



## **Optimized communication plan and its impact on the contingency plan previously put in place for timely crisis response in the air sector**

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### **Abstract**

Analyze the crises spread in the Organization, taking into account their effects, response time (partial and total) and entities involved. In theory, the goal is to understand how the crisis response should be and how the system responds to the same type of crisis.

There is a gap in the communication plan for crisis response in place. The deepening and exploration of typologies of organizational crises in the air sector, will to optimize the response times that can satisfy or mitigate the worsening of the situations, setting off a new challenge. It is through the methodology of gathering information, readings and research of the subject literature that this will be analyzed based in success cases, typologies of crisis and also models of response time exist.

The study will shine a light on the different crisis typologies as well as their propagation at the Lisbon airport. Leading to the creation of a model or models for a quick and effective response to it. Thus minimizing the response time and eventual recourse due to the analysis of success stories in similar infrastructures.

The objective of this study is to study is the production of a model or several. Therefor optimizing the response time in crisis situations as a result of studies and research on typologies of crisis and their effects in time and in the entities involved.

### **Keywords**

crisis communication; typologies of crisis; aviation; reponse times



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## Introduction

Based on previous studies [1], the motivation that guides the accomplishment of the research proposed here was born. The deepening and exploration of other aspects in terms of organizational crises in the air sector unleashes a new challenge. Given the experience gained in the airport system and compliance, we are led to conclude that there is a gap in the communication plan for crisis response. It is on this basis that the idea of studying the typologies of crisis as well as their propagation appears in order to optimize the response time's thus satisfying or mitigating crisis situations, especially when the interference of new social technologies is important for the affectation / alteration and or resolution of the crisis itself.

The crisis is understood as a phenomenon that affects the normal functioning of an organization's activities and creates a significant threat to it: jeopardizing its relations and position with its public as well as its ability to continue to supply products and services; In addition to affecting the image the organization reputation, the industry itself and the sector of activity where the organization acts, it can, in the last instance pose a threat to the very survival of the organization.

During the development of the doctoral thesis entitled "Social technologies and crisis communication in the air sector" [1], a study was carried out that aimed to understand and illustrate (through the elaboration of a communication model in crisis management) of the aviation industry in Portugal have planned the prevention and management of the crisis, from the point of view of communication and relations with its public. It was also an objective to understand and demonstrate the utilization of policy and monitoring of social and institutional technologies of each company that are present during the prevention and management of the crisis in companies in this sector.

It is based on the previous theoretical study then carried out that we will start to develop a new study, this time having as object of study the airport system of the Lisbon Airport, and aiming at objectives that could lead to the production of a model or several for the optimization of response time in crisis situations. This work is based on the development of studies and research on typologies of crisis and their affectation on the time and entities involved.

## Specific objectives

- Carry out the survey of the typologies of crisis in the Lisbon Airport, namely air side and land side;
- Analyse the spread of crises in the Organization in terms of their effects, response time (partial and total) and involved entities. In theory, understand how the response to the crisis should be and in practice to understand how the system responds to the same type of crisis;
- Creation of a model or models for response in identified typologies of crisis, minimizing the response time and with possible resort to the analysis of success stories in similar infrastructures.

## Work methodology

- Literature review;
- Collection of information, readings and research on the subject. Success stories, typologies of crisis and models of response times in other infrastructures will be analysed;
- Case study, where the methodology set forth in the previous point will be maintained;



- Comparative analysis of the case under study with existing good practices;
- Proposal and validation of the model or models of performance.

## Literature review

The concept of crisis, which is nothing more than a phenomenon that affects the development of the organization's normal activity, is an occurrence with a potential negative effect in organization, the company, the industry, as well as its publics, products, services, image and reputation. It disrupts the normal flow of the organization's business, whether by its existence or not, and may not be as catastrophic as to destroy the organization [2].

According to this author, in a crisis in contrast to the problem, the emotions are red, the brain does not always work at its maximum power and events happen so quickly that schematizing a plan of action during a crisis is unthinkable.

