

INTO THE FIRE

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS
STARTS WITH PREPAREDNESS



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PRESENTED BY:

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Building a Stronger Kentucky

2016 KENTUCKY AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE

Why am I here?



CHRISTOPHER TARANTINO, MEP CMCP

- CEO – EPICENTER MEDIA & TRAINING
- DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST – FEMA
- SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT – NATIONAL DISASTER PREP. TRAINING CTR.
- CHAIR – INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS (ETC)



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Why are **you** here?



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“By the time you hear
the **THUNDER**, it's too
late to build **THE ARK.**”

-UNKNOWN

Crisis vs. Risk/Emergency

Crisis Communications /'kr̩sɪs/ /kəˌmyoʊnəˈkɑːʃhəns/

(noun) ¹ the effort taken by an organization to communicate with stakeholders when an unexpected event occurs that could have a negative impact on the organization's reputation, personnel, mission and/or key results areas

- ▶ **Crisis communications** deals more with reputation management, **emergency/disaster and risk communications** focus more on life-safety concerns

The Crisis/Disaster **Lifecycle**



This is a **CYCLICAL** process

How can we **best**
prepare?

Pre-plan

▶ **Build your Crisis Response Team**

- ▶ Crisis Communications Team
- ▶ Crisis Leadership Team
- ▶ Spokespersons & Public Information Officers (PIOs)

▶ **Stakeholder Analysis**

- ▶ Where are gaps in education/understanding?
- ▶ Are personnel prepared for crisis?

▶ **Risk Analysis** → Anticipate threats/hazards



Perform a **SWOT** Analysis

Strengths
(Internal)

Weaknesses
(Internal)

Opportunities
(External)

Threats
(External)

Identify **threats & hazards** (ongoing)

Internal

- ▶ Facilities
- ▶ Personnel
- ▶ Products/Services
- ▶ Suppliers
- ▶ Distributers
- ▶ Internal policies
- ▶ Procedure
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Others...

External

- ▶ Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Weather
- ▶ Competitors
- ▶ Media
- ▶ Clients/Customers
- ▶ Politics
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Others...

Develop **policies** & **procedures**

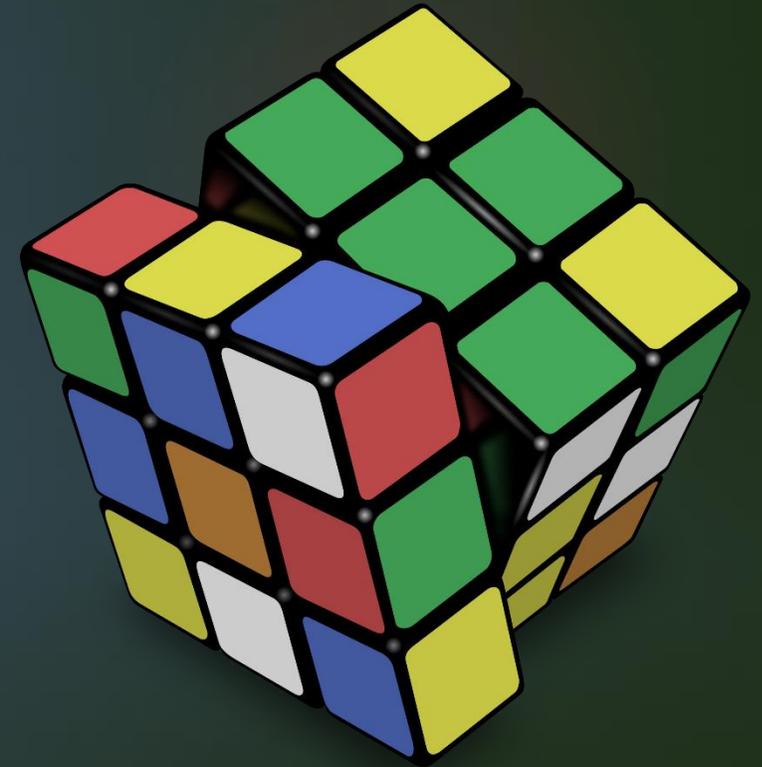
- ▶ **Crisis Action Plan**

- ▶ **Crisis Communications Plan**

- ▶ Social Media Plan
 - ▶ Traditional Media Plan
 - ▶ Alerting, Outreach & Monitoring Strategies

