



HOW I SEE IT.

3 Tips for Leading in Anxious Times

Do not move unless it is advantageous.

Do not execute unless it is effective.

Do not challenge unless it is critical. - Sun Tzu

The year-end push is always stressful, but given this year's economic woes and competition for customers and employees, 2008 is downright frustrating.

Don't panic, just plan and execute. There's still time-on-the-clock.

It's time to call for a time-out – to re-focus, re-energize, and re-enforce.

Re-Focus

Develop the A-list of best opportunities. Determine the best products, best services, best prospects, and best strategies to align them all. Now is the time for high-margin, quick close, high-referral/prestige efforts. You want to chase the kind of business that will gain attention and make you stand out as a 'gotta do business with me' reputation. Lose the slow pay, high maintenance-low return customers for better ones.

Leverage the Customers. Existing customers are your best source for more business (add-ons, upgrades, new products, etc.). Structure an outrageous "offer they can't refuse" for their loyalty. Don't "give it away" – you still need to make money, but make it as attractive as possible.

Do a few things well. Save time, energy, and precious money by getting very selective and targeting only potentially hi-return efforts in advertising, marketing, PR, and other visibility efforts. Now is not the time to "scatter gun" your efforts.

Re-Energize

Spread the word. What is the mission? What are the goals? What's the plan? Don't keep it a secret – tell your team first, then customers, then prospects in the marketplace. Five-minutes is all you should need to get everyone on board with the right focus.

Schedule at least one impactful meeting, seminar, or event. Do your people need a boost of creativity, training, motivation, skills development, or something else that can be accomplished by a thirty, sixty or ninety-minute event? Do it. Money spent on bringing in an outside pro can be the 'shot-in-the-arm' to get everyone jazzed.

No layoffs. People are anxious enough about their jobs without seeing heads roll. Obviously IF there's a really bad element, you need to deal with them; however, be sure to explain "Why" they're gone so people don't think they're next. Use it as a moment to teach the values everyone is to demonstrate.

Re-Enforce

Be available. Now is not the time to "hide" in your office. Walk the halls, go on calls, have pep talks and/or regular BRIEF meetings to keep everyone informed of how things are progressing. The last thing you need are rumors flying and damaging gossip because nobody knows where you are or hears from you.

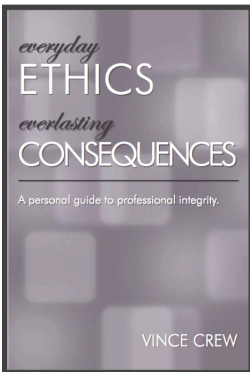
Remind the team of the rules of engagement. It would be very easy to give into temptations during financially charged times. This is not the time to be shy about ETHICS. Everyone needs to understand that there are values, parameters, and rules of decision-making and conduct that apply in good times and not-so-good times. Accept no compromises to the principles that have helped you establish an enviable reputation.

During tough times we can do stupid stuff. And yet, tough times are good, because they cause us to re-evaluate a lot of our priorities and energies to doing what matters most. Re-focus, re-energize, re-enforce.

At least that's how I see it.

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A TIP OR TWO

When it comes to any planning... FOCUS

- F**actor in your personal & professional goals - make sure they're aligned and consistent
- O**pportunities that will provide "quick" success builds momentum and helps you to prioritize
- C**ommit to accomplishing results, not just keeping busy
- U**nderstand your limitations (time, money, energy, people, etc.) - go for greatest return
- S**ense of urgency will drive you to accomplish and deliver in a timely fashion

THOUGHTS FROM HERE AND THERE

- Everyone who got where he is had to begin where he was. Robert Louis Stevenson
- If you are going through hell, keep going. Sir Winston Churchill
- A mistake is simply another way of doing things. Katharine Graham
- Whatever you do, do it with all your might. Work at it, early and late, in season and out of season, not leaving a stone unturned, and never deferring for a single hour that which can be done just as well as now. P.T. Barnum
- You know what luck is? Luck is believing you're lucky, that's all. Marlon Brando
- Vitality shows not only in the ability to persist, but in the ability to start over. F Scott Fitzgerald
- Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin. Mother Teresa
- If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome. Anne Bradstreet
- Cast all your anxieties on HIM, for HE cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7
- Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Corinthians 5:5
- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6
- Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

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