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About the Cover: A true leader has many personal and professional qualities and skills that enable him or her to bring people together to strive for a common goal. In a critical situation, such leaders have well-trained support that is prepared to help manage difficult scenarios and bridge gaps to ensure rapid response and recovery efforts.. (Source: @iStock.com/macgyverhh)

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Editorial Remarks

By Catherine L. Feinman



Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) provides valuable tools to leaders at all levels. This issue on "Leadership" shares some of the concepts created by and taught at NPLI. Kerri Kline leads this issue with a summary of a roundtable discussion held at Harvard University with leaders who have been involved in the decision-making process for a variety of crises. As crises continue to occur, Leonard Marcus describes how the meta-leadership concepts that his team created continue to evolve to meet new and ongoing challenges. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is one example of how a leadership change can significantly improve operations at all levels of an organization.

Wendy Walsh then describes the importance of relationships when high-consequence decisions must be made. Eric McNulty follows with other human factors that can influence the leadership decision-making process. These factors are important at all levels, all the way up to the president, as addressed in Kay Goss's article. To learn more about leadership as it relates to crisis communications, Anthony Mangeri interviewed Richard Serino in DomPrep's latest podcast.

Rounding out the issue, Michael Jacoby shares a citizen's perspective on data accountability for public health and safety threats that White House and Congressional leaders in the next administration must consider. Change is inevitable, so Laura Curvey and Lamine Secka's white paper describe how emergency management is adjusting to a "new normal." Leadership is more than just a title; it is process of continual learning.

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Making Tough Calls: Meta-Leadership for Critical Decisions

By Kerri Kline

On 29 September 2016, DomPrep, in collaboration with Harvard's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), hosted a roundtable at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on "Leadership: Decision Science." This article summarizes that discussion, which was moderated by Eric McNulty, NPLI director of Research and Professional Programs, and Richard Serino, NPLI distinguished visiting fellow.



Emergency management and resilience professionals responsible for making critical decisions during high-consequence events require leadership skills beyond those of traditional management. These professionals are required to make difficult decisions daily – from allocating resources to making choices with life-and-death consequences. Decision science best practices are rarely shared and incorporated into leadership development. The National Preparedness Leadership Initiative ([NPLI](#)) at Harvard University has developed a program that equips leaders with skills, knowledge, and abilities required to effectively lead during crisis events in the 21st century. By connecting diverse leaders with national, regional, and local responsibilities, the NPLI provides a forum for these leaders to convene and discuss current challenges to better improve preparedness.

The NPLI institutional base conducts qualitative and quantitative research to better equip leaders with tools to address the rapidly evolving challenges faced in the field of preparedness and resilience. Roundtable participants were comprised of NPLI alumni and individuals from multidiscipline backgrounds to include the American Red Cross, Boston Fire Department, Boston Emergency Medical Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Cambridge Police Department, Massachusetts State Police, Department of Homeland Security, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, private sector, NPLI faculty, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and others.

Framing the Conversation

Eric McNulty began the discussion by providing the framework and methodology of NPLI's [three dimensions of meta-leadership](#):

1. *The Person*: Meta-leaders develop high self-awareness, self-knowledge, and self-regulation. They build the capacity to confront fear and lead themselves and others out of the “emotional basement” to high levels of thinking and functioning.
2. *The Situation*: With often incomplete information, the meta-leader maps the situation to determine what is happening, who are the stakeholders, what is likely to happen next, and what are the critical choice points and options for action.

3. *Connectivity*: The meta-leader charts a course forward, making decisions, operationalizing those decisions, and communicating effectively to recruit wide engagement and support.

Important pieces of the decision-making conversation are the psychological and neurological factors that leaders employ and experience during high-stakes environments. The “head,” “heart,” and “gut” are all intrinsic human aspects to the decision-making process. McNulty expounded that the “head” considers the analytical and quantitative components of a situation, the “heart” examines the “moral dimensions and ethical dimensions” of a decision, while the “gut” examines the intuitive nature of decision-making.

Finally, decisions need to be examined through the domains in which they are made: operational, political, and ethical. Richard Serino explained, “Most of the decisions we make initially are operational, what do we have to do to get the job done, to do it now, and where do we have to go... but then...how does [the presence of politicians] influence the decision-making process as a leader?” Serino went on to explain the attributes of a good leader is the ability to lead not only down, but lead up and lead across, and foster relationships with the multitude of people that emergency managers will work with is integral in accomplishing the necessary tasks during a crisis. The ethical component is dealing with the challenges of knowing that the right decision was made even when that choice was unpopular.

The framework of the meta-leadership and decision science outlined above provided the lens for which the following conversations examined the aspects of the success and failures in the existing system as applied and seen in recent emergencies and disasters.

Examination of Leadership Applications in Past Crises: Successes & Failures

To determine the best strategies to deploy during an emergency, it is necessary to first examine the successes and failures of decisions from past crises. The multijurisdictional and multidisciplinary make-up of the participants yielded a variety of real-life examples to include: the Orlando shooting incident in June 2016; the Brigham and Women Hospital shooting incident in January 2015; Boston Marathon bombings in April 2013; Worcester, Massachusetts, fire incident of December 1999; and a multitude of hurricanes and other natural disasters. Through each discussion prevalent themes continued to arise: recovery efforts, identification of the desired outcome, flexibility in policy and training by examining the “what” versus the “why,” communication across agencies, and public empowerment.

The recovery component of an incident is comprised of a diverse set of needs and each is essential in the overall recovery of a community after an incident. Serino explained that, “The reality is we don’t plan for recovery...we don’t spend that much time and effort and certainly not money.” An important shift needs to occur, one that will be difficult until the spending and planning for recovery efforts increase. Response and recovery departments are often separated from one another, and in the larger organizations, do not know one another. Successful recovery efforts are those that support the community to rebuild itself to feel safe again. For example, after the Orlando shooting incident one of the main recovery issues was to ensure that the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community felt safe again. It is essential that resources are allocated to prepare for the recovery post incident and not just focused on the response to an incident.

