Resiliency scoring for business continuity plans

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ABSTRACT

Through this paper readers will learn of a scoring methodology, referred to as resiliency scoring, which enables the evaluation of business continuity plans based upon analysis of their alignment with a predefined set of criteria that can be customised and are adaptable to the needs of any organisation. This patent pending tool has been successful in driving engagement and is a powerful resource to improve reporting capabilities, identify risks and gauge organisational resilience.

The role of business continuity professionals is to aid their organisations in planning and preparedness activities aimed at mitigating the

impacts of potential disruptions and ensuring critical business functions can continue in the event of unforeseen circumstances. This may seem like a daunting task for what can typically be a small team of individuals. For this reason, it is important to be able to leverage industry standards, documented best practices and effective tools to streamline and support your continuity programme. The resiliency scoring method-ology developed and implemented at Target has proven to be a valuable tool in taking the organisation's continuity programme to the next level. This paper will detail how the tool was developed and provide guidance on how it can be customised to fit your organisation's unique needs.

Keywords: resiliency, metrics, risk, business continuity, engagement, maturity, scoring

ABOUT TARGET

Target was formed more than 50 years ago when five brothers from the Dayton family, and owners of the Dayton's depart-ment stores, had an idea to create a better discount retail experience. In 1962, these five brothers turned their idea into a reality by opening the first Target store in Roseville, Minnesota to establish discount retailing as it is known today.

Target has come a long way since 1962; today the company employs team members in over 20 countries, which includes sourcing offices around the world and headquarters offices in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Bangalore, India. The Target team is comprised of approxi-mately 350,000 team members, who are responsible for operating more than 1,800 stores, serving over 180 million guests and running nearly 40 distribution centres.

From its department store roots to its growing online presence, Target maintains a passion for innovation and creating great shopping experiences for its guests. Target

is currently the second largest general merchandise retailer in America, with Target.com consistently being ranked as one of the most visited retail websites. Like all organisations, Target is susceptible to the risk of business and technology disruptions. The focus of the continuity programme at Target is to partner with teams across the organisation to ensure that actionable plans are in place to enable the company to continue to meet the needs of its guests when faced with a dis-ruption event.

For its size, Target has a relatively small business continuity team. In order to max-imise resources, an all-hazards approach to business continuity planning is uti-lised, with a focus on impact (e.g. team member shortage, facility outage, appli-cation outage and vendor outage). This approach helps to ensure that, regardless of the cause of the disruption, an appropriate response is in place to enable the continu-ation of critical functionality. A business impact analysis is leveraged to identify essential teams and those teams are then required to document business continuity plans for their critical processes. An owner and a backup planner are assigned to each plan and participate in an annual life cycle process that is designed to help them document their plan contents, validate the viability of their plans through exercises and then mature their plans based on gaps that have been identified. It is important to note that the individuals identified as planners are not business continuity pro-fessionals; rather, they are subject matter experts in their areas of business and the business continuity planning activities that they undertake go above and beyond their regular job duties.

DISRUPTION EXAMPLES

Target has had a continuity programme in place for over 25 years. During that time,

the company has experienced considerable growth and has seen its share of successes as well as challenges. Included in those challenges have been some unforeseen business interruptions. The purpose of the continuity programme is to respond to these disruptions when they occur and ensure the continued health and survival of the organisation by mitigating their impact. Below are some examples of continuity incidents that have occurred in recent years.

A few years ago, Target faced the potential of a major facility outage at its downtown Minneapolis headquarters buildings when a water main break flooded the nearby streets with 14 million gallons of water. The incident rendered the nearby buildings unusable by impacting the availability of water and the use of plumbing. The event had the potential to displace 15,000 Target team members. Thankfully the situation was addressed quickly by the city and the buildings were only forced to close a few hours early on the day of the break. The business continuity team was engaged throughout the course of the incident and quickly communicated with planners. Team members were encouraged to take their laptops home with them that night as a precautionary measure in the event that the buildings would need to remain closed. Although this ultimately ended up being a small event, it helped to highlight the potential implications a large-scale facility outage could have on the company.

