



**Business Continuity Institute**

**Responding To The Resilience Challenge**

**BCI 20/20 UK Group white paper**



# Introduction

## Responding to the resilience challenge

Recent events continue to demonstrate the increasing interconnectedness of risks and how it makes organizations more vulnerable to serious disruption.

Global macroeconomic turbulence in emerging markets, growing regulatory demands and security risks, as well as complex supply chains, for example, make it more challenging for organizations to thrive<sup>1</sup>. As such, the resilience challenge to organizations is more important today than ever.

The BCI 20/20 UK Group had previously articulated the resilience challenge to organizations and the business continuity (BC) profession. Main discussion points are:

Resilience is a strategic quality within organizations which enables them to withstand and adapt to sudden change.

Business continuity has a leading role in building this quality given its understanding of a business and where value is generated within it.

Business continuity is integral to resilience as long as it displays cross-boundary collaboration, understanding of networked risks, and agility during crises.

As an important management discipline, BC has to think more holistically and work more closely with other management disciplines (e.g. risk management, information/physical security, supply chain management, etc.).

1. References pertaining to the global risk landscape are identified in the 'Further Reading' section.



Resilience as an enabler sets up a platform for BC practitioners to influence top management.



Business continuity practitioners nonetheless need to engage in practices that increase their impact across the organization. Some of these practices include increasing awareness of high-level goals, adopting interdisciplinary and cross-functional engagement, communicating better with other management disciplines within organizations, improving understanding of risks, better emphasising adaptive capacity and agility as well as developing leadership skills.

The BCI 20/20 UK Group aims to respond to the resilience challenge as outlined above and proposes to reflect on current professional practices. Responding to the resilience challenge ultimately involves understanding BC's place within organizational resilience. Leading resilience practice in organizations where relevant is also a challenge to BC professionals. Aimed primarily at the BCI membership, this paper is meant to be read alongside recent work in the field<sup>2</sup>. It also seeks to address the leadership within organizations as it clarifies how resilience features within decision making. The main arguments include:

- Understanding the competencies, knowledge and experience required in a resilience role.
- Developing competencies, knowledge and experience through relevant qualifications and professional training.
- Business continuity professionals should respond to the strategic imperative of resilience and its place at the heart of organizational decision-making by leading resilience practice. Business continuity's challenge is to lead management disciplines in building organizational resilience.

## Section 2

### Towards resilience practice

“ Responding to the resilience challenge requires ambition. Resilience presents opportunities to organizations as an enabler of change – turning change into a positive instead of a negative. ”

Resilience also opens prospects for BCI members, and BC professionals in general, to engage in a broader field and enables them to take on leadership roles within their organizations. Fundamentally, the resilience challenge involves developing professional practice oriented towards the strategic requirements for building resilience across an organization.

“ Business continuity provides a key contribution towards the strategic appreciation of resilience through its fundamental understanding of an organization's interests, key stakeholders, brand, reputation and value-creating activities. ”

This potentially makes BC the focal point of coordination among fellow management disciplines (e.g. risk management, information/physical security, supply chain management, emergency planning, etc.). Consequently, BC professionals have the opportunity to lead resilience practice across their organizations with their knowledge of the impacts of disruption and their work towards safeguarding business interests.

Business continuity professionals must then leverage their understanding and skill sets to contribute towards organizational resilience. Complementing these with the competencies, knowledge and experience derived from other management disciplines will enable BC professionals to broaden their practice. It is essential therefore to understand which competencies, knowledge and experience can build on an individual's practical foundation.



Future resilience practice will challenge professionals to know what is important to a business.

“From a conceptual standpoint, professionals must be able to draw upon key insights from management disciplines and marshal these in influencing organizational decision making.”

While many disciplines (e.g. BC, risk, information/physical security) have their own areas reporting at top level, there is a gap in professionals who can combine these insights into a readily understandable and actionable format for presentation to top management. A key competence may therefore involve communicating the imperative actions and the value of resilience across an organization.