Successful decisions are made during an emergency when the stakeholders and emergency managers collaborate and pause for a moment to determine the desired outcome. Coupling decisions and outcomes creates a clearer strategy eliminating extemporaneous steps that do not lead to final desired outcomes. McNulty emphasized that different people and different organizations are making decisions during crises that are not synchronistic, and creating a structure so that the multiple stakeholders are making decisions aligned with the desired outcome in mind can assist in a situation.

Training is integral to quick response during an incident and requires the cooperation of public and private sectors. Exercising protocols develops muscle memory that allows emergency professionals to react quickly, but it is essential that the training is conducted in a way that allows for flexibility during an incident. Sometimes emergency managers are faced with unlearning what they have practiced as shifting in the moment will produce a

When making difficult decisions during a crisis, leaders need to use their heads, hearts, and guts to develop analytical, moral, and intuitive solutions.

better outcome. McNulty stated that it is important to examine “what goes into the protocol... but understanding the why because the context has most likely shifted from when the policy was set, to the situation you are facing now.” A meaningful after action report will focus on the “what” and

“why” components of a decision and can inform future policy. One of the noted successes is the eagerness of professionals to learn from one another, and well-developed after action reports provides an avenue for future learning.

Public engagement and public empowerment can provide individuals with the tools necessary during an event. The “Stop the Bleed” and “Run. Hide. Fight.©” campaigns are examples of public empowerment that has gained publicity as active shooter incidents have become more prevalent. Serino expressed that, “Leadership is giving your people permission to act (the professionals)...but also giving the public permission to be part of the response.” Israel instituted a high school program that requires all students to complete a search and rescue training, and the number of lives saved has increased exponentially because it provides the public the necessary tools to make a difference. The public will act based on the way they think is best for the situation at hand; empower the public by providing them with the tools and options for a way to act that will help not hinder the emergency response.

Improving Collective Decision-Making Capacity

Improving collective decision-making capacity needs to begin at the leadership level. Increasing the amount of diversity among leaders and teams will increase the collective knowledge base among those individuals working together. Diverse backgrounds and gender differences yield different opinions and ways of examining an issue. The demographics of the emergency management community are slowly evolving, and the leadership and teams need to reflect those changes to maximize their collective intelligence. The decision-making chain should be automatic during an event without ignoring the collaboration culture.

There is a difference between education and training. Providing the general public and all responsible for response during a disaster the education affords them the skills to evoke rational thought, whereas training is a learned experience. Training has benefits in muscle memory and habits, but these can be detrimental during an event where flexibility is required. Working with solutions instead of stringent policies in effect can lead to elasticity and provide team members the ability to rely on their education. Leaders need to identify the difference between order and control during an emergency, as control can hinder order. Part of the education process is allowing team members to function in their roles on a daily basis, allowing for more fluidity of responsibility during an event.

Key Takeaways & Recommendations for the Next Generation of Leaders

- It is necessary to allow the experts to do their job. As a leader, it is important not to impede their work or cause them to change their behavior.
- In a reactionary world, take the time to think before acting.
- Empower staff, as it takes a team to respond during an emergency.
- Routines are developed over time, and it is essential to train how these needs shift in emergencies. Create the habit of changing habits when necessary.
- Embrace exercises and continue to break down barriers to foster relationships with a variety of subject matter experts.
- Be the conductor, surrounded with people who are willing to provide honest, diverse opinions in high-stakes situations.
- Focus actions on the desired outcomes.
- Be an informed leader.
- Build trust among the team because effective collaboration is the only way to successfully respond to an emergency.
- Do not underestimate the value of the public and the experience they can bring to an issue.
- View leadership as a responsibility instead of a job.
- Provide honest evaluation and mitigation ideas for after action reports.
- Talk less and listen more.
- Indecision is a decision. Do not be afraid to make a decision. It may not solve the whole problem, but it is a step in the process.
- Find opportunities to be a good leader, never let a good crisis go to waste because they provide an opportunity to exercise leadership skills that are not available daily.
- Lead, follow, or get out of the way.
- Make a decision based on facts and intelligence, not popularity.
- Never stop learning, and take the time to continue educational efforts.
- Be prepared to be surprised.

Special thanks to the following roundtable participants who contributed to the above discussion:

Geoff Bartlett, *Director of Emergency Management, Tufts University*

Suzanne Blake, *Manager of Emergency Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)*

Robert Bradley, *Consultant, Global Preparedness and Crisis Management, Center for Toxicology & Environmental Health*

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Joseph Finn, *Commissioner, Boston Fire Department*

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Eric Goralnick, *Director of Emergency Preparedness, Brigham and Women's Hospital*

Kay Goss, *President, World Disaster Management*

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Andrew Schwartz, *Harvard University*

Kurt Schwartz, *Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency*

Richard Serino, *Distinguished Visiting Faculty, NPLI*

Alan Snow, *Director of Safety and Security, Boston Properties*

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Bill Van Schalkwyk, *Director of Emergency Management, Harvard University*

Wendy Walsh, *Program Manager, FEMA's Higher Education and Executive Academy Programs*

Kerri Kline joined the DomPrep Team in June 2016. As the program manager, she is responsible for business development for DomPrep's publications, as well as assisting with conferences, roundtables, executive briefings, and workshops. With more than eight years of experience in marketing and production, she facilitates DomPrep's advertising and marketing campaigns.

Meta-Leadership 2.0: More Critical Than Ever

By Leonard J. Marcus

Over the past decade, meta-leadership, a methodology developed at the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative at Harvard, has become a widely adopted framework for leading in emergency preparedness and response. Over that time, both the model and methods have advanced based on field experience. This article presents the latest thinking and practice for those charged with public safety, security, and resilience.



