

Governing Energy



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Collaboration

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This blog is being written while the author is traveling in southeastern North Carolina. With hurricane Jose churning off to the east and Maria threatening the Caribbean, Harvey and Irma are in the rearview mirror. Moreover, other storms are marching west across the Atlantic Ocean.

A recent television newscaster was commenting that “so far” recovery and rebuilding efforts in Texas and Florida are going fairly well. This is in stark contrast to the New Orleans disaster caused by Katrina in 2005 and the mass chaos as Houston evacuated during Rita that same year.ⁱ

Business Model Differences

According to that news segment, much of the difference is attributed to a different “business model” between federal and state governments. My personal observation of both 2005 storms (resided in the

Houston area at that time) is that governments of all levels **REACTED** to events on the ground. Some officials even appeared to have the “deer in the headlights” look during press conferences.ⁱⁱ

In Houston, the decision to reverse highway lanes to San Antonio and other locales was ad hoc and did not appear to have much planning. In the resulting chaos, several deaths were reported on the highways.ⁱⁱⁱ

So why are things different today? According to that television personality, all levels and agencies of government (including the military) coordinated in advance of the storms. Intense coordination took place during the storm. Moreover, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross and others were included in all phases of the storm efforts.

This **PROACTIVE** model made all the difference and as the old saying goes, “Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.”^{iv} From this writer’s perspective the full capabilities of the society (including international collaboration) continue to be brought to bear on these natural disasters.

Lessons Learned

Athletes, Actors, Military and others constantly train and strive to improve “their game.” The long hours of study, practice and mistakes prepare individuals and organizations for when the time of test arrives. The new business model that proactively addresses the needs of the many before, during and after major incidents can minimize the downside and maximize the upside to these disasters.

It is not enough to develop robust collaboration plans enabled by new technologies such as Blockchain.^v Plans must be realistically and continually rehearsed and improved upon.

It is unrealistic to believe that a Collaborative Business Model that does not incorporate Continuous Planning and Training will be as successful as one that does. In our rush to adopt the latest buzzword business model, many organizations either skip or gloss over these two required components.

Whether increasing Operational Excellence and capturing the value available or addressing Business Continuity issues, a proactive collaborative *culture* beats a reactive organizational *strategy* every time.^{vi} Texas and Florida demonstrates this hypothesis.

Is Your Organizational Culture Reactive or Proactive?

Additional details are available from the author.

About the Author

Dr. [Scott M. Shemwell](#) has over 30 years technical and executive management experience primarily in the energy sector. He is the author of six books and has written extensively about the field of operations. Shemwell is the Managing Director of The Rapid Response Institute, a firm that focuses on providing its customers with solutions enabling Operational Excellence and regulatory compliance management. He

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End Notes

ⁱ <http://www.hurricanescience.org/history/storms/2000s/rita/>

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_government_response_to_Hurricane_Katrina

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Rita

^{iv} [http://military.wikia.com/wiki/7_Ps_\(military_adage\)](http://military.wikia.com/wiki/7_Ps_(military_adage))

^v <https://blockgeeks.com/guides/what-is-blockchain-technology/>

^{vi} <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shephyken/2015/12/05/drucker-said-culture-eats-strategy-for-breakfast-and-enterprise-rent-a-car-proves-it/#331e1eae2749>