

**CORE© INSIGHT SERIES**

Continuous Opportunity and Risk Dynamics Engine

*Article 3 of 5 — The CCORD*

# The CCORD: Making the Causal Structure of Risk Visible

*The diagram that shows whether you still have time to act*

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## The Problem This Article Addresses

Every risk diagram used in enterprise governance — the heat map, the bow-tie, the risk matrix — is a position diagram. It shows how severe a risk is at a given moment. None of them shows whether the organisation can still do anything about it. In any complex risk environment, some risks are fully interceptable; others have already crossed the causal boundary and can only be managed in their consequences. Boards and executives who cannot see that distinction are making response investment decisions without knowing which of their risks are still inside the intervention window. This article introduces the CCORD — the diagram that makes that boundary visible.

## Summary

The Clements-Causal-Opportunity-Risk-Diagram (CCORD) is the visual centrepiece of CORE©. Its used to map the complete causal structure of RiskTime — the CCORD maps the organisation's entire risk-opportunity landscape onto a single, geometrically constrained diagram. Its defining feature is the causal boundary: a diamond-shaped limit that separates risks still within the organisation's power to prevent from risks that have already become structurally unavoidable.

## 1. What Conventional Risk Diagrams Cannot Show

The limitations of conventional risk visualisation are structural, not cosmetic.

- Heat maps show the magnitude of risk at a single point in time. They do not show whether that magnitude is increasing or decreasing.
- Bow-tie diagrams show the logical structure of cause and consequence. They do not show the temporal relationship between current decisions and future outcomes.

- Risk matrices rank risks by combined severity. They do not show whether the organisation still has the causal capacity to intervene.

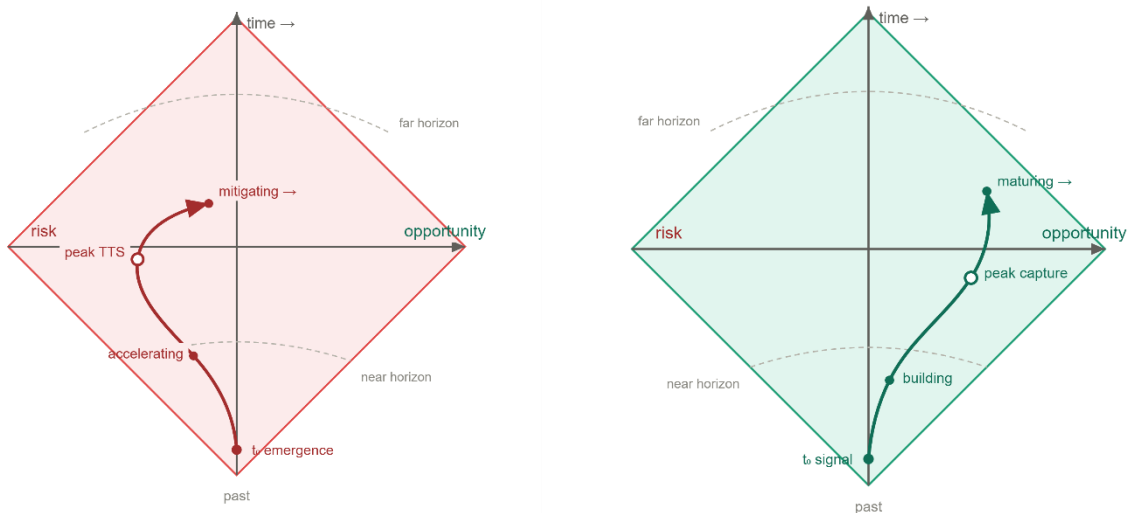
Every conventional risk diagram presents the organisation’s risk landscape as if all risks were equally accessible to management intervention. This causes risk committees to invest response resources in risks that have already passed the intervention horizon, and to underinvest in risks that are still fully interceptable but do not appear severe enough to trigger action.

## 2. The CCORD Framework

### 2.1 Mathematical Foundations

The CCORD adapts conformal diagrams to the risk-opportunity world. The original diagrams map a complete causal structure in a finite, bounded form — making it possible to represent, in a single image, every causal relationship between events, including which events are still reachable from a given point and which lie beyond any possible causal connection.

CORE© applies this structure to the organisational risk domain. The conformal coordinates are replaced by a risk-opportunity spectrum (horizontal) and time (vertical). The causal boundary — derived from the maximum velocity of risk propagation relative to the organisation’s response capacity — is preserved as the diamond-shaped constraint defining the intervention horizon.



### 2.2 Axis Construction

The horizontal axis runs from maximum risk magnitude on the left (negative values) to maximum opportunity magnitude on the right (positive values), crossing zero at the organisation’s current equilibrium. The vertical axis represents time flowing upward from the

present (or from the past if results have been recorded for example emerging opportunities). Decision horizons are drawn as tanh curves that bow toward the past at higher magnitudes — reflecting the compression of decision windows as risk severity increases.

### The Causal Boundary Principle

A risk positioned within the CCORD diamond can still be intercepted by management action. A risk that has crossed the boundary cannot be prevented — only its consequences can be managed. This distinction — interceptable versus locked-in — is the single most operationally important piece of information in strategic risk management, and it is invisible to every conventional risk diagram.

## 2.3 Trajectory Plotting

Each risk or opportunity is plotted as a trajectory — a path through CCORD space over time. Slope encodes velocity; curvature encodes acceleration; quadrant position determines whether the trajectory is risk-dominant or opportunity-dominant. A risk trajectory curving toward the boundary signals imminent causal closure; an opportunity trajectory diverging outward signals a widening exploitation window.

