

Six Keys to Leading in Crisis

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Leaders have an increased responsibility to lead during times of crisis and this current COVID-19 crisis is certainly one of those times. We have identified 6 C's as keys to demonstrate your leadership today.

Calm

In any crisis, we look to our leaders for signals that we can either, get through this, or on the other hand, that it's time to panic (the boat is going down). It's important, as leaders, that we project a sense of CALM – that we can get through this. This can have a huge positive impact on our teams as we focus on addressing the challenges we will face whether they are personal (how do I make working from home work for me) or business (how do we continue to produce, generate revenue, keep our business alive) in this time of crisis.

Connect

Connecting to your team is more critical than ever! Ensure that you are increasing both the frequency and amount of information you communicate to your team. Here are some ideas:

- 5 minute daily huddles to check in with everyone
- Virtual lunches
- Slack or text channels that are focused on ideas for working at home with children, surviving social isolation, funny things that happen while WFH
- Increase 1:1s, even for short check-ins at the beginning and end of each week
- Increase overall business updates, new strategies, redirection of projects, etc.

It's also critical that you are connecting with your peers and maintaining important relationships across the organization. We are all in this together. Reach out to your peers and colleagues to support them, share ideas for managing in this new environment, for creative ways to socialize where being isolated.

Clarify

Ensure that you take this opportunity to clarify the goals for each of your people. Are they clear on what needs to be accomplished by when? What, if anything, has changed in terms of what they are expected to deliver by when? It's also an opportunity for you to take the time and space to reflect on your team's mission and priorities. How might they need to change in this crisis? Is there an opportunity to refocus and/or reprioritize to increase your team's impact?

Create

Crises are a time for creativity and redesign. Look for opportunities to be creative with your team. Hold a Zoom meeting with the team and use the Chat function to brainstorm ideas, whether about current projects or coping with the "shelter-in-place" challenges. Here is our [Design Thinking](#) approach to guide you (all practices can be adapted to videoconferencing formats).

Coach

It's important to coach your directs, but during a crisis, it is even more imperative. Use this opportunity to reach out and coach your people. We have developed [In-the-Moment Coaching](#) that is highlighted by the *RAR Model* (Rapport, Assess, Reframe). Giving feedback and problem-solving with your team is a daily practice, and it's also a great time to help each member of your team learn and develop.

Care

Most importantly, it is THE moment to show that you CARE personally about each member of the team. In your 1:1s, ask how they are coping with the crisis, what is most challenging for them, what are their concerns/worries. You don't have to have all the answers, you just need to listen and ask if there is anything



they need from you. This demonstrates that you care about them personally. As the crisis continues, we all need support. Reaching out proactively to your team, your colleagues, your customers is a key leadership role for you now. This is about leading with your heart, not leading with your head. Heart-based leadership breeds loyalty and commitment and is one of the most powerful leadership tools we all possess.

Finally, it's also important that you practice SELF-CARE. As a leader, the demands on you escalate in crisis. You have your own worries, challenges and concerns. Ensure that you are taking time to rest, regenerate, and exercise. Find a friend, colleague, family member to co-support each other. You can only be your best leader if you are taking care of yourself.

About the Author

Barbara Baill, M.A., is the Principal of Perceptus, Inc. and a Strategic Partner with Mariposa. Barbara brings to her clients the wisdom and learning from 25 + years of Human Resources and line management experience in the fast-paced environments of high-tech industries. This included 5 years leading HP's Global Executive Development function and 7 years as the VPHR for Quantum Corporation's Disk Drive Business; both assignments resulting in driving large scale organization change initiatives. Barbara began her coaching career in 2002, dedicated to helping leaders increase their leadership impact and find more personal satisfaction in both their business roles and personal lives. Barbara holds a M.A. in Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota, a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Michigan, and is a Certified Integral Coach from New Ventures West. Barbara coaches virtually and in person in the SF Bay Area and can be reached at barbara@mariposaleadership.com.

