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By Stacey Leigh Smith

Entitled An Empirical and Logical Analysis of Crisis Preparedness in the Meeting Planning Industry

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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AN EMPIRICAL AND LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CRISIS PREPAREDNESS IN THE MEETING PLANNING INDUSTRY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

Stacey Leigh Smith

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2008

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

I dedicate this dissertation…

- to my father, Dr. Larry Gould, who has been my role-model for hard work, perseverance and personal sacrifices, and who inspires me to set high goals and the confidence to achieve them.

- to my mother, Eva Gould, who has always had confidence in me and was a constant source of support.

- to my brother and his family, Scott, Dena, DeShawn, DeNae, & Hayden, for all their love, encouragement and constant efforts to keep me smiling through all kinds of challenges.

- in memory of my grandmothers, Pat Altiere & Virginia Gould, both of whom always cheered me on and made me believe in the importance of education.

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- to my loving husband, Shane, who has shared the sacrifices and endured the many uncertainties of this seemingly endless quest for professional achievement – I love you.

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ABSTRACT

Smith, Stacey Leigh Ph.D., Purdue University, December, 2008. An Empirical and Logical Analysis of Crisis Preparedness in the Meeting Planning Industry. Major Professors: Sheryl Kline and Thomas Pearson.

A devastating crisis can be the defining moment for an organization. Regardless of the severity of a situation, crises pose a serious threat to companies - in their reputation and in their physical and financial health. Preparation is the key to a successful response. This dissertation analyzed the current level of preparedness for the meeting planning industry in regards to crisis planning efforts. The overall research, presented in three studies, identifies a lack of preparedness overall for the meeting planning industry. Recommendations for better crisis planning in the meeting planning industry are provided.

The research in this dissertation examines the issue of crisis preparedness for the meeting planning industry. Three studies are presented related to this core issue, followed by a model for developing crisis plans and a suggested application framework. The flow of the research is from theory to analysis to application. General references relating to each article are presented in alphabetical order at the end of the dissertation in a comprehensive collection to help the reader find information and allow for intellectual linkages between citations.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

A devastating crisis can be the defining moment for an organization or event, especially in the hospitality and tourism industry. Accordingly, crisis preparedness has taken on a new sense of importance in light of recent natural disasters, terrorist threats, potential epidemics (avian flu, SARS), and acts of war. The United States' federal government National Response Plan defines preparedness as "the range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents. Preparedness is a continuous process involving efforts at all levels of government and between government and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities, and identify required resources" (NRP, 2004). It includes the planning and prevention measures that are necessary to minimize loss and ensure continuity of critical business processes for an organization. Whether businesses previously had crisis plans or not, the item has moved to the top of the priority list for managers since the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, the Southeastern Asian tsunami of 2004, and the recent wrath of floods, hurricanes, and fires in the United States.

Travel and tourism in the United States is a $1.3 trillion industry (TIA, 2007). It is among the world's largest employers with 7.3 million direct travel-generated jobs in the United States and over 220 million worldwide (TIA, 2007). Hotels, restaurants, airports, convention facilities and other hospitality companies are what have been defined as "soft" targets—meaning they are extremely vulnerable to overt and covert terrorist attacks. These events are created by humans and would affect a large number of people attracting national and worldwide attention. Becoming equally dangerous is the threat of a biological attack (e.g. Anthrax) and naturally occurring world health issues such as the Avian (Bird) Flu or SARS. The events of September 11, 2001 in the United States, restaurant terror threats in Afghanistan, and recent hotel bombings in India and Israel exemplify the very real danger of terrorist attacks. Natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami in 2004, wildfires in California and severe flooding from heavy rains in the Midwest in 2007 and 2008, and the devastation caused by the hurricanes along the Gulf Coast in the United States also illustrate events that lead to catastrophic loss of life and severe disruption of business. The United States continues to learn lessons from the crisis caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Recovery still continues along the Gulf Coast and governments and businesses at all levels have been engaged in trying to understand how to cope with future events. Some handled these situations reasonably well while others had breakdowns in their crisis plans with distressing outcomes. Whatever the results, some of America's most prestigious and well-known hotels, restaurants, and convention centers suffered almost unimaginable loss of life and operational paralysis. Many still remain vulnerable to a successful terrorist attack or Katrina-like disaster.

1.2. The Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) Industry

The MICE industry has changed enormously in the last couple decades. The Convention Industry Council's 2004 Economic Impact Study, which is updated every 5 years, states that the MICE industry now ranks as the 29th largest contributor to the gross national product for the United States (CIC, 2005). The industry generated $122.31 billion in total direct spending in 2004 and employs 1.7 million jobs in the United States alone (CIC, 2005). It also greatly contributes to other aspects of the hospitality industry. As evidence: (1) it generates more than 36% of the hotel industry's estimated $109.3 billion in operating revenue; (2) accounts for about 17% of the air transportation industry's operating income; and (3) the spending and tax collection from the meetings and conventions trickles down into every aspect of the local economy including local transportation, restaurants, retail stores, and other service businesses (CIC, 2005).

This tremendous growth exposes the MICE industry to greater vulnerability than ever before. Recent events that might have been better managed with crisis preparedness plans include hurricanes, shootings (Expo Web, 2006b), structural damage (ExpoWeb, 2006a), bomb scares (Finz & Vargas, 2003; Wolken, 2006), protests (Seelye & Brooke, 1999), and biohazard scares (Dvorak, 2005).

Given this context of growth and greater exposure, the research in this dissertation examines the issue of crisis preparedness for the meeting planning industry. As noted earlier, the research follows a non-traditional dissertation process in which a series of articles have been developed surrounding the core topic of meeting planners' level of crisis preparedness. The key research question focuses on crisis preparedness in general with planning efforts examined in particular. Using the findings from these three studies,

a model for developing crisis plans for meeting planners is offered along with an application framework for conducting a crisis planning workshop for meeting planners. The flow of the research is from theory to analysis to application.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

There is a lack of empirical research determining the current level of crisis preparedness for meeting planners. It is important to keep in mind that meeting planners are a unique group because of their mobility and portability of resources from one facility to the next as meeting locations vary. This makes planning and preparing for crisis events troublesome. Any assumption that depends on the preparedness level of a facility to care for meeting attendees is dangerous and likely unwise.

The problem-in-logic, therefore, is to explore the theoretical/conceptual direction and current thinking about approaches to crisis preparedness. The problem-in-the-empirical-world, on the other hand, is to conduct research to determine the current level of meeting planners' preparedness and their knowledge of the issue to better serve the industry.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to assess from both a logical and empirical perspective the lack of knowledge about crisis preparedness in the meeting planning world. This wedding of logic and empirical analysis will produce a better understanding of a neglected element of the hospitality industry in general and, at the same time,

generate more specific findings for the MICE industry that can be used as the groundwork for educational training and experiences.

1.5. Definition of Terms

The MICE industry is a sector of the larger hospitality and tourism industry. For purposes of this study, however, the term "industry" will be used instead of sector or segment. The term meeting planning and MICE will be used interchangeably throughout this paper. Refer to the Glossary of Key Terms in Appendix A for a select list of other defined terms and phrases used throughout the study.

1.6. Specific Study Objectives

The overall research question that guides this study is "how prepared are meeting planners for a crisis situation?" The study consists of three major studies before a model will be developed and recommendations made to assist meeting planners in the crisis planning process. Study One will analyze the current level of crisis planning preparedness for the meeting planning industry. Study Two will explore meeting planners' perceptions of the need for crisis planning. The objective of Study Three is to evaluate the crisis plans of current industry planners and assist in the design of effective crisis plans that link strategic thinking to operational execution in the event of a crisis.

1.7. Limitations

Like any study, this one has limitations in method and data that must be made transparent to the reader. First, studies one and two both utilize a survey instrument. The

voluntary nature of the study potentially limited the findings because some individuals chose not to participate. Thus, the limitation of information can bias the studies by the process of omission. The sample is termed "an incidental" sample (Guilford, 1965) meaning subjects participated based on availability and willingness to complete the survey. The survey samples were collected from a meeting planning association and industry magazine. Meeting planners who do not belong to this particular association or subscribe to the specific magazine were not surveyed and may have a different profile with respect to demographic characteristics and level of crisis preparedness. The most important concern generated by this limitation is generalizability. The results simply may not be generalizable to all meeting planners. The content analysis was completed on a small number of plans. A larger pool of plans might have generated a wider variety of patterns and themes which could affect the findings. Finally, meeting planners are vulnerable to an unlimited number and types of crises at the many meetings they manage. This dissertation did not focus on the specific types of crises and how meeting planners react to each. Alternatively, the results still add to the profession's body of knowledge about crisis preparedness in theory and in practice.

1.8. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study for the industry resides in the fact that safety and security matter more today in the hospitality and meeting industries than ever before. As the world continues to experience both human and natural disasters, it is important that travelers know they can be safe when conducting business. In the case of this research, meeting planners must be prepared in the event of a crisis in order to protect lives and

maintain a reputation of vigilance relative to safety and security for the people they serve. The project will develop new findings, a conceptual model, and crisis planning framework for the meeting planning industry to assist in the development of crisis plans.

1.8.1. Residual Contributions of the Study

Like much research, however, the effort has generated residual information and findings that can apply to other domains of study, practice and policy. For example, this research is consistent with key focal areas in current public policy (local, state, and federal) and may potentially enhance the relationships between first responders (emergency medical services, firefighters, and law enforcement) and meeting planners. More importantly, the ultimate impact of the research may potentially result in saving lives, protecting properties and safe guarding a vital sector of the United States economy by reducing the need to provide extraordinary assistance in a crisis. In other words, as more meeting planners prepare for potential life threatening situations, the opportunity to assist other parties in a crisis that may not have prepared adequately are enhanced by the "proactivity" of the MICE industry. This residual effect is an intangible, but increasingly important contribution as government, business and society continue to try and draw lessons from Hurricane Katrina, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and similar devastating events.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it is intended to provide the reader with an operational definition of the meetings industry and an overview of the industry's evolution as an increasingly important part of the overall hospitality industry. In essence, this first section represents a snapshot of today's meetings (M), incentives (I), convention (C) and exhibition (E) industry, or as it is better known, the MICE industry. Included in this snapshot is a look at the major players, the specific types of meetings planned and the trends, issues and developments that must be considered in crisis preparedness as it relates to MICE.

The second purpose of this chapter is to review the applicable theoretical frameworks for crisis preparedness that may apply to the current and future MICE industry. The goal in exploring and weighing the value of these models is to identify and adapt a framework for the MICE industry that can eventually contribute to our understanding of the current meeting planners' levels of preparedness and, ideally, serve as the foundation for developing educational tools and training approaches for practical use in the industry.

2.2. Defining the MICE Industry

One of the most rapidly growing areas of the hospitality and tourism industry is the MICE industry. Meeting planners in today's world are required to have strong business knowledge along with exemplary organization and management skills in order to plan detail-driven, high-visibility events (Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006).

The average lead, or planning, time for organizing a meeting is three to six months regardless of it being an in-house training meeting or a mega-meeting attracting a large number of people, including international delegates (Davis, 2002; Nichols, 2003; Rosato, 2003; Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006; State of the Industry 2007). This short amount of time requires education, experience and skills, but often conditions the amount of attention afforded for potentially catastrophic events.

Incentives programming has begun to grow again after experiencing a 9/11 slow down. Incentives could include an event intended to showcase someone who has met or exceeded company goals, such as sales goals (CIC, 2004). Incentive travel is a travel award given by companies to employees to stimulate production (CIC, 2004). Over half of all meeting planners are involved with incentive travel (Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006). Meeting planners most often work with travel agents to "organize incentive travel programs for corporate executives to reward them for reaching specific sales targets" (Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006, pg. 455). These trips can vary from three to six days in length and range from small trips to expensive, lavish vacations.

Conventions are "annual gatherings of a group of individuals, with no limit of numbers, who meet for a common interest" (Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006, pg. 455). The majority of conventions are held in hotels, but the ones with larger attendance utilize city

convention centers. For example, the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE) holds an annual convention each year for hospitality and tourism educators to interact and share information about the latest in hospitality education. Many industries hold an annual convention to gather, discuss, and network about the latest information relative to the specific industry. An exhibition component is common with conventions today, although this component may differ depending on the topic and nature of the industry involved.

Exhibitions can be small table-top booths to showcase goods and services or they can be elaborate events to showcase larger products and services such as the Paris Air Show or Comdex. Comdex, now known as INTEROP, is the nation's largest exhibition held every year in Las Vegas to showcase new computer products and services (Smith, Green, & Sigler, 2006; Interop, 2008). Live demonstrations and seminars complement the exhibit booths at most exhibitions today. Exhibitions, typically, are either a trade show or a consumer show. A trade show is available only to people who are employed by retail establishments that sell the showcased product or service. Pre-certification and registration are required to participate in trade shows. Consumer shows, on the other hand, are open to the general public. The Boat Show or Auto Show are examples of consumer shows.

2.3. A Brief History of the Origins and Early Growth of the MICE Industry

About thirty years ago, the MICE industry was considered an insignificant market segment (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Only a few major cities, such as Las Vegas and Miami, had facilities capable of supporting large meetings. Most facilities were equipped

with ballrooms more suitable for social functions, e.g. dining and dancing (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Very few properties even had convention departments to assist in the meeting planning function. Meeting planners, furthermore, were not really recognized with an official job title. Meeting planning was most often an extra responsibility taken on by non-professional planners, such as secretaries or clerical support staff. In fact, it was not until 1989 that the U.S. Department of Labor added the job title of 'meeting and convention planner' to its National Occupational Code Directory (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

Obviously, the meeting as a function of social interaction and business has been around for a long time. Historical research has identified primitive ruins that functioned as common areas where people gathered to discuss shared interests, such as hunting plans or organizing tribal celebrations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Emerging nomadic lifestyles gave way to villages and cities each having common gathering places for people who met to trade goods or discuss public problems. Cities quickly became central points for a wide variety of human interaction and commerce (Gartrell, 1992). For example, buildings in ancient Rome were used to hold debates and meetings (Spiller, 2002). Many political debates, historical speeches, judicial matters, and public discussions took place in the Roman Forum (a public square in the city), the Rostra, and the Comitium all during this time period three thousand years ago (Spiller, 2002).

Cities continued to grow and became centers of financial, technical, and intellectual resources (Gartrell, 1988). As the importance of cities grew, transportation to major urban areas began to improve and increased the ability to gather for meetings and discussions. Groups that gathered for meetings included trade associations as well as

professional, fraternal, and religious organizations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). It was in Detroit, Michigan, when a group of businessmen decided that these groups and meetings were significant contributors to the revenue of the host city where they met (Gartrell, 1992; Montgomery & Strickland, 1995). Initially, it was the hotels and lodging establishments that promoted the city or region by advertising their services and products in order to host conventions and meetings (Spiller, 2002). The first Convention Bureau, however, was established in Detroit, in 1896, with the primary motive to attract conventions to the city. Many cities began to quickly follow suit and became more organized to accommodate major meetings in the early twentieth century. With an increased emphasis on attracting individual and group leisure travelers, the "V" for visitor was added to the association's name in 1974 (Migdal, 1991), becoming known as Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB). The International Association of Convention Bureaus (IACB), now the International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (IACVB), was formed in 1914 and had just 28 city bureau members (Montgomery & Strickland, 1995; Spiller, 2002). The membership of the IACVB grew more rapidly after 1966, reaching 394 members in 25 different countries by 1993 (Newman, 1993). In 2005, the IACVB was renamed the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) to be more consistent with an updated brand premise and business identity. It boasts more than 625 bureaus and 1,500 professional members from over 25 countries (DMAI, 2008).

As the industry grew rapidly in the early 1900s, hotels were struggling to play a dynamic role in the industry. The properties were not physically equipped to host large meetings. When hotel chains came along, such as Hilton, Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, and Marriott, they recognized the importance of the emerging MICE industry and the role

it could play in marketing their properties. Working with meeting planners and association executives in the 1950s encouraged the big hotel chains to build upon the initial concept of purely functional meeting facilities. They designed state-of-the-art meeting facilities focused on promoting meetings, conventions, and expositions (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). While physical changes were taking place to support the growing MICE industry, hotels realized the need for a person with the primary responsibilities of serving the meeting, conventions, and expositions functions. It was around this time that the concept of the convention services manager came into existence and is often credited to Jim Collins (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Collins was a young salesperson at the Chicago Conrad Hilton hotel when he recognized the need for such a person. The convention services manager's job has been defined as helping to "ensure that meetings and conventions booked at a hotel are successful. Usually that means working across the hotel's departmental lines to achieve the desired result, but sometimes it means toning down the guests' expectations of what the hotel can deliver or even rewriting sales contracts" (Montgomery & Rutherford, 1994). In order to illustrate professionalism and gain credibility for this newly titled position, the convention services managers united to form their own professional association, the Association for Convention Operations Management (ACOM) in 1988 (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; ACOM, 2008). As a member of such an association, members "learn skills to be more effective service managers; gain a better understanding of the breadth of their role; and learn about planners' expectations" through education and training (ACOM, 2008). The meetings industry has continued to grow dramatically over the last thirty years and is now a major player in the hospitality and tourism industry.

2.4. The MICE Industry Today

Since the 1950s, the MICE industry has grown dramatically along with the rest of the hospitality and tourism industry. A number of supply and demand factors have facilitated the industry's growth, such as the "increase in disposable income, the greater propensity to travel, increased leisure time, and improvements in transportation and technology" (Spiller, 2002, pg. 5). More specifically, Lawson (2000, pg. 11) notes other factors specific to the MICE industry contributing to its development:

- Expansion of government and quasi-governmental organizations, together with an increasing need for meetings between the public and private sectors
- Growth of multinational corporation and pan-national agencies, necessitating more interdepartmental and interregional meetings
- Developments in association interests, cooperatives, professional groups, and pressure groups
- Changes in sales techniques, use of product launches and sales promotions meetings
- The need to update information and methods through in-company management training, continuing professional development, and attendance at ad hoc or scheduled meetings
- Development of subject specialization – conferences enable an expert to pass on information to a large number of others peripherally involved
- Health insurance requirements leading to the introduction of executive conference centers in which "hard work" and "hard play" could be offered as an integral package

Generally speaking, the (MICE) industry is vastly different than it was just fifteen years ago. The industry used to be characterized by small conventions or business meetings held in a few select resort cities where most delegates were white males who brought along their spouses for mini-vacations (Astroff & Abbey, 1998). Today, the

industry has been dramatically impacted by globalization, the availability of increased spending power, new travelers including an increased number of female, younger, and more affluent business people requesting bigger meetings and demanding more services. Hotel business centers fully outfitted with sophisticated communications equipment are a necessity; state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment is an unspoken expectation; and many meetings and conventions put on lavish productions with food and décor in order to attract attendees (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). In the mid-1990s, meetings and conventions were still considered worthwhile enough to justify expenses and time away from the office despite economic pressures (Astroff & Abbey, 1998). The September 11, 2001, (known as 9/11) catastrophe put a damper on this free spending mindset. Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, however, the industry has begun to rebound. Demand for exhibit space is growing, convention center occupancy rates -- defined as occupied square feet of exhibit space (demand) divided by available square feet (supply) -- are climbing, and meeting attendance is on the rise (Kovaleski, 2007). The gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to grow and the first-tier cities, such as Las Vegas, Orlando, and San Diego, initially scooped up most of the available business. As demand returns (despite the impact of a pending recession), the meetings business is moving "down-market and returning to some second- and third-tier cities" (Kovaleski, 2007). Two important factors to watch in the industry today are (1) supply and demand for meeting space of all types; and (2) the health of the U.S. economy.

Since 2000, the supply of meeting and exhibition space has greatly outpaced demand, which resulted in more centers competing for less business (Kovaleski, 2007). Meeting and exhibition supply is expected to continue growing, but Michael Hughes,

associate publisher and director of research services at Tradeshow Week Custom Research, predicts that the growth rates for both supply and demand will converge over the next five years with the supply growing slightly faster (Kovaleski, 2007). This will result in relatively the same occupancy rates yet the competition will remain fierce. Incentives, such as discounts and free space, will continue to be offered in order to gain a competitive advantage. Also, very important to today's industry is the health of the U.S. economy. In "the 50 years preceding 2001, despite six serious recessions…the industry continued to grow without pause," stated Steven Hacker, president of the International Association of Exhibitions and Events (Kovaleski, 2007). That does not appear to be the case anymore. For the first time, the hospitality industry is showing itself to not be immune to economic cycles. The weakness of the U.S. dollar has served to draw more meetings and conferences outside the U.S. because of the ability to buy more. Offsetting the value of the dollar overseas is the cost of airline and other forms of travel. The increasing cost of all types of fuel has taken some of the luster off the attractiveness of the cheap dollar overseas. In the future, any effort to build or expand supply both domestically and internationally for the meetings and conventions industry will require careful future-oriented research.

The 2005 ExPact Study conducted by the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) provides evidence to illustrate the economic impact of the MICE industry within local economies. For example, the average convention delegate spent $1,036 per event or $290 per day with the average length of stay being 3.56 nights (DMAI ExPact, 2005). Lodging accounted for 47% of delegate spending and another 28% was spent on food and beverage. Just over 80% of the delegates stayed in hotels.

Meeting planners and organizers averaged $101 per event or $24 per day for spending per delegate. Over 65% of exhibitor spending in the host city was attributed to staff lodging, meals, and transportation. Similar to other research, meetings and events held in larger cities tend to produce more spending. Larger destinations also tend to host events that are broader in scope which translates into additional spending. The statistics provided here are to be updated in a new study, replacing the ExPact Study, titled Convention Delegate Spending Information. It is scheduled to be published in late 2008.

In terms of the big picture, the MICE industry has changed so much in the last couple of decades that it now ranks as the 29th largest contributor to the gross national product of the United States (CIC, 2005). The industry generated $122.3 billion in total direct spending in 2004 and employs 1.7 million people in the United States alone (CIC, 2005). It also greatly contributes to other aspects of the hospitality industry. For example, three factors must be considered: (1) MICE generates more than 36% of the hotel industry's estimated $109.3 billion in operating revenue, (2) it directly accounts for about 17% of the air transportation industry's operating income, and (3) the spending and tax collection from the meetings and conventions trickle down into every aspect of the local economy including local transportation, restaurants, retail stores, and other service businesses (CIC, 2005).

2.5. Players in the MICE Industry

The MICE industry is highly interrelated and has connections to various players in the larger hospitality industry. To effectively operate and identify with the industry,

ultimately leading to a better of understanding of crisis preparedness, it is important to recognize the major MICE players and their roles.

(1) ASSOCIATIONS: Associations in the United States began in the eighteenth century when the Rhode Island candle makers organized themselves (Walker, 2006). An association may be broadly defined as "an organized body that exhibits some variety of volunteer leadership structure, which may employ a staff and that serves a group of people who have some interest, activity, or purpose that they share in common" (Montgomery & Strick, 1995, pg. 42). Associations are generally structured to promote and enhance a common interest, activity or purpose (Rutherford, 1990).

Associations have been big business and continue to grow in importance. According to the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), about 6,000 associations operate at a national level in the United States with a hundred thousand more operating at a regional, state, or local level (Walker, 2006; ASAE & The Center, 2008). The ASAE, founded in 1920, boasts more than 23,000 individual members and serves as the largest organization of association executives and industry suppliers in the world (ASAE & The Center, 2008). Ninety-five percent of associations offer education programs for their members which makes that service the single most common association function. Education programs are followed by convention planning and other convention activities (89%). Most, if not all, use web sites and email to share information with members (81%) and public information activities (79%) (ASAE & The Center, 2008). In terms of annual spending, membership education and training is also the single largest budget item for associations - accounting for $3.6 billion per year, or about 18 percent of the average

association's budget (ASAE & The Center, 2008). Association members spend in excess of $10 billion annually to participate in such education programs. Other notable association activities include industry research, "which seven out of 10 associations offer at a total cost of $615 million a year; and setting industry product and service standards for their industries, which three of five provide at a total cost of about $884 million annually" (ASAE & The Center, 2008). One survey found that members spend more than $1.1 billion to comply with these association-set standards, which safeguard consumers and provide other valuable benefits (ASAE & The Center, 2008).

There are several general categories of associations: trade, professional/science, military/veterans, educational, technical, and Social, Military, Educational, Religious, and Fraternal (SMERF) groups (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Trade associations are not-for-profit organizations designed to address the needs of for-profit businesses (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). For example, the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) opens the door to association, corporate, and independent meeting professionals through a variety of resources, education and networking events (PCMA, 2008). The members work together to reach goals that will affect that particular industry. Professional associations are not involved in business pursuits. Rather, they are designed to assist individuals with their common goals and interests. The Hospitality Sales Marketing Association International (HSMAI) is an example where people meet annually for a major gathering of individuals interested in sales and marketing in the industry. Military associations are centered on both "active status" and veterans' reunion

groups. These groups, which tend to be big spenders, have large conventions and are usually interested in a "resort-recreation" site (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Educational associations serve the needs of those affiliated with academia at all levels from elementary school to college. They are big business because they hold many national meetings. For example, the Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE) is an association for educators involved with the hospitality field worldwide and have any annual conference every year. Technical societies are centered on technical professions, such as the Society of Motion Pictures. Think of any particular professions from librarians to teachers to hospital administrators and you will find at least one association (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). SMERF groups have become a major market segment in the MICE industry. The acronym was coined for particular nonprofits meaning Social, Military, Educational, Religious, and Fraternal. These groups occupy a large number of room nights, primarily during slow times, so they serve an important niche for the industry (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). SMERF groups have three primary characteristics: "they are price sensitive; they are more likely to book meetings during the hotel's off-season; and they very often have nonprofessional planners who change from year to year" (Astroff & Abbey, 2002, pg. 15). In summary, associations represent a major target audience of the MICE industry by serving a large number of industries and individuals.

(2) CONVENTION CENTERS: A convention center has been defined as "a public assembly facility that is designed to host meeting and exhibits under one roof. It also has provision for banquet, food and beverage, and concession service" (Rutherford, 1990, pg. 78-79). More recently, the Convention Industry Council defined a

convention center as a "Facility that combines an exhibition space with a substantial number of smaller event spaces. The purpose of this type of player is to host trade shows, public shows, conventions, large food functions and other functions related to the convention industry. They may be purposely built or converted and municipally or privately owned" (CIC, 2008). Most convention centers, however, are publicly owned by a city, county, or state government. The facilities are supported by taxes on hotel rooms. The fees vary greatly and are commonly known as hotel occupancy, room, or bed taxes (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Although publicly owned, some convention centers are operated by privately owned management companies. Some centers are privately owned such as The Sand Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas which is the largest privately owned facility in the United States. Convention center space is large and flexible. Most centers can host large trade shows as well as smaller rooms for banquets, meetings, and association functions.

(3) CONFERENCE CENTERS: A conference center has been defined by the Convention Industry Council as "a facility that provides a dedicated environment for events, especially small events. The facilities may be certified by the International Association of Conference Centers" (CIC, 2008). The main difference from a convention center is that the conference center most often provides overnight accommodations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Conference centers were initially created to meet the demand for specialized meetings not met by hotels. Since meetings can generally be defined as their sole purpose, conference centers have been designed for the individual meeting attendee in mind and stress comfort, privacy, and rooms functioned with necessary business equipment.

(4) MEETING PLANNERS: Meeting planners are individuals who coordinate "every detail of meetings and conventions" (Walker, 2006). Meeting planning was often an extra responsibility assumed by non-professional planners, such as secretaries or clerical support staff. As previously stated it was not until 1989 that the U.S. Department of Labor added the job title of 'meeting and convention planner' to its National Occupational Code Directory (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

Meeting planners "may be independent contractors who contract out their services to both associations and corporations as the need arises or they may be full-time employees of corporations or associations" (Walker, 2006, pg. 460). The International Convention Management Association (ICMA) estimates there are about 212,000 full- and part-time meeting planners in the United States (Walker, 2006). The role of the meeting planner varies from meeting to meeting. Some of the duties and tasks undertaken by a meeting planner include (Walker, 2009):

Pre-meeting Activities:

- Plan meeting agenda
- Establish meeting objectives
- Predict attendance
- Set meeting budget
- Select meeting site
- Select meeting facility
- Select hotel(s)
- Negotiate contracts
- Plan exhibition
- Prepare exhibitor correspondence and packet
- Create marketing plan
- Plan travel to and from site
- Arrange ground transportation
- Organize shipping
- Organize audiovisual needs

On-Site Activities:

- Conduct pre-meeting briefing
- Prepare executive plan
- Move people in/out
- Troubleshoot
- Approve invoices

Post-meeting Activities:

- Debrief
- Evaluate
- Provide recognition and appreciation
- Arrange shipping
- Plan for next year

The meeting planner has an important role in interacting with hotels to establish room blocks and rates. Planners may also work with the catering/banquet/conference department to plan association functions for the overall meeting. PCMA (2006b) also describe these duties and task but continue by stating it is not only about budgets and having the right amount of food. It is about creating "memorable events that help people network with others, which builds their enthusiasm and connection" (PCMA, 2006b, pg. xiii). The accurate room diagram for a meeting session is the bare minimum for expectations; whereas creating a dynamic learning environment is the new standard. As PCMA (2006b, pg. xiii) states for meeting planners, "logistics may have been our foundation, but the focus on learning is our future." Also, becoming more critical for meeting planners is their interaction with local and government entities that help to support the meeting function, including times of emergency. First, the local convention and visitors bureau (to be described in the next section) acts as a sales team for the city. Second, the local law enforcement, medical, and fire departments are consulted by meeting planners when planning for a crisis is actually

done. In the event of an emergency, a meeting planner needs to know how to best support the association or group he/she represents. Meeting with the local officials is one way to help in that preparation in the event such services are needed. Approaches to emergency preparedness will be discussed later in this chapter.

(5) CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS (CVBs): A convention and visitors bureau is a not-for-profit 'umbrella' organization that represents hospitality and tourism-like economic development activities in a city and is designed to solicit both business- and pleasure-seeking visitors (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Walker, 2006). It has four primary functions (Walker, 2006): (1) To promote the area it represents and encourage groups to hold meetings, conventions, and trade shows; (2) To assist those groups with meeting preparations and to lend support through the meeting; (3) To encourage tourists to partake of the historic, cultural, and recreational opportunities a city or area has to offer; and (4) To develop and promote the image of the community it represents. Most CVBs are supported by "bed taxes" of various types and/or sales taxes.

(6) TOUR OPERATORS, SUPPLIERS & DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS: A tour operator is someone who develops and sells travel packages (NTA, 2008). A tour supplier provides the "package components for tour operators and can fall into one of the following categories: hotels, attractions, restaurants, airlines, cruise lines, railroads, and sightseeing/receptive services" (NTA, 2008). Destination marketing organizations (DMOs, a seller) "promote specific destinations or regions and include national tourism organizations, state and

provincial tourism offices, convention and visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce" (NTA, 2008).

Tour operators have been playing an increasing role in the MICE industry. The tour suppliers and DMOs support the services offered by a tour operator. The operators work with meeting planners in arranging tours and activities for the meeting attendees and their families who desire the combination of business with pleasure (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Meeting attendees often like to stay in a convention city for a few days after a meeting ends to sightsee, relax, or enjoy other forms of entertainment in the city. Meeting planners often market added-value activities well in advance of the meeting or convention. This allows the meeting delegate to pay one registration fee that includes tours or activities.

(7) TRADE SHOWS AND EXPOSITIONS: Trade shows, expositions, exhibitions, and scientific/technical conferences are terms often used interchangeably in among MICE players (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Exhibition is a European phrase that Americans adopted as the industry became larger. Expositions and exhibitions are generally defined as public shows. Trade shows, on the other hand, are historically private shows that are open only to those in the particular industry.

(8) TRADE SHOW SPONSORS: Trade show sponsors are "generally trade or professional associations who use the trade show as an integral part of their meetings and/or conventions to generate revenue" (Montgomery & Strick, 1995, pg. 55). The sponsor may underwrite all or part of the costs of an event and they may or may not participate in any of the profit from the event (CIC, 2008). One example is the

National Restaurant Association (NRA). It sponsors the NRA trade show every May in Chicago.

Sponsors are responsible for securing the physical facilities where the show is held and are accountable for managing the show. Some tasks include developing an exhibitor list, marketing the show to exhibitors and attendees, organize suppliers, organize move-in and move-out of the show, and oversee all financial responsibilities (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

(9) EXHIBITION OR SHOW MANAGERS: An exhibition or show manager is essentially a meeting planner on a larger scale. This individual works directly for the sponsoring organization and is responsible for all aspects of the exhibition or trade show.

(10) SERVICE CONTRACTORS: A service contractor is an individual or an organization that "provides event management and exhibitors with a wide range of services, sometimes including, but not limited to, installation & dismantle, creating and hanging signage and banners, laying carpet, drayage, and providing booth/stand furniture" (CIC, 2008). The service contractor is hired by a show manager or association meeting planner. Often times, the service contractor is part of the facility's management team and, in order to use the facility, the sponsor must use their service contractor.

(11) HOTELS: Hotels played a crucial role in the early growth years of the MICE industry. Although their role has changed, they are no less important. No matter where out-of-town guests may find themselves for a meeting or convention, there is a need for affordable and comfortable overnight accommodations. Most major hotels

now offer meeting and convention facilities that have become a major source of revenue for many properties. The convention services manager is the key player for hotels in terms of interactions with the MICE industry. Once the sales manager has sold a group on the hotel for a function, the convention services manager then acts as the liaison between the meeting planner and the hotel. This individual's primary role is to service the meeting or convention. This relatively new position at hotels has greatly assisted the meeting planner's job. Instead of dealing with several different department managers within a hotel to plan a function, one person is able to assist the planners with all the essentials of a meeting.

(12) GOVERNMENT RESPONDERS: Meeting organizers and attendees are increasingly becoming aware of the need for a safe and secure environment to hold their functions. A crisis can happen at any time. As the underlying assumption of this study implies, it is critical for a meeting planner to have a crisis plan in place for the event and communicate that plan to the attendees and staff (Christen, 2006). Pro-active plans and communications with local law enforcement, fire department, and medical responders is a must in the event that a crisis takes place. Thus, government responders have begun to emerge, and will grow more important as players in the MICE industry.

2.6. Types of Meetings

The many different types of meetings fill a large spectrum from very small gatherings of only a couple of people to large exhibitions with thousands of people in attendance. In its simplest terms, meetings are "conferences, workshops, seminars, or

other events designed to bring people together for the purpose of exchanging information" (Walker, 2006, pg. 447). The definition of terms all represent a meeting of some sort with only slight variations in names. Whenever the definitions do not describe a type of gathering, the event can always be called simply a meeting (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). This is especially true if the meeting attendees are all members of a single organization put together to discuss specific organizational activities, such as stockholder or board of director meetings (Astroff & Abbey, 2002).

(1) CONVENTION: The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a convention as "the summoning or convening of an assembly……an assembly of persons met for a common purpose" (Merriam-Webster, 2008a). This is the most commonly used term in the MICE industry (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Walker, 2006). Conventions usually have a few general sessions and supplementary smaller breakout meetings. Some are held in convention centers, but the majority is held in large hotels over a three to five day period (Walker, 2006). Function space is allocated for registration, general sessions, smaller meetings, expositions, meals, and more.

(2) CONFERENCE: A conference is similar to a convention. The term convention is used most often in trade circles; whereas a conference is used in technical and scientific areas. Astroff & Abbey (2002) state the difference is those of semantics rather than execution. Conference programs generally deal with specific problems or developments and may or may not have breakout sessions.

(3) CONGRESS: More commonly used in Europe and at international events to describe a function similar to a conference. For example, the same conference in San Diego, California, may be termed a congress in Geneva, Switzerland.

(4) FORUM: A type of meeting often led by panelists with an emphasis on discussion. Forums are characterized by discussion among the participants and with a focus on the many sides of an issue. Often times a moderator will summarize points of view and lead the discussion. For example, the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals association sponsors a Hospitality Technology Professionals Forum. It is designed to bring together industry professionals and experts to offer "an open-discussion that encourages audience interaction and features two tracks of technology topics; one geared towards clubs and one towards other hospitality properties. The forum provides the most up-to-date insights, expertise and comprehensive discussion on topics of interest" (Huffman, 2006).

