

## WHITE PAPER

# AI-Assisted Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery Planning

*Why Dave Is Faster, More Efficient, and Less Expensive*

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## Executive Summary

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (BC/DR) planning is a business-critical discipline — yet for most organisations it remains expensive, slow, and infrequently updated. Traditional engagements with specialised consultants cost between \$30,000 and \$140,000 per planning cycle and take three to six months to complete. The resulting documents are often outdated before they are approved.

Avsentia's AI-assisted BC/DR agent — Dave — changes the economics fundamentally. Powered by large-language model technology trained on NIST SP 800-34, ISO 22301, and decades of industry practice, Dave delivers expert-level BC/DR guidance in real time, at a fraction of the cost, and without scheduling overhead.

This white paper quantifies the speed, efficiency, and cost advantages of the AI-assisted approach, examines the methodology underpinning Dave's recommendations, and explains why organisations of every size should adopt AI-assisted BC/DR planning as their standard practice.

**90%**

Reduction in planning  
time

**80%**

Lower cost vs. traditional

**24/7**

Availability — no  
scheduling

**Days**

Not months, to a working  
plan

# 1. The BC/DR Planning Problem

Despite regulatory expectations and widely publicised disaster events, a significant proportion of organisations — particularly small and mid-size businesses — operate without adequate BC/DR documentation. The reasons are almost always the same: the traditional process is prohibitively expensive, takes too long, and quickly becomes outdated.

## 1.1 The Cost Barrier

Engaging a qualified BC/DR consulting firm typically involves the following cost components:

- **Initial assessment and scoping:** \$5,000 – \$20,000
- **Business Impact Analysis (BIA):** \$15,000 – \$40,000
- **Plan development and documentation:** \$20,000 – \$60,000
- **Review, testing, and exercise design:** \$8,000 – \$25,000
- **Annual maintenance and update cycles:** \$10,000 – \$30,000 per year

For a mid-size organisation, a complete initial BC/DR planning engagement commonly totals \$50,000–\$140,000. Annual maintenance typically adds another \$15,000–\$30,000. Most SMBs cannot absorb this cost — leaving them unprotected.

## 1.2 The Time Barrier

Even when budget is approved, the timeline is the second major obstacle. A traditional BC/DR project follows a sequential, meeting-heavy process:

- **Procurement and contract execution:** 2 – 6 weeks
- **Stakeholder interviews and data collection:** 4 – 8 weeks
- **BIA analysis and draft documentation:** 4 – 8 weeks
- **Internal review cycles:** 3 – 6 weeks
- **Final approval and publishing:** 2 – 4 weeks

Total elapsed time: 3 – 6 months for a first-generation plan. In rapidly changing technology environments or after a merger, acquisition, or major system change, organisations often cannot wait that long.

## 1.3 The Currency Problem

A BC/DR plan completed in January becomes outdated as soon as the organisation adds a new cloud provider, changes a critical vendor, onboards a new office, or modifies its technology stack. Traditional consulting engagements do not include continuous monitoring — the plan sits in a shared drive and deteriorates quietly.

### Industry Finding

According to Gartner, fewer than 50% of organisations that have a BC/DR plan test it more than once per year, and a significant portion report that the plan is materially out of date at the time of an actual incident. An outdated plan can be worse than no plan — it creates false confidence.

## 2. Introducing Dave: The AI-Assisted BC/DR Consultant

Dave is Avsentia's purpose-built AI BC/DR consultant. He is not a general-purpose chatbot — he is a specialised agent trained on authoritative BC/DR frameworks, tested against real-world planning scenarios, and designed to produce structured, actionable plans that meet regulatory and audit requirements.

### 2.1 What Dave Knows

Dave's knowledge base encompasses the primary frameworks and standards governing BC/DR practice:

- **NIST SP 800-34** — Contingency Planning Guide for Federal Information Systems
- **ISO 22301** — Business Continuity Management System standard
- **FFIEC BCP Handbook** — Financial sector business continuity guidance
- **CISA BC/DR Guidelines** — Federal cybersecurity and infrastructure continuity
- **SOC 2 Availability Criteria** — For technology and SaaS organisations
- **HIPAA Contingency Planning** — Healthcare data and operations continuity

Across these frameworks, Dave understands the full BC/DR lifecycle: risk assessment, Business Impact Analysis, RTO/RPO definition, recovery strategy design, plan documentation, and testing and exercise planning.

