

Pandemic Influenza: Still a Threat to Business

An Article by Vern Biccum, Global Consulting

In recent years, a pandemic influenza has been identified by many business continuity experts and emergency planners alike as a significant threat to ongoing business operations around the world. Potential impacts include up to 360 million deaths and global economic losses of more than \$4 trillion.

But is the threat of a pandemic still real? In short, the answer is yes. Although pandemic influenza media coverage has dwindled in recent months, the fact remains that new cases of human infection with H5N1 (the virus many experts believe will trigger the next pandemic) continue to emerge in 2009, and mortality rates for those infected remain greater than 50%.

Unlike more traditional threats (fires, earthquakes, etc.), a pandemic influenza is expected to last between 18 and 24 months, will be geographically far reaching, and will result in significant staff absenteeism over a prolonged period of time. While these differences introduce unique challenges to the planning process, pandemic planning is nonetheless key for an organization to truly become resilient. In addition to simply maintaining operations, planning in advance for a pandemic may enable your organization to:

- Stabilize the corporate bottom-line by protecting key revenue streams and minimizing unanticipated expenses.

- Gain market share as you continue to deliver products and services while less prepared competitors are overwhelmed by the event.
- Seize opportunities to develop new revenue streams in the pandemic environment.



Getting started can seem like a daunting task, but there are excellent tools available to get the process started. Here is a list of resources that may help to kick off your planning efforts:

- For a general overview about pandemic influenza visit www.influenza.gc.ca
- To read the latest news and learn how to prepare your business for pandemic influenza, visit the Centre for Infectious Disease Research and Policy www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/biz-plan/index.html
- To implement effective infection control measures, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) offers a Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf

Coming soon!



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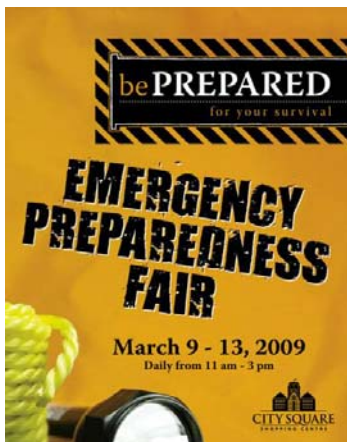
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**Influence of the Media 2.0:
the New Media?**

**A brief column on the influence of the
media by Jim Stanton**

**Barack Obama: First New Media Savvy
US President** - Earlier this month, President
Barack Obama showed how to get off the
mark fast in the introduction of his first
major announcements.

When it was discovered that former U.S.
Senator Tom Daschle had "forgotten" to pay
his taxes for three years. Daschle resigned
but President Obama took responsibility.

He said, time and time again in his February
media blitz that "I screwed up, I should have
been more diligent."

This shows how well President Obama
understands one of the fundamentals of
communications.

When you make a mistake, acknowledge it,
take responsibility, tell people what you are
doing to "fix" it up ... and it goes away. I call
it: "Mess Up, 'Fess Up, Dress Up."

While the Presidential team continues to use
You Tube and the other New Media to
communicate with Americans, they made
sure every major US media outlet
interviewed the President. It has been
estimated that 25 -30 million Americans saw
his television broadcasts (Bloomberg.com).

This is further evidence that the rules of the
game have been changed forever by
technology. This is a good example of the
melding of the roles of traditional and new
media. The Obama team recognizes that you
cannot focus on just traditional or new

media but need to make creative use of the two.

Remember during the run-up to the election, sites with names like Politico and FiveThirtyEight and Eschaton and Crooks and Liars and AlterNet collectively come to rival the three television networks in influence with younger audiences.

Huffington Post's "Off the Bus" site often made headlines with on-the-scene bulletins and audio/video snippets from some 3000 contributors.

What's happening today?

The Democrats used www.change.gov as the "go-to" place to find out what was happening in the election.

As soon as President Obama was confirmed in office, the site closed, a message said: "The transition has ended and the new administration has begun. Please join President Obama at whitehouse.gov."

Now, that is effective use of the new media. By the way, President Obama got to keep his Blackberry, making him the first media-savvy President. Stay tuned!



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If you think you have some information that would be of interest
to the rest of the Membership, please submit to

Lesley Carew, Executive Administrator – info@epicc.org

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