Crisis Management: Plan and Prepare

Could your organisation cope with a crisis today, tomorrow, or in five years time? In the wake of the Hobart CBD fire, which destroyed the 170-year-old Myer department store building on 22 September, crisis management was certainly fresh in the minds of many Tasmanian business owners.

At the recent CPA Australia Public Sector Finance Leaders seminar, Gavin Anderson & Company Managing Director, Nick Maher, shared his insights and extensive crisis management experience, and his key message to Hobart’s public sector leaders was clear. “If you have a crisis, you have to have a plan,” Mr Maher advised. “When a crisis occurs it’s important, I think, to take time to plan, to take matters into your own hands - be master of your own destiny.”

CPA Australia’s Public Sector Accountants Committee Chairman, Frank Barta, agrees that planning for a crisis, even if it doesn’t eventuate, is imperative. “If you haven’t got a plan - you need to get one,” Mr Barta said. “Your plan need only be simple but, if nothing else, you need to know who is going to be responsible, who are the key players, who the spokespeople will be, where you are going to get your media advice, and then dovetailing those into a range of potential scenarios.”

Crisis can occur in a myriad of forms, from natural disasters, worksite fatalities and project delays to service complaints, utility disruptions and even environmental damage. Any crisis will typically have a strong human aspect to it. Any predicament or disaster involving people will put an immediate public focus on a company that may impact on its reputation, and its ability to operate. The crisis may also draw intense scrutiny from the media. With so much at risk, having a crisis management plan is now a routine consideration for many organisations. In fact, there are growing expectations from many stakeholder groups that organisations and businesses must prepare and plan for a range of potential crises. So, where do you begin if a crisis management plan is still on your ‘to do’ list?

KPMG Manager, Helen Williams suggests a good starting point for those businesses who have yet to implement a crisis management plan, is to carry out a risk assessment. “The first step for any organisation is to understand and identify the risks, or unforeseen events that may prevent its ability to continue operating. Any assessment should have a whole of business approach, rather than just looking at the financial risks, and it should also involve members from all aspects of the organisation,” Ms Williams said. “The recent Myer disaster triggered a wave of concern through the business community in Hobart’s CBD. It was a shock to see the Myer building totally devastated by fire in such a short time and I think that event made many of our clients think, what if my business had suffered?” she said.

For those organisation’s or businesses that haven’t undertaken a risk assessment or, have only been ‘thinking about’ developing a crisis management plan and don’t know where to begin, starting the process may be as easy as picking up the phone. “There are many organisations who can point businesses in the right direction - engaging a consultant is a good starting
point to give help, guidance and leadership”, Ms Williams said. “It is important to ensure that businesses have an all encompassing crisis management plan - it need not be a step-by-step rigid plan but it should include all aspects that need to be managed in the case of an event, or any unforeseen circumstances, so you are able to continue operating your business.”

The CPA Australia Tasmania division provided assistance to business owners affected by the blaze that destroyed Hobart’s Myer store, at a temporary business and employee assistance centre. CPA Australia representatives helped people come to terms with the impact of the fire on their cash flow and ability to meet various business costs. Some 150 businesses were forced to close whilst the ruins from the Hobart CBD fire were demolished and the clean-up commenced.

Checklist for being prepared
Get your team in place
- Management
- Operational
- Communications
- Legal
- Human Resources

 Routinely assess the potential for crisis
- Evaluate projects for their risk potential

Know the plan
- Keep it flexible so that it is capable of responding to any crisis quickly and decisively
- Establish responsibilities and relationships
- Keep it updated

Test the plan
- Use scenario-based training

HE HELPED FUEL BHP BILLITON’S GROWTH.

ADRIAN MANGER
FINANCE MANAGER BASST STRAIT
BHP BILLITON

Using strategic business analysis, Adrian Manger helped BHP Billiton to optimise their investments in Bass Strait. Like all CPAs, Adrian has broader business training, enviable commercial acumen and the versatility to deliver outstanding results - anywhere in the world.