(5) SYMPOSIUM: A symposium is similar to a forum, but tends to be more formal in nature. Although audience participation is anticipated, there is less give and take discussion that characterizes the forum. More presentations are provided by experts and opinions are gathered from the participants (Walker, 2006). For example, PCMA reported that the Association of Rehabilitation Nurses (ARN) added a lunch symposium to its traditional annual conference format. The symposium, called 'Lunch and Learn,' had a medical doctor giving a presentation about pain and the rehabilitation process and allowed some attendee participation throughout the presentation while lunch was being served.

(6) LECTURE: Lectures are highly formal and structured, most often with one presenter or expert functioning being the focus. Questions are sometimes allowed following the presentation.

(7) SEMINAR: These types of meetings are similar, but move away from the pure presentation format. A seminar allows participants to share experiences in a particular area. There is a great deal of sharing of knowledge and experiences. It is often guided by an expert discussion leader and usually involves 30 or fewer people (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Walker, 2006).

(8) WORKSHOP: A workshop format is a small group meeting that deals with specific problems or assignments (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). A facilitator or trainer usually leads the sessions and topics which generally include exercises to enhance skills or develop knowledge in specific areas (Walker, 2006).

(9) CLINIC: A clinic is usually a training event with a small group of people. It offers a setting in which attendees learn by doing (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; Walker, 2006). Drills and instructions are provided on specific topics.

(10) RETREAT: Retreats are small meetings conducted mostly in remote locations. The purpose is of "bonding, intensive planning sessions, or simply to get away from it all" (Astroff & Abbey, 2002, pg. 10).

(11) PANEL: A panel consists of two or more speakers that offer viewpoints in their areas of expertise. This format usually offers discussion among the panelists as different viewpoints arise and audience participation is encouraged. These meetings are led by a moderator and can be part of a larger meeting format.

(12) EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE SHOWS: Exhibitions are usually an event that is held in conjunction with another meeting, such as a convention. This format is "used for display, usually by vendors of goods and services, and has a built-in audience since it is held as part of a convention" (Astroff & Abbey, 2002, pg. 10).

Trade shows are held in relation to a particular trade and held for its own sake as opposed to being open to the public. Industrial, professional, and scientific trade shows are generally privately held. Exhibitions that are open to the public are considered consumer shows. Some examples include a home show, auto show, flower and garden show. Trade shows are appealing to meeting planners because of the large amount of revenue that can be generated by exhibitors who are charged for their booth or table space. Consumer shows do not generate much revenue since the design of such events is to attract local clientele.

2.7. Trends Affecting the MICE Industry and Its Future

The hospitality industry, and especially the MICE industry, has faced dramatic changes in a world where transformative change is often the flavor of the day. The onset of the Information Age alone, with its new forms of communication technologies, began to dramatically change the expectations of meeting attendees. The industry seems to be catapulting forward with continuous innovations in trying to meet the demand of its consumers, communities, and other stakeholders. Domestic socioeconomic, cultural, and political forces along with emerging technologies and globalization are all factors that continue to shape the nation, the globe and thus, the industry. The continuous evolution of products, services, and new approaches within the MICE industry are all factors that require special sensitivities, understanding and new skills from meeting and event planners in the 21st century. In other words, the MICE industry has been transformed and is transforming itself by adding new core competencies and "stretching its services" as a result of the "creative destruction" in the world around and pull of market forces

demanding new ways of serving customers. On the whole, this transformative change has been positive because it keeps the industry growing and adaptive, but the complexity inherent in this change has increased the possibilities that a crisis of various origins can hit the industry at any time.

Although planners expect a steady increase in average meeting attendance from 2007 to 2008 – by 11% for corporate meetings, 18.3% for association events, and 19% across all conference (MPI & American Express, 2008) – they are still challenged on how to keep an "increasingly diverse group of time-starved attendees coming back to their meetings" (PCMA Market Survey, 2007). The contextual challenge comes from economic concerns; rising costs of fuel and air travel as well as increased lodging facility rates (PCMA Market Survey, 2007; MPI & American Express, 2008). The remainder of this section will describe ten of the most crucial trends and challenges affecting the meetings industry.

(1) THE ECONOMY & RISING COSTS: When it comes to predicting the future of meetings and conventions, it can be stated with reasonable certainty that conventional wisdom applies. Simply put, a decline in business fortunes is bound to be followed by declines in corporate travel, convention attendance and company gatherings (Rogers, 2001). The nation's economy is on a downturn and is most likely to have some leveling impact on the meeting planning industry. Economic uncertainty, rising costs for just about everything related to travel and food, and a growing "credit crunch" will make it difficult to plan or attract attendees in the next year and beyond. Economists argue that falling home prices, the loss of jobs and high fuel costs are the main reasons behind the economic downturn (Hargreaves, 2008). Gasoline prices

recently closed at an all-time high of $145.08 per barrel and hitting an intraday record of $147.27 (Reuters, 2008). Although adjusting for inflation, rising incomes and better fuel efficiency may mitigate the impact of the economy, few would argue that the situation is promising for the near term health of the meetings industry. It could be argued that conditions are nearly as bad as they have ever been, and not likely to get better anytime soon (Hargreaves, 2008). Food prices (rising nearly 5% in January alone) experienced the highest one-month increase since December, 1990 stated John Lonski, chief economist at Moody's Analytics (Hargreaves, 2008). These negative economic forces place a general drag on consumer spending and in particular, less money is available for individuals and organizations to travel to meetings and conventions. In approximately one year, the main concerns for meeting planners went from the impact terrorism and war in 2007 might have on business travel to major fears about the impact of inflation and a possible recession (MPI & American Express, 2008). More than two-fifths of suppliers and association planners surveyed at the end of 2007 identified inflation and rising costs as their major concern for 2008 (MPI & American Express, 2008). Perhaps one of the bright spots was the falling value of the dollar overseas. The assumption is that international visitors to meetings are likely to take advantage of the additional opportunity provided by the dollar's low current value. The full impact of the economic downturn on the industry is yet to be seen, but the worst case scenario may be alleviated with the increased use of technology and virtual meetings. This is bound to change economic losers and winners in the meetings planning industry and may shift thinking about crisis preparedness.

(2) GROWING BUDGETS: A survey of over 1,500 meeting professionals identified budget changes as perhaps the leading internal industry trend in 2008 for all types of meeting planners (MPI & American Express, 2008). As a whole, meeting planners expect budgets to rise 11% as a share of their organization's total spending. Alternatively, one in four corporate planners expect their budgets to be cut (MPI & American Express, 2008). These opposite dynamics in budgeting do well for either party. Budgets make a difference because there is an expectation that changes worldwide will cause many organizations to think about new goals and strategies. This thinking process, in turn, creates a demand for sharing perspectives and strategies with and among organizations. Ultimately, the need for meetings to share this new thinking and goal-setting is increased. Unfortunately, increased meeting costs and declining corporate budgets are not a good match for organizational strategy and planning purposes.

(3) TECHNOLOGY: The average meeting attendee's attention span is 20 minutes (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). This is the about the same amount of time between television commercial breaks in the broadcast television industry. The attention span issue requires meeting planners to be creative in their overall design of an event and the interactivity of the information/learning mode. Technology is playing a bigger part in that creative design and must continue to evolve (Walker, 2006). Not only the millennial generation, but adults are demanding greater interactivity and an opportunity to create their own learning experiences similar to the Web 2.0 phenomenon. Technology, in all forms, has made the job of a meeting planner easier; yet more challenging to be sure the technologies are properly employed. The World

Wide Web, electronic mail, faxing capabilities, wikis, blogs, really simple syndication (RSS), video conferencing, online meetings, voice of internet protocol, instant messaging, and wireless handheld devices are some of the many technologies to impact the meetings industry (Astroff & Abbey, 2002; PCMA, 2006b). Industry associations have also greatly influenced the use of technology such as the APEX initiative by the Convention Industry Council which designed office ready template for meeting planners that work with Microsoft Office products (PCMAb, 2006). Many of these technologies have created a scenario whereby the participants meet before the face-to-face experience ever takes place. Surveyed meeting planners identified the top technology trends for 2008 and beyond to include attendee feedback systems, request for proposal systems, meetings interaction software, improved Internet access on-site, audiovisual equipment, meeting logistics tools, customer relationship management (CRM) software and attendee identification and tracking systems (MPI & American Express, 2008). This is certainly a brave new world in the meeting planning industry and it creates many new considerations relative to crisis preparedness. In effect, a written plan for crisis management is really a vehicle for incorporating technological solutions and mechanisms into the planner's thinking about low- and high-impact events that may upset a meeting or conference.

One of the more important new forms of interactive association is the virtual meeting. This type of event can include web collaborations, web conferencing, webinars and webcasting as alternative information distribution systems (Ball, 2003). Two of five meeting planners, and nearly half of all corporate planners, expect to use some type of webcast in 2008 (MPI & American Express, 2008). Three in ten

planners expect to increase the use of webcasts as a feature during live meetings to enhance meeting attendance by combining both live and virtual audiences (MPI & American Express, 2008). The interactive experience --- brainstorming, networking, and relationship building --- acquired almost naturally through face-to-face meetings does not always work the same through virtual meeting options. Thus, the need to think creatively about applications of technology to the virtual meeting environment is a trend that will grow in the future. Accordingly, virtual meetings will increase in number and the attendant risks associated with this type of meeting will grow. Planners will have to think about technological crises (including hackers, viruses, storage and security of information and simple unreliability of the technology). The loss of a connection with 1000 attendees in a virtual meeting environment will not endear the consumer to the event planner for future business.

(4) GLOBALIZATION: Many events have happened in the last fifteen years that opened up a vast new market for the meetings industry (Walker, 2006; Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Some of these include the breakup of the Soviet Union and the renewal of marketing of former socialist economies, the opening of trade in European bloc countries, the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). The events of September 11, 2001, in the United States hurt the entire industry. Although the implications discouraged travel to meetings, especially to international meetings, the industry and the MICE industry have since recovered from this tragic attack. First, the boom in world business in Asia, Europe and Latin America has greatly increased meeting attendance (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Second,

foreign hospitality interests have been purchasing U.S. domestic properties. This increased competition has resulted in the need for creative marketing strategies to attract international business (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). In turn, the need for planning strategically to accommodate these acquisitions, mergers and partnerships continues to expand.

The growth of international meetings has affected the logistical planning for meeting professionals. Although many traditional factors have remained a part of the planning function, there are other items that have changed or been added. New items now added to the planning function would include emerging communication abilities, increased use of technological capabilities, worldwide venues, more efficient and effective registration procedures and, hopefully, security assurance and pre-and post-event crisis measures (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

According to meeting professionals, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative has shown to have had only a moderate impact so far on the meetings industry, but it could become more significant in the coming years (MPI & American Express, 2008). The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is "a result of the Intelligence Reform and Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), requiring all travelers to present a passport or other documents that denotes identity and citizenship when entering the U.S. The goal of the initiative is to strengthen U.S. border security while facilitating entry for U.S. citizens and legitimate foreign visitors by providing standardized documentation that enables the Department of Homeland Security to quickly and reliably identify a traveler" (U.S. Department of State, 2008).

Given the continued globalization of the meetings industry, the implications of the travel initiative are only going to increase. In 2008, 20% of meeting planners that work for organizations with operations in only one country now expect to do business internationally in 2008 (MPI & American Express, 2008).

(5) MARKETING OF HOST CITIES TO THE INDUSTRY: In comparison to recent years, large conventions are not as well attended. Regional meetings or conventions, however, have witnessed increased participation (Walker, 2006). With meetings and conventions meaning big money for the cities that host them, the challenge has become ever more important for larger cities in soliciting group business. Larger cities are often plagued with a reputation of higher crime rates and too expensive for many associations and corporations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). For this reason, as well as the current economic situation and rising costs, the industry has focused on second-tier cities as destinations for meetings and conventions (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Walker, 2006; Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Marketing the second-tier cities --- such as Charleston, West Virginia, or Milwaukee, Wisconsin --- is more of a challenge since they tend to be less exotic locations than Las Vegas or San Diego. Meeting planners can often find attractive incentives such as water rafting or other local activities not often found in the big cities (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). The response has been favorable and second-tier cities continue to rise as lower cost choices to host meetings and conventions. The positive response has also led to the increased building of convention centers in these cities to better serve the smaller associations and corporate businesses (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). This second-tier city phenomenon has implications for security and crisis planning. It is often easier to

prepare for crisis management in these smaller settings and the likelihood of these cities being major targets is diminished.

(6) SUSTAINABILITY & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: Adopting a "sustainability" strategy in the form of including "green measures in meetings" is a major trend for the meetings industry. A green meeting "incorporates environmental considerations to minimize its negative impact on the environment" (CIC, 2004). It has been made clear that the "capacity as planners and suppliers to act in partnership to minimize waster, purchase responsibly and educate delegates has the potential to benefit the environment, our economic bottom line, ourselves and generations that will come after us" (GMIC, 2007). The Convention Industry Council recently created the CIC Task Force of Sustainability and Responsibility in response to the growing demand of meeting professionals for timely information, education, and opportunities surrounding environmental and social responsibility (CIC Task Force, 2008). Its three initial priorities include compiling a repository of green meeting practices, developing education strategies around industry sustainability, and identifying measurement tools for sustainability practices. Conservation practices and environmental concerns also emerged as a trend in the Meeting Professionals International Future Watch 2008 report (MPI & American Express, 2008). The importance of sustainability and social responsibility for meeting planners is to increase their efficiency and competitiveness, add value, and reduce risk (GMIC, 2007).

(7) PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: Education has long been the cornerstone of professional and trade associations (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Associations strive

to improve the professionalism of members and advancements of the particular industry through continuing education opportunities. Many associations use the meetings industry to facilitate these educational opportunities. In turn, however, the meetings industry must also embark on educational opportunities to keep the profession up-to-date and competitive. Meeting planners must be aware of the latest technology and educational opportunities in order to facilitate productive meetings in an ever-changing world. The Professional Management Convention Association (PCMA) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI) are among the two largest meeting planning associations that offer a tremendous amount of support to the meeting planning industry. The associations offer educational sessions at annual meetings and conferences as well as provide support through the association's website. Examples of concepts addressed at these sessions include helping meeting planners develop a better understanding of return on investment, how to meet meeting objectives and become acquainted with strategic meetings management (Sookman, 2007). Colleges and universities are also key players in offering meeting planners educational opportunities.

To improve and enhance the status of meeting planning as a profession in the future, most everyone agrees that knowledge is key (Sookman, 2007). Sookman (2007) states that "meeting planners are encouraged to view themselves as more than just tactical managers and to see that meetings and events play a strategic role in their companies and organizations." Twenty years ago, an administrative assistant or coordinator was assigned the meeting planning function as an ancillary job to their primary responsibilities. That is not the case today. The industry continues to advance

and there are an increasing number of colleges and universities that offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in meetings and events management. Many meeting professionals, themselves, are teaching meeting or event courses at the college level (MPI & American Express, 2008). When surveyed about the important topics to further advance the meetings industry through educational efforts, meeting planners, in respective order, identified the following top three areas: (1) better understanding of procurement and finance; (2) better understanding of marketing and communications; and (3) a better ability to assess and report a meeting's impact (MPI & American Express, 2008). The industry recognizes the future leaders of the industry are the educated meeting professionals that approach the job with a strategic mission. Industry associations, such as PCMA and MPI, greatly support this new breed of professionals and must continue to strive and provide as many educational opportunities as possible.

(8) ROLE OF THIRD PARTY MEETING PLANNERS: Third party meeting planners are becoming much more prevalent in the industry. Third party planners may be independent planners, association management companies, destination management companies, incentive travel house, or travel agents. With corporate downsizing, the increased complexity of negotiations in a seller's market, and an increased use of technology, many organizations are looking outside their regular staff for meeting planning services (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Since these professionals are hired 'out-of-house' the term "outsourcing" the meeting function has become the new industry buzzword (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Outsourcing of meetings is expected to continue to increase as the nation enters an economic downturn. The role of the third party

meeting planner is going to be more critical to the industry (MPI & American Express, 2008; MPI & American Express, 2007; Porter, 1997; Feiertag, 1998).

(9) ENHANCED ROLE OF REVENUE MANAGEMENT: Hotels, airlines, and cruise ships have found great financial success in using yield/revenue management which is basically setting prices based on demand. With the advancement of technology and the availability of the internet, prices may be changed instantaneously as availability and demand necessitate (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Since hotels receive revenue from multiples sources, the goal is to work to apply a total revenue management approach to all the profit centers. This means that more than ever before hotels are evaluating a meeting group's spending patterns and potential prior to booking them (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). The patterns reviewed looked at a meeting group's ability to meet revenue expectation in food and beverage, audiovisual, recreational usage, telephone revenues, and even retail spending (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Revenue management software has become a key tool and made this process of evaluating potential groups easier and can more effectively book revenue generating meetings and conventions. Revenue management is a challenging practice. Accordingly, the industry is responding with an increase in such positions as Director of Revenue Management. This position helps a business to focus on the intricacies of the revenue management task and increases the chances of business revenue generation.

(10) GROWTH OF CONVENTION CENTERS/COMPETITION: Competition throughout the meetings industry continues to grow (Walker, 2009; Astroff & Abbey, 2002). The number of convention centers is increasing, overall size is expanding and some centers are even becoming available online for virtual meetings (PCMA, 2006b;

Walker, 2009). Exhibit and meeting space has increased dramatically over the past ten years primarily due to expansion efforts or brand new facilities (PCMA, 2006b). It is important to note that most convention centers are publicly owned and are primarily supported by taxes on hotel rooms (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). These fees, known as occupancy, room, or bed taxes can vary considerably. The importance of these fees is critical. High hotel room taxes are a factor when a meeting planner is considering a facility for a function, known as site selection. High fees can price a city right out of a planner's budget. Relevant to trend number two, budgets are a major consideration in the coming years. Bed taxes will become even more important in terms of positioning and differentiation in the industry.

2.7.1. Trends Summary

New trends, developments and innovation have increased in the last decade fueled by technologies. Such technologies include the Internet, increased demand for education and training, the continued advance of the Knowledge Society, a greater reliance on professional development, new industry players, increased competition and changing values and demand in society, government and the economy. The industry must manage these trends and innovations, but will also have to engage in some transformational change. It cannot be business as usual. Globalization and the forces of supply and demand in the industry require some major rethinking of how operations and execution must be carried out. One of the most critical areas to be considered is how to enhance thinking about safety and security in the industry. Unless careful consideration is given to the well-being of the consumer and the vulnerability of meeting facilities/operations, the

industry stands exposed to losses beyond imagination from major disaster, terrorist attack and other possible crises. In turn, these events will be translated into loss of revenue, brand promises, competitive position, human resources and positioning for future growth. The need to evaluate and apply various crisis preparedness models and thinking to industry operations remains in its infancy.

2.8. Conceptual Frameworks for Crisis Preparedness

Literature specifically focused on crisis preparedness for the MICE industry is scarce and lacks an empirical foundation. Much of the crisis preparedness literature for the MICE industry can be found in trade journals providing primarily checklists and general information (Howe, 1998; North-Puma, 2001; Genoist, 2002; Sturken, 2005; Grubb, 2006). At best, there is a practical approach without much thinking about the variability and differences in crisis preparation. Industry association websites are another source of basic information providing news updates, short excerpts that stress the need to have crisis preparedness plans, templates and checklists for association members (PCMA, 2006a; IAEM, 2002; ASAE, 2006; MPI, 2006). White papers can also be found on association websites, but often lack sufficient empirical support for their findings (IAEM, 2002). Academic and research journals cover crisis preparedness plans, yet the articles are not industry specific, especially with regard to the MICE industry. Literature in research journals covers various aspects of crisis preparedness plans, including the four key elements of prevention, awareness, response, and recovery (Hardenbrook, 2005; Rutkowski, et al., 2005; Smith, 2005; Pelfrey, 2005). Few of them, however, are related to the larger hospitality industry or its derivative, the MICE industry. Academic journals

in the hospitality industry have addressed the issue of crisis preparedness in less than systematic ways and sometimes only tangentially, but they are increasing as the topic becomes more recognized as a critical aspect of the industry (Santana, 2003; Ritchie, 2004; Huan, Beaman, & Shelby, 2004; Laws & Prideaux, 2005; Zhang, 2005). Again, these articles are aimed primarily at the hospitality industry and not directed at the MICE industry. Faulkner (2001) and Fink (1986) have used a community response model and developed a generic framework based on literature that outlined different stages to be taken during an emergency for the tourism industry. Much of the literature is retrospective. They use case study approaches to identify lessons learned from previous crisis situations in the hospitality industry (Orlob, 2004; Stafford, Yu, & Armoo, 2002; Young & Montgomery, 1998). Evans & Elphick (2005) have employed a qualitative approach of semi-structured interviews to investigate the reactions of leading UK–based tour operators to the 9/11 attacks in the United States. The application of this sort of study is limited in scope and generalizability.

2.8.1. Individual Frameworks

A conceptual framework is a collection of interrelated elements that can describe and direct a research topic or area (Sana, 2003). Crisis preparedness frameworks help to explain the interrelationship of the components of the "preparation challenge" and facilitate an understanding of the research that has been done in the area. This section will describe five crisis preparedness frameworks and two theories that complement the discussion of how to think about crisis preparedness.

The first framework, Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness, was introduced to prepare organizations for terrorist threats (Pelfrey, 2005). The term 'cycle' is used as a proxy for "a dynamic, flexible, and continuous process of interaction and integration, and functioning as a self-organizing mechanism that improves preparedness for anticipated events and for the unimagined events" (Pelfrey, 2005, pg.3). The key is that organizational crisis preparedness is an ongoing process that is constantly evolving. The framework strives to better accomplish an "auto-adaptive" capacity, as described by Comfort (2002), in organizations that are faced with the task of establishing crisis preparedness initiatives. The four phases described by Pelfrey's (2005) model are Prevention, Awareness, Response, and Recovery. The two elements of the first phase, Prevention, are collaboration and information sharing--both central to the process of preparedness. Inclusions of awareness may seem unclear to some experts as an actual phase in a model. The second phase, Awareness, is a critical part of training and educating strategies because its function is to help recognize a potential crisis. This is key to mitigating the severity of harm associated with any crisis. The third phase in the Cycle of Preparedness is Response. This is the term most often associated with the term "crisis management." During this phase, a series of operations are initiated once the crisis is recognized and in process. Once the response phase is invoked, various strategies are employed including: control of the scene, mitigation and treatment of harm, communication procedures, and protection throughout the event. Although such actions may take place during other phases in the cycle, they are more heavily emphasized during the Response phase. The fourth and final phase is Recovery. Pelfrey (2005) notes that as important as it is to prepare for a 'response' to a crisis event, it is just as important to

prepare for recovery efforts. This is the process of "rehabilitating, restoring, and repairing the harm done" (Pelfrey, 2005, pg. 11). Pelfrey's model is shown in Figure 2.1. Figure 2.2 illustrates Pelfrey's model in a terrorism context.

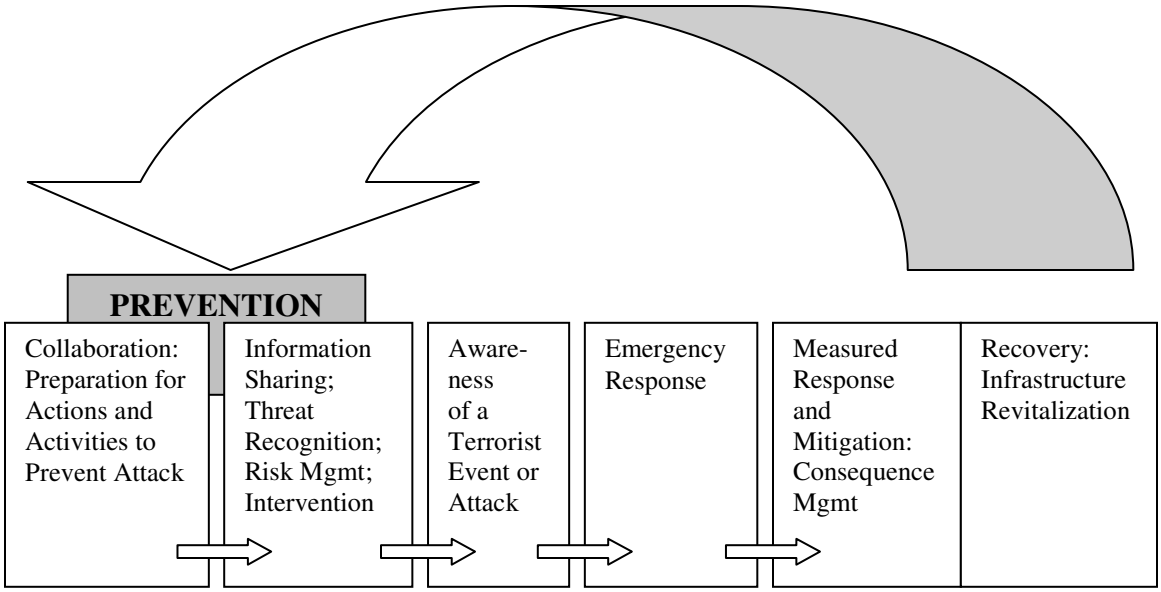

Figure 2.1: Major Elements of the Cycle of Preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005)

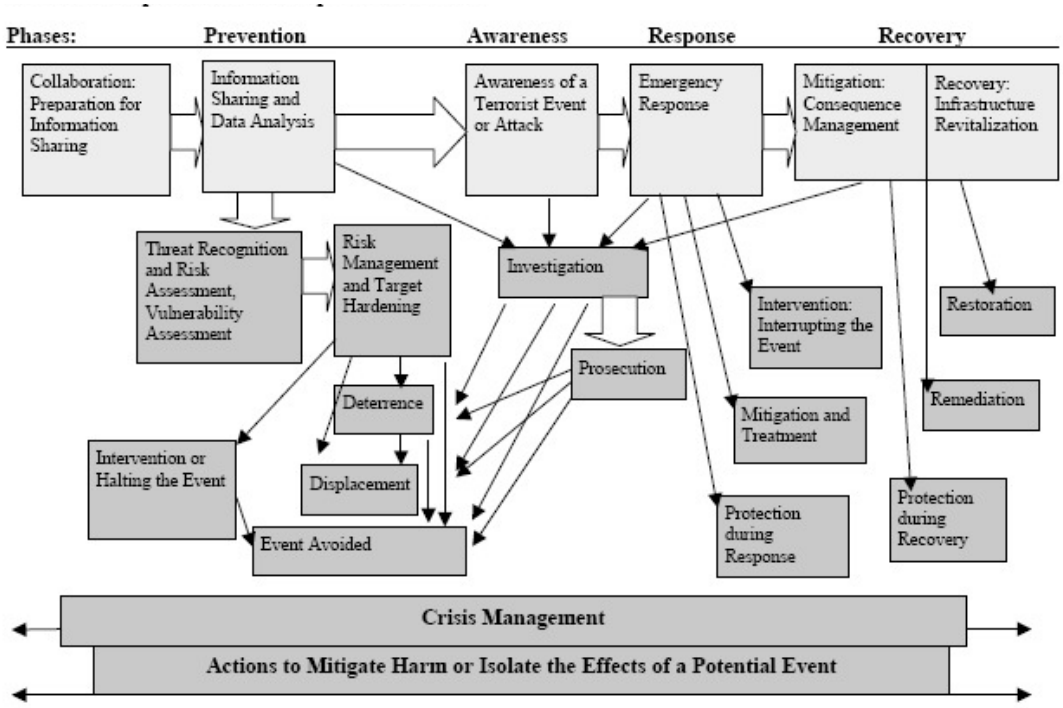

Figure 2.2: Cycle of Preparedness in Terrorism Context (Pelfrey, 2005)

The second framework by Pearson and Mitroff (1993) proposes a similar crisis management framework consisting of five major phases. It is depicted in Figure 2.3. When reflecting on a crisis after it occurs, observers often find that many warning signals were there but unidentified. With so much information being exchanged everyday in an organization, Pearson and Mitroff (1993, pg. 52) argue that the major challenge in signal detection is "to learn how to separate those signals indicative of a looming crisis from the barrage of noise which is part of daily business." Preparation/prevention is the systematic process of searching for potential crises that could happen. Damage containment is similar to Pelfrey's Mitigation phase and involves limiting the effects of the crisis. Recovery involves having both short-term and long-term recovery plans in place. Most often overlooked, according to Pearson and Mitroff, is the Learning phase. This phase

involves reflecting and critically examining the lessons learned with the aim of avoiding the same crisis from happening again. In essence, this is also a 'cycle,' but lacks the depth and detail of Pelfrey's model. In addition, Pelfrey embeds an element of dynamism and integration in his explanatory approach that suggests crisis preparedness and management is a learning process that adapts and transforms as circumstances change.

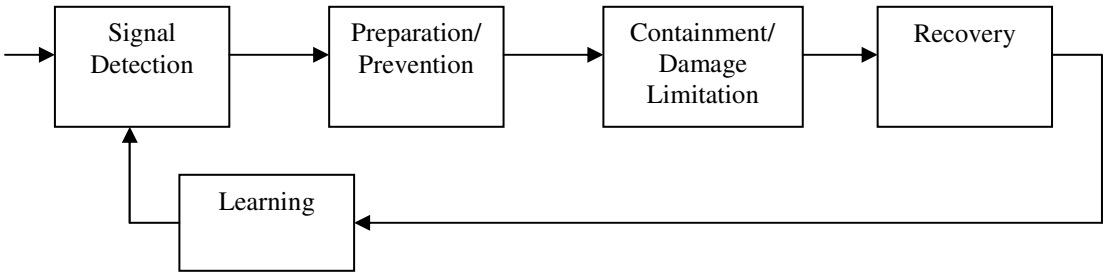

Figure 2.3: The Five Phases of Crisis Management (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993)

The third framework of Pearson and Clair (1998) developed a multi-dimensional model of the crisis management process (see Figure 2.4). The authors state that this model moves beyond previous models in four main ways: (1) it explicitly recognizes objective, subjective and perceptual components; (2) it acknowledges the complexity of outcomes; (3) it integrated previous models that only dealt with limited aspects as opposed to the whole crisis management process; and (4) it links multidimensional views of crisis management drawn from psychological, social-political, and technological-structural perspectives (Pearson and Clair, 1998).

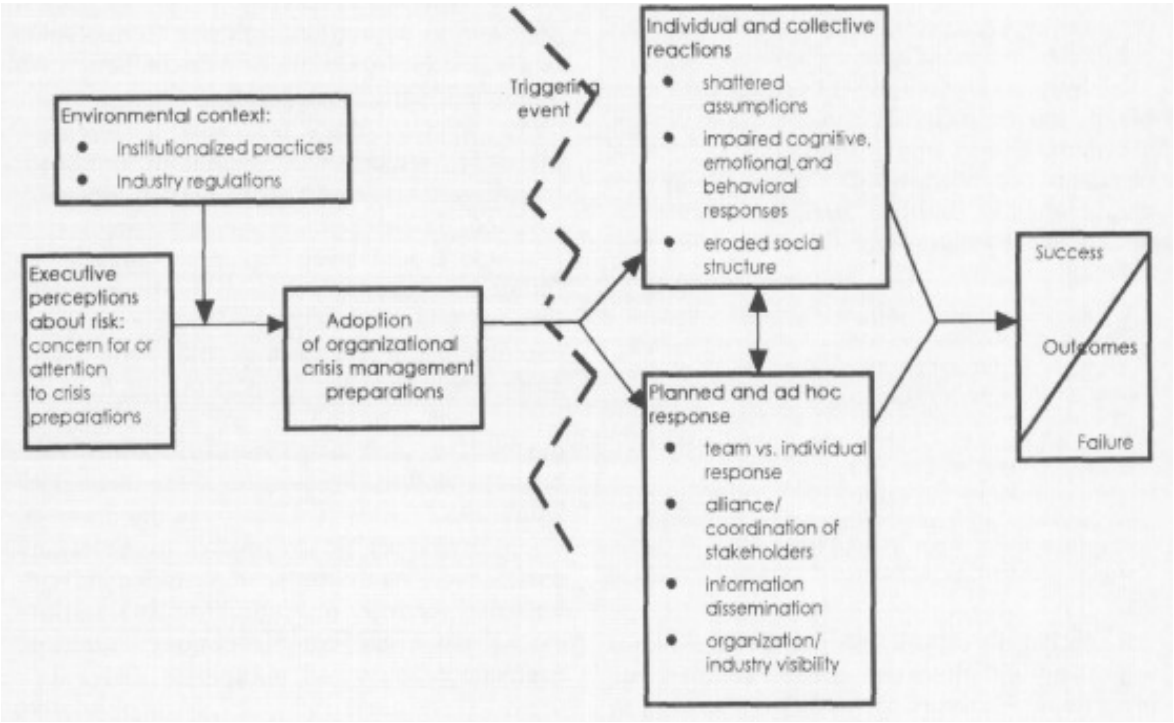

Figure 2.4: The Crisis Management Process (Pearson and Clair, 1998)

A fourth framework developed by Wang and Belardo (2005) takes a different approach to crisis management. This model focuses on knowledge management and knowledge strategies as shown in Figure 2.5. The model combines the process-oriented approach of Pearson and Mitroff (1993) and Zack's (1999) framework of knowledge strategies with Earl's (2001) taxonomy of knowledge management strategies which provide methods "that organizations can utilize to manage their knowledge in order to achieve their business goals" (Wang & Belardo, 2005, pg. 7). The framework shows that knowledge management strategies are best employed during the first three phases of a crisis. The idea of the approach is to effectively and efficiently use the knowledge on hand, especially during the last two phases of Recovery and Learning. The authors believe that the goal of the first three phases is to quickly mitigate the effects using the

knowledge on hand. Alternatively, the last two phases involve tapping more resources to conduct activities that are time-consuming and require considerable support. Identifying the "knowledge gaps between the available knowledge of organizations and the knowledge required in order to immunize organizations from future business crises" is an example of such time-consuming activities (Wang & Belardo, 2005, pg. 7).

Type / Process	Earthquake Parallel	Flood Parallel	Hurricane Parallel	Nuclear Accident Parallel	Oil Spill Parallel
Signal Detection	Knowledge Management Strategy				
Prevention/Preparation		Knowledge Management Strategy			
Containment/Damage Limitation			Knowledge Management Strategy		
Recovery				Knowledge Strategy	
Learning					Knowledge Strategy

Figure 2.5: A Crisis Management Framework (Wang & Belardo, 2005)

The models described so far identify stages, or phases, of crises which should trigger effective preparedness strategies. The fifth framework of Faulkner (2001) takes a similar approach and combines Fink's (1986) four stage approach with Roberts (1994) chronological framework. Slightly different from the others, Faulkner (2001) applies his research directly to the tourism industry and identified six stages of a crisis including pre-event, prodromal, emergency, intermediate, long term or recovery, and resolution. His framework combines the stages proposed by Fink (1986) and Roberts (1994) as shown in

Figure 2.6. This combined framework provides additional insight on potential strategies to be considered or developed at the various stages of a crisis (Ritchie, 2004).

