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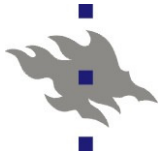
Crisis Management and Communication: Detection of Early Warning Signals

Case Nokia Water Crisis

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Outline

- Crisis Management: Early Warning Signals
 - What are the factors affecting the signal detection and problem sensing process?
- Crisis Management and Communications
 - In what ways internal and external communications are related to early warning signals detection?
 - PR: Communication strategies (warning the citizens, reputation repair)
- An organizational crisis is a low-probability, high impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly (Pearson & Clair 1998)



Case: Nokia Water Crisis

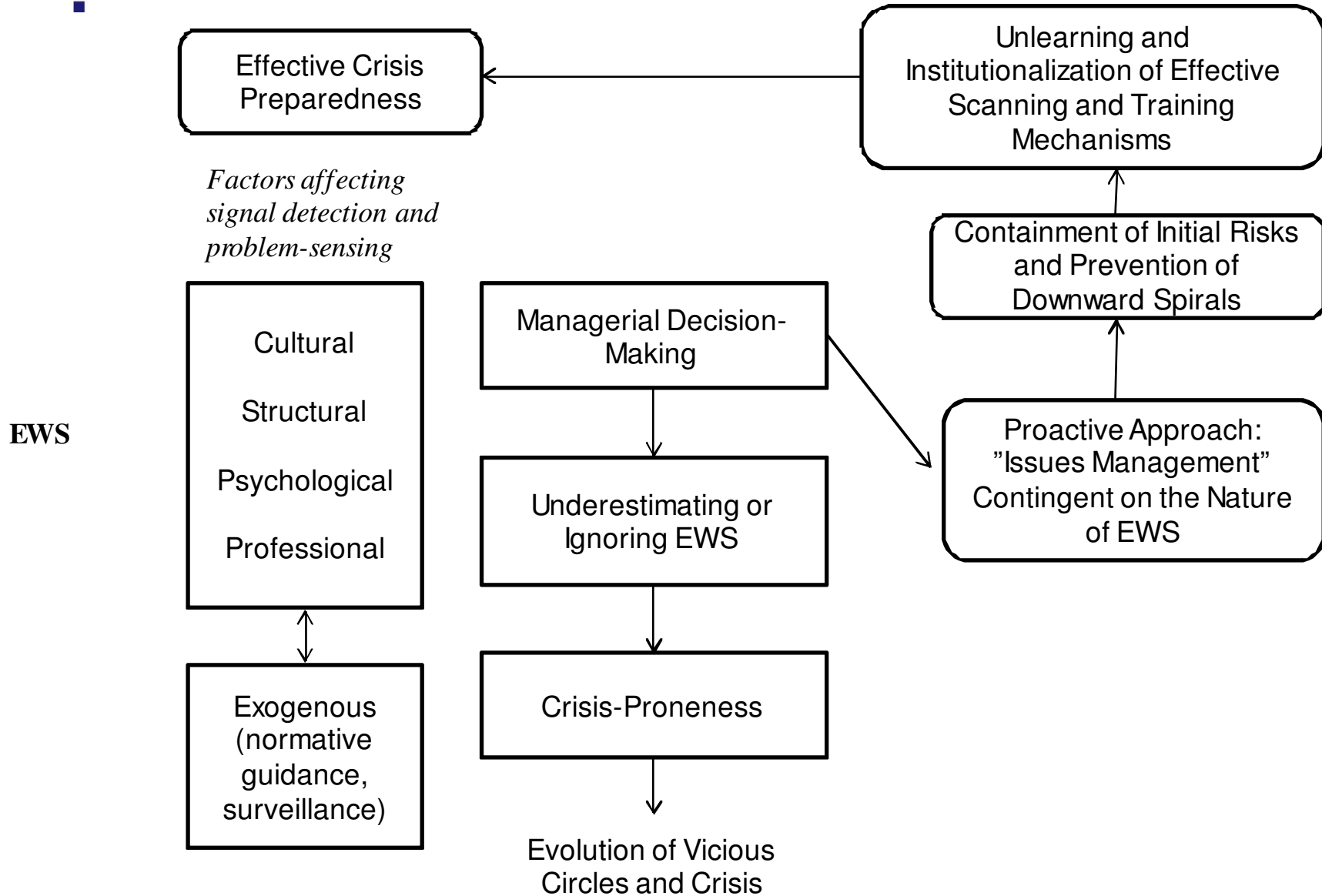
(Seeck, Lavento & Hakala 2009; Lavento 2009; Accident Investigation Board B2/2007Y)

