



EBOOK

# Five Tips for Strengthening Organizational Resilience in 2022

Applying Lessons from 2021 to Better Manage Risk




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A photograph of three business professionals (two men and one woman) sitting around a table in a meeting, overlaid with a blue tint. The woman is on the left, looking at a laptop. The man in the center is gesturing with his hands while speaking. The man on the right is listening.

“Organizational Resilience is creating a **“bend, not break”** capability. It helps your organization take a punch and come out stronger on the back end.”

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BRIAN ZAWADA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AT CASTELLAN



# What is Organizational Resilience?

In an era of rising risk and uncertainty, your business is all but guaranteed to face one or more critical events in the coming months.

Organizational resilience is your ability to bounce back from a threat. It takes work to become good at responding to crises, requiring a deep understanding of your priorities and vulnerabilities. Done right, your business can learn lessons from every situation and empower stronger responses for the future.

Effective organizational resilience relies on careful planning, clearly defined rules for mitigation and response, and the ability to improvise in the moment, as noted in a recent Harvard Business Review article.<sup>1</sup> It takes time and practice to develop.

Resilience is by design. It doesn't happen by accident.



These five tips will help you **strengthen resilience** in your own organization.

“**More than half** of risk management and security professionals say their risk responses are **less than effective** today.”

Source: “Failing To Plan Is Planning To Fail,” Forrester Consulting, October 2021.

1. “Building Organizational Resilience”, Suarez and Montes, Harvard Business Review, 2020.

## TIP #1

# Define Resilience in Your Organization

Organizational resilience can look different for everyone, even within the same company. The CEO may be concerned about maintaining the mission statement; the CFO wants to preserve the bottom line; and the COO is focused on keeping production rolling. These competing priorities often contribute to a siloed approach to critical event management (CEM). In fact, in a recent survey of more than 450 crisis management professionals, fewer than one percent of responding organizations split CEM across multiple functions.

Effective resilience is built when all sides come together to determine the most important focus in times of crisis, as well as keeping the lines of communication open to ensure cross-functional coordination. Gather the decision-makers together to determine your priorities and how everyone can work together to drive continuous improvement and focus on better business outcomes.

### Ask yourself:

What does “business as usual” look like, and what do you lose when it’s disrupted?

What would it take to recover from a worst-case scenario?





“ In 2021, we had to quickly **adapt** and **evolve**...  
So we moved fast and we broke things.  
Next year will be about backfilling those gaps.”

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STEFANIE DRYSDALE, VICE PRESIDENT OF CYBER AT PRESCIENT





## Key questions:

What would happen if your biggest threat were to occur tomorrow? What about many smaller events all at once?

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Where did you grow the most in 2021? Did that cause stress elsewhere?

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What resources do you have available to monitor and mitigate risks?

## TIP #2

# Identify Your Gaps

Many of the hazards we saw in 2021 are going to stick around for 2022 — from cybersecurity risks to supply chain disruptions to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But the list of potential crises doesn't stop here. That's why it's important to prioritize long-term crisis management BEFORE the next critical event.

While it's impossible to predict every situation, think about the ways that different risks could impact your business. Keep in mind that threats are ever-evolving and rarely occur in isolation; it's not uncommon to face a "crisis within a crisis."

The key is to spend time examining your organization's blind spots. Prioritize ways to address these weaknesses, actively preparing for threats while maintaining the flexibility to handle unpredictable situations. And practice your responses so that you're ready when the time comes.

## TIP #3

# Embrace the Digital Transformation

Over the past year, the world has struggled with the how and when (or the if), we will return to business as usual. But no matter what our new normal becomes, an essential component of ensuring organizational resilience is reducing complexity — and ensuring your digital transformation efforts add value, not unintended challenges.

Acknowledge what you know — and what you don't. A business impact analysis can help you create a “digital model” of your organization. Remember to consider any situational awareness or risk intelligence gaps you've identified; new and emerging communications technology to leverage; and how you will keep data secure and maintain compliance.

The migration to the digital realm also requires a significant amount of trust between organizations and their employees, especially with the dramatic increase in hybrid and remote work. It can be a delicate balancing act of maintaining communications, monitoring work and upholding compliance regulations without creating additional vulnerabilities in your cyber network.

“Firms with highly mature employee experience practices are **28% more likely** to have higher employee accountability, more innovation, lower attrition and better customer outcomes.

Source: “The ROI Of EX”, Forrester Research, Inc., September 3, 2019.



“If you’re not connecting the dots, you’re going to see the **physical repercussions** of digital vulnerability.”

— Stefanie Drysdale, Vice President of Cyber at Prescient

## TIP #4

# Unite Your Cyber and Physical Security

Constant connectivity has had a positive impact for organizations as they work around the clock and around the globe. It has also created a whole new facet of exposure for businesses that had to rapidly adapt to the digital space.

The growing use of Internet of Things (IoT) devices on unsecured networks makes it easy for criminals to exploit weaknesses in business models from any number of angles. And an attack in the digital realm has real-world implications: A compromised client list can expose physical addresses; a disgruntled employee can release sensitive security information; and a disruption in your supply chain can derail your production schedule.

### **What can you do to reconcile these two realms of vulnerability?**

The key is that most digital threats have human instigators. Your HR and IT teams can work together to identify potential risks and address them before they become reality. Perhaps HR receives troubling information about an employee. IT can confirm if they’re exporting concerning data, and then the issue can be resolved quickly, thereby mitigating risk to the organization.





“It’s less about what it takes for your organization to be resilient...and more about asking, **“what heartbeats do you need to protect?”**”

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ANN PICKREN, CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER AT ONSOLVE



## TIP #5

# Speak the Language of the C-Suite

You already know the importance of organizational resilience in preparation for 2022. But how can you convince your C-Suite to support your efforts?

The key is to recognize that you all have the same goal in mind: Ensuring the continued success of your business.

**Here are some ways to become a trusted advisor to your executive team:**

- Don't rely on reports and jargon. Tell them a story.
- Discuss the risk to services and effects on customers.
- Be concrete, and reference specific, real-life events.
- Find meaningful connections to show that your priorities align.





“It’s not a matter of having a **crisis management capability** that lasts for a few days. We must build a competency to look ahead and ask: ‘**what if**’?”

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BRIAN ZAWADA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AT CASTELLAN



For a closer look at strengthening resilience in 2022, [watch the on-demand webinar](#) featuring expert panelists Brian Zawada, COO at Castellan, Stefanie Drysdale, VP of Cyber at Prescient, OnSolve Chief Customer Officer Ann Pickren, and moderator Matt Bradley, OnSolve VP of Global Security Solutions.

