

Leadership Rules for the New Normal

It wasn't long ago that normal meant slow and steady. Today, normal means expect the unexpected, requiring a new set of leadership rules. To help leaders fully engage people and strengthen their resilience in these uncertain times, authors Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, who have been studying leaders and researching leadership for more than thirty years took a fresh look at what leaders do when they are at their personal best. As a result of their research, they identified six principles that all leaders should incorporate into their approach to be successful in turning adversity into opportunity.

1. Broaden the context: View what's happening from a historical perspective to understand how others have dealt with challenging times. Research has shown that people who first reflect on their past during stressful circumstances and tell positive stories about handling hardships are more effective in dealing with adversity and rebound more quickly.

2. Defy the verdict: People want to know the truth, even if it's bad news. If you want your team to respond with fierce determination during periods of business adversity, you need to increase your level of communication about what is really going on. Exemplary leaders acknowledge reality, but do not dwell on the threat. Embrace change as a challenge and move quickly to mobilize resources to defy the verdict.

3. Fully commit to what's important: During tough times, exemplary leaders make certain everyone understands the purpose that guides decisions so as to gain alignment between people and values.

4. Take charge: Leadership opportunities are in the moment. What makes the difference between being a leader or not is how you respond in the moment. You have to respond assertively to moments of trial and adversity.

5. Engage others: Collaboration and trust among your team are essential to navigate through difficult situations. People engaged with one another are motivated to strengthen their relationships with one another, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and find win-win solutions.

6. Show you care: Leaders who have the courage to show they care for the team build strong interpersonal relationships and develop a bond that can be the difference between a team that overcomes challenges and a team that disintegrates at the first sign of trouble. If you want people to hang with you when times are tough, let them know they are valued on a regular basis.