

Visual Business First Aid Guide: The ABCDE Framework

A free resource from "Business First Aid: The Emergency Guide for Your Company" by Marcos Duarte Rivero

BUSINESS FIRST AID

The Emergency Guide for your Company



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BUSINESS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Just as emergency medical professionals follow the ABCDE protocol to save lives, business leaders can use this same structured approach to save their companies during crisis.

A - AIRWAY (CASH FLOW)

Definition: The financial pathway that allows resources to flow in and out of your business.

Like a blocked airway, cash flow problems are immediately life-threatening regardless of other business strengths.

Warning Signs:

- Difficulty meeting payroll or critical vendor payments
- Growing gap between accounts receivable and payable
- Declining cash reserves with increasing obligations
- Reliance on credit to fund regular operations
- Customer payment delays affecting operational capacity

First Response:

1. Assess exact cash position across all accounts
2. List and prioritize all upcoming payment obligations
3. Identify immediate sources of emergency funds
4. Implement spending freeze on non-essential expenses
5. Accelerate collection of outstanding receivables

B - BREATHING (OPERATIONS)

Definition: The core functions that produce your products or deliver your services.

Like breathing difficulties, operational breakdowns quickly become life-threatening if not addressed.

Warning Signs:

- Production or service delivery delays increasing
- Quality issues or customer complaints rising
- Key equipment showing signs of unreliability
- Staff overextension or increasing error rates
- Supply chain disruptions affecting inventory

First Response:

1. Identify specific operational failure points
 2. Implement immediate containment measures
 3. Activate backup systems or processes if available
 4. Assess impact on customer deliverables
 5. Mobilize appropriate expertise to address root causes
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C - CIRCULATION (REVENUE)

Definition: The flow of money throughout your business that sustains all activities.

Like circulatory problems, revenue issues will progressively weaken the entire organization.

Warning Signs:

- Sales declining across multiple channels or products
- Customer acquisition costs increasing
- Conversion rates dropping at key funnel stages

- Competitors gaining market share
- Customer retention rates declining

First Response:

1. Identify which specific revenue streams are affected
 2. Determine if problem is volume, pricing, or conversion
 3. Launch targeted tactical sales initiatives
 4. Enhance customer retention efforts
 5. Implement daily revenue tracking with clear accountability
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D - DISABILITY (DECISION-MAKING)

Definition: The leadership capacity to analyze situations and implement effective responses.

Like neurological issues, decision-making problems can paralyze the entire organization.

Warning Signs:

- Important decisions repeatedly delayed or avoided
- Increasing conflict among leadership team
- Inconsistent strategic direction or frequent reversals
- Information not reaching decision-makers
- Implementation gaps between decisions and actions

First Response:

1. Identify specific decision bottlenecks
 2. Establish temporary decision authority where needed
 3. Implement simplified decision rules focused on critical factors
 4. Create clear communication channels for essential information
 5. Document all decisions and rationale for consistency
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E - EXPOSURE (EXTERNAL FACTORS)

Definition: The market conditions and external forces affecting your business.

Like environmental exposure, market threats can endanger even internally healthy businesses.

Warning Signs:

- Regulatory changes threatening business model
- New competitors with disruptive approaches
- Rapid technology shifts affecting your offerings
- Changing customer preferences or expectations
- Economic conditions impacting your market

First Response:

1. Assess the specific nature and severity of market threat
2. Secure key customer and partner relationships
3. Adjust your value proposition to address new realities
4. Implement enhanced competitive intelligence gathering
5. Develop contingency plans for different scenario outcomes

THE GOLDEN HOUR IN BUSINESS

In emergency medicine, the "Golden Hour" after trauma significantly impacts survival chances. Similarly, your response during the first critical period following a business crisis largely determines whether your organization:

- Experiences a temporary setback or begins a downward spiral
- Maintains stakeholder confidence or triggers widespread panic
- Contains damage or faces escalating consequences
- Recovers quickly or endures a prolonged recovery

Remember: In business emergencies, like medical ones, the right actions in the right sequence save lives.

BUSINESS TRIAGE: WHEN MULTIPLE CRISES STRIKE

When facing multiple simultaneous crises, use the START framework to prioritize:

● **RED:** Immediate Response Required

- Threatens core business survival
- Requires response within hours
- Can be influenced by immediate action

● **YELLOW:** Urgent but Not Immediate

- Affects important but not survival-critical functions
- Response window measured in days
- Requires significant but manageable resources

● **GREEN:** Important but Can Wait

- Impacts non-critical business functions
- Can wait weeks for response
- Immediate action not essential for outcomes

● **BLACK:** Beyond Salvation or Not Worth Resources

- Loss will not threaten core business
- Recovery unlikely regardless of intervention
- Would require resources better deployed elsewhere

BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS FIRST AID KIT

Every business should have these emergency resources ready before crisis strikes:

1. **Cash Flow Emergency Plan:** Predetermined sources of emergency funding
 2. **Operational Continuity Protocols:** Backup systems and processes
 3. **Revenue Protection Strategies:** Quick-response sales and retention initiatives
 4. **Crisis Decision Framework:** Simplified rules for emergency decision-making
 5. **Market Disruption Response Plan:** Pre-planned adaptations to external threats
 6. **Crisis Communication Templates:** Pre-approved messaging for key stakeholders
 7. **Emergency Contact List:** All critical internal and external contacts
 8. **Resource Allocation Guidelines:** How to deploy limited resources during crisis
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LEARN THE COMPLETE SYSTEM

For comprehensive guidance on:

- Preventing business crises before they occur
- Responding effectively when emergencies strike
- Recovering completely after disruption
- Building long-term organizational resilience

Get "Business First Aid: The Emergency Guide for Your Company" at:
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