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## Crisis Management in Modern Organisations

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### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The objective of this article is to understand how effective crisis management influences the functioning of organizations. The article analyses three main aspects of crisis management: crisis planning and response, crisis communication, and business continuity management (BCM).

**Design/methodology/approach:** This article formulates the following research problem: How does an organization's appropriate approach, through controlling its core elements such as planning and response, communication, and maintaining continuity affect its functioning? Corresponding to this research problem, a research hypothesis is proposed, which suggests that organizations that implement comprehensive crisis management plans invest in regular training and simulations and use modern technologies for risk monitoring and management are more resilient to disruptions and better at maintaining business continuity. Further analyses and research aim to confirm this hypothesis and provide guidance on optimizing crisis management strategies to enhance organizational effectiveness. The study employs a detailed analysis of existing scientific literature, norms, and standards related to crisis management, business continuity planning, and crisis communication. The analysed sources include books and scientific articles aimed at understanding the theoretical foundations of crisis management, as well as identifying best practices and challenges in this field.

**Findings:** Crisis management is a dynamic field that requires continuous development and adaptation to new challenges. Further research and analysis will enable a better understanding of threats and the development of more effective strategies, contributing to increased organizational resilience to crises.

**Practical Implications:** Effective crisis management allows organizations to respond quickly and efficiently in the face of threats, which is crucial for their long-term success and market stability. However, for crisis management to be fully effective, further analyses and studies are necessary to continuously improve strategies and procedures. Particular attention should be paid to the development of technologies that can support crisis management, as well as

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research on the human aspects of crisis management, such as crisis psychology and organizational culture.

**Originality/Value:** The article presents a comprehensive approach to crisis management, with particular emphasis on crisis planning and response, crisis communication, and business continuity management. It discusses key strategies, tools, and best practices that can support organizations in effectively managing crises and ensuring their sustainability in the face of contemporary challenges.

**Keywords:** Communication, organization, planning, response, management.

**JEL codes:** H12, M12.

**Paper type:** Research article.

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary enterprises and organisations operate within a dynamically changing environment, characterised by increasing complexity and unpredictability. Globalisation, technological advancement, climate change, and various threats such as cyberattacks, natural disasters, and health crises, present managers with challenges in ensuring operational continuity and protecting the interests of the organisation and its stakeholders. In this context, crisis planning and response, effective crisis communication, and Business Continuity Management (BCM) play a pivotal role.

Crisis planning and response refer to processes aimed at preparing an organisation for potential threats, minimising the adverse impacts of these threats, and swiftly and effectively restoring normal operations after their occurrence. Effective crisis planning includes the identification of possible crisis scenarios, the development of response procedures, and the regular training and exercising of employees.

Crisis communication is one of the most crucial elements of crisis management. It encompasses not only the internal flow of information within the organisation but also external communication with the media, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Effective crisis communication enables a rapid response, reduces panic, and maintains trust in the organisation during difficult times.

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a holistic approach to identifying potential threats to the organisation and developing strategies that ensure the uninterrupted operation of key business processes in the event of disruptions. BCM involves both the prevention and response to incidents, providing the organisation with the capability to quickly regain full operational functionality following a crisis.

The aim of this article is to present a comprehensive approach to crisis management, with particular emphasis on crisis planning and response, crisis communication, and business continuity management. The key strategies, tools, and best practices that can support organisations in effectively managing crises and ensuring their resilience in the face of contemporary challenges will be discussed.

## **2. Crisis Planning and Response**

Contemporary enterprises and organisations must be prepared for a variety of crisis situations that may arise from unpredictable events. These crises may take the form of natural disasters, technological failures, cyberattacks, health crises, or financial problems. In the face of such threats, it is essential to have appropriate plans in place and the ability to respond quickly and effectively to minimise negative impacts and ensure the continuity of operations.

A crisis should be viewed as a stage that serves, or rather provides an opportunity for new life or the adoption of new technology (Hargins, Watt, 2010). Crisis planning is the systematic process of preparing an organisation for potential crisis situations. It involves identifying potential threats, conducting risk analysis, and developing procedures and action strategies. The key elements of crisis planning include:

- The identification of threats – the recognition and classification of possible threats that may affect the organization;
- risk assessment – an analysis of the probability of occurrence of individual threats and their potential consequences;
- The development of action plans - creating detailed procedures for responding to various crisis scenarios;
- training and exercises – the regular training of employees and crisis simulations to prepare teams for effective action in crisis situations;
- responding to crisis situations.

