

Disaster recovery powered by essential wisdom from a chance encounter

An American non-profit organization struggled with its disaster recovery efforts, until Japanese manufacturing knowledge radically transformed its activities for the better.

St. Bernard Project (SBP)



Right:
CEO & Co-Founder
Zack Rosenberg
Left:
Director of Client Services
& Co-Founder
Liz McCartney



Rosenburg and McCartney helped rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. But the massive amount of damage eventually became too much.

It was a day that turned lives upside down. In late August 2005, Hurricane Katrina barreled down on the southeastern United States in one of the worst natural disasters in the nation's history. Some 230,000 square kilometers—an area about the size of Japan's main island of Honshu—were devastated by the impact. Louisiana and Mississippi took the brunt of the damage, and nearly 80percent of New Orleans' urban districts were inundated when the city's levees collapsed. The number of victims swelled to 1 million people, with 400,000 of them living in evacuation shelters. The St. Bernard Parish was one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods of all. Generous support flowed in from across America and around the world to help the victims return to life before the storm. Lawyer Zack Rosenberg and schoolteacher Liz McCartney founded the non-profit organization St. Bernard Project (SBP) soon after the disaster. Their goal was to help people rebuild their homes. With the help of military veterans and

volunteers, the group rebuilt more than 400 houses over the next five years. Despite their successes, however, Rosenberg and McCartney were keenly aware of their limitations.



