



# BUSINESS CONTINUITY Awareness Week 2011



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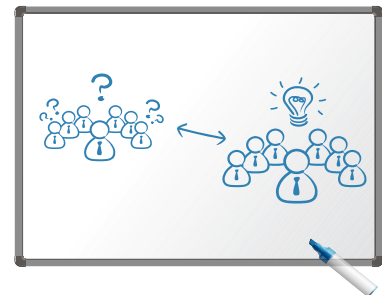
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## How would you sum up the aims and objectives of Business Continuity Awareness Week?

The clue is in the title really – it's about raising awareness of BCM. The primary aim of the event is to promote the many benefits of an effective business continuity strategy to a new audience. We are essentially looking to provide an educational platform upon which those new to the discipline can learn more about it from a range of experienced business continuity practitioners.

The event is also designed to encourage participants to take what they have learned from the various activities during the week back into their own organisations so that they can promote BC practices to their colleagues in a more proactive way. Historically, internal BCM awareness initiatives have been rather limited. Hopefully, the activities during BCAW will provide them with more effective awareness raising techniques.



## When was the first BCAW launched and what format did the event take?

The idea to have a week focused on raising BCM awareness was floating around for a number of years, but the first official event took place in 2002. This was not just a BCI-led event, but involved a number of different organisations. The problem we had was choosing the best week and in the end we decided to attach the event to a major related exhibition and conference in London. Our aim was to attract both interest from businesses and media attention by linking BCAW to the exhibition. As this was only a two-day event, we spent the remainder of the week on activities designed to encourage companies to undertake their own awareness raising efforts.

I must admit, it was a bit hit and miss. While on the whole, it was relatively low key, we did manage to get a number of large corporations involved in the process and they ended up conducting their own internal events. We also managed to generate some media coverage.

## How would you say the event has evolved?

The event has certainly become a key date on the BCM calendar, particularly in the last few years, and now it is much more of a global undertaking.

One thing, ironically, which has contributed to this is the fact that the event that we originally 'piggy-backed' no longer takes place. What this meant was that we had to create an event that could stand on its own two legs. It also meant that we could decide on the timing of the event rather than being tied to the week of the exhibition.

One other thing that has changed is that it is no longer a UK-focused event. Similar events were also being held in countries such as the US, Canada and Australia, and we were all trying to select weeks for the event that tied in with particular activities, which created a number of problems.

I would add at this point that the BCI did not initially want to take ownership of the event. We saw our role as being one of a facilitator rather than dictating the event. However, two years ago we bit the bullet and took on a lead role in organising BCAW. Once we became more proactive, other countries came on board to help us create an international event. This greater involvement has enabled us to develop a broad range of activities and materials for the event sourced from all over the world. Last year, for example, we were able to conduct a global video conference and had a number of international webinars.

### What is the primary focus of BCAW 2011?

There are primarily three messages which we are looking to broadcast during the week. We want to get away from the traditional, outdated view of BCM as being solely about buildings, technology and people, and to raise awareness of the strategic-level role played by the discipline in the context of business resilience.

The three messages focus on the role of business continuity in the context of:

- Competitive advantage through operational resilience
- Protecting value and reputation in a crisis
- Transparent corporate governance and risk oversight

Some BC professionals and their organisations are already at this level, but we need to move the thinking forward of those who are still focused on the operational side of business continuity. Furthermore, by making those who are new to BCM aware of the fact that the business continuity remit extends beyond the operational components, we are ensuring that they will build their strategy on much more comprehensive foundations.

### What new elements or activities have been introduced into this year's event?

On the whole the mix this year will be similar to last year, although there will be more webinars this time and also a greater international interaction. In total, we will

have over 30 webinar presentations during the week, during which people will be able to pose questions to the presenters. These will also be recorded and will be available via the BCAW website.

Other exciting elements will include a new BCAW Forum, which will be hosted on LinkedIn and will allow people to raise particular BC issues and discuss any new topics affecting the industry with other practitioners. During the week, we will also be releasing a range of new research material in conjunction with our partners; issuing a paper on the topic of resilience produced by a BCI Partnership Working Group; and providing new guidance which has been produced by the BCI Partnership which looks at the link between business interruption insurance and BCM and is based on a 9-month project working with experts from BCM and insurance sector. In addition, two roundtables will take place in the run-up to and during BCAW, with reports from the events being made available to BCI members following BCAW.

The event will also see the launch of a new online incident simulation training game designed for business. BC24 allows teams of six players to test out their crisis management capabilities and gives them a chance to compete with organisations from across the world. It revolves around a scenario which affects a particular organisation and each member of the team plays the part of someone within the company. Roles will include the CEO, the HR manager and the IT director. They will be faced with a series of challenges stemming from the original incident, which will develop depending on how the team approaches each of these challenges. The aim is to measure how successful the team is at managing the incident, and to demonstrate this each team will be given a score – so there is certainly a competitive edge to the activity.

### How is the event structured and does it cater for all levels of BC professionalism?

The event is designed to be fun as well as informative. BCAW is not designed to be the BCI preaching about BCM, but rather it aims to provide people with an opportunity to get involved in BC-related activities. For example, people can download a series of materials from the BCAW website which will allow them to conduct their own internal events.

While there is a strategic element to this year's event, the week also includes a number of activities which are focused on the practical side of BCM and are designed to help people with their business continuity strategies. This is not a top down-type approach, but rather is aimed at making people aware of things that they can do in their own organisations which

have worked in other companies. We want the event to have an impact on people at all levels, whether experienced professionals or those simply looking to get a better understanding of business continuity.

### To what extent is there an international flavour to the presentations and activities, and how important is this fact?

It is essential from the BCI's perspective that BCAW be an international event. There are numerous national events that take place, but the primary goal of the week will be to clearly demonstrate that BC practitioners represent a global community. The BCI membership includes well over 5,500 members from over 90 countries in the world, but the actual number of people involved globally in business continuity is in the tens of thousands. What BCAW provides is an opportunity for these people to communicate with each other and share their experiences with their colleagues and friends throughout the world.

The event is very much an international collaboration, with numerous events being organised in various different countries. This is critical to the success of BCAW. Also some of the activities are being run by people who are not members of the BCI.

### For those BC professionals wishing to play a more proactive role in BCAW 2011, how would you suggest they get involved?

The first port of call should be the BCAW website, which provides an overview of all the various events that are taking place and how people can get involved, including the forum, the numerous webinars and the BC24 online simulation game. If they require any further information or have any particular queries, they should contact the BCI directly.

One final point I would make is that what we are hoping to do during this week is to catalyse people to take their BC activities forward. The event will provide a range of discussion forums, materials, research papers and guidance documents, but it is up to participants to take this wealth of information back into their own organisations and use it to get everyone involved in making their company a more resilient one.



Business Continuity Awareness Week 2011 will take place from 21 March to 25 March. For further information, please go to: [www.bcaw2011.com](http://www.bcaw2011.com)