### 2.2 How Dave Works

Dave operates through natural conversation. There are no forms to fill out, no templates to download, and no project kickoff meetings to schedule. A user describes their organisation, its critical functions, technology environment, and risk concerns — and Dave responds with expert-level analysis, structured outputs, and specific recommendations.

- **Text and voice interaction** — type or speak, Dave responds in full detail
- **Document-aware** — upload existing policies or risk registers for Dave to reference during the session
- **Section-by-section methodology** — BIA first, then RTOs/RPOs, then recovery strategies, then communication plans
- **Iterative refinement** — ask follow-up questions, request revisions, drill into specific scenarios
- **Immediate PDF export** — every output can be downloaded as a branded, formatted report immediately

## 3. The Speed Advantage

Speed is the most immediately visible advantage of the AI-assisted approach. What traditionally takes months now takes hours or days.

### 3.1 Side-by-Side Timeline Comparison

| Phase | Traditional | Dave (Avsentia) |
|-------|-------------|-----------------|
|-------|-------------|-----------------|

|                            |              |                                 |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Engagement / Onboarding    | 2 – 6 weeks  | Immediate (minutes)             |
| Risk & Scope Assessment    | 2 – 4 weeks  | Same session (1–2 hours)        |
| Business Impact Analysis   | 4 – 8 weeks  | Same session (2–4 hours)        |
| RTO / RPO Definition       | 2 – 4 weeks  | Same session (1–2 hours)        |
| Recovery Strategy Design   | 3 – 6 weeks  | Same session or next session    |
| Plan Documentation         | 4 – 8 weeks  | Continuous — export per section |
| Internal Review & Revision | 3 – 6 weeks  | Real-time — ask Dave to revise  |
| Final Approval Package     | 2 – 4 weeks  | Days (compile exported PDFs)    |
| TOTAL                      | 3 – 6 months | 2 – 5 days                      |

3.2 Why Speed Matters Beyond Efficiency

A faster planning cycle has direct business risk implications:

- **Regulatory pressure** — Regulators increasingly expect current, tested BC/DR plans. An organisation that starts planning after receiving an audit finding may have only 60–90 days to remediate.
- **M&A and integration** — Post-acquisition timelines do not pause for a six-month consulting engagement. Dave can produce a combined-entity BC/DR baseline within days.
- **Incident aftermath** — After a disruptive incident, the plan must be updated to reflect lessons learned. Traditional re-engagement takes weeks; Dave does it in hours.
- **New system deployments** — Every major technology change should trigger a BIA review. With Dave, that review can happen in the same sprint as the deployment.

## 4. The Efficiency Advantage

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Speed measures elapsed time. Efficiency measures how much useful work is produced per unit of effort. By both measures, the AI-assisted approach outperforms the traditional model.

### 4.1 No Scheduling Overhead

Traditional BC/DR engagements are structured around stakeholder availability. Consultants must schedule interviews with department heads, IT leadership, operations managers, HR, and finance — each of whom has competing priorities. It is common for a single BIA workshop to require three rounds of scheduling before it occurs.

Dave eliminates this entirely. He is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A CISO can start a BIA at 11:00 PM before a Monday board presentation. A risk manager in Singapore can work through recovery strategies during their business day without waiting for a U.S.-based consultant to become available.

### 4.2 No Rework from Miscommunication

In traditional engagements, a significant portion of project time is spent on rework caused by miscommunication. A BIA draft comes back with incorrect critical functions, wrong RTO targets, or missing dependencies. The correction cycle adds weeks.

With Dave, corrections are immediate. If an RTO is wrong, the user says 'the RTO for payment processing should be 4 hours, not 24 hours' and Dave updates the analysis on the spot. There is no change order, no revised Statement of Work, and no waiting.

### 4.3 Consistency of Method

Human consultants vary. A junior associate may miss critical dependencies that a senior partner would catch. Dave applies the same methodology on every engagement, for every client, every time. The BIA framework, the RTO/RPO derivation logic, the recovery strategy evaluation criteria — all are consistent and deterministic.

