



Understanding Business Processes and Critical Capabilities

A Closer Look at Business Impact Analysis with U.S. Anesthesia Partners

The Problem

Like many healthcare organizations, U.S. Anesthesia Partners (USAP) have committed to improving and evolving their approach to business impact analysis (BIA) and the role BIAs play in operational resilience, cybersecurity, risk management, and compliance.

The question is, can they successfully respond to disruptions—for example, a cyberattack or other security issues?

The answer at USAP was once subjective as executive leadership and program managers had very different ideas based on different goals, objectives, and priorities.

“We all knew that we needed to have an objective way to figure out which processes that we wanted to invest the time to do continuity planning,” Mike Spies, USAP CIO said. “What we talked about a lot was that the business impact analysis really reached into the business, but it wasn’t enough to just engage the business, we also had to engage our teams.”

Spies said everyone at USAP understood continuity planning was important, but people were split about what that actually meant in terms of preparation.

“For some, it was a complete focus on disaster response planning with the thought that if we are prepared for a disaster, then we’ve got our continuity plans, and there’s nothing left to worry about. We’re prepared.”

USAP understood it needed plans to respond to and recover from disruptions. Still, team members also knew that to protect the business, it had to incorporate key business objectives, like understanding Recovery Time Objectives (RTOs) and Recovery Point Objectives (RPOs) and the role response plans play in achieving important milestones.

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The Solution

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Clearwater helped USAP conduct cross-team interviews to learn more about the processes and to educate its team about the role of disaster response and business continuity in its success.

At first, team members were highly system focused, but over time, they could refocus on understanding that the BIA wasn’t about systems but the work and processes each team did. From there, they narrowed those down to the five most critical processes and where they fit in the larger resiliency picture.

That gave the BIA the right context and helped put into focus the impact of a loss of any of those processes from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

“That’s been helpful for us to know what the expectation of the business is in terms of the recovery time and recovery point,” Spies said. “And now we can go back and shore up some of the systems that we have to make sure we meet that and even close the gap if we can. But now they’ve got the proper context.”





About USAP

USAP is the leading single-specialty anesthesia practice, dedicated to providing high-quality anesthesia services to over 2.3 million patients across the nation annually. With over 4,200 clinicians and expertise in many anesthesia subspecialties, including pediatric, cardiac and OB anesthesia, USAP sets the standard for high quality patient care. Its data-driven quality metrics enable continuous innovation and improvements that are shared across USAP via a robust Clinical Quality Committee and quality framework.

This helps facilitate the delivery of consistent, high quality services for patients, surgeons, facilities and payers. The company's clinicians serve healthcare communities in Texas, Florida, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Maryland. For more information on USAP, please visit usap.com.

About Clearwater

Clearwater helps organizations across the healthcare ecosystem move to a more secure, compliant, and resilient state so they can achieve their missions. The company provides a deep pool of experts across a broad range of cybersecurity, privacy, and compliance domains, purpose-built software that enables efficient identification and management of cybersecurity and compliance risks, and a tech-enabled, 24x7x365 Security Operations Center with managed threat detection and response capabilities. To learn more, please visit www.clearwatersecurity.com.

Results

Now, on a regular basis, Spies can give leadership updates about plans, how they're put in place, and how they will get structured along the way.

"I think that just making sure they understood, and again that they got in that whole chicken-or-the-egg conversation, because there were some folks that just felt like this was an IT responsibility, but through education and knowing the difference between a disaster recovery plan and a continuity plan and how those work really helped distinguish them so they knew what we were responsible for," Spies said. "And it is about making sure we had disaster recovery plans and that the plans met the expectations of the business and that the business could define and set those."

This helped emphasize that a business impact analysis is a business exercise, not an IT exercise.

"The engagement that we got was outstanding," Spies explained. "And now I think they see the process, and we're now moving forward to actually working to build out the continuity plans. We're seeing they're going to reap the benefit of the strong data that we captured. That's going to accelerate efforts."

What USAP Says

"The business impact analysis engagement with Clearwater surpassed our expectations. Beyond simply documenting the information required in order to begin creating a business continuity plan, this work facilitated a thorough comprehension of our business processes and the underlying critical capabilities that supported them. In all actuality, it would have been very advantageous for us to have done this project with Clearwater much earlier because now I have a much clearer understanding of my organization."

Jeremy Singleton

U.S. Anesthesia Partners Information Security Director

Learn More

Whether you need help with risk analysis, responding to OCR, or a comprehensive approach to your cybersecurity and compliance program, we can help.