

# How to get risk management onto a boardroom agenda – and keep it there

More likely to succeed (Drivers)	Less likely to succeed (Challenges)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sponsor understanding of the issue</li> <li>– Personal reputation and career prospects</li> <li>– Real, immediate threat/continuity risk – a trigger</li> <li>– Visible recent incidents and their impacts</li> <li>– Responsibility to stakeholders</li> <li>– Regulatory/governance demand for BCM</li> <li>– Strong credible management support</li> <li>– Strong desire for compliance</li> <li>– Possibility of more agreeable, faster decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Technical language and complexity</li> <li>– Historical assumption of adequacy</li> <li>– Rarely visited territory for decision-makers</li> <li>– Inaccessible decision-makers</li> <li>– New in-post Director</li> <li>– Non-budgeted cost with revenue component</li> <li>– Competition for space on Board agenda</li> <li>– Competition for funds</li> <li>– Not overtly mission-aligned</li> </ul>

- Draft a proposal evaluating the benefits of each recommended option and providing a fully budgeted implementation plan:
  - \* Summarised and detailed tangible business case with costs that add up
  - \* Undeniable significance, quantifying the risk
  - \* Policy and mission-alignment, capable of being supported
  - \* Professionally underwritten and independently produced
  - \* Factually supported
  - \* Familiar, using a format compatible with board papers
  - \* Uncontroversial, with no surprises or errors
  - \* Clear and brief, with no technical jargon
  - \* Inclusive of viable alternatives, including 'do nothing'
  - \* Checked and re-checked.
  
- Secure a senior sponsor capable of promoting and guiding the proposal through the various stages of acceptance. The individual concerned should be:
  - \* Bought-in, supportive and accessible
  - \* Influential and well-connected
  - \* Able to explain and sell it to others
  - \* Eloquent on business continuity management and allied subjects
  - \* Tuned into the board's appetite for risk and expenditure.
  
- Lessons:
  - \* Risk or business continuity management is unlikely to be a high-agenda regular board item for most organisations
  - \* However, you can smooth the path and boost sympathy for its role

- \* External factors can delay or accelerate approval
- \* Board familiarity and buy-in is a major advantage.

Setting out to 'make the board listen' is a mistake: we should aim instead to be 'giving the board a message it needs to hear'. The success of any unplanned un-budgeted business continuity management initiative is attributable to alignment, presentation, content and networking. It requires us to become skilled salespeople as well as risk management experts. Presentations skills to the fore, please. Communications planning is vital.