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. Pre-Crisis
2. Evaluation
3. Initial Event
4. Resolution
5. Maintenance
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
References


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