

Risk Management

Keeping Your Business Running and Protecting Your Employees and Reputation

BY RALPH PETTI, MBCI, CBCP, GRCP, CERT

THE PANDEMIC. It has changed our lives forever – and is still a threat that is lingering and will have to be completely extinguished. As 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy were major incidents that severely impacted our region, they both had end-dates that could be reached as we worked together to settle things. The COVID-19 virus pandemic is something for which there may not be an antidote, as of this writing, for upwards of a year.

It's a hard lesson to learn when someone tells you what to do and you are giving up a little bit of your American freedom, but with the pandemic, we had no choice except to act. If we did not listen to the authorities and act on their recommendations, we would be looking at a much longer period of stress, isolation, compromise and major medical issues.

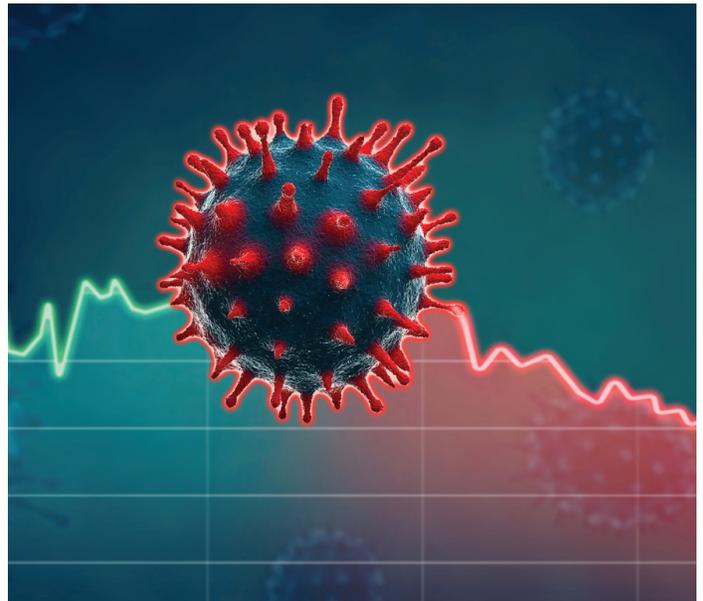
In Delaware, no other major disasters experienced have had the impact that the pandemic has had on our communities. We have had major events that disrupted our lives, but life has gone on. Delawareans are survivors and we are doing our best to get through this calamity. But there is a silent disaster event always lurking nearby us.

Major disaster events happen every day that can truly affect your business. These could be fires, blackouts, terrorism, cyberattacks, severe weather, road closures, etc. These events compromise employees, products, facilities, transportation and communication methods, supply chain partners and the list goes on.

If you are just backing up your data with your disaster recovery plan, you are not planning for the continuation of business processes. Disaster recovery is not business continuity planning!

Business continuity planning can:

- Protect the safety of your employees, clients, stakeholders and their families
- Keep your reputation intact by having all employees understand what to do
- Clearly understand all your business processes and obligations
- Clearly identify all of your key suppliers and their impact on you
- Help to rectify your business risks and exposures that you may have



- Create specific crisis management plans that can be used internally and externally
- Coordinate with any disaster recovery backup or IT services providers
- Establish ONE plan: succession planning, evacuation planning, employee safety, etc.

The pandemic. 9/11. Hurricane Sandy. All major events. Most have ended and we moved on. Some may not. It's up to you to consider a simple and affordable "All-Hazards Planning" model that is easily completed and maintained by your own team.

The most important things that you can consider as a business owner, whether you are a Small-Medium Business or a Global Enterprise Business, is the protecting your employees and your company's reputation. Roughly 80% of all businesses that do not have a plan when an incident strikes may go out of business within two years. By having a plan, your company will be able to optimize the way that you operate and be a viable and successful member of the community. ■



Ralph Petti, MBCI, CBCP, GRCP, CERT is a certified risk manager focusing on business continuity planning to help ensure that businesses prepare for, and survive from, disaster events of all kinds. A four-time Delaware State Chamber Ambassador-of-the-Year, Ralph is also a licensed realtor and insurance professional and conducts his risk management work through Continuity Dynamics, Inc. and Readiness Associates, LLC, and partners with the likes of FEMA and DHS.