

What can have a greater impact on communication than language or technology

17. September 2019

Culture. Hands down.



At the end of August, I spoke at IBTM China about crisis communication for the MICE industry. As a European in China, I decided to go prepared - reading books about the culture, cultural differences, the people and the country. I even did a crash course in the Chinese language! All of this helped me to understand much better the way people in China think and develop ideas.

I was reminded that, wherever you work, you need to take the local culture into account. You have to understand how cultural differences will affect the way you handle people and communication - especially in a critical situation.

I like to work in an agile way, but in many countries hierarchies are very important – there are lines of responsibility and orders of decision-making in every professional scenario. People work within structures.

How can we adapt crisis management to a hierarchical structure? We often need to find common ground as well as to study the local culture's unique traits. We can then

create an effective crisis communication and management strategy that will work well with how people think, wherever you are.

A hierarchical system can be very useful when looking at the procedures in a crisis. Crisis management uses clear structures that help to focus on what's important – finding solutions to get back to normal as quickly as possible.

From the people 'on the ground' to those right at the top, we can package information so everyone is involved. The CEO might not be the best person to run the crisis team, but as a decision-making authority they can see the importance of what we're getting in place, give approval, and the project teams are able to perform their duties effectively.

In the events sector, we need the procedures, we need the structures. We need to speak one language and therefore we need a system that can work in all cultures. Even if nobody wants to admit it, or to talk about it openly, we all need to have a crisis management strategy.

I must thank all the participants who joined my session and approached me afterwards to discuss how crisis management is handled in Asia. I learned there is a global need for crisis management and that some cultures would love to change old systems to a more open and agile working system.

After all, whatever the cultural differences, we will all have the same aim after crisis – to return to normal operations as quickly as possible :)

More about VOB Inspires People GmbH --> <http://bit.ly/2WJeieO>