

# Expecting The Unexpected: Crisis Communication Preparedness In The Tourism Industry

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## Abstract

*Tourism is an industry highly susceptible to man-made and natural crises. Tourism operators may need to be well prepared to meet a crisis. However, are adequate contingency plans in place? Academic literature is fragmented across at least three major disciplines: strategic management; public relations; and tourism management. This qualitative, grounded theory study of the tourism industry in Western Australia investigates the antecedents of crisis communication preparedness at the individual operator level. The paper raises managerial implications and proposes a model of crisis communication preparedness in the tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** Crises, Communication, Public Relations, Strategic Management, Tourism

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has suffered significant impacts since 2001 due to a number of crises. For example, the London terrorist attacks, New Orleans hurricane, Asian tsunami, and the 9/11 terrorist events in New York all gained widespread media attention. Similarly, the 2002 and 2005 Bali bombings and SARS health scare in 2003 have affected many businesses and tourists. The latest risk to the tourism industry is potentially an Avian influenza pandemic. From an economic perspective, tourism makes a valuable contribution. In Australia in 2003-2004, inbound tourism contributed \$7.6 billion to total Gross Domestic Product and \$17.3 billion in export earnings. Over half a million people are employed in the Australian tourism industry, and several other industries are suppliers to the tourism industry such as utilities, agriculture, liquor, and construction companies. Therefore, there would be significant economic, social, political and cultural impacts if a major crisis was to occur in Australia (*Tourism Industry Yield 2003-2004, 2005*). Past or potential crises should be catalysts for tourism organisations worldwide to review their overall strategic or management plans such as crisis team structure, identification of stakeholders, security procedures, culture, technology, and crisis communication strategies (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998). However, tourism businesses may be dangerously ill-prepared to manage a crisis (Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004).

Existing literature focuses on the need for crisis management to be part of strategic planning (Preble, 1997). Although critically important, crisis management may not be sufficiently resourced in tourism organisations. It may not even be a component in strategic planning. Although prescriptive checklists and diagnostic tools, action plans and 'how to' guides abound, little empirical research has as yet been conducted.

The literature does not explore the reasons *why* organisations do or do not have crisis management in their strategic planning processes. Although a number of factors have been raised that hinder crisis management preparedness, these have not been tested empirically (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993).

The aim of this exploratory study is to identify the factors that influence crisis communication preparedness within the tourism industry. Grounded theory principles govern the research process. Employing qualitative, semi-structured interview techniques, a total of 27 depth interviews were conducted over four months within the metropolitan and selected regional areas of Western Australia. The interviews revealed four main attributes that influenced crisis communication preparedness: strength of stakeholder relationships; leadership; established resource base; and strategic direction. From these findings, a conceptual model of crisis communication preparedness in the tourism industry was developed. This model elaborates on Fall's crisis communication model (2006). The paper proceeds as follows. Firstly, an introduction to the broad topic of crises is provided. A review of the key concept of crisis communication within the literatures of strategic management, public relations and tourism management follows. Next, the qualitative, grounded theory study of the tourism industry in Western Australia is introduced. The study investigates the factors that influence crisis communication preparedness at the individual operator level. The initial key findings are then presented. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications for crisis communication management and a conceptual model of crisis communication preparedness in the tourism industry.

## The Nature Of Crises

A crisis is a major, unpredictable event that has potentially negative results. The event and its aftermath may significantly damage an organisation and its employees, products, services, financial condition, and reputation (Barton, 1993). Another view is that a crisis may not only have negative outcomes, but also positive (Fink, 1986). For example, an organisation may improve its systems and procedures, foster goodwill with key stakeholders and enhance positive reputation due to its responsiveness to a crisis.

