



Founder's Forum: Crisis Leadership Conversations

October 2016 Webinar

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Firestorm Founder's Forum – Crisis Leadership Conversations

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This brief is based on the webinar “Founder’s Forum – Crisis Leadership Conversations” presented by Jim Satterfield, Firestorm President/COO and Co-Founder.



Jim Satterfield
Firestorm President,
COO and Co-Founder

When You Hear “Crisis” What Comes to Mind?

Crisis: a crucial or decisive point or situation (*a turning point*), a condition of *instability* and/or *danger* leading to an abrupt or decisive change at which ***the trend of all future events is determined.***

This paper will focus on recent issues within the United States. What events have occurred in 2016 and what impacts have we seen as a result? The do’s and don’ts of crisis management will be reviewed including: what should happen before, during and after a crisis event.



The Worst Disaster?

What is the worst disaster? When a crisis hits, the attention of the public, media and stakeholders is directed to a particular organization, adding additional chaos and stress. The worst disaster, therefore, is the one to strike your school or business whether in the form of violence, a natural disaster, communicable illness or cyber security.

The time to prepare, train and test for a crisis is **before** one hits and **before** an organization is in the spotlight. When a crisis occurs, it will continue to grow and strengthen until control is gained.

Current Events: What has our country endured in recent times?

- Violence – Terrorism, Clowns, Nightclub Shooting, Police Shootings, Civil Unrest, etc.
- Natural Disasters – Hurricane Matthew
- Cyber Security – Yahoo Breach
- Brand Impact – Wells Fargo and Samsung
- Communicable Illness – Zika

Recent Violent Acts

Shootings - Workplace violence or violence in schools continues to be a prevalent topic of concern. There has been a recent influx in shootings around the country; one of which was the [Orlando nightclub shooting](#). The June 12, 2016 shooting became the largest incident of workplace violence in United States history.

Additional violent incidents have occurred in [shopping malls](#) across the country. Furthermore to workplace violence, terrorism continues to range from the lone wolf environment, to organized events, to bombings that include the violent acts in [New York and New Jersey](#), for instance.

Recent headlines have focused on police-involved shootings. Incidents include attacks on police officers as well as police shooting civilians. The actions of police officers have been debated and subsequently led to civil unrest. Civil unrest brings violence into a community.

School Violence - Schools remain targets for violence. A [shooting outside of Greenville, South Carolina](#) made national news on September 28, 2016. In this scenario, a 14-year-old killed his father in their home, and proceeded to drive the family car to Townville Elementary School. Upon his arrival, a fourth grade class was exiting the building for recess. The suspect began shooting into the playground area, hitting two children and one adult. The teacher, although wounded, escorted her class back into the building and activated the lockdown and lockout procedures. First responders were immediately dispatched and detained the suspect and eliminated a further attack.

Firestorm employs a great number of retired secret service and FBI agents. Known as Expert Council Members to the Firestorm community, they conduct site assessments and assist Firestorm with a variety of crisis support. One expert council member received a phone call from a reporter regarding the South Carolina school shooting. Between the initial reach out and the conversation with our Expert Council member, the reporter canceled the interview stating the school shooting ***“was not a big deal,”*** anymore.

As the aftermath of the shooting continued to evolve, one of the children passed away from the injuries sustained during the event. The event, although not a “big deal” to the reporter, became life-changing to the victim’s family, classmates and community.

Violence in our schools and organizations continues to be a major concern throughout our communities. Warning signs can be identified prior to acts of violence. The key is to intervene at that point and not wait until the violent act occurs.

Beyond the physical violence, natural disasters pose threats to schools and businesses.

Natural Disasters - Hurricane Matthew

Hurricane Matthew brought rain, wind, tornadoes and flooding, causing significant disruption along the East Coast.

Natural disasters, like a hurricane, remind us that we must be prepared at home and at the workplace. If you are not prepared, damages can, and will, be increasingly severe. Remember, *every crisis is a human crisis*. The most serious crisis that occurs is the one that affects **you**.

Cyber Security Breaches

Cyber security breaches continue to pose threats around the country. Billions of [Yahoo customers were compromised](#) as a result of a cyber security breach in 2014. Two years later, in September 2016, Yahoo uncovered the breach and announced the incident to the public.

