

White Paper:

PREPAREDNESS NEEDS A NEW MESSAGE

**Developing and Promoting an Effective Message to Encourage
Businesses, Government Agencies, Their Employees and Families to
Prepare for Disasters and Emergencies: Connecting the Dots**

Executive Summary

For the past five years, dozens of organizations have advised people to prepare for emergencies. Sometimes, in their fervor to accomplish that mission, these groups approach the tone of begging about preparedness. The media repeats messages of urgency from groups like the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. The plea goes out from churches, trade associations, schools, police and firefighters—all promoting the same message to businesses, their employees and families. The method may vary, but the message is always this: ***“Get prepared NOW for a disaster.”*** Fear—with a capital “F” —is wielded as the primary motivator.

With all the media attention, public service announcements and federal money spent on emergency preparedness since 9/11, one would expect a dramatic increase in the number of businesses and families that are well prepared for an unexpected event.

However, many surveys have shown just the opposite. Preparedness-related activities have remained fairly constant or declined slightly since 9/11. Further, the data indicates that the overwhelming majority of American businesses and their employees have not responded to the media messages and have not embraced the need for “preparedness¹.” This data suggests that the current approach to encouraging preparedness is ineffective, and a new method of communicating the importance of developing business and personal preparedness plans is needed.

Preparedness in the U.S. Today

Arguably, the need for businesses and individuals to be on alert and ready for a disaster or emergency may have existed throughout U.S. history, but a heightened perception of the need has been pervasive in the past five years. The intent of all this attention has been to stimulate interest in the topic of “preparedness.” There has been an increased focus on the potential of another terrorist attack and/or an outbreak of pandemic flu, with projections about the inability of first responders to be able to assist and serve massive numbers of people should these incidents occur. The broken response to Hurricane Katrina, for example, made this point acutely obvious.

Natural and man-made disasters have demonstrated that first responders have limited resources, including a shortage in their own numbers. Some events may also impact the lives of first responders and their own families, thus reducing the size and effectiveness of a potential response. Even emergency managers are not immune from *preparedness paralysis*.

Additionally, with greater frequency and intensity than before 9/11, the media has turned its attention to news of natural disasters—existing and potential—and now the very real threat of pandemic flu. All these stories emphasize the need for preparedness. Many remark upon the lack of it.

The cable news channels, especially during the days and hours before a major storm hits, run preparedness messages, feature stories, and interviews with experts, often several times per hour. Whether it is perception or reality, the message to “get prepared” is clear and prevalent for most of America to see and hear. The question is how effectively this method changes behavior and promotes action toward increased preparedness, outside of the immediate threat of a major weather event, whether a hurricane, potential flooding, or a blizzard.

Fueled by the September 11th attacks on the U. S. and the rash of natural disasters, such as wildfires and hurricanes, the media has dedicated significant “real estate” to tell these compelling stories, as “above-the-fold” articles in print or as lead items on radio, T.V. broadcasts and Internet websites.

Hurricane Katrina also produced a spike in interest in preparedness. The Google Trends graph, below (Table 1²) analyzes a keyword search of the word “preparedness” to illustrate that point. The upper portion of the graph, labeled “Search volume” demonstrates how many searches have been done on Google for that specific word over a period of time.

