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**2026 | Philadelphia | January 11–14**

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# Making Your Event Crisis-Ready by Strengthening Your Rapid Response Skills



# Meet Your Facilitator

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# Ground Rules & Expectations



## Interactive Format

Engage actively and participate in discussions



## Confidentiality

Keep organization-specific discussions confidential



## Technology Use

Limit and close out of apps to minimize distractions



## Stepping Out

Step out for a call if needed to avoid disruptions

— Foundation & Framework —

- 1 Intros & Context Setting
- 2 Risk Mitigation vs. Crisis Management
- 3 Understanding Your Risk Environment

— Organization Specific Risk Assessment —

- 4 Risk Calculations
- 5 Stakeholder Complexity
- 6 Single Points of Failure

— Building Your Response Framework —

- 7 Your Risk Environment
- 8 Team Roles & Communication Structure
- 9 Crisis Communication Strategy

— Practical Application & Planning —

- 10 Case Studies (if time allows)
- 11 Building Your Action Plan

# Table Introductions

Role

Organization

Riskiest Ice Cream Flavor or Pizza Topping You've Ever Tried

# Content Attribution

All content delivered in this workshop is adapted from the certificate course on Crisis Management & Risk Mitigation for Events as taught by Juliette Kayyem.



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Institute**

**What risks do you worry  
about most for your events  
or business practices?**

# Why Proactive Planning Matters



## Event Disruptions

Unexpected events like natural disasters, cyberattacks, and equipment failures can significantly disrupt business operations



## Crisis Response Costs

Unplanned crisis response can be extremely costly, with expenses for emergency measures, lost productivity, and reputational damage



## Benefits of Planning

Proactive planning and preparedness can mitigate the impact of disruptions, reduce costs, and ensure business continuity

# Crisis & Risk Fundamentals

# What is a Crisis?

## Unforeseen by the Organization

Crises are **unexpected events** that the organization has not planned for or anticipated.

## Endangers Organizational Goals

A crisis threatens the achievement of an organization's **key objectives and priorities**.

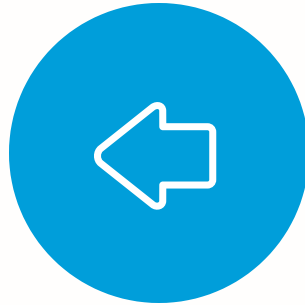
## Limited Time for Response

Crises require **urgent and immediate action**, leaving little time for deliberation and planning.

## Threatens High Priority Values

Crises **jeopardize the core values** and principles that are most important to the organization.

# Old Thinking: Linear & Reactive



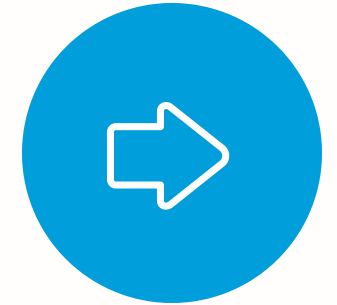
## Left of Boom

The time and space  
before the explosion  
occurs

Preventive and  
mitigative measures  
can be taken



## BOOM!



## Right of Boom

The time and space  
after the explosion has  
occurred

Response and recovery  
efforts are focused

**Who's stuck in old thinking?  
Why?**

# New Thinking: Disasters as Standard Operating Procedure



## Embracing Uncertainty

Accepting that disasters are an **inevitable part of the modern world** and developing strategies to thrive in unpredictable environments.



## Proactive Resilience

Building robust systems and processes that can **withstand and adapt to disruptions**, ensuring business continuity.

