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Tabletop Exercises: Training That Works & Manages Risks



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Senior Management Decision

How much risk is
acceptable versus the
cost of reducing that
risk?



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There are two kinds of Executives; those that have lived through a crisis and those that will...



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Are you Prepared for this....





Training & Exercises

- Training and exercises are invaluable tools for preparing staff and testing emergency plans.
- Training and exercises should **reinforce concepts in the organizational emergency plan.**
- Training should be **conducted regularly** (Reality: *we do what we've practiced, not what is in the plan*).



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Through Exercises, Organizations Can:

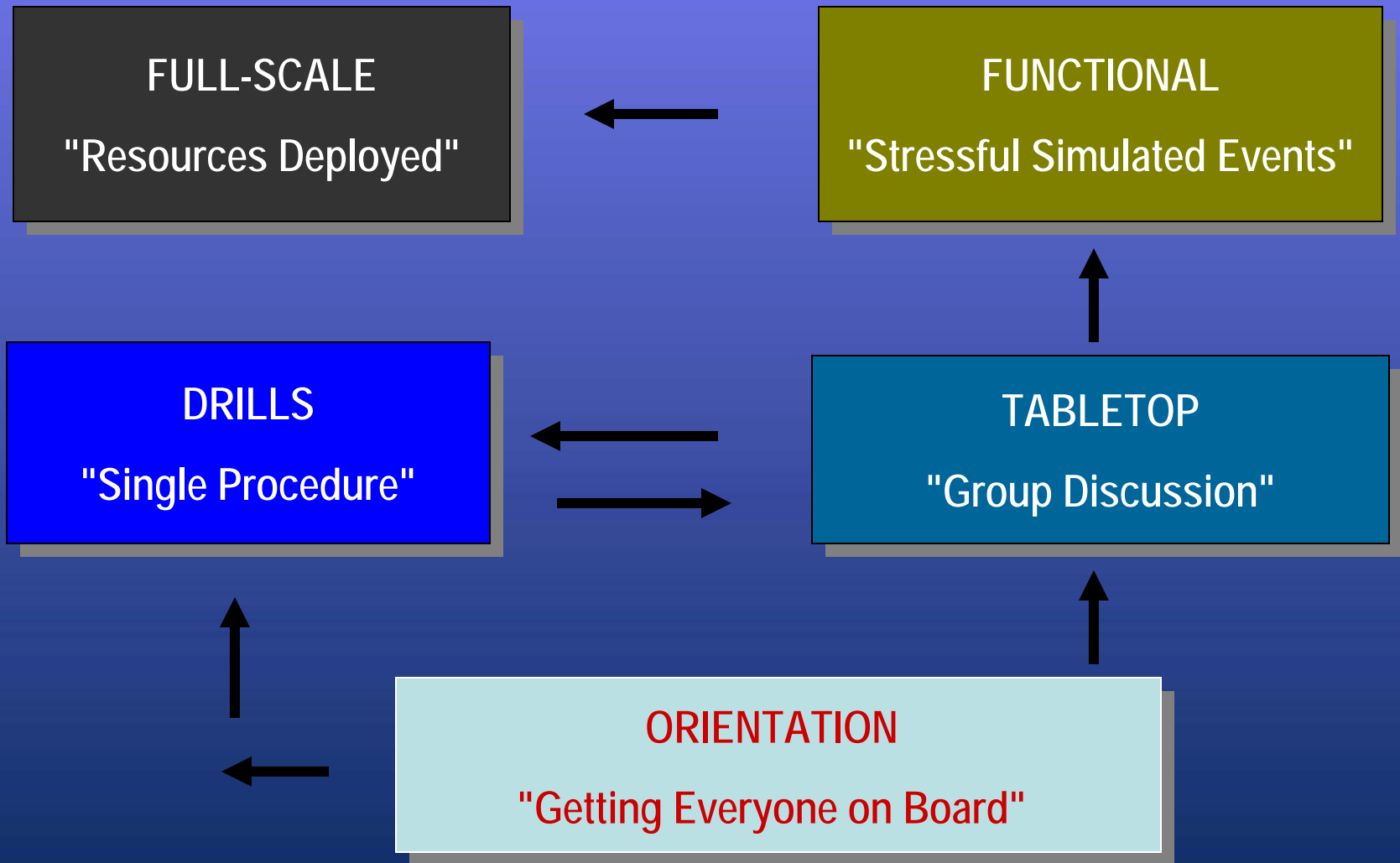
- **Test and evaluate plans, policies, and procedures.**
- **Reveal planning weaknesses.**
- **Reveal gaps in resources.**
- **Improve organizational coordination and communications.**
- **Clarify roles and responsibilities.**
- **Train personnel in roles and responsibilities.**
- **Improve individual performance.**
- **Gain program recognition and support of officials.**
- **Satisfy regulatory requirements.**





