

Flash Flood: Crisis Communication Challenges at a Regional Medical Center

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SYNOPSIS

This decision case gives students an opportunity to think about communication needs related to an organization's recovery from a crisis created by a flood. Columbus Regional Hospital (CRH) experienced a disaster on a scale few other hospitals have survived – a flood of historic magnitude severely damaged the hospital, forcing it to close its doors for the first time in its 90-year history. In a matter of minutes, the flooding destroyed several critical functions and systems. When all was said and done, CRH incurred more than \$200 million in damages, although this figure was not known for many months.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives in this case are to:

1. Identify the dynamics and variables associated with responding to a crisis.
2. Identify key stakeholder groups.
3. Construct a communication plan that reflects the perspectives and information needs of key stakeholder groups.
4. Describe the role that social media might play in a crisis communication plan.
5. Describe the role that an organization's vision statement can play during the recovery period after a crisis.
6. Articulate the importance of public institutions communicating in ways that calm and build/maintain trust with the stakeholder groups in the face of incomplete information.

APPLICATION

This case could be used with either undergraduate or graduate students and can be used in a variety of courses that include content such as crisis management, change management, strategic planning, and/or intervening in organizational systems, where there is a critical communications component.

KEY WORDS

Crisis Communication, Health Care, Strategy

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