

Hogan Lovells' Interview with Pete Frielinghaus on Business Continuity Management in Africa

May 2020

Tobias Faber and Camilla Fröhlich from the Frankfurt office virtually interviewed Pete Frielinghaus, a resilience specialist and fellow of the Business Continuity Institute, on Business Continuity Management (BCM) in Africa and the implications of COVID-19 on BCM.

HL: You are a fellow of the Business Continuity Institute and currently advising in the field of Resilience after serving as Managing Director of ContinuityEastAfrica in Kenya and having worked all over Africa for the past 18 years. It's fair to say, you know Africa.

Pete Frielinghaus: No-one can ever say they really know Africa. Africa is an enigma of its own and a continent that continually surprises and amazes me – but yes, I've worked in about 27 countries over the last 20 years all over the African continent.

HL: In a nutshell what is BCM and why should it not be overlooked especially within Africa?

Pete Frielinghaus: BCM is all about continuity of your operations, in the old days we referred to DR, or Disaster Recovery, this is no longer applicable as we don't always face disasters but encounter plenty of incidents that could disrupt our daily operations (business and technology) – so it's about continuity management and more importantly, about general or holistic resilience. Africa in particular, needs and invokes BCM on a far higher average than Europe or any other first world country – the classic examples are the highly unreliable utilities we find prevalent all over Africa – power, water, infrastructure etc.

HL: You have been quoted as saying that we live in a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). Recent events make this acronym more applicable than ever. However, preparation is vital and could mean the difference between a business surviving a disaster or succumbing to it. Would you agree that BCM is vital for all businesses?

Pete Frielinghaus: Absolutely, all you need to do is turn on any news channel at any time of the day and you'll see examples of VUCA being very much alive and well in all sectors. This is the essence of BCM – maintaining your organization's resilience and continuity of critical processes, irrespective of the type of interruption.

HL: Have you noticed a growing trend towards foreign investors in Africa focusing on putting BCM measures in place or would you say this is still one of the things overlooked to an extent?

Pete Frielinghaus: Foreign investors that do their due diligence properly should insist on it – more than often, the organizations' they represent would have a duty to maintain their governance and compliance obligations as prescribed by their local governing bodies.

HL: We cannot avoid addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Is this something you have prepared businesses for? Especially in Africa outbreaks are not uncommon and surely businesses too are not immune to the effects. Can you briefly touch on what BCM in times of a pandemic looks like?

Pete Frielinghaus: This pandemic has completely revolutionized BCM and the need for proper preparedness – we have put pandemic plans in place for a number of years now, but the extent of this outbreak has tested them all to the limit. The first real deployments came about with Ebola in West Africa and Bird Flu in the East – all of these proved their value at the time.

HL: How has the response to COVID-19 been different to other outbreaks, such as Ebola, in Africa?

Pete Frielinghaus: Besides the sheer scale of the pandemic, the biggest difference was the fact that for the first time ever, we all experienced a complete lockdown and as such, all our workers had to test their remote working capabilities. For those unprepared, this was a complete game stopper

HL: You have seen and been an active part of BCM solutions being stressed-tested in real situations such as the terror attacks in Kenya in recent years. Are there any so-called "lessons learned" that came out of the wake of those attacks by observing businesses implementing BCM solutions and operating from recovery sites that you could share?

Pete Frielinghaus: Yes, unfortunately you are right, I've had first-hand experience in this in Nigeria, South Sudan and more recently in Kenya. Without going into too much detail, the biggest lesson learnt was testing, testing and testing! Organizations that test their resilience strategies regularly, are far more prepared and able to recover more quickly than those that have not exercised their responses

HL: Let's assume that a business in Africa has BCM solutions in place, how important is it to "dry run" such a plan to ensure that all employees, management and clients know how things will play out if and when the need arises? Is this something you recommend to clients? If so, how is this implemented as we assume it's far more than your average fire drill in a downtown office location.

