**PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**

**Episode 028 with Lor Bradley**

**How To Create A Business Continuity Plan**

## Introduction

Welcome to the Scale and Skyrocket your business podcast with me, your host, Lor Bradley. If you're looking for super smart ways to scale your business and build a business that serves you (and not the other way around) then stay with me as every week, I'll be sharing my simple time-smart strategies on how you can scale your business by working smarter and not harder.

So, I hope you're having a great week! I've got a great topic for you this week! We're going to talk about preparedness in your business.

I've been reflecting a lot recently about what seems to be an increasing amount of global platform outages. It's definitely on the increase. If you cast your minds back to 2021; Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google, Twitter all went down globally during that year.

As literally as I'm speaking to you right now, we've just seen the terrifying volcanic eruption in Tonga which has wiped out communications and the internet there. The country has effectively gone dark and that's quite frightening.

And, revisiting 2021, many business owners were stung by the global platform outages that led to some really great conversations around our lack of ownership of our social media audiences, and what we should be doing to protect our relationships with our audiences on socials.

And these happenings have brought the reality closer to our own personal doorsteps that we do need to be prepared and ready in our businesses for when things might go wrong.

So today, I'm going to take *that* conversation one step further from safeguarding your audience on social media, and I'm going to talk about what you should be planning for (and let's hope this never happens to any of us!) IF for any reason you need to step away from your business, or if a disaster strikes or (on a more practical note) if you want to sell or exit your business.

I actually wanted to talk about this before the pandemic hit sometime back in late 2019 but, you know, I hesitated because I didn't want to be seem as a 'glass half empty' kinda person, but I really wish I had done now.

Oh well, better late than never!!

OK.

## What Does A Business Continuity Plan Do?

So, platform outages and disasters can happen at any time and disrupt any business that isn't prepared for it. And I'm not just talking about global outages, volcanoes or pandemics here. It could be an illness that leaves you unable to work, someone hacking your IT systems and takes down your website. Or even loss of key team members for one reason or another that leaves you feeling your way in the dark.

And *this* one is usually the case; you might just actually want to take time out of your business to get involved in other projects and you need your business to run like clockwork whilst you aren't there.

And the whole point of having a continuity plan (and this is how it's different from a business plan or 90-day action plan) is that a continuity plan will make sure your business can continue running and bringing in revenue (with or without you) and safe in whatever scenario you feel most vulnerable from (such as platform outages or team illness).

And I know many of you are wondering already wondering 'how do I protect my clients and my business in a world where there seems to be so much uncertainty?'

We always seem to be coming out of the latest crisis, whether it's falling ill to Coronavirus and keeping your business running, experiencing global outages, or any other kind of emergencies. I know many of you are experiencing these things and wondering where you can plug the gaps so you're not feeling at the mercy of your environment the next time something happens.

And I'll put money on it that there will be another natural disaster, there will be system crash, or an illness... No matter where you are, something will happen – it's just a part of life so let's get ready for it.

I'm going to walk through my tips now on what should go into your continuity plan, and hopefully give you some peace of mind for the future. The great thing about having a

continuity plan in your back pocket is it leaves you free to mentally focus on your clients and growing your business.

You won't have that stress of wondering what's lurking around the corner as you'll already have the most likely scenarios covered in your plan to whip out at a moment's notice.

We always seem to be emerging from some crisis, whether it's a global pandemic, and internet outage, or a family emergency. Many business owners see those events and wonder where they can plug the gaps so they're not helpless the next time something happens. Because there will be another natural disaster, there will be system crash, or a hospital stay... No matter where you are in the world, something will happen.

And if you don't have a business continuity plan right now, then now is a great time to get started and create one.

## What Does A Business Continuity Plan Typically Include?

It doesn't need to be too heavyweight, what's most important is that you:

• Identify what assets and workflows you have in your business.
• What you actually DO in your business day-to-day.
• WHAT needs to be done if disaster strikes, and then,
• WHO should be doing these things and,
• WHEN they should be doing them!

