

5 Tips for Managing under Uncertainty

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You can't Always Control Events, But You can Control Your Actions in Tough Times

The cloud of uncertainty hangs over us all at one point or another. The U.S. debt crisis, high unemployment, and talk of a "double-dip recession" have thrown a lot of companies for a loop.

During uncertain times don't seek safe harbor curled up in a ball. Get up and take the lead! Motivate people to start something new. Encourage innovation! People are relatively adaptable once they know what the situation is, like it or not.

Here are five tips for managing under uncertainty.

1. Keep processes and routines steady and familiar.

Keep your team or staff in the know at all times. For instance, a calendar filled with communication dates can reduce some of the anxiety of uncertainty. It's good leadership to overcome reluctance to say "I don't know," and instead to engage people in discussion about the situation.

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Emphasizing meaningful rituals is another tactic. To have some things that the department or firm does together regularly, no matter what, increases the ability to get on with the action even if situations aren't yet fully resolved.

2. Tackle maintenance and repair.

Uncertainty makes it tempting to let things deteriorate. But fixing things that can be improved represents productive action.

For example, for job-seekers, embarking on a fitness regiment can add energy, lift spirits, and potentially make the person more attractive to a potential employer.

3. Encourage the flow of new ideas.

Since uncertainty leads to rampant gossip and speculation anyway, it can be a good time to harness imagination toward productive ends. Brainstorming about possible futures stimulates imagination about what to do under nearly any circumstance.

4. Show your appreciation.

Showing appreciation to valued clients is the business equivalent of gathering loved ones to reminisce about wonderful times together. Thanking clients for their loyalty or appreciating staff for their contributions doesn't involve making promises, but it does make friends. And sometimes those gestures of appreciation bear fruit in the revenue stream, when those who are appreciated decide to reciprocate by increasing their demand for services.

5. Make your purpose and values clear.

Purpose and values remind people of the long-term. It provides grounding. It helps focus on the times ahead, not just today's troubles. It helps people remain connected to one another, and encourages them to move forward together.

Conclusion

While perfect clarity isn't always a given, a good leader should always be able to **COMMUNICATE, ENGAGE**, and remain **TRUE TO PRINCIPLES**. This can make all the difference in getting stuck in an uncertain rut or emerging triumphantly!

Adapted from article [Five Tips for Coping with Uncertainty and Finding Opportunity](#) by Rosabeth Moss Kantor.

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