

9/11 Attacks



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Crisis Management for Responsible Tourism and Events (BMTP6020)

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Video URL

URL: <https://youtu.be/ojGYa7iZK-M>

Script

Slide 1: Warning. This Video contains images that some individuals may find distressing. The 9/11 Attacks.

Slide 2: At 8:45 am on September 11th 2001, disaster struck the World Trade Centre in New York City (History.Com Editors, 2018). A passenger plane flew into one of the two Twin Towers. Then shortly after at 9:03am, a second commercial plane struck the Towers (Veterans of Foreign Wars, 2022). This catastrophe impacted both New York and the rest of the World. To make this issue even worse, a further two planes were hijacked with an aim to hit the Pentagon in Virginia and lastly in an open field in Pennsylvania and unfortunately these attacks were completed (History.com Editors, 2018).

Slide 3: Undertaking these attacks were 19 Al Qaeda Terrorists that hijacked said aircrafts (Imperial War Museums, 2023). 15 of the attackers were from Saudi Arabia, Two from the United Arab Emirates, One from Lebanon and the last from Egypt (9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2023). Even though they were all from different countries, they all came together to rain terror on the United States. But the main question is why would they do this to the American citizens?

Slide 4: Al Qaeda is an islamic extremist terrorism society that is aiming to take over governments all over the Middle East which was being led by Osama Bin Ladin at the time of the attacks. (9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2023). They are attacking The United States to aim to stop the American support to the Middle Eastern Governments; the American support was seen as an interference in the al-Qaeda plan to take over (9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2023). These terrorist attacks have been happening for a very long time especially from Al-Qaeda and ISIS. These terrorist groups have a mass amount of followers that preach their laws to what they have been told is right to their religion. Even with this being a planned event, could it have been avoidable?

Slide 5: When the Terrorists arrived at the airports, they all checked in as normal using the check in desks with all of their bags being processed without an issue. All hijackers passed through the security screening apart from one, this hijacker passed through the security scanner and set the alarm off twice, he then proceeded to have a physical screening from the security team with the hand detector which he then passed, meaning all hijackers passed through the security at the airport. There was no sign of any of their weapons when they were screened. This is concerning considering the actions that happened later on that morning. According to the 9/11 Commission Report, When questioned about the attacks, the security team at the airports recorded nothing suspicious (Commission Members, 2004). The first flight to be hijacked was the American 11 Flight. This flight was hijacked at an estimated time of 8:14am which were then followed by brutal stabbings to the passengers and flight attendant on board (Commission Members, 2004). The air traffic control office tried to make contact with the hijackers that were flying and raiding the plane but received no luck. This therefore left them in a total blindspot with nothing they could really do other than to assure the passengers on the plane that made contact with the Air Traffic Control office. At 8:44am, a passenger was communicating with one of the officers at Air Traffic Control stating "We are

flying low. We are flying very, very low, We are flying way too low” After this the phone call ended and a minute later, the plane crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Centre(Commission Members, 2004). Unfortunately this was not the end, Very similarly to the American 11 Flight, the United 175 flight was hijacked which further ended up being flown into the South Tower. Both attacks killed everyone on board the aircraft and hundreds of individuals in the towers immediately.

SHOW VIDEO 1:15 - 1:30 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4CAwjfY-dU>

Slide 6: Why could these attacks have happened? This question is still asked to this day. According to Erik J.Dahl who authored the book The 9/11 Attacks: A New Explanation, the american intelligence agencies were being warned about possible attacks from the al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden for many years before the attacks so why was nothing put in place to prevent this from happening (Dahl.E, 2013). The warning signs from the leaders were there, if the government had done more into taking action about these threats then these attacks could have easily been prevented.

