

BCM Bureau November 2011

"Does BCM really warrant a seat at the Board room table or is the cause better served by influencing those already there?"

Response from Hilary Estall, SBCI

As with most questions in life, you have an immediate response and then you take the proverbial "step back" and think about it in more detail. This question is no different.

In an ideal world the answer is "No additional seat is required". However, as such a world doesn't exist, my considered response reflects this.

Every Board of every company is made up of a group of individuals. These individuals all have their own ideas and "drivers" and approach business in their own way. What matters to one member of the Board may hardly feature in another's mind and this is fine (if not a little worrying to some of us mere mortals). This is why the Board was created; to bring a group of professional individuals together for the good of the company.

Company reputation, the ability to continue trading in adverse conditions, to excel over the competition, maintain operational integrity and make a profit is on the minds of all the Board. Why would you need anyone else to enter the Boardroom and remind them of this? You don't! But this isn't what a lot of Boards relate BCM to. Unless the company has suffered a serious incident or is being expected to demonstrate its BCM capability for tendering purposes, chances are it won't be on its radar.

What's needed is for someone within the business (probably who is operationally minded), to start asking questions of (the more strategic members of) the Board about the business's capability to cope with unforeseen problems, large and small, and wait for the penny to drop. And it will...eventually. This "someone" should choose their champion wisely. Make sure a relationship of respect and trust already exists and that with every question asked, a solution is offered which, whilst sitting within the BCM camp, provides a practical and reasonable course of action for the business.

Ask for BCM to appear on the next Board meeting's agenda and offer to present a compelling case for taking the next steps to developing a BCM programme. Deliver it well and the need for an extra seat at the Board won't be necessary.



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