

LEADERSHIP IN THE VUCA AGE

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The world is facing significant disruption and increasingly urgent global challenges affecting individuals, families, organizations, governments, and society. This VUCA-driven (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) age of disruption brings new complexities, opportunities, and risks for education. The potential for crises has intensified, driven by rapid technological improvement due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0).

We have encountered first-hand how when we overcome pandemic triggers worldwide, it creates educational disruption and a public health hazard. As part of an innovative strategy, leaders need to act when a crisis occurs to resolve the issue and protect the organization. There are five steps to protect the organization when a crisis occurs. The first step is to Evaluate Risk Management and Internal Controls. Commitment to regular evaluation and risk management practices and internal controls should be practiced. A strong crisis management program through a regular assessment is effective when addressed together. This step can identify new risks and can make new policies to solve the emerging crisis that could lead to significant damage to the organization. The next step is to Identify the most probable crises and assess their potential impact. Some possible crises in every organization include natural disasters, unexpected injury or death of employees, harassment or discrimination, workplace violence, employee malfeasance, cybercrime, fraud, and mismanagement.

The 3rd step which is the most important is to create and train a crisis management team. Internal and external experts should be identified to assure that the team is

prepared to execute important response strategies and tasks. Internal expertise should include senior executive management, operations leaders from key areas, and leaders of compliance, corporate communications, and human resources. While external expertise supplements the internal team and should establish relationships with communication groups, and legal, among others.

The 4th step is to develop and implement a crisis communication plan. Instant communication is a highly effective response to a crisis. Organizations should respond immediately when an issue arises. An effective plan for crisis communication includes complete details on what to do and how to do it. Specifically, policies, processes, implementations, roles, and responsibilities for communication should be detailed. One of the best-practice plans contains quick response guides for the identified crises that have been assessed by the organization. Communication plans focus on cultural differences so that they can respond appropriately. Finally, the plan should be implemented and updated regularly to assure that it is well integrated with operational response and recovery plans.

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The last step is to develop a crisis response plan which is a written plan to effectively manage the crisis. The plan should contain levels of crisis with thresholds for the controlling and implementing team. It should identify the leader of the team to respond to each type of crisis. The vital procedures are assessment, investigation, and mitigation. The details of operational roles and responsibilities should be clear and external support services are identified and engaged. When a crisis is declared, employees are aware of the policies and its leaders, can facilitate better, and respond faster.

To have effective leaders during the crisis in the VUCA age, resilience, mental & result agility, more empathetic leadership, more cognitive readiness & creativity, and more attention should be demonstrated.

References:

Sattar Bawany, 2019. Leadership in Disruptive Times.