



ATIPIC INSIGHT SERIES
Continuous Opportunity and Risk Dynamics
Article 5 of 7 — Funding the Right Action

Turning Risk Management from Push into Pull

How to make risk management visible, valued and — above all — sustainable, by embedding it into everyday decisions rather than reporting it after the fact.

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The Problems This Approach Addresses

- Risk management cannot show its value because its indicators move too slowly to appear in weekly management decisions.
- Actions are implemented by owners with no visible link to the risk function, so the function gets no credit and the work disconnects from need.
- Teams are asked to demonstrate value while being measured on cost — a mismatch of time horizons that guarantees the wrong choices.
- After a crisis passes, organisations snap back to comfort-zone management and lose the momentum the crisis created.
- Risk management is treated as a reporting obligation rather than a behaviour, so it never becomes part of how the company actually thinks.

Summary

Risk management struggles to show its value because its indicators move too slowly to enter everyday decisions, and its actions are implemented with no visible link to the function. Turning push into pull means making it visible where decisions happen and making it sustainable. Through transparency, value-based measurement, a deliberately enlarged comfort zone and foresight, risk management embeds itself in the culture — stabilising the bottom line and tilting spend toward future need.

Do you struggle to show the value risk management brings? Slow-moving indicators that never reflect the energy invested. Soft improvements in decision quality competing against million-dollar EBITDA gains that may not survive the year. Worst-case scenarios that were avoided, compared against the actual cost of events that happened; opportunities missed that were never even identified. The value, lost or gained, is rarely appreciated in the short term — and in a market where the major indices keep climbing, ordinary decision-making is read as good decision-making, and the contribution of risk management stays hidden.

None of this is cause for pessimism. Risk management is about improving decision-making across every level of the organisation — asking better questions, providing more insight, and taking more calculated risk outside the comfort zone of daily business. The full value shows in a sustained ability to avoid shocks and realise larger gains. The challenge is to make that visible, and to make it last. Asked recently how to turn the risk management “push” into a “pull,” the answer was two-fold: implement it so that it is visible, and do so continuously and sustainably.

Costs are short-term and tangible. Value is long-term and intangible. The whole difficulty of risk management is the difference between them — and the difference is time.

1. Part one — Practical, visible implementation

Business schools are right that the key is measurement — but the wrong measures are being used. A heat map drifting toward “more likely,” or a distribution curve, plays no part in everyday decisions across the management desk. If your effort goes into getting teams to identify, quantify and simulate the largest risks first, and then pass them upward in a rigid reporting format, the symptoms are predictable: indicators are reported by the risk manager rather than the risk owner; they surface at the risk debrief rather than in the weekly management report; implementation is seen as the owner’s job, disconnected from the risk function; and almost no one checks whether the risk and its action are still valid by the time implementation begins.

Combined, these produce three failures. Actions are based on the historical situation rather than future need. Actions target siloed symptoms rather than holistic causes. And the risk function receives no credit, so the cycle repeats. Worse, when owners follow through and see no immediate positive impact — having spent funds the boss wanted elsewhere — the disconnect hardens into resistance.

The way out is to align the risk function with the owner’s daily problems while ensuring the actions are sustainable. Three disciplines do most of the work.

Transparency

Make the relevant information available to decision-makers throughout the organisation — downward, not only upward. Accounting can break cost down by process, exposing input costs and output values and revealing where value is being lost and why: customer complaints, quality issues, environmental fines, safety events. A simple analysis often shows that the cheap part bought to cut working capital is the very cause of the unreliability eroding performance — and that the value lost dwarfs the saving. That is how procurement’s case for spending more is made with evidence rather than assertion.

Value measurement

Sit with risk owners and identify performance indicators together. It is never easy, but as the business model evolves, measurement must evolve with it. ESG is the cautionary example: many organisations use an auditable rating as the indicator — a compliance-driven lagging measure — rather than valuing the actions that actually improve the environment and strengthen the business model. Traditional EBITDA

and cash-flow measures capture almost none of this; it shows up only later, in reliability, customer satisfaction and reputation. Yet on the day the dust-filter or water-recycling project is on the table, it is assessed on cost. The shift required is from cost to *value* — and the owner, not the risk manager, must report it.

A concrete example is the use of a stability index in place of Mean Time Between Failures. Rather than measuring against an original design benchmark, it captures the best performance the team has actually achieved over a short window — hours or days — and continuously resets the target to that already-proven level. It drives repeatable performance, lets assets be compared on a level playing field through normalisation, and enables “twinning,” where the exchange of knowledge between sites delivers a global benefit far larger than any local gain.

Throughout implementation, owners report the improvements while risk management refines the process and captures transparent metrics. Because risk management is transversal, the benefit accrues to the company rather than to any single silo, and hard controls replace soft ones. The quick wins from the initial transformation become the enabler for continued collaboration — and the foundation for the harder task: sustainability.

2. Part two — Making it sustainable

When you leave a site and return to the office, does its management keep thinking about risk — or only when the next report is due? Will they fund the longer-term risks, or spend everything on the burning platform? Sustainability means the factors that make the process work are present in the day-to-day business model and form part of the team’s shared mind model. When what I think is important aligns with what you think is important, and both match what really is important, the organisation wins, and the approach simply makes sense.

The requirement lives in people’s mindsets. Treated as a reporting action, risk management always ranks below real work — true at the top of the house as much as on the shop floor. So while upward reporting matters, risk management is never embedded unless it is also pulled downward. Each person, though, carries filters and biases that discard inputs. Only when those filters open does risk-enhanced decision-making become sustainable, visible in the actions developed and their effectiveness. For that to happen, the approach must:

- Make sense to the people using it;
- Be supported by success stories that make people want to repeat what worked;
- Be confirmed by a team that shares a similar mental model;
- Be adaptable to future change.

In short, we have to walk the talk. But there is a trap. Set the mind model against the Johari window and the known-knowns are revealed as the source of transformation resistance: it worked, I have confirmation, no waves, I do what everyone else does. The risk profession is largely stuck in that quadrant. Moving on requires two deliberate moves by the risk manager — enlarging the comfort zone, and cultivating a culture that embraces decisions in the yellow and blue areas. After the volatility of 2020–22

stretched everyone's comfort zone and adjusted their benchmarks, many organisations are now sliding back to traditional comfort-zone management. The task is to keep the momentum those events created: what went well, what went wrong, and what must change.

3. Is it actually embedded? What to look for

Whether risk management has truly entered the decision-making process can be read from a few observable signals:

- Regular team discussion focused on risk and opportunity, not just compliance;
- Meeting notes that record alternative approaches considered;
- Both short- and long-term goals addressed in the same conversation;
- The words “value” and “consequences” in routine use;
- Risk-oriented indicators in the weekly management report;
- Meetings that open with opportunities and how to capture them.

This rhetoric and rigour reshapes experience and the benchmarks people apply. As everyone begins to act this way, behaviour and culture shift, and risk management embeds itself — not only at corporate level but in the habits of the workforce. Two effects then become visible as maturity grows: the bottom line stabilises as frequent issues are correctly identified and mitigated, which becomes the enabler for growth; and budgeted spend tilts toward future need rather than historical habit, so there is less repeat spend, more acting and less reacting.

4. Foresight as the engine of sustainability

Sustainability ultimately requires foresight: ensuring every past decision continues to add value, and maintaining a continuous flow of ideas across every layer of the company. Foresight workshops animate this, surfacing concerns and solutions across time horizons while building the team. When I understand where value is being lost and where future value will be created, funding can be aimed precisely at reducing leakage and strengthening futurized core processes — re-prioritised as plans change, so money is never spent repetitively on obsolete products, and opportunities are never left on the table simply because they were not in the budget. Any KPI achieved must be monitored continuously, or it degrades.

While executives chase large, isolated investments such as M&A, the risk manager ensures the smaller but frequent issues are addressed — and these, captured bottom-up through the risk culture, often outweigh the headline deals. Spin-in management is routinely launched and then left unmanaged, hence the 70–90 percent integration failure rate; spin-off value capture is rarer still. Sustainable risk management claims both. It forces the unknown-known quadrant as small as possible through disciplined spin-off and spin-in management, and in doing so turns the strategic value-creation arena into a managed activity rather than a hope.

5. How to Initiate This in Your Organisation

1. Make risk visible where decisions happen: move risk-oriented indicators into the weekly management report, and have risk owners — not the risk manager — report them.
2. Establish downward transparency, using accounting to expose value lost by process, so the case for action is built on real input costs and output values.
3. Replace lagging, cost-based measures with leading, value-based ones — for example a stability index over MTBF — and normalise across sites to enable knowledge twinning.
4. Deliberately enlarge the comfort zone and reward decisions in the yellow and blue quadrants, capturing the lessons of recent volatility before the organisation reverts to type.
5. Run foresight workshops on a cycle to keep past decisions adding value and new ideas flowing, re-prioritising funding toward future need.
6. Treat spin-off and spin-in value capture as managed activities with owners and appetite statements, not one-off projects.

Conclusions

Sustainable, effective risk management differentiates itself in three ways: it widens the scope of comfortable decisions into the known-unknown and unknown-known, taking more calculated risks and opportunities; it takes the initiative and promotes ideation, forcing competitors into reaction; and it supplies the narratives and processes that change how people and teams think, so that all the relevant information is finally processed. Enable change rather than fine-tune — that is the future role of the risk manager.

Key Takeaways

- Costs are short-term and tangible; value is long-term and intangible — the whole difficulty is the difference of time.
- Move risk-oriented indicators into the weekly management report, reported by the owner, not the risk manager.
- Use downward transparency and leading, value-based measures — such as a stability index over MTBF.
- Deliberately enlarge the comfort zone and reward decisions in the yellow and blue quadrants before the organisation reverts.
- Foresight keeps past decisions adding value and new ideas flowing; sustainable RM claims both spin-in and spin-off value.

About This Series: ATIPIIC Insight — Seven 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 — not whether you still have time to act. This series shows business leaders how to move from static risk registers to a dynamic, causally-grounded risk and opportunity 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. ATIPIIC provides the temporal and causal layer that converts existing risk data into forward-looking strategic intelligence.

Article 1 | Funding the Right Action

Problem: Competing CapEx requests are judged by advocacy and seniority, not value, so the actions that create the most holistic value are never the ones funded.

Key message: A transversal management system places every action on a level playing field and prioritises by value created and vulnerability reduced.

Article 2 | Accelerators and Amplifiers

Problem: Severity and probability cannot explain why some minor events escalate catastrophically while others fade.

Key message: Two forces — internal accelerators and external amplifiers — are measured to reveal weak-signal escalation before it moves.

Article 3 | Foresight: The Other Half

Problem: Risk management still looks backwards and is repeatedly blindsided by predictable surprises.

Key message: Foresight watches how the world is moving, not just where the company stands, answering 'where do we need to be?'

Article 4 | Opportunities & the Comfort Zone

Problem: Opportunities go unmanaged and an oversized comfort zone leaves whole sectors stagnant and exposed.

Key message: Keeping the comfort zone deliberately small turns identified opportunity into captured value.

Article 5 ◀ YOU ARE HERE | Push to Pull

Problem: Risk management is reported after the fact and cannot show its value, so it stays a push rather than a pull.

Key message: Embedding risk into everyday decisions through transparency, value measurement and foresight makes it visible and sustainable.

Article 6 | What We Need to Survive

Problem: Resilience is confused with robustness and resistance, and the buffer erodes invisibly until one event too many.

Key message: Resilience is engineered in the system, the balance sheet and — decisively — the behaviour of people under crisis.

Article 7 | Procurement: A Golden Key

Problem: Procurement is measured on cost while expected to deliver resilience, ESG and growth.

Key message: A managerial bridge turns the supply chain from a cost centre into a value-creation engine.

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