



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

Incorporating Societal Safety Issues into Businesses

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What's Wisconsin known for?

- Green Bay Packers
- Cheeseheads
- Binge drinking



March 20, 2012

- “The U.S. Geological Survey said the 1.5-magnitude earthquake struck Tuesday just after midnight in Clintonville, a town of about 4,600 people about 40 miles west of Green Bay.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/22/clintonville-wisconsin-earthquake-boom_n_1373767.html



Post Earthquake

- In the aftermath of an earthquake, people look for signs that their community is returning to “normal”



- Key element = business and industry
- Business provides jobs, generating revenue and income

- Revenue and income enable people to purchase goods, both necessities and other goods



Without functioning businesses:



- People lose income
- People may lose their homes, along with their reason for staying in the community
- People are unable to shop at their preferred grocer, buy gas at the corner station, purchase clothing in their favorite mall, and the like



- Downstream and upstream businesses are unable to work with contracted suppliers and distributors
- Utilities are unable to collect receivables
- What used to be the community **may not be** after an earthquake



- The last several years have seen many attempts to engage potentially affected populations, including businesses, in thinking about and preparing for earthquakes



- Events such as the Great California Shake Out, the Great Central U.S. Shakeout, and others around the world have involved high numbers of people, many of whom have been associated with PreK-12 schools, colleges and universities, medical facilities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, neighborhood groups, and businesses (<http://www.shakeout.org/comparison/>).



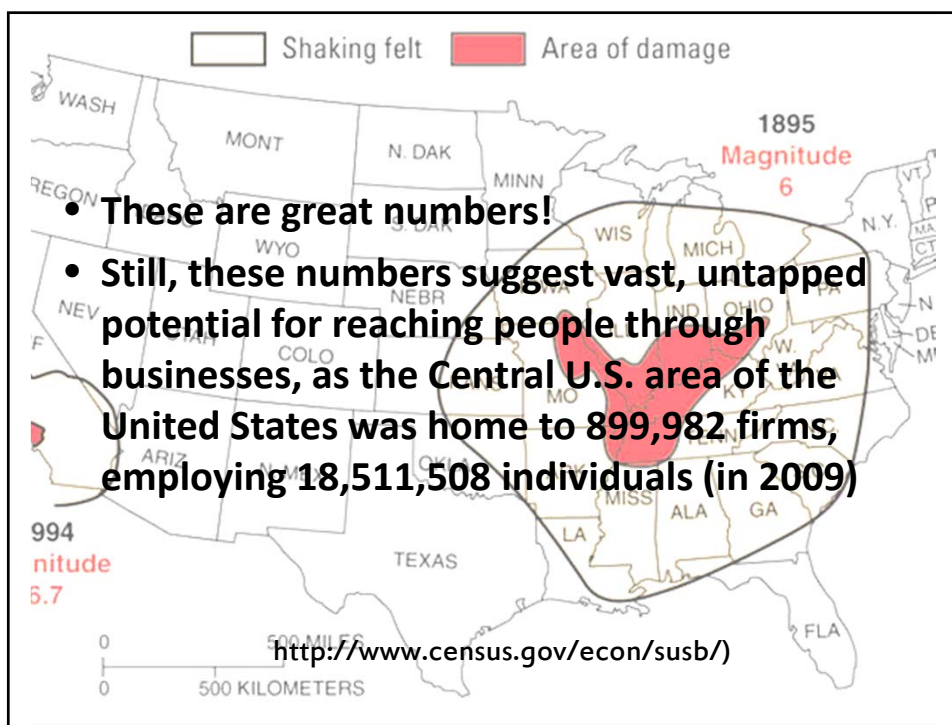
- Events such as the Great California Shake Out and the Great Central U.S. Shakeout appear to do an excellent job of communicating and sensitizing people to earthquake risks and preparedness.

- Key conduit of sharing seismic safety information = businesses
- People spend many if not most of their waking hours at businesses, whether they're working, shopping, etc.



- Analogy: Communicating seismic safety information to working adults through businesses = communicating seismic safety information to children through PreK-12 schools
- While 2,054,872 children participated in the most recent Great Central U.S. Shakeout (2012), the number of businesses participating was 443, including 60,745 individuals

http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/all_participants.php





- What are the mechanisms by which seismic safety issues might be communicated through and in businesses?

Idea #1

- More events like the Great Central U.S. Shakeout! Create muscle memory!
- Continually increasing the number of participants will go a long way toward communicating a clear message to all possible participants
- The numbers of participants have been excellent, but opportunity remains!

- Example: While the 2011 Great California Shake Out involved 488,389 individuals associated with businesses, California's businesses employed 12,833,709 individuals in 2009
- **Get to people where they live and work!**



- Run it like a United Way campaign!
- Give community recognition to participating businesses – awards, placards, advertisements, etc.
- Contributes to mimetic isomorphism (following leaders, avoiding being a loser)

Idea #2

- Speak to Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations (e.g., Rotary)
- Business continuity planning workshops, like those led by CERI as described yesterday morning



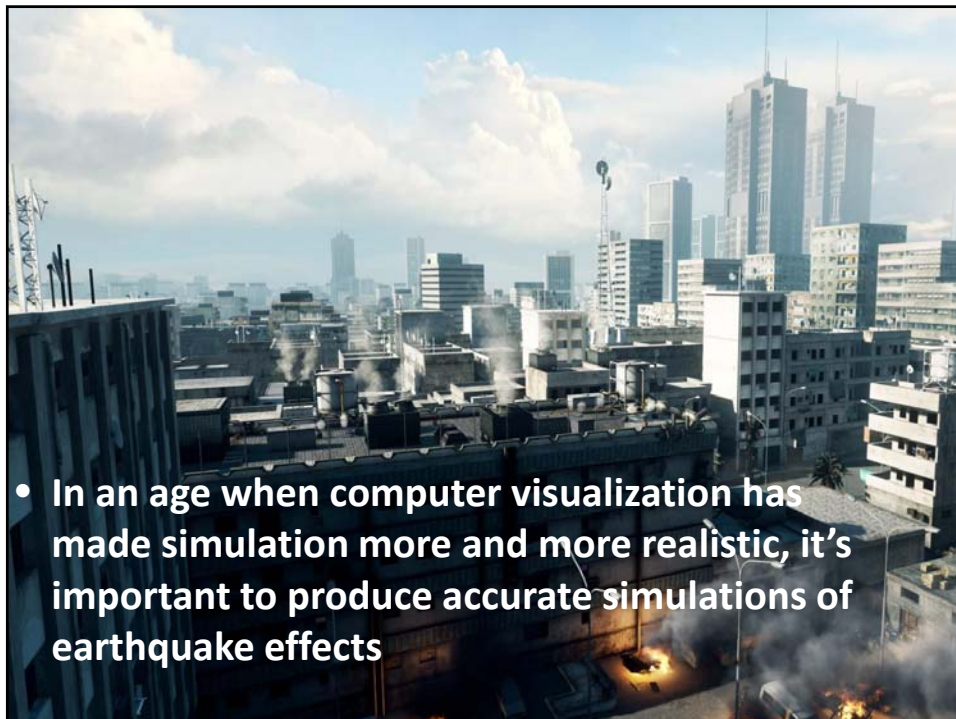
Idea #3



- Invite businesses to earthquake conferences (e.g., EQ Mean Business)

Idea #4 – Speak the language

- Jargon enables members of the industry to communicate effectively and efficiently with other members of the industry
- Too often, our jargon does not transfer especially well outside our own industry
- Tailor our messages!



- Creating social and print media that may be accessed by all business employees will be essential to effectively distributing needed information



- Short videos on YouTube that engage viewer emotions (positively or negatively) appear to have great potential, especially those that go “viral”



1,643,312 Views

- Print media that may be kept at one's desk may also serve as regular reminders of what to do (e.g., "Drop! Cover! Hold on!")



- **Twitter feeds** that remind employees about earthquake preparedness may be used *sporadically*
- "We are a traveling society"



Idea #5 – Focus the message

- Business owners are interested in the “bottom line” – profits, people, planet (sustainable business practice)
- Talk about ROI
- Talk about employee retention, commitment, OCB, reduced workplace deviance

- Talk about productivity
- Talk about employee satisfaction, loyalty, and the impact on customer satisfaction
- Link to values



Making the difficult case

- Denial can be comforting
- But ... preparation can enhance one's perceptions of control. And even the reality!
- Help businesses think about the **gains**. And the costs. But mostly the gains.
- Keep talking. Everywhere. To everyone.
- Give examples (contribution to diffusion)

Finally, listen

- Find out what business people believe
- Example: "My building is built to code. I have nothing to worry about."
- Confronted with the notion of life safety, what might the average business person say? How should we respond?

