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 Institute of Real Estate Management



# GREAT QUAKE- TSUNAMI





## JAPANESE PROPERTY MANAGERS TURN TO MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA DURING A CRISIS

The Great Quake-Tsunami—referring to the 9.0 magnitude earthquake/tsunami twin disaster that ravaged the Pacific coastal areas of northeastern and eastern Japan on March 11, 2011—left thousands dead, equally as many missing and millions of dollars of damages in its wake. In the midst of the chaos, Japanese property managers were able to use mobile technology to stay in touch with each other and their tenants/owners when typical means of communication were shut down.

*The following is the perspective of Kiyoshi Inomata, CPM, an IREM Member who works in the Tokyo / Yokohama area of Japan. >>*

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE EARTHQUAKE, THE MOST COMMON SERVICE REQUESTS WE RECEIVED FROM TENANTS INCLUDED:**

1) Restoration of natural gas service, which got turned off following the earthquake by a fail-safe device; 2) restoration of elevator services; and 3) repair of leaks in the water supply and drainage system caused by shears. However, due to public transportation shut-downs accompanied by major traffic jams, lack of gasoline and degradation of communication between our staff, tenants and owners, we were limited in our ability to provide a typical level of service to tenants.

**SAVED BY SMARTPHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Because of overloaded telephone circuits, cell phone calling capabilities were limited for the first few days after the earthquake. As a result, emergency communication methods using Smartphone applications and social media

sites became all the more important. For example, we were able to share information among our employees using Twitter immediately after the earthquake, enabling us to follow up with our tenants and owners quickly. We had never appreciated the vast usability of technology before; indeed, Internet usage from mobile devices has proven to be a superior communication vehicle for emergency situations. Our company provides Smartphones to all employees and makes registration for Viber and Skype mandatory. We also download disaster-related applications such as "RadioJP," which was quite helpful in getting information at the time of disaster; "The Quake is Coming," an earthquake flash report; "Blackout Search," which pinpoints planned outages; and "Family Medical Dictionary," which references first-aid treatment methods.

With our elderly tenants and owners who do not use the Internet, we had no choice but to physically visit them until landline phone service was restored to normal (which actually took less time than cell phone service). Fortunately, multiple vehicles with office capabilities and ASP property data management systems made it easier for us to swiftly assess and respond to property damages in our area.

**ASSESSING THE AFTERSHOCKS**

Even though I work in the Tokyo/Yokohama area—about 400 km (or 250 miles) from the Northeastern region of Japan closest to the epicenter—the earthquake still registered an intensity of six (seven being the strongest) on the so-called *Shindo* scale. Established by the Japan Meteorological Agency, the *Shindo* scale measures the intensity of shaking at any given location, rather than the strength of the earthquake at its epicenter, like the Richter scale.

As a result of the quake, our area suffered fires at petrochemical complexes, peeling external wall tiles, cracked external walls on condominiums, split foundations on wooden houses, falling ceiling panels, broken glass and the collapse of the parking structure in one of our large commercial facilities (which houses Costco). Tokyo Disneyland, which is built along the filled land of Tokyo Bay, experienced tilted buildings and telephone poles as well as broken street and parking lot pavement due to liquefaction of the ground.

Relatively speaking, however, visible damages were surprisingly small—even structures built with quake-resistant standards put in place before 1981 did not get



[TOP]  
BLACK SMOKE  
RISES IN A FIRE  
OF PETROLEUM IN  
TOKYO.

[BOTTOM] YOKOHAMA  
OFFICE BUILDING  
DAMAGE CAUSED  
CRACKS IN THE WALL.

PHOTOS BY INOMATA





significantly damaged. Buildings in the Northwestern region of Japan had limited damages, which resulted from the tsunami rather than the earthquake. According to specialists, despite the intensity of the quake, its seismic wave cycle was relatively short, minimizing damages caused by the sympathetic vibrations of the buildings.

#### RECONSTRUCTION ON THE HORIZON

Following the record-breaking Kobe earthquake 16 years ago, officials said it would take at least ten years for reconstruction; however, after only six years, visible repairs were made to the priority areas surrounding train stations. The Great Quake-Tsunami, compared to Kobe, was compounded by the tsunami and the accident at the nuclear power plant, both of which will likely increase reconstruction times for areas surrounding the Fukushima nuclear plant and the Northeastern shoreline.