- Between 28 Nov. and 30 Nov. 2007 450 000 liters of treated wastewater (technical water) from the wastewater treatment plant of Kullaanvuori was accidentally allowed to enter the drinking water network
- Caused illness to more than 8,000 people in the town of Nokia and the surrounding area
- The entry of the technical water into the drinking water network was possible because a valve had been built, in breach of regulations, between the sewage network and the drinking water network. The entry of the wastewater into the drinking water network exposed people to a large number of illness-causing contaminants.



Early Warning Signals: Tackling Process

(Sheaffer et al. 1998)





Crisis ingredients: An Overview

(Sheaffer et al. 1998)

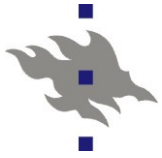
- "The Success-Breeds-Failure" Syndrome
- External Regulatory Failures
- Failure to Note and/or Understand the Significance of Financial or other Performance Information
- Organization Culture, Structure and Strategy Deficiencies
- Malevolent Environments



Pre-Crisis Phase

(Coombs 2007)

- Crisis Preparedness Planning
 - What value is given to crisis preparedness planning?
 - How likely is the threat felt to be realized?
- Crisis Preparedness Rehearsals
 - Sufficient exercises in communications?
- Training
- Risk analysis
- Every crisis is different: it is impossible to prepare to all possible situations
 - Familiarity of the key actors
 - Creation of mutual trust
 - Communication cultures



Communication in creating the situation picture (Coombs 2007)

- Determining the needed information sources
 - Internally and externally (stakeholders!)
 - Performance information and other relevant data (the follow up systems in wastetreatment plants, phone records, internet usage)
 - Media and internet monitoring
- Gathering the needed information in order to detect the possible warning signals
- Analyzing the collected information to recognize the crisis potential
 - Scattered information > context of the interpretation
- Communication to create the situation picture <-> Communication of the situation picture (not always possible)



Central events 28-29 Nov. 2007

(Lavento 2009)

Wed 28 Nov.

- 12 PM treated wastewater starts to mix with drinking water
- 15:30 PM first complaint about the water to Water services' customer number
- 16-24 PM rinsing the water network
- The contaminated area is defined (based on the complaints)

Thu 29 Nov.

- 14:55 PM first complaint to municipal environmental health inspector
- Messages in Aamulehti's website
- First contact by the press
- First message to the city's feedback box
- Notifications of "stomach symptoms" to Health Centre



Central events 30 Nov. 2007

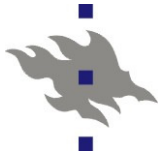
(Lavento 2009)

Fri 30 Nov.

