ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

Strategic Imperative 2 of the Australian Government's Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy is to develop and promote an organisational resilience body of knowledge and a common understanding of organisational resilience. In undertaking this work it is important to ensure that it meets the needs, and addresses knowledge and information gaps, identified by critical infrastructure stakeholders.

1. Dimensions of leadership

The importance of leadership in shaping a resilience culture is clearly shown in the research to date. What is not explored is how leadership manifests not only in single entities (from the Board and the CEO through to middle management and junior staff) but as a 'social property' that emerges from cooperation between individuals.

- What are the required attributes of the 'leader' and leadership teams to influence an organisational resilience (OR) approach, and how do these qualities contribute to:

  - ✓ Strategy Direction
  - ✓ Culture
  - ✓ Performance
  - ✓ Continuous Improvement
  - ✓ Relationship development and leverage, and
  - ✓ Overall Organisational Resilience

- How does organisational leadership differ (if at all) across situations encountered by the organisation (BAU, crisis, after the event etc.) and/or between the different stages (bands) of Business Maturity?
- What behaviours and attitudes are important to a successful crisis leadership approach?
- How important is 'co-operative leadership' and what qualities are built by leaders operating in pairs or teams?
- How do organisations encourage and utilise other forms of leadership that exist outside of the usual leadership hierarchies and what are the behaviours of those 'non-designated leaders' that are responsible for fostering a resilience culture?

2. CEO tenure

The CEO has a pivotal impact on a range of factors associated with resilience, in particular culture. There has, in recent years, been a trend towards shortening CEO tenure as Boards and shareholders pursue short term profit in favour of long term sustainability, potentially impacting on an organisation's resilience.

- What are the interrelationships and respective roles of 'the Board', the 'CEO', and the 'Executive Team' and how do these linkages influence an organisation's resilience potential?
- What impact does the length of CEO/Chair tenure have on the short/long term resilience of the organisation?
- How do environmental selection pressures (such as share price, shareholder expectations, the expectation of lending institutions) promote or retard different leadership expressions, and how does this affect key decision making?

3. Organisational structures

Structural rigidity and 'stasis' within organisations, no matter how historically successful they may have been, has the tendency to stop them from being able to adapt to changing environments. It has been found that organisational boundaries, hierarchical leadership and silo-based planning often impede growth, and that organisations that embrace change are more likely to prosper.

- How does the structure of an organisation (including its enabling technologies, insurance arrangements, management systems, corporate functions etc.) enhance or impede its resilience potential?
- What are the most effective means of capturing and embedding the emergent resilience qualities of an organisation as it undergoes structural and cultural change?

4. The role of HR

Research has shown that a high level of emphasis is placed on culture when considering an organisation's resilience capability. It is therefore not surprising that human resource management (HR) is identified as fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of an organisation's leadership structure and cultural values.

- What are the cultural drivers behind the HR process, and are HR managers aware of the implications of their selection and retention policies in an OR context?
- How do HR managers engage with other stakeholders, such as business continuity managers, and to what degree are HR strategies aligned with the needs of long term resilience?
- How do HR teams within organisations successfully develop capability to manage adversity?

5. Measuring organisational resilience

Developing ways to measure resilience is key to articulating the business case for organisational resilience. If business can recognise the competitive advantage to be gained by employing resilience practices, the value proposition for OR will more soundly resonate with Boards and CEOs.

- In identifying those organisations often described as resilient, together with the characteristics that drive their resilience potential, is there a suite of tools to be developed that will assist in benchmarking organisational resilience?

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