Successful critical event management requires leadership and teamwork of the highest order. A crisis or emergency can emerge very quickly and require the rapid deployment of people and resources to solve complex problems under extremely challenging conditions.

Technical competence is not enough. Even highly trained people will have little impact in an emergency unless they can handle stress and cooperate effectively and efficiently with others. Making this happen is the responsibility of the leader. Leaders who excel in critical situations understand the X factors, the intangible human factors required to manage one’s own behaviour and the behaviour of others under pressure. The X factors are essential for leaders and teams working in mentally challenging, physically difficult or life threatening situations - which may change without warning – and require rapid coordination of people and resources, flexible responses and evidence-based decision making.

Under pressure people do not display new behaviours but rather apply previously learned habits. The same applies to leadership. This means leaders must establish the skills and behaviours or habits they need to manage critical events during ‘down time’, the 90-95% of time when a crisis is not threatening. Leadership of critical events cannot be learned ‘on the run’. It requires leaders to carefully reflect on their own personal strengths and development priorities. They must also consciously select and practise the skills and behaviours they will require during the critical 10-5% of their time when they will be tested to the limit so that these become well honed habits. This cannot be done in the middle of an emergency!

The Sheppard Associates programme ‘The X Factors: Leading People in Critical Situations’ is designed to prepare leaders for the challenge of critical event management. The programme covers the essentials of leadership and teamwork but examines these within the context of crisis management.

The roles of leaders and teams in managing critical events are examined from the following perspectives:

1. **Self-Management**
   - Understanding leadership strengths and development priorities
   - Role modelling – verbal and non-verbal behaviour
   - Managing stress – understanding personal stressors
   - Leadership styles – which to use and when to use them

2. **People Management**
   - Understanding human behaviour – why people act the way they do
   - Managing people – influencing the behaviour of others
   - Communication and relationship management
   - Conflict management – managing stress in others

3. **Team Management**
   - Creating ‘mature’ teams
   - High and low tempo leadership
   - Role allocation
   - Performance management

4. **Critical Event Management**
   - Leadership priorities
   - Team member priorities
   - Planning the critical event ‘project’
   - Managing the critical ‘event ‘project’

If you are interested in this programme, please contact us on +61 8 8407 1332 or email us at info@sheppard.com.au