



## Bart Basi

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# DISASTER PLANNING IN THE COMING YEAR

### Introduction

The fact of the matter is that, businesses in this country and all over the world face a gauntlet of peril. From rising fuel prices, rising commodity prices, clients filing bankruptcy on their payables and clients not paying to adverse credit climates, business is a challenging endeavor for any line of work. However, there are threats even beyond the day-to-day and year-to-year challenges.

It was just 5 months ago that Superstorm Sandy swept through the Northeast. In its aftermath, approximately seventy-seven billion dollars (\$77,000,000,000) of insured losses have been reported. Now, the hurricane that was all over the news is now becoming part of our collective memory. The legacy it leaves behind on the businesses of the Northeast is unfortunately, ongoing. Many businesses in the area, once they shuttered, never reopened. In this case, as in many, the terrible results of natural disasters are often felt for a long time or even possibly forever.

# ~~UNPREPARED~~



### New Statistics on Natural Disasters

In 2012 the nation experienced a number of natural disasters. In fact, in the past 15 years, natural disasters have increased 40%. In terms of human suffering, property loss, and the potential loss of business and commerce in the wake of the hurricanes and other natural disasters, businesses need to be prepared.

Natural disasters are a fact of life on this planet. With earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, tsunamis, tornados, and such, at some point nearly everyone and every business will be touched by a natural disaster. The consequences can range from minimal (as in a snow or ice

storm), to severe (hurricanes), to termination and even dissolution of the company, to even being dangerous to personnel. With disaster planning, the company can and should plan to continue in at least some capacity.

### Planning for the Worst

The absolute worst thing to do in preparation for a natural disaster is to do nothing at all. Waiting until it is broadcast on the radio or seeing a major storm system develop on the news is not the time to begin your preparation for a disaster. At that point, communications and electrical systems may already be failing area wide. Critical supplies needed for business continuation may have already been sold out of

stores. Therefore, secondary protocol in people, location, and supply is absolutely necessary at all times. Out of state suppliers and friendly competitors should be reviewed for viability in these potential circumstances.

The best thing a business owner can do to continue business during and after a disaster is to begin preparation immediately. Talk to the people who are going to be players in the disaster plan. Talk to secondary suppliers. Think about where business will be conducted in the event the primary location is not available. The basics are presented in short form :

#### 1) Written Instruments and Communication

Along with any disaster plan, written instruments a necessity. Reducing a plan to writing is a sure sign that the plan is being developed in a manner which is achievable.

Ready.gov provides a written form which your business can use to prepare and commit a plan to paper. Check signing authority in an alternative person is a must as well. If the key person is not available, there must be a back-up person.