

Institute of Management Services 2024 Annual General Meeting

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

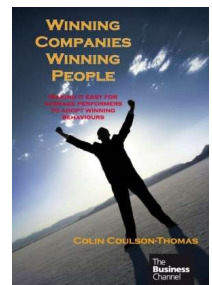
Friday 8th November

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IMS 2024 Annual General Meeting

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Agenda

- Evidence and Sources
- Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges
- Common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges
- Requirements for effective responses
- Obstacles to effective responses
- Implications for decision makers and their professional advisers
- Questions for Leaders, boards, practitioners and the professions
- **Note: Responding to global risks and existential threats represents an unprecedented business, political and professional challenge and opportunity**



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Scientific Evidence and Sources



- IPCC, UNEP, WEF and WMO annual and pre-COP summary and synthesis reports
- CCT Theme Papers for IOD India annual international events:
 - 2023 London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability: Boards, ESG and Corporate Governance for the New World Economy
 - 18th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility: CSR and Exploring the Evolution of ESG in the New World Economy
 - 2024 UAE Global Convention and 31st Annual World Congress on Leadership for Innovation and Excellence
 - 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change: Board's agenda for addressing Climate Change and Environmental Risks: Driving Towards a Greener Society
 - 2024 Annual Directors' Conclave: Emerging Trends and Building Inclusive Boards
- CCT monthly articles in Director Today and quarterly articles in Effective Executive and Management Services



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

WEF 2-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- **Misinformation and disinformation (T)**
- **Extreme weather events (E)**
- **Societal polarization (S)**
- **Cyber insecurity (T)**
- **Interstate armed conflict (G)**
- **Lack of economic opportunity (S)**
- **Inflation (Econ)**
- **Involuntary migration (S)**
- **Economic downturn (Econ)**
- **Pollution (E)**

Source: WEF (World Economic Forum) (2024), *The Global Risks Report 2024*, 19th Edition, Cologny, Geneva, World Economic Forum, 10th January



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

WEF 10-year Global Risk Ranking (Severity of Impact)

- Extreme weather events (E)
- Critical change to Earth systems (E)
- Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse (E)
- Natural resource shortages (E)
- Misinformation and disinformation (T)
- Adverse outcomes of AI technologies (T)
- Involuntary migration (S)
- Cyber insecurity (T)
- Societal polarization (S)
- Pollution (E)

Source: WEF (World Economic Forum) (2024), *The Global Risks Report 2024*, 19th Edition, Cologny, Geneva, World Economic Forum, 10th January

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Existential Threats

- Asteroids
- Nuclear Weapons and Threats
- Biosecurity Threats
- Global Warming and Climate Change
- Artificial Intelligence and its Regulation
- Biodiversity (Monocultures/food security)
- + Various Malevolent / Terrorism / Exogenous



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Consequences of Collective Human Activity

- We face shared existential challenges:

- Environmental degradation
- Reduction of biodiversity
- Running down of natural capital
- Spread of contagious disease
- Global warming and climate change
- Gen AI / AGI as an existential threat, etc.



- Collective human activity is the cause of global warming, climate change and other existential challenges facing humankind. Could survival become a shared interest?
- Where do existential threats feature in our, corporate and institutional policies and priorities? How prepared are people, organisations, communities and societies?
- Are common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges, requirements for effective responses, and obstacles to them understood?
- How might obstacles to effective responses be overcome? Is this interesting or imperative?
- What role can and should we play? How do we transition from studying selected aspects of certain problems to supporting more holistic and collective responses?

Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges

- Inter-related and/or inter-dependent and complex
- Common cause: Collective human aspirations / activities / lifestyles
- Uncertainty on timing/tipping points and/or slow burn
- Increasing vulnerability of life-forms and infrastructures
- Reducing resilience and increasing potential impact/cost
- Potentially catastrophic impacts
- Possible unintended consequences of human intervention/responses



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Requirements for Effective Responses

- Collaboration and collective action
- Supply / value chain and community/stakeholder cooperation
- Recognition of priority common / shared interests (e.g. collective survival)
- Cross-functional, inter-disciplinary and wider cooperation
- Disaggregating data / trends (differing local impacts)
- Corporate / community and public / private partnerships
- Flexibility, adaptation, intelligent steering and greater flexibility and speed
- Quicker adoption/scaling up of sustainable innovations / solutions



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Obstacles to Effective Responses

- Fragmentation and polarisation
- Self and vested interests in the status quo/fossil fuels
- Distractions and short-term pressures
- Delaying strategies and tactics and denial
- Bias, misinformation and disinformation
- Increasing population / rising lifestyle aspirations
- Limited natural capital and persistent negative externalities
- Social media / retreat into virtual worlds
- Departmental structures, organisational boundaries and discipline rather than holistic solution focus
- Differing public and private sector remits, approval processes and budgeting incompatibility