The first peer-reviewed article on the concept of meta-leadership was published in collaboration with Barry Dorn and Joseph Henderson in 2006. Since then, this team at the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) has had the opportunity to teach meta-leadership to tens of thousands of emergency preparedness and response professionals around the world. Meta-leadership is now included in the curriculum not only at the executive education programs at Harvard but also at the Federal Emergency

Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute, the Air Force War College, National Defense University, and other institutions.

The Evolution of Meta-Leadership

The meta-leadership concept continues to evolve. The team learns both from research with leaders in the field as they prepare for and respond to crises as well as from participants in classes, workshops, and seminars. Fresh insights have been gathered by observing and interviewing leaders during and immediately after incidents, including: responses to the H1N1, Ebola, and Zika outbreaks; the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; the Hurricane Sandy landfall; and the Boston Marathon bombings. Many of these response leaders have completed meta-leadership training, providing opportunities to field test ideas and practices. Likewise, the research team has expanded, now including Eric McNulty, Richard Serino, and other researchers and faculty. With all that, the team has undertaken a "reboot" of the original concepts and their applications. Welcome to Meta-Leadership 2.0.

Meta-leadership was conceived as a conceptual framework and practice method particularly applicable to leaders expected to influence a wide range of stakeholders, including those over whom they have no direct authority. For example, during a large complex disaster, subject matter experts must persuade political officials and executives, the general public, as well as leaders of other organizations to achieve effective coordination and collaboration. The necessary connectivity of effort includes agencies across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Since 2006, the degree of difficulty in accomplishing these linkages has increased; the threat environment has grown more complex; and the expectations of the public to ensure their safety and security has intensified. Leadership practices can explain many of the differences between response successes and disappointments.

For those new to meta-leadership, what follows is a brief introduction. For those familiar with previous iterations, this is an update of the model.

Three Dimensions of Meta-Leadership

Meta-leadership is a holistic, three-dimensional framework for grounding leaders, decoding the context in which someone leads, and then recruiting and motivating a wide range of stakeholders to achieve shared objectives. It views leadership as an exercise in complex problem solving. The meta-leader creates a “problem-solution” environment in which problems are rapidly identified and sustainable solutions are deployed. Unity of purpose, generosity, and trust – often expressed as, “How can I help make you a success?” – fuel productive thinking and action.

The first dimension of meta-leadership is *The Person of the Meta-Leader*. Meta-leaders understand and express both who they are and why they are leading. High levels of emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness and self-regulation, are critical in stressful environments.

In 2006, Leonard Marcus, Barry Dorn, and Joseph Henderson published their first article about the concepts and practices of meta-leadership, which the team continues to evolve.

As neuroscientists and others expand the understanding of brain functioning – especially during times of stress – it is possible to teach leaders how to be “smarter than their brain.” For example, the ability to recognize and counteract the survival-driven “amygdala hijack” of the freeze-flight-fight

response by deploying practiced protocols is essential to efficient and effective response leadership. Beyond this, awareness of cognitive biases – the ways in which human brains process and interpret information – helps leaders overcome blind spots and distractions. Creating an environment of psychological safety encourages followers to reach balanced independent decisions and speak necessary truth to power. By mastering self-discipline and serving as a visible role model, leaders foster confidence, discipline, and order across the response enterprise.

The second dimension of meta-leadership is *The Situation* – the milieu that leaders confront. The problem is both to discern what is happening and what must be done about it. Every crisis or disaster is composed of multiple situations: population health, infrastructure damage, environmental destruction, business and government continuity challenges, political considerations, media narratives, and more. By mapping these situations and the involved stakeholders – including their independent and overlapping motivations and interests – the meta-leader develops widely conceived situational awareness. This effort is both more comprehensive and more nuanced than what is achieved through a traditional, data-driven common operating picture. Equipped with this wide perspective, the meta-leader identifies patterns, generates options, makes decisions, takes actions, and communicates to stay ahead of rapidly unfolding events.

The third dimension of meta-leadership is *Connectivity* – linking and leveraging people and organizations to create unity of effort and amplify the collective impact of individual activities. Shaping connectivity, the meta-leader optimizes the flow of relevant information, decisions, and resources across the enterprise to increase the likelihood of and shorten the time to a positive outcome. By continually improving the signal-to-noise ratio in vertical and horizontal feedback loops, the meta-leader catalyzes productivity in multiple



directions: down to subordinates; up to superiors; across to silos within the organizational chain of command; and beyond to other entities involved in the situation. Each of these directional facets of connectivity has distinct authority/influence dynamics, governance structures, and performance expectations, which the meta-leader skillfully negotiates.

The Complex, Nonlinear Management Approach

The practice of meta-leadership requires one to embrace complexity. This means an acknowledgment that: much is beyond the leader's control; relational interdependencies are difficult to fully fathom; and accurate assessment requires seeing the system as a whole and not simply as its individual parts. This all can seem daunting and even foreign to those trained in and operating with traditional linear approaches to management. Therefore, meta-leaders recognize their tasks as not merely establishing control. Among all the stakeholders involved in a complex event, it is more a matter of establishing order beyond control.

When the NPLI team asks professionals if they like order – knowing what is expected of them and what they can expect of others – almost all respond affirmatively. Then when asked how many like to be controlled, far fewer hands go up. However, much of the doctrine that directs how leaders prepare and respond to crises is about establishing control through chains of command, jurisdictional boundaries, and limits on authority. These can work well in the predictable scenario of routine situations or within a hierarchical organization. However, rigid doctrine can cause conflict and impede progress when a response involves multiple jurisdictions, public-private sector interactions or the public, particularly when some of these entities are outside of or unfamiliar with a formal incident command system. It is a paradox of complexity theory: the more control is imposed, the less order is achieved. When order among the entities is the leadership priority, the leader imposes control only when it contributes to order and restrains it when it inhibits people from accomplishing their part of the larger mission.

