

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

Man turned Meta-Leadership Pioneer

Contributor: Mark Lupo

“...The momentum and pervasiveness of Meta-Leadership concepts in the Columbus area - has been remarkable ...”

Mark Lupo had just started thinking about adding a preparedness component to his work to strengthen small businesses, when he was approached by a colleague from Synovis to serve on the host committee for the first-ever Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness in Columbus, Georgia, in 2007.

Getting the private sector involved in preparedness

“The Summit was a revelation,” Lupo described, “because it illuminated the possibility of linking the public sector to the private sector in an important, meaningful way.” In his experience, small and medium-sized businesses did not know a lot about how the police and fire department, for example, prepare for and respond to emergencies. During the year following the Summit, Lupo, in collaboration with his new public safety colleagues, developed a four-phase approach to help these businesses develop an emergency plan. Throughout 2007 and 2008, over 100 business leaders attended seminars about how to develop emergency plans, prepare for a pandemic, become engaged with the local Citizen Emergency Response Team, and ensure that business insurance supports response to community emergencies.

Four years later, the audience has expanded

An assessment of these seminars suggested that a regional approach is beneficial to businesses, and late in 2008, planning began for a leadership forum that would bring nationally-renowned leaders to the Southeast for a two-day seminar. The “Summit for Threat Preparedness” was launched in 2009 with sponsorship from a local hospital, the Sheriff’s Office, a local community college, and a defense contractor. The forums continued, with the third held in 2011; they have been complemented by annual Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Public Safety Days.

The Meta-Leadership momentum continues

Lupo is currently working with the Chattahoochee Community College to develop a non-credit-bearing Public Safety Academy to continue to connect business leaders with government and nonprofit leaders to enhance business readiness and community resilience. Recently, leaders from a major insurance company met the coordinator of the county’s public transit system at an academy offering. Under normal circumstances, these individuals would likely never have met, yet they now have an agreement for the county to provide buses to help businesses evacuate in the event of an emergency.

“I am just one small piece of what’s happening here,” says Lupo. The momentum and pervasiveness of meta-leadership concepts in the Columbus area over four years has been remarkable and can be a model for other communities with the commitment to go forward.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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