

About the Establishment and Activities of the Business Continuity Advancement Organization (BCAO, A Specified Non-Profit Japanese Corporation)

Incorporated under the NPO Law and with the approval of the Cabinet Office, the Business Continuity Advancement Organization (BCAO) officially commenced activities in June 2006 as a Specified Non-profit Japanese Corporation. At the certification commemorative seminar on July 10, the text of fundamental standards for business continuity was unveiled, and a business continuity specialist certification system to be implemented within this fiscal year was announced. Currently a subcommittee meets on a monthly basis, and various seminars and meetings to exchange views are planned. Together with all concerned with Business Continuity (BC), we hope to conduct activities to further the facilitation of the mission of this organization.

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Business Continuity Advancement Organization
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1 Introduction

In January 2006, experts and scholars who are committed to the advancement of business continuity planning to cope with the occurrence of disasters and accidents established Business Continuity Advancement Organization (BCAO). At the end of May, the organization received certification as a Specified Non-profit Organization from the Cabinet Office, and commenced operations as an NPO with the completion of registration in June. In this article, the road to the establishment of this organization and the scope of its activities will be introduced.

2 Road to Establishment of BCAO

Business Continuity (BC) is essentially a management strategy for corporations and organization to facilitate the rapid recovery and restoration of services and operations with minimum interruption in the aftermath of an accident or disaster. This is achieved through Business Continuity Management (BCM) for the development, execution, drilling and review of Business Continuity Plans (BCP). In the wake of the computer millennium bug problem and the terrorist attack on September 11 in New York, the importance of BCM and BCP has been the focus

of increasing attention, and the USA and UK have taken the lead in widespread adoption of BC. For this reason, cases of Japanese companies that are requested by overseas trading partners to furnish their BCP are on the rise. In addition, because it is necessary to tackle the issue of BC throughout the supply chain, major domestic companies are beginning to demand BC response from their suppliers.

Since 2004, Japan has experienced a string of large-scale disasters, and companies have a renewed recognition of the importance of corporate disaster and crisis management measures. Also from the standpoint of information security governance, the continuity of information system operations is vital. With this in mind, the government has been announcing BC-themed guidelines and policies one after another since 2005. While stressing the importance for all companies including small- and medium-scale businesses to come to grips with BC, the government positions BCP as a key pillar of corporate disaster management in their policy for national countermeasures in the event of a large-scale earthquake.

With these circumstances as background, BCAO was established based on the proposal of the experts and scholars associated with the formulation of the above mentioned governmental guidelines and with the cooperation of many others with a high degree of interest in the field of Business Continuity.

3 Activities of BCAO

The envisaged role and activities of BCAO are broad. They include: activities to educate companies and promote widespread adoption of BC; fostering BC specialists; establishment of standards; awards/certification; research; information dissemination; publishing, lectures; and support for companies and organizations that are embarking on BC planning. As of the end of August, 2006, the organization has the participation of over 200 individual members and about 40 corporate members (corporate membership enables active participation of up to 5 or 10 registered individuals.)

On July 10, 2006, the NPO certification commemorative seminar (participation: free) was held at the Yoyogi National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo, and was attended by approximately 500 people including those directly concerned with BCAO. BCAO has planned following activities for the future:

- NPO certification commemorative ceremony will be held on October 20 in Osaka to kickoff the launch of the Kansai Regional Branch.
- Meetings of persons in charge of BC to launch an exchange of views were held in Tokyo and Osaka in August and September, respectively; they continue to be held.
- Following up the completed production and release of a text of fundamentals that serves as BC teaching material (explained in more detail below), BCAO will further expand publishing activities with the production and release of texts to support practical application of BC in the future.
- BCAO has already announced a framework of qualifications for licensed BC specialists (explained in more detail below), and is in the process of preparing a curriculum for the training of BC specialists with courses to be announced within this fiscal year. In addition, current committees and subcommittees are as follows:

- 1) Committee on Standards & Education - Standards Subcommittee, Curriculum Subcommittee, Seminar Subcommittee
- 2) Committee on Promotion of BC Understanding & Adoption - Newsletter Subcommittee, Regional BC Promotion Subcommittee,
- 3) Committee on International Affairs - International Affairs Subcommittee
- 4) Committee on the Study of BC Fundamentals & Related Issues - Business Impact Subcommittee, Information System Subcommittee, Backup Office Subcommittee, Finance Subcommittee, Natural Disaster Research Subcommittee, Natural Disaster Information Subcommittee, Natural Disaster Regional Cooperation Subcommittee, Terrorism & Accidents Subcommittee
- 5) Committee on Research & Analysis Issues - BC Case

Study Research & Analysis Subcommittee, Documents & Statistics Subcommittee

Also for members who wish to acquire fundamental knowledge about BC, a fundamentals study group has been established. This group and the various committees and subcommittees generally will meet on a monthly basis.

