



Crisis communication, legal issues and economic impact of the Pandemic Threat

Institute of Directors 116 Pall Mall, June 11, 2009

Beyond the current Pandemic Threat, a sudden spike in sick people will necessarily have an impact on organizations and their ability to carry on business as usual.

- Employees may not be able to work and perform their duties.
- Vendors and suppliers may be impacted and unable to deliver the goods and services the organization needs.
- Partners and customers may be impacted and slow demand for the organizations goods and services is foreseeable.

Business continuity plan are designed to address such situations and the British government supports them.

But Directors of companies ask themselves more practical questions:

- How can my employees not be exposed?
- What measures should I take to protect them?
- If I have a case of illness among my employees, what do I do?
- What measures should I take to protect myself?

All these questions must be addressed today

- Because it is compulsory
- Because corporate manslaughter is never far away
- But simply because your growth depends on it.

Such questions have direct impact on your P&L.

With our combined expertise (consultancy backed up by a legal assessment) we can help you find the answer which is the sole guarantee of your business continuity.

Among our recommendations you will find that crisis communication must be a priority which implies to consider the followings:

- Establish an authorised and competent team to communicate with key stakeholders and the media;
- Ensure that all contact lists are up to date and maintained;
- Plan on how to deal with the emotional impact of such events on the individual's family as well as the workforce in general.
- Develop pre-planned media statements for use when needed.

- Prepare contingency statements for delivery to your workforce.
- Elaborate early communications to suppliers and customers to set expectations.
- Identify alternate communications channels in case normal communication channels become unreliable or overloaded.
- Advertise your company Business continuity plan as soon as possible as a truly competitive edge and added value in an ever changing environment.
- Monitor the immediate ROI/ROE delivered by this initiative
- In case of outbreak, communicate any changes to lead times for notification to the customer if the capability to provide the goods or services significantly reduces.

The key issue, here, is to set the appropriate methodology with a relevant partner in order to maximize the ROI/ROE.

Above all, it is critical to keep exercising your teams and assess your business continuity plan regularly for it represents an interesting way to build a positive momentum among all your stakeholders. Exercising also develops a business continuity management culture and a level of skill in the participants that will be essential in the management of a real situation.

It is worth noting that many of the issues potentially arising from a pandemic would also apply to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incident and to a major flood incident.

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