



Annual Awards 2011 Entry Form

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Please tick the relevant box below to indicate which category you wish to enter

Risk Manager of the Year	<input type="checkbox"/>	People Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational Risk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategic Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Risk Management Young Achiever of the Year*	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Applicants for Risk Management Young Achiever of the Year should indicate their date of birth here:

N.B. If you wish to enter more than one category, a separate entry form is required for each category.



Executive Summary

Please type your executive summary here. The summary should be no more than 500 words. Please use Arial font, size 11, at 1.5 line spacing. Use additional spacing between paragraphs.

Summary

Back in 2007 risk and its management had become a prominent feature at all management levels across Norfolk County Council. It was regularly discussed at management meetings, member panels and was integrated into our service and business planning processes. So in the main, we were feeling pretty good about ourselves and our achievements.

However our conscience was nagging, there was an area that we believed had been neglected up to this point and that area was 'strategic risk management in our schools'.

Previously, a lot of work had been done with our schools on operational and insurable risks like security, health and safety, fire etc., but we had not provided them with sufficient help to identify strategic risks and ensure business continuity. This is the story of how we set about putting this right.

In 2007 we had 452 schools, there was no way we could tackle them all. After consideration we decided that the largest area of risk was with our high schools. These were essentially medium sized enterprises in their own right and so this is where we concentrated our efforts.

We had developed an approach, but it was untested and knowing schools the way we did we could not hope to reach them with an untested product that had no credible recommendations, that was a recipe for disinterest. However, and fortunately for us, such a credible source materialised in the form of a high school headteacher named George Denby.

George was very interested and allowed us to pilot our approach with his school. The pilot was a great success and with George's help and support we were able to approach all 45 other high schools to offer our strategic risk and business continuity package.

Due to a lack of in-house resource we were unable to deliver these sessions to schools ourselves. This presented the opportunity to enter into a partnership with Zurich Municipal Insurers to deliver the package on our behalf. The package included delivering a workshop with the school's senior leadership team to carry out two main functions;

- Identify the key strategic risks to the delivery of the school's Improvement Plan objectives and;
- Identify and assess the critical activities the school operated under.

The sessions produced a draft Strategic Risk Register and a draft Business Impact Analysis. Further starter documents such as a School Risk Management Policy and a School Business Continuity Plan were also delivered following the workshops with the intention that schools would customised these to their own requirements.

The sessions were a great success and with our follow up support we are now confident that our high schools are equipped with the knowledge and the materials to manage their key strategic risks and ensure the resilience of their school business. Our conscience now rests a little easier.

Please write your main submission here. The submission should be no more than 1500 words. Please use Arial font, size 11, at 1.5 line spacing. Use additional spacing between paragraphs.

What was the need?

Back in 2007 we were feeling pretty smug. We had helped schools manage their operational risks through the completion of a second series of risk ranking visits. These had identified a number of operational risks and we had spent a lot of time and effort putting these right. The results were showing in our property and liability claims data.

On the strategic front we had been heavily involved embedding strategic risk management processes and ideology into the Council's management structures. This was also working well and reaping benefits.

But hidden deep behind the smugness our conscience was nagging, we knew there was a gap and that our work hadn't finished; we had neglected the strategic risk aspect in our schools. This was nagging at us and it was starting to show, we had schools in special measures, financial irregularities and indeed fraud was becoming evident in some of our high schools. It was all very well ensuring that schools had proper security and health and safety procedures but what about the more strategic risks like financial management, the lack of governors, competition for pupils and a lack of resilience with key staff. It was time to act.

The Approach

Phase One – Finding a way in

Our visits to schools to perform our risk ranking surveys, (operational and insurable risks), had highlighted the fact that very few schools had disaster recovery plans in place. This coupled with our duties from the Civil Contingencies Act led us to agree that we needed to include Business Continuity as part of the strategic risk management package we were developing for schools.

Back in 2007 we had 452 schools. We had to be realistic, it was impossible to contemplate a programme of strategic risk management with so many. We prioritised, high schools are large organisations in their own right with multi-million pound budgets and they have hundreds of staff and thousands of pupils. We decided this was the largest area of risk so we agreed to target our 46 high schools.

Now, high schools are busy places and anyone who has attempted to get schools involved in something additional to their core requirements will be familiar with the response, “not at the moment thank you”. So we had to find a way in, we had to find a ‘George’.

In our work embedding risk management across the Council we had been involved with the ‘Children’s Trust for Norfolk’. At one of the Area Trust meetings we were approached by George Denby, Headteacher of Caister High. He was very interested in our risk management approach and thought it would be of benefit to his school. This was a eureka moment, here we had a willing participant, if we could show George that our process had real value to his school he could be a great ally in persuading other schools to participate. This proved to be the case.