- ▶ Develop messaging around risks included in **risk analysis** (“canned messages” and/or “holding messages”)

- ▶ This should be **proactive**, but is (of course) reactive too



Build **partnerships** EARLY

- ▶ **Identify potential partners NOW**
 - ▶ Who are you already partnering with?
 - ▶ Who might help you in crises?
 - ▶ What assistance do you need? In-house vs. not?
 - ▶ Who are the influencers in your area?
- ▶ Share content and provide resources – ***provide value to your audience!***

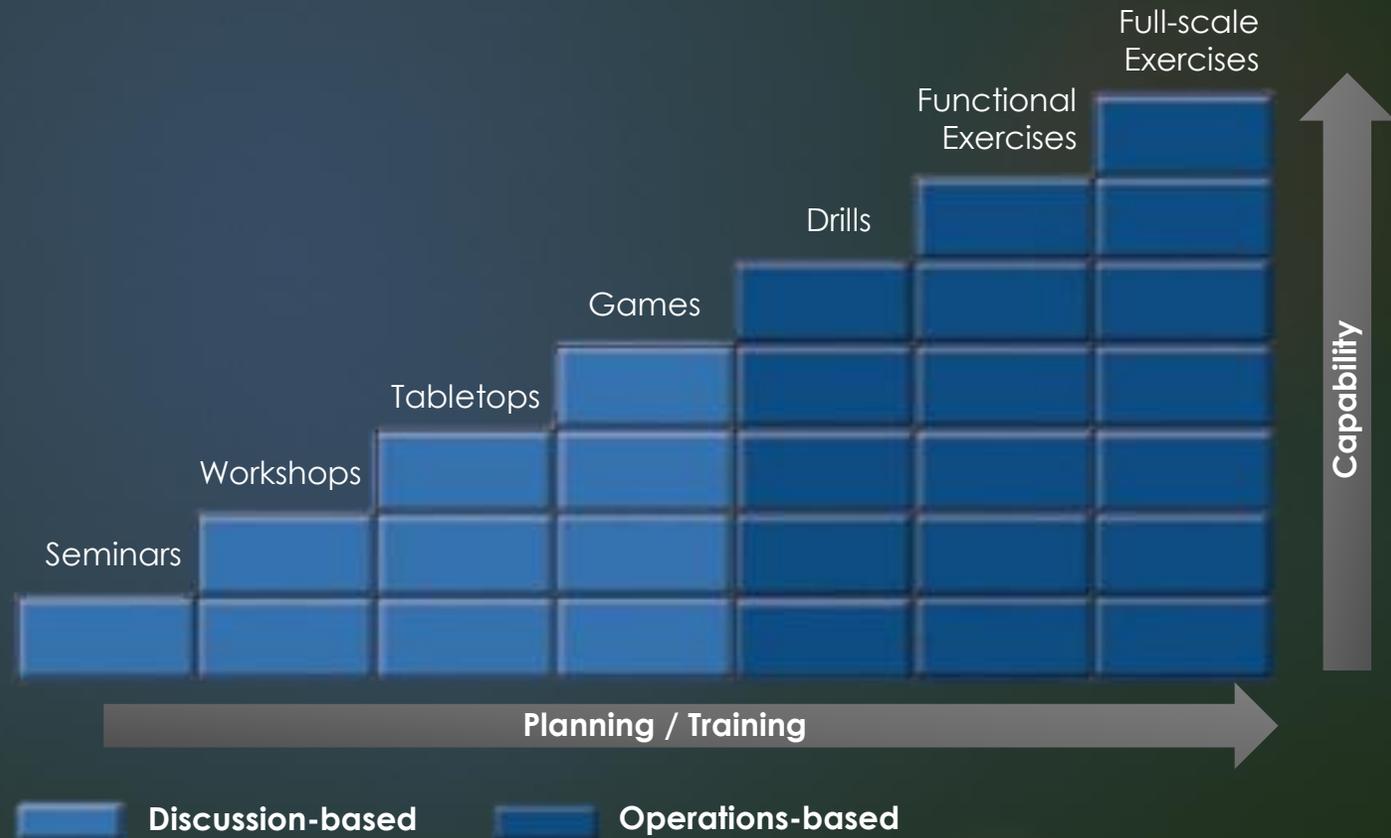
- ▶ **External Stakeholders**
- ▶ **Business & Community Partners**
- ▶ **Media**
- ▶ **General Community**
- ▶ **EMPLOYEES**

“Every employee is a PR representative for your organization, whether you want them to be or not!”

