

Can you see preventable problems coming?



Systemic
Contextual
Attention
Negligence

“Didn’t see **that** coming!”

Really? **Really?**

Chances are somebody did – even many ‘somebodies’, in your business, on your payroll, hiding in plain sight. They may even have tried to alert you, only to find channels non-existent, blocked, filtered or simply ignored as ‘noise’ that didn’t arise from the strategy team.

Your staff are frequently the first to see the early signs of de-railing initiatives and operational risk. Despite this, the work of being ‘in touch’ is too often ad-hoc. Something leaders do when they can, through coffee chats, site visits, town halls that often contain more spin than substance. This is a hallmark of SCAN risk.

SCAN – Systemic Contextual Attention Negligence - risk is a form of contextual blindness at the top of organisations, when the executive agenda becomes too detached from the on-the-ground commercial realities and true drivers of the business (the things staff see every day).

How do you know you have SCAN risk?

1. Are HR engagement exercises focused entirely on staff welfare – or do you actively seek observations on risks, operational, and commercial realities within the business?
2. Preventable mistakes? Are there significant errors in the company’s recent history for which people – after the fact – revealed that they had ‘seen it coming’?
3. Implementation dissonance: Are there policies or decisions which don’t ‘land’ well when implemented, or which suffer more teething pains or executional problems than expected?

The consequences of SCAN lapses go beyond those enshrined in business failure case studies: the Kodaks, Sonys, Blockbusters of infamy. The risk goes up every time there is a shift in customer or employee sentiment; a new strategy (too often led by structural efficiency post-rationalized with a ‘strategy’) is deployed; or a small-player start-up ‘somehow’ starts to gain traction in an established market.

The pandemic era made things worse: with the hasty shift to remote work in many companies, informal and unstructured channels of communication – the same ones that enable execs to hear warning signals from their people – were pulverized.

Well-managed companies see this gap and are actively mitigating SCAN risk through a disciplined systemic approach which is far more efficient, more effective, and more data-driven than traditional engagement methods.

For companies that want to survive and leaders that want to perform, meaningful and actionable data is fundamental. Not traditional, biased, blind-spotted surveys, but actionable intelligence gathered and used in real time, to enable leaders to ‘act on the future before it happens.’

That’s nowhere near as difficult as it sounds; it doesn’t require that you find more hours in your day and doesn’t assume you can magically conjure up the time and headspace for more one on one conversations, Town Halls and workshops.

Contact us to find out how.