Empowering Leaders through Cultural Simulation to Enhance Disaster Communications

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Crisis Ready: our mission is to enable our clients to strive for best practice, by building an awareness of cultural complexity and a strategic approach to emergency communications

definitions

- Incident - an event with an adverse outcome
- Emergency - an incident which endangers life property or the environment, and which requires a coordinated response.
- Disaster - an emergency which effects an entire community
disaster management

1. ensure safety and wellbeing - liaise if necessary with other first responders
2. inform community and other stakeholders - internal and external
3. liaise with regulatory bodies
4. strategise and plan for recovery
5. inform and connect with community to facilitate recovery
6. record decision making during response and recovery
7. investigate, inform stakeholders and act on findings
8. review, evaluate, improve, share lessons learned

most important asset is information

• What has happened?
• What caused it?
• How can we fix it?
• How many are affected?
• Which stakeholders are affected?
• What resources are needed?
• Who is involved in response?
• What are the long term consequences?

most important process is communication

• Internal
  • ensure that everyone has the information they need to respond
  • prevent internal outrage
• External
  • inform and connect to your stakeholders and community
  • keep them safe
  • limit outrage
State Emergency Service
Commissioner Murray Kear

Crisis

- We define a crisis as an incident with outrage
- Outrage comes from differing values
- Values come from our cultures

If you want to avoid a disaster becoming a crisis you must address cultural differences

3 dimensions of a disaster

- the actual incident
- the response from authorities and organisations
- the picture of the incident - how it is perceived

Culture

- behaviours and beliefs of a group
clarity
- language - simple and appropriate
- positive actions
- repetition
- narratives
- visual images
- fit with preconceptions

credibility
BE-
- fast
- open
- consistent
SHOW-
- empathy
- commitment
- competence
be fast

- get out first
- tell it all
- tell it fast
- don’t create a vacuum – if you don’t tell the story someone else will
- the first message is the most likely to be believed
- be prepared to say what you don’t know

be open

- give reasons for issues you can’t discuss
- let the community into the process even if it is flawed

be consistent

- internal communication
- interoperability and connections between agencies

empathy
commitment
• be available
• be involved
• be accountable

competence
• don’t play status
• established relationships

disaster communication strategy
• what do we need to achieve?
• who do we need to speak with?
• what do we need to say?
• how should we send the message?
• how has the message been received?
disaster communication simulations

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What happens in exercises?
Too often we...
• focus on operational scenarios
• allow participants to bring their own experiences and assumptions

We need to focus on...
• observation and listening
• analysis
• problem solving

our approach
Disaster Exercise (DISTEX)

An entire community suddenly wrecked without warning. Lives, hope and livelihoods are lost. Your job is to get vital information to them, reassure them, and help them start to rebuild their lives.

Your small team is deployed, with little warning, to a disaster zone to help the local authorities.

Are you ready?

DISTEX concept

- A 3-5 day disaster simulation exercise
- Can be made up of teams or individuals
- Can use your plan or ours
- Food and shelter are basic (tents)
- Scenarios are varied to suit the aims
- Set in Krizo...

What can it achieve?

- test the plan and the people
- experience a disaster
- teach your team to ‘listen’ and strategise
- build relationships - leadership and teamwork

KRIZO

- participants must...
  - listen,
  - conduct an analysis of needs,
  - track potential issues etc
- to engender...
  - strategic thinking,
  - team work,
  - creative problem solving and
  - communication skills
KRIZO

- Experiential learning in an unknown and complex environment
  - where no one is at home
  - where no one is an expert
  - where no one has local knowledge
  - everyone must listen (hard!)
  - so...no cheating and maximum learning!

KRIZO

- cultural depth and human complexity
- input by:
  - characters (face to face and on the phone)
  - situation reports from operations
  - social media
  - Krizo tourist guide
  - media stories

Krizo video
Scenario One

- The village of Korta is in danger of being hit by a mudslide after heavy rains in the area
- The villagers need to evacuate today
- Local authorities are saying the people won’t listen
- They have turned to your team for advice with communicating to them

Korta Video

People may remember how you handle an emergency... But it is how you help a community rebuild during the recovery, that will foster their lasting memory of your organisation.

recovery

- plan for it, understand it, prioritise it
- start it during the response phase
  - have a separate team commence recovery communications planning
  - engage all agencies to get input
- recovery leads to resilience
Scenario Two

- two weeks later
- 120 Kortans died...everyone left is mourning
- the water supply has been restored but...
- chlorine has been added to the water to clean it but in the Kortan language 'chlorine' sounds like 'cholera'
- a mixture of grief and fear has lead to a belief that the authorities put cholera in the water to kill off the Kortans
- you need to develop a communication strategy to tell them the water is safe

Questions

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