



## Leading through COVID-19 crisis

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Over the years, I have been working with several industries including health care in managing their crises. Today, in dealing with the pandemic Covid-19, they are experiencing a new type of crisis, one with increasing demand from all stakeholders (employees, customers, the community, the authorities, the suppliers), with challenges that do not stop growing in size and scope by the day. This may be the biggest challenge that they have faced.

Organizations, many which were built many years ago, were built for stability and reliability as the path to success was clear. As world economies have changed to knowledge economies, and now to sharing economies, many of these same organizations have remained in stationary, unable to break away from tried and tested traditional methods.

Industries all over and healthcare is no exception are in a situation that can be described as **volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous**....and they are wondering how to deal with it, what is going to happen next, and how to survive it.

The organizations that are more at risk are the ones that did not anticipate, and prepare for change. Understandably, no one anticipated the world coming to a stand-still. But they are also the ones whose visions were never clear, their thinking was Cartesian and linear, and their resources were mostly spent on trying to keep up with the competition, as opposed to competing with themselves, by getting better, and investing on people instead of tools, buildings, things... What will save companies today will not be processes, technology, smart managers, or brilliant doctors alone. It will be those who believe in their people, in recalibrating their strategy, reimagining the future, and the mission ahead of them.

How can these organizations stop the clock, save lives, and prepare for a better future? How can they prevent such pandemics from destroying civilization, community, families, while they are looking to restore order is a world full of disorder?

Aside from logistics, tools, resources, budgets, access to high tech equipment, there are men and women that need to be led through a war – a war like which the world has not seen before.

Answers to these questions depend on three things: the **mindset of decision makers**, the **context** they create, and **perspective** they have moving forward. Meaning what kind of a manager-leader are they today, and more importantly, what kind are you willing to be?

Let's first talk about the **mindset**?

Our brain loves to categorize and learn from the past to secure our future. This has worked well for thousands of years. Without this ability to predict the future based on the past, to identify risks, we would have disappeared as a species. This complex internal evolutionary system has done an incredible job of protecting us and allowing us to prosper for thousands of years, but right now, it is beginning to fail and limit us. That is why a change of mindset, a new way how we see ourselves, our values, our role...has to change

We need to talk to each other differently, collect information differently, and develop different strategies and plans for the future.

There are four habits that can help us evolve and improve our ability to deal with higher levels of complexity and uncertainty. These four habits are easy to implement:

- Ask different types of questions

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☐ Ask yourself and your employees how and where you can best focus your attention to help them do a better job. **CONFIDENCE**

☐ Don't ask why something went wrong or who did it. Ask instead why it went wrong. Ask your role in it **ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY** and accept **BLAME**

☐ Ask someone in your organization "How would YOU do it differently" and give them the green light **EMPOWERMENT** and **MOTIVATION**

☐ Show interest in your employees; **EMPATHY**. Ask them how you can help them get there "Where do you want to be in the organization in 3 or 5 years?" And "How can I help you achieve your goals?"

· Take on multiple perspectives

☐ Listen to what is not being said

☐ Be grateful to different opinions

☐ Do not punish those who disagree

☐ Accept when you are wrong

☐ Reward your people for participating

☐ Be the last to speak

· Develop a systemic vision

☐ Do not be linear in your thinking. Look at different points of view.

☐ Look at the organization a whole and not isolated incidents

☐ Do not isolate incidents/events

☐ Make your organization more horizontal by including the max people from start to finish

☐ Finally treat the root causes and not the symptoms

☐ Look at the whole picture; take a step back to see what's possible

Adopting these changes is so critical that our survival depends on it. I believe there are strategies to learn not only to survive, but also to thrive.

## AS A LEADER, PROVIDE THE TOOLS TO SUCCESS

This requires **freedom, creativity, speed, flexibility** and a corporate **culture that connects** people with the organization. This connection becomes more significant and can be brought into the focus of leadership even more decisively

The economy will not be the same, your patients will behave differently as their needs will not remain the same, your employees, if you get to keep them will be looking for a different type of boss, inclusive management, conditions of work.....

## TO LEAD IN CHANGE IS TO GAIN THE TRUST OF EVERYONE, PATIENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND THE COMMUNITY

### The right perspective

#### Lead by example:

☐ Be present and available. No longer manage from behind a desk

☐ Be honest with the reality

☐ Share information and what you are thinking

☐ Explain your decisions and do not just give orders

### Create Traction not Distraction:

☐ Provide everyone a purpose and keep people together (do not allow for conflicts).

☐ Provide updates so they do not have to rely on gossip or fake news

☐ Stay positive and show the way to a better tomorrow

☐ Tend to individual concerns

### Optimism over fear

A crisis reveals one of 2 things, fear or optimism.

☐ Fear of the unknown, loss of confidence, pessimism, depression. These are sure to lead you to lose your leadership status and expedite losing control over your people and your company.

Or you can show optimism, accepting things for what they are, and getting ready to see the opportunity these tough times have created: Ford Motors is now making ventilators. Amazon is partnering with local delivery companies (usually competitors), many local businesses have transformed themselves (above 2 types of leaders?), the biggest theaters in NYC are now the best run hospitals, and that is all a result of optimistic leaders who show the way.