“From a functional standpoint, professionals must be able to deploy appropriate professional practices from business continuity practice and other management disciplines as needed.”

Future resilience practice will require interdisciplinary solutions involving specialists drawn from a variety of fields. The challenge for BCI members is therefore to use BC as their foundation for gaining complementary knowledge and experience from disciplines such as risk management, information and physical security among others. This knowledge must be applied when engaging counterparts in the management disciplines to solve resilience related challenges. An important competency for BC professionals may involve applying continuity strategies in coordination with risk management, information/physical security, health and safety and supply chain management counterparts, for example. Business continuity professionals may also need to reflect on their approach to analysis, taking a broader view of risks and threats.





From a leadership standpoint, professionals must be able to put resilience at the top of an organization's agenda by exercising influence and authority – 'managing up' or leading appropriately across all levels.



Business continuity's unique understanding of value creation within an organization can influence governance and promote informed decision making. In these uncertain times, BC can push organizations to become more agile in dealing with emerging risks, while taking a clear role in crisis leadership when risks materialise into disruptions. Business continuity's contributions into protecting an organization's brand and dealing with important stakeholders are also essential to reputation management, an important capability for today's business leaders. In short, BC professionals can take advantage of leadership opportunities within their organizations given their expertise. This can only happen however, if they influence others and use BC as an enabler for business success – whether it is profit, turnover, new business, safety or other relevant organizational metrics.

It is anticipated that there will be other drivers of future resilience practice. While different requirements exist among industry sectors or geographical regions, legal and regulatory compliance will continue to significantly influence organizational behaviour. Maintaining trust and performing obligations among organizations, their suppliers and regulators, as well as their wider network will remain essential. Upholding the highest standards of practice will also push organizations to improve their processes.

As such, professionals must remain aware of these drivers that influence organizations in their industry and geographical area. Existing resources such as the BCI Good Practice Guidelines emphasise this message and this should be reinforced moving forward. Consequently, this will require organizations to retain expertise in adapting corporate decision making to these drivers. A key competency for BC practitioners in particular may include demonstrating the relationship between resilience and regulatory compliance.

As increasing amounts of resources are spent on compliance, resilience practice must also be able to create efficiencies by harmonising efforts in different areas (e.g. BC, risk management, information/physical security, supply chain management, etc.). More importantly, as resilience is inextricably linked to ethical behaviour, BC professionals should influence organizations to 'do the right thing' – using compliance as a starting point in maintaining trust and reinforcing good corporate behaviour.

Given this context, it is suggested that

“ BC professionals are well placed to respond to the resilience challenge. The application of BC technical and professional practices which enable identifying threats, estimating impact and ensuring continuity amidst disruption require a strategic view of an organization which is a necessity for resilience practice. ”

This is merely a starting point, however, BC professionals among others are required to familiarise themselves with other management disciplines and engage their counterparts in interdisciplinary teams. Business continuity professionals are also challenged to exercise leadership and communicate strategically in order to put resilience at the top of an organization's agenda.





## Section 3

### Developing competencies, knowledge and experience integral to resilience

“ Responding to the challenge of resilience practice will consequently involve the development of relevant competencies, knowledge and experience. ”

**Individual practitioners** should use their BC background as a foundation for understanding other management disciplines. Taking academic programmes, certification and training opportunities can complement their existing skill sets. They should also maximise their professional membership and networks. Resilience practice is expected to grow into a highly technical role which will require practitioners to bridge academic knowledge and professional experience. Practitioners will also be expected to address the gap between existing technical expertise among management disciplines to decision making at the top. With the emergence of highly qualified resilience professionals with backgrounds in BC, risk and disaster management among others, the job market will be increasingly competitive with roles demanding greater technical proficiency and leadership capability.

**Professional bodies** in the management disciplines should take the lead in identifying key skills, working with their counterparts and exploring joint offers if necessary. Not one professional body can entirely lay claim to the competencies, knowledge and experience required for resilience practice. The challenge is out there for professional bodies to recognise skills gained in different settings and build on these in preparing their constituents for the rigours of emerging resilience roles.

