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# Workplace Emergency Preparedness: Important Questions to Ask

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**H**ow does your organization react when employees are out of work for several days for something as simple as the seasonal flu outbreak? It's common to deal with these types of absences by shifting workloads within departments or peer-groups. But what if a larger group of employees — or a whole location, branch, or division — was disabled for a prolonged period of time?

Being prepared for disasters such as severe weather, flooding, infectious disease outbreaks, civil unrest and, in some cases, even terrorism all require emergency and business continuity planning. Are you prepared for a disaster or an emergency that could occur with minimal or no warning?

### Questions to Ask When Planning for Disasters:

These four critical questions should be addressed in order to avoid potential business-disrupting problems and to ensure continued operational success when planning for disasters, pandemics, and other emergencies:

**ONE:** Once we know who we've lost, how do we identify those with the ability to fill in until the absent return or can be replaced?

**TWO:** How do we ensure that front line managers have the resources required to keep up with demands?

**THREE:** How do we keep our customers from feeling a negative impact?

**FOUR:** Are we confident that we can successfully manage the situation when something unexpected happens?



### If a Disaster Occurred Tomorrow, Organizations Would Need to Know:

**ONE:** Which employees, and therefore which skills and abilities, have been lost?

**TWO:** Of the remaining employees who possess the critical skills, which ones are most suitable based on a range of variables like location, experience, work schedule, and personality type?

**THREE:** If none of the remaining employees fit all the criteria, how will the skills gaps be adequately and quickly addressed?

**FOUR:** How will we ensure we make well informed decisions and where will we turn to get the necessary data?

### Use Competency Management for Emergency Preparedness

If some employees suddenly become unavailable, organizations need to know what skills each of their employees possess so that management knows exactly what skills have been lost. If organizations implement a solid competency management program, the task

# Are you ready?

of identifying and replacing skills would be much easier.

The foundation of workforce development begins with competencies and identifying the unique combination of knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristics required for success in an organization ... and then organizing that information into a competency model. Defining competency models for your organization, assessing skill levels through skill assessments, and then analyzing gaps provide the essential information for [disaster planning](#) as well as strategic planning for training, staffing, performance management, and even succession planning.

By having access to all employees' skill inventories through a process of assessment, management can more easily determine the skills that have been lost and can identify the remaining employees who possess those skills in adequate levels. These employees should be critiqued on a wide range of factors in addition to job skills. Variables such as location, experience, and personality help determine the best replacements. Some replacements may require additional training and development for optimal results. Because all employees' skills have been catalogued, you can deliver precise training to fill the most critical skill gaps in descending order of importance.

No one likes to think about potential disasters, but organizations that [proactively plan](#) for the worst tend to survive ahead of the rest. If you're thinking of implementing or improving your performance or competency management program, [contact us](#) about [WebMentor Skills™](#) – Avilar's workforce planning and competency management software.

## About Avilar

Avilar – The Competency Company™ is a leader in workforce planning and development with web-based competency management and learning solutions for corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. Formed in 1997, Avilar was a pioneer with its award-winning WebMentor™ product line and has built itself on the basis of superior customer service and highly adaptable product design.

Avilar consultants are recognized as industry thought leaders and have decades of experience in implementation and analysis. Let Avilar help you transform your organization from ordinary to extraordinary.