

# Proactive Management vs. Crisis Management



IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CONTEXT, EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LEADERSHIP. PANDEMIC OR NOT, IT IS ALWAYS IN TIMES OF CRISIS THAT TRUE LEADERS STAND OUT.



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In the current global context, everyone is talking about the importance of good leadership. Pandemic or not, it is always in times of crisis that true leaders stand out.

You've most likely already heard the well-known adage: A smooth sea never made a good sailor.

There has been a flurry of articles and webinars over the past six months on what a leader needs to do in a time of crisis, but how can we simplify things and apply some of these concepts to be better leaders? In everyday life, how can a leader implement all of these recommendations in a practical way?

Before going any further, let's clarify the scope of this document. This is not about the pandemic—enough has already been said on that topic. This is about being ready to lead in crisis situations. For example, if a company's offices are completely destroyed by a fire, how would a leader react? Some may have already experienced this type of situation, but for a leader, this is a major crisis. You must remember that, as a leader, it is important to focus on the elements of a crisis that you can control. Why? It's the only way you can influence the outcome.

Instead of crisis management, we should be talking about proactive leadership. A proactive approach won't protect you from a potential crisis, but it will substantially mitigate its effects.

Rather than going straight to the solutions, let's first look at the interesting data on the effect of leadership within an organization.

Taken from: <https://teamsylvester.com/2019/06/12/7-statistics-to-know-about-leadership-development-in-2019/>

- 7% of organizations report they're experiencing a leadership gap.
- 83% of businesses say it's important to develop leaders at all levels.
- Only 5% of businesses have implemented leadership development at all levels.

Taken from:

<http://www.bloomleaders.com/blog/2018/10/9/interesting-statistics-about-effective-leadership>

- 79% of employees quit due to “lack of appreciation.”
- 63% of millennials feel a lack of leadership development.
- The more women in leadership roles, the better the shareholder ROI.

Taken from:

<https://www.td.org/insights/the-business-case-for-leadership-development-and-learning>

A 2015 joint study by the Conference Board and Development Dimensions International found that CEOs of global companies ranked leadership development efforts as one of their top five human capital strategies.

Here are some other compelling scientific metrics from the same study that prove the incredible value of leadership development and learning, all from the organizations that reported post-training changes in leadership behaviours:

- 114% higher sales
- 71% higher customer satisfaction
- 42% better operational efficiency
- 48% more product and work quality
- 300% additional business referrals
- 233% extra cross-selling
- 36% higher productivity
- 90% lower absenteeism
- 49% reduced overtime work
- 105% fewer grievances
- 11% less downtime
- 90% less rework
- 60% fewer workplace accidents
- 77% lower turnover

So, in light of these statistics, why did we write this white paper?

Because, despite all of this, it is clear that the gap between what we believe makes a good leader compared to the perception of the people who benefit from strong leadership is substantial and is, in our opinion, unacceptable. I always get chills when I think of the 2011–2021 Gallup study that shows that 70% of employees don't feel engaged in their work. Wow. Is there a direct correlation between engagement and leadership? Definitely. So what can we do about it?

The solution appears to be simple, but applying it is much more difficult. Why? It's because before being a company president, CEO or supervisor, we are human beings. This means that we all have our own baggage which in part propels us forward and at the same time makes us doubt ourselves or even act in complete contradiction of the basic principles of leadership.

As former French president Jacques Chirac said:

“We are our own worst enemies.”



Here is what we propose to solve this problem. It involves three steps.

1

Make a point to be on the offensive and not on defense. If I were coaching you in a sport, I would tell you to go for the puck or the ball, throw to the line and attack the net. I wouldn't say protect our defensive zone, defend the net and clear the defensive zone.

In the workplace and in your industry, are you on offense or defense? Do you prefer to be proactive or reactive? Even better, do you create opportunities, or do you wait for opportunity to come knocking at your door?



