

Six tips for leading teams in uncertain times

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THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



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The current situation with COVID-19 has created an environment of uncertainty for us all. Successfully managing your people through these unprecedented times will require many managers to do things differently.

At 4i Solutions Ltd, we work with a wide range of businesses helping to develop management and leadership skills to build successful teams, companies and partnerships. As our clients adjust to new ways of running their business, we wanted to share a short checklist of the top six things to help you navigate through these extraordinary times.

1. **Leadership with Resilience** - As a leader, demonstrate how you yourself are coping. Set an example for how chaos can be met with calmness and considered decisions. Demonstrate empathy for people's predicaments and thank them for their commitment. Tell the story as it unfolds, make sure everyone is aware of what actions have been taken so far and how plans are underway for leading the business through this period. Show that you haven't lost sight of the long term, and that your core values are still at the heart of what you do.
2. **Teamworking** - Managers should think carefully about the importance of defining the tasks that a team is being asked to carry out. Make time to listen to alternative views and encourage the more silent members of your team to share their thoughts and ideas. Scheduling regular virtual one to one and team meetings will help to ensure proper collaboration among team members, and strengthen team spirit. It's also vital that team leaders are able to manage any conflict that arises, or knows who to contact for advice and support. Remember to also keep in regular contact with those outside of your immediate circles, e.g., *supply chains, customers, colleagues, and external stakeholders*. Maintaining good relationships with your network is enormously important to assist when navigating through these unique circumstances. It will also help us to prepare for the journey back towards business as usual.
3. **Communication Preferences** - Be mindful of the tone of your written and spoken communications, particularly in terms of the quantum of communications. In times of stress our senses are often heightened, and well-intended messages can sometimes be misinterpreted. According to [Walter Bradford Cannon, Physiologist](#), a reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival is **fight** or **flight**. Respecting the person you are trying to contact by actively using their preferred method could be the difference between a perceived interruption, and an efficient and fruitful exchange of necessary information. For example, instead of sending emails, you may choose to phone, or video call those who you feel would appreciate a more personal approach. You may also consider adding employees' communication preferences to a team list.

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continued



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- Wellbeing** - A sudden change to your typical working environment will create its own set of unique challenges. This is supported by a recent study published by [People Management](#), ‘*Half Working From Home During Lockdown Are Unhappy With Work-Life Balance.*’ A poll of 500 workers, conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies over the last two weeks, found 50 per cent of respondents were not happy with their current work-life balance, with 48 per cent putting in longer and more irregular hours than they would under normal circumstances. If your staff are working from home or remotely, you will do well to make regular contact, to avoid them feeling isolated. Show a genuine interest in their emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing. After all, you want your people to be ready, fit, and healthy come a return towards business as usual. A Myers Briggs Type Indicator assessment can also assist in facing the challenges in the transition to remote working. It is important to take into account personality traits. How are your team members getting the buzz they need to self-motivate? How are they interacting with colleagues and clients who have different strengths and needs? We are qualified to use a range of tools to support organisations to get the best from their teams.
- Coaching and Mentoring** - It can feel lonely at the top, especially when the people you manage are looking to you for all the answers! Many managers and business leaders are having to focus their time and energy on responding to pressing business-critical matters. In some cases, this will leave gaps in the support that they were previously providing team members. According to the [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development \(CIPD\)](#), coaching and mentoring are great ways to develop leadership skills, at all levels. Successful coaching and mentoring relationships can help to build confidence and resilience. Our qualified Executive Coaches are offering a complementary virtual coaching session to our existing and previous clients, and with some gentle persuasion, maybe even some new clients!
- Reintegrating your People** - The journey back towards business as usual will require us all to demonstrate greater tolerance and care, for those that have either been directly or indirectly affected by the effects of the pandemic. To help build trust, it’s essential to be open and honest in your communication with staff, especially on plans for taking the business forward. You can also help to facilitate increased collaboration and engagement by inviting staff to share their thoughts and ideas on helping the business to move forward.

Please feel free to get in touch to find out how to book your complimentary coaching session or to share your thoughts?

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