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PROTECTION | PREVENTION | PREPAREDNESS | RESPONSE | RESILIENCE | RECOVERY

EXTREME WEATHER 2017 HURRICANE SEASON

Interview with Jesper Holmer Lund of INSARAG; Geopolitics & Climate; Resilience in Qatar; Security & Conflict; Immersive Counter-terror Training; Reintegrating Violent Extremists; Business Continuity; Communities & Policing; Risk Communication; Leadership; Humanitarian Action; Junior Health Volunteers in Refugee Camps

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CRJ aims to identify and highlight future trends that could manifest as life-threatening hazards and events which will, in turn, confront all those whose concern is to protect lives, livelihoods, the environment and businesses, and consequently the wellbeing and sustainability of nations and communities. We then propose practical solutions.



In many ways, it is a simple matter to isolate and trace the threads in this complex global tapestry of climate, geopolitics, politics, conflict and disputes, modern tribalism that is often fuelled by social media, food insecurity, human encroachment of land previously considered unsuitable for settlement – the list is long but the clues are all there.

This issue's narrative thread provides a timely reminder – if one were needed – that nature can be the biggest threat of all, with reports on the cataclysmic devastation caused by a particularly active hurricane season. And, as CRJ goes to press, wildfires in California have led to 23 deaths, hundreds more missing and thousands of structures destroyed.

On p30, Casey Brunelle traces links between climate, resource scarcity and conflict, before we move on to John Drake's analysis of stabilisation progress in the Middle East on p34. The long term and wider ramifications of protracted conflicts are examined on p36, and we consider the impact on communities and individuals on p38. As countries prepare themselves for the return of foreign fighters or their children (p44 and p46), we look at reintegration and peacebuilding, which are not only said to cost less in the long term, but also create the peaceful and sustainable societies in which we all want to live (p48 and p50).

Turning to learning, David Stewart draws lessons on national resilience from the recent blockade of Qatar (p58); Rob McAllister examines leadership on p62 and Christoph Schroth looks at the supplies all businesses should put together in the form of battle boxes (p64). The persistent and malevolent threat of cyber attacks is examined on p68, before we move on to even more practical solutions.

Page 72 presents developments for the treatment of traumatic brain injury, followed by articles looking on inter-service co-operation and how technology is being harnessed to create more secure and resilient communities.

This all serves to demonstrate that the whole picture, complex as it is, can be redrawn with positive outcomes. It is a challenge, but the will and human creativity are in place.

Emily Hough

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Stewarts | CRJ

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Peace One Day

Battle boxes for businesses

It is time to bring the battle box into the 21st century to help with business continuity after a major incident, says **Christoph Schroth**. Here is some advice as to what they should contain

Battle boxes are essentially emergency preparedness kits for a business, rather than for the welfare of employees on site. They are a set of items to continue business operations once existing infrastructure has been compromised by a disaster or other incident.

Items such as high visibility vests, hard hats, glow sticks, basic medical supplies and a loudhailer are all common disaster management supplies. Business

continuity kits tend to include stationery, clipboards, petty cash, business premises plans and important documents. Many commercially available kits tend not to include items essential to the way business is conducted. The overwhelming involvement of technology, like dependence on mobile phones, the Internet and permanent access to data, needs to be considered.

The following items and concepts should be considered and integrated into a modern battle box.

■ **A business continuity plan:** You need to have a procedure or plan for the eventuality that business operations cannot be continued with existing equipment at existing premises or in the event of a complete systems failure. Only then will it become entirely clear what specific challenges are likely and what equipment and contingencies are essential.

■ **Checklists:** Once an incident occurs it is too late to come up with things that need to be done or



checked. The emergency plan and business continuity plan are generally not ideal as quick reference guides, which is why checklists should be considered.

These could cover what to do when business premises become unusable, and may include items such as notifying security companies to post guards at warehouses, contacting the social media officer to prepare an announcement across specific platforms and advising all staff via text message not to speak to the media.

■ **Webmail:** Access to email on devices such as office computers with an installed mail client is not a viable option during or after an incident, and alternatives must be considered. Ensuring email can be accessed from any computer with a web browser is critical, as it increases the amount of alternative locations and devices business can be conducted from. Webmail is a function nearly all email systems support, but staff might not be aware of how to access this, so instruction and familiarisation are also important.

■ **Cloud storage and data backup:** Backup critical data off-site to ensure equipment damage to one location does not eliminate data and cripple operational capability.

Consulting with an IT specialist on the most secure option for your business is ideal, but companies like Dropbox, box.com and Google Drive are some options available for free. The ideal solution depends on the individual business and its requirements with regard to data volume, security, network speeds and cost.

■ **Internet access:** This is the backbone of most business operations. You need a 3G or 4G modem connected to a router with wireless capability, to allow essential staff to have access. This is a safer alternative to public WiFi networks. As with mobile phones, prepaid SIM cards or a fixed data volume contract should be avoided, as it is nearly impossible to predict the amount of data needed.