Every business and school possesses personal identifying information; therefore all organizations should be prepared to handle a cyber breach. Beyond personal identifying information, organizations hold intellectual property, for example: financial records. In the hands of the wrong people, this information leaked can cause significant damage.

A cyber breach is not only an IT problem; it is a business, brand and reputation problem. Cyber security issues will not disappear; therefore cyber security must be an aspect of a robust crisis management plan.

Tangled Brand Impact?

Wells Fargo - Wells Fargo and Samsung have seen significant brand damage in 2016. The [CEO of Wells Fargo resigned](#) on October 13, 2016 as a result of a sales tactics scandal. Prior to the resignation, the company fired more than 5,300 employees for opening millions of accounts for customers, without the customer's knowledge or approval. The employees received bonuses and promotions associated with opening new accounts. These acts were in an effort to meet artificial deadlines. The former CEO stated it *was not a part of Wells Fargo's culture*. If 5,300 people act a certain way within your organization, it is a part of your culture. Wells Fargo will be known and remembered for this sales tactic scandal.

Samsung - Samsung has endured a number of issues this year. Making headlines have been cases of the [Samsung Galaxy Note 7 phones bursting into flames](#). Passengers began boarding a South West flight in Louisville, Kentucky when one customer's phone [burst in flames](#). The Galaxy Note 7 burned with such intensity that it burned a hole through the floor of the plane. Fortunately, the plane was still at the gate

and all passengers were removed safely. Had the incident occurred in the air, the event would have been catastrophic.

The company recalled all Galaxy Note 7 phones and issued refunds. This act resulted in a financial impact for the company. Additionally, the freight lines Samsung utilized on the West Coast, Hanjin Shipping Co Ltd, [filed for bankruptcy](#) in September of 2016. As a result, all Samsung products were shipped back to Korea. Samsung may now miss the Christmas retail season.

Scandals and product recalls make customers and stakeholders question an organization's brand, reputation, credibility and integrity.

Communicable Illness – Zika Outbreak and More

The communicable illness, Zika, became an issue during the summer of 2016. Zika emerged in the United States – particularly in Florida and spread to Georgia and the Carolinas this year; but it will be back next year. When Zika is not the main focus of communicable illness, attention will shift to the seasonal flu, chicken pox, whooping cough or another variation of illness. Regardless of the disease or virus, a communicable illness will shut down schools, businesses and other organizations for long periods of time.

Leadership Lessons Learned: Crisis 101

What lessons have we learned thus far in 2016?

Lesson One: *Crisis is not business as usual. A crisis is business as unusual.* A crisis does not facilitate normal, day-to-day functions. You must recognize this change because almost everything you initially learn in a crisis is wrong. You will be forced to make decisions between multiple 'bad choices' with limited information.

Lesson Two: *Every crisis is a human crisis.* Every crisis will have an impact on lives. Never lose sight of that fact. If forgotten, an organization will lose sight of who they are.

So What's The Point? Perspective Personal

To the right, lies a pile of colored pencils. If only one colored pencil is the main focus, you will only see one color, not the rainbow of colors. This analogy relates to understanding perspective during a crisis. One aspect of a crisis cannot be the sole focus. You must identify all factors of a crisis and how, and in what way, they will impact your organization. Remember, every crisis is a human crisis. If that perspective is lost, recovery will not be possible and the crisis will continue to grow.

“Do you want to be known as the organization where “X” happened? Understanding the potential brand threats becomes extremely critical when creating a robust crisis management plan.”

*- Jim Satterfield
Firestorm President/COO and
Co-Founder*



Visibility – CRISIS STOP™

Visibility is high during a crisis and all eyes are on a particular organization. The public will be watching every move an organization makes when a crisis strikes. Controlling visibility during a crisis can be achieved by using CRISIS STOP™.