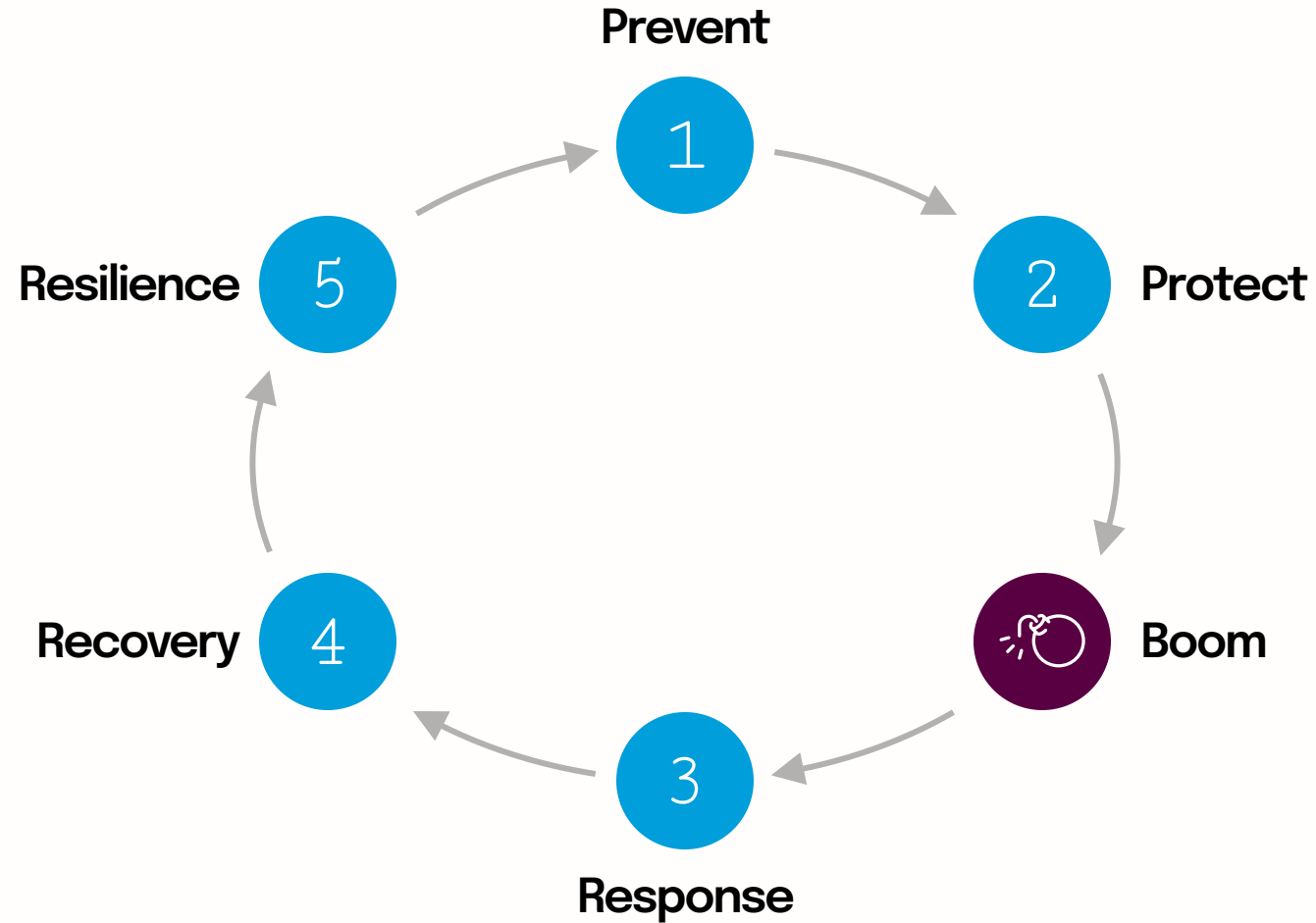


## Collaborative Networks

Fostering strong **partnerships and communication channels** to coordinate emergency response and share best practices.

By reframing our mindset and embracing disasters as a standard part of operations, organizations can become more agile, adaptable, and better equipped to navigate an increasingly volatile world.

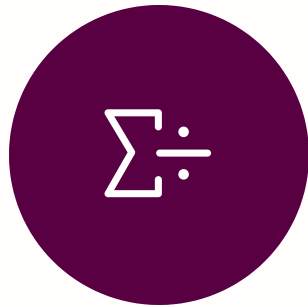
# New Thinking: Cyclical Five-Part Framework



**Who is starting to  
embrace new thinking?  
What's been successful?**

# Defining Risk in Crisis Management

# Minimize the Impact: The Concept of 'Fail Safer'



## Risk Calculation

Identify and assess potential risks, their likelihood, and potential impact



## Resource Allocation

Determine the resources needed to mitigate and manage identified risks



## Resource Inventory

Assess the available resources and capabilities to address potential disruptions

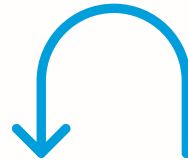
By thoroughly understanding risks, allocating appropriate resources, and inventorying available capabilities, organizations can build a 'fail safer' approach to managing unexpected events and disruptions.

# Managing Risk and Measuring Consequences



## Determining the Acceptable Level of Risk

Balancing between **minimizing** all risk and **maintaining** the mission objectives



## Minimizing All Risk

Implementing robust safeguards and fail-safe mechanisms to **reduce** potential failures

