

The CRO that wasn't

What 118 survey responses can, and cannot, tell us about the future of resilience

A critical review of the BCI Future of Resilience Report 2026

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118

survey respondents, shown once, in an annex graphic

c.1.2%

of the BCI's stated 10,000+ membership

29.2%

expect a dedicated CRO to become standard in most large organisations

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pages of methodology in a 72-page report

Summary

In October 2026 the Business Continuity Institute published its Future of Resilience Report 2026, produced with the support of resilience software provider F24. The launch email described “a profession on the verge of a significant transformation” and promised readers “the rise of the Chief Resilience Officer as a standard senior role”.

The report rests on 118 survey responses. That number does not appear in the launch email, the forewords, the executive summary or anywhere in the main text. It appears once, in a graphic in the annex. By the closing questions roughly 105 people were still answering. And when you read the chart behind the Chief Resilience Officer headline, fewer than a third of those who answered expect a dedicated CRO to become standard in most large organisations.

This paper sets out what the report claims, what its data shows, and how both compare with the BCI's own earlier research. It is written for resilience practitioners, and for the boards and procurement teams who increasingly see BCI figures quoted back to them in proposals, business cases and conference slides.

Why this matters

The BCI is the most visible professional body in our field. When it publishes a headline figure, that figure travels. It turns up in vendor marketing, consultancy proposals, board papers arguing for a new post or a bigger budget, and the trade press, usually with the sample size and the caveats stripped away. If the original claim is overstated, everything downstream inherits the problem.

There is a second reason, closer to home. Our discipline asks organisations to make decisions on evidence. We tell clients to test their assumptions, to validate recovery times and not to trust a plan that has never been exercised. A professional body that publishes confident ten-year forecasts on thin data, without stating its method, weakens the case the rest of us make every day.

Nothing that follows questions the good faith of the authors or the respondents. The people who took part gave their time and their views, and many of the comments in the report are thoughtful. The problem is the distance between what was asked, who answered, and what has been claimed on their behalf.

Finding the 118

Most survey reports of any standing tell you early on how many people took part, when the fieldwork ran, how respondents were recruited and where the limits of the data lie. The British Polling Council, for instance, expects its members to publish sample sizes, fieldwork dates and method alongside published results. The Future of Resilience Report 2026 runs to 72 pages. It has no methodology section. It does not say when the survey ran, and it gives no response rate. The number of respondents, 118, is shown once in an infographic on page 63, next to “13 sectors” and “11 respondent interviews”.

The launch email calls it “our global survey of resilience practitioners”. The BCI says it has more than 10,000 members, so 118 responses is about 1.2% of the membership. The survey also appears to have run through an open online link, so not every respondent need have been a member. Everyone who answered chose to. That matters in a survey about the future of the profession, because the practitioners most willing to spend twenty minutes imagining resilience in 2036 are probably also the ones most invested in the idea that it is about to become more important.

Then there is attrition. The report gives percentages but never the number answering each question. Working backwards from the published percentages, by finding for each chart the smallest whole number of respondents that reproduces every figure, gives a consistent pattern. About 118 answered the first question, around 113 to 115 the early forward-looking questions, about 105 the questions on roles and skills, and 103 to 106 the final ones. The demographic questions that tell us who took part were themselves answered by about 104 people. These are my estimates, but every chart fits the same pattern.

With around 110 people answering a question, the margin of error on any single percentage is roughly plus or minus nine points, and that assumes a random sample, which this is not. Several of the gaps and shifts the report presents as findings are smaller than that.

Who answered

Around 71% of respondents work for organisations with more than 1,000 employees and only 13.6% for organisations with fewer than 250. Financial and insurance services is the largest sector at 30.8%, followed by public administration and defence at 15.4%. Europe accounts for 38.7% of respondents, and the UK is not identified separately.

