

VIRTUAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTS

CONNECT, COMMUNICATE AND CONTINUE

The expression VEME describes virtual preparedness for emergencies. Organizations use VEME to optimize Information Technology and Communications (ITC) Systems through various combinations of:

- **Virtual Private Networks (VPN).**
- **Emergency portals** to inform traveling Emergency Managers and fixed email addressees for teams to allow 24/7 communications.
- Different-times and Different places **collaborative systems** for geographically separated teams such as *MissionMode*.
- **1800 numbers** set-up for public hotlines on particular crisis issues.
- Switchboards, which allow for a cascading system of answering multiple calls by internal **Call Centres** to overcome log-jams in telephone communications.
- **Dark websites**, which can be quickly activated to replace normal sites for media releases and fast facts.
- Organisations with prepared Business Continuity Plans may integrate a **Disaster Recovery Centre** into their VEME for a fast transition to interim operations. Sites are described in terms of the level of organizational information stored.

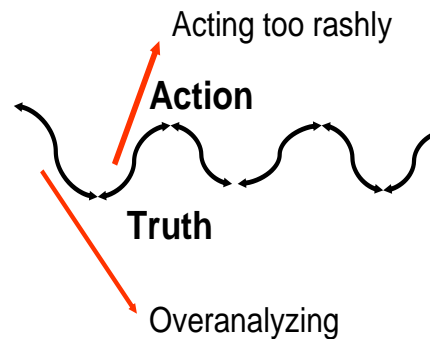
Cold sites require user organizations to bring their information with them. **Warm sites** already store some of the organization's information. Hot sites contain constantly replicated information. **Hot sites** may also operate in a dispersed mode with data in a variety of locations.

Despite all of this technology, and with such systems approach and virtual networking allowing organizations to fight above their weight, VEME can be manpower intensive, and organizations must always be prepared to **go back to basics in crisis situations**. For example, the crisis benchmark for posting media releases is one hour; a near impossible task without pre-programmed email and facsimile addressees.

In adopting various VEME practices, computers in the Emergency Team Room can fascinate members, so VEME is no substitute for the mental **wetware** required to develop strategy and implement crisis leadership under pressure. Emergency Teams and their chiefs of staff need to guard against these fascination devices, which optimize **software** and **hardware**, but which do not generate the bold and creative second and third-stage thought required to control and transform from crisis situations.



The Sine Wave of Emergency Management



Critical Thinking in Emergencies

The darkest corner in hell is reserved for fence-sitters. Dante

Emergency Management is like a sine wave. If there is too much action, there is a danger of acting too rashly. If there is too much planning, there is a danger of overanalyzing and thus failing to act. It is all about balance between acting and analyzing.

It is a unique Emergency Manager who can rapidly assimilate enough diverse information to make anticipatory decisions. Machines alone will not produce increased leadership ability without an accompanying increase in the Emergency Manager's ability to make decisions and issue orders.

The **characteristics of Emergency Management Teams** are as follows:

- A group with a multi-disciplined approach that can mobilize quickly for organization extinction events.
- An ability to win and share information quickly and then arrive at an immediate course of action or to hand-off the information to senior management.
- An ability to manipulate and monitor resources to implement decisions.

However carefully an organization goes through the steps, and however well drawn its emergency plans are, it is the emergency management teams proficiency that will achieve success and efficiency and ultimately determine the organization's reputation when a threat materializes and becomes a major event. John Laye

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Experience a scenario when the Sydney CBD experiences a bombing and is flushed of all surviving inhabitants over two hours. This simulation uses modern electronic technology to show the power of Virtual Emergency Management Environments (VEME).

Participants will be grouped in public and private sector agencies and organizations and stepped through a solution to a national security crisis in the Sydney CBD. We will demonstrate how seamless multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency life lines can deal with crises and their consequences. We will overcome the inevitability of executive travel and employee dislocation and improve resilience to business interruptions.

The simulation has direct application to companies who have a corporate head office in a large CBD, State Government officers who are focused on city-wide cooperation, Crisis Champions keen to leverage their Crisis and Business Continuity Plans with sophisticated technology; and people generally interested in public-private partnerships

Simulation Objectives

The objectives are to use leading-edge ***Same time-Same place and Different-times, Different places collaboration*** www.missionmode.com technology to enable government and business to work together to endure widespread outages to major city functions in the immediate aftermath of an inner city disruption to hundred of thousands of people.

MissionMode ensures that all interaction between your colleagues, customers and suppliers is relevant, timely and secure anywhere in the world. It provides ready-to-go messaging, task status, contact status and a resource library of information and expertise to draw on for Operations Management, Crisis Management, Crisis Communications and Business Continuity.

MissionMode streamlines message distribution, delivering urgent communications within minutes to any phone, fax, e-mail, pager, or handheld device. Sending an alert is only the first step. *MissionMode* takes you beyond notification, enabling you to take those critical next steps by providing your team with an ***online situation center***. Pre-defined templates enable you to put your plans into action immediately based on the situation at hand by making relevant procedural documents available and automatically assigning tasks. Team members can post information to keep everyone up to date on project progress and attach documents, spreadsheets, and multi-media files. Additional integration with fixed and mobile security cameras provides tools to manage all of your mission-critical and day-to-day communications.

Game Plan

We will use computers with web access to www.missionmode.com plus an LCD to display the electronic log. We will load the mobile phone and email address of team leaders so we can step through the activation and notification process, before getting onto problem-solving and decision making.