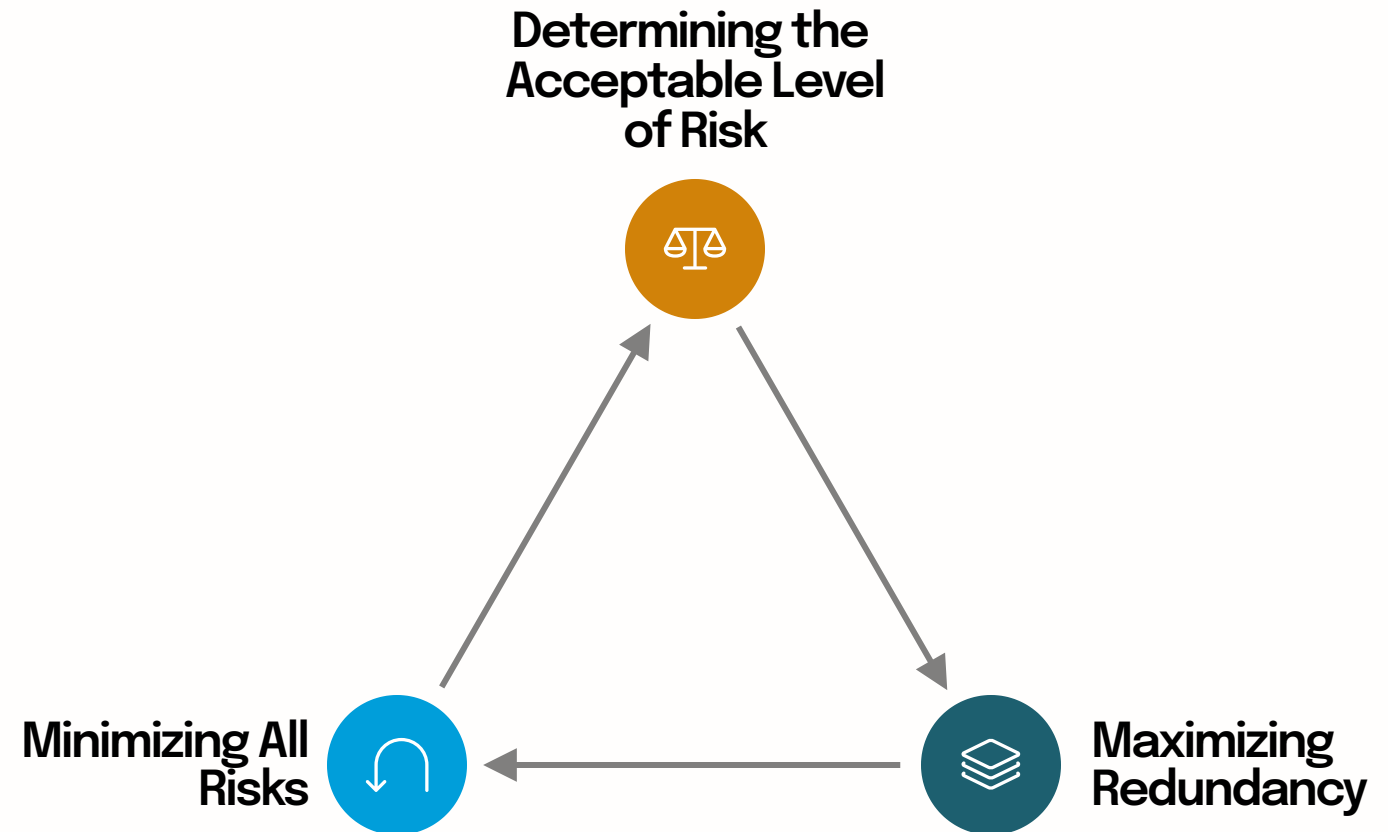


## Maximizing Redundancy

Integrating multiple layers of **protection** to create a comprehensive risk management system

Effective risk mitigation requires a nuanced approach that balances the need for safety and security with the imperative of mission accomplishment.

# “Less bad” “Fail safer” Concept



# Worksheet: Risk Identification & Prioritization

# 6 Types of Decision-Making Bias

## Myopia

Tendency to focus on **short-term costs and benefits**, overlooking long-term impacts

## Amnesia

Tendency to quickly **forget lessons learned** from past disasters and mistakes

## Optimism

Tendency to **underestimate the likelihood** of future losses and hazards

## Inertia

Tendency to **maintain the status quo** or default option when faced with uncertainty

## Simplification

Tendency to selectively attend to only a **subset of relevant facts** when making risk-related decisions

## Herding

Tendency to base choices on the observed **actions and decisions of others**

# Overcoming Inertia and Myopia

- **Continuous Preparedness**
- **Proactive Evaluation**
- **Embrace Flexibility**
- **Challenge Assumptions**

Overcoming inertia and myopia requires a mindset of continuous improvement, adaptability, and proactive risk assessment.

# Break - 10 minutes



## Time to Recharge

Rejuvenate and refresh your mind and body.



## Stretch It Out

Do some light stretching to get the blood flowing.



## Grab a Snack

Grab a healthy snack and stay hydrated to refuel and boost your energy.

# What Risk 'Personality' Best Describes You?

Your risk 'personality' reflects your unique approach to **decision-making and handling uncertainty.**

It can reveal insights about your **comfort level with risk**, problem-solving strategies, and overall risk management style.



