

Leading in a Crisis: How to Keep People Calm, Focused and Engaged

1. What do employees want from leaders in times of crisis?

Prompts:

- They need information. Weak leaders stop communicating.
- They want leadership to provide direction – to show there's a way out of the storm.
- They want honesty.
- They want to know what's expected of them.

2. What research mentioned in the Quick Take shows that even highly competent people can become dysfunctional in times of high stress. What does that mean to you as a leader?

Prompts:

- Uncertainty leads to stress that can prevent people from thinking clearly and making good decisions.
- The human brain needs things to be predictable. When certainty and routine are disrupted, people might stop doing the things that make them high-value employees.
- Our goal as leaders is to relieve as much of the anxiety as possible by showing that we have a plan to get through the storm.
- Our people need to know in very certain terms what's expected of them and how they can contribute to the plan.

3. In what ways do you believe having a plan and controlling anxiety serves to validate your leadership skills?

Prompts:

- People are reassured when they believe leadership can address potentially paralyzing complexity, simplify it, and draw a roadmap for navigating the storm safely.
- Strong leadership in a crisis builds trust and confidence.
- Working through a crisis with a clearly defined shared goal builds teamwork that will carry over when business returns to normal.
- Crisis situations give leaders the opportunity to show that they genuinely care about the welfare of the company and every employee because everyone is in it together.
- A crisis is a threat, but it's also an opportunity.

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