

Business Continuity and Crisis Communications for Economic Recovery

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Outline

- Business continuity
- Key issues in crisis communication
- Communication challenges and strategies
- Communicating for economic recovery



Why this is so important to economic recovery

Small businesses – most vulnerable after a disaster

- 1 in 4 never re-open after a disaster, yet they are the backbone of many economies
- 75%+ don't have proper insurance
- Lose avg. \$3,000 per day if closed
 - Medium sized businesses lose avg. \$23,000 per day



They're not prepared



The scary statistics

- 60% of small businesses are not prepared with a plan
- Of those businesses without a plan, 43% won't reopen in the event after a crisis – 75% will fail within 3 years



Failure to
plan =
planning to
fail

Businesses fail to prepare for 2 reasons:

- They lack financial resources and knowledge
 - They underestimate the impact an incident will have or think it will never happen to them
-
- Business continuity planning is the process of considering how they will stay in operation in the event of a disaster





Business Continuity



Discussion

- Do you feel your businesses are prepared to withstand a disaster?
- Does your community offer business continuity training?



Business Continuity

Business Continuity Planning

- How to deal with interruptions in supply chains, production capacity and cash flows
- Alternatives and strategies for protecting operations, assets, and personnel
- Improves businesses ability to respond and recover from interruptions



Business Continuity



Education is key

- Outreach to business community
 - Short workshops and trainings on business continuity
 - Provide material and resources online and direct businesses there often
 - Provide blank electronic and paper business continuity templates



Business Continuity

Activities you can organize

- Have businesses involved in disaster planning
- Hold events to encourage yearly updating of business continuity plans
- Use existing services, like yearly fire inspections or business license renewals as a reminder for the need to update their plan





Engaging Small Businesses in Preparedness



Engaging Small Businesses

- Appoint a “champion” to communicate and push messages
- Promote efforts in local marketing channels
- Target large local businesses whose supply chain is multiple local small businesses – Push them to prepare and ask to push down the chain



Engaging Small Businesses in Preparedness

- Integrate business continuity into your community's core activities
- Have an online and physical resource center
- Educate on available resources and best practices



Engaging Small Businesses in Preparedness



Resources

- www.Restoreyoureconomy.org
 - Webinars, guides, and case studies
- Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety - OFB-EZ (Open For Business-EZ)
 - Free 20 page blank business continuity plan
- State and Federal government



Case Study:

Charleston, South Carolina's Business Continuity Efforts



Case Study

Charleston Business Continuity

- Created a Business Continuity Planning Council to help encourage small businesses to make business continuity plans.
- Used chamber's network to bring in teams of local experts to speak



Charleston Metro
Chamber of Commerce 





Crisis Communication: Who owns your message?



Why communicating with businesses is essential to recovery

- Rumors spread quickly and can lead to slower economic recovery
- Businesses may delay opening or move
- They will attempt to contact you for information
- How you communicate – or don't communicate can have a big impact on how quickly they recover



