

MODERNIZING HOSPITALITY CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Hospitality Case Study

CLIENT SITUATION

A large international hospitality company saw substantial growth throughout 2017, naturally causing its organizational structure to become more complex. That year, the company opened over 300 hotels in North America in addition to over 450 hotels its franchisees opened worldwide.

Also in 2017, natural and man-made disasters plagued North America and like many organizations, the hospitality company faced challenges during these events and was looking to improve its crisis management and communications. It needed a crisis response program that could support both its franchised and managed properties, which led the company to North Highland.

An international hospitality company sought to refine its crisis management program given growing complexities arising from the burgeoning number of managed and franchised properties in North America. North Highland transformed the crisis program and increased its impact by streamlining information delivery and clearly defining response tiers, roles, and responsibilities within the hospitality organization.

OUR APPROACH

North Highland tapped a team of experts including an internal 40-year industry veteran and a university crisis logistics professor to transform how the hospitality company executes crisis management. A new organizational structure was created, including the addition of a new role: a crisis logistics coordinator who could handle administrative duties and free up leadership to drive decision-making during emergencies.

Toolkits were developed for the associate vice president and crisis logistics coordinator, arming both roles with the information needed to steer them through crisis calls and speed remediation.

To provide immediate clarity during disasters, crisis tiers were defined and distinct roles and responsibilities were assigned for staff at corporate headquarters and properties. North Highland then created a step-by-step flow for the crisis logistics team to provide at-a-glance insights into top-line goals and individual task owners, ensuring that all involved would be on the same page. Seven disparate crisis lines were replaced with a single phone number for managed and franchised properties to use during an emergency.

Next, a centralized crisis website was developed on the company's intranet to streamline communications and provide a single source of information. The new mobile-accessible site housed all resources developed during the project as well as existing assets that were updated for the new approach.

Finally, North Highland launched a pilot program with these assets to increase engagement and drive impactful behavioral change. We then launched a crisis steering committee to ensure value and effectiveness, along with representation from all disciplines.

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VALUE DELIVERED

North Highland equipped the hospitality company to drive better decision-making and more effective operations during crises. We enacted change that immediately transformed the structure and availability of information, improved continuity for brand-wide response during emergencies, and bolstered the company's long-term ability to align disaster response to leadership direction at all of its properties. In total, the hospitality company's documents and digital pages for crisis management were reduced from 800 to 125 and sorted by crisis type (hurricane, wildfire, active shooter, etc.). This represented a substantial reduction in the time and procedural complexity required for staff to determine the next course of action during

a disaster. Client leadership throughout North America commended North Highland on the project and its successful reinvention of the hospitality company's crisis management program.

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ABOUT NORTH HIGHLAND

North Highland is a global management consulting firm known for helping clients solve their most complex challenges related to customer experience, performance improvement, technology and digital, and transformation. We add value and support our clients across the full spectrum of consulting, from strategy through delivery. We bring the big ideas, then we make them real.

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