## 3. What the CCORD Provides for Leadership

### The Intervention Map

The CCORD provides, at each reporting cycle, an explicit answer to the question boards most need: which of our current risks are still inside the intervention window, and which have already crossed the causal horizon? This Intervention Map separates the risk register into two actionable categories: prevent (still interceptable) and contain (causal boundary crossed).

### Risk-Opportunity Simultaneity

Because risk and opportunity share the same horizontal axis, the CCORD makes visible what conventional risk frameworks systematically obscure: every environmental disruption occupies a position on the full spectrum from threat to opportunity. The same regulatory change, the same technology disruption, the same competitive shift appears differently depending on the organisation's strategic posture. Article 4 develops this insight into the dual-axis strategic framework.

### Trajectory-Based Escalation

A risk trajectory curving toward the causal boundary — even if the risk is currently rated only Moderate — warrants immediate escalation. The CCORD makes this signal visible; the conventional heat map does not. This is precisely the category of risk that produces boardroom surprises: risks that were consistently rated manageable until, suddenly, they were not.

## 4. How to Initiate This in Your Organisation

The CCORD is introduced as an additional output in the existing board risk report — not as a replacement for the risk matrix, but as a companion diagram that adds the causal dimension.

- Step 1 — Select the top ten risks from the existing register, using TTS scores (Article 2) or conventional scores as the selection criterion.
- Step 2 — Determine current CCORD positioning for each risk: magnitude, velocity (from Article 1 velocity tagging), and causal proximity (estimated from response capacity analysis). This is a half-day workshop.
- Step 3 — Construct the first CCORD frame. Plot each risk as a point with an arrow indicating velocity direction. Mark the causal boundary based on the organisation's assessed response capacity.
- Step 4 — Present the CCORD frame alongside the conventional risk matrix at the next board risk committee. The primary board question: which risks are inside the intervention window, and what response investments are required to keep them there?

### First Step for the Board

Ask your risk function to categorise the current top-ten risks into two groups: those where management intervention can still prevent the outcome, and those where the outcome is already trending toward locked-in. ie there is no more decision freedom. If they cannot make that distinction from current data, the CCORD is the tool that makes it possible.

## 5. Conclusions

Risk visualisation has prioritised ease of construction over completeness of information. The CCORD reverses that priority. It is the only risk diagram that enforces causal constraints — distinguishing, on geometric grounds, between risks that can still be managed and those that can only be contained. Introduced as a companion to the existing board risk report, it provides the strategic clarity that heat maps and risk matrices cannot: not just what is at risk, but whether it is still possible to do something about it.

### Key Takeaways

- All conventional risk diagrams are position diagrams — they show severity, not causal accessibility.
- The CCORD causal boundary separates risks into two actionable categories: interceptable and locked-in.
- Every risk appears as a trajectory, not a point — showing direction and velocity as well as current severity.
- Implementation begins with a half-day positioning workshop applied to the top ten risks from the existing register.

- The primary board output is the Intervention Map: a current-period categorisation of which risks are still inside the response window.

### ABOUT THIS SERIES: CORE© IN PRACTICE — Five Articles for Business Leaders

**The Overarching Message:** Your organisation makes risk decisions daily with tools designed thirty years ago. They score severity. They do not measure direction. They record what is at risk. They do not tell you whether you still have time to act. CORE© changes that. This series shows business leaders how to move from static risk registers to a dynamic, causally-grounded risk intelligence system that integrates with the frameworks you already have.

**Why this matters to CEOs, CFOs, and Boards:** Risk misread as stable when it is accelerating destroys value silently. Opportunity visible in the data but invisible in the framework is value permanently foregone. CORE© provides the temporal and causal layer that converts existing risk data into forward-looking strategic intelligence for CEOs, CFOs, and boards.

#### Article 1 | RiskTime — The Missing Dimension

**Problem:** Boards and executives make risk decisions without knowing how fast a risk is moving or how much time remains to act.

**Key message:** RiskTime quantifies the effective decision window: how long the organisation has before a risk becomes causally locked in.

#### Article 2 | The Threat-Trajectory Score — Beyond the Heat Map

**Problem:** Static Likelihood x Impact scoring cannot distinguish between a risk that is stable and one accelerating toward crisis.

**Key message:** TTS replaces the heat map with a dynamic, formula-driven score measuring direction, velocity, and systemic amplification.

#### Article 3 ◀ YOU ARE HERE | The CCORD — Making Causal Structure Visible

**Problem:** Risk diagrams show severity at a point in time. They do not show whether the organisation still has the ability to intervene.

**Key message:** The CCORD makes the intervention boundary explicit, distinguishing risks that can be managed from those already locked in.

#### Article 4 | Every Crisis Is Someone's Opportunity — The Dual-Axis Model

**Problem:** Conventional risk management is structurally biased toward the downside, causing organisations to miss the upside of disruption.

**Key message:** CORE© computes opportunity and threat simultaneously, enabling boards to allocate resources across defence and growth.

#### Article 5 | Integration — Embedding CORE© in Your Existing Governance

**Problem:** New risk methodologies are dismissed because they appear to require discarding existing infrastructure.

**Key message:** CORE© is an augmentation, not a replacement. A three-phase roadmap embeds it into ISO 31000, COSO, and the Three Lines Model.

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