BCP is for life

Business continuity planning (BCP) is one of those areas which you can quite easily convince yourself that all is well, and that disasters only happen to others. A year on from the millennium bug some people may have become a little blasé about the need for BCP.

I am sure most people have good intentions and that it always appears on 'To Do' lists – let's give everyone the benefit of doubt – but other things always seem more urgent and there may be a subconscious feeling that "there has not been a disaster yet, so we should be okay for a bit longer". As a result, BCP frequently gets left in the in-tray, and a little prod may be required to move it up the agenda. Hopefully, this BCP spotlight will do the trick, and if only one corporate treasurer acts as a result of these articles, then we will feel that everyone's efforts have not been in vain.

One of the key messages coming from our authors is that BCP does not just involve 'disasters' or disaster recovery – corporates need to prepare for all sorts of events which might prevent them from carrying on their proper business.

To begin at the beginning, **Piper-Anna Shields** of Guardian iT looks at how to get started with BCP, and emphasises how the 'continuity culture' has to work its way through the whole organisation if it is to be truly effective. **Tricia Munday** of Omnicom Finance then looks at how the BCP has to grow with the business, from a basic survival plan through to a 'business as usual' – no matter what – BCP.

Having established the why and what of BCP, we go on to look at the who and how. **Ken Lillie** of SunGard explains where the treasurer fits into the picture, and the specific issues he or she needs to watch for.

Dave Dignam of Synstar compares the relative merits of 'going it alone' with using a specialist provider of back-up facilities. **Dave Claridge** of KPMG then poses a worrying question to us all – does the disaster recovery test tell us anything? – and goes on to suggest how to make it truly effective. Part of the process involves the initially worrying concept of 'no warning' disaster recovery tests. **Jeremy Lewis** of Aon explores how insurance can provide cover not only for the physical loss of assets, but also the costs of business interruption and emergency action, and so needs to form a key aspect of the BCP.

Finally, to put BCP into the broader context of the marketplace, **Paul Philpotts** of BSMG provides a fascinating insight into how the public relations professionals manage the external profile of the company in a disaster situation, so that while the BCP is keeping the business running, the PR department can keep the customers loyal. the message is that appropriate PR training for *all* involved in the business continuity or disaster recovery process forms a vital part of the plan. ■

KEN MARSTERSON
Rabobank International
CATHY COOPER