

Communication and Crisis: American Association of Port Authorities

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Overview

- ◆ Conditions of Crisis
- ◆ Crisis Types
- ◆ Developmental Models
- ◆ Six C's of Effective Crisis Communication

Crisis

Enron • 9/11 • Chinese Milk • Swine Flu • Bird Flu • Three Mile Island • Exxon Valdez • Red River Floods 1999, 2009 • Katrina • Rita • Ivan • Andrew • Anthrax Letters • Auto Industry Bankruptcy • TWA Flight 800 • 2003 Power Blackout • Bhopal Disaster • Salmonella in Tomatoes • Catholic Church Sex Scandal • Chernobyl • Air France 447 • SARS • Lead Contaminated Toys • Northridge Earthquake • Minneapolis Bridge Collapse

Bad Things Happen

- ◆ “Normal Accidents”
- ◆ Complex Society/ Unintended Interactions
- ◆ Emergent Threats
- ◆ External Factors

Conditions of Crisis

- ◆ Surprise

 - Unanticipated

 - High Uncertainty/Lack of Information

 - Outside normal comfort zone

- ◆ Perceived Threat

 - High priority goal (Reputation)

 - Probability of loss X value of loss

- ◆ Short Response Time

 - Slow Response, Increased harm

 - Inadequate information for a response

Conditions of Crisis

- ◆ Loss of life, property, security
- ◆ Significant / Personal Impact
- ◆ Disruption of Existing Channels
- ◆ Decisions Require Communication
- ◆ Response Requires Coordination

Crisis Type

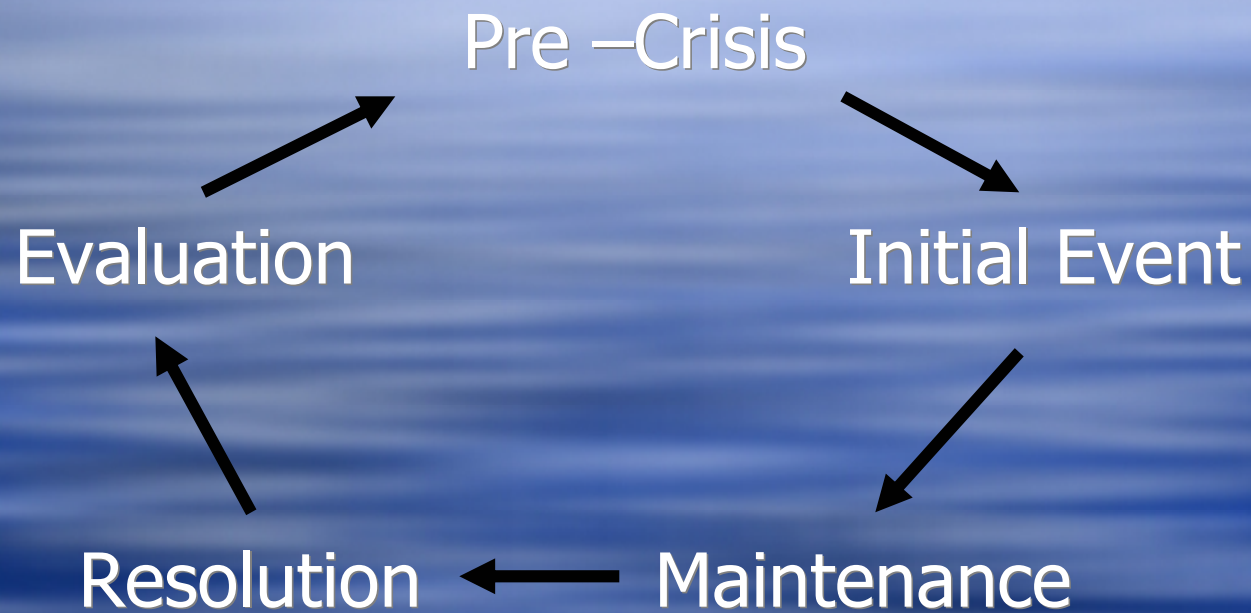
“Natural” Disasters & Human Caused

- ◆ Hurricane
- ◆ Flood / Tsunami
- ◆ Wild Fires
- ◆ Blizzards
- ◆ Tornadoes
- ◆ Earthquakes
- ◆ Infectious diseases
- ◆ Food borne Illness
- ◆ Transportation Accidents
- ◆ Leaks and Spills
- ◆ Employee Violence
- ◆ Strikes/Job Actions
- ◆ Terrorist Attacks
- ◆ Tampering
- ◆ Explosions/Accidents

Five Stages of Crisis

1. Pre –Crisis: Before event erupts
2. Initial Event: Trigger event
3. Maintenance: Initial intensity has dissipated
4. Resolution: Crisis is contained/No new harm
5. Evaluation: Assessment/ Learning/ Critique

