

# IS YOUR BUSINESS TRULY RESILIENT?

Paul O'Shea, CEO of Ashview Consultants, explores why perceived readiness often falls short when real-world disruption strikes



**T**he recent power outages across Spain and Portugal were like nothing we have ever seen before. Without warning, businesses were – quite literally – in the dark as systems crashed and supply chains were disrupted.

While extremely distressing for the public, the outages also sent shockwaves across the business world as they highlighted just how vulnerable even the most advanced organisations can be to unexpected disruption. This wasn't a theoretical exercise from a risk management manual, it was a visceral shock proving that disruption respects

no borders or blueprints. It exposed a brutal truth – many organisations clinging to traditional safety and risk cultures are sleepwalking into catastrophe.

While many businesses have risk policies and documentation in place, they are usually checked just once a year during an annual review, with a focus on avoiding regulatory fines. Once these

**“IT'S NOT ABOUT REPLACING RULES, BUT TRANSFORMING THEIR PURPOSE AND APPLICATION”**

documents are signed off, they are often left untouched – out of sight and out of mind – until they have to be updated again the following year. This results in a false sense of compliance and ultimately, unmanaged risk.

Working across multiple sectors, we see a common problem. Companies believe they're ready for any eventuality because the documents are signed and boxes are ticked. However, risk preparedness needs to be a living strategy that is regularly reviewed – not a cabinet file of documents gathering dust. We also often see companies relying on retrospective compliance data or processes rather than taking a forward thinking, proactive approach, resulting in a dangerous illusion of control.

Traditionally, the risk management model is viewed as an obstacle rather than a competitive edge. Safety culture, within this framework, often translates to top-down rules and a fear of non-compliance. Think annual fire drills everyone sleepwalks through, or safety policies employees sign without reading. The focus is on proving compliance, not improving resilience.

## ONGOING ASSESSMENT

When the unexpected strikes – whether it's a cyberattack, a supplier collapse or a complete power grid failure, organisations without a strong foundation often scramble to respond. Their reactions are typically ineffective as preparedness isn't embedded in their day-to-day operations. That's why it's essential for businesses to regularly assess the full spectrum of risks they face – to ensure they are truly protected and ready for whatever challenges may arise.

By identifying, assessing and mitigating risks that could impact business operations or workplace health and safety standards in real-time, a business will be better equipped to plan ahead and drive continuous improvement, rather than reacting to a problem when it arises.

Reactive organisations spend more time recovering from disruptions than those with proactive risk programmes.

The lesson? Compliance does not equal resilience. Checking boxes might satisfy auditors but it leaves organisations fatally exposed to modern threats.



The Safe365 platform provides real-time insights

Organisations that equate documentation with preparedness are often blindsided, not just by what they didn't know but by what they assumed was already under control. It's not that the old systems are wrong, it's that they are incomplete. Resilience requires evolution.

As we enter our third decade in business at Ashview Consultants, we've noticed significant changes in the sectors we work across. Business risks have become more complex and harder to navigate. The organisations that succeed are those that treat risk and safety not as a task to complete but as a system to live by – embedded in culture and practice. They invest in clarity, visibility and shared accountability across their teams.

It's not about replacing rules, but transforming their purpose and application. This culture views proactive risk management as a strategic imperative, a competitive edge. Modern safety transforms rules into living systems. Crucially, it requires a fundamental shift in how organisations operate and collaborate.

Additionally, Irish companies are more globalised today than they were a decade ago and with that comes increased cross-market activity and greater exposure to complex risks. We apply the same model across all sectors, built on a simple but effective approach: plan, review and improve.

The majority of our methodology is based on international standards, particularly ISO, which many businesses are already working towards. This provides a strong foundation for identifying risks and taking proactive steps to mitigate them.

Technology is also beginning to bridge the long-standing gap between intention and implementation in safety culture. To facilitate this, we use a state-of-the-art digital platform called Safe365, which helps organisations move beyond static audits into real-time insights. It enables teams to review safety data continuously, embedding a culture of proactive risk management and supporting ongoing improvement.

Safe365 doesn't replace standards such as ISO, it builds on them. Instead of providing an annual snapshot, it offers continuous feedback to assess organisational safety maturity across key areas such as leadership, behaviour and

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**THOSE EMBRACING A MODERN RISK AND SAFETY CULTURE - BUILT ON REAL-TIME AWARENESS, EMPOWERED PEOPLE AND PROACTIVE ADAPTATION - HAD A FIGHTING CHANCE TO NAVIGATE THE CHAOS**

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preparedness, using structured, evidence-based frameworks.

This helps assess organisational safety maturity across areas such as leadership, behaviour and preparedness, using structured evidence-based frameworks. The platform measures 82 elements across 10 modules, covering everything from director knowledge to worker engagement offering a clear, real-time picture of safety maturity. Organisations using the platform can track emerging risks, monitor behavioural trends and identify areas for improvement without waiting for the next quarterly report or annual review.

This shift also changes the nature of engagement. Dashboards provide a shared understanding, from the boardroom to the site office, while workers are empowered with the tools to speak up, flag concerns and contribute to solutions. Information is no longer siloed or reactive, it circulates, informs decisions and supports a culture where learning happens in real time.

## EMBEDDING ENGAGEMENT

This also marks a deeper psychological shift. In traditional models, safety is seen as an administrative hurdle – rules to follow, audits to survive. In resilient organisations, safety is something people do for each other. It becomes embedded in daily decisions, reinforced by trust, not fear. This shift, from enforcement to engagement, is what sustains real resilience.

Over time, this leads to greater flexibility and stronger long-term performance. Being prepared doesn't just improve safety, it saves time and money. It's always more expensive to rebuild a hacked system than

to protect it and far more costly to regain customer trust than to maintain it.

CEOs, Boards and management teams need to think of proactive risk management as a strategic advantage, not just a box-ticking exercise. By identifying, assessing and mitigating risks that could impact their business operations or workplace health and safety standards in real-time, a business will be better equipped to plan ahead and drive continuous improvement instead of reacting to a problem when it arises.

The power outages in Spain and Portugal weren't just a power failure; they were a stark illumination of vulnerability. Organisations relying on yesterday's playbook found themselves paralysed. Those embracing a modern risk and safety culture – built on real-time awareness, empowered people and proactive adaptation – had a fighting chance to navigate the chaos.

The evolution from traditional compliance to modern resilience isn't just about avoiding disaster, it's about building organisations that are stronger, more adaptable and inherently safer. It transforms safety culture from a rulebook gathering dust into the very pulse of the enterprise. In a world where the lights can go out in an instant, that's not just best practice, it's survival.

Resilience doesn't happen by accident. It requires deliberate investment in systems, people and leadership and the courage to go beyond minimum standards to embrace a future where change is constant. Resilience is no longer just a buzzword; it's a business model. The real question for every

leader isn't, "Are we compliant?" but rather, "Are we truly prepared?" The organisations that will thrive are those that treat resilience as a core value, not just a checkbox. The future belongs to those who respond with action, not just a signature on an annual form. 🍀

Ashview Consultants is one of Ireland's leading risk management consultancies and won the Leaders in Employee Safety and Wellbeing award at the Risk Excellence Awards 2025 with its leadership setting the tone for a supportive and inclusive workplace culture and driving progressive policies.

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