Composite stages	Fink's (1986) stages	Robert's (1994) stages
1. Pre-event		*Pre-event*: where action can be taken to prevent disasters (e.g. growth management planning or plans aimed at mitigating the effects of potential disasters)
2. Prodromal	*Prodromal stage*: when it becomes apparent that the crisis is inevitable	
3. Emergency	*Acute stage*: the point of no return when the crisis has hit and damage limitation is the main objective	*Emergency phase*: when the effects of the disaster has been felt and action has to be taken to rescue people and property
4. Intermediate		*Intermediate phase*: when the short-term needs of the people affected must be dealt with — restoring utilities and essential services. The objective at this point being to restore the community to normality as quickly as possible
5. Long term (recovery)	*Chronic stage*: clean-up, post-mortem, self-analysis and healing	*Long-term phase*: continuation of the previous phase, but items that could not be addressed quickly are attended to at this point (repair of damaged infrastructure, correcting environmental problems, counselling victims, reinvestment strategies, debriefings to provide input to revisions of disaster strategies)
6. Resolution	*Resolution*: routine restored or new improved state	

Figure 2.6: Stages in a Community's Response to a Disaster (Faulkner, 2001)

Finally, communication is a critical component in all aspects of crisis preparedness. Structural-functional systems theory (Dunlop, 1958) addresses the details of information networks and chains of command making up organizational communication. In this theory, information in organizations flows in patterns called networks which are made up of members and links (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1997). A systematic approach to communication during a crisis is critical in mitigating the worst possible harm. Diffusion of innovation theory was proposed by Everett Rogers in 1983. Research dealing with diffusion examines how new ideas are spread among groups of people. This theory centers on the ability of new information to be accepted following dissemination via a variety of channels (Elkins, et al, n.d.). In preparing and responding

to a crisis, diffusion of innovation theory argues that successful communication among a large number of people is crucial. A crucial ingredient, however, to the successful application of this theoretical approach is choosing the proper communication channels. This decision is just as important as the message being sent. Diffusion theory suggests that creation of a communication plan as an element of overall crisis preparedness strategy may be the crucial factor in the preparation process.

2.9. Summary

The hospitality and tourism industry is the number one service industry in the world. The MICE industry is a critical component of the overall industry and has grown tremendously in the last twenty years. It is generating millions of dollars each year and plays a critical role in the nation's economy. The complexity of the meeting planning industry continues to be a challenge as security and safety become major concerns, technology advances, consumers' demands change more frequently, costs rise, and competition grows.

The challenge of adopting a single theoretical model for understanding crisis preparedness and management in this industry is complicated further by the fact that meeting planners change facilities/venues for almost every function. The diversity of place adds complexity because the factors to be considered in one venue may not be present or crucial to another meeting venue. Safety and security from all types of crises must be a part of the strategic planning process in order to protect the organizations and people involved. The goal is to find the level of generalizability acceptable in education and training strategies. At the same time, any explanatory or consulting model must be

flexible and accommodating enough to handle particular venues, types of meetings and special circumstances. In order to develop the appropriate education and training approaches and tools to build both generalizability and customization into the process of preparedness, it is necessary to assess the current level of crisis planning in the MICE industry of the larger hospitality and tourism industry. The next chapter provides a look and assessment of current MICE plans and planning initiatives.

CHAPTER 3. CRISIS PREPAREDNESS FOR THE MICE INDUSTRY: ARE MEETING PLANNERS PREPARED?

Abstract

A devastating crisis can be the defining moment for an organization. Regardless of the severity of a situation, crises pose a serious threat to the physical, economic and branding assets of hospitality management businesses. Preparation is the key to a successful response. This study analyzed the current level of crisis planning preparedness for the meeting planning industry. Preparedness was defined as the availability of plans. The data were collected from meeting planners utilizing a web survey design. The study identifies a lack of preparedness overall for the meeting planning industry. Recommendations for better crisis planning in the meeting planning industry are provided.

3.1. Introduction

The effects of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Asian tsunami are a few examples of crises that have affected all aspects of life including the business sector. These events, and many others, have brought forth the need for individuals and businesses to have effective crisis plans in place. The MICE industry is no exception. Recent incidents, in the MICE industry that would have been better managed with crisis plans include shootings (Expo Web, 2006b), structural damage (Expo Web, 2006a), hurricanes in 2005, bomb scares (Finz & Vargas, 2003; Wolken, 2006), protests (Seelye & Brooke, 1999), and biohazard scares in 2003 and 2005 (Dvorak, 2005). The *goal* of this chapter is to better prepare meeting planners to handle unforeseen emergencies by providing a preliminary set of recommendations that will be further discussed in the final chapter of this study. Although this chapter is limited to an analysis of city-wide meetings, the recommendations could be applied to other geographic meeting/events venues.

The findings from this project will be highly relevant to meeting planners to help raise awareness and aid in the development of crisis plans. It should alert the industry, as a whole, to the importance of communication and coordination with officials at the local, state, and national level. More importantly, the ultimate impact of the research will result in saving lives, protecting properties and safe guarding a vital economic sector of the United States economy.

3.2. Literature Review

The MICE industry is vastly different than it was fifteen years ago. The industry used to be characterized by small conventions or business meetings held in a few select

resort cities where most delegates were white males who brought along their spouses for mini-vacations (Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Today, the industry has dramatically been altered through globalization, increased spending power, as well as new travelers including an increased number of female, younger, and more affluent business travelers. Another difference is that meetings and conventions must be considered worthwhile enough to justify the expenses and time away from the office (Astroff & Abbey, 2002).

3.2.1. Crisis Preparedness Planning Defined

Planning describes a "structuring process that defines how the decision-makers want to see a future process develop" (Glaesser, 2006, pg. 159). This task, in regards to crisis planning, assists an organization with mitigating the worst results in the event of a crisis and aims to ensure the continued existence of the business after such an event. Some organizations utilize a one-page checklist as a crisis plan. A well-designed crisis plan; however, is part of a bigger process that must be strategically addressed with attention to detail. Glaesser (2006) outlines the development of crisis plans in three steps before achieving the end result of a comprehensive crisis plan: generic planning, contingency planning, and preventive planning. The importance of having a crisis plan is illustrated by the astounding statistic that 80% of companies lacking a crisis plan "vanish" within two years of suffering a major crisis (Wrigley, Salmon, & Park, 2003).

The aim of crisis planning is to reduce the element of surprise and, through preparation measures, mitigate the worst results from happening (Glaesser, 2006; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004). An effective crisis plan sets forth specific "key decisions on the mechanical portion of the crisis -- those aspects that rarely vary -- and

leaves you free to manage the content portion of the crisis" more effectively (Fink, 2002). Planning for a disaster is vital for show managers and operations professionals (Mather, 2001); however, research has shown that meeting planners lack having any type of crisis plans (Kline & Smith, 2006). Preparation is critical for meeting planners in keeping security costs down and having visible security measures in place assist in making attendees feel more secure (Will your Employees be Safe at Your Next Big Corporate Event?, 2002).

3.2.2. Creating a Crisis Plan

Create a checklist is what crisis planners are often told to do to prepare for a crisis event. No doubt you can use this advice as one step in the development strategy, but a well-designed crisis plan is part of a larger process that must be structured around important considerations and directed by a conceptual scheme. The next section describes the elements and use of a conceptual framework with great promise for both operations and educational planning.

3.2.3. Framing the Survey Questions for the Development of a Crisis Preparedness Planning Approach: The Pelfrey Model

The frameworks and theories presented in Chapter Two offer a variety of unique ways to derive the survey questions for this chapter and, at the same time, help guide the process of developing a crisis preparedness planning approach. Based on considerations of simplicity, comprehensiveness, elegance and potential, it was decided that Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness model (Figure 3.1) offers the most value for structuring the rest of

the research for this dissertation (Pelfrey, 2005). Other models researched include Pearson & Mitroff's (1993) 'Five Phases of Crisis Management,' Pearson & Claire's (1998) 'The Crisis Management Process,' Wang & Belardo's (2005) 'A Crisis Management Framework,' and stages of crisis management by Fink (1986), Roberts (1994) and Faulkner (2001). There are several reasons for choosing Pelfrey's model. First, the framework tends to simplify the complexity of the other models by relying on four basic phases: prevention, awareness, response and recovery. These phases are representative of what security experts have argued reflect the appropriate cycle from crisis prevention to crisis recovery. The depth and detail provided in each phase, however, creates a dynamic, moving process that is flexible and cyclical in nature. Second, the dynamism of the Pelfrey model lets the user "stretch" each phase by virtue of organizational learning and a broader range of response measures. Third, the awareness phase places extensive emphasis on the importance of education and training as a tool for crisis recognition. Professional development has always been important to the hospitality industry and the meeting planning component is no different. A review of the Pelfrey model will further highlight its explanatory and predictive power and lay the foundation for deriving the survey questions in Chapters Three and Four.

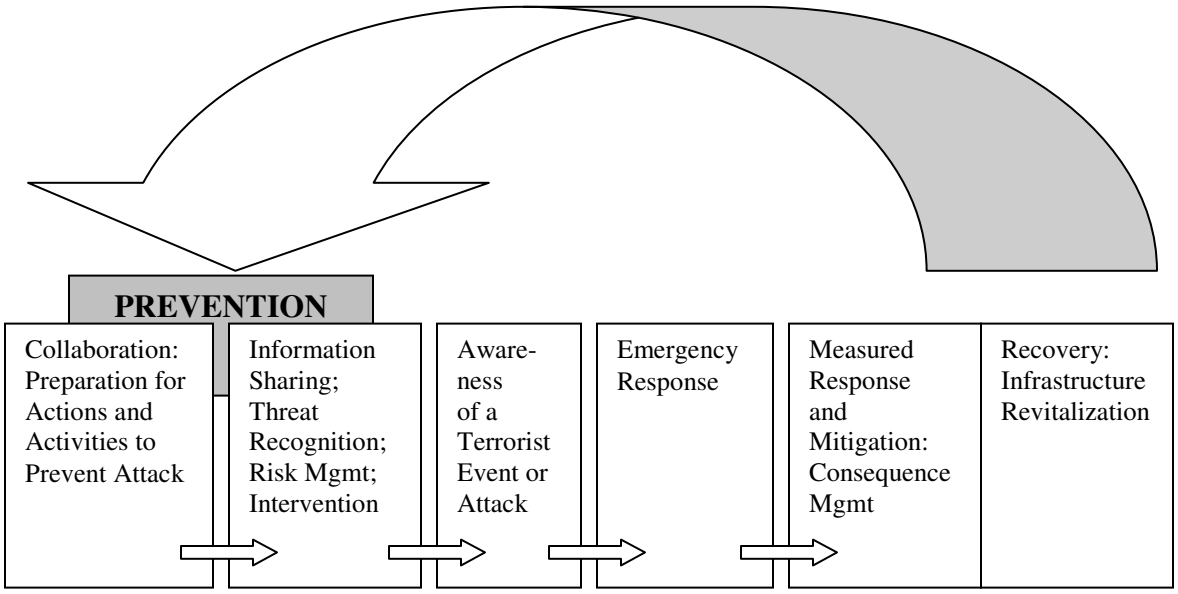

Figure 3.1: Major Elements of the Cycle of Preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005)

3.2.4. Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness Planning Model: Four Phases

Prevention – Prevention includes the process of identifying potential risks that could occur at or near a meeting location (Pelfrey, 2005). This step is vital in prioritizing which risks should be addressed and can be addressed based on cost-control. Prevention also includes objectives that must be operationalized such as Collaboration and Information Sharing. These two elements involve communicating and working with other agencies, organizations, and individuals to take measures in preventing a crisis. A meeting planner cannot create a crisis plan alone and be successful. He/she must work with others to ensure a safe and methodical approach. Amazingly, this stage is usually skipped in many plans even though it is the least costly and the simplest way to control a potential crisis. During this phase, an organization must try to minimize risks and to be certain that those that must be taken are commensurate with the returns expected

(Augustine, 2000). This leads to two more objectives of Prevention, which are Risk Management and Risk Communication.

Risk management can be defined as "the culture, processes, and structures that are directed towards the effective management of potential opportunities and adverse effects" (Risk Management, 1999). This definition is wide-ranging in that it can be applied in many different areas and locations. This could include financial to human resources to environmental concerns as well as physical locations such as hotels, restaurants, convention centers, and any other type of meeting facility. Risk Management (1999) states that in the context of threatened areas, "risk management can be taken to mean the process of gathering information to make informed decisions to minimize the risk of adverse effects to people and the environment." This applies directly to reducing the risk of affecting large groups of people at any meeting or convention event and the surrounding environment. On a different level, risk *assessment* entails approximating the level of risk or the probability of an event occurring and the magnitude of effects if the event does occur. In essence, "risk assessment lies at the heart of risk management, because it assists in providing the information required to respond to a potential risk (Risk Management, 1999). "Extraordinary incidents, whether caused by war, terrorism, accident, or natural disaster, focus attention on such basic, immediate, human needs as survival and safety, and longer-term needs such as water, food, and shelter" (Hall, 2003). Proper risk management can reduce the risks incurred during these devastating times and ensure proper basic needs can be met. The following diagram and quote illustrates how risk management and risk assessment work together to identify areas of needed attention and reduce risk in regards to human health.

"Human health risk assessment is one form of risk assessment, focusing on assessing the risk to people and communities from hazardous substances or discharge of contaminants. Ecological risk assessment is another form of risk assessment that can be used to assist management of risks to ecological values. The focus of risk assessment for contaminated sites is usually human health, as a large proportion of the known potentially contaminated sites are located in urban areas. However, where valued natural environments are present, the focus of ecological risk assessment is on assessing the risks to plants, animals and ecosystem integrity from chemicals present at or discharging from a contaminated site (Risk Management, 1999)." See Figure 3.2.

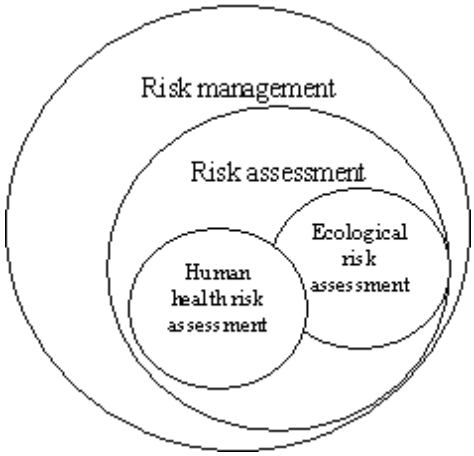

Figure 3.2: Risk Assessment (Risk Assessment for Contaminated Sites, 2003)

Finally, risk communication is a term that is not given enough attention but is extremely important when discussing crisis plans and the meeting planning industry. Dr. Alok Chaturvedi (2005), director of the Purdue Homeland Security Institute, stresses the importance of risk communication when discussing the hospitality industry. Risk communication is the development of methodology, tools and materials to communicate

risk or possible crisis situations and translate complex research findings for a variety of applications and audiences. Since previously stated research identifies that the threat of an overt attacks can be minimal, risk communication becomes even more important. The reason for effective communication is to keep meeting planners, attendees, facility employees and staff informed in the rare event of a crisis. It could mean the difference between life and death for a large number of people.

Well-known risk communication consultant, Peter Sandman (1987) states that the crisis situations that kill people are not necessarily the situations that people fear. Rather, it is due to the lack of information people possess to handle a situation. Risk communication closes the gap between potential danger and the situations people truly fear and/or should fear. The purpose of risk communication is to help managers understand why the public takes one situation more seriously than another. Understanding the differences between the two can then lead to changes in policies that will bring public and expert assessments of a risk at a meeting or elsewhere closer together (Sandman, 1987).

A final note regarding prevention is that too many people see this phase as part of the recovery process. They think about how they can prevent the crisis from happening the next time. There may not be a next time if one has not thought through preventive measures from the beginning. It is claimed that 80% of organizations cannot recover after a severe crisis if a plan was not well-developed. It is vital, therefore, to consider the prevention phase as an integral part of the planning process.

Awareness – Very closely related to response, awareness is recognizing the crisis is occurring. Fink (1986) identifies this as the prodromal (or warning) stage. This phase

could also be called the "trigger" mechanism because it initiates the plan's response elements. Although closely related to response, awareness is separate because it is the connection between prevention and response. For example, when the first airplane struck the World Trade Center no one was sure it was a terrorist attack. As soon as the second plane struck, people quickly recognized this was not an accident and the necessary response activities began to take place. The speed of the recognition (or awareness) is the key to the mediation of the harm.

Augustine (2000) defined a term that he called 'crisis creep.' This is the small pieces of evidence that can make one aware that a crisis is coming or about to happen. For example, a series of memorandums before the space shuttle, Challenger, launched in 1986 went unnoticed. These memorandums came from competent engineers calling for a delay in the shuttle's launch. Not addressing these memorandums led to a terrible crisis for NASA as the shuttle exploded shortly after take-off, killing all the astronauts on board including the first schoolteacher to accompany such a flight. Being aware of evidence signaling a crisis can help a meeting planner initiate the proper response activities and help ensure a positive outcome.

American companies, both domestic and international, are increasingly becoming prime "soft" targets for overt attacks (Taylor, 2004). These 'soft targets' are marked with strong symbolic value and encompass many businesses of the services industry including meeting and convention facilities, malls, banks, restaurants, attractions, supermarkets, schools, apartment buildings, airlines, transportation systems (e.g. subway) and hotels to name a few (Find2Fine, 2002; Hall, 2003; Lasher, 2004; Van Houten, 2003). International travel has begun to increase in recent years (Lasher, 2004; Hauer, 2001) and

has enhanced the volume of business being done in the services industry. The meetings and convention industry sector needs management and staff that are educated and prepared. Awareness of the many possible crisis situations and signs to watch for will ensure the right strategic response at the right time.

Response – Garcia (2006) claims that "whether an organization survives a crisis plan with its reputation, operations, and financial condition intact is determined less by the severity of the crisis than by the timeliness and effectiveness of the response." Response is the phase most recognized when discussing a crisis plan. Augustine (2000) states it is during this phase that time is of the essence for a successful outcome. Many people primarily focus *only* on this phase, not realizing the importance of integrating all the phases required to create an effective crisis plan. The response phase sets in motion a variety of tasks and activities. These response tasks and activities are often carefully designed and tested by using crucial exercises such as scenario planning and mock drills. The response phase involves equipping, training and exercising key responders of the crisis management team to initiate critical functions when confronting a crisis situation.

Fink (1986) considers this the acute crisis stage. Having an effective crisis plan can, and will, greatly shorten this phase. A survey of Fortune 500 companies found that those without a crisis plan reported suffering lingering effects of the crisis response as much as two and a half times longer than companies that were prepared with a crisis plan (Fink, 1986; Laws & Prideaux, 2006).

The meeting planning and convention industry's success in a crisis situation ultimately depends on how effectively it can respond to the situation. This can mean the difference between lives lost and lives saved. Management and staff cannot save lives

and protect other citizens if is not aware of the seriousness of such threats and be fully prepared to handle such a situation. President George W. Bush claims "In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act" (Office of the Press Secretary, 2002). For meeting planners to effectively act, both public and private sectors must be involved, and a strategic approach to crisis planning for meetings and conventions must be followed.

Recovery – Receiving more attention today is the important task of preparing for crisis recovery. This is a critical part of any crisis plan. Many times, people focus on 'surviving' the crisis that they forget the importance of laying a strategic plan to continue critical business functions. The recovery phase can begin as soon as the crisis is discovered, but often extends in time and energy far beyond any ending of the crisis. Different agencies and organizations may need to be involved in the recovery phase compared to those in the response phase. In order to rehabilitate a site after a crisis situation, a full analysis needs to be completed as to what led to the event. Organizational learning is essential. Meeting planners and staff must evaluate how well the crisis situation was handled and investigate if a better way could have been initiated. This evaluation can lead to new policies and procedures for the industry. Recovery requires learning and the development of feedback in order to complete the "cycle of preparedness."

3.3. Methodology

3.3.1. Population, Sample, & Research Instrument

The population for this study was 2,099 members of a meeting planning industry association that were identified as "meeting planners." This organization is a leading provider of convention and meeting education in the United States. Its members include individuals whose organizations develop and plan meetings, conventions, exhibits, and seminars. It also includes individuals engaged in providing products and services related to the MICE industry. Using descriptive statistics, data were collected and analyzed from meeting planners in charge of planning functions at a variety of locations (e.g. convention centers, hotels, etc.). The respondents provided feedback about the level of preparedness relative to a crisis event taking place at one of their functions. The sample size was 417 meeting planners with a 19.9% response rate. Validity was ensured through a pre-testing process. The data was collected via a questionnaire web survey design using a modified Dillman (2000) method in order to increase the response rate. The survey questions for this study as well as they research conducted in Chapter 4 can be found in Appendix B.

3.3.2. Research Questions

This study explored the following set of research questions:

1. What is the current level of preparedness for the meeting planning industry in the United States?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses for the current state of crisis planning in the United States for the meeting planning industry?
3. How well have crisis plans in the United States been tested for effectiveness?

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Demographics

Of the 417 meeting planners responding to the 2006 association Crisis Plans Survey that was distributed via email during July 2006, 64.6 % of the respondents were Association Meeting Planners. The sizes of the associations were fairly evenly split: 1,000-4,999 member (21.1%), 10,000-24,999 members (21.1%), and more than 50,000 members (19.7%). The seniority of the meeting planners were divided with 24.5% spending 6-10 years as a meeting planner and 24.5% have spent more than 20 years as a meeting planner. On average, the planners spent between one and three years in their current position. Over half of the planners (51.2%) had acquired a Bachelor's Degree as the highest level of education. When it comes to industry certifications, over half (52.8%) of the meeting planners hold no certifications at all. Being a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) was identified as the most popular certification (41.4%). Finally, 98.5% of the respondents were members of the association from which the population was drawn.

3.4.2. Meeting Information

From January 2005 to December 2005, 43% of the meeting planners held one city-wide meeting whereas 40.9% held no city-wide meetings. Over a third (38.2%) of the meeting planners held more than 20 meetings in 2005. The net square footage for their largest meeting in 2005 was split between less than 50,000 square feet (27.3%) and 50,000-150,000 square feet (27.0%). The number of attendees at the largest meeting in 2005 was 1,000-5,000 (37.7%) with 'less than 1,000' representing 27.3% of the

respondents. Finally, the number of full-time staff varied with 39.6% of the respondents stating they had 26 or more employees and 25.2% of the respondents reported having only 2-5 employees.

3.4.3. Current Business & Crisis Plans Situation

The meeting planners were split on reporting their overall level of preparedness for dealing with a crisis. If a crisis was to occur at a meeting for which they were responsible 39.3% (n=157; N=400) felt 'prepared' and 37.8% (n=151; N=400) expressed the feeling they were 'not very prepared' to manage that crisis for the meeting group. In regards to having a crisis management team for their meeting planning organization, nearly half of the respondents (n=197; N=400) reported no team was established. Of the 42% (n=168) that did have a team, they reported that the team met 1-3 times per year on average with 4-6 people representing the full team.

Having a crisis plan is believed to be 'very' or 'extremely' important by 65.6% of the meeting planners. Only 41.5% (n=162; N=390), however, actually have a crisis plan in place. Of those meeting planners that do have a plan, 60.2% (n=97; N=161) of them have never had to implement the crisis plan. Those with crisis plans in place, 40.9% (n=65; N=159) feel the plan is written with extensive policies and procedures to assist in the management of a crisis. The plans are updated, on average, of once per year (n=74; N=155).

When asked about having a comprehensive insurance policy to assist with recovery actions, 41% (n=146; N=356) of the meeting planners agreed that they do, but 29.2% (n=104; N=356) reported being neutral on the issue. Those with the insurance

plan, 87% reported having a business interruption clause in place (n=187; N=215). Gathering information from a facility concerning its crisis plan is believed to be 'very' or 'extremely' important by 69% of the meeting planners (n=258; N=374). A facility's level of crisis preparedness during the site selection process is 'important' to 33.2% of the respondents and 'not very important' to 25.7% (N=374). Following the questions about the importance of having a plan, the meeting planners reported only meeting with the facility to discuss their crisis plans 'sometimes' (27.8%; N=374). Less than 20% of the planners reported that they met 'often' and 18.2% reported 'always' meeting with the facility managers about crisis plans (N=374).

3.4.4. Specific Emergency Situations

This section inquired about potential and actual crises that meeting planners encountered at meetings they have planned. When asked if the meeting planners had ever experienced a crisis at one of their meetings, 63.4% reported they had not (n=249; N=393). This was regardless to whether or not the meeting planner had a crisis plan in place. Of the 36.6% (n=144; N=393) that had experienced a crisis, 43.8% (n=63; N=144) reported 'natural disasters' as the most common crisis. This was followed by 'accidents/fatalities' (n=50; N=144) and 'protests' (n=38; N=144). Next, the meeting planners were asked if they ever had to implement their crisis plan in a specific situation. 60.2% reported they had never implemented their plan (n=97; N=161). Of the 33.6% that did implement their plan, 48.1% used it for a 'natural disaster' situation followed by 'accidents/fatalities' (27.8%) and 'bomb threats' (27.8%). Finally, when asked about a

series of potential scenarios, the respondents identified what the possibility of each would be to occur at one of their meetings (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Possibility of Crises at Meetings (N=365)

Type of Crisis	Not Possible %	Not Very Possible %	Possible %	Very Possible %	Highly Possible %
Fire	0.3	8.8	67.3	18.1	5.5
Structural Damage	0.5	22.3	62.6	11.3	3.3
Bomb Threat	1.1	18.4	60.2	16.2	4.1
Accidents/Fatalities	0.3	7.1	59.1	24.2	9.3
Employee Strike	2.7	12.6	54.7	23.4	6.6
Terrorist Attack	1.6	26.9	54.1	13.2	4.1
Biological Hazard	2.2	27.5	54.1	12.9	3.3
Shooting	2.2	36.0	52.5	6.6	2.7
Workplace Violence	2.7	40.4	50.8	3.8	2.2
Natural Disaster	0.5	10.7	49.7	29.1	9.9
Protests	3.0	23.6	47.8	19.0	6.6
Lockdown	4.4	44.8	44.2	4.7	1.9

It is important to point out that ‘Accidents/Fatalities’ and ‘Employee Strike’ had ‘Highly Possible’ scores of 24.2% and 23.4% respectively. Also, ‘Shooting’ and ‘Workplace Violence’ had ‘Not Very Possible’ scores of 36% and 40.4% respectively. Finally, ‘Protests’ and ‘Lockdown’ had “Not Very Possible’ scores of 23.6% and 44.8% respectively.

3.4.5. Training for Employees and Key Responders

Regardless of whether the meeting planners had a plan or not, proper training of employees is lacking in potential crisis situations. The following Table 3.2 represents the

potential crises and the percentage of time that employees received training. Training is never received in most areas for meeting planners. The next highest scores were that all the areas receive training less than once per year. Notable percentages that were reported included training for 'Medical Assistance for attendees' that took place once per year (31.1%) as well as training for 'Fire Evacuation' which took place once per year (28.9%) and 2-3 times per year (24.9%).

Table 3.2: Crisis Training Received by Meeting Planners (N=357)

Area of Training	Never %	Less than once per year %	Once per year %	2-3 times per year %	4-5 times per year %	More than 5 times per year %
Biological Hazard	68.9	17.9	9.8	2.5	0.6	0.3
Man-made events e.g., terrorism, shooting, protests	60.2	20.7	16.2	2.5	0.3	0.0
Bomb Threat	56.3	21.0	17.1	5.0	0.6	0.0
Natural Disasters	49.9	21.6	23.0	4.8	0.0	0.8
Medical Assistance for attendees	38.4	20.7	31.1	7.0	1.4	1.4
Fire Evacuation	25.8	16.5	28.9	24.9	2.0	2.0

3.4.6. Communication and Coordination Among Key Players

In the process of developing crisis plans some planners did coordinate and communicate with external partners as shown in Table 3.3. External partners may include any type of meeting facilities, law enforcement, medical services, fire department, security/crisis management consultants, or convention and visitors bureaus to name a few. Considering that only 41.5% (n=162) of planners surveyed had plans in place, the number of planners who actually worked with external partners is relatively small. These

planners primarily met with the meeting facilities (convention centers, hotels, etc.) about 45.9% of the time. Surprisingly, 32.7% of the meeting planners included no externals partners to assist with their plan development. Other (*) partners identified by the meeting planner that were optionally added were shipping services (e.g., FedEx, UPS, and USPS), local governments, and contractors.

Table 3.3: External Partners Consulted in the Crisis Planning Process (N=159)

Partner	YES %	n
Convention Center/Facilities	45.9	73
No external partners included	32.7	52
Security Company	27.0	43
Fire Department	23.3	37
Insurance Company	20.1	32
Convention & Visitors Bureau	19.5	31
Health Services	14.5	23
Law Enforcement	14.5	23
Crisis Management Consultant	6.3	10
Public Relations Company	2.5	4
Other*:	15.7	25
Key Vendors (third party supplier, decorators, AV company)	33.3	4
Parent Association	16.7	2

When asked if meeting planners communicate and coordinate their crisis plans with the meeting facility staff relative to facility's own crisis plans, they reported doing so to some degree (N=159): Always-34.8%, Often-27.1%, and Sometimes-22.6%. Regarding the importance of reviewing emergency procedures during a preconvention meeting, meeting planners agreed it is 'important' to 'extremely important' 95.2% of the time (n=356; N=374).

Next the study addressed the issue of written communication plans. Communication plans are critical components of a crisis plan and usually augment the overall plan. It is, therefore, important to explore these types of plans to a degree. The meeting planners were asked how important it is to have a communication plan in the event of a crisis with regards to four main stakeholders. Meeting planners (N=364) reported that it is 'extremely important' to include employees (35.4%) and the facility (34.6%) in the communication plan and 'important' to include clients/attendees (38.2%) and local officials (40.4%). Although the importance of having a communication plan was previously pointed out, 27.2% (N=357) of the respondents claimed to *never* have a communication plan in place for a crisis situation (23.5% reported 'sometimes and 20.2% reported 'rarely'). Finally, 40.1% of meeting planners reported 'always' having a designated media spokesperson in the event of a crisis and 25.8% never have one specified (N=357).

3.4.7. Scenario Planning and Testing of Plans

Some meeting planning organizations engage in scenario planning in order to recognize potential threats (N=374): Never-40.6% of the time, Rarely-26.5%, Sometimes-22.7%, Often-6.4%, and Always-3.7%. Conducting exercises to test the crisis plan after its development is an essential part of a successful response in a crisis situation. Of the 41.5% of meeting planners that do have a crisis plan in place, 89% (n=138; N=155) of them do not conduct exercises to test the plan. The 11% that do conduct exercises to test the crisis plans do so, on average, of once per year (n=11; N=17) and the

remaining (n=6; N=17) do so 2-3 times per year. Table 3.4 shows the methods of testing the plans used by meeting planners.

Table 3.4: Methods of Testing Crisis Plans (N=17)

Method	YES %	n
Mock Drills	76.5	13
Tabletop Exercises (discussions)	58.8	10
Computer Simulations	5.9	1
Other:	5.9	1
Role Playing at Senior Management Retreat		

3.5. Findings and Implication

3.5.1. Question #1: What is the current level of preparedness for the meeting planning industry in the United States?

The current level of preparedness for the meeting planning and convention industry could be characterized as fair to poor. Meetings planners seem to be aware of the importance of crisis plans, but the omissions or limitations in several areas of plan development is cause for concern. Approximately 40% of meeting planners feel prepared in the event of a crisis, whereas another 40% feel not very prepared. Nearly half (49.3%) of the meeting planner organizations, however, do not have a crisis management team which is considered to be a vital element in creating a crisis plan. Having this type of team assists with scenario planning and testing to identify gaps in the plan and better prepare employees and participants. Although 65.6% of the meeting planners felt having a crisis plan was either very or extremely important, over half of the meeting planners (58.5%) do not have a plan. Of the 41.5% that do have a plan, 60.2% of them have never

had to implement the plan. This lack of implementation experience tends to diminish thinking about updating and testing imperatives.

A final note from the survey regarding the current situation is that meeting planners believe that it is "very to extremely important" (69%) to gather information from a facility regarding its crisis plans. They also believe it is important (33.2%) to consider the facility's level of preparedness during the site selection. With the level of importance on collaborating with the facility so well understood, it is surprising to see that only 18% of meeting planners always meet with the respective facility regarding its plans. The highest percentage (27.8%) of the meeting planners only meet sometimes with the facility. This dissonance identifies a lack of action on behalf of meetings planners even though they realize the importance of collaboration with the facility.

3.5.2. Question #2: What are the strengths and weaknesses for the current state of crisis planning in the United States for the meeting planning industry?

Identifying strengths and weaknesses of crisis plans will help meeting planners understand areas that need to be maintained or improved as well as gaps that need to be filled in with better written plans. The first strength identified from survey findings is that 41.5% of the meeting planners have some sort of crisis plan. Although this is less than half, it is still a larger amount of respondents than expected. An appreciable number of meeting planners feel that their current plans are written with extensive policies and procedures to effectively assist them in a crisis (40.9%). They update their plans once per year (47.7%). This finding is important because updating crisis plans is essential to ensure a successful response to an event. Because key planners will leave organizations,

contact information must be updated on a regular basis. New tools and technologies are always becoming available and should be incorporated into plans as well.

Insurance is another important component of a strategically designed crisis plan. Insurance can mitigate financial losses if a meeting is unexpectedly canceled or rescheduled (Malouff, 2003). Frank Malouff (2003) further states a meeting planner "would have to write off expenses incurred up to that point [of crisis beginning], including deposits, advertising and printing costs, booking fees, and catering contracts. In addition to these expenses, you would face losing the revenue generated from registration and exhibitors fees. Protecting your association from this fate is the driving force behind an insurance program." Having a comprehensive insurance policy to assist with crisis recovery actions is represented in 41.0% of the crisis plans. Of this number, 87% of these insurance policies include a specific business interruption clause.

Finally, almost half (45.9%) of the meeting planners surveyed have collaborated with the facilities (convention centers, hotels, etc.) in developing their crisis plans. A designated media spokesperson is part the plan for some meeting planners (40.1%). This collaboration is an important finding because no crisis can be successfully prevented or managed alone or without an eye to public relations.

Weaknesses identified by the survey are important because they reveal gaps that must be addressed by the meeting planning industry in their crisis planning efforts. First, not necessarily a weakness of current plans, but the simple fact that over half (58.5%) of those surveyed did not even have a plan of any sort is troublesome. Second, as indicated earlier, few meeting planning organizations have a crisis management team. These teams are considered to be a vital aspect of developing and maintaining an effective crisis plan.

Having this type of team assists with scenario planning and testing to identify gaps in the plan and better prepare meeting planners. Third, the lack of training is almost a crisis itself. This critical weakness was identified in survey results and reinforced by additional comments provided by meeting planners. Regardless of whether they had a plan or not, meeting planners and organizations are not conducting enough training. This is a crucial aspect of responding to a crisis situation and should be quickly addressed by the industry. Fourth, only about one-third of meeting planners collaborate with external partners in the development of their plans. The lack of collaboration when developing a preparedness plan can greatly hinder the management of any crisis. Fifth, 27.2% of the meeting planners surveyed never have even a communication plan in place for their meetings. Finally, 40.6% of organizations never engage in scenario planning to identify potential threats.

3.5.3. Question #3: How well have crisis plans been tested for effectiveness?

Both the industry literature and security experts identify scenario planning and testing crisis plans as essential action steps in measuring the effectiveness of crisis plans. Both of these steps help to recognize gaps in the plan that must be corrected to ensure a strategic and successful response to a crisis situation. The survey results found that 40.6% of the meeting planning organizations never engage in scenario planning in order to recognize potential threats. This is a huge weakness identified throughout the survey. Only 10.1 % of the respondents' organizations often or always engage in this process. Testing of plans, in the form of exercises, has also been identified as a huge weakness for meeting planners and their respective crisis plans. Of the 41.5 % of meeting planners that

have a crisis plan, 89.0% have never conducted mock drills to test the plans. Of the 11% that do conduct exercises to test the plans, 64.7% do it once a year and 35.3% do it 2-3 times per year. The most popular exercises to test the plans were mock drills and tabletop exercises (e.g. discussions). Computer simulations were only selected by one meeting planner. This type of exercise is becoming more popular and economically feasible. Both of these actions – scenario planning and testing exercises - are areas of concern that have been identified as weak aspects of crisis plans. The tremendous importance of these action steps must be communicated to meeting planners and their organizations. Equally important, it is clear that the "cycle of preparedness" requires feedback from the recovery phase, simulations or scenario building exercises that is not being produced. If it is being produced, there is little evidence to demonstrate that the feedback is part of a "learning" phase that could produce continuous improvement of a plan, organizational operations and employee knowledge.

3.6. Conclusion

This survey of MICE industry crisis planning efforts has revealed some important findings that cannot be ignored. It has identified several areas where immediate action can occur to assist meeting planners in the development of strategic and effective crisis plans. Taking action now can save lives, prevent injury, and minimize property damage in the moments of a crisis.

