Choosing BCP Software: One Organization’s Story

Brenda E. Brown-Paul
Introduction

• Brenda Brown-Paul
  – Sr. Analyst for a Professional Services Company
  – 21 years of IT experience
    • 6 years in business continuity
    • Certified Business Continuity Planner
    • Primarily federal government contracting
    • Several application review & requirements analysis projects

• Customer – Data center
Overview

• Problems – What were we trying to solve?
• Review Process – How was the analysis conducted?
• Findings – What was the final result?
• Lessons Learned – What could have been done better?
State of Customer’s Business Continuity Program

• The Data Center’s Business Continuity Program
  – Started in 2001 after negative audit report
  – Includes BC Plan, OEP, Crisis Management Plan, Business Recovery Plan, & IT Contingency Plans
  – User Training & awareness programs
  – Supported by management

• Missing? Tools to support the program!
Identify the Problem

• What are you trying to solve?
• Decentralized management of BCP Documentation
  – System owners responsible for SOP & IT Contingency Plans
  – Documents kept in directories that cannot be accessed universally
  – Confusion about versions among staff
  – No easy way to collaborate or show dependencies
  – New things keep popping up!
Overall Process in Choosing BCP Software

1. ID Problem & Initial Requirements
2. Identify Stakeholders & Responsibilities
3. Set Review Criteria & Factors
4. Software Review
5. Findings
6. Recommendation

- Requirements Analysis
1. Initial Requirements

- Would be a shared, Internet-based application
- Would be “easy” to administer
- Would be “easy” to use
- Would be browser independent (very important for this customer)
2. Stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders?
  - Customer Management
  - Team Leaders
  - Team Members
  - Business Recovery Coordinator
  - BC Consultant
  - System Administrator(s)
  - Project Managers
Expected Stakeholder Responsibilities

• Agency, Division & CIO Mgmt – No interaction
• Office level management – Interaction possible, but no assigned responsibilities

• Team Leaders, BRC & Consultant – Responsible for updates & other tasks
• BC Consultant – Administration (not system) & Security
• System Administrators – Backups, recovery, contingency, etc.
• Project Managers – May request information from system directly or through other users.
Primary Stakeholders

• BC Consultant & BRC
  – BRC responsible for overall BC program
  – Consultant will be the primary administrator & Security Officer for the software
    • Set up users
    • Manage web space
    • Define backup schedule
    • Interface with vendor
    • Etc.
Stakeholder Skill Sets

• Comfort level with PCs
• Comfort level with the Internet
• Will the users follow rules & guidelines? To what degree?
• Past experience with these users
  – Adherence to:
    • Change Management Policies
    • SOP Creation
    • Timely updates
3. Requirements Analysis

• Internet Based
  – Run in secure web space
  – Browser independent; no Active X
  – Should look & feel like a website

• Scalable
• How much?
• Ease of Use
• Ease of Deployment
• Support
Requirements Analysis (cont.)

• Adherence to DRII Professional Standards
• Security
  – In addition to secure network, want additional level of security
  – User login
  – Restricted access to modules, fields, etc.
• Contingency Event Support
4. Software Review Criteria

• Three Categories of Software
  – **Category A** – A “basic” application that steps through the BCP process
  – **Category B** – A BCP application that steps through the process, includes a ‘planning wizard’ & helps manage exercises
  – **Category C** – A BCP application that does all of the above & provides incident management & notification modules
Criteria

• Weights from .50 to 1.00
  – Essential – 1.0
  – Important – .70 or greater
  – Interesting – .50
## Criteria

- **8 overall criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to DRII/BCI Standards</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Deployment</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Price</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Event Support</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criteria

• Each criterion had a list of factors. Each factor ranked from .50 to 1.50
  – Exceeds the factor – 1.50
  – Meets the factor – 1.00
  – Did not meet the factor - 0
• Overall, there were 49 factors between the 8 criteria
Final Scoring

- Derived by multiplying the individual factor score by the factor weight, adding all of the factors by that criteria together, & dividing the result by the number of factors in the criteria.
  - All factors do not apply to each category
  - Maximum Score for a Category A app: .87
  - Maximum Score for a Category B app: .83
- Finally, the score & the price were listed & ranked
5. Software Review – Step 1

- Where else – the Internet?
- Review of BCP & Disaster Recovery Websites
- IT Industry Research organizations
- Warning: General web search is too broad
Software Review – Step 1

