

# Bridgeway to Success™

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**TAKE PROMPT,  
DECISIVE AND  
RESPONSIBLE  
ACTION.**

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## Responding to Crisis

The words of my college football coach still resonate, “It’s not how you cover, it’s how you recover!” Meaning? Every defensive back gets beat. It’s what you do *after* you get beat that counts.

JetBlue is dealing with the “after you get beat.” Following February’s ice storm in New York City that left thousands of passengers stranded for days, JetBlue’s response was judged to be slow and ineffective. So what have they done since? CEO David Neeleman has made numerous media appearances accepting full responsibility for poor decisions and overwhelmed systems. He’s promised refunds and credits for passengers. He’s committed to fixing systems, training personnel and introducing a customer bill of rights. Thanks to these actions and the goodwill built over seven years, JetBlue is on the road to recovery.

When a client in New Orleans was struck by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we developed and started implementation of a Disaster Response Plan within 48 hours. Our mantra: *There will be a handful of success stories that emerge post-Katrina; we will be one of them.* Our plan was built on five pillars: 1. People First. 2. Communication is King. 3. Gather Intelligence. 4. Manage Morale. 5. Honor the heroic efforts. The company has since grown by over 60%.

The classic story of corporate recovery is Johnson & Johnson’s response when seven Tylenol consumers died due to cyanide-contaminated product in the 1980’s. Acting decisively, J&J removed over 31 million bottles of Tylenol from stores. Communications to doctors, distributors, employees and the media were prompt, candid and consistent. They designed tamper-proof packaging before reintroducing the product. The outcome? Tylenol recovered and came back even stronger largely because of J&J’s vigorous and principled response.

How do *you* respond to crisis? By taking responsibility? By acting promptly and decisively? By emphasizing people and communications?

It’s a choice. When crisis hits, choose your destiny.

Michael Canic