Later that same year, Target did experience the displacement of 800 of its team members due to a flood at its City Center campus in Minneapolis. The incident, caused by a leaking ice machine, occurred during non-business hours and went unnoticed for a period of time, resulting in severe damage to several floors within the building. The flooding led to the complete loss of workspace for hundreds of team members and many others encountered technology disruptions as well due to damaged equipment. The business continuity team was activated for a total of 65 days in response to the event until all of the impacted workspaces were restored and normal business operations resumed. This event remains the only official full-scale activation of the business continuity team at Target headquarters.

Recently, yet another water event impacted Target when a pipe burst overnight at its North Metro headquarters facility in Minnesota. The event resulted in damage to the main floor of the building and required reconstruction of several meeting spaces as well as the temporary relocation of a critical team while their office space was restored. Team member impact during this event was minimal due to the quick efforts of the response team and the location of the incident.

These events serve to highlight how susceptible organisations like Target are to business and technology interruptions, while also demonstrating the importance of being able to continue critical business functions during such events. A growing dependence on technology innovations and an increasing global presence further establish the need for a strong continuity programme that is supported by engaged planners and leaders as well as robust continuity plans.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

To ensure Target remains resilient, the business continuity team relies heavily on planners embedded across the organisation to develop actionable plans for their areas and on leadership to provide the support necessary to prioritise continuity efforts. In recent years, Target's continuity programme had made tremendous strides and innovations to better support planners and partners through improved product and service offerings, but the programme still

faced challenges and experienced some common industry hurdles.

Engaging planners and leaders was a challenge. Continuity planning often goes above and beyond standard job requirements. Both planners and leaders struggled to prioritise preparing for a potential disruption that might occur in the future over focusing on current work priorities.

In addition, producing meaningful and actionable metrics was difficult. The team relied solely on compliance metrics (e.g. was training completed? had the plan been updated? were exercises performed?). These metrics did not tell an effective story or provide leaders with the data they needed to make informed decisions. Fundamentally, the programme lacked the ability to provide measurable insight into how resilient the organisation would be if faced with a disruption event.

The programme also lacked the means to assess the quality of the business continuity plans that had been documented. Even though the plans might have contained all of the required fields, there often remained great disparity among the actual content of the plans being submitted for review. Some plans contained very basic, rudimentary information while others were much more mature and detailed.

The opportunity the programme faced was being able to improve upon each of the challenges, highlighted above, to enhance business continuity planning as a whole at Target. It was important to be able to answer the following questions: 'How can the best information possible be captured within the business continuity plans?' and 'How can a meaningful story about that information be shared with the organisation?'

In order to help answer these questions, a scoring methodology was created by the business continuity team to assess the company's business continuity plans. The methodology included documented guidelines that were designed to be utilised by the planners to provide them with tips on how to develop effective workarounds and complete activities aimed at improving resilience. In order to create the guidelines, the programme leveraged the years of expertise of its members along with existing industry standards and contents from some of company's most comprehensive plans. Each section of the plan template was analysed to identify the criteria that the team felt would make that particular section of the plan strong. These guidelines were then documented, ranked in order of increasing resiliency and assigned a value. It was important to organise the information in a way that would make it easily accessible for all of the planners to adopt. It was also critical to develop the scoring in a way that would effectively summarise the wealth of data that was being collected within the plans and translate it back into a powerful message for consumption by the organisation.

RESILIENCY SCORING

The resiliency scoring methodology began with the creation of guidelines for planners and the development of a scoring guide. The scoring guide outlined the scoring criteria, including details on how plan contents and exercises would be scored, as well as opportunities available to complete additional resiliency score activities to obtain an even higher plan score. The scoring guide was used by the business continuity team in order to review business continuity plans and assess their current resiliency and it was also provided to planners as a roadmap by which to develop and mature their plans' contents.

Resiliency scoring quickly added value at Target; it enabled the business continuity team to evaluate and score the company's business continuity plans based

upon analysis of their alignment with the predefined standards as well as highlighting areas of opportunity and risk that existed within the plans.

What is a resiliency score?

A resiliency score is an assessment of how resilient a team would be in executing their critical functionality if faced with a disruption event that necessitated the implementation of their business continuity plan. The score is based upon analysis of the documented plan contents and the exercises that have been performed to prove whether or not the plan will yield the desired result when put into effect.

How is the score assessed?

The score is assessed by reviewing the business continuity plan against the predefined set of guidelines outlined in the scoring guide and then assigning an appropriate score based upon its alignment with those standards.

What factors impact the score?