**Regulators** should engage with individual practitioners and businesses, identifying the skills required in reinforcing trust and good corporate behaviour. Their experience in calling organizations into account offers a good perspective in improving governance and leadership. This is crucial in building that influence and authority necessary for BC practitioners to call for changes in organizational culture.

**Universities**, building on the literature which identifies these competencies, knowledge and experience, should engage with their professional counterparts and develop appropriate qualifications in resilience. While current qualifications are becoming more technical and enable graduates to gain sophisticated knowledge, these must also be fit for purpose to the demands of organizations.

**Business leaders** must support efforts to develop these competencies, knowledge and experience by recommending further training, certification and promotion of good practice. Management commitment is essential to developing resilience practice which ultimately redounds to the bottom line. Resilience helps enable organizations to better deploy corporate strategy and thrive amidst the challenges of a complex, changing business environment.

Aspiring for a more senior-level role and taking the lead in resilience practice are good starting points for the BC profession in developing desired competencies, knowledge and experience. This should be supported by relevant education, training and professional certification which allows professionals to gain the technical proficiency required to take on future resilience roles.



## Section 4

### Moving towards resilience

“The professional practices required to build resilience are ultimately underpinned by the competencies, knowledge and experience of individual practitioners. Business continuity, among other management disciplines, is well-placed to take up roles in this emerging field.”

Senior resilience roles are likely to be technical, interdisciplinary and require high-level strategic thinking. However, they need to use their background as a ‘scaffold’ for acquiring complementary competencies, knowledge and experience from other disciplines.

“Resilience practice as such will require reaching out to other management disciplines in forming relevant skills which correspond to the technical, interdisciplinary and strategic outlook advocated by the resilience paradigm.”

The challenge moving forward is therefore twofold. Professional bodies, regulators, universities and business leaders are all challenged to provide opportunities for individual practitioners to develop their competencies, knowledge and experience and ensure access to a broad range of resilience-focused information and training. Individual practitioners, particularly in BC, are encouraged to gain relevant academic qualifications, professional certificates and training which will complement their existing skill sets and make them adaptable to the rigours of resilience practice. In the end, this will enable the profession to respond to the resilience challenge and undertake their responsibilities towards building more resilient organizations.



## Further Reading

Further resources about resilience as a concept and the challenges organizations face in building resilience are available below:

1. **BCI (2016) : [Position Statement on Organizational Resilience](#)**  
This recent statement from the BCI aims to add clarity to the position of business continuity within the context of organizational resilience.
2. **BCI (2015) : [The Resilience Challenge for The Business Continuity Profession](#)**  
This white paper of the BCI UK 20/20 Group elaborates on resilience and its implications to organizations and professional practice.
3. **BCI (2015) : [Post-conference proceedings: How to rise to the resilience challenge](#)**  
Insights shared during the 2015 BCI World Conference and Exhibition are featured in this publication. One of the highlights include a piece written by Dr Rob MacFarlane MBCI (Hon) which elaborates on the concept of organizational resilience.
4. **BCI (2013) : [The Good Practice Guidelines \(Global Edition\)](#)**  
This remains as one of the most authoritative texts in BC and is an independent body of knowledge for BC practice.
5. **BCI (2016) : [Horizon Scan Report](#)**  
This annual report lists the risks and threats to organizations that practitioners are most concerned about. It also reveals emerging trends that may impact organizations in the future.
6. **World Economic Forum (2016) : [The Global Risks Report \(11th edition\)](#)**  
This comprehensive report lays out the global risk landscape, demonstrates the interconnectedness of risks and uncovers socio-economic and demographic trends which influence risks.
7. **BCI (2015) : [Supply Chain Resilience Report](#)**  
This annual report outlines the challenges to and threats affecting global supply chains.
8. **British Standards Institution (2014) : [BS 65000: Guidance to Organizational Resilience](#)**  
This British Standard defines resilience and its implications to organizations and professional practice. This guidance proposes principles of resilience and discusses the benefits and challenges to building resilience.
9. **BCI (2016) : [BCM Legislations, Regulations, Standards and Good Practice](#)**  
BCI members submit the latest legislations, regulations, standards and good practice guidelines affecting their country in this compilation.
10. **Crask, James (2014) : [The Interplay Between Resilience and Regulation](#)**  
This Continuity article by James Crask considers the development of organizational resilience and how regulatory instruments may respond.
11. **AIRMIC (2014) : [Roads To Resilience: Building Dynamic Approaches To Risk To Achieve Future Success](#)**  
This report by AIRMIC outlines the characteristics that underpin successful corporate resilience. Written primarily for a risk management audience, its insights are nonetheless useful for practitioners of BC and other management disciplines.



