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## CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

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### INTRODUCTION

Crisis management is a critical organizational function. Failure can result in serious harm to stakeholders, losses for an organization, or end its very existence. Public relations practitioners are an integral part of crisis management teams. So a set of best practices and lessons gleaned from our knowledge of crisis management would be a very useful resource for those in public relations. Volumes have been written about crisis management by both practitioners and researchers from many different disciplines making it a challenge to synthesize what we know about crisis management and public relations' place in that knowledge base. The best place to start this effort is by defining critical concepts

#### Definitions

There are plenty of definitions for a crisis. For this entry, the definition reflects key points found in the various discussions of what constitutes a crisis. A crisis is defined here as a significant threat to operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. In crisis management, the threat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization, its stakeholders, and an industry. A crisis can create three related threats: (1) public safety, (2) financial loss, and (3) reputation loss. Some crises, such as industrial accidents and product harm, can result in injuries and even loss of lives. Crises can create financial loss by disrupting operations, creating a loss of market share/purchase intentions, or spawning lawsuits related to the crisis. As was noted in "The Corporate Communications Bible", all crises threaten to tarnish an organization's reputation. A crisis reflects poorly on an organization and will damage a reputation to some degree. Clearly these three threats are interrelated. Injuries or deaths will result in financial and reputation loss while reputations have a financial impact on organizations.

Effective crisis management handles the threats sequentially. The primary concern in a crisis has to be public safety. A failure to address public safety intensifies the damage from a crisis. Reputation and financial concerns are considered after public safety has been remedied. Ultimately, crisis management is designed to protect an organization and its stakeholders from threats and/or reduce the impact felt by threats.

Crisis management is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders. As a process, crisis management is not just one thing. Crisis management can be divided into three phases: (1) pre-crisis, (2) crisis response, and (3) post-crisis. The pre-crisis phase is concerned with prevention and preparation. The crisis response phase is when management must actually respond to a crisis. The post-crisis phase looks for ways to better prepare for the next crisis and fulfills commitments made during the crisis phase including follow-up information. The three-part view of crisis management serves as the organizing framework for this entry.

A crisis management plan (CMP) is a reference tool, and not a blueprint. A CMP provides lists of key contact information, reminders of what typically should be done in a crisis, and forms to be used to note the crisis response. A CMP is not a step-by-step guide how to manage a crisis. Pre-assigning tasks presumes there is a designated crisis team. The team members should know what tasks and responsibilities they have during a crisis.

As noted earlier, reputation repair may be continued or initiated during this phase. There is important follow-up communication that is required. First, crisis managers often promise to provide additional information during the crisis phase. The crisis managers must deliver on those informational promises or risk losing the trust of publics wanting the information. Second, the organization needs to release updates on the recovery process, corrective actions, and/or investigations of the crisis. The amount of follow-up communication required depends on the amount of information promised during the crisis and the length of time it takes to complete the recovery process. If you promised a reporter a damage estimate, for example, be sure to deliver that estimate when it is ready. Crisis managers agree that a crisis should be a learning experience. The crisis management effort needs to be evaluated to see what is working and what needs improvement. The same holds true for exercises. Coombs (2006) recommended every crisis management exercise be carefully dissected as a learning experience. The organization should seek ways to improve prevention, preparation, and/or the response. As most books on crisis management note, those lessons are then integrated into the pre-crisis and crisis response phases. That is how management learns and improves its crisis management process.

### CONCLUSION

We have tried to identify the best practices and lessons created by crisis management researchers and analysts. While crises begin as a negative threat, effective crisis management can minimize the damage and in some case allow an organization to emerge stronger than before the crisis. But non organization has immune from a crisis, so all must do their best to prepare for one. This article provides a number of ideas that can be incorporated into an effective crisis management program.

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## THE APPLICATION OF BAYESIAN NETWORKS IN VALUE-DRIVEN MANAGEMENT OF IT TRAINING PROJECTS

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Topical problem of IT-employees' training compels IT companies solve it with their available means to provide for competitive capability. Solution variants are diverse – from organization of own corporate training center to cooperation with higher education institutions and private educational firms.

At now popularity is gained by short-time training courses, trainings and master classes, aimed at obtaining by particular employees of a certain competence, possibly with use of e-learning means. These phenomena show necessity of system approach for solving problem of continuous upgrading of IT-employees' qualification.

Proactive management in its turn requires instrument to evaluate and forecast controlled system behavior, one of which is Bayesian networks (BN), that allow to solve the basic tasks of determining a posteriori probability – prediction and diagnosis [1]. Thus, this study, aimed at development of models and value forecast means with use of BN under proactive management of IT staff training projects (ITTP) is quite topical.

In training projects, BN is widely used for building: models of domain knowledge area, models of employee, undergoing training, and models of training process. At that, model of employee, undergoing training, is built as based on evaluation of competences' mastering [2, 3]. Effectiveness of this model is influenced by degree of specification of both training process and competences being learnt, which is pointed out by L. Amaeva [4].

Model of employee, undergoing training, built with BN use, often needs adjustment and correction due to omission of great number of hard-to-formalize competences, required in IT projects (business competence, leadership practices, ability of conducting negotiations, etc.). Such hard-to-formalize competences form additional