



NEWSLETTER

RJ2 Technologies Monthly Newsletter
February 2025



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Show Some Love To Your Business Continuity Plan

Wintertime can feel like a wonderland. There’s hot cocoa, cozy fireside conversations, glistening white snowfall...ice storms, power outages and tons of employee sick days. You can’t predict the future, but a business continuity plan – BCP for short – ensures that unexpected events don’t slow you down because, in business, every minute counts – literally. Downtime costs small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) \$137 to \$427 per minute, according to a 2020 IBM report. Although the loss is small, extreme downtime is the ultimate undoing for many SMBs.

This month, while you’re rushing out to buy flowers or before you settle in for a cozy Netflix series, don’t forget to show your BCP some love too.

What Is A Business Continuity Plan?

It’s just like it sounds – a plan to keep your business continuously running in the case of an unplanned event like a natural disaster, cyber-attack or human error. A BCP outlines processes and procedures your company will follow during a crisis. It considers operations, assets, human resources, technology and safety; in other words, it keeps necessary functions in your organization running until the disaster is handled.

Isn’t a disaster recovery plan the same thing?

Disaster recovery plans focus solely on restoring your IT systems. It’s one – albeit critical – component of your BCP. If a winter storm knocks out your Internet, a disaster recovery plan restores data access and any IT services you may have lost.



Why a BCP is Important

Let's say your office suffers a major fire incident. Do you know where and how your employees would work? Would they be able to handle customer calls? Where would your executive team meet to make critical, time-sensitive decisions? In addition to providing a plan for restoring your IT systems, a BCP is a practical framework for your entire company's resiliency and financial sustainability.

Additionally, people want to know you have it together. If you hesitate or flounder in response to an emergency, you'll lose the trust of your team and customers, and that's incredibly hard to get back.

What Your BCP Needs

A few basic elements make up a solid BCP framework for every business, no matter your industry.

1. Your company's critical functions. What are the must-do activities in your business? This could be anything from order fulfillment to customer support. Knowing what's absolutely critical to your company helps you prioritize during a disruptive emergency. Assess the likelihood and impact of these risks to understand what you're preparing for.

2. Risk assessment. What types of crises could disrupt your business? These could range from natural disasters, like floods or earthquakes, to cyber-attacks or a key employee leaving unexpectedly. But don't linger too long on this step because you can't possibly think through every scenario – focus on recovery.

3. Recovery strategies. For each critical function and process, develop strategies to recover during a disruption. This might include alternative methods of operation, using different locations, employing backup systems, etc. Pro Tip: ditch wordy manuals and use flow charts and checklists to communicate plans to your team.

4. Data backup and recovery. Check (and double-check) that all your critical company data is regularly backed up and can be restored quickly. Decide on off-site storage and cloud backups and establish protocols for data recovery.

5. Communication plan. This includes how you'll communicate with employees, customers and stakeholders during a crisis. Who says what and through which channels? Include contact lists, communication templates and dissemination methods (e.g., e-mail, social media, website updates).

6. Alternative operations. If your main office isn't usable or accessible, where will your team work? Do you have relationships with alternate suppliers if your primary ones are unavailable?

7. Review schedule. Your business will evolve, and so should your continuity plan. Create a schedule to run drills and update your plan regularly. Also, distribute it to everyone who needs to know, so everyone knows their role during a crisis.



Is A BCP Right For Your Business?

There is absolutely no company – big or small – that's not at risk of a disaster. According to a 2022 threat report by ConnectWise, nearly two in three midsize businesses experienced a ransomware attack in the last 18 months. One in five victims spent \$250,000 or more to recover. The odds are not in your favor when it comes to business risk.

Remember, the goal of a BCP is to minimize disruption to your business and help you get back to normal operations as fast as possible. Get with your team and review your BCP today. If you don't have one, **call RJ2 Technologies at 847-303-1194 or email marketing@rj2t.com** and we can help you get started.

Black History Month - Honoring the Legacy of Black Innovators in Technology

Black History Month is a time to reflect on and celebrate the profound contributions of African Americans to all facets of society, including the realm of technology. It is essential to recognize and honor the pioneers whose innovations have shaped the modern world. This observance not only acknowledges their achievements but also inspires future generations to pursue excellence in technological fields. By understanding the historical context and challenges these innovators faced, we cultivate a deeper appreciation for their enduring legacies.

Trailblazers Who Transformed the Tech Industry

Several key figures have left an indelible mark on the tech industry. One such individual is Mark Dean (pictured to the right), a computer scientist and engineer who contributed to the development of the first personal computer at IBM in 1981. Dean holds three of the nine original patents for the IBM PC and has been a trailblazer in the field of computing, demonstrating the critical role Black innovators play in technological advancements. Dean is the first Black American to become an IBM Fellow in 1999 - one of the highest honors awarded to an individual for their technological contributions to the company. He served as CTO for IBM Middle East and Africa and Vice President of Worldwide Strategy and Operations for IBM Research. Currently, Dean serves as the John Fisher Distinguished Professor at the University of Tennessee.



Mark Dean



Jacqueline D. Woods

Jacqueline D. Woods is another influential figure whose work at IBM has shaped the intersection of marketing and technology. As a leader with a visionary approach, Woods has been pivotal in developing strategies that not only boost technological adoption but also emphasize diversity and inclusion within the tech sphere.

