

Tourism Crisis Management Institute



2008-09 Annual Report



Dedication

This second annual report is again dedicated to the University of Florida’s President, Bernie Machen, whose vision and commitment helped create this important focus on tourism crisis management.

Vision

The vision of the Tourism Crisis Management Institute is to be the premiere North American Tourism Crisis Management Institute providing innovative, scholarly and applied research-driven service to private and public sectors. Quality research is facilitated through interdisciplinary teams of experts with experience and knowledge in problem solving.

Mission

The mission of the Tourism Crisis Management Institute is to develop research-driven solutions to crises that address reduction, readiness, response and recovery issues in local, national and global tourism economies.

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Letter from the Director



This year has brought about a plethora of crises which have inundated the United States. Crises ranging from the economic/financial crisis to flooding in North Dakota to the Swine Flu pandemic to a number of hurricane threats have all riddled the country over the last 12 months. The multitude of crises has provided heightened awareness for the need to have a

comprehensive crisis plan in place. As a response to this need, the TCMi has launched its first online training certificate aimed at working tourism professionals. The program will focus specifically on destination marketing organizations because this sector of the tourism industry is mainly responsible for the marketing and management of the destination and when a crisis occurs would be the primary tourism entity responsible for managing the situation.

In addition to the certificate, the group has focused its attention on several grant submissions ranging from NSF to private granting agencies. The TCMi team continues to focus our efforts on building scholarly contributions to the area of tourism crisis management. With a range of in-house research projects now being completed, the team is now beginning to see trends across all sectors of the tourism industry with regards to crisis planning. Mainly, our research has shown that businesses are “resource strapped” and have not created plans, which are comprehensive in their scope, but rather focus narrowly on communications surrounding the event and how their business units are responding to the crisis.

As the TCMi approaches the end of their second year, our research team will continue to focus on the importance of developing comprehensive tourism crisis management plans for all sectors of the tourism industry.

Sincerely,

Lori Pennington-Gray

Director of TCMi and Associate Professor

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Letter from the Dean

With the 2008-2009 year coming to a close, the Tourism Crisis Management Institute has been busy working on research projects, developing an online Tourism Crisis Management Certificate program, creating a comprehensive marketing plan for the certificate and presenting, attending and sponsoring events at various tourism conferences.



The TCMI continued to examine tourism crisis management issues within the state and nation. One study in particular examined the emergency action component plans of the Florida Park Service to determine how well each plan prepared for crises specific to visitors and tourists. The findings of the study were presented to the head of the

Florida Park Service in Tallahassee. Similarly, the TCMI analyzed the tourism crisis management plans of 51 official State Tourism Organizations to determine levels of preparedness for each crisis management plan.

The TCMI presented at the Florida Emergency Professionals Association and the Travel and Tourism Research Association to

present information about disaster preparedness and risk reduction for tourism organizations and businesses.

With continued concerns stemming from natural and man-made disasters, the TCMI launched an online tourism crisis management certificate program for tourism industry professionals to assist them in developing comprehensive tourism crisis management plans. During the upcoming year, additional tourism crisis management certificate programs are being planned for various other sectors of the tourism industry. The TCMI has also prepared extensive marketing materials to position the tourism crisis management certificate program as the leading tourism crisis management program in the U.S.

As the TCMI approaches the end of their second year, they have continued to accomplish their planned goals and I am looking forward to another productive year.

Sincerely,

Steve Dorman, M.P.H., Ph.D.
Professor and Dean

Letter from the Department Chair

The Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management seeks to inspire and enable a better quality of life through innovative and compelling research, education and outreach in tourism, recreation and sport. The faculty and staff in the Department are excited about the innovative efforts and services that the TCMI adds to the vision for our research and outreach efforts.

The launch of the Tourism Crisis Management Certificate this past year was a significant step toward extending our work around the globe. The certificate utilizes a unique approach through online courses developed by expert industry professionals and TCMI faculty. These services will help industry leaders and organizations prepare and recover from crises that may occur in the destination, lodging and attractions industries. The future of the certificate program is encouraging as the TCMI faculty and staff consider this exclusive certificate to be only the starting point of future crisis management educational services.



As you review this year's annual report, you will see that the TCMI faculty and staff are passionate about their endeavors and are actively engaged in enabling a better quality of work and community life through their work. The Department is also very excited about future impact the programs in the TCMI will have on our numerous

stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Michael Sagas, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management

Analysis of STOs Tourism Crisis Plans

Objective

This study examined the tourism crisis management plans of 50 official State Tourism Organizations (STOs) and one official District Tourism Organizations (DTOs) to determine the preparedness included in each plan.

Method

Fifty-one STOs were asked to provide their tourism crisis management plans to the University of Florida's Tourism Crisis Management Institute via email or mail. Thirty eight of the 51 STOs responded - a response rate of 74.5 percent. Of the 38 STOs, only 16 had crisis plans specific to the tourism industry (31 percent). Twenty STOs (40 percent) expressed that they did not have a crisis management plan specific to the tourism industry whereas two (4 percent) expressed they did have a crisis management specific to tourism but could not release it.

Comparative analysis was conducted to analyze each plan based on four stages of crisis management: reduction (crisis awareness, political awareness and standard operating procedures), readiness (crisis management plan and tourism planning), response (crisis response procedures, visitor as-

sistance and communication) and recovery (business continuity plan, human resources and debriefing). The following findings represent the 16 STOs tourism crisis management plans.

Findings

In the reduction phase, most of the plans included crisis awareness components in their tourism crisis management plan, although 48 percent of the plans did not focus on raising political awareness in regards to the economic impact of a crises on the tourism industry. Interestingly, 90 percent of the plans did not include elements of standard operating procedures in crisis reduction specific to tourism.

Specific to the readiness phase, 62 percent of the plans included elements of a crisis management plan; however, 68 percent did not include focus on planning specific to tourism in their crisis management plans.

The response phase indicated that 63 percent of the plans included crisis response procedures in their crisis management plans. In contrast, only 45 percent of the plans included procedures to assist visitors. Most of the plans (86 percent) included communication procedures. In fact, most of the plans focused on external and media communication.

In the recovery phase, 51 percent of the plans addressed business continuity plans. In terms of human resource issues in a post crisis situation, only 11 percent of the plans indicated they used this procedure and only 31 percent planned for debriefing sessions to the tourism industry and political leadership after a crisis.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Most crisis management plans submitted were lacking information concerning standard operating procedures for reducing potential crises, tourism planning, addressing human resource issues following a crisis and debriefing. Most plans focused on the communication aspect of crisis management rather than on a comprehensive aspect of crisis management. These findings are consistent with our findings from the Florida CVB/TDC crisis readiness study conducted last year.





Review of Florida State Parks Emergency Action Component Plans Using the TCM I Tourism Crisis Management Model

Purpose

This analysis of Florida Park Service (FPS) Emergency Action Component (EAC) plans evaluated the comprehensive readiness of the FPS system as it relates to handling visitors/tourists' needs during crises.

Method

Florida has 161 state parks with written protection plans which have EAC sections. These EAC sections are the "crisis plans" for each specific park. Only one new park (Weeki Wachee) did not have a complete EAC section and is currently in the process of developing its plan and therefore, was not included in this study. Including the state office, the five district offices and the 160 state parks (161 minus Weeki Wachee), there are 166 state park EAC plans. State park EAC plans were downloaded from the FPS's DEP Intranet system. Out of 166 FSP EAC plans, 164 plans were

downloaded from the DEP intranet and two state parks submitted their EAC plans via email, a response rate of 100 percent.

The Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI) at the University of Florida analyzed the state park EAC plans using a significantly modified tourism crisis management checklist developed by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA, 2003). The checklist includes four phases of crisis management: reduction, readiness, response and recovery. There are 67 separate criteria under the four stages of crisis management planning. Content analysis was used to analyze 166 state park EAC plans based on the four phases of crisis management.

Findings

The reduction phase consisted of crisis awareness, political

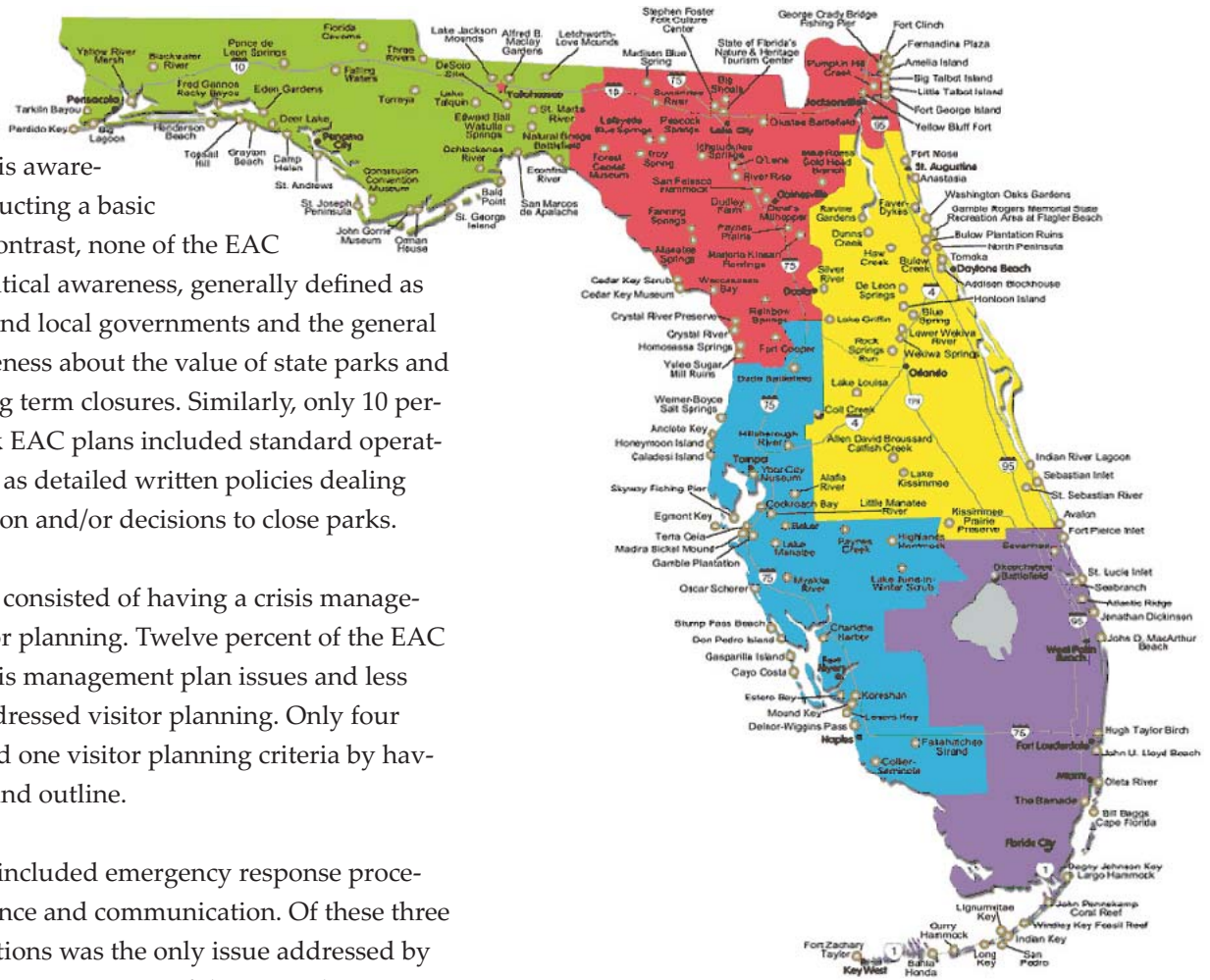
awareness and standard operating procedures. Eighteen percent of EAC plans addressed crisis awareness specific to conducting a basic SWOT analysis. In contrast, none of the EAC plans addressed political awareness, generally defined as working with state and local governments and the general public to raise awareness about the value of state parks and risks involved in long term closures. Similarly, only 10 percent of the state park EAC plans included standard operating procedures such as detailed written policies dealing with visitor evacuation and/or decisions to close parks.