The score can be impacted by several different factors, including:
- Plan completeness and compliance — Have all of the annual requirements been met and were they met on time?
- Recovery procedures — Are they detailed, actionable and easy to follow?
- Risk acceptance — Has risk been accepted within the plan due to there not being a viable workaround available?
- Exercise participation — Has the plan been thoroughly exercised? Have findings from the exercises been documented and remediated within the plan?
  - Notification exercise — Verify accuracy of plan contact data and ability to reach team members in the event of an activation.
  - Tabletop exercise — Verify plan completeness through scenario based discussions.
  - Simulation exercise — Verify plan viability through execution of workarounds.
- Completion of additional resiliency score activities, including:
  - Awareness training — Review of plan contents with team members and leaders to discuss how the plan would be leveraged to respond to a disruption event.
  - Self-led exercises — Performing in-depth exercises that go beyond the scope of the standard exercises facilitated by the business continuity programme. These could include notification, simulation, or tabletop exercises and could be conducted with internal or external partners.
  - Business continuity plan reviews — Meeting with interdependent teams to review their plan contents and ensure that gaps in planning do not exist between teams.

It is important to note that the resiliency scoring guidelines were designed to be stretch assignments for planners, meaning the guidelines are rigorous, detailed, and provide incentive for planners to strive for continual improvement. The continuity team realised that it would not be possible for planners to obtain a high score in every category, especially in the first few years. The goal of scoring is not for planners to get all of the points possible, it is instead intended to help them look for meaningful ways to strengthen their plans' contents and better prepare them to enact their plans if necessary.

Another important factor to mention is that the score was not designed as a reward system to highlight good plans or penalise mediocre ones. Rather, it was intended to provide a realistic gauge of the current resiliency of a plan, indicating how actionable it would be if enacted in response to a disruption event. It also makes sense that

for some aspects of the business there is more inherent risk than there is in other parts of the business. The score captures this fact and demonstrates where increased risk exists. The scores are tracked and reported to planners and leaders, including the Executive Steering Committee. This reporting has improved transparency into the viability of the organisation's plans.

SCORING METHODOLOGY

On a practical level, resiliency scoring makes it simple for the business continuity team to assess plans, as the scoring criteria are clearly defined and documented and planners are trained on the guidelines that will lead to higher plan resiliency and therefore a higher score. When evaluating a plan, the assessor has a copy of the documented scoring guide at hand to assist in assigning scores. Each section of the plan is assessed individually and then a total score is assigned based on the combined sum of the scores of the individual sections.

To demonstrate how the scoring is put into practice, below are generic example workarounds documented by a planner. The first example workaround has been developed to account for how a critical process would continue if faced with technology disruption involving the loss of a critical application:

'If the critical application were to become unavailable all reporting results would be entered and tracked in an Excel spreadsheet titled "Business Reporting Results" which is currently stored on a restricted drive and is password protected to ensure the security of the data (see critical drive section of the plan). The primary contact to complete this action would be John Smith and the backup contact would be Jane Doe. In the event that both the primary and backup contacts are unavailable the results can be documented by our vendor interdependency Analytics Enterprises (see vendor interdependency section of the plan for contact information) which maintains PCI compliance standards. When the critical application is restored all data that was captured during the outage will need to be manually entered back into the critical application. This workaround would remain viable for two weeks at which point we would reach a threshold where catchup processing would become too time consuming to complete successfully.'

In order to score this section, the Required Applications section of the scoring guide (shown below, Figure 1) would be referenced by the assessor.

The guide outlines the criteria that would merit each level of scoring for the Required Applications section of the plan. According to the resiliency scoring standards, this documented procedure would receive 6 points for having included the following components:
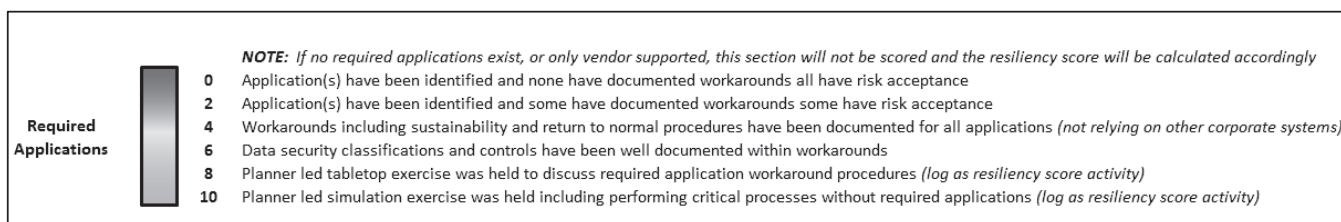

