

**WELCOME REMARKS BY
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**BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE
– “ENSURING ENTERPRISE RESILIENCE IN UNPREDICTABLE
TIMES”**

6 JANUARY 2016, WEDNESDAY • 10.00AM

Dr Koh Poh Koon
Minister of State for Trade and Industry

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Happy New Year! It is my pleasure to welcome you today to this annual conference on business continuity management (BCM) organised by SBF. We gather today to learn how enterprises can be more resilient in today's economy. We are also here to recognise companies who have enhanced their business resilience through the adoption of a business continuity management system.

Importance of Business Continuity

We thought we had said goodbye to the worst of disruptions and crises in 2015, both man-made and natural. Unfortunately, we were not spared in 2016. Financial markets were down sharply at the start of new year

and the renewed row between Saudi Arabia and Iran will heighten tension in the Middle East. We can all pray for peace and quiet in 2016 but no one believes that this will happen.

It is in this context that BCM becomes more imperative for businesses. It essentially looks at contingencies for unexpected events. The financial sector was an early adopter, when it had to prepare for the Y2K transition. The focus then shifted to terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

To help companies evaluate and benchmark their business continuity plans (BCP), international standards were introduced. We are now guided by the internationally-recognised ISO 22301 which is tagged to Societal Security. The standard's objective was broadened to demonstrate the organisations' BCM capabilities to a wider group of stakeholders. It recognises the roles that businesses play in society.

SBF's Role in Singapore's BCM Ecosystem

BCM has come a long way since SPRING Singapore began promoting it in 2003. SBF spearheaded the development of a Business Continuity Management (BCM) standard for the manufacturing and service sectors, with the support of EDB and SPRING Singapore.

In 2008, SBF was appointed as the national BCM focal point, driving companies to adopt BCM. By November 2015, SBF has held over 200 BCM events, reaching out to some 18,300 participants and 12,000 companies. More Singapore companies have adopted BCM measures to manage pandemic and haze-related disruptions.

As SPRING Singapore's appointed partner, SBF will continue to support SMEs in enhancing their business resilience and BCM preparedness through capability building.

Keeping Our Pulse On The Ground

More than 200 Singapore companies participated in our BCM survey late last year. They also shared their views how SMEs can be encouraged to raise their business resilience. Around 13 per cent are BCM-certified or in the midst of securing certification. Six in 10 companies are not aware of BCM-related programmes and initiatives in Singapore.

Broadly, the findings revealed that Singapore companies are aware of the importance of BCM and the objectives involved for implementing it.

The survey found that almost 90 per cent disagreed that BCM is not necessary as companies can take directions from the Government when disruptions happen. Only 28 per cent agreed that BCM is less relevant to small companies as they do not have complex supply chains and diverse markets like large companies. 85 per cent agreed that BCM assures their stakeholders that their businesses are sustainable. Overall, it is heartening that more companies appreciate the critical need for BCM and it is not limited only to the large companies.

Businesses also rated the top three areas that BCM is useful in addressing – the loss of key employees, breakdown of information systems and networks, as well as financial and cash flow issues.

The top three challenges holding companies back from attaining BCM certification including the lack of resources, ranging from time, manpower to financial resources, a lack of knowledge and skills as well as the costs involved to maintain certification. Close to one in five companies commented that their companies are not BCM-certified and do not have a BCP in place. We hope to close the gap on this with new initiatives that will be announced today and rolled out this year.

Conclusion

SBF will continue to work closely with the trade associations and business chambers on BCM-readiness for various sectors. We will also make available more materials and case studies on companies on the BCM portal in this quarter. Together with the business community, we can build a stronger and more resilient Singapore.

I wish you a fruitful conference ahead. Thank you.