- **S**tabilize the situation – Crisis Communication.
 - When a crisis occurs, a member of the school board, leadership counsel or other figure of authority, will suggest to immediately release a statement to the public. Firestorm does not recommend that approach. Slow everything down. Do not rush to release a statement to the public. An organization does not have an obligation to instantly brief the media or public. Facts, metrics and other information received initially in a crisis are wrong. When a crisis occurs, take a deep breath and focus on what is known, not what is thought, before speaking to the public or media. Do not make a statement until information has been proven factual. It is not what you think, hope or believe, but rather what you **know**.
- **T**rigger appropriate resources
 - The next step is activating appropriate tools and resources. If the crisis is a fire, activate the fire extinguishers, pull the fire alarm and notify first responders. Implement your crisis plan and organize members of the school board, c-suite or other leadership boards. Notify the organization's insurance agent, crisis manager and counselors. Ensure these resources are available before the crisis strikes.
- **O**pine on the exposures
 - Next, identify the consequences and what will happen next. Can you identify your organization's next crisis? Yes. How you respond and the steps you take will foretell how the crisis will unfold. Stop and predict what will happen as a result of the situation; this action is a critical step.
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- **P**revent common crisis errors
 - We see the same mistakes repeated over and over. If you find yourself in a crisis and do not know where to turn, [call Firestorm](#) and we will give you direction. The first hour allows the opportunity to control the situation, find support and avoid creating additional crises.

*“Communication just to
communicate is a failure.”*

-Jim Satterfield

What Are The Do's?

- **Determine** who the general is. CEO? Board Member? That person must give clear direction.
- **Ask** yourself 'why' five times before every communication. 'Why now?' 'Why contact the media?'
- **Know** most of what you learn in first 24-hours will be wrong or factually incorrect.
- **Document** media calls, but do not return the calls.
- **Make** sure all employees know there is only **one** spokesperson. Provide employee(s) (who are not the spokesperson) a talking point- *"I am not an authorized spokesperson for the company. I would be happy to take your information and pass it on."*
- **Anticipate**, in the event of injuries/fatality/criminal act, that first responders will take control of scene.
- **Determine** who will interface with first responders.
- **Stick** to themes- home bases and message maps.
 - **We will not be defined by this event.**
 - **We will invent the future.**
 - **We will embrace the victims.**
- **Monitor** social media. Social media goes beyond advertisements and click-throughs. Social media can be used as a risk management tool. Social media is an open-source intelligence. If someone has ill intent, 80 percent of the time the intentions are shared with someone else; 67 percent of the time, information is shared with two or more people. When people know information, they talk. Today, the platform for conversation is via social media.
- **Develop** a 'victim' strategy. Victim's family has a huge impact on the overall consequences your organization will suffer.
- **Appoint** 24 x 7 family representative(s). Have back-ups.
- **Clear** all communications with victim family, where possible. If the family does not want you to discuss, that gives you basis for not releasing early communications.

What Are The Don'ts?

- **Don't say anything.** Tell everyone they are not authorized to speak. STOP.
- **Don't talk through media.**
- **Don't give phone numbers, dates, times.** Don't fall into number game.
- **Don't put anything in writing.** Meet face-to-face or telephonically where possible. (This recommendation does not apply to life-safety notification and direction).
- **Don't explain.** When you are explaining, you are losing. You can't change what happened. You can only talk about steps you will take to make sure it doesn't happen again.
- **Don't forget someone important** (donor, regulator, shareholder). Identify ALL constituents.
- **Don't succumb to the pressure of the moment.** If not a life-safety issue, time is your friend initially.
- **Don't turn over any documents/computers** (to law enforcement, regulators) until directed by counsel.
- **Don't take ownership of someone else's grief.**
- **Don't characterize someone else's feelings** or what the loss must mean to that family.
- **Don't talk about how the loss/incident makes you feel.** No word you choose will measure up to what the family would expect you to say. Instead, focus on the family. *"Our thoughts and prayers are with the family."*
- **Don't reply to anything on social media**—at least initially.
- **Don't communicate through a third party.** Communicate directly.

Recommendations



Write It Out – Have a written crisis management plan. This plan should include how to make decisions during a crisis and identify members of the crisis management team. Within the crisis management plan should be a crisis communication plan. Map responses to crises before one evolves. Pre-drafted messages answer the questions:

- What can we say if there is an incident of sexual molestation in our organization?
- What can we say if there is a death of an employee or student in our organization?
- What can we say if there is a serious injury on our campus or property?
- What can we say if a crisis occurs on a field trip or a business outing?

