



## **CEO Leading in a Crisis – Phase II**

This is round two of the crisis. We should have people at home and initial chaos is relatively calmed down. Now we must lead a firm that is working from home (everyone or partial) for three more weeks to three more months+. Here are my tips to running a firm that will grow during this time.

**Your health** – You must take care of your health. Exercise on a schedule. Don't allow yourself to browse in the kitchen and eat out of boredom and easy access to food. From what I am reading, it is probably a good practice to limit drinking of alcohol. It is one of the worst things you can do during crisis period for many reasons.

**Be in the People business** – Your people are going to be heavily engaged in the insurance business. This is the time for you to be in the people business. Some key points:

1. Encourage and motivate your team frequently and purposefully. Try to do so on video.
2. Hire – This is a great time to find talent. You don't have to hire them, just get connected. Other agencies are going to fall on their face right now. Take advantage of that. Salespeople are being displaced in a lot of firms. Go find them. Build your pool of potential talent.
3. Retain – Take care of your key people and make sure they are your biggest advocates after the storm. Get on video with them and ask them how they are doing.
4. Recognize – Seek out recognition during this time. Catch people doing great things!
5. Show you care – Be compassionate about "them". Ask about family. Fix any problems they are having doing their job from home.
6. Create opportunities to connect individuals and teams in video – Virtual happy hours, daily check in meetings, task force groups for upcoming challenges, are things I have already heard from great firms.

**Run the Future Business with Purpose** – Continue your business plan and make modifications that make sense. Make prior projects a priority and give to team members to execute. Work on your personal development and challenge your organization to all learn and become better through this crisis.

**Monitor KPIs** – KPIs to manage in a down economy...

1. Revenue – tracking projected and real revenue through agency billing reports is critical right now. No guessing.
2. **Client count** – I believe this is the most critical measurement in a down economy. When you set goals to add new clients (logos) to the firm, you will increase the revenue base.

It will help offset losses and will create the fastest growth when things turn. The philosophy is similar to investing when the market is down. It takes less time to get back to zero and then grow with more clients added to your base.

3. Balance sheet management is critical. Cash, net worth, debt, line of credit. All need to be goal oriented and watched closely.
4. Profit – Watch trends in profit and manage expenses but don't cut what will help you grow.

**Manage HOPE** – People will “show up” if they have HOPE. You need to give people clarity around items that are true in the organization and the market. Keep them from guessing and making things up. Make sure they know what progress is being made and what is good in the firm. Be clear on how things are being organized and implemented. Communicate what you are confident about, so then you can share your confidence.

**Develop Future Leaders** – We may never get a better opportunity for training our future leaders on crisis management than this event. Get your future leaders and ask them what they think we should do as a firm. Show them the areas you are managing right now. Let them be involved in meetings and decisions. What they can learn about cash flow, people, leadership, client management, growth, etc., will be incredibly valuable.

Leadership will continue to evolve with new phases of this crisis. We must be purposeful in our leadership and not wing it. Activities like managing through email, living in a reactive state, being emotional, communicating negative beliefs of the future, and sending messages of despair will not be effective. Hopefully we can all implement the items listed above and give our people a great chance of success.