Her efforts in driving strategic initiatives have expanded IBM's reach and impact, demonstrating the power of effective marketing in technology. Woods' leadership has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of diverse perspectives in fostering innovation. By championing diversity, she has helped create a more equitable tech environment, encouraging the next generation of Black innovators to pursue their passions. Woods has served as Head of Marketing for IBM, Vice President - IBM Systems, Cloud, Data and Mobile, and Chief Marketing Officer at IBM Global Financing. Currently, Woods is Chief Marketing Officer for IBM Global Business Partners and is a board member and Secretary of the Greater Fairfield County Foundation, a non-profit serving under represented communities.

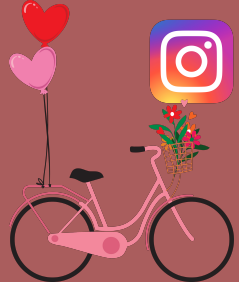
Inspiring Future Generations: The Lasting Impact of Black Tech Pioneers

The achievements of Black pioneers in technology not only transformed their respective fields but also opened doors for future innovators. By highlighting their stories during Black History Month, we can inspire young minds to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and continue the legacy of innovation. Representation matters, and seeing individuals who look like them achieve great success can motivate the next generation to pursue their passions and contribute to the technological advancements of tomorrow.

In conclusion, Black History Month is more than a celebration of past achievements; it is a call to action to continue the work of those who came before us. By acknowledging the contributions of Black innovators in technology, we not only honor their legacy but also foster a more inclusive and innovative future. Let us celebrate these pioneers and ensure their stories are told and their impact recognized for generations to come.

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Vendor Partner Highlight - **mimecast**

This month, we are excited to highlight Mimecast, a leader in email security providing comprehensive solutions to protect organizations from a wide range of email-based threats. They offer advanced email security solutions designed to safeguard businesses from phishing, malware, ransomware, and other cyber threats.

At RJ2 Technologies, we provide Mimecast's email security solution to protect email infrastructure. Their solutions help us enhance our security posture and provides peace of mind knowing our email communications are protected. We're proud to have selected Mimecast as part of our IT stack to help leverage email solutions.

To learn more about this partnership, **please call RJ2 Technologies at 847-303-1194 or email marketing@rj2t.com**

Make Tax Season A Little Less Miserable



Ah, February – love is in the air and Cupid may just have his arrow pointed toward you and a special someone. But Cupid has competition. It's also tax season and scammers are out looking for their special someone(s), too. As if taxes weren't horrible enough on their own, criminals are devising new ways to trick us into tax scams, with horrific consequences.

According to IRS data, tax scams spike in January and February and intensify through April. Last year, scammers targeted numerous business owners by misrepresenting the Employee Retention Credit (ERC), charging hefty fees for assistance with applications – even for a credit many victims didn't qualify for. So many business owners were attacked that the IRS set up an ERC withdrawal program to help those who realized they had unknowingly submitted fraudulent claims.

Popular Tax-Time Scams

Tax scams are particularly tricky because no well-meaning taxpayer wants to make a mistake and get in trouble with the government. Scammers and cybercriminals prey on our fear of compliance issues by posing as IRS agents, tax software providers or even colleagues in financial departments, with urgent messages demanding payment or Social Security numbers.

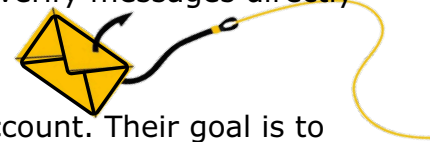
It may be only February, but these scammers are likely already in your inbox. Take a few minutes to read about these common tax-time scams and what you can do to prevent them.



1. Phishing And Smishing Scams

Scammers love pretending to be the IRS to get your personal information. They'll send fake e-mails or texts promising refunds or threatening legal action, hoping you'll click on their links or share sensitive details. These scams don't just target individuals – they often go after tax pros and businesses because those can give access to loads of valuable data.

How to prevent it: Never click on links or reply to unexpected messages claiming to be from the IRS. If something feels off, report suspicious e-mails to phishing@irs.gov, and always verify messages directly with the IRS through official channels.



2. Online Account "Help"

Scammers are targeting taxpayers by offering help setting up an IRS online account. Their goal is to steal your personal tax and financial information, which they can then use for identity theft. These criminals may pretend to be "helpful" third parties, tricking you into handing over sensitive details like Social Security numbers or IDs, which they can use to file fake tax returns and steal refunds.

How to prevent it: Only create your online account directly through [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) and avoid any unsolicited offers for third-party help. If someone reaches out offering to assist, it's probably a scam.

3. Fuel Tax Credit Scams

The IRS is warning taxpayers about popular scams pushing Fuel Tax Credit claims, which are only available for off-highway business or farming use. Scammers will mislead you by fabricating documents or receipts for fuel to make false claims, often charging hefty fees in the process. While these scammers profit, you are left with the risk of facing IRS scrutiny and potential penalties.

How to prevent it: If you're considering claiming a Fuel Tax Credit, make sure you're eligible, as incorrectly claiming it could lead to serious consequences like fines or criminal charges. Always consult a qualified tax professional to ensure your claims are legitimate.



You Know The Saying: If It Sounds Too Good To Be True, It Probably Is

Many of these scams are plastered all over the Internet, often with promises of tax savings that sound too good to be true. But the old saying still rings true: If something seems too good, it probably is. These schemes might look tempting, but they can land you in hot water with the IRS and lead to serious legal trouble. This year, make tax season a little less miserable by sticking to legitimate, proven methods. If you are interested in knowing more common tax scams and tips on how to stay safe this tax season, please **call RJ2 Technologies at 847-303-1194 or email marketing@rj2t.com**