

ABSTRACT

Sands Casino is the first American-owned casino operating in Macau and it is only one year old. Its model of operation is supposedly different from its major competitor – Sociedade de Jogos de Macau (SJM). The success of a casino depends on many factors including its preparedness to handle crisis, and yet sound crisis management is not something that Macau is known for. Using Sands Casino as a point of departure, this study aims to find out how crisis is perceived and managed in the local industry.

The data were collected from semi-structured interviews with management executives and professionals in order to identify the main factors of crisis and the relevant management practices. This is supplemented with the researcher's workplace observation for evaluating the crisis management plan in actions. Moreover, the Onion Model was used to examine the plans, mechanisms and procedures for crisis management, the dedicated infrastructure crisis management; organizational beliefs and rationalizations and individual defense mechanisms.

The findings suggested that there are plenty of weaknesses in the current Sands crisis management, but it is expected the crisis management plan would succeed once the crisis management team fully implemented it. However, we could also see that there are strong points in the current Sands crisis management plan. It has a strong crisis management team, good management commitment, good organizational culture and open-minded management style, which are vital for long term development of an organization.

To be sure, Sands is in a reactive mode to crisis management right from the very beginning of its existence in Macau as it was rushing to meet a deadline for the commencement of business. However, as Sands is gaining more experiences and becoming more proactive towards crisis management, it is only a matter of time before we see Sands becoming a crisis-ready organization, especially upon the implementation and launching of its crisis management plan.

Implication drawn from this research would have potential practical contributions for enhancing crisis awareness of Macau residents and the casino operators in Macau. It is suggested that Sands put the priority on the staff awareness of crisis and build

strong liaison with media and relevant governmental departments. Because in the coming ten years, gaming industry will continue to be the flagship industry for Macau's economy, future research to explore the crisis management for the whole gaming industry is necessary. Since some types of crisis may not only threaten one casino, but also affect the others as well. If there's a crisis management plan established for the whole gaming industry, it will be no doubt that benefits will be bringing into the whole Macau economy.