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Walking The Talk: Business Resilience Planning at Facility Engineering Associates

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*by Maureen Roskoski, CFM, SFP, LEED AP O+M,
Senior Professional, Corporate Sustainability Officer
Facility Engineering Associates*



Business Resilience is the ability to rapidly adapt and respond to business disruptions while maintaining continuous business operations. Business resilience planning provides guidance for ensuring the ability to respond, resume, and restore to a pre-determined level of operation following a disruption. At FEA, we help our clients strive for resilience through comprehensive planning that takes a holistic and long-term view of the threats and their individual enterprise in order to ensure that the business is prepared to avoid, mitigate, and recover from adverse events. But, what were we doing ourselves? Were we walking the talk?

The mission of FEA is to provide facility managers and owners with progressive and innovative solutions to engineering and facility lifecycle challenges. Thus, it is critical that FEA maintain a robust business resilience program to ensure the stability of operations and services for our partners, our community, and our clients around the world. To make sure that we had an effective program, we decided to pursue certification under the ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management Systems standard. Our journey started in 2015 with a commitment from the FEA Board of Directors to allocate time and resources to our ISO certification. Our certification planning process was comprised of the five steps shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: FEA ISO Certification Steps

Like many organizations, FEA had some documentation related to what to do in the event of an emergency. We had evacuation procedures and were confident we could get everyone out of the building if needed. But what happens as everyone is standing in the parking lot and we are told we can't get back in to the building for a significant period of time? We needed a plan. We used the ISO standard to build it. It provides a good framework for developing not only a business continuity plan, but a full management system, framed around the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (See Figure 2).

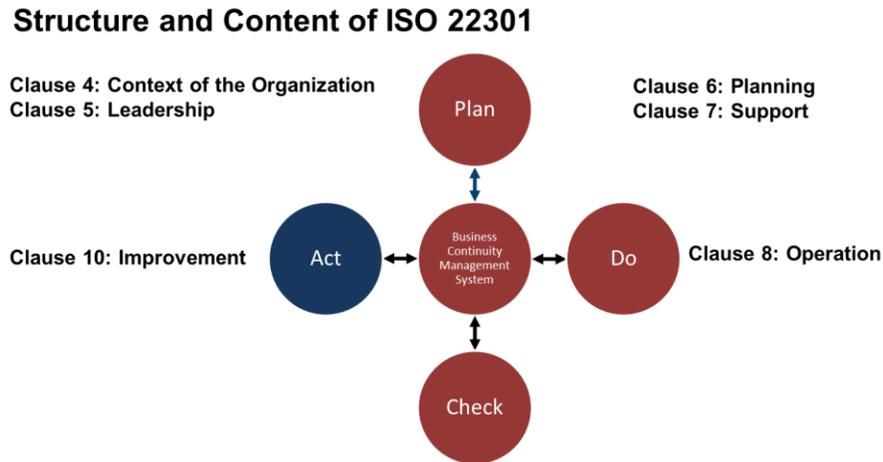


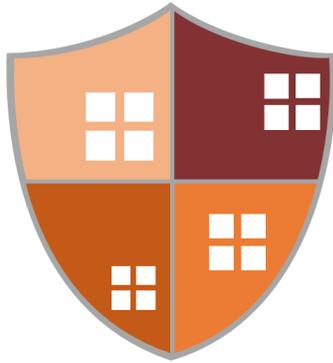
Figure 2: ISO 22301 Business Continuity Management Framework

Through the ISO certification planning process, we expanded our organizational resilience in clear and tangible ways by creating, implementing, and training on business continuity and emergency response procedures. Effective business resilience planning includes critical elements that became evident to us as we went through the ISO certification process including:

1. **Management engagement:** Engagement with leadership is crucial to generate enthusiasm and gain support for allocation of employee time.
2. **Accountability:** Clear roles and responsibilities, reporting requirements, and follow-through allow for decisions to be made and roles of authority to be addressed.
3. **Business Impact Analysis (BIA):** This effort allows you to truly identify the critical processes that are needed to continue to function and how soon you need them up and running.
4. **Balance detail with ease of use:** Plans and procedures need to be detailed but also need to be user-friendly and easy to implement.
5. **Employee engagement:** Everyone plays a role in business resilience so everyone needs to be aware and engaged in the process.

Other tangible outputs of our planning process were the employee handbooks that we created. First, our “Safety 1st” handbook outlined specific procedures to follow in many different emergency situations. Second, our “Readiness Handbook” was a user-friendly short guide that combined the most important points of the emergency preparedness procedures and our business continuity procedures. These handbooks were great engagement tools, provided procedures to exercise, and continually serve as reminders to employees of what their responsibility is during a particular event.

 FEA Business Resilience...



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FEA pursued the certification to strengthen our organizational resilience and to enhance our ability to continue our business during a disruptive event. We achieved ISO certification under the 22301 Business Continuity Management Systems standard for FEA’s Fairfax Office in January of 2016. The certification is a great achievement, but the journey to certification, although challenging, was by far the greatest benefit. We invigorated a core team of business continuity professionals, engaged with our employees companywide, and created a culture of organizational resilience. Everyone at FEA, in all of the offices, is part of Business Resilience. With our ISO 22301 certification, FEA has put into practice the system we advise our clients to implement to help ensure strong operational resilience, corporate governance, and crisis management planning.

To learn more about FEA and Business Resilience, visit <http://www.feapc.com/services/facility-asset-management/business-resilience/>