Required Applications		
	NOTE:	*If no required applications exist, or only vendor supported, this section will not be scored and the resiliency score will be calculated accordingly*
	0	Application(s) have been identified and none have documented workarounds all have risk acceptance
	2	Application(s) have been identified and some have documented workarounds some have risk acceptance
	4	Workarounds including sustainability and return to normal procedures have been documented for all applications *(not relying on other corporate systems)*
	6	Data security classifications and controls have been well documented within workarounds
	8	Planner led tabletop exercise was held to discuss required application workaround procedures *(log as resiliency score activity)*
	10	Planner led simulation exercise was held including performing critical processes without required applications *(log as resiliency score activity)*

Figure 1   Required Applications section of Resiliency Scoring Guide

- A documented manual workaround to continue operations without the reliance on other corporate systems.
- Sustainability and return to normal procedures.
- Data security procedures and controls.

For the sake of clarity, high scoring workarounds are presented here. Each workaround displayed will receive 6 points. The scoring guide indicates that documented workarounds can receive a score as high as a 10. In order for a planner to receive either an 8 or a 10 for their workaround they would have to complete the resiliency score activities mentioned earlier. These activities are documented elsewhere in the plan. A 6 is the highest score that can be earned for the content of the workaround itself.

Below is another example of a workaround documented for a facility outage procedure. This workaround is designed to ensure continuation of critical functionality in the event of the sudden loss of a work facility:

'Refer to BC Workplace Recovery Plan in addendum section which contains a step by step outline for planner actions and a communication plan. Our team will require an alternate location with LAN drive and internet access and company provided laptop (see defined hardware needs below). The key drives required are \\businessdrivetgtaspic (O:drive) and \\ttcfiledrive (N: drive).

The majority of team members will be able to utilise remote access with their laptops, assuming the LAN drive is available. The Planning team currently has 110 laptops and an effort is underway to convert the remaining desktops to laptops sometime in 2016/2017. The Planning team will have limitations in regards to test reporting until a remote location is established and equipped. Depending on the severity of the outage if limited laptops are available we will reprioritise workload based on process criticality for team members with laptops in possession (see strategy and prioritisation list in BC Workplace Recovery plan in the Addendums section). We will plan on using our Planning Consultants (see Planning Consultant Contact list in the Addendum section) for our test reporting needs as well as utilise a local vendor http://www.e-analytics.com to create test documents and deliver files to plan consultants electronically until critical functionality is restored. See Interdependencies section for vendor contact information. Required links to various programmes within Planning are available at www.planningdrive.target.com'

As with the Required Applications section, the Facility Outage Procedure section of the scoring guide (shown below, Figure 2) would be referenced by the assessor.

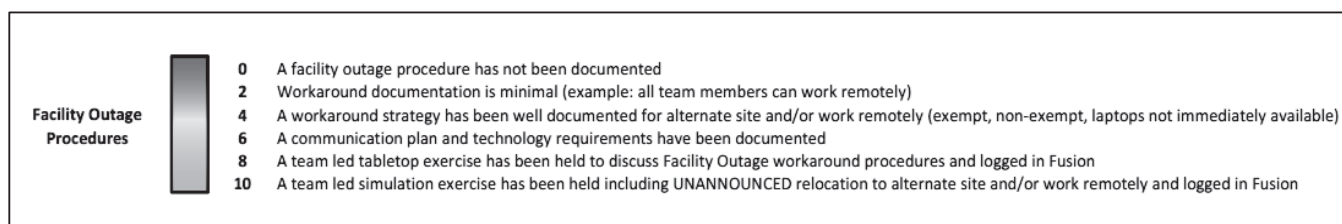According to the resiliency scoring standards, this documented procedure

Facility Outage Procedures

0	A facility outage procedure has not been documented
2	Workaround documentation is minimal (example: all team members can work remotely)
4	A workaround strategy has been well documented for alternate site and/or work remotely (exempt, non-exempt, laptops not immediately available)
6	A communication plan and technology requirements have been documented
8	A team led tabletop exercise has been held to discuss Facility Outage workaround procedures and logged in Fusion
10	A team led simulation exercise has been held including UNANNOUNCED relocation to alternate site and/or work remotely and logged in Fusion

Figure 2   Facility Outage Procedures section of Resiliency Scoring Guide

would receive 6 points for having included the following components:

- A well-documented recovery procedure that includes technology requirements.
- An attachment referenced that includes a communication plan to notify team members if a facility outage event occurs.
- A plan to reprioritise workload based on laptop availability is included.
- Alternate resources are identified to assist if the facility will remain unavailable for an extended period of time.

