

Why Now?

If you believe the way resilience information is currently brought to executive leadership and the Board is well-defined, mature, and sufficient, there is no need for Operational Resilience Governance™.

If you don't believe that is the case, then perhaps it is time to ask a different question:

What should an executive governance discipline for organizational resilience look like?

ORG is not presented as the final answer. It is the beginning of a conversation about whether such a discipline is needed—and, if it is, what it should become.

Something Has Changed

Organizations have been managing disruption for decades.

Business continuity, disaster recovery, cybersecurity, risk management, emergency management, crisis management, IT operations, facilities, supply chain and other disciplines have each developed increasingly sophisticated capabilities.

So why is the need for something different becoming apparent now?

The answer may not be that organizations lack resilience capabilities.

The problem may be that **the organization has changed faster than the way we govern those capabilities.**

Today's organizations are highly interconnected. A single mission-critical business service may depend upon people, technology, applications, data, facilities, cloud services, telecommunications, third parties and shared enterprise capabilities.

Those dependencies don't follow organizational boundaries.

The organization chart is generally vertical.

The business service is horizontal.

That creates an important governance challenge.

A cybersecurity organization can tell us how cybersecurity is performing. IT can tell us how technology is performing. Business continuity can tell us how continuity capabilities are improving. Risk can tell us what risks have been identified and how they are being managed.

All of that information may be accurate.

But the executive question is different:

What does all of this mean to our ability to continue delivering the services that matter?

More Information Does Not Necessarily Mean More Understanding

This is something I began to see repeatedly through my consulting engagements.

Significant risks were being identified. Capability gaps were being documented. Improvements were being made.

Yet I often found a disconnect between what was known within the organization and what executive management actually needed to understand.

Reporting naturally tends to follow organizational responsibility.

A leader responsible for a particular program is expected to demonstrate that the program is working, that progress is being made, and that the organization is getting better.

There is nothing inherently wrong with that.

In fact, much of my own career was built around a simple question:

What can we do better?

But I also encountered another perspective:

What can I do to demonstrate what I'm doing well?

Those may sound similar, but they can produce very different results.

The first seeks improvement.

The second can become a demonstration of performance.

Organizational structures naturally create ownership boundaries, and those boundaries can cause reporting to become centered on the performance of the program rather than the condition of the organization.

That distinction matters.

An executive does not necessarily need another report telling them how well each individual resilience program is performing.

They need to understand the condition of the business services for which the organization is accountable.

The Resilience Profession Is Changing

This is not an argument that the resilience and continuity professions have failed.

Quite the opposite.

There has been significant evolution in the way resilience practitioners think about their work.

Adaptive Business Continuity, for example, challenged many of the traditional assumptions surrounding continuity planning and placed greater emphasis on people, capability, measurement and continuous improvement.

That evolution is important.

But it raises another question:

Once an organization has developed and improved its capabilities, how does executive leadership understand what those capabilities collectively mean?

That is a different question from how an individual discipline improves its practice.

It is a governance question.

ORG does not seek to replace Business Continuity, Disaster Recovery, Cybersecurity, Risk, Emergency Management, Facilities, IT, Supply Chain or any other specialized discipline.

Those disciplines are necessary.

They provide expertise, capabilities and evidence.

ORG proposes that something else is needed above them:

an executive governance layer that brings the evidence together in the context of the business services that matter.

Expectations Are Changing

There are other indications that the timing is right.

Regulatory expectations around operational resilience are evolving.

Research organizations and business thinkers are increasingly examining organizational resilience, systemic dependency, resilience measurement and the ability of organizations to sustain important operations.

The auditing and assurance profession is also beginning to consider how resilience can be evaluated and how organizations can provide meaningful assurance over their ability to continue operating.

These developments are coming from different directions.

They don't necessarily agree on the answer.

But they point toward the same emerging question:

How do we know?

How do we know whether an organization can continue delivering its important services?

How do we know where the significant weaknesses are?

How do we know whether the investments being made are actually improving the organization's condition?

And perhaps most importantly:

How does executive leadership know?

From Capability to Condition

Organizations have accumulated an enormous amount of resilience knowledge and capability.

The challenge is increasingly one of integration and understanding.

We can know a great deal about individual capabilities without necessarily understanding the condition of the organization as a whole.

An organization can have excellent cybersecurity, a strong continuity program, successful recovery testing and sophisticated risk management—and still have a significant weakness in a mission-critical business service.

The missing information isn't necessarily another measurement.

It is the **relationship between the evidence and the business service.**

This is where ORG begins.

ORG starts with Mission Critical Business Services.

Those services are analyzed and become **Governance Objects**—enduring objects through which their resilience condition can be understood and governed.

The objective is not to replace the underlying capabilities.

It is to provide a way to bring their evidence together so executive leadership can understand:

What do I need to know?

What are we doing about it?

What do you need from me?

That changes the conversation from program performance to organizational condition.

From activity to understanding.

From individual capabilities to the enterprise.

And ultimately, from resilience management to resilience governance.

Why Now?

Perhaps the answer is not that resilience has suddenly become important.

It has always been important.

Perhaps the reason is that we have reached a point where the organization has become sufficiently complex, interconnected and dependent upon distributed capabilities that **executive leadership can no longer rely on disconnected program reporting to understand organizational resilience.**

At the same time, regulators, researchers, auditors and practitioners are beginning to ask harder questions about resilience and assurance.

The need is emerging from multiple directions.

And that may be the real significance of **Why Now?**

We are not starting with a blank sheet of paper.

We have decades of resilience disciplines, experience, research and capability behind us.

What may be missing is an executive discipline that allows leadership to understand what all of that capability means.

ORG Is a Beginning

I don't believe ORG is the final answer.

In fact, I don't believe anyone should be claiming to have the final answer to a discipline that is only beginning to emerge.

ORG is an attempt to define the problem, establish some foundational concepts and begin a conversation about what an executive discipline for organizational resilience might become.

If you believe the way resilience information is currently brought to executive leadership and the Board is well-defined, mature and sufficient, there is no need for ORG.

If you don't believe that is the case, then perhaps it is time to start the conversation.

Not about replacing resilience.

Not about creating another methodology.

But about whether organizational resilience has finally reached the point where it deserves its own executive governance discipline.