The eleven interviewees whose quotes run through the report are based in China, Ghana, Tunisia, South Africa, the UAE, the wider Middle East, Australia and the USA. Their perspectives are welcome. Even so, a UK-headquartered institute has produced a report on the future of the profession that leans heavily on EU regulation such as DORA and the AI Act, without a single quoted voice from the UK or continental Europe.

The sample is also quite different from last year's. The BCI's Resilience: Vision 2030 Report, published in 2025 with the same sponsor and the same lead author, had 218 respondents from 52 countries, half of them in Europe. This year the sample is 46% smaller, the European share has dropped by eleven points and the public sector share has almost tripled. When the report says that a skill has "risen sharply as a priority", it is comparing two different groups of people.

	2019 OR report	Vision 2030 (2025)	Future of Resilience (2026)
Respondents	87	218	118
Countries	19	52	Not stated
Europe-based	Not stated	49.5%	38.7%
Public administration & defence	Not stated	5.7%	15.4%
Professional services	Not stated	13.0%	7.7%
Fieldwork dates published	No	No	No
Methodology section	No	No	No

The CRO that wasn't

The executive summary carries the headline "The Chief Resilience Officer is expected to become a standard executive role". The launch email lists "the rise of the Chief Resilience Officer as a standard senior role" among the report's main themes. On page 29 the text goes further still:

"An overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) expect a dedicated resilience leadership role at C-suite level to become standard over the next decade."

This is what respondents actually said when asked whether they anticipate a dedicated Chief Resilience Officer (or equivalent) becoming standard over the next ten years. The approximate numbers of people are my own calculation, based on about 113 answering.

Answer	Share	Approx. people
Yes, within most large organisations	29.2%	33
Yes, but limited to regulated sectors	27.4%	31
Possibly, but integrated into another C-suite role	35.4%	40
No	5.3%	6
Too early to tell	2.7%	3

The 92% is the first three rows added together. The largest single group, 35.4%, said responsibility is most likely to be folded into an existing C-suite role. That is the opposite of a dedicated resilience role, and it has been counted as support for one. Another 27.4% said yes, but only in regulated sectors, which is a long way from "standard". The answer that actually matches the headline, a

dedicated CRO becoming standard in most large organisations, was chosen by 29.2%. That is around 33 people.

Even the executive summary's more cautious figure of 56.6% "yes" is made up of the two qualified answers. It is also worth looking at the direction of travel. In 2025, Vision 2030 asked whether organisations *should* nominate a Chief Resilience Officer, and 73.7% said yes. A year later, asked whether one *will* become standard, fewer than a third expect it in most large organisations. Between what practitioners would like and what they expect, the figure falls sharply. That is a far more interesting finding than the one in the headline, and the report does not mention it.

Nor does it mention the BCI's own earlier position. The BCI Manifesto for Organizational Resilience (2018) stated that "no single management discipline or member association can credibly claim 'ownership' of organizational resilience", and described the business continuity professional's role as coordinating the many disciplines that contribute to it. The 2026 report presents a dedicated enterprise resilience function and a Chief Resilience Officer as the expected future. A professional body is entitled to change its view, but it should say when it has done so, and why.

What the data does suggest

Read without the gloss, the data says that most practitioners in this sample expect resilience to get more senior attention, and that the commonest expectation is for it to sit inside an existing senior portfolio: a chief risk officer, a chief operating officer, or a combined legal and risk role. Several of the report's own interviewees say exactly this. One describes a chief legal and risk officer at C-suite level and sees "more value in that kind of combined mandate". Another describes resilience embedded in enterprise risk management "with real C-suite visibility".

For most organisations, and for nearly every small and medium-sized one, that is the realistic picture. There will be no Chief Resilience Officer. There will be a busy executive who owns resilience alongside several other things, supported, if they are fortunate, by a practitioner a level or two below. In that world, what decides how an organisation copes is the quality of its plans, how well people are trained to use them and whether they have been exercised. A new title on the organisation chart does not make up for any of those.

Other headlines the charts don't support

The CRO is the starkest example, but there are others, and they follow the same pattern of a qualified or modest finding presented as something stronger.