Augustine (2000) has stated, "Almost every crisis contains within itself the seeds of success as well as the roots of failure. Finding, cultivating, and harvesting that potential success is the essence of crisis management." Look for the opportunity in every

crisis. Whenever it happens, wherever it happens, however it happens: look for the opportunity that exists in every crisis. Manage it, get control of it, and benefit from it. Somebody will so why shouldn't it be you (Fink, 1986)? This is the "learning" imperative that is seriously missing in theory and practice. A crisis plan is a foundation that requires a great deal of time and energy to create through intensive information gathering, training, and information dissemination. This can be guided Pelfrey's four phases of creating a crisis plan, but continuous improvement may require an information processing step currently missing in existing in the Pelfrey model.

A meeting planner can hope for the best, but *must* be prepared for the worst. The ability to handle a crisis, no matter how severe, could mean the difference between saving lives and the reputation and future of the organization. The success and viability of any organization lies in being proactive, prepared and willing to learn in a dynamic way that may lead to organizational transformation.

3.7. Recommendations

To increase meeting planners' level of crisis preparedness, the following list of preliminary recommendations for industry associations to consider as services to its membership is offered:

- Provision of an interactive workshop for meeting planners to engage in the crisis plan development process. This would be conducted 1-2 times per year.

- Develop an extensive catalog of literature that can be easily accessed by meeting planners to help them learn more. This would include all types of literature from research articles to trade magazines and case studies.

- The development of a 'tool-kit' for meeting planners that will establish a foundation for initiating preparedness steps. The tool-kit can include education and readiness strategies to inform meeting planners of potential threats (e.g., manuals, templates, videos).

- The creation of a computer simulation that meeting planners can use to test their plans. These simulations are becoming more available through research institutes and are highly effective in testing crisis plans.

- An interactive section of an association website that can be utilized to facilitate discussion about crisis planning and best practices. This benchmarking section could also include webinars that members from all across the country could utilize and further their knowledge in many areas of crisis planning.

3.8. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study surveyed over 2,000 meeting planners, the response rate was acceptable but low. Meeting planners who do not belong to the particular association that was surveyed may have a different profile with respect to demographic characteristics and level of crisis preparedness. This study, therefore, may not be generalizable to all meeting planners. Future studies may expand the research to include other groups of meeting planners. Finally, a more complete conceptual framework for plan development that incorporates a "learning" phase is essential. This issue will be addressed in the final chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 4. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF MEETING PLANNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF CRISIS PREPAREDNESS

Abstract

The hospitality and tourism industry is like no other economic sector when it comes to being challenged by crisis events. Crises pose a serious threat to a company's brand, facilities and economic health. Preparation is the key to a successful response. This chapter explores meeting planners' perceptions of the need for crisis planning. The data were collected from meeting planners utilizing a web survey design. The results reveal very little difference in the perceptions of the necessity for crisis preparedness among the various types of meeting planners. The results did identify different levels of training among various types of meeting planners. Training/professional development activities were also found to be a key predictor in the characteristics of meeting planners who have a written crisis plan.

4.1. Introduction

Increasing numbers of natural disasters, terrorist threats, potential epidemics (avian flu, SARS), and acts of war illustrate the need to make crisis preparedness a permanent part of every business. Crisis preparedness in the MICE industry has not kept pace with this pattern of growth and subsequent need for added and new forms of planning. Equally disturbing, industry leaders have not been proactive in helping their employees learn from the implications of these often tragic circumstances. It is quite plausible that the "perceptions" of meeting planners play a vital role in this documented lack of preparedness plans (see findings of previous chapter). Because meeting attendees do have the legal right to expect a safe and secure environment (Monroe, 2008), planning for crisis preparedness becomes a business risk-management tool of the first magnitude. Safe means free from harm and secure means free from danger. In order to accomplish both goals, it is important to describe and challenge the traditional mindset that crisis preparedness is not the responsibility of the planner. In other words, the strategic perception that crisis preparedness planning is the sole responsibility of the meeting facility is not in the interest of the industry or its consumers. Whereas the last chapter focused on ascertaining the actual availability and use of crisis plans, the purpose of this chapter is to assess and explore the belief systems and perceptions of how meeting planners think about the need for crisis planning. From available evidence, it can be argued there is variability among planners in how they perceive the importance of crisis preparedness. One of the objectives of this study is to investigate this preliminary finding.

4.2. Literature Review

People and organizations are impacted everyday by crises large and small. Crises are "no longer an aberrant, rare, random, or peripheral feature in today's society. They are built into the very fabric and fiber of modern societies" (Mitroff, 2001, pg. 5). It is critical, therefore, that meeting planners gain an understanding of possible crises and what can be done to mitigate their impact. Mitroff (2001, pg. 5) notes that "while not all crises can be foreseen, let alone prevented, all of them can be managed far more effectively if we understand and practice the best of what is humanly possible." The challenge lies in the fundamental nature of preparation. Most organizations still do not understand the new management and thinking skills that are required to effectively manage and recover from a crisis. If this observation is valid, what contributes to the tendency for a planner to ignore or minimize steps for "consequence management" or fail to include continuity contingencies into a meeting impacted by a potentially tragic set of circumstances?

4.2.1. Defining and Shaping the Crisis Planning Process: The Importance of Strategic Perceptions

Although this is not a study about the theory of perceptions, it is important to lay the conceptual groundwork for understanding perceptions in the context of the crisis planning process. It is also useful to understand that there is a difference between "strategic" perceptions that set direction and "operational" perceptions that are basic filters for routine and traditional planning purposes. Realizing a profit, producing participant satisfaction, or meeting a timeline would be examples of operational perceptions widely used in planning for a meeting. These would be standard perceptual

considerations common to all planning processes in the meeting world. Strategic perceptions, on the other hand, would be filters for accommodating new issues (e.g. the use of sophisticated technology, compliance considerations, legal and financial risks and security and safety of participants) that require adaptation and an appreciation of disruptive change in the meeting planning environment. It is this latter type of perception, defined as strategic in nature that is the focus of this chapter.

In the field of psychology and the cognitive sciences, perception is the "awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation" (Merriam-Webster, 2008b). Simply put, perception is "the way in which individuals analyze and interpret incoming information and make sense of it" (Pearson Education, 2004). As psychologists have known for a long time, you cannot explain the way a person thinks by only understanding the stimuli in that person's environment. This information can get filtered by perceptions, both operational and strategic in nature.

Throughout literature perception is commonly described as having three conceptual elements: cognitive (attribute-based), affective (feelings), and overall impressions. Baloglu & Love (2005) refer to the cognitive aspect as "beliefs and knowledge of an object whereas affective evaluations are feelings about the object." Places or objects, furthermore, may give a person an overall impression that is different from the cognitive or affective perceptions (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This is known as the "overall or global impressions" (Baloglu & Love, 2005).

In a word, the information in the person's environment gets "enriched" by the perception a person holds about the world, an object or some other phenomenon. The same is true of meeting planners. If meeting planners are characterized by un- or under-

developed strategic perceptions about the seriousness of crisis planning, the information in their environments does not get translated into plans or activities leading to secure and safe meeting venues.

Whether meeting planners hold strategic perceptions that deem safety of meeting attendees and crisis plans as important or not is unclear in the research literature. Certainly, the evidence provided in the last chapter lays the groundwork for answering the question in this way—maybe (Keilty, 2007). Another approach holds that the strategic perceptions held by meeting planners are present but less structured (Baloglu & Love, 2005). Their cognitive and global impressions of the importance of preparing for a crisis during a meeting may remain weak or not serve as a tool for action at all at this point. It could be, however, that when the affective dimension (general feelings about something) of their perceptual filters is explored, meeting planners realize that potential crises are becoming a more critical planning consideration. Although the feeling of importance is there, meeting planners still are not taking action even though crisis planning can impact profitability or customer service. In fact, there is empirical evidence to demonstrate that meeting planners are characterized by more structured perceptions. At base, further research is needed on the affective/qualitative dimensions of meeting planners relative to unstructured perceptions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). If one differentiates on the basis of "type of meeting planner" they may find even different findings yet. For example, Crouch and Ritchie (1998) are critical of the empirical rigor of research completed on perceptions of corporate planners. Alternatively, they do argue that because corporate planners hold different perceptions of site planning, it is likely this type of planner approaches planning differently than other types. Extrapolating from this

research finding hints at the need to look at different types of planners when trying to evaluate strategic perceptions about crisis preparedness planning.

In sum, if one can better identify meeting planners' strategic perceptions about the need for incorporating crisis plans into meeting consideration, then one can more precisely understand why they act or do not act. It can also help understand what is necessary to enrich and enhance their beliefs about the need to think about crisis planning in an operational sense. Knowing the belief systems of different types of planners will assist the industry and academia develop more focused training and educational experiences to change or enrich perceptions. For example, it may be prudent to create awareness activities before more specific professional practices or guidelines will be taken seriously or have any chance of success. The findings of this chapter will help provide direction for what strategic planners call "planning to plan." In order for crisis mitigation to be successful, it may be necessary to step back and provide education opportunities before meeting planners can take on the larger task of developing crisis preparedness plans.

4.2.2. Planners and Their Perceptions

The preceding section made a very important distinction between the operational and strategic perceptions of meeting planners. This distinction is made as a way of emphasizing more than ever the importance of strategic perceptions. If one is going to fully understand how meeting planners think about their role and responsibilities, they have to discover in what direction they are taking the industry. From current literature, it is known that meeting planners have generally perceived their roles and responsibilities

as “balancing the needs and the wants with delivery, timelines, compliance issues and what is subjectively viewed as a quality meeting” (Keilty, 2007). In other words, the emphasis has been on the operational as opposed to the strategic. The following lists are meeting planners’ common perceptions of their job responsibilities as identified throughout various literatures.

Most Common Operational Perceptions

1. Organizational
2. Timeline
3. Vendor Management
4. Supplier Management
5. Client Expectations
6. Logistics and Travel
7. Legal and Compliance (Sarbanes-Oxley)
8. Customer Service
9. Procurement
10. Site selection

Emerging and Evolving Strategic Perceptions

1. On-site Security/Safety and Information Assurance
2. Crisis Preparedness (Prevention, Awareness, Response and Recovery)
3. Technology Integration and Reliability
4. Healthcare Preparedness and Management
5. International and Country-Specific Considerations
6. Developing Green Meetings (Environmental Sustainability)

In thinking about enhancing the perceptions of meeting planners in order to develop a more strategic perspective, it is important to remember the Albert Einstein's famous dictum, "No problem can be solved from the same stream of consciousness that created it." Simply put, meeting planners will have to get beyond their traditional and operational ways of thinking to take the challenge of planning for crisis preparedness head-on. Strategic and innovative approaches must be added to the industry's current approaches to planning and execution of MICE activities and initiatives. The research in this chapter will help define the current status of those who work in the industry.

4.2.3. Types of Meeting Planners

When studying perceptions of meeting planners, it is important to understand there are several types of planners with perceptions that may different. Each planner has different experiences and works in a variety of environments (with different sources of information) which may contribute to shaping their perceptions on the topic of crisis preparedness and, more specifically, crisis planning. Seven of the more common meeting planner types are corporate, association, independent, government, religious, medical, and university planners.

Corporate meeting planners are employed by a for-profit business or corporation (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Beaulieu & Love, 2004). This type of planner's responsibilities may not be limited to planning meetings for the company. Often times a secretary, manager, or assistant is put in charge of planning one meeting or training session and, therefore, does not have the official title of 'meeting planner.' In larger corporations, however, someone may hold the official title of 'meeting planner' and have

the sole responsibility of planning, organizing, and implementing a variety of meetings. These types of meetings may include management meetings, training meetings, sales meetings, product introduction/dealer meeting, professional/technical meetings, stockholder/public meetings, incentive trips, and seminars (Montgomery & Strick, 1995; Astroff & Abbey, 2002). Large companies such as 3M, Dow Chemical, and State Farm Insurance all employ full-time corporate meeting planners (Astroff & Abbey, 2002).

Association meeting planners may work in a membership or non-profit organization (Beaulieu & Love, 2004). The primary goal of this planner is to plan all association meetings. The majority of association planners are employed on a full-time basis and average ten to fourteen meetings per year (Kline & Smith, 2006). Responsibilities include managing meetings dealing with "member services, standards, conventions, trade shows, and publishing" (Montgomery & Strick, 1995, pg. 50). Sales and training are becoming an important aspect of association meeting planners' responsibilities, especially with the increasing usage of webcasts and other technologies (MPI & American Express, 2008). The Credit Union Executive Society and the American Association of Orthodontists are examples of associations that employ meeting planners.

An independent meeting planner is an entrepreneur who specializes in planning meetings and conventions. This planner "contracts services on an individual basis and can do a wide variety of meetings" (Beaulieu & Love, 2004, pg. 99). Associations and corporations who do not employ full-time meeting planners may choose to use the services of an independent planner. With tight budgets often the case, this is an economical way to have a professionally planned meeting or convention (Montgomery & Strick, 1995). Sometimes an independent planner is hired to work in conjunction with a

full-time association or corporate planner to offer expertise in certain areas. This happens when the independent planner plays a more supporting role rather than assumes the main responsibility of the meeting planning function. For example, an independent planner may only be involved with the site selection process based upon specific knowledge the planner may have about facilities and locations. An independent meeting planner must have strong confidence and discipline along with all the other planner competencies to operate successfully in today's market (PCMA, 2006b).

Government meeting planners are those individuals who have the primary responsibility of planning government meetings. The level of organization may include local, state, and federal meetings. Topics of meetings generally include education and training as well as meetings between government entities and industry to discuss more obscure subjects (PCMA, 2006b). As a potentially lucrative market, government meetings can be an excellent source of convention business. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the International Food Organization of the United Nations are some examples of governmental entities that employ such planners. The Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) is a "nonprofit professional organization of persons involved in planning government meetings, either on a full or part-time basis, and those individuals who supply services to government planners" (SGMP, 2008). Their objectives are "to improve the quality and promote the cost effectiveness of government meetings by improving the knowledge and expertise of individuals in the planning and management of government meetings through education, training, and industry relationships" (SGMP, 2008).

Religious meeting planners represent religious associations and entities such as churches or schools. They may also link religious organizations with other types of associations, e.g. education or social. Such meeting planners generally choose locations that are family oriented because large religious meetings are often family affairs. Religious meeting attendees often are on 'pay on your own' trips so they are price sensitive and usually opt for double occupancy hotel rooms (PCMA, 2006b). Meeting planners for these types of meetings must be conscious of the uniqueness of this type of group. Religious meetings can be profitable for both the planner and the hotel being utilized because such meetings usually do not displace corporate or association business. This occurs because of the price sensitivity and religious meetings tend to take place on holidays and weekends (PCMA, 2006b). Approximately 800 meeting planners are members of the Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA) which represents over 1,000 diverse religious organizations (RCMA, 2007).

Medical meeting planners are focused solely on planning meetings in the medical field, including pharmaceutical companies. This is a large group of planners, but the size reflects the size of the medical field. Medical tourism has also increased in importance. This type of planner brings together doctors, patients, and other types of healthcare providers in attractive locations to handle regimens of care, the sharing of information and professional development activities. It is a new brand of tourism that continues to grow in importance as the population ages and new forms of healthcare emerge. With an estimated 35,000 medical meetings held annually, the emergence of this lucrative market for all types of tourism businesses is easily explained (PCMA, 2006b).

University meeting planners are often employed in specialized offices known commonly as “Conferences” and “Meeting Planning Services.” These individuals plan educational conferences, camps and other similar non-credit programs and events at the school or university they serve. Many educational meetings are rather short, so meeting planners tend to look for accessibility and value for the attendees (PCMA, 2006b). Although there are different types of meeting planners who plan a variety of meetings, they all share one common theme. The theme of safety and security runs through all meetings regardless of type, size or structure. Every meeting planner wants to protect all aspects of the meetings he or she plans, including the attendees first and foremost. Investigating a meeting planner’s perception towards the crisis planning efforts is very important. Knowing what a planner has or has not done to prepare for a crisis is critical in developing the necessary educational tools to achieve a more safe and secure environment for meeting attendees.

4.3. Methodology

4.3.1. Population, Sample, and Research Instrument

Primary data for this study was collected through the use of a web survey instrument in which two major meeting planning populations were surveyed. The first population for this study was 2,099 members of a well-known meeting planning industry association who were defined as meeting planners. Its members include individuals whose organizations develop and plan all types of events including meetings, conventions, exhibits, and seminars. It also includes individuals engaged in providing products and services related to the MICE industry. The second population includes

subscribers of a major international meeting planning magazine that were classified as meeting planners. The magazine is among the top industry publications for meeting planners. The total number for this population could not be determined because the magazine does not categorize types of subscribers. The survey was sent to all subscribers who were asked to define themselves as a meeting planner. A sample of 734 surveys were returned and usable for analysis.

The data were collected using a modified Dillman (2000) method in order to increase the number of responses. This means the population groups were sent reminders along with the survey three times. Each reminder yielded more completed surveys. Validity was ensured through a pre-testing process. Face validity and reliability was improved through an extensive literature review and a pre-test involving input from industry experts. The respondents provided their feedback regarding their perceptions about crisis preparedness based on their training and experience.

Systematic empirical analysis was accomplished using a variety of statistical methods to examine the survey data. SPSS (formerly Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows, Version 15.0, was used to perform all statistical analyses. A series of descriptive statistics were conducted on all items. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), cross-tabulation, t-tests, chi-square, and logistic regression were employed to further explore the research questions and the derived hypotheses.

4.3.2. Research Questions

This chapter explores the following research questions:

1. Do meeting planners perceive crisis preparedness as an important component of planning for meetings?

2. Do meeting planners differ by type in their perceptions of crisis preparedness?

3. What are the demographics of meeting planners who have a written crisis plan?

4.3.3. Research Hypotheses

Question 1: Do meeting planners perceive crisis preparedness as an important component of planning for meetings?

H_{1A}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if information is shared with other stakeholders (facilities, attendees, community responders, CVB, etc).

H_{1B}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if there is a larger number of meetings managed per year.

H_{1C}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if there is a larger number of employees in the meeting planning company.

H_{1D}: The perceived level of importance for communication plans will be high if there is a larger number of employees in the meeting planning company.

H_{1E}: A higher level of perceived importance will positively correlate with those planners who have a crisis plan.

H_{1F}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high with planners who have a crisis management team.

H_{1G}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high with those planners who have experienced a crisis at a meeting.

H_{1H}: If a planner has a crisis plan, then there will be a high level of perceived importance in gathering information from a facility about potential crises.

Question 2: Do meeting planners differ by type in their perceptions of the importance of crisis preparedness?

H_{2A}: The perceptions of importance to having a written crisis plan will differ among types of planners.

H_{2B}: The frequency of having a written communication plan will differ among types of planners.

H_{2C}: The frequency of having a designated media spokesperson will differ among types of planners.

H_{2D}: Government planners will have more plans than other planners.

H_{2E}: Independent/Third Party planners will have least number of plans than other planners.

H_{2F}: Government planners will have received more training than other planners in areas of crisis preparedness.

H_{2G}: Independent/Third Party planners will have received the least amount of training in areas of crisis preparedness.

H_{2H}: Government planners will view terrorist and biohazard attacks as more highly possible to occur than other types of planners.

H_{2I}: Government planners will feel more prepared overall than other types of planners.

H_{2J}: Government planners will test plans more than other types of planners.

H_{2K}: Association planners will view accidents/fatalities as the most likely crisis to occur over other types of planners.

H_{2L}: Association planners will coordinate and share a crisis plan with the facility staff more so than other types of planners.

H_{2M}: Association planners will have experienced more crises than other types of planners.

Question 3: What are the demographics of meeting planners who have a written crisis plan?

H_{3A}: Crisis experience will be a predictor of planners having a crisis plan.

H_{3B}: More experience (defined in years) as a meeting planner will be a predictor of having a crisis plan.

H_{3C}: Frequency of training as a meeting planner will be a predictor of having a crisis plan.

H_{3D}: The larger meeting planning associations will be a predictor of having a crisis plan.

4.4. Results

4.4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Frequencies and percentages for the characteristics of the meeting planners surveyed are presented in Table 4.1. In summary, the majority of the meeting planners were association meeting planners (55.1%) which was not closely followed by independent/third party meeting planners (18.6%). The length of time the planners have been in their current position closely varied: four to six years (22.2%); one to three years (21.0%); or over 15 years (18.8%). Overall, the meeting planners have served the profession for six to ten years (24%). Almost half of the planners hold a bachelor's degree (45.9%) and another 18.6% hold a graduate degree. Overwhelmingly, meeting planners did not hold any industry certifications (61.7%). Of those that did hold a certification, the Certified Meeting Professional was by far the most popular (31.4%). The planners held various industry association memberships with the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI) being the most common (54.5% and 23.3% respectively). Table 4.2 provides more information about association meeting planners and those who work for an association management company. Table 4.3 presents a summary of information about the various meetings managed by the meeting planners.

Table 4.1: Frequencies of Meeting Planner Characteristics

Characteristic		N	*n*	%
Type of Planner	Association meeting planner	608	335	**55.1**
	Independent/Third Party		113	18.6
	Corporate		80	13.2
	Other		61	10.0
	Association management company		43	7.1
	Government		26	4.3
Length in Current Position	Less than 1 year	600	56	9.3
	1-3 years		126	21.0
	4-6 years		133	**22.2**
	7-9 years		87	14.5
	10-12 years		59	9.8
	13-15 years		26	4.3
	Over 15 years		113	18.8
Overall Time as Meeting Planner	Less than 1 year	600	15	2.5
	1-5 years		90	15.0
	6-10 years		144	**24.0**
	11-15 years		114	19.0
	16-20 years		102	17.0
	Over 20 years		135	22.5
Highest Level of Education Completed	Some high school	590	0	0
	High School diploma or equivalent		13	2.2
	Some college or vocational school		123	20.8
	Bachelor's degree		271	**45.9**
	Some graduate school		73	12.4
	Graduate degree		110	18.6
Industry Certification	I have no certifications	590	364	**61.7**
	Certified Meeting Professional - CMP		185	31.4
	Other		25	4.2
	Certified Assoc. Executive - CAE		20	3.4
	Certified Exhibition Manager - CEM		9	1.5
	Certification in Meeting Mgmt. (CMM)		4	0.7
	Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP)		1	0.2
	Certified Global Meeting Professional (CGMP)		1	0.2
	Certified Internet Meeting Professional (CIMP)		0	0
	Certified Planner of Professional Meetings -CPPM		0	0
Member of Associations	Professional Convention Mgmt. Assoc. (PCMA)	590	321	**54.5**
	Meeting Professionals International (MPI)		137	23.3
	American Society of Assoc. Executives (ASAE)		124	21.1
	Other		79	13.4
	International Assoc. of Exhibition Mgmt. (IAEM)		38	6.5
	International Special Events Society (ISES)		10	1.7
	Insurance Conference Planners Assoc. (ICPA)		4	0.7
	Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO)		1	0.2
	International Festivals & Events Assoc. (IFEA)		1	0.2

*Boldface denotes the largest number

Table 4.2: Frequencies of Association Meeting Planners

Characteristic		N	*n*	%
Association Membership Size	Less than 1,000 members	349	84	**24.3**
	1,000 – 4,999		77	22.3
	5,000 – 9,999		38	11.0
	10,000 – 24,999		57	16.5
	25,000 – 49,999		37	10.7
	50,000 or more members		53	15.3
Association Type	Professional	349	196	**56.2**
	Trade		64	18.3
	Social		3	0.9
	Military		1	0.3
	Educational		78	22.3
	Religious		7	2.0
	Fraternal		0	0
Geographic Representation of Association	International	349	150	43.0
	National		165	**47.3**
	Regional		7	2.0
	State		21	6.0
	Provincial		2	0.6
	Local		4	1.1
% of membership based outside of the United States	Less than 5%	349	192	**55.0**
	5% - 9%		47	13.5
	10% - 14%		37	10.6
	15% - 25%		25	7.2
	More than 25%		40	11.5
	Association is not U.S.-based		8	2.3
% of membership that attended 2005 annual convention or trade show	Less than 20%	349	112	**32.1**
	20% - 39%		105	30.1
	40% - 59%		69	19.8
	60% - 79%		37	10.6
	80% - 100%		19	5.4
	Did not hold 2005 annual meeting		7	2.9

*Boldface denotes the largest number

Table 4.3: Information About Meetings Managed

Characteristic		N	*n*	%
Number of Full Time Staff in Organization	One person	590	100	16.9
	2 – 5		171	**29.0**
	6 – 10		73	12.4
	11 – 15		37	6.3
	16 – 20		20	3.4
	21 – 25		25	4.2
	26 or more		164	27.8
Number of meetings, in total, held from January – December 2005	Less than 4	600	171	**28.5**
	5 – 9		131	21.8
	10 – 14		78	13.0
	15 – 19		33	5.5
	20 or more meetings		187	31.2
Number of CITY-WIDE meetings held from January – December 2005	None	600	319	**53.2**
	1		192	32.0
	2		41	6.8
	3		13	2.2
	More than 3		35	5.8
NET square footage for largest meeting, convention, or tradeshow held from January – December 2005 (top 6 responses)	Less than 50,000 sq. ft.	590	219	**37.1**
	50,000 – 150,000 sq. ft		152	25.8
	150,001 – 250,000 sq. ft.		80	13.6
	250,001 – 350,00 sq. ft.		48	8.1
	350,001 – 450,000 sq ft.		23	3.9
	450,001 – 550,000 sq. ft.		22	3.7
Approximate total number of Attendees for largest meeting, convention, or tradeshow held from January – December 2005 (top 6 responses)	Less than 1,000	590	260	**44.1**
	1,000 – 5,000		178	30.2
	5,001 – 10,000		59	10.0
	10,001 – 15,000		24	4.1
	15,001 – 20,000		27	4.6
	20,001 – 25,000		8	1.4

*Boldface denotes the largest number

The meeting planners were asked (as unstructured perceptions) what they believed was the most important thing to consider in creating successful crisis plans relative the meeting planning industry. This question was optional to answer which resulted in a smaller population size (N=220). Table 4.4 presents the top 12 categories when responses were summarized.

Table 4.4: Most Important Thing to Consider in Creating Crisis Plans (N=220)

	Item	*n*	%
1	COMMUNICATION – Have communication plan	59	26.8
2	Ensuring SAFETY of attendees & staff & protection of association assets	28	12.7
3	COORDINATION with staff & external partners (facility, CVBs, local govt.)	25	11.4
4	SIMPLE & FLEXIBLE – develop a plan that is easy to understand yet thorough	23	10.5
5	Know the facility's plan & INTEGRATE its use with the planner's plan	21	9.5
6	SCENARIO PLANNING – cover all your bases & consider all scenarios/options	15	6.8
7	INFORMATION GATHERING – know the facility, attendees, location	12	5.5
8	UPDATE & PRACTICE – conduct mock drills & constantly review & rewrite plan	6	2.7
9	SUPPORT from upper management & staff	5	2.3
10	GETTING STARTED and just doing it (creating a plan)	3	1.4
11	DO NOT KNOW – Need more information about crisis preparedness	3	1.4
12	Create a UNIVERSAL, STANDARDIZED PLAN	2	0.9

At the end of the survey, the meeting planners were asked if they would like to provide any additional comments regarding crisis plans specifically for the meeting planning industry. This question was also optional to answer which resulted in a smaller population size (N=271). Table 4.5 summarize the responses into 16 categories.

Table 4.5: Open Comments About Crisis Plans for the MICE Industry (N=271)

	Item	*n*	%
1	**COLLABORATION** of all parties is important (CVB, facility, hotel, local govts, meeting planner, etc)	10	14.1
2	**PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE** – Need seminars showing us how to get started preparing a plan with samples, speakers, etc.	8	11.3
3	We **NEED CRISIS PLANS**! Everyone should have one!	8	11.3
4	This **SURVEY GAVE ME A LOT TO THINK ABOUT.**	7	9.9
5	Boilerplate **MODEL** for the major types of meetings	4	5.6
6	Want **EXAMPLES & ARTICLES** that can help us start a plan	4	5.6
7	Checklists are okay as seen in publications, but **SAMPLES & CASE STUDIES** are more beneficial	4	5.6
8	My organization **LACKS TRAINING**	2	2.8
9	Important to communicate to meeting planners that there is **NO 'ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL'** plan	2	2.8
10	Stress **UPDATING PLANS** is important	2	2.8
11	**COMMUNICATION** is the most important factor	2	2.8
12	Create **THOROUGH** plans that can be implemented at any stage.	2	2.8
13	**SIMPLE** plans are needed (don't get too wordy)	2	2.8
14	Want more information for crisis plans & **OUTDOOR EVENTS**	1	1.4
15	Meeting planners need to be **ORGANIZED** & just do it! (create a plan)	1	1.4
16	**TESTING THE PLANS** is not done enough in order to help identify gaps in the crisis plan.	1	1.4

The descriptive analysis provided a foundation for the type of meeting planner surveyed and the meetings they plan. It also provided insight into unstructured perceptions about what meeting planners believed to be the most important things to consider in the crisis planning efforts.

4.4.2. Hypothesis Testing

Research Question #1: Do meeting planners perceive crisis preparedness as an important component of planning for meetings?

H_{1A}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if information is shared with other stakeholders (facilities, attendees, community responders, CVB)

Hypothesis H_{1A} is supported. Pearson correlation was used to assess the degree the quantitative variables were linearly related within the sample (Green & Salkind, 2005). Analysis shows that a significant positive correlation exists at the .01 level. The results in Table 4.6 illustrate that the more information that the meeting planners share with the facility's staff and considering the facility's own crisis plan for a meeting will lead to a higher perceived level of importance for crisis plans.

Table 4.6: Correlation - Sharing Information with Facility Staff and Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans

		Share information with facility staff	Importance of having a crisis plan
Share information with facility staff	Pearson Correlation	1	.220(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	229	229
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	.220(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	229	718

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.7 further supports H_{1A} when analyzing responses the perceived level of importance with whether or not meeting planners actually meet with the facility managers prior to meetings that will take place in order to establish goals of action in the event of a crisis. The results were also significant at the .01 level. The more meeting planners meet with the facility regarding crises, then the higher perception of importance for crisis plans.

Table 4.7: Correlation – Meeting with Facility about Crises and Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Planners meet with facility about crises
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.259(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	685
Planners meet with facility about crises	Pearson Correlation	.259(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	685	685

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To reinforce the results presented in Tables 4.6 and 4.7, a combined variable was created from the two variables "Planners meet with facility about crises" and "Share information with facility staff" because they both involve the sharing of information. The results were also significant to provide further support that H_{1A} is supported.

H_{1B}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if there is a larger number of meetings managed per year.

Hypothesis H_{1B} is supported. Correlation analysis was conducted on the meeting planners' perceived importance level of crisis plans with (1) number of city-wide meetings held per year (Table 4.8) and (2) total number of meetings held in a year regardless of size (Table 4.9). The correlations were both significant at the .01 level; however, the total number of meetings regardless of size illustrated a stronger relationship (.225 at .01 level versus .125). The more meetings held per year, therefore, increased the meeting planners' perceived level of importance for having crisis plans.

Table 4.8: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans and Number of City-wide Meetings Held Per Year

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Number of citywide meetings held per year
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.125(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	718	600
Number of citywide meetings held per year	Pearson Correlation	.125(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	600	600

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.9: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans and Total Number of Meetings Held Per Year

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Number of citywide meetings held per year
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.225(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	600
Number of total meetings held per year	Pearson Correlation	.225(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	600	600

H_{1C}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high if there is a larger number of employees in the meeting planning company.

Hypothesis H_{1C} is supported. Correlation analysis identifies a significant relationship at the .01 level in regards to the number of employees in a meeting planning company and the perceived level of importance for crisis plans by the meeting planners. Table 4.10 illustrates this significant relationship.

Table 4.10: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans and Number of Full-time Employees in the Meeting Planning Organization

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Number of full-time employees
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.248(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	590
Number of full-time employees	Pearson Correlation	.248(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	590	590

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

H_{1D}: The perceived level of importance for communication plans will be high if there is a larger number of employees in the meeting planning company.

Hypothesis H_{1D} is supported. A significant relationship was identified at the .01 level (Table 4.11) in regards to the perceived level of importance for having a written communication plan with the number of full-time employees in the planning company.

Table 4.11: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Written Communication Plans and Number of Full-time Employees in the Meeting Planning Organization

		Importance of written communication plans for employees	Number of full-time employees
Importance of written communication plans for employees	Pearson Correlation	1	.292(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	660	590
Number of full-time employees	Pearson Correlation	.292(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	590	590

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Further analysis conducted on other groups about the perceived level of importance for having a written communication plan were also found to be significant at the .01 level. The relationship proved strongest with the number of full-time employees and the higher perceived level of importance by meeting planners for having a written communication plan. Tables 4.12 and 4.13 illustrate the significant relationships identified among clients

and attendees as well as city officials and first responders. In summary, the more people meeting planners work with, the higher perception of importance they hold for having a written communication plan.

Table 4.12: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Written Communication Plans in Regards to Clients and Attendees

		Number of full-time employees	Written comm plan for clients & attendees
Number of full-time employees	Pearson Correlation	1	.180(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	590	590
Written comm plan for clients & attendees	Pearson Correlation	.180(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	590	660

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.13: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Written Communication Plans in Regards to City Officials

		Number of full-time employees	Written comm plan for city officials
Number of full-time employees	Pearson Correlation	1	.137(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	590	590
Written comm plan for city officials	Pearson Correlation	.137(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	590	660

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

H_{1E}: A higher level of perceived importance will positively correlate with those planners who have a crisis plan.

Hypothesis H_{1E} is supported. Table 4.14 illustrates the significant relationship at the .01 level for H_{1E}. The more a meeting planner thinks that having a crisis plan is

important, then there is a higher probability that the meeting planner will actually have a plan in place.

Table 4.14: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plan and Actually Having a Crisis Plan in Place

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Have a crisis plan
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.370(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	718
Have crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	.370(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	718	718

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Further analysis found that a strong relationship also holds true for the perceived level of having a written communication plan with actually having a communication plan in place as presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Written Communication Plans and Actually Having a Plan in Place

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Have communication plan in place
Importance of having a communication plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.398(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	660	645
Have communication plan in place	Pearson Correlation	.398(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	645	645

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

H_{1F}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high with planners who have a crisis management team.

Hypothesis H_{1F} is supported. There is a significant relationship, at the .01 level, between the perceived level of importance for meeting planners to have a crisis plan and whether or not they have a crisis management team. The composition of such a team is not identified in these results, but the results (Table 4.16) do illustrate the meeting planners do have some type of team in place the higher the perception of importance for having crisis plans.

Table 4.16: Correlation –Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans and Having a Crisis Management Team

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Have a crisis team
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.202(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	718
Have a crisis team	Pearson Correlation	.202(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	718	734

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

H_{1G}: The perceived level of importance for crisis plans will be high with those planners who have experienced a crisis at a meeting.

Hypothesis H_{1G} is supported. The results for H_{1G} are presented in Table 4.17 and show a significant relationship at the .05 level. Only 9% of the variation, however, is explained by this relationship. Other variables explain the rest that were not controlled for in this study. Regardless, a significant result shows there is a relationship present. Table 4.18 provides the frequency of crises experienced by the meeting planners surveyed.

Table 4.17: Correlation – Perceived Level of Importance for Crisis Plans and Having Experienced a Crisis

		Importance of having a crisis plan	Experienced a crisis
Importance of having a crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.087(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	718	718
Experienced a crisis	Pearson Correlation	.087(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	
	N	718	723

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.18: Frequency of Crises Experienced by Meeting Planners

Type of Crisis	N	Yes	No	% that experienced
HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME CRISIS	723	252	471	34.9%
Terrorist Event	252	48	204	19.0%
Natural Disaster	252	104	148	41.3%
Biological Hazard	252	13	239	5.2%
Bomb Threat	252	35	217	13.9%
Fire	252	42	210	16.7%
Shooting	252	5	247	2.0%
Protest	252	61	191	24.2%
Employee Strike	252	51	201	20.2%
Structural Damage	252	11	241	4.4%
Accidents/Fatalities	252	94	158	37.3%
Workplace Violence	252	2	250	0.8%
Lockdown	252	2	250	0.8%
Foodborne Illness	252	18	234	7.1%
Other	252	50	202	19.8%
(medical emergency –noted)		17		39.5% (out of the 50)

H_{1H}: If a planner has a crisis plan, then there will be a high level of perceived importance in gathering information from a facility about potential crises.

