A new direction

IIRSM is pursuing a new vision and strategy for growth. As Chief Executive Phillip Pearson explains, there is a requirement for a membership organisation that covers the full spectrum of risk management.

Risk management is emerging as one of the most important functions in a business. While many risk practitioners initially developed a firm foundation for their career in health and safety, the role encompasses so much more. The industry must evolve to reflect this new reality.

“Risk management is something that can mean different things to different people,” says Phillip. “We as an organisation want to link risk sectors and give members who have been working in the health and safety industry the opportunity to develop their career in the wider risk profession; the industry is calling for this.”

The risk discipline is evolving and new roles are developing that require support to be able to demonstrate their professional integrity and high standards of operating to others in the business. As a result of the new vision the institute will be a place for professional development not only for those working in health, safety and risk, but also for emerging roles such as ethics managers.

The institute’s new direction has been formed in consultation with industry, in recognition of the need for a professional body that covers the spectrum of risk disciplines.

“We have spoken to a number of major organisations across the public and private sector, and it’s clear the time is now for our new direction, especially as there is currently no organisation fulfilling this wider role,” Phillip adds.

Our President, Siobhan Donnelly, explains the new vision involves introducing risk management to safety personnel. “IIRSM wants to enhance the careers of our members and also improve the impact of health and safety as part of overall risk,” she says.

According to Siobhan, it makes sense to spearhead this initiative now to elevate safety personnel within the risk realm. “There are so many safety breaches because safety personnel are left in isolation. We believe that a more integrated approach will have more impact across the business and also at board level.”

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“Pursuing our new vision will allow us to achieve that. By growing our membership base around the globe we will lift the profile of the conversations we have with our members and with the business community.”

Implications for members

Our vision recognises it is important for members to embrace ongoing career development to achieve a long-term career in their chosen area. Given the risk environment, members require new skills. They need to think differently and more widely about the world around them.

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“One of the most important functions in a business is risk management. This needs to be driven by members, so the end result benefits everyone in the risk community,” he adds.

Phillip is calling on members to contact him directly, by emailing him at philip.pearson@iirsm.org. “I want to talk directly with members, as well as non-members – you don’t have to be a member to work with us. Please get in touch if you think you have the right skills to contribute to the new vision. We want to talk to everyone who works in the risk management profession.”

Member support

When Phillip was interviewed for this article he was about to fly out of Aberdeen after a Branch meeting the previous night, which confirmed how supportive members are of IIRSM’s new vision.

“We have done considerable work with risk professionals in the UAE, Qatar and Oman and they are also very supportive. We are in discussions with members based in Singapore and Hong Kong, who are also looking forward to having more details on our vision. We are also looking at opening branches in other counties, especially the Republic of Ireland. It’s a real opportunity for global growth.”