

# Operational Resilience Leadership Playbook

---

A service-led approach to disruption, recovery, and learning

Help leaders connect critical services, dependencies, impact tolerances, scenarios, decisions, and continuous improvement.

01

# Executive summary

---

Resilience is the ability to continue delivering what matters, adapt under pressure, and learn fast enough to reduce future disruption.

## ● Services

Begin with the service stakeholders depend on, not the inventory of systems.

## ● Tolerance

Define how much disruption is unacceptable in business and stakeholder terms.

## ● Dependencies

Map the minimum people, data, technology, suppliers, facilities, and decisions required.

## ● Learning

Turn exercises and incidents into funded, owned, and retested improvement.

Use this playbook to frame executive ownership, service mapping, scenario exercises, supplier discussions, and a 90-day resilience agenda.

# The critical service model

---

A critical service is an outcome delivered to a stakeholder. Its resilience depends on a chain of capabilities that must work together.

---

|    |                    |                                                                                  |
|----|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 | Service            | What must continue to be delivered, for whom, and why?                           |
| 02 | Impact tolerance   | How much disruption creates unacceptable harm?                                   |
| 03 | Minimum capability | What is the smallest viable level of service during disruption?                  |
| 04 | Dependencies       | Which people, data, systems, suppliers, facilities, and decisions are essential? |
| 05 | Scenarios          | Which plausible failures could cross the tolerance?                              |
| 06 | Improvement        | Which changes reduce likelihood, impact, or recovery uncertainty?                |

---

# Map dependencies that matter

Focus mapping on the minimum viable service and the points where one failure can affect many outcomes.

|            |                                                                           |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| People     | Specialist knowledge, authority, location, availability, succession       |
| Data       | Integrity, access, freshness, lineage, recovery, confidentiality          |
| Technology | Applications, identity, network, cloud, integration, observability        |
| Suppliers  | Concentration, subcontractors, recovery commitments, exit options         |
| Facilities | Sites, equipment, utilities, logistics, physical access                   |
| Decisions  | Crisis authority, risk acceptance, customer communication, prioritization |

A dependency map is useful only when it changes a scenario, decision, investment, supplier arrangement, or recovery design.

# Exercise the operating model

A strong exercise tests coordination, decisions, communication, and adaptation under uncertainty - not memory of the plan.

## DESIGN

- Choose a service-led scenario
- Define learning objectives
- Include cross-boundary dependencies
- Set realistic information constraints

## RUN

- Introduce uncertainty and escalation
- Observe decisions and handoffs
- Track assumptions and workarounds
- Test stakeholder communication

## LEARN

- Prioritize systemic findings
- Assign owners and funding paths
- Set retest dates
- Update service and dependency knowledge

The best exercise leaves leaders with fewer untested assumptions and a sharper, owned improvement agenda.

# Leadership workshop questions

---

Use these questions to test whether resilience is understood as an executive capability rather than a technical document.

01

---

Which services would create unacceptable stakeholder harm if disrupted?

02

---

Who is accountable for each service across organizational boundaries?

03

---

What is the maximum tolerable disruption in business terms?

04

---

Which hidden dependencies could invalidate current recovery assumptions?

05

---

Where are supplier concentration and exit options weakest?

06

---

Which decisions would be hardest under incomplete information?

07

---

How are manual workarounds tested and sustained?

08

---

How do incidents and exercises influence investment and operating change?

# A 30-60-90 day resilience agenda

Build visibility and executive ownership first, then test the weakest assumptions and close the learning loop.

## FIRST 30 DAYS

- Name critical services and owners
- Define provisional impact tolerances
- Review current plans and incidents
- Select one service for deep mapping

## DAYS 31-60

- Map minimum dependencies
- Identify concentration and uncertainty
- Design a service-led scenario
- Agree decision and communication roles

## DAYS 61-90

- Run the scenario exercise
- Prioritize systemic findings
- Fund and assign improvements
- Set retest and reporting cadence

Resilience improves when service knowledge, decisions, exercises, incidents, and investment operate as one continuous system.