

The Sentry Framework

De-risk human factors.
Raise enterprise value.

Clearer judgements. Earlier warnings. Fewer crises.

INDEPENDENT BEHAVIOURAL-RISK ADVICE
FOR LEADERS AND BOARDS

Harris Hawkins · Private Advisory Services · Oxford

IN BRIEF

We help senior leaders and boards spot and contain people-related risks before they turn into public problems.

The Sentry Framework is an independent advisory service for chairs, boards, chief executives, founders and family-business principals. We look for the behavioural, relational, reputational and decision-making risks that ordinary risk management misses, and we help you deal with them early, discreetly and under written terms.

It fills the gap between three things you probably already buy: organisational risk management, executive coaching, and due diligence on people. It does not replace any of them. Where needed, we work alongside your lawyers, HR, risk, communications and investigation teams.

WHAT YOU GET

Clearer judgement.

Better challenge.

Earlier warning.

Fewer preventable crises.

More trusted, more investable, more in demand.

THE PROBLEM

The cost of waiting has gone up.

A private failure now becomes a public one within hours. Organisations need to be as fluent in human error as they are in finance and strategy. The risk comes from human nature itself: pressure, ego, loyalty, fear, fatigue and grievance. Good governance reduces it.

The risk grows with seniority. Senior leaders often work with distorted information, little dissent, concentrated influence and heavy public exposure. By the time a conduct failure, a public controversy, a poor appointment or a strategic misjudgement is visible, the conditions that produced it have usually been in place for months.

Five questions that we worry about, on your behalf

1. Who tells your leaders the truth when the truth is unwelcome?
2. What did your last bad press story, communications failure or executive misbehaviour cost you?
3. Does your board understand the real network of influence around the chief executive?
4. Which decisions are less sound than they look because of pressure, loyalty, grievance, fear, poor health or overconfidence?
5. Is information flowing freely to the top, and is anyone shut out? Is there enough wrong with it to cause a damaging crisis?

What we do

We help leaders and boards identify and contain behavioural, relational, reputational and decision-making risks before they become organisational events.

Three engagements

ENGAGEMENT	WHAT IT IS	THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS
1 Executive Governance Advisor	An ongoing adviser to one high-consequence decision-maker.	How do we improve this leader's judgement, relationships and decision security over time?
2 The Inner Circle Map	A review of who really influences decisions, and how information reaches the top.	Who actually influences the key decision-maker, and what risks does that create?
3 The Red Team	A rapid challenge of one imminent decision, message or controversy.	What could go wrong with this decision, and how do we reduce that before we act?

ENGAGEMENT 1 OF 3

Executive Governance Advisor

A second mind for high-consequence decisions and relationships. Independent, and informed by clinical and organisational experience.

Suited to

CEOs, founders, chairs, family-office principals and senior executives whose decisions, behaviour or communications can materially affect value, staff safety, regulatory exposure or reputation.

- Confidential advisory sessions, usually weekly or fortnightly.
- Fast access before major meetings, announcements, appointments, negotiations and conflicts.
- Challenge before you speak or sign: “What are you about to say, signal, concede or overlook?”
- A review of who is shaping the leader’s judgement, what they stand to gain, and where dependency, fear or pressure may be at work.
- Early warning of behavioural drift: impulsiveness, overconfidence, grievance, isolation, escalating conflict.
- A monthly risk summary in plain business language. Not a clinical report.
- Optionally, a quarterly conversation with the chair, general counsel or governance lead, under a confidentiality protocol agreed in advance.

ENGAGEMENT 1 OF 3, CONTINUED

What you receive

- **Executive Risk Map.** A living one-page view of the material behavioural, relational, decision and reputational risks.
- **Pre-Decision Challenge.** A short written challenge before a high-stakes event.
- **90-Day Psychological Security Plan.** Agreed controls, boundaries, communication rules and escalation routes.
- **Quarterly board-appropriate insight.** Anonymised themes and system-level recommendations. Never private therapeutic content without consent.

