



## **IBM Crisis Response Team**

**A task force providing immediate  
assistance in crisis situations**



**Simone Eiken**, consultant in IBM Global Services, is specialized in crisis management, business continuity and disaster recovery. Prior to joining IBM France in 2003, she was working in IBM Global Services Germany, mainly in Financial Services and Human Resources. Simone is a regular speaker in crisis management conferences. She is completely fluent in several languages: German (native language), English, French and Spanish.

*Educational background:*

Bachelor of Arts in 'International Business Administration' at

- 'University of Cooperative Education (BA)' à Stuttgart, Germany,
- 'Open University', London
- IFI, Groupe ESC Rouen

Admission in Sciences Po. Paris (2003)



**Olivier Velin** is a certified managing consultant in IBM Global Services and expert in crisis management, security and disaster recovery. He has over 25 years experience in risk assessment and mitigation. Prior to joining IBM France in 2000, he was successively in charge of the disaster recovery plan at the french bank Société Générale, Insurance Manager then CIO in an insurance company (GMRA). Olivier has written articles on crisis management and disaster recovery, and he is a regularly speaker in conferences. He is also a lecturer on the subject of crisis management and disaster recovery at the ESIEA.

*Educational background :*

ESG Paris : Management Expertise

Paris 12 University : DESS in Business Administration

**Brent H. Woodworth, Worldwide Segment Manager: IBM Crisis Response Team**



Mr. Woodworth is the manager of IBM's Worldwide Crisis Response Team. He has been with IBM for over 28 years and has held a variety of senior management positions. Brent has worked closely with business leaders, elected officials and heads of state throughout the world in the development of improved risk identification, disaster management and global humanitarian relief services. Since the creation of the IBM Crisis Response Team, Brent and his team have responded to over 70 major global disasters in 40 countries. Brent manages the marketing and delivery of IBM Crisis Response Team services to government and private sector clients along with supporting IBM's corporate risk & insurance interests at IBM manufacturing, service delivery, and administrative sites worldwide. Brent also works with IBM's Corporate Community Relations department and the Chairman of IBM in delivering International Humanitarian Relief Services during times of global crisis.

# IBM Crisis Response Team

When disaster strikes, IBM's Crisis Response Team takes action

## What is the Crisis Response Team ?

IBM is uniquely qualified to respond to natural disasters and other crises. This was apparent after the Tsunami in southern Asia and Hurricane Katrina in the United States.

The CRT was created by IBM in 1993. Since that time, the CRT has responded to over 70 major global disasters in over 49 countries.

Its vocation is to intervene with an IBM task force during and after any type of disaster (natural disasters such as tsunamis, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes etc, as well as terrorist attacks such as Sept 11<sup>th</sup>).

The team provides immediate, 365 day x 24 hour availability assistance, including international humanitarian relief, emergency management and on-site services, as well as business services to government and business entities in the U.S. and around the world.



*Turkey August, 1999*

The Team supports governments in evacuating citizens, provides thorough assessment of the situation and ongoing technical assistance to help rebuild infrastructures. The team determines how to match needs with available resources for the most effective crisis response.

People usually think of IT Recovery only, although this just a part of Business Continuity and the CRT's activities. The crucial point is the business and how to keep your business operational. The CRT helps organizations manage the crisis and get back to normal operations with minimal impact to business.

The Team's holistic view allows to cover all aspects as the following examples illustrate.

In the aftermath of the tsunami in southern Asia, for example, the team's response was both timely and targeted. Brent H. Woodworth manager of the IBM Crisis Response Team, remembers, "There were clearly major logistics challenges in getting food, drinking water and supplies to remote areas. Communications were highly disrupted because the tsunami had destroyed major portions of the lifeline infrastructure."

IBM immediately set up a database to manage supply distribution and to track individuals in each affected village. Within the first week, the tools helped to locate more than 40,000 missing children. Survivors were able to check registries to find out whether loved ones were safe, and relief workers could keep tabs on recovery projects and let evacuated villagers know when they could return home. The tools helped to direct donated food to the hungriest camps and ensured that ailing survivors received the appropriate medical help as quickly as possible.

Since the tsunami had destroyed communication infrastructures, IBM set up high-speed satellite systems to transmit the information from these databases. Prior to the implementation of the IBM system, relief workers in some remote areas were sending information to government officials via helicopter, since they had no other means of communication. IBM's solution enabled communication in real time, boosting the efficiency of relief workers and improving their ability to respond when needed.