The academic literature is fragmented across at least three major disciplines: strategic management; public relations; and tourism management. Additionally, the focus within the tourism management literature has been mainly on *destination* recovery efforts rather than individual operators. In the literature, a hierarchy of themes is evident. At the higher level, crisis management refers to changes of tasks and processes following a crisis, and the strategic management activity that guides the technical and administrative activities during a crisis (Fall, 2006; Glaesser, 2003). Crisis management cannot be isolated from overall strategic management and is crucial in achieving outcomes (Preble, 1997). At the next level down, communication is a subset of crisis management and refers to the communication between an organisation and its publics before, during and after a crisis (Fearn-Banks, 1996; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). One crisis communication model presents three phases; crisis preparation, crisis response and crisis recovery (Fall, 2006). A number of crisis typologies have been proposed. One simple classification for crises is that of being natural or man-made (Barton, 1993; Brewton, 1987; Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Lerbinger, 1997). Another typology concerns breakdown of systems - technical/economical crises such as a product defect or human/social crises such as terrorism ( Mitroff, Shrivastava, & Udwardia, 1987; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). A third typology differentiates between crises that occur from within the organisation such as sexual harassment, sabotage, and bankruptcy or arise outside of it such as hostile takeovers, terrorism and natural disaster (Mitroff et al., 1987).

## Crisis Communication

Crisis communications is defined as ‘communication between the organisation and its publics prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence,’ (Fearn-Banks, 1996, p. ix). It is the strategic management activity that guides the communication during a crisis between the organisation and its internal and external publics (Fall, 2006). If effective, crisis communication may reduce the severity of a crisis or even stop it from occurring. Overall, crisis communication can greatly help an organisation’s reputation management (Kauffman, 2005). The criteria for successful crisis communication have been summarised as taking a proactive stance and having the ability to restore or maintain public confidence (Williams & Treadaway, 1992). Elements of crisis communication are depicted in the model below:

FIGURE 1

### Crisis Communication Model (Fall, 2006)

<u>Crisis Preparation Phase</u>		<u>Crisis Response Phase</u>		<u>Crisis Recovery Phase</u>
Development of Crisis Communication Plan (CCP) and Crisis Management Team (CMT)	→	Implementation of CCP by CMT, and collaboration with stakeholders to maintain reputation	→	Response by CMT to restore stakeholder confidence to return to normal operations

## Crisis Communication In Public Relations Literature

The main aspects in the public relations literature are; the role of PR in crisis management; case studies; crisis communication plans; and theories on *how* organisations respond to crises. The role of public relations has become increasingly important in crisis management. An empirical examination of convention and visitor bureaux in the US following 9/11 highlighted the shift towards the application of PR techniques (Fall, 2004). Similarly, the inclusion of PR in top management strategic decision-making in times of crises has been suggested or documented (Stroh & Jaatinen, 2001). There are several case studies on crisis communications in the PR literature. For example, the Johnson and Johnson Tylenol product tampering case demonstrated effective crisis communication

(Fink, 1986; Marra, 1998) . In contrast, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill reflected poor crisis communication responses (Murphy, 1996; Williams & Treadaway, 1992).

Theories of crisis communication in the public relations literature relate generally to crisis communication responses, rather than a form of preparedness. The theory of apologia involves examining post-crisis responses as defence (Benoit, 1997; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002; Marsh, 2006; Sellnow & Seeger, 2001; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002). Image restoration theory refers to the role of communication in achieving goals and maintaining positive images of organisations (Benoit, 1997; Blaney et al., 2002). Discourse of renewal theory suggests a crisis can be an opportunity for an organisation to better position itself through strategic communication (Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002). Chaos theory highlights the impact of small variances in non-traditional, non-rational systems plus unpredictability and unanticipated outcomes (Murphy, 1996; Seeger, 2002; Sellnow & Seeger, 2001). Both the strategic management and public relations literatures address the purpose of crisis management when protecting an organisation's reputation. Reputation is considered a 'valued resource' (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, p.166). Thus, it needs to be effectively managed. Identifying stakeholders and establishing relationships through communication is essential prior to a crisis (Bland, 1998). Communicating during and after a crisis helps reduce the damage to an organisation's reputation and aids overall business recovery (Fearn-Banks, 1996; Glaesser, 2003; Horsley & Barker, 2002; Preble, 1997; Smits & Ally, 2003).

