



In the eye of the crisis – and now what? Ten guidelines for navigating through uncertain times - Part 2

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Six guidelines for you as a leader

1. Avoid falling victim to tunnel vision

In a crisis, you are being driven rather than being in the driver's seat. Instead of acting, you are reacting. This risks to narrow the radius of your decision-making. You need to actively work against this. **Don't decide too hastily.** If possible, always take one night to sleep over important decisions. **Involve other people and outsiders** into your decision-making. They can help you to consider a problem from a different perspective, to uncover blind spots in your reasoning and to offer you new approaches to a problem. The first impulse is not always the right one.



2. Intensify the communication with your employees – it will help you too

Don't forget your employees and retreat to your office and don't mingle exclusively **with colleagues** from the same or upper hierarchical levels. You will only master the crisis in cooperation with your employees, and they need **orientation** and **trust**.



Don't try to master the crisis alone but treat it as a joint effort with your employees. You will discover how much **energy, support,** and **ideas** your employees can provide to you. Not being alone will give you comfort and a precious feeling of solidarity in these times.

3. Think systemically and in scenarios

The exponential curve of Covid 19 exemplifies the **complex and systemic character of the crisis**. **Linear thinking** and focusing on the **common factors** do not suffice anymore. The factors that (will) influence your business are now beyond your standard radar screen, e.g., in other industries, countries, or involving other social actors. These factors are not linked to each other in linear and uni-directional cause-and-effect relationships. They influence each other through **dynamic** and **reciprocal feedback mechanisms**, as it is characteristic for **complex systems**.

Thus, expand your mental map. Start thinking in systems, possible scenarios, and interrelated feedback mechanisms. These are the most apt methods for these circumstances, not the linear projection of trends and numbers.

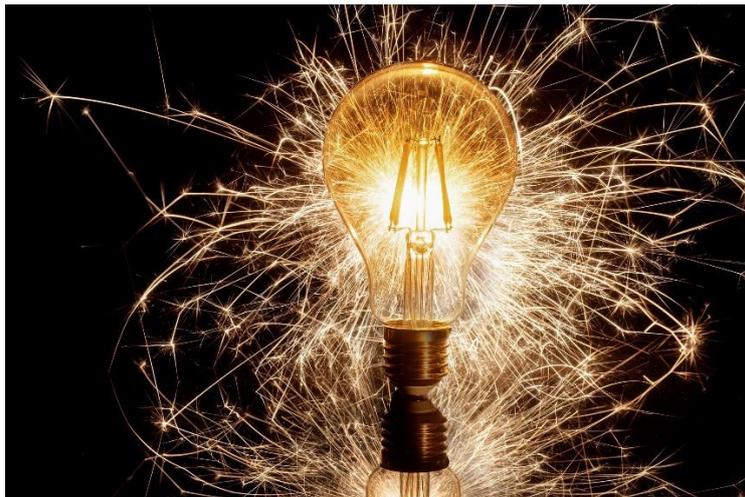
4. Increase the scope of available options for your future decisions

One thing is almost certain: whatever we assume about the future, we will be wrong. Currently, we are driving in a thick fog, and the half-life of a decision has sunk to under a few hours. Things will turn out differently than we expect them. For this reason, it is vital to increase your **flexibility** and be **cautious**. Choose the option that **increases the room for maneuver** for your future decisions – whatever they might be when taking.



5. Promote creativity and ideas in your company

Humans have faced many seemingly hopeless situations in our history, and very often, we have found a way out. Our biggest talent is **our creativity and ideas**, especially in difficult times. Your company is full of ideas. You can build on this.



Promote the development of ideas and encourage employees to voice them. But you need to choose the right method. Sending out an email asking for ideas is often not very successful. It is more fruitful and stimulating to talk to employees personally and to discuss the options face-to-face (even through a video call).

This also shows your employees that they are important and valuable. Furthermore, it also helps them to overcome their self-isolation in their home office, and it resonates with their need to belong to a community.

6. Develop sources of hope and resilience

Crises cost energy, generate self-doubts, and question your identity and self-esteem. To bolster mental strength is now critical. You are now running a marathon. Positive thinking, celebrating small successes, and remembering past success stories are vital for enduring the crisis.



Try to live healthy, take your time for doing sport, and be close to people who can give you energy and trust in yourself. In all of this, don't expect too much of you. It is good to set ambitious objectives, but expectations that are too high can backfire and cause frustrations: a "step by step"-approach focusing on continuous improvements will bring you to the finish line. A successful day means that you are already one day closer to the end of the crisis – celebrate it. It will improve your morale and provide you with the energy and confidence to tackle the challenges of the next day.

Questions or comments are highly welcome at: wolfgang.lassl@puremanagementgroup.com