



Leading During a Crisis and Remotely

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed extraordinary demands on our faculty and staff in an environment that is unfamiliar and uncertain. We offer the suggestions below based on literature on leading change and on managing remotely, experiences across businesses and the military, and from the direct experiences of colleagues in hard hit areas across the US (Washington State, Chicago, New York).

Alter leadership behaviors to match situational demands.

Leadership requirements are contextual. Some dealing with this crisis are operating in a very chaotic environment; others in situations that are less chaotic but still very complex. As the environment shifts back and forth---from simple to complicated to complex to chaotic---different leader behaviors are called for.

See the attached grid from Snowden, D. and Boone, M. (2007). A leader's framework for decision-making. Harvard Business Review, November, 69-76.

Promote a sense of community and instill a caring culture.

- Check to see how everyone is doing (emotionally, personal health, family, etc.)
- Provide encouraging words; acknowledge and validate challenges they are having
- Focus on how you can help
- Problem-solve and lend support to one another, including back-up support for childcare, eldercare, etc.
- Based on the above, strategize about any changes to work priorities.

Stay in a routine of working norms as much as possible

(or develop a new routine that better fits the situation):
 If you had regular meetings, hold them for as many as can attend. If you had one-on-ones, continue them. This provides team members with a sense of continuity.

Communicate frequently using the most appropriate technology

Channel	Best for:
1:1 Call or Video Conference	Individual catch-up; Building relationships; Discussing sensitive/difficult topics
Video Conference	Problem-solving and co-creation; Planning & review; Decision meetings; Worskshops & trainings
Chat	Urgent questions & guidance; Keeping up-to-date in real time; Social talk
Video Captures & Voice Notes	Explaining work; Showcasing; Guidance when managers have limited time; Debriefs after meetings some team members missed
Email	Updates & status reports to large numbers; Formal internal & external communication

Source: McKinsey & Company

Expect individual responses to the changes taking place to be different from their past responses, different across the types of changes, and to take place across a spectrum of responses that are:

- Emotional: From anger to excitement.
- Cognitive: From focusing on the disaster to focusing on the opportunities.
- Intentional: From opposition to anything changing to support for change.

Be alert to anyone who is having an extreme or lengthy response and needs help

When everyone is stressed, it is easy to overlook someone who may be in need of help. Consider also that uncharacteristic responses can signal stress; it is not always a negative response and even subtle changes in an individual's characteristics can signal stress

Share your own story and encourage others to share theirs

This helps provide social connectivity and builds community in a time of physical distancing.

Model self-care

This sends the message that if you are going to help others you have to care for yourself too.

Additional Resources

Consider the content on the following webinars from Linked In Learning (all faculty and staff have access):

Leading at a Distance: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/leading-at-a-distance/remote-workers-are-the-future-of-business?u=74651410>

Leading Virtual Meetings: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/leading-virtual-meetings/welcome-to-better-virtual-meetings?u=74651410>

*You gain courage and strength and confidence every time
you look fear in the face.
You must do the thing you think you cannot do.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

Decisions in Multiple Contexts: A Leader's Guide

Effective leaders learn to shift their decision-making styles to match changing business environments. Simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic contexts each call for different managerial responses. By correctly identifying the governing context, staying aware of danger signals, and avoiding inappropriate reactions, managers can lead effectively in a variety of situations.

	THE CONTEXT'S CHARACTERISTICS	THE LEADER'S JOB	DANGER SIGNALS	RESPONSE TO DANGER SIGNALS
SIMPLE	<p>Repeating patterns and consistent events</p> <p>Clear cause-and-effect relationships evident to everyone; right answer exists</p> <p>Known knowns</p> <p>Fact-based management</p>	<p>Sense, categorize, respond</p> <p>Ensure that proper processes are in place</p> <p>Delegate</p> <p>Use best practices</p> <p>Communicate in clear, direct ways</p> <p>Understand that extensive interactive communication may not be necessary</p>	<p>Complacency and comfort</p> <p>Desire to make complex problems simple</p> <p>Entrained thinking</p> <p>No challenge of received wisdom</p> <p>Overreliance on best practice if context shifts</p>	<p>Create communication channels to challenge orthodoxy</p> <p>Stay connected without micromanaging</p> <p>Don't assume things are simple</p> <p>Recognize both the value and the limitations of best practice</p>
COMPLICATED	<p>Expert diagnosis required</p> <p>Cause-and-effect relationships discoverable but not immediately apparent to everyone; more than one right answer possible</p> <p>Known unknowns</p> <p>Fact-based management</p>	<p>Sense, analyze, respond</p> <p>Create panels of experts</p> <p>Listen to conflicting advice</p>	<p>Experts overconfident in their own solutions or in the efficacy of past solutions</p> <p>Analysis paralysis</p> <p>Expert panels</p> <p>Viewpoints of nonexperts excluded</p>	<p>Encourage external and internal stakeholders to challenge expert opinions to combat entrained thinking</p> <p>Use experiments and games to force people to think outside the familiar</p>
COMPLEX	<p>Flux and unpredictability</p> <p>No right answers; emergent instructive patterns</p> <p>Unknown unknowns</p> <p>Many competing ideas</p> <p>A need for creative and innovative approaches</p> <p>Pattern-based leadership</p>	<p>Probe, sense, respond</p> <p>Create environments and experiments that allow patterns to emerge</p> <p>Increase levels of interaction and communication</p> <p>Use methods that can help generate ideas: Open up discussion (as through large group methods); set barriers; stimulate attractors; encourage dissent and diversity; and manage starting conditions and monitor for emergence</p>	<p>Temptation to fall back into habitual, command-and-control mode</p> <p>Temptation to look for facts rather than allowing patterns to emerge</p> <p>Desire for accelerated resolution of problems or exploitation of opportunities</p>	<p>Be patient and allow time for reflection</p> <p>Use approaches that encourage interaction so patterns can emerge</p>
CHAOTIC	<p>High turbulence</p> <p>No clear cause-and-effect relationships, so no point in looking for right answers</p> <p>Unknowables</p> <p>Many decisions to make and no time to think</p> <p>High tension</p> <p>Pattern-based leadership</p>	<p>Act, sense, respond</p> <p>Look for what works instead of seeking right answers</p> <p>Take immediate action to reestablish order (command and control)</p> <p>Provide clear, direct communication</p>	<p>Applying a command-and-control approach longer than needed</p> <p>"Cult of the leader"</p> <p>Missed opportunity for innovation</p> <p>Chaos unabated</p>	<p>Set up mechanisms (such as parallel teams) to take advantage of opportunities afforded by a chaotic environment</p> <p>Encourage advisers to challenge your point of view once the crisis has abated</p> <p>Work to shift the context from chaotic to complex</p>