

The Key to Adapting During Times of Rapid Change

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At this moment, the business environment is changing rapidly. It's not just the threat of Coronavirus that is demanding us to adjust and adapt, but also all the downstream effects – the economy, shocks to the supply chain, and self-isolation. The pandemic will reveal all of the hidden vulnerabilities we're going to have to cope with throughout the rest of the year.

In order to make sure our organizations can adapt to this level of change we are going to have to empower people with information. Without information, people are paralyzed. Without information, people don't have a sense of urgency. Without information, people make up stories and assume the worst. Without information, people typically run in a hundred different directions. Without information, people can't adapt to changes in the environment.

When we freely share information and empower people to use that information to make decisions, people can and will respond to changes in the environment. Be it customer needs or technology-- they'll be better equipped to respond to the tsunami of changes that emerge from the aftershocks of the virus. They will innovate and create the bright spots that inevitably erupt from the most unlikely situations.

With this in mind, if you are not sharing information, over-communicating, and giving people the data they need to respond quickly and effectively to the changes at hand, don't be surprised if they act out of alignment with your strategy and culture. Whether they are stuck and not doing anything or running in a hundred different directions – the outcomes are the same.

The fact is that we're wired to react negatively to situations that we can't control or influence. Situations like our current one tend to make us choose between playing the victim or villain. But it doesn't have to be that way. Lead with your values, be transparent with information, and empower folks to take responsibility to act with their own sense of urgency, creativity, and compassion. If you've got the right people, they'll make the right choices--but not without the right information.

To help people adapt:

- Over communicate, with more information, more often.
- Make sure people know they are empowered—give them freedom with fences.
- Encourage experimentation—try some things. We are all new at this.
- Act fast but be patient. Some results are immediate and obvious, some are not.
- Trust your people and yourself.

On the other side of this crisis, those who adapt will thrive. And leading effectively in times of crisis requires all of us in leadership roles to adapt first.

Learn more about InnerWill's solutions at innerwill.org.

How are you helping your teams adapt? I'd love to hear from you. Comment below or send me an email at Thomas.Epperson@innerwill.org.



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