

## Leading HR in Tough Times

2009 is predicted to be a very difficult time for all types of organizations and businesses. **Tough times require strong leadership!** This is true for HR leaders as well. Strong leadership is strategic, focused on results and aligns people and processes to vision and values.

**Here are some tips for leading your human resources in tough times:**

1. **ALIGN your HR activities with your long term business strategy.** Spend most of your time on your most important business issues. Focus your human resources on the one or two key areas of opportunity that will bring you the most success.
2. **COMMUNICATE, communicate, and communicate some more.** Talk about what is happening in your market, sector, and industry. Be open-minded and curious; engage your people in problem-solving. Silence breeds worry; communicate to engage your people in creating a more positive future.
3. **ENGAGE your people in discovering opportunities for business growth.** Even though you may lose customers discover what opportunities you can find; explore new markets or new applications for your product or service. Probe into the experience, vision and opinions of your team.
4. **MEET THE CORE CAREER MOTIVATORS of most people,** namely to: have a career future; have positive work relationships; and, to have an opportunity to do their best work. After the tough times you will need your strongest people. Continue to engage them as part of the team; connect with what motivates them.
5. **HAVE THE COURAGE TO MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS NOW.** Leading is a long term process involving numerous small steps. If you need to reduce your staff do it well; provide for those who need to leave; engage those staying behind; communicate the way forward. Do not be afraid to challenge ineffective processes, reduce costs, and make it easier to achieve new results.
6. **EMBRACE CHANGE, it has always been with us.** In 2009, we are likely to see change like many of us have not experienced before. As a leader, you can embrace change by overcoming the paralysis of fear and making the strategic decisions that will enhance your competitive edge. Engage your people in creating an environment which is focused and aligned with new opportunities.

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December 2008

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