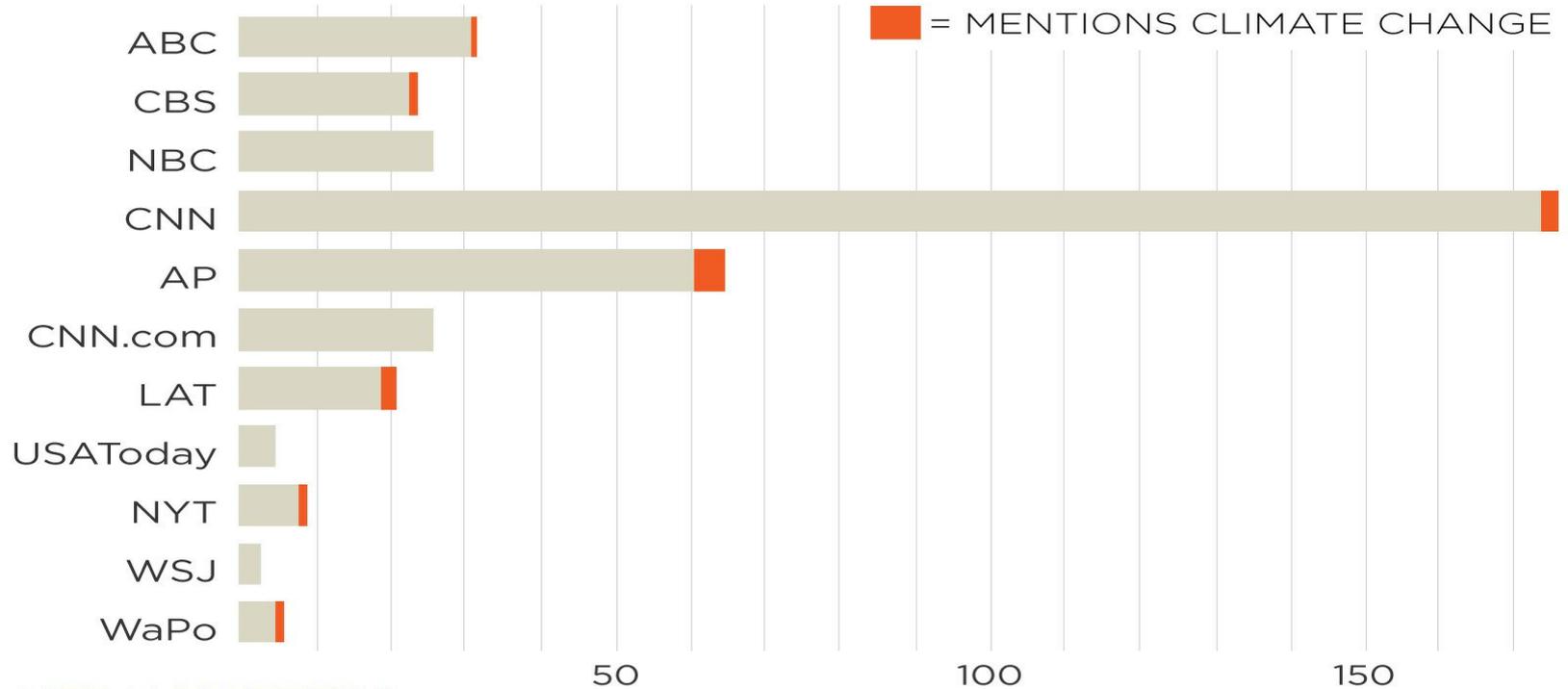
Impact: Colorado Forest Fires

- After successive fires, local officials lamented the international publicity -- appearance that the entire state of Colorado was destroyed
- Impression was that Colorado is not a safe place to visit or invest
- A pro-active and positive message was needed



MEDIA COVERAGE OF WILDFIRES

Articles/Segments On Western Wildfires, April 1 - June 30, 2012



MEDIAMATTERS
FOR AMERICA



Hurricane Sandy, New Jersey

- Media stories left the impression that the entire New Jersey Shore was out of business
- Cape May and the Wildwood Boardwalk were unaffected and open for business



- The state waged a campaign to communicate “open for business” and inspire businesses and the community



The Essential Communication Plan



Key Steps

- Establish a base
- Maintain updated contacts
- Gather all facts
- Draft statements in advance of being asked
- Anticipate the tough questions
- Designate a spokesperson
- Disseminate information widely
- Maintain in contact with businesses



Emergency business contacts

Determine who you must contact and how to reach them

- Build relationships in advance
- Get home and office contacts for business leaders and media
- Better to exchange business cards / info before the need



Emergency & Business Operations Centers

Establish a location to coordinate communications

- Various government , state and federal agencies should operate out of one place [EOC]
- Economic development and business organizations like the Chamber work from a central location [BOC]





Provide Timely
Information &
Dispel Rumors



Lead through the crisis

Take time to communicate

- If dangerous weather or other circumstances are imminent, disseminate information widely
- Leaders will often be judged on speed and accuracy of information
- Best Practice: Today elected officials and community leaders are using a wider variety of channels, including social media, email, website, phone recordings, TV and radio

#safety-before-selfie



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Dispel Rumors

- Misinformation is harmful to businesses, the economy, and the community following a major disaster
- Providing timely, accurate information to businesses and the media will help to get the economy moving
- Proof read! Credibility will be harmed by poorly written release
- Key is timeliness and control
- Make this a team effort



Uniform, credible response

- Consistent and accurate messaging from authorities builds confidence among community residents and business owners
- Establish your spokesperson
- Enforce organizational roles and procedures for communicating



Prepare statements and spokesman

Brainstorm “What-ifs?”