When results matter, demand a CPA.
Partnerships with Powerco Benefit Council and Community

Natural gas distribution company, Powerco, has developed strong links with Local Government in Tasmania, having worked with Burnie City, Waratah-Wynyard, George Town and Launceston City Councils, to install natural gas infrastructure in those areas.

Powerco and the Burnie City Council have enjoyed a proactive relationship since the commencement of stage one of the Tasmanian Gas Project. Powerco Commercial Manager, Fraser Kirkpatrick, said the Council was instrumental in ensuring that a polythylene gas pipe was installed in the same trench that a council rising sewer main was being laid, between South Burnie and Cooee, via the Burnie CBD. “Powerco assisted Council staff with training to allow for the gas pipe installation. Now that the gas main has been commissioned, several commercial businesses, including Council assets, have been able to connect to natural gas,” he said.

Waratah-Wynyard Council has also utilised shared trenching opportunities with Powerco who installed gas mains within the CBD on both sides of the street in provided trenches. Utilising provided trenching makes the construction more economically viable for Powerco to service areas that are not gas main fronted.

In George Town, following the introduction of natural gas to the Old Launceston Seaport development at York Cove, George Town Council was keen to have natural gas available to other parts of the community, and contributed towards a pressure reduction facility at South George Town to enable this to occur. Council provided trenching for gas pipe installation to make natural gas available to the CBD and, to the delight of several LPG commercial customers, natural gas will be available in time for Christmas.

The Launceston City Council recently entered into an agreement for a shared trenching opportunity in George Street that will allow around 16 commercial premises to enjoy the benefits of natural gas.

Powerco contractors installing the natural gas network in Tasmania

Mr Kirkpatrick said he was very pleased Powerco had been able to work with Local Government and enter into key relationships in this way. “Pressure on electricity and other energy costs are making natural gas a recognised commercial benefit to all businesses in Tasmania,” he said.

“Powerco, Council and the community have all benefited from this joint approach. As a consequence of taking advantage of shared trenching arrangements, Powerco and the councils involved, have been able to install natural gas pipe in areas where there was not necessarily a major customer seeking to connect to the network,” he said.

For further information, please visit the website at www.powerco.com.au.
WISE Move for LGAT News

Mike Roberts principal of Advertising Media and Associates first heard of WISE Employment’s Disability Employment Network when he saw an article in LGAT News. Not too hard, since he also sells advertising for the magazine.

Mike noticed an article in the magazine and approached WISE Employment because he thought it would be nice to give someone an opportunity. “I was getting snowed under with paperwork and couldn’t get to my marketing. I really needed someone to do some research and to work on my database,” he said.

Meanwhile, Emily Brake was job-hunting for her first job. She found out about WISE Employment’s service in Launceston through a friend. “WISE found me the job with Mike and they helped me prepare for the interview,” she said. “My WISE employment consultant, Linda, even came with me to the interview. I was a bit nervous but Linda talked me through it and it was easier with her there.”

Six months later, Emily is happily working 15 hours per week helping Mike with research, database and mail outs. “It’s helped with my computer skills - I can now use Photoshop and the latest version of Word,” Emily said. “It’s an area I like and enjoy.”

Mike is really pleased with her progress and the extra assistance his business is receiving, leaves him free to get on with his marketing. “Emily took to the work like a duck to water. She had a good computer background and she’s come through with flying colours,” he said.

To find out how WISE Employment can assist your organisation, visit www.wiseemployment.com.au or phone 1800 685 105.

Beyond PR Awarded for Excellence

Tasmanian public relations company, Beyond PR, has won the Tasmanian category of the Australian Small Business Champion Award for its excellence in the provision of business services. The award was presented on 23 September in Hobart.

Beyond PR Managing Director, Becher Townshend, paid tribute to the hard work of his staff in receiving the award, which he said recognised the firm as a leader in the provision of services to businesses throughout Tasmania. “Communications is an exciting and challenging industry and it is thanks to our team of outstanding professionals that we are able to deliver services to our clients that are second to none,” Mr Townshend said.