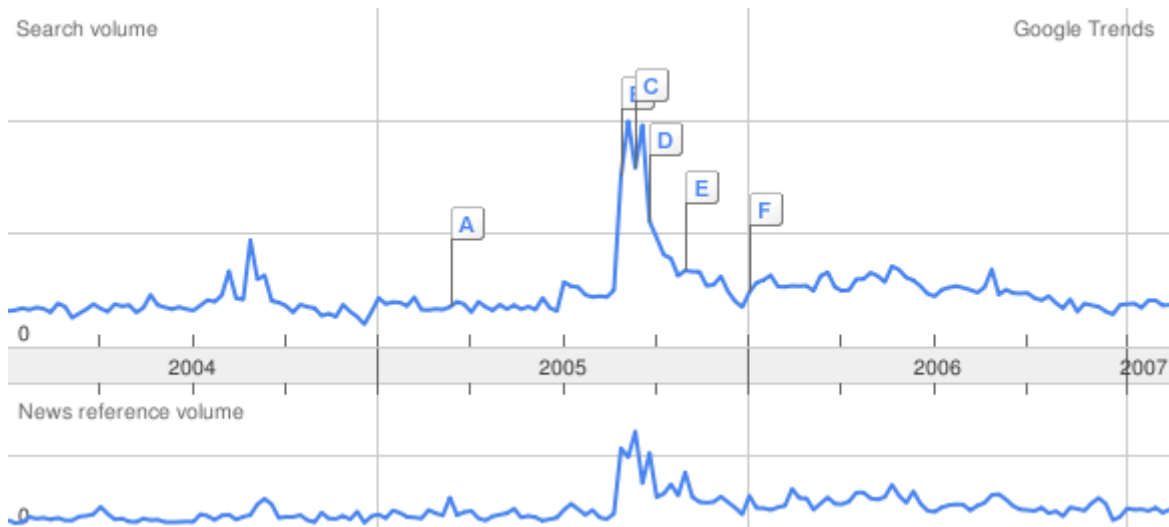


TABLE 1

The “News reference volume” section (bottom graph) shows how many times Google news stories about the search term have appeared.

In Table 1, allowing for spikes during the 2004 hurricane season and the “Katrina and Rita” season in 2005, the media references and search volume have been fairly steady during the period from 2004 through early 2007.

At the Iowa Homeland Security Conference in Des Moines in July 2006, George Foresman³, the DHS’s Undersecretary of Preparedness, said, “The country’s biggest security challenge is to get Americans to start drawing their own emergency evacuation plans and putting together survival kits. Ultimately, our key to a more prepared America is a more engaged citizenry in America.”

He asked the 400 local and state emergency management officials: “How many of you have detailed personal and family disaster plans?” **Only about five of these 400 trusted “experts” raised their hands to indicate that they were as prepared as they advise everyone else to be!**⁴

Additional surveys bear out the conclusion that preparedness is not a priority for a much wider cross-section of people and many businesses.

- A survey conducted by JPMorgan Chase and AFP⁵ in late 2005 found that only 37% of respondents felt their companies were prepared adequately to handle even a disaster like hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
 - Only 50% of organizations polled had business continuity plans in place.
 - Just 24% had tested their business continuity plans after Katrina and Rita.

- The Society for Human Resource Management⁶ found that only 34% of companies considered human resource issues an important element in their organizations' business continuity plans. **Most of these policies only focused on workplace issues such as drills (like fire drills), communications, and business related training.**
- A 2006 Hewlett Packard⁷ study showed that only 26% of those companies that have business continuity and recovery plans in place review and test their plans regularly.
- The International Facility Management Association's 2006⁸ study found that only 7% of the businesses surveyed had completed and implemented pandemic flu plans. (Health organizations agree that 40% and more of a company's employees may be absent during a pandemic flu outbreak.)
- During National Preparedness Month in September 2006, a WABC/USA Today⁹ poll showed that only 30% of people responding were "mostly prepared" for a natural disaster, while 68% were mostly unprepared.
- The 2006 AT&T Disaster Preparedness Study¹⁰ results summary showed that 97% of people in states impacted by Katrina were affected, but 28% say that even after that event, they are still unprepared for another natural disaster.
- On January 30th, 2006, Macro International, Inc. Opinion Research Corporation¹¹ released a study about key roadblocks to disaster preparedness. Their conclusion was that despite the effects of Hurricane Katrina and the "spate of disasters that affected the nation in 2005, Americans – across all demographic groups – are no more prepared for a national emergency than they were in 2003."

“While more than a third of all Americans are worried about terrorism (36%), respondents generally felt least prepared to help themselves in the event of a terrorist attack. The survey bears out this lack of preparedness: only 17% of all Americans have both an emergency plan that includes a meeting place that has been discussed with family members and a basic emergency kit.”
- A May, 2007 Mason-Dixon poll¹² of people on both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts revealed that 61% of those polled had no hurricane survival kit. Eighty-eight (88) percent had done nothing to prepare their homes in case of a hurricane.
- The American Red Cross and Harris Interactive poll¹³ conducted in 2007 showed that only seven (7) percent of the population had completed all three steps the Red Cross considers essential to be prepared: have a disaster supply kit, make a plan and be informed. Only 28% of Americans have a kit. The survey found that 64% of Americans do not have evacuation plans. In addition, six of 10 households have a pet but only 1/3 have a plan for their pets in case of disaster or emergency.