## Modern Day Tourism And Susceptibility To Crises

In the tourism literature, Litvin and Alderman (2003) suggested that a tourism crisis is a natural or man-made disaster with the potential to totally disrupt the tourism industry. Sonmez, Bachmann and Allen (1999) examined how a tourism crisis may threaten the normal operations of a business, damage its reputation for safety, attractiveness and comfort and cause a downturn in the local economy. Relevant tourism literature is dominated by case studies and 'how to' applied research rather than theoretically grounded empirical studies. In recent years, a number of case-based studies of crisis communication response strategies have appeared; Maldives following Tsunami December 2004 (Carlsen, 2005); Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau post 9/11 (Litvin & Alderman, 2003); British Tourist Authority's response to foot-and-mouth outbreaks (Frisby, 2002; Leslie & Black, 2006); restaurants in Hong Kong and their response to SARS (Tse, So, & Sin, 2006); marketing Nepal in an uncertain climate (Baral, Baral, & Morgan, 2004); cases on Israel, Jordan, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Turkey, and Croatia (Beirman, 2003); a model for managing malevolence crises - Washington DC hotels' responses to terrorism (Stafford, Yu, & Armoo, 2002); tourism disaster framework - flooding in Katherine, NT (Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001); and Melbourne Aquarium following an outbreak of Legionnaire's disease (Harris, Jago, & King, 2005). A prominent emerging theme in the tourism literature concerns terrorism and its impact on tourism (Beirman, 2003; Horner & Swarbrooke, 2004; Santana, 2001; Sonmez et al., 1999). Terrorism has been prevalent for centuries, but modern-day terrorists use tourism as a target for action. Generally, the studies have focused on destinations or organisations representing groups of tourism businesses. Less attention has been given to the consequences of crisis communication (or lack of) by individual tourism organisations. In addition, the case studies tend to describe a crisis and how it was managed. Little attention has been given in research to the reasons behind the management approaches adopted.

## Research Objectives And Methodology

This study investigates two key questions in relation to crisis communication preparedness in the tourism industry.

- What barriers do tourism organisations face in being prepared to communicate to stakeholders during and after a crisis?
- How does crisis communication preparedness relate to the ability of tourism organisations to manage a crisis?

Using the Tourism Council Western Australia membership list as a sample frame, 27 participants were selected as interviewees using non-probability purposive judgement sampling (Sekaran, 1992). Semi-structured depth interviews were conducted with the expert informant respondents using an interview guide and a hypothetical scenario. The researcher has substantial employment experience in the tourism industry, so the researcher-participant relationship was positive in terms of the researcher's status and ability to build trust and rapport (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The interviews were conducted face-to-face and ranged from 45-65 minutes. The majority of the participants signed consent forms for the interviews to be tape-recorded. Following the data collection, each interview was transcribed, thus strengthening the study's reliability. Given the interpretative nature of the research, the study's credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were considered by the researcher at all stages of the data collection and analysis (Walsh, 2003). Using NVivo qualitative analysis software, the data were stored, manipulated, and coded. This is a way of bringing together ideas, thoughts and definitions about the data through selection of text (Gibbs, 2005). The rationale for the methodology adopted is that little previous empirical research has been conducted on this topic. Because the nature of the research was exploratory and did not involve the testing of hypotheses, a qualitative methodology was chosen. Using grounded theory principles, the research followed a cyclical process – data collection; analysis; development of theoretical ideas; and literature review. An inductive method allowed patterns, themes and categories to emerge from the data

analysis. By conceptualizing as well as describing, the procedure allows theory to be generated from the data rather than testing any pre-existing theoretical frameworks (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Murphy, 1996; Riley, 1996).