Global Risks, Existential Threats and Complex Challenges

Questions for Leaders, Boards, Advisers and the Professions

- How vulnerable to existential threats are your areas of responsibility? Which activities, entities, groups, communities and supporting infrastructures are most vulnerable?
- Do those for whom you are responsible understand causes and common features of contemporary risks, threats and challenges; requirements for effective responses; and obstacles to them?
- Where do existential threats feature in your, corporate and institutional policies and priorities?
- How prepared are people, organisations, communities and societies? How might obstacles for effective responses be overcome? Are actions regarded as interesting, important or imperative?
- Could survival become a common, shared and priority interest? What could you and your colleagues do to engage stakeholders, confront vested interests and enable, support and accelerate:
 1. The minimisation of negative externalities and transition to more sustainable and inclusive aspirations, objectives, policies and priorities, and activities and lifestyles in harmony with the natural world?
 2. Cooperation and inter-disciplinary, inter-departmental, inter-organisational and inter-national collaboration across organisational, departmental and other boundaries and collective and responsible responses to global risks, existential threats and contemporary challenges?



Operating in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous World

Selected Further Reading (Theme Papers)

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2023 & 2024), [Theme Papers for] 2023 and 2024 London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability, www.iodglobal.com
[https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/theme-paper-lgc-2023.pdf, 17th August 2023 and
https://www.iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/LGC-2024-theme-paper.pdf, 9th September 2024]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2023), [Theme Paper] 18th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/theme-paper-18th-international-conference-on-csr.pdf, 15th November]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 2024 UAE Global Convention and 31st Annual World Congress on Leadership for Innovation and Excellence, www.iodglobal.com
[https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-uae2024.pdf, 11th January] [



Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-icemcc2024.pdf, 30th April]

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), [Theme Paper] 2024 Annual Directors' Conclave: Emerging Trends and Building Inclusive Boards, www.iodglobal.com [https://iodglobal.com/front_assets/images/events/2024/theme-paper-adc2024.pdf, 10th July]



Operating in a VUCA World Selected Further Reading (Articles)

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Challenging Misinformation, Understanding Impacts and Pursuing Possibilities, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue III, March, pp 17-20

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), AI, Sustainability and the Future of Work, *Management Services*, Vol. 68 Number 1, Spring, pp 13-19

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Directors, Boards and Existential Threats, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue IV, April, pp 43-48

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Handling Differing Director and Board Perspectives, *Director Today*, Vol. X Issue V, May, pp 15-19

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Preparing Directors for Corporate Survival and International Operation, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VI, June, pp 21-27

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Recognising and Preparing for Existential Threats, *Management Services*, Vol. 68 No 2, Summer, pp 22-29

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Confronting Cyber Risk Realities, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VII, July, pp 11-17

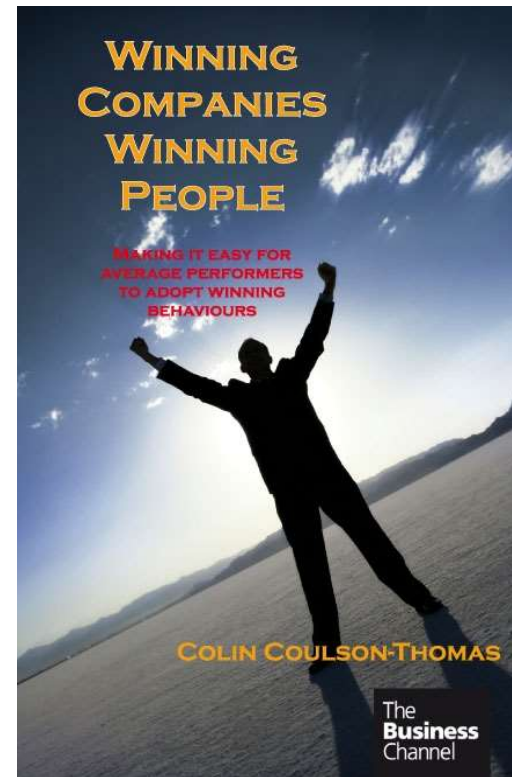
Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Leadership Qualities for Confronting Existential Threats, *Effective Executive*, Vol. 27 No. 2, Summer, pp 5-25

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Accelerating Environmental and Climate Action: How bias, misinformation and disinformation can discredit and delay, *Director Today*, Vol. 10 Issue VIII, August, pp 63-68

Coulson-Thomas, Colin (2024), Recognising and Coping with Misinformation and Disinformation, *Management Services*, Vol.68 No. 3, Autumn, pp 14-21

Future and Responsible Leadership and the Under-pinning CSF Research Programme

‘Transforming Public Services’, Talent Management 2’, ‘Transforming Knowledge Management’, ‘Winning Companies; Winning People’, ‘Developing Directors’ and reports on creating and exploiting knowledge, customer and client relationships, purchasing, winning business, pricing, etc. briefings, tools and reports can be obtained from: www.policypublications.com and articles and recent theme papers and articles related to existential threats are available from: <http://www.academia.edu>



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