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THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY AND UNCERTAINTY.

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IF THE COVID-19 VIRUS HAS DONE ONE THING, IT HAS BEEN TO REMIND US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY AND UNCERTAINTY.

LEADERSHIP IS THREE WORDS – “LEAD YOUR SHIP”

During times of crisis and significant uncertainty be a leader that is present. Lead your team through the quicksand rather than into the quicksand. We are not splitting hairs here. There is a real difference in leaders who are decisive and can communicate a clear pathway to navigate to reach a successful endpoint once this period of business hibernation ends.

Being present and finding the courage to ‘lead your ship’ starts with being informed.

Gather as much credible information as you can to test the many assumptions you may be making right now.

The aim is to use information to test, dismiss and confirm assumptions about the future. Great leaders see further into the future because they do their research. They make compelling decisions because they underpin those decisions with credible information.



“IN A MOMENT OF CRISIS, REACTIONS SET THE LEADERS APART FROM THE FOLLOWERS.”

Peter Stark

If you are not entirely sure you have what it takes to ‘lead your ship’ get in touch with Verity Consulting who would be willing to give you a second opinion on how you have planned your next steps or guide you to be the leader your team needs right now.

MANAGING YOUR OWN STATE

It is very normal to have an internal dialogue and find yourself going into auto-pilot mode and begin to mimic what's happening in the environment and suddenly decide – I need to buy toilet paper in bulk! This is a very natural physiological and mental phenomenon I like to call 'herd mentality'.

To keep your behaviours and responses in check, practice mindfulness and manage your state of well-being. Always stay positive and remember there are things we cannot control and there are things we absolutely can control. For instance, there are no excuses for not getting plenty of sleep, making nutritional food choices and exercising more.

While social distancing is the mantra now, what it really means is we need to maintain physical distance rather than social distance. We are social beings and while we need to keep a healthy distance in the physical spaces we occupy, social connectedness is more important than ever. Make more phone calls, interact more on social media, schedule online coffee dates with work colleagues, have virtual drinks with friends and family.

The key takeaway is, manage your state. Nurture both physical and mental wellbeing so that you will be in great shape and ready for the bounce.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE MONEY AS MY BUSINESS HIBERNATES?

There is lots of excitement about receiving government assistance during the COVID pandemic. Be careful as it is not a handout without hoops to jump and criteria to meet. This is a great time to make some calls to your bookkeeper, accountant, financial advisor, your lenders, suppliers and the ATO.

Foster those relationships, negotiate some new arrangements that lead to a win-win. With information about what assistance is available you can make better decisions about how to stretch and supplement funding to ensure enough cash flow – both personally and in business -- to ride out the next 6 months.

"Business is all about relationships... how well you build them determines how well they build your business..."

Brad Sugars



WITH THE LAST DOLLAR IN YOUR POCKET - WHAT SHOULD YOU SPEND IT ON?

The short answer is some smart marketing. With so many restrictions on physical movement and maintaining social distance, everyone is wondering how they will shop for products and services. Now more than ever you need to communicate what your product delivery will be over the next 6 months or more. If your approach has changed, get that message out as quickly as possible to retain and (claim more) market share.

Consider also how you can assist suppliers, customers, clients, family and friends in business. Everyone is vulnerable right now so let's show some community-ship.



*"It's not what you sell
that matters as much as
how you sell it!"*

Brian Halligan

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSITIVE AND REAL COMMUNICATION

Linked to marketing, the narrative needs to be more positive and personal. There is enough doomsday messaging that is creating lots of negativity around how this is going to affect people.

Of course, the situation is devastating and let's not downplay its gravity. However, there are some positives such as: spending more time with the people we love; spending less time at the office and rethinking the way work is done. It is not often we are given the opportunity to stop and think and reinvent ourselves and our business because at other times, "we are so busy". This is prime time to seize the opportunity for some clear and innovative thinking.

Start with your routine. Work on a buddy system and wrap a layer of positivity around your decentralised, home-based workforce. Each time you have a conversation, make a special effort to be more positive. Add some sunshine rather than darkness into communication efforts.

It is ironic that while it can be difficult to lead during the tough times, teams tend to bond together in adversity. Use this period to strengthen the work culture so that when we exit this period (and it will end), you will have a great team culture on which to build a high performing team.

There are lots of people experiencing personal struggle, feelings of loss and completely out of control and overwhelmed by the uncertainty.

Let's think about control.

There are things we can control, things we can't and things we can influence. The one thing we can all control is the person we are when we wake up each morning and start the day. How we conduct ourselves on a conference call, on the phone, within our family and towards our friends and colleagues is all personally controllable. Negative energy struggles to survive in a positive environment. Turbo charge positivity and channel resilience as this will help us all get through and become a much better person.

