

The Missing Link- Your Trauma Response Plan

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When a critical incident happens at your workplace, your people will be affected. How much and to what extent may depend on what actions you take or don't take. Most businesses plan for computers, IT systems, workforce safety and business processes. But what will you do if your people can't perform well enough to help you recover your business?

When people are in the grip of disaster and crisis, they cannot work productively, they cannot proceed with 'business as usual'. Whether you do something or don't your people on the job will be affected. What you need to know is when a critical incident does occur reactions get blown out of proportion, even more so than they did in the past 20 years. Emotions escalate; people get scared and can't always think on their feet.

It is not because businesses are doing anything that differently from what they did before. The world that we live in is different. Terrorism, massive natural disasters and wars have invaded our lives. Newspaper reports, satellite TV, 24-hour global news coverage are constantly reminding us that the world we live in is not as safe as it use to be.

If the events being telecast aren't immediate triggers to trauma, eventually the constant onslaught builds up fear and tension. So when a critical incident happens in the workplace or close to home, instead of being like little explosions that don't readily impact us, the incident becomes comparable to a human emotional atom bomb.

The dangerous part for businesses is that there is no way to predict how your people will respond. Each person carries their own set of coping mechanisms and each person

has their own history of trauma. Reactions can range from mild to severe.

Sometimes, the impact of the traumatic incident overwhelms the capacity of the individuals or the organization to recover properly. Understanding trauma and its effects can equip businesses to handle workplace crises in a more thorough and effective way.

Businesses can't be the specialists that will know how a person will respond, but they can be educated as to what to expect. Preparing your business processes and IT systems is a must; preparing your people is essential!

What steps do businesses need to take before a critical incident strikes?

Installing a comprehensive system that encompasses the Preparation, Response and Recovery stages of a critical incident in the workplace will give businesses the predictability, control, and consistency, to ensure efficient and comprehensive results. Knowing what to expect and what to do when a critical incident happens equals critical dollars and time saved.

The cost of *not* dealing effectively with workplace trauma:

- Increased absenteeism
- Decreased productivity
- Resignations
- Depression
- Low morale
- Disability claims
- Increased health costs

Setting up a Trauma Response Plan is a small but essential piece in the preparation

phase that can make or break a business's ability to recover.

Establishing an effective Trauma Response Team at your workplace will be the most beneficial two hours you have ever spent.

The benefits of having trauma specialists help you prepare:

- Informed management
- Trained response team
- Educated employees
- Available consultants
- A plan formatted to your unique business needs
- A bond with trauma experts

- The unique culture of your business is known and accommodated

The explicit goal of having a solid Trauma Response Plan in place *before* a critical incident occurs is to assist the restoration of your business to pre-incident functioning and productivity quickly and effectively.

The question is not whether a workplace crisis will happen, it is **when**. Preparing your business for the inevitable is a must. You commit to protecting your most valuable assets – your people. For unless your business is run 100% by robots, your people **will** be impacted when something critical happens at the workplace

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