

**Amicus**  
LEGAL CONSULTANTS

# PREVENTING, AND PREPARING FOR, CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- A FRESH APPROACH



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## WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

In an increasingly interconnected world, the risk, and impact of a critical incident has never been more acute. What, then, is a 'critical incident'? The phrase 'critical incident' conjures up images of disaster or catastrophe. It might be exactly that! But, equally, it might be an occurrence that is significant, or even dramatic, for the organisation concerned, but is one with an entirely positive outcome.

A critical incident, positive or negative, is, however, one that affects and has an effect, whether organisationally or individually to those within. It might serve to question an aspect of beliefs, values, attitude or behaviour and can arise for a host of reasons: lack of communication or knowledge, cultural differences and misunderstandings, perception of unfair treatment, or the dynamics of team and individual relationships.

Whatever the cause, the consequences may be far-reaching. For a financial or commercial organisation, this might lead to a drop in market value, a reduction in public appeal and reputational damage.

Over recent years, the City of London has been subject to unparalleled levels of external scrutiny. The perceived industry-wide failure of self-regulation in the financial sector to individual instances of corporate mismanagement and corruption has profoundly tarnished its banking and commercial institutions. This, in turn, has led to sustained pressure on corporate institutions to 'clean up their act' and to behave in a more ethical, responsible manner. At the same time aspects of business have been redefined, sometimes unnecessarily, by the entry into force of the Bribery Act 2010.

Set against this picture, it is now beyond dispute that commercial organisations in the UK have to have in place sound governance policies and compliance processes, along with the capability to assess and manage risk, if they are to maintain public trust and to satisfy the demands of the law (often, of more than one jurisdiction!)

## PUTTING IN PLACE PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Amicus Legal Consultants, a City-based legal and law enforcement consultancy, has continually cautioned against rushing ahead with the development of new corporate accountability and governance policies and procedures without first rigorously assessing them, along with existing measures, to avoid unnecessary outlay and to ensure a 'fit for purpose' framework that enjoys the full engagement of management and staff alike.

Amicus also recommends that processes are instituted that can accurately gauge an organisation's internal response mechanisms in the wake of a critical incident in order to facilitate the best possible response and to guide future policy development. However, more often than not, those who find themselves at the heart of a critical incident or the response to it may be reluctant or unwilling to share their experiences and the learning from it. This may occur for a host of reasons: hierarchical or cultural restraint, fear of recrimination, lack of confidence or simply a lack of 'buy-in' by those involved.

Amicus bases its conclusions on the decades its specialists have spent in assisting capability building and critical incident response and debriefing worldwide. "Our experience has enabled us to identify many of the inherent limitations that occur whenever an organisation seeks to obtain unbiased, objective feedback from its employees, agents or partners," explained Amicus director Martin Polaine. "And this in turn convinced us that we needed to develop a debriefing mechanism that would benefit the employer and employee equally, one that both informs an organisation and, at the same time, allows experiences, ideas and opinions, in fact, any matter of consequence, to be provided in a frank and constructive manner."

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## THE TWIN-TRACK AMICUS SOLUTION: OBTAINING AUTHENTIC INSIGHT & TESTING UNCERTAINTY SAFELY

*Solve:Interactive*: A debriefing tool and full methodology has been specifically developed to enable the challenges and the solutions to them to be identified from within the organisation, rather than from the outside. Some of the regular uses to which it is put include:

- › Assessing organisational responses following a critical incident;
- › Identification of good practices and lessons to be learnt in the wake of a critical incident;
- › Testing internal systems:
- › Creating new, or assessing, existing policies and procedures;
- › Risk assessment and risk management;
- › Conducting a scoping/needs assessment exercises.



Now, let us take the situation where, for instance, a new policy or procedure has actually been put in place, perhaps to prevent a critical incident occurring or, simply, to give effect to a new regulatory or compliance directive:

An immediate question is: Can the new policy, procedure or compliance measure be realistically tested? Significantly, Amicus has found that using an immersive training approach, which allows for testing in a 'safe' and consequence-free, yet all too realistic, environment is the answer.

*Solve:Immersive* is the Amicus multimedia immersive approach that provides this capability. To achieve this, specifically developed software, coupled with facilitators and subject matter experts are deployed to enable those within the organisation to 'live' a bespoke and true to life 'event'. Participants will make real time decisions as they carry out roles and responsibilities identical to those they undertake in their daily work life, but those decisions and the processes behind them will be challenged and critically analysed in regular debriefing sessions, with every outcome recorded, tracked and audited. By the end of an exercise, each participant will have lived through the 'event', learnt a great deal and, typically, achieved a much higher level of reasoned decision-making and risk management, and been part of a considerably enhanced co-ordination effort. Time and again, our clients assure us that *Solve: Immersive* is a totally unforgettable, but incredibly valuable, experience!

### SOLVE METHODOLOGY AT A GLANCE:

Our *Solve* methodology is comprised of two parts, *Solve:Interactive* and *Solve:Immersive*.

	
A pre- or debriefing tool	A multimedia immersive exercise
The element of anonymity breaks through typical constraints to provide true insight	Real-life 'scenarios' that require participants to make real time decisions
Facilitates a dialogue and challenge in order to identify issues and provide solutions	Tests and provides practical training on procedures of all types, decision-making at every level and risk assessment/management
Fully evidenced solutions are arrived at from within an organisation, not imposed upon it	Sustainable learning outcomes in a 'safe' environment.

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