How to Engage Local Businesses in Critical Disaster Preparation Activities

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BCP Council Mission

• To motivate, educate and assist companies with business continuity planning

• Focus on four areas: Prepare, Protect, Response & Recovery
How Did the BCP Council Start?

• 2005 Homeland Security Innovation Conference
• Presentations about Oklahoma City and 9/11
BCP Council – A History

• Formed the Council in 2006
• Met frequently to determine the scope of work
• First event on pandemic influenza in partnership with DHEC
BCP Council – A History

• Two events scheduled in 2007: Open for Business and Hurricane Preparedness Workshop

• Sofa Super Store – assembled a workshop on business recovery within weeks of the fire
BCP Council – A History

• 2008 Events: BCP Expo, Preparing for Earthquakes & Hurricanes, and Workplace Violence

• Speaker’s Bureau

• Community and Regional Resilience Institute (CARRI) www.resilientus.org
BCP Council – A History

• 2009 Events: How to Write a BCP, Hurricane Preparedness for Business, Pandemic Influenza

• 2010 Events: Hurricane Preparedness Expo

• ESF-24
Events

- Consistency in message
- Resources! Resources! Resources!
- Make it interactive
- Attendance
CARRI

• Invited to participate because of the BCP Council
• Engaged many of our volunteers, past speakers, loyal attendees
• Helped create a framework for other communities
• Led to opportunities with other groups: FEMA, NetGuard
ESF-24

• Partnership with Charleston County

• Help recruit volunteers to work in the Emergency Operations Center

• Serve as a hub of communication with other business organizations
What’s Next?

• Continue with ESF-24
• Speaker’s Bureau
• Web Content
Lessons Learned
Relationships are Critical to Success

• Ensure consistent messaging
• Identify potential speakers for events
• Promote events and activities to larger audience
Key Relationship Examples - Government

- County
- State
- Federal (FEMA)
Key Relationship Examples – Local Media

- Newspapers
- TV Stations
- Radio Stations
- Business Journal
Key Relationship Examples – Community Organizations

- United Way - VOAD
- Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy
- East Cooper Community Outreach (ECCO)
Key Relationship Examples – Business Continuity Professionals

- Local Hospital (MUSC)
- Local Dept. of Defense Base (SPAWAR)
- Local College (College of Charleston)
- Large Employers (Boeing)
Storytellers are Most Influential Speakers

• Personal experience with disaster is a powerful motivator for others

• Can be difficult to find: relationships are important!

• Can be reluctant to tell stories with bad ending
Timing is Important

• Capture business and public awareness immediately after disaster event

• Media attention is at its highest around an event

• Prior relationships allow for promotion of your message following an event

• Preparedness vs. Recovery – transform message to capture attention after an event
Event Details are Important

• Length of event – shorter (few hours) is better than longer (all day)

• Cost of event – many factors involved, but even paid events are successful

• Overlap with other events where there is a larger audience for a broader topic

• Qualify speakers to ensure they will deliver message well
Incentives are Difficult, but Worth Investigating

- Local vs. National Incentives – focus on local but stay aware of national (insurance)
- Business Licenses – discount for business continuity plan
- Fire Marshal – ask for business continuity plan during annual inspection
Summary

• Relationships are critical to build an effective program.
• Allow the program to evolve and grow organically.
• Don’t get discouraged! It takes time.
Questions