## Results And Data Analysis

All 27 participants were in senior managerial positions in their respective tourism organisations. They had an average of 12.5 years industry experience, ranging from less than one year to 25 years. 14 were male and 13 were female. 19 of the businesses were located in the metropolitan and suburban area and eight were greater than a one-hour drive from Perth city. In terms of type of tourism organisation, eight participants were from tours and transport, seven from attractions, eight from accommodation providers, one from Government, one supplier to the industry, one from an industry lobby group and one consultant to the industry.

Four key themes emerged in relation to crisis communication preparedness in tourism organisations. These were; strength of pre-existing relationships with stakeholders; leadership; resource base; and strategic direction.

### Strength of Stakeholder Relationships

In order for a tourism organisation to be prepared for communication in a crisis, strong relationships with stakeholders need to be established. Interviewees identified a variety of internal and external stakeholders including existing and potential customers, staff and their families, suppliers, owners and government.

*Probably, it would be a good idea to try and note down who you think your stakeholders are, who you think the important people are that makes your business successful if that's what it is. So, get an understanding of your broader stakeholders, if you like, I think that's a good idea, and know who you might need to communicate to, and who you might need to deal with really quickly. Also, who you might need to reassure and reassess your relationships with. So, yeah, who are your stakeholders, who you need to talk to, what the public perception is. **Respondent 9***

Some of the participants highlighted the importance of cooperative networks which needed to be established prior to a crisis occurring. These included regional, state and national tourism bodies, and other tourism operators in their vicinity. Such networks and relationships help in times of crises and may combine resources.

*I am a strong believer that if the whole area doesn't work together and market the area together, then what is the point? You might be able to do a one-off, and that doesn't usually reach people. You need to plant that idea and let it grow and grow, which is where your state and Australian bodies come in, or regional bodies. **Respondent 14***

It is evident from the data that the tourism managers felt a unified team approach was very relevant in this particular industry. Respondent 1 commented that people participating in trade shows often displayed camaraderie and that the focus was about bringing business into Western Australia, not purely to their individual organisations. This collective approach to recovery communication efforts was reiterated in other responses.

### Leadership

The broad attribute of leadership includes such elements as: attitudes towards crises; industry resilience; prioritisation of tasks; and taking responsibility. Leadership was raised as being a key ingredient if tourism organisations were going to survive a crisis and would greatly influence attitudes held by staff as well as overall organisational culture.

*I guess, it's crucial. It needs to filter down and be a positive, forward approach from the top end management, all the way down. This will be seen as a clear direction as to how the company is going to recover and move forward. **Respondent 19***

Several participants stressed that if organisations thought they had immunity or low risk of facing a crisis, it reduced the chance of them prioritising the need for crisis communication preparedness. Thus, if leaders expected the unexpected, it would influence overall strategic planning and crisis management planning in that organisation. Financial and human resources would most likely be allocated towards the task of creating and implementing crisis communication strategies.

*That's one of the main reasons why some of the big operators have gone down in the last few years, because they think they are invincible. But, nobody is. If you don't keep your act together, you are going to go down. **Respondent 2***

Overall, the respondents felt the tourism industry was resilient, made up of individuals with commitment, passion and determination to succeed. There was some concern over new entrants to the industry who perhaps lacked the same instincts or ability. Because the

industry consists of individuals, the strength of the industry may be driven by a core base of die-hard operators, who have survived crises in the past.

*I think those who have been around a long time are a hardy bunch and they have survived and have learnt to survive, and there are quite a number of operators out there who have been through the hard times. They will survive, probably the new start-ups will struggle more. **Respondent 23***

The interview data indicated that creating crisis plans may not be a priority for some tourism organisations. This may be due to the relatively high number of small businesses operating in the industry.

*I guess general complacency and small businesses run a little bit lean. The manager has to do a thousand different things, and have all the compliances; superannuation, and all the other things you have to do in your day. Your mind doesn't let you think of the worst thing happening. I guess for my mind, that would not be a high priority. It would be something down the list a bit. Best of intentions, but you are not likely to get to. **Respondent 16***

Respondent 4 agreed that many tourism businesses would be focused on their daily operations, with a very short-term business planning time horizon. Finding time and motivation to think about worst case scenarios and recovery measures was just not a priority for many small tourism operators.