- A survey conducted in February, 2007 by TNS NFO for Office Depot¹⁴ found that 71% of small business employees work at a company that does not have a disaster plan. The survey found that 42% of businesses do not even know how much it would cost to prepare for a disaster.
- The 2007 AT&T Business Continuity Study¹⁵ results showed that at least 30% of companies surveyed stated that business continuity planning was not a priority. Of those companies with a plan, 59% had not tested their plan in the past twelve months.
- According to the Council for Excellence in Government and the American Red Cross in a December 2005 report and survey¹⁶:
 - Katrina was not a significant preparedness motivator, in that Americans who say they have done a great deal to prepare only increased from 8% before to 12% after the disaster. (As of December 2005)
 - “The proportion who admits to having done nothing to prepare declined only slightly from 42% to 36%.”
 - “Fully two in five (38%) of Americans say that Hurricane Katrina/Rita gave them absolutely no motivation to prepare for an emergency”
 - “Despite the horrific images of family displacement/despair on television, most Americans still have no plan for how to communicate with family members” (36% report that they have an emergency communications plan, which is a decrease from 41% in August 2005)
- A survey conducted by Weekly Reader Research from September 8-18, 2006¹⁷ found that, in Florida, nearly 40% of moms and children surveyed said they don’t have a communications plan. In Las Vegas, nearly one-third did not have a plan and in Ohio the percentage was around 40%. In the tri-cities of Tennessee the percentage was 33%.

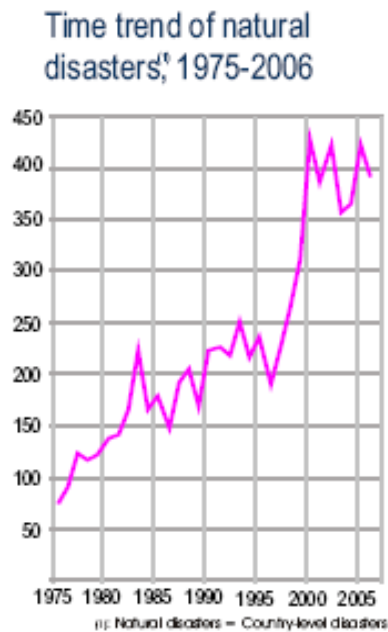
In 2006, Max Mayfield, former Director of the National Hurricane Center, said before he retired that “Katrina was quite a wake-up call, yet it seems too many residents are still asleep.”

Number of Disasters Increasing

There has been much controversy and debate over the relationship between global warming and a rise in the number of natural disasters that occur each year. Some suggest that climate changes and unusual weather patterns provide explanations for the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters.

There is agreement, however, that the vulnerability of the United States to natural disasters increases as population density changes. For example, as the population of coastal areas increases on both coasts, more people and developed property are located in high-risk areas, leading to more potential loss of life and a definite growth in economic impact and consequences.

The ISDR (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction)¹⁸ graph below illustrates the increase in the number of worldwide natural disasters between 1975 and 2006.



If one includes other types of possible disasters and emergencies--such as pandemic flu, terrorism events, technological occurrences, and other manmade disasters--it becomes apparent that the number of possible disaster events has certainly increased. Both businesses and families are clearly more vulnerable to these hazards without preparedness plans.

Rising Costs of Being Unprepared

Indisputably, the most serious potential outcome of a lack of disaster preparedness is loss of life. Hurricane Katrina, for example, was one of the deadliest natural catastrophes ever in the United States. According to The Weather Channel, more than 1,830 deaths were