There were many examples of leading for order beyond control in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing response. Chains of command worked well within individual organizations. Members of those organizations stayed “in their lanes” and trusted others to do the same. Yet when confronted with novel situations, leaders found innovative ways to work together and solve presenting problems, for example: keeping the transit system in operation and secure in the immediate aftermath of the bombings; securing the city for a presidential visit in the midst of a major criminal investigation; or coordinating a manhunt that shut down a major U.S. city and several of its suburbs.

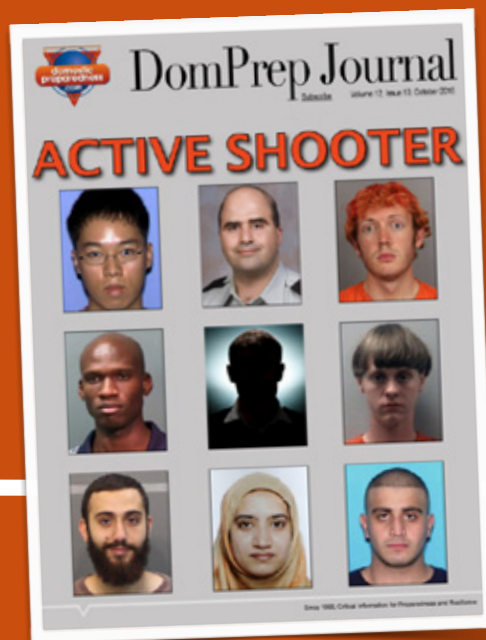
Meta-leadership arose from observations of leaders as they practiced complex problem solving. Discoveries were linked to the relevant academic literature in order to deepen understanding and refine practice principles and tools. The conceptual rigor intends to be both theoretically sound and pragmatically useful and relevant. The team is deeply grateful to the many dedicated leaders who shared their field experiences in keeping the nation secure. Through research and teaching about meta-leadership, the team at NPLI hopes to contribute to the development of more effective leaders and more resilient communities, helping to make them more mutually successful in preparing for and responding to crises.

Leonard J. Marcus is co-director of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative, a joint program of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

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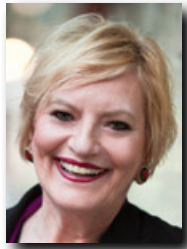


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Importance of Presidential Leadership in Emergency Management

By Kay C. Goss

With over 30 years working in emergency management – 12 years in a state governor’s office, almost 8 years at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as associate director in charge of national preparedness, training, and exercises, and 11 years in the private sector at Electronic Data Systems and Systems Research and Analysis International, it became apparent that presidential leadership has been quite important at all levels and for all sectors.



The first issue to consider in presidential leadership is governance – how presidents shape the lumbering federal bureaucracy to address the gravest threats. Over recent decades, emergency management has become an increasingly important profession and the related government agencies, FEMA, states, tribes, and local governments, as well as institutions of higher education and professional nonprofit organizations, have responded rapidly by pushing forward on standards, certifications, and accreditations.

Related developments from natural and technological hazards to pandemics and terrorism have forced this new focus on building this skills-based profession. The reasons include housing in flood- and fire-prone terrains, deferred maintenance on aging infrastructure, rapid development, climate change, and international threats of terrorism.

In the past, officials with local and short-term perspectives once were unwilling to learn much from disaster history or to plan ahead for the inevitable. This “disaster amnesia” sometimes causes the public to be perpetually surprised that the worst can and occasionally does happen. Thus, the need for the president, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appointees, and all of the agencies that support them to focus on and fully support the crucial roles they play and the extensive expertise that is required to lead in these times. Adequate funding is also a must.

The Increasing Expectations of Presidents

Many articles have been written on this topic through the years. One of the most comprehensive is from Naim Kapucu, Montgomery Van Wart, Richard Sylves, and Farhod Yuldashev, in a 2011 article, entitled [“U.S. Presidents and Their Roles in Emergency Management and Disaster Policy 1950-2009.”](#) Although it was published more than five years ago, it still has points worth considering during this time of transition:

The major factors are the ability and willingness to appropriately distinguish the needs and priorities of disaster management apart from civil defense needs and priorities, the selection of well-qualified disaster management leaders

with a background in natural and accidental disasters, and the quality of implementation of programs including administrative execution, number and level of presidential disaster declarations, and timely presidential involvement in catastrophes.

Using this framework, two presidents emerged as excellent, three as good, four as average, and two as poor. Interestingly, while some presidents learned from previous executive types of experiences, others did not. While some presidents learned from major catastrophes (focusing events) that occurred just before or during their administrations, others were hard-pressed simply to recover from especially disruptive or new disasters and failed to improve the system as a result. A consistent finding is that the performance of presidents in emergency management has had a growing effect on their overall reputations by the public and experts. Before 1950, presidential roles were extremely modest and expectations almost nonexistent. After Truman and through Reagan, roles increased substantially and expectations were modest. From Clinton through Obama, the roles have continued to increase and expectations have become exceedingly high.

Looking at current areas in which presidential leadership matter the most, there are seven areas for consideration during this fragile period of transition: personal experience, knowledge base, appointments, vision, speech, personal time, and compassion.

Personal Experience

Presidents come from local areas, some of which have frequent disasters. Many presidents have been previous governors, members of Congress, mayors, county executives, or other officials who have personally experienced the importance and process of excellent

emergency management. However, that is not a necessity, as every citizen who has experienced a disaster learns quickly that it is a job for solid, experienced, vigorous, and professional emergency managers.

