

The LIPA Case Study – (Final Exam Essay)

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As I reflected upon the LIPA case study, it reminded me of the same scenario of Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005. The destruction of the hurricane found its way along the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. I distinctively remember the news and social media reporting about there could possibly be damage however, their hypothetical guess was inaccurate. There was major damage, with trapped individuals trying to swim for their lives. They were unprotected because of the government failing to prepare for one of the worst hurricanes that will remain etched within history, along with the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

“In the opening chapter we briefly introduced the idea of vulnerability, noting that vulnerable people suffer disproportionately greater harm in disaster compared to less vulnerable people, and that disaster ministry is a practice of restoring justice...The issue of community and vulnerability goes much deeper than just identifying people at risk. If disaster impact is, as the United Nation says, a combination of the disaster event and vulnerability, then preventing and mitigating disasters must deal with root causes of vulnerability. If we plan to prepare for a disaster, and we fail to consider the particular needs of the vulnerable among us, then we are contributing to the chasm that exists between the less vulnerable and the more vulnerable. This happens simply because the better off among us better equipped to act on the recommendations for the preparedness, compared to the vulnerable. Preparedness does not directly harm the vulnerable, it just moves the better off further ahead while doing proportionately less to help the vulnerable” (Aten & Boan, 2015, p. 30-33).

Ignorance and LIPA

The LIPA case created an increase within vulnerable circumstances because they failed to prepare. In addition to this, their reasoning for not preparing or taking the disaster crisis more serious, was in due in part toward the lack of adequate qualified employees, the priority was more focused on them becoming a brand than preparing for a crisis, and for the lack of apparent leadership. Furthermore, once some manner of intervention was introduced, they were unqualified political appointees whom did not have experience in utility matters. This lack of regard from unqualified official appointees only enhanced LIPA's ability to ignore the advice of experts. One would think that as they experienced several crises, they would have been more prepared for impact, vulnerability and disaster relief. However, that was not the case; in fact, the

circumstances with each disaster grew more intense and worse. Ignorance is not blissful, instead, it is quite hurtful to those individuals, customers or groups who are dependent upon the expertise and decision-making of the ill-prepared.

Principles and Preparational Steps

All disasters or crisis are not preventable especially, if it is a natural disaster. We have no control over climate changes. But, man-made disasters can be prevented, or at least caution along with preventative measures can be implemented, in order to decrease damage. The LIPA case would have yielded different results if certain preparational steps were implemented. First, a “Best Practice Model” must be constructed as well introduced as a preventative precaution in lieu of a crisis. “*The Best Practice Model* consists of five factors—types/risks, mechanisms, systems, stakeholders, and scenarios—are they key elements of the model that must be managed before, during, and after a major crisis” (Mitroff, 2000, p. 30). Second, because of LIPA’s lack of preparation and human regard, as Bill George states,

“Face reality, starting with yourself...In *Leadership Is An Art*, Max DePree writes, “The leader’s first job is to define reality. The last is to say thank you.” Before you can lead your organization through a crisis, you have to acknowledge that you are indeed in one. Next you have to get everyone else to acknowledge it as well. Only then can you define the problems accurately and develop plans to deal with them” (George, 2009, p. 17).

The last principle/step that one should recommend in conjunction with communication, honesty, it would consist of the organization learning how to navigate the perfect storm of complexity, diversity, and uncertainty. The collaborative efforts of Dotlich, Cairo and Rhinesmith suggests that most leaders do not properly know how to assert certain aspects of leadership as they discuss the advancement and requirements of this modern technological era.

“Most leaders have never had to operate in such a completely diversely complex environment. Just consider one issue to glimpse the magnitude of the problems (and opportunities) for leaders... Diversity today is mastering the art of walking a mile in

someone else's shoes—someone with whom you have little in common—so you can adapt to their expectations and appreciate their strengths—or else prepare to be overtaken by competitors in emerging markets who will soon be expanding into the developed world. Diversity is both an urgent challenge and an urgent opportunity. Leaders tell us constantly about the challenge of taking action in the face of uncertainty is unrelenting. Or more specifically, they complain about the difficulty in doing so” (Dotlich, Cairo & Rhinesmith, 2009, p. 11).

One of the contributing issues of their downward spiral was due in part because of their rescue efforts or disaster plans were not updated, nor could the officials give the directives to help restore power-outage to their customers. As a result of poor leadership, there have been ongoing customer complaints, dissatisfaction, along with a continual lack of customer service support. Surprisingly enough, this is only one case study that paints a portrait of how too many corporations/organizations become too comfortable and unremorseful within their response level. Also, another issue that was an ongoing issue was the lack of communication of the upper management to the middle management; it was absent of cohesiveness, uniformity and it revealed how the decline within leadership played such a major role in the company's downfall.

In conclusion, the apparent need along with preparational methods are a vital essential for the survival of any organization. As I have eluded before, “It's not a matter of “if” a crisis is going to occur, it's a matter of “when” it's going to occur.” Preparation is not limited to the business arena, it is practical enough, to whereas it can transcend to the secular to that of the sacred. Leadership author, mentor and Bishop T.D. Jakes repetitiously states, “Maximize the moment for every opportunity.” His statement gears toward a more in-depth implication. Many times, when the role of maximizing enters into a relationship and or partnership, there is a tendency to think within the terms of financial revenue. But, what if the same manner of investment or regard was put forth into preparing for a potential crisis or disaster?

One must take this into consideration, the biblical principle that is utilized pertaining to the farmer who built up his barn-house by storing goods from the crops that produced a harvest. This farmer or harvester had such an overflow, until his focus was on that which he planted and produced. In a more business mindset, he was focused more on the profit marginals, the tangibles, than focused upon the intangibles of his being—heart and mind. The Father arrived unexpectedly and the farmer/harvester did not have any thing stored within him spiritually. He did not expect for his soul to be required of him—unexpected death. In life, in the market-place, there are no certainties or guarantees. However, if there are guaranteed times of the unexpected moments of crisis, disaster, etc. Crisis management is more than a market-place tool, it is a life essential.

Reference

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