• Recommendations from peers
  – Internal company business continuity group
  – Internal customer business continuity group
  – Association of Contingency Planners (Mid-Atlantic Chapter)
  – Called a bunch of folks I know
Software Review – Step 2

- Review of vendor websites & demo SW
- Narrowed list to six vendors to get more information by phone.
- Sent questionnaire to the vendors with criteria
- Online demonstrations
- When possible, met with company representatives
- Asked for, and called, references!!!
Software Review - Shortcomings

• Only one person involved in this review
• Could not test the applications in the customer’s environment – which skewed the decision
  – Most required application to be loaded at the customer site – no could do
  – One would not provide access to a demo site
  – Only 2 could provide demo site access; one made it so easy that it swayed the reviewer toward their company early in the review process
6. Findings

• 6 Final Candidates
  – Category As (2)
  – Category Bs (3)
  – Category C (1)
Findings – Category A

• 2 Candidates
  – Neither application met all of the criteria
• First Candidate
  – Not web-accessible as advertised, though web-enabled was coming in about a year
  – Clumsy look & feel – Old Visual Basic interface; could “feel” the db
  – Restricted user to completing BC Plan in a proscribed order
• Second Candidate
  – This was one of several modules that had to be purchased separately
  – Addressed only 4 of DRII Best Practices. 4 others addressed in 2 other modules
  – Required knowledge of 3rd-party, proprietary reporting application
  – Cost more than all of the 5 other applications rolled together!
• Both applications only run on Windows Servers
Findings – Category B

- Each met the minimum requirements to varying degrees
- One app was a category A until online demo was given
- One app could be a category C with a notification module
Findings – Category B

- **First Candidate**
  - Over 30+ pre-defined reports
  - Tracks application criticality, risk tolerance, dependencies, GAP analysis, etc.
  - Comes with 1000s of pages of guidelines, a user’s guide & online help
- Not at all intuitive & must be used in a proscribed order. Could not load existing documents, or easily cut & paste
- Any changes to the fields, format, reports, etc required vendor work $
- Reports could not be altered until they were in WP. Not easy for customer stakeholders
- Security
- No tracking for tests or events
Findings – Category B

• **Candidate 2**
  
  – Very easy to use – intuitive!
  
  – Longest track record of any company reviewed – 21 years
  
  – Built on java – can run on any server
  
  – Had track record with ODBC notification apps
  
  – Provided starter list of tasks to help novice, but could jump around
  
  – Collaborative; unlimited number of users
  
  – Easy list interfaces
  
  – Security
Findings – Category B

- **Candidate 2** (cont.)
  - Test/Activate module for exercises & to track actual events
  - Versions are tracked
  - Existing documents can be cut & pasted into the database

- Reports are in the same 3rd party application as the first

- Training offered for free about 350 miles away at company HQ or for $1500 per day onsite
Findings – Category B

• **Candidate 3**
  - Very easy to use! Site administrator (reviewer) had no training, but basic instructions
  - **ACCEPTS DOCUMENTS JUST AS THEY ARE!!!**
  - MS based, but can be run on any platform
  - Application designed for the Internet and collaboration
  - Able to manipulate the site through any HTML editor.
  - Provides complete set of document templates based on DRII Best Practices in order
  - Focus of the company is on government COOP processing; they speak the language
  - Certified DRII training partner
Findings – Category B

- **Candidate 3**
  - Database tracks all documents, files, users, lists, etc.
  - Training is minimal; mostly for system administrator & done during installation
  - At time of evaluation, this was a very young company (couple of years old). Staff had over 20 years in DRP
  - At beginning of evaluation, had few customers.
  - Better bells & whistles if you use Office 2003 on MS 2003 server, but completely functional without it.
Findings – Category C

• All the great features of Category B apps
• In fact, too many features for this client!
• Lots of fun to play with! Very easy to use
• No real customers, though used in large national testing by Feds
• Developed for the Internet from the start
7. Recommendation

• Recommended third application in Category B
• Customer only wanted demonstration of the recommended application
Lessons Learned

• Analyst’s vision was not the customer’s vision!
• Internal sales job was not strong enough
• Needed to have one customer “champion” invested in the process
• The priorities have changed.
• Who is going to do the certification & accreditation for this package, which includes writing the IT Contingency Plan, justification, etc?
Questions
• Suggested websites
  – www.contingencyplanning.com
  – www.drj.com
  – www.metaworld.com or www.gartner.com (recently purchased metaworld)

• Contact
  – brenda.e.brown-paul@lmco.com