4 About the BCAO Standards Text

As the first step achieved by the Organization, a text of BC fundamental standards has been produced. Based on the belief that inconsistent BC content expounded by various concerned companies and organizations will be a barrier to future promotion of understanding and adoption of BC, BCAO members set out to establish uniform BC standards and language as much as possible. The Standards Subcommittee mentioned in the previous section formed a team for this task, and work proceeded with all board members taking an active part.

The completed fundamental text took the form of a 50-slide Powerpoint document, and covered the BC concept, reasons explaining the necessity of BC, elements needed to realize BC, case studies, and the assertions of BCAO. In addition to serving as presentation material for lectures and basic courses organized by BCAO, the material can be downloaded by members for use within their respective organizations.

(Commercial usage of the material, i.e., for sale or profit, is strictly prohibited.)

The contents of the text are outlined below:

0. Preface: About the objectives of this text
1. Thoughts on BC
- 1-1 What is BC (Business Continuity)?
- 1-2 BC Concept
- 1-3 BC and BCM/BCP
- 1-4 Conventional vs. BC Approach to Disaster Response
2. BC Needs and Trends
- 2-1 Reasons & Background of the Heightened Need for BC in Japan
- 2-2 BC Trends in Japan
- 2-3 Guidelines Announced in Japan
- 2-4 Overseas Standardization Trends
- 2-5 Items Deemed Essential for BC in Japan
3. BC Elements and Points
- 3-1 BC Elements Viewed from a PDCA Cycle Perspective
- 3-2 BC Merits
- 3-3 For the Advancement of BC
- 3-4 For Continuity of Improvement and Growth
4. Case Studies
5. Plans for the Future
6. BCAO Assertions

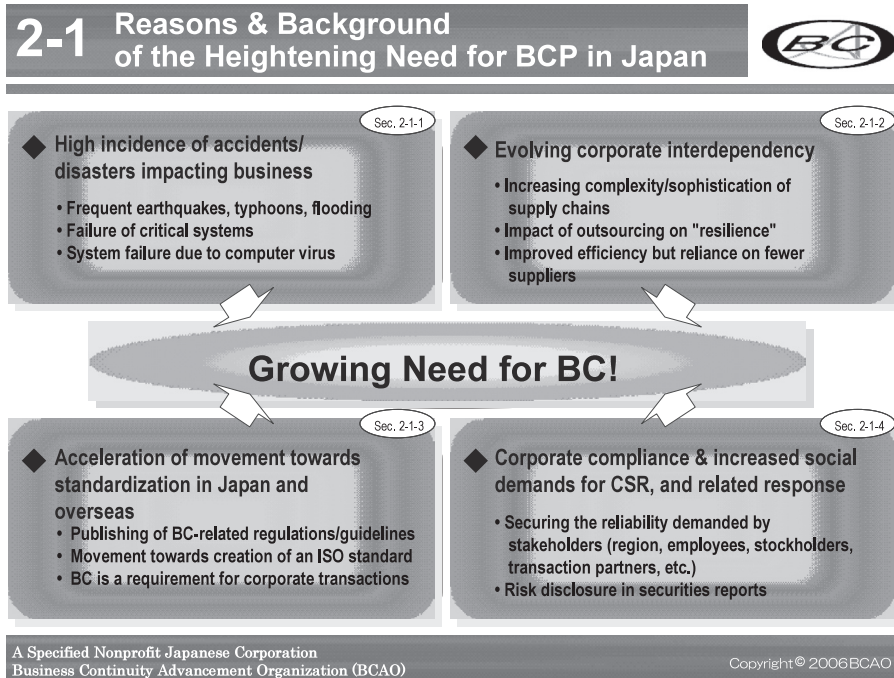


Fig. 1 Text example 1.