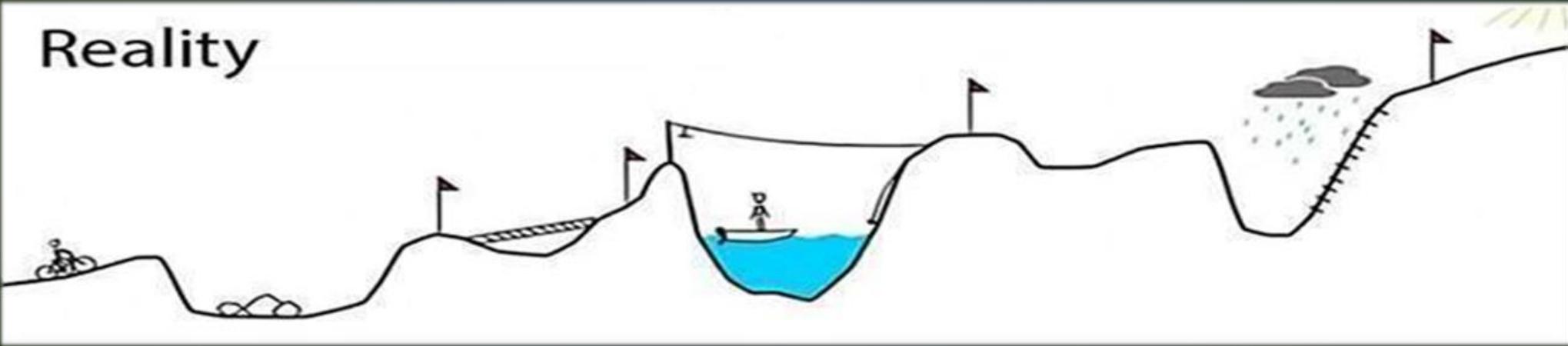
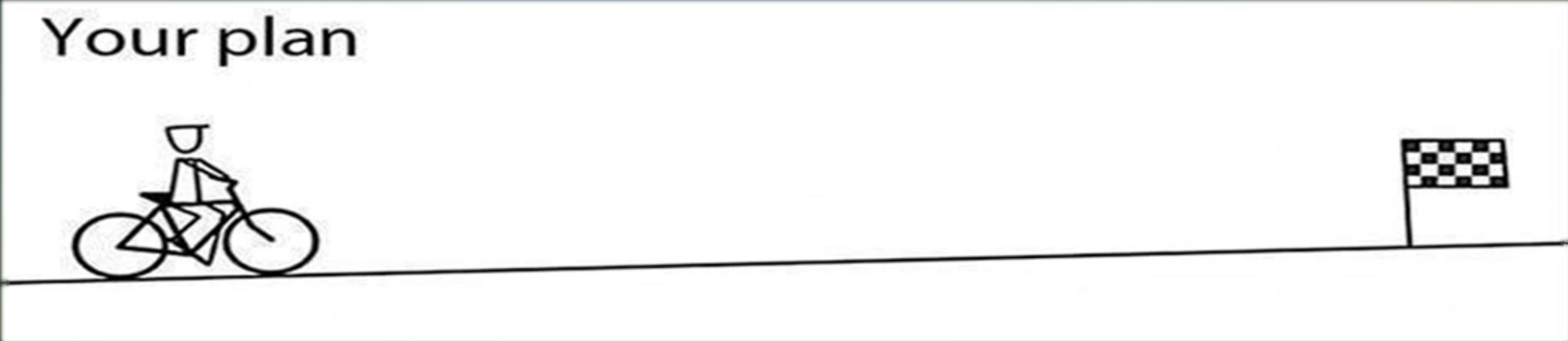
-JONATHAN BERNSTEIN