There were mixed views on the issue of taking responsibility for crisis communication. Some interview data suggested the primary responsibility sat with individual tourism managers.

*I would take responsibility myself. That's where the world is falling apart because no one is willing to take responsibility. Ask for advice and service if required, but never depend on it: never totally depend on someone else to do what you have to do. If you can't do it yourself, then find someone else who is very capable of doing it, and has a complete confidence of doing it. And, if it's the case you have too much on with work, then you have to share it. **Respondent 2***

However, other interviewees felt a group approach was more relevant for crisis communication in the tourism industry.

*At a government level, I think they should be setting examples and procedures, and to have tourism operators such as ourselves become accredited by following procedures, like an accreditation of some kind where you have to apply and prove that you can as an operator manage in a crisis situation. And I think it comes from tourism bodies as well to help promote that and assist that. **Respondent 5***

The tiers would include individual operators, regional tourism associations, industry specific membership associations, Tourism Council Western Australia, and State and Federal Government tourism departments.

### **Having an Adequate Resource Base**

Another attribute which influences a tourism organisation being prepared for crisis communication is the resource base. This may consist of: knowledge to help prepare crisis plans which incorporate communication elements; financial resources; and sufficient human resources to conduct the necessary planning and implementation.

A variety of views were expressed regarding the acquisition of knowledge and its usefulness. The knowledge and understanding displayed ranged from a wider stance on business principles to specific tourism industry information. Respondent 23 suggested that once awareness of the need for plans was raised, then tourism managers could be educated on how to develop them and take ownership of the tasks. The development of plans and strategies could only take place after awareness and ability to do so was met.

It was suggested by Respondent 26 that some smaller tourism organisations – those that were mainly owner/operators – were naïve, but did not always take advice or direction onboard. This made their businesses quite vulnerable to external forces. A Government respondent reiterated their commitment towards sustainability in the tourism industry. It provided knowledge and training through workshops and seminars on business development and marketing and encouraged tourism managers from all sectors, business sizes and levels of experience to attend the sessions.

It is evident from the interview data that financial reserves are necessary to implement crisis response activities.

*If they are going to survive through a major crisis, they have to have at least something as a back up, having cash reserves to carry you through. **Respondent 4***

Many responses highlighted the reality that if business slowed down during or after a crisis, a business needed to have sufficient reserves to survive a crisis. Additionally, having capable people to create plans was not always present in smaller tourism organisations.

*I've learned along the way that in a live situation, companies that do well in whatever crisis it may be, usually employs a PR agency, a skilled strategic thinker that can get the message out, and do it quickly. Respondent 16*

The desire to develop plans and strategies may be unfulfilled if human resources are inadequate.

## **Strategic Direction**

It is evident from the interview data that strategic direction certainly enhances a tourism organisation surviving a crisis. The elements encompassed by strategic direction in this context are: planning for the inevitable; taking a pro-active stance; adaptability; and diversification of business portfolios.

The research indicated tourism organisations that developed crisis communication initiatives tend to have senior managers and leaders who recognized the volatility of today's environment and took measures to maximize recoverability through communication means. Taking a strategic managerial perspective was emphasized in the interview data.

*What really kind of brings it all together is your overall branding and strategic direction and your role, your purpose, your vision. If all of that is clear, and you have staff 'buy-in', and they understand the brand and what you are trying to achieve, I think that is really critical. Respondent 9*

Respondent 8 commented a crisis could not be managed without a plan, without strategy. Such management would reduce chaos as it would direct processes and procedures. Tourism managers interviewed suggested that seeking out ideas and options needed to be done in advance of any crisis occurring. Being pro-active referred to seeking knowledge, creating strategies and building relationships.