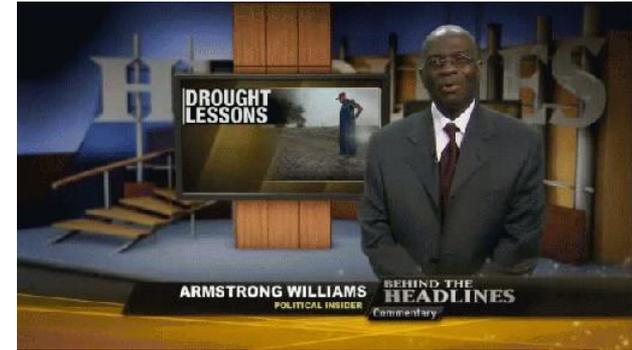
Be creative but prepare for the worst

- Think through all topics that may come up
- Practice answering toughest questions
- Develop “must air” points



Dealing with Media

- High demand for information on deadline
- Reporters compete to deliver news first
- They won't be concerned about economic consequences
- Get ahead of the media for best results
- Spokesperson must be ready or reporters will find other sources



Do's & Don'ts of Media Interviews

- Don't give exclusives
- "No comment" conveys a message of guilt or fault
- Instead:
 - "Specific details are still unfolding"
 - "The situation is under investigation, so it would be premature to give you a statement. I'll be glad to do so as soon as we know the facts."
- Follow up when you have information
- You can use:
 - "Off the record"
 - "For your background only"



Control & Manage Publicity

- Provide written fact sheet or press release with 24/7 contacts
- Contact information stays with the position
- Dispel myths, promote your message
- Publicize every success with a press release
- Tailor messages and methods of communicating to target audiences



Disseminating information

Texting

- Often available even when cellular network is down
- In immediate aftermath, can provide information on where to find safe spaces and resources
 - Know your audience (internal vs. external)
 - Keep it simple and clear
 - Arrange for a mass text messaging service before the crisis



Communication methods

Don't Forget About the "Old" Stuff Still Works When Things go Bad

- AM/FM Radio
- Ham Radio
- Newspapers
- Landline Phones
- The Corner Store
- Local 'Social' Networks



Communication
methods

New Platforms

facebook

flickr®



twitter

You Tube™

Linked in.

digg

slideshare
Present Yourself

- What's next - Is there something local?
- How do you manage all of these
- Should we try?



Communications - Why

Choose the Platform

- Information Dissemination – one way
- Feedback / Communication – two way
- Situational awareness – Intelligence
- Damage Assessment – real time
- Geo-location – with limitations
- Just in time training
- Video/Live streaming of event – multiple
- What else/ next?



Roles of EDOs

Economic development organizations, industry associations and Chambers are vital resources to inform local government about business needs

They will advocate for recovery resources and should help identify gaps

Assist government in recovery efforts



Websites

- Central source of information
 - Promote as go-to source
- Develop pre-disaster to be deployed and updated quickly
- Create a business contact database
 - Displaced businesses can enter updated contact information easily via Google Forms



Central Themes in Messages



- Communities must understand how their economy is being affected
- Publicize milestones: recovery successes, businesses returning and re-opening
- Be ready for media cycle; news outlets will revisit disasters at anniversaries
- Consider hiring a PR firm in extreme cases



Final
Thoughts:

What
businesses
need to hear
from you

- Empathy: How you're advocating for them
- Business re-entry procedures
- Reputable service providers:
 - Cleanup
 - Financing
 - Business counsel
 - Rebuilding efforts
- Confident leadership: your plans for mitigation & future economic resilience



Thank you.

- **Do you have an experience to share?**



- **Questions?**

