

Editorial

Received: July 2023

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A new volume of the journal is always an opportunity for reflection on how far we have come as a professional community. I have been involved with the journal since its inception, mainly as editor. I have shared this journey with our publisher, members of the Editorial Board and so many authors who have contributed significant pieces of thought leadership.

In our early issues, we featured pandemics, supply chain risk, top management buy-in and natural disasters. In that sense little has changed as all of these remain hot topics. However, our understanding of these subjects and the wealth of experience gleaned along the way makes us infinitely better prepared to deal with them.

I believe this journal provides a major historical archive of how business continuity and emergency management disciplines have evolved. They are still separate specialisations but now cover a much broader but coordinated tapestry of threats and vulnerabilities. National and international standards bodies have played a role in building awareness in the importance of the subject matter, as have the United Nations (UN) based initiatives such as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). The professional institutes in these fields have also played a very influential role by strengthening alliances and building understanding across governments and public sector bodies as well as major corporates. It has been a great pleasure to have been part of this evolution.

Recently, I attended and spoke at the inaugural collegiate conference being jointly run by DRI International and the

Institute for Disaster and Risk Reduction (IRDR) at University College, London. Many of the attendees were master's students from the university who were planning a future career in the field. Among the speakers were experts in a wide range of risk and resilience topics from the commercial, government and academic world. Another joint project I have been involved with is working with DRI International and The National Prevention Leadership Initiative (NPLI) based at Harvard. We have been looking at the connection and distinction between resilience and sustainability as a business driver. This has also encompassed the extent to which environmental, social and governance (ESG) is an increasing business risk and opportunity. Who would have thought 30 years ago that the simple idea of planning to better protect your business against disasters would be commanding the interest of the world's most prestigious universities and many top graduates.

As we move ahead, there seems to be no slowing up of emerging issues that are adding to the challenges of successfully running any organisation. We have been generally aware of the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) applications for decades, but this has suddenly become a major concern for debate in the public square. For the general public, AI is a convenient single description of a range of technologies that have the possibility to dramatically change the way we live and work. Many argue that they offer great potential for improving productivity and efficiency. However, they will inevitably

lead to a major reconstruction of the labour market with possible wide-scale unrest and disorder. If not properly regulated and monitored they also will be used for unethical purposes — putting safety, security, and privacy of individuals, companies and nations at serious risk.

At a time of rapidly changing technology, risk inevitably increases as the current push towards electric vehicles (EV) illustrates. Business and individual lives and livelihoods require a degree of stability and if this is impossible stress and conflict are inevitable. In the changing vehicle market, nothing is certain with manufacturers, distributors, retailers, car rental firms, vehicle finance and leasing companies gambling their future investments on uncertain government direction and unproven technical solutions. Companies cannot rely on taxation policies in the various jurisdictions in which they operate, they cannot rely on governments continuing with current

environmental policies and they cannot even rely on the date for phasing out petrol/diesel vehicles. This might be extended, tightened or even scrapped by changing governments with different political objectives. A list of unknowns includes the technical limit on battery performance, a shortage of vital metals for battery production, environmental concerns on battery disposal, hydrogen cells as an alternative to EV, the viability of synthetic fuels and long-term electricity availability without fossil fuel generation or massive investment in nuclear energy. This is before the clear customer resistance to the quality and performance of current EV offerings is factored in.

I suspect that as a community we will have much to concern ourselves with for many years to come. I hope you enjoy this issue of the journal and would welcome your contributions if you have an interest in authoring a paper for future editions.

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