

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: RESPONSE PLAN FOR THE THREAT OF NEGATIVE MEDIA REPRESENTATION

(CASE STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL BURCH UNIVERSITY)

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Abstract: Business Continuity Management (BCM) can be defined as a holistic management process (ISO 22301:2012) which means that interdependences and connections between all parts of process are very important. BCM is the best way for the organization to prepare for response in potential future crisis situations and to avoid damage from theoretical events.

Awareness of importance of BCM in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not at a satisfactory level. One of the risks that can have the highest impact on higher education institution is reputation risk. This BC response plan is particular preparedness plan of the University for the event of negative media representation.

The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of importance of business continuity response plans for incidents or crisis situations in higher education institutions. Additional reason for this study is importance of the reputation of these institutions. Image and reputation of higher education institutions are crucial for their existing.

Answers will be sought for the following research questions: How higher education institution can protect of reputational damage, in the first place of negative media attention? How to make BC Response Plan? Why is communication plan extremely important as a part of BC response plan?

Keywords: BCM, higher education, response plan, reputation, media

JEL Classification: H12, M10, I23

Introduction

Optimism is not a strategy neither is a plan.

In day and age of global crisis (economic, financial, migrant, terrorism, etc.) and wars all around the world, also in era of a great influence of social network communication and propaganda, many organizations (institutions and companies) in all industries are facing with a lot of rising problems.

Not only companies for profit and the others financial institutions are important to save and continue business in the case of some kind of crisis; also Higher Education Institutions should consider what can happen. HEI are important because HEI's business depends of their reputation and they are responsible for their academic and administrative staff as well as for their students. In one word for all their stakeholders.

Business Continuity Management (BCM) can be defined as a holistic management process (ISO 22301:2012) which means that interdependences and connections between all parts of process are very important.

BCM is the best way for the organization to prepare for response in potential future incident or crisis situations and to avoid damage from theoretical events.

Crisis is defined as "a critical event that may impact an organization's profitability, reputation, or ability to operate." (Wikipedia, Business Continuity Institute [BCI], n.d.)

„A critical event, which, if not handled in an appropriate manner, may dramatically impact an organization's profitability, reputation, or ability to operate." (Wikipedia, Disaster Recovery Institute International, n.d.)

In Europe, in the first place in UK and Ireland there is no obligatory requirements from government for HEI with the exception of teaching hospitals connected to universities (McGuinness and Marchand, 2014) but there is defined BCM according to Higher Education Business Continuity Network (HEBCoN). HEBCoN are partner with the BCI, Kenyon, and Cambridge Risk Solution.

Historically, universities have given little attention to Business Continuity Management (Beggan, 2011).

In the USA a lot of universities are implemented BCM. For example, Northwestern University has got a complete BCM and open access to templates for BCM, links to case studies in USA, etc. Also, Marquette University and many others in USA.

"US HEI are required by federal law to establish continuity of operations plans (McCluskey, 2007). Universities face a number of challenges when preparing continuity of operations plans including an open fluid environment, diverse beliefs and subcultures, and the balance between preparedness and rigid security controls (McCluskey, 2007). HEI have been responsive to policy mandates by establishing clear priorities - human lives, protected facilities, fortified information technologies, and plans for business recovery." (Zaghab, 2011, p.2)

There are several governance guides for BCM in HEI, such as "Action Guide for Emergency Management at Higher Education Institutions" which has been developed to give higher education institutions a useful resource in the field of emergency management. (U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2010)

Awareness of importance of BCM in B&H is on low level in global. Government has got only few obligatory laws for financial institutions but higher education law in Bosnia and Herzegovina doesn't recommend any of prevention measures of BCM for HEI.

The purpose of this study is to raise awareness of importance of business continuity response plans for incidents or crisis situations in higher education institutions.

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Answers will be sought for the following research questions:

- How higher education institution can protect of reputational damage, in the first place of negative media attention?
- How to make BC Response Plan?
- Why is communication plan extremely important as a part of BC response plan?

BCM is important because of that it's the proactive measure and is a proactive measure that concerns all business processes, assets, facilities, and human resources, not just data center and communication network. (Adapting Business Continuity To Your Organization, n.d.)

The other very important fact is that BCM is not just a plan. BCM refers to all issues associated with risk, not just natural or man-made disasters, so it can help one organization to uncover potentially significant costs and risks before they happen. (Adapting Business Continuity To Your Organization, n.d.)

Image and reputation of higher education institutions are crucial for their existing. Consequences of lost reputation and bad image can destroy one HEI and everything which was built for years.

