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Chaos Management Skills Essential

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Recently, we realized again that crisis management is important and it's about time to rethink our current crisis management from the bottom up through the experience of Hurricane Katrina. According to this article, in emergency management, the keys to effective crisis management are following elements: competent-leadership to arrest crisis situations by resorting to flexible and dynamic structural arrangement way, the ability to position and reposition the multi-institutional and human actors at different levels and jurisdictions as changing dynamics, time, and surprises dictate in the field, and making things happen by mobilizing material, human and technological resources and capacities in a well coordinated manner. Especially, in emergency management, coordinating with each other beyond bureaucracy might be most important element for efficient management.

There is some debate over whether government should make plans to coordinate with businesses to help in crises by using the strengths of the businesses. And this article raises the question of what the relationship should be between government and business so that crises are managed efficiently.

Some people might say that if government made a contact with some enterprises like Wal-Mart to cooperate in national crises, it would mean that government patronizes certain enterprises. But we can't deny the contribution of Wal-Mart in the crisis by Hurricane Katrina, and the need to cooperate with private sector in crisis. Certain businesses; the food companies or retailers, have several advantages over public sector in following points.

First of all, in crises government needs a lot of food to provide and the public sector can't stock enough food all the time by themselves. On the other hand, certain private sector has enough stock of food all the time, and they don't need to stock them only for crises because they can sell it when there's no crisis and it's their job. Second, certain private sector has trucks to transport food from other place because they have their own transportation system. Third, they have their own communication system like a website or

a toll-free number. For example, Wal-Mart or Walgreen have their photo center which has a big database and on-line system, and they could help people to find missing people by using their on-line system. Fourth, private sector could grant large money, and also provide jobs since they have many stores over the country.

Of course if government made a contract between an enterprise like that government would buy every material from the enterprise at the market price, then it might be patronization because the enterprise which made a contract with government are guaranteed for selling material to government without any competition.

Government might make a guideline among businesses like that in crises government would cooperate with private sector and private sector would provide materials to government at half market price, and provide transportation system, communication system or others. Even if they couldn't get profit from it, they would agree with the guideline because they work with government not for profit but for pride, reputation or social contribution.

And sometimes because of bureaucracy, government hesitates to share information with private sector even in crises. But government could ask private sector for attending

meeting and exchanging reports with public sector in crises. Because government needs to organize public sector and private sector, and clarify where responsibility lies so as to improve the government's response and efficiency. Government might need more flexibility.

I have heard before that in managing Hurricane Katrina, the city of New Orleans were doing their own things, and they were not organized with other agencies as teams. Even when Wal-Mart offered to help the public sector, the public sector couldn't tell Wal-Mart what to do because they were just trying to get organized at that point. To make matters worse, even when Wal-Mart tried to help the public sector, Wal-Mart couldn't identify who was in charge. The delay and often ineffective government response was generating widespread criticism.

Government might need to cut through layers of bureaucracy to improve the government's response. And in crises government needs to use every resource no matter it is public sector or private sector. In order to improve the government's response and efficiency, government should rethink our current crisis management from the bottom up and establish a new guideline so as to coordinate with businesses to help in crises by using the strengths of the businesses. As this article said, we can turn a crisis or disaster into an

opportunity to learn what we should change. We learned from Katrina that crisis the advance prevention and preparation is essential. And preparation can and should be proactive in advance, not reactive, considering “every” possible strength and weaknesses in capacity to respond.