Write pre-determined messages prior to a crisis. It is easier to edit a response than create a response under the pressure of a crisis.

Identify Warning Signs – Warning signs and behaviors of concern can escalate to incidents of violence. Warning signs can be identified for acts of violence, cyber breaches and communicable illness outbreaks. For every risk and threat identify and understand the triggers.

Anonymous Reporting - Anonymous reporting must include digital; Firestorm recommends reporting via texting. If anonymous texting is not an option, students and/or employees may not report issues in the workplace or education institution.

Establish a Formal Threat Management Team – Members of a Threat Management Team must understand how to evaluate behaviors of concern. The team is responsible for analyzing every anonymous report.

Identify Support Resources –

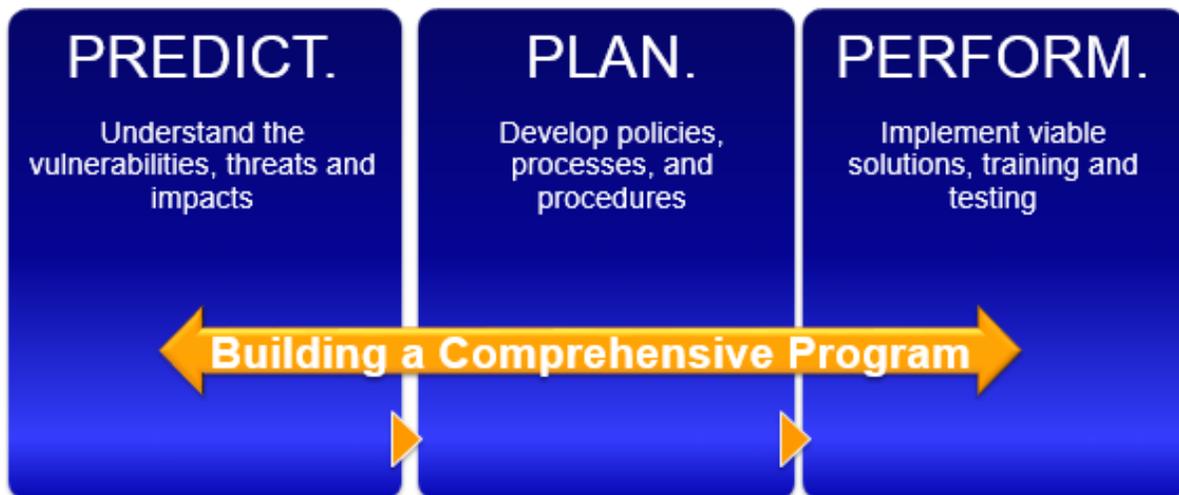
- General counsel
- Insurance broker
- Counselors
- Psychologists and psychiatrists
- Crisis managers

Open-Source Intelligence Network Monitoring – Monitoring of social media today is a critical asset to every organization. Monitoring allows management to look and listen to what is occurring in their organization.

Insurance – New insurance products help protect organizations from active shooters, behaviors of concern and communicable illness. Ensure there is not a gap in insurance coverage.

Train and Test Your Plans – Test plans in addition to standard fire and tornado drills and lockdown procedures. Make a list of possible scenarios and answer how your organization would respond to each particular crisis or disaster.

Next Steps



Predict:

- Update Risk/Threat Assessment

Plan:

- Align Crisis Management Plan with Best Practices
- Develop a Crisis Communication Plan
- Message Maps

Perform:

- Contact Firestorm for CRISIS STOP™
- Analysis of Insurance and Current Response Plans
- Stress Test Your Plan

Contact Firestorm to learn how to:

Align your plans to best practices

Create your own *Intelligence Network*

Schedule *CRISIS COACH*® training

Attend any of our other webinars by [registering here](#).

View previous Webinars on our [YouTube Channel](#).

No-Fee Self-Assessment

Receive a no-fee, Self-Assessment & Expert Analysis (\$2,500 value).

Link: <http://www.firestorm.com/engage-us/contact-firestorm>

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