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Sidestepping Best Practices By Peter Aggus

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Enterprise Risks By Guy Robertson

In a world of risk, there's more to think about than earthquakes, pandemics and cyber-attacks. Equally serious, and a growing area of corporate concern is enterprise risk. It can have a large impact on our markets and money, yet it's neglected in many business resumption plans and continuity programs. It needs to be understood and addressed by senior management.



Fast Recovery – a Five Step Process

1. Assess your Disaster Recovery Plan – identify what's missing or out of date
2. Review your risks
3. Update your DRP
4. Activate mitigation plans including rearchitecting infrastructure for fastest recovery
5. Train and test

For a more extensive document, request "Fast Recovery" from ellen@tmcconsulting.ca.



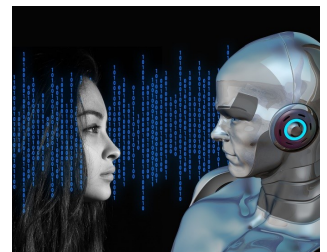
Conversational Intelligence By Thomi Glover

Last month I explored the critical role of conversational intelligence in effective consulting. We saw the way the amygdala, or lizard brain, that has been with us for millions of years impacts not just what we do, the old fight or flight pattern, but also what we are able to hear and how we can move into trusting relationships. Without trust our clients are highly unlikely to want to work with us. Fortunately, it is a skill that anyone can learn.



AI FOMO - The Fear of Missing Out By Ellen Koskinen-Dodgson

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Due Diligence

Most IT equipment needs special protection—like operation in a clean cool environment and not being crashed-into or bumped. We sometimes forget this when we sidestep best practices. Here are some examples of what we've found during IT assessments.

Room Sharing

Others often use 'spare space' in IT rooms as temporary storage for a few boxes. Stacks of storage boxes can topple, a ladder can take out overhead wiring, a mop handle can catch in loose patch panel cables or bump the wrong spot and power down some equipment.

The worst case that we've seen is a small server stored on the floor under someone's desk. This guarantees dust and regular bumping from feet, the office chair and the vacuum cleaner.

Mounting

Best practices tell us how to mount equipment but we sometimes do something on a temporary basis that we plan to come back to later. Later often becomes never. We've seen a network switch balanced on a cardboard box on top of a storage cabinet, just waiting to be vibrated loose and drop onto someone's head.



We've seen a server mounted inside a cupboard—an overheating problem just waiting to happen.

Water

Water (or coffee) damage can be a common cause of system outages. Equipment may be next to drinks waiting to spill. The room may be underneath a bathroom or janitor's closet which are known to flood; or may be in a flood-prone basement.

We know of a case that sounded like it should be safe but wasn't. In the Calgary flood of 2013, a building's backup power system failed. The generator was fine, and safely located on the roof, but the basement power distribution panels were under water.

Power

Power cables are a particular risk. They often drape onto the floor

between the outlet and the equipment. This can turn into a Worksafe tripping incident and unplugged equipment. Plugging the cord back in is easy but some equipment, like servers, do not restart that easily. A reboot followed by a rebuild of important system files may cause your office to be down for possibly a couple of hours or more.

We have seen the same issue caused by cleaners unplugging critical equipment to do the vacuuming.

I was in a computer room once where the manager came in to berate one of the ops staff. In a temper he flung a ring binder onto the table and it slid across and hit the wall, right on the Emergency Shutoff, which took the call centre offline for 90 minutes.

Take a Walkabout

You can find things like this for yourself. If you'd like a checklist, email me and ask.

If you'd like to comment on this article or explore these ideas further, contact me at peter@tmcconsulting.ca.

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Peter, as an engineer & technology management consultant, has developed innovative & cost-effective solutions for clients in many industries.

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Operations Impact

Enterprise risk is a broad and all-encompassing term for a growing category of corporate risk and includes substantial and potentially disruptive challenges to your organization's operations. Among the more common examples are:

- Legislation (from any level of government) that can force operational changes on an organization
- Hostile takeovers
- Mergers
- Budgetary problems and bankruptcies
- Economic downturns—recessions and depressions
- Currency fluctuations
- Product recalls and failures
- Negative activities of foreign governments
- Negative activities of competitors
- Loss of key management and expert technical staff
- Strikes and other job actions
- Outbreak of war or revolution

Enterprise risk can also include the non-physical effects of any other



threat, emergency or disaster. Think of how public health guidelines and orders associated with Covid-19 have caused massive changes in how many organizations do business.

The Consequences

"We're well-prepared for every type of natural disaster," says Dave, a partner in a Vancouver engineering firm. "But a recession presents problems that I'm not sure how to address."

"My administration did not think that we were at risk and then we were advised to shut everything down," says Carol, a support services manager at a BC community college. "We were unprepared, and as a consequence we're struggling to comply with government guidelines. At the same time, the loss of revenue is staggering,

and we are still working on a response to the drop in student numbers and the conversion of our courses for Zoom delivery."

Addressing the Risk

Thoughtful disaster planning provides organizations a better chance of survival. In order to develop effective plans to mitigate enterprise risk, there is a need to involve not only senior management and service delivery personnel, but also legal counsel, external financial advisors, and general disaster planning specialists.

Once your planning group identifies a threat, the next step is to determine ways to deal with it quickly. Include these risks in your Corporate Risk Register and Mitigation Plan. These risks are not going away. Often, delays in response will lead to worse losses.