Hypothesis H_{1H} is supported. Table 4.19 shows a significant relationship supported at the .01 level. If a meeting planner has a crisis plan, there is a greater likelihood that they will deem it important to gather information from a facility about potential crises.

Table 4.19: Have a Crisis Plan and Importance of Gathering Information from a Facility

		Have crisis plan	Importance of facility information gathering
Have crisis plan	Pearson Correlation	1	.306(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	718	685
Importance of facility information gathering	Pearson Correlation	.306(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	685	685

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Research Question #2: Do meeting planners differ by type in their perceptions of the importance of crisis preparedness?

H_{2A}: The perceptions of importance to having a written crisis plan will differ among types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2A} is supported. The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Table 4.20 show that there is a difference among the types of planners in relation to their perceptions of importance to having a written crisis plan. Post hoc tests were completed to identify where the differences in the planners lied. Tukey's multiple comparison test (Table 4.21) identified a marginal difference (.052) between association meeting planners and those planners that were employed by an association management company. There were no significant relationships between the other planners so the difference resulting between the two types of association planners is most likely to have provided the ANOVA results of a difference between meeting planners in regards to the importance of having a crisis plan.

Table 4.20: ANOVA – Difference Between Types of Meeting Planners Regarding Perceptions of the Importance of Crisis Plans

Importance of having a crisis plan

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.511	5	2.502	2.994	.011
Within Groups	536.598	642	.836		
Total	549.110	647			

Table 4.21: Tukey's Multiple Comparison Post Hoc
Dependent Variable: Importance of Having a Plan

(I) TYPE_ PLANNER	(J) TYPE_ PLANNER	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound ---- Upper Bound	
(1) Association Meeting Planner	2	.430	.151	.052	.00	.86
	3	.257	.115	.222	-.07	.59
	4	-.084	.190	.998	-.63	.46
	5	.111	.100	.878	-.18	.40
	6	.279	.128	.250	-.09	.65
(2) Association Mgmt. Company Planner	1	-.430	.151	.052	-.86	.00
	3	-.173	.176	.925	-.68	.33
	4	-.514	.232	.232	-1.18	.15
	5	-.319	.167	.398	-.80	.16
	6	-.151	.185	.965	-.68	.38
(3) Corporate Meeting Planner	1	-.257	.115	.222	-.59	.07
	2	.173	.176	.925	-.33	.68
	4	-.342	.210	.582	-.94	.26
	5	-.146	.135	.888	-.53	.24
	6	.022	.157	1.00	-.43	.47
(4) Government Meeting Planner	1	.084	.190	.998	-.46	.63
	2	.514	.232	.232	-.15	1.18
	3	.342	.210	.582	-.26	.94
	5	.195	.202	.929	-.38	.77
	6	.363	.218	.553	-.26	.99
(5) Third Party/ Independent Planner	1	-.111	.100	.878	-.40	.18
	2	.319	.167	.398	-.16	.80
	3	.146	.135	.888	-.24	.53
	4	-.195	.202	.929	-.77	.38
	6	.168	.146	.861	-.25	.59
(6) Other Type of Planner	1	-.279	.128	.250	-.65	.09
	2	.151	.185	.965	-.38	.68
	3	-.022	.157	1.000	-.47	.43
	4	-.363	.218	.553	-.99	.26
	5	-.168	.146	.861	-.59	.25

H_{2B}: The frequency of having a written communication plan will differ among types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2B} is not supported. The results of the ANOVA in Table 4.22 show that there is not a difference among the types of planners in relation to their frequency of having a written communication plan. A chi-square test conducted with crosstabs also identified insignificant results of .320. Looking closer at the crosstabulation in Table following Table 4.23 shows that (1) association, (2) association management company, (3) corporate, (5) independent, and (6) 'other' planners have a similar decreasing distribution. Government planners (4) have a more bell-shaped distribution which contributes to the lower .157 value in the ANOVA.

Table 4.22: ANOVA – Difference Between Types of Meeting Planners and Frequency of Having a Written Communication Plan

have_commplan					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	14.700	5	2.940	1.602	.157
Within Groups	1177.953	642	1.835		
Total	1192.653	647			

Table 4.23: Crosstabulation Between Types of Meeting Planners and Frequency of Having a Written Communication Plan

		have_commplan					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	1
TYPE_ PLANNER	Assoc.	128	62	61	38	44	333
	Assoc. Mgmt.	17	9	8	5	2	41
	Corporate	33	20	15	7	3	78
	Govt.	6	4	10	2	3	25
	Independent	32	27	26	16	10	111
	Other	21	10	15	7	7	60
Total		237	132	135	75	69	648

H_{2C}: The frequency of having a designated media spokesperson will differ among types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2C} is supported. The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Table 4.24 show that there is a difference among the types of planners in relation to their frequency of having a designated media spokesperson in place for the meetings they manage. Post hoc tests were completed to identify where the differences in the planners lied. Tukey's multiple comparison test (Table 4.25) identified a significant difference (.005) between association meeting planners and third party/independent planners. There were no significant differences between the other planners so the result between the association and independent planners help to explain the significant ANOVA results (.007) of a difference between meeting planners in regards to the importance of having designated media spokesperson.

Table 4.24: ANOVA – Difference Between Types of Meeting Planners and Having a Designated Media Spokesperson

media_person					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	45.511	5	9.102	3.197	.007
Within Groups	1827.599	642	2.847		
Total	1873.110	647			

Table 4.25: Tukey's Multiple Comparison Post Hoc Test
Dependent Variable: Importance of having a designated media spokesperson

(I) TYPE_ PLANNER	(J) TYPE_ PLANNER	Mean Diff. (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound --- Upper Bound	
(1) Association	2	.339	.279	.830	-.46	1.14
	3	.514	.212	.150	-.09	1.12
	4	.128	.350	.999	-.87	1.13
	5	.664(*)	.185	.005	.14	1.19
	6	.218	.237	.941	-.46	.89
(2) Association	1	-.339	.279	.830	-1.14	.46
	3	.175	.325	.995	-.75	1.11
	4	-.211	.428	.996	-1.43	1.01
	5	.325	.308	.899	-.56	1.21
	6	-.121	.342	.999	-1.10	.86
(3) Corporate	1	-.514	.212	.150	-1.12	.09
	2	-.175	.325	.995	-1.11	.75
	4	-.386	.388	.919	-1.49	.72
	5	.149	.249	.991	-.56	.86
	6	-.296	.290	.911	-1.12	.53
(4) Government	1	-.128	.350	.999	-1.13	.87
	2	.211	.428	.996	-1.01	1.43
	3	.386	.388	.919	-.72	1.49
	5	.535	.374	.706	-.53	1.60
	6	.090	.402	1.000	-1.06	1.24
(5) Third Party/ Independent	1	-.664(*)	.185	.005	-1.19	-.14
	2	-.325	.308	.899	-1.21	.56
	3	-.149	.249	.991	-.86	.56
	4	-.535	.374	.706	-1.60	.53
	6	-.445	.270	.567	-1.22	.33
(6) Other	1	-.218	.237	.941	-.89	.46
	2	.121	.342	.999	-.86	1.10
	3	.296	.290	.911	-.53	1.12
	4	-.090	.402	1.000	-1.24	1.06
	5	.445	.270	.567	-.33	1.22

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

H_{2D}: Government planners will have a different number of plans than other planners.

Hypothesis H_{2D} is not supported. The results of the t test (t = .912) indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between government planners and other types of planners relative to the number of crisis plans. The results may be partly explained by the small representation of government planners (25) as opposed to the

others (623). The Fisher's exact test is a statistical significance test used in the analysis of categorical data where sample sizes are small. The test is used to examine the significance of the relationship between two variables in, most commonly, a 2 x 2 table. It works in exactly the same way as the Chi-square test for independence; however, the Chi-square gives only an estimate of the true probability value so the Fisher's exact test can be more robust and better to use at times (SISA, n.d.). This test was conducted to support the results of the t test. Table 4.26 shows these results which support the t test results as no statistically significant relationship exists.

Table 4.26: Number of Plans Among Government and Other Types of Planners

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.012(b)	1	.912		
Continuity Correction(a)	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.012	1	.911		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.551
Linear-by-Linear Association	.012	1	.912		
N of Valid Cases	648				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.26.

H_{2E}: Independent/Third Party planners will have a different number of plans relative to other planners.

Hypothesis H_{2E} is not supported. The results of the t test (t = .766) indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between Independent/third party planners and other types of planners relative to the number of crisis plans. The Fisher's exact test was conducted to support the results of the t test. Table 4.27 shows these results which support the t test results as no statistically significant relationship exists.

Table 4.27: Number of Plans Among Independent/Third Party and Other Types of Planners

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.089(b)	1	.766		
Continuity Correction(a)	.035	1	.852		
Likelihood Ratio	.088	1	.767		
Fisher's Exact Test				.825	.423
Linear-by-Linear Association	.088	1	.766		
N of Valid Cases	648				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.66.

H_{2F}: Government planners will have received more training than other planners in areas of crisis preparedness.

Hypothesis H_{2F} is supported. The results of the ANOVA shown in Table 4.28 identify a significant difference (.05 level) among the types of planners relative to the amount of training received in the areas of fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, and human created crises. There was a marginally significant difference (.066) relative to medical training. The Tukey post hoc multiple comparison test showed that the government planners had the highest overall mean illustrating a higher amount of training received in all areas. Corporate and government planners received the highest amount of fire training with planners in association management companies receiving the least amount of training for fire crises.

Table 4.28: Training in Areas of Crisis Preparedness

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Area of Training: Fire	Between Groups	24.613	5	4.923	3.169	.008
	Within Groups	997.214	642	1.553		
	Total	1021.827	647			
Area of Training: Biohazard	Between Groups	3.659	5	.732	1.100	.359
	Within Groups	426.952	642	.665		
	Total	430.611	647			
Area of Training: Bomb Threat	Between Groups	17.691	5	3.538	3.988	.001
	Within Groups	569.544	642	.887		
	Total	587.235	647			
Area of Training: Natural Disasters	Between Groups	15.737	5	3.147	3.120	.009
	Within Groups	647.557	642	1.009		
	Total	663.295	647			
Area of Training: Human Created Attacks	Between Groups	9.635	5	1.927	2.633	.023
	Within Groups	469.865	642	.732		
	Total	479.500	647			
Area of Training: Medical	Between Groups	13.024	5	2.605	2.082	.066
	Within Groups	803.192	642	1.251		
	Total	816.216	647			

H_{2G}: Independent/Third Party planners will have received the least amount of training in areas of crisis preparedness.

Hypothesis H_{2G} is not supported. The results of the ANOVA shown above in Table 4.26 identify a significant difference (.05 level) among the types of planners relative to the amount of training received in the areas of fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, and human created crises. There was a marginally significant difference (.066) relative to medical training. The Tukey post hoc multiple comparison test could not conclude that any less training was received by Independent/Third Party planners. Table 4.29 presents the overall mean for each type of crisis and its amount of training. Overall,

the least amount of training is received in the area of biohazard crises. This table, however, does not differentiate between the types of planners.

Table 4.29: Means for Training in Areas of Crisis Preparedness

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Area of Training: Fire	685	1	6	2.44	1.272
Area of Training: Biohazard	685	1	6	1.45	.811
Area of Training: Bomb Threats	685	1	6	1.66	.945
Area of Training: Natural Disasters	685	1	6	1.80	1.004
Area of Training: Human Created Attacks	685	1	5	1.57	.855
Area of Training: Medical	685	1	6	2.04	1.124
Valid N (listwise)	685				

H_{2H}: Government planners will perceive terrorist and biohazard attacks as more highly possible to occur than other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2H} is not supported. The results of both the t test and chi square presented in Tables 4.30 and 4.31 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference among the types of planners in their perceptions of terrorist and biohazard attacks as more highly possibly to occur at a meeting.

Table 4.30: T Test for Planners Perceptions of Terrorist and Biohazard Attacks Occurring at a Meeting

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tail	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	Lower	Upper
Terrorist Attack	Equal var. assumed	1.21	.272	1.29	646	.195	.201	.155	-.103	.505
Biohazard	Equal var. assumed	.672	.413	.274	646	.784	.041	.149	-.251	.333

Table 4.31: Chi Square for Planners Perceptions of Terrorist and Biohazard Attacks Occurring at a Meeting

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.833(a)	4	.305
Likelihood Ratio	4.242	4	.374
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.679	1	.195
N of Valid Cases	648		

H_{21}: Government planners will feel more prepared overall than other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{21} is not supported. The results of the ANOVA in Table 4.32 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference among the various types of planners in regards to their overall feeling of their crisis preparedness levels. The results of the t test in Table 4.33 further support the result that there is no statistically significant difference.

Table 4.32: ANOVA for Planners Overall Perception of Their Crisis Preparedness Levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.369	5	.474	.521	.760
Within Groups	583.407	642	.909		
Total	585.776	647			

Table 4.33: T Test for Planners Overall Perception of Their Crisis Preparedness Levels

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tail	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff. Lower--Upper	
Over-all Prep Level	Equal variances assumed	1.496	.222	1.434	646	**.152**	.278	.194	-.103	.659
	Equal variances not assumed			1.542	26.30	.135	.278	.180	-.092	.649

H_{2J}: Government planners will test plans more than other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2J} is not supported. The results of the Fisher's exact test in Table 4.34 show there is no statistically significant relationship indicating that government planners test their plans more often than other types of planners.

Table 4.34: Fisher's Exact Test For Testing Crisis Plans

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.742(b)	1	.389		
Continuity Correction(a)	.122	1	.727		
Likelihood Ratio	.636	1	.425		
Fisher's Exact Test				.327	.327
Linear-by-Linear Association	.738	1	.390		
N of Valid Cases	214				

H_{2K}: Association planners will view accidents/fatalities as having a higher probability to occur over other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2K} is supported. The results of the t test in Table 4.35 indicate there is a marginal statistical difference between association planners and other types of

planners in terms of perceiving accidents/fatalities as having a higher probability to occur at a meeting they manage. A Mann-Whitney and ordinal regression analyses (see Table 4.36 and Table 4.37) were also conducted as another way to run two independent samples and strengthen the reliability of the results of the t test. The results concluded the same results of the t test of a statistically significant difference. Association planners do view accidents/fatalities with a higher probability of occurring as do other types of planners.

Table 4.35: T Test for Association Planners and Probability of Accidents/Fatalities

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tail	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff. Lower	Upper
Acci-dent	Equal variances assumed	3.945	.047	1.903	615	.057	.107	.056	-.003	.218
	Equal variances not assumed			1.905	614.82	.057	.107	.056	-.003	.218

Table 4.36: Mann-Whitney Results for H_{2K}

Mann-Whitney Test Statistics(a)

	accident_poss
Mann-Whitney U	43704.000
Wilcoxon W	89155.000
Z	-2.042
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.041

a Grouping Variable: type_assocplanner

Table 4.37: Ordinal Regression Results for H_{2K}

Ordinal Regression: Model Fitting Information				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	39.230			
Final	35.036	4.194	1	.041

Link function: Logit.

H_{2L}: Association planners will coordinate and share a crisis plan with the facility staff more so than other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2L} is not supported. The results of the t test in Table 4.38 indicate there is no statistically significant difference between association planners and other types of planners in terms of whether they share their crisis plans (if have one) with the facility staff of where a meeting is being held. A Mann-Whitney and ordinal regression analyses (see Table 4.39 and Table 4.40) were also conducted and concluded the same results of the t test of no statistically significant difference. When looking considering all six types of planners individually, an ANOVA (.409) also concluded that there was no difference among the types of planners.

Table 4.38: T Test for Association Planners and Sharing Plans with Facilities

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tail	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	Lower	Upper
share_ plan facility	Equal variances assumed	.531	.467	1.102	212	.272	.173	.157	-.136	.482
	Equal variances not assumed			1.101	204.0	.272	.173	.157	-.137	.482

Table 4.39: Mann-Whitney Results for H_{2L}

Mann-Whitney Test Statistics(a)	
	share_planfacility
Mann-Whitney U	5222.500
Wilcoxon W	9975.500
Z	-1.041
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.298

a Grouping Variable: type_assocplanner

Table 4.40: Ordinal Regression Results for H_{2L}

Ordinal Regression: Model Fitting Information				
Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	46.692			
Final	45.609	1.083	1	.298

Link function: Logit.

H_{2M}: Association planners will have experienced more crises than other types of planners.

Hypothesis H_{2M} is not supported. The results of the Fisher's exact test in Table 4.41 show there is no statistically significant relationship indicating that association planners have experienced more crises than other types of planners.

Table 4.41: Fisher's Exact Test For Number of Crises Experienced

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.019(b)	1	.890		
Continuity Correction(a)	.003	1	.955		
Likelihood Ratio	.019	1	.890		
Fisher's Exact Test				.935	.477
Linear-by-Linear Association	.019	1	.891		
N of Valid Cases	648				

Research Question #3: What are the demographics of meeting planners who have a written crisis plan?

H_{3A}: Having experienced a crisis previously will be a predictor of planners having a crisis plan. – Not Supported

H_{3B}: The larger number of years as a meeting planner will be a predictor of having a crisis plan. – Not Supported

H_{3C}: Frequency of training as a meeting planner will be a predictor of having a crisis plan. – Supported

H_{3D}: The larger meeting planning associations will be a predictor of having a crisis plan. – Supported

Binary logistic regression was used to analyze research question #3. In linear regression, the dependent variable is assumed to be normally distributed. In the analysis for this study, the variable is dichotomous (0 = no; 1 = yes) which makes it hard to tell if the variable is normally distributed. Logistic regression takes this into account and assumes a logical distribution. It gives more support for the distribution when determining the final model and predictors. Binary logistic regression is a form of regression used when the dependent variable is a dichotomy and the independent variables are of any type. Logistic regression "can be used to predict a dependent variable on the basis of continuous and/or categorical independents and to determine the percent of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independents; to rank the relative importance of independents; to assess interaction effects; and to understand the impact of covariate control variables" (Garson, 2008). The impact of predictor variables is usually explained in terms of probability (Garson, 2008). Since logistic regression is more flexible, it is more reasonable to be used for this analysis.

The dependent variable for the regression analysis was whether or not the meeting planner had a crisis plan. The aim of the analysis was to determine which demographics

are the strongest predictors of those planners that have a crisis plan which are outlined in the four hypotheses. The following nine independent variables were used in the regression analysis: (1) crisis experience; (2) number of years as a meeting planner; (3) fire training; (4) biohazard training; (5) bomb threat training; (6) natural disaster training; (7) human made attack (i.e. terrorist attack) training; (8) medical training; and (9) association membership size.

The initial model from the logistic regression is shown in Table 4.38 with all the variables used. This model shows the first five variables as being insignificant predictors of meeting planners having a plan. Independents variables were removed one at a time and the model was reanalyzed to see if any significant results were found by removing the each variable.

The final model is presented in Table 4.42. It shows that meetings planners who are most likely to have a crisis plan have received thorough training in the areas of natural disasters, human-made attacks, and medical training. Another predictor of meeting planners who have crisis plans is the larger associations in terms of members. It may be that meeting planners perceive safety and security as a more important issue for the larger number of people for which they manage meetings.

Table 4.42: Logistic Regression - Initial Model

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Experienced Crisis	.231	.275	.709	1	.400	1.260
	Yrs as planner	-.112	.095	1.380	1	.240	.894
	Fire training	.038	.136	.078	1	.780	1.039
	Biohazard training	.074	.238	.095	1	.757	1.076
	Bomb threat training	.199	.264	.569	1	.450	1.220
	Natural disaster training	-.430	.188	5.207	1	.022	.651
	Manmade attack training (terror)	-.585	.294	3.961	1	.047	.557
	Medical training	-.462	.142	10.576	1	.001	.630
	Association membership size	-.343	.081	17.795	1	.000	.709
	Constant	4.133	.618	44.769	1	.000	62.368

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: exper_crisis, mtgplanner_yrs, emptrain_fire, emptrain_bio, emptrain_bomb, emptrain_natural, emptrain_manmade, emptrain_medical, assoc_member_num.

Table 4.43: Logistic Regression - Final Model

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Natural disaster training	-.385	.175	4.871	1	.027	.680
	Manmade attack training (terror)	-.434	.213	4.134	1	.042	.648
	Medical training	-.444	.138	10.369	1	.001	.642
	Association membership size	-.343	.076	20.089	1	.000	.710
	Constant	4.001	.446	80.498	1	.000	54.670

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: emptrain_natural, emptrain_manmade, emptrain_medical, assoc_member_num.

FINAL MODEL:

Meeting Planners Most Likely to Have a Plan = Natural disaster training + Human-made crisis training + Medical training + Larger member association size

4.5. Findings and Implications

This study investigated meeting planners' perception of the importance of planning for crisis preparedness. The results of the research have both broad and specific implications for the meeting planning industry now and in the future.

The first major finding of this study is that "size matters." Crisis preparedness is perceived today as important primarily by meeting planners who hold a larger number of

meetings per year and represent associations with large memberships. This finding implies that information about the importance of safety, security and crisis planning needs to be leveraged by the professional industry organizations to raise the level of awareness among ALL meeting planners. Industry media could cover this topic more in monthly publications to increase the awareness of importance to meeting planners for crisis preparedness initiatives. Crisis preparedness experts should be consulted to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the information presented. Another recommendation is for corporations and organizations to make crisis planning a part of their marketing materials and campaigns. This strategy would send a message about the bottom line and competition. If crisis planning "sells," it will not take long for the smaller organizations and meeting planner groups to follow the leaders. A final implication of this finding is that the provision of incentives to attend webinars/seminars, training, and workshops in all areas of crisis preparedness would support professional opportunities for development that currently are relatively scarce.

The second major finding of this study is that there are very few differences among specific types of meeting planners in their crisis preparedness initiatives. There were only four results that identified marginally significant differences. Notably, it was revealed that government planners receive increased amounts of training relative to other planners in various areas of crisis preparedness including fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, and human created attacks. Medical training only slightly varied among all types of planners. This finding implies that the more regulated environment of government organizations may require meeting planners to be better prepared for crisis situations at meetings and events they manage. One recommendation similar to that

identified for the first major finding, is that since the organizations that employ planners are providing little or any training, this is a significant opportunity for professional industry associations to provide services for its members (following the lead of governmental organizations). The two largest associations that meeting planners belong to are the Professional Convention and Management Association (PCMA) and Meeting Professionals International (MPI). These associations may also want to consider reaching out to the upper management of organizations that employ meeting planners to stress the importance of crisis preparedness.

The third major finding of this study is that crisis planning has evidently become a strategic perception for those meeting planners that have crisis plans. For these planners, crisis considerations have moved into their preparation window and seem to have become an essential element. Based on this finding, it would seem natural to conduct further research in the form of interviews or content analysis to try and understand how these planners reached this level of awareness. It may be that they have fully developed cognitive and global impressions of the need for crisis planning or simply affective feelings that are less than fully developed. Exploration of the content of their planning efforts in more detail would be useful in trying to see how well this perception is developed. It would also be interesting to assess whether these planners are considering other strategic perceptions about security such as healthcare or environmental emergencies.

Perhaps the most troubling finding is that over one-third of meeting planners (34.9%) surveyed have experienced some type of crisis at a function they have planned. Over half of the planners (58.5%) in the same sample, however, still do not have any type

of crisis plan in place. This finding implies that meeting planners still do not take crisis preparation seriously enough. The tendency to rely upon the owners of facilities to be prepared is still a powerful assumption among planners. One recommendation is for organizations and/or professional associations to provide workshops to introduce planners to the strategic planning process that can lead them to the development of a flexible plan that they can adjust accordingly. Too often the planners are caught up in wanting one checklist as an end-all. This is not how preparedness works. The planners must be educated on how developing strategic initiatives will lead to their operational effectiveness during a crisis. Another recommendation is having that one-third of planners that have experienced a crisis speak or present to planners and share their stories. This reality of possible outcomes may help planners in the importance of undertaking the crisis planning process.

4.6. Conclusion

The bottom line for meeting planners in the industry is to make money and add value to the positioning of the business which is constantly threatened by the uncertainty of future events and disruptive changes (Glaesser, 2006). Crisis planning is essential for thinking strategically about assuring the continued success of a meeting planner business and can add real value to marketing efforts (Glaesser, 2006). This type of strategic perception and thinking can be extended to site selection, global planning, environmental/green issues and other changes in the industry.

It can be concluded with some degree of certainty that a majority of meeting planners do not deem crisis preparedness important enough right now to take proactive

measures to ensure safety and security at meetings and events they manage. On the other hand, previous empirical research on meeting planners' perceptions has tended to ignore the affective/qualitative dimensions of the planners' perceptual domain (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). It may be that meeting planners "feel" the need to include elements of crisis planning, but have yet to make it a priority. The next chapter in this study will provide a content analysis of existing plans which will add nuance and definition to the quantitative analysis in this chapter. It may be that some of the existing plans will reveal some unique strategic perceptions based on the content planners have included.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the principal finding of this chapter implies that a general approach to education for meeting planners could be effective since few differences were found between the types of planners. The content of the training and educational experiences must focus not on operations as routinely defined in the MICE industry. Rather, the focus of the training must originate from a different stream of consciousness that appreciates a strategic perspective and draws on the experiences of others who have faced the challenge of crisis planning in terms of prevention, awareness, response and recovery. The next chapter will reveal whether or not those strategic elements have been included in existing plans.

4.7. Limitations and Future Research

The exact population size of this research is unknown due to a lack of information about how many magazine subscribers were suppliers and meeting planners. It was impossible, therefore, to calculate the total population size and response rate. Only meeting planners who were members of a specific professional industry association

and/or subscribed to a particular industry magazine were surveyed and may have a different profile with respect to demographic characteristics and perceptions than other planners. Although this study may not be generalizable to all meeting planners, the findings further validate several impressions about the level of awareness about crisis preparedness in the industry and reveal evidence that the industry is not moving very quickly in a direction that would suggest planners are making this crucial topic a high priority.

Any research study sets the stage for future studies and this study is no different. In thinking about where to take this line of research, four possibilities come to mind.

First, future studies should evaluate a more extensive group of meeting planners. Although this is a limitation of the current study, the foundation has been established for bringing a larger population into play.

Second, more specific areas of a meeting planners' job could be studied to further investigate the process of how a planner brings the issue of crisis preparedness into other decisions, such as the site selection choice. As the industry becomes more global, this could be a very valuable initiative.

Third, the facilities that hold meetings and events should be studied to evaluate levels of crisis preparedness and interaction with meeting planners. Levels of collaboration could have tremendous implications for cost-effectiveness, enhanced safety and awareness, and improved views of the industry by participants and public policymakers.

Fourth, a meeting planner's attendees and clients should be studied to evaluate their expectations of a meeting planner's crisis preparedness approach and strategy.

Results from the attendees and clients could subsequently be compared against meeting planners' perceived levels of preparedness. This would shed light on the issue of whether or not expectations are being met. Identifying expectations may help pressure meeting planners to further realize the importance of crisis preparedness. If clients know that a meeting planner is effectively prepared to handle a crisis situation, they will more likely hire the person/organization to manage a meeting or event. At a minimum, meeting participants are demanding greater transparency in the preparation process. This type of research can help meet that demand.

CHAPTER 5. A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CRISIS PLANS: MAKING INFERENCES ABOUT THE NATURE OF CRISIS PREPAREDNESS IN THE MEETING PLANNING INDUSTRY

Abstract

The meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibition industry (MICE) has never been more susceptible to the potentially devastating impact of a crisis than it is today. Using NVIVO 8 software for qualitative analysis, this study examines the content and emerging themes of existing crisis preparedness plans obtained from members of the meeting planning industry. The purposes of the analysis are to evaluate the crisis planning literacy of current industry planners and to aid in the design of effective crisis plans that link strategic thinking to operational execution in the event of a crisis. The results of the evaluation reveal a heavy emphasis on operational activities (response measures) with less emphasis on strategic thinking about prevention and awareness.

5.1. Introduction

Formal planning for crises is critically important to protecting assets and saving lives. Planning takes time and resources that many organizations are not willing to put forth because of the assumption "it won't happen to us." Other times, a lack of resources, money, and uncommitted upper management deter crisis planning efforts. For meeting planners, the challenge of crisis planning is even more difficult due to the complexity of an industry that is also highly mobile. Meeting planners, by the nature of their profession and jobs, are often moving from one location to the next managing meetings and events. This dynamic, however, puts additional emphasis on the importance of crisis planning for the meeting planning industry. Meeting planners need crisis plans to assure clients and attendees that strategic and operational measures have been taken to prevent a crisis or mitigate harm if a crisis were to occur. Pro-active thinking can increase a meeting planner's reputation, employability, and demonstrates a concern for society in general. Crisis planning efforts can also enrich marginal revenue, or simply put, is good for business. Crisis planning will not only protect lives and assets which is important to a meeting planner and the organization it plans functions for, but when the fact that a meeting planner is prepared for crises, it will increase the number of clientele acquired.

5.2. Literature Review

5.2.1. Crisis Planning & Plans: Origins, Purpose, and Definitions

Many authors claim that the concept of crisis management evolved out of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Reactor accident in 1979 (Devlin, 2007). Because the organization responsible for Three Mile Island provided more misinformation than

information, it generated confusion, anger, and fear among the public. The case has become classic in how not to manage a crisis. Within five years of the Three Mile Island crisis, the first graduate school program in crisis management was started at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Devlin, 2007). Since that time, crisis management has received much more attention on its importance as a part of organizations' success and in the personal lives for individual citizens alike. Developing a formal crisis plan is a critical component of crisis planning initiatives within an organization.

There is a critical distinction to be made between crisis planning as a continuing process of preparation and improvement and a crisis plan as the outcome of this preparatory process. Planning is best defined as a "structuring process that defines how the decision-makers want to see a future process develop" (Glaesser, 2006, pg. 159). Defined this way, the primary purpose of crisis planning is to reduce the element of surprise and, through preparation measures, mitigate the worst possible outcomes of a crisis (Glaesser, 2006; Luecke, 2004). The process of preparation is a way to organize and make as many decisions as one can before an actual crisis occurs. Formal crisis planning provides the opportunity for meeting planners to consider all possible scenarios that could happen at an event, discuss different responses, and even test possible strategies for levels of effectiveness (Luecke, 2004). The essential goal is to be strategic and pro-active---that is, know the direction you want to go, think about the journey ahead of time and carefully adapt and customize operational measures to meet the venue and nature of the event. The literature is clear that having such visible security measures in

place assist in making attendees feel more secure (Will your Employees be Safe at Your Next Big Corporate Event?, 2002).

Crisis plans, on the other hand, are an outcome of the crisis planning process. A plan is defined as a written set of "key decisions on the mechanical (or operational) portion of the crisis -- those aspects that rarely vary -- and leave you free to manage the content portion of the crisis" more effectively (Fink, 2002, pg. 55). In the process of developing a plan, the 'what-if' questions are asked and assumptions are made about certain tasks to undertake based on different scenarios. In the literature on crisis management, Fink (2002) reinforces the idea that that the importance of developing a crisis plan is to manage the operational portion of the crisis. In contrast, strategy is focused more on prevention and awareness measures.

Building on the distinction between the planning process and the crisis plan leads to the understanding that crisis preparedness is best conceptualized as the integration of strategy (crisis planning), operations (crisis plan), and results management (learning after a crisis). Successful business leaders know that effective performance is a product of linking strategy to operational execution (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Linking the anticipatory power of strategy with the essential of carefully planned operations is one of the hardest things to do for any business. Interestingly, this difficult connection is equally crucial in linking good planning with a carefully defined set of tactics in a crisis plan. Many organizations fail to achieve strategic objectives because they do not effectively connect strategy with operations or vice-versa (Becher, 2005). The gap between strategy and execution of operations must be eliminated for a meeting planning organization or individual meeting planner to be successful in managing and recovering from a crisis.

One cannot simply or quickly write an effective crisis plan without first going through a strategically conditioned crisis planning process.

Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2008) are leaders in the strategy execution movement. Many planners would agree when they argue, "without excellent operational and governance process, strategy -- even the most visionary strategy -- cannot be implemented. Conversely, without strategic vision and guidance, operational excellence is not sufficient to achieve, let alone sustain, success" (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). This strategic management and execution perspective is very applicable to the crisis plan development process as summarized in Figure 5.1.

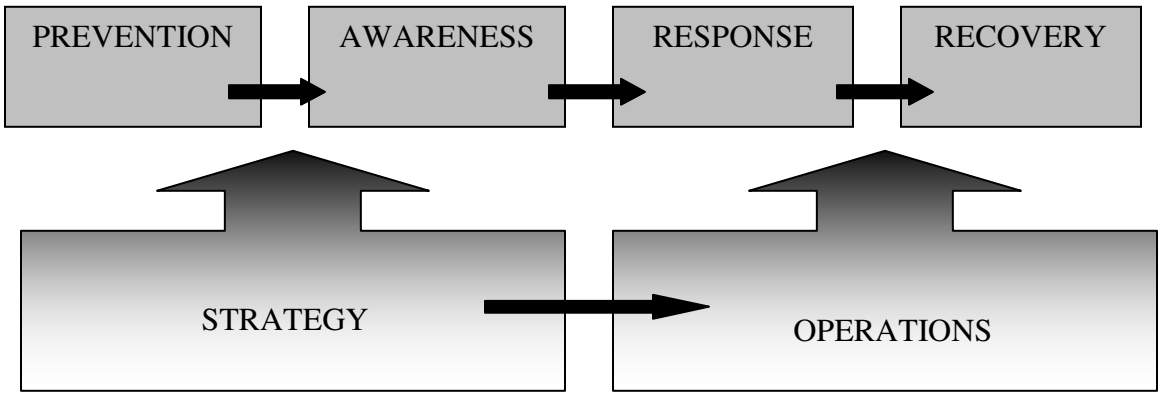

Figure 5.1: Crisis Plan Development Linking Strategy and Operations
(Adapted from Pelfrey, 2005)

Prevention and awareness activities must be strategically developed in order to operationalize the response and recovery phases of the crisis plan. The plan, however, must first be aligned with the meeting planner's organizational strategy in terms of necessary resources and support. Next, a strategy for success in the event of a crisis must be designed in collaboration with other key stakeholders. Strategy is about direction. What direction has the planner decided to move when a crisis begins? Wait for the

authorities or begin a self-directed evacuation? Even more important, what preventive measures will move us away from the need to deal with a crisis or similar event? Once a strategy has been designed, operational measures can be developed in alignment with the established strategy. Striving for a solid alignment between the meeting planner's crisis preparedness strategies and operational initiatives to respond and recover from a crisis will ensure a higher success rate in the event of a crisis. It is this link between strategy and operations that can make the plan work with greater effectiveness, efficiency and mitigation of costs. Finally, learning from the outcome of a crisis is just as important as the strategy originally put forth. This is results management. Learning must take place in order to adjust the strategic vision in managing a crisis the next time. Learning may find the strategy was in the right direction but the operational initiatives need adjusting, such as revisions to the crisis plan. One incredible finding is this study points to the fact that even after a crisis, many planners either do not engage in crisis planning for their next event or simply ignore the lessons of the experience.

5.2.2. Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness: A Process Framework for Developing Plans

Pelfrey's (2005) Cycle of Preparedness is the conceptual framework that translates the findings of the study into a continuous process of crisis plan development. The "cycle" encompasses four main phases in effective crisis planning: Prevention, Awareness, Response, and Recovery (Figure 5.1). Pelfrey describes how overall preparedness "cannot be proclaimed or finished" (Pelfrey, 2005, pg. 5). It is an ongoing process, or *cycle*, that must continually be evaluated and improved. Too often the focus is on Response measures. Response is critically important and an intricate part of managing

a crisis. It should be noted, however, that this phase is operational and after the fact. (see Figure 5.2).

