



CUTTINGS

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Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

Crisis Leadership

Don't underestimate the power of a positive work climate...

Tough economic times can set up vicious downward cycle of results and motivation: no matter how much extra effort is put in, the company continues downward. People focus on the things they can't control and stop taking positive action.

So effective crisis leadership needs to create an engaging work climate despite the bad economic news and the fear it can generate. And as research shows that employees working in engaging climates outperform by as much as 30 per cent, there is a bottom line payoff which is really needed.

Here's some practical advice on what leaders can do from Hay Group's Mary Fontaine, managing director, leadership and talent:

Keep employees energised

Businesses that win in a downturn provide clear direction in the face of uncertainty, reassuring when necessary, all the while continuing to push for results.

Leaders create the vision, provide the context and gain commitment. It's important not to leave employees in the dark about the

company's strategy and as an information vacuum is immediately filled by rumour. Good leaders make decisions quickly and focus people on what they can do to help the company through the downturn.

Effective leaders reach out to others for help and expertise, but do so only after they have framed the issue and established the parameters that provide clarity.

Good leaders are supportive. People are scared. They're worried about their jobs and their ability to pay bills. Their self-esteem is under attack. Sometimes the best leadership involves just getting out of the office, listening and understanding.

Crisis leaders continue to coach and develop people, often just taking only a few minutes to listen, to help, to provide a little feedback or impart some wisdom. Moments may be brief but can be profound.

Effective downturn leaders become more visible, leading by example, demonstrating that they are there with—and for—employees.

Don't rely on one style

Combining styles fosters a better work climate. It gives employees goals to focus on and room to innovate, while also encouraging

them to work collaboratively. This is important because employees that are engaged by the right kind of leadership will go the extra mile.

Avoid bad habits

During a downturn it's easy to fall into bad habits. Perhaps the biggest risk is adopting a command and control approach, which, at its worst, involves micromanaging.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Get people looking at what they can do, so that they feel empowered and energised to help the company through the downturn. It's important not to leave employees in the dark. Don't cut down on meetings just to save costs, look for ways to keep people connected so they can collaborate and innovate.

Untapped energy

When leaders create the clarity, flexibility and the responsibility employees need to be effective they generate commitment through an engaging, empowering work climate that is a source of extra energy. In many cases tapping this source may be enough to offset the cuts that have to make elsewhere

Hay Group Leader, issue 10

Coached Employees Want to be Challenged

Employees value being challenged by their coach more than any other potential benefit, according to a study by BlessingWhite.

Among nine prospective coaching actions taken by managers, being stretched beyond what an individual thought possible was ranked first globally.

Stretch assignments are opportunities for individuals to get

out of a rut and to distinguish themselves among colleagues. And there is a good payoff for organisations in hard economic times. Individuals who are coached to think beyond their normal boundaries are the very ones who can turn companies around.

The study found that coaching was well received by the great majority of employees worldwide.

Being asked questions by one's coach also ranked high in the study findings. Whereas the least valued coaching action is establishing clear performance goals, which is more directive in nature.

The best coaches do more guiding than directing. Most people don't like being told what to do, but they do like a challenge.

www.blessingwhite.com/cc_report.asp

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Snippets

A bumper summer collection of quotations...

- ✂ “Intuition will tell the thinking mind where to look next.” *Jonas Salk*
- ✂ “If you judge people, you have no time to love them.” *Mother Teresa*
- ✂ “People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.” *Audrey Hepburn*
- ✂ “Seeing ourselves as others see us would probably confirm our worst suspicions about them.” *Franklin P. Adams*
- ✂ “Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” *Howard Thurman*
- ✂ “In all things it is better to hope than to despair.” *Goethe*
- ✂ “You never find yourself until you face the truth.” *Pearl Bailey*
- ✂ “We have a plan, therefore nothing can go wrong.” *Spike Milligan*
- ✂ “If we cannot learn from history, we are condemned to repeat it.” *Georges Santayana*
- ✂ “When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice.” *William James*
- ✂ “One must know not just how to accept a gift, but with what grace to share it.” *Maya Angelou*
- ✂ “For those who believe, no proof is necessary. For those who don't believe, no proof is possible.” *Stuart Chase*
- ✂ “Truth has not special time of its own. Its hour is now—always and indeed then most truly when it seems unsuitable to actual circumstances.” *Albert Schweitzer*
- ✂ “If you really want to do something, you do it. You don't save it for a sound bite.” *Liz Friedman*
- ✂ “Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie.” *William Shakespeare*

- ✂ “It is not so important to know everything as to appreciate what we learn.” *Hannah More*
- ✂ “Live as if you were living a second time, and as though you had acted wrongly the first time.” *Viktor Frankl*
- ✂ “It is the sweet, simple things in life which are the real ones after all.” *Laura Ingalls Wilder*
- ✂ “It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.” *Roy Disney*
- ✂ “The value of life is not in the length of days, but in the use we make of them; a man may live long yet very little.” *Michel de Montaigne*
- ✂ “Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values.” *HH Dalai Lama*
- ✂ “Begin growing from where you are - not from where others think you ought to be by now.” *Steven Douglas Lawrence*
- ✂ “Our ultimate freedom is the right and power to decide how anybody or anything outside ourselves will affect us.” *Stephen Covey*
- ✂ “Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire.” *Reggie Leach*
- ✂ “Keep your love of nature, for that is the true way to understand art more and more.” *Vincent Van Gogh*
- ✂ “Leadership is about the ability to influence people by personal attributes and behaviours.” *John Adair*
- ✂ “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable.” *Ordway Tead*
- ✂ “Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” *John F. Kennedy*
- ✂ “Courage is the power to let go of the familiar.” *Raymond Lindquist*
- ✂ “At the core of all anger is a need that is not being fulfilled.” *Marshall B Rosenberg*
- ✂ “If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head, almost nothing.” *Marc Chagall*

- ✂ “Our aspirations are our possibilities.” *Samuel Johnson*
- ✂ “If my mind can conceive it, and my heart can believe it, I know I can achieve it.” *Jesse Jackson*
- ✂ “It's not too late to ask yourself if you really are the person you want to be, and if not, who you do want to be.” *Morrie Schwartz*
- ✂ “Impossible is a word humans use far too often.” *Jeri Ryan*
- ✂ “Some of the world's greatest feats were accomplished by people not smart enough to know they were impossible.” *Doug Larson*
- ✂ “We have more possibilities available in each moment than we realise.” *Thich Nhat Hanh*

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