



# DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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According to an article by Mary Scherer, VP - AT&T Business Services, a survey was taken by the Economist Intelligence Unit to review progress made by companies in creating business continuity plans. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that planning

**Terri L. Maurer, FASID** for business continuity has always been a priority. The bad news is that one-third of the respondents either have no plan, or don't know if they have one or not.

A crisis management plan is only worth the time invested if it is tested, revised and improved regularly. According to the survey, about 25% of the companies surveyed never fully test their plans. How often should you test your plan? That depends on what kind of company you have, but twice a year is not unreasonable. Some parts of a plan may need testing more often as changes are made within the company. Because of rapid changes in technology, IT related sectors like data storage may need more frequent attention.

The survey also revealed 28% of companies have experienced a disaster that led to a full shutdown of their key business operations. More than 60% of these disasters came in the form of terrorist attacks, natural disasters and systems failures.

Don't wait for a disaster to happen. Schedule time and a top-level team to do some scenario planning and develop a crisis management plan for your company. Believe me, the world is full of disasters just waiting to happen.

## Visualize - Analyze - Strategize

### Plan for success!

#### Maurer On The Move

Come see and hear Terri's informative presentations on a variety of business topics. If you have questions about an event or topic, contact Terri at: [tmaurer@juno.com](mailto:tmaurer@juno.com).

**October 18th**  
Fall Market  
D & D Building  
New York City

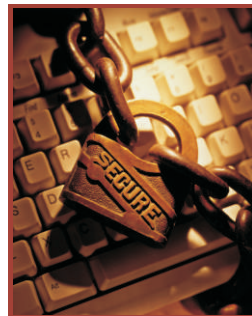
**March 17, 2006**  
ASID Conference  
Interiors '06  
Nashville

**November 1st**  
Design Source New England  
Seaport World Trade Center  
Boston

Just for a moment, imagine your business located in New Orleans. Your facility is submerged in a lake of fetid water. Hopefully this was not reality for anyone reading this publication. But, if it were your reality, how prepared would you be? Would you know that your employees escaped safely? What would your priorities be? Who would be in charge of seeing steps were taken to minimize harm to your human resources and your physical plant?

While most of us will never face a disaster of this proportion, does not mean we will totally avoid other types of crises. How prepared are you to face a workflow interruption of any kind? Viruses and worms invade our computer systems daily. Blackouts and flooding are not uncommon in certain areas of our country. A breach in security can put your firm into crisis mode in the blink of an eye.

## Visualize



How much thought have you given to how quickly you can reestablish business and get production back up and running? These are issues no one wants to think about. When we do look at them, it's usually through rose-colored glasses that convince us those kinds of disasters will never happen to us. In the past 10 years, the United States has had its share of natural disasters. We've seen hurricanes, ice storms and blizzards on the east coast, with earthquakes and raging fires in the west. The terrorist attack on 9/11 heaped massive destruction on New York City. Some businesses survived, others did not. Less catastrophic, but just as damaging to an organization's stability are things like security breaches by computer hackers or financial situations that seemingly sneak up on you.

Who in your company will be in charge of communications for any disaster, no matter how small? Being on the ball and ready to disseminate bad news in a controlled manner can go a long way in quelling a catastrophe before it becomes uncontrollable. If nothing is communicated about a bad situation, a vacuum forms and the tendency is that something...anything...will fill that void. You can fill that void with your own responses. You can maintain control. Be proactive, not reactive to rumors and innuendo that will fill the grapevine faster than the ruptured levees emptied water into New Orleans. What is your plan of action to attack and control a crisis? Under what circumstances should your crisis plan be put into effect?

## Analyze

It pays to have a crisis management plan in place, but more importantly, it pays to use it. Call it a crisis management plan, a business continuity plan, or a disaster plan. The title isn't important; but having the foresight to plan for the unexpected is. How ready will you be to pick up the pieces and start your business again? Think about not having your customer database, pending purchase orders, accounts receivables or payables. Employee information and other HR records, supplier information, orders or production schedules; all are critical pieces in the success of any business. Without these crucial pieces of information, you could be among businesses that do not survive.



Do you remember the huge Tylenol scare? That could easily have been the end of a dominant player in the business world, had they not been prepared to handle such an emergency. Their advance planning saved them, enabling them to come back stronger than ever. Not only were they able to save their place in the market, but they positioned themselves as front-runners in security packaging for their products.

Take time to put a crisis management plan into place and test it often. Consider the stakeholders who must be addressed in time of crisis. Stockholders, management team, employees, suppliers, customers, bankers and independent contractors are among the stakeholders who can be affected by a crisis of any proportion. How will you deal with their unique needs? Inform bankers and investors quickly if a financial disaster is looming. Take control. Will employees need counseling from an employee assistance provider of some kind? Identify who you will call and record their contact information now. Develop a communications plan to assure that your crisis strategies operate smoothly.

## Strategize

#### Something To Think About...

"Survival is a privilege which entails obligations."

Simon Wiesenthal - Justice Not Vengeance

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