*What I'm saying is you have to be pro-active so you don't end up in a crisis communication situation. Being pro-active is if you can prepare yourself a little more before, and try and have a safe strategy, and a crisis does occur, then the amount of crisis communication that consumes your time is reduced. There will be an element of this – you can't run a business and not have that. You are always vulnerable. But, I'd rather lose 15% than 55% (of business) in a crisis situation. Respondent 22*

The data obtained stressed the need for a range of ideas to generate business.

*You have to be proactive - not the old adage, 'build it and they will come,' and be very active in marketing and selling, and making sure the product you are delivering always evaluating and monitoring what you delivering and trying to improve that. Preferably, the ideal is to exceed expectations. Respondent 9*

Appropriate PR and marketing strategies needed to be put in place, combined with evaluation and monitoring devices for continuous improvement. Tourism managers who were adaptable or flexible in their approach to business were perceived to have a greater chance of surviving a crisis. The interview data revealed an overwhelming need for tourism businesses to have diversified products and customer bases.

*Having all your eggs in one basket is not a good strategy in any form. If all of your business comes from Perth, and Perth got swamped by a tsunami, then you don't have any more business. So, you need to have all the burners on the stove going, and that's certainly what we do here. We are in a number of different markets – inbound, domestic wholesale, and of course, the companies coming down from Perth. I can see some smaller operators that don't have the benefit of the distribution that we do, being badly hurt by an event. Respondent 16*

Additional comments referred to geographical sources of business ranging from local and national to various international markets (Respondents 1, 11, 19, and 27). Diversification is seen as allowing the stronger markets to support the weaker in times of crisis.

## **Discussion**

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data that has emerged through the research process. Firstly, it is apparent the tourism industry sees itself as resilient and is, in general, optimistic about the future. However, there are some reservations that individual operators and the tourism industry as a whole may be not be adequately prepared to manage a crisis of any great magnitude, such as

those that have been experienced overseas. A second point is that the tourism industry is and will continue to be susceptible to crises. An open, broad mindset towards the likelihood of a crisis in today's volatile world – *expecting the unexpected* - and adequate attention towards crisis planning will help the chance of recovery in tourism organisations. In addition, a strategic and holistic approach to crisis management is required by the tourism industry (Ritchie, 2004). Tourism businesses should have identified their external and internal stakeholders before a crisis hits (Evans & Elphick, 2005). If strong relationships are not present before a crisis, recovery efforts can be very difficult, if not impossible. Those that survive will have sufficient resources to create or implement plans including communication activities aimed at specific stakeholders. Knowledge is a key resource - tourism operators need to know the fundamentals of PR and communication in order to project timely, appropriate messages to key stakeholders. Making decisions to outsource PR and communication to external consultants may be worthwhile, but operators need to know who to contact, how, and why. Smaller tourism businesses entering the industry with insufficient financial or human resources will clearly struggle in times of crises. Finding time to create plans and strategies may be challenging, but without the right foundations, a business may simply dissolve if a crisis hits.

Finally, the strength of leadership affects the degree of crisis communication preparedness (Smits & Ally, 2003). Managers may have the perception that their business, region or even the entire Australian tourism industry is not likely to experience a crisis. But this naïve view may put tourism operators at a greater risk. Strong leadership will contribute to a tourism organisation's ability to face a crisis. Managers need to take responsibility for action before, during and after a crisis. Relying on leadership from higher levels such as state and national government would not necessarily help individual operators survive.

## **Limitations Of The Research**

This study has a number of limitations. Firstly, it was exploratory and interpretive in nature making it less generalisable. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small. The research remains in the relatively early stages of theory building. Finally, the data collection ceased when conceptual categories were saturated (Glaser, 1992). Because data collection can be ongoing, the point of saturation was determined by the researcher.