The facility outage workaround above refers to documents that have been attached in a separate addendums section of the plan. As part of the review process these documents would be cross-checked to verify that they contain adequate information in supporting the workaround.

Finally, here is an example of a team member outage workaround procedure. This type of workaround is developed to account for how critical functionality would continue if faced with a team member (employee) shortage:

'The individuals activating the plan should refer to the BC Workplace Recovery document (attached in the addendum section) which contains an outline for communication and prioritisation based on current priorities and projects. Depending on the type of outage, our team can work remotely as all team members have laptops with critical software installed. We would utilise our resources with our partner team at the India location assuming they are not impacted by the outage. The India team is cross-trained on critical functionality. If they are impacted by the outage we would engage our Planning Consultants to assist with workload. We currently do business with 9 consultant groups around the US and Canada. These consultants have the system and resource capabilities needed to create and plot our testing and exercising files. A complete list of consultants is attached in the Addendum section under Planning Consultant Contacts. We would first engage our three primary consulting groups which are, Analytic Resources, JAM Corp, and Agility Enterprises. Contact information for these partners is also listed in the Critical Contacts/ Interdependencies section. Detailed job processes and design criteria are all posted on our department site, which would be considered critical in the event of a reduced workforce to aid in cross training remaining team members. The path to the site is: http://tgtcollab. target.com/sites/test/aspic'

As with the previous examples, the Team Member Shortage Procedure section of the scoring guide (shown below, Figure 3) would be referenced by the assessor.

According to the resiliency scoring standards, this documented procedure

Team Member Shortage Procedures	0	A team member shortage procedure has not been documented
	2	Workaround documentation is minimal (example: all team members are cross trained)
	4	A workaround strategy has been well documented and includes critical procedures and prioritization of work
	6	Alternative resources (team members, contractors, vendors) have been clearly identified and trained on specific tasks
	8	A team led tabletop exercise has been held with alternative resources to discuss workaround procedures and logged in Fusion
	10	A team led simulation exercise has been held including transferring work and return to normal procedures and logged in Fusion

Figure 3   Team Member Shortage Procedures section of Resiliency Scoring Guide

would receive 6 points for including the following components:

- A communication plan has been identified.
- Documentation of how tasks will be prioritised is included.
- Alternate resources have been identified to assist with workload in the event of a reduced workforce.
- A link to documented critical procedures and job aids is provided to aid alternate resources in completing critical processes if required.

The scoring criteria have been set up to be cumulative in nature. For instance, in order to obtain a score of 8 a planner must first meet all of the criteria to earn a score of 6, and so on. This is consistent for each section of the scoring guide. Similar scoring criteria have been defined for each individual section of the plan. After all of the sections of the plan have been scored they are totalled, resulting in a cumulative plan score out of 100 possible points.

HURDLES

As expected with any innovation, Target experienced some hurdles when it came to rolling out the new scoring methodology. The primary hurdle related to planner confusion and lack of knowledge over what the score represented and how to best utilise it to improve the quality of their plans. The Business Continuity team responded to this challenge by creating relevant content as a part of the annual training requirement for planners. The content included information on when the resiliency score would factor into the different life cycle phases, how exercise completion and finding remediation impacted the score, guidance on assessment criteria, the benefits of the score, and how the score would be reported to

leaders. The training also provided specific examples of high scoring workarounds, outlined the scoring guide so planners were equipped on how to utilise it as a resource, and provided details on resiliency scoring activities to support team resiliency. Additionally, planners were assisted in getting acclimatised to the score by linking directly to the scoring guide within the planning development software and providing a record of the assessed score within the business continuity plan itself, which included feedback on how the score was assessed and what steps could be taken to improve the resiliency score. These creative solutions led to high planner understanding and engagement and increased participation in exercise and training requirements and resiliency score activities.