■ **Backup Power:** Ensuring availability of multiple USB power banks and spare wall chargers with sufficient adapter cables for all devices is not optional. These chargers should not be selected simply on purchase price, as unsuitable chargers can damage devices and make equipment unserviceable. Petrol or diesel powered generators are essential if the electricity supply is disrupted for more than a few hours and/or the business requires a continuous supply of electricity to operate, such as

*Key elements of a battle box,
a vital element of ensuring
business operations in a crisis*

GHB Spangler



for security systems or essential IT infrastructure.

■ **Mobile phones:** Simple phones, such as those with only phone and text message capability, are ideal as battery life is significantly longer than smartphones and purchase cost is minimal. The advantage of a smartphone is it can be used for e-mail, internet access, creating WiFi hotspots and accessing cloud storage. Prepaid airtime is easy to obtain, but a contract SIM card is preferable, as it does not need to be reloaded, should airtime value be exceeded during an incident.

■ **Laptops and tablets:** Owing to their portability and independence from mains power, at least one laptop and/or tablet should be part of every battle box. Long battery life and an identical or similar operating system and software package to other company computers will reduce the time needed for staff to become familiar with them. Regular battery charging and software updates are essential to maintain operational readiness.

■ **Contact information and directions:** Create and maintain a list of key contact information and include this in every battle box, updating it on a regular basis. Information should not be limited to a single telephone number, website and email addresses, but include at least two telephone numbers as well. This ensures that failure of one system does not disrupt communications entirely. Instructions in case a venue or person cannot be contacted should also be included. Always include contact details of neighbouring businesses, with an after-hours telephone number.

■ **Social media and communications strategy:** People tend to turn to social media to obtain news and updates, and share concerns, thoughts and criticism. Most organisations have a social media plan or strategy for daily operations and particular events, but during a major incident this strategy will have to be altered. Developing a plan for use during any disruptive incident is critical and should clearly show who is responsible for issuing statements and handling communications. This prevents potential unintentional release of information and affords control over how information is disseminated.

■ **Digital camera:** This can document events and damage caused by the incident. Digital is preferred over a disposable film cameras, as the images are immediately available for review and may be useful for the social media strategy. Disposable cameras are cheaper but need to be sent for developing, which causes delay. Consideration should be given to the type of battery the camera requires, as charging facilities might not be available and spare batteries cannot always be easily obtained. Use standard, household batteries, as these are easy to obtain and replace. They also have an excellent shelf life and are reasonably priced.

■ **Keys and access cards:** Spare keys for the business's critical infrastructure should also be in the battle boxes, but as keys are no longer the default method to access buildings and facilities, access codes and access cards are also needed. Access can be added or revoked from key cards without the need to change physical locks or make new keys. However, it creates challenges in that these privileges need to be updated regularly, because not using a card regularly can potentially make it unavailable during an incident. Liaison with the systems engineer for the key card system is therefore essential.

■ **Credit cards and petty cash:** These are important to cover urgent expenses during an incident. Petty cash can be used where credit card payments are not possible, whether

down to power outages, lack of connectivity for the card terminal, or if the merchant does not accept cards.

Irrespective of the size of the organisation, the area it covers and the number of staff, contractors and visitors, one battle box is not adequate. Access to the box could be limited during a major incident, as its location may be inaccessible, or it could be damaged or destroyed during an incident.

The battle boxes must be stored safely; they should be very sturdy and ideally waterproof, reducing likelihood of damage and extending the lifespan of their contents.

The suitability of storage locations is best tested and evaluated during emergency management exercises, fire drills or other training. Storage should generally be off-site for at least one of the boxes, and can be in a local self-storage unit, warehouse or even at a private property. Access needs to be possible 24/7 and not require one particular person to be present.

Having a dedicated room or workspace in mind that can serve as an incident management room means every team member will know where they will be meeting. There should also be a backup location available. Consider where the room/venue is located, how it can be accessed and how it might be affected by an incident.

A room higher than ground floor would be good in floods, but of no benefit if access is only possible via an elevator, as power failure would prohibit access and egress. This does not have to be a dedicated office space, it could be at another branch or a local business service centre, as long as access and availability are guaranteed.

Cost and quality

There is no benefit to any equipment if people are unfamiliar with how to use it when it is needed. Trial the battle boxes during exercises to ensure all items are fit for purpose. This does not have to entail a full-scale exercise. Every team member should be familiar with every item and be encouraged to suggest changes, upgrades and additions.

Cost and quality of the battle box content are important. Quality is more important than price, as these items are what will determine if a business is operational after a major incident.

Bear in mind that these items will spend up to 100 per cent of their lifespan in a locked box, only to be checked periodically and then locked up again, so it is unlikely that a low quality, low-cost item will be fully functional when it is needed the most.

Choosing the right item can be time consuming – review product reviews or recommendations from industry journals and online ratings.

Business continuity kits are available from specialist retailers, but tend to be expensive, while not addressing all aspects mentioned in this article, so it may be beneficial to create one from scratch.

Battle boxes, like any other emergency preparedness kit, are not designed to allow trading as if nothing has happened. Their function is to ensure that essential tasks can be accomplished.

The size and exact content of the boxes depends on the individual organisation, but all items suggested above should be considered, while keeping in mind that the box has to be of a reasonable size to allow for easy transportation. Ultimately, careful consideration, combined with trial and error, will lead to the best possible configuration.

Author



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