If you'd like to comment on this article or explore these ideas further, contact me at guy@tmcconsulting.ca.

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Guy Robertson is a senior planner at TMC and an instructor at the Justice Institute of BC and Langara College. He has written five books and numerous articles on corporate security and disaster planning, and offered workshops and lectures at conferences across North America and in the UK.

Conversational Intelligence By *Thomi Glover*

Last month I explored the critical role of conversational intelligence in effective consulting. We saw the way the amygdala, or lizard brain, that has been with us for millions of years impacts not just what we do, the old fight or flight pattern, but also what we are able to hear and how we can move into trusting relationships. Without trust our clients are highly unlikely to want to work with us. Fortunately, it is a skill that anyone can learn.



Get Out of Lizard Brain

How we communicate is critical to help others get out of their lizard brain and into their prefrontal cortex where thinking, not just feeling, resides. It is foundational to building trust. This is a challenge because different words mean different things to different people. The tone of our voice complicates things further.



Things That Work

What can we as professionals do to improve our relationships with our clients, either internal or external? How can we move to shared problem solving and mutual success?

Take It Slow: do not jump to a solution. Even if we think we have the perfect solution for the client's challenge, we first need to ensure we have a shared understanding of what the challenge actually is and how important it might be.

Anxiety Check: we need to be aware of the level of fear and anxiety that is simply "in the air". Among other things, it means we need to take extra time and extra care. Nearly everyone these days goes around with a heightened amygdala, and, building

trust, moving brain activity to the prefrontal cortex, takes time.

The Right Tone: We are tonal creatures. Our neanderthal ancestors communicated with tonal sounds long before they had language. Anyone who has a dog knows how the animal responds to and expresses tone. The way we say what we say, makes a critical difference in what our clients hear, and the extent to which they feel safe in sharing their challenges and ultimately, whether they decide to trust us or not.

If our tone is the least bit too assertive, let alone aggressive, that can create fear and defensiveness. We stay in the "you" or "me" and don't move to the "we".

Define Success: create a shared understanding of success and a safe space to share concerns or problems. The pair of questions that I like to ask each participant are:

1. If there was one thing that could really make a difference to the success of your team / organization, what would it be?
2. And what difference might that mean for you personally?"

Listen: Stay quiet, and listen! Our deep listening speaks volumes about our willingness to really partner, not just create more business. Take the time to make it safe for everyone to acknowledge how they experience their challenges, especially if they fear that they might appear personally inadequate.

With trust, our clients see us as being "on their side."

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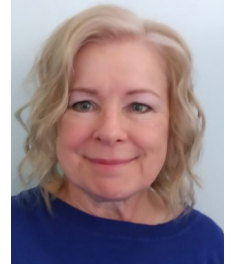
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Thomi is an Executive Coach, Leadership and Organizational Development Consultant and facilitator of custom processes that build effective teams, enhance leadership and develop emotional intelligence.

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AI Is...?

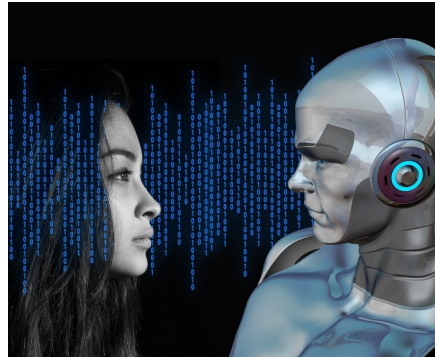
AI can mean different things to different people as it's an umbrella term, defined by Merriam-Webster as the capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior. A given application may present as:

- Process automation incorporating automated "learning" feedback to improve the process
- Image processing to recognize a person or identify an activity
- Human language processing, including emotional tone evaluation, to interpret input, then to generate a realistic and appropriate response.
- Risk assessment and mitigation such as bank fraud prediction
- Self-driving cars

Obstacles to AI

To many people, the most difficult part developing an AI strategy is to imagine the range of possibilities, then decide what might make sense for their organization. It's easy to get stuck before beginning because:

1. **It's too expensive** – we're not a mega-corporation, where a tiny improvement in productivity saves millions of dollars.
2. **It's too difficult** – we don't have



the expertise for AI.

Addressing Obstacles

It's Too Expensive: You don't actually know the costs until you investigate and put together some business cases. Remember, everything has a cost, including inaction.

It's Too Difficult: This is a valid concern. Many organizations don't have expertise when they decide to develop an AI strategy but they solve the problem by engaging consultants and/or hiring AI specialists.

Where to Start

- Establish a steering group
- Educate yourselves
- Check out what others are doing
- Brainstorm/visualize
- Define what useful functions could be delivered by potential projects

- Identify what is lacking for the delivery of these projects – most often this involves data problems

Data Problems

Many organizations are tackling the mass of problems associated with their data:

- What do we have?
- Where is it? Can we overcome silo problems?
- Of all of the duplications and versions, which version is the truth?
- What data is more important (and therefore needs more protection)

The End Game

I believe the major wins with AI will be in empowering humans to use their precious creativity and brainpower to do work that needs creativity and brainpower. Let the AI do the grunt-work – the research, the detail checking, the repetitive stuff. We're heading for a brave new world, in a good sense of the term.

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