

Leadergy Center is an exclusive professional leadership development resource for senior executives of corporations, governments, and not-for-profit organizations. We trade in a currency of trusted relationships under-pinned by character, commitment, connection, and competence. We've taken an oath to protect American values, to uphold and protect the constitution of the United States, and to assure each and every client of ours receives our best every day.

## You Can Move From Survive to Thrive in Periods of Change!



Our business climate today is continually under siege by threatening conditions and repetitive change in the marketplace. It seems impossible to predict next month's numbers, let alone a quarter or two. As senior leaders we may feel like we are in a sea awash in change, senseless change. When we lay our head down on the pillow at night we are drained and unsatisfied. We also are sleeping with one eye open, because we know that in all likelihood we are going to face yet one more unexpected ripple when we awake in the morning.

The military calls this "combat sleep". As business leaders, we feel like we are in combat in some ways. It seems like every plan we execute, regardless of how 'perfect' we developed it, yields a modicum of mediocrity when implemented. Many times it isn't because the plan was bad, it's because by the time we implemented it our battlefield conditions changed. Indeed, we are operating in a time of high velocity change in business.

No organization of any stature is immune from "unpredictable times," but in today's climate "unpredictable" has become "unprecedented." We live in a world of global change influenced by economic instability, increasing velocity of technology obsolescence, rapid employee benefit cost escalations, unclear and shifting market signals, including reversals, and many others. This is also created in part by dysfunctional leadership and a decline in business ethics, including our highly trusted financial institutions.

As leaders each one of us makes a choice between "growth opportunity or sustaining". These are hard choices and associated risk is unequal and unpredictable. Yet interestingly, some leaders see this as a difficult time to lead while other leaders see this as an unprecedented opportunity to propel their organizations into the next global growth phase.

We research, teach, and mentor leaders in making these types of difficult choices, and here are some of the daily mindsets of the New 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformational Leadership mindset that we drive at Leadergy® Center:

1. **You will never have a better time to establish an environment/culture of honesty and straight forwardness with your people than right now.** The test of a great leader, particularly in uncertain times, is will s/he rely on their *values and beliefs* engrained in their character on a day to day basis to guide their judgment, thinking, and actions? One of this nation's notable writers said (paraphrased), "we judge ourselves by how we feel about ourselves; but others will judge us by what we do." Now is the time when people in your organization measure you out and look to you to validate your personal leadership values by your actions. They will determine if your actions are congruent with what you say.

Undeniably, this is the best time to build a culture and environment of honesty and straightforwardness within your management teams and people. This is the only way to counter act behaviors of “uncertainty” when sales drop, revenue declines, customers slow down orders. It starts with straight talk followed by aligned action. That’s how you reinforce a foundation of trust.

2. **You must establish trust and confidence with your key people.** Distrust and uneasiness can spread rapidly in an organization if left unchecked. We’ve seen too many organizations where the tide of optimism and opportunity had left the shores. Unfortunately this distrust and uneasiness will eventually spread to the customers. How many times have you heard a customer say about a competitor “THEY are struggling?”

Leaders of excellence are quick to step up the communication and their presence one-thousand percent in order to build trust at all levels. Communicating the issues and full disclosure of information demonstrates you are operating in reality, are pursuing next steps, and ideally invites solutions from your team. Displaying a climate of trustworthiness with your key people by letting them know you will listen and find the answers together results in an increase in commitment and productivity.

The opposite is damaging. In one company where sales were declining, the CEO issued a letter advising employees to use all pencils down to the erasers before sharpening another one. His letter erased any glimmer of trust for an upturn. The result was turnover of the very best people who could have turned the organization around.

3. **You’ll never have a better opportunity to increase loyalty and reduce unacceptable and unwanted turnover.** It is good to remember “*strong swimmers jump the ship first.*” Now is the time to increase the one-on-ones with your key people. Sitting down with your top performers to communicate the same consistent message is an act of bringing them into your confidence. This will have a huge impact on them and the organization, particularly if they are the people others in the organization respect. Ask them to serve as a catalyst to communicate your message, as well as your unfiltered feedback loop.
4. **Find and use “secondary leaders” in the organization to stabilize the climate.** Leaders of excellence are highly skilled at understanding their own bandwidth as well as the bandwidth and impact of secondary leaders. Secondary leaders are those who may or may not be in a formal leadership role but who lead the organization in a subliminal way. These are the ones that the rest of the people listen to and follow when things get tough. In past organizations we have cultivated secondary leaders who were in management positions, others who were secretaries, skilled workers in the warehouse, production line workers, and product development engineers. *Every organization* has secondary leaders who have the influence to change the direction of the organization. Do you know who your secondary leaders are? If you don’t, do you know how to find them? You need to!
5. **Increase your personal contact to key customers; those who know your organization.** In a recent conversation with a senior vice president of a larger financial firm, he said, “when the stock market declined you could either hide or pick –up the phone - picking-up the phone was extremely hard.” Are you able to pick up the phone and call your highest volume customers anytime? More importantly do they know who you are? I am not suggesting lessening the customer relationships with their primary

