Teamwork and Collaboration during a Crisis

For this assessment, you will identify the roles of 10 CMT agencies, using information about a real world crisis that occurred in April 2010. First, carefully read the following overview and scenarios that illustrate one of the many required crisis management team member actions.

Overview

Public relations specialists and practitioners perform critical duties during a Crisis Management Team (CMT) response by helping develop messages that are sent to various publics and stakeholder groups. In order to develop accurate messages that help the organization speak with one voice, PR personnel must have an understanding of the roles and duties of the other members of the CMT. This helps in coordinating messages for various stakeholder groups that communicate what management is doing to respond to the crisis. Below are examples of CMT functional roles and responsibilities that may include federal, state, and local responses – depending on the nature of the actual crisis.

1. Public relations or public information
2. Physical security of the area (land, air, or sea)
3. Personal security for emergency responders and the public (law enforcement)
4. Human Resources (personnel and employment issues)
5. Legal counsel for liability and damages
6. Medical liaisons for information on injuries and death

Instructions

Second, read the following 10 statements that describe duties and responsibilities, and choose the correct letter (A–P) to match the statement to the crisis management team member or agency that was involved in the response during the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. You can refer to the RestoreTheGulf.gov website and the introductory section of The National Commission’s final report, "Deep Water: The Gulf Oil Disaster and the Future of Offshore Drilling," to assist in matching the actions or duties with the CMT agency.

1. This organization was responsible for writing and distributing the first news release informing news media and the world that an explosion had occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, approximately 41 miles off the coast of Louisiana.

2. This agency was responsible for providing information about the search and rescue phase of the event that included a 72-hour air and sea search that covered 5,200 square miles of waters.
3. Because of the magnitude of the BP Deepwater oil spill, this agency elevated the response by establishing a Regional Command Center and Joint Information Center in New Orleans, La., inviting all partners in the response efforts to join.

4. After all workers on the rig were accounted for, or confirmed as missing or dead, this federal government agency focused on the environmental threats from the oil leak into the Gulf of Mexico.

5. As the disaster worsened over the course of three months, the list of stakeholders grew to 17 federal agencies and others to include the oil industry, investors, environmental groups, Gulf Coast fishing, and tourism industries. This senior official used the skills and expertise of government and military public affairs personnel to coordinate what the US government was doing to respond to the crisis.

6. This agency was concerned that birds could be harmed by oil through physical contact, ingestion, and inhalation. The agency reported on birds rescued and collected during the response to the BP oil spill.

7. The emergency public relations template for government communicators can be found in the National Incident Management Systems training courses provided by this agency.

8. Although this company had the expertise in deepwater drilling, a senior official made a statement that reflected a lack of compassion and questioned the company’s earlier messages of trying to help limit the environmental and economic damages. The senior official stated, “I'd like my life back.”

9. This senior leader and his administration worked to hold the responsible parties accountable for repairing the damage and repaying Americans who had suffered a financial loss.

10. In response to the BP oil spill, this agency authorized the mobilization of the Louisiana National Guard to help in the ongoing efforts to assess local communities in the cleanup and removal of oil and to protect habitants from contamination.

Crisis Management Team Member or Agency

A. National Incident Commander
B. Joint Information Center
C. British Petroleum (BP) CEO
D. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
E. White House spokesperson
F. Department of Defense (DOD)
G. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
H. Governor of Louisiana
I. BP chairman
J. Transocean Ltd. (offshore drilling contractor)
K. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
L. President of the United States
M. Senator from the state of Mississippi
N. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
O. US Coast Guard (USCG)
P. US Fish and Wildlife Service