What does the future hold for Business Continuity Management professionals?

The results of the PwC/BCI Business Continuity Management Futures Survey

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In the summer of 2016 the BCI and PwC came together to tackle a question that has been in the air for some time: has the emergence of interest in organisational resilience altered the career paths of those working in Business Continuity Management? And whether it has or not, what does the future hold for BCM and the professionals that deliver it?

Those of us working at the BCI and PwC get to work with many BCM and risk and resilience related professionals across many industries and countries, and we have seen significant change emerge, particularly over the past few years. Our organisations and their strategies have evolved to meet changing circumstances, economies and stakeholder needs.

BCM has been embedded in many of our workplaces (though certainly not all) and its acceptance as business-as-usual has helped support the emergence of the wider concept of ‘organisational resilience’, which in turn has opened up new conversations for some BCM leaders, particularly those working at the most senior levels.

What we wanted to know from the research was about the reality in your organisation and what you, as a key stakeholder in the future of BCM and its associated activity, think has, is or will change.

As we prepared the survey those of us creating it reflected on our collective experience and observations, and wanted to test whether what we were seeing was as widespread as we felt it might be:
When people entered the BCM industry 20 years ago, it was often as a result of being well-known in their organisations for being highly capable and knowing the company inside out. These ‘older hands’ talk about getting into BCM “by accident” and had no significant competition for the role when it was created. By contrast, today universities are graduating whole classes of students: that’s hundreds of people every year who want to enter the industry. We wanted to know how people at all stages of their careers viewed current industry prospects and how they wanted their careers to progress.

The emergence of organisational resilience and its associated Standard has reinforced an evolution in thinking from the top. Business leaders value BCM and increasingly see that organisational resilience is strengthened when areas of the business focused on protecting it work together closely. In many organisations we see that BCM, Risk, Technology, Security and other resilience disciplines work with the business but rarely work well with each other; business leaders recognise this is an inefficient approach to maximising resilience and require change. With new standards and some regulator focus on resilience, we wanted to understand the concerns and opportunities that ‘organisational resilience’ is presenting to professionals.
About the results

We issued an open invitation to joint PwC/BCI survey in late 2016. The online survey was sent to our membership and contact lists and was shared through appropriate forums on networks such as LinkedIn.

We received a large volume of responses which were scrutinised for spam, and data sets that were too incomplete to be included in the analysis. We analysed 741 individual responses.

The survey focused on capturing quantitative data from these participants, and invited open text responses to some questions.

At the BCI World conference in November 2016 we ran a session to debate the findings. Participating delegates included experienced BCM leaders, heads of resilience, BCM managers, co-ordinators and administrators and a class of university students studying to enter the profession. During this session we captured debate and comment quoted herein.

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey
About the responders

How did you get started in BCM?

“I was trading currency at an investment bank and they created this role for me after 9/11.”

“Accidentally, it was tacked onto another role I wanted.”

“I studied it at University.”

“I was Head of Security first…”

“By accident.”

Source: Discussion about Futures Survey at BCI World 2016

What qualifications do you have?

78% Degree
14% Post-grad
28% Masters
2% PhD

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey 2016

What’s your degree in?

“I don’t have one”

“Computers”

“Sports Psychology”

“I’m studying for a degree in Disaster Management”

“French – over three decades ago”

“Economics”

Source: BCI World Workshop 2016

What other qualifications, or memberships do you have?

What other qualifications, or memberships do you have?

Age: 26-35 (%)
- Emergency Planning: 12%
- Health & Safety: 4%
- Cyber/Information Security: 16%
- Risk: 13%
- Corporate/Physical Security: 0%

Age: 36-45 (%)
- Emergency Planning: 12%
- Health & Safety: 6%
- Cyber/Information Security: 7%
- Risk: 14%
- Corporate/Physical Security: 8%

Age: 46-55 (%)
- Emergency Planning: 16%
- Health & Safety: 4%
- Cyber/Information Security: 8%
- Risk: 9%
- Corporate/Physical Security: 6%

Age: 56-65 (%)
- Emergency Planning: 13%
- Health & Safety: 4%
- Cyber/Information Security: 9%
- Risk: 7%
- Corporate/Physical Security: 7%

Age: Over 65 (%)
- Emergency Planning: 17%
- Health & Safety: 5%
- Cyber/Information Security: 10%
- Risk: 10%
- Corporate/Physical Security: 10%

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey

What do you notice across the age groups?

What are the keys to a successful BCM career?

- Tenacity with flexibility
- Calmness under pressure
- Knowledge of the business
- Relationships across the organisation
- Leadership skills
- Situational awareness

Source: BCI World Workshop 2016

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey 2016
What’s becoming more important to BCM professionals?

What’s changing or has already become more important?

- BCM: 37%
- Exercising BCM plans: 48%
- Crisis mgt planning: 56%
- Exercising crisis plans: 55%
- IT resilience: 58%
- IT disaster recovery: 55%

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey

What else?

- 62% Expanding remit beyond “traditional” BCM
- 53% Working closely with InfoSec
- 45% Working closely with Risk Mgt
- 42% Working closely with IT
- 37% Working closely with security
- 46% Defining operational resilience for the org

Are our organisations resilient enough?

- 37% believed there was a clear understanding of what makes their organisation more resilient
- 22% believed their organisation is fully equipped to survive disruptions and major incidents
- 63% believe they are somewhat equipped
- 43% believe it is somewhat resilient
- 23% believe their organisation is resilient

Source: PwC/London First Resilience Survey, 2015

What do leaders think about organisational resilience?

