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MOVING YOURSELF AND YOUR TEAMS FROM FEAR TO ACTION

FEATURING

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MOVE WITH THE SPEED OF TRUST

STEPHEN M. R. COVEY

In the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and on the day after the stock market's worst day in over three decades, I spoke with a client who runs a technology consulting company in New York City. This CEO told me, "The disruption is devastating and is hitting all of us. But it's interesting to me, when something like this happens, you see leaders invest and focus on all sorts of different things they think are vital to solving the problem at hand. But you know what? If I'm going to focus on anything, it's going to be on trust. Trust is baseline humanity, and we need it to solve our problems. If we get better at trust, that will help us navigate everything else."

In this time of change, crisis, and uncertainty, the greatest asset and security any leader has is their credibility. The greatest currency they have is the trust people have in them. The greatest power they have lies in how they choose to extend trust to others.

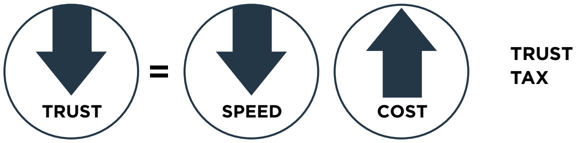
While that's always true, during enormous disruption, the critical currency of trust carries an even greater premium. Trust is the one thing that changes everything. We still have to do other things—collaborate, be adaptive and agile, and stay responsive to changing conditions—but what this CEO was affirming as he navigates this crisis for his business is that we can do all of those things *better* if we start with trust. He's right. And if we lose it, our ability to do any of those other things is profoundly diminished.

If we do what it takes to build a high-trust culture, even in the midst of a crisis—and I would emphasize *especially* in the midst of a crisis—we'll be far more agile, collaborative, creative, and innovative.

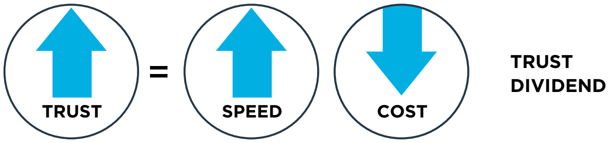
TRUST IS AN ACCELERATOR, ESPECIALLY DURING CRISES

When we say "trust," many people think of a soft, nice-to-have social virtue, and it is that—but it's so much more. Trust is a pragmatic, hard-edged, economic, and actionable asset we can create through specific behaviors. It affects the speed at which we can move and the cost of everything.

When there's low trust in any team, culture, organization, society, or relationship, speed goes down and cost goes up. It's a tax. Think about a leader you don't trust: They can communicate all they want, but you'll discount what they say, or you simply won't believe it, much less act on it. You'll have to verify and draw your own conclusions. Low-trust organizations are ensnarled in bureaucracy and excessive controls. Low-trust team members miscommunicate, have "meetings after the meetings," and play politics. Everything takes longer.



Thankfully, the converse is also true: When trust is high, speed goes up and cost comes down. When credible leaders share information or announce a plan, their teams get to work. Communication and collaboration are seamless. Teams feel safe to innovate and take smart risks. High trust earns a dividend; it's a performance multiplier.



Teams and organizations that operate with high trust significantly outperform teams and organizations with low trust. This has been proven in dozens of studies across a multitude of industries and sectors. The HOW Report study conducted by the consulting firm LRN, for example, found that people who work in high-trust cultures are "six times more likely to achieve higher levels of performance compared with others in their industry." Tapping into this level of performance during a crisis is vital.

FOUR KEY BEHAVIORS THAT BUILD HIGH TRUST FAST

The advice for most crises is to communicate, communicate, communicate. I agree. But if you stand up and communicate without being credible or having trust or telling the truth, you're going to dig a deeper hole. *How you do what you do* makes all the difference, and it will also increase your credibility.

Think about it: If we're not credible when we communicate, people won't believe what we're saying; they may not care or take stock in our advice; they may question our agenda or doubt our motives. We must focus first on building credibility through *both* our character and competence, then earning trust through a few key behaviors.

The behaviors we need to emphasize during times of crisis are the same behaviors we need during times of noncrisis. They just become even more important because the degree of difficulty has gone up. We need to be intentional and deliberate about those behaviors.

There are 13 specific behaviors common to every high-trust, highly engaged culture, and 13 opposite and counterfeit behaviors found in every low-trust, toxic, dysfunctional culture. Unfortunately, we don't have time to build trust over months and years; we've been thrown into a new environment.

Four of the 13 Behaviors are disproportionately leveraged during a crisis, and I'll cover them in the following sections:

- Confront Reality
- Create Transparency
- Talk Straight
- Extend Trust

We'll spend extra time in "Extend Trust," covering its specific application to remote work.

Interestingly, during major disruptions, leaders tend to drift not to the *opposite* of a high-trust behavior, but to the *counterfeit*. I'll cover those in detail below.

CONFRONT REALITY

High-trust leaders take things head-on, even the tough things. Confronting reality means discussing the undiscussable and calling out the elephant in the room.

The opposite of confronting reality is to ignore it, act as though it doesn't exist, and hope it will go away in time. The counterfeit is to act like we're confronting reality when we're actually evading it. We might focus on busywork or ancillary issues instead of tackling the tough root causes of the challenges at hand. We kick the can down the road. We skirt reality or give lip service to it, versus facing the hard news that it's bad now and it may get worse. Acknowledging the elephant in the room, or merely talking about it, is very different from taking it head-on.

How we receive bad news the first time often determines whether or not we will continue to receive bad news. But we can't solve a problem we don't understand. We need the bad news. We have to confront and work through it, not around it. If team members, peers, or experts share difficult information, we don't hide from it. We take it head-on. Doing so inspires trust and confidence.

CREATE TRANSPARENCY

Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson said, "Transparency is 'job one' for leaders in a crisis." We must be open and authentic and real. Transparency is drawn from the principle of light: it cleanses, dissipates the shadows, and enables people to see. It gives them a sense of comfort and confidence. They know nothing is hidden.

> "TRANSPARENCY IS 'JOB ONE' FOR LEADERS IN A CRISIS."
>
> — Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business School professor

The opposite of creating transparency is to hide or cover up. It includes hoarding, withholding information, keeping secrets, