



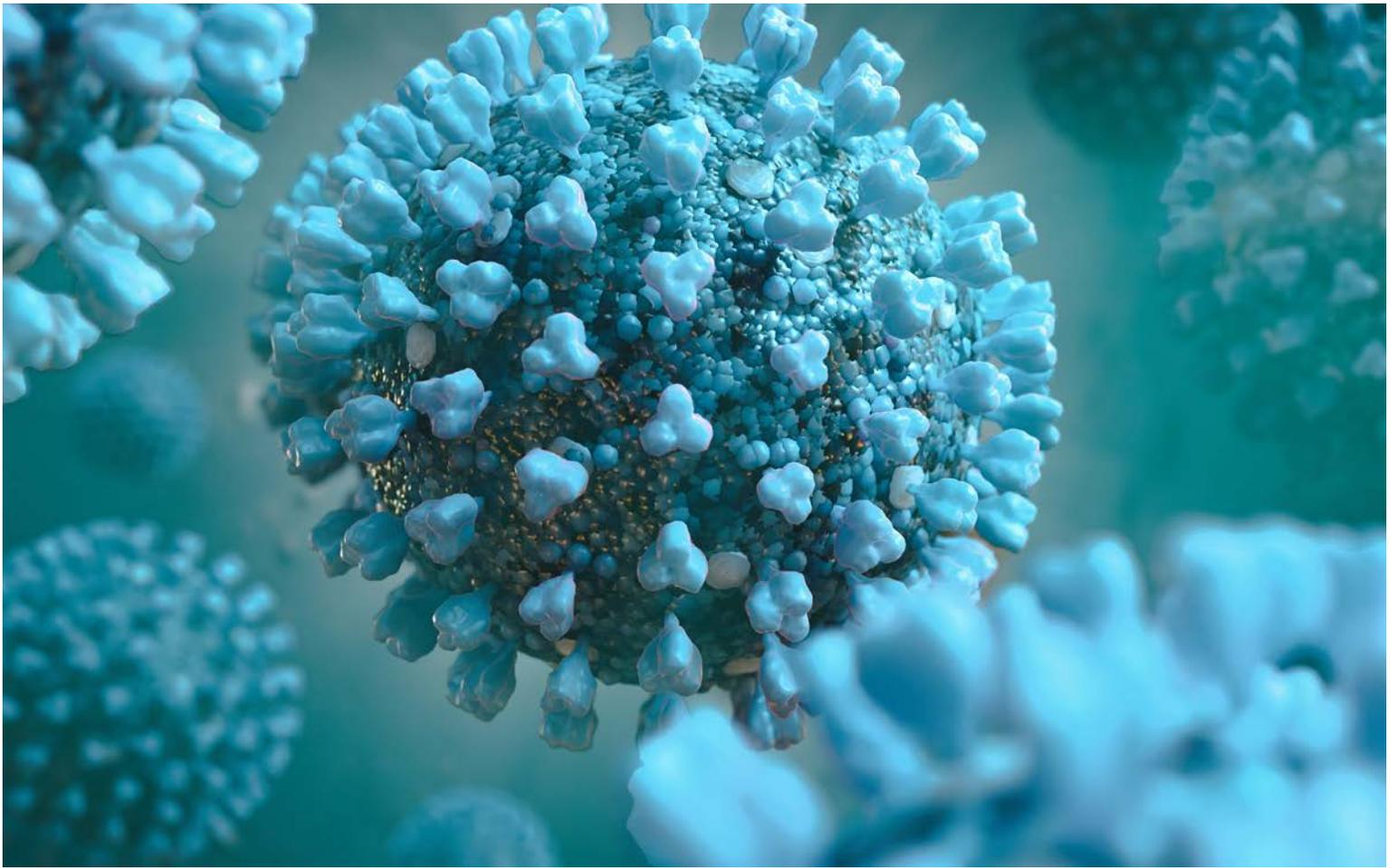
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2020 WHITE PAPER SERIES



Leadership During Crisis

Responding to the Coronavirus Outbreak in the Logistics Industry



National shutdowns have become typical language in business continuity plans due to the increasing level of public panic during widespread crises. For the logistics industry, shutting down is not an option. Delivering everything from medical supplies to basic consumer necessities, moving forward is a critical mission.