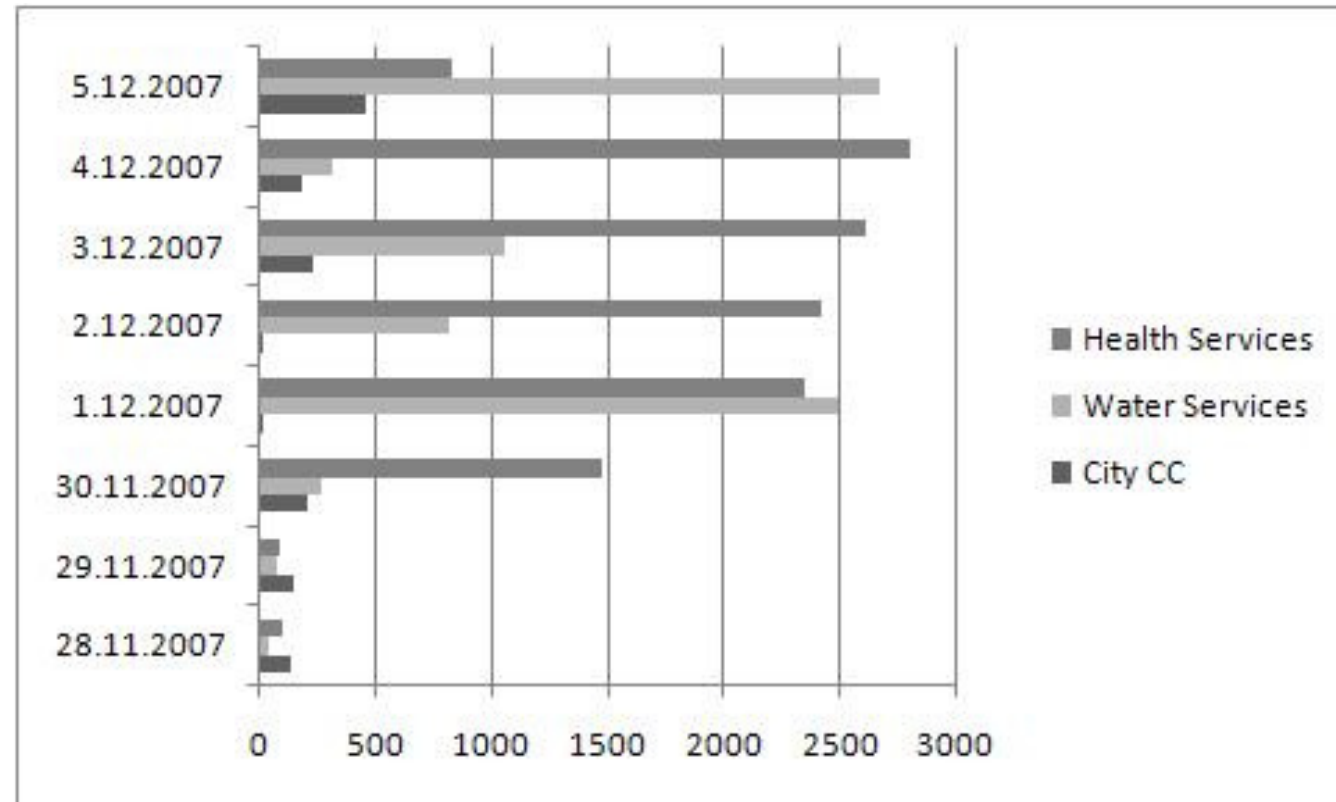
- 06:50 AM First complaint to the Water Services that also incl. information about stomach symptoms
- 11:30 AM Env. health instructor gives instructions to boil water before any usage
- 12 PM illegal pipeline is being cut down, information to head of water services
- 15.15-15.45 PM First "lead team meeting"

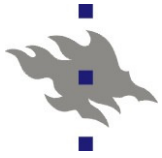
Communications

- Fri 30.11. media contacts, no internal communications or direct communication to citizens
 - Radio Suomi 12:30 PM
 - First announcement in webpages 12:47 PM
- No monitoring or scanning to solve the scale of the problem
- Mon 3.12. 11 AM first press conference



Amount of phone contacts gives perspective on the extent of the epidemic

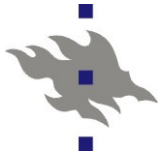




From warning signals to crisis

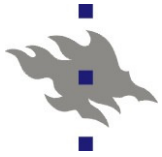
(Dyregrov 1994)

- People have several individual and collective defence mechanisms that prevent us from facing different types of crisis rationally
 - The outcomes or "current situation picture" are considered impossible
 - People believe that things are already been taken care of or that "everything is going to be fine"
 - The warning signals are interpreted in a manner which prevents the situation "becoming crisis"
- Crisis are socially produced
- Demands naming



Further readings

- Coombs, Timothy W. (2007a): Ongoing Crisis Communication. Planning, Managing, and Responding. 2nd Edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Dyregrov, Atle (1994): Katastrofiapsykologian perusteet. Vastapaino, Tampere.
- Forsberg, Tuomas & Christer Pursiainen (2003): Suomalainen kriisipäätöksenteko. Teoksessa Forsberg ym. Suomi ja kriisit. Vaaran vuosista terrori-iskuihin. Gaudeamus, Helsinki.
- Lavento, Heidi (2009): Nokian vesikriisi yllätti – vaaran merkkejä ei havaittu. Media ja viestintä 2/2009.



Further readings

- Pearson, Christine M. & Judith A. Clair (1998): Reframing Crisis Management. Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review: Jan 1998; 23; 1. p. 59-76 .
- Seeck, Hannele & Heidi Lavento & Salli Hakala (2008): Kriisijohtaminen ja viestintä. Tapaus Nokian vesikriisi. Acta nro 206. Suomen Kuntaliitto, Helsinki. Ladattavissa ilmaiseksi osoitteesta:
 - <http://hosted.kuntaliitto.fi/intra/julkaisut/pdf/p081117093234T.pdf>