

# CASE STUDY: PANDEMIC PLANNING

A leading global financial services firm historically made business continuity a high priority. In 2005, with H5N1 (avian flu) becoming more prevalent, the firm developed concerns about its ability to respond effectively to a pandemic. Satori Consulting was engaged to help design and deploy a plan that would allow the client to adapt to new challenges and to increase its overall resiliency.

In April 2009, it became apparent that the characteristics of the H1N1 (swine flu) outbreak distinguished it from potential avian flu pandemic. As a result, the needed to quickly reassess its existing plans. The flexibility of the Satori framework implemented in 2005 enabled the client to rapidly incorporate lessons learned into its plans.

## THE SITUATION AT HAND

Our client had a global, structured approach to managing risk, including a team of Business Continuity Planning (BCP) professionals who had developed effective response plans for localized events requiring site and infrastructure recovery. However, a potential pandemic would present several new challenges:

- How would the client assure the safest possible work environment for their people?
- Would existing policies and infrastructure address high levels of absenteeism and support large numbers of employees working remotely?
- How would regulatory agencies adjust during a pandemic and what would be the likely impact on the client's business?

Pandemic flu is a unique threat requiring a new set of assumptions. For instance, many business continuity scenarios focus on site recovery, while a pandemic's primary impact is to the workforce. Furthermore, gathering accurate information for planning, without creating undue panic or confusion in the organization or with external stakeholders, necessitates well crafted communications. Diligent and dedicated sponsorship at the highest levels of the organization, along with rigorous risk identification and business impact assessment is required to achieve global coordination and synchronization of plans.

## THE SATORI SOLUTION

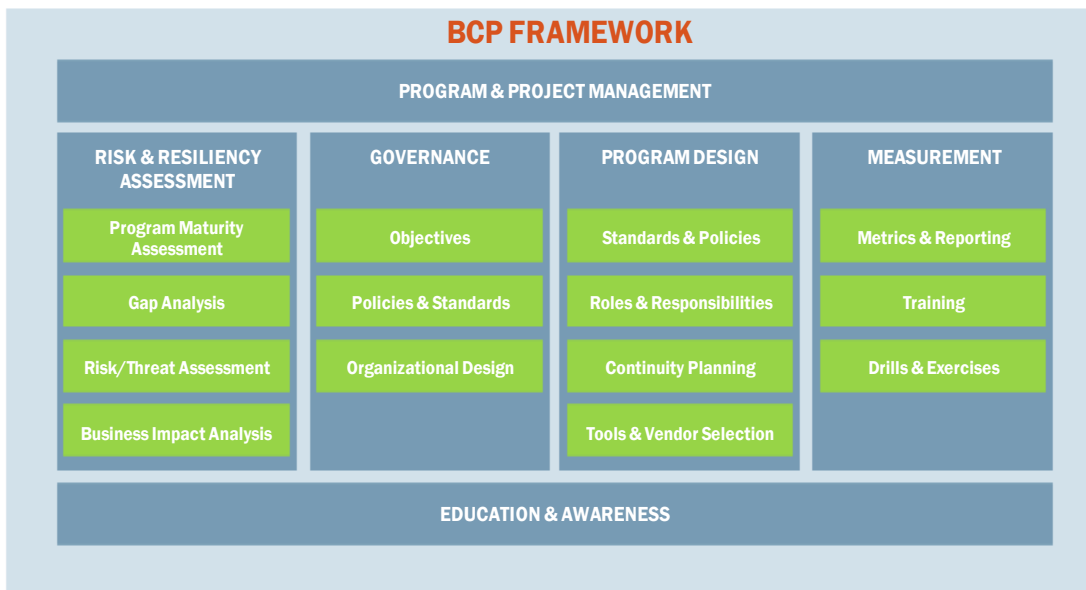
Leveraging our flexible BCP framework, we established a task force of senior business leadership and divisional teams, including Operations, Employee Wellness, and Corporate Communications, to create strategies for managing anticipated health and business challenges.

Furthermore, we facilitated a Program Management Office that directed teams to:

- Define policies and identify the critical infrastructure required to sustain business operations during an extended disruption.
- Establish a Readiness Plan detailing the firm's intended response should "pandemic-indicative" events, such as human-to-human avian flu transmission, occur.
- Develop strategies for engaging business lines in planning and for proactive outreach to external agencies, organizations and institutions.
- Create and implement a dashboard tool to track the complex planning effort against targeted readiness outcomes.

## RESULTS

Our approach resulted in a sustainable, flexible and adaptable solution. Organizational leadership and key business personnel were highly engaged in the planning



process, and accountability and transparency were established. The framework, policy and approach were successfully integrated into the client's Business Continuity program. Finally, to ensure that plans remained up-to-date, we implemented regularly scheduled plan reviews and testing exercises.

## PANDEMIC PLAN ADAPTATION: H1N1 (SWINE FLU)

The recent H1N1 outbreak has highlighted several deficiencies in existing continuity plans. New planning considerations include:

- The unpredictability and rapidity of the spread of the virus, which has challenged pandemic planning assumptions.
- Accommodating working parents who must cope with the impacts of school closures.
- The acknowledgement by the World Health Organization that its pandemic phase rating scale is focused solely on the geographic spread of the illness. Severity and impact of the outbreak must also be considered.
- Re-evaluating pandemic plans that assumed a high mortality rate.
- Reassessing plans for the procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment (and other limited emergency resources)
- Updating the allocation plans for BCP resources, such as alternate work space and remote working infrastructure.
- Re-thinking HR, travel and other policies to ensure they remain relevant during subsequent waves of the flu

### Comparison of H1N1 & H5N1 Assumptions

|   | H5N1 (Avian)        | H1N1 (Swine)  |
|---|---------------------|---|
| <b>Illness rate</b>                               | 30%                 | Unknown   |
| <b>Severity/Morbidity</b>                         | High                | Low   |
| <b>Planning Assumptions</b>                       | WHO pandemic phases | Consider spread, severity and impact                    |
| <b>Planning Lead Time/ Escalation of Outbreak</b> | Several weeks       | Minimal; escalation from PAPP3 to PAPP5 within one week |
| <b>Number of Pandemic Waves</b>                   | 2-3                 | Unknown   |
| <b>Geographic Origin</b>                          | Believed to be Asia | Mexico & NYC  |

## NEXT STEPS

We continue to monitor the ever-evolving H1N1 situation and are working with our client to continue to adapt its pandemic plans accordingly.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.satoriconsulting.com](http://www.satoriconsulting.com) or email: [panflu@satoriconsulting.com](mailto:panflu@satoriconsulting.com)

*At Satori Consulting, our mission is simple: to work side-by-side with clients to discover opportunities and solve problems. We strive to provide both comprehensive and expert service, mindful of every client's unique needs. Our team of highly-skilled management consultants brings a wealth of industry and functional experience to provide wide-ranging services in project and program management, risk management, change management, organizational effectiveness, strategy and advisory, business process engineering, performance management, and infrastructure and technology.*



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