

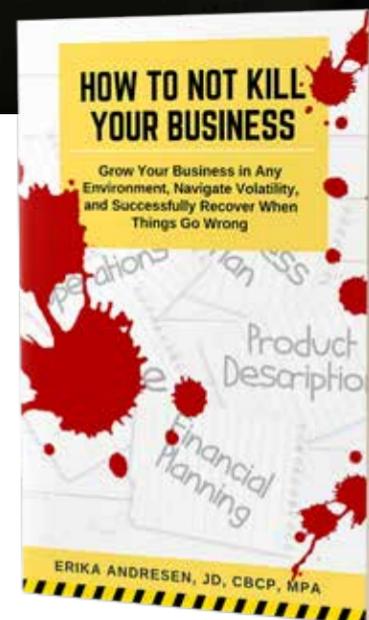
Unlocking Resilience

How to Not Kill Your Business helps leaders navigate disruptions beyond disasters.

BY LISA A. BEACH



Erika Andresen, founder of EaaS Consulting



COURTESY OF ERIKA ANDRESEN

You might think the term “business continuity” only applies to recovering from natural disasters. However, business disruptions can emerge in several ways—from a single employee’s departure, a supply chain glitch or communication breakdowns.

Navigating today’s tumultuous economy involves challenges and unforeseen disruptions. Business continuity planning—crucial for businesses of all sizes—ensures seamless operations, whether disruptions are a tiny tremor or a seismic shift.

Erika Andresen, founder of EaaS Consulting, LLC, underscores this in her book *How to Not Kill Your Business: Grow Your Business in Any Environment, Navigate Volatility, and Successfully Recover When Things Go Wrong*. She defines business continuity as the key to securing and ensuring uninterrupted business operations, offering resilience in the face of both disasters and disruptions, whether natural or human-made.

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INSPIRATION BEHIND THE BOOK

When Andresen first launched her consulting firm, she targeted mom-and-pop shops, feeling they *most* needed business continuity.

“I was coming... from a place of helping those who needed it most—and small businesses, by and large, are completely unaware of the practice of business continuity,” says Andresen, noting that global corporations and large companies have been practicing it for decades. Andresen felt there was no reason for small companies to not engage in business continuity, too, so she set out to change that.

But in her initial market research, she discovered smaller shops had no interest in spending money on business continuity. Instead of allowing this to kill her business, Andresen pivoted, writing her book with small business owners top of mind. “I want to move the needle for \$5 on Kindle or \$20 for paperback to protect their investment and keep their dream alive.”

KEY INSIGHTS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Many small businesses delay action, either waiting to grow or until a crisis looms. Andresen highlights the peril of optimism bias—the belief you’ll only have positive experiences and the odds of negative experiences won’t impact you. “Waiting only

causes things to happen at a slower pace,” she says, noting that proactive measures better prepare you for future disruptions.

Andresen shares a valuable lesson from one of her solopreneur clients. Initially, the client was hesitant to apply business continuity principles until she grew her business. But her vulnerabilities became apparent through a series of questioning from Andresen. After implementing Andresen’s suggestions, the client realized she couldn’t grow without the security business continuity offers. “Business continuity buys you confidence, security, opportunity and time,” Andresen says.

PROACTIVE PREPARATION FOR VOLATILITY

Proactively preparing for and navigating volatility only *starts* with creating a business continuity plan. Andresen says you also need to train and exercise the plan—starting at the top.

“Without leadership buy-in, the preparedness for an effective business continuity plan plummets,” she explains. Staff training and exercising the plan allows everyone to learn what to do and what could go wrong. “It’s better to figure this out in advance than during the disaster,” Andresen says, noting that working ahead provides an opportunity to fix the plan. “This is not supposed to be a one-off, check-the-box event. It’s a living document that will keep a business thriving, clients satisfied and employees employed.”

CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

Andresen weaves the theme of resilience throughout her book, guiding readers through self-reflection and prompting them to identify blind spots or unrecognized pain points. For instance, she notes that the pandemic shifted the value paradigm toward employees as the most important asset. “You cultivate organizational resilience by investing in the people who work for you, who execute the

procedures the way you want and who are the face of your company when they interact with clients,” Andresen says.

Also, Andresen advises that looking ahead and anticipating risks creates an agile company. “Agility promotes creativity and growth. Don’t see it as a cost or chore—it’s an opportunity,” she explains.

Owners can build their personal resilience by creating businesses that do not need them present 24/7. “Getting ahead of risks, installing control measures for any single points of failure and building redundancies—all part of the business continuity process—will give business owners the freedom to step away, recharge and trust that the business will continue thriving.”

BALANCING GROWTH WITH STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Andresen provides a stark reality check in a growth-focused world. Growth, she contends, is impossible without stability, and stability is unattainable without business continuity. Building a business continuity plan allows owners to learn the ins and outs of their business and identify their critical operations crucial for survival, she explains. Most owners make a lot of assumptions about what those critical operations are. But without having done a risk assessment with a business impact analysis, she argues, they may be investing time and money in the wrong strategy. “The cost of not doing business continuity is too high: loss of market share, loss of customers, loss of employees, loss of reputation and, ultimately, the loss of your business,” she explains. “How can you grow from that? You can’t.” ♦

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