

## Issue No. 4 - Leading In Turbulent Times

I hope you have ushered in 2009 with tremendous optimism and faith. Thought I'd build on my previous article with some tips and suggestions on how to lead effectively during these times.

Firstly, take note of how you're holding up. **Manage your own fear.** There's nothing more unnerving to a team during times of crises than a perception that their leader's not totally with it. Acknowledge the fear, feel it and do something constructive to deal with it. Remember, "Courage is not the absence of fear. It is doing whatever it takes in spite of fear". Taking on physical activity helps. Now might be a good time to start or ramp up on that "get fit" regimen.

**Look at the bright side.** Write an inventory of everything that's going great in your life right now. Take down everything positive that could arise from the present situation. Let gratitude take the place of fear. Remember, the best emotional state to be making decisions in is either gratitude or inspiration, never fear or desperation.

**Be real.** State the reality as it is, and with empathy and compassion. The important thing is to state it. Don't be silent. Your team is looking to you to provide certainty and direction. Communicate with humility, grace, and yet, exude certainty that as with every crises, this one shall pass. And it will. If you are dealing with layoffs, this [article](#) offers constructive tips on how to communicate this.

**Be optimistic.** Give your team hope. Just don't be over exuberant when communicating or dealing with layoffs. Remember people are but bundles of emotional energy. Give them the boost they need when they need it. Obama stated things as they were, then offered a clear glimpse of what was possible, then made a request for the support he needed, and finished with clear, unequivocal certainty that with that support and belief, the team would prevail. A powerful formula. If you mean it. If you don't, work on it. In the words of Henry Ford, "whether you believe you can or you believe you cannot, you are absolutely right".

**Use team huddles,** coffee sessions, managers' clinics. Get your team talking about challenges and then about solutions. Listen to them. Talking helps. Help them manage their focus. Get them to focus on solutions. Remember, you experience what you focus on. Come up with ideas to effectively reduce costs. Then stimulate constructive activity in moving the team forward. Crises breeds creativity and innovation. Reward the best ideas!

**Find ways to inexpensively improve morale.** Trust and loyalty inevitably get shaken during these times. Find activities the team can do e.g. fun runs, barbeques, watching motivational clips together. Get the "social birds" in your team involved in creating such events. Getting them to think of someone else during these times (rather than their own problems) helps. Organise a fund-raising drive to help others, perhaps someone who's been retrenched. Write notes of sincere acknowledgement - they cost nothing and yet, are priceless.

**Keep your staff engaged through training.** Now is as good a time as any to help them get clear about their own personal future. Keeping your staff engaged during these times will determine if the organisation's fortunes moves up or stays down when things get better. Training and career development are key levers in [helping keep staff engaged!](#)

Take action to "clean up". Put in those processes you've always felt should be in place. Better hiring routines, staff induction programmes, cutting down on unproductive meetings.

Last but not least, have faith. As with the seasons, after every winter comes the spring.

Wishing you every Inspiration,

Dominic Siow

The EQ Strategist

Dominic Siow EQ Strategist

People Empowerment Solutions