### 4.4 Living, Updatable Plans

Because Dave is always available and costs nothing per additional conversation, plans can be updated continuously rather than on an annual cycle. When a new vendor is onboarded, a five-minute conversation with Dave produces an updated dependency analysis. When a new regulation is published, Dave can review the existing plan and identify gaps the same day.

#### Key Insight

Traditional BC/DR plans are point-in-time documents. Dave-assisted plans are living documents — updated as frequently as the organisation changes. The marginal cost of an update is zero beyond the subscription.

## 5. The Cost Advantage

Cost is where the contrast between traditional and AI-assisted BC/DR planning is most dramatic. The difference is not incremental — it is structural.

### 5.1 Traditional Cost Structure

BC/DR consulting is billed primarily on time and materials. Senior practitioners command \$200–\$350 per hour; mid-level consultants bill at \$125–\$200 per hour. A complete initial engagement for a mid-size organisation typically involves 200–400 total billable hours.

| Service Component            | Hours          | Typical Cost                |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| BIA Interviews & Analysis    | 40 – 80 hrs    | \$8,000 – \$28,000          |
| Risk Assessment              | 20 – 40 hrs    | \$4,000 – \$14,000          |
| Plan Writing & Documentation | 60 – 120 hrs   | \$12,000 – \$42,000         |
| Strategy Design              | 30 – 60 hrs    | \$6,000 – \$21,000          |
| Review & Revisions           | 20 – 50 hrs    | \$4,000 – \$17,500          |
| Tabletop Exercise Design     | 15 – 30 hrs    | \$3,000 – \$10,500          |
| Annual Maintenance           | 30 – 60 hrs/yr | \$6,000 – \$21,000/yr       |
| <b>TOTAL (Year 1)</b>        | ~200 – 400 hrs | <b>\$43,000 – \$154,000</b> |

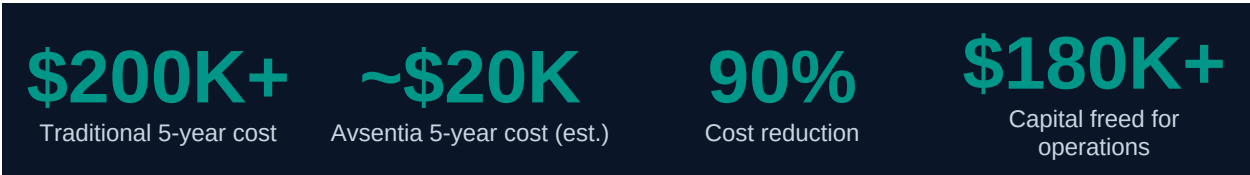
### 5.2 Avsentia Cost Structure

Avsentia is offered as a subscription service. There are no hourly rates, no change orders, no overage charges for additional queries, and no separate fees for revisions. Organisations select a plan tier and receive access to Dave for the duration of the subscription.

| Dimension                | Traditional Approach      | Avsentia + Dave              |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Cost Model</b>        | Hourly / project billing  | Fixed monthly subscription   |
| <b>Initial Plan Cost</b> | \$43,000 – \$154,000      | Fraction of traditional cost |
| <b>Revision Cost</b>     | \$150–\$350 per hour      | Included in subscription     |
| <b>Annual Updates</b>    | \$6,000 – \$21,000/yr     | Included in subscription     |
| <b>Availability</b>      | Business hours, scheduled | 24 / 7 / 365, on demand      |
| <b>Update Frequency</b>  | Annual (typical)          | Continuous, as needed        |

### 5.3 Five-Year Cost Comparison

When viewed over a five-year horizon — which includes initial planning, annual updates, and periodic major revisions — the cost differential becomes even more pronounced:



## 6. Quality, Compliance & Methodology

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A lower cost and faster delivery only matter if the output quality is sufficient to meet regulatory expectations and protect the organisation. Dave is built on the same frameworks that govern professional BC/DR practice.

