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COACHING & INSPIRATION

“COMMUNICATING THROUGH CHAOS”

Often communication in the workplace falls apart when people think they've communicated clearly, but haven't. Known to organizational experts as signal amplification, the common “I thought you understood me” phenomenon can create everything from humorous to fatal misunderstandings. For example, CRICO Strategies, a Harvard-affiliated insurer, found health care mis-communications lead to over 1,700 deaths and \$1.7 billion in malpractice claims.

Teams in high-risk workplaces like construction sites and manufacturing plants know clear and open communication isn't just important for logistics, but actually saves lives, prevents injuries, and saves companies vast amounts of money. Besides the human and legal costs of miscommunication, workers in all fields know the frustrations and dramas that can arise from this mainstay of human interactions. In 2005 at TRAFALGAR Square in London: “Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom. Of course, the task will not be easy. But not to do this would be a crime against humanity, against which I ask all humanity to rise up.” ~ Nelson Mandela

Leadership is an art of influencing, motivating, inspiring, and transforming people towards achieving organizational goals. The leader is the most important element in leadership and therefore the communication you have as an influencer is paramount to achieving your goals. Here are a few characteristics to ensure you are Communicating Well, even in the midst of Chaos!

- 1. BE WILLING TO OVERCOMMUNICATE:** When leaders and key influencers are silent, people are forced to come up with their own ideas of what is going on. This has never been a good solution to solve complex problems. Teams need to hear from their leaders, especially in chaotic times.
- 2. EXTEND AN OVERABUNDANCE OF GRACE:** Keep in mind not everyone in your organization is as invested as you. Not everyone has the privilege of seeing what you see or having the title or influence you have. Keep humanity in mind through the storms, and it will build trust.
- 3. CULTURE IS NOT A BUILDING:** Remember that culture is the shared vision of your team, not the locations where they meet from time to time. Vision leaks, so ensure your teams are reminded often of the overall mission, vision and behaviors that drive your culture.
- 4. CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS:** In the best of times, expectations can be misunderstood. In times of chaos, this is intensified. You can't hold someone accountable for expectations they didn't even know where there to begin with.
- 5. EMBRACE CREATIVITY:** Innovation doesn't happen in isolation, it is when people are faced with circumstances that require solutions be made. This is true of uncertainty. Allow your people to show their bandwidth by coming up with creativity in the chaos and give credit to them.
- 6. LISTEN WELL AND ASK GREAT QUESTIONS:** Do your teams know that you are an active listener or do they know you're just waiting on your turn to speak? Learn to ask great questions while listening well and your teams will trust you to lead them through chaos.
- 7. BE WILLING TO BE VULNERABLE:** When you're faced with chaos and times of uncertainty, if your teams don't see you as being real, approachable and genuine, it will only add to your stress. When you can be authentically open with your teams, they are willing to follow you well.