



RYP Quarterly

Five Tips for Leading out of COVID-19

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It is only when the tide goes out do you discover who has been swimming naked.

- Warren Buffett

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a once in a generation crisis which will create a new normal in how we live, work, and transact our lives. Whilst this is a new phenomenon for Leaders to deal with, history does provide some invaluable insights on the attributes Organisations need that rebound strongly after a crisis.

It is in times of crisis when the character of person and the culture of an organisation will be revealed

In this blog, I share 5 tips / tools a leader needs to successfully navigate the future.

Tip 1: Mission Centred Businesses always rebound more quickly.

An organisations Purpose – Vision – Mission is at the core of any employee's DNA and sense of work fulfillment. This is much more than having a mission statement on the wall, but more whether staff genuinely believe the Organisation they work for makes a positive impact on the World, and how what they do contributes to the organisations purpose.

Lesson for A Leader: It is in times of crisis and how a leader responds is how what an organisation stands for is revealed.

Take the time to reflect on the Organisations mission, purpose and impact it makes. If it is affirmed, use it to re-engage staff around the organisations "why" – who it is, what it stands for, its brand promises and ultimate reason for being.

If missing engage the team to help reimagine what an authentic purpose could be – Check to see if line leaders have been role modelling any upfront cultural commitments during COVID. Explore if they believe that what the Organisations stands for has been affirmed, or not.

Working hard for something you don't stand for is called stress. Working for something you believe in is called passion.

- Simon Sinek



Tip 2: You Need a Road Map Forward

There will be a new normal post COVID. Returning to business as usual is not an option. You will be returning to Business as Unusual. Any road map should have three horizons to help navigate the times of uncertainty.

Horizon 1: Surviving Immediate Future (The next 3-6 Months)

Horizon 2: Restarting, Rethinking and Recommencing BAU (The next 6-12 Months)

Horizon 3: Pursuing New Opportunities in 2021 (Beyond 12 Months)

There should be several scenarios scoped out in Horizons 2 & 3, with clear triggers to help signal which way your business needs to react and respond to

Lesson for a Leader: **Hope is not a strategy!**

You are only as strong as your contingency plan. Having a three horizons road map will help engage Front-Line Leaders and the wider team, and allow them to contribute to the thinking, planning and pursuit of an uncertain landscape. The more eyes on the future, the more likely you will be aligned and have a greater ability to pivot as a united team.

Tip 3: Leadership Team must be Resilient and Optimistic & Role Models.

Both resilience and optimism are outcomes of how teams are being led and the ensuring team culture. Staff mirror image the behaviours and attitudes of their leaders.

Resilience is fuelled by:

- **Being persistent** in difficult circumstances
- **Proactively responding** to the changing circumstances
- **Being evenly tempered** through self-awareness in the most difficult and trying of circumstances
- **Taking active steps** to check in and support team members and colleagues regularly – remember they will never forget how you made them feel in times of difficulty.

Optimism is fuelled by:

- **An ability to express gratitude** and thanks for team members efforts and volunteerism.
- **Having a future focused** predisposition
- **Role modelling** positive thinking and a solution focused approach to problem solving.
- **Smiling** and catching people doing things rights

Lesson for Leader: **Presenteeism is Everything.**

Connecting with team members (whether onsite or remotely) is key to ensure there is a sense of resilience and optimism. The regular reassuring smile, pat on the back or



encouraging words will speak volumes during times of uncertainty with team members. You need to be present to role model!

A Leaders Actions & Attitude is Everything. Everyone can feel when a leader has checked out or is not authentic

Tip 4. An Ability to Critically Reflect and Let Go of the Past

Over a lifetime one thing you learn is everything is temporary. The way people live, learn, transact business, or use products and services is forever evolving. Since the industrial revolution, every ten years at least one third of jobs are invented. The human spirit has a wonderful ability to pivot and adapt to the circumstances of the day. It is important to spend some time to look learn and listen to what your stakeholders are saying, and how they are buying and behaving. An important leadership dynamic to lead and facilitate with team members is to critically reflect by:

- Reaffirm existing work practices, services, or products (*Stop – Start – Continue*)
- Realign how business can be transacted (*Traditional + Digital*)
- **Reimagine** what the future possibilities could be (*The art of the possible*)
- **Refresh and Renew** the mission and brand story (*What team stands for – point of difference*)

Lesson for Leader: **Critical Reflection helps engage the team.**

This is not something a leader does in isolation. It provides a vehicle for the leader to engage team members and together explore what should be stopped, started, or continued.

We cannot solve today's problems with the same thinking we used when we created them

- *Albert Einstein*

Tip 5: An ability to pivot and unite quickly behind a new approach or idea

Urgency and agility is everything when living and working in uncertain times. The one thing a leader can guarantee is that in an unpredictable market change is rapid and guaranteed. This is all about managing risks and exploring new opportunities in a united, agile, and engaged manner. What is required is clear scenarios and triggers which signal new trends and early warnings. If the need to adapt and pivot has been flagged early, it provides a platform of hope and confidence that the team will successfully navigate and capitalise on the risks and opportunities.

Lesson for Leader: **Clarifying that the future will be unpredictable will help galvanise the need for the team to be united and agile.**



It is a little bit like lifeboat training or fire drills. It helps prepare the team to act decisively and swiftly as and when the need to do so arises.

Perfect Practice Delivers Perfect Results so the saying goes in sport. It is no different with organisational capability. Prepare for unpredictable times and act decisively as and when they occur

Summary:

The ability to successfully navigate the future comes down to one thing, LEADERSHIP.

The tool kit a leader needs to include:

- 1. A Mission Centred Team**
A team who are centred around and committed to the mission and purpose of what the organisation stands for.
- 2. A Road Map out of COVID**
The Three Horizons H1 H2 H3
- 3. Leaders who are Resilient and Optimistic**
Fuelling this by role modelling it is essential.
- 4. Challenge the Status Quo**
An in-ability to let go of the past will stifle the future.
- 5. An Ability to pivot quickly.**
COVID is an example of how quickly and urgently teams can unite, pivot and act. The same lessons need to be taken into the future.

Facta Non Verba – Deeds Not Words

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