*Earthquake: Gujarat - Bhuj, India - Magnitude 7.9 - January, 2001*



**IBM on-site team**

## Hurricane Katrina: The right assistance at the right time

During Hurricane Katrina the IBM Crisis Response Team assembled in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a second Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated in Boulder, Colorado. The team included IBM employees selected for their unique skills as well as subcontractor personnel — all of whom had proven to be self-sufficient in crisis conditions and able to deliver critical services under extreme conditions. The team also included specialists in military coordination, federal and state emergency management, information technology, communications, engineering, medical services and trauma management. The results of the Crisis Response Team's efforts could be felt throughout the area that was ravaged by the hurricane. In addition to the direct humanitarian relief services provided by IBM, the team:

- Used database technology to collect and process information needed to locate and reunite missing persons
- Provided hardware to Texas Health and Human Services to quickly register and process evacuees
- Donated equipment and supplies used to process evacuees and support relief workers
- Quickly set up a call center to handle financial donations for relief efforts

It is a reality of global business: Disasters of all types will occur, and they will impact the communities where IBM's employees and clients live and work. Yet it is precisely this global reach, together with the collected expertise of IBM employees, that enables IBM to respond like no other in times of crisis.

Part of the success of the team during a crisis is the work that they do before the crisis even strikes. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, The IBM Crisis Response Team (CRT), supported by the IBM Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Sterling Forest, New York, began monitoring Katrina before it crossed Florida. IBM employees in the region and members of the IBM EOC and the Crisis Response Team were put on alert. EOC representatives — call handlers, project managers, engineers and other IBM experts — began talking to clients about their preparations as the storm churned across the Gulf of Mexico.



## Lessons learnt from Katrina

### 1. Human resources:

Technology as the traditional disaster discovery is the easiest part to handle during a disaster. Business continuity issues in terms of risk and vulnerability assessments, impacts, plans and organization are much more difficult to manage and to keep up to date.

The **people issue** is usually not addressed properly: key questions include who are the key people for the business, who are their backups?

When thinking about people within a disaster **it is essential to include their families**, though companies usually don't go beyond the employee aspect.

The events of Sept 11<sup>th</sup> showed us the **importance of the human factor**: nervous breakdowns had to be handled, special psychological assistance was required. After the events, people who had lived the attack refused to return to Ground Zero. This resistance has to be addressed and handled properly. The CRT has for example consultants intervening after disasters to give education for moral and psychological support.

During Katrina particular issues were the **relocation of the personnel and finding missing people** – IBM helped to track people via a special software and to provide food and medicine supply.

### 2. Crisis communication:

A detailed proactive communication plan is necessary, adapted to the different target groups such as clients, media or employees to make people aware of the company's actions.

One single, strong and decisive voice to the public is needed. This spokesperson should communicate the key messages regularly – you can't overcommunicate during a disaster. **A unified voice between government, corporations and citizens is crucial to avoid panic reactions.**

### 3. Transportation:

**Transportation is another challenge as it is never available after a huge disaster.** It is critical and extremely difficult to bring people and data out of the region and has to be included in a Business Continuity Plan. Logistics becomes a major issue.

4. Infrastructure:

**The whole infrastructure is damaged** causing the interruption of telecommunications, energy and water supply, etc.

In cases such as Hurricane Katrina, rapid response is critical and basic communications systems must be either established or restored immediately.

5. Bureaucratic obstacles:

Bureaucratic silos exist; businesses and governments tend to make decisions based on how they are measured during peaceful times (multiple signatures needed, import taxes on relief goods, etc).

This is inappropriate in case of a disaster as it makes emergency measures very complicated. **The whole management has to be changed in a crisis situation and to be adapted to the challenge.**

The relationship between governments and the private sector is extremely important. Increased cooperation before, during and after a disaster is necessary.

**The public and the private sector should work together as partners** – there is a big focus on this issue on a worldwide stage. **The private sector has a lot of resources and capabilities to intervene and to provide assistance maybe quicker and more efficiently than the public sector or in complement with the government.** IBM is currently working on these public and private partnerships.



