**Sample business impact analysis questions**

For best results, organize the business impact analysis questionnaire so it fulfills objectives in 20 to 25 questions. If additional data is needed, it might be necessary to prepare a follow-up questionnaire or schedule interviews.

The following questions can serve as a starting point for a questionnaire. Not every question here will apply to your business, so make sure only to include those that are relevant in the final questionnaire.

**Business processes**

* What are the primary business processes/functions for your business unit?
* What is the minimum acceptable recovery time frame for your business unit?
* What is the minimum acceptable recovery time frame for supporting processes and applications?

**Dependencies among business units/processes**

* What business units and/or processes and/or systems does your business unit/process depend on to perform normally?
* Which are internal dependencies?
* Which are external dependencies?

**Criticality of business processes**

* How critical is your business unit and/or processes to the company and its operations?
* What would happen to the company if your business unit and its functions were suddenly unavailable?

**Availability of alternate business processes, staffing and resources**

* What alternate procedures or workarounds are available and documented?
* What access to temporary staffing is available?
* What alternate operating resources, such as branch office space or home working, are available?

**Handling work backlogs**

* If applicable, how long will it take to process daily backlogs for each day of downtime?
* What technique is used? Concurrent or sequential processing?

**Critical records**

* What critical business records are needed?
* Where are those records located?
* What onsite records storage is used, and where is it located?
* What off-site records storage is used?

**Reporting requirements**

* What specific internal/external reporting, such as for regulatory compliance, is needed?
* Specify the report name, author(s), recipient(s), frequency, delivery requirements, variances allowed and penalties (if any)

**Functions that might be difficult to recover**

* What functions and supporting systems might be difficult to recover, owing to their complexity and resources needed?
* For operations that might be difficult to recover in a timely manner, what is the maximum time those functions can be unavailable?

**Situations that might affect the restoration of critical functions**

* What situations can you identify that may negatively affect restoration of your mission-critical functions in a timely fashion?
* What resources will be needed to restore your functions to an as-normal or near-normal state?

**Maximum tolerable business unit downtime from outages**

* Assuming a serious disruption, such as damage to the company’s headquarters, how long could your business unit and/or system/application be unavailable before its loss would impact the organization?
* What interim arrangements, such as remote working, could help minimize the amount of downtime?

**Maximum tolerable technology downtime to the business**

* What is the maximum amount of time that information systems, networks and technologies can be unavailable before the organization loses business, market share, revenue, customers, etc.?
* What interim arrangements, such as cloud-based disaster recovery and business continuity, are available to minimize the downtime?

**Minimum acceptable staffing**

* What is the minimum number of people your business unit needs to operate?
* What alternate staffing resources are available?

**Minimum acceptable configuration of systems**

* What is the minimum configuration of physical office systems, such as servers, routers, switches, workstations, laptops, phones, and copiers to resume limited operations?

**Minimum acceptable configuration of software**

* What is the minimum configuration of operating systems, databases, applications, utilities, etc. needed for your business unit?

**Minimum acceptable infrastructure requirements**

* What is the minimum configuration of power supplies, HVAC systems, voice and data communications needed for the business?
* What water supplies, food supplies, medical supplies and offices supplies are needed?

**Minimum acceptable workspace requirements**

* What is the minimum physical office space required by each employee in your business unit?
* What office resources, such as office supplies, furniture, lighting, phone/data connections, and electrical outlets, are needed?
* What specialized equipment, such as high-speed printers, graphics workstations and secure storage containers, is needed?
* Are alternate arrangements available, such as remote working?

**Accommodations for employees with special needs**

* What arrangements will be needed for employees with special needs?
* Are alternate arrangements available, such as remote working?

**Anticipated changes to the business**

* What potential special situations, such as mergers and acquisitions and planned physical moves, could affect how the organization recovers?

*About this author: Paul Kirvan, CISA, FBCI, has over 30 years of experience in business continuity, disaster recovery and resilience as a consultant and author.*