



## CIR Article

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## Could You COPE? Simply, Efficiently or EFFECTIVELY?

Many organisations currently struggle with a key question being asked at all levels within the organisation and that question is simply:

### ***Could we COPE if a major disaster were to hit our business today?***

The Business Continuity Industry's strategies and ways of working have developed at different rates in different organisations over the years. Internationally, the major focus was placed on the need to prepare for the potential Y2K bug; the biggest technology disaster that never happened. After this date most Disaster Recovery centres were dismantled and the testing teams disbanded. Were organisations short sighted in their speed to break up the only structure that had been put in place to support a Business Resilience (BCM) methodology?



#### **Hindsight Is A Wonderful Thing**

Due to the hype of Y2K, many organisations ploughed millions of pounds into preparation activities to ensure the effects would not cripple their organisations. As the "follow the sun" monitoring and reporting strategies were invoked, each watch started to report the country-by-country and region-by-region current state of readiness. As these positive responses continued to come in, many asked, "was this just a waste of time?"; those involved justified their efforts by quoting the ease of transition into the new millennium.

Whether this was down to good planning or was purely fortuitous, it is relevant to note that the high profile of Y2K was the impetus that caused many organisations to make their first Business Continuity preparations. Unfortunately, millions of pounds were wasted as knee jerk reactions dismantled the disaster recovery centres and infrastructure which had been put in place.

Many argued that the need to prepare was no longer required, exactly as happened when some in government argued to dismantle our sea defence capabilities months before the start of the Falklands war. It was only because the House of Commons was slow to respond that the armed forces were still in a position to respond effectively to the invasion.

As we moved from Y2K to post 9/11 it became apparent that there was a need for organisations to COPE with these potential threats to their continuity; the need had to be ingrained into the culture of the organisation as a whole.

Often key supporting stakeholders to the company are not considered, such as clients, employees, investors, suppliers and the environment at large. The company may successfully resume business but may not have anyone to do business with!

If organisations were to analyse the true costs associated with their Y2K preparation, they would find that a considerable amount of resource was actually invested in awareness raising, building up the capability to respond. It is disappointing that after all this hard work was completed, the perceived need to prepare diminished, and much of the good work was undone or forgotten; so much so that some of today's BCM programme managers are now faced with rebuilding their Business Resilience capability virtually from scratch.



#### **Everyone Needs To Be Involved When Re-Building A Business**

The need to consider all aspects of the organisation is essential to the success of any Business Resilience proposition. After all, the objective is to re-build and "Continue the Business" in the aftermath of a major disruption to the day-to-day running of the Organisation. So how is this message delivered and received effectively by all? Not forgetting all key stakeholders associated with the business, as mentioned earlier.

We are faced with the daunting prospect of trying to get the whole organisation to except the need for preparation. It is particularly important that all people who are essential to this effort are clear on the role they would be required to play. The question is, how do we do this?

At NonVerba, it is our experience that the communications proposition should be as simple as possible so that the message can be delivered to all business units effectively.

We have found that the relationships between all of the disaster recovery team members are critical. They must be developed and cemented before the strategies and technologies to be implemented are considered. If the relationships between all involved are not strong or are not supported, then the project is most probably doomed for failure, no matter how clear the overall strategy or methodology.

 **Being Able To COPE Simply, Efficiently and Effectively**

NonVerba's registered COPE methodology enables your organisation to prepare actively for disaster situations. Its simple. Yet extremely effective approach to Business Resilience ensures that your organisation's cultural need to adopt this sometimes complex discipline is achieved quickly and more importantly throughout the business in a standardised way.

COPE stands for Communication leading to an Organised response involving People from Every part of the organisation.

Implementation and response can be achieved in three increasing levels of effectiveness:

- To Simply COPE means 'Communication leading to an Organised response involving People from Every part of your business'
- To COPE Efficiently requires a plan so that each part of the organisation is 'doing the thing right'
- To COPE Effectively demands an integrated response considering all stakeholders relevant to the organisation. This ensures every is 'doing the right thing'

This is represented in the COPE. logo by the central symbol of "Infinity" to illustrate that the NonVerba strategy, whilst being structured, is a never-ending process.

**COPE<sup>®</sup>**

COPE involves a sequence of steps that have been defined to lead your organisation through three key stages as illustrated below:



The ability to achieve each stages requirement depends on the following criteria being addressed.

**∞ 1<sup>st</sup> Stage - SIMPLY COPE**

Being able to "Simply COPE" with a major event requires a:

**C**ommunication strategy leading to an  
**O**rganised response, involving  
**P**eople from  
**E**very business function

Our proposition is that an organisation should assemble a team composed of representatives from every part of the business, who are given clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They will then be trained on an agreed set of actions with guidance to ensure a consistent response. Then you will have a high probability of being able to restore operations, even though with this approach, restoration could take time to achieve. The first deliverable will be to ensure a communication process, materials and technologies are in place to get the message out, and all those required are trained to respond in an organised way.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage - COPE EFFICIENTLY

Peter Drucker (1993) differentiated between Efficiency and Effectiveness. Efficiency enables one to do the “Thing Right”. NonVerba leverages this idea by proposing that the next deliverable would propose to get all business functions to develop a standardised and easily accessible plan. This covers the response and recovery capabilities to help re-build their respective business functions in the aftermath of a major event.

Although a stage two approach would be faster than stage one, this level is only sufficient to ensure *efficiency*, and not necessarily *effectiveness* due to planning in silo/functional isolation.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage - COPE EFFECTIVELY

Effectiveness is deduced by Drucker as selecting the “Right Thing” to do. Michael Porter (1985) proposed an ideal that every organisation has a standard operating procedure for its “Value Chain” model, and that there are two types of priority to consider in any organisation. The primary activities of the organisation are those processes that ultimately deliver the product or service level to its customers. These are the processes which add the most value to the organisation. The secondary processes such as HR and IT are those which support the primary processes. NonVerba’s proposal is that to get to stage 3 of the COPE strategy, the organisation needs to fully understand its own primary activities. It then needs to allow the leaders of these functions to prioritise which processes need to be responded to and recovered in the ‘golden hours’ of response and recovery after any major incident. This will ensure that these essential processes are re-built first before considering other supporting functions soon after. This approach supports a truly effective response.

## Need To Be Simple!

The success of a BCM programme is not just dependent on either the technology being used or the ability of the Business Resilience manager, it is also dependant on how effectively this is communicated. Once this message is received and understood, the technology and those involved in coordinating the response and recovery will be able add real value to the effectiveness of the programme. Without the message being understood, agreed and supported by all essential representatives of all business functions, the programme will realistically have virtually no chance of succeeding.

NonVerba has invested significantly in developing simple and effective methodologies and software tools to support the concept of Business Resilience. By leveraging the technologies such as the Internet, Flash based multimedia presentations, computer based training packages and CDR credit card storage devices, we can ensure that the message is simplified and communicated in the most effective ways as possible. This guarantees organisations are in a position to ultimately “COPE Effectively”.

NonVerba is a Corporate Governance Solutions Specialist in consultancy and software solutions. For example its e-planning solution “eSecurus® 2005” has been developed and refined over the last four years to meet client’s ever increasing demands.

Peter Joyce, founder and Managing Director of NonVerba spent 7 years at Goldman Sachs Investment Banking Division, the last four years conceiving and developing solutions for their global Investment Banking business continuity response methodology. NonVerba’s blue chip client list, currently includes specific representation from the Construction, Legal, Pharmaceutical and Facilities Management Industries.

## References

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