Planning a Table Top Exercise

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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Common Terminology
3. What is it you need to know?
4. Developing a Scenario
5. Exercise Time!
6. Questions
7. Wrap Up
Introductions

• Your name
• Your organization
• Why did you pick this workshop?

• Who are we?
Continuum of Exercises

Table Top

Full Scale/Comprehensive

- More Experience
- Greater Complexity
- More Preparation Time
- Increased Cost
Basic Definitions

Plan Review Exercise

A review of the plan with its owner to review structure, content and objectives of the plan
Basic Definitions

Table Top Exercise

A review of the processes and procedures that would be used in a real disaster. Used early in the exercise program to detect issues that may interfere with the conducting of a realistic simulation.
Basic Definitions

Walk Through Exercise

Methods shift from paper-based to hands-on. Physical actions are required to determine if procedures in plan will work.
Basic Definitions

Modular/Component Exercise

Exercise focuses on a single critical business function like a call tree or single server application.
Basic Definitions

**Functional/Line of Business**

Exercise activity is grouped according to the purpose or manner in which elements work or are used. An example would be an exercise utilizing the EOC.
Basic Definitions

Simulation/Mock Exercise

A simulation exercise generally simulates a disaster and exercises the response & recovery roles & responsibilities in a realistic way.
Basic Definitions

Comprehensive/Full Scale Exercise

Extensive and complex exercise that engages many of the elements of the organization – may re-enact the worst case scenario.
Types of Exercises

Scheduled

Surprise
Key Factors for A Tabletop Exercise

Exercise Development

Exercise Participants

Scenario Development
Exercise Plan Development

Don’t have the same people who develop the plan write the exercise

Use a committee to write the exercise – provides another learning opportunity
Exercise Plan Development

Don’t write the exercise to point out the weaknesses (but that may happen)

– if you see a weakness fix it before the exercise
Exercise Plan Development

Keep it simple and straightforward!

Don’t make it too big a scenario and too complicated
Exercise Plan Development

Develop a disaster scenario not a catastrophe

...don’t make it a doomsday scenario
Exercise Plan Development

If you only use the process when it is a really big one, it becomes a disincentive to exercise for day-to-day operations.
Exercise Plan Development

Needs to be about team building and relationship building

...it’s early in the process
Exercise Plan Development

No fault exercise

“Blame the man, not the plan”

“Blame the plan, not the man”
Exercise Plan Development

Take the time to Prepare!
Exercise Participants

Caution re: numbers!

Organizational behavior research would suggest no more than 15 in the exercise.
Exercise Participants

Never have an exercise before making sure that people are trained re: plan, process and the roles and responsibilities.
Exercise Participants

Make sure you include the right people in the room – have those involved that can make the appropriate decisions

(inputs should reflect the right level – e.g., middle managers – middle management decisions)
Exercise Participants

Remember that people will do what they are used to do – so training will need to be often.
If it’s too complicated, people will start to focus on the scenario to the point that they forget to work together as a team.
Scenario Development

Determine the scope

Is this a tabletop for:
• your business (single site)?
• multi-site?
• industry-wide?
• with partners?
Scenario Development

In most exercises the scenarios always worsen – the inputs make it worse

...which is the opposite from real life where things do get better
Scenario Development

So, make sure the scenario has a positive outcome

... no need to be “Pollyanna” – but the scenario should demonstrate improvement
Scenario Development

Make sure that the scenario engages the right people and that the scenario includes them (e.g., single payroll clerk) – who isn’t there
Scenario Development

Certain things need to be specific not generic
Scenario Development

Have to reinforce your business continuity plan – don’t just focus on emergency response

...critical business functions should be exercised
Scenario Development

Include non-critical business functions to ensure that there is an understanding of what is critical and not critical.

Consider what you are not going to do as well as what you are going to do.
Scenario Development

Consider what links exist with emergency responders – consider their immediate arrival versus a short delay, or a long delay.
Scenario Development

Take people out of their comfort zone – have them deal with emergency management situations that are not part of their normal practice or day-to-day
Scenario Development

Don’t test communications!
Scenario Development

Remember that no scenario ever unfolds as is practiced in real life!
Introducing the Company

EPICC
International Inc.
Introducing the Situation

The Background

The Objectives
Introducing the Scenario

Explosion!!
Task One

Complete the scenario to incorporate the points listed in the background & to meet the objectives
Task Two

Identify the resources
Task Three

Develop an Input to meet the Objective

An input should bring out a situation for the participants to action
Let’s Play

Consider

• Does the input make sense?
• Does it meet the objective?
Review

• Did the input make sense?
• Did it meet the objective?
Key Factors for A Tabletop Exercise

Exercise Development

Exercise Participants

Scenario Development
Questions?
Thanks!