

In addition, as an incident unfolds, these specialist skills may be used concurrently, consecutively, or some not at all. The same person cannot be hands-on managing evacuation, fire-fighting, coordinating the corporate BCP, and giving press calls.

...resilience is an operational cost – a cost of good service management – rather than being attributable to BC or DR. The BC or DR project simply identifies the operational weakness.

11.14 Will BC Converge With Operations?

Can the increasing focus on resiliency lead to convergence of BC with operations?

Certainly the two activities have common interests in reducing unplanned downtime. For over 20 years of BC projects, at some point, whenever our recommendations for risk reduction or redundancy have been presented, someone from the client organization has grumbled that BC or DR is costing a fortune in resilience. I have always argued back that resilience is an operational cost – a cost of good service management – rather than being attributable to BC or DR. The BC or DR project simply identifies the operational weakness. However, there are many situations in which the BIA, undertaken for BC, can add weight to operational business cases (e.g., for a document management system or disk mirroring). So, just as with all the other activities identified above, I would argue that there are interests in common, and cooperation between all these activities is essential. However, that does not necessarily imply convergence of activities – that is, the integration of them under a single discipline.

11.15 Is a Silo Mentality the Answer?

That is not to say we can afford to tolerate a silo mentality, a risk also identified by a Riskskill³ survey, which notes:

Borne out of the desire to conduct business correctly, increasingly complicated silo structures have grown up in the corporate world, with the corporate tsars of compliance vying for power with those running policy, risk, and traditional management functions such as IT and finance. It is possible that key decisions...will fall between these silos so that one either finds managers that are only partially responsible for an issue or a whole gaggle of managers who all feel that something is “their bag.” The only solution is to have cross-functional internal teams working closely with non-execs to allocate and refine roles and responsibilities.

Thus, our cross-functional approach to risk must be:

- ▶ Comprehensive? Yes.
- ▶ Compatible? Yes.
- ▶ Consistent? Yes.
- ▶ Congruent? Yes.
- ▶ Coordinated? Yes.
- ▶ Complete, in that every aspect of risk is covered somewhere in the organization? Absolutely.
- ▶ But convergent in that it becomes a single, integrated entity? No.

You can't be everywhere at once, nor can you be all things to all people.

As long as all the bases are covered, communication and coordination are in place between the various risk management aspects, politics are avoided, and the parts add up to a coherent overall approach, it really does not matter where or to whom they ultimately report.

11.2 Your BC Career: Broad or Deep

Having said all that, a BC professional may be able to develop skills, especially in a small organization, sufficient to cover many of the roles above. In that case, broad BC may be an option, but I would suggest that there is a practical limit to career growth in broad BC.

So, if broad offers a less likely career path, how about deep?

11.2.1 Choosing Among Deep Career Development Paths

One definition of a specialist is “someone who digs a deeper and deeper hole for themselves.” But that’s a little simplistic. Deep BCM suggests that while you remain a BCM specialist, your career progression comes from one of three paths.

First Path: Technology Specific

The first, limited, path is to switch from a technology-specific skill – IT DR – to a broader-based BC arena. However, you still have to answer the “broad or deep” question at some point.

Second Path: Join a Larger Organization

The second path is to move from a smaller organization to a larger one – from being a lone voice to being part of a bigger, maybe national, then an international organization’s BCM operations, finally becoming a global BC manager for a multinational organization.

Third Path: Transition from Company Resource to Consultant

The third path is to move from being an in-company resource to becoming a BC consultant – either as an independent or as part of a larger, international consultancy. This move will provide wide experience across industries, against different cultures and environments.

Other Paths: Risk Manager vs. Outage Planner

Interestingly, John Jackson, Executive VP, Fusion Risk Management, offers a different view.⁴ He sees a shift in the way BC and DR professionals view and approach their roles which will eventually see two types of practitioners emerge: *risk managers* and *outage planners*.

Risk managers will evolve their focus to understand and help to manage risks, prioritizing them to lessen the impact on the organization. When it comes to supply chain issues, risk managers will need to understand the pros and cons of outsourcing and supply chain risk, and work with procurement and finance teams to understand the impact on their risk profile. Risk managers will need to understand the impact that social media trends and tools can have and devise approaches to benefit from or lessen the impact of these growing ways of life. In terms of their approach to resiliency, risk managers will understand that the best approach is to avoid the impact on the organization, wherever possible, and look for ways to improve resiliency at every level. Risk managers will learn so much about their organizations that some will be groomed for a much bigger role, possibly in the C-suite.

Outage planners will engineer and execute the required tasks to respond to the unmitigated risks, should they occur. Outage planners will have an important role, but with a different perspective. These practitioners will continue to focus on reacting to the outages and planning the recovery process, adapting the trends along the way. Outage planners, for example, will need to understand how social media tools might fit into their planning efforts and utilize these capabilities to

improve their effectiveness. Outage planners will accept that while resiliency is certainly a sought after goal, not all incidents will be avoidable, and quality, actionable plans are still required. Outage planners will certainly provide a critical and needed role, but, in Jackson's opinion, will have a different long-term impact and opportunity in the organization.

Perhaps the variety of environments in which BC professionals operate, the different industries, the different sizes, the different geographic reach, leaves room for different types of careers and different career paths.

If you are entering BC from another discipline – for instance, IT, security, the military, facilities management, finance, or audit – you can bring a broader perspective to BC ...Broad experience suggests adaptability and offers opportunities.

Which is your path?

If you are embarking on BC as your first career or broadening from IT DR to BC, a future as a BC practitioner requires that you get a sound grounding in its basic disciplines. You need to “get your time in” and should probably consider changes of employment (the economy permitting) in scale of organization and industry to gain broader BC and risk experience as a career direction within BC and risk management.

If you are entering BC from another discipline – for instance, IT, security, the military, facilities management, finance, or audit – you can bring a broader perspective to BC. My own experience includes all those and supply chain management, albeit some deeper than others, and such a broad background helps the BC practitioner relate to the business. It also offers the opportunity to continue to develop skills within an earlier discipline while also enhancing BC skills. Broad experience suggests adaptability and offers opportunities.

Either background could offer the possibility of moving into consulting and training. The former runs the danger of having only one string to the consulting bow, whereas the second approach may offer a wider range of opportunities built on your additional skillsets. While opportunities for BC and risk professionals in academia offer the possibilities for research and publication, it is a fairly narrow market.

For the very experienced practitioner, there are at least three choices:

- ▶ Expert within an organization and moving on within the BC profession – perhaps with local, national, international scope. This is demanding employment that offers relative security.
- ▶ BC expert within an established consulting company, which can lead to extensive travel and periods of absence from home at the wish of your employer, and put a strain on relationships.
- ▶ Independent BC consultant, which can be a precarious existence but rewarding both financially and in terms of flexibility.

Your choice depends on your temperament (your own personal appetite for risk!) and your domestic circumstances. Young kids and mortgages tend to require security of employment rather than encourage the risk of solo consulting. Personally, I have absolutely no regrets about making the jump from employee to employer: I've met some amazing people, travelled to far-flung places, worked in a variety of industries – and have seen, learned and done things that just wouldn't have happened any other way. I love my work – every new client is a new experience, and I can't wait to get my teeth into the next assignment. Whatever route you choose, I hope you enjoy your career in BC as much as I have enjoyed mine.