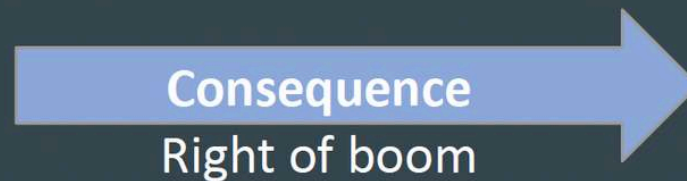
# The Five Risk Personality Types

- 1 The Risk Avoider**  
Minimizes risk at all costs, prefers safe and stable options
- 2 The Risk Calculator**  
Carefully analyzes and weighs the pros and cons before making decisions
- 3 The Risk Optimist**  
Embraces risk and sees opportunities where others see danger
- 4 The Risk Adapter**  
Flexible and able to adjust their risk profile based on the situation
- 5 The Risk Delegator**  
Relies on others to handle risky decisions and tasks

# Worksheet: What's Your Risk Personality?

# Managing Risk Calculations

# Probability Consequence Risk Framework



# Why do we focus on the Grey Rhino?



## Highly Obvious Dangers

Dangers that are highly visible and highly probable, but still neglected by people

## Paralysis of Inaction

Everyone may be talking about the issue, but no one is taking action to address it

## Signposts Ignored

Most 'grey rhinos' (major problems) occur after clear warning signs have been ignored

Even when we see the obvious dangers ahead, we often fail to take the necessary steps to address them, leading to costly consequences down the line.

# Black Swan Events - Rare, but Devastating



## Unpredictable Disruptions

Unexpected events that can have severe, widespread impacts



## Cascading Consequences

Initial shocks leading to a domino effect of additional crises



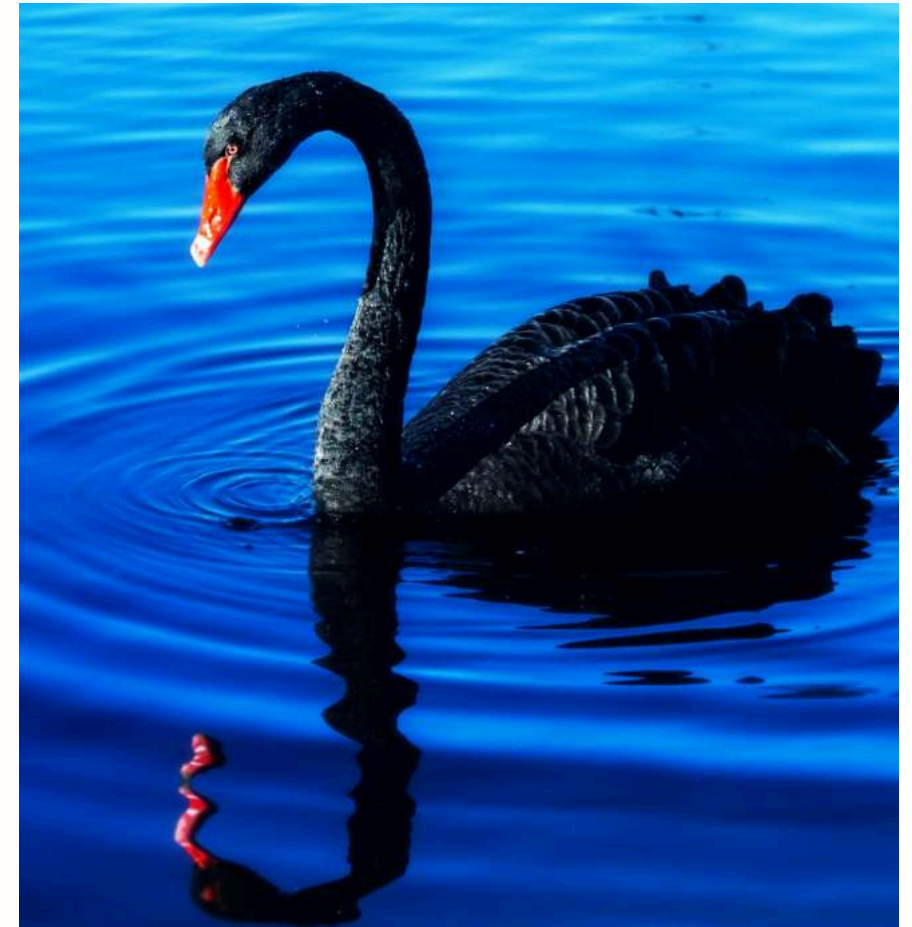
## Systemic Vulnerabilities

Interdependencies that amplify the effects of a single failure



## Limited Foresight

Difficulty anticipating rare, high-impact scenarios



# The "Preparedness Paradox"

## Successful preparedness measures seem like a waste

Successful measures that prevent disasters or crises can make it seem like the preparedness was unnecessary

## Benefits of preparation are hard to see

The benefits of being prepared for bad events are not always visible, making it difficult to justify the investment