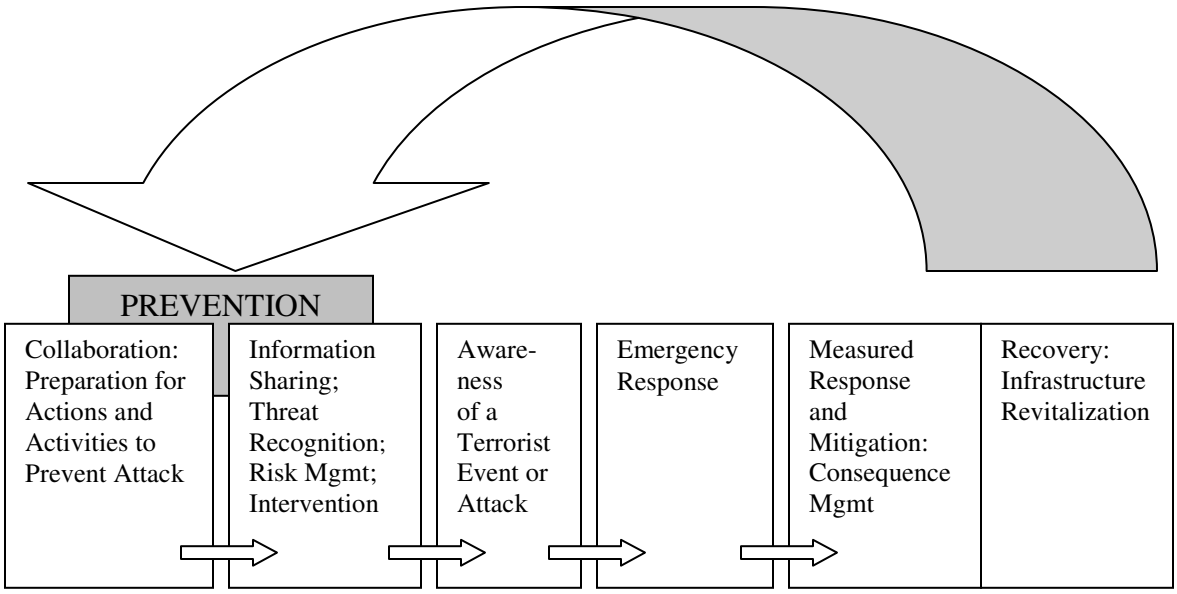

Figure 5.2: Major Elements of the Cycle of Preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005)

First, prevention measures, if taken with care and due diligence, may actually be able to prevent some crises from occurring altogether. Realistically, complete prevention from any and all crises is impossible (Fink, 2002). But the realization of preventing all crises is no excuse to engage in planning and the development of a plan. With appropriate strategic thinking and preparation, a meeting planner can substantially limit the duration and damage caused by a major crisis. Research has repeatedly found that organizations that diligently prepare for a crisis not only recover faster, but with significantly less damage than those organizations that do not prepare (Mitroff, 2001). The prevention portion of crisis planning consists of policies, procedures, and controls employed to minimize the potential for a crisis to occur (Devlin, 2007). This may include risk

assessment/analysis and security planning with facilities holding events that meeting planners manage. Pelfrey (2005) identifies collaboration and information sharing as key prevention activities.

Second, awareness is the art of recognizing that a crisis is occurring and serves as the first stage of response. Although this phase may seem like common sense, it is a critical phase that involves recognizing various triggers and signals. Being aware of exactly what type of crisis is about to occur, or is occurring, and having an understanding of the surrounding circumstances are crucial in initiating an effective response. Training serves an important role during this phase. If individuals have been thoroughly trained in a variety of crises scenarios and the elements of the crisis plan, they know what to look for and what response activities to initiate.

Third, response is the phase most discussed when considering crisis planning. Garcia (2006) claims that "whether an organization survives a crisis with its reputation, operations, and financial condition intact is determined less by the severity of the crisis than by the timeliness and effectiveness of the response." The timeliness and effectiveness of the response is highly determined by being prepared and organized with a complete, well-tested crisis plan in place. Augustine (2000) states it is during this phase that time is of the essence for a successful outcome. Many planners focus *only* on this phase, not realizing the importance of integrating all the phases required to create an effective crisis plan. The response phase sets in motion a variety of tactical tasks and activities. These tasks and activities are often carefully designed and tested by using crucial exercises such as scenario planning and mock drills. The response phase involves equipping, training and exercising key responders of the crisis management team to

initiate critical functions when confronting a crisis situation. Having an effective crisis plan can, and will, greatly shorten the response phase. A survey of Fortune 500 companies found that those without a crisis plan reported engagement in the crisis response as much as two and a half times longer than companies that were prepared with a crisis plan.

Fourth, beginning to receive more attention than ever before is the important task of preparing for crisis recovery. This is a critical part of any crisis plan. Many times, people focus more on 'surviving' the crisis and forget the importance of having a plan to continue critical business functions. The recovery phase can begin as soon as the crisis is discovered, but often extends in time and energy far beyond any ending of the crisis. Different agencies and organizations may need to be involved in the recovery phase compared to those in the response phase. In order to rehabilitate a site after a crisis situation, a full analysis needs to be completed as to what led to the event. Organizational learning is essential (Garvin, 1993). Meeting planners and staff must evaluate how well the crisis situation was handled and investigate if a better way could have been initiated. This evaluation can lead to new policies and procedures for the industry. Recovery requires learning and the development of feedback in order to complete the "cycle of preparedness." It is important to note that Pelfrey does not include testing and learning as one of the distinct phases in the "cycle of preparedness." Although the Pelfrey framework helps to shape the plan development process, it is necessary to investigate what the crisis management literature identifies as the essential elements of a good crisis plan.

5.2.3. Crisis Plans: General Structure & Elements

The general crisis preparedness literature is diverse but points to some critical considerations and elements common to most crisis management plans. At the same time, these common elements may have to be adapted to fit the resources available to an event planning organization and altered to match the particular event venues.

Perhaps the most important element mentioned in the literature is the development of a crisis management team. This team's contact information should be the first item listed in a plan. The team usually has two roles—custodian of the planning process and operational integrator (Fink, 2002; Devlin, 2007; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004; Hillyard, 2000; Wallace & Webber, 2004). Fink (2002) states a crisis management team should have a primary leadership core and with other members strategically chosen. For example, if an organization is planning for potential financial crises, then the team should have financial experts as members. Devlin (2007) expands on the critical importance of executive management as the heart of the crisis management team and not simply a tool for "lip service" or delegation. In the development of a plan, Devlin (2007) outlines two methods: (1) the crisis management team as the sole developer; or (2) the crisis team delivers a presentation to the entire organization with each department/unit writing its own section to put together an overall plan. Barton (2008) clarifies that it is possible for a corporate office to have a different plan than the company's separate business units. This is why the crisis team may need to play the role of integrator for communication and effective fusing of strategy and operational initiatives.

A second element of a good crisis management plan is the designation of a public spokesperson (Fink, 2002; Devlin, 2007; Harvard Business Essentials, 2004). Often times it is expected that the chief executive officer (CEO) or president of a company will assume this role. This does not, and in many instances, should not be the case. It is important to choose a person who will best present, explain, and defend the company's position relative to the unfolding of the crisis (Fink, 2002). An organization may also want to consider the selection of more than one spokesperson. This designation should definitely be identified in the crisis management plan.

Some of the literature in the field of crisis management argues that a communication tree is the most important element to be included in a crisis plan (Barton, 2008; Wallace & Webber, 2004; Fink, 2002). It is almost self-evident that a quick and efficient response requires all involved to know how and who to contact. Relevant employees, agencies, and vendors are crucial stakeholders to include in a communication tree. It is also important to include back up individuals in case a person is not able to be reached.

When considering the content of a plan, the general consensus of the literature is that specific information should be limited because each organization and crisis is different. This is not to say that detail is not important. Rather, the emphasis in the literature is that it is best to not provide too much detail. Fink (2002) states the content of each plan should be localized and specifically tailored to the industry, location, and/or group of people. The level of detail provided should not be too broad, but not too a description of each action or overly directive. Devlin (2007) supports Fink's standard for level of detail stating it should be more than an overview, but not so specific that it

cramps the style of the responder in successfully managing the crisis. The plan should be inclusive and actions identified based on the number of different crises the plan aims to target (Devlin, 2007). The actions outlined in the plan should provide enough information to neutralize, limit or contain the significant and damaging aspects of the potential crisis (Harvard Business Essentials, 2004).

Some literature provides guidelines calling for inclusion of certain sections of a crisis plan. Wallace and Webber (2004) suggest the essential elements are the following: (1) immediate actions, such as who to call; (2) detailed containment actions, such as how to reduce damage; (3) recovery actions (basic, critical, & restoration priorities); (4) foundation documents, such as an asset list, risk assessment, and critical process matrix; (5) employee recall list; (6) vendor list; (7) manual work processes; and (8) relocating operations. Some elements of an organization's crisis plan may be required by federal, state, or local regulations. For example, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) mandates a crisis plan to include the following seven essential elements (Hillyard, 2000):

(1) identification of facilities and transportation routes that contain hazardous materials;

(2) emergency response procedures to be used at the disaster site and in surrounding areas;

(3) identification of personnel designated as community and facility coordinators responsible for the plan's implementation;

(4) procedures for notifying authorities and potentially affected parties;

(5) methods for determining when a disaster has occurred and the areas at risk;

(6) descriptions of emergency equipment and facilities available in a community;

(7) plan for evacuating facilities and potentially affected areas.

5.2.4. MICE Industry Crisis Plans: Structure & Elements

MICE industry crisis planning literature is very practical in nature and emphasizes operational tactics over strategic thinking. The information about MICE crisis planning is found in trade journals and consists of primarily checklists and general information (Howe, 1998; North-Puma, 2001; Genoist, 2002; Sturken, 2005; Grubb, 2006). There is little in this literature that could be characterized as systematic or strategic in approach. Industry association websites are another source of planning information providing news updates, short excerpts that stress the need to have crisis preparedness plans, templates and checklists for association members (PCMA, 2006a; IAEM, 2002; ASAE, 2006; MPI, 2006). White papers can also be found on association websites, but often lack sufficient empirical support for their findings (IAEM, 2002). Academic journals in the hospitality industry have addressed the issue of crisis planning in less than systematic ways and sometimes only tangentially, but they are increasing as the topic becomes more recognized as a critical consideration in the industry (Santana, 2003; Ritchie, 2004; Huan, Beaman, & Shelby, 2004; Laws & Prideaux, 2005; Zhang, 2005). Again, these articles are aimed primarily at the hospitality industry and not specifically the MICE industry. Other articles focus on crisis preparedness in general and not elements of a crisis plan (Barton, 1994; Young & Montgomery, 1998; Houston, 2001; Henderson & Ng, 2004). Case study approaches have been used to identify lessons learned from previous crisis situations in the hospitality industry yet do not provide precisely identified elements to include in a crisis plan (Orlob, 2004; Stafford, Yu, & Armoo, 2002; Young & Montgomery, 1998). Ghitelman (1993) states that a crisis plan should have two parts: steps to help prevent a crisis and an outline of response measures. Extensive details are

not provided on specific planning processes. The one common element that mentioned in a variety of the industry literature to address a crisis was the importance of having an insurance or business interruption clause in contracts (Meyers, 1999; Wickrema, 2005; Chapman, 2003; Foster, Krugman, McIntosh, Nestor, et al, 2003; Barton, 1994). Insurance liability, however, is more of a strategic action to take during the crisis planning process. A crisis plan can be important to liability insurance because some hospitality industry companies have been able to reduce the liability insurance premiums "by developing a crisis plan that the insurer found both responsive and visionary" (Barton, 1994, pg. 63). Overall, however, the literature does not provide guidance for a holistic planning approach or for crisis plan development in the meeting planning industry.

5.3. Methodology

5.3.1. Population, Sample, & Research Instrument

Various meeting and event planning associations were contacted to collect crisis plans from all types of meeting planners. The total number of planners who replied was 115. Of those 115 planners, 71.3% (n=82) stated they had no crisis plan in place; 17.4% (n=20) had some type of plan; 3.5% (n=4) stated that the information was confidential; and 7.8% (n=9) of the planners sent general comments about the topic. Some, on the other hand offered, alternative crisis management materials. Whether or not they had a primary plan was not indicated in their response. The sample size for the analysis conducted in this study was 20 crisis plans.

Content analysis was the methodology utilized to explore the embedded information and strategy in sample's industry crisis plans. Content analysis is a research approach "used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or a set of texts" (Busch, et al, 2005). Inferences are made by analyzing the presence, meanings and relationships of the words and/or concepts. The study began with a conceptual analysis in which "a concept is chosen for examination, and the analysis involves quantifying and tallying its presence" (Busch, et al, 2005). Such an analysis is initiated with coding text into manageable categories. When "reducing the text to categories consisting of a word, set of words or phrases, the researcher can focus on, and code for, specific words or patterns that are indicative of the research question" (Busch, et al, 2005). Relational analysis was subsequently employed to go beyond mere presence of words. The "focus of relational analysis was [sic] to look for semantic, or meaningful, relationships" (Busch, et al, 2005). Meaning is a product of the relationships among the concepts discovered in the text. The relational analysis was carried out by running various models to visualize and explore the possible relationships between the concepts identified.

NVIVO 8 software was used to operationalize the content analysis method. The steps followed in the data analysis and interpretation was followed according to Creswell (2004). Two techniques were used in the initial stage of open coding to minimize or reduce potential bias and maintain authenticity to identify emergent themes and patterns: in-vivo coding and constructive labeling. In-Vivo codes (QSR, 2008) are nodes that are created directly from the text in the crisis plan. Literature suggests that employing concepts that are directly taken from the text makes certain that categories are grounded

in the data. Strauss (1987, p. 34) noted that constructive labeling in open coding "can add more social science meaning to an analysis than in-vivo codes, as they add scope by going beyond local meanings to broader social science concerns." Through these two techniques, a series of codes were generated for category building and to identify any relationships. Validity and reliability was ensured through a peer review process. Multiple coders were also utilized to ensure inter-coder agreement. This type of reliability offers a stability of the codes generated. To ensure reliability, the Kappa coefficient was used for the multiple coders. This is a statistical measure which takes into account the amount of agreement among the coders that could be expected to occur through chance (QSR, 2008). If the coders are in complete agreement then the Kappa value or $\kappa = 1$. If there is no agreement among the coders (other than what would be expected by chance) then the Kappa value or $\kappa \leq 0$ (QSR, 2008). The Kappa value for the coding in this study was 0.81 among the multiple coders. This score is on the level of 'almost perfect' agreement and acceptable for inter-coding reliability (Landis & Koch, 1977; Gottschalk, 1995).

5.3.2. Research Questions

This inquiry explores the following research questions:

1. What are the common words and phrases used in the existing crisis plans in the meeting planning industry?
2. What are the predominant patterns and themes found in the existing crisis plans?
3. How can the predominant patterns, categories, or themes found in existing crisis plans become the basis for creating explanatory models and prescriptive crisis preparedness education strategies?

5.4. Results

5.4.1. Conceptual Analysis: The Implications of Words

Twenty crisis plans were utilized for the data analysis. Conceptual analysis explored text frequencies. Ninety percent (n=18) of the plans had titles which offers insight into the direction for the content of the plan (Table 5.1). An indication of the date of the plan's development or last updated was noted in 40% (n=8) of the plans. Four of the plans were developed or updated in 2006; 2 in 2008; and 1 each in 2005 and 2007.

Table 5.1: Title of Plans

Title of Plans	n
Crisis Plan	2
Crisis Communication Plan/Binder	3
Emergency Procedures Plan	2
Evacuation Plan	2
Business Continuity Plan	1
Crisis Management Protocols	1
Critical Incident Management and Debriefing Procedures	1
Disaster and Emergency Plan	1
Emergency Preparedness Plan for the (Name of the Meeting)	1
Event Emergency Response Plan	1
Emergency Evacuation and Communication Plan	1
Preparing for an Emergency	1
Risk Management Process	1

After the data screening and coding process, NVIVO 8 generated the top 200 words that appeared most frequently in the crisis plans. The singular and plural variations of a word were combined for simplicity in evaluating. Table 5.2 shows the top 25 words out of the list and the related frequencies. Appendix C shows the top 100 list. The most frequent word was "emergency/emergencies" with 869 occurrences. "Event" was the second most frequently used word in the plans occurring 414 times, followed by "all" (n=398); "employee(s)" (n=349); and "information" (n=337).

Table 5.2: Top 50 Words in Meeting Planners' Crisis Plans

	Word	Count		Word	Count
1	emergency/emergencies	869	26	medical	175
2	event	414	27	location	171
3	All	398	28	organization	169
4	employee(s)	349	29	do	168
5	information	337	30	call	162
6	plan	326	31	fire	160
7	contact	319	32	management	160
8	you	304	33	situation	158
9	communication(s)	301	34	meeting(s)	152
10	security	277	35	center	150
11	team	262	36	provide	150
12	should	260	37	operations	149
13	business	251	38	disaster	147
14	have	234	39	other	147
15	facility/facilities	225	40	building	146
16	from	220	41	evacuation	146
17	media	220	42	site	145
18	your	219	43	personnel	143
19	crisis	216	44	name	141
20	incident	212	45	safety	141
21	may	211	46	response	139
22	member(s)	197	47	control	137
23	any	187	48	necessary	137
24	staff	186	49	one	136
25	person/people	178	50	area	135

5.4.2. Relational Analysis: The Implications of Word Patterns and Themes

Following the conceptual analysis to initially explore the data frequencies, relational analysis was conducted with the generated codes for phrases and/or segments within the crisis plans. Because of the potential explanatory and modeling benefits, inquiry into possible word relationships to the four major phases of Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness was investigated. The results affirm that response and recovery activities are identified much more often by meeting planners in their plans. General response activities were referenced 216 times throughout the plans whereas the other phases were all characterized by word counts of less than 100. Prevention was referenced 27 times; Awareness – 26 times; and Recovery – 61 times.

5.5. Findings and Implications

5.5.1. Question #1: What are the common words and phrases of existing crisis plans in the meeting planning industry?

A more comprehensive review of the word frequencies reveal the terms 'emergency/emergencies' are much more common than the term "crisis" or "incident." In the literature, emergency is often considered a more general term for use in all types of situations that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property or the environment. The term crisis, however, is a more powerful and precise term that is considered an unstable situation of extreme danger. It identifies a crucial stage or turning point during an event or process (Fink, 1986; Augustine, 2000). This finding implies that meeting planners feel the more operational term 'emergency' encompasses a broader scope of the situation and a less severe change or potentially damaging event in the progress of a meeting. In other words, there does not seem to be a change from past planning practices despite what might be termed the "message" of more recent tragedies like 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina. One might think the scope and magnitude of those events would lead to greater usage of terms "crisis" or "catastrophe.

The word "employee(s)" (n=349) was mentioned much more frequently (#4) than "attendees/participants" (n=109) which showed up #67 on the list. This finding could imply that plans still are more focused on employees' traditional tasks and actions as opposed to the strategic communicating and information sharing needed before and during a crisis scenario. In other words, the employees' roles are seen as different than the attendees/participants roles in a crisis. In addition, existing plans tend to focus on employee tasks in the context of the traditional challenge of event and emergency management. This conventional mindset is not helpful because crisis management calls

for multi-tasking and role redefinement in the middle of a crisis. Simply knowing your role as it relates to routine event operations is not enough.

The term "process" was only used 51 times (#189) in all 20 plans. Since managing a crisis is an on-going process, this was an interesting finding. Again, the implication is all an employee needs to do is manage routine linear and sequential tasks (what you would normally do as an event unfolds) during an emergency with little adaptation, flexibility and nimbleness so important to a crisis situation. The idea of actually "learning during a crisis" is minimized by this straightforward and traditional mindset. This finding suggests that perhaps future educational strategies should focus on the idea of crisis management being a 'process' requiring various levels of control. With a better understanding of crisis management as an on-going process, meeting planners may be more inclined to recognize the importance of including prevention and awareness measures to their overall crisis plan. This is not new to the literature on crisis planning and management, but it does appear as something missing in the MICE industry. Other important words that did not show up in the plans anywhere during this phase included terms such as "scenario," "timeline," "flexible/flexibility," "learn," and "awareness." These words would most often show up in the prevention and awareness stages. Again, if the importance of including prevention and awareness initiatives was really understood, it is assumed that these words would begin to show up in meeting planners' event management crisis arrangements. Ralston and Wilson (2006) focus on a "scenario-based strategy" to crisis planning which highlights the importance of scenario planning as an initial step in crisis plan development. The authors state that with scenario-building and testing, one can "speculate about not just 'the future,' but a range of possible futures that

might arise from the uncertain course of the forces of change" (Ralston & Wilson, 2006, pg. 4). Once alternatives have been narrowed down, then a crisis planning strategy can be developed that is "focused but resilient, specific but flexible" (Ralston & Wilson, 2006, pg. 4). The words found in the plans were not consistent with the literature on how to build scenarios and learn how to respond to different consequences before, during and after a crisis.

5.5.2. Question #2: What are the predominant patterns and themes found in existing crisis plans?

Moving from the basic foundation of word frequency, relational analysis seeks to discover patterns or themes among the word and category content in the crisis plans. Simply stated, are there any relationships within the text? After analyzing the top 100 most frequently used words, four themes emerged.

First, there were many words that indicated some type of "Event" such as 'event,' 'meeting,' 'crisis,' 'incident,' 'situation,' and 'disaster.' Some of these words imply what might be called "little events" and others might be "big or ongoing events." This distinction could be important as planners think about event feedback for learning and testing.

Second, "People" emerged as a category with words to include 'employee(s),' 'you,' 'team,' 'your,' 'member(s),' 'staff,' 'person/people,' 'personnel,' 'director,' 'we,' 'manager,' and 'participants/attendees.' Distinguishing "staff" from "participants/attendees" is an important distinction for planning purposes.

Third, "Location" emerged as a category with words including 'facility/facilities,' 'location,' 'building,' 'site,' 'area,' 'EOC,' 'hotel,' 'shelter,' 'office,' and 'city.'

Although not an unexpected pattern, it is important to note that there seems to be little reference to a domestic location relative to an international location. There could be other important subthemes within these two subsets. The importance lies in the observation that crisis management planning in an international location is likely to be more complicated because of distance, specific country rules, customs, etc. Simply put, a "one size all plan" that fits the domestic landscape is likely to be less effective in an international setting.

Finally, "Action" emerged as a category from the many action-oriented words used including 'contact,' 'do,' 'call,' 'manage,' 'provide,' 'response,' 'control,' 'use,' 'action,' 'maintain,' 'make,' 'report,' 'follow,' and 'insert.' This pattern implies the plans contain thinking that is indicative of operations and tactics as the way to meet the challenge of a crisis situation. The fact that the analysis did not uncover a category that could be called "strategy/strategic" in addition to the "action" theme is consistent with previous discussion in this chapter.

A further review of the plans reveals the themes are found primarily in the response activities sections. The conceptual analysis of text and the relational analysis of emergent themes from the text illustrate again the likely "operational" mindset of a meeting planner as they approach the process of creating crisis plans.

Communication appears to be another major theme in existing plans. This theme emerged from a coding of phrases within the text in combination with word frequencies. Meeting planners extensively referred to communication activities throughout the plans. This was a promising finding from a control perspective because a crisis cannot be always managed by one person or even a single team. It almost always involves multiple people, parties, roles and responsibilities. Again, it is helpful to find solid evidence that

meeting planners recognize communication as a critical component of crisis management.

Patterns based on the "type of crisis" were revealed in the analysis. Out of the 20 crisis plans, 11 (55%) thoroughly described specific types of crises. This means that possible crises were provided with detailed definition or specific tasks were described to undertake in the event related to the particular type of crisis occurring. Other plans simply listed a few examples of crises with no descriptions or response steps. Figure 5.3 illustrates the types of crises with detailed explanations in the plans and the number of times each was referenced. The diagram's reference numbers does not include plans that simply listed types of crises.

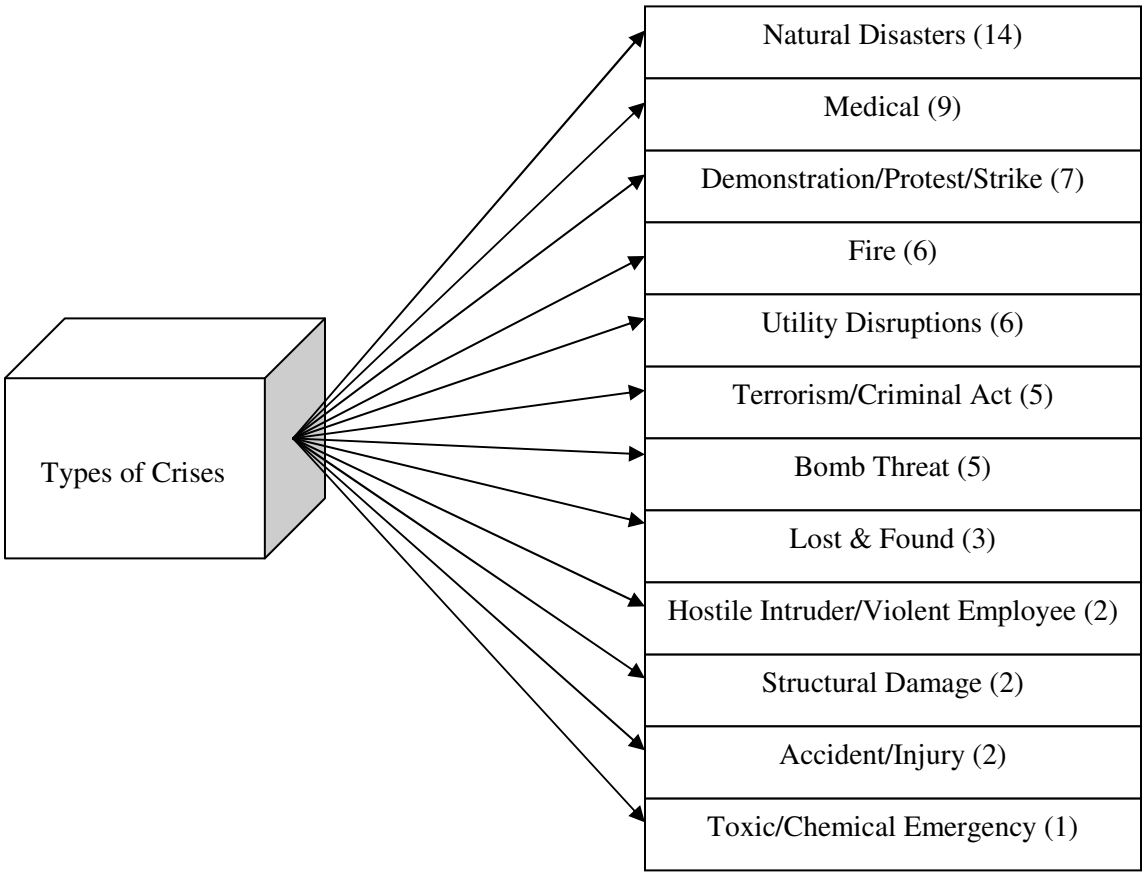

Figure 5.3: Types of Crises Explained in Meeting Planner Crisis Plans

Another pattern that emerged among the plans examined is a focus on Response and Recovery activities. General response activities were referenced 216 times in the plans whereas the other phases were all cited less than 100 times. When linking the relationships of the word and smaller concept frequencies to the larger phases, further evidence of the response and recovery focus is provided. Again, this illustrates the importance of establishing a strategy for overall direction or an approach to crisis prevention and awareness and subsequently linking them to response and recovery operational planning.

The pattern and theme analysis demonstrates that all possible phases in a crisis are addressed to some degree, but that there still may be a knowledge gap about strategy and viewing a crisis as preventable and, once underway, as ongoing. This is an important point. Meeting planners do not appear to approach crises as preventable and process-driven. If anything, the words and patterns in the plans tend to point to discrete events like an evacuation or fire that can be handled in traditional ways. If this finding is valid, then education should be devised for meeting planners to enhance their understanding of strategic thinking for purposes of prevention and awareness in the crisis management cycle of preparedness.

5.5.3. Question #3: How can the predominant patterns or themes found in crisis plans become the basis for creating explanatory models and prescriptive crisis preparedness education strategies?

The word frequencies as well as the themes and patterns generated by the content analysis can serve as a basis for explanatory models and prescriptive educational strategies. By using the conceptual phases in Pelfrey's cycle of preparedness approach to

accommodate the words found in the plans, an explanatory/prescriptive model can be generated as depicted in Figure 5.4. Using Pelfrey's elements, the findings of the analysis can be better organized to demonstrate gaps in thinking about crisis preparedness and management. In Figure 5.4, the phrases or sections of the crisis plan that were coded are represented in italicized font as categories. The individual words appearing in regular font are exact words from the plans' text. The frequency of each coded word or category is shown in the parentheses. The four phases for the Cycle of Preparedness were also coded categories: Prevention, Awareness, Response, and Recovery. Using each of Pelfrey's four phases as major elements for a guide to preparing a crisis management plan can add real value to the "how" of plan development that is both strategic and operational. In fact, the template in Chapter Six finds its origins in the Pelfrey framework. Communication is represented in a circle because it is a concept that is critical in all aspects of the cycle of preparedness and emerged as a major category within the crisis plans.

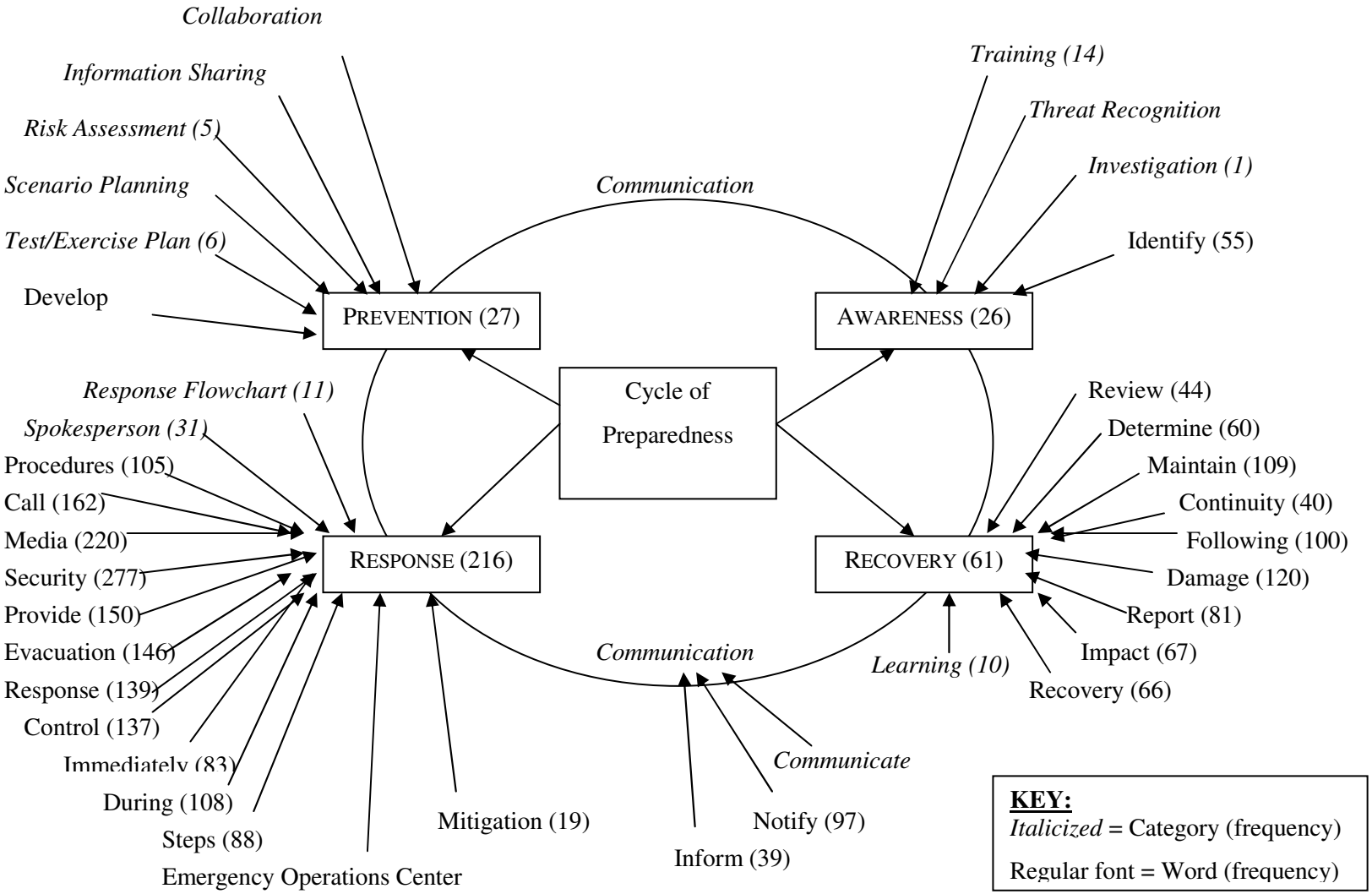

Figure 5.4: Relational Map of Concepts & Words

5.6. Conclusion

Although not surprising, it is still unsettling to validate that very few meeting planners employ any type of formal crisis plan. With an astounding 71.3% of meeting planners reporting they did not have a crisis plan in place for their meetings, it is evident that industry-wide awareness-raising and education is badly needed. If we trace the findings of this chapter's content analysis from words to themes to explanatory models to prescriptive educational strategies for those planners that do have crisis plans, it is evident that there is a disconnect between the strategic and operational mindsets of meeting planners in preparing for a crisis as an unfolding process. When plotted on a relational template as in Figure 5.4, the gap between strategic and operational mindsets is further demonstrated. How does the industry close the gap? First, by providing additional resources and support, senior management in meeting planning companies can educate meeting planners about the strategic aspect of crisis management. In other studies, meeting planners have cited 'lack of upper management support' as a major barrier in their crisis planning efforts (Kline & Smith, 2006).

Second, professional industry associations can develop webinars with crisis management experts as featured speakers. This "reference to authority" approach and the application of technology could be a very cost effective way to distribute the professional development necessary for better strategic planning in crisis management.

Third, it would seem productive to conduct hands-on workshops specifically aimed at both the analysis of current plans and the development of new crisis plans for the meeting planning industry. This would supplement the webinar training previously described.

Fourth, a crisis planning handbook, specifically designed for meeting planners, would be an effective tool for planners to have on hand and utilize as a guide in developing and continuously updating their plans. Beyond meeting the needs of documentation for crisis management planning purposes, a handbook in traditional and online forms could serve as an archive as new "best practices" are found and applied.

There is also little mention in the language of the plans of scenario planning, testing plans, and learning from previous experiences. The presence of these words would be clear indicators of a strategic mindset for crisis planning. The concept of learning from previous experience that would help to close the loop and eliminate the disconnect is simply not a part of these plans and could affect the success of managing future crises.

If planning is "the art of removing much of the risk and uncertainty to allow you to achieve more control" over the outcome of a crisis (Fink, 1986, pg. 15), the ability to manage fluid situations and make informed decisions is vital to achieving success at critical points during a crisis. If meeting planners can remove risk by having a solid crisis plan, clients and attendees are going to feel higher levels of comfortability and security. This positive feeling can translate into new and recurring business for meeting planners as their reputation for preparedness becomes "marketing buzz." Safety and security remain a top issue for many customers in the hospitality and tourism industry, especially meeting clients and attendees. With the proper crisis preparedness initiatives put in place, meeting planners can best serve their employees, clients, and attendees by providing top-notch safety and security assurances to build a positive reputation and, in turn, improve their business.

5.7. Limitations and Future Research

The first limitation of this research is the small number of plans that were analyzed. A larger pool of plans might have generated a wider variety of patterns and themes which could affect the findings of this study. Second, the results cannot be generalized to all meeting planners. Planners in other professional industry associations may have different approaches to crisis planning.