*Your attitude
determines direction*



IT'S A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD AND NOW IS THE TIME TO NEGOTIATE

Don't wait too long to have those important conversations with customers, suppliers, landlords and bank managers. While we can assume that your business will be able to ride out the impact of COVID 19, NOW is the best time to get on the phone, make that call on Skype or zoom and re-negotiate payment terms and fees.

Everyone is going through the same situation and feeling the impact of business uncertainty. The playing field has never been more level. Aim to achieve a win-win outcome.

Achieving a win-win will take pressure off and buy you time to adjust and re-orientate the way your business looks in the future. It will also help build stronger business relationships because you are not after a win for yourself that causes a loss for the other party. A win-win conversation is not only powerful it shows professional respect.



CHECKLIST YOUR LIFE AND YOUR BUSINESS AND BE RESILIENT.

The way you run your life personally is influenced by the way you do business.

With business all but at a standstill now – how is life in general tracking? There is now more time to check off that list of projects around the house, throwing a frisbee (with one person only or the dog).

Be clear on how you will spend your time now. Prioritise effort on the things to consider in the short, medium and longer terms. Set goals across the time horizon. Get yourself ready for the bounce back.

Wonder what normality will look like beyond the crisis? Create a checklist of what you want the new world of business to be and not what it was previously.

Put into place a checklist for getting through the COVID19 pandemic and more importantly to get ready for the bounce that's coming.



“Persistence and resilience only come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems.”

Gever Tulley

ESTABLISH A WORK ROUTINE IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

There are several positives to working from home - no travel time, no office workwear, no makeup, no parking or go-card, reduced fuel costs and wear and tear on vehicles. Although it does mean that managing productivity will require resetting expectations around tasks, schedules and accountability.

Not everyone can maintain focus on work in the home environment. Distractions from other members of the family also working from home or needing home-schooling will be a challenge for many having to operate within a different work ecosystem. Some suggestions to keep your people on task:

- Be realistic about the time available for work-related tasks. If there are home-schooling responsibilities to fit in, the hours for work will reduce. Calculate the time that can be dedicated for work. Reset expectations and tasks accordingly

- Set a daily routine that breaks the day into three phases. The morning routine requires you are ready to turn up to your "virtual" workplace. Continue to do the things you would normally do to go to work- wake up at a set time, brush hair and teeth, get dressed be camera-ready. Schedule your breaks. There is no reason you cannot take a 10 minute break at 10am as you would normally at the office. The afternoon routine may be the time spent making calls or having meetings or preparing reports. Then a night routine so that it is clear when your time out from work and focus on family time.

- Prioritisation and adjustment to new routines is the answer to managing productivity. Establishing times for online meetings and team catch ups will help everyone establish a new work rhythm.

You will be pleasantly surprised how much more can be jammed into your day.



LET'S TANGO LATER, TIME DO THE OODA LOOP

Continuing to do business, albeit differently, while living with a virus pandemic requires a new move, we like to call the OODA loop. The OODA loop is to: observe, orient, deduct and act. In the words of Dwight Eisenhower:

*“Plans are useless,
planning is essential”.*

Use your time in hibernation to observe what is happening within your sector. Analyse the trends so that you can better orientate and re-orientate your business. The way in which businesses switch tactic is to pivot. If businesses aren't pivoting, then it is likely they will hit an obstacle and this is where they will stay and not progress.

There was a time when it was thought impossible to climb Mount Everest. Well we have achieved it and the rest is history. Consider the impact of COVID 19 on business as climbing Mount Everest. Do the OODA loop and pivot, pivot and pivot. Pivot by consistently observing, orientating deducting and then acting.



*Observe, Orient,
Deduct, Act*



TIME FOR A POST-COVID 19 ADJUSTMENT: BUSINESS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

With the impact COVID 19 pandemic has had on business and the way we live we need to accept that the ecosystem for conducting business will be changed forever – even after the intensity of the pandemic subsides. The business ecosystem will never go back to what it was. Now is the time to rethink and reinvent your business. Whether it be:

- use of different channels to market or
- a new client base that has always been there, but you could never reach.
- a change to your product mix.
- switch to video based rather than face-to-face interactions.

Consider the opportunity for reaching a broader customer base. An example of this is giving keynote presentations at a breakfast or lunch event. In the past such event would attract up to 70 people locally. Via video we can reach 10 times this number globally.

For more information or advice on how Verity Consulting Partners can assist you and your business during the challenges you are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and prepare for the economic upturn, go to "[Ready for the bounce](#)" and do not hesitate to get in touch with Verity Consulting Partners for additional tips and tactics.

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