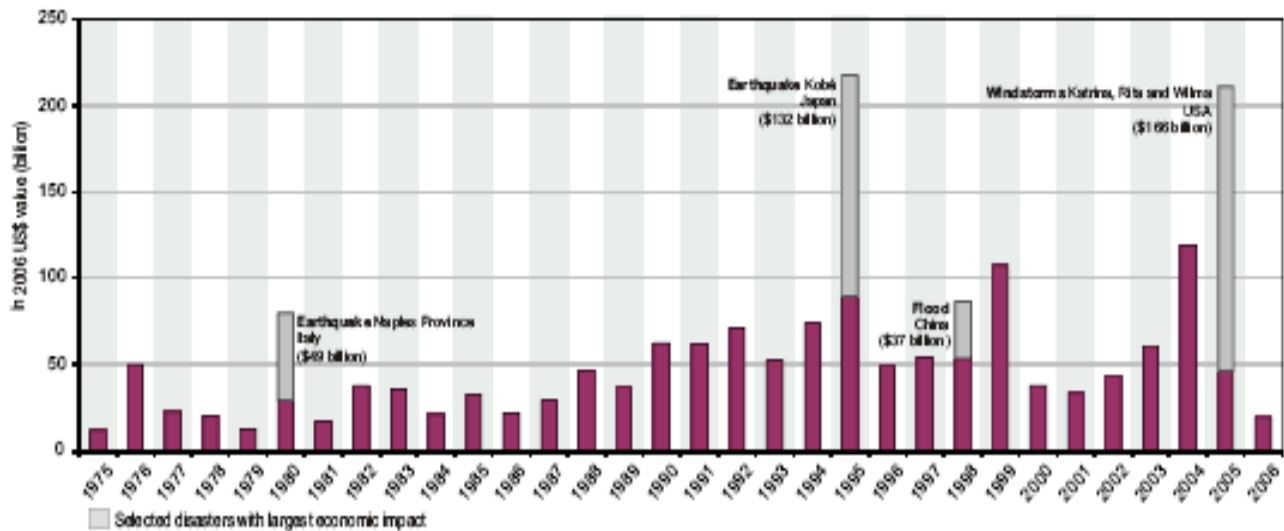
attributed both directly and indirectly to Katrina. How many of those lives might have been saved if people had invested time and energy into a preparedness plan?

Over 18,750 businesses¹⁹ (60% in New Orleans alone) were destroyed completely in Louisiana after Katrina. How many of those now defunct companies had preparedness and recovery plans?

The economic impact of a disaster has both immediate and long-term effects. The Weather Channel places the cost of Katrina-related damages at \$81 billion. It would be speculative to estimate ongoing damage costs, as the total financial consequences of Katrina will probably not be known for some time.

The chart²⁰ below references the economic costs worldwide of natural disasters that occurred during the years of 1975-2006.

Annual reported economic damages from natural disasters: 1975-2006



Would better planning have had any effect on these numbers?

One might expect that the increasing incidence of disasters, increasing cost, increasing preparedness warnings along with increasing visibility of the consequences of failing to be prepared for disasters would drive most people to take action. But that hasn't happened.

Why People Don't Prepare

Is the impact on lives, property damage, business interruption and failures largely avoidable by proper planning? If so, why don't more people and businesses take preparedness more seriously?

According to the New York University Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response Urban Security Initiative Research Project done in May 2006²¹, "There is an urgent need for research that both examines how citizens have integrated concerns about catastrophes into

their ordinary routines and explores reasons why so many have failed to do so. Such information has immediate policy relevance since it can help inform emergency planners how to plan programs that are likely to work for citizens and conduct effective outreach.”

It is clear that the studies and surveys noted above confirm that not enough businesses and their employees are crisis ready. The first question to ask is, “Why not?”

Why are people *not taking preparedness seriously* enough to take action to protect themselves, their families, and their businesses?

The next logical question centers on *what can be done* to increase the personal preparedness of the American public?

In response to the first question, a number of studies and massive research provide some insight into why many people don’t prepare. The work of David Ropeik, an instructor of risk perception and risk communication at the Harvard School of Public Health²², suggests that many people experience “optimism bias.” This means that they generally believe bad things will happen only to the “other guy” and “not me.”

In addition, people look at likelihood and probabilities, then conclude that their time and money are better spent on areas of life that have a higher perceived priority, pleasure, or benefit, according to Ropeik²³.

According to the Safe America Foundation²⁴, understanding how the human mind reacts to thoughts of personal and familial harm explains the lack of attention to preparedness. Because threatening and distressing images create anxiety, the mind uses a process called *mental distancing*. It does not think about those things that cause stress. The phrase “out of sight, out of mind” illustrates this idea. If you don’t think about it, it doesn’t exist.

