

Cultivate Your Risk Manager Superpowers



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When was your last big risk management win? Did you feel like you'd earned your superhero cape?

Reflecting on our successes can help us build on areas where we excel as risk managers. It can also help us identify areas where we could use some help to grow our skills.

That was the goal of NRMC's first affiliate member webinar of the year, "[Cultivate Your Risk Manager Superpowers](#)." We created a (subjective!) list of 10 "superpowers" of great risk managers and shared ideas for how to cultivate those qualities.

Here's a peek at some of those superpowers, with ways to hone these skills at any stage on your risk management journey.

1. Adaptability

This superpower allows us to adjust when the conditions around us change. Adaptability helps us let go of ideas, processes, and goals that no longer serve our organizations.

If you're very adaptable and want to build on that:

- Hone your emotional intelligence. People often react emotionally to risk. In meetings, focus on others' emotional cues and try to respond to them.

If you know adaptability is a challenge for you, here are some ways to grow.

- Take an improv class! Improvisational acting requires you to stay open to possibilities, think fast and find creative ways to meet the unexpected.
- Try a new sport or hobby. Take a music or cooking class or step onto a pickleball court. Approach the new skill with a mindset of learning rather than mastery.

2. Communication

Communication skills can cut through confusion and misunderstanding. They can help you sense and address issues like fear and anxiety about change. And with strong communication skills, you can create great relationships that support risk management.

If you're a strong communicator and want to build on your skills:

- Try to break the habit of thinking of a response to another person while they're still speaking. Listen fully before you think about what you'll say. Notice when your mind wanders or tries to form a response. Redirect your attention to the person speaking.

If you struggle with communication and want to improve:

- Use fewer words. Many people who aren't confident in their communication skills—or overconfident!—clutter things up with jargon. When you write a memo, cut the weakest sentence from every paragraph before you send. You may need to add back a little information, but it will be stronger and clearer than what you cut.
- When you're communicating, just communicate. Don't play with your phone or make your grocery list. Give conversations all your attention.

3. Creativity

This superpower helps us envision things beyond what we or our organization have seen before. It helps us work with our colleagues to create innovative risk solutions. And it brings more enjoyment to our life and work.

If you're very creative and want to build on that:

- Visit a children's museum that offers hands-on activities. When you reach an activity that stumps you, observe how kids approach it. Seeing their natural curiosity flow inspires new problem-solving ideas.

If you don't think you're very creative, here are some ways to boost your creativity.

- When you're brainstorming individually, set a time limit. Crank out as many ideas as you can. You'll have lots of raw material when you need to narrow the list.
- Try the [30 Circles challenge](#). Draw 30 circles on a sheet of paper. Then, draw on the circles to turn as many of them as possible into recognizable objects within three minutes.

Try out some of these techniques and see how they affect your risk management practice this year. NRMC Affiliate Members who have created a profile on our website can check out our archived webinar in their Affiliate Dashboard and learn how to grow in all 10 superpowers. If your agency is not yet an Affiliate Member but is interested in registering for upcoming sessions, [join today online](#) or contact Whitney Thomey at whitney@nonprofitrisk.org or 571-307-4321 to learn more about our member benefits. And stay curious!

Rachel Sams is Lead Consultant and Editor at the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. She recently visited a children's museum to play with circuits. Reach her with thoughts and questions about risk management superpowers at rachel@nonprofitrisk.org or (505) 456-4045.