Leading Through the Unexpected

Navigating Change, Uncertainty & Business Continuity

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When the plan changes

Think of a moment when unexpected news changed what came next.

What needed your attention first?



An unexpected leadership transition

- A counterpart’s terminal illness
- Additional leadership responsibilities
- Business needs alongside the human experience

A moment that shaped my response

The situation. The decision.
What happened next.

- What I would do again
- What I would handle differently



Maintaining stability

- What must continue?
- What can wait?
- What needs a different owner?

Clear ownership

- Who owns the responsibility?
- What decisions can they make?
- When should they ask for help?
- When will we review the plan?

The human impact

“What has changed for you because of this, and where do you need support?”



Communication during uncertainty

- What we know
- What we’re still working through
- What happens for now
- When we’ll share another update

An interim team update

> “There are questions we can’t answer today.”

- Respect the person’s privacy
- Explain the coverage plan
- Give people a contact and a review date

Stepping outside your role

- Responsibilities and decision authority
- Work that can move off your plate
- Support and approval needs
- A date to reassess

Shared responsibility

- A second person in important conversations
- Accessible knowledge and process documentation
- Backups with experience and authority

Where are we vulnerable?

If one person became unavailable tomorrow, what would become difficult first?



Your team’s next step

- What would become difficult first?
- Who could take ownership?
- What could you do in the next 30 days?

1 minute to reflect. 3 minutes with a partner. Then share.

Leading through the next disruption

- Priorities people can act on
- Compassion alongside timely decisions
- Updates people can depend on
- Responsibility the team can share

One action. One date.

Choose one conversation or action.
Put a date beside it.



Questions & discussion

What are you navigating
in your organization?



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