I can’t think about that right now. If I do I’ll go crazy. I’ll think about it tomorrow

Scarlett O’Hara in: Gone with the Wind, Margaret Mitchell

At the end of 2006, The Council for Excellence in Government²⁵ released the results of a preparedness survey of some 15,000 Americans. Entitled “Are We Ready?,” the study identified the reasons 32% of respondents gave for doing nothing to prepare for an emergency.

Among this group:

- Almost half (45%) simply had not thought about it.
- One-third (34%) did not think an emergency would happen to them or their family.
- One-quarter thought that nothing they did would be effective.
- Twenty-one percent said that not knowing what to do was a major reason for their lack of preparedness.
- Eighteen percent said it took too much time.
- Sixteen percent said it cost too much money.

Additional information gleaned from other surveys and studies reveal more about the barriers to preparedness. Factors that challenge preparedness efforts, in no special order, include the following:

- Apathy - Little knowledge or concern for consequences of the threat and risk involved
- Not knowing how, or where, to start to plan or prepare, or what to do
- Assuming the government (FEMA, Red Cross, local agencies, etc.) will take care of everything
- Feeling nothing they do will be effective
- Lack of good communication – Not having good information before, during, and after an event
- Too much time involved
- Costs too much money
- Paper Plan Syndrome – Illusion of preparedness gives false sense of security
- Plan ineffective unless accompanied by training, practice, and regular updating.

Why People Do Prepare

Just as important to the goals of everyone dedicated to preparedness is the question of why people *do* prepare.

The Council for Excellence in Government Report²⁶ lists the reasons why some people do prepare:

- The majority (80% who have performed at least one task to prepare) cites the need to be self-sufficient and not reliant on others for protection.
- Nearly half (49%) of those who have taken steps to prepare for an emergency say that being responsible for children is a major reason.
- In some parts of the country, such as San Francisco (61%) and Miami (62%), of those who have taken at least one step to prepare say they have done so because they live in a high-risk area.

Based on the numerous surveys completed over the past several years, using different methodologies, criteria, and definitions, a somewhat clear picture emerges about why some people prepare and some don't.

Regardless of the reasons for failing to prepare, should there be a better effort made to more thoroughly convince people to rethink their reasons for not taking action?

In what manner can the message be made clearer, more motivating or more effective to help people *think* about preparedness, consider that an emergency *could* happen to them, and rest assured that actions they take to prepare *will be* effective?

Perhaps the problem is *how* the message is delivered.

Rethinking and Reinventing the Disaster Preparedness Message:

How Can More People and Businesses be Convinced to Stop, Look, Listen to a *New Preparedness Message* and Take Action at the Workplace and at Home?

We've established that, despite all the media attention, despite the billions of dollars spent by the government and the private sector during the past five years and all the effort to get people to heed the preparedness message, almost three-quarters of the country is still not truly "prepared."

What can be done to get more people involved, increase their fortitude and resiliency, get more businesses prepared, bring training to employees, and decrease a dependence on first responders in a disaster or emergency?

One possibility may be to involve schools and parent-teacher associations to develop a curriculum for educating students, parents, and the general public about emergency preparedness.

Churches and community organizations could work in partnership presenting educational opportunities, such as preparedness fairs, workshops, and so on.

Similar education can be promoted by business owners to provide employee training in the workplace, a process that can provide substantial financial benefits to the business while establishing it as a concerned citizen of the community.

Since many company executives think of business continuity plans primarily as emergency plans for IT networks, the human needs of the company often are not addressed. In order to be properly executed, business continuity plans must be activated by employees. Their presence at work is essential, making it imperative that they can come to work with the assurance that their families have plans in place in case of disaster or emergency. It is equally essential, therefore, that businesses play a major role in educating and training their employees about the development of family preparedness plans.

There are more ways to approach the topic of reducing risk, most of which have been utilized many times over. Yet, as survey after survey has shown, these approaches have not resulted in the desired goals – personal motivation and action to prepare for a disaster.

A preparedness message is needed that will stimulate such action. It needs to be simple and consistent in order to provide maximum motivation. Public awareness and action can best be achieved when the attention of the audience is focused on the issue. A new approach may be necessary.