Even amidst the pandemonium surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, businesses are still concerned with day to day functions. Preparatory tactics can be employed to allow continued business without a major disruption in operations. Shifting focus to the areas of solution-driven conflict management, empowerment, and performance will help de-escalate doubts and fears while reassuring the workforce.

Infinet-I Workforce Solutions, in collaboration with crisis management consultants and industry experts, has discovered a need for predetermined responses, proper prioritization, and urgent solutions in a time of crisis. The newly developed framework encourages the implementation of new practices regardless of the current standard operating procedures. New challenges will arise such as planning capacity to sustain remote workspaces and a reduced workforce. The responsibility of logistic leaders is to ensure the company, the network of shippers/ receivers, and the country continue to function throughout a national crisis.

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.”

-Theodore M. Hesburgh

"A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader, a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

FIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES TO HELP LOGISTICS THRIVE IN THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

1. Propel the Psychology of the Problem Solver
2. New Effective Organization in Crisis Management
3. Empowering New Leaders
4. The Healthy Rhythm
5. Empathy and Bonding

The most essential factor is persistence —the determination never to allow your energy or enthusiasm to be dampened by the discouragement that must inevitably come.

- James Whitcomb Riley

If you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.

- Dolly Parton

PROPEL THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PROBLEM SOLVER

A strong sense of urgency does not require negative or harsh demands. As everyone is looking to management for guidance, maintaining composure in a time of stress will allow a positive mindset to flow throughout the company. To allow the workforce to feed off energy, participate in face to face meetings with employees whenever possible, including video messages in lieu of email. Through these means, management can establish credibility to gain buy-in from employees and ultimately prevail.

It is a waste of energy and resources to focus on issues that are out of the control of the business, such as federal regulations and mandates. Instead, focus on ways to respond to events that arise. Problem solvers face situations head on by preemptively preparing solutions for many possible outcomes.

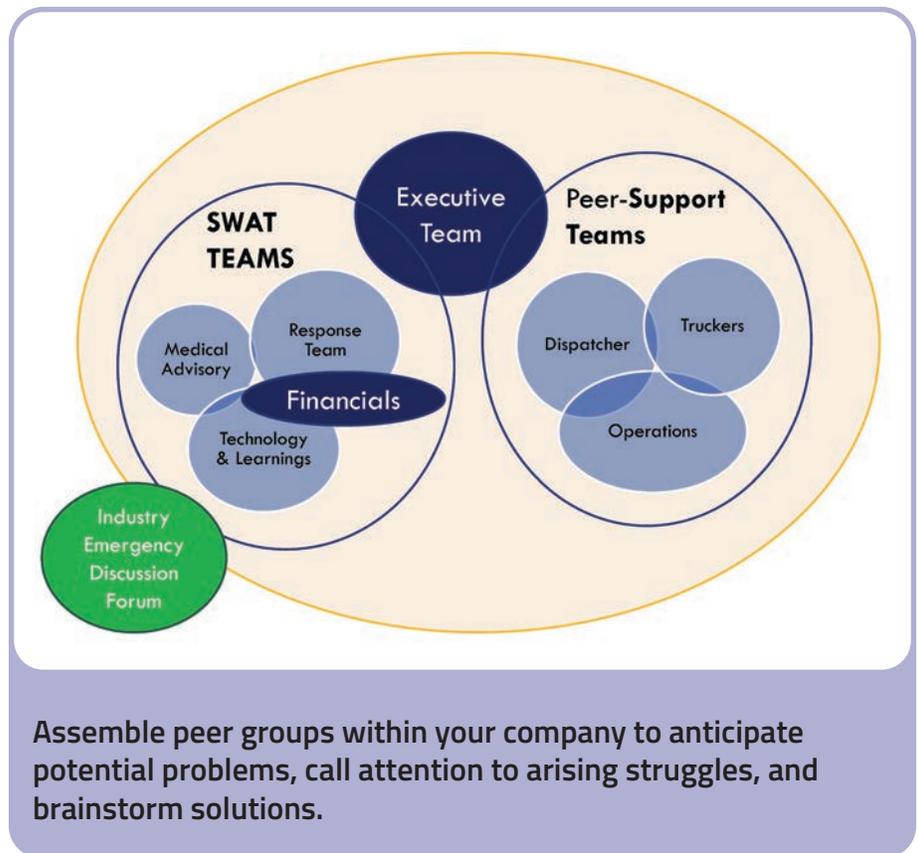
EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

While the public is panicking about the current state of affairs, leadership may struggle to maintain composure and retain a positive mind set. Front line employees depend on their leaders to remain in control, convey confidence, and make good decisions. In an effective organization, leaders will project clarity amongst the workforce, acknowledge the crisis and how the company is affected, and encourage positivity throughout the ranks.

