13.1 The Need for a Monitoring Process

For the functions that are vital to its continuing success, we can assume that your company has management systems in place for monitoring on a regular basis. Such functions typically include sales, finance, and productivity. In fact, your executives and managers most likely use customized "dashboards" to monitor the wellbeing of the organization and to identify problems at their earliest stages. It is equally important to have a management monitoring system for your crisis preparedness and response capabilities.

A Real-Life Example

CMI once helped a national retail chain set up a workplace violence response program and threat response team. This company went from being a disorganized accident-waiting-to-happen to having a professional multidisciplinary team with a plan. In the years that followed, though, the company had undergone reorganization. Many people were downsized when a new CEO brought in a number of managers from his previous organization. As a consequence, of the 10 original members of the team we helped to establish, only 3 remained. Meanwhile, during the reorganization process, the company allowed its whole preparedness structure to disintegrate. Does it still have threats and incidents of violence? Yes, at least as many as ever. But responsibility for its corporate-level response capability has fallen to a single security manager, whose job description is overloaded with many other duties.

Lessons-learned: In a few short years, because it lacked the habit of regularly scrutinizing itself and paying sufficient attention to the program, the company was nearly back where it started, back to being an accident-waiting-to-happen.

> **Nobody in your company would say that it is enough to purchase and operate a fleet of trucks without ever changing the oil or checking the pressure in the tires. Periodic monitoring and refining is just as essential to preparedness.**

It would be best to establish a monitoring system that can give you clues to the need for preparedness. Tracking and compiling a listing of crises will help. What are crises your organization has experienced in the past? What are the small crises situations or near misses that serve as warnings of potential high-consequence crises? Look also at your neighbors and your industry. Are there impacts in the greater environment, like pandemics or issues related to global warming, which could be helpful in justifying crisis preparedness revisions?

Analyzing motives of manmade incidents could also help. Is there a correlation with crime, such as robberies, foreign "knock off" replicas of your

the actual results.

To get an idea of what else you can measure, let's go back to some of the concepts in this book that denote "good crisis response" and give some hypothetical examples:

- Immediate and decisive actions to address the urgent, crisis-related issues and gain control of the situation:

  - You can measure how long it takes for the crisis action team (CAT) to assemble in the crisis command center (CCC), for example.

  - How quickly are notifications completed to identified external stakeholders?

  - Following initial notification, how long did it take the teams to implement their first response actions?

- Prompt identification of the problems at hand and of the potential for escalation:

  - How quickly was the compiled list of critical issues provided to senior management in the desired format?

- Willingness to assume responsibility, when appropriate, and to "solve" the problems:

  - How quickly did the appropriate crisis team come up with a solution to the immediate problem and convey it to defined audiences, such as senior management, employees, customers, impacted stakeholders, or the media?

- Identification and investigation of root causes:

  - How soon was an investigative team dispatched to identify the cause of the incident?

  - How quickly were initial communications conveyed to defined audiences regarding the investigation of the root cause?

- An effective crisis communications plan that includes all identified stakeholder groups:

  - When did the first notifications or organized communications go out to each stakeholder group in accord with established notification goals? For example, to:

    - Affected employees.

    - Appropriate government regulators.

> ❖ Media.

> ❖ Insurance company.

> ❖ Others.

> ❑ How soon was a hotline established and operational to give and receive communications?

◗ Demonstration of compassion and caring in words and actions:

> ❑ How soon was contact with family members of casualties attempted or made by a trained family representative?

> ❑ Was every communication to various audiences begun with a statement of heartfelt caring and concern about those who have been affected?

◗ Accessibility of management to affected individuals and groups including families of casualties, injured and uninjured employees, and the media:

> ❑ Did a senior manager make personal contact with the families of serious casualties within the first 48 hours following the incident?

> ❑ How soon did senior management communicate visibly with impacted groups and the media, as appropriate?

◗ Ongoing steps to make needed short- and long-term changes:

> ❑ Did the crisis management team (CMT) and crisis action team (CAT) take time-outs at least every two hours to identify any unconsidered or uncoordinated issues that needed to be addressed?

> ❑ Was a debriefing conducted for lessons-learned within one week of disengagement?

> ❑ How many changes were identified and appropriately reported?

◗ Little or no evidence of lingering outrage or damaged reputation, business disruption, financial impact, or harm to individuals:

> ❑ There is no adverse feedback coming to management through the family reps, surveys, from crisis consultants, or occurrences of negative content reported by the media in the last 48 hours.

> ❑ Crisis counselors that provided individual or group services for traumatized employees report no indications of lingering outrage.