SUCCESS STORY

The following account reflects how resiliency scoring has had a practical and beneficial impact at Target. A new planner inherited a business continuity plan from a previous owner and was dissatisfied with the low resiliency score the plan had received. Through communications with the business continuity team, the planner learned that the score reflected underdeveloped workarounds within the plan that would not be easy to execute in the event of a disruption. Analysis of the plan score revealed opportunities to enhance the plan contents, which were very basic and contained 'bare bones' information as described by the planner. A desire to obtain a higher resiliency score that reflected a strong plan drove the new planner to take the steps outlined in the resiliency scoring guide to improve the plan contents. The planner was also cognisant that scores would be reported to leadership and wanted to be able to display the team's improved capability to recover

should a disruption occur. The team had recently experienced a facility outage from a flooding event, which had heightened awareness of the impacts of an outage and highlighted the importance of having a strong plan in place.

The planner proactively completed the business continuity training offerings to ensure he was fully aware of all of the requirements and understood the resiliency scoring guidelines. Through the trainings and scoring guide he gained the knowledge required to develop implementable workarounds for his plan. He took the exercise phase of the life cycle seriously and completed all of the exercise requirements, along with remediating the findings that were identified and inviting partners (team and vendor interdependencies) to participate in the exercises alongside him. This level of engagement was a marked improvement from the previous year. He then took action to raise awareness with his leadership by reviewing the updated plan with his director. These efforts resulted in the resiliency score for his plan increasing by 14 points, which showcased a plan that was now robust and implementable.

This success story illustrates the sense of accomplishment gained by planners for their business continuity related efforts in support of improved team and organisational resilience. This story reflects a common theme among the planner base — and there are many more examples, too numerous to highlight here, that reflect how the score has energised the continuity programme, increased levels of participation and resulted in an increased recovery posture due to better equipped planners with more effective business continuity plans.

LESSONS LEARNED

Target experienced the following benefits after implementing resiliency scoring.

Engaged planners and leaders

Prior to the rollout of resiliency scoring for business continuity plans, it was difficult to engage planners and gain the support of senior leadership. Many planners were only motivated to meet minimum requirements since business continuity planning went above and beyond their regular job duties and leaders struggled to effectively gauge the ability of their teams to respond to a disruption and did not understand the potential risks they might be susceptible to encountering.

Following the rollout of resiliency scoring, planner engagement improved significantly, as evidenced by improved plan contents and increased participation in programme requirements and activities. Planners were now equipped with specific guidelines that provided them with detailed steps they could take to ensure their plan's resiliency. The scoring also provided additional incentive and accountability as the continuity team had a meaningful way to communicate with leadership about plan contents. The leadership team was informed of the actual health of their plans and could easily recognise areas of risk that might exist.

Additionally, resiliency scoring fostered an environment of knowledge sharing among planners, as they were able to review other plans that received high scores in order to gain insight into how to further enhance their own plan's contents. It also created an atmosphere of healthy competiveness among planners and leaders, as they were interested to see how their scores compared to their peers and they aimed to improve their scores to position themselves well within the overall company rankings.

Meaningful and actionable metrics

The sole reliance on compliance metrics offered a limited ability to tell a meaningful story. As a result, plans that met the basic requirements were perceived as good

plans because they had done everything that was required of them. Following the implementation of resiliency scoring, there was a more complete picture of organisational resilience. Now, through enhanced metrics, planners and leaders could see how individual sections of their plans scored and take action to improve their plans based upon that information.

The scoring also provided the ability to identify trends and make informed decisions. It highlighted areas of risk and opportunity. For instance, application workarounds were scoring much lower than other sections of the plans. That information was leveraged to have meaningful conversations, prioritise resources, and appropriately focus efforts on making improvements in that area. Enhanced training materials and exercises were created to aid planners in improving their application workaround scores.

Ability to assess plan quality

There was a lack of means to quantify the quality of plans. Although a template was provided for planners to complete, there was still great inconsistency among the quality of plans being submitted for review. Some plans were well written, thorough and easy to execute, while others met the basic requirements of completing all of the fields, but contained very little substance or forethought, resulting in them not being very actionable.