The readiness phase consisted of having a crisis management plan and visitor planning. Twelve percent of the EAC plans addressed crisis management plan issues and less than one percent addressed visitor planning. Only four EAC plans addressed one visitor planning criteria by having a media liaison and outline.

The response phase included emergency response procedures, visitor assistance and communication. Of these three subsets, communications was the only issue addressed by any of the state parks. One percent of the EAC plans met the communications criteria. The same four EAC plans that met the specific visitor planning criteria also met the communications criteria by having a media spokesperson.

The recovery phase included three subsets: business continuity plan, human resources or employee management after a crisis, and debriefings to insure lessons learned are incorporated into future planning. The business continuity plan and human resources criteria were met in less than one percent of the EAC plans. One state park EAC plan satisfied the business continuity plan criteria by implementing a media plan and procedures. For human resources, two EAC plans satisfied the criteria by ensuring that staff knew their job responsibilities and one EAC plan included information about counseling support. None of the EAC plans addressed debriefings.

Of the 67 separate criteria following the four phases of crisis planning, only 10 items were comprehensively addressed by the FPS collectively.



Conclusion

To maximize visitor/tourist safety during crises in Florida, the TCMI recommends that the Florida Park Service adopt the TCMI Tourism Crisis Management Model when preparing state park EAC plans. The TCMI Model is a comprehensive tourism crisis management planning tool designed to address crisis awareness, political awareness, standard operating procedures, crisis planning, visitor planning, crisis response procedures, visitor assistance, communication, business continuity plans, human resource issues and debriefings. All of these criteria are essential to developing a comprehensive tourism crisis management plan for the FPS.



Tourism Crisis Management: When Hurricanes Strike

Identifying Factors that Influence the Evacuation Decisions of Florida Tourists when Hurricanes Strike

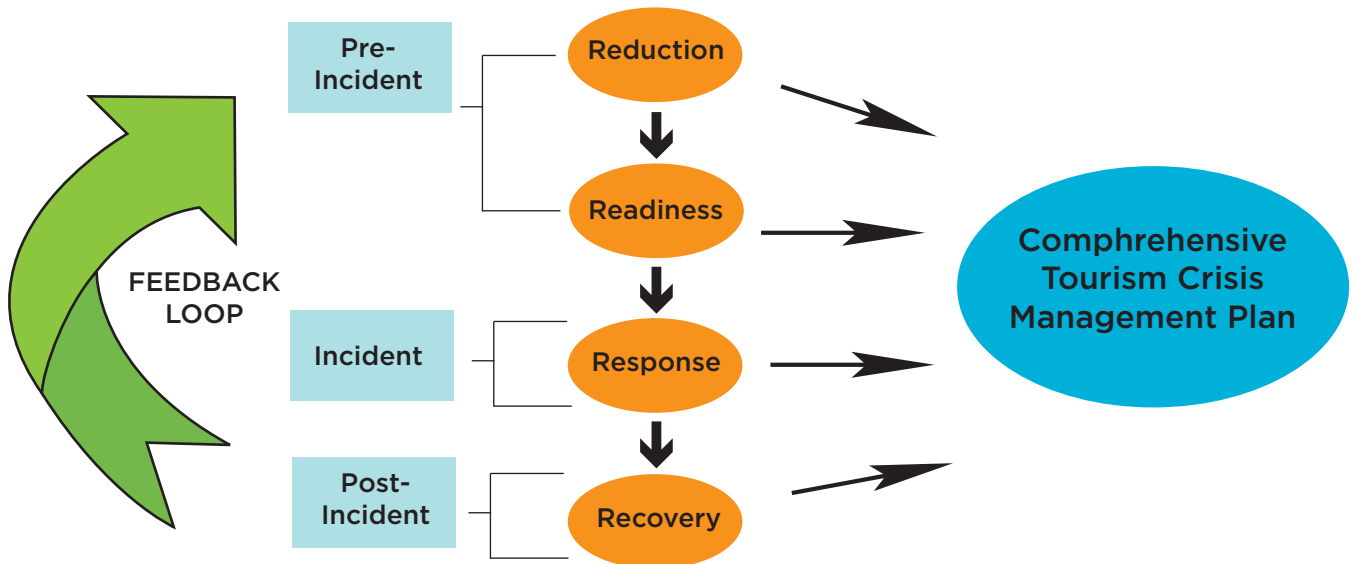
(A pilot study funded by the Eric Friedheim Foundation)