Slide 7: When issues like these ones occur, the airport in particular would have a procedure to follow in the event of a terrorist attack. Obviously in all airports, not enough was done to stop the hijackers getting through security. Therefore, new policies and procedures were put in place to aim to prevent this crisis ever happening again. To understand how to manage a crisis, there are two critical crisis-management roles that need to be completed. These are Coordinating recovery efforts and communicating externally and internally (Broadbent.M, 2002). Internally in the case of 9/11 would be the airport and the towers themselves, externally would be the city of New York and the other planes in the sky during the time of the attacks. The airport when they received the call from the passengers on the plane should have contacted emergency services immediately to the departing and arrival airport incase of a sudden landing. The next point of call would be the media. The media are very important in these issues. The likes of the news will be the first to be updated to broadcast to the citizens of what is happening, on this occasion, by the time the media had been notified about the hijackers, the North Tower would have been struck.

SHOW VIDEO 6:03 - 6:16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eTzV7HvKHU&t=376>

Slide 8: This video shows that anything can happen whilst broadcasting live. Now obviously they are showing the first plane crash which initially a lot of individuals thought was a bomb. During this time the second plane crashed into the east tower. Live coverage is very important in cases like these to keep worried citizens informed of any new information that the news station may receive. In this case, with the large number of individuals that worked in the World Trade Centre and were travelling on the plane, the live coverage may have been the first place their loved ones would have heard or seen about the situation.

Slide 9: Pre-crisis is just as important as post crisis. It's the time to analyse what would happen in the event of a crisis such as the 9/11 attacks. The airport's policies and procedures would be completely different to the Twin Towers. The correct risk assessments would be in place although the airport would have a much larger and stricter risk assessment. There is always going to be a threat of a crisis no matter the destination but unfortunately aeroplanes are one of the highest at risk (SmartTraveller,2023) The airport is

obviously the main hub for terrorist hijacking an aeroplane. It was clearly obvious that the airports pre-crisis were too lenient to passengers and possibly staff. If the security systems would have been more secure, the hijackers may have been caught before the disaster. As previously stated, the government has received threats from al-Qaeda about a possible attack so the government could have warned the airport to make their security stricter. Like the airport, the World Trade Centre was unaware of the events that were going to occur on the morning of September 11th, therefore had no plan of action in place to keep everyone in the towers safe. It was a case of trying to get as many individuals out of the towers once the incident had taken place. The towers were constructed in an unsafe manner with emergency exits being limited and not in a safe position. The emergency exits were positioned in the core of both buildings from the very top floor to the mezzanine level above the ground floor (Kuligowski.E,2021). The width of the stairway would never be deemed safe today as they were only 112cm wide (Kuligowski.E,2021). The towers implemented sky lobbies onto 2 of the floors which meant that the elevators had to change depending on the floor levels. This method of construction meant that they could not be used in an emergency. Again this would be illegal now, emergency elevators and extra staircases must be implemented into the design of modern skyscrapers to make evacuation as easy as possible (Kuligowski.E,2021). With the way the planes hit the towers it was almost impossible for anyone above the 76th floor to evacuate safely (Kuligowski.E,2021).