But, first, let us look at the notion of risk messaging, the media and the impact of such communications. Dr H. Dan O'Hair, Chairman, Department of Communications, University of Oklahoma, spoke before the House Subcommittee on Research, Committee on Science, November 10, 2005²⁷ about communication research, and disaster preparedness and response.

Dr. O’Hair addressed several questions that are on point for this discussion. First, how do people respond to warnings and other risk communications? The question included a discussion of whether responses vary, based on individual cultural, economic and other experiential differences.

“Substantial research has been devoted to risk perceptions factors (Ropeik & Slovik, 2003)²⁸ that include an individual’s perception of *dread* (the significance of the threat), his sense of *control* (the extent to which he has some level of management over the threat), whether the threat is *man-made or natural*. Other issues pertinent to risk perceptions include: does it affect *children*, is the risk *novel or new*, and what is the risk *probability* (can it happen to me)? An additional factor weighing into the risk perception equation includes the *magnitude* of the perceived risk - people have a tendency to overestimate small risks and underestimate large risks (LaFountain, 2004)²⁹...”

“A different line of research has demonstrated a ‘negativity bias’ where people weigh negative information more strongly than positive information (Flynn et. al, 2002)³⁰ while other studies reveal an opposite pattern where people feel a sense of self efficacy towards risks leading to an ‘optimistic bias.’”

Given the varying perception levels among certain groups, it is distressing that the National Research Council³¹ reports much of the forecast delivery messages are designed for ‘the educated, the affluent, the cultural majority, and the people in power,’ with the least effective messages oriented for minorities, the elderly, and the poor (NRC, 1999, p.86).”

Secondly, “What role does the media play in risk communication and the formation of public behaviors and views? People depend upon multiple sources of information for risk information, including T.V., radio, newspapers, friends, and the Internet.”

O’Hair³² says that “often the media operate from a sensationalism principle, where their interest is casting the content of risk through political and human interest lenses, frequently omitting risk factors.” Opinionated journalism can become accepted, as in the coverage of Katrina when some journalists failed to separate their human emotions from their reporting.

This approach often leads to what is called a “paradox of media coverage.” The media can serve a valuable purpose for victims, consumers, government officials and other organizations. “Alternatively, the media often frame their messages in ways that omit critical information, sensationalize the situation and politicize the context of the disaster event.”

So what lesson can be learned from effective and ineffective risk communication about natural disasters and hazards? A GAO³³ report...”suggests that the most important principles for communicating risk and threat information involved the following: first, messages should be consistent, accurate, clear, provided repeatedly through multiple methods; secondly, information should be timely; and third, information should be specific about the threat, including the nature of the threat, when and where it is likely to occur, and directions on preventive measures or protective responses.”

O’Hair points out that “trust is an all important goal of risk communication strategies.”

How can these comments about media messages help to structure a new approach to risk preparedness messaging?

When risk probability is perceived as "low," risk messages are unlikely to have much impact on the listeners who have little or limited motivation to seek out media information. With "high" probability, people want to know more, become curious and therefore will seek information. But the media prepare and deliver the message according to their agenda, frequently omitting risk factors (LaFountain, 2004).³⁴

Could a new, consistent and relevant message be provided in a very unique way across multiple channels? Would this empower the media and other broadcast, narrowcast and niche methodologies to share a single concept that may assist the country to understand a greater need to get prepared than has been previously understood?

A New Solution

The Emergency Preparedness Institute has prepared a unique message to bring to the media and to businesses and their employees, wherever they are gathered, called "The Lighter Side of Preparedness and "The Lighter Side of Terrorism." This message is designed to be an introspective, humorous, satirical and unconventional approach that speaks to the heart of why some people don't prepare and why some people do.

This will be introduced to people, trade associations, schools, emergency managers, businesses, government agencies, elected officials the media, and to speakers' bureaus as a solution to the problem of communicating an effective and action-inducing preparedness message.

The Emergency Preparedness Institute is engaging in an ongoing campaign to release the presentation and build awareness of this new approach -- including PR, direct mail, podcasting and blogging, etc.

The Rationale for a New Means of Conveying the Message

A shift must be made to help people think differently about preparedness. A new point of view is needed to crystallize the notion that a disastrous event has a definite probability of occurring, which calls for a definitive preparedness effort.