Future research in this area could first include collecting plans from specific types of meeting planners. The content could be analyzed and a comparative analysis among the different types of planners could be completed. Second, it could be valuable to duplicate this study using different parts of the industry such as facilities, restaurant managers and others in order to analyze the preparedness levels in these other areas of the overall hospitality and tourism industry.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUDING ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

Taken together, the tremendous growth of the MICE industry and the proliferation of crises have created a greater vulnerability and potential for disruption to meeting events than ever before. There is a lack of empirical research, however, that measures the current level or quality of crisis preparedness in the industry.

Simply put, the purpose of this dissertation was to assess from both a logical and empirical perspective this lack of knowledge about crisis preparedness in the meeting planning world. The problem-in-logic, on the one hand, was to explore the conceptual direction and current thinking of approaches in the relatively new field of crisis management and compare it to the logic and emerging practices and planning in the MICE industry. The problem-in-practice, on the other hand, was to conduct empirical research to determine the current level of meeting planners' preparedness and their knowledge of planning and how to develop crisis plans to best serve the industry. It was important to keep in mind that meeting planners are a unique group because of their mobility and portability of resources from one facility to the next as meeting locations vary. This makes planning and preparing for crisis events troublesome.

The flow of the research in this study is from theory to analysis to application. Because crisis management planning, specific to the meeting planning industry, is

virtually non-existent until about the last eight to ten years, the results of the research have broad implications for the meeting planning industry both theoretically and practically. Consequently, this dissertation includes three studies with a focus on several key areas of inquiry about crisis preparedness to help the industry better develop strategy, align operational plans and learn from experience. This chapter draws together the major findings of each study, identifies contributions to the professional knowledge base and the industry, enumerates the limitations of the research, and summarizes the core value of the dissertation. It concludes with crisis planning and preparedness recommendations for the MICE industry and observations about future research ideas for the larger hospitality management field.

Dissertation Key Points of Inquiry:

- Why is the issue of crisis preparedness an important topic for discussion in the MICE industry?
- What is the current strategic and operational thinking about the process of preparedness and the structure of plans in the crisis management field?
- What is the current level of crisis preparedness in the MICE industry?
- Do meeting planners perceive crisis preparedness to be an important consideration in the industry?
- Does the content of existing crisis preparedness plans reflect the industry's current level of perceived importance and knowledge about crisis management?

6.2. Study One: Crisis Preparedness for the MICE Industry: Are Meeting Planners Prepared?

6.2.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study of MICE industry crisis planning efforts revealed some important findings that were generally expected, but still noteworthy. As defined in study one, "planning is a structuring process that defines how…decision-makers want to see a future process develop" (Glaesser, 2006, p. 159). The key findings in this analysis demonstrate that the majority of surveyed planners have little understanding of the implications of this definition.

6.2.2. Findings

First, the current level of preparedness for the meeting planning and convention industry can be characterized as fair to poor. Over half (58.5%) of meeting planners surveyed in this study have no crisis plan. Meeting planners seem to have a growing awareness of the importance of crisis plans, but the omissions or limitations in existing plans (no team, no comprehensive insurance policies, little training, etc.), reinforce the finding that the level of preparedness in existing plans is questionable.

Second, using the first phase in Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness planning model as a criterion, it was found that about 40% of the meeting planners in the sample expressed little appreciation for prevention and preparation activities. Fifty percent (50%) of the sample that noted they were "Prepared" implied having a crisis management team. Approximately 70% indicated that gathering information about "emergencies" from a facility constituted being prepared for a crisis. Training of employees for crisis

management was missing in several major areas such as bomb threats, terrorism activities and a host of related areas.

Third, it was found that an appreciable number of planners update their plans each year. Although this was only 40% of a small number of those who had plans, maintaining currency can be characterized as a strength in the planning process. Use of new communication technologies have been incorporated into plans to bolster relations with external parties and to enhance internal operations.

Fourth, it has been concluded that one prevention/preparation activity that needs to be focused on is scenario planning. To begin any type of crisis preparedness process, an understanding of possible crises need to be established. This understanding is acquired from literature, experts, and conversations with external and internal stakeholders. Through their research, Pearson and Mitroff (1993) found that many organizations only focus on crises that may potentially impact their core technology. For example, "technical companies prepare for technical breaks (such as power outages), information companies prepare for loss of data (such as counterfeiting), and so on" (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993, pg. 52). If a fire alarm is sounded and a meeting planner must relocate a meeting to a different building, many factors come into play. Scenario planning helps to reveal these factors and identify potential crises that go beyond traditional meeting planner considerations like the evacuation of a building. Although it is important to prepare for standard emergencies such as fires, the fullest range of crises possible need to be considered in crisis planning activities.

Fifth, another prevention and preparation activity that needs to be focused on is the testing of crisis plans. The research found that 89% of meeting planners do not test

their crisis plans. How is one to be confident that the planning process will be effective during the time of an actual crisis? Research shows that "organizations which prepare effectively for crises make a deliberate point to constantly probe and scrutinize their operations and management structures for potential errors or problems before they are too big to correct" (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993, pg. 53). Testing plans, in any industry, can be challenging but even more so for the meeting planning industry. Because of the mere fact that meetings are mobile and take place in different facilities all over the world, testing crisis plans can be a daunting task for planners, yet it has to be done. This fact highlights the need for flexible and versatile plans to accommodate a variety of situations, locations and types of crises.

Key Takeaway:
Meeting planners are not as prepared or knowledgeable about the topic of crisis preparedness as they should be in today's global marketplace. Over half of the planners (58.5%) surveyed, indicated they had no type of crisis plan in place. Prevention and preparation activities, furthermore, were found to be missing in the crisis preparedness initiatives conducted by an appreciable number of meeting planners.

A crisis plan is the outcome of a continuous planning process that requires a great deal of time and energy to create through intensive information gathering, training, and information dissemination. Current plans have a variety of weaknesses that need correction. Perhaps most questionable is why existing plans have not been tested for identification of these weaknesses and omissions.

6.2.3. Contribution to the Research Knowledge Base

This research study identified several areas where immediate action is needed to assist meeting planners in the development of strategic and effective crisis plans. Information regarding scenario planning and testing of crisis plans need to be provided to

meeting planners as crisis preparation initiatives. The findings from this study have also contributed to the knowledge base by raising our awareness of the unevenness of both the existence of plans and their quality. It should also alert the industry, as a whole, to the importance of communication and coordination with officials at the local, state, and national level. The responses to this survey should add to the industry's understanding of how little training is actually being conducted for 21st century crises relative to more traditional emergencies like fires, electrical outages in a facility and so on. Using the findings of this study, a host of recommendations to help industry associations provide crisis preparedness services to their members is offered.

6.3. Study Two: An Empirical Study of Meeting Planners' Perceptions of Crisis Preparedness

6.3.1. Summary of Key Findings

Whereas the first study in this dissertation focused on ascertaining the actual availability and use of crisis plans and other crisis preparedness activities, the purpose of the second study was to assess and explore the belief systems and perceptions of how meeting planners think about the need for crisis planning. There were six major findings.

6.3.2. Findings

First, organizational size and activities are factors in planners' perceptions about crises. Generally speaking, crisis preparedness is perceived as important primarily by planners who hold a larger number of meetings per year and represent associations with large memberships. This implies that safety, security, and crisis planning needs to be

leveraged by the professional industry associations to raise the level of awareness among all meeting planners.

Second, there were very few differences among the specific types of meeting planners in their crisis preparedness initiatives. One notable difference was that government planners received increased amounts of training relative to other planners in various areas of crisis preparedness including fire, bomb threats, natural disasters, and man-made attacks. This could imply that the more regulated environment of government organizations may require specific preparation measures to effectively manage a crisis at a meeting or event.

Third, a troubling finding is that over one-third of meeting planners (34.9%) surveyed have experienced some type of crisis at a function they have planned. Over half of the planners (58.5%) in the same sample, however, still do not have any type of crisis plan in place. This finding implies that meeting planners still do not take crisis preparation seriously enough. The tendency to rely upon the owners of facilities to be prepared is still a powerful assumption among planners. Too often, it appears that planners resort to one simple checklist as the solution to crisis preparedness. This is not how preparedness works. Planners must be made aware of how developing strategic and comprehensive initiatives will lead to improved operational effectiveness during a crisis. It should not be forgotten that there are many types of crises. Plans must be adaptable, portable and accommodate a variety of situations. Along with this flexibility is the need for a continuous learning and improvement component. This can be done in many different ways, but it should be a part of both the planning process and the eventual plan for a meeting.

Fourth, crisis planning is being perceived as a wedding of strategy, tactics and operations by those who have been involved in the development of plans and experienced a crisis episode. It is not clear why this has occurred, but it represents a finding that deserves further study. Why have some planners reached this level of awareness about the importance of viewing the crisis preparation as a strategic planning process, but others have not?

Fifth, the results of this study identified that meeting planners do better when they have a commitment and assistance from upper management in their crisis planning efforts. The meeting planner needs to become a champion for the cause within their respective meeting planning organization, especially with senior leadership. The fundamental "need" for having a crisis preparedness strategy must first be recognized before anything can be done. Pearson and Mitroff (1993) point out from their research that a single champion for such efforts is most often found at the middle management level. As a meeting planner builds his or her knowledge and credibility about crisis preparedness efforts, upper management is more likely to develop a sense of ownership and claim responsibility for future crisis planning objectives and activities. If industry associations can focus on arming planners with more knowledge and access to resources in the area of crisis preparedness, meeting planners may be able to garner more support for their efforts within their respective organizations. Another way to acquire upper management's support is through meetings of key internal and external stakeholders. Pearson and Mitroff (1993, pg. 56) describe how having management assess "how they might be perceived by various stakeholders helps them discover their organization's crisis vulnerabilities, often bringing unflattering perspectives to light." Bringing together

local responders (fire, police, medical) and facility managers can help management cultivate a need for crisis preparedness planning and plans. It can also influence the actual content of plans.

Finally, this study also examined the characteristics of meeting planners who have a crisis plan. Those planners having a plan likely received extensive training in the areas of natural disasters, man-made attacks, and medical training. Meeting planners who belonged to large industry associations were more likely to have a plan.

Key Takeaway:
The key takeaway from this study is that education supersedes experience when it comes to shaping perceptions about the importance and structure of crisis preparedness planning and plans. Table 4.18 reveals that 35% have "experienced" some type of crisis, yet 58.5% still do not have a formal plan or even an ongoing crisis management planning process. In contrast, findings in Table 4.39 illustrate that when planners have some form of education/training, they are more likely to have a detailed plan. Planners with training who belong to a large professional association are also more inclined to have a plan. Planner type makes no difference in terms of perceptions about the importance of crisis preparedness.

6.3.3. Contribution to the Research Knowledge Base

It can be concluded with some degree of certainty that a majority of planners do not perceive crisis preparedness important enough right now to take proactive measures to ensure safety and security at meetings and events they manage. On the other hand, previous empirical research on meeting planners' perceptions has tended to ignore the affective/qualitative dimensions of the planners' perceptual domain (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). This study has found that meeting planners 'feel' the need to develop a plan, especially when they participate in education and training directed at the importance of crisis preparedness, but have yet to make it a priority. Additionally, the results of this

study reveal that further research is needed to understand why some planners look at crisis preparation through a "strategic planning filter" and others continue to follow a more conventional approach informed by "operational" planning considerations and the development of plans alone. The strategic approach takes a more visionary and process-oriented approach to the task of preparing for crisis management. The current research in the MICE industry simply does not speak to this distinction very well at all. The next study adds more information about this inference.

6.4. Study Three: A Content Analysis of Crisis Plans: Making Inferences About the Nature of Crisis Preparedness in the Meeting Planning Industry

6.4.1. Summary of Key Findings

The final study in this dissertation sought to build on the quantitative research completed in the first two studies. Based on content analysis methodology, this study takes a more qualitative approach that adds a textual analysis which enriches and adds value to the earlier findings. In one way, it builds on the work of Argyris and Schön's (1974) idea that people have espoused theories that are different from the theories they actually use. The content analysis methodology is a tool for uncovering the mental maps people use to "plan, implement and review their actions" (Smith, 2001). In other words, planners may state they use a strategic approach in the crisis plan development efforts, but, in fact, the words and themes of the content analysis reveal a mental map that is better characterized as "operational."

6.4.2. Findings

First, consistent with the first two studies, the content analysis affirmed the finding that few planners actually have crisis plans. This was discovered during the data collection efforts when 82 of 115 (71.3%) meeting planners contacted had no crisis plan available for analysis.

Second, the term 'emergency' is used much more often than 'crisis' which may offer insight into how meeting planners define the terms. They may feel the more conventional and operational term 'emergency' encompasses a broader scope of situations and represents circumstances that are not as severe as those associated with a 'crisis.'

Third, the term 'process' was used only 51 times among all 20 plans analyzed. The inference drawn from this finding is that plans are more a reflection of a linear view of crisis management where a series of sequential tasks have to be completed. The minimal use of the term 'process' implies absence of a view of crisis preparedness as a process of planning with little appreciations of the need to adapt, remain nimble and demonstrate flexibility during a crisis---some crises requiring more of these competencies than others. The idea of actually "learning during a crisis" is undervalued by this straightforward and traditional mindset. Four themes were identified from the word frequency analysis: Event, People, Location, and Action. Further investigation determined that most of the activities involved with each theme focused on response measures. 'Communication' was a major theme identified when researching phrases in combination with word frequencies. This implies that meeting planners recognize the importance of this critical component when managing a crisis. Natural disasters and

medical crises were the top two types of crises that were explained in detail within the plans. This is consistent with the findings of Study 2 as training in these two areas were predictors of planners who have a crisis plan. Finally, when mapping the findings of the content analysis from word frequencies to themes to explanatory models, there was an obvious disconnect between the strategic and operational mindsets of meeting planners in preparing for a crisis event. The plans had a heavy emphasis on activities focused around response and recovery of a crisis which both illustrate an operational mindset. Very little attention was given to strategic initiatives such as prevention and awareness measures including identifying the crisis team members, scenario planning or testing plans. The concept of learning would close the loop and eliminate the disconnect, but learning was not a substantive part of the existing plans and could affect the success of managing future crises.

Key Takeaway:
If we trace the findings of the content analysis for this study from words to themes to explanatory models to prescriptive educational strategies for this small group of planners that do have crisis plans, the analysis reveals that the mental maps used by these planners was not based on a strategic approach linking strategy with operations with results management. The third element, results management, is almost nonexistent and produces a disconnect between the strategic, the operational and results management mindsets of meeting planners in preparing for a crisis event. The concept of learning that would close the loop and eliminate the disconnect between the outcomes of the crisis management process (response and recovery) and the prevention of future mistakes or less than optimal results is simply not a part of these plans. Equally important, learning as a phase is not openly discussed and defined in Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness. At best, Pelfrey makes reference to consequences. But learning from consequences as a formal phase does not appear in Pelfrey's diagram nor does Pelfrey distinguish between what Argyris and Schön (1978) refer to as "single-loop" learning---learning that produces incremental change in the results management phase----and "double-loop" learning---learning that explores "why" a change that is transformative must occur to improve a plan and the planning process.

6.4.3. Contribution to the Research Knowledge Base

This study found that the crisis planning literacy of current industry planners is limited to mostly the calibration of operational tactics with only minor inclusion of strategic thinking and the way in which results from real-life crises, scenario planning or testing initiatives can improve and transform plans. In addition, the literature emerging from the relatively new field of crisis management places great significance on the distinction between crisis planning as a continuing process of preparation and improvement and a crisis plan as the outcome of this preparatory process. The MICE industry literature and the hospitality and management literature does not make this distinction clear and almost ignores the concept of transformative learning as a part of the process of producing plans. The results of the evaluation reveal a heavy emphasis on operational activities (response and recovery measures) with less emphasis on the pro-active, strategic areas of prevention and awareness. This study should add to the research base and inform the direction of both future research and industry applications.

6.5. Limitations of the Three Studies

As with any research, there are limitations that condition the applicability and implications of the findings. First, the data was collected for the three studies from meeting planners were members of a few of only the most common industry associations. Those planners that do not belong to these associations were not surveyed and may have provided different responses and profiles with respect to demographic characteristics and level of crisis preparedness. This study; therefore, is not generalizable to all meeting planners. Second, the content analysis was completed on a small number of plans. A

larger pool of plans might have generated a wider variety of patterns and themes which could affect the findings. Third, meeting planners are vulnerable to an unlimited number and types of crises at the many meetings they manage. This dissertation did not focus on the specific types of crises and how meeting planners react to each. Even so, it is unlikely that based on the many types of crisis there is a single or general approach to crisis preparedness. Fourth, this dissertation did not explore the cultural systems of meeting planning organizations. The type of organizational culture may hinder or facilitate management's thinking and preparation measures in regards to crisis preparedness.

Despite these limitations, the findings do validate several impressions about the level of crisis preparedness in the meeting planning industry. In addition, the findings reveal evidence that the industry is not moving very quickly in a direction that would suggest planners are making this crucial topic a high priority. The findings are numerous and noteworthy and point to the importance of placing preparedness planning in a larger, more strategic context.

6.6. The Core Value of the Dissertation: Answering the "So-What" Question

When all is said and done and the findings of this project are published—so what? Has the research effort made a difference? The "so what" question is best answered this way: The core value of the dissertation is less the individual study findings and key takeaways, and more the greater conceptual and empirical clarity it provides to the growing and complex issue of crisis preparedness in the MICE industry. As a result of this research, several major insights have been clarified and progress toward a general framework for improving industry crisis preparedness planning has been established.

6.6.1. It's the Process, Not the Plan: Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness as a Foundation for Developing MICE Industry Crisis Preparedness Plans

One of the most valuable insights about how crisis preparedness is viewed in the general management literature is provided by Pearson and Mitroff (1993). They argue that organizations with effective crisis management strategies "are keenly aware of their vulnerabilities and set out to improve deficiencies in an on-going crisis management process. They do not believe that crisis management plans, per se, are the answer. Indeed, they recognize that, rarely, if ever, will a crisis follow a pre-set plan. The purpose of crisis management is not to produce a set of plans; it is to prepare an organization to think creatively about the unthinkable so that the best possible decisions will be made in a time of crisis. A fixed preparation for all crises is not a sensible target." This quote underscores one of the major points made in Chapter Five---there is a critical distinction to be made between crisis planning as a continuous process of preparation and improvement and a crisis plan as the outcome of this preparatory process. Additionally, Pearson and Mitroff imply that the process does not stop with the plan, but continues even during an event. This is certainly a different stream of planning consciousness than the mindset which suggests developing a plan is the top priority. Plans are a major priority, but the purpose of a plan is enhanced by the additional role of serving as a structuring element in a "system" of crisis preparedness. Beyond the mitigation and limiting of damage, the process of plan development and testing will help structure later decisions and provide the opportunity for consideration of alternative pathways and scenario selection.

The crisis plan document is a critical part of the process. The content analysis research in this dissertation, however, helps reveal with regard to the actual planning mental maps in use is that meeting planners really need a better basic understanding of *all* aspects of crisis preparedness. Given that the research also demonstrates that even the impact of experiencing a crisis is not enough to convince some meeting planners they need a crisis management planning process and a plan (see Table 4.18 in Chapter Five), the value and implications of providing better education and training strategies for the industry are magnified. Industry associations can be the source of much of this consciousness-raising and education. If the leaders in the meeting planner industry suspected this to be the case before this research was conducted, they will know it with greater certainty now.

After a careful review of the general literature in the field of crisis management, Pelfrey's Cycle of Preparedness (Figure 6.1) was selected to help structure part of the research in this dissertation and to serve as a tool for comparing plans by employing the phasing elements as a set of preparation standards. Importantly, Pelfrey's cycle approach is consistent with the idea of planning as a process that "cannot be proclaimed or finished" (Pelfrey, 2005, pg. 5). The four key phases in the Pelfrey framework—prevention, awareness, response and recovery—are valuable for "steering" the plan development process and typify what needs to be considered when building a plan.

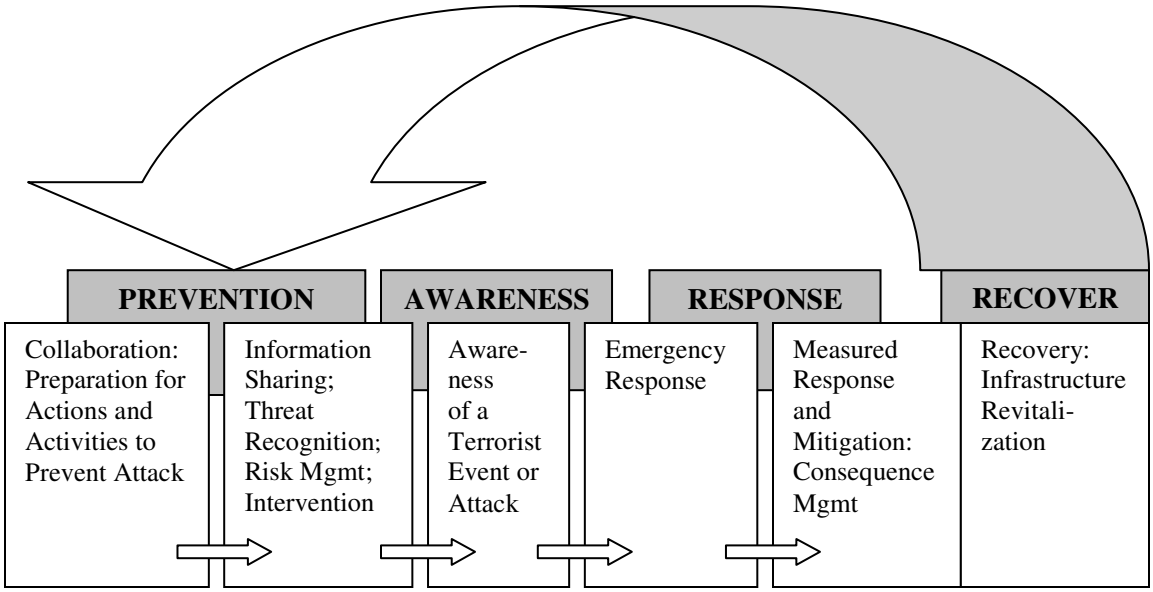

Figure 6.1: Major Elements of the Cycle of Preparedness (Adapted from Pelfrey, 2005)

6.6.2. Adding Value to the Pelfrey Cycle as a Process for Planning and Plan Development: Double Loop Learning

What seems to be weak or missing with the Pelfrey framework is a "learning" phase. In contrast, Pearson and Mitroff (1993, p. 54) include a learning stage after recovery to allow for "adequate reflection and critical examination of the lessons learned from experiencing a crisis." Making time for organizational learning would appear to be almost self-evident. Yet, it is almost non-existent in much of the MICE industry specific literature. If we assess the mindset used by meeting planners in the content analysis sample, this omission is reaffirmed. The word results of the content analysis are visually presented in Figure 5.4. Learning is hardly mentioned. At the same time, none of the literature, general or specific, includes a very sophisticated approach to organizational learning in the crisis preparation and management process.

Argyris and Schön (1974) make a classic distinction between single-loop and double-loop learning to respond to the research finding that a mismatch that can occur between intentions and outcomes in the organizational learning phase. Single-loop learning solves problems attributed to faulty planning but does not answer the question of "why" the problem occurred in the first place. For example, a recent article in the Wall Street Journal (Michel, Bowen, & Johnston, 2008) describes customer service recovery in the following way—"all too often, companies have customer service sort out the immediate problem, offer an apology or some compensation, and then assume all is well. ….it does nothing to address the underlying problem, practically guaranteeing similar failures and complaints." This is single-loop learning. The question of "why" the poor service occurred is never answered when learning is defined in this more adaptive and incremental way. In comparison, double-loop learning is a transformative dynamic that occurs when a problem is identified and corrects the source of the deficiency by "modification of the organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives" (Argyris and Schön, 1974).

In a double-loop learning approach, the following questions would be posed to remedy the preceding customer service deficiency:

"what is the customer trying to accomplish, and why?"

"how is the service produced, and why?"

"what are the employees doing to provide the service, and why?"

(Michel, Bowen, & Johnston, 2008)

When applied to the Pelfrey framework, reflection and critical examination after the recovery phase would not just correct the problem. Rather, the learning phase would ask

"why" police entered a facility to look for a terrorist without notifying the meeting planners in charge. The problem could be corrected by asking local police to issue a text message, but use of the technology does not manage the policy problem. If the crisis plan never contained a protocol/policy for contacting those in charge first about why and when police would be entering the facility, a simple text message does not go to the root of the problem.

The bottom line is that the research results derived from the content analysis point to the need for greater emphasis on a learning component in crisis management plans that go to the root of weaknesses and mistakes in a crisis event. Double-loop learning is an error detection approach to learning that is essential for a planning process based on continuous preparation, improvement and transformative change.

6.6.3. The Significance of Strategy, Creativity, and Flexibility: A Crisis Planning Template for the MICE Industry

One of the enduring research themes in this dissertation is the distinction first made in chapter four regarding the difference between planners with strategic and operational perceptions and those with primarily operational perceptions. The claim was made that planners with an operational mindset have a tendency to think less strategically about crisis preparedness. As a result of this narrower mindset, high quality crisis thinking and planning must come from a different stream of consciousness. Continued MICE industry crisis planning conditioned by operational considerations will have a hard time incorporating preventive measures, double-loop learning and the challenges of flexibility and creativity in the process; not necessarily the plan. Tying together strategic

thought with routine operational planning is essential if the MICE industry is to eventually address the imperatives of this growing issue-area.

Additionally, effective crisis preparedness strategies must be *custom-tailored* to the MICE industry and the related business environment. Because every meeting or event is different, there can be no general approach to plans or planning that covers every part of the industry. Meeting planners and key players in the industry must work together to develop strategic and operational planning strategies that are flexible and adaptable as every crisis is different. Particular to the industry, for example, may be prevention strategies involving the site selection process. This is critical because meeting planners manage meetings in a variety of facilities and one cannot become routine in such a process. Finally, the results of this dissertation make it clear that a learning dynamic is an essential element of any high-quality and effective planning process and plan development approach (Figure 6.2)

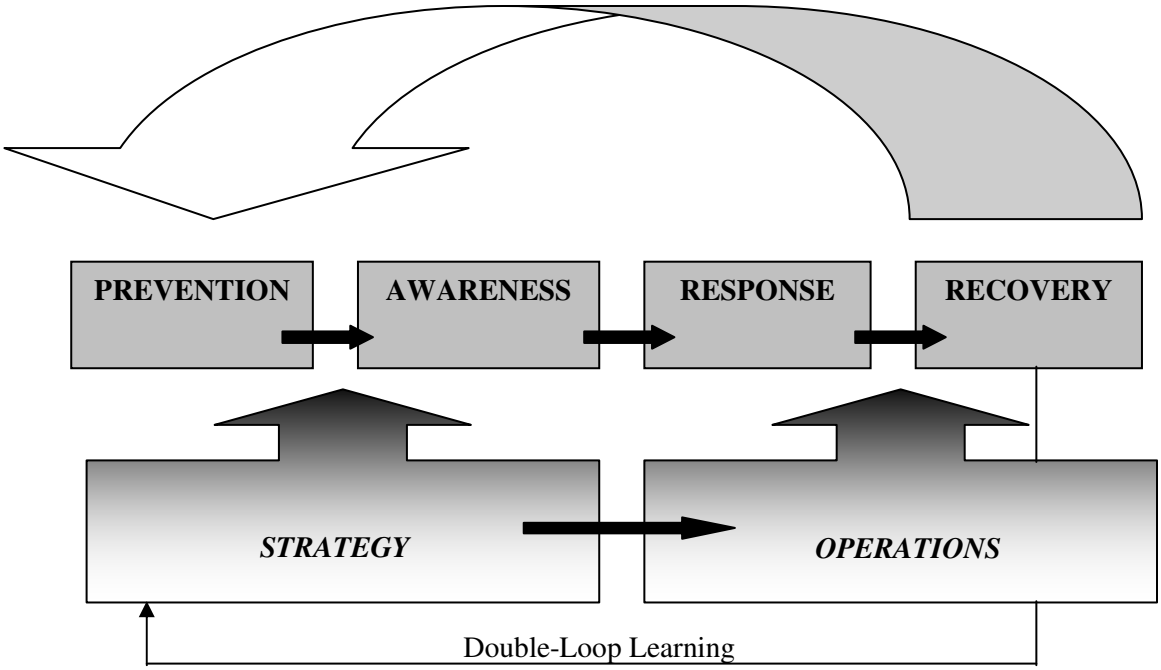

Figure 6.2: A Strategy-Based, Learning-Driven Crisis Preparedness Planning Framework

A CRISIS PLANNING TEMPLATE FOR THE MICE INDUSTRY

*Adapted, in part, from Pearson & Mitroff (1993)

ELEMENT ONE-- PLANNING TO PLAN

Strategic Actions

- Integrate crisis management into strategic planning processes
- Integrate crisis management into statements of corporate excellence
- Include outsiders on the organization's board and on crisis management team
- Provide training and workshops in crisis management
- Expose organizational members to crisis simulations
- Create a diversity or portfolio of crisis management strategies

Operational & Structural Actions

- Create a crisis team (comprised of 5-7 people)
  - Include individuals from inside as well as outside the organization
  - A cross-section of backgrounds will provide important insight into all aspects of managing a crisis helping to ensure a quality crisis plan.
  - Internal team members may include other meeting planners, administrative staff, and/or top management. Employees from different departments help to offer unique perspectives and approaches to handling a crisis.

- External team members may include individuals from law enforcement, fire, medical response organizations, law firms, and community organizations such as the Convention & Visitors Bureau, convention center and hotel properties.

- Dedicate budget expenditures for crisis management
- Establish accountabilities for updating emergency policies/manuals
- Computerize inventories of crisis management resources
- Designate an emergency command control room
- Assure technological redundancy in vial areas (e.g., computer systems)
- Establish working relationships with outside experts in crisis management

Psychological and Cultural Actions

- Increase visibility of strong top management commitment to crisis management
- Improve relationships with activist groups
- Improve upward communication
- Improve downward communication regarding crisis management programs
- Provide training regarding human and emotional impacts of crises

ELEMENT TWO—OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

- The purpose of the plan
- Any necessary policies regarding emergency response
  - For example, if an employee identifies a crisis or potential crisis, who is the first person to contact and initiate response activities.
- Emergencies that are addressed in your plan
  - Including, but not limited to, natural disasters, accidents/fatalities, protests, fire, terrorist attack and/or bomb threats.
- List contact information (include primary and secondary contact details)
  - Crisis team
  - Facility/venue management
  - Authorities/external parties (law enforcement, etc.)
  - Key Management & personnel for your company
- Responsibilities of key personnel
  - Where response activities would be managed from (command center)
  - Identify the media spokesperson

ELEMENT THREE—PREVENTION & PREPARATION

Actions taken to avoid an incident or to intervene and stop an incident from occurring. Prevention involves actions taken to protect lives and property.

Communication Actions

- Conduct training for dealing with the media regarding crises
- Improve communication with local communities
- Improve communication with intervening stakeholders (e.g., police)

Evaluation Actions

- Conduct legal and financial audit of threats and liabilities
- Modify insurance coverage to match crisis management contingencies
- Prioritize activities necessary for daily operations

Diagnostic Actions

- Conduct environmental impact scans
- Establish learning system to follow up past crises and near crises
  - Scenario planning – brainstorming all possible crisis situations that could occur at a meeting/convention/event
  - Plan testing and simulation
- Conduct risk assessment/diagnostic analysis
  - Collaborate with other meeting planners, agencies, organizations, individuals, and meeting facilities to discuss potential risks that could occur at meetings.
  - Include as many events as you can think of that could possibly occur at your meeting and in the community where the meeting will be taking place including, but not limited to the following:
  - Consider the following items:

    --*Historical events*
    - Have happened before at the facility, or with certain groups

    --*Geographical events*
    - Meeting facility's proximity to dams, flood plains, etc.; proximity to companies utilizing hazardous materials (possibility for leaks or explosions); proximity to major transportation routes and airports; proximity to nuclear power plants

    --*Technology events*
    - What could result from a process or system failure?
    - Explosion , power failures, computer system failures

    --*Human error*
    - Single largest cause of workplace harm (careless actions)

    --*Man-made events*
    - Intentional crimes (terrorism, shootings, theft, protests, bombs)
    - Unintentional (fire)

    --*Natural Disasters*
    - Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, thunderstorms/lightning, earthquake, etc.
  - Once you have made a list of potential crises, determine the probability of each event that could occur
  - Determine the magnitude/impact of effect that each potential event could impose

- Determine the resources available to distribute to each risk in regards to funding, education, training, equipment, etc.

ELEMENT FOUR—AWARENESS

The continual process of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence, information, and knowledge to allow organizations and individuals to anticipate requirements and to react effectively.

- Establish tracking system for early warning signals
- Conduct training to educate employees on crisis identification
  - Teaches employees to pay attention to small pieces of evidence that a crisis could happen, is happening, or about to happen.
  - Evidence of potential crises may include, but are not limited to, a suspicious individual that does not appear to belong in the meeting and/or facility, an employee who does not have on appropriate identification, and/or any packages that are unattended or not properly labeled.
- Communicate plan to employees and key personnel
  - Completed 2-3 times per year and prior to each meeting or event.
  - Done through staff meetings, training sessions, or one-on-one

ELEMENT FIVE—RESPONSE

Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs.

- Have necessary emergency equipment to mitigate crisis.
  Including but not limited to:
  - Do you have a first-aid kit on site?
  - Do you have access to radios and/or walkie-talkies to enable communication?
- Construct appropriate telephone tree to initiate response tasks and connect with key responders of what to do next
  - Includes Crisis Team members (especially those on site of the meeting)
  - Should also include, but not limited to:
  - The head of the meeting organization that is affected by the crisis
  - Community responders, such as law enforcement, fire, medical, media
  - Facility management team – who do you contact at the facility where the meeting is taking place?
- Staff trained on proper response procedures for events determined to be most likely to occur or determined to have a major impact at your meeting.
  - For example, CPR training in the event of a medical crisis
  - Evacuation plans in the event of a fire

- Conduct exercises to test the plan
  - May included, but not limited to, tabletop exercises, computer simulations, role playing to complete field exercises (simulate event and physically go through the proper procedures)
- Designate an individual to serve as media spokesperson for the public
- Have clearly specified key roles and responsibilities for key responders
- Response tasks and activities have been tested. For example, and not limited to:
  - A command center has been established
  - An evacuation plan and meeting point has been outlined along with alternative plans

ELEMENT SIX—RECOVERY

The development, coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans. (NRP, 2004).

- Provide psychological support services (e.g., stress/anxiety management)
- Establish procedures assuring the chain of command
- Establish procedures for an employee and media briefings
- Determine critical functions to ensure business continuity
  - Determine recovery priorities and timetable goals
    For example, which functions should be addressed first and establish steps to take to resume meeting/event
  - Procedures for Restoring Critical Operations
    May include, but not limited to the following:
    - Loss of Personnel, Equipment, Facility/Site, Utilities, Documentation
    - Technology concerns: Hardware, Software, Power disruptions, Data communications (i.e., telephone services), Data Files & vital records, Data recovery alternatives (i.e., back up vital information at an off-site location
- Review and update insurance policy
  - How will your company be valued when determining insurance coverage?
  - What perils or losses does the policy cover?
  - Included a 'business interruption' clause such as "We will pay for the actual loss of Business Income you sustain due to the necessary suspension of your 'operations' during the 'period of restoration.'"
- Meet and reflect on crisis response. Address the crisis plan for adjustments
- Marketing tasks
  - To rebuild reputation and promote your successful response to a crisis
  - May include newsletters to associations (clients) and/or new promotional campaigns in trade magazines

ELEMENT SEVEN—DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING (INTERVENING TO IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS)

Learning that occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives.