- 90% believe that resilience is greater when functions such as Risk Management, Business Continuity, ITDR and Security are joined up
- 37% believe that these areas are appropriately joined up

Source: PwC/London First Resilience Survey, 2015
What are BCM professionals planning to do next?

Interest in resilience increases career opportunities for BCM professionals:

56% say resilience increases career options for BCM professionals

66% of those who deliver BCM in-house

Career aspiration quotes from individuals:

“IT based Business Continuity Management”

“Global Business Continuity Manager”

“A role that encompasses BCM, resilience and security”

“Head the Enterprise Risk Program”

“Enterprise Risk Management senior position with a global organisation.”

Intendons of those who’ll move roles within 2 years:

- Remain within current specialist function: 59%
- Remain within current organisation: 62%
- Taking on more responsibility in the same department: 12%
- Taking on more responsibility across multiple departments: 16%
- Moving into a different field: 21%

How are we equipping ourselves for change?

- Want additional qualifications or memberships: 66%
- Want initial or additional BCI qualifications/memberships: 32%
- Want risk related qualifications/memberships: 22%
- Want IT or Information Security related qualifications/memberships: 14%

Most commonly cited options in further study plans:
- Risk Management
- Cyber resilience
- Organisational resilience
- BCM diploma
- NEBOSH/ health & safety
- Project management
- Leadership and management

Source: BCI/PwC Futures Survey and discussion at BCI World 2016

Source: PwC/BCI Futures Survey

Source: BCI World Workshop 2016
1. **Education and opportunity.**

Individuals in the BCM industry are highly qualified. In a profession where the consensus of hiring managers participating in the discussion was that experience is more important than academic qualification during most recruitments, that’s an interesting finding. However, older hands hold a diverse range of degrees from aquatics through French to economics, while the students are due to graduate in studies more focused on business continuity, disaster management and emergency planning. 28% of individuals who responded to the survey have masters degrees and discussion suggests these are more focused on their current specialist business area. There is also the emergence of Masters degrees that cater to those looking to, perhaps, increase the breadth of their career: examples include programmes in “Business Continuity, Security and Risk” and “Organisational Resilience” and, again, discussion suggests these are among the more popular choices for BCM professionals looking to leverage academia in their career paths. Building on previous research by the BCI that showed that those with more senior levels of BCI membership tend to command higher salaries in the industry\(^2\), clear are conclusions from this research are that deep experience is valued highly but well-chosen studies, qualifications and memberships can be leveraged to open new career opportunities.

2. **BCM, crisis and technology.**

Where BCM is in place, there is an increasing focus on the need to deliver crisis management planning and technology resilience, with this work usually being led, championed or supported by the BCM team. While BCM is maturing (37% said it would become even more important in their organisations) there is an increased focus on crisis management planning and exercising, where more than 55% said that focus on crisis capability was becoming even more important. Similarly, 58% said the same for IT resilience, which is about preventing disruption, which now takes a slight (3%) lead over IT disaster recovery in terms of near future focus. Indeed, both the BCI and PwC have seen an increase in requirements, planning and exercise/testing activity in both these arenas.

3. **It’s not just about BCM any more, it’s about BCM’s vital contribution to resilience.**

BCM roles continue to present an interesting and varied career that gives post-holders a spectacular understanding of their organisation, and a brilliant network of contacts within it. 62% believe that many BCM functions will need to expand their remits, and around half of us believe it’s becoming more important to work closely with areas such as Cyber and Information Security, Risk Management, IT and Security (among others). Indeed, a quick scan of recruitment boards during the research period showed many jobs being advertised as hybrids between

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**Emerging themes**

While there were many interesting research findings, and a number of follow-up questions we’d like to pose, there were some clear themes that came out of the research:
BCM and one or more of the other areas, particularly those posts at more senior levels. Businesses are also responding, by requiring closer working and joined-up approaches between the functions to maximise effectiveness and minimise silo mentalities to increase resilience. In turn, professional services firms such as PwC are called upon to carry out comparative health checks and deliver services across the ‘operational resilience disciplines’ to increase effectiveness through pragmatic alignment. Many BCM jobs remain unchanged by these developments, but 66% of people delivering BCM in-house believe that current interest in resilience provides them with increased career opportunities and opens up the way to do things perhaps their predecessors did not.

4. Determining our own paths.

One of the things that struck us most during the research and the discussion in subsequent sessions on the findings at BCI World, is that both organisations and individuals are benefiting where BCM has matured in an organisation. Organisations are, of course, better prepared to manage disruptions but often recognise that BCM leaders have a deep understanding of how their organisations really work, from the bricks and mortar to the technology to the people. They are leveraging the individuals but also demanding more of them and their counterparts in other operational resilience disciplines, by requiring them to act cohesively and maximise the resilience they’ve already invested in. Similarly some BCM leaders are taking note of the opportunities this trend may offer them, and creating and taking opportunities to not only progress to lead BCM but, where they have other interests, also explore other opportunities including, in some cases, shooting straight towards securing a Board position.

This PwC operational resilience benchmark provides a gap analysis across operational resilience functions, showing the current vs the desired state of maturity.
We would like to thank all the participants of the research. If you would like to speak to any of the researchers to learn more about the study or how the BCI or PwC can support you, please get in touch.

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PwC
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The BCI is the world-leading professional association for business continuity and resilience professionals. The vast experience of our global membership and partner network is built into our world class training and education, thought leadership and research programmes. The BCI offers a wide range of resources and networking opportunities for the continuing professional development of our communities worldwide.
To learn more or discuss the future of BCM and Resilience in your organisation please feel free to contact us:

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