Regulation

The executive summary states that 93.9% "expect regulatory expectations to increase significantly across industries". The chart on page 21 shows that 56.5% chose "increase significantly" and 37.4% chose "increase moderately". The 93.9% is the two combined, with the stronger label attached. On the same executive summary page, this figure and the 73.5% investment figure appear beneath the heading for the CRO question, to which neither belongs.

The "near total inversion"

The report's central story, repeated in the launch email, is that resilience is seen today as a cost or a compliance necessity and in ten years will be seen as a value creator. Today 13% of respondents, about 15 people, see it as a value creator, and 59.1% expect it will be seen that way in ten years. That is a statement of hope from about 115 people about how others will come to see their work, and on its own it tells us very little about whether anything is changing. On measurement, the evidence points the other way. 16.8% measure financial loss reduction today, against 16.7% in last year's survey. The profession would like to talk the language of financial value, but it is no closer to measuring it.

Investment

73.5% expect "investment in resilience" to increase over the next ten years. Yet when the same respondents describe how their own organisation's approach will change, only 26.7% expect increased budget allocations, and only 30.5% expect resilience managers to have access to larger budgets. In 2025 the comparable figure was 57.6%. Expectations of bigger budgets have nearly halved in a year, and the report says nothing about it.

Artificial intelligence

AI-driven predictive analytics was chosen by 88.3% as a technology that will have "the greatest impact on the resilience industry". The question allowed several answers, it asked about the industry in general, and ticking AI costs nothing. When respondents were asked how AI will actually be used in their own business continuity function, risk assessment and forecasting attracted 8.4%, and only 10.7% named predictive analytics as their biggest measurement gap. The report calls the 88.3% "the strongest single finding in this survey". I would suggest it is one of the softest.

Supply chain

In 2025, supply chain resilience was the third most important future skill at 45.9%, and the BCI's launch messaging said it was overtaking cyber and geopolitical knowledge. In 2026 it has fallen to 18.1%, and supply chain and third-party risk was named the biggest future risk by just 4.7%. The report then uses the 2026 closure of the Strait of Hormuz, with its effects on energy, shipping and fertiliser, to illustrate the finding that geopolitical instability tops the risk list. For most organisations, what Hormuz actually tested was their supply chain. And because no fieldwork dates are given, we cannot even tell whether respondents answered before or after the strait closed.

Editing and sourcing

On page 41, a quote attributed to a risk and resilience adviser in Australia ends with the words: "I don't think this was me? The first reference to 'after all this time in the profession' isn't something I would reference about myself at this point." This is plainly the interviewee's comment on a draft quote, made during approval, and it has been printed as part of the quote. Embarrassment aside, it tells readers something about how the qualitative material was produced. The quotes were written up by the authors and sent back for sign-off, and at least one interviewee did not recognise the words attributed to them. Near-identical quotes about AI literacy also appear on pages 36 and 55, worded slightly differently each time.

The referencing has problems as well. The UNDRR source is cited in the text as note 20 but is number 22 in the reference list, and note 21 is never cited. A “BCI white paper on dangerous assumptions” links to a Business Continuity Awareness Week event page. The BCI’s own Vision 2030 report is cited via the sponsor’s blog. The claim that the Hormuz closure was “the largest disruption to global energy supply in history” rests on a ResearchGate upload.

These are things a careful reviewer would pick up in an afternoon. That they were not picked up says a good deal about the level of scrutiny the report received before publication.

A pattern, not a one-off

Read the BCI’s recent research side by side and the same themes keep returning: silos, lack of senior support, the difficulty of proving return on investment and the shortage of strategic leadership skills.

The 2019 report *Organizational Resilience: Perspectives from the Industry* had 87 respondents. It found that 59% said views of resilience varied between departments, that only 7.9% of organisations offered executive coaching and that none used stress tests to develop leaders. It also found that 76.9% agreed their organisation was “adequately prepared to thrive despite risks that could disrupt operations”. That report was published in July 2019, and within a year the pandemic had put that confidence to the test. It is a useful reminder of how little weight self-reported optimism in these surveys can bear.

