

COVID-19 RESPONSE

# **LEADING THROUGH CRISIS: NOW IS THE TIME FOR CALM. NOW IS THE TIME FOR LEADERSHIP**

A leader's behavior under pressure demonstrates the true strength and resilience of an organization

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic becomes increasingly apparent, including worsening economic conditions, businesses need to act quickly and calmly to prepare for extreme disruption. With uncertainty surrounding timeframes and disparity in governmental guidance globally, it is increasingly important that business leaders take a consistent and strategic approach to directing employees and business objectives. Indeed, as reported in a new Edelman Trust Barometer survey, people are looking more to their employers than to governments or the media for leadership and information in this crisis.

This guide lays out simple ways to help you lead from the front. Providing a strong and resilient voice will help give your business the greatest chance to weather the storm and protect your value for recovery.

# Leadership behaviors and strategies

## 1. COMPASSION

Although it's natural to show compassion in normal circumstances, a mindful leader is careful to also show compassion under pressure, especially in uncertain times.

- Your employees are under immense pressure to perform. Don't add to it, offer direction.
- Emphasize employees' health and wellbeing, while making necessary resources available.
- Avoid escalating fears and a sense of uncertainty. Model calm and rational behaviors.
- Watch your tenor and tone. Listen actively, communicate continuously, and display composure.

## 2. CLARITY

In difficult times, people look to their leaders for guidance and clarity, and they "read" their leaders in an effort to gauge the severity of the crisis. They want to know that there is a deliberate plan and a wise path forward.

- Balance short-term measures with long-term, strategic priorities.
- Prioritize open, honest, and frequent communication. Close critical information loops.
- Clarify decision rights and accountabilities to drive interim measures.
- Reassure that this crisis has a beginning, middle, and an end—and that it will end.

## 3. COMMUNITY

In moments of crisis and uncertainty, people either bind together or pull apart. As a leader, there is an enormous opportunity to emphasize and reinforce the benefits of supporting each other, and to demonstrate the strength of your organization's sense of community.

- Reach out to employees directly and ensure they stay connected to the organization.
- Ensure employees working remotely have sufficient resources and feel valued.
- Emphasize a collaborative approach to ensure common goals and alignment.
- Be inclusive in all that you do, leveraging the collective knowledge of the organization.
- Take the opportunity to reaffirm what your organization stands for—and stand by it.

## 4. CONTINUITY

Use the time to examine your current vision and strategy. As the world changes, ensure your organization is ahead of the curve.

- Reaffirm the core values of your organization, your purpose, and your mission.
- Evaluate the organization's strategy and course correct as needed.
- Be prepared for disruptions and look for ways to build resilience into the business.
- Have the courage to adjust to a changing landscape. Focus on promoting stability.



For more information, get in touch: [www.alixpartners.com/contact-us](http://www.alixpartners.com/contact-us)

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For nearly forty years, AlixPartners has helped businesses around the world respond quickly and decisively to their most critical challenges—circumstances as diverse as urgent performance improvement, accelerated transformation, complex restructuring and risk mitigation.

These are the moments when everything is on the line—a sudden shift in the market, an unexpected performance decline, a time-sensitive deal, a fork-in-the-road decision. But it's not what we do that makes a difference, it's how we do it.

Tackling situations when time is of the essence is part of our DNA—so we adopt an action-oriented approach at all times. We work in small, highly qualified teams with specific industry and functional expertise, and we operate at pace, moving quickly from analysis to implementation. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our clients until the job is done, and only measure our success in terms of the results we deliver.

Our approach enables us to help our clients confront and overcome truly future-defining challenges. We partner with you to make the right decisions and take the right actions. And we are right by your side. When it really matters.

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