Research method used in this study is qualitative method, case study on International Burch University.

Review the literature

According to *ISO 22301:2012, Societal security - Business continuity management systems – Requirements* for manage and effective Business Continuity Management System it's required to apply Plan-Do-Check-Act (PCDA) model as well as other International standards (ISO 9001, ISO, ISO/IEC 27001, etc).

In this standard there is a list of BCMS requirements for the organization and all interested parties for general, legal and regulatory obligations and responsibilities.

Focus in standard is in planning of BCMS and in compliance of planning with the organization's mission, goals, internal and external obligations and responsibilities. Also, Standard asserts importance of leadership, involving high management in this process, awareness of all including parties and communication.

For the communication three question have to be considered: what it will communicate, when to communicate and with whom to communicate (ISO 22301:2012, p. 13).

Also, Standard differentiates internal and external communication.

BCM Umbrella shows the relationship between risk disciplines. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Business Continuity Institute - BCI, 2003



In this study it'll be discussed mainly about Crisis Management and Communication and PR, so reviewing the literature will cover primarily these risk disciplines.

Crisis Management can be defined as a critical organizational function which failure can cause harm to stakeholders, (Coombs, 2014, p. 1)

Reputation is the second important for one organization and it placed after public safety.

Coombs defines reputation as "how stakeholders perceive an organization". (2014)

Some research suggests that lessons designed to protect the organization's reputation will help to reduce the likelihood of negative word-of-mouth. (Coombs, 2014)

The other component to consider in crisis response is role of social media and the third component are emotions. According to previous researches focus is on anger, sympathy, and anxiety as the primary fears that arise from a crisis.

Crisis Management's role is preventing or lessening the damage a crisis can cause in an organization or affect to stakeholders.

For the establishing Crisis Management three main phases according to Coombs, (2014) are:

- 1) Pre-Crisis Phase which includes preparing Crisis Management Plan, defines Crisis Management Team and spokesperson, making Pre-draft Messages and defines Communication Channels,
- 2) Crisis Response which includes Initial Response and Reputation Repair and Behavioral Intentions
- 3) Post-Crisis Phase which includes return to normal business operations.

Coombs differentiates two crisis communication research lines: internal crisis communication management communication with employees about a crisis and stealing thunder which is defined as a matter of timing involving the disclosure of information about a crisis.

One interesting paper has written by Blue Moon Consulting Group. The paper is focused at the most important distinctions between terms about crisis management role in crisis and to proactive & strategic approach to manage reputational risk in Higher Education.

First, in the paper is explained that crisis management and emergency management are not the same as well as the crisis communication isn't crisis management. It is really a fact that the common mistake is to confuse these concepts.

Difference between crisis management and emergency management (EM) is that EM is defines as the process of managing physical events and Crisis management defines the process of managing the broader impacts and consequences of events and issues – not just physical ones. (Blue Moon Consulting Group, n.d.)

