

BusinessPlus+ Newsletter

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Leadership in the face of the current Economic Storm

With everything that is currently going on in the world directly or indirectly because of COVID-19, strong leadership has never been more important. Putting things in the context of what can and cannot be controlled is pivotable for businesses and an organisation's people - to provide a calming influence - so appropriate leadership behaviour and decisiveness in these troubling times is vital.

In "[The Daily Stoic](#)", a book by Ryan Holiday & Stephen Hanselmen, one day's entry is about the idea that "**Calm is Contagious**".

Here are the author's words from that book:

"There is a maxim that Navy SEALs pass from officer to officer, person to person. In the midst of chaos, even in the fog of war, their battle-tested advice is this: 'Calm is Contagious.' Especially when that calm is coming from the man or woman in charge. If the (the team) begin to lose their wits, if the group is unsure of what to do next, it's the leader's job to do one thing: instil calm - not by force but by example."

The three tones we can use more often as leaders are:

1. **To remove the fear and replace it with confidence, tell your people, 'you've got this'**, and if you are on the front line with them, about to face down a challenge then 'we've got this';
2. **To remove the confusion and replace it with certainty, use phrases like 'one step at a time', 'trust the process', 'stay the course'**, and let people know what the next best action is. Turns out any action will often do, as the culture is more powerful than the strategy.

Management consultant Peter Drucker famously said, 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast', and referenced research performed at the London Business School of Economics by Dr John West who showed the heavy impact that culture had, as opposed to a business focused simply on strategy;

3. **To mobilise us all in pursuit of a better future, use words like 'onwards' and 'next'**. The job of a leader is to help manage the overload of stressful times. Focus on what we need to do now, what we need to do next, and then. **Now, Next, and Then – these three time-horizons are very useful in times of stress.** Leaders triage the priorities for the people so that we can act in the presence of fear; that's the definition of courageous leadership.

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