

Leadership Lessons for Recovering from COVID: It's Time for a New Playbook

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Agenda

- ▶ Leadership Eras
- ▶ Recovery Leadership Skills
 - Understanding these skills
 - Applying these skills
- ▶ In summary...

Leadership has changed over time

- ▶ **1950's: Stable Prosperity Era**
 - Military model with an emphasis on hierarchy
 - Loyalty to organization, reliance on supervisor
 - Dominant motivator: **Success Matters**
- ▶ **1980's: Change and Churn Era**
 - Corporate reorganizations, acquisitions, downsizing
 - Loyalty to organization disappears, reliance on self
 - Dominant motivator: **Survival matters**
- ▶ **2020's: COVID Recovery Era**
 - To be written...
 - Dominant motivator: **Helpfulness matters**

During periods of ambiguity we don't know what to do

- ▶ Uncertainty about what to do next is often due to:
 - Too little information
 - Too much information
- ▶ Unfortunately, the 24/7 news cycle exacerbates the latter and often does more harm than good.
- ▶ This workshop tries to create a balanced, focused view based on what leaders need to do now during periods of extreme change.
- ▶ Its emphasis is how to deal with your potentially greatest asset: **the people in your business.**

What can we learn from past crises?

- ▶ Business will not be the same as in the past.
- ▶ There will not be a singular event to indicate it is over.
- ▶ The recovery will be gradual, not immediate.
- ▶ Those that prepare will be in the best shape to take advantage of new opportunities.
- ▶ Innovation coupled with realistic expectations can drive new success.
- ▶ Retaining a competent and motivated work force is a key to initiating responsive actions.
- ▶ **Your actions as a leader matter.**

The “end” is just the beginning...

- ▶ The pandemic is/will be a major disruption in our lives.
- ▶ There will be a new “normal” with many opportunities for those who prepare rather than those who simply react.
- ▶ A new set of leadership skills are called for.
- ▶ We call these RLS’s – **Recovery Leadership Skills**.
- ▶ We will describe these skills, and most importantly – how you can apply them.
- ▶ In so doing, you can serve as a “Beacon of Hope” during these difficult times.

Let's put things into perspective...

- ▶ During steady state business conditions, leaders have a good idea of what is expected, relying on past practices that have served them well.
- ▶ They develop a rich repertoire of leadership behaviors when dealing with customers, employees, and other constituencies.
- ▶ When the unexpected happens, many of these behaviors may also work, **but too often, not as well.**
- ▶ Those that can adapt to change and learn new approaches have a higher likelihood of success.
- ▶ That is what this workshop is about.

Simply being the boss is not enough

- ▶ This is a time for honesty and acknowledging that you may not have all the answers.
- ▶ There is no magic bullet.
- ▶ A different leadership approach is required where you set expectations and lead change in new, powerful ways.
- ▶ We call these **Recovery Leadership Skills**
 - Helpfulness and honesty, while always important, are now central to these skills.

Traditional vs. Recovery Leadership Skills

Traditional Leader Skills

- ▶ **Setting Direction**
 - Results emphasis
 - Customer focus
- ▶ **Executing**
 - Problem solving
 - Business judgement
- ▶ **Leading**
 - Influencing others
 - Managing conflict
- ▶ And many, many more

Recovery Leader Skills

- ▶ All of the traditional skills
PLUS:
- ▶ **Empathy**
- ▶ **Integrity**
- ▶ **Fairness**
- ▶ **Encouragement**

1. Understanding the Recovery Leadership Skills

Recovery Leadership Skills

- ▶ Start with the definition of what these behaviors represent.
- ▶ Think of people you know who are both effective and ineffective when showing **empathy, integrity, fairness and encouragement**.
- ▶ Use the following charts as guidelines regarding both effective and ineffective actions or outcomes.
- ▶ Think about the contrast between effective and problematic comments and how you might respond.

Empathy: Easily comprehends the feelings and emotions of others and can openly express them.

Effective Behaviors	Problematic Behaviors
Listens carefully to the feelings and concerns of others	Has a predetermined perspective of what these feelings are
Acknowledges the legitimacy of these feelings	Dismisses or minimizes the validity of concerns or feelings
Shares own perspective and concern for these feelings	Emphasizes own opinion and point of view
Open to getting new input that enhances awareness of feelings	Resistant to expressing unfamiliar feelings or emotions

Integrity: Capacity to demonstrate actions that serve the best interests of those led.

Effective Behaviors	Problematic Behaviors
Truthful, even when it may be difficult to do so	Has own agenda which may or may not be shared
Willing to make and explain difficult decisions	Makes excuses or assigns blame for tough actions that are made
Willing to listen and speak up for those who may hold unpopular views	Makes up own mind or is impacted by small group of influencers
Encourages open discussion of different points of view	Resistant to ideas that differ from own established perspective

Fairness:

Provides evenhanded actions that others see as equitable.

Effective Behaviors	Problematic Behaviors
Consistent in actions involving others	Plays favorites and acts in an arbitrary manner
Openly shares basis of decisions and actions	Tends to be secretive or, when challenged, evasive
Makes decisions based on facts, not on own personal views or sympathies	Relies more on own opinions and feelings when making decisions
Is seen as an impartial and unbiased arbitrator	Seen as inconsistent and often arbitrary

Encouragement:

Inspires others and provides support for new ideas or better ways of doing things.