And before we get started, you're probably wondering what software or tools you should use to create your plan. Well, I always say it doesn't really matter as long as you HAVE a plan (cos that's the important bit right) but I would suggest putting your plan into a collaborative platform like Google Drive, Asana or Trello. I currently have mine in Google Drive.

Reason being, your continuity plan is a living and breathing set of documents and you, and your team will need access to these and will need to keep them up to date.

Alright, let's get started. I'm going to talk about

## How To Create A Business Continuity Plan

So, the first step is

## STEP 1: Document Your Business

And what you want to capture here is identify and write down all the core functions and assets within your business, so you know where to focus your planning efforts.

So, create an inventory and write down each of your:

• Systems, including usernames and passwords
• The software and apps you use
• If you have software that you own, where that is stored.
• Any Physical assets such as laptops, servers, phones (and this is going to be essential if you have a team)
• And then any other user accounts and passwords that don't fall into the above categories.
• If you have teams and different functional areas in your business, then make sure you categorise your inventory into those functional areas. You can also delegate this task out to your teams and get this task completed much faster.

And then the next step is

## STEP 2: Map Your Process and Procedures

Now is the time to look your existing workflows and procedures to see what's in place and what needs to be created. Now whenever I do this exercise with my clients, we always start with their own end clients. And we map out the workflows around their end-to-end client journey; so that's from:

• How you attract your clients,
• How you nurture and engage with your clients and
• How you turn your clients into your brand cheerleaders.
• And then next, we focus on other operational processes that are internal to your business that are essential for keeping it running.
• And then lastly, other adhoc workflows that are not so essential.

And what you're building here is a map of all your critical functions, just at a high level, so that you're clear on what's needed for your business to operate smoothly. And basically, you need to know how your business functions so you can begin to plan alternatives should a situation happen.

And when you capture this information, you'll also want to demarcate between the things that are:

- Repeating tasks,
- Adhoc tasks,
- Internally focused tasks,
- Client, or other externally focused tasks,
- And then identify if it's a critical process core to the functioning of your business.

So, for example and easy way of identifying this is a critical process ask yourself these two simple questions:

1. Does this process help keep the lights on in my business and,
2. Does it impact my clients directly if I fail to do it?

And then the next step is a bit chunkier and it's going to take you more time and that's to consider the most likely scenarios of what's most likely to affect your business. And that's

### STEP 3: Future Proofing Your Critical Business Functions

So, if you are scaling a business to sell eventually then you would also consider that scenario in this part of your business continuity plan. And the scenarios you'd want to consider are things like a global pandemic, a recession or global economic changes, changes to your marketplace, changes to your supply chains, internet outages, security breaches, you're taking a sabbatical, and so on.

So, you'll need to identify exactly what you need to put in place so you can keep the core parts business operating until things go back to normal.

If you're wondering what's happening in the world which might impact your business then there's plenty of think tanks online which provide annual reports on the top scenarios impacting businesses today, so I'll provide a link to the one I use, that's the Emerging Risk Radar, down in the show notes.

So, the 2021 risk radar shows that Pandemics, Political Instability, Extreme Weather, Infrastructure Blackouts, Cyber Security, Supply Chain, Terrorism and Regulatory Uncertainty are all happening right now.

And what you need to do is work out which risks could present the greatest impact to your own business, and then decide what you need to DO to cover your bases should those things happen.

So, let's go back to your business continuity plan and keep in mind those risks when you are future proofing.

You'll need to draft your continuity plan to demonstrate how you'll **continue to make sales** should that risk happen – so if you're most like to be affected by an internet outage, how will you continue to make sales during that outage?

So, create an action plan for making sales so that you'll continue to generate revenue if you're forced to adapt and respond to a challenging situation.

You'll also need to draft your plan for **continuing to support your clients** should for example, that internet outage happen. The benefit of having this one in place is it's a huge trust and relationship builder with your clients because they can still access you during an outage, or any other type of emergency.