## **Managerial Implications**

This research is valuable to management in tourism organisations in terms of strategic decision-making. It consolidates the need for tourism organisations to review the level of crisis communication preparedness. It examines the culture within the Australian tourism sector; currently, there is limited support for the need for crisis communication planning. Situations have been experienced by individual operators which may have been considered critical, but generally, a very colloquial, 'she'll be right' mentality appears to taint tourism managers' attitudes; and thus, their commitment towards planning efforts. Now that four key factors have been identified in this qualitative study, possible strategies can be considered by the tourism industry to be better prepared for a crisis, and engage in more effective communication.

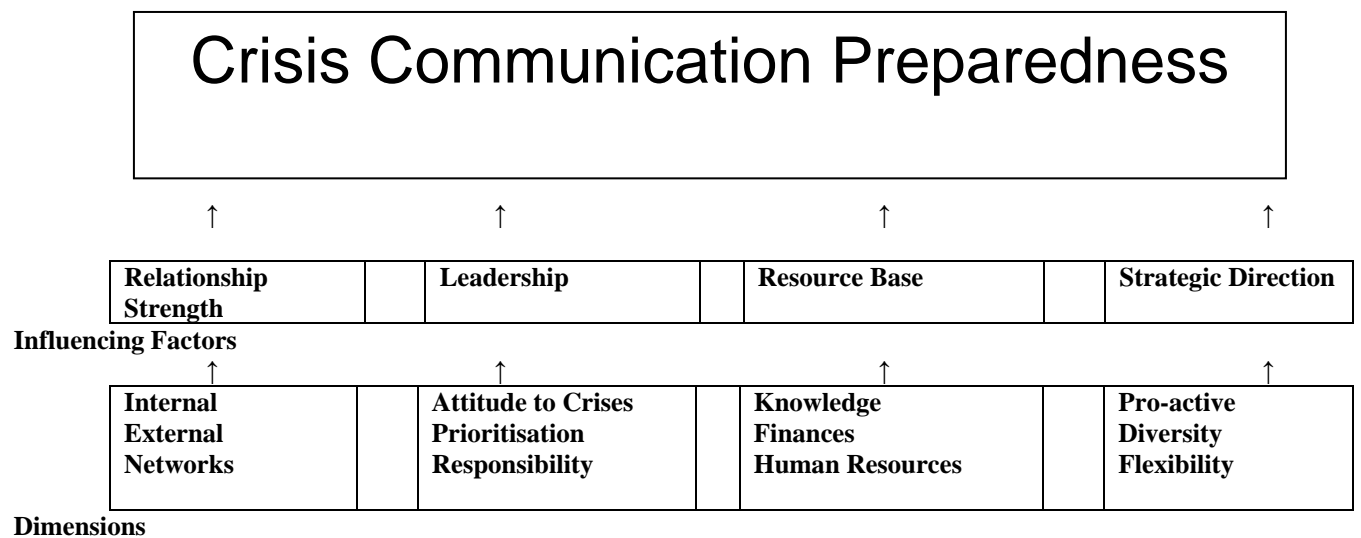
## **Conclusion And Future Directions**

From an academic perspective, this topic is significant because there are few studies which specifically examine the importance of crisis communication as part of crisis management in individual tourism organisations in Australia. Given the increasing incidence of crises that impact on tourism, it is a timely piece of research. The research also consolidates some of the previous work done in the strategic management, public relations and tourism management areas and provides a potential starting point for quantitative research in this area. In the tradition of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which attempts to build or discover theory from data, Figure 2 presents a conceptual model of the factors that influence crisis communication preparedness in the tourism industry.

From a managerial perspective, the research has highlighted the growing importance of crisis communication integrating into the strategic planning in individual tourism operations. Regardless of the fact that many tourism businesses are small to medium sized, this research highlights the need for preventative measures to encourage long-term sustainability should a crisis strike. Whether that is through cooperative or individual efforts, crisis communication preparedness may be the ultimate deciding factor. Only those tourism organisations that have 'expected the unexpected' will survive.

FIGURE 2

Conceptual Model - Crisis Communication Preparedness in the Tourism Industry



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