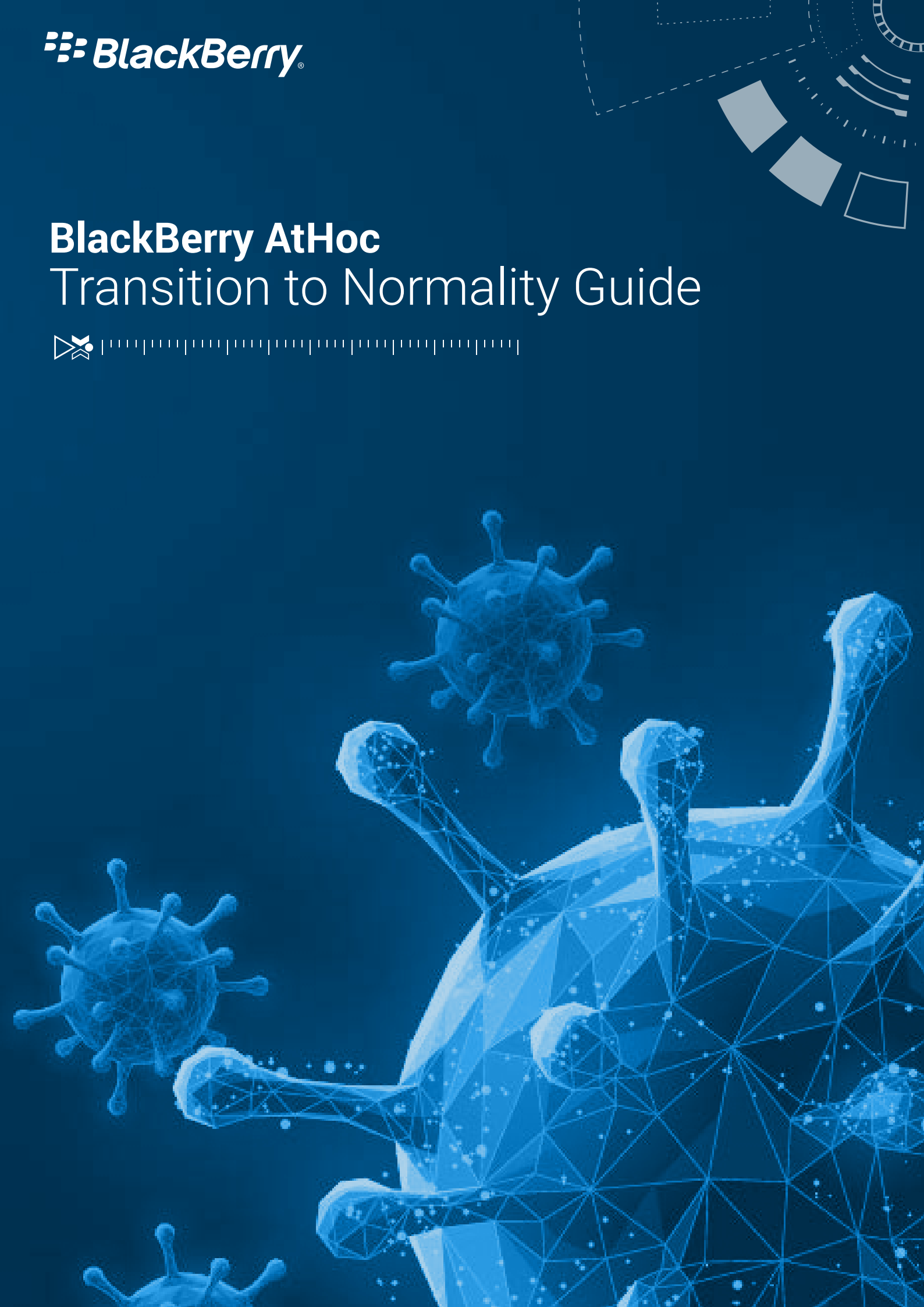


# BlackBerry AtHoc Transition to Normality Guide



# Transitioning through normality phase

Organizational resilience refers to the ability of an organization to absorb and adapt in a changing environment<sup>1</sup>. A resilient organization (or the wider community or society) has the ability and capacity to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper.