Be an agent of **change**

- **TRAIN** people
- **TEST** systems
- **EXERCISE** capabilities

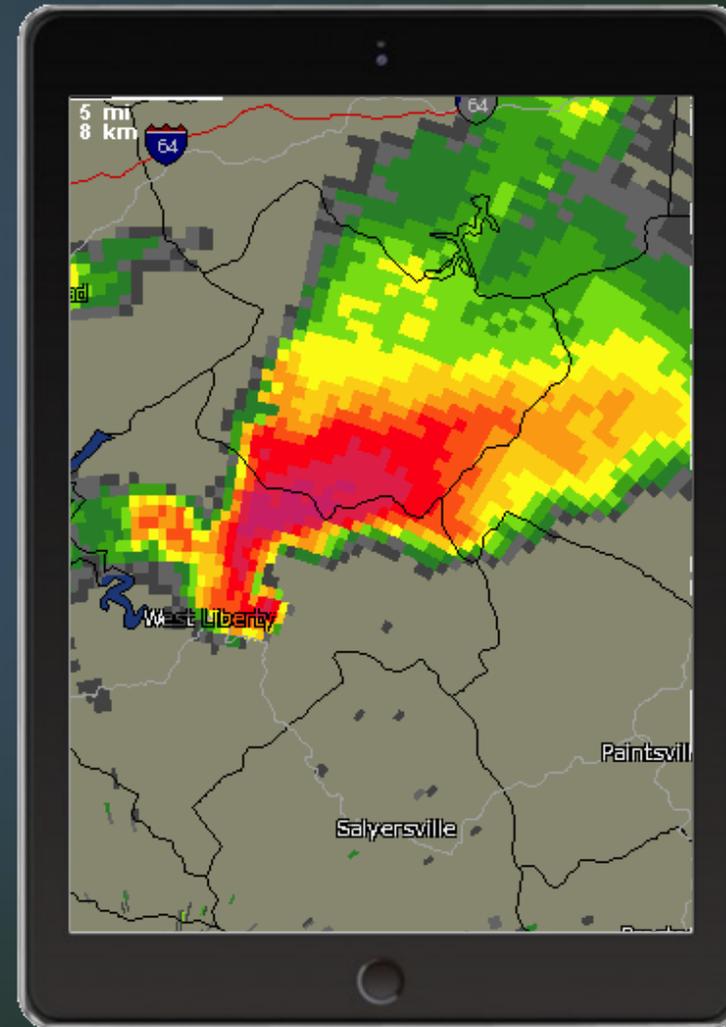


What **plan**?

