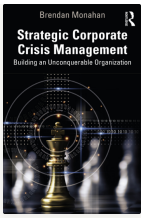
Free one-pager



Becoming Unconquerable

A one-page operating model for deciding and acting when the plan runs out.

When the unexpected happens, the organizations that thrive can flex and adapt on the fly. For them, planning is learning, and it never stops. Readiness is a capability your whole organization carries.

What the best organizations execute

1. **Recognize triggering events quickly.**
   See the deviation before it becomes a headline.
2. **Focus on initial objectives. Lead iteratively.**
   Decide the opening move; let the rest follow.
3. **Address stakeholders, always and appropriately.**
   Who needs to hear what, and when.
4. **Accept the unknowability of the moment.**
   Favor exploration over false certainty.

The trust that carries response

- Frontline operations are trusted to recognize patterns that deviate from the norm.
- Frontline managers are trusted to orient to those patterns and build a recommendation on their own.
- Senior leaders and the core team stay responsive to those inputs, and actively resist adding friction.
- No one person saves the day. Strength is organized, not summoned.

The operating rhythm

Two loops, running together

Collecting / collating
Gather what's known, drawing signal from the edges of the organization inward.

⇌

Sensemaking
Turn it into a shared, unfolding map of what's really happening right now.

The map becomes a real-time playbook for the incident, and it starts with a clean container.

The clean container

Three questions

Ask them out loud, early, and again as the situation shifts.

01 **Who's in charge?**
Right here, right now, for this problem. One name. Everyone should be able to say it.

02 **What needs to be done?**
Not everything that could be done. The short list that must happen next. People first.

03 **Who's doing what?**
Every action gets a name and a check-back time. Then loop back to question one.

Response imperatives

Protect life → Stabilize the incident → Protect property & environment

Readiness happens on blue-sky days. Build it before you need it: premortem exercises, a rapid and responsible escalation protocol, and a network of Crisis Envoys who carry the signal from the edges of the organization to the core.

From Strategic Corporate Crisis Management: Building an Unconquerable Organization by Brendan Monahan (Routledge, 2022).

Views expressed here are my own and independent of my employer.

unconquerablebook.com/framework