Slide 10: During the crisis was an extremely stressful time. It was important that all teams and businesses affected knew the correct policies and procedures to follow. All staff would have needed to be trained on what to do in the case of a fire or a terrorist attack. There would be a crisis management team in all organisations affected. The airport would be the first team to get into action. The CEO or managers of the airport would have to notify all the teams across the airport to keep a chain of contact in motion. In an interview by Seven Dimensions they interviewed Ross Campbell, RCA Crisis Management, to gather advice and strategies on what to do in the event of a crisis. Mr Campbell states, "So a well prepared team is a team that continues to improve to make the whole company compliant not just compliant responsive to the worst case scenario." (Seven Dimensions,2015). This was extremely important in the case of the Twin Towers, in both the airport and most importantly the teams in and around the towers needed to have a strong leader that would make the correct decisions to help save as many individuals as possible. The emergency services were an extreme factor to the lives of many individuals. Without the emergency services, there would never be as many survivors. Many firefighters, Policemen and Paramedics lost their lives to save the others in danger. These heroes worked brilliantly as a team to save thousands of lives. They would have been the first contact from the airport and the World Trade Centre. The crisis team and the emergency team would work together to clear a large part of the city in case of another attack all whilst working to save as many lives in the Towers. The firefighters were the main emergency service team to begin as they were the team to retrieve the individuals from the tower to get them to safety along with trying to subdue the blaze from the towers. All emergency service teams will have a leader who would have guided them through their roles to prevent aspects being missed. With the evacuation system in progress from the towers, the nearby businesses were also in extreme danger. The Marriott Hotel was situated on the World Trade Centre Park almost between the towers. On the day of the attacks, Marriott owner Bill Marriott was getting ready to fly to New York City to attend a 'World Trade & Tourism Council Executive meeting' (Van Atta.D, 2019). He was interrupted from his meeting to the news of the North Tower being struck. Bill Stated

“My mind went straight to our guests and associates. Did the hotel team know what was going on? Were they already evacuating? Had anybody been hurt? The hotel’s associates were well trained for emergencies, but this emergency was like nothing we’d ever seen before.” (Van Atta.D, 2019). The marriott employees had extensive training on what to do in a crisis. They evacuated everyone as quickly as possible but by the time they had almost completed their evacuation, the south tower had collapsed into one half of the Marriott hotel, leaving many individuals severely injured or dead. Some of the survivors from the tower collapse made extreme efforts to escape but then shortly after the first collapse, The North Tower then collapsed completely crushing the hotel. Miraculously, 14 individuals that were stuck in the crush made it out alive and were the only individuals to escape the event alive after the collapse of both towers (Van Atta.D, 2019). The Marriott staff and the firefighters helping to evacuate all individuals inside the hotel did the best they could and followed all procedures which helped save hundreds of lives. Speed and concentration is extremely important. Acting according to the rules and following training protocols will help to deal with all types of crisis.

Slide 11: Post crisis is the time for change and improvements. Analysing where it all went wrong along with ways to create a safer environment for all. Amy Hurley-Hason and Cristina Giannantonio wrote the Crisis Response Plans Post 9/11: Current Status and Future Directions state “Part of crisis management is having an effective Crisis Response Plan. Organisations need to constantly update their CRPs each time they experience a crisis because there are lessons to be learned each time a CRP is implemented during a crisis.” (Hurley-Hanson.A, Giannantonio.C, 2009). All organisations after the attack reevaluated their crisis policies and procedures, it wasn't a case of they needed to be changed over time, they needed to be changed immediately especially in the airport. The Twin Towers did collapse after the attacks. There is now a memorial site at the base of the Towers where loved ones and the general public go to pay their respects. To create a tighter security system at the airport, the CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology set up a Passport Analysis Program (Commission Members, 2004). This program can analyse the passport to see “ The program looks for individuals whose passports incorporate indicators of terrorist affiliation; develops automated detection tools that identify in near real-time the bearers of fraudulent foreign passports, and helps to verify the citizenship of individuals attempting to enter the United States.” (Commission Members, 2004). This system helps to prevent individuals who are suspected to be possible terrorists or leaving to attend terrorism training camps. New visa issuing policies were introduced along with stricter airport and land border inspections (Commission Members, 2004). The airport has severely improved their security systems making it a significant amount harder for terrorist attacks to occur on flights. Although more can always be done. Forever increasing security to protect lives will never go unappreciated by all.

Slide 12: To conclude, the 9/11 attacks were one of the worst terrorist attacks in history. These attacks could have been avoidable if an extensive amount of crisis control systems were in place. Unfortunately there was not much else that the Twin Tower Managers or owners could have done to stop the attacks but the airport definitely could have done a lot more. It is proven that they are always improving their security and updating their policies and procedures to hopefully never have an attack like this one again. Thank you for Watching.

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