Resilience is a strategic capability and goes beyond crisis management. It involves learning from experiences and adopting best practices to deliver business improvement by building competence and capability across all aspects of an organization.

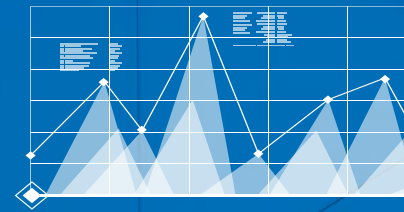
With the world now experiencing an unprecedented global pandemic event with COVID-19<sup>2</sup>, organizations have been forced to take a head on approach in managing this crisis, which is now acknowledged by a majority of governments, societies and resilience practitioners to be a threat that does not conform to conventional risk scenarios. Where a crisis management plan is established, organizations and communities will have better control at the initial phase, thus contributing to greater resilience.



1. ISO 22316:2017 – Security and resilience, Organizational resilience (March 2017)

2. World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 (11 March 2020)

# Conventional crisis management thinking



BlackBerry® AtHoc® provides a secure unified communications platform for enabling networked critical communications and emergency notifications, both inside and outside your organization.

The ability of an organization to sustain its resilience effort requires the organization to understand and develop essential crisis management frameworks and processes. Typically, frameworks will encompass the phases of preparedness, response and recovery. At the preparedness phase, the identification and prioritization of risks that threaten the existence and continuity of an organization's delivery of critical business functions is essential for the follow up design of incident response and contingency plans. As a common approach, organizations may develop plans intended to respond to various identified risk scenarios (i.e.: human-caused, natural or environmental threats).

Once these plans have been developed, they need to be communicated for validation. This activity can often be a laborious and repetitive process as it will depend on the complexity of the plan(s), size of the organization, business footprint coverage (state, regional or global), and also the need to comply with relevant regulatory measures that may influence the depth or scope of communications required.

Hence, the preparedness phase must be well thought through, even before an organization can be assessed for its readiness to respond to identified organizational threats.



# Complexities in sustaining resilience

While crisis management planning can help to mitigate an organization's risk exposure during a potentially disruptive event, the events leading up to the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic as well as recent developments and measures recommended by global health authorities and various governments, have posed a considerable challenge to sustaining an organization's resilience.

Almost overnight, organizations have been required to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) that quickly went out of stock, abide to workplace safety and health compliance and declaration requirements, communicate stringent personal hygiene measures, and ultimately adhere to mandatory lockdown measures (regardless whether partial or full), causing business disruptions. While some organizations managed to experience a temporary degradation of service delivery, others ended up with permanent closures. Organizations that were resilient were able to execute their business continuity plans leading to a vast majority of operations to be transitioned to work-from-home for employees. One of the most notable consequences of this pandemic is that organizations had a rapid crash course in resilience and business continuity planning.

As we begin to see governments transitioning through the "normality phase" and trying to open their economy via a phased approach, organizations have to be prepared for the possibility that cluster outbreaks may still occur. When that happens, businesses must be prepared to revert to a potential lockdown mode and once again experience the inconvenience of continuing their business via alternative means.







Being resilient requires organizations to have an effective communications plan and platform to rapidly disseminate information to stakeholders when the need arises despite disruptions to operations. Organizations should know that this current pandemic crisis will not be the only threat today, and that other threats previously identified in the risk register may also occur. The following are common communication observations:

- Initial alerts and warnings received often needs to be re-broadcasted through various communication platforms, thus causing delays in critical information dissemination
- Acknowledgement of received information is recorded in various formats - following post-recovery where an after-action review (AAR) needs to be performed it will take some time to collate and validate
- Accuracy of information communicated, particularly where it may be relayed through multiple parties
- Adherence to timely situation updates, regardless at the frontlines, or to official media outlets
- Currency of information by the time it reaches the crisis management team or media spokesperson
- Absence of a common operating communications platform (or its reliability), leading to different response stakeholders within the affected community not being able to seamlessly collaborate with one another
- Potential for misinformation in today's environment, where information can be relayed from multiple sources (worst, distorted), and the general public may not know which is the official source to refer to
- Cyber security risks, particularly where the adopted communications platform is insecure, non-compliant or unstable