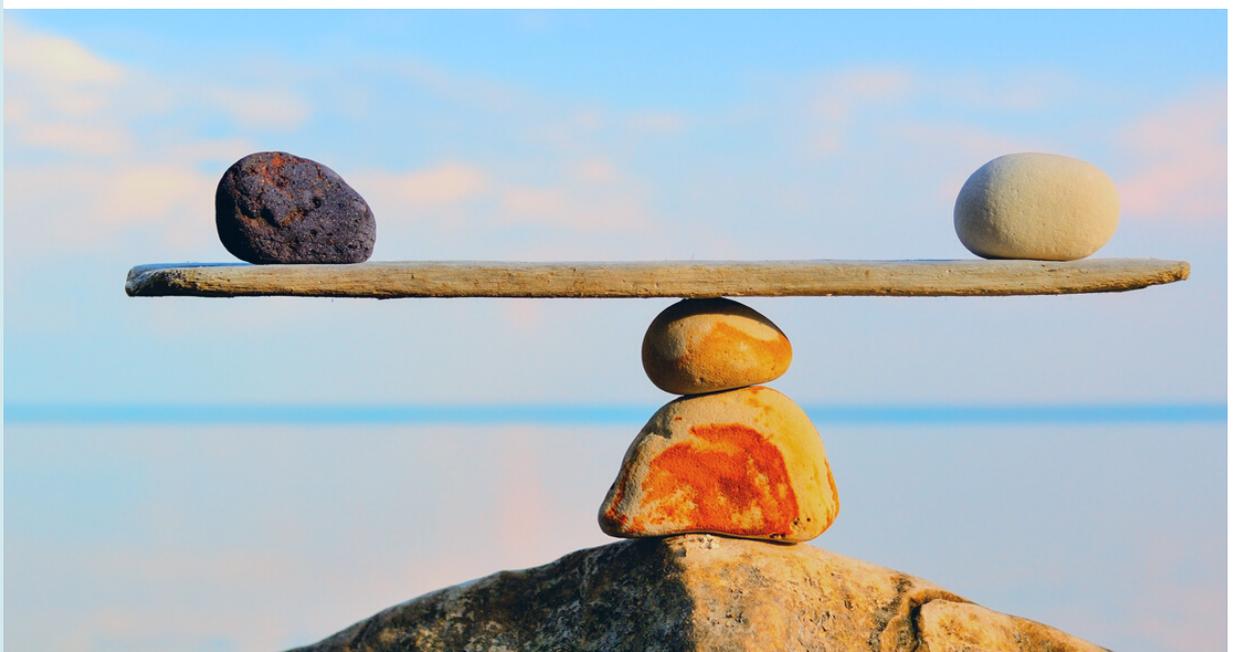
## 2

Apply the ABCs of influence (Affect, Behaviour and Cognition). This approach is based on the book *To Sell Is Human* by Daniel H. Pink.

When leading in a time of crisis, one of your main functions is to influence stakeholders. The first thing you must do is reassure them and then, secondly, lead them in the direction they must go.

- Create harmony in the workplace by directing through questioning. Don't assume that you have all of the answers. Use your head as much as your heart. In other words, be human and show empathy.
- Be strong and confident. Stop and ask questions. It is proven that asking questions is more powerful than making affirmations. For example:
  - Affirmation: "We can do it" vs. Question: "Can we do it?"
  - Affirmation: "I must solve this problem" vs. Question: "Can we solve this problem?" or "How can we solve this problem?"

Try to pay attention to how you're feeling. When you ask questions, your brain looks for an answer. When an undesirable situation develops, take the time to put it into perspective. Ask yourself, "Is this situation permanent?" "Is it pervasive?" "Is it personal?"



- Clarity. Are your instructions, directives and intentions clear? To yourself as well as to others? You might be surprised to hear that when I ask a leader to explain their intentions to me, they are often not even clear to the leader. Imagine how it is for others.

Do a test and ask your colleagues if they understand your message, your strategy and your intentions.

- Ask them to summarize everything in their own words.
- Ask them how clear it is on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 meaning "not clear at all" and 10 meaning "crystal clear."

Whatever their response, start a conversation by asking why they rated it one number and not another. For example, one of your colleagues may be scared of offending you by saying 9 out of 10. Ask him why he didn't say 7. Let him clarify his position and you'll understand.

### 3

Let the important conversation flow from there. According to Judith E. Glaser in her book *Conversational Intelligence*, there are three levels of conversation.

- Transactional: Ask questions to get on the same page as the other person.
- Positional: Communicate to advocate for a point of view.
- Transformative: Listen in order to connect with the other person. Be open to learning, discovering and changing.

Take the most time at this last level. It will be more demanding in the short-term, but the payoff is huge.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The owner and president of DirecSys, a NB company located in Dieppe, Marc-André's mission is to help organizations through the growth of their employees. Marc-André has completed his Six Sigma Master Black Belt with a major in innovation. Being a certified coach via the John Maxwell organization, he has a passion for understanding human behaviour at work. Marc-André works relentlessly at implementing the concept of organizational health in large-scale and custom production environments, in the manufacturing and service sectors. In other words, re-humanizing the workplace. He is a learner at the service of learners.



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