Resiliency scoring provided the capability to perform a quick assessment of plan quality. Assessing all plans based on the same guidelines helped to remove ambiguity or bias and offered suggestions to improve plan quality that might not have been considered previously by the planners. It also enabled the programme to establish uniformity in both plan development and assessment. The plans being submitted now contain more consistent information and are reviewed using a common standard; thus a plan reviewed by one team member will be scored similarly to a plan reviewed by another.

Additionally, the score illustrates strengths, opportunities and areas of risk. Higher scoring sections of the plan highlight strengths within the plan and lower scoring sections highlight those areas that merit attention in order to make the team more resilient. One of the biggest wins has been the ability to provide transparency into where teams have acknowledged operational risk within their plans. The business continuity team strongly encourages planners to develop workarounds for potential outages whenever possible; however, risk is inherent in doing business and a viable workaround may not always be possible. In these instances, risk must be acknowledged within the plan. Visibility to continuity strengths, opportunities and risk has captured the attention of leadership and has been instrumental in showing the value of the business continuity programme and how it is vital to Target's continued success.

ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

Planners play an essential role in any continuity programme and are key to organisational resilience. An engaged planner leads to a business continuity plan that is readily implemented when needed and ultimately to a more robust organisation. Resiliency scoring has encouraged planners at Target not only to develop better plans but it has also driven improved involvement and participation in all continuity programme activities.

The resiliency score has proved effective in engaging the support of senior leadership, as it provides transparency around operational risk and enables the continuity programme to tell the story of true organisational resilience beyond just compliance metrics.

An innovative continuity team fosters increased planner commitment along with renewed leadership support and that ultimately leads to enhanced organisational preparedness. Resiliency scoring has energised all components of the continuity programme at Target.

It is important to continually seek ways to grow and improve your programme in order to keep it relevant. One of the ways this is done at Target is by soliciting feedback from planners annually. When asked for input about the resiliency score, the team learned that planners appreciate the fact that the score gets the attention of upper management, provides tangible ways in which to make their plans more actionable, and offers a roadmap for plan improvement over time.

Here are a few examples of their comments:

'… good way to get the attention of upper management. Rather than just a pass/fail, done/undone checkbox, it really helps indicate the quality of the plan and areas where it may be strengthened.'

'I like having tangible information regarding how I can make my plan more resilient.'

'… an amazing tool to understand the steps needed to make our plan more robust. AWESOME!!'

Planner feedback is one of the methods utilised to gauge the success of the tool and comments such as these demonstrate how the scoring methodology is adding value for planners.

TAKE ACTION
The following are a few action items that can easily be leveraged within your own organisation in order to improve your continuity programme.

Make It Simple
It can be easy to take for granted the depth of knowledge and expertise that you have as a business continuity professional around how to keep your organisation resilient. Leverage this expertise to provide guidance and make business continuity simple for your organisation. Give your planners and leaders tools to streamline the business continuity planning process by providing resources such as helpful training modules, easy to use templates, and offering them helpful examples to get them started. Resiliency scoring is a great example of a tool that can help to take some of the guesswork out of how to develop a really great business continuity plan.

Make It Fun
Ensuring the continuity and resiliency of your organisation can seem like a large undertaking, but, armed with your expertise and helpful tools, do not be afraid to confront the challenge and make sure you try new things to make it fun. To make progress you have to be willing to be innovative and creative in order to find effective ways in which to enhance your programme. Resiliency scoring brought new energy to the continuity programme at Target and created a fun environment of competiveness among planners and leaders as they worked to compete with their peers and improve their scores. It has offered a rewarding way for planners and leaders to track the growth and development of their plans over time, as well as adding a little healthy competition to the process.

Make It Matter
It may seem as though you do not have all of the resources you need to continue to mature your continuity programme. Look for ways to be innovative and accomplish

small meaningful changes that will make a difference for your organisation. Resiliency scoring was a creative idea that quickly started making a meaningful difference and it was implemented without any additional resources. Find those ways in which you can continue to make thoughtful enhancements to your programme that will matter to your organisation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, business continuity teams are tasked with ensuring the resiliency of their organisations. The stakes are high to mitigate the potentially severe impacts of business or technology disruptions. In order to be successful it is necessary to be able to effectively lead your organisation towards becoming increasingly more prepared. At Target, resiliency scoring has served successfully as a creative method to engage planners, educate leadership, and revitalise business continuity plans. We hope that this paper has provided you with new ideas and inspired you to bring new energy to your continuity programme.