Crisis Planning in the Tourism Industry:
Ensuring Safety & Resilience

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What could happen....🤔

9/11

Boston Marathon Bombing

Medical Emergencies

Natural Disasters

Hyatt Walkway Collapse

Cruise Ships

Security Threats

Transportation Accidents

COVID-19

Public Health Emergencies

Technological Failures

MGM Grand Fire

Airlines

Environmental Hazards

Disney Derailment

Structural Disasters

It matters….

- Have *you* attended a convention/event/activity in the past year?
  - How safe were you?

- Have you planned a meeting/event/activity for *your* business/community?
  - What safety measures did you take to protect your attendees?
  - Did you ask to see the facility's crisis plans?

- Have *you* faced a crisis at a meeting/convention/event?

- Customer service, social media, etc all have impact today

Definition of Crisis

- "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; *especially* : one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome" (Merriam-Webster)

- "a situation that has reached a critical phase" (Merriam-Webster)

- "unforeseen emergencies"

Introduction

- Crisis Preparedness
  - Continuing sense of urgency
  - All industries

- The world is increasingly intricate and interconnected, requiring us to be crisis-ready.

- The question today is not if but rather when the next crisis will take place.

- Interestingly, the biggest risk is often not the crisis itself, but rather the preparation, management, and response.
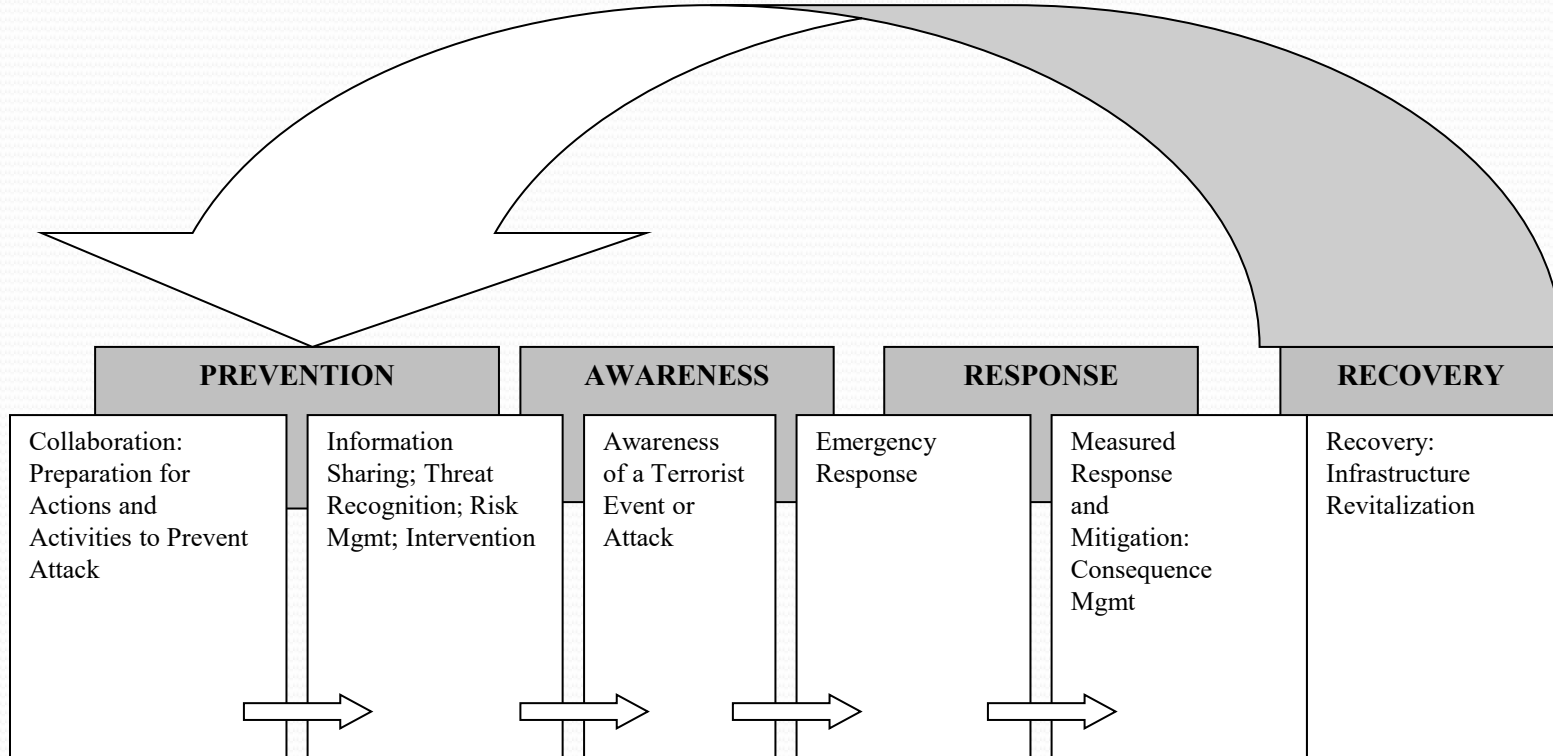
Crisis Preparedness

The tourism industry can hope for the best but must be prepared for the worst!

