



In my shoes

Fire, flood and famine... keeping our business operational

●●● *In this issue of In my Shoes, etc talks to Chris Keeling, Partner with Acuity Risk Management about their work with Pinsent Masons and the science of business planning for the unexpected.*

Acuity is a specialist consultancy helping financial institutions, professional service providers, government bodies and retail organisations mitigate their business risks and plan confidently for all eventualities. Through consultancy services and its leading IT risk management system STREAM, Acuity has built a strong client base including BP, Barclays, The Cooperative Bank, Cable & Wireless and various government departments.

It's a booming market to be in following the near collapse of the international banking system. Pressure is building on regulators to enforce increasingly strict and compulsory regulatory compliance to stop any other industry making the same high-risk mistakes.

For the past 12 months, Chris and his colleagues have been working with our own Facilities team to understand the physical and financial risks that face our organisation. He's advising the team on how to control risk through thorough

threat assessment, mitigation planning, testing and careful monitoring.

"Business continuity and good crisis management are like an insurance policy," explains Chris. "It's about assessing the various threats to your operations, mitigating for them with clear procedures and practices, testing various scenarios to check the plans work and then hoping you never have to go through the situation for real.

"With most of the organisations with whom we work, we start by understanding their assets; those things they need to operate and generate value or profit. In the case of Pinsent Masons, it's the knowledge of its people and their relationships with clients.

"We assess the threats to these assets and how vulnerable they would be in a number of different situations. We then design a solution that reduces the threat, mitigates the vulnerability and contains the overall business risk within acceptable parameters."

So what might these risks be in a firm such as Pinsent Masons? IT, email and telephony failures could all disrupt working life and affect our service to clients. However, incidents such as a city centre bombing or fire in one of our locations could have much more severe implications. And, of course, how might a medical pandemic impact on our firm? Could we continue to operate if a large number of our people were sick or absent while caring for relatives? That's what crisis management is all about – thinking and planning for the unthinkable.

"I've been impressed by how proactive Pinsent Masons is in relation to crisis management and business continuity. The firm won't be caught on the back foot and is well prepared for the good of its people and its clients.

"We have worked with people across the business to review processes and practices, understand weaknesses and design robust plans that will stand up to any risk. We are now in testing phase where we'll walk through various

scenarios, check the plans work and make any necessary adjustments. These precautions meet the stringent BS 25999 British standard for business continuity management.

For more information about crisis management or our business continuity plans, speak to **Kathy Saunders** on 0207 490 6336 or Kathy.saunders@pinsentmasons.com



Chris Keeling, partner at Acuity Risk Management

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