Stages of engagement

- **Initial diagnostic.** Two to four weeks.
- **Ongoing engagement.** Monthly continuation with defined response times and an agreed number of sessions.
- **Crisis availability.** Round-the-clock or short-notice support, priced separately.

Where it usually sits in the budget

Governance and risk control, external advisory, board support, coaching, learning and development, or security.

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

How can we improve this leader's judgement, relationships and decision security over time?

ENGAGEMENT 2 OF 3

The Inner Circle Map

Formally: Inner-Circle Influence and Risk Map

An independent account of who really shapes decisions, set against who the organisation chart says does, and the risks that creates.

Questions it answers

- Who has real access to the leader's ear?
- Who is filtered out, sidelined or feared?
- Who is genuinely independent, and who is captured?
- Are there signs of manipulation, dependency, factionalism, retaliation or distorted information?
- Is the leader too insulated, and are there safe routes for challenge and dissent?

Suited to

Boards, CEOs, founders, family businesses and private-equity portfolio companies, particularly during succession, turnaround, merger, conflict or leadership transition.

How it is engaged

A fixed project, typically over four to eight weeks.

ENGAGEMENT 2 OF 3, CONTINUED

What you receive

- **Influence Map.** People, relationships, access points, dependencies and where risk concentrates.
- **Conduct and Manipulation Risk Register.** Observable risks, the evidence behind each, likely impact and control actions.
- **Information-Flow Audit.** What reaches the key decision-maker, what does not, and why.
- **Board Action Memorandum.** Priority actions on governance, decision rights, communications, leadership support and escalation.

How we do it

- Confidential interviews with the sponsor, under clear terms of reference.
- Structured confidential interviews with selected executives, board members and critical advisers.
- Mapping of decision pathways, meeting structures, escalation processes, relevant communications and governance records.
- Mapping of formal and informal influence: access, dependency, conflict, vetoes and bottlenecks.
- A behavioural red-team review of a live strategic decision or controversy.
- A validation workshop with the sponsor or board committee.

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

Who actually influences the key decision-maker, and what risks does that create?

ENGAGEMENT 3 OF 3

The Red Team

High-Stakes Decision and Communications Testing

Prevent unforced errors before they become costly events. We bring psychological expertise to test high-level executive decisions before they go out.

How it works

You bring a draft message, decision paper, speech, board paper, strategy, appointment, response to an allegation or negotiation plan, together with the context, constraints, stakeholders and likely points of conflict. Legal and communications advisers join where required.

Suited to

Announcements about to land, companies in the public eye, regulatory and investor disputes, terminations, acquisitions, executive dismissals, public controversy, restructuring, whistleblowing matters, litigation-sensitive events and leadership conflict.

A good place to start

Many clients begin here. It is concrete, it is fast, and it needs little access to your organisation.

How it is engaged

Typically over two to ten working days.

ENGAGEMENT 3 OF 3, CONTINUED

What the Red Team tests

- The emotional state driving the decision.
- Whether urgency is being mistaken for clarity.
- What employees, regulators, investors, adversaries, journalists or hostile former colleagues could read into it.
- What the draft accidentally reveals, denies, plays down, provokes or commits the organisation to.
- Whether power, status, humiliation, loyalty or revenge are shaping the position.
- Which stakeholders or risks have been left out of the room.

What you receive

- Likely interpretations, reactions, failure modes and reputational exposure.
- Recommendations: language to avoid, signals to strengthen, questions to answer, and advice on sequencing.
- A 72-hour action plan for urgent matters.

THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS

What could go wrong with this specific decision, and how can we reduce that risk before acting?

HOW WE WORK

Terms of engagement

Three parties

CLIENT	SPONSOR	INDEPENDENT ADVISER
CEO, founder, chair or board committee.	Chair, general counsel, chief risk officer or chief of staff.	Harris Hawkins.