**Particular challenges in highly sophisticated cultures:**

The principles of Incident Commands are also valid for sophisticated societies or cultures and events like September 11<sup>th</sup> although **the different lifestyles result in additional problems:**

- destruction is usually more concentrated,
- there are special challenges in search and rescue of victims,
- panic reactions are bigger and more difficult to handle.
- the logistical challenge is gigantic and dependence on IT and infrastructure result in huge paralysis of the whole society.
- people have higher expectations compared to poorer countries where initial needs are limited to basic elements such as shelter, water, food, etc

**General citizens and businesses have to be trained in advance to be more self-sufficient for at least the first 72h.**

The potential domino effects in these highly sophisticated cultures are immense and need to be studied in detail.

**These issues should be discussed between governments and proven practitioners of the private sector.**

This will probably mean cooperating on a smaller scale, educating the various parties carefully and applying the proven principles to larger scales. To encourage these partnerships, high-level sponsors are extremely useful.



*Meeting the Challenge of 9/11*



**Emergency operations center : IBM**



## Earthquake in Pakistan

The IBM Crisis Response Team has been deployed to Islamabad in Pakistan.

As a standard procedure, the CRT first contacts the Country Manager and then the Head of the Government. During this earthquake, priorities were identified with the local government followed by an action plan: providing first aid with medicine and blankets, giving advice on communication, assessing damage and long term consequences, bringing geologists, organizing logistics, bringing in a team of drama specialists a few weeks later to train parents and teachers to handle the psychological and human issue.

Three weeks after the earthquake struck South East Asia the Pakistan government estimates that 3.5 million people are homeless and face several months living in temporary tented accommodation in the severe Himalayan winter. The IBM Crisis Response Team is helping the government with a logistics management system to track and register displaced people and deliver supplies of food, medical aid and shelter using Open Source Software developed following the Tsunami.



Picture : BBC News



Picture : BBC News

The quake toll stands at about 20,000 but is expected to rise, with some reports suggesting it could double. The earthquake, which has left behind such apocalyptic scenes as this, of Muzaffarabad, is the worst in the region's history

Landslides have covered or pulled down buildings mercilessly

## Getting through a disaster

The IBM Crisis Response Team addressed these issues successfully thanks to its profound experience in business continuity.

### **Brent Woodworth's top ten rules are:**

1. **Remain calm.** That means you need to think before taking action. It's sometimes difficult to do that, but think clearly and logically about the welfare of your people, business and customers.
2. **Respond decisively.** To protect business operations and people, you need to take action. You shouldn't hesitate to move the business forward. It's imperative to return operations to as close to normal as you can, as quickly as you can. No one wants an act of terrorism, or the potential for terrorism, to cripple operations within this country.
3. **Don't point fingers.** Tempers go up and down, which is normal. This is the time to buckle down and get work done. There will be plenty of time later to pass blame.
4. **Show patience and compassion.** You need to listen to your employees. Understand their ideas, and respond effectively to their requests.
5. **Maintain your sense of humor.** This isn't morbid: You need to look at the future and keep people motivated. If you continue to talk about the future and look forward, it will help people get through this process.
6. **Tell the truth, and tell it often.** You can't overcommunicate in a disaster. Update employees constantly about what's going on at the company. Hold one meeting in the morning, one in the afternoon and another before people go home. Even if the reports are the same, issue those reports. Tell employees what's going on. Always tell the truth. People can accept that.
7. **Do it right the first time.** Do your best work. This is not the time to say that mistakes are OK and someone else will catch it.
8. **Build and follow your plan effectively.** This is the purpose of mitigation planning. This disaster illustrates the incredible importance of developing a solid plan for IT and all aspects of your business -- operations, personnel, IT, insurance, everything.

9. **Don't take on too much.** Don't be afraid to delegate. You shouldn't try to be a hero. You need to be able to use your team effectively. You need to get some sleep, in essence. You won't make good decisions otherwise.

10. **Demonstrate leadership and confidence.** People look for leaders to help guide them through this process. Things will get better.

To make this checklist work, **it is essential to train leaders and to prepare them to face disasters.** Otherwise they lose control over the situation very quickly.

**“A two-year study program funded by the US government shows the value of being prepared and of spending government money on this preparedness: The report proves that \$4 of savings is realized for each \$1 spent on disaster mitigation”.**

Simone Eiken  
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