

# Crisis Response Planning For Your Organization

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# Have you ever considered?

- What would you do if your organization suffered a sudden, catastrophic incident?
- In the event of a crisis how would you contact your staff, customers, students, and others after hours?
- Where would you establish an alternate facility if yours was not usable?

# Why You Need a Crisis Plan

- Crisis Planning forces you to think about your vulnerabilities
- It helps reduce losses
- It hastens the recovery phase
- Because 40% of firms struck by disaster are no longer in business in five years
- And because, it can happen to you



# Defining Terms—Issue or Crisis

- Issue
  - Usually plenty of warning about emerging issues
  - You have time to identify issues and develop strategies
  - Issues are rarely an immediate threat to day to day business

# Defining Terms...

- Crisis:
  - Often there is little or no warning
  - Harm to people, property, and assets
  - An immediate threat to day to day business
  - Can threaten the organization's existence
  - Impact can reach well beyond the organization and its people

# Crisis...

- The point or moment just prior to a decisive and critical change
- An unstable or uncertain situation, as in international relations, that has the potential for sudden change.



# Critical Communication

- We often deny that a crisis could affect our organization.
- A crisis can be dramatic and overwhelming but it can also be any incident, or situation, that is critically important to your organization.
- It is, therefore, Critical Communication.

# Six Steps To A Crisis Response Plan

1. Assemble your Crisis Team
2. Create a Framework for Response
3. Analyze the risks
4. Reduce or eliminate obvious risks
5. Develop your Crisis Response Plan
6. Test, revise, and update your plan



# Assemble Your Crisis Team

- Your Crisis Team should be small but include representation from all key areas
- Sanctioned and led from the top
- Include representation from, but not limited to, Operations, Finance, HR, Legal, and Communication/Marketing

# Create a Framework for Response

- What you're trying to get done in a crisis may seem obvious, but how you get it done is far from clear. Few decisions made in a crisis will be black and white.
- The Crisis Team needs to consider, and identify, the principles and ideals that will guide its crisis response.

# Framework for Response

- Some examples:
  - "Our crisis response actions will be open and transparent to our employees and customers."
  - "The ongoing well-being of our employees is paramount. We will provide support to our staff during the incident and recovery."
  - "Our physical assets (buildings, equipment) must be preserved."



# Identify the Risks

- What can happen?
- Why can it happen?
- How can it happen?

# Analyze and Evaluate the Risks

- Determine the likelihood of the event
- Determine the impact of the event
- Estimate the level of risk

# One Approach To Evaluating Risks

<b>Risk Event</b>	<b>Probability</b> High 5--Low 1	<b>Impact</b> High 5—Low 1	<b>Total Score</b>



# Reduce Or Eliminate Obvious Risks

- Crisis Response Planning reveals situations that demand quick action
- Don't wait for completion of your plan to remedy them

# Develop Your Crisis Response Plan

- A good Crisis Response Plan is:
  - Easy to follow—it's understandable
  - Flexible—it can be used as a guide in any crisis
  - Easy to keep up to date—plans that are hard to maintain don't get maintained
  - Is accepted as the source of information that your organization will use in a crisis situation

# Crisis Response Plan Contents

- Plan Rationale including:
  - Definition of a crisis and/or emergency for your organization
  - Examples of possible events



# Contents Of The Plan...

- Framework for Response
  - Include the statements developed earlier
- Composition of the Crisis Team
  - Actual team membership should go into an appendix
- Crisis roles and duties
  - Roles in a crisis often differ from regular roles

# Lists, Plans, Contacts and More

- Emergency Operations Centre—location, set-up, access
- Media Centre
- Call Centre
- Strategic Planning area—in a long event you must consider what will happen in the next few hours, days, a week.

# Other Considerations

- Data back-up and recovery
- Facility plans
- Alternate facilities
  - Determine alternates for both your emergency and regular business facilities
- Recovery planning
  - Getting back to normal usually takes much longer than dealing with the actual incident



# Other Considerations...

- How will you communicate with your staff in a crisis?
- For your web site, consider developing a "dark site" that can be activated quickly in the event of a crisis.
- Pocket size, or electronic Contacts Lists of key staff and contacts.

# Where To Put Information

- If the information is fairly static, put it in the main body of the plan
  - Planning rationale, authority, composition of the team, duties
- If the information changes or can change frequently, put it into an appendix.
  - Names and contact information, resource lists
- This approach makes it easier to update information

# Test, Revise, And Update Your Plan

- Crisis Response Plan Review
  - Carefully review the plan looking for inconsistencies, or items that may not be clear to others.
  - This is also a good opportunity to introduce the Crisis Response Plan to other managers and supervisors.
  - And remember that all staff should be aware that you have a Crisis Response Plan.



# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Tabletop exercises
  - A facilitated exercise in which participants discuss a scenario that has been developed beforehand. They see it for the first time at the exercise.
  - The facilitator introduces new aspects of the scenario as the Crisis Team reacts to the inputs.

# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Tabletop exercises...
  - The tabletop simulation could run for as long as half a day, but two hours is more common.
  - At the end of the tabletop exercise the Crisis Team debriefs with the help of the facilitator.
  - Revise and update the plan, as required, after the exercise.

# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Crisis Simulation

- A more elaborate simulation where the Crisis Team gathers in the area designated for emergency operations.
- Crisis Team members react to an unfolding scenario in which developing information is fed to participants, individually and collectively.



# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Crisis Simulation...

- The exercise often includes skilled observers who monitor and assess the actions of Crisis Team members.
- A Crisis Simulation typically takes 4-5 hours to conduct and another 1-2 hours to debrief.

# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Crisis Simulation...

- Much more complicated than a tabletop, but no equipment or actual response is involved.
- Revise and update the plan, as required, after the exercise.

# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Full Crisis Response Exercise
  - A full simulation in which there is an actual response to a simulated incident.
  - Realistic scenarios with simulated casualties.
  - Common for airlines and airports, and oil, chemical and related industries.
  - Occasionally municipalities do full simulations too.



# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Full Crisis Response Exercise
  - Definitely includes Exercise Evaluators
  - Much greater degree of complexity than either Tabletop or Crisis Simulation.
  - Make take a day or more to conduct.
  - Debrief is extensive too, usually occurring some time after the exercise.

# Test, Revise, and Update...

- Full Crisis Response Exercise
  - More costly than other types of exercises.
  - Notwithstanding the time, cost, and effort the Full Crisis Response Simulation is often considered to be the “ideal” type of exercise to test a plan.
  - Revise the plan, as required, after the exercise.

# Test, Revise, and Update

- In order of cost, complexity, and difficulty to stage:
  1. Crisis Plan Review
  2. Tabletop exercise
  3. Crisis Simulation
  4. Full Crisis Response Exercise



# Protecting Your Business Records

- Set up an Emergency HR file
- Maintain lists of business contacts
- Ensure that you have back-ups of all financial AND Human Resources records
- Keep back-up copies off site, but accessible to senior management
- Back-up, back-up, back-up, back-up,...

# The “Truth” About Crisis Plans

- There are numerous models for crisis planning. No single planning model is right for every situation.
- Every plan is different, but each provides a valuable guide for action in a crisis.
- A plan that isn't tested isn't really a plan; it's a best guess.

# Contact Information

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