1. **Scope.** Which risks, people, decisions and systems are included.
2. **Confidentiality.** What stays private, what may be reported as themes, and what must be escalated.
3. **Records.** Minimal, factual, securely stored and kept only for the stated purpose.
4. **Clinical boundaries.** When a matter is advisory, and when it is therapeutic, investigative, legal or a safeguarding issue.
5. **Escalation.** Conduct, fraud, harassment, self-harm, threats, violence, regulatory concerns and material legal risk.
6. **Independence.** We may challenge the client, decline unsafe requests, and end the engagement if the work is being used to entrench abuse or conceal wrongdoing.

Built to sit inside your risk framework, with a trail you can audit.

BUYING IT

Procurement notes

CLIENT	MAIN CONCERN	PRODUCT, AND BUDGET LINE
Chair or board	CEO risk or conduct, succession, reputation, governance	Influence and conduct risk review; board-linked retainer *Board governance; external advisory; risk management*
CEO or founder	Better judgement, fewer self-inflicted crises, trusted and independent challenge	Executive Governance Advisor retainer *CEO office; executive support; strategy; L&D*
General counsel	Litigation exposure, investigations, disclosure, conduct, defensibility	Red Team *Legal; compliance; investigations*
COO or chief risk officer	Non-financial risk, culture, conduct, operational resilience	Inner Circle Map; executive risk review *Risk management; investigations*
Head of HR	Leadership conduct, psychosocial hazards, mental health, culture, retention, absence and illness	Inner Circle Map; leadership selection *Personnel risk; organisational behaviour development*
Chief of staff	Better information flow, decision quality, stakeholder management	Retainer; Red Team *Office of the CEO*
Private equity operating partner	Management-team risk, value protection, succession, portfolio crises	Inner Circle Map; interim retainer *Value creation; portfolio support*
Family office or principal	Personal exposure, trusted advisers, family-business governance	Executive retainer; Inner Circle Map; Red Team *Principal advisory; family governance*

Psychosocial and culture-risk services are usually bought through HR, risk and safety. Governance and leadership advice is often funded from board, strategy or fractional-leadership budgets.

STRAIGHT ANSWERS

The quiet issues

IF YOU ARE THINKING	THE ANSWER
"Our people sometimes say unwise or impulsive things."	We help leaders spot avoidable communications and judgement risks before they turn into problems.
"Some people are acting in bad faith."	We assess behaviour, influence, conduct and integrity risks inside critical relationships.
"We need a mind-reader."	We are not that. We provide independent psychological challenge and risk intelligence.
"Our executives do, or do not, need therapy."	That is not what we do. We give confidential advice on leadership judgement, conduct and organisational risk.
"Can you read body language?"	No. It is not a reliable method. We use structured behavioural, organisational and relational assessment.
"What do we call this in our systems?"	Business advisory for governance, security and communications.

A LINE FOR YOUR BOARD PAPER

An independent advisory service that helps senior leaders and boards manage governance and improve quality in human-factor risks: behaviours, relationships, decision-making and communications. Preventing issues and crises before they occur.

WHERE WE HELP MOST

Where it is useful

High-scrutiny sectors. In regulated or contested markets, intense focus raises the risk of judgement errors, narrow attention and impulsive reactions. Isolated staff groups and thin supervision aggravate. We see this in fintech, crypto, biotech, defence, multinationals, and mining.

Family offices and family-run businesses. Succession pressure, family dynamics and hidden power struggles create real governance risk.

Turnarounds, mergers and crises. In fluid situations, power-grabs, toxic influence and communication hazards appear quickly. Leaders need someone to map these hazards out.

Private equity, investment and asset managers. Firms where the behaviour of a few people at the top can move listed companies or major investments.

HOW TO BEGIN

Write to us in confidence. We will arrange a first private conversation, at our offices, at your location or by secure line, to see whether the fit is right.

Scope, phases, timing, and outcomes are agreed before any formal work begins.

Harris Hawkins

Private Advisory Services

Introductions are received in writing.

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OFFICES

London · Doha · Cape Town · Geneva · Hong Kong
Founded in Oxford, 2010.

All work is governed by clinician-grade confidentiality.