Knowledge Base

Presidents often come to the job with a basic knowledge of emergency management due to these previous experiences. If not, they should take the time to be briefed early in their candidacies on the challenges of risk assessments, preparedness initiatives (planning, training, exercises, technology, standards, certification, accreditation, outreach),



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mitigation, prevention, protection, response (National Incident Management System, Urban Search and Rescue, Incident Management Assistance Teams, etc.), and recovery. Long-term and community-based recoveries include individual and public assistance, as well as efforts necessary to get the community's economy working again.

Appointments

Governance is key – that is, how the president shapes the lumbering federal bureaucracy to address the gravest threats. The early presidential appointments send a strong message about the understanding and respect that a president has for FEMA and DHS. Appointing people with strong related professional experience and recognized expertise to FEMA and DHS, known personally by the president, shows the president's focus on emergency management and homeland security. It also demonstrates an understanding of the nuanced intergovernmental, interagency, and interdisciplinary processes involved. FEMA refers to this as the “whole of community” organizing concept, which involves national, tribal, state, and local levels of government, the private and nonprofit sectors, and the public. Appointees that are active in organizations such as the National Emergency Management Association and the International Association of Emergency Managers can provide well-versed leadership in the profession.

Presidential leadership during this fragile period of transition requires: experience, knowledge, appointments, vision, speech, personal time, and compassion.

Opportunities are available to potential appointees in the area of higher education. The FEMA Higher Education Program was launched in 1994 and now includes more than 300 degree and certificate programs, with another 150 such programs in homeland security. Additionally, an accreditation program has been developed: the Council for Accreditation of Emergency Management Education, with a FEMA Focus Group providing guidance for these academic programs.

Knowledge of professional emergency management standards is helpful for related presidential appointees. An outstanding standards and assessment program is administered through the Emergency Management Assessment Program (EMAP), located in Lexington, Kentucky, as part of the Council of State Governments, endorsed by NEMA and IAEM. A majority of states and numerous localities, as well as a number of institutions of higher education, have had their emergency management programs accredited through this process. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an international standards organization, also has recommended standards for emergency management and business continuity, as general guidance, but do not offer accreditation.

Vision

The president should reflect a strong vision of how FEMA and DHS will operate in “the new normal” in emergency management and homeland security, with many more natural disasters and human-induced incidents expected. There is no time for learning on the job. For example, William Jefferson Clinton's administration faced a series of disasters in his first

term. In the first months of his first year, the administration faced the Midwest floods (1993); in the second year, the Northridge Earthquake (1994); in the third year, the Kobe Earthquake in Japan, in which Japan requested FEMA advice and counsel, then Oklahoma City Bombing (1995); and in subsequent years a historic Nor'easter storm, a huge hurricane coming up the east coast, numerous tornadoes, and flooding in almost every state.

Speech

The public speeches and press conferences that presidents have before, during, and after disasters have enormous impacts on the attitudes and feelings of disaster victims and survivors, as well as on the profession of emergency management or homeland security. It sets the tone for all those impacted and those in surrounding areas, as well as the nation as a whole. Increasingly, these events are covered by traditional media and social media worldwide. The Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, for example, houses 150 speeches the president delivered that mentioned emergency management.

Personal Time

Personal visits to disaster sites and to the responding agencies, like FEMA, DHS, Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation sends a strong message of deep caring and understanding. The importance of specific attention by the president to those most directly impacted cannot be overestimated.

Compassion

The public, in advance of a disaster, appreciates knowing that the president would be, to the extent possible, caring about disastrous events on every one in the country. This kind of soft power of outreach and understanding cannot be overestimated, but is often underestimated. Presidents with compassion tend to be more proactive during disasters. The public, as well as related officials, notice this and take their cues and comfort from such leadership.

In Closing

Disasters are frequent, high profile, and require effective presidential attention. When this does not occur, it is apparent to all. Press coverage will include, and potentially emphasize, any disorganization, oversight, flub, or false start. If presidents let disasters get ahead of them, it is almost impossible to catch up. Applying lessons learned from how past presidents managed disasters will ensure the effective recovery of communities in need and solidify the reputation of president in the eyes of experts and the public.

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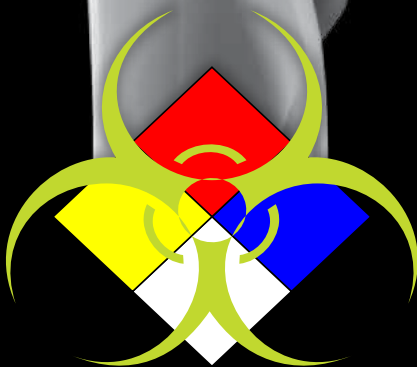
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The Human Factors in Leadership Decision Making

By Eric J. McNulty

Preparedness and response organizations have realized many benefits from adopting the Incident Command System (ICS) and similar formal management structures. Performance, however, depends on how people behave as humans within that system – particularly in stressful, fast-moving environments. Integrating behavioral training into ICS training may help improve performance and outcomes.



The crisis hits – a terror attack, an earthquake, or a mine collapse. The emergency operations center (EOC) activates and team members, trained in the Incident Command System (ICS), slide into their well-rehearsed roles. The response is underway.

The use of ICS, and its federal counterpart National Incident Management System (NIMS), has become the accepted standard. It provides structure amid potential chaos, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and direction for training and exercises. The common deployment of ICS facilitates coordination and cooperation across organizations and jurisdictions. However, ICS and most formal approaches to incident management have an “Achilles heel”: they undervalue the human factors critical to success in preparedness and response.

Arising as a management approach, ICS is built on the assumption of rational thinking and decision making. Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman, Dan Ariely, and other behavioral economists have provided ample evidence, however, that people are much less rational than many would think. Absent an understanding and application of insights from psychology and applied neuroscience, leaders are likely to sub-optimize the effectiveness of ICS.