Due to new environmental developments, terrorism, and the proliferation of social media with increasing exposure, companies have come to play a key role in crisis management [3]. According to this author, no organization is immune to a crisis, it can arise from inside or outside the organization, and the way in which the crisis is handled can save the organization or destroy it, especially when it comes to how it communicates in the crisis situation.

The Institute for Crisis Management defines crisis as a significant disruption to an organization's business that encourages extensive media coverage. The outcome of public opinion may affect your operations and may still have political, legal and financial impacts on your business.

In the air sector the crisis concept is closely linked to the concept of risk, because the sustainability and viability of the air sector depends to a large extent on risk management ie: identification, analysis, elimination, mitigation and prevention of hazards as described in [4].

Nowadays, the role of communication is to support a well-structured management model that can lead the company to face ever more competitive challenges of a society that becomes more demanding in quality and rights [5].

The air sector is one of the sectors where the occurrence of a crisis can pose serious threats in terms of loss of life, financial loss and public insecurity (as in the food and pharmaceutical industry, for example). However, the air transport sector has a very diverse set of companies and entities with very different missions and organizational natures, so that the position of each company in the face of the threats of a crisis and the management of crisis communication also follow different logics.

In recent years, crises have had a global impact on people. With technological developments people can watch a major disaster unfold, making expectations very high on how organizations respond to and even how they respond to the crisis. Such a source of threat results from the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders [3].

In crisis management, communication has also received particular attention from managers and researchers [6]. The message conveyed, the information that is shared, the communication channels and their recipients are key components in communication in crisis situations and whose management may dictate the survival or non-survival of the organization.

Crisis management is defined as a process to strategically plan the removal of some of the risk and uncertainties from the negative occurrences of a crisis, which could put the organization in control of its own destiny [2].

Crisis managers have an incessant and continuous work to minimize the likelihood of a crisis situation, as well as to prepare the organization for the day that it emerges [3].



Business models need to change, companies need to transform to respond appropriately to the impact and demands of social media, do we will stop looking for the news, they will come to us or even we will create them [7].

According to Rainie [8], current technologies are still far from realizing any possible future scenario in its entirety, however, represent a potential evolution from current trajectories.

For many organizations, social technologies are a threat because of their open-channel nature and lack of technical and human resources to monitor and manage these technologies. From this arises the need to define and implement in organizations a responsible policy for the use of social technologies, oriented to internal audiences and external audiences [9].

According to the [10], we can conclude that many executives report significant benefits when using a new generation of workplace communication tools. The latest results suggest that social tools promise new levels of internal benefits and may eventually bring about deeper changes in the organization in terms of communication, making the business more effective and improving the work method of its employees.

The technological changes have created an environment that forces the organizations to follow the constant evolution of the necessities, behaviors, activities and expectations of the clients. Companies that provide effective customer service by partnering with a collaborative community environment will be in a better position to extend the relationship with their customers over time [11].

Today the business world is unpredictable and volatile thus becoming more complex every day. Companies have seen risk as a necessary evil, which should be minimized or mitigated whenever possible.

Risk is defined as the likelihood of unwanted effects arising from exposure to a hazard. It is often expressed as an equation: Risk = Probability x Consequences.

According to Fearn Banks [2], crisis communication is concerned with the transfer of information to a specific audience, whether to prevent a crisis, recover from a crisis, maintain or improve reputation.

Through effective risk assessment, organizations can also better coordinate multiple responses by effectively addressing risks that threaten the various business areas or functions. More importantly, an effective risk assessment produces a forward-looking view, allowing organizations to avoid risks and also provide a better and clearer approach to the risks they face.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [4] aviation safety and security is the identification, analysis and elimination (and / or mitigation of an acceptable or tolerable level) of hazards, as well as the risks that threaten the viability of an organization.

History shows that airplane accidents / incidents not only result in loss of life, but also affects business aspect, so the need for risk assessment is critical, as is the implementation of a system and adequate planning for the control of accidents.

Assessing the level of risk is an important task, and it is necessary to determine the level of risk based on its probability and consequence.