## Difficulty in promoting preparation

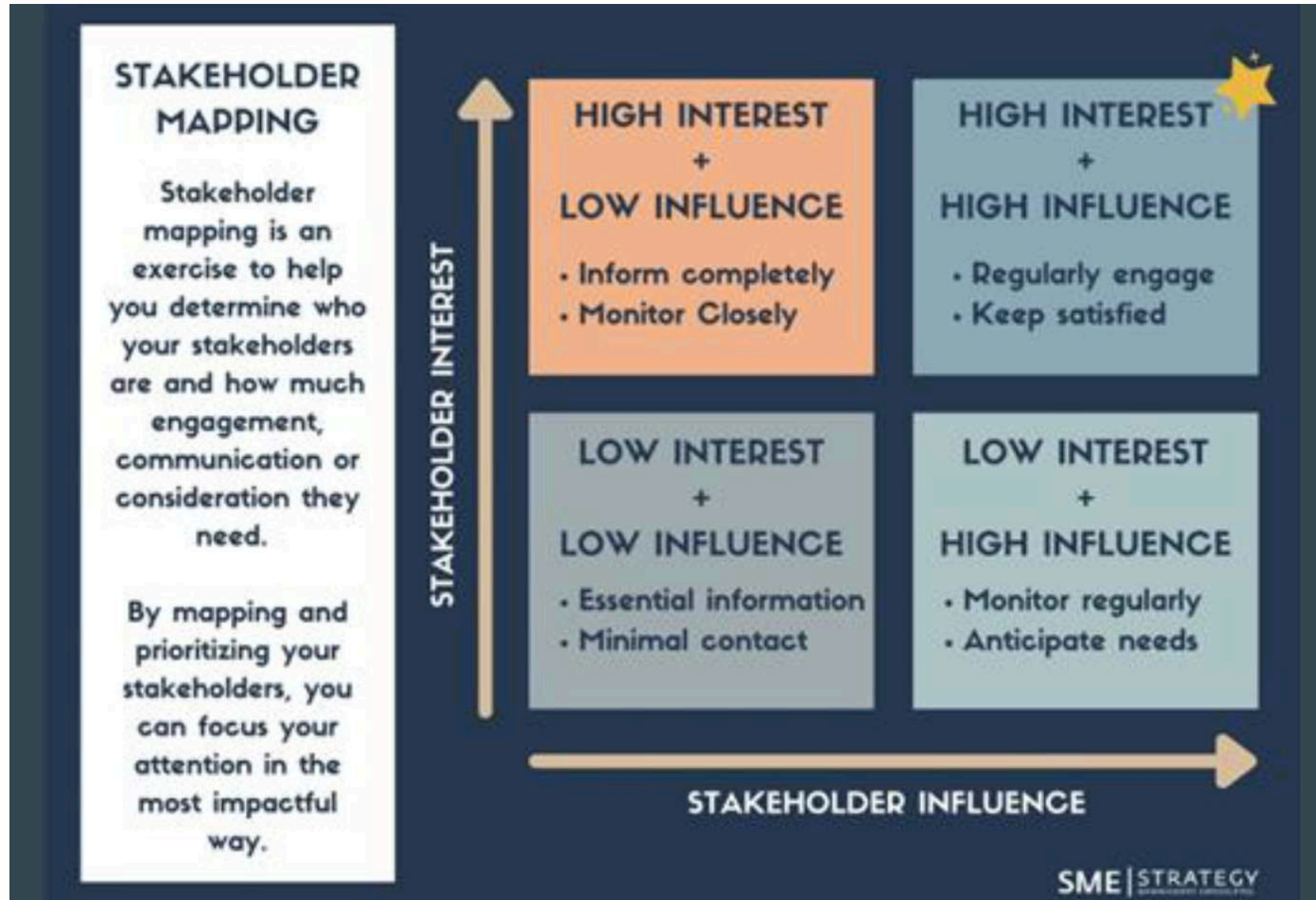
This paradox keeps us from promoting preparation in anticipation of bad events because the benefits are hard to justify

## **Key Takeaway:**

**Rather than trying to predict the unpredictable, focus on building adaptive capacity and resilience to respond effectively.**

# Developing a Stakeholder Matrix

# Interest & Influence Matrix



# Worksheet: Stakeholder Mapping & Crisis Matrix

# Cultivating Stakeholder Buy-In and "Listening to the Noise"

## **Foster Collaborative Relationships**

Actively seek stakeholder input and incorporate their feedback to build trust and buy-in

## **Understand Stakeholder Needs**

Conduct interviews and surveys to identify the goals, concerns, and pain points of key stakeholders

## **Communicate Effectively**

Tailor messaging to resonate with different stakeholder groups and address their specific interests

## **Anticipate and Address Objections**

Proactively identify potential roadblocks and develop strategies to overcome them

# Understanding Your Risk Environment

# What is a Single Point of Failure?

Part of a system that, if it fails, will cause the entire system to fail.

