

**ODN Meeting, Barry University**  
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**Topic: How organizations cope with change**

Categories of change:

- Unexpected external events/emergencies such as the current crises in housing and gas prices
- Unexpected internal events/ emergencies such as a hostile corporate takeover, sabotage or product failure
- Expected external events/ emergencies such as hurricanes
- Expected internal events/ emergencies such as leadership succession

General relevant comments:

- Different types of change events/disruptions require different types of responses on the part of organizations.
- Organizational responses are influenced by the organizational and community cultures.
- Emergencies highlight the strengths and weakness of an organization and its leadership.
- Emergencies can bring out the best in staff and lead to a stronger organization.
- Consensus seeking is often not an appropriate strategy during an emergency – decisive action is needed.
- Effective leadership is an important element to successfully navigating emergencies/change.
- Frequent communication (internal and external) is an important element to successfully navigating emergencies/change.
- The ability to improvise from established response strategies is important.
- Organizations must develop some contingency plans.
- Organizational values and practices such as resilience, trust, communication, transparency, and developing an expectation for change assist an organization in successfully addressing change events and emergencies.

Response strategies for events that can be anticipated:

- Prepare procedures in advance for categories of events/disruptions that can be anticipated.
- Train and educate staff (but don't paralyze them with fear).
- Practice response procedures.

Response strategies for events that cannot be anticipated:

- Develop a chain of command for use in emergencies.
- Foster a culture of empathy and consideration of employees' differing concerns and impacts.
- Develop a continuative operations plan (contingency plan).
- Develop a general "problem solving" protocol.

Response strategies for internal events that can be anticipated:

- Conduct research on the impact of possible decision alternatives prior to decision-making.
- Set the stage for the change. Create an organizational cultural expectation that change is inevitable.