

## The Price of Entry in Today's BC Employment Market

Certification has gone from being an extra to being a necessity.

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**T**HE RECENT ANNUAL SALARY SURVEY CONDUCTED BY BC Management (Newport Beach, CA) reported in the May/June issue of *Continuity Insights* (pages 26-29) had both good news and bad news for business continuity (BC) professionals seeking guidance on compensation. The good news is that gaining certification in the field often leads to either an immediate bonus or higher salary adjustment.

The bad news is that prospects for a raise among the majority of continuity consultants fell — the data show that salaries fell by more than 21 percent. Even more important is the fact that certification is increasingly a requirement for landing a position in the BC profession.

Cheyene Haase, senior account manager for BC Management, has been recruiting in this field for more than four years. She observes, "I have found it interesting that when I first started, having certification was unusual. People did it as an extra check box on the resume. It has become much more of a necessity today. Jobs that I fill for clients demand that professionals have certification."

Many certifications exist, including the ABCP, CBCP and MBCP designations offered through DRI International. Many hiring managers are asking specifically for these designations; they specifically state that the CBCP is a prerequisite in today's complex business environment. BC Management reported that at least 75 percent of employers are seeking the designation.

At higher levels, including some director positions, some recruiters are even finding that employers want the MBCP designation (Master of Business Continuity Planning). This designation requires more expertise, thus the field of candidates is much smaller.

In a business environment in which many executives have not received increases or have taken pay cuts, we are seeing that people who are certified are the ones getting pay increases. Salaries are down overall, according to the salary survey; overall, the BC Management results show a 2.3 percent salary decrease for corporate BC professionals and a 21.7 percent decrease for independent contractors. However, if you take a closer look, a good many people have enjoyed

salary increases in selected geographic regions and in certain positions with higher levels of experience and certification.

### Certified BC Planners Wear Many Hats

The latest findings also point to clear trends in the professional profile of BC planners. Increasingly, directors of BC must provide physical and plant security, emergency preparedness plans, and continuity programs as well as guarding information assets and protecting data.

Physical plant management, human resources management and creating contingencies for information resources are all a part of the job today. Some people might have once said that information technology (IT) was the whole role or largest piece of the puzzle, but not according to the hiring trends found by the recruiter.

Watch for more integration of the seemingly disparate roles for both information architects and continuity planning across the entire enterprise. Today's forward-thinking companies will hire a director above that infrastructure to make sure they have an enterprise-wide person who understands both sides of the equation. With this in mind, these employers need people who are top-notch as speakers and experts in their fields. Education is an obvious lynchpin to make this connection.

"The person must be a leader," Haase believes. "We are not in an either/or situation anymore. Hiring authorities demand people who can speak to the board of directors. Successful candidates need to make the case for continuity planning and effectively explain that something as simple as a water main break or a computer hacker could bring a firm down for a few hours and cost millions of dollars. If someone has the ability to perform in front of the executive management team, additional professional education can enhance his or her next career move."

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Tom Mawson spoke at the 2003 *Continuity Insights* Management Conference.

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