



U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Foundation

Dallas Strategic Simulation

After Action Review
May 28, 2026





Background

Hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in partnership with the Boston Consulting Group and the Dallas Regional Chamber, the Dallas strategic simulation examined how a disruption to global positioning and timing systems could impact FIFA World Cup operations, regional infrastructure, and public confidence across the Dallas–Fort Worth area. The scenario focused on a “silent disruption,” where systems remained online but produced unreliable outputs, creating operational uncertainty across transportation, logistics, communications, and event management. The major international sporting event context served as a high-stakes scenario to examine whether stakeholders had the contingency plans, coordination channels, and decision-making structures needed to operate through critical system degradation during a high-demand and highly visible event.

This disruption did not present as a clear outage. Instead, the scenario unfolded as a slow progression of irregularities and weak signals rather than a single triggering event. Part of its insidiousness was that there was no obvious moment that clearly demanded action, forcing participants to grapple with when incremental disruption becomes a crisis.

This after-action review captures key lessons from the simulation and identifies opportunities to strengthen coordination, communication, and preparedness ahead of future large-scale events.

Executive Summary

The Dallas Strategic Simulation convened participants from business, government, civic institutions, and event-related stakeholders for a scenario-based exercise examining how a complex, systems-level disruption would unfold in a major urban environment. While the FIFA World Cup served as an anchor scenario to compress decision pressures, the exercise



was designed to test coordination, communication, and decision-making across sectors and multiple municipalities within the greater DFW metroplex during any high-demand, high-visibility event.

Through the exercise, participants repeatedly returned to the same core challenge: fragmented information and coordination quickly became the central obstacle to effective response in complex, interdependent systems. Teams identified major uncertainty around who owned key systems, who held decision authority, and how information should flow during a rapidly evolving disruption.

The simulation also surfaced important strengths, including participants' ability to prioritize under uncertainty, recognition of the need for a single source of truth, and broad agreement that communications capability is decisive in complex event disruptions. The most significant lesson was that fragmented coordination across interdependent systems can hinder effective response as much as the disruption itself, particularly when the root cause remains unclear.

Methodology & Approach: The Dallas Strategic Simulation followed a facilitated, multi-phase tabletop format. Participants were assigned to teams representing multinational corporations, public-sector actors, and related stakeholders involved in managing a major international sporting event. Each phase introduced new information, decision points, and operational pressures intended to test how participants would coordinate under uncertainty.

The exercise was designed to surface practical lessons about escalation, communications, interdependencies, and cross-sector coordination in the context of FIFA World Cup operations in a major metropolitan host city. Discussion focused not only on immediate response actions, but also on broader governance questions, business continuity, infrastructure dependencies, and the role of trusted networks before and during a crisis.

Scenario Frame: The simulation centered on a World Cup-related disruption in Dallas–Fort Worth, initially framed by uncertainty over whether protests or emerging operational



issues would require a delay or change in event execution. Participants had to determine whether early indicators represented a genuine threat, a distraction, or a signal of a deeper systems problem, all while balancing the needs of players, event operations, sponsors, media, and broadcast continuity.

As the exercise evolved, the disruption was revealed to involve degraded GPS functionality, with cascading impacts across transportation, logistics, payments, and communications. While the scenario established that there were no immediate physical safety threats to the event itself, participants still lacked clarity on the root cause or timeline for resolution. The challenge was therefore one of the operational continuity, managing player and fan movement, event execution, media messaging, and public safety in a degraded and uncertain environment.

Significant Findings

Coordination Gaps and Early Uncertainty Drive Instability

Observations

The earliest phase of the simulation was dominated by uncertainty. Participants wrestled with basic but consequential questions: whether to ask FIFA about delaying operations, whether a protest was a real threat or a distraction, and whether acting too early would create confusion or unnecessary escalation. Teams did not have a shared understanding of who held reliable information or what the operational plan should be.

Takeaways

The exercise showed that uncertainty at the start of a crisis can become destabilizing on its own. Without clarity on who knows what, who decides, and what thresholds trigger action, teams can either delay too long or mobilize too soon. Early ambiguity also makes it harder to distinguish signal from noise.

Recommendations

- Define early decision thresholds for escalation, delay, or continuation of operations.
- Clarify where authoritative operational information resides, including local organizing and event channels.
- Use structured early briefings to separate confirmed facts, open questions, and possible distractions.
- Begin information sharing at the earliest signs of disruption and throughout the response in order to help stakeholders build a fuller operating picture as weak signals emerge, conditions evolve, and decision thresholds become clearer.

Critical Infrastructure Ownership Must Be Clear and Unified

Observations

Participants lacked a clear understanding of system ownership and coordination roles. Confusion over who owned GPS weakened response efforts, and there was no shared model for information-sharing across private-sector, local, and federal actors. Participants also questioned whether entities such as the Dallas Regional Chamber were represented in the Joint Information Center, whether language barriers complicated engagement with FIFA-related stakeholders, and how fusion centers would support information-sharing and coordination when signals were ambiguous. The discussion also raised questions about how Fusion Centers can serve as a venue for information sharing, threat interpretation, and cross-sector coordination.

Takeaways

Communication leadership must rest on a shared understanding of roles, authorities, and coordination channels. Once participants recognized that the U.S. government owns GPS, the scenario shifted from isolated confusion toward a broader realization about federal dependencies. For many participants, this was a striking realization: a tool that feels ubiquitous and invisible in daily life is in fact owned and governed by a specific actor. That recognition sharpened understanding of how much everyday commerce, mobility, and event operations depend on infrastructure that is widely used but not widely understood.

Recommendations

- Clarify operational ownership of critical systems and communicate those dependencies before a crisis, particularly at the local, state, and event-organization levels.
- Include a designated business leader in any operations and/or information center to strengthen information assessment, decision making, and external communications.
- Prepare multilingual and translation support capacity through apps or translators for international event coordination.

Business Coordination Needs a Central Voice

Observations

Participants consistently emphasized the importance of the private sector, but also noted that business actors lacked a single entity to aggregate needs, coordinate action, and deploy resources. Multinational corporations were often imagined as calling one another directly rather than working through a common coordination structure, and there was no clear leader representing business interests across the region.

Takeaways

The simulation reinforced that businesses are critical operational partners, but a fragmented business response creates gaps in speed, consistency, and accountability. The challenge is not only inviting business participation during a crisis, but building pre-crisis mechanisms that connect companies to one another and to public decision-making structures in a trusted way.

Recommendations

- Establish a clear business coordination mechanism for major event disruptions.
- Define and communicate how regionally headquartered companies, sponsors, and major employers plug into crisis structures.
- Develop trusted networks before a crisis that connect companies through existing relationships and vetted intermediaries.

Interdependencies Create Cascading Effects

Observations

As the simulation progressed, participants saw how deeply GPS disruption could affect other systems, including 5G-dependent operations, aviation, emergency response, and the broader movement of people through Dallas–Fort Worth. The region’s two major airports, first responder reliance on GPS, and the possibility of grounded flights quickly elevated the scenario from an event issue to a broader national and economic concern. The exercise also exposed how heavily everyday mobility already depends on technology-enabled systems, including public transit coordination, navigation, and rideshare platforms. Even without the added strain of a major international event, participants saw that the current transportation ecosystem has limited ability to function smoothly in a degraded-tech environment. The World Cup did not create that vulnerability; it magnified a preexisting one.

Takeaways

Participants recognized that interdependencies, not just the initial disruption, drive the most serious consequences. Weak understanding of second- and third-order effects slowed decision-making and made it harder to prioritize actions. The scenario underscored the need to identify where redundancies are required and which systems become bottlenecks under stress.

Recommendations

- Identify local and event-level dependencies on GPS, telecommunications, aviation, public safety, and related systems.
- Clarify escalation pathways with relevant infrastructure owners and public-sector partners before a disruption.
- Build event-level contingency plans for degraded navigation and communications environments, including low-tech fallbacks.
- Practice prioritization frameworks that help local and event stakeholders manage second- and third-order effects.

Reliable Communication Networks are Essential to Trust Brokering

Observations

Participants repeatedly highlighted the importance of communications discipline, trusted networks, and pre-existing relationships. They stressed the need for holding statements, consistent amplification of messaging, and better methods for connecting people across sectors before a crisis. One idea discussed was a relationship-based model in which trusted intermediaries connect organizations through known contacts, helping establish credibility and faster coordination under pressure.

Takeaways

Relationships are not secondary to plans; they are part of the operating system for crisis response. The simulation showed that trusted person-to-person and organization-to-organization links can accelerate coordination, reduce friction, and help bridge sectors that do not otherwise work together routinely. Strong networks also support message credibility when public concern is high.

Recommendations

- Build cross-sector relationship networks before a crisis, not during one.
- Create executive-level communication links that can rapidly connect trusted expert organizations.
- Use regular exercises and chamber-to-chamber engagement to strengthen familiarity across sectors and jurisdictions.

Conclusion: The New Mandate for Corporate Resilience

The Dallas Strategic Simulation demonstrated that disruptions in a high-demand environment, whether tied to a global event like the World Cup or any large-scale, high-pressure scenario, can quickly expand beyond localized operations into broader regional and national systems challenges.

The exercise reinforced that local actors do not need to control the root cause to influence outcomes—but they must be able to coordinate effectively, communicate clearly, and operate across interdependent systems. Participants identified key gaps in coordination, governance, and infrastructure awareness, alongside practical opportunities to strengthen preparedness.

Ultimately, the exercise underscored five enduring lessons:

1. Coordination across private sector, government, and sporting organizing bodies must be tight.
2. Infrastructure ownership and dependencies must be understood in advance.
3. Business needs a central coordinating voice and presence in the problem-solving decision making and communications.
4. Interdependencies create cascading failures.
5. Communications anchored in a single source of truth are the most critical capability.



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