5 CHANGE MANAGEMENT TIPS
... when you’re in CRISIS mode
When you have a crisis to deal with, one of the certainties is that you literally have no time to plan or think. But this doesn't mean you can't (or shouldn't) take stock of the environment you're in. In fact, this is one of your most important tactics. Warning: this will go a bit against your instinct because you're going to feel like you have to act, have to “say something” right now, without taking time to think. That's a mistake. As Al Pacino’s character in Glengarry Glen Ross said, “Don’t open your mouth unless you know the shot.” Take a quick scan of your surroundings. This isn't a 10-page survey, it’s talking to some of your key people as well as others (influencers, optimists and sworn pessimists) to get a true pulse. You can accomplish this in a matter of a couple days (or hours if you're really in a bind). Jot down a few questions, engage a few people who are close to what's being said and what's going on out there and summarize. It's not more complicated than that. Well, it doesn't have to be.
Enlist Help

It's so much more enjoyable to work through heady problems, challenges and crises with other people, especially if they're smarter than you 😊. Renowned change expert John Kotter talks about the importance of building a coalition in leading change. When you're in crisis mode, you need to build a coalition very quickly so we're just saying “get help!” It's true as the saying goes that “many hands make light work,” but enlisting help from others isn't just about sharing workload. It's also about sharing ideas and bringing supporters to the table. Finding those who are influential within your organization and bringing them on board is a big plus anytime. In crisis, it's even more critical. You don't have time to “find your way” through the complex world of stakeholders. You need to get some shit done. And yes, extra hands to carry out the work does make life a little easier. Tips 1 and 2 can really happen simultaneously. You may need some help to take stock or you may need to take stock in order to identify helpers.
Okay so you’ve probably heard this one, right? “If you fail to plan, you should plan to fail.” We really hate that saying. Sorry but it’s true. A plan is important but a plan without execution is just shelf-ware. And in crisis, that’s even worse because time, and potentially other stuff, is public enemy #1. So, we like the idea of creating a punch list of the tasks that need to get done. This is a "MINI"-plan (note the emphasis) but "PUNCH LIST" sounds way more exciting.

To get this list started, you need three things: (1) the summary from when you “took stock”, (2) a few of your helpers, (3) a conversation. The outcome of the conversation(s) will be punch list version 1. Expect that you’ll be adding to it and modifying tasks as you go. PMs don’t like this but it’s reality.

Make sure your punch list includes a few events to bring people together for a bit of levity and fun.
Have we mentioned that you’re in crisis mode? Often, leaders take too much time thinking and planning the perfect strategy, message, vision, etc. when what is really critical is just getting word out. Your people want and need the truth. This is no time to channel the words of Colonel Nathan Jessup from *A Few Good Men*. Trust your people, they CAN handle the truth.

In times of crisis, organizations (people that is) need to come together as soon as possible. So, hold an all-hands meeting and tell your people what’s going on, what’s known, what’s being done and what to expect. (live in-person, webcasts, conference calls can all be effective, depending on your organization). The key is to get a genuine and consistent message out and have a venue for questions to be asked. The more personal this can be, the better.
You know what’s going on in the organization and have a pulse of how your people are feeling. Check. You’ve enlisted help from colleagues, influencers, every day people. Check. Punch list. Check. All-Hands Meeting Held. Check. Well, shoot folks, it’s time to rock and roll.

This is where the fun begins. It’s time to start knocking things off the punch list while you continue to take stock, enlist more helpers and supporters, and keep everyone engaged and informed.

And while you do all this, remember to listen to music, enjoy a few refreshments, and have a little fun with each other. Going through crisis together is crazy but it brings your whole team closer and when you get through it, you’ll be incredibly strong as an organization.
Seriously, how simple is this?

1. Take Stock (quickly)
2. Enlist Help
3. Make a Punch List
4. Come Together
5. Start Jammin’

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We listened to [SEBELL], the Stills, Dropkick Murphys, Neon Trees and American Authors while we made this eBook.