1 Introduction

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Tourism has always been impacted by crises and disasters, and no tourism destination is exempt (Beirman, 2006). Tourism is particularly susceptible to natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes and bushfires amongst others), which can cause sudden and immediate damage and destruction to destinations and their infrastructure, as well as longer terms issues with reduced visitor arrivals, leading to knock-on employment problems (Huang et al., 2008). However, there are other types of man-made crises that can also affect the tourism industry, including the actual or perceived threat of terrorism or political instability within a destination. Additionally, while some crises may affect entire destinations, others are more specific, affecting only particular industry sectors or organisations. Finally, not all challenges for destination marketers arise suddenly. Many destinations struggle to attract tourists because they are perceived to be unattractive for some reason, perhaps as a result of the long-running presence of heavy industry. The common thread linking these various crises, disasters and challenges is the unfortunate effect that they have on the reputation and image of the destination or organisation involved. Faulkner (2001: 136) defined a disaster as "a situation where an enterprise or a destination is confronted with sudden unpredictable catastrophic changes over which it has little control". A crisis, on the other hand, is considered to be "a situation where the root cause of an event is, to some extent, self-inflicted through such problems as inept management structures and practices or a failure to adapt to change" (Faulkner 2001, p.136). However, while there is an academic distinction between the term 'crisis' and 'disaster', they are often used interchangeably and in this book, both terms will be used.

Crisis and disasters that directly impact tourism can have extensive reputational implications for the organisations and destinations involved. It is critical that destination marketing organisations (DMOs) and chief executive officers (CEOs) communicate the right message in such circumstances to reassure the public that they have their best interests at heart. Often this is not done well. Every crisis and disaster is different, and knowledge is required to understand how different crises and disasters, whether they be at a destination or an organisational level, affect members of the public. Such insight provides managers with a clearer understanding of the most effective messaging and communication strategies post event. This book uses real life case studies to contextualise the relevant theories on tourism, marketing and communication, and unpacks examples of best practice to illustrate how carefully managed response strategies can ensure the future survival of an organisation. It is the 'go to' text for those seeking specific strategies and proven best practice techniques.

Although the book deals with a variety of types of crisis and disaster, and a range of contexts, nonetheless there are some common findings from the chapters. First, it is vital for destinations and organisations to be proactive in terms of crisis management – have a crisis management plan in place that is strategically designed to protect and recover reputation and image. It has been argued that organisations always operate in a pre-crisis phase (Fink, 2006), and this could apply to destinations too – being prepared is essential. Second, liaising with the media is crucial – ensure that the media receives a consistent message from all stakeholders that is honest and accurate, to prevent misrepresentation and to try to limit sensationalism. Third, use the recovery phase to critically assess the existing tourism product and marketing strategies – enforced down-time can be used wisely for a re-evaluation of current practices and offerings. Finally, social media continues to change the landscape of news and publicity – it is important to use social media to its best advantage as a way to provide a continual flow of consistent messages about a destination or organisation following a crisis or disaster.