Failure is not a steady state.



## It Can Create

- A false sense of security
- Put undue pressure on a single component

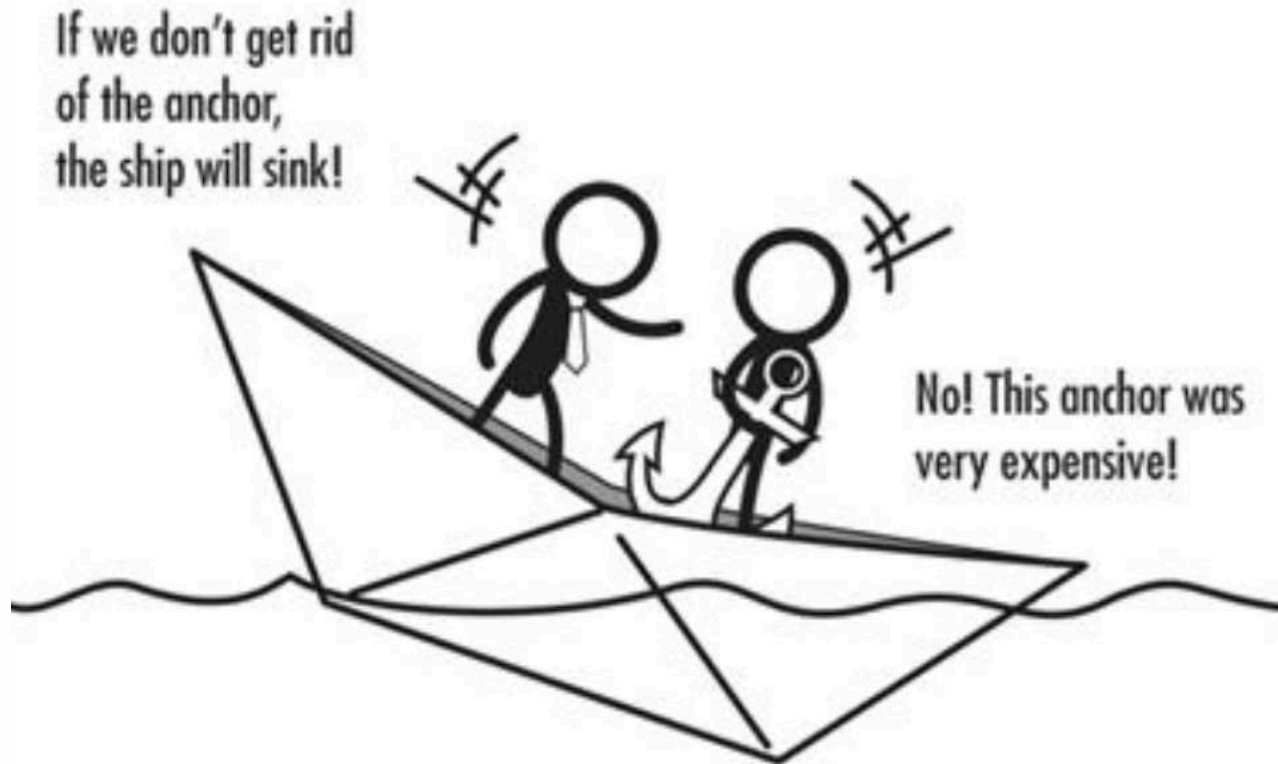


## Plan for Multiple Levels of Failure

- Implement redundancies
- Diversify components
- Have contingency plans

By understanding and addressing single points of failure, you can build more resilient and reliable systems.

