

BIODEX

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When Business Relationships Change in the Wake of a Disaster

Shirley, N.Y.—The subject line read, “We are okay”...this began a string of emails darting back and forth between offices on Long Island with long-time clients in Japan. What happens to business relationships in the wake of a disaster? Biodex Medical Systems soon found out after the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in Japan, hit on March 11, 2011.

Biodex manufactures and distributes equipment for the physical rehabilitation, medical imaging and nuclear medicine markets in over 85 countries. At Biodex, signs hang everywhere reminding those who work here, we are “Customer Obsessed.” The creed which every employee follows is; make the customer happy and serve them. So when the Great East Japan Earthquake, (as it is now known), hit, concerns ran high for our clients scattered throughout the region. How could we help them? The emails going back and forth, hinted how.

“I feel so happy to hear from an ‘old’ friend at Biodex! Yes, it is really the disaster of triple tragedies, record breaking terrible earthquake, tsunami and contamination of radio activity...The current situation hangs in the balance. There are rolling black out in Tokyo areas except metro area. So I told my wife and son to stay with her parents for another week just in case something terrible happens. As a Japanese, I am very pleased and appreciate American people’s concern, help, and thought.”

The relationship is now personal for many at Biodex who keep in regular contact. Words of hope and encouragement are part of regular emails entitled, “Thinking of you and your family,” and “How are you doing? We want to help!” Biodex has been in business since 1949 with many business dealings spanning decades. “We have been maintaining steady contact throughout this crisis and our concern and well wishes are deeply regarded by our Japanese colleagues,” explained Adel Holl, International Sales Manager, for Biodex.

The items our Japanese clients were importing from Biodex, were not the type of goods they now needed. Products for the clinical research market and specialized therapeutic devices, while still wanted, couldn’t offer immediate nourishment and comfort. Biodex distributes products for use in nuclear medicine and most of these products were not the items Japanese businesses had been importing from the company. Everyday items were scarce or non-existent—so too were radiation detection and monitoring devices. “Our products for use in nuclear medicine and radiation detection are for the hospital or clinical setting, not a nuclear disaster, but they flew off the shelves. These products have been wiped out and are back ordered for nearly six months,” Holl states, adding, “We were happy to be able to at least send what we had.”

While the demand remains high for radiation meters, “Our clients in Japan are not the only ones needing radiation monitoring devices, our other customers located in countries within the danger zone, for radiation, are also concerned. We have been helping them locate products in other markets, to meet their needs, until our supplies are replenished,” Holl explains.

In the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation division of Biodex, large equipment used for physical therapy remained in demand. “Shipments continued to be scheduled with just equipment inside, we got the idea to fill any remaining room with items of necessity,” explains Ed Behan, Director of Product Management and Market Development.

Biodex sent over non-perishable goods, typical of what is needed after a disaster of this magnitude. Surprisingly, there was another request: The BioStep, a semi-recumbent, elliptical trainer...not requiring electricity!

The email read: *“We are wondering if you have some unnecessary BioSteps to be offered to the people who are living in evacuation sites. As the BioStep can be used in the environments that have no access to power, this is a good item for Japanese people.”*

And that is exactly what shipped, several new BioSteps and loads of items for our *friends* to pass along.

It is estimated it will take years for parts of Japan to be fully functioning again, areas hardest hit will take decades. Businesses have been destroyed and normal modes of conducting commerce are gone. Consider for a moment, billing, invoicing—all of these types of activities, to keep a business going are extremely strained. Some of the emails indicate; workers are living at their offices because their homes have been destroyed or the roads cannot be used. Getting back to normal business operations, will understandably take time.

For more information, contact Karen Johnson, Marketing Promotions Manager at Biodex directly at: 1 800-224-6339 (Int’l 631-924-9000), Email: info@biodex.com, kjohnson@biodex.com or www.biodex.com/balance

Please note photos are available.

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