

First and Second Order Impact: Coronavirus

By Gail S. Bower

Let's say you have an event in early April. Here's an example of brainstorming the impact to the first and second level.

First-Order Impact may include:

1. Local officials may require cancellation
2. Organization could hold the event, and everything will be fine.
3. Organization could hold the event, and people decide not to show up.
4. Organization could hold the event, and someone unaware he/she has the virus attends.
5. Organization may elect to postpone or cancel the event.

Second-Order Impact, as sub-bullets, may include:

1. Local officials may require cancellation
 - a. Scramble to notify everyone.
 - b. Lose money.
 - c. Customers would understand.
 - d. Event insurance might kick in.
 - e. Small event vendors who lose business suffer financially.
2. Organization could hold the event, and everything will be fine.
 - a. Staff on high alert throughout.
 - b. Customers call with questions daily.
 - c. Extra leadership communication is necessary.
 - d. Health precautions are necessary.
 - e. Customers may opt not to attend.
3. Organization could hold the event, and people decide not to show up.
 - a. Insurance does not cover.
 - b. Event loses money.
 - c. Sponsors are disappointed.
 - d. Caterer can trim order to reduce costs.
 - e. Media messages about COVID-19 overwhelm; organization's message unheard/unseen.
4. Organization could hold the event, and someone unaware he/she has the virus attends.
 - a. Cooperate with health officials to curtail further infection.
 - b. Cooperate with the media and government officials with public communication.
 - c. Notify all attendees.
 - d. Attendees are angry and fearful.
 - e. As much as you try to instill calm, some individuals panic.
5. Organization may decide to postpone or cancel the event.
 - a. Massive communication effort.
 - b. Major unplanning and re-planning.
 - c. Confusion among staff, volunteers, and attendees.
 - d. Some loss of revenue or added cost.
 - e. Control of the messages by being proactive.

What do you learn from this exercise? What decisions can you make? What actions—or inactions—do you need to take? How can you be of greater service to others?

Gail Bower helps you put more money in your mission and more mission in your money. She's trained as a futurist to help clients envision what might be ahead and make clearer decisions. GailBower.com.