contact in your company, but a direct call to the CEO, President, or Vice President is an excellent way to keep business, learn of any risk of losing business, and/or increase the business in a changing climate. Simple as it is, your customers are the people who sign your paycheck. You should be talking to them frequently.

6. **Leaders who, being aware of their fear and anxiety during changing climates, and are willing to put these emotions on hold, will unleash an organizations *greatest potential*.** All leaders have fear and anxiety. You will never be able to eliminate this, nor should you try. Mastering and managing emotions is a critical response to effective communication of clarity of purpose in difficult times. When trends are not favorable, effective leaders draw from an internal well-spring of instinct, knowledge and action. Instincts and knowledge inform our action in knowing what the right thing to do is. Yet we often do not trust our instincts to act, paralyzed by fear and anxiety. Transformational leaders have developed a deep trust of their instincts to overcome this paralyzed state of ineffectiveness and initiate action in spite of uncertainty and confusion.
7. **The Anatomy of Highly Effective Meetings - Communicate concisely and then get out of their way!** It's amazing sometimes how ineffective meetings are. They can be a black hole of meaningless time wasters. Especially in the vortex of change meeting times over-extend, and it seems decision cycles proportionately slow down. Meetings multiply like flies, but seldom anything of value really gets done. These are often the signs of a distressed organization.

There are some simple rules for assuring that meetings effective:

- a) Reduce the number of meetings and time to increase productivity in the organization
- b) Only hold meetings with written agendas – published in advance to each participant
- c) Insist meetings must conclude with next steps and dates for completion
- d) Prioritize all initiatives with criteria established from the decision process
- e) Keep the meetings on agenda – do not stray – note other issues for a separate meeting later – getting off track derails any favorable outcome and waste valuable time
- f) Be clear on follow-up and include in next meeting agenda
- g) Schedule meetings at the exact same time each week with mandatory attendance by the key decision makers

These are common sense rules for productive meetings but too often not practiced constantly. Once you are certain they are clear on what needs to be done then get out of their way and let them do what was agreed to be done.

Not all downward trends, or periods of difficulty have to end badly. In fact, for the New 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transformational Leader these challenges are often the moment when an organization rises to greatness and not only overcome difficulty, but rockets to levels of performance firepower never experienced before.

One last reflection - Focusing on the financials, balance sheets and losses is “rearward navigation”. That is the equivalent of driving your car while looking in the rear view mirror. All of the influencers that are reflected in the financials have already happened. If you spend all your time on these measurements you will likely miss the greatest opportunities in front of you. Leaders must include “forward navigation” in their day-to-day discipline. Invest valuable time innovating and creating solutions to reverse the trajectory, and prepare for future growth.

## **Our Invitation**

The Leadergy® Center is a safe haven for exploration, discovery, and application of transformational leadership that delivers business results in a constantly changing world. We would like to serve you and your organization by helping you achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century transformational leadership. This may include helping you identify your unique capabilities that are currently being under-utilized, as well as that of your leadership team.

Our personal and professional lifetime commitment is to help leaders like you and your executives achieve differentiating results in relationship to bringing out the best in your people. After all, that is really what leadership excellence is about – bringing out the best in others to advance achievement of shared goals.

We want to help you mold and shape your groups leadership to accomplish that. Our focus is crystal clear. If we can help you equip and shape your organization for achieving performance firepower, then it becomes another building block in our pursuit of nation building. Our goal is to help facilitate the refinement, or possibly the re-creation of organizations like yours in ways that will utilize all its resources to achieve uncommon results through transformational leadership, thus serving future generations in a positive way.

We would love to come up alongside of you and give you some tailwind to help you lead a transformation. Give us a call today, or drop us an email, as we'd love to get to know you better, and evaluate how we may be of service to helping you live your dream, your passion, and your purpose.

For more information about us and our business please visit us at: [www.leadergycenter.com](http://www.leadergycenter.com)

Sincerely,

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