- Natural Disasters
- Accidents
- Fatalities
- Employee Strikes
- PR Crises (Wendy's, Domino's)

- Shootings
- Workplace violence
- Protests
- Terrorist Attacks

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Tourism Literature
  - Checklists (PCMA, 2006; IAEM, 2002; ASAE, 2006; MPI, 2006)
  - White papers (IAEM, 2002)
  - Academic Journals: less systematic, but improving in empirical approaches (Santana, 2003; Ritchie, 2004; Huan, Beamn, & Shelby, 2004; Laws & Prideaux, 2005; Zhang, 2005)

- Crisis Preparedness Frameworks
  - Cycle of Preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005)
  - Five Phases of CM (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993)
  - The CM Process (Pearson & Clair, 1998)
  - Knowledge & Knowledge Management Strategies (Wang & Belardo, 2005)
  - Stages in a Community's Response to Disaster (Faulkner, 2001)

Cycle of Preparedness *(Pelfrey, 2005)*

PREVENTION		AWARENESS		RESPONSE		RECOVERY
Collaboration: Preparation for Actions and Activities to Prevent Attack	Information Sharing; Threat Recognition; Risk Mgmt; Intervention	Awareness of a Terrorist Event or Attack	Emergency Response	Measured Response and Mitigation: Consequence Mgmt		Recovery: Infrastructure Revitalization

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Crisis Planning Origins
  - Three Mile Island Nuclear Reactor- 1979 (Devlin, 2007)
  - Carnegie Mellon University – 1984

- <u>Planning</u>: structuring process that defines how the decision-makers want to see a future process develop (Luecke, 2004; Glaesser, 2006)

- <u>Plans</u>: "key decisions on the mechanical portion of a crisis – that aspects that rarely vary – and leave you free to manage the content portion of the crisis" (Fink, 2002)

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Elements of a Plan
  - CM team
    (Hillyard, 2000; Fink, 2002; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004; Wallace & Webber, 2004; Devlin, 2007)
  - Media spokesperson
    (Fink, 2002; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004; Devlin, 2007)
  - Communication Tree
    (Fink, 2002; Wallace & Webber, 2004; Barton, 2008)
  - Content – specific yet flexible
  - Some mandate explicit content
    (Hillyard, 2000; Wallace & Webber, 2004)

Why this presentation?

Crisis Preparedness for the
Meeting/Event Planning Industry Survey

"Provide recommendations to better prepare planners and enable them to handle an unforeseen crisis at a city-wide or large meeting/event "

Questions Answered

1. What is the current level of preparedness for the meetings/events industry?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current crisis preparedness plans?

3. How well have crisis plans been tested for effectiveness?

Crisis Plans

Are we prepared?

- Over half of respondents (58.5%) do **<u>NOT</u>** have a plan

- Nearly half (49.3%) do **<u>NOT</u>** have a crisis management team

- Of the 41.5% that do have a plan:
  - Less than half believe it is a good plan
  - Less than 10% have ever exercised/tested the plan

Current Level of Preparedness

- Fair to Poor
  - 40% feel prepared
  - 40% feel **NOT** prepared

- Majority (65.5%) believe plans are <u>very important</u>

- Gathering information from facilities:
  - 69% feel it's important
  - Only 18% always meet with the facility about their crisis plans

Strength of Current Crisis Plans

- Written extensive policies & procedures
- Update plans once a year
- Comprehensive insurance coverage
- Collaborate with facilities
- Have a designated media spokesperson
  - Communication/social media so important today

Weaknesses of Current Crisis Plans

- Over half have no plan
- Lack of training in areas of potential crisis
- No communication plan
- Never engage in scenario planning

