

Lessons from Katrina

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What can Katrina teach us about handling crises or disasters within our business? Some of it seems obvious. Planning, execution and commitment are cornerstones of any successful business.

The city of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana and the Federal government all knew what would happen if a hurricane of that magnitude hit the city. But they have an excuse; they're government entities.

Democratic governments are built for stability not speed. Dictators can achieve more, (and faster) when they have total authority. Benevolent dictators can attain great results with and for everyone involved.

Here are seven significant lessons for executives, managers, sales reps and business owners.

1. When a plan fails, the people pointing fingers are probably guilty of inaction. The good news is that during a crisis, the politicians in your organization will be evident. Replace them with people who embrace responsibility.
2. The people you can count on are those who are asking what can be done to fix the problem; they're focused on results. They're too busy to point fingers
3. In critical situations, those who are most at-risk have a weak financial base. If you've been good stewards of money, chances are you have more and better options. Financial security also reduces the likelihood panic under pressure.
4. Intellectuals are valuable assets during the thinking and researching process but don't ask them to get the job done. If the rescue efforts depended on journalists, reporters and editorialists, the results would have been worse. They find fault without providing workable solutions. Their negativeness hurts morale.
5. Reward autonomous behavior unless it's based on unhealthy motives. The dependant people in your organization will be unable to help themselves; worse, they'll impede and burden their teammates. Teach people what to do and why, so they can act wisely on their own. Give them the tools to become self-sufficient.
6. Life isn't fair; neither is business. No one owes you anything you haven't earned.
7. People are more important than things.



David Yoho provides systems and customized education that helps organizations outthink, outsell, outmaneuver and outnegotiate their competition without sacrificing profit or integrity.

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