

## Lessons To Remember

By Skip Williams  
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You've done everything right:

- You have a plan
- You have tested and verified your plan
- You've trained your team members
- You have maintained your plan

Disaster strikes! Now what? You know you're prepared, but still there is some nervousness and uncertainty. You can relax knowing that your disaster recovery plan is working for you, but it is still essential to keep in mind the following life lessons:

### **Do Not Panic**

Panic is the one thing that can cause your well-prepared plan to fail. The difference between a disaster that results in failure and one that results in continuity success is often how well teams control panic. Well-trained teams can recover from even the most serious incidents provided they remain calm and in control.

There is no one cause of panic. It usually comes from small problems that grow. So long as everything rolls along smoothly, people are pretty good at adjusting. But as soon as things begin to unravel, there is a strong likelihood that it will only take a small change to cause chaos and panic. With this comes the abandonment of rational thought, and this is when we see companies forgetting about their disaster recovery plans and operating in a completely reactive situation.

This will not work. Remember the number one rule: do not panic. Trust in your disaster recovery plan and the preparations you did to ensure it would work in such a situation.

### **Watch Out For Murphy**

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Murphy's Law states that anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Poor planning, inadequate training, and poorly maintained safety and response gear are invitations for Murphy to appear.

What can you do to prevent Murphy's Law from ringing true? Ensure your team is up-to-date with the latest disaster recovery plan, remember to maintain this plan, and be sure to have your necessary hardware working and fully operational.

By doing these little things, you can keep Murphy away, and breathe easy. Remember a successful disaster recovery plan only works if you do your part in the maintenance of the plan, your team, and your essential equipment.

### Practice Makes Perfect

We've all heard the mantra that practice makes perfect. Well it couldn't be more true than in a disaster scenario. The more you practice your plan, making sure team members know how to respond, the more likely things will operate smoothly.

Think about the things that could happen and practice ways to counteract or to respond to them. What would you do if you get separated from others in your unit during an evacuation? What would you do if the building were completely dark during the exit? What would you do if the emergency responders are delayed in arriving and you are informed that there are still people unaccounted for and maybe still in the building? (Remember to build these scenarios into your disaster recovery plan....)

Practicing these will quickly turn the situation from disaster to recovery.

### Fix the Little Things

Pay attention to detail. Even the smallest mistake or misstep can quickly add up to bigger problems. All of a sudden your carefully thought out disaster recovery plan is not working

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because you let some small mistakes slip in.

If this does happen, act quickly, identify the problem, respond to the problem, and get back on track with your disaster recovery plan.

### **Pay Attention**

Remember the safety briefings we receive before each airplane flight? Yes, they seem kind of boring and repetitive, but these seemingly tedious briefings can be the difference between successfully surviving an accident or not.

Same goes for the training and briefings you provide to your team. It is critical that team members are listening and paying attention to the disaster recovery training. We know this is easier said than done, but if done in a cohesive team environment where you can get everyone involved, you might find that your team recognizes why it is so important to be prepared for any disaster or threat – no matter how big or small it seems.

### **Be Equipped**

As part of your plan development, get the safety and emergency gear needed for your response teams. This includes items such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, AED defibrillators, protective clothing, gloves, fluorescent bibs, flashlights, water, whistles, stretchers, stair chairs, communication devices (two-way radios, cell phones, etc.), bull horns, etc.

### **Be Responsible For Your Safety**

Remember, that ultimately we are all responsible for own safety. Train your staff to recognize this. Teach them that no one else can think for them or plan for them and nobody else can save them when they fail to be prepared. Show them to take responsibility for their own actions and be prepared to deal with problems that may occur.

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### Remember the Lessons

So there you have it, some basic life lessons that really do apply to disaster recovery and business continuity planning. Only make sense – doesn't it. The lessons that apply to our day-to-day life are the ones that ensure a successful response to a disaster.

Remember these lessons and smoothly and effortlessly turn disaster into recovery.

#### *About KingsBridge*

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