# Why Don't We Pivot?



## Sunk Cost Fallacy

Continuing to invest in a losing proposition because of money already spent



## Failure to See Changed Circumstances

Inability to adapt to new market conditions or customer needs



## Politics of Change

Resistance to pivoting due to organizational politics and power dynamics

**Continually ask:  
What else would be  
impacted if \_\_\_\_\_ fails?**

# Worksheet: Building Your Planning & Response Framework

# Typical Risk Categories for Events

## Venue/Infrastructure

Factors related to the event location, facilities, and logistics

## Stakeholder Relations

Relationships with partners, sponsors, vendors, and attendees

## Weather/External

Environmental conditions and unforeseen external events

## Technology

IT systems, connectivity, and digital event components

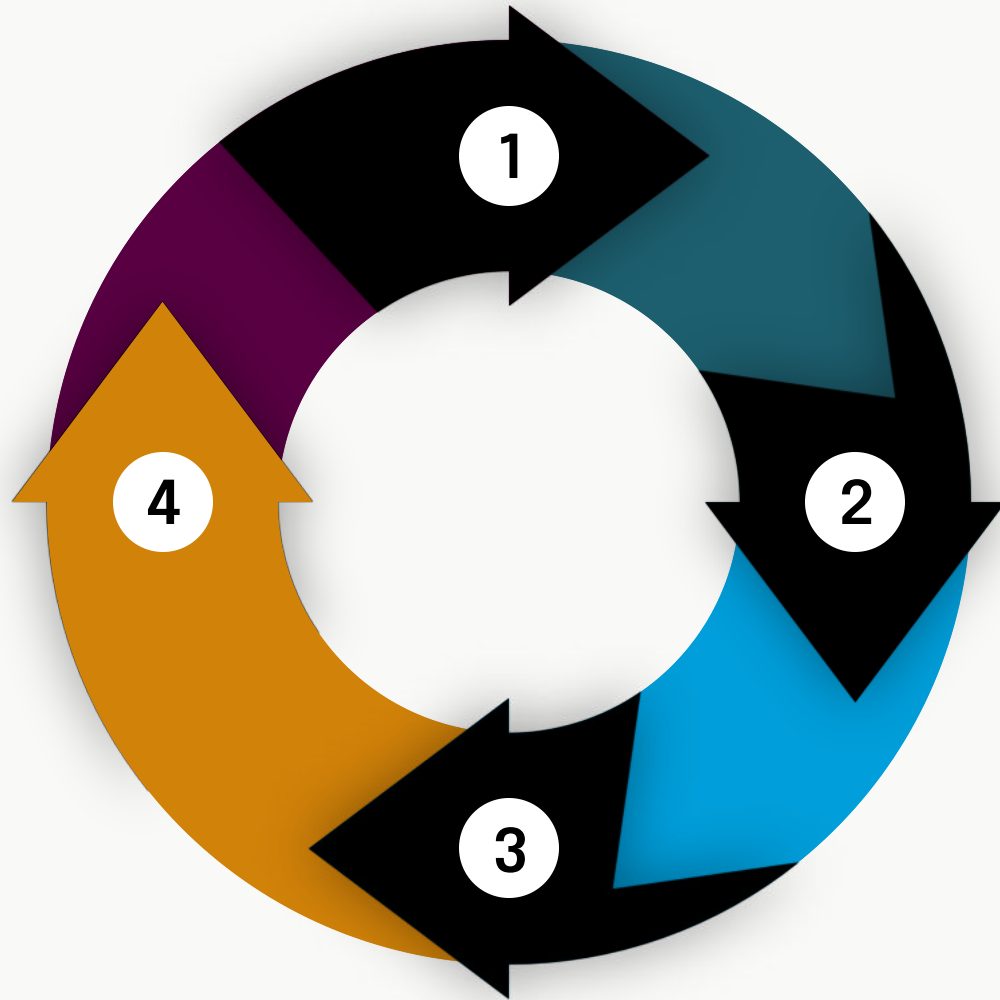
## Health/Safety

Attendee well-being, emergency preparedness, and medical/wellness protocols

## Political/Regulatory

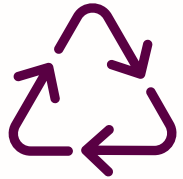
Legal requirements, government policies, and compliance issues

# Your Organization's Response Framework



- 1 Team Roles & Responsibilities
- 2 Communication Structure
- 3 Situational Awareness
- 4 Crisis Communication Strategy

# Building Your Organizational Playbook



## Anticipate Organizational Risks

Identify potential threats, vulnerabilities, and impacts to your organization



## Evaluate Organizational Capacities

Assess your organization's resources, skills, and capabilities to address risks



## Establish an Operational Footprint

Determine the necessary infrastructure, processes, and systems to effectively respond



## Enable Seamless Communication

Develop channels and protocols to share information, coordinate actions, and engage stakeholders

# Sample: Team Roles & Responsibilities

## Team Lead

Responsible for overseeing the entire team, setting goals, and ensuring effective coordination and communication among team members.

## Operations Manager

Manages the team's day-to-day operations, including resource allocation, task prioritization, and process optimization.

## Communications Liaison

Serves as the primary point of contact for external stakeholders, manages information flow, and coordinates cross-functional collaboration.

## Crisis Response Lead

Leads the team's response during emergency situations, coordinates crisis management efforts, and ensures business continuity.

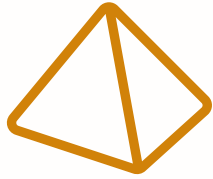
## Technical Specialist

Provides deep expertise in a specific technical domain and assists the team in solving complex technical challenges.

## Administrative Support

Provides administrative support, such as scheduling meetings, managing documentation, and handling logistics for the team.

