

rB Leading Through Crisis | Rod Brace

<http://rodbrace.com/article/crisis>

Opportunity emerges in the midst of crisis. Leadership in the heat of crisis is the catalyst in which opportunities become visible, actionable and beneficial. We are familiar that in the down turn of the stock market there are bargains to snatch up and similar opportunities arise in the housing market during a real estate slump. The economic laws that watch over these conditions have a degree of predictability that allow speculators and savvy investors to capitalize on the moment. These investors understand how people think and act differently when faced with a downturn. Leaders faced with crisis have similar, predictable opportunities.

Periods of crisis can be unsettling to an organization. Employees worry about job loss, vendors anticipate soft sales, consumers hold a bit tighter to funds when calamity emerges. This unsettled mind-set causes virtually every stakeholder to act differently. It is within that changed mindset that leaders should emerge to provide clarity, direction and assurance. A leader who strives merely to survive rather than thrive, misses a rare opportunity.

When experiencing periods of crisis, team members become more open to understanding the dynamics of the business and are more receptive to listening to leadership's perspective on the present condition and predicted path of the scenario. A leader has the opportunity during this period of crisis to educate the organization on the environment in which the organization exists and leverage the strengths of the organization to demonstrate to team members the components of the organization that presently create an advantage.

Roles are closely examined by team members during crisis. It is common for an employee to worry about their value to the organization as the day-to-day norm is disrupted. Employees speculate on their relative value to the organization and what that does to create instability in their work life. Times of crisis allow the leader an opportunity to re-recruit the organizational champions by calling upon them to assist the organization out of the crisis while at the same time reassuring them of their value to that overall effort of the organization.

Finally, crisis is an excellent time to review the purpose of the team members and use the current threat or market pressure to remind them of the importance of operational discipline and highlight efficiencies that have placed the entity in a position to withstand the momentary pressures. The astute leader will "connect the dots" between thriving during this downturn and previous organizational moves that positioned the team for success while other entities fail.

I have seen many emerging leaders "come into their own" during times of crisis. By calmly recognizing the opportunities of the situation while avoiding a bunker mentality that protects one's own executive status at the expense of others, a leader can endear him or herself to their team as the protector and teacher that provides clarity to the situation as well as a path through the difficult times. It is in the midst of crisis that team members learn to trust their leader in deep and meaningful ways.

Don't miss the opportunity to capitalize on crisis to build trust, teach principles and strengthen the organization as a leader.

A leader of good judgment gives stability." Proverbs 29:4 The Message