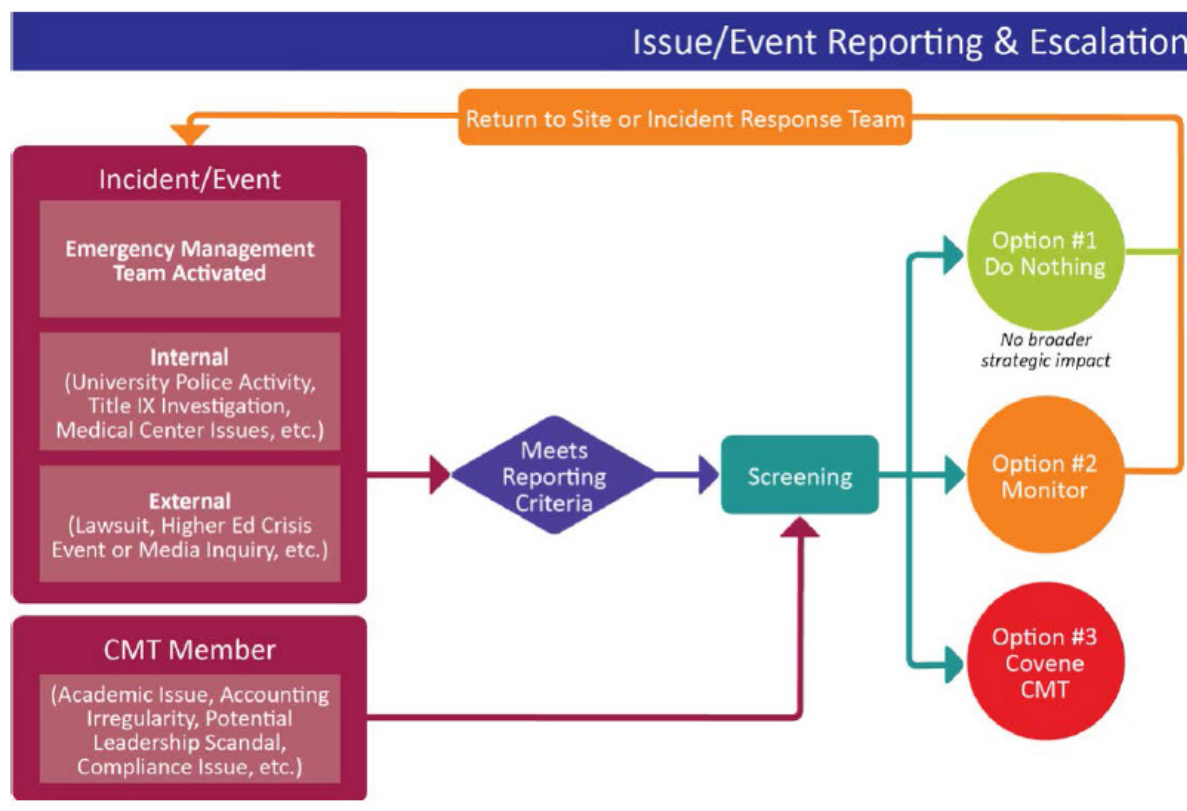
A second mistake is to confuse crisis communication with crisis management. While communications certainly is a critical, visible and impactful part of crisis management but it's not the whole. For many organizations, a crisis is by definition the point at which stakeholders start to make inquires leading to the inevitable question, "What are we going to say?" From a crisis management standpoint, equally critical to "what are we going to say?" should be the questions, "why didn't we know about this earlier?", "who needs to be involved?" and "what are we going to do?" (Blue Moon Consulting Group, n.d.)

In the paper it's explained what are the four critical components of effective CM. That components are the answers of these mentioned questions

The most important is to have:

- 1) A Clear Reporting Process & Criteria - Defining the what, how, when and to whom issues and events that have the potential to create significant reputational risk are identified and reported.
- 2) A Strategic Incident Screening Process - Analyzing and assessing information in a broader context.
- 3) Defined Parameters for Crisis Team Activation - Detailing when and how your university's Crisis Management Team will be engaged such that it is understandable, predictable and repeatable. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Issue/Event Reporting & Escalation



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This paper is very useful in establishing CM and creating of the plans for business continuity because it provides all the steps in the process and key benefits for it.

According to literature thinking that bad publicity won't happen to our organization is really wrong opinion and a great mistake. If there is plan and preparation steps for it, organization will give itself a much better chance of limiting the damage and staying in control of the situation. "Simply being prepared for adverse publicity can prevent a bad story from becoming a terrible one." (The Marketing Donut, n.d.)

BCM Methodology

According to ISO 22301:2012 BCM Methodology is as follows:

- Risk Analysis
- Business Impact Analysis
- Business Continuity Strategy
- Plan Development
- Testing and Exercising
- Program Management

Risk Analysis

Risk Analysis is the first step in BC Planning. It's a process of identification and classification of potential risks. Risk assessment can be defined as "the determination of quantitative or qualitative estimate of risk related to a well-defined situation and a recognized threat". (Wikipedia, Risk Assessment, n.d.)

Usually, quantitative risk assessment method is used for the classification of risks. Quantitative risk assessment requires calculations of two components of risk (R):

- the magnitude of the potential loss (L)
- the probability (p) that the loss will occur

Risk = Probability x Loss

$$R_i = p(L_i)$$

Risk categories

Potential threats which are in correlation with BCM can be separated in specific categories:

- **Social:** Threats emerging from criminal activities or and other social influences
- **Operational:** External/Internal threats which come from inside the University or outside
- **Financial:** Threats which cause a financial loss
- **Natural/Environmental/Disaster:** Threats which can happen from natural events or environment/man made influence
- **Political:** Events/threats caused by political events

(Wikipedia, Social Risk Management, n.d.)

International Burch University - general information

International Burch University (IBU) was established in 2008 in Sarajevo, with the goal of presenting a unique opportunity to rethink the very idea of a modern university. (International Burch University, n.d.)

IBU is member of the private Bosna Sema Educational Institutions. (International Burch University, n.d.)