Types of Exercises

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What is a Tabletop Exercise?

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- A tabletop exercise is a facilitated, scenario-based group discussion; used for centuries
- Typically 3 hours to 6 hours in duration
- Scenarios should be chosen on priority response and recovery events
- There are many formats and methods





Why Conduct Tabletop Exercises?

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- Clarify Roles and Responsibilities
- Evaluate Plans and Procedures
- Develop Effective Teamwork
- Assess Resources and Capabilities
- Identify Needs and Solutions
- Cost Effective & Validation



Why Conduct Tabletop Exercises?

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- Are **low-stress discussion** of coordination and policy within the organization and/or between the organization and other agencies.
- Provide a good environment for **problem solving**.
- Provide an opportunity for key agencies and stakeholders to become **acquainted** with one another, their interrelated roles, and their respective responsibilities.
- Provide good **preparation for a functional exercise**.
- Cost Effective
- Minimal Disruption
- Validation of your Plan



Getting Started: Steps for Success

Pre-Planning

- Incident Analysis
- Establish Objectives
- Orientation Meetings
- Set Timelines
- Identify Participants
- Pre-exercise Training
- Single department drill



Tabletop Exercise

- The Facilitator
- The Story Board
- Draft the Narrative
- Room Layout
- Breaks/Refreshments
- Presentation
- Copies of Materials
- Conduct the Exercise



After Action

- Debriefing
- Participant Evaluation
- Comprehensive Report
- Post Exercise Meeting
- Functional Exercises
- Revisions
- Supplemental Training
- Implementation

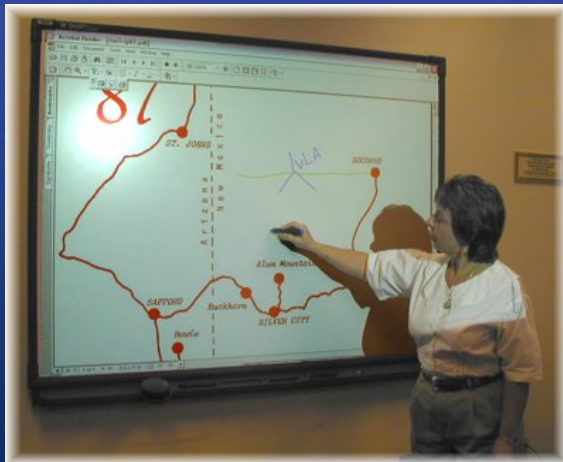
Developing an internally designed tabletop exercise normally evolves over a 1-month to 2-month period if conducted properly.

Tabletop Exercise Preparation

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- Pre Exercise Preparations
 - Emergency/Continuity Plan Reviews
 - Management Interviews
 - Guide/Handout Preparations
 - Audio/Video Content
 - Power Point Preparations
- Flipchart and markers
- Note taker
- A/V equipment
- Extra seats for observers
- Name Plates
- Copies of the exercise scenario
- Emergency plans/Incident focus
- Additional pre-incident information
- Participant evaluation form



The After Action Process

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- Immediate Debriefing
- Evaluator and Participant Comments
- Written Comments from Evaluators
- Comprehensive Report
- After Action Meeting (Weeks Later)
- Improvement Ideas and Implementation
- Supplemental Training





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Outsourced vs. In-House

- Difficulty of Exercise
- Human Resources
- Cost Benefits
- Liability/Expertise
- Time Management
- Third Party Validation

Complacency is Risky Business

- The Myth of the Non Profit Veil
- Will Insurance Pay
- Standard of Duty





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Questions