Looking ahead, our main concern is the amount of time it will take to reconstruct buildings in the Northwest that either completely collapsed or were significantly damaged as a result of the tsunami and earthquake. Under normal circumstances, houses in Japan, which are usually two-story wooden structures, take three months to complete, while high-rise buildings and condominiums typically take one to three years to construct. Reconstruction after a major catastrophe is a more complicated and time-consuming process that must factor in damaged factories and industrial complexes, sporadic blackouts due to defunct power plants and a general shortage of all resources, including construction materials, equipment and manpower. Before we begin to rebuild other properties, our priority is to reconstruct vital systems—such as water, sewage, natural gas, electric, road and rail systems—that suffered structural damages.

Since the Tokyo/Yokohama area did not suffer as much damage, our daily work has now returned to business as usual. March is the end of the fiscal year in Japan and it is usually the busiest month out of the year for property managers due to the fact that every few years, Japanese companies typically relocate their employees. However, this year, many are postponing these standard moves

#### A note from Kiyoshi Inomata, CPM March 29, 2011



*Many Japanese, including myself, were touched by President Obama's speech, filled with love and courage, when he announced that the United States would send military personnel as part of "Operation Tomodachi" to assist Japan immediately after the earthquake. Both Japan and the United States, along with the rest of the world, are troubled with many problems. However, as he mentioned, the differences between our countries are very small when compared to issues of humanity. I look forward to the two countries, the world and colleagues of IREM holding hands with bright hope for the future throughout this long journey of reconstruction.*

*I would like to thank IREM Members as well as the government and the citizens of the United States for their assistance and encouragement in response to this disaster.*

because of our unclear economic future, as well as the fact that many companies have temporarily opted to move their offices west, which is affecting the residential market. As can be expected, there is also an increased demand for better earthquake-resistant residences.

When it comes to predicting how the population will respond to this disaster, there are two possibilities: 1) The population in eastern Japan might shift to other areas due to the fear of the effects of the radioactive leak from the Fukushima nuclear plant on food, water and soil; and/or 2) reconstruction work might spur a surge in economic activity, which could in turn drive population growth in those very areas people are currently moving from.

Fortunately, despite the seriousness of the situation, people are staying calm and, depending on how the situation recovers, those who made the move away from eastern Japan might eventually return to their hometowns, which is an important cultural aspect of Japanese society. ■



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[WWW.REDCROSS.ORG](http://WWW.REDCROSS.ORG).

このたび日本を襲ったM9.0という歴史的な大震災に対し、IREM会員の皆さんや、皆さんの国の政府、国民の方々から、様々な援助、応援をいただいていることに心から感謝します。

私が仕事をしている東京・横浜エリアは震源地に近く被害の大きかった東北沿岸部から400km(250マイル)も離れていますが、それでも震度6を記録し、石油コンビナートの火災やビル外壁パネルの剥離、マンションの外壁や木造住宅の基礎の亀裂、あるいは天井の落下やガラスの破損、大型商業施設(コストコ!)の駐車場斜路の崩落などさまざまな被害が発生しました。

東京沿岸部の埋立地では(東京ディズニーランドなど)、地盤の液状化によって建物やエクステリア、電柱などの傾きや道路・駐車場の舗装の破損なども起こっています。

しかし、全体的に見ると今回の震災では、1981年以前の建築許可によって建てられたいわゆる「旧耐震基準建築物」も含め、目に見えた被害は意外と少なく、東北地方の方々からも、津波以外での建物被害はあまりなかったと聞いています。専門家からは周期が比較的短い地震波動であったため、建物の共振による被害を免れることが出来たという分析がされています。

震災直後に多くのテナントから発生したサービスリクエストは、主に①安全装置によって停止したガスの簡単な復帰作業②緊急停止したエレベーターの復旧作業依頼③給排水管のズレによる漏水事故の3点がほとんどでした。ただ、津波を含めた震災被害の大きかった東北地域において、全壊・半壊の被害を受けた建物も多くあるわけで、このエリアの被災建築物の再建までに、そして、被災地域全体の復興にどの程度の期間を要するかということが、重要な懸案事項になります。