- Recall corporate memory of past crises/dangers
- Review current planning principles and practices as applied to the event
- Map the error/defect/problem/crisis from the client's perspective
- Look to practice and history when it comes to evaluating the management approach
- Study the impact of the intervention and archive the results

Some Key Tips for the Crisis Planning Process:

Six tips to keep in mind when operationalizing any crisis management plan:

- *Strategy*: strategic planning must take place before operational tasks are defined
- *Creativity*: think outside of the box; make the unthinkable situations become thinkable
- *Adaptable & Flexible*: Remember it may be necessary to alter and/or adapt plans and re-plan during the actual crisis or event
- Do not leave your plan in a drawer to collect dust! Review it, Revise it, Distribute it, become a champion!
- Review the plans at pre-convention meetings
- *Remember*: 80% of companies that lack a crisis plan "vanish" within two years of suffering a major crisis (Wrigley, 2003). The plan, however, can only be effective if a strategic planning process was undertaken in its development.

6.7. Recommendations for the MICE Industry

Based on the results of the dissertation, the following list of recommendations for the meeting planning industry to consider is offered below:

- Provision of an interactive workshop for meeting planners to engage in the crisis plan development process. This would be conducted 1-2 times per year. The education should be devised for meeting planners to enhance their understanding of strategic thinking for purposes of prevention and awareness in the crisis management cycle of preparedness as well as operational strategies. The critical understanding that crisis preparedness is an on-going process is also a must during these workshops. The workshops, most likely offered by industry associations, should include a variety of guest speakers including crisis experts, emergency responders, and meeting planners who have experience crises to share real-life experiences. Other features should include a hands-on session where experts can consult with meeting planners on their current crisis preparedness strategies. This

is an excellent opportunity to highlight the preparedness cycle described in Figure 6.3 based on Pelfrey's crisis research.

- Develop an extensive catalog of literature that can be easily accessed by meeting planners to help them learn more. This would include all types of literature from research articles to trade magazines and case studies. The results of this research identify a desire by meeting planners for access to relevant research on the topic of crisis preparedness.

- The development of a 'tool-kit' for meeting planners that will establish a foundation for initiating preparedness steps. The tool-kit can include education and readiness strategies to inform meeting planners of potential threats (e.g., manuals, templates, videos). These education materials should be put together with the help of experts and targeted at the meeting planning industry making such a tool-kit more valuable to the busy meeting planner who needs specific and relevant information to begin the process.

- The creation of a computer simulation that meeting planners can use to test their established preparedness strategies. These simulations can become a reality through research institutes and are highly effective in testing crisis plans. The effort would take time from 'crisis preparedness champions' in the MICE industry and the research institute experts but could prove beneficial in testing crisis preparedness strategies. Other scenario planning and testing plan educational strategies should be incorporated through workshops and tool-kit materials as previously described.

- An interactive section on industry association websites that can be utilized to facilitate discussion about crisis planning and best practices. This benchmarking section could also include webinars that members from all around the world could utilize and further their knowledge in many areas of crisis preparedness. The analyses from the studies identify weaknesses in the strategic perceptions of meeting planners to where access to literature and discussion will generate a more strategic approach to crisis preparedness for the industry.

- Industry media should cover this topic more in monthly publications to increase the awareness of importance to meeting planners for crisis preparedness initiatives. Crisis preparedness experts should be consulted to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the information presented. Another recommendation is for corporations and organizations to make crisis planning a part of their marketing materials and campaigns. This strategy would send a message about the bottom line and competition. If crisis planning "sells," it will not take long for the smaller organizations and meeting planner groups to follow the leaders.

- Template/Guidelines: The template outlined in the previous section provides meetings planners a strategic approach to the crisis planning process. It is based upon Pelfrey's four phases and includes a section on learning.

6.8. Future Research

The research completed in this dissertation has provided a foundation for a variety of possible future research initiatives. A list derived from the results of the three studies and the collective insights of the dissertation would include the following items:

- Future studies may expand the research to include other groups of meeting planners.

- Future studies should evaluate a more extensive group of meeting planners.

- More specific areas of a meeting planners' job could be studied to further investigate the process of how a planner brings the issue of crisis preparedness into other decisions, such as the site selection choice. As the industry becomes more global, this could be a very valuable initiative.

- A meeting planner's attendees and clients should be studied to evaluate their expectations of crisis preparedness planning. Results from the attendees and clients could subsequently be compared against meeting planners' perceived levels of preparedness. This would shed light on the issue of whether or not expectations are being met. Identifying expectations may help pressure meeting planners to further realize the importance of crisis preparedness. If clients know that a meeting planner is effectively prepared to handle a crisis situation, they will more likely hire the person/organization to manage a meeting or event. At a minimum, meeting participants are demanding greater transparency in the preparation process. This type of research can help meet that demand.

- Future research could include collecting plans from specific types of meeting planners. The content could be analyzed and subsequently compared among the different types of planners.

- Further research needs to be done on specific types of crises that may affect meeting planners and what needs to be considered for each in crisis preparedness strategies.

- Future research could be done to explore the meeting planning organizational culture and how it may deter or encourage crisis preparedness strategies.

- The content analysis study could be duplicated in different parts of the industry from facilities to restaurant managers to others in order to analyze the preparedness levels for other aspects of the overall hospitality and tourism industry.

- The facilities that hold meetings and events should be studied to evaluate levels of crisis preparedness and interaction with meeting planners. Levels of collaboration could have tremendous implications for cost-effectiveness, enhanced safety and awareness, and improved views of the industry by participants and public policymakers.

- Tourism and hospitality industry associations of all types should be surveyed to better understand the education and training they provide to their members and external parties who may be part of a crisis preparedness initiative.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Glossary of Key Terms

Academic Journal: A regularly-published, peer-reviewed publication that publishes scholarship relating to an academic discipline. The purpose of such a journal is to provide a place for the introduction and scrutiny of new research, as well as a forum for the critique of existing research (Wikipedia, 2006).

Acute Crisis Stage: Similar to the response stage. The point of no return and action must take place (Fink, 1986).

Awareness: The continual process of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence, information, and knowledge to allow organizations and individuals to anticipate requirements and to react effectively (NRP, 2004).

Business Crisis and Continuity Management: The business management practices that provide the focus and guidance for the decisions and actions necessary for a business to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, resume, recover, restore, and transition from a disruptive (crisis) even tin a manner consistent with its strategic objectives (Shaw & Harrald, 2004)

Chain of Command**:** A series of command, control, executive, or management positions in hierarchical order of authority (NRP, 2004).

Chronic Crisis Stage: Similar to the Recovery phase. A time for self-analysis and of healing (Fink, 1986).

City-wide Event: An event that requires the use of a convention center or event complex, as well as multiple hotels in the host city (APEX, 2006).

Communication Plan: Details of all the formal communications activities that will occur throughout the crisis.

Competency: Possessing a level of capability supported by knowledge, skills and/or abilities required for effective or superior performance within the context of a person's job responsibilities and in relationship to the organization and its goals (Dartmouth Research 2003).

Crisis:

- A crucial or decisive point or situation; a turning point (American Heritage Dictionary, 1997)
- Characterized by a certain degree of risk and uncertainty (Fink)
- A major event that has potentially negative results. The event and its aftermath may significantly damage a business and its employee, products, services, financial condition, and reputation. Handled properly, a crisis may provide

opportunities for organizational learning and strategic improvement. (Shaw & Harrald, 2004)

- Any incident that can focus negative attention on a company and have an adverse effect on its overall financial condition, its relationships with its audiences or its reputation in the marketplace (Reid, 2000 from NyBlom, 2003).

Crisis Communication: All means of communication, both internal and external to an organization, designed and delivered to support the Crisis Management function (Shaw & Harrald, 2004).

Crisis Creep: Paying attention to small pieces of evidence that a crisis could be approaching. Part of the Awareness stage. This element of awareness can promote a more effective response (Augustine, 2000).

Crisis Management: Involves planning, organizing, leading, and controlling assets and activities in the critical period immediately before, during, and after and actual or impending catastrophe to reduce the loss of resources essential to the organization's eventual recovery (NyBlom, 2003). Crisis management responsibilities extend to pre-event prevention and preparedness and post event restoration and transition (Shaw & Harrald, 2004).

Crisis Resolution Stage: Making the organization well and whole again (Fink, 1986). Part of the recovery phase.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support domestic incident management activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOCs may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, and medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., Federal, State, regional, county, city, tribal), or by some combination thereof (NRP, 2004).

Evacuation**:** Organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of civilians from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas (NRP, 2004).

Facility Management**:** Facility selection and acquisition, building services, information systems, communications, safety and health, and physical security (NRP, 2004).

First Responder**:** Local and nongovernmental police, fire, and emergency personnel who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers as defined in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled

support personnel (such as equipment operators) who provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations. First responders may include personnel from Federal, State, local, tribal, or nongovernmental organizations (NRP, 2004).

Gross Square Footage: 1) Total amount of available function space in exhibit hall or other facility. 2) Total amount of space used for a specific show or event (APEX, 2006).

Incident**:** An occurrence or event, natural or human caused, that requires an emergency response to protect life or property. Incidents can, for example, include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, wildland and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, war-related disasters, public health and medical emergencies, and other occurrences requiring an emergency response (NRP, 2004).

Incident Management**:** The management of operations, logistics, planning, finance and administration, safety and information flow associated with the operational response to the consequences/impacts (if any) of a crisis event.

Incident Response**:** The tactical reaction to the physical consequences/impacts (if any) of a crisis event to protect personnel and property, assess the situation, stabilize the situation and conduct response operations that support the economic viability of a business.

Meeting Planner: A person who is in charge of all planning of a meeting. Meeting planners handle logistics, meals, hotel arrangements, room-sets, travel schedules, and often the hiring of speakers (McDargh, 2008). For this research, the term meeting planners includes individuals who plan any type of meeting, conference, convention, tradeshow, exhibition, or event.

MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences/Congress, & Exhibitions. An internationally used term for the events industry (APEX, 2006).

Mitigation**:** Activities designed to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident (NRP, 2004). Mitigation measures may be implemented prior to, during, or after an incident. Mitigation measures are often developed in accordance with lessons learned from prior incidents. Mitigation involves ongoing actions to reduce exposure to, probability of, or potential loss from hazards. Measures may include zoning and building codes, floodplain buyouts, and analysis of hazard-related data to determine where it is safe to build or locate temporary facilities. Mitigation can include efforts to educate governments, businesses, and the public on measures they can take to reduce loss and injury.

Mock Drill: An instructional exercise aimed at perfecting procedures and skills in the event a crisis were to occur. Considered regular practice to be prepared.

Net Square Footage: Actual amount of salable space used by exhibit booths/stands which excludes aisles, lounges, registration areas, etc (APEX, 2006).

Preparedness**:** The range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents. Preparedness is a continuous process involving efforts at all levels of government and between government and private-sector and nongovernmental organizations to identify threats, determine vulnerabilities, and identify required resources (NRP, 2004).

Prevention**:** Actions taken to avoid an incident or to intervene to stop an incident from occurring. Prevention involves actions taken to protect lives and property. It involves applying intelligence and other information to a range of activities that may include such countermeasures as deterrence operations; heightened inspections; improved surveillance and security operations; investigations to determine the full nature and source of the threat; public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and, as appropriate, specific law enforcement operations aimed at deterring, preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity and apprehending potential perpetrators and bringing them to justice (NRP, 2004).

Prodromal Crisis Stage: Indicates the Awareness Stage (Fink, 1986). One that precedes and indicates the approach of another (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2006).

Recovery**:** The development, coordination, and execution of service- and site-restoration plans for impacted communities and the reconstitution of government operations and services through individual, private-sector, nongovernmental, and public assistance programs that: identify needs and define resources; provide housing and promote restoration; address long-term care and treatment of affected persons; implement additional measures for community restoration; incorporate mitigation measures and techniques, as feasible; evaluate the incident to identify lessons learned; and develop initiatives to mitigate the effects of future incidents (NRP, 2004).

Response**:** Activities that address the short-term, direct effects of an incident. Response includes immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Response also includes the execution of emergency operations plans and of incident mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes. As indicated by the situation, response activities include: applying intelligence and other information to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident; increased security operations; continuing investigations into the nature and source of the threat; ongoing public health and agricultural surveillance and testing processes; immunizations, isolation, or quarantine; and specific law enforcement operations aimed at preempting, interdicting, or disrupting illegal activity, and apprehending actual perpetrators and bringing them to justice (NRP, 2004).

Risk Assessment: Entails approximating the level of risk or the probability of an event occurring and the magnitude of effects if the event does occur. In essence, "risk assessment lies at the heart of risk management, because it assists in providing the information required to respond to a potential risk (Risk Management, 1999).

Risk Management: The synthesis of the risk assessment, business area analysis, business impact analysis, risk communication and risk-based decision making functions to make strategic and tactical decisions on how business risks will be treated – risk ignored, reduced, transferred, or avoided (Shaw & Harrald, 2004).

Risk Identification: Includes a detailed review of the business operations and processes, suppliers, and customer, product lifecycles, technology systems, public perception and company reputation, market position and human capital (Shaw & Harrald, 2004). All critical business functions must be identified. Requires a broad based team that represents all aspects of the company.

Risk Communication: The exchange of risk related information, concerns, perceptions, and preferences within an organization and between an organization and its external environment that ties together overall business operations with the risk management function (Shaw & Harrald, 2004).

Scenario Planning: Employs a range of techniques including research, brainstorming, creative-thinking, story telling and attempts to sketch a series of narrative accounts which delineate the boundaries of what could conceivably occur going forward (Laubacher & Malone, 1997).

Soft Target: A soft target would be of interest to terrorists because it would be easy to destroy, is not guarded, and would be a symbolic "castration" of one of America's businesses encompassing many people. Soft targets include meeting and convention facilities, malls, banks, restaurants, attractions, supermarkets, schools, apartment buildings, airlines, transportation systems (e.g. subway) and hotels as well as any national landmark.

Target Shifting: Terrorists do extensive research on potential targets and will observe security procedures. If they perceive a high level of security, they will 'shift' to an easier target (Orlob, 2004).

Threat**:** An indication of possible violence, harm, or danger (NRP, 2004).

Tourist: Defined by the United Nations as one who spends more than one night but less than a year away from home for pleasure or business, except diplomats, military personnel, and enrolled students (Montgomery & Strick, 1995).

Trade Journal: A periodical, magazine or publication printed with the intention of target marketing to a specific industry or type of trade/business (Wikipedia, 2006).

Training/Education: A tiered program to develop and maintain individual, team and organizational awareness and preparedness, ranging from individual and group familiarization and skill based training through full organizational exercises (Shaw & Harrald, 2004).

Appendix B
Survey Questions

Section 1 – General Preparedness & Prevention

1. What is your overall level of preparedness in the event that a crisis would occur at one of your meetings?
    a. Not prepared
    b. Not very prepared
    c. Prepared
    d. Very prepared
    e. Extremely prepared
    f. Don't know

2. Does your organization have a crisis management team?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Don't Know

3. How many times per year does the crisis management team meet?
    a. 0
    b. 1-3
    c. 4-6
    d. 7-9
    e. 10 or more times per year
    f. Don't Know

4. How many people are on the crisis management team?
    a. 1-3
    b. 4-6
    c. 10 or more people
    d. Don't Know

5. Have you ever experienced a crisis at one of the meetings you have planned?
    a. Yes
    b. No

6. Which of the following crises have occurred at one of the meetings you planned? (Check all that apply)
    a. Terrorist Event
    b. Natural Disaster (e.g. hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake)
    c. Biological Hazard (e.g. SARS, Avian flu)
    d. Bomb Threat
    e. Fire
    f. Shooting

g. Protest
h. Employee Strike
i. Structural Damage
j. Accidents/Fatalities
k. Workplace Violence
l. Lockdown
m. Foodborne Illness
n. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

7. How important do you think it is for meeting planners to have a written crisis plan?
   a. Not important
   b. Not very important
   c. Important
   d. Very important
   e. Extremely important

8. Do you have a written crisis plan in place for the meetings you have planned?
   a. Yes
   b. No

9. Have you ever had to implement your crisis plan(s)?
   a. Never
   b. Within the last year
   c. Within the last 2-3 years
   d. Within the last 4-5 years
   e. More than 5 years ago
   f. Don't Know

10. For what crises did you implement your plan(s)? (Check all that apply)
    a. Terrorist Event
    b. Natural Disaster (e.g. hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake)
    c. Biological Hazard (e.g. SARS, Avian flu)
    d. Bomb Threat
    e. Fire
    f. Shooting
    g. Protest
    h. Employee Strike
    i. Structural Damage
    j. Accidents/Fatalities
    k. Workplace Violence
    l. Lockdown
    m. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

11. My crisis plan is written with extensive policies and procedures.
    a. Strongly disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

12. Were any external partners included in developing your crisis plan(s)? (Check all that apply)
    a. Convention & Visitors Bureau
    b. Convention Centers/Facilities
    c. Fire Department
    d. Health Services
    e. Insurance Company
    f. Law Enforcement
    g. Public Relations Company
    h. Security Company
    i. Crisis management consultant
    j. No external partners were included
    k. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

13. How often is the crisis plan(s) updated?
    a. It has never been updated
    b. More than once per year
    c. Once per year
    d. Every 2-3 years
    e. Every 4-5 years
    f. Don't Know

14. I coordinate and share my crisis plans with facility staff, taking into consideration the facility's own crisis plans for a meeting.
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Always

15. I have conducted crisis mock drills or simulations to test my crisis plan(s).
    a. Yes
    b. No

16. How often are mock drills or simulations held to test your crisis plan?
    a. Once per year
    b. 2-3 times per year
    c. 4-5 times per year
    d. More than 5 times per year

17. When testing plans, do you use: (Check all that apply)
    a. Tabletop exercises (discussions)
    b. Computer simulations
    c. Mock drills (e.g., having people actually walk through an evacuation)
    d. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

18. When planning a meeting, how important is it to gather information from a facility concerning their crisis plan(s)?
    a. Not important
    b. Not very important
    c. Important
    d. Very important
    e. Extremely important

19. I meet with the FACILITY managers prior to where my meeting will take place to establish goals of action in the event or a crisis.
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Always

20. How important is a facility's level of crisis preparedness in your site selection process?
    a. Not important
    b. Not very important
    c. Important
    d. Very important
    e. Extremely important

21. My organization engages in scenario planning (identifying possible future crisis situations) in order to recognize potential threats.
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Always

22. How important is it for meeting planners to review emergency procedures at preconvention meetings?
    a. Not important
    b. Not very important
    c. Important
    d. Very important
    e. Extremely important

Section 2 – Crisis Awareness, Response, & Recovery

23. What is the possibility that each of the following situations could occur at the meetings you will plan in the future?
    SCALE: Not Possible – Not Very Possible – Possible – Very Possible – Highly Possible

    -Terrorist Attack
    -Natural Disaster (e.g., hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake)
    -Biological Hazard (e.g., SARS, Avian Flu)
    -Bomb Threat
    -Fire
    -Shooting (inside or outside the meeting)
    -Protests
    -Employee Strike
    -Accidents/Fatalities
    -Structural Damage
    -Workplace Violence
    -Lockdown

24. How important is it to have a WRITTEN COMMUNICATION PLAN in the event of a crisis situation with regards to each of the following?
    SCALE: Not impt – Not very impt – Impt – Very impt – Extremely impt

    -My employees
    -My clients and attendees
    -City Officials
    -Facility (where meeting is held)

25. I have a WRITTEN COMMUNICATION PLAN in the event of a crisis situation for meetings I have planned.
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Always

26. I have a designated media spokesperson for my meetings in the event of a crisis.
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Often
    e. Always

27. How often are your employees trained in the following areas?
    SCALE: Never-Less than once a year-Once a year-2/3 times per year-4-5 times per year – More than 5 times per year

    -Fire evacuation
    -Biological Hazards (e.g., SARS, Avian Flu)
    -Bomb Threats
    -Natural Disasters (hurricane, tornado, flood)
    -Man-made Events
    -Medical Assistance for attendees

Crisis Recovery

28. I have a comprehensive insurance policy to assist with recovery actions after a crisis.
    a. Strongly Disagree
    b. Disagree
    c. Neutral
    d. Agree
    e. Strongly Agree

29. My insurance plan includes a business interruption clause to cover a crisis situation.
    a. Yes
    b. No

Section 3 – International Participation

UCF Data – does not pertain to dissertation

Section 4 – Demographics

30. Please indicate what type of planner best describes your current position. (Check all that apply)
    a. Association Meeting Planner
    b. Association Management Company
    c. Corporate Meeting Planner
    d. Government Meeting Planner
    e. Third Party/Independent Planner
    f. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

Please respond to the questions based on the LARGEST account that you have actively managed.

31. How large is the membership of your association?
    a. Less than 1,000 members
    b. 1,000 to 4,999
    c. 5,000 to 9,999
    d. 10,000 to 24,999
    e. 25,000 to 49,999
    f. 50,000 or more members

32. Which best describes your association?
    a. Professional
    b. Trade
    c. Social
    d. Military
    e. Educational
    f. Religious
    g. Fraternal

33. Which best describes the membership of your association?
    a. International
    b. National
    c. Regional
    d. State
    e. Provincial
    f. Local

34. What percentage of your membership is based outside of the United States?
    a. Less than 5%
    b. 5% to 9%
    c. 10% to 14%
    d. 15% to 25%
    e. More than 25%
    f. Association is not U.S.-based

35. What percentage of your total membership attended your 2005 annual convention or trade show?
    a. Less than 20%
    b. 20% to 39%
    c. 40% to 59%
    d. 60% to 79%
    e. 80% to 100%
    f. Did not hold 2005 annual convention or trade show

36. How long have you worked in your current position?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1-3 years
    c. 4-6 years
    d. 7-9 years
    e. 10-12 years
    f. 13-15 years
    g. Over 15 years

37. How long have you been a meeting planner?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1 – 5 years
    c. 6 – 10 years
    d. 11 – 15 years
    e. 16 – 20 years
    f. Over 20 years

38. How many CITY-WIDE meetings did you HOLD from January 2005 to December 2005? (City-wide is defined as: " An event that requires the use of a convention center or event complex, as well as multiple hotels in the host city." (APEX))
    a. None
    b. 1
    c. 2
    d. 3
    e. More than 3

39. How many meetings, in total, did you actually HOLD from January 2005 to December 2005?
    a. Less than 4
    b. 5 – 9
    c. 10 – 14
    d. 15 – 19
    e. 20 or more meetings

40. Please indicate the approximate NET square footage for the largest convention, tradeshow, or meeting you held from January 2005 to December 2005.
    a. Less than 50,000 sq. ft. (net)
    b. 50,000 – 150,000 sq. ft.
    c. 150,001 – 250,000 sq. ft.
    d. 250,001 – 350,000 sq. ft.
    e. 350,001 – 450,000 sq. ft.
    f. 450,001 – 550,000 sq. ft.
    g. 550,001 – 650,000 sq. ft.
    h. 650,001 – 750,000 sq. ft.
    i. 750,001 – 850,000 sq. ft.
    j. 850,001 – 950,000 sq. ft.
    k. Over 950,000 sq. ft.

41. Please indicate the approximate number of total attendees at your LARGEST convention, tradeshow, or meeting held from January 2005 to December 2005.
    a. Less than 1,000
    b. 1,000 – 5,000
    c. 5,001 – 10,000
    d. 10,001 – 15,000
    e. 15,001 – 20,000
    f. 20,001 – 25,000
    g. 25,001 – 30,000
    h. 30,001 – 35,000
    i. 35,001 – 40,000
    j. 40,001 – 45,000
    k. 45,001 – 50,000
    l. More than 50,000

42. Please indicate the number of FULL-TIME staff currently in your organization. (If you are a corporate planner, please indicate only those employees who are involved in the meeting planning function.)
    a. One person
    b. 2 -5
    c. 6 – 10
    d. 11 – 15
    e. 16 – 20
    f. 21 – 25
    g. 26 or more

43. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
    a. Some high school
    b. High school diploma or equivalent
    c. Some college or vocational school
    d. Bachelors' degree
    e. Some Graduate school
    f. Graduate degree

44. Do you have any of the following certifications? (Check all that apply)
    a. Certification in Meeting Management (CMM)
    b. Certified Meeting Professional (CMP)
    c. Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP)
    d. Certified Planned of Professional Meetings (CPPM)
    e. Certified Global Meeting Professional (CGMP)
    f. Certified Internet Meeting Professional (CIMP)
    g. Certified Association Executive (CAE)
    h. Certified Exhibition Manager (CEM)
    i. I have no certifications
    j. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

45. Are you a member of any of the following associations? (Check all that apply)
    a. Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
    b. Meeting Professional International (MPI)
    c. American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)
    d. International Association of Exhibition Management (IAEM)
    e. International Special Events Society (ISES)
    f. International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA)
    g. Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO)
    h. Insurance Conference Planners Association (ICPA)
    i. I am not a member of any meeting planning industry associations
    j. Other (opens box asking respondent to specify)

46. What do you believe is the most important thing to consider in creating a successful crisis preparedness plan for a meeting planner? (OPTIONAL)

    OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

47. Would you like to provide any additional comments regarding Crisis Plans for the convention and meeting planning industry? (OPTIONAL)

    OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE

Appendix C
Top 100 Words from Content Analysis

Table A1: Top 100 Words Used in Crisis Plans

	Word	# used		Word	# used
1	emergency/emergencies	869	37	operations	149
2	event	414	38	disaster	147
3	all	398	39	other	147
4	employee(s)	349	40	building	146
5	information	337	41	evacuation	146
6	plan	326	42	site	145
7	contact	319	43	personnel	143
8	you	304	44	name	141
9	communication(s)	301	45	safety	141
10	security	277	46	response	139
11	team	262	47	control	137
12	should	260	48	necessary	137
13	business	251	49	one	136
14	have	234	50	area	135
15	facility/facilities	225	51	phone	134
16	from	220	52	services	132
17	media	220	53	can	131
18	your	219	54	possible	131
19	crisis	216	55	director	130
20	incident	212	56	time	128
21	may	211	57	when	126
22	member(s)	197	58	damage	120
23	any	187	59	number	119
24	staff	186	60	we	118
25	person/people	178	61	what	118
26	medical	175	62	use	117
27	location	171	63	who	114
28	organization	169	64	first	112
29	do	168	65	action	111
30	call	162	66	i	110
31	fire	160	67	participants/attendees	109
32	management	160	68	maintain	109
33	situation	158	69	eoc	108
34	meeting(s)	152	70	etc	108
35	center	150	71	about	107
36	provide	150	72	critical	107

	Word	# used		Word	# used
73	hotel	107	87	step	92
74	local	107	88	alternate	90
75	shelter	105	89	available	89
76	office	103	90	has	89
77	up	103	91	key	89
78	company	101	92	injured	88
79	following	100	93	manager	88
80	make	100	94	steps	88
81	injury/injuries	100	95	insert	86
82	equipment	99	96	primary	84
83	appropriate	98	97	immediately	83
84	hours	98	98	net	83
85	need	96	99	city	82
86	during	92	100	800	81

VITA

VITA

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EDUCATION

Doctoral Candidate: Hospitality & Tourism Mgmt.(Purdue University)West Lafayette, IN
Specializations: Crisis Preparedness; Hotel/Lodging; Training; Meetings Industry
Expected Date of Graduation: December 2008

M.S.	Hotel, Restaurant, and Travel Administration (HRTA)		
	University of Massachusetts-Amherst	Amherst, MA	May 2002
B.B.A.	Management		
	Fort Hays State University	Hays, KS	May 2000
B.S.	Information Networking and Telecommunications		
	Fort Hays State University	Hays, KS	May 2000
Minor:	Political Science		
	Fort Hays State University	Hays, KS	May 2000
Certificate:	Leadership Studies		
	Fort Hays State University	Hays, KS	May 2000

CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES & ACTIVITIES (2004-PRESENT)

- Instructor - HTM 212: Organization Behavior & Management in the Hospitality Industry
- Meeting Planner – 2007 & 2008 International Hospitality & Tourism Virtual Conference
- Researcher Grant/Project – Risk Assessment/Crisis Management Training for Venue Managers (Thailand Conventions & Exhibition Bureau)

- Research Grant/Project – Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Online Training Program for Crisis Plan Development
- Career Center Assistant – assist with the recruitment of companies for student internship and post-graduate placement. Maintain internship reports and daily contact with students' career inquiries.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE & ASSISTANTSHIP DUTIES

Purdue University, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Purdue 2004-present
Graduate Teaching Assistant

- Full teaching responsibilities and course management for Organization Behavior and Management in the Hospitality Industry (HTM 212)
- Taught one section each semester with an average of 48 students per class
- Coordinated Master Sommelier Course (September 2005)
- Develop survey & analyzed results for efforts towards accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA)
- Develop survey & analyze results for Senior Survey

University of Massachusetts-Amherst, HRTA Department, UMass 2000-2002
Graduate Teaching Assistant

- Assisted Chief Undergraduate Advisor organizing student activities
- Facilitated Guest Lecture Series for introductory hospitality class
- Organized and led student trip to New York Hotel/Motel Show, New York City

Fort Hays State University, Political Science Department, FHSU 1996-1998
Teaching Assistant

- Assisted with course management of students' records and grades/prepared lecture materials

WORK EXPERIENCE

Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, MO September 2002 – August 2004
Assistant Front Office Manager

Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, MO July 2002 – September 2002
Corporate Management Trainee

Hyatt Regency Crown Center, Kansas City, MO May 2001 – August 2001
Rooms Division Internship

Hays Convention & Visitors Bureau, Hays, KS September 1999 – December 1999
Intern – Hotel Promotions & Event Planning

Solutus Group, Chicago, IL May 1997 – June 1997
Intern – Business Development, Management & Marketing

The Beth Corporation, Chicago, IL — June 1997 – July 1997
Intern – Business Development

GRADUATE LEVEL COURSEWORK & INDUSTRY TRAINING CLASSES

Courses

- Homeland Security Issues
- Advanced Hotel Management
- Hotel Management Analysis/Research
- Strategic Management
- Human Resource Management
- Hospitality Marketing Management
- Hospitality Promotions and Advertising
- Special Events Management
- Behavioral Decision Making
- Hospitality Financial Management
- E-Commerce
- Statistical/Research Methods

Industry Training

- Workplace Values
- Manager on Duty Training
- Interviewing Skills Training
- Ethics and Harassment Training
- CPR Training

RESEARCH INTERESTS & GRANTS AWARDED

Interests

- Crisis Preparedness for the Hospitality Industry (security, terrorism, training, crisis plans)
- Current Trends and Issues in Hotel Lodging
- Training Methods and Techniques for Lodging Properties
- Hospitality and Tourism Education Research

Research in Progress

- Crisis Planning: Are Meeting Planners Prepared? (Paper)
- Crisis Management for Thailand Conventions & Exhibition Bureau (Grant application)
- An Assessment of Training Methods and Tools Utilized by the Hotel Industry (Paper)
- Homeland Security and the Hospitality Industry: Is the Hotel Industry Prepared for a Bioterrorist Attack? (Paper)
- Career Paths in Hospitality Education: Department Heads and Deans. (Paper)

Grants Submitted/Awarded

- 2007 - Thailand Conventions & Exhibition Bureau Grant Submitted in partnership with Purdue Homeland Security Institute: $444,874.69 (Risk Assessment & Crisis Management for Venue Managers)
- 2006 - Professional Convention Management Association Grant Awarded: $3,000 (Crisis Planning)

- 2006 - Washington Project Federal Grant Submitted in partnership with Purdue Homeland Security Institute: $1.5 million (Crisis Management)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Publications

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2006). "PCMA Report: Crisis Planning for the Meeting Planning & Convention Industry." *Convene Magazine*, December 2006.

Smith, S. & Kline, S.F. (2005). "The perfect check-in: Using 'touch points' and 'operational excellence' to deliver a great total customer experience." *The Rooms Chronicle, 13* (4), pp. 1-3.

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Presentations

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2008). "An Empirical Study of Meeting Planners' Perceptions of Crisis Preparedness: Preliminary Findings." 13th Annual Hospitality and Tourism Graduate Student Education and Research Conference, Orlando, FL, January 3-5, 2008. (Poster session)

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2007). "Career Paths in Hospitality Education: Department Heads and Deans." 2007 I-CHRIE Conference, Dallas, TX, July 27, 2007. (Refereed presentation)

Smith, S. (2007, March). "Crisis Preparedness for the Meeting Planning Industry." HTM Department Strategic Alliance Council, Purdue University. (Industry presentation)

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2007). "Crisis Preparedness for the MICE Industry: Are Meeting Planners Prepared? A Descriptive Study." 12th Annual Hospitality and Tourism Graduate Student Education and Research Conference, Houston, TX, January 4-6, 2007. (Refereed presentation)

Smith, S. & Pearson, T. (2006). "Mission Statements & Performance Chain Analysis in the Hotel Industry." International Hospitality & Tourism Virtual Conference, Purdue University, May 2006. (Refereed presentation)

Smith, S., Kline, S. & Procopio-Torres, C. (2006). "The Consideration of Stress Reduction in Orientation Programming: The Case of Casino Hotels." 11th Annual Hospitality and Tourism Graduate Student Education and Research Conference, Seattle, WA, January 5-7, 2006. (Refereed presentation)

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2006). "Homeland Security and the Hospitality Industry: Is the Hotel Industry Prepared for a Bioterrorist Attack?" 11th Annual Hospitality and Tourism Graduate Student Education and Research Conference, Seattle, WA, January 5-7, 2006. (Poster Session).

Smith, S. & Kline, S. (2005). "Career Paths in Hospitality Education: Department Heads and Deans." New Frontiers in Tourism Research. 17th Annual Conference for the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators, Chicago, IL, October 20-22, 2005. (Poster Session).

Smith, S. (2005). An Assessment of Training Methods and Tools Utilized by the Hotel Industry. 10th Annual Hospitality and Tourism Graduate Student Education and Research Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC, January 5-7, 2005. (Poster Session).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

College Teaching Workshops 2004-2008
Purdue University, Center for Instructional Excellence

- Including Micro-teaching, Discussion Leading, Assessment Design, & others

Graduate Teaching Technology Certificate 2006
Purdue University, Center for Instructional Excellence

Graduate Teaching Certificate 2005
Purdue University, Center for Instructional Excellence

International Review Board (IRB) Certification Workshop 2005
Purdue University, Office of the Vice-President for Research

FHSU representative to China as participant in first SIAS graduation ceremony 2002
Fort Hays State University

AWARDS & ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

HTM Department Outstanding Doctoral Student 2008
Purdue University

Graduate School Excellence in University-wide Teaching Award – ($500 Stipend) 2006
Purdue University

Outstanding HTM Graduate Student Teaching Award Purdue University	2006
Leadership Award Hyatt Regency Crown Center	2003
Manager of the Quarter Nominee Hyatt Regency Crown Center	2003
Award of Excellence Hyatt Regency Crown Center	2003
Torch Award Nominee – Outstanding Graduating Student Award Fort Hays State University	2000
Dean's Honor Roll Fort Hays State University	1996-2000
Outstanding Member of Student Alumni Association Fort Hays State University	1998-1999
Phi Eta Sigma Bookplate Award Fort Hays State University	1999
Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges Fort Hays State University	1999

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, ACTIVITIES, & ORGANIZAITONS

Kappa Omicron Nu (honor society for human sciences)	2007-present
Eta Sigma Delta (hospitality honor society)	2006-present
Gamma Sigma Delta (honor society for agriculture/tourism)	2006-present
Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE)	2005-present
International Society for Travel & Tourism Educators (ISTTE)	2005-present
American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA)	2005-present
Purdue HTM Graduate Student Association (Vice-President)	2004-present
Phi Kappa Phi – Honor Society	1998-present
L.E.A.D. Team Trainer (Hyatt Regency Crown Center)	2003-2004
Safety Committee (Hyatt Regency Crown Center)	2002-2004
Master's Society (University of Massachusetts)	2000-2002

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Assisted opening of Courtyard by Marriott (White Lodging Services)	2005
United Way (co-chair for Hyatt Team 2003)	2002-2003
Groundhog Shadow Day (Hyatt)	2003-2004
Youth Friends (taught hospitality classes to inner city high school kids)	2002-2004
Kansas City Royals Charity Volunteer	2002-2004
Local Blood drives in Kansas City area	2002-2004

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST