seamless crisis management response system. Silos within the crisis management organization should be coordinated, with each area of responsibility aware of the interdependent impacts its specific actions have on the other functions within the company.
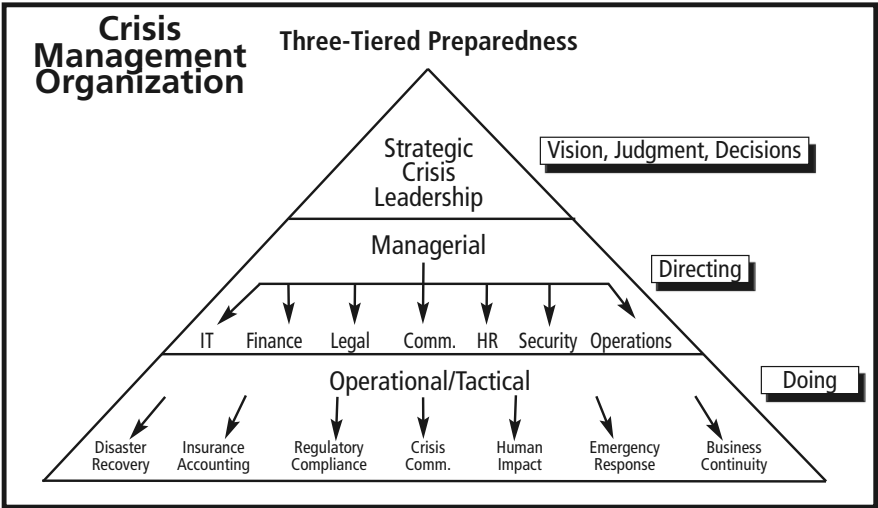

Figure 3-1. Three-tiered Crisis Management Organization: Executive, Managerial, and Operational Teams

Operational/Tactical Team(s): Starting at the bottom of the diagram, some crises will be managed only by the operational/tactical team(s). For example, if a data center goes down, a properly designed and tested IT disaster recovery plan would be executed with little or no disruption to the business. If continuity of operations is maintained, there may be little need to involve the crisis response up the corporate ladder. Possibly, only a notification to executive management would suffice that the outage occurred and effective response actions were implemented. Crisis response at the operational and tactical levels tends to take place at the site and field levels. This may include emergency response, tactical implementation of the business continuity plan, bringing in crisis counselors, or submitting an insurance claim for an isolated or non-catastrophic incident.

Managerial Team: One level up, the managerial team is charged with directing the crisis response on behalf of the organization. While the operational/tactical responses are "doing" oriented, the managerial team is charged with "directing" the crisis response. A primary function of the managerial team is to serve as an intermediary between the operational/tactical responders and executive management. Typically, this is the team that populates the crisis

command center (CCC) if the team members are not functioning virtually. Every function of the organization should be represented on the managerial team. For example, initially mobilize all team members; then, if the nature of the crisis does not involve a corporate security response or an IT issue, these team members may be excused, as appropriate. However, the core managerial team should include managers who have oversight over every function of the organization. This managerial team is often named the crisis action team (CAT), but various names prevail.

Executive/Crisis Management Team: The executive team typically consists of executives and senior managers who are charged with strategic crisis leadership for the organization. As a general rule, if core assets of the organization become threatened at an organizationally defined threshold level, the executive team will be notified and activated. The role of the team will be to focus on issues that threaten the viability of the organization. Key relationships may be threatened. Institutional investors could consider selling huge shareholder stakes. Politicians may consider regulations, new laws, or other controls that would reduce the free enterprise of the organization. Reputation or public trust may be at risk. As with these and other macro-level repercussions, the executive team will be activated to address higher-level organizational threats.

> As in the emergency medical field, if treatment is provided within one hour or less of the critical incident, the likelihood of survival is significantly improved. This same approach has been applied to crisis management...

Sometimes, the executive team could be activated without the involvement of the other response teams. Issues of financial improprieties, ethical misconduct, unlawful corporate behavior, and others may contain little or no role at the operational and managerial levels. In any case, someone within the organization should be charged with the responsibility and authority to ensure the proper team resources are applied to the crisis at hand.

The objectives of the notification and activation phase are to ensure that the appropriate internal and external people:

◗ Receive notice of the threat or crisis.

◗ Assess and implement the correct activation level.

◗ Assemble and be uniformly briefed within a defined time period.

In the last chapter we introduced the "golden hour" rule as it applies to crisis response. As in the emergency medical field, if treatment is provided within one hour or less of the critical incident, the likelihood of survival is signifi-

◗ The evolving fact pattern.

◗ Priority actions.

◗ Pending items.

> ...a fact pattern can turn on a dime. What were thought to be solid tips become misinformation, and facts that appeared fully corroborated can vaporize as new input is gathered.

Prioritized information is the raw material of which your crisis response is crafted. The quality, accuracy, and timeliness of how that information is used will greatly affect your response. Let's examine each of these three categories individually.

Evolving Fact Pattern: At first blush, "evolving fact pattern" might appear a contradiction in terms. But when the subject is a flash flood, terrorism, a plane crash, or an industrial accident, a fact pattern can turn on a dime. What were thought to be solid tips become misinformation, and facts that appeared fully corroborated can vaporize as new input is gathered.

Posting of the evolving fact pattern is essential. It should be highly visible and easily accessible. The methodology your team uses will depend on your infrastructure, back office system, command center layout, and other culturally specific issues. In any case, consider using a grid that spells out the facts, date, and time of entry, verified or not, by whom (see Table 3-1).

Table 3-1. Posted Emerging Fact Pattern

Date: _____

Emerging Facts	Time Entered	Verified	By Whom
Ten fatalities	13:01		Hans Strauss
Media onsite	13:05	✔	Ellen Cohen

Such documents record when information was received in sequential order. While some attorneys don't want any documentation during crisis response, crisis team effectiveness will be diminished if the incoming information is not compiled, organized, verified, and posted during the crisis. Posting of information will also help to update anyone with a need to know about what has been learned and when. This keeps the team from having to stop their crisis response in order to brief the executive who may be late to the game. It also has helped with defensibility. For example, you may be falsely

Phased De-escalation Process: De-escalation does not imply uniform 100% termination of duties for all crisis responding personnel. Typically, de-escalation is not a process where "all the lights are on" one day and the next day the lights are all turned off like a light switch. The de-escalation process has a jagged edge, meaning that there typically is a phasing process back to a new normal. Team members begin to work on daily duties that have been deferred while the crisis response was in full gear. However, unfinished business and smoldering issues may still need part-time attention during the phasing back to more normal and stable times at work.

The de-escalation process is best ratcheted down to the alert or information level that we discussed in the previous notification and activation section. Meanwhile, the executive team could disband before managerial team involvement ends. It is likely that the emergency response will de-escalate well before the managerial and executive teams. However the process unfolds, it is important to be purposeful about each component of the de-escalation process.

De-escalation Checklist: When teams disband, there are a few items to address during the process. A de-escalation checklist will help to assure no stakeholders feel neglected and methods are in place to address rekindled issues. A sample checklist might include:

◗ Appropriate stakeholders are notified of the de-escalation with feedback about the company's intent to de-escalate the crisis response.

◗ Warning signs of potential re-escalation are identified and communicated appropriately to stakeholders and how they should notify the company if they feel an issue rekindles.

◗ An internal monitoring system remains in place. For example, ongoing social media references would be monitored and responded to, as appropriate.

◗ Debriefing of lessons-learned is completed and improvements implemented.

◗ A "process guardian" is assigned the responsibility to ensure that elements such as the crisis plan, notification lists, team training, and exercise schedule remain up-to-date. The process guardian would also ensure that lessons-learned are sculpted into the crisis management organization within the company.

◗ **Defensible documentation** is compiled (possibly with extraneous notes destroyed) in a manner that meets the culture and policies of the organization.

Debriefing Lessons-Learned: It is human nature to want any crisis to be behind you. Daily responsibilities of work and home can remain unattended while the all-consuming task of crisis management is orchestrated. Team members are emotionally and physically spent. Finally, the time comes to phase back into a normal work/life routine and there is much to do to catch up on time lost.

So, it makes sense that team members may resist meeting again after the crisis is contained, recovery is in full swing, and de-escalation has occurred. But that's exactly what needs to happen very soon after the crisis response is de-escalated. There are invariably lessons to be learned from the experience. But, those lessons can soon be forgotten or not captured for future crisis management improvement if a lessons-learned debriefing is not conducted.

In order to ensure this debriefing meeting takes place and is attended by all, it will involve a couple of important components. First, debriefing should be a *required* component of the crisis response process. A senior manager with full authority should sign off on this process as a part of the crisis management policy and protocol within the company. Second, the process guardian should be empowered to require every team member to attend the debriefing, unless one or more senior managers want to assume that responsibility themselves.

Each level of response team (operational/tactical, managerial, and executive/strategic) should conduct a debriefing. A scribe should compile all observations and suggestions. A method should be defined for deciding which improvements and new controls need to be implemented. Responsibility and accountability for implementation are also a part of this crisis response improvement process.

Typically, many lessons-learned and areas of improvement will be observed by team members during the crisis response. However, because of the whirlwind of issues and responsibilities, the ability to remember all these improvements becomes a blur after the crisis de-escalates. For that reason, another important component of crisis planning, training, and exercising is to have each team member develop the habit and system for compiling future improvement ideas while the crisis is unfolding in real time. Some may say they are too busy to take the time and effort to compile improvement ideas. I disagree. During every one of the hundreds of crises I've handled over two and a half decades, I have carried a notebook where I jot down ideas for improvement – during the crisis. My preference is to use a traditional notebook and a pen rather than an electronic medium like a tablet or laptop because, for me, writing is faster and more convenient than reopening and saving a list electronically. This is just my preference, but the

issue is to establish a method that works for each team member to ensure lessons-learned are captured.

Defensible Documentation: Documentation of the crisis response strategies and activities of the company will be based on your legal counsel's preference. Some attorneys prefer no documentation at all, fearing evidence that can be used against the company following crises when the perennial litigation hits. On the other hand, if constructed properly, documentation is preferred by other attorneys for defensibility. This is especially true with all the electronic communications coming in and out of the company related to the crisis. Many attorneys are quick to prohibit emails by employees following a crisis, but invariably there will be discoverable documents that could help or hurt any case against the company.

Legal liability concerns notwithstanding, lack of documentation during crisis response creates other problems. Documentation helps to keep organized the voluminous amounts of crisis-related information coming in and out of the organization. I've worked with organizations where no documentation is allowed by attorneys during crises and the response rapidly becomes disheveled. Ironically, the crisis response is clearly not as organized, timely, and on the mark, which leads to outrage and an increase in litigiousness. One attorney would allow documentation only on erasable white boards during crisis response, which was cumbersome and ineffective. But there is merit to both sides of the documentation debate.

> The object is to have only one set of compiled documentation and the rest of the notes are to be destroyed as standard operational procedure... Legal counsel for the organization should review, approve, and house this documentation.

If crisis response documentation will be generated, some established guidelines and protocol can help. Ask each team member to funnel all their documentation into one location, such as a personal notebook or word processing document. No notes should be generated outside this single location. In this manner, all notes can be collected at the end of the crisis response and compiled into one official set of documentation. Consider assigning a scribe to compile, condense, and memorialize the crisis response into one official set of documentation. The object is to have only one set of compiled documentation and the rest of the notes are to be destroyed as standard operational procedure (assuming there is no legal reason to keep the original team members notes). Legal counsel for the organization should review, approve, and house this documentation.

Quick Use Response Guide

Chapter 3: Crisis Containment

Establish Protocol for the Six Phases of Crisis Team Management

- ◗ Notification and activation.
- ◗ Fact finding.
- ◗ Decision-making.
- ◗ Prioritizing.
- ◗ Implementation.
- ◗ Purposeful de-escalation.

Crisis Command Center (CCC)

- ◗ Have you identified and prepared a room(s) for the crisis action team (CAT)and other teams to meet during crisis response?
- ◗ Extended hours capabilities.
- ◗ Alternative offsite location, if needed.
- ◗ Posted security guard/gatekeeper.

Is the room configured for maximum efficiency?

- ◗ Information posted visibly.
- ◗ Proper ventilation.
- ◗ Is it technologically connected?
  - ❏ Presently equipped.
  - ❏ Ready to be retrofitted.

Possible equipment in the CCC

- ◗ Generator for sufficient backup power.
- ◗ Multiple phone lines (with some unpublished numbers separate from the normal phone system).
- ◗ Phone headsets.
- ◗ Speaker phones.
- ◗ Chargers for cell phones.
- ◗ Computers with e-mail, fax, and Internet capabilities.

◗ Printers.

◗ Televisions for monitoring media, with recording capability.

◗ Satellite or cable television connections.

◗ Two-way radios.

◗ Video conferencing capabilities.

◗ Sufficient office supplies.

◗ Defibrillator and first aid supplies.

◗ Flashlight and other emergency equipment.

◗ Bullhorn.

◗ Method established for visually posting pertinent information on easels, white boards, and projectors.

◗ Digital photographs, maps, real-time video surveillance of remote worksites.

◗ Other pertinent information, equipment, and resources.

Crisis Action Team (CAT) Leader

◗ Is the team leader empowered with the authority and access to senior management to fulfill the duties of crisis response?

◗ Have a sufficient number of runners and assistants been designated for delegation so the leader can keep the CAT together?

Initial Crisis Management Team (CMT) Meeting

◗ Have a method established for documentation (per legal counsel's direction).

◗ Establish a phone log system.

◗ Generate a sufficient number of methods for communications to and from the team.

◗ Utilize checklists for team member immediate considerations (according to the incident at hand).

◗ Assign one person to serve as the liaison between the CAT and the executive leadership team. Tactical/operational teams typically report to the manager on the managerial CAT who has authority over them.**Humanitarian Response Team (HRT)** (discussed in detail in Chapter 5)

◗ Utilize this team to exclusively address the myriad people-related issues of a traumatic or distressing incident, when there is outrage, or other times when there is significant impact on people.

◗ The CAT leader will delegate any people-related issues to the HRT for implementation and follow up.

◗ Position the HRT near the CAT to facilitate coordination between the two teams.

◗ Assign one person on the team to serve as the liaison between the HRT and the CAT.

Chapter 3 – Questions for Further Thought and Discussion

1. Since the CCC is the nerve center of a crisis response, what are several things that could go wrong, e.g., power outage? What contingency plans can you identify for each?

2. If a policy is established that only those persons with a contributing purpose (regardless of rank) are allowed in the CCC, what are the several reasons this policy should remain an enforced rule?

3. If communications are so important, why shouldn't the executive CMT and the CAT be located in the same room?

4. What information, equipment, and resources should be in the CCC that are not listed in this chapter?

5. What are the traits and capabilities that should be considered when choosing a CAT leader? What should be the process of choosing a CAT leader? Should the leader be rotated, and if so, why and how often?