



How a private equity company continues to provide a seamless and robust service to customers despite disruption from flooding and volcanic ash

Customer needs

- Implement resilience and response mechanisms to safeguard business activities in the event of disruption
- Gain commercial edge by ensuring the organisation is more robust and capable in what it does than its competitors
- Protect the company's reputation should the unexpected occur

Customer benefits

- Greater business efficiency and reliability, and independent verification of best practice
- A rehearsed method and a proven capability for restoring critical products and services to an agreed level and timeframe following a disruption
- Enhanced stakeholder and customer confidence in the organisation

“Not only does having a business continuity plan make us a much more resilient organisation, it also shows all of our clients, both existing and new, that we will do everything possible to ensure that we can continue to provide a quality service whatever the situation.”

Adam Heaysman
Partner and Head of Client Services



Customer background

Altius Associates Limited (Altius) is an independent fund-of-funds and segregated account manager focused solely on private equity and private real assets markets across the globe. The company has a staff of 31 with a team of 20 investment professionals with deep experience in investing in private markets globally. Altius' research and investment teams provide global coverage in all private equity and private real assets (energy, infrastructure, and timber) strategies. The company currently manages and advises over \$17 billion of investments and commitments for a select group of international institutional investors.

Altius is one of the first financial services companies in the world to achieve independent third party certification to the global business continuity management system standard, BS 25999.

Why certification

"Since the terrible events of September 11th, 2001, more customers are asking for evidence of their partners' business continuity credentials to ensure that they can continue to provide services in the event of an incident, whether that be a terrorist attack or something more mundane such as a power failure," says Adam Heaysman, Partner and Head of Client Services at Altius.

Altius quickly recognised that implementing a comprehensive business continuity management system, certified by an independent body, would enhance the services provided to its clients by adding additional resilience to the organisation.

Implementation

"The major challenge for Altius was demonstrating that we had a fully functioning and integrated management system in place and not just a plan," says Heaysman. This involved rapidly designing and running a training programme to fully embed the system in the company's culture and setting up appropriate systems." By putting a formal business continuity management system in place, Altius is now able to prioritise activities should a crisis occur and is confident that in that situation the organisation will be able to continue and provide a seamless service to its customers.

Following the completion of a Business Impact Analysis and a Business Continuity Plan, Altius then sought independent third party assessment and certification for its management system. To facilitate the project Altius employed the services of Biscon Planning; an experienced continuity consultancy based in Gloucestershire. Biscon Planning is part of BSI's Associate Consultant Programme.

"Without certification to a management system standard, many organisations overlook the exercising, maintaining and reviewing stage of the business continuity management plan," says Mick Bayne, Consultant for Biscon Planning. "By gaining independent assessment and certification to the BS 25999 standard, organisations are showing that they are taking business continuity seriously which reflects favourably on them to their customers. Business continuity is not a luxury but a necessity and certification helps to implement the changes and ensure that they are properly complied with."

Benefits of working with BSI

"BSI is recognised as the world's leading certification body with a rigorous and thorough assessment process which we knew would fully test our management system," says Heaysman. "Having our system certified and our organisation aligned with BSI gives added credibility and reassurance to our clients that our business continuity plan will work.

"Things do go wrong and the unexpected happens. The heavy snow fall in Jan 2010 and the volcanic ash cloud resulted in many of our staff being stuck in numerous cities around the world. Thanks to our business continuity plan, we had an IT infrastructure in place which allowed those members of staff to work as if they were still in the office. As a result, events which would have had a major impact on the ability of the company to service its clients a few years ago, caused minimal disruption.

"Similarly when the London office experienced a major flood one afternoon, knocking out the power supply to the building, we were able to switch the servicing of all of our clients to our Richmond, Virginia office and by 9.30am the next day the London office was back up and running. From our experience a well-structured and thought-out business continuity plan is the least expensive insurance any company can have."

Following the benefits already experienced from improved risk management, Altius Associates Limited is considering building on its BS 25999 certification with a view to gaining registration to the information security management system standard, ISO 27001.

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BSI offers a comprehensive portfolio of business continuity management (BCM) training courses. Introductory courses broaden general awareness of good BCM practice. Implementation and auditing courses take that knowledge further to drive change within an organisation. Training delivery methods for this topic include open scheduled courses, executive workshops and incompany training. Visit www.bsigroup.co.uk/training or call **0845 086 9000** for details.



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