Five Stages of Crisis



1. Communication & Pre-Crisis

- ◆ Monitoring/Recognition of Risks/Threats
- ◆ Promote stakeholder understanding of risks
- ◆ Preparation for adverse events
- ◆ Change behavior to reduce likelihood of harm
- ◆ Alliances and cooperation with agencies, organizations, and groups
- ◆ Development of consensual response strategies

2. Communication & Initial Event

- ◆ Designated spokespersons & channels
- ◆ Empathy, reassurance, reduction in emotional turmoil, crisis related uncertainty
- ◆ Promote understanding of crisis, consequences, & anticipated outcomes
- ◆ Cooperation with agencies, organizations, & stakeholders : Media
- ◆ Promote understanding of crisis responses (What we are doing; Why we are doing it).
- ◆ Responsibility, accountability, blame

3. Communication and Maintenance

- ◆ Accurate public understandings of the crisis (evolving)
- ◆ Accurate public understandings of recovery/solicitation of support where appropriate
- ◆ Ongoing support, cooperation and alliances with stakeholders, agencies, organizations: Media
- ◆ Feedback from affected publics/correction of any misunderstandings/rumors
- ◆ Develop corporate identity and image restoration strategy

4. Communication and Resolution

- ◆ Inform and persuade public about ongoing response, recovery and rebuilding
- ◆ Facilitate broad-based, honest discussion of cause, blame, responsibility, and adequacy of response
- ◆ Improve public understanding of new activities, policies and procedures
- ◆ Reestablish/repair relationships with stakeholders and restore corporate image

5. Communication and Evaluation

- ◆ Evaluate and assess responses, including communication effectiveness
- ◆ Document, formalize, and communicate lessons learned
- ◆ Determine actions to improve crisis communication and response capability
- ◆ Create linkages to pre-crisis activities

Six C's of Effective Crisis Communication

- 1. Centrality**
- 2. Capacity**
- 3. Coordinated**
- 4. Consistency**
- 5. Calibrated**
- 6. Considered**

1. Communication Centrality

The Problem: Communication is often relegated to a staff function as opposed to part of the agency's strategic decision making systems. In these case, the communicative implications are not taken into account in decisions.

1. Communication Centrality

- ◆ Communication as a strategic function
- ◆ Communication in decision-making
- ◆ Communication as decision
- ◆ Clarifies communication activities and responsibilities

2. Communication Capacity

The Problem:

Important Issue + Insufficient
Information + Disrupted Channels
= Information vacuum >

Emergence of Rumors

Unofficial Sources

Public Confusion

2. Communication Capacity

- ◆ Surge Capacity
- ◆ Emergent Audiences
- ◆ Communication as decision
- ◆ Clarifies communication activities and responsibilities

3. Coordination

The Problem:

Multiple Agencies

Multiple Mandates

Multiple Methods

Multiple Jurisdictions

3. Coordination

“The core of emergency management has to do with inter-organizational relationships” (Drabek, 2002).

- ◆ Shared communication systems
- ◆ Shared procedures
- ◆ Participation in Drills & Exercises
- ◆ Familiarity
- ◆ Joint Operating Agreements/Joint Information Centers

4. Consistency of Message

The Problem:

Multiple Sources

Multiple Channels

Multiple Audiences Multiple
Messages

4. Consistency of Message

- ◆ Hallmark of Effective response
- ◆ Reduction of uncertainty, confusion
- ◆ Requires coordination
- ◆ Designated spokespersons, channels, methods
- ◆ Filling the information vacuum

5. Calibrated Communication

- 1). Effective communication is matched to the circumstances.
- 2). Crisis is an abnormal circumstance.
- 3). Every crisis is unique, creating unique requirements.
- 4). People rarely panic.

5. Calibrated Communication

- ◆ Circumstances of crisis require:
 - ◆ Rapid response to fill the vacuum
 - ◆ Accuracy to maintain credibility
 - ◆ Specific informational needs:
 - ◆ What to think?
 - ◆ What to do?
 - ◆ Where to go?
 - ◆ How to get there?
 - ◆ What do I need?

6. Considered

- ◆ Planning, considering what would be done “if” is the most important step in effective crisis response.
- ◆ Requires considering very uncomfortable scenarios and disrupting routines.
- ◆ Operations Plan + Communication Plan
- ◆ Plan is a “general outline”

6. Considered: Steps in Crisis Planning

- Identify risk areas
 - What bad things have happened?
 - What risks does our industry face?
- Reduce risks where possible

6. Considered: Steps in Crisis Planning

- Plan an Initial Response
 - Crisis Team, Roles & Responsibilities
 - Notification Procedures / Information
 - Templates & Checklists
 - Contingencies & Resources
 - Joint Information Center
 - Clearance Procedures
 - Message Procedures & Templates
- Update Regularly

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