

From the Field...10 Lessons Learned From the Asian Disaster of 2004

BY ROBERT A. JENSEN | JANUARY 10TH, 2006 |



The Asian tsunami disaster of 2004 was a reminder of the incredible and sometimes destructive power of nature, as well as a wake-up call for countries and organizations to ensure they are prepared to deal with emergencies and crises.

Teams engaged in crisis management, crisis communication, and humanitarian assistance in Phuket, Thailand, learned a number of lessons from the experience.

1. Consequence management plans are fundamental.

It is no longer enough just to have crisis management plans in place; the tsunami taught us that the tip of crisis management planning – consequence management – is what can make or break a company.

2. Public and private partnerships are essential in disasters of this scale.

While it is true in almost every crisis, the Asian tsunami demonstrated how public and private cooperation can make a big difference in helping resolve issues and come to common standards.

3. Early establishment of mutually understood relationships with all groups in the crisis is necessary.

The size and scope of the tsunami disaster prompted more than 30 nations and various private companies to respond. With so many resources coming from such a large number of sources, it was critical that each entity understood what its role was in relation to the others.

4. Early protocol controls and hierarchy within all cooperating organizations is critical.



With 30 nations involved, standards had to be set and agreed upon early in the process. The Thai government did an excellent job of building a framework for cooperation among the nations involved.

5. Extreme flexibility is required for varying environmental, political, and cultural factors.

Given the number of victims in the Phuket area, now estimated at over several thousand, the highest standard of care for victims and their families was needed.

6. Uniform information sharing is vital so that all parties have the same information in the same time frame.

In any crisis, over-communicating is a minimal concern. A good model for this is what the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and other civil aviation authorities do in the event of an airline accident.

7. Ensure proper funding is in place to sustain relief and recovery operations.

This is a difficult area because of what is not known at the time of the crisis. However, a fundamental axiom in crisis management applies here. It is much easier to spend money correctly the first time than to spend money to do it over.

8. Provide continual health and welfare support for all employees deployed to the disaster site.

During a crisis, most companies naturally focus their efforts on the needs of the survivors of a crisis or their families and support groups. Companies discovered that sustained support for those who are deployed to a disaster site is equally important.

9. Have the depth and breadth of personnel to sustain multiple operations over an extended period of time.

In addition to providing care for those team members at a disaster site, it is also critical to rotate them in and out of the disaster area at the end of a typical three-week deployment.

10. Need for a dedicated, experienced crisis management team.

A crisis is not the time to train people. A company's very existence may be at stake, and proven people are essential in such areas as incident management, communications, human resource management, safety, transportation, security, and logistics.

0 recommendations Published in Enterprise Resilience

Share This Story, Choose Your Platform! [Social media icons]

About the Author: Robert A. Jensen



Robert A. Jensen is President and Chief Operating Officer of Kenyon International Emergency Services, Inc., the world leader in disaster response coordination services.

He is the author of Mass Fatality and Casualty Incidents, A Field Guide, the only published forensic text focusing strictly on the response to mass fatality incidents.

Related Posts



Leave A Comment

You must be logged in to post a comment.

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. Learn how your comment data is processed.

RECENT POSTS

- > Click, Click, Click, BOOM: Diffusing the Resilience Timebomb with Microsimulations
- > 7 Ways to Decrease Risk and Increase Resilience With Employees
- > 10 Disciplines of Effective Cyber Security Leadership
- > The 7 Deadly Cyber Sins We All Should Avoid
- > 30 Lessons from 30 Years of Crisis Management

RECENT COMMENTS

- > BCM-News.Daily.Digest » Business Continuity Management News on We Generate Power and Water: How Can We Work Remotely?
- > KEVIN DINEEN on Be Like Netflix, not Reddit: SaaS Disaster Response
- > The Truth About Priority Reevaluation and Improving Your Critical Thinking - Double A Solutions on 10 Tips for Effective Employee Communication in the Time of Covid-19
- > KEVIN DINEEN on Enterprise Resilience Saved the Day During COVID. Does Anyone Realize It?
- > Kathy Gannon Rainey on What We Should Do Now

RECENT ARCHIVES

- > July 2021
- > June 2021
- > May 2021
- > April 2021
- > March 2021
- > February 2021
- > January 2021
- > December 2020
- > November 2020
- > October 2020
- > September 2020
- > August 2020

FULL ARCHIVES

Select Month [Dropdown arrow]

CATEGORIES

- > Best Practice
- > Case Study
- > Communications & Network
- > Connect
- > Enterprise Resilience
- > Glossaries
- > Human Concerns
- > Incident & Crisis Response
- > Insight - Communications & Network
- > Insight - Enterprise Resilience
- > Insight - Human Concerns
- > Insight - Incident & Crisis Response
- > Insight - IT Availability & Security
- > Insight - Physical Infrastructure
- > IT Availability & Security
- > Physical Infrastructure
- > Research & Reports
- > Solutions - Communications & Networks
- > Solutions - Enterprise Resilience
- > Solutions - Human Concerns
- > Solutions - Incident & Crisis
- > Solutions - IT Availability & Security
- > Solutions - Physical Infrastructure
- > Sponsors
- > Standards
- > Thought Leadership
- > Uncategorized
- > Videos
- > White Papers

MEMBER ACTIVITY

- Newest | Active | Popular
- Niki McCarron registered 3 days ago
- G Mc registered 5 days, 6 hours ago
- Cynthia Jones registered 6 days, 18 hours ago
- Hannah Youell registered 1 week, 2 days ago
- piku shabeer registered 1 week, 3 days ago