

Choosing the Right Business Continuity Consulting Firm



When searching for the right Business Continuity Consulting Firm there are several important factors that should be taken into consideration including location, experience, and support structure. It is important to ensure that the expectations of your organization are met, if not exceeded, and that the firm is willing to educate you in their BCP process.



Business Continuity Planning Services includes the holistic management processes that identify potential impacts that threaten an organization. ICS provides a framework for building a resilient capability which includes an effective response to safeguard the interests of key stakeholders and protect your reputation. An effective business continuity program includes developing advance arrangements by establishing policies, plans, and procedures. These enable the organization to continue critical business functions at planned levels of service, despite events or interruptions.

Please visit ICSInc.com to learn more.



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How should your organization qualify a consulting firm to provide BC/DRP Services?

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery planning consultants include mega-firms that can provide end-to-end services, however many of these companies come with very high price tags. These companies provide software solutions that generally best serve organizations with 50 business units or more that must have a coordinated business continuity plan or large corporations with multiple like business units, geographically separated with repeatable tasks.

For organizations and corporations with fewer than 50 business units, ICS recommends an approach to Business Continuity/ Disaster Recovery Planning using nationally recognized standard templates and standard software (MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Visio). The benefits offered by automated software packages are not realized by these organizations since costs associated with use of automated software solutions, with or without additional contractor support, are not offset by time savings or ease of plan development.

Ensure you evaluate potential consultant firms for the following before making your decision.

Are the consultants certified in business continuity planning?

Not only certified but how and by whom. Do they also have PMP's, ITIL Certifications, other emergency planning certifications, IT knowledge and Business experience? Certification ensures that business continuity consultants are well-versed in all aspects of BC/DR planning. Specialized certifications are available for emergency management, risk management, audit, security and technology. DRI International offers certification specifically for business continuity consultants and vendors to ensure that practitioners understand professional practices. Ask if the consultants you'll be working with are certified in business continuity planning.

ICS consultants possess the following certifications: CBCP, PMP, ITIL, CHS-III, CISSP and CISA.

Will the firm take time to document your needs?

Good BC/DR planning starts with understanding what your exposures are and making a good decision on recovery strategy. The most critical part of the whole process is your business impact analysis, including the risk assessment. That's where



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you need to spend most of your time. Business impact analysis is the key to your entire plan. Consultants should also perform a recovery option study to determine these priorities. Some consultants will perform a business impact analysis and identify the exposures and impacts to expect in a disaster. But they won't describe how to solve those problems.

ICS will work with your staff to outline your recovery options and define timeframes and costs for each option.

Ask yourself if the consulting firm will push you towards their supported solution.

Many consulting firms that provide big-name technology solutions and consulting services will try to tie you into their offerings as your best or only solution. Business continuity is about planning and services and it should be less about technologies. Many consulting firms are fixated on upselling. Firms that offer BC/DR planning and consulting services should be able to help you perform a business impact analysis, identify critical business processes, map all the dependencies and define how critically you need them, and what the impact would be on revenue with or without the use of automated software solutions.

ICS does not provide a one shoe fits all feet mentality. We research our clients and recommend solutions best suited to their needs. If that means steering a customer to our competitors, that is what we'll do.

Will the consultant match a solution to your business needs?

Plans must match the overall business plan and objectives of the organization. Consultants should be asking your business units what they need, why they need it and when they need it. Priorities should be based on business needs and not on expectations of needs.

ICS will guide your business unit leaders to identify and document requirements. We will assist your senior management team in validating requirements, prioritizing mission essential functions and verifying resumption guidelines.

Will the consulting firm solution fit your budget?

Most people would like to drive a Bentley but their budgets simply will not support that desire. Likewise, the best technical solution isn't always the best solution for all customers.

Did you know?

ICS Consultants are trained in the ten essential knowledge areas defined by the Disaster Recovery Institute:

- Project initiation & management
- Risk evaluation & control
- Business impact analysis
- Developing business continuity strategies
- Emergency response & operations
- Developing & implementing business continuity plans
- Awareness programs & training
- Maintaining & exercising BC plans
- Crisis communications
- Coordination with external agencies



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Consulting firms need to outline multiple solutions to provide managers a range of options based on budget, time to implement and a mix of common sense. Implementing a top of the line solution that cannot be supported through testing and training due to budget constraints negates any advantage the solution offers. Recommending a full hot site for IT support, with full duplication and failover does not make sense if your business case does not support that level of recovery capability.

ICS makes it a point to understand your business objectives, budgetary constraints, and planning needs, and will develop a plan that is scalable to meet expected business growth.

Should your Organization Engage ICS?

ICS understands that Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning Services includes the holistic management processes that identify potential impacts that threaten an organization. By conducting a Gap Analysis of existing plans, and providing a mitigation report outlining a process and levels of effort to bring your business continuity program to a defined level of compliance, ICS can provide a framework for your organization to build a resilient capability which includes an effective response to safeguard the interests of key stakeholders and protect your reputation. Ensuring business continuity and disaster recovery plans are developed, in place, tested and advertised as such will provide leverage in selling the benefits and value of the products and services your organization provides.

ICS has the industry experience and knowledge to develop, implement, and validate a BC/DRP program. ICS has a long history of performing BC/DRP and IT security services for clients at the Federal, State and County level, with the Department of Defense and other enterprise organizations and various verticals including public sector, finance, healthcare, Universities and Colleges and others. ICS works with our clients, using the ICS methodology which is based on the standards and best practices from the Disaster Recovery Institute's *Professional Practices for Business Continuity Planners* to develop a comprehensive Business Continuity Planning program. ICS has developed templates that provide a framework for assessing and documenting the business impacts that will enable your organization to respond to an event in such a manner that critical business functions continue with planned levels of service in spite of interruption or essential change.



About ICS, Inc.

Integrated Computer Solutions, Inc. (ICS) is a full-service information technology and IT security consulting and professional services firm headquartered in Montgomery, AL with operating locations throughout the United States.

Established in 1997, ICS provides a robust portfolio of technology and information security services that combine comprehensive strategy with cutting edge security. Our services provide a balance of cost and quality that enables our clients to maximize their return on IT investments.

ICS has an established track record of providing enterprise technology and security services to a wide range of Federal, State, and Fortune 1000 clients.