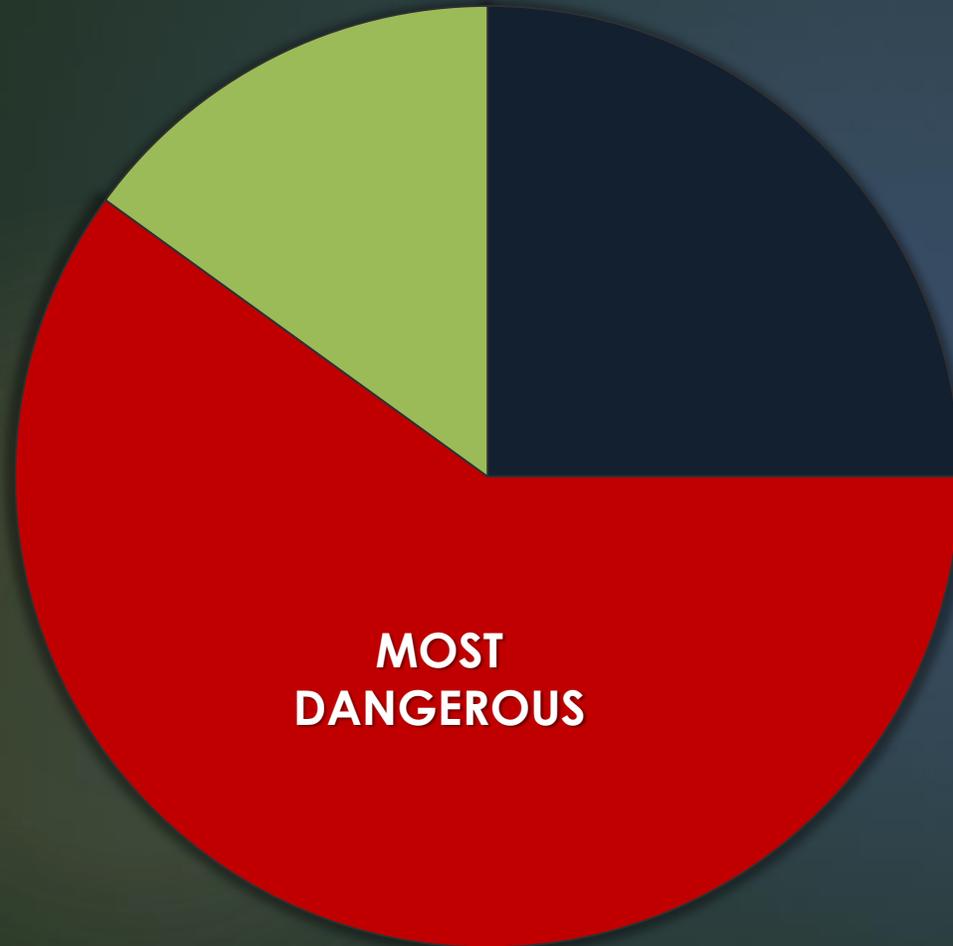


Lessons Learned in Kentucky (Tornado Outbreak – March 2012)

- ▶ 31 separate tornado warnings during outbreak (total of 139 tornadoes across 11 states)
- ▶ 21 deaths in Kentucky
- ▶ Duplicated and/or unverified info runs rampant
- ▶ **Unified messaging & expectations management takes practice.**



Reduce the “**RED SLICE**”



- What we know we know
- **What we don't know we don't know**
- What we know we don't know

Strong decision-making
is your **biggest asset**
in an incident.

Know how **information spreads**

- ▶ Word-of-mouth
- ▶ Blogs/Websites
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Phone
- ▶ Radio & television
- ▶ Press releases
- ▶ Text messages
- ▶ Mobile apps
- ▶ Sensors
- ▶ “Citizen Journalists”

- ▶ **No longer centralized**
- ▶ No longer top-down information sharing

- ▶ **Distributed networks of information**
 - ▶ Influence each other
 - ▶ Correct each other
 - ▶ Inform each other
 - ▶ Varying levels of trust/credibility

Lessons Learned in Kentucky (Tornado Outbreak – March 2012)

- ▶ Cascading incidents (such as power/communications failure or inclement weather) can disrupt response & recovery
- ▶ More questions than answers: “Should we rebuild at all?”
- ▶ Timing of messaging is critical
- ▶ Collaboration with partners is key
- ▶ **Temporary housing & immediate needs vs. long-term solutions**



Expect rumors





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“If you think you are in control,
you’re FOOLING YOURSELF.

As soon as you start listening, you realize you’re not in control. And letting go will yield more and better results.”

-CHARLENE LI

Lessons Learned in Kentucky (Tornado Outbreak – March 2012)

- ▶ +\$5.2M in Housing Assistance (short-term rentals & home repair) from FEMA
- ▶ 2,200 homes damaged (650 completely destroyed)
- ▶ Incredible impact on housing & communities
- ▶ **Recovery takes a long time (and an incredible amount of resources)**



Start with the **END** in mind

▶ Think **RECOVERY**

- ▶ After Action Review (AAR)
- ▶ How will this incident affect our future operations
- ▶ What is the “new normal”?

▶ Think **PREPAREDNESS**

(remember, this is a cyclical process!)

- ▶ What have we learned from this incident?
- ▶ What will we change as a result?
 - ▶ Training, policy/procedure, plans, etc.



Keys to **success**

- ▶ Involve everyone in the planning process
- ▶ Good data leads to better outcomes
- ▶ Be realistic about basic human behavior & tendencies
- ▶ Start with your goals & objectives
- ▶ Share information with partners
- ▶ Test your assumptions often
- ▶ Don't underestimate the power of social media influencers



“**Every incident** is an opportunity for increased organizational resilience.”

-CHRISTOPHER TARANTINO



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Q&A Session

ASK ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE!

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THANK YOU!

