

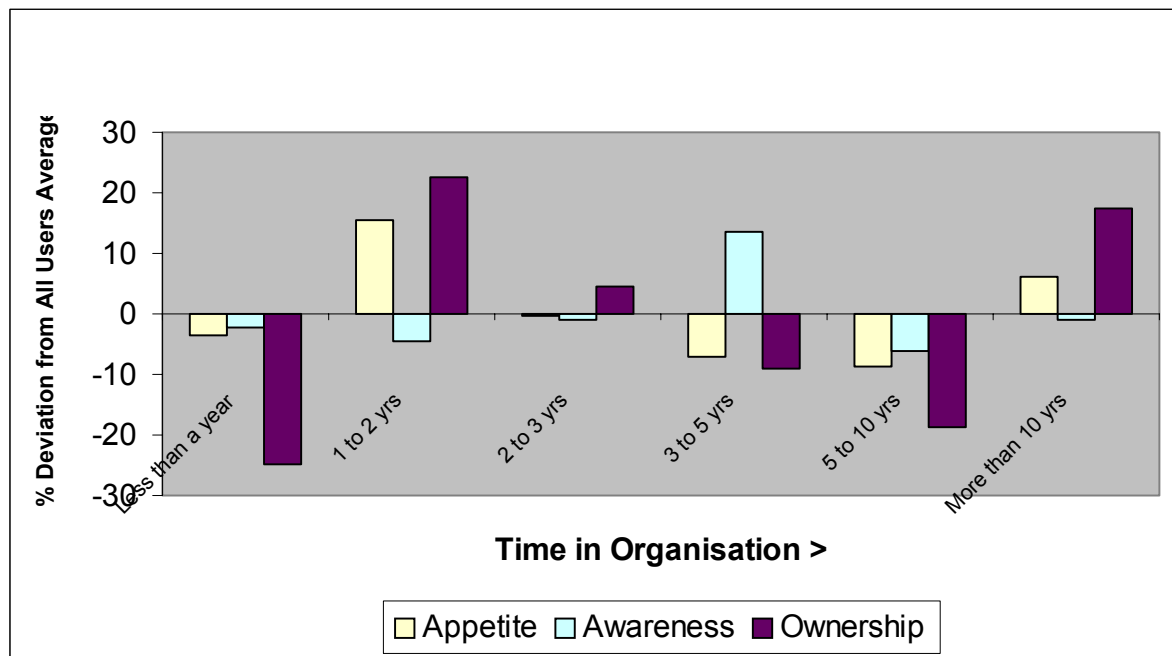
The INONI Report – Attitudes To Risk – Part Eight

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In December 2003 JRCPL launched an INONI survey called 'Attitudes to Risk' in partnership with www.continuitycentral.com. The survey set out to investigate the attitudes to risk and continuity that exist within and across organisations, the so-called 'continuity culture' or 'risk culture'.

This article is the seventh in a series of linked sections based on the resulting INONI Report. Further sections will become available over the coming weeks. You can view other currently available sections via the links in the Introduction.

Does familiarity breed contempt for risk?



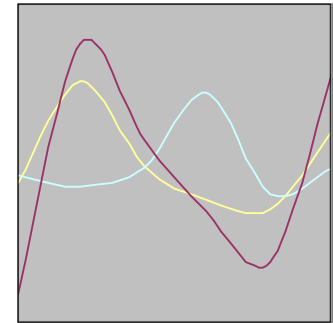
The graph shows group average scores grouped left to right according to the length of time participants have spent working for their present organisation. To help you interpret the graph, recall that the bars represent the following parameters:

- Self-appetite for general and specific operational risk-taking (Appetite)
- Appreciation of the operational risks facing the organisation (Awareness)
- Adoption and management of risks by staff in the organisation (Ownership)

It may also help to remember that the x-axis represents the All Users average score and that bar height represents a deviation from that average.

The graph suggests how individuals' understanding and perception of their organisation's continuity culture varies according to time served, describing a possible risk culture life cycle for employees. (There are a number of sub-themes that underpin the life-cycle axis including career path, opportunity, responsibility, experience, insight, security and familiarity).

The curves suggest that attitudes shift significantly in the first two years, from a tentative first year (9 participants) as the new joiner learns the ropes, to a strong pro-risk stance in year two (7). This transition is possibly fed by a misplaced belief that the risk framework will protect them whatever they do. By the third year (20) attitudes appear to stabilise.



Many people stay in a job for less than three years; and it may be fair to suggest that those who stay longer have made a greater commitment, buying into and contributing to the underlying company culture. This seems to be reflected in the 3 to 10 year groups (16 and 17 users), which show a reducing risk appetite but also a reducing belief in risk ownership in the organisation. This may be because their expectations of others have increased.

This trend appears reversed in the 10 years plus group (16), which shows a surprising reversion to the year two pro-risk stance. These represent staff with probable lifetime allegiance to the organisation; they are probably confident, knowledgeable and influential. They are in a position to define company culture and lead others by authority and example. The group's pro-risk stance may be explained by its perception of corporate invulnerability, possibly borne of experience.

The value of this apparent risk culture life-cycle lies in our being able to focus attention at any time on those groups most likely to place the organisation at risk, and also those most likely to assist with and support its risk culture.

Organisations may wish to consider the following:

- 1 There may well be an underlying cultural life cycle, although this may vary from company to company. Once established, this becomes a valuable targeting mechanism
- 2 Continuity is not a natural concern for all groups and the presence of persuasive awareness-raisers builds positive pressure. Companies should seek influencers at all levels and encourage their buy-in to the continuity culture ideal
- 3 The analysis suggests it may be worth installing a robust risk procedural and policy framework around strong pro-risk groups, monitoring attitudes and minimising opportunities for unjustified operational risk-taking
- 4 Select risk thought leaders carefully and at times that reflect their career interests. Balance raw aspiration against corporate commitment and their desire to preserve organisational integrity in the long term. Continuity culture cannot be created overnight and those given responsibility for building it need vision

- 5 Shape operational risk and continuity education and/or practices according to time served, raising awareness during periods where it is poorest and curbing or directing people away from inappropriate risk-taking. Anticipate attitudinal changes and assign responsibility accordingly

You can access other sections of the report as they become available via the Introduction ([click here](#)).