

# Crisis management planning

A Guest Article by Per Holmgren  
November 2010

---

---

## **Crisis management planning**

**A Guest Article by Per Holmgren for TCii Strategic and Management Consultants**

---

### **Getting good at dealing with the unexpected**

Staff injured, financial problems, fire, flooding, power losses, media crisis, IT systems not working, supplier service breakdowns, rapid changes in the world – these things and more can happen to an organisation at any time.

In the event of a crisis, how do you act to minimise the consequences – and actually build a better brand, customer trust and team spirit in the organisation? How do you get good at managing such events for your organisation?

Having worked with more than 220 well-known organisations, we believe that for effective crisis management, you need to do two things:

1. Have a good crisis management plan.
2. Train your key people to use the plan.

It really is that simple!

### **How to draw up a crisis management plan**

Before embarking on a crisis management plan, it's a good idea to work with your key people so that they see the necessity of having such a plan. One easy approach is to ask them questions such as:

- What would you/we do in event of a fire?
- How would we cope if the building was flooded?
- Suppose there was a serious power failure: what would we do?
- What would happen if we couldn't use the IT system?

Then, people usually start to see the importance of having a structured approach – a plan – for sorting out the situation together.

Once you have established the need for a crisis management plan, you can proceed to create the plan together with the key people in the organisation. The plan should be easy to implement, and flexible enough to be applied to all kind of events. It should show people what they should be doing, and keep them updated.

Working with operations that are subject to stringent safety regulations – the nuclear power and aviation industries, for example – has shown that a crisis management plan needs to have very easy-to-use checklists for all the key functions in the organisation. The same is true for any type of organisation.

---

## **Crisis management planning**

**A Guest Article by Per Holmgren for TCii Strategic and Management Consultants**

---

### **Crisis management training**

Once the crisis management plan is complete, it's time for practice in the form of a crisis management training session. Without training, people will have real difficulty using the plan.

Training sessions can vary from simple desktop exercises that last for an hour, up to full scope exercises lasting an entire day. From our experience of training over 100 organisations in crisis management, we believe the best value for money comes from having a team of five or six people playing around 20 different roles. Our trainers play "against" the organisation's key management staff.

The session lasts around four hours, and a joint evaluation follows. This is a fun and fast way to learn how to use the plan. It shows trainees that if they trust the plan and follow it, everything will work out.

### **A three-part process**

To sum up, there are three steps to crisis management planning:

- Create a want for a crisis management plan.
- Create the crisis management plan itself.
- Practise using the plan.

*Per Holmgren*

*Founder and CEO – Business Risk Management Europe*

If you would like more information on any of the points covered in this Guest Article, please contact **TCii** on **020 7099 2621**.