According to Paul McGhee, PhD³⁴, trust is important in presenting ideas that are new, or asking people to do something different, to think outside of the box. Trust is essential, too, if it requires people to make an effort and take action that they are not used to taking. (Paul McGhee, PhD, www.LaughterRemedy.com)

Professor McGhee says it is important to promote a message that will remove roadblocks to listening and increase acceptance of new ideas from others. He suggests the use of *humor* to avert shutdown to new ideas by putting people in a better mood and making them more receptive to listening.

The use of “humor lubricates the channels of communications and self-directed humor is effective. Humor minimizes the element of risk and promotes listening and develops emotional attachment to the speaker.”

McGhee continues to suggest that a lighter approach is also an effective tool for easing into sensitive or awkward topics; the reaction of the listener (audience) tells you whether it is safe to proceed with a more serious statement about the tough topics.

Dr. Steven M. Sultanoff,³⁵ says that “Humor facilitates communications ... reduces stress, provides perspective ...and energizes.” An example of providing perspective might be this: Consider a “Ziggy” cartoon where Ziggy is lying on the psychiatrist’s couch and the psychiatrist is saying “The whole world isn’t against you---there are BILLIONS of people who don’t care one way or another.

Another example comes from San Diego State University where “a sense of humor is a key ingredient of a pilot “Cover Your Assets!” disaster readiness project...”³⁶ This is the “testing ground” for a project “that mixed light-hearted jabs at duct tape, shrink wrap and color coded terrorism alerts with serious advice and a practical new way to stay prepared.” “Don’t leave home without it” is a six-minute video” produced by the university’s students about a handout that folds up about the size and shape of a credit card. It stores emergency phone numbers and other information giving people access to information usually stored on cell phones. In a real emergency or disaster, access to cell phone service may not always be available.

Comedian W. C. Fields said, “*There comes a time in the affairs of [life] when we must take the bull by the tail... and face the situation.*”

Humor is a great stress reliever because it makes people feel good, and they can’t feel good and feel stress simultaneously. Humor allows them to shift their thinking from one channel to another, even if it involves incongruity.

Humor:

- Eases emotional pain
- Generates interest in what is being said
- Increases participation
- Makes difficult topics more accessible
- Strikes an emotional chord

As humor is used in the discussion and promotion of issues involving tough topics such as preparedness, its full meaning might spread contagiously to others throughout the country, and people will begin to see the “lighter side of preparedness.”

Naturally, the use of humor must be appropriate. Using humor to motivate people when the “alarm sounds” in the face of a fire or hurricane or other disaster is not appropriate.

Author George Bernard Shaw said, “*If you’re going to tell people the truth, you’d better make them laugh, otherwise they’ll kill you.*”

Author Edward de Bono says that reason can only sort out perceptions, but the humor process is involved in changing them.

Actor John Cleese once said. "If I can get you to laugh with me, you like me better, which makes you more open to my ideas. And if I can persuade you to laugh at the particular point I make, by laughing at it, you acknowledge its truth."

Our approach then is to conduct workshops, provide keynote speeches, media interviews, podcasting, blogging, public relations messages, and other verbal and written communications around the country to promote "preparedness" using a humorous approach. The Emergency Preparedness Institute will release it as our solution to the problem we've brought to their attention. We will engage in an ongoing campaign to develop the presentation and build awareness of our new approach.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has identified that in the uncertain and fear-filled days since the attacks on America in September of 2001, a significant effort has been made through a multitude of channels to promote emergency preparedness readiness to the nation's businesses and their employees and families. The survey data, however, suggests that, regardless of the attention that has been given to promoting preparedness, the increase in the numbers of businesses and people who have actually "gotten prepared" has not increased significantly in proportion to the effort made and money spent. This is despite the increasing numbers of disasters that are occurring and the increased costs of those disasters measured in lives lost and dollars expended.

The suggestion is that fear and apathy play a major role in the apparent lack of preparedness actions taken. Some of the major reasons given for failure to prepare are that people:

- Do not think about it
- Are not concerned that an event will impact them
- Do not know what to do, or
- Feel that preparedness takes too much time and/or costs too much money.

On the other hand, those people who heed the message and prepare for the inevitability of some natural or manmade disaster do so for a number of reasons.

