

NAVIGATING A CRISIS

People don't expect you to have all the answers but they do expect you to share what you know. They are seeking sensible reassurance. Now more than ever it is important to communicate. Here's some ideas for managers to support their teams.

4. DON'T BE A JOBS WORTH

Now is the time to challenge preconceived rules. Whether this is work travel, sick leave or remote working policies.

Be clear about your willingness to work with your teams on supporting their emotional needs and together offer up suggestions that will help them be effective, in a different way. Get creative together.

5. SOLICIT FEEDBACK

Don't adopt a tell approach to communications. Often in times of stress managers don't want to open up the debate in case they lose control or show they don't have answers. This will be your undoing.

Now is the time to accept your vulnerability and be prepared to explore, challenge, question, develop with those around you.

1. MANAGE YOUR OWN STATE FIRST

It is important to separate fact from emotion. To be the best role model you need to manage your own state. If you demonstrate anxiety and uncertainty, people will feed off this. Remember you lead the way. Take care of yourself first so you can be the best support for your own people. Eat well, drink water. Keep your body moving. Before you go into any conversation take a moment to prepare yourself mentally for it. Take a deep breath and stand tall and think about the outcome you want from that conversation. I know it sounds simple but it is these type of small actions that improve your resourcefulness when all around you are in meltdown.

2. HIGHLIGHT PREPAREDNESS

Be clear, yourself, about the business continuity plan and share this with your teams. This will help people focus on what can be done rather than what can't. It will build resourcefulness. And where there is no plan, help your own teams be resourceful by including them in planning. You don't know what ideas they have until you ask and this in turn will help them feel more in control and resourceful.

3. BUILD A COMMUNITY

Many people are driven by fear right now and this can make them feel powerless. Your job is to make people feel safe. They need to know you care. Show this is by communicating and exploring together.

If you have people working from home remember they are still there. Use the digital tools you have available to keep them in the loop. Team 'huddles' digitally can help raise energy and focus. Set realistic daily/ weekly targets. Individually, check in with how they are feeling and what they are thinking. This will go a long way to keep people on track. Remember that not everyone enjoys working from home.

People can feel isolated, struggle to bounce ideas around and some lack the drive or discipline to be effective. So, lead the way by using digital tools to involve your teams. You could share a morning motivation video explaining how you are going to stay on purpose and ask the team to share their ideas on the back of it.

Celebrate successes -when someone has achieved something no matter how small, give them a virtual high five as well as sharing with the team. Watch out for individuals who are struggling and bring in other members of the team to support them. Now is the time to communicate; and then communicate some more. It could be at the very time you are becoming withdrawn or distracted so know you might have to work really hard on this. As managers, remember it is your job to get the most out of people and you can only do that by showing you care about them in these troubling times.

6. REMEMBER THOSE ABOVE YOU TOO

Your own manager and their manager are in the same boat and have fewer people they can share with. Be there for them too to explore. Don't expect them to have all the answers. Instead be their go-to person to help them continue to perform.

7. BE VISIBLE; MAKE YOUR RESULTS VISIBLE

When people are heads down in turmoil, performance is the last thing on their minds. But performance and continual improvement is essential to help your organisation survive. Be an advocate for performance and help your peers do the same. It really is the case that you are in this together and it is only together that you will survive. Share your successes, define what you are focusing on and describe the positive outcomes of conversations. If you are talking to customers share what they are saying particularly if they say something nice!

8. RISE ABOVE

It's easy to get stuck in the weeds during crisis management and the detail will keep you bogged down. Maintain an outcome focus and challenge those around you to do the same. Always think "Why are we doing this" "How will doing x move us forward?" Crisis is not solved by data alone – it is the human touch that will see you through this and help you move to a more stable footing.