Tourists are an under-studied population that is vulnerable when faced with natural disasters. Florida receives more hurricane landfalls than any other U.S. state, and is also one of the top three states for inbound tourism. This pilot study examines how tourists' evacuation decisions vary based on the content of the hurricane-warning messages they receive. It is hypothesized that the content of the risk communication has a strong impact on the tourists' evacuation decisions, and that given a risk-communication message, the hurricane knowledge and experience of the tourists affect the evacuation decision (after controlling for other tourist characteristics such as socio-economics and travel behavior). The proposed research will employ novel techniques to address the clear lack of empirical data on the behavioral responses of tourists. The mode of data collection will focus on a group of tourists in Orlando and stated-preference surveys, will be administered to tourists at several locations within Orlando and Tampa. These modes will elicit the behavioral intentions of tourists under scenarios that do and do not currently exist.

Modeling Evacuation Decisions of Tourists in Response to Hurricane Information

This study is the second phase of the pilot study and will examine the ways tourists process risk-communication messages related to hurricanes. Airport-intercept surveys will be employed to target leisure travelers visiting Florida during the hurricane season. Questionnaires using a laptop computer will be administered in major international airports in three coastal and one non-coastal destination in Florida. Survey questions will focus on risk-communication messages that include text, graphics, video or audio. An econometric-modeling approach will be used to analyze the data and to test the hypotheses. The study will yield significant information that can be used to improve risk-communication messages to tourists during hurricane emergencies and will ultimately provide data for policy formulation for local and state policy makers, emergency response service teams and tourism management agencies.

TCMI's Ongoing Research Activities



The TCMI has completed four tourism management studies: (1) Tourism Crisis Preparedness Study, (2) The Florida CVB/TDC Crisis Readiness Report by way of Content Analysis, (3) Review of Florida State Emergency Action Component Plans Using the TCMI Tourism Crisis Management Model and (4) Analysis of STOs Tourism Crisis Plans. As we continue to examine various aspects of the travel industry, it is clear that there is a desperate need to educate leaders on the need to create comprehensive tourism crisis management plans. Specifically, use of the TCMI's model would allow various businesses to react proactively rather than reactively in the event of a crisis.

The TCMI is currently conducting two additional studies: (1) Identifying the Factors that Influence the Evacuation Decisions of Florida Tourists when Hurricanes and (2) Modeling Evacuation Decisions of Tourists in Response to Hurricane Information. These two studies will examine the relationships between evacuation decisions of tourists and the hurricane risk communication.

What we have learned from our four studies to date:

1. The majority of businesses are focused on the incident phase of planning, with a particular focus on the communication portion of the response.
2. The majority of businesses lack attention to the pre-incident phase of planning and have not spent time

- identifying potential crises which would affect their business and more specifically, how to be ready when a crisis does occur.
3. Recovery is an afterthought because most businesses do not consider writing down the pathway to recovery, including detailed methods which address business continuity, human resources and internal debriefing.
4. The level of attention to unique aspects of the business is lacking and most plans are generic. Details relative to different types of crises are also lacking and thus the ability to respond in a focused timely manner has been compromised.