In 2025, *Vision 2030* found that silo mentality was the leading reason resilience strategies fail, at 63.4%. In 2026 the key takeaways tell us that “fragmentation is the enemy of everything the profession wants to become” and that “the profession is not yet building the leaders of the future”. Seven years apart, the diagnosis has barely moved, and the BCI is the body responsible for professional development and certification in this field.

Each report presents the profession as being on the cusp of change. Last year the horizon was 2030. This year it is “a decade”, which takes us to 2036. The destination keeps moving while the problems stay where they are, and so do the sample sizes.

What the report gets right

It would be unfair, and not very useful, to stop there. The report is candid that measurement is the discipline’s weakest point, and accepts that practitioners “do not yet know how” to demonstrate financial worth. Its finding that 71.6% expect the business impact analysis and risk assessment to be enhanced rather than replaced is sensible, and a welcome corrective to talk of reinventing everything.

Some of the interview material is excellent. A logistics director argues that leaders understand probability and should be told plainly how much certainty the organisation has, instead of being offered assurance. Another respondent warns of resilience as a “yo-yo function”, funded after a crisis and forgotten once the urgency passes. A practitioner in Ghana describes a recovery time recorded as thirty minutes in the BIA that turned out to be two hours when tested, which anyone who runs exercises will recognise.

The irony is that these individual voices are more persuasive than the statistics wrapped around them. The report would have been stronger had it presented itself as what it is: a collection of practitioner perspectives, with some indicative survey data attached.

What we should ask of the BCI

A professional body's research ought to meet at least the standard we expect of a client's business impact analysis. State your assumptions, show your workings and do not claim more than the evidence supports. In practical terms, I would like to see BCI research reports do the following.

1. State the number of respondents on the first page, and the number answering each question alongside each chart.
2. Say when the fieldwork ran, how respondents were recruited and what the response rate was.
3. Publish the questionnaire, including which questions allowed more than one answer.
4. Keep aspiration and evidence apart. "Respondents hope" and "respondents report" are different statements and should be labelled as such.
5. Compare years only where the questions and samples allow it, and report the inconvenient changes as well as the helpful ones.
6. State the limitations plainly: self-selection, sample size, and the sector and size profile of respondents.
7. Check the executive summary and launch messaging against the charts before publication.

None of this is onerous. It is what any of us would expect from a supplier presenting evidence for a decision.

Reading industry surveys: a note for boards and buyers

If a proposal, business case or sales pitch quotes a resilience survey, five questions will tell you most of what you need to know. How many people answered this particular question? Who were they, and how were they found? When were they asked? Was the question about what people do, or what they hope will happen? And who paid for the research? If those answers are hard to find, treat the figure as opinion and give it the weight that opinion deserves.

About the author

Helen Molyneux is the founder and director of Cambridge Risk Solutions, an independent UK resilience consultancy established in 2008, and of RiskReady, an e-learning platform for business continuity, crisis management and information security. She holds Lead Auditor certifications for ISO 22301 and ISO 27001 and has around 18 years of independent consulting experience across the public and private sectors, following a career as a local authority emergency planning officer. Cambridge Risk Solutions helps organisations before incidents, through plans, training and exercising, and after them, through debriefs and post-incident reviews.

Sources

1. The Business Continuity Institute, *BCI Future of Resilience Report 2026* (with F24), 2026, and launch email “The BCI Future of Resilience Report 2026 is now available”.
2. The Business Continuity Institute, *Resilience: Vision 2030 Report* (with F24), 2025.
3. The Business Continuity Institute, *Manifesto for Organizational Resilience*, May 2018.
4. The Business Continuity Institute, *Organizational Resilience: Perspectives from the Industry* (with Sungard Availability Services), 2019.
5. Respondent numbers per question are the author’s estimates, derived from the published percentages. Page numbers refer to the PDF of the 2026 report.