Proactivity is the most effective safeguard against challenges that will inevitably arise during a pandemic. Leadership can prepare for these challenges by assembling peer groups to anticipate potential problems, call attention to arising struggles, and brainstorm solutions. Front line and field employees are a valuable source of information regarding the company's operations. Management may not always be aware of issues faced by their subordinates. Open communication with all levels helps understand the employees' state of mind and keep a handle on morale.

The crisis management executive team will not operate with the same practices as the normal corporate structure. New leaders will focus on mapping situations as they arise to gain a proper understanding, formulate solutions, and communicate and retrain employees to perform during a time of change.

The new team will focus not only on day to day operations but will create a plan of action in regard to medical preparedness, technology and learning, and any financial issues that may arise. While it is impossible to avoid all obstacles, a proactive plan of action is the best defense against potential setbacks.



EMPOWERING NEW LEADERSHIP

The task of taking on even more responsibility can seem impossible for leaders who are already overloaded, however, a unique opportunity exists in times of misfortune. Employees exist within your ranks that are eager to prove their worth. Now is the time to delegate tasks to those who seek opportunity, but how can the decision of whom to elevate be made?

Establishment of a new architecture for decision making involves leaning toward those who are more pragmatic than emotional. Employees in new leadership roles should have a clear sense of empowerment, understand their new role, and be trusted to make decisions.

Even in a time of crisis, invest in those who focus on the company's success. The individuals who display a deliberate sense of calm and bounded optimism will drive the company forward for years to come.

"The secret of leadership is simple: Do what you believe in. Paint a picture of the future. Go there. People will follow."

- Seth Godin

THE HEALTHY RHYTHM

After the peer groups and new leadership have been established, the amount of new information could potentially overwhelm decision makers. They will need to leverage their experience along with the new information to make deliberate and informed decisions. A proper evaluation will require time, attention to detail, and identification of potential outcomes. When the pressure is palpable, management may feel pressured to make hasty decisions. However, the company will be much better served if those involved remain disciplined, remain calm, and evaluate all options before moving forward.

PAUSE

ASSESS

ANTICIPATE

EMPATHY & BONDING

Common stress among employees presents management with an opportunity to harness the emerging herd mentality and focus on the survival of the company. As survival mode takes the place of complacency, taking advantage of the situation creates a new camaraderie throughout the company. Effective leadership will set clear expectations and focus on motivation in order to elevate the workforce to the new level of achievement.

The project is not necessarily complete for leadership when normalcy returns. The entire workforce has been through a traumatic experience but have managed to make it through, together. These incidents can have lasting effects comparable to other life-changing events, such as being in a car accident or losing a friend. Communities will emerge on the other side of this pandemic as a changed group, possibly unrecognizable from before. It will be the priority of management to maintain an air of positivity, recognize the difficulties faced by employees, and reward their loyalty through the crisis they have endured together.

"I get knocked down, but I get up again. You're never gonna keep me down."

- Chumbawumba

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Regardless of their role, each employee is a problem solver. If properly empowered, they will see themselves as an integral part of the company and be motivated to do more. Allow others to step up into leadership roles and prove themselves worthy of trust.

Continuity through disaster requires preparation, crisis management, and a structured vision for the future. If the goal is to not only survive but thrive during difficult times, existing procedures will not suffice. By adopting a new framework of changed behaviors, leadership will reassure their workforce that business does not suffer, even in times of widespread, national crisis.

We want to empower your company's response to the current crisis and improve coordination and communication with your employees. For companies who are not currently Infinit-I Workforce Solutions customers, Vertical Alliance Group is offering a complimentary 30-day trial of the Infinit-I Workforce Solutions system. Please call 877-792-3866 to take advantage of this offer.



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