Next, draft your plan for **continuing to procure your supplies** so that you can continue providing your products or services even if your supply lines are broken in for example, an internet outage. And something to also consider here is making a list of alternative suppliers to have in your back pocket, or alternative methods of communication should, for example, an outage happen.

Then draft your plan of **how you will manage your team(s)** so that they can continue to perform effectively during a crisis. I always advise my 121 clients to multi-skill their teams so that should you ever need to execute your continuity plan, that you will be sufficiently covered should some of your team not be able to work for any reason.

Again, during internet outages, how should your team communicate with one another?

So, think of your team as a swiss army knife! They'll need to be multi skilled and ready to operate in tough environments!

And lastly, draft your plan for how you will **maintain your systems and equipment**. So that's all the systems necessary to keep your business running during a disaster scenario. So, for example, should you have an outage or a weather event which damages your host server, do you have redundancy in place to switch over to an operational back up?

And this is something that's really important to ask when you are choosing a service provider. I'm thinking in particular course provider platforms like Kartra, Thinkific and Teachable here. It's always a smart move to ask them what their failover plans are should their primary host server fail for any reason.

You don't want to invest in any platform that has no redundancy plans in place!

OK. Let's talk about how to

## Turn Risks Into Opportunities

Just a final word on risks before we move on to the next stage of your continuity plan is think about how you turn these risks into opportunities for growth.

Remember in the pandemic, so many businesses failed and then there were those that almost seemed ready to pivot and adapt at a moment's notice?
Well, having a continuity plan will help you to innovate and stay ahead of everyone else.

So, those are the main components of a business continuity plan. You're probably thinking shit, that's going to take me forever to put a plan together and yes, it can be time consuming but my tips for completing your plan are to:

• Focus on your biggest risks first
• Create an outline of what needs to be focused on
• Prioritise the work that needs to be done
• Delegate the work out to your teams
• If you have a large sized business, then turn this exercise into a project with a project lead and chunk it out over 2 to 3 months.

Alright, so let's move on and talk about what happens after you've created your continuity plan in…

## How To Use A Business Continuity Plan

And when you reach this stage, you'll have finished and reviewed your plan and now is the time to look at how you will use it effectively in times of crisis.

Make sure you have nominated a person, or people across your business who will be responsible for executing your plan and decide what circumstances will trigger the need to put the plan into action.

If you have a team, then choose a team leader responsible for project managing and executing your plan, this might be your most senior virtual assistant, your Online business manager (if you have one) or one of the most senior or most trusted members of your team.

You ideally want this person to be cool in a crisis and someone who can competently communicate execute the ready-made plan and get your people united around it.

Now the reason I suggest nominating someone else to run with your continuity plan instead of you is because of this, you will need a clear head and time available to focus on your

business in an emergency. Your time is going to be spent connecting with key clients, partners and suppliers. You don't want to be down in the operational weeds when all chaos is breaking loose!

Having a strong leader executing your plan, and having your team involved and communicating in the process is going to give your business the best possible chance of recovering after an emergency.

So, just a few things to remember, and these are key for maintaining a business continuity plan, and that's to make sure you

- Keep your plan up to date (so treat it as a living document)
- Test it works with various emergency scenarios (and this is a great way to test your teams' responses and look for gaps in your plan)
- Stay on top of global trends and risk factors and what could impact your business.
- And lastly, be clear on what your role is during an emergency and how involved and contactable you're going to be in the process.

So, that's how to create a business continuity plan in under 30 minutes. I hope that's been useful. If you don't have a plan in place in your business and you'd like to work with me to better understand the risks which could trip you up, and create a continuity plan to set your business up for success then do drop me a DM. I'd love to hear from you.

So, thanks for listening. And if you've found this episode useful then please leave me a review and don't forget to subscribe for a new episode every Wednesday.

So that's it for this week. Have a great day!

Until next time
Lor Bradley.