

Is Business Continuity Co-Sourcing the Right Solution for My Organization?

Many business professionals tend to think of consultants as specialized, expensive problem-solvers brought in for a short-term, time-limited project. However, there can be a number of benefits when consultants are considered for longer-term, recurring program activities designed to deliver continuous improvement and alignment with business need – something we call *business continuity co-sourcing*.

Co-sourcing is defined as a service performed jointly by internal organizational staff and an external service provider. From a business continuity perspective, consultants provide as-needed assistance to support the development and/or maintenance of an organization's business continuity program. A co-sourcing agreement typically works best when both parties agree on roles and responsibilities, as well as a series of tasks/objectives that drive preparedness. The organization's business continuity manager or sponsor will still serve as the ultimate guide and decision-maker specific to program objectives, whereas the consultants perform as they would in a project capacity, executing preparedness activities that align to organizational need and offering ideas on how to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

While co-sourcing may not be right for every organization, there are a number of situations where co-sourcing is an optimal solution. For instance, a newly-appointed business continuity manager or program sponsor with limited or insufficient time or resources to develop a quality program is one example where co-sourcing is an effective choice. In this instance, hiring consultants under a co-sourcing arrangement provides immediate expertise to design and implement an efficient and effective program, and then support the program maintenance activities as necessary.

Another situation where co-sourcing may be beneficial is for the organization struggling with finding the right people to lead or support the program. Rather than waiting to start or improve the program until the right person or people can be found, co-sourcing enables experienced, knowledgeable consultants to “fill the void” and develop a solid foundation for the program until qualified personnel are hired.

An additional scenario involves more mature programs, which may have inconsistent or varied activity peaks. In this instance, due to the varying need for staff, employing full-time employees may not be the best solution. Instead, by bringing in consultants as necessary to support, say, a Q1 BIA refresh or a Q4 exercise, business continuity activities can be completed quickly and efficiently during those peak periods without requiring resources during non-peak periods.

Co-sourcing has a number of benefits that business continuity sponsors may want to consider when developing the right solution for their organization. As co-sourcing is “on-demand”, resources are only used as necessary and can be scoped appropriately to meet an organization's needs and resource constraints. And in the case of Avalution's co-sourcing approach, the same consultants will continue

supporting your organization, so there's familiarity and consistency throughout the project. In addition, the consultants working alongside your organization are also available to support the response to various disruptive events, meaning they aren't just scheduled to perform the anticipating planning tasks normally associated with project work. Most importantly, consultants are able to bring a wide variety of experience and expertise to new endeavors, which leads to creative and efficient solutions. Consultants are "ready-to-go" with business continuity expertise and trained to quickly learn and understand the critical parts of organizations to best apply their business continuity knowledge and to develop the optimal solution. This bypasses many of the normal learning curve issues or training requirements when hiring internally.

While a co-sourcing solution is not a right fit for all organizations, business continuity program managers or sponsors experiencing one of the scenarios above may decide that co-sourcing is the optimal solution for their organization. For more information on co-sourcing as a preparedness solution for your organization, please contact us at contactus@avalution.com.