Pete Frielinghaus: As I've alluded to in the previous point, testing is absolutely critical. A full testing strategy should be put in place and planned over a number of months and even years as the testing becomes more mature – these strategies would start with basic desk-top testing of plans and responses, to far more detailed and complex tests (or exercises, as it's mostly not based on a pass or fail concept) which include a number of different elements such as ICT recovery, Business Process recovery, Crisis Management and strategic leadership. Most importantly, the communication and relationship between all these elements are vital for a successful recovery.

HL: They say education is key so following on from the above question, how can our clients embarking on projects within Africa and setting up satellite locations or local offices gain better awareness and understanding of BCM? We really emphasize the importance of a local partner to our clients in almost all Africa-related interactions – BCM is also something our clients should be discussing with their local partners too.

Pete Frielinghaus: Having worked all over Africa, I learnt really early on that what works in your head office or home country, will most certainly not work in the same way in-country. When you are operating in a foreign environment, my best advice would be listen to the locals, ask a lot of questions and be respectful of their responses and cultures – cultural difference have a huge impact on an easy landing into new ventures - local knowledge is key. I can give you some great examples of things going wrong purely on cultural differences, that's a topic for another discussion ·

HL: Pete, thank you very much for shining a light on BCM and its importance especially in the current climate.

Key contacts



Dr. Tobias Faber

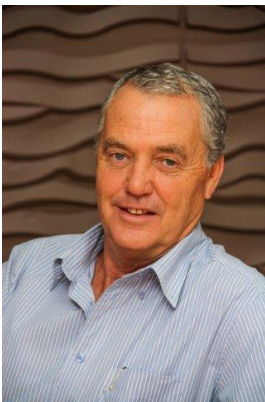
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About the interviewee Mr. Pete Frielinghaus (FBCI), Senior Resilience Advisor and Instructor - Advisory Services



**Pete Frielinghaus FBCI
Resilience Specialist**

Education, Qualifications and Certifications:

Certified ISO 223301 Instructor | Fellow of the Business Continuity Institute (FBCI) | Chairman of the Africa Chapter of the BCI | Mauritius and East African BCI Forum founder | Approved BCI Trainer / Instructor.

Summary of Work Experience:

Pete is the Chairman of the African Chapter of the Business Continuity Institute, an approved BCI and ISO 22301 Instructor. He has been the area representative for Mauritius and is the vice chair of the East African Forum. He was awarded the Business Continuity Consultant of the year Award in August 2014 and was recently deployed as the Managing Director of ContinuityEastAfrica in Nairobi Kenya

Pete gained a broad range of skills in training, retail telecommunications and IT during his career which started in the IT Industry in the early 80's. As an entrepreneur he has been involved with several start-up ventures in the retail sector before joining a large South African Investment Bank where he was responsible for Integration, System Design, BCM and the general operations in their securities division. During this time he gained extensive experience on a wide variety of systems and processes in the banking industry including application development, implementation, database management, communications and business continuity planning. In 2002 Pete focused specifically on business continuity management where he completed a wide variety of assignments both locally in SA as well as London, East and West Africa involving all aspects of the BCM Lifecycle. He was the founder and General Manager of an IT services start-up in Mauritius specialising in Business Continuity and off-site recovery. He has been a certified member of the Business Continuity Institute since 2004 and in 2013 was elected as a director of the inaugural African Chapter of the Business Continuity Institute which he now chairs.

In addition to his in-depth operational BCM experience, Pete has been involved in BCM engagements (ranging from reviews to full programme implementations) in various industries including the following:

- Financial (Banking and Insurance) Sectors;
- Telecommunications;
- Logistics & Transport;
- Government, Defence;
- Retail;
- Health, Medical and Pharmaceutical;
- Security;
- Manufacturing;
- Distribution
- Mining.

Specialisations

- BCM Training
- IT Disaster Recovery
- Telco and Financial sector BCM Specialist
- Crisis Management
- Programme & Project Management
- BCM Maturity Assessments
- Business Impact Analysis / Risk Assessments
- BCM Strategy Design/Development
- Business Continuity Plan development: (Strategic, Tactical & Operational)
- IT DR testing & GAP Analysis reporting

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