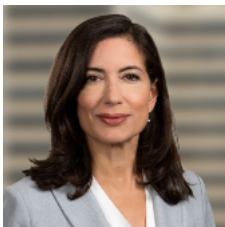


Gavel to Gavel: Crisis readiness – 3 essential strategies

By: Susan Lindberg Guest Columnist June 23, 2021



Susan Lindberg

Perhaps your company was fortunate enough not to be affected by the catastrophic storm in February. Or you haven't yet been a victim of a ransomware attack. But if you were, do you know how you would respond?

Your technical teams would probably answer "yes." However, effective response to and recovery from a severe incident is a team effort.

Where to start?

1. Have a plan

- Internal notification – Construct a notification system with updated contact information. Keep in mind that quick action will be required, not only from technical (engineering and IT) teams, but also legal, communications, insurance, regulatory, human resources, and government relations.
- Define roles, including responsibility for external communication.
- Consider contracting with an off-site data center to ensure business continuity in case of extended power outage or facility damage.
- Consider contracts and insurance policies. A central system will enable prompt action to minimize exposure.
- Consider laws and regulations and maintain a reference of reporting and other legal requirements.
- Consider government agencies and law enforcement and form relationships ahead of time. A contact at the FBI, either directly or through your law firm, may be important in case of cyberattack.
- Consider media strategy. Holding statements can be prepared in advance; key executives can be trained.

2. Don't go it alone

- If a major disaster strikes, you will need outside assistance. Identify experts ahead of time.
- External counsel – Your legal adviser provides guidance on legal risk and privilege, manages documentation, analyzes contractual exposure and force majeure, and manages litigation and penalty exposure.
- Use a specialist to draft press releases, prepare spokespeople and help internal communications team.
- Consider consultants and contractors, experts who can assist with investigation, remediate damage, restore physical facilities and equipment, and address software issues.

3. Expect the unexpected

- Tabletop drills simulate challenges and external chaos. After drills, discuss lessons learned and adjust as needed. Mike Tyson famously said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

Like a professional fighter, your response team's training and practice drills will equip you to handle that punch.

No two incidents are the same, and preparedness will help your team achieve the agility needed to respond well.

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