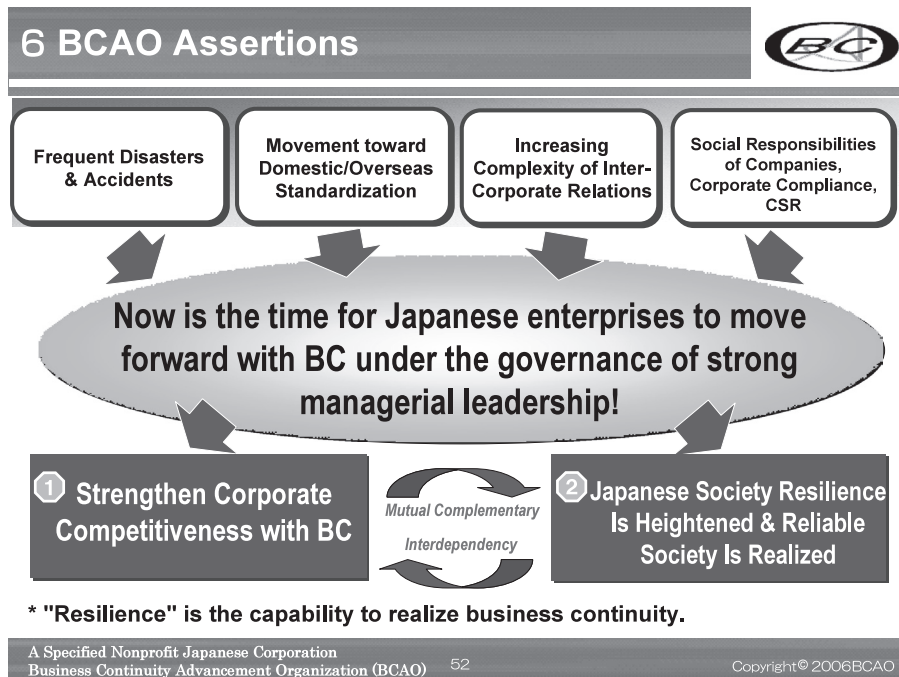


Fig. 2 Text example 2.

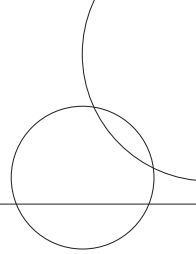


Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show examples of slides from the text. Content of each has been originally produced by BCAO.

5 About the System for Certification of BC Specialists

With the aims of facilitating the acquisition of basic know-how by those charged with the management and supervision of BC in companies and organization and providing those with practical BC experience with a way to enhance their specialty knowledge and skills, BCAO has structured a system of certification for BC specialists.

The basic configuration for the BC specialist certification consists of the following two types:

- Business Continuity Specialist: This certification which has 3 grades is for those who are charged with the routine BC plan development and constant refinement of plans through PDCA.
- Business Continuity Response Director: As described in the profile in the table, this type of specialist has the knowl-

edge and skills necessary to implement the devised BCP in the event of an actual emergency.

The outline is as shown in the Table.

Other certification-related points that should be noted are as follows:

- Validity of certification will be 3~5 years, at the end of which, applications for renewal of certification may be accepted (length of the renewal period is currently under discussion.) In order to qualify for renewal, the applicant must have completed a specified number of hours of education in the required courses.
- Regardless of whether the subject has engaged in business continuity work in the central corporate organization such as the management planning department, general affairs, etc., or even in IT, procurement or branch general administration, the number of years of experience shall be applicable. When considering small- and medium-scale businesses, the holding of concurrent posts within the company shall be a premise for evaluation.
- A separate system for certification of instructors who will

Table Outline of the certification system for BC specialists/response directors.

LEVEL		EXAMINATION QUALIFICATIONS	COURSE/ EXAMINATION	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
1. Business Continuity Specialist Certification				
Certified Business Continuity Specialist Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possesses fundamental BC knowledge and can understand what business continuity entails. 	Any person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle, 1-day course (5 hours) and an examination (1 hour) • Mainly lecture-style courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCAO membership (Applicants qualify for membership after passing the examination. This applies to all certification)
Certified Business Continuity Specialist Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of bearing responsibility for actual structuring of BC in his/her company • Capable of BC maintenance management • Capable of understanding of unified/mutual concept of inter-corporate (inter-departmental) BC 	Holder of BC Specialist Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 5-day course and examination • Details are under discussion <Proposal: workshop-type class with a small number of students per class> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Years of experience and hours of course instruction received are taken into consideration • Other details are under discussion and TBD.
Certified Business Continuity Specialist Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable of bearing responsibility for actual structuring of BC in his/her company as a manager/leader. • Capable of BC maintenance management" 	Holder of BC Specialist Grade 2 and have fulfilled certification requirements	Under discussion and TBD	
2. Business Continuity Response Director Certification				
Certified Business Continuity Response Director	Capable of implementing devised BCP in the event of the actual occurrence of an emergency that demands such action.	Holder of a BC Specialist Grade of 1 or higher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under discussion and TBD • <Proposal: In addition to basic knowledge, it will be necessary to conduct "desktop simulations" (exercise actual skills) that drill response to emergency situations based on scenarios.> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under discussion and TBD • <Proposal: Holds a managerial position or plays a leadership role in his/her company/organization. Years of experience and BC education will be taken into consideration."

bear responsibility for the training courses will be created.

- The official for the certification test will “Jigyō Keizoku Kanrisha Kentei Shiken” (Business Continuity Manager Licensing Examination) with the abbreviated name of “BC Kentei” (BC Licensing Exam).

During the first calendar quarter of 2007 (January~March), the first certification training course and examination for Business Continuity Specialists will be conducted, and plans call for the execution of a “demonstration” curriculum for Business Continuity Response Directors.

6 Conclusion

The planned BCAO activities introduced here will be subject to constant review and refinement as the organization moves forward; therefore, please visit the website (<http://www.bcao.org/>) or the newsletter for the most up-to-date information.

With the aim of ensuring that companies, organizations, and indeed Japanese society at large will be able to overcome disasters and accidents with minimum interruption, it is the sincere hope of the BCAO that all readers with a high degree of interest in BCP and BCM will join us in realizing this mission.