At the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), Dimension One of the meta-leadership framework and practice method is *the person* – understanding the self as a human and as a leader. Here are three of the most common potential decision-making traps rooted in self-understanding and how NPLI teaches leaders to avoid them.

The Amygdala Hijack

The basic operating system of the human brain is geared toward calculating risk and reward – the brain’s first job is keeping people alive. Whenever it senses a threat – whether being cut off in traffic or encountering actual gunfire – the amygdala ignites the freeze-flight-fight (Triple F) survival response. This instinctual mechanism is in everyone and numerous events in a busy EOC can activate a hijack. The problem is that a leader cannot reason or solve complex problems while in survival mode. They must reset their brains much like they reboot computers. Taking three deep breaths is a simple trigger script that recalibrates thinking by demonstrating self-competence. Here, ICS is particularly valuable because engaging in its practiced protocols serves a similar function for team members.

The lesson for leaders: Recognize the hijack, and be intentional and disciplined about countering it within and with others.

Cognitive Biases & Heuristics

The human brain processes mountains of data each day, most of it unconsciously. The way that it copes with this onslaught is through biases and heuristics – shortcuts that enable rapid function with accuracy that is “good enough” most of the time. Consider how little active thinking a person dedicates to drive to work. Unless something unusual emerges to attract attention, much of the activity is on auto-pilot. The person gets to work safe and on time while his or her brain preserves energy for more difficult tasks. There are dozens of these shortcuts that guide leaders’ thinking and decision making every day.

When leaders consider different perspectives and recognize biases in themselves and others, they gain a more complete picture on which to base their decisions.

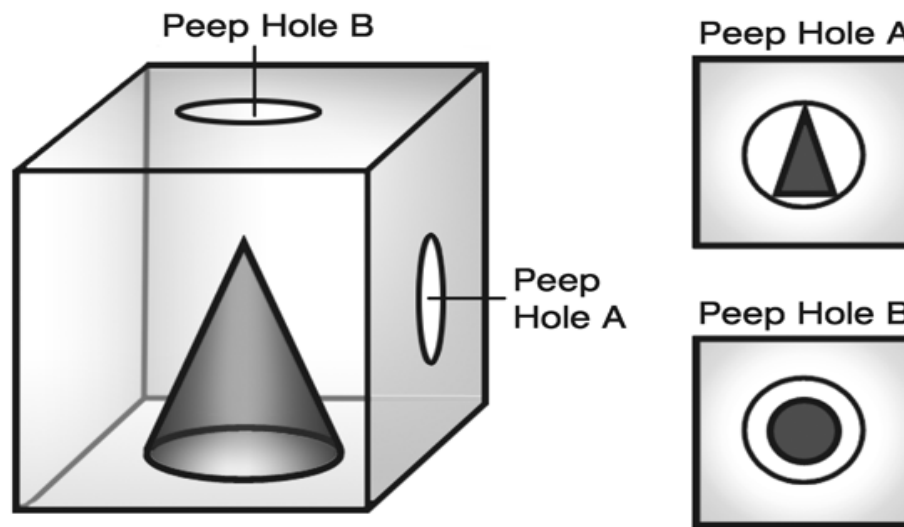
These biases and heuristics can also lead people astray. Confirmation bias, for example, leads to overweighing evidence that supports an existing world view. In the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings on 15 April 2013, leaders in Boston, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C., looked at the same data and came to opposite conclusions. In Washington, leaders looked at the date – Tax Day and Patriots’ Day, and close to the anniversaries of the Oklahoma City bombing and Waco, Texas, confrontation – and initially thought that the perpetrators were home-grown terrorists. In Boston, feeling that they had good intelligence on potential domestic threats, officials initially thought the bombings were an act of an international group.

The lesson for leaders: Learn the most common biases and heuristics as awareness can help mitigate their effects in the intense back-and-forth of a response. Draw upon the different perspectives of peers and team members to help counteract individual bias and improve decision quality.

Tunnel Thinking

Leaders almost automatically narrow their focus when confronted by a disaster or crisis response. They look for what they can “fix.” Often, they may retreat to their operational comfort zones. It is essential, however, for a leader to see the bigger picture, discern the potentially divergent perspectives of multiple stakeholders, and anticipate the many secondary potential events that will unfold during the response: political, media, reputational, regulatory, etc. Each of these has distinct dynamics and may have interdependencies. The aspect overlooked can flare up unexpectedly – triggering an amygdala hijack – and distract or derail the leader and team members.

The tool NPLI provides to help leaders improve their decision making is the cone-in-the-cube. Imagine an opaque cube in which sits a cone. If a peephole is drilled in the top, the



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viewer will see a circle. If a peephole is drilled in one side, the viewer will see a triangle. Each viewer can argue vociferously that they have the correct observation based on his or her narrow slice of evidence. This is particularly true when someone has spent a career peering through a certain peephole or has an advanced degree in that peephole. They become invested in their perceptions yet neither viewer sees the full dimensions of the cone in the cube. This simple metaphorical tool helps the leader achieve psychological distance from the situation, making it possible to achieve more nuanced and complete situational awareness.

The lesson for leaders: No one has the complete answer, yet everyone may have part of it. Always ask, “What am I missing?” before making a decision.

Successful Application of Lessons

NPLI’s curriculum is neither perfect nor comprehensive. This brief overview of some of its components points to the relevance of brain function and behavioral tendencies to success in an ICS environment. The simple proposition is that these elements should be integrated into more ICS training. No matter how robust the management structure, it will still be populated by people. The better leaders understand themselves and others, the more effective their leadership.

Eric J. McNulty, M.A., is the director of research at the National Preparedness Initiative, a joint program of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. He is also an instructor at the Harvard Chan School. He has engaged in field research in numerous crisis responses and teaches on leadership in numerous graduate and executive programs. He is a frequent speaker at conferences and other events.

