

# Strategic Simulations

## **An earthquake simulation at Sapir Academic College in Israel**

On May 27 2013, 150 students from the School of Communications at Sapir College took part in a simulation which dealt with a severe earthquake in the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

The purpose of the simulation was to allow students to gain experience with communication practices, such as journalism, television, radio, digital communication, and marketing communication. The simulation created a realistic environment that gave the students a firsthand experience in the context of crisis management. In addition, it exposed students to the job of professionals in the field and tied them directly to various issues.

The plot of the simulation dealt with a major earthquake in Southern Israel's Gulf of Eilat that caused heavy damage and over 1,000 fatalities. The simulation began 10 days after the earthquake, when most of the victims were already evacuated. The government has begun restoration efforts while a public uproar started to point fingers and blame several government officials.

The simulation was planned by 25 top of their class students. It was led by Sapir college lecturer Dr. Shay Hershkovitz. Dr. Hershkovitz is also Vice President of Research and Strategy at Linx and an expert in simulation design and competitive intelligence. The simulation design was based on thorough research of similar disasters, geological issues, knowledge of search and rescue officials in Israel and much more. The 25 students created the background information, designed the necessary material, planned the mission of the simulation and were responsible for marketing among fellow student in the school of communications. The simulation also included senior professionals from government offices, search and rescue forces, the military, local authorizes and the media.

As mentioned earlier, the simulation included 150 students from the Communications department. They were divided into groups according to their field of study including: written, radio and television journalism, digital communication, marketing communication and general studies. They conducted press conferences and covered them, interviewed government office officials and ran in-depth journalistic inquiries. In addition, they developed PR programs for government offices whose image was damaged, designed marketing plans aimed to rehabilitate tourism, and established public protest groups.

The simulation ran on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, as well as a special website that was built by the students running the simulation. The school's digital journal and local radio station also took part in the simulation, which was covered by the local media.