“Since Beyond PR was formed in 2002, we have grown our client base and reputation to become one of Tasmania’s largest provider of public relations, lobbying and communications services. We pride ourselves on the ‘total ethical management’ model of communications, which means integrity and honesty are central to our professional conduct and the advice we give our clients. It is reassuring to see our approach to public relations excellence in Tasmania has not only been recognised by our success in recent years, but also by such a prestigious award,” he said.

The award was judged on a variety of criteria including customer service, support for the local community, business achievement, staff motivation and development. Beyond PR employs some 12 people throughout Tasmania, assisting a variety of business, community and government organisations with their public relations needs.

For further information, contact Becher Townshend on 6223 3333.
With a TasPension, you can concentrate on the important things in life...

...and leave your pension to us.

- Standard Pensions
- Transition to Retirement Pensions
- Convenience, flexibility and easy access
- Regular payments to suit your lifestyle
- Tax advantages

Let a TasPension provide you with a regular retirement income from your hard-earned superannuation savings, and you can get on with life (and piggy-backs)!

Call 1800 005 166 today.
Quadrant Appoints New Deputy CEO

Quadrant has announced the appointment of Graeme Sundstrom to the newly created position of Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Graeme brings a strong mix of experience and knowledge having held senior management and financial management positions in Tasmania and Victoria. His most recent position, as General Manager of Sorell Council, involved the management of Council’s financial, physical and human resources.

“Quadrant’s commitment to building and maintaining strong relationships with its membership and the fact that Quadrant members directly benefit from the fund, rather than shareholders or financial advisors, is just one of the reasons I was drawn to the role,” said Graeme. “Quadrant has good historical investment returns with a low cost base and they are sending out the message to ‘stop paying commission on your super’ ensuring members are given the very best opportunity to maximise their retirement savings,” he said.

The new position was created in response to the rapid growth of the super fund which currently has more than 5,500 members and around $500 million in funds under management.

For further information, visit www.quadrantsuper.com.au or call 1800 222 209.

Kit to Create Better Workplaces

The Tasmanian Government has launched a kit to help Tasmanian businesses create modern employment and workplace practices.

The Better Workplaces Resources Kit has been developed for small to medium businesses and contains practical tools such as checklists, templates, fact sheets, flowcharts and case studies on a range of human resource issues.

Workforce planning, recruitment, training, staff retention, performance management and leadership are some of the topics covered in the kit.

The Better Workplaces Kit is being offered free of charge to businesses as part of a broad strategic focus to help Tasmanian workplaces attract and retain people and increase productivity.

A copy of the Better Workplaces Resource Kit is available online at www.development.tas.gov.au/betterworkplaces, or by phoning 1800 440 026.

New Consultant Joins High Performance Team

High Performance Management and Sales Training, now in its fifth year as a resource for Tasmanian business, is proud to announce the addition of a new performance consultant to its team.

Tamara Stokes has joined the company, bringing with her a wide range of experience in operations management, financial management and strategic planning, from the hospitality, tourism and property development sectors. Prior to joining High Performance Management, Tamara played a key strategic and operational role as Manager - Corporate Projects with the Federal Group. After six years with Federal, High Performance Management is pleased that she has chosen to develop her consulting career with them.

Tamara Stokes may be reached on 6236 9055, or by email at tamara@highperftraining.com.au.
The Aqeo® 20 is the latest addition to the Aqeo® range of state-of-the-art, high performance water and wastewater treatment solutions. Using technologies developed to supply emergency relief drinking water in humanitarian disaster zones, the Aqeo® 20 represents exceptional value and performance for a range of applications.

- Low capital and operating costs
- Easy installation and maintenance
- Compact Design
- Highest virus and bacteria rejection
- Automatic chlorine and backwash facility
- Systems can deliver from 20,000 to 80,000 litres per day

To discover how this clever system can make a difference call Stornoway today on 1800 357 773 for a demonstration.