# Crisis Decision-Making Authority



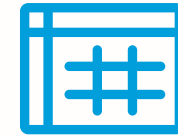
## Chain of Command

Clearly define roles and responsibilities for decision-making during a crisis



## Time-Sensitive Escalation

Streamlined protocols to rapidly escalate time-critical decisions to the appropriate authority



## Situation Monitoring

Continuous assessment of the evolving crisis to inform real-time decision-making

Effective crisis decision-making relies on a well-structured framework that empowers the right people to make the right decisions at the right time.

# Analyzing Capabilities

- **Assess Organizational Structure**  
Evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational hierarchy and decision-making processes
- **Analyze Response Procedures**  
Review emergency response plans and procedures for improvement opportunities
- **Evaluate Resource Allocation**  
Identify gaps in personnel, equipment, and funding to support capabilities
- **Assess Training Effectiveness**  
Determine the impact of training programs on operational readiness

Comprehensive analysis of capabilities enables organizations to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to enhance overall preparedness and response.

# Three Questions to Guide All Safety Planning

1

## What?

Identify the hazards, risks, and potential consequences of a specific situation or task.

2

## So What?

Analyze the significance and impact of the identified hazards, risks, and potential consequences.

3

## Now What?

Determine the appropriate actions, controls, or safety measures to address the identified hazards and risks.

By consistently asking these three questions, you can effectively plan for and ensure the safety of yourself and others in any situation.

# Communicating Risk and Response

# Communication Chain Template

## Internal Team Communication Flow

- Establish a clear and structured process for sharing information, updates, and decisions within the internal team.
- This could involve regular meetings, instant messaging, email updates, or a shared project management platform.

## External Stakeholder Notification

- Develop a protocol for notifying and engaging external stakeholders, such as clients, partners, or regulatory bodies, about relevant developments, changes, or milestones.
- This may include scheduled status reports, ad-hoc updates, or a dedicated communication channel.

# Keys for Effective Messaging

## Know your audience and channels

Understand who you're trying to reach and the best ways to communicate with them

## Build a strong, simple message

Craft a clear, concise, and compelling message that resonates with your target audience

## Prioritize discipline, repetition, and focus

Consistently reinforce your key messaging through multiple touchpoints

## Silence is detrimental

Avoid letting gaps in communication undermine your efforts

**Effective messaging requires a strategic, disciplined approach to connect with your audience and drive your desired outcomes.**

# Three Questions



## **What do you want people to know?**

Present key insights, facts, or information that you want your participants to take away from your message.



## **What do you want people to feel?**

Evoke an emotional response that aligns with your intended message, whether it's inspiration, motivation, or a call to action.



## **What do you want them to do?**

Provide a clear and specific directive that you want your audience to act upon, whether it's to sign up, share, or implement a change.

# After-Action Reports & Structure

## After-Action Report Structure

Outlining the key components of an after-action report, such as executive summary, incident overview, analysis, and recommendations.

## Identifying Lessons Learned

Highlighting the importance of capturing and documenting lessons learned from an incident or event to improve future responses.

## Continuous Improvement

Emphasizing the role of after-action reports in driving continuous improvement and organizational learning.

**After-action reports are a critical tool for organizations to review their responses, identify areas for improvement, and implement measures to enhance their preparedness and resilience.**

**Putting It All Together**

# Activity: Case Study Exercises

- 1 The Technology Breakdown
- 2 The Security Incident
- 3 The Air Quality Emergency

# For each case study, consider...

## **Immediate Response (First 15 minutes)**

What are your first three actions? Who do you contact first? How do you communicate with stakeholders?

## **Crisis Management Approach**

Risk assessment and prioritization? Resource allocation and coordination? Decision-making under pressure? Stakeholder impact analysis?

## **Communication Strategy**

Internal team coordination? Stakeholder messaging (attendees, speakers, sponsors)? Media relations (if applicable)? Post-crisis follow-up?

## **Long-Term Impact Management**

How do you strengthen relationships through effective crisis response? What preventive measures will you implement for future events? How do you maintain credibility and trust with stakeholders?

# Next Steps

# Building Your Action Plan (Part One)

## Crisis Management Checklist

Develop a customized crisis management checklist outlining key actions, responsibilities, and contact information for your team to reference in an emergency.

## Resource Identification

Identify the tools, technologies, and key relationships your organization needs to implement its crisis management framework effectively, including emergency communication platforms, backup venue partners, and subject-matter experts.

# Building Your Action Plan (Part Two)

## 30-Day Action Plan

Identify immediate steps your organization can take within the next 30 days to enhance crisis preparedness, such as finalizing communication templates, testing emergency notification systems, and establishing backup vendor relationships.

## 60-Day Action Plan

Outline the systems and processes that need to be developed over the next 60 days, including updating the risk register, formalizing the crisis response structure, and conducting tabletop exercises with the team.

## 90-Day Action Plan

Determine how your organization will test and refine their crisis management plan over the next 90 days, such as scheduling crisis drills, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and incorporating lessons learned into the plan.

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