# Enhancing resilience during normality transition phase

For communications to be effective in sustaining an organization's resilience, the following should be considered regardless if it is applied at the strategic, operational, or tactical levels:

- Uphold the principal of "true source and one voice" for information (or instructions)
- Conduct a final review of "what needs to be said" from pre-prepared messages before broadcasting
- Exercise discipline in timely dissemination of critical information
- Be ready to push out information once validated and relevant
- Implement a system or process that minimizes dissemination error
- Ensure all intended recipients receive them at the same time
- Be certain that information reaches out to intended stakeholders and is acknowledged
- To mitigate potential security risks, ensure your means of communications abides to the relevant security requirements defined in your respective industry/sector

With on-going developments to the current pandemic crisis and the potential of other risks materializing, any investment made in a reliable communications platform should be able to: send out critical alerts in the most expeditious manner; enable accountability of actions taken; facilitate the collection of critical information on operational or tactical responders and crisis management units; and, support collaboration of multiple stakeholders in a harmonized and secured environment. Overall, it should be able to provide clear visibility and situational awareness of the current crisis, without having to rely on multiple dis-jointed sources or causing additional stress loads to your communications process. With the current pandemic and safe distancing measures to abide with, such a platform should be accessible regardless of device platform, location, as well as minimal human involvement.



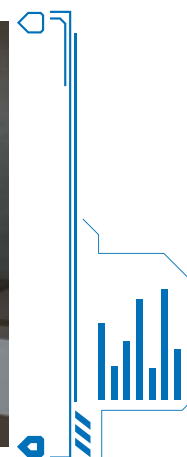


# A new normal

At this uncertain stage in the crisis, organizations must continue to ensure their businesses are prepared and can adapt to (sometimes sudden) disruptions. This ability to adapt at short notice should be part of an organizations “new normal.” At the foundation of these potentially long-lasting requirements and conditions is the continuous need to have agile resilience measures in place.

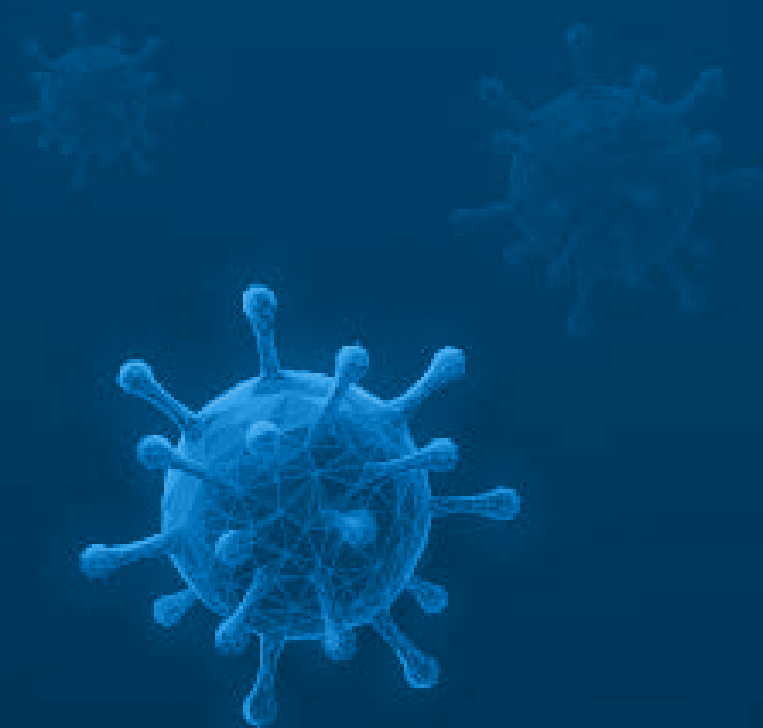
To sustain an organization’s resilience, partnering with the government as well as with reliable and resilient stakeholders or solution providers can greatly help to facilitate this capability. The same applies to investing in a critical communications platform solution for your organization or community, where it is essential to ensure consistency and reliability of information flow to intended stakeholders during critical moments.

For more information and current updates on the COVID-19 situation, do visit the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).





To discuss your communication challenges with a BlackBerry specialist,  
please visit: [blackberry.com/contactsales](https://blackberry.com/contactsales)



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