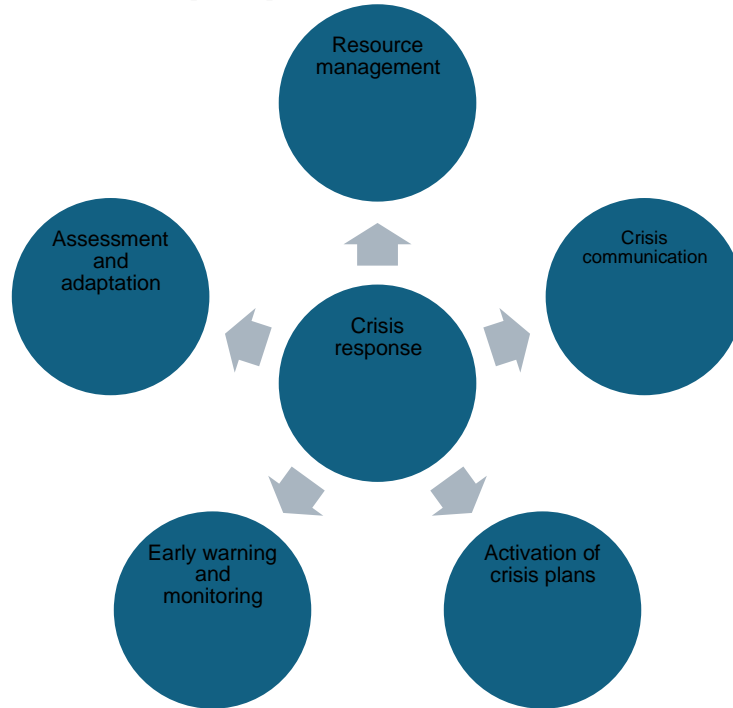
Organizations become victims of various threats. Effective crisis management is favoured by rational planning and integrated management, competencies in the field of organizational development of the organization, real decision-making processes. Making appropriate decisions in the organization builds an effective crisis barrier, which gives the ability to cope with this phenomenon (Wieczerzyńska, 2009).

Planning various types of activities aimed at preventing crisis situations rarely takes place before problems arise. First-degree organizations preparing for crisis situations do not conduct analyses of the impact of significant factors on operational activities and the implementation of set goals (Depta and Wojtaszek, 2015).

In order to be able to respond properly, the causes of the crisis must be properly recognized. Only their proper diagnosis will allow for taking effective remedial action (Walecka and Dąbrowska, 2015). An effective response to crisis situations

requires quick and coordinated action. Below, in Figure 1, the key elements in the response process are presented.

**Figure 1.** Key elements in the response process



*Source:* Own elaboration.

Early warning systems and the constant monitoring of key indicators can help in the quick detection of impending threats as well as the swift implementation of developed action plans and the activation of crisis teams. Effective and clear internal and external communication is essential for informing all stakeholders about the situation and the actions taken. Also, the optimal use of available resources, including human, financial, and technological, is necessary for effective crisis management.

The constant assessment of the situation and adjusting actions in response to changing conditions, as well as well-developed crisis plans and effective responses to crisis situations, are crucial for maintaining the continuity of the organization's operations and minimizing losses. They allow for the rapid restoration of normal functioning, protection of the company's image, and the maintenance of trust among customers and stakeholders.

As a result, organizations that are prepared for crises are more resilient to unforeseen events and better cope in a dynamically changing business environment. Planning and responding to crisis situations are not only an element of risk management but

also a key component of long-term development and the sustainability strategy of the organization.

### **3. Crisis Communication in Organisations**

In today's rapidly changing world, crisis communication has become a key element of management for every modern organization. The environment of new media and social media, alongside many positive aspects, has also introduced phenomena that can cause crisis situations for individuals and organizations (Kaczmarek-Śliwińska, 2016, p. 57). Crisis communication can be defined as the strategic use of words and actions to manage information and meaning during a crisis process (Coombs, 2010).

Effective communication during a crisis can determine the success or failure of crisis management, impacting the company's reputation, stakeholder trust, and future operational activities. Crisis communication involves the rapid, clear, and effective transmission of information to internal and external stakeholders during a crisis.