For this, ICAO defined several risk analysis matrixes that allow its control and mitigation, in the most diverse situations in the aerial sector; however the risk of the involvement of new technologies in this sector, has not yet been included in these rules, and has been gradually defined in the crisis management plans in the companies of the sector.



## Emergency, Communication and Contingency Plans

The Emergency Plan of the Airport defines the sequence of actions of the operations that must be put in place to control each of the possible emergency situations that occur in the Airport and in the surroundings.

The purpose of the Emergency Plan is to coordinate the actions of the various emergency actors that play a part within the area of responsibility of Lisbon Airport.

With it, the goal is to minimize its consequences by protecting people and property that may be affected.

### Type of emergencies

#### EMERGENCY INVOLVING AIRCRAFT

- Aircraft Accident: Action to be taken when an accident or fire with an aircraft occurs on or off the Airport. It is considered an Aircraft Accident outside the airport when it occurs more than 1 km from its respective perimeter;
  - Total Emergency: Action to be taken when it is known or strongly suspected that an approaching aircraft has technical problems and may cause an incident. We can also consider at this point, accidents not related to aircraft, such as Natural Accidents;
  - Local Prevention: Action to be taken when an approaching aircraft is known to have technical problems, which by their nature normally do not entail serious difficulties in landing safely;
  - Airplane Bomb Threat: Action to be taken when a bomb threat has been received and validated as sufficiently serious by the Threat Assessment and Analysis Team;
- Aircraft Seizure or Diversion: Action to be taken when it is known that an aircraft has been hijacked or diverted; the following are some examples of anomalous situations that could lead to the implementation of any of the previous situations.

On Air (Air Traffic Service) decision of:

- Landing gear failure;
- Motor failure;
- Serious hydraulic or electronic problems (controls, navigation, radio);
- Traces of smoke in the aircraft;
- Loss of fuel, loss of pressure in the cab.

In the ground (STA decision, SOA (Airport Operations Service), SSLCI (Rescue and Fire Fighting Service)):

- Incident during parking;
- About train heating;
- Aborted take-off.

Situation of extreme weather condition for the operation as:

- Wind shear;
- Heavy rain or hail;
- cross winds of the order of 15 knots, in the 20-knot service runway or in a burst scheme within the same values;
- Heavy thunderstorms.

#### EMERGENCIAS NOT INVOLVING AIRCRAFT



**Fire on the premises:** Any type of fire that may occur in the airport or on the infrastructure belonging to the airport;

**Off-Airport Fire:** A fire that may constitute a danger to the flights or to the airport infrastructure to which the foreign fire services must take action. The contact with the firemen of the airport can originate in the STA, Police or private individuals, these in turn will trigger warning to the external action Fire department in the indicated place;

**Natural Disaster:** Any type of natural disaster that could cause damage at the airport or on aircraft;

**Facility Pump Threat:** Action to be taken when a bomb threat is received and validated as sufficiently serious by the Threat Assessment and Analysis Team;

**Incident involving Hazardous Materials:** May occur independently or as a result of an emergency with an aircraft. Such an incident is not necessarily limited to the existing load within the aircraft, but may occur while the cargo is at the loading terminals, in transit or during loading and unloading operations;

**Sabotage and Armed Attack:** Actions aimed at producing damage, destruction of facilities, equipment and aircraft. Require immediate intervention by the Security Forces;

**Crowd Control:** Action to be taken by the Security Forces, when there is strong evidence or evidence that there will be public order changes, in the airport grounds (land side or side air);

**Fire in the GOC (Joint Operation Group - pool of aviation fuel suppliers):** Fires that may occur in the facilities of the Joint Operation Group.

## **Crisis communication plan**

The term "communication" tends to become too broad and leads to incorrect interpretations of some procedures or responsibilities, so it becomes necessary to separate what is meant by "operational communication", where all intrinsic steps to contingency situations or emergency in the act of coordinating, informing, advising, soliciting support and making known to the various local actors. The Operational Communication is mapped in the procedures of the Contingency Plan and the Emergency Plan of the Airport, whose procedures activate the Crisis Communication Plan [12].