Mission

"The mission of International Burch University is to support education, scientific research and the training of highly qualified personnel to work in academic and professional fields through the development of modern curricula and creating an environment to encourage creative, objective and critical thinking and continuous learning. Through its public activities and joint projects and cooperation with institutions from the private and public sectors, as well as international institutions, the university aims to improve the community and contribute to solving local and global challenges. An important aspect of all activities is a friendly academic environment that encourages each student to take a leading role in reaching their personal and intellectual potential." (International Burch University, n.d.)

Vision

"Achieving excellence in education, research & development, and innovation & entrepreneurship through mentorship and guidance." (International Burch University, n.d.)

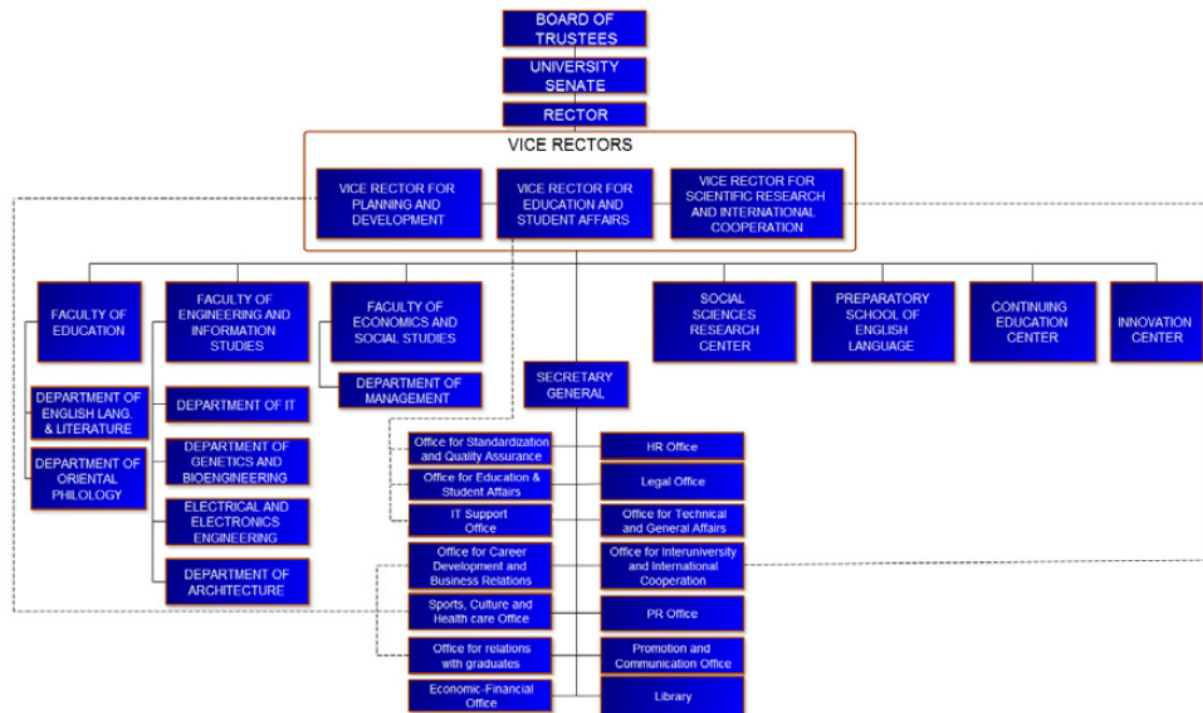
*Number of personnel/Headcount***Figure 3:** Number of academic staff (International Burch University, n.d.)

Number of academic staff in 2013-2014	Prof.	Assoc. Prof	Assist. Prof.	Senior Teaching Assistant	Assistant	TOTAL
Employees	6	10	27	40	6	89
External collaborators	2	3	9	3	1	18
TOTAL	8	13	36	43	7	107

Table 26: Structure of academic staff in academic 2013-2014**Figure 4:** Number of administrative staff (International Burch University, n.d.)

Qualification structure of administrative staff at International Burch University	
BACHELOR DEGREE	30
HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE	20
UNQUALIFIED	6

Table 29: Qualification structure of administrative staff in 2013-2014

Figure 5: Organizational Chart of University (International Burch University, n.d.)

Development strategy of HEI International Burch University for period 2014-2019

Some of important strategic goals are:

- TL&QA (teaching and learning quality assurance)
- Strengthening the relations between the University and the community
- Improving PR of University

Business impact analysis (BIA)

After risk assessment, it's very important to do second step and essential component of an organization's business continuance plan - Business impact analysis (BIA) which is defined as "a systematic process to determine and evaluate the potential effects of an interruption to critical business operations as a result of a disaster, accident or emergency." (TechTarget, n.d.)

