



What Successful Leaders Do in Challenging Times
Webinar Summary and Key Information | May 4, 2020

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What Just Changed and How Do We Adjust?

This is an unparalleled time, and one in which great leaders step up by taking their leadership skills to a higher level. Do a lot more of the same with special emphasis on overcommunicating and constantly staying in touch with all team members.

An Everyday Leadership Lesson

Former Broncos coach John Fox said this about Tim Tebow "... he brought an incredible spirit and spark [passion] to our team and" along the way, he earned the trust [respect] of his teammates and coaches while inspiring [everyone] our fans. His [informal competitiveness, clutch performances and will to win played an instrumental role in our team earning a division title and advancing in the playoffs."

Be a "The Dream Manager®"

Matthew Kelly got this one right: Disney-like magic happens when a leader links each team member's skill set with passion and team needs.

Defining Leadership

There are 880 definitions of leadership—find the one that inspires you or create your own.

Try this one: Uncommon leadership is about exemplar character, contagious passion and disciplined execution coupled with an inspirational repertoire that rallies the troops in a worthy cause while making all things appreciably better.

Treat all with CPR—Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect

What Individuals Want Most and When They Do Best

Great leaders inspire and all want to inspire by an ethical who treats them with high dignity and respect, view their talent as unique and "one-of-a-kind", show appreciation for their contribution to the mission

What Employees Need from Leadership

A physically and psychologically safe work environment; tools, equipment and supplies; a leader's time, coaching, encouragement, reinforcement; celebration of team accomplishments; respect as a SME; and Dream Manager® linkages

Special Topic #1: What do fully engaged, high-performing teams look like? What's going on between members?

Think of an Indy 500 Pit Crew- what magic is happening in under 10 seconds? More importantly, what's the underlying behaviors on display? Total teamwork; read each other's minds; anticipate each other's movements; total cooperation; total focus on the mission, suppressed egos.

Special Topic #2: Best 1-on-1 Questions

Feedback is a give yet some in leadership positions seldom engage in one-on-one conversations. Be the exception and the anomaly and regularity provide quality feedback:

- What's on your plate; on your mind; and on fire?
- What should we start, top and continue to do?
- What changes can we make RIGHT NOW to improve the organization / processes / relationships?
- What is getting in your way?
- What barriers can I break down right now?
- What resources do you need?
- How's our relationship?
- What keeps you awake at night?
- What makes you proud to work here?

Homework and More to Explore

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln - Doris Kearns Goodwin

Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us - Daniel Pink (Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose)

The Manager's Book of Decencies: How Small Gestures Build Great Companies - Steve Harrison



Q: How can we deal with competing collaboration methods to keep everyone happy? Some staffers prefer regular meetings and telecons and others want to use technology like Microsoft Teams. Those who don't want to meet are constantly unavailable on the calendar.

A: First, set an expectation that calendars need to be updated. Second, check in with those constantly unavailable and ask for a time that works for them. Tough to be unavailable if they chose the time and date. Varying the method (meetings, telecons, Microsoft Teams helps too

Q: We are facing a real challenging time now, ideas/suggestions on inspiring and communicating with folks during COVID -19, while maintaining social distancing and keeping everyone safe?

A: Greater communications, be on the phone more, constant uptick and ask some one-on-one questions. This isn't permanent but I think it's a game changer.

Q: How do you think the current status of telework and probable future use of telework will impact ability to execute leadership? i.e. unable to do "leadership by walking around?"

A: We must be adaptable: great leaders are adaptable, but also might start discussing with their team about different ways to celebrate successes. In the future – I think we're going to see a lot more of this. People will discover telework *does* work. Some people's productivity increases dramatically. "Leadership by walking around" would be replaced by an uptick in individual conversations. Conditions changed so it's time for adaptable leadership. Resiliency and adaptability are needed now more than ever.

Q: What can you do to help staff in a situation where workload is overwhelming, but you are not able to reduce the workload? (We've strongly advocated for additional staff but aren't in control of that.)

A: Let people know you're actively involved in trying to get more help - they need to know you're fighting for them. Get laser focused on process - how can you make the process better, so they don't burn out - are workloads evenly distributed?

Q: I have a great employee on my team; however, I have a hard time identifying areas for improvement or other than positive feedback. I feel like I'm failing them by not offering more. Do you have any recommendations?

A: Is there a special project or growth assignment for them? Discover their passion. What drives them at work and to be that great employee? Would they mentor others? Serve as a subject matter expert? Can you upgrade their title without upsetting the formal positional structure?

Q: This may be beyond the scope of today, what can you do to change difficult culture? Especially if you are in a leadership role but not the head of the department?

A: Create a center of excellence. Somebody, somewhere, needs to be the beacon and shining example. Most great organizational successes start small and grow by inertia. Be the shining example.

Q: How do you bring up the topic with individuals that are really struggling with prioritizing work and working efficiently in this environment when they do not self-identify this in their one-on-one meeting?

A: It may be time for a separate candid conversation, outside of your regular one-on-one meeting, that starts something like this: "I've observed, that at times, you struggle with prioritizing work and working efficiently." Provide examples. Let them catch their breath and respond ...then both of you work together to find a solution. Remember, great leaders are great coaches and feedback is a gift.





Q: How do I convince agency leadership that succession planning is key to the survival of my department? We have only three full time employees (FTE) and one contractor. One FTE retires in two years, one is retirement eligible and I retire in four years. If we don't get at least one more junior FTE onboard soon, the staff knowledge will vanish and the one(s) who remain will be overwhelmed and will eventually leave/retire. Succession planning does not seem to be deemed important by many agencies.

A: ...time for a "white paper" with relevant examples from your shop? No one upstream wants to be surprised and you are doing your job by keeping them apprised of a potentially mission-impacting issue. Point out succession planning resources, success stories from other federal agencies, include cost along with consequences of inaction.

Q: Related to "CPR" (Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect), is trust not also key?

A: You are correct. Trust is earned and that takes time and much leadership by example. Laying a foundation of CPR is a great start.

Q: Bullying in the workplace. Prevention? (Not reaction...)

A: Bullying destroys "CPR" in the workplace. Confront immediately if you see bullying. Inform all, multiple times in meetings etc. that your shop has a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying. Find and show a video with examples of bullying so there is no doubt about what bullying is and what it looks like.

Q: How do you handle strongly-opinionated people who try to influence processes and decisions based on the way they think, which may not always take all the facts and considerations into account?

A: Diverse opinions are invaluable; sounds like the strongly-opinionated people could benefit from coaching and a softer approach. A simple change from "I disagree" to "I see it another way" is a start. Also, model the way so folks see you demonstrate the approach.

Q12: I am a leader of a department and I have three leaders that have input in the program I lead. How do I motivate them to help me to move the needle upward and onward and remain respectful, while trying to get them moving in the necessary direction that will move my department in a positive direction?

A12: Think about co-leadership and all pulling in the same direction. Also need to talk about expectations, CPR, and collaboration to achieve the mission then celebrate success.