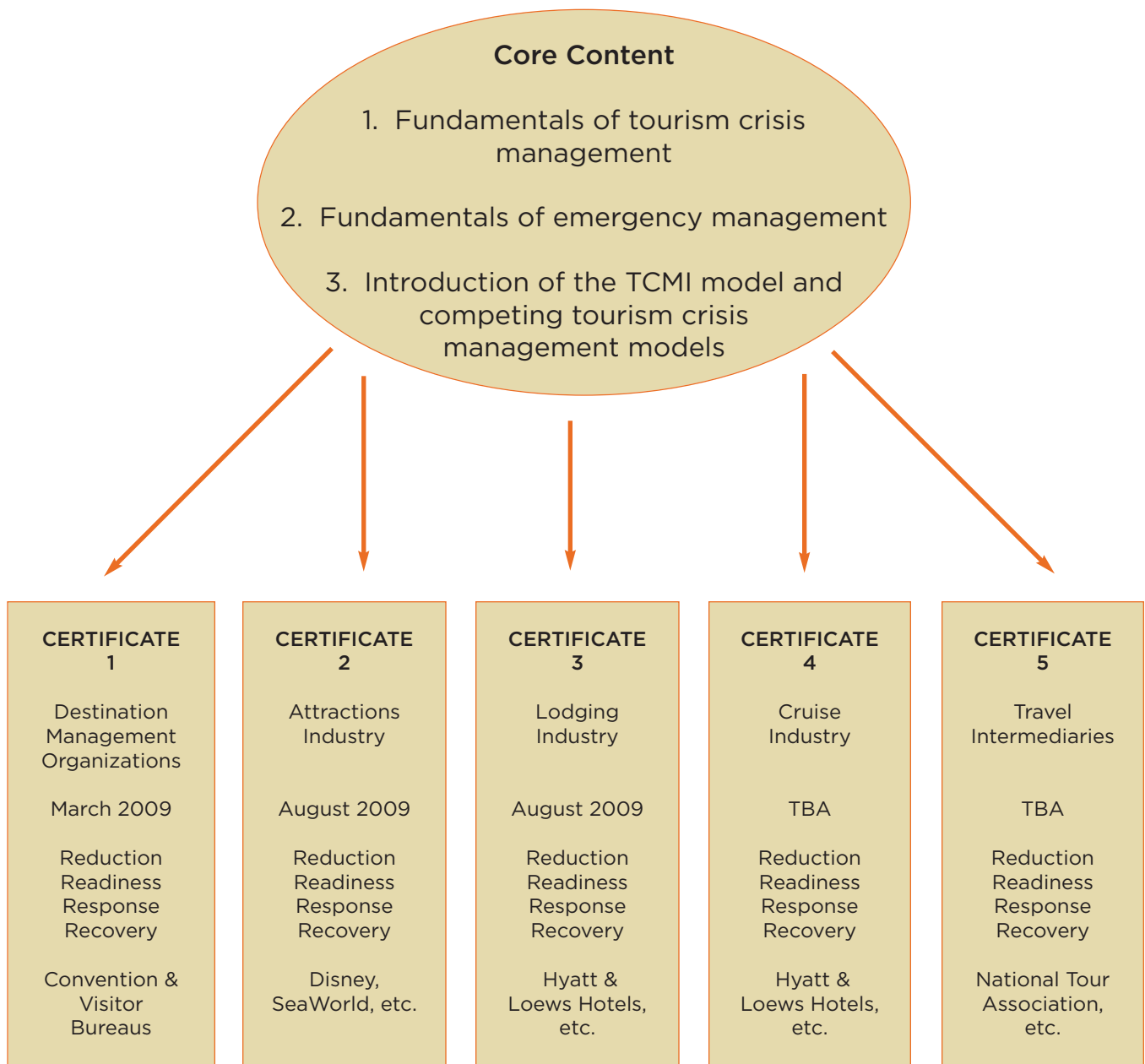
Where do we go from here?

1. Continue to research various aspects of the tourism industry focusing on attractions and lodging sectors.
2. Build a best practices workbook using the best business plans from various sectors to identify best practices.
3. Submit and publish articles in special issues of tourism journals which focus on tourism crisis management.
4. Continue to develop research questions related to understanding how tourists process information related to hurricane evacuation.