BIA is a component to show any vulnerabilities and a planning component to develop strategies for minimizing risk. Purpose of the BIA is to identify critical functions with defined Recovery Time Objective (RTO) for critical processes. The recovery time objective (RTO) defined as "the targeted duration of time and a service level within which a business process must be restored after a disaster (or disruption) in order to avoid unacceptable consequences associated with a break in business continuity." (Wikipedia, n.d.)

Academic Continuity is the most important for every HEI, so strategy for increasing academic continuity capacities should be in place for the IBU.

Education and scientific research is a primary mission of International Burch University. Develop academic continuity/recovery plans will ensure preparedness of IBU for the wide risks/threats.

It is also important to ensure training for individuals charged with implementing the plans to understand the roles, responsibilities, and activities in the plans.

Priorities for crisis response

The priorities for decision making are as follows, in order of priority:

1. **Life and health safety** - The priority in incident or crisis situation is the safety of all persons who are involved in that incident/crisis situation.
2. **Protection and enhancement of the reputation of University** - The next priority is the brand and reputation of the IBU.
3. **Prevention of further risk or damage** – Some actions should be taken to protect against further risk arising or further damage being done.

Response Plan of IBU for the Threat of Negative Media Representation

This threat is in category of social and political threats with intention to discredit the institution/company in public.

Universities are not currently obliged by government to have specific continuity arrangements but thinking that this kind of event won't happen to education institution is not a good choice.

If plan exist and preparation is ongoing process, it's a much better chance of limiting the damage and staying in control of the situation. Being prepared for negative publicity can prevent an incident from becoming a crisis.

Sources of the risk:

- Global situation in the world reflects on Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Balkan's instability as social, political, and economic environment.
- Competitors, unemployment, negative political strategy, malicious intentions (manipulating with emotions of the public).

Possible harmful consequences /losses

- Loss of reputation, credibility
- Loss of staff
- Loss of students
- Impact on other important business partners
- Financial loss

Table 1: Possible losses, defined RTO

<u>Possible Harmful Consequence</u>	<u>Time after incident when this consequence become critical (RTO)</u>					
	0-2 days	1 wk	2 wks	3 wks	4 wks	>4 wks
Loss of reputation, credibility	x					
Loss of students						x
Loss of staff						x
Financial loss						x
Impact on other important business partner(s)		x				

Factors that should be consider in preventing/reacting of this type of situation:

- Continuous monitoring at social, political, and economic environment and awareness of global situation.
- Building positive image through implementing IBU business strategy and IBU Strategy on public relations.
- Awareness of the speed at which information spreads, especially via social networking sites, and takes quick action to neutralize negative publicity.

Major Rules for handling Negative Media Representation

What should University do:

- Act promptly to confront and neutralize negative publicity
- Turn to experts such as lawyers, psychologists and PR professionals if it's necessary
- Inform stakeholders (defined target groups)
- Making positive spin
- Learn from own mistakes

What should never do:

- Ignore the power of society/individuals using social media to destroy reputations
- Not be prepared for the worst-case scenario

Requirements /Content

- Crisis Management Team: role, responsibilities
- Crisis Plan/Checklists
- Communication Plan: internal and external

Purpose

- Neutralize crisis, prevent panic, put the situation under control

Scenario (proactive, reactive)

- Prepare for unwanted event
- Investigate what happened, why and what is background of the event and how to react

Before incident/crisis (Mitigation/prevention)

First step for proactive scenario of IBU is to define a Crisis Management Team.

Members of Crisis Management Team:

- Crisis Manager (High Management/Rector, Vice Rector)
- BC Manager (Crisis Coordinator)
- PR
- HR Office Representative
- Legal Office Representative
- Heads of academic departments
- Optionally, representatives of others departments
- Two deputies for every team member

The role of Crisis Management Team is to analyse the situation and formulate crisis management plan to save the organization's reputation.

Responsibilities of the Crisis Management Team:

- Detecting the early signs of crisis
- Identifying the problem areas
- Set IBU objectives for the crisis
- Evaluate the potential impact of a crisis
- Prepare crisis management plan which works best during crisis situation
- Motivate employees not to lose hope and release their stage best
- Consider legal & regulatory compliance issues
- Approve global communications internal/external
- Help the organization to resolve crisis and also prepare it for the future

Crisis Plan/Checklist (Preparedness) Second step is making crisis plan/checklist Content of the plan:

- Who should inform whom in defined times
- Names, contacts, addresses, e-mail addresses of Crisis Management Team and other critical/essential functions, stakeholders, key media

- Steps in resolving the situation
- Folder of information - various documents that may be needed during the incident/crisis (previous press releases, photos, biographies, history of the University, annual reports, financial indicators - all need to be saved at the safe backup location)

Unit Preparedness

Every unit at the University should have a plan to promote preparedness. That plan will distribute to all involved and appointed employees.

Unit Communication Procedure:

Staff Phone Tree (staff phone tree with email, personal email, cell, etc.)

Key people & resources

Communication Resources:

Table 2: Emergency home contact list (University)

Resource/description:	Emergency home contact/email list (University)
Responsible department:	Human Resource Office
Location:	Defined secure location

Table 3: Message posted on web site

Resource:	Message posted on web site
Responsible department:	Promotion and Communication Office
Additional Info:	In cooperation with PR

Table 4: List of students

Resource:	List of students
Responsible department:	Office for Education & Student Affairs
Location:	Defined secure location
Additional Info:	Student roster

Proclamation of Crisis

Crisis Management Team should consider:

- The all relevant facts about event and decide if the event is incident or crisis.
- That decision will depend of political, social situation and media reactions of it and also of defined parameters for Crisis Team activation
- When crisis is proclaimed, every Crisis Team Member will do what is defined for his/her role.
- It should be consider that the content of the crisis must remain confidential.

Response of crisis (during a crisis)/Checklist

Crisis Communication Plan

Creating a Crisis Communication Plan is important step in preparing University to control and manage situation.

In creating Communication plan, it should be considered:

- Compliance with IBU Strategy on public relations
- Rapidity of the preparing a press statement (the most important in this situation)
- Avoiding negative publicity (keep public informed clearing up any misconceptions about University)
- Agreed statement to the public (not to speak untruth)
- Informing target groups continuously. The target groups include: students, partners, institutions, economy and civil sector, media and employees
- Nominating of PR - It is recommended that the statements give only one person. This should be somebody who can stay calm in the face of media, unpleasant questions, and pressure.
- Positive spin - Look for the 'good news' of the viewpoint of University - by making these public University can ensures negative press is mixed with the positive.
- Internal communication:
 - Nobody should give the official statements except of PR.
 - All statements should be approved by Crisis Manager.
 - Employees get instructions (guidelines) for external communication. Press Releases should include information about:
 - What happened
 - Investigation is ongoing
 - What University made/taken
 - When will be the next info

Example:

Info about the event, the consequences that University still doesn't have results of the investigation but that is expect in time. PR can say something about the brand of University, what does University expect of resolution the situation, recommend the experts who can speak in University favour.

Update on situation/event

During a crisis there will be a need for update information about the ongoing situation. This is need for all involved and the others who don't know in the first time what happening. Also, it's necessary to inform media and public about ongoing situation.

Closing a crisis (Recovery)

When crisis has been finished the business can back to normal business operations. The decision about closing the crisis situation is made by the Crisis Manager.

It should be considered:

- What has been achieved to control or reduce risks
- Implications for observed risk
- Decision to close crisis and back to normal business operations

Post-incident analysis

After the termination of incident/crisis University should do a post-incident analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to:

- Review all actions implemented during the crisis and to upgrade the process for the next time
- To identify cause of the incident and possible controls to prevent or avoid repetitiveness
- Identify lessons learned for the future
- Implement any improvements to the crisis response process itself
- Define ongoing action plans

Conclusion

This case study has presented some new and preliminary findings about the BCM implementing in higher education institutions.

Previously studies about BCM in Higher Education Institutions were completed in many countries, basically, this research topic is presented in USA and UK.

Lack of government requirements in most European countries in this area is reason why this topic isn't evaluated as important in HEI.

This study provided basic steps in BCMS methodology based on ISO 22301:2012 as well as planning crisis team and communication.

The data showed that BCM is still not practice within universities in B&H.

Implementing BCM could be a point of significant competitive advantage for a university but universities in BiH are not aware of this potential.

IBU is on a good way to exploit this potential.

Writing Response Plan for the Threat of Negative Media Representation was the challenge for implementation a little segment of BCM for the first time in higher education institution in B&H.

Limitation in study are that complete risk assessment and BIA hasn't done because in focus was one threat. For future researches it's recommended to extend the scope of BCM planning.

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