Weaknesses - Training

Employees **<u>never</u>** received training in the following areas

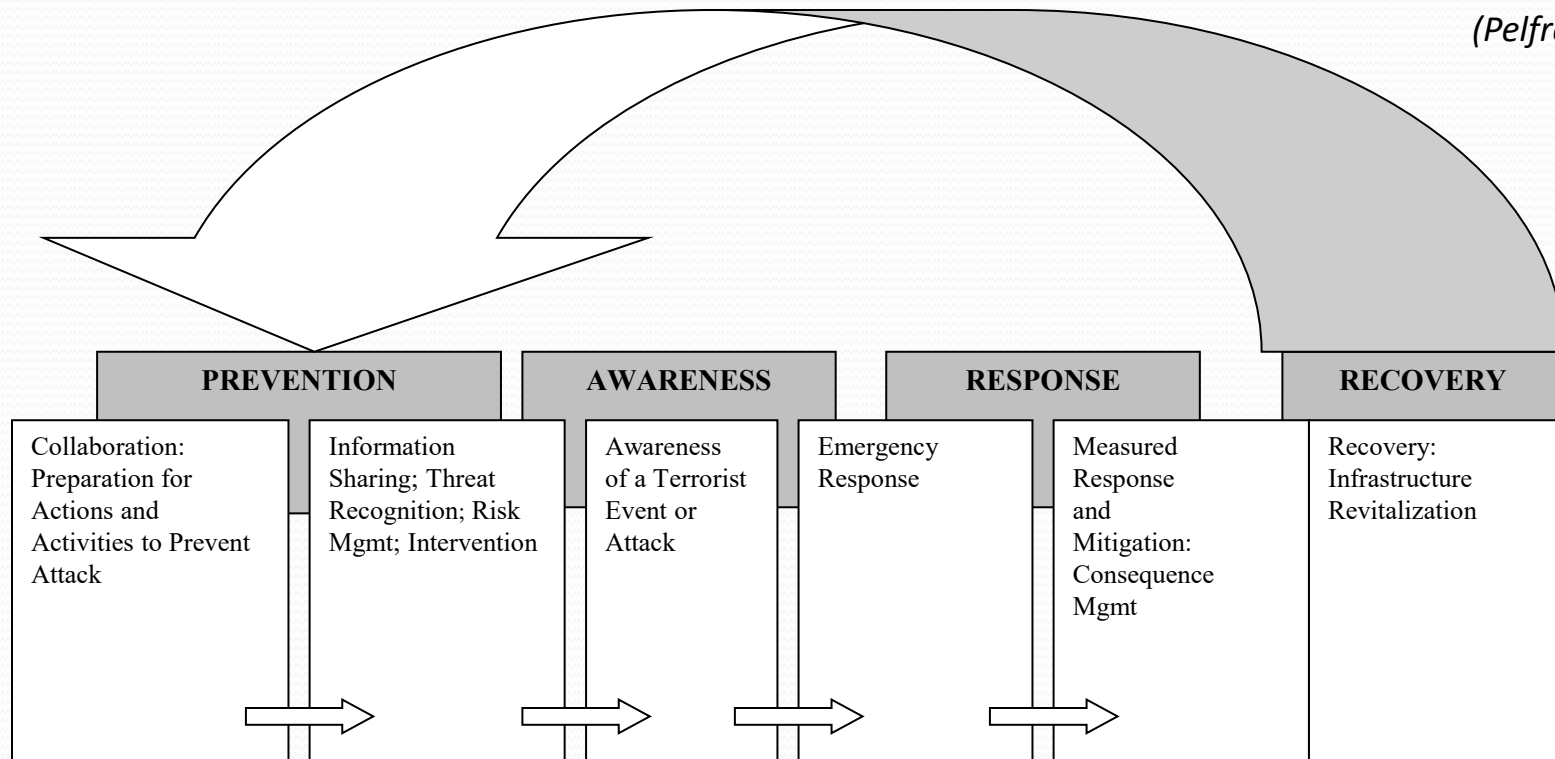| Type of Crisis	%
Biological Hazard	68.9
Man-made events (shooting, terrorism, protests)	60.2
Bomb Threat	56.3
Natural Disasters	49.9
Medical Assistance	38.4
Fire Evacuation	25.8

Study Conclusion

- Crisis preparedness, overall, for the meeting planning industry must improve.

- Planners are aware of the importance for a crisis plan, but need assistance in creating one.

Core Value of the Research: So What?

It's the Process, Not Just the Plan: Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness as a Foundation for Developing Industry Crisis Plans

(Pelfrey, 2005)

PREVENTION		AWARENESS		RESPONSE		RECOVERY
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Core Value of the Research: So What?