Effective Behaviors	Problematic Behaviors
Stimulates others to try different approaches	Tends to say “no” rather than “yes” to new ideas
Open to innovation and moving beyond established ways of doing things	Finds many reasons for maintaining the status quo
Thinks broadly and is willing to test assumptions	Focuses on short term causes and actions
Imparts confidence that enables others to try new ideas	Stalls or dismisses challenges or alternative suggestions

2. Applying the Leadership Recovery Skills

The direction of many leadership conversations will change

FROM

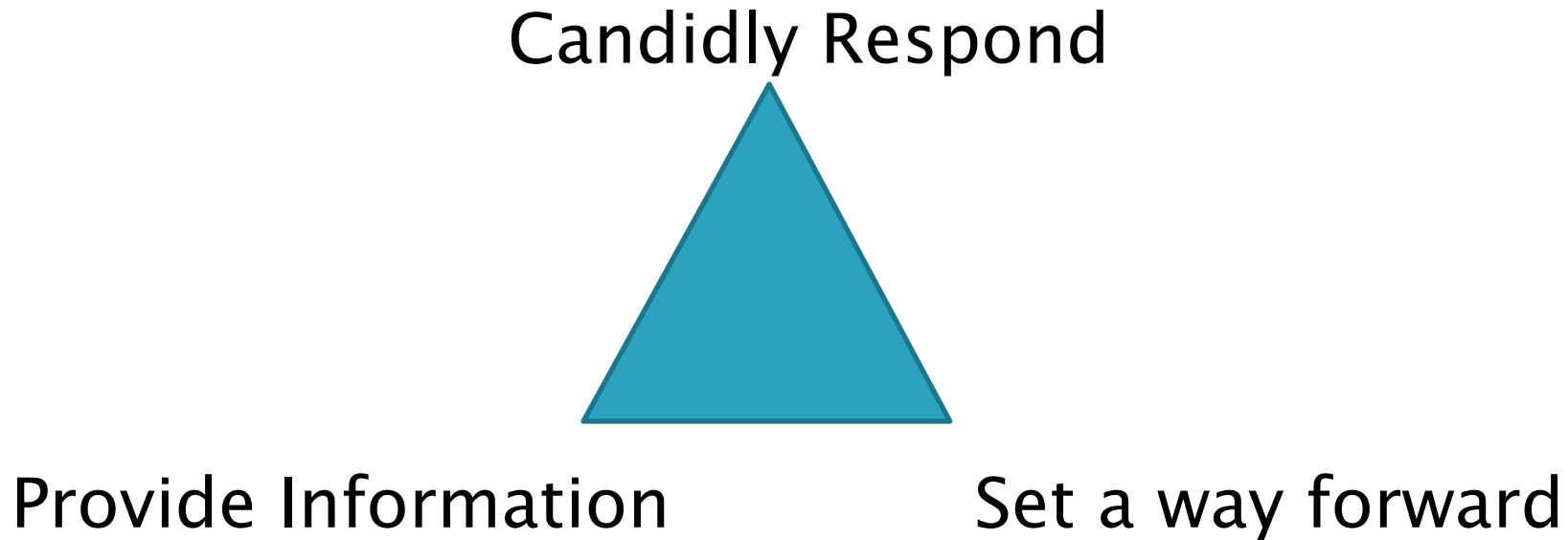
- ▶ Setting a direction to improve a situation
- ▶ Leveraging resources
- ▶ Expanding services
- ▶ Dealing with competition
- ▶ Etc.

TO

All of the above AND

- ▶ Listening to deep feelings and concerns
- ▶ Truthfully serving the best interests of all
- ▶ Providing evenhanded responses and
- ▶ Stimulating others to act differently

Principles of Managing a COVID Conversation



Some common COVID concerns

- ▶ What is going to happen to me, to the company, to my career?
- ▶ How can I be sure that I will have a job next month?
- ▶ We seem to have lost a lot of customers. Will we stay in business?
- ▶ Do we have enough money to continue next month?
- ▶ Why did you decide to do X?
- ▶ Why have some of us lost their jobs?
- ▶ Specific concerns related to your business, competitors and customers...

A simple 6 step approach to address most COVID concerns

1. Thank the person for coming to speak to you
2. Acknowledge that this is a tough conversation for both of you
3. Listen carefully to their concerns
4. Respond candidly, providing information and a realistic perspective of the situation in an empathetic manner
5. Ask if your response answered the concerns noted
6. Review any next steps based on this conversation

This approach will work best when...

- ▶ Your responses emphasize Leadership Recovery Behaviors
- ▶ You practice what you want to say
 - Print these up on a 3x5 index card to have them handy for you
- ▶ You are prepared, and are not fearful of saying the “wrong” thing

These are not easy skills to master, BUT...

- ▶ This is the most important time to master and apply these skills
- ▶ They will help you set the tone for uniting and building back your company
- ▶ You also need to acknowledge that these skills are important for everyone in your company
- ▶ Your actions will be remembered (for good and bad) so:

DON'T IGNORE OR MINIMIZE THESE!

In summary...

- ▶ When this is “over”, talented people will have many options.
- ▶ Your behaviors now are very important.
- ▶ 10 years from now people will remember their experiences during COVID.
- ▶ How you act now will help them write their script!

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