日本では、木造2階建ての住宅が多いのですが、一般的には着工から完成まで約3ヶ月間といわれています。また、高層住宅やビルの場合はおよそ1~3年の工期が必要です。ただし、それは平常時においてという前提条件ですから、工場や工業団地への被害、発電所被害による電力不足から実施されている不定期な輪番停電による操業の難しさから、あらゆる建築資材、設備、人員の供給が滞っているこの情勢では、数ヶ月の工期の遅れが発生することが当然に予想されます。津波被害や液状化によって、上下水道、ガス、電気、道路、鉄道などのインフラが失われたり、大きな被害を受けたりした地域においてはその回復が先に必要になりますのでさらに復興までには長い道のりが必要となるでしょう。16年前に起きた記録に残る大きな都市型地震である「阪神・淡路震災」では、復興までに10年はかかるといわれていましたが、わずか6年で駅周辺の再開発が一応の完了をし、目に見えた復興を実感するまでにいたりしました。ただ、今回の震災がこの前例と大きく異なる点は、「津波による大きな被害」と「原発事故の発生」です。福島原発周辺地域と東北沿岸部の都市においてはより長期の復興期間を要すると予測されます。

地震発生直後、われわれのPM業務を阻んだのは、公共交通機関のストップとそれに伴う大渋滞とガソリン不足そして社内スタッフ、テナント、オーナー等との通信状況の悪化でした。現在は平常の状態に回復していますが、震災から数日間、携帯電話は基本的に使えませんでした。緊急用の通信を優先すべきという観点からも当然の措置だと思います。一方、ツイッターは地震のそのときにも、刻一刻と社内スタッフ間で情報のやり取りをすることができて、それをテナントやオーナーもフォローすることができたので今回ほど有用性を認識したときはありませんでした。モバイル機器によるインターネット接続は

緊急時のインフラとして優れていることが実証されたということでしょう。わが社では、スマートフォンを社員全員に供給していますが、Viber、Skypeの登録を義務付けました。また、災害時の情報入手にはラジオが大きな力をもっていますが、これも全員がRadioJPというアプリケーションを、「ゆれくる」という地震速報や「停電検索」という計画停電情報、「家庭の医学」という応急処置の方法などといった災害用アプリと一緒にダウンロードしました。問題は、インターネットを利用しない高齢のオーナーやテナントですが、こういった方々に対しては固定電話(携帯電話よりも回復が早かったです)が回復するまでは足を運んで連絡を取るしかありませんでした。幸い、事務所機能を持った複数の専用車両とASP化された物件データ管理システムを使って管理物件が点在するエリアを運営していたおかげで、震災後の建物被害状況の把握も含めて、速やかな対応ができたと思います。

現在の仕事の状況は、東京・横浜エリアでは、被害が少なかったこともあり、業務は日常の状態に戻っています。特に、3月は日本の企業や役所、学校の年度終了月でもあり、賃貸住宅市場は一年で最も活況な時期となりますが、今回の震災による経済活動の先行きが見えないことから、退去・引越しを見送る入居者が増えたり、西日本のへの一時的なオフィス機能移転による引越しなど短期的な賃貸住宅市場にも影響を与えています。より耐震性能の高い住宅への借り換えといった需要も発生しています。中長期的には、福島原発事故による放射能物質の漏出に伴い、発生した食品・水・土壌などの環境に対する恐怖から、東日本エリアから他地域への人口移動が発生する可能性があります。現在は幸いパニックには至っておらず、今後も事態の収束の仕方によって、地縁の強い日本の社会においては移動した人口が再度元に戻る可能性もおおいにありうると予想できます。また、復興に伴う経済活動の活性化から逆に人口流入が増えるというシナリオも考えられます。すべては、今後の状況次第ということになりますが、日本は冷静で規律と公共性を重んじる、そして我慢強い国民性をもつということを念頭に予想をしていく必要があるでしょう。

最後に、震災発生後ただちに米国が発動した日本救助作戦「オペレーション・トモダチ」において兵士を送り出すオバマ大統領の愛と勇気に満ちた演説に私も、多くの日本国民も胸を打たれ、大きな感動を受けました。日本も、米国も、そして世界も、いまだ様々な問題を抱えていますが、彼の語るとおり、国々や人々の数え切れない差異など人類が取り組むべき課題に比べればとても小さなものと思います。長い復興の道のりにおいて、明るい未来に希望を抱きつつ、これからも両国が、世界が、そしてIREMの仲間たちが、ともに手を携えていくことを心から望んでいます。

#110 IREM-JAPAN 理事

東京支部長 猪俣淳(いのまた きよし)CPM ファカルティー

その他:猪俣写真、震災状況の写真は別途添付。