

# LEADERSHIP MATTERS

May 2010 ISSUE 40



## “Do it for the right reason”

Do it for the right reason

The invitation to work with the Saudi Arabian Government on crisis management capacity building has been and remains an interesting assignment to say the least. My brief was to look at their current capacity across a number of levels of Government and then provide advice on their gaps and identify strategies as to how to address those deficiencies.

There has been many interesting things to come out of the work to date, but one was the contrast in the level of acceptance of risk, current

capacity and their perceived needs.

I think I could break the group into two fairly clear schools of thought with a number of accepted facts. The first accepted fact is; little to no crisis management planning exists across many levels of Government. The second accepted fact is; there is a need to build a crisis management capacity and the third is; in times of crisis they have no leadership structure and too often, time and energy was spent fighting as to who was in charge. These facts

were accepted and acknowledged by all parties that I was working with.

The difference and what I found interesting was the pathway that the various groups saw to address these problems and this is where the two different schools of thought existed. There was one group who acknowledged that to address the deficiency a journey would need to be undertaken and this would require 12 months or so to make headway. The second group wanted to walk out of the Westin Hotel in Jeddah

that afternoon with the solution and a one page checklist which they could call their disaster management plan.

One wanted an answer to address the problem and one wanted an answer to say the problem was addressed.

One answer would address the real problem and one would likely do more damage than good because then they thought they had the answer. It might have been his answer but it certainly wasn't addressing the need of dealing with the next crisis or disaster they would face in Saudi Arabia.

As the two different thought patterns and desires became clear to me I couldn't help but think of how many times things are done for the wrong reason. How many times in our lives do we do something because that is the expectation but have no real belief or passion in what we are doing. Who then benefits for this pattern of behaviour?

I guess the one page disaster management plan that is constructed in an afternoon

will on the face of it tick the box to say they have one - just as long as they never have to use it. And therein lies the problem because they will have to use it at some point in time.

The pleasing outcome of all of this for the people of Jeddah was the mind shift that occurred or if not a mind shift at least their vocal opposition to the opposing direction became less vocal.

"To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

Elbert Hubbard

## HANDS UPDATE

I will be back in Bangkok in a couple of days, the scene of death of 90 during the recent riots. Whilst the state of emergency and curfew still exists from all reports life is returning to a level of normality. But the damage has once again been done to the tourism industry and the people who are hurt most are the poor. The first to lose their jobs, the first to have their

income cut and orders for the catch of the day stopped. The impact of all of this on the work we are doing with the kids in Baan Tharn Namchai is zero. The impact on the work we are doing with the kids in Yasothon is also zero. We will of course continue to do what we can to support them and create sustainable solutions, regardless of the colour of the shirt worn by those in power.