## About the Author

Patrick Alcantara DBCI (BCI Senior Research Associate) wrote this paper. He is a senior research practitioner with extensive publication, project management and public speaking experience. He has delivered research projects for organizations such as Zurich, BSI and the UK Department of Business Innovation & Skills. He is also part of the Editorial Board of the international, peer-reviewed Journal of Business Continuity & Emergency Planning. He obtained a Diploma in Business Continuity Management from Bucks New University and was awarded a Distinction for a Masters by the Institute of Education (now University College London) and Deusto University.



He can be contacted at [patrick.alcantara@thebci.org](mailto:patrick.alcantara@thebci.org).

## About the BCI 20/20 UK Group

The BCI 20/20 UK Think Tank gathers the best minds in BC and related fields. Its members are seasoned professionals with extensive experience in different sectors. The BCI 20/20 UK Think Tank is composed of:

- Tim Astley MBCI
- Kevin Brear MBCI
- Malcolm Brooke MBCI
- Martin Caddick MBCI
- Rick Cudworth
- John Frost MBCI
- Andy Hasler AMBCI
- Jeff Lewis MBCI
- Dr Robert MacFarlane Hon MBCI
- John Milne
- John Tesh CBE
- John White
- Vince West MBCI

Bill Crichton FBCI chairs the BCI 20/20 UK Think Tank. He has 23+ years of experience in business continuity management (BCM) and is a long-standing Fellow of the BCI. He has completed 14 years on the BCI Board including 2 years as Vice-Chair.

Deborah Higgins MBCI (BCI Head of Learning and Development) and Andrew Scott CBCI (BCI Senior Communications Manager) represent the BCI Central Office in the 20/20 UK Group.

## About the BCI

Founded in 1994 with the aim of promoting a more resilient world, the Business Continuity Institute (BCI) has established itself as the world's leading Institute for business continuity and resilience. The BCI has become the membership and certifying organization of choice for business continuity and resilience professionals globally with over 8,000 members in more than 100 countries, working in an estimated 3,000 organizations in the private, public and third sectors.

The vast experience of the Institute's broad membership and partner network is built into its world class education, continuing professional development and networking activities. Every year, more than 1,500 people choose BCI training, with options ranging from short awareness raising tools to a full academic qualification, available online and in a classroom. The Institute stands for excellence in the resilience profession and its globally recognised Certified grades provide assurance of technical and professional competency. The BCI offers a wide range of resources for professionals seeking to raise their organization's level of resilience and its extensive thought leadership and research programme helps drive the industry forward. With approximately 120 Partners worldwide, the BCI Partnership offers organizations the opportunity to work with the BCI in promoting best practice in business continuity and resilience.

The BCI welcomes everyone with an interest in building resilient organizations from newcomers, experienced professionals and organizations. Further information about the BCI is available at [www.thebci.org](http://www.thebci.org).

## Contact the BCI

Andrew Scott CBCI  
*Senior Communications Manager*

10-11 Southview Park  
Marsack Street  
Caversham RG4 5AF  
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 118 947 8215  
[research@thebci.org](mailto:research@thebci.org)







10-11 Southview Park  
Marsack Street  
Caversham  
RG4 5AF  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)118 947 8215  
[www.thebci.org](http://www.thebci.org)