In April 2008 we ran a pilot of our process at Caister High, this consisted of a workshop to identify key strategic risks and to look at and assess critical activities. The output was a register of the schools key strategic risks identified against their School Improvement Plan and a Business Impact Analysis. Also included in the output were a Risk Management Policy and Business Continuity Plan templates. These documents were reviewed and customised by the school to fit their environment and culture. Further post workshop visits took place with the school to further develop these documents.

At the end of the pilot process we had a package of documents and a workshop process that would deliver strategic risk management and Business Continuity that was school friendly. We also had a strong and credible advocate in George Denby who said,

“I found the approach very supportive to the management of the school and a useful tool to identify key areas for action”.

We had our way in.

Phase 2 – Delivery

Now we had the process, the documents and the will, however we still needed the approval of the School Improvement Board and the Children’s Services Management Team, however because of the success of the pilot this was granted with no conditions in the Feb of 2009.

Arranging and delivering workshops across the County to 46 high schools is very heavy on resource, we simply did not have sufficient in house. This was overcome by approaching and eventually contracting with Zurich Municipal to deliver the workshops sessions on our behalf.

The delivery process took 18 months between April 2009 and October 2010 and was split into a number of elements:

First Contact

It was important to let schools know what we were trying to achieve so we developed a letter to headteachers explaining the process and also outlining that the School Improvement Board and Children’s Services Management Team had approved the process. We also included the positive message from George.

Headteacher Meeting

These initial meetings were very important it was our chance to showcase what we were offering and what the benefits would be to the school. The meetings were between our representative and the Headteacher and/or Business Manager. At the meetings a date for

the workshop session was agreed.

Pre workshop Pack

To ensure the best cooperation during the sessions we developed and delivered pre workshop packs. These included details on risk management, the intended process, a template to list their critical activities and some risk categories to consider prior to the meeting. The risk categories had to be specific to schools for example, governance, academic, personnel, ICT, management, finance and reputation.

Workshops

The workshops were designed to include the school's senior management team and the Chair of Governors. They were delivered by Zurich Municipal's consultant Tilden Watson. The workshops comprised of two main themes, the identification of key risks and the prioritisation of critical activities. The objective was to create a strategic register of risks to the achievement of the Schools Improvement Plan and a Business Impact Analysis as a starter to a Business Continuity Plan.

Post Workshop Packs

Following the workshop our Zurich Municipal partners developed the draft documents and sent them to us for moderation. Post moderation they were sent to the school. The pack included;

- Draft Risk Register
- Draft Risk Management Policy
- Business Impact Analysis
- Draft Business Continuity Plan

Follow up Arrangements

Immediately following delivery of the workshop pack the school was contacted to offer

support to develop the documents and plans.

We grouped risks into themes and developed risk topic sheets to identify control measures. Some of these control measures had been in place in some schools and it was important to spread good practice.

Articles were written in our regular newsletter “Risk News” providing updates as we progressed through the programme.

To improve the recording and reporting of risks, a web based risk recording database was developed. This enables schools to enter the risk information directly onto the system, produce reports and set reminders for reviewing and monitoring.

Innovation

This project was breaking new ground; strategic risk management in schools was a new concept. Combining strategic risk management and business continuity to deliver better management and resilience had not been done before in our schools and so far as we know, in any coordinated way across the country. Working in partnership with colleagues in Business Continuity and Zurich Municipal was a novel approach for us.

The ability to record school risks directly onto a web based recording and reporting system is a new support for schools.

Impact

Our target was to reach all 46 high schools, however 6 schools declined our offer to take part for various reasons including “moving to Academy status”, “headteacher leaving so can’t commit” and “Ofsted inspection imminent”.

However we did deliver to 40 high schools. The Zurich Municipal facilitators were pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic approach demonstrated by the school's management teams which we feel was influenced by our early face to face visits to sell the process.

A questionnaire was sent to schools some months after the workshops seeking opinions on added benefits. Responses were received from 50% of the schools and these demonstrated a significant level of satisfaction with the process and the value added.

Liaison with our internal auditors had them ask specific questions of the school during formal audit visits regarding the maturity of their risk management process. These in the main provided favourable responses.

Conclusion

The programme from conception to final delivery took around two years. We feel that we have filled the gap; our high schools are no longer neglected in regards to strategic risk management and business continuity.

We are confident that they have the means to manage their key risks and so are better prepared for the uncertainties facing them in these changing times. We feel that they have a much higher degree of resilience as a result of this work and we are confident that they are embedding the concepts of risk management into their everyday management practices.



Main Submission



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