- Need to be able to take care of themselves and not rely on outsiders
- Overwhelming need to protect their children
- Living in a high-risk area causes some to prepare

Data has been offered establishing that a different approach to communication, involving the use of humor, might be useful and effective for delivering a serious message in a manner that will provoke action to be taken by the listener.

The use of humor, when applied correctly, can make difficult messages easier to accept. It also can generate emotion in a positive way, encouraging people to consider what is being

said and to “internalize” the message. The result is that learning will take place and so will action, according to experts in this field.

Using a new approach to delivering the message, it is the Institute’s intent to expect and monitor a significant increase in preparedness actions by both businesses and their employees and their families, especially as we enter the traditional seasons of wildfires, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

Monitoring this New Message

The Emergency Preparedness Institute has created *“The Preparedness Clock”* – developed and maintained as a symbol to monitor America’s business and employees’ preparedness for a catastrophe.

It portrays, based on various surveys, the approximate percent of businesses and people (families) who are “ready” to manage interruptions to their businesses and their lives, anticipate and evaluate their emergency disaster needs, create a plan, coordinate with others, communicate with others, designate safe locations, educate others, and evacuate as needed.

It is currently set at 23 minutes to the hour, (with 12:00 representing 100% preparedness) and will be reset one minute for each additional (or decreased) 3% of businesses and their employees, according to new surveys, that are reporting their levels of preparedness.



The Emergency Preparedness Institute, Inc. is a private corporation of business people, primarily from the media and insurance industry providing training, educational programs and information, media interviews and publishing internet and podcasting interviews with emergency preparedness experts. Its website is www.getprepared.org and www.wgpnradio.com. The Institute has published “When Disaster Strikes Home -101+ ways to protect your family from unthinkable emergencies” and is the creator of the “Safety M.A.P.™ for emergency preparedness training. It can be reached at sara@getprepared.org

Notes:

¹Preparedness is defined in many ways, depending upon whom you ask and the intent of survey authors. Some common elements include: having a plan (not defined), an emergency kit (content varies), a communications plan, an out-of-state contact, basic supplies including water (in varying quantities), batteries, flashlights, portable emergency radio, and emergency evacuation plan, and knowing CPR

²“Google Trends,” <http://www.google.com/trends>

³O.Kay Henderson, *U.S. Homeland Security Official Warns Iowans to Be Prepared*, <http://www.radioiowa.com/gestalt/go.cfm?objectid=DC9C946F-8B0F-4189-B2D822A312692449> (July 2006)

⁴ibid

⁵AFP Survey, by JPMorgan Chase, 2005

⁶Disaster Preparedness Survey Report, The Society for Human Resource Management

⁷Trends in Business Continuity and Risk Management Survey, Envoy Worldwide

⁸Pandemic Flu Preparedness Survey, International Facility Management Association

⁹WABC/USA Today Poll, September 2006

¹⁰2006 AT&T Disaster Preparedness Study, States Impacted by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita, AT&T

¹¹*Americans Worried, Yet Unprepared*, <http://www.orcmacro.com/DisPlanRelFinal.doc> (January 2006)

¹²Mason-Dixon Polling and Research, Inc., May 2007

¹³Harris Interactive and American Red Cross, April 2007

¹⁴TNS NFO and Office Depot, 2007

¹⁵AT&T Business Continuity Study, January-February 2007

¹⁶The Aftershock of Katrina and Rita: Public Not Moved to Prepare, Council for Excellence in Government an American Red Cross,

<http://www.excelgov.org/UserFiles/File/preparednessfactsataglance.pdf?PHPSESSID=c3a73c7720124a1c53ca6013e58d2055>

¹⁷*Families Still Extremely Unprepared for Emergencies Says Survey Conducted During National Preparedness Month*, EMBARQ and the Home Safety Council, <http://investors.embarq.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=197829&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=913426&highlight=>

¹⁸2006 *Disasters in numbers*, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2007/2006-Disaster-in-number-CRED-ISDR.pdf>

¹⁹Lisa Habib, *Katrina's statistics tell story of its wrath*, The Weather Channel,

http://www.weather.com/newscenter/topstories/060829katrinastats.html?from=hurricane_tracker (August 2006)

²⁰ibid

²¹New York University Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response Urban Security Initiative Research Project, New York University, May 2006

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