High-Consequence Decisions: What It Takes

By Wendy Walsh

In September 2016, more than 30 people gathered at the Harvard Faculty club to discuss topics related to leadership and the decision-making process. Most in the room had been faced with making critical life-and-death decisions at some point in their careers, and some on a regular basis. These participants were asked to share their knowledge about what it takes to make high-consequence decisions.



Participants represented the first responder communities of law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical service (EMS), as well as emergency management and academia from local, state, and federal agencies. The discussion was framed in the context of meta-leadership, beginning with the self-regulation and emotional intelligence of the person, expanding to the situation at hand to understand the knowns, the known unknowns, and the unknown knowns of the environment, and then linking to support the conductivity of many organizations and individuals to galvanize collective intelligence toward a unity of effort in decision making. The meta-leadership framework depicts conductivity in three equally important directions: calling for individuals and communities to lead up, down, and across to enable a true realization of collective intelligence, which reveal outcomes that may be impossible achieve in isolation.

One dominant theme of this dialogue was relationships. The characteristics and dynamics of developing and sustaining meaningful conductivity in a crisis event is greatly impacted by the relationships that have been forged long before the crisis at hand emerged. On a day-to-day basis, people are immersed in their own roles, and it takes time to consider broader implications of their processes and plans. The conversation emphasized the need to cultivate understanding across many perspectives to include political leaders, private sectors, traditional media, and social media, as well as the responder communities of law enforcement, EMS, and fire service. In establishing these connections, building partnerships, and gaining a better understanding, there will be a greater possibility of surfacing the unknown unknowns prior to a crisis event and aid in decision making that results in desired outcomes.

Leading up, down, and across requires integrating the head, heart, and gut into the decision-making process for high-consequence events.

To actualize this focus on building relationships and ultimately trust, it is necessary to come back to the center of the meta-leadership model: the individual person. Each

Data Accountability: Starting Over With a New Administration

By Michael Jacoby

Over the next few months, precious time will be lost trying to quickly update newly elected officials on key health and life safety issues that have been discussed for years among their predecessors and the public. Only time will tell how the new occupants of the White House and Congress embrace and address such issues and the long-term implications.



Data accountability involves fact checking and data verification for quality assurance and quality control to ensure that the nation as a whole has access to accurate information. After many years of discussion about the data problems discovered in the national system, tragic incidents such as the massive explosion in West, Texas, in 2013 expose the consequences of having [inaccurate databases](#) for safety-related data and information on toxic chemical sources.

Those working in Washington, D.C., under the current administration have been briefed on the linkages between incidents like the West, Texas, explosion and the assessments and points raised in a [previous 2012 article](#) on “scrubbing” data (i.e., fact-checking information and looking for errors) and the [Environmental Protection Agency’s response](#). By ensuring that data is accurate, communities can mitigate threats and potential consequences of high-risk threats that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Perhaps it was the amount of problems discovered that motivated President Barack Obama to address these concerns by issuing [Executive Order 13650](#) (“Improving Chemical Facility Safety and Security”) on 1 August 2013. Unfortunately, despite the President’s Working Group having years to reduce training issues for responders through national programs such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Fire Administration, and to establish a Global Information System parameter or standard for information collection and reporting, gaps still exist. If the locational information for toxic substances is not correct for a site of interest that is already recorded in the federal database system – as required by policy, guidelines, or statutes – then communities and the nation as a whole have a major problem!

Significant problems for communities and the nation can arise when critical decisions are made based on inaccurate, incomplete, or misleading data and information.

The Trump Administration will now be faced with the challenge of cleaning up these data problems. Simply put, when using information contained in federal websites during times of

crisis or need, decision makers and the public have a high expectation that the information being presented is correct. However, if the first thing that the database users see is inaccurate, incomplete, and/or misleading information, then it can become extremely difficult to restore trust in a national system unless major changes are made.

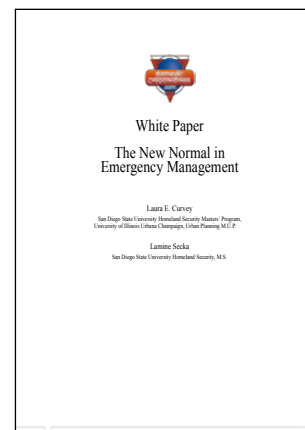
Responders throughout the nation need accurate information about the locations and types of toxic substances with which they may come into contact. Now the nation has to wait to see if President Donald Trump’s administration will decide to take a more aggressive approach to fixing the discrepancies in federal databases. Unfortunately, some of this information may date back to the beginning of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act ([EPCRA](#)) in the 1980s, which means there could be three decades of bad information recorded in the systems that others were using to make decisions. It is no wonder that problems exist.

For updated data verification information for responders or awareness information containing examples of what to look for when fact-checking or “scrubbing” community information, contact the author at: DVeNews@gmail.com

Michael Jacoby is a resident of York County, Pennsylvania, who has been actively concerned for some time about various environmental, Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Department of Labor protection of public health and life safety issues. York County is a major community in EPA Region III, and is represented in Congress since 2013 by U.S. Representative Scott G. Perry (PA 4th).

White Paper: The New Normal in Emergency Management

On 14 September 2016, a half-day workshop was conducted at The International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS) Conference. The topic of that workshop was “The New Normal in Emergency Management.” An expert panel included representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, the United States Coast Guard, the United States Customs and Border Control, San Diego Harbor Police, plus community and business professionals. This white paper summarizes the proceedings and presents the panelists’ view on the topic of the “new normal” and how it relates to their daily operations.



Summer Air Traffic Delays – Warnings vs. Reality

By Leonard J. Marcus

The aviation system remains a prime target for terrorists. The traveling public, airlines, and airports grew impatient in the face of long security lines. As a result, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was often in the news, until its leaders undertook a systematic process of transformation to both enhance security and minimize inconvenience for the traveling public.



