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MAJOR INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING

When people think of Major Incident Management Planning (MIMP), they automatically think of large-scale, well-attended events, such as Sporting and Political Events and they often interpret the 'major incident' itself as terrorism.

Whilst this isn't incorrect, they don't necessarily associate the MIMP with small, medium and large-scale businesses and the other associated and perhaps, more likely, risks within.

Sure, terrorism is certainly a hot topic on an international scale, especially for now and no doubt for many years to come, but what about the things that are less attractive to the media? What about a bust fire sprinkler pipe in your premises for instance? It's very unlikely you'll hear or read about it in the news, but I can assure you, this is a major incident for your business that can cause untold damage and will undoubtedly come under intense scrutiny from someone out there.

A MIMP is usually derived from a Risk Assessment as a 'control measure', or at least it should be. This in-depth risk assessment will help to identify the areas where your business or organisation is vulnerable and what is mission critical.

"What is a Major Incident Management Plan?"

A Major Incident Management Plan, or MIMP, as it is occasionally referred to as, is a set of bespoke instructions and guidelines which help improve the overall management of major incidents that are foreseeable risks to your business.

The definition I frequently use is: "Any situation arising with little or no warning, causing or threatening death, injury or serious disruption to normal life or contamination of the environment, on a scale more than that which can be dealt with by the emergency services

and which may require local authority assistance."

A situation could quite literally be any of the following:

- Fatality
- Bomb Threat
- Gas Leak
- Fall from Height
- Collapse of Building
- Total Electricity Failure

Relating this specifically to VIPs being managed by a Private Family Offices, a MIMP may be put into action following or during a medical emergency.

Overall, the MIMP is one of the single most important documents you can implement within your family office in order to reduce any potential damage to your property and harm to your customers, your staff, and your business or assets.

"Where do you start with a Major Incident Management Plan?"

Most businesses and organisations grow organically, so many family offices or businesses may not have a MIMP in place, or the internal capability to produce one, so, where would you start?

Well, firstly, you need someone who knows exactly what they are talking about. It's crucial to have someone brought in, providing you don't have a 'competent person/s' already in the business, who has the relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience to carry out the design and implementation of such a plan in the first instance.

Many security consultants claim to be 'experts' in this field, but I would urge you to carry out the necessary due diligence before the appointing or employing of any persons or company to carry out this scope of work. It goes without saying that given the nature of the MIMP,



the contents and its function – you need someone who is very well versed in this field.

All departments should have input into the MIMP from the off. There is a tendency at the moment to focus on cyber threats and while this is, of course, an important area that will need review, it's as mission critical as loss of power or loss of an area due to a fire or flood.

Even if you have a MIMP in place, unless it is treated as a working document and reviewed regularly, then it is of little use. Regular review is paramount and things such as debrief notes, learning outcomes or any significant changes should always be included.

Once the document has been implemented, one of the main fundamentals is training. It's all good and well having a terrific document in place, but again, what use is the MIMP if personnel have no idea what's contained within and also how to put it into practice? Train, train and train again.

Tabletop exercises are highly important and will flush out

areas of weakness early on – they will of course help to ready your team for any incident and will also go a long way to enhance team building, management training and morale.

Remember – not everyone can work well under pressure when taken out of their comfort zones. Sometimes the only way to conquer this is to completely immerse yourself in this sort of training. You will quickly learn a lot about yourself by partaking in this sort of training and soon your confidence builds. This is in large due to learning a system that allows your body to cope with the associated stresses, in turn, significantly improving your decision making at crucial times.

"How does the Major Incident Management Plan fit in and aid Business Continuity?"

A MIMP is an important component of business continuity but it is invariably an area which is often overlooked.

Whether you manage or own a family office, an arena, an airport or any other small, medium or large, high-profile asset anywhere in the world, it's essential that you and your team know how to react to any major crisis or incident to align with business continuity. It's not just about developing the state of mind where you and your staff are ready for anything, at all levels. It's also about having the information, which in turn, gives you the knowledge to be able to put that state of mind and your plans into action - fast.

The plans themselves should provide a comprehensive strategy, or contingency plan, which can be the difference between getting your asset or office functioning again quickly – or indeed not at all!

"What should be included in a Major Incident Management Plan?"

The most important thing for me when designing the MIMP, is that it should be entirely unique to your business. Generic 'templates' are not the way forward and truth be told, they have been known to cause more damage than not having a MIMP at all, in fact, I have heard of instances where a business's

plans have accelerated the incident, for the worse. The importance of this should never be underestimated and if I can get you to take one thing from this article, it would be exactly that.

There should literally be no stone left unturned. Every foreseeable risk should have a section within which has prompting information and guidance notes so that it can jog your memory while allowing you to be dynamic in your decision making. The reason for this is simple – there are no two incidents the same.

Some of the areas for consideration, to give you a flavour of what's contained within the MIMP, may be:

- In-depth and individual plans and descriptions for the Office Building, including: A Site Search Plan and Evacuation Plans
- Contact Information for: First Line Contacts, Senior Management, Utility Management Companies, Media and Communications Team, Local Emergency Services, etc.
- Command & Control – Hierarchy & Key Duties
- Roles & Responsibilities
- The Process for Handovers and Closing Down Actions

“Who should be responsible for the Major Incident Management Plan?”

Some would say a Security Manager, or Health and Safety Manager. Some may even say the CEO, or Head of the company or office. Well, the answer is simple – you must be deemed a ‘competent person’, and by competent, I mean being able to justify that level of competence in a Court of Law. If you cannot do this and heaven forbid the worst was to happen, that person would, without doubt, be in a World of trouble and believe me, when things go wrong, people love to point the dreaded finger of blame.

“Dealing with an incident and implementing your Major Incident Management Plan.”

The ‘trigger’ for your MIMP to be put into practice is, of course, the incident itself. The MIMP will offer you guidance through every phase of a major incident, from start to finish, covering areas like who is in charge on the ground and who should be called in or contacted. Larger organisations might employ a command structure, but in many cases, the person in charge may

turn out to be the most senior person present. Of course, this is subject to change if the incident were to escalate or should a more senior or qualified person arrive at the scene.

Another important aspect of dealing with a major incident or crisis is how you and your team handle the media. It's often the case that the media ends up managing the crisis team when it should be the complete opposite! Keep your statements short, concise, relevant and never divulge more information than you need to. Always be polite but firm with the media because they have a real knack for detecting an opening with someone who is weak or ill-prepared.

Post-Incident Review or Debrief:

It is highly important that your organisation learns lessons from ANY incident. For example, how did the MIMP perform? How did the staff perform during the incident? And in dealing with its aftermath were all necessary actions carried out in a swift and seamless manner?

The above should all form part of a review that will, in turn, enable the strengthening of the MIMP and contribute to the improvement of your teams dealing with major incidents.

Intelligent Protection International Limited have provided family offices with a broad range of bespoke security services to family offices for many years now and continue to do so with their ever-expanding portfolio. Since the conception of the ‘Intelligent’ brand in 2002, they have provided services from international Executive Protection to Security Consultancy Services.

by George R. Foster

George is the Group Managing Director for Intelligent Protection International Limited, which is part of Intelligent (UK Holdings) Limited group of companies. He is also an elected member of both The Security Institute and The International Institute of Strategic Studies.

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