

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

Risk Event	Probability High 5--Low 1	Impact High 5—Low 1	Total Score

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.
 - May 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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