The strategy TSA adopted has lessons applicable to the whole of the homeland security enterprise. In spring 2016, the upcoming summer months appeared ominous for airline travelers. Long security lines plagued major airports, including Atlanta (Georgia), Minneapolis (Minnesota), and Dallas (Texas). Customers missed flights, which infuriated the airlines. Passengers were advised to arrive hours before their flight, pruning air travel efficiencies. Forecasts for a record volume of summer air traffic made the situation even more foreboding.

By mid-May, stalled TSA security lines reached crisis proportions in Chicago, Illinois. Passengers waited hours to board flights. Furious, Mayor Rahm Emmanuel called a press conference to denounce the agency.

Summer Air Traffic Woes

With the summer gone, the question is, “What happened?” Memorial Day travelers were warned of huge delays that never materialized. The summer proved “smooth sailing” at most airports. When problems arose, they were quickly resolved. Mayor Emmanuel held another press conference in August, this time to commend the “heroic” efforts of TSA. “When things get messed up, people always report it. When they get fixed and addressed, they should also be reported,” he said. When so much of the public has lost confidence in government, explaining this quick and dramatic turnaround is important. As the nation marks 15 years since 9/11, the TSA experience also informs how the country can improve homeland security.

The National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), based at Harvard University, was asked by TSA to examine and assist in addressing mounting leadership challenges. This government-academic connection allowed NPLI to systematically assess leadership questions and develop a leadership curriculum to assist agency transformation.

A New Leader at TSA

The story begins in June 2015. A leaked Inspector General report revealed that security officers missed dangerous items – including guns and explosives – 95 percent of the time. TSA had placed a premium on reducing wait times. The agency lost track of its mission.

One month later, Coast Guard Vice-Commandant Admiral Peter Neffenger was confirmed as the new TSA administrator. Neffenger was a graduate of Harvard’s executive education program. The NPLI had studied his leadership as deputy national incident commander during the 2010 Gulf oil spill.



Neffenger's first priority at TSA was reorienting the agency: ensuring the security of the traveling public. Rather than emphasizing quick security lines, passenger anomalies were thoroughly checked, including liquids, guns, and other risks. The trade-off was security over speed. At the same time, the agency faced a congressionally imposed nine percent reduction in its workforce alongside a nine percent increase in passenger volume. It became a simple math problem translating into longer wait times.

TSA's senior leadership team was able to turn the situation around. First, when a problem spiked at an airport, Neffenger and senior leaders immediately met with local airport and airline officials, political leaders, and TSA managers to determine what happened and seek fixes. One such meeting occurred in Atlanta in March. Delta Airlines executives were surprised by the administrator's visit. The long lines, they concurred, were bad for business, security, and the traveling public. Delta agreed to work with TSA to alleviate the problems. They provided staff to assist TSA in non-security functions. They paid for and installed new automated security lanes in Atlanta, testing a screening technology promising long-term improvements in speed and effectiveness. Following that lead, American, United, and other airlines also joined in.

To meet growing volume, the TSA workforce had to be significantly expanded. The workforce required training. With information in hand, congressional leaders quickly got on board delivering the necessary funding and authorizations.

Back at TSA headquarters, a new system was established to monitor the volume of passengers. Airline passengers fly with reservations, so ebbs and flows can be anticipated. With that, TSA can strategically shift and surge their workforce to meet demands. TSA inaugurated a daily call with major airports and airlines to assess and forecast problems. Together, TSA, airlines, and airports worked to stem problems even before they occurred. And when glitches arose, corrective actions and adjustments were easily made.

The Lesson for the Broader Homeland Security Enterprise

Leaders across the aviation security ecosystem transitioned beyond the blame. They partnered, transforming antagonisms into collaborative working relationships. TSA established close linkages with its allied stakeholders: employees, Congress, related government agencies, airlines, airports, law enforcement, and private sector organizations.

In the midst of these wait line troubles, international threats against aviation escalated. Terrorists attacked airports in Brussels, Belgium, and Istanbul, Turkey. Explosives were detonated on aircrafts in Egypt and Somalia. Aviation continues as a prized target.

By forging a stronger web among security entities, TSA is fortifying the protective shield that detects, deters, and defeats those who pose a threat to passengers. This task cannot be accomplished by one agency alone. At the national level and at airports across the country, the leadership that solved one problem is being adapted to solve an even bigger one. For those who would do harm, a close-knit weave of partnerships is more difficult to penetrate. This strategy, forging stronger connectivity of effort, is what the Harvard NPLI calls “meta-leadership.”

TSA was established to combat “Terrorism 1.0” against a clearly defined adversary. The system now faces the more dynamic environment of “Terrorism 2.0”: homegrown and international terrorists; lone wolves or those loosely connected to terrorist groups; and others who are difficult to detect. Working together, the TSA and its related stakeholders are demonstrating agility through connectivity. The TSA transformation provides lessons for the broader homeland security enterprise as it appropriates resources and attention to this evolving and more complex threat profile.

Leonard J. Marcus is co-director of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI), a joint program of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. In collaboration with colleagues and through extensive research, he has pioneered development of the conceptual and pragmatic bases for meta-leadership, the Walk in the Woods method for interest-based negotiation, and applications of systematic dispute resolution for multidimensional problem solving.

Richard Serino on Leadership in Crisis Communications

At the International Association of Emergency Managers annual conference in October 2016, DomPrep Advisor Anthony Mangeri sat down with Richard Serino, distinguished visiting fellow at Harvard’s National Preparedness Leadership Initiative, to discuss leadership as it relates to crisis communications. An [audio](#) of the full interview is now available.

Richard Serino, Visiting fellow at Harvard School of Public Health, National Preparedness Leadership Initiative

Anthony S. Mangeri, Director of strategic relations for fire services and emergency management and is on the faculty of the American Public University System





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