Online Tourism Crisis Management Certificates

To address the critical need to prepare tourism industry professionals for crises, the Tourism Crisis Management Institute (TCMI) developed a comprehensive Online Tourism Crisis Management Certificate for Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). Four additional certificates will target attractions, lodging and cruise industries along with travel intermediaries. The five certificates focus on crisis reduction, readiness, response and recovery efforts from natural- and human-induced disasters that might affect destinations or businesses.

Tourism Crisis Management Certificate Modules



TCMI Accomplishments

Referred Publications

Pennington-Gray, L., Cahyanto, I., Thapa, B., McLaughlin, E., Willming, C., Blair, S., & Kaplanidou, K. (2009). Are Florida DMOs Doing a Good Job of Documenting Their Tourism Crisis Management Plans? Abstract submitted for the special issue of the Tourism Review International. "Tourism in A Time of Crisis."

Pennington-Gray, L., Kaplanidou, K., Cahyanto, I., Thapa, B., McLaughlin, E., Willming, C., & Blair, S. (2009). Disaster Planning within the Tourism Industry. Abstract submitted for the special issue of the Tourism Review International. "Tourism in a Time of Crisis."

Professional Presentations

McLaughlin, E. TCMI Research and Certification Program. Presented at the meeting of the Upper Midwest Convention & Visitor Bureau Association, St. Cloud, MN, September 21, 2008.

McLaughlin, E. CVB research and TCMI Certification Program to Lee County Hoteliers. Presented at the Lee County Annual Tourism Industry Hurricane Workshop, Fort Myers, FL, October 10, 2008.

McLaughlin, E. Convention & Visitor Bureaus: Your New Partner in Emergency Preparation and Recovery. Presented to the Florida Emergency Professionals Association (FEPA), Orlando, FL, February 12, 2009.

McLaughlin, E. Crisis Management and Crisis Communication: How to Prepare your Business. Presented to the Lee County Team Tourism, Lee County, FL., May 1, 2009.

McLaughlin, E. and Wynkoop, S. Review of Florida State Parks Emergency Action Component Plans Using the TCMI Tourism Crisis Management Model. Presented to the Florida State Park Service Director, Tallahassee, FL., May 15, 2009.

Invited Presentations

McLaughlin, E. (2009, March). UF Tourism Crisis Management Institute: Research Update and Certification Program Overview. Presented at the Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association: Montgomery, AL.

Pennington-Gray, L., and Cahyanto, I. (2009, June). Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction. Presented at the Travel and Tourism Research Association, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Conferences Attended to Market TCMI

Pennington-Gray, L. and McLaughlin, E. (2008, August). Governor's Conference on Tourism, Orlando, FL.

McLaughlin, E. (2008, August). US Travel Industry (formerly TIA) Educational Seminar for State Tourism Organizations (ESTO), Bonita Springs, FL., August 24-27, 2008.

McLaughlin, E. and Blair, S. (2009, March). Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association, Montgomery, AL,

Blair, S. (2009, March). Governor's Hurricane Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL,

Pennington-Gray, L. and Cahyanto, I. (2009, June). Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA), Honolulu, Hawaii.

Conference Sponsorship

McLaughlin, E. (2008, October). TIA Marketing Outlook Forum 2008. Flyers for registrants, Portland, OR.

McLaughlin, E. (2009, February). Florida Emergency Professionals Association. Trade show booth and sponsorship, Orlando, FL

McLaughlin, E. and Blair, S. (2009, March). Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association. Breakfast sponsorship and presentation, Montgomery, AL.

Grant

\$50,000 - Eric Friedman Foundation Grant

Research Projects

Review of Florida State Parks Emergency Action Component Plans Using the TCMI Tourism Crisis Management Model

Analysis of STOs Tourism Crisis Plans

Identifying the Factors that Influence the Evacuation Decisions of Florida Tourists when Hurricanes Strike

Modeling Evacuation Decisions of Tourists in Response to Hurricane Information

Security of Corporate Travel Executives Online Survey Study (Arizona State University and UF)

Other Projects

Tourism Crisis Management Certification Program for DMOs

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