### 6.1 Framework Alignment

Every plan Dave produces is grounded in established BC/DR standards:

- **NIST SP 800-34** — alignment ensures federal and regulated-industry compliance requirements are addressed
- **ISO 22301** — structure provides internationally recognised continuity management system documentation
- **Recovery strategy guidance** — maps to FFIEC, HIPAA, and SOC 2 requirements where applicable
- **Test and exercise planning** — follows NIST and DHS recommended tabletop and functional exercise formats

### 6.2 Structured, Auditable Output

Dave produces structured documents, not informal notes. BIA outputs include critical function rankings, dependency maps, and RTO/RPO justifications. Recovery strategies include prioritised options with cost-benefit framing. Plans include owner assignments, review schedules, and version history fields — everything an auditor or regulator expects to see.

### 6.3 Honest About Limitations

Plans produced with Dave's assistance should be reviewed by the organisation's legal and compliance teams before formal adoption. Dave will flag areas where local regulation, insurance requirements, or contractual obligations may impose specific requirements that go beyond his general guidance.

Important: Dave provides expert BC/DR guidance based on established frameworks. He is not a licensed professional engineer, attorney, or certified auditor. All plans should be reviewed internally and validated against jurisdiction-specific requirements before formal adoption.

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## 7. Who Benefits Most

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### 7.1 Small and Mid-Size Businesses

SMBs face the same disruption risks as large enterprises but lack the budget for traditional consulting engagements. Dave makes expert-level BC/DR accessible to any organisation regardless of size. A 20-person professional services firm can produce the same quality of plan as a Fortune 500 company — in days, at a predictable monthly cost.

### 7.2 Organisations Facing Regulatory Deadlines

When a regulator issues a finding, a merger requires compliance sign-off, or a cyber incident triggers a board mandate, the organisation needs a plan fast. Dave's ability to produce a working plan in days — rather than months — is mission-critical in these scenarios.

### 7.3 Enterprise Supplemental Use

Larger organisations with existing BC/DR programmes can use Dave to accelerate BIA updates for individual business units, stress-test existing recovery strategies against new threat scenarios, train new staff on BC/DR concepts interactively, and produce department-level contingency plans that complement the enterprise programme.

### 7.4 High-Requirement Industries

- **Financial Services** — OCC, FFIEC, and SEC continuity expectations; tight RTO/RPO targets for transaction systems
- **Healthcare** — HIPAA contingency planning requirements; clinical operations continuity
- **Technology / SaaS** — SOC 2 Availability criteria; customer SLA commitments
- **Government Contractors** — FISMA, CMMC, and FedRAMP continuity documentation requirements
- **Professional Services** — Client contract continuity obligations; knowledge worker recovery planning

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## 8. Data Privacy & Plan Ownership

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Avsentia is designed with a clear principle: your BC/DR plans belong to you.

### 8.1 No Plan Storage by Default

Avsentia does not store or retain BC/DR plan content. Every output Dave produces is exported by the user as a PDF and managed within the organisation's own document management systems. This model means there is no third-party dependency for plan retrieval during an actual incident — you hold your own plans, on your own infrastructure.

### 8.2 Optional Offsite Storage

For organisations that require third-party offsite document storage as part of their own recovery strategy, Avsentia offers an optional paid offsite storage add-on. This service is separate from the core subscription and available on request through the Billing page at [avsentia.com](https://avsentia.com).

### 8.3 Account Data Security

Account credentials, subscription information, and reference documents uploaded to assist Dave during planning sessions are stored with encryption at rest and in transit. Access is authenticated and audit-logged. Reference documents are used only to assist Dave in the session for which they are uploaded.

## 9. Conclusion

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery planning is no longer a discipline reserved for organisations with six-figure consulting budgets and six-month timelines. AI-assisted planning — through Avsentia's Dave — has fundamentally changed what is possible.

Dave delivers the expertise of a seasoned BC/DR consultant, available instantly, at any time, without scheduling overhead, and at a cost that any organisation can sustain. The speed advantage — days instead of months — means plans can be kept current. The efficiency advantage — no rework, no miscommunication, no waiting — means more gets done in every session. The cost advantage — 80–90% below traditional consulting — means the savings can be reinvested in the resilience controls the plans identify.

The question is no longer whether organisations can afford AI-assisted BC/DR planning. The question is whether they can afford not to adopt it.

### About Avsentia LLC

Avsentia is an AI-powered Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery platform purpose-built to make expert BC/DR planning accessible, affordable, and continuously current for organisations of every size. Dave, our AI consultant, combines the depth of a senior BC/DR practitioner with the speed and availability of modern AI.

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