

5 Tips on Leading Through Uncertain Times



Uncertainty isn't just reserved for a global pandemic like Covid-19. Volatile business environments, rapid changes in technology, evolving expectations for leaders or any other variables mean that most leaders find themselves navigating through increasingly complex workplaces. While we have more access to information than ever, sorting through what's most important and reliable creates doubt and uncertainty. Research suggests that leaders who will work effectively in highly complex, ambiguous and paradoxical environments will need to:

1

Think long term and understand the potential consequences before taking action. This strategic orientation towards looking to the future and potentially even seeing around corners allows leaders to take a long-range broader view. Using their expertise and wisdom (or surrounding themselves with those who have such insight) will be key to minimizing missteps in times of uncertainty.

IN ACTION:

- Slow down and ask questions before moving too quickly to implement new ideas.
- Engage experts and broader perspectives in decision-making to the best and most current information is being considered.
- Take time to think and plan.

2

Provide clear and compelling communication that brings people along on the journey. During times of uncertainty, leaders need to continually revisit and potentially refine expectations as the landscape around the organization shifts and changes.

IN ACTION:

- Be transparent with changes and information to minimize speculation during times of extreme disruption and crisis.
- Be prepared to readjust goals and rewards and clarify expectations for team members to support engagement. When it's not 'business as usual' adjusting your approach to rewards and recognition is key. Particularly in high performance environments that emphasize goal achievement.

3

Lean into leadership by stepping up, taking charge and challenging the status quo. In times of uncertainty, individuals look to leadership to show the way forward. This is also a time to challenge outmoded assumptions and stand behind hard decisions.

IN ACTION:

- Be decisive. During a crisis teams look for leaders who are comfortable with authority and willing to step up to take charge.
- Challenge outmoded assumptions. During extreme change and crisis, the reality is that nobody has the 'right' answers. Look for opportunities to test and trial new ways of working and question miss-placed authority.

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4

Remain calm and control emotions. Staying even-keeled and consistent while working under pressure reduces the strain on your team and increases the effectiveness of decision-making.

IN ACTION:

- Have an outlet to let out your own fears, frustrations and emotions. Join a peer group and support each other in navigating this disruption.
- Build in mindful habits to reduce stress. Try taking 5 deep cleansing breaths before going into each meeting.
- Practice gratitude as a way to tame fear, anxiety and uncertainty. Write down three items each day that you are grateful for and place them in a jar. Re-read as needed.

5

Cultivate connection and community. Leaders who show empathy and compassion will gain the support and respect of teams during times of uncertainty.

IN ACTION:

- Create space for emotions. Ask 'how are you feeling today' at the start of one to one or team meetings to allow people to share their experiences.
- Carve out time for informal connections. Whether it's a virtual happy hour in the age of social distancing or mailing birthday or other milestone cards to team members, creating personal connections and community strengthens engagement and collaboration and also reduces stress and feelings of isolation.

Leading in Times of Uncertainty

Group Coaching Program

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Using our high impact group coaching format, you'll not only build new skills and mindsets around navigating uncertainty, you'll also cultivate a community of support along the way.



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