General objectives:

- Map the maximum number of possible situations in order to guarantee measures that will guarantee a timely response to all the public affected by the occurrence and those considered as priority;
- Ensure that all levels of management have sufficient information to implement and maintain an effective crisis management system;
- Define the main roles in crisis communication management within the Communication Directorate;
- Establish protocols with the communication areas of all stakeholders identified in the Contingency Plan and in the Emergency Plan in order to ensure greater effectiveness in the coordination of the information to be provided to the media and the public in general.

Operational Objectives:

- Avoid additional operational constraints;
- Control flows and agglomeration of passengers;
- Control crowds;
- Ensure continuity of operation without constraints;



- Ensure continuity of operation, even with calculated constraints;
- Ensure reliable, up-to-date information to all stakeholders;
- Reassure stakeholders and users.

Institutional objectives:

- Inform all stakeholders and users;
- Control reputation.

The crisis communication plan is about two distinct plans, with proper communication procedures and appropriate to the situations: Contingency Plan and Emergency Plan.

## **IROPS (Irregular Operations) contingency plan**

The Contingency Plan [13] aims to minimize the impact that disruptive events and irregularities in the operation can cause to passengers. It was developed by the Operational Management team in Humberto Delgado Airport, in Lisbon, and contains coordinated procedures with the main stakeholders. This plan also intends to be the repository of previous cases of disruption and also integrate the procedures of each partner, as well as the foreseeable interaction between them, when applicable.

Plan for IROPS:

- Identifies airport systems considered critical to the operation, the disruption of which could undermine the welfare of passengers;
- It covers procedures of the operational and technical areas and aims to guarantee the needs, comfort and safety of the passengers;
- Establishes coordinated actions to prevent and anticipate problems as well as actions necessary for immediate response to unforeseen situations that may arise, either on board the aircraft or at the terminal, whenever there are disruptions or significant delays that constitute irregularities of the operation.

Causes of IROPS:

- Adverse weather conditions;
- Seismic or volcanic events;
- Reduction of capacity or of airport and / or air traffic facilitation;
- Technical problems (with aircraft, systems and / or equipment, power failures);
- Safety breaches and labor problems.

The phases of IROPS, to be considered in terms of planning and actions, are:

- Increase in the number of passengers and / or airplanes;
- Capacity constraints;
- Off-hours or non-scheduled operation (divergent flights);
- Prolonged stay (passengers and / or aircraft).

The situations described above may also affect the capacity of the various airport subsystems, and even cause a severe impact on the airport's operations and, consequently, its normal response capacity.

There were 14 large areas related to critical system failures, equipment, and meteorology, among others, ordered as follows:

- 01 - Disruption due to abandoned baggage
- 02 - Disruption in accesses AHD (Airport Humberto Delgado)
- 03 - Disruption in the luggage terminal



- 04 - Weather disruption
- 05 - Disruption due to air traffic
- 06 - Industrial disruption
- 07 - Disruption due to failure of computer network or systems
- 08 - Disruption due to power failure
- 09 - Disruption due to lack of fuel
- 10 - Disruption due to epidemic or contagion
- 11 - Disruption due to interruption of operation on the track
- 12 - Disruption due to the need to close areas
- 13 - Failure to supply water
- 14 - Command failure and control of light signalling

At the end of the disruptive situation, all relevant information, such as documentation completed at the time of the disruption, should be collected, which will be submitted to the IROPS Committee, which will systematize it for further analysis and thorough evaluation of the event, for the purpose of review the quality of response.

It is critical that an integrated, consistent and authentic communication response to an event, incident, or accident uses all available channels to interact with internal and external partners and other stakeholders.

The Head of Communication has the function of monitoring and taking control of all the content placed on the website and social networks until the normalization of the situation.

## Conclusion

The case study of fuels at Lisbon Airport is under development, and after comparative study and analysis (from the first event and the second with the same typology - strike in the fuel supply), with existing good practices, conclusions can be reached that could lead us to the concretization of a model that can respond quickly and efficiently.

We are analyzing the spread of crises in the organization regarding their effects on response times and involved entities with a view to minimizing response times with possible success stories for producing a model.

This work is under development and results are expected soon.

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