A Strategy-Based, Learning-Driven Crisis Preparedness Planning Framework for the Meetings/Events Planning Industry
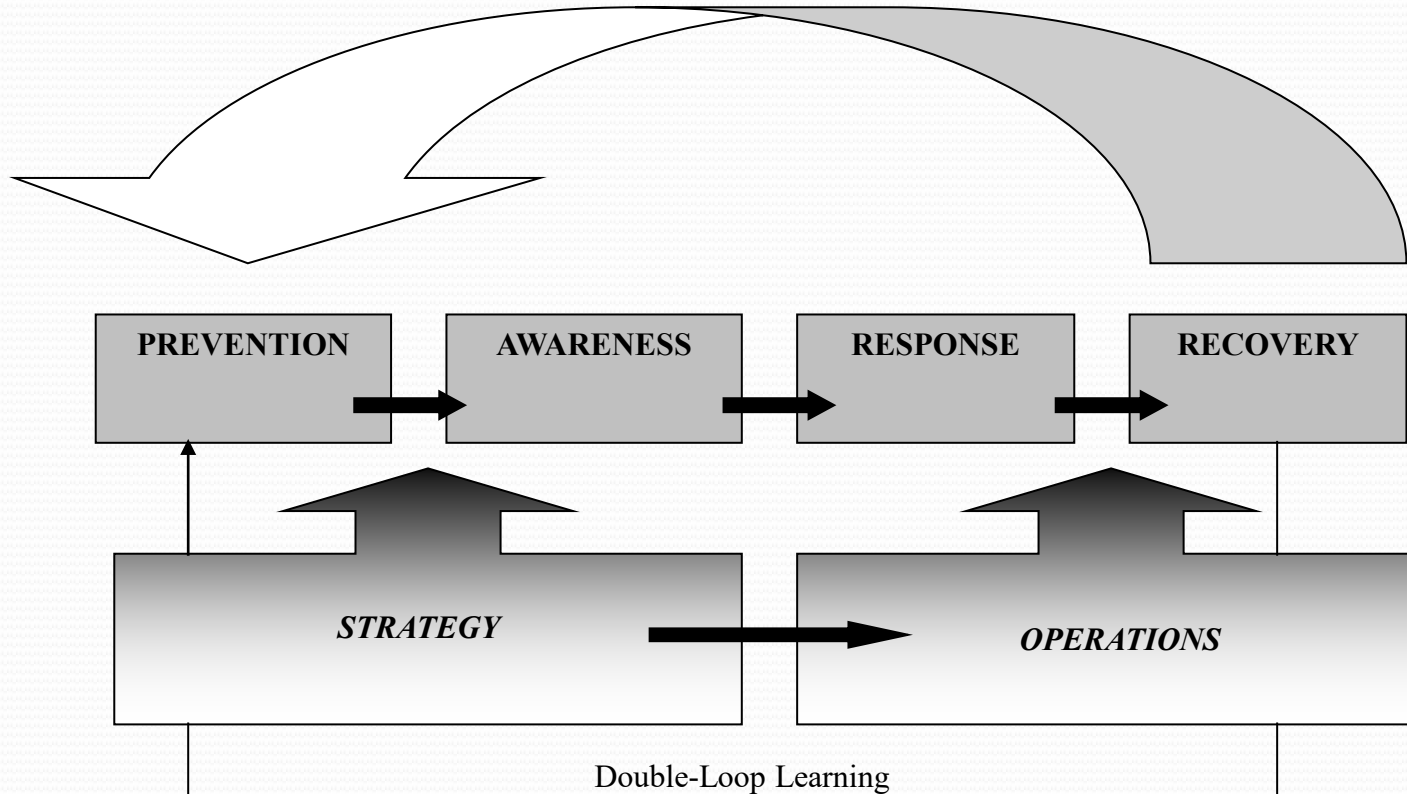
Stages of Crisis Preparedness

- Prevention
  - Before
- Awareness
  - Beginning
- Response
  - During
- Recovery
  - During
  - After

Prevention

The process of identifying potential risks
that could occur at or near
a meeting/event destination.

Prevention

- Risk Assessment
  - Prioritization and Magnitude

- Risk Management
  - Informed decisions

- Collaboration
  - Internal & external

- Risk Communication
  - Information sharing

Awareness

- Recognizing a crisis when it occurs

- Closely related to response

- *CRISIS CREEP*
  - Small pieces of evidence that can make one aware that a crisis is coming or about to happen (i.e., 9/11; Challenger)

- All aspects of the hospitality industry are soft targets. Awareness knowledge is critical.

Response

- Activities that address the short-term effects of an incident

- Immediate action that
  - Saves lives
  - Protects property

- Execution of the plan
  - Sets in motion a variety of tasks and activities

Recovery

- Strategic plan to continue business functions

- Often overlooked in crisis plans

- Can begin as the crisis begins
  - Example: hot, warm, cold sites

- May lead to new policies and procedures

Test your plans...

- Table top exercises
- Role plays
- Drills
- Functional exercises
- Full-scale exercises
- After-action reviews (AARs)
- Scenario-based training

By doing this, you can..

- can identify weaknesses
- improve coordination
- enhance preparedness to effectively respond to emergencies

Importance of Recovery Steps

"80% of companies that lack a crisis plan "vanish" within two years of suffering a major crisis"

Crisis Planning:
Essential Elements to Consider When Developing Your Crisis Plan

Handout

Conclusion

- Crisis preparedness, overall, for the meeting planning industry must improve.

- Planners are aware of the importance for a crisis plan but need assistance in creating one.

- Challenge yourself in the coming year to prepare yourself and your organization.

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Questions or Comments?

Thank You!

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