A key objective of crisis communication is to ensure the safety of employees, customers, and society by informing them about the actions taken for protection. By providing accurate and verified information, an organization can reduce the risk of panic and misinformation, which is crucial for minimizing damage. A crisis can be dynamic, and communication requirements may change as the crisis progresses (Coombs, 2019).

Protecting the company's reputation is another significant aspect of crisis communication. Maintaining stakeholder trust requires transparency and honesty in communication. Organizations that are open and sincere during difficult times typically fare better in maintaining a positive image in the eyes of their stakeholders. Ultimately, effective crisis communication aims to facilitate a return to normal operations for the company by providing clear instructions and regular updates.

As part of preparations for potential crises, organizations must develop a detailed crisis communication plan. Such a plan should include communication procedures for various crisis scenarios to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

It is also essential to designate a team responsible for managing communication during the crisis. This team should be well-trained and ready to respond quickly. In preparing the communication plan, it is important to consider communication barriers, which can be briefly categorized based on the type of element in the information flow process within the organization to which they pertain. An example typology:

- Interpersonal barriers - created by participants in the act of communication: individual perception, experience - perceiving through the lens of one's own

- principles, values, and feelings, a lack of assertiveness, stereotypes, prejudices, the filtering of information, a lack of trust;
- barriers resulting from a lack of awareness and communication skills: selective listening – a distortion of the motive, a lack of understanding of nonverbal communication, excessive self-absorption;
  - barriers arising from a lack of communication channels: in a hierarchical structure, for example, the absence of pathways for communication between a rank-and-file employee and a senior manager, between departments, for example, difficulties in obtaining relevant information from another organizational unit;
  - barriers related to the quality of information: relevance - conveying information that is perceived as not particularly useful and irrelevant from the recipient's perspective, timeliness - delays in delivering messages, credibility - related to a lack of trust when words are not supported by declared actions, method of delivery - inadequacy to the recipient, semantics - language differences, information overload;
  - barriers associated with the communication atmosphere and the organizational culture of the company: reluctance to formally express opinions, especially negative ones - defensive behaviours, lack of trust in colleagues and superiors, discouragement and lack of motivation to work (Olsztyńska, 2002, p. 176).

The behaviours mentioned influence decision-making, the limitations of individuals or groups, such as knowledge on a given topic, emotional degree regarding a specific reality, and fundamentally the acquisition of reliable and factual information. Following this, effective communication and action are necessary to achieve a defined goal (Krynicka-Duszyńska, 2010).

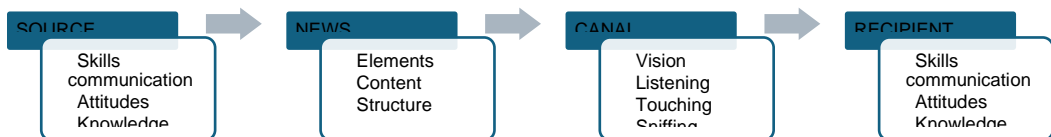
Speed and clarity are fundamental to effective crisis communication. The immediate initiation of communication after a crisis allows for rapid informing of all stakeholders about the situation and actions taken. Regular updates and open communication help maintain trust and minimize uncertainty, which often accompanies crisis situations. Below, in Figure 2, the Interpersonal Communication Model according to P.H.I. Morgan is presented.

In the age of social media and rapid information flow, organizations must also be prepared to manage communication through these channels. Quick and effective responses to questions and concerns raised by customers, along with the active monitoring of social media, enable the better management of crisis perception and minimize potential damage to the company's reputation.

Crisis communication in modern organizations is not only an element of risk management but also a key component of long-term development and sustainability strategies. Through preparation, transparency, and swift action, companies can

effectively manage crises and maintain the trust of their stakeholders, which is essential for their long-term success.

**Figure 2.** The interpersonal communication model according to P.H.I. Morgan



*Source:* Kuc and Moczydlowska, 2009.

#### 4. Business Continuity Management (BCM) in Modern Organizations

Maintaining continuity of the process is a problem for organizations due to various types of disruptions, crises and adverse events. The answer to these dilemmas may be to refer to business continuity management (BCM) (Starosta, 2016).

Business Continuity Management (BCM) has become an indispensable element of the strategy of modern organizations. Faced with a growing number of threats such as cyber attacks, natural disasters, technological failures or pandemics, BCM is a key tool that allows companies to maintain operability in critical moments.

BCM is a holistic approach to identifying potential threats that could disrupt an organization's operations and developing and implementing plans and strategies to ensure the continuity of key business processes. This process includes both prevention and incident response, allowing organizations to quickly regain full operability after disruptions occur. We can say that business continuity management is:

- A proactive approach to operational risk management, Focusing on securing the organization's image,
- Building strategic-level protection for the organization against unpredictable threats,
- Creating a strategy to maintain core processes in the organization,
- Creating plans and procedures to enable smooth functioning of the organization in the face of a threat or rapid renewal,
- Creating programs aimed at reducing any imperfections in the context of the customer in order to meet their expectations,

- Improving the organization in every area (Kildow, 2011).

One of the main goals of BCM is to minimize the impact of disruptions on the company's operations. By carefully analysing potential threats and developing appropriate action plans, organizations can prepare for various crisis scenarios. These plans should include preventive measures, incident response procedures and post-crisis recovery strategies.

Within BCM, it is also important to create crisis management teams and conduct regular training and exercises. This ensures that employees are well prepared to act in crisis situations, significantly increasing the effectiveness of crisis management. The diagram below shows the embedding of BCM in the organizational culture.

**Figure 3.** BCM cycle chart



*Source:* Own elaboration based on Green, 2014.

A key element of BCM (Business Continuity Management) is also communication. Effective crisis communication enables quick information dissemination to employees, clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders about the situation and the actions taken. Transparency and clarity of the message are essential for maintaining stakeholder trust and minimizing panic.

In today's organizations, technology plays a significant role in managing business continuity. Modern IT systems, such as risk and continuity management platforms, allow for the effective monitoring of threats and the quick implementation of action



plans. Utilizing technology such as artificial intelligence and machine learning enables the prediction of potential threats and better preparation for unforeseen events. Business continuity management is also a strategic aspect that impacts the long-term development of the organization.

Companies that are well-prepared for crises can quickly restore full operational capability and minimize losses, which enhances their market competitiveness. Moreover, effective BCM increases customer and business partner trust, which is crucial for building lasting business relationships.

In summary, managing business continuity in today's organizations is a comprehensive process that includes identifying threats, developing action plans, regular training and exercises, and effective communication. With proper preparation and the use of modern technologies, companies can effectively manage crises and maintain business continuity, which is critical for their long-term success and market stability.

## **5. Conclusions**

Crisis management is an essential element of modern organizational strategy, enabling effective planning, response, and adaptation in the face of various threats. The three key areas of crisis management—crisis planning and response, crisis communication, and business continuity management (BCM)—form the foundation for building organizational resilience.

In the area of crisis planning and response, organizations must develop detailed plans that enable rapid and effective action in emergency situations. It is crucial to identify potential threats, assess risks, and create procedures and strategies that minimize the negative impacts of crises. Effective planning allows organizations to prepare for various scenarios, which enhances their ability to respond quickly and adapt.

Crisis communication plays an extremely important role in crisis management. Clear, prompt, and transparent information dissemination to internal and external stakeholders is essential for maintaining trust and minimizing panic. Effective communication also allows for better management of the crisis perception, which can significantly impact the organization's reputation. In today's world, where information spreads rapidly, the ability to manage communication on social media is as important as traditional communication channels.

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is another key element that allows organizations to maintain operational continuity during a crisis. BCM is a holistic approach to identifying potential threats and developing strategies that ensure the continuity of critical business processes. Through BCM, organizations can minimize disruptions and recover operational capability more quickly after a crisis occurs.

The use of modern technologies, such as risk and continuity management systems, enables the effective monitoring of threats and implementation of action plans.

In summary, crisis management in today's organizations is a comprehensive process that includes crisis planning and response, crisis communication, and business continuity management. Effective crisis management allows organizations to act quickly and efficiently in the face of threats, which is crucial for their long-term success and market stability.

However, for crisis management to be fully effective, further analysis and research are necessary to continuously improve strategies and procedures. In particular, attention should be given to technological advancements that can support crisis management, as well as research on the human aspects of crisis management, such as crisis psychology and organizational culture.

Crisis management is a dynamic field that requires ongoing development and adaptation to new challenges. Further research and analysis will lead to a better understanding of threats and the development of more effective strategies, contributing to increased organizational resilience to crises.

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