

OWL



Tip of the Month

Wargame

Wargame to help determine resource needs and gaps in your continuity plans! Now you're thinking — wargame? Wargame (or war game) tends to be associated with military planning and defined as a military exercise carried out to test or improve tactical expertise. Basically, it is brainstorming various scenarios that would cause you to react in a different way. Another way to think about it is, what would you do when things do not go as planned. Some people review plans simply by proposing “what-if” scenarios, and then discussing various actions.

Let's step outside the world of academia, and think about planning a family reunion and how it relates to wargaming. What if it rains? What if more people show up than invited? What if we run out of food? What happens if Uncle Jim starts telling nasty jokes in front of the kids? Does your plan have the flexibility to handle all of the “what-ifs?” Wargaming ahead of time will help.

When updating Continuity of Operations Plans you should have similar “what-if” discussions. What happens if we lose power? What if we have to evacuate and cannot return for several days? What would we do if we lost the internet?! What if the executive assistant was sick for two weeks? What would happen if a pipe burst flooding the entire building? (Has this ever happened?) This is a great exercise to do for 10-15 minutes as part of a staff meeting. A quote that illustrates the importance of the planning process: “In preparing for battle, I have always found plans useless, but planning indispensable.” Dwight Eisenhower

Participating in disaster exercises is another way to wargame. A tabletop exercise focusing on a particular emergency with numerous consequences will quickly identify planning gaps and resources needs. You can reach out to the Office of Emergency Management to host such an exercise, or if you plan on conducting internally, at least get a template to get started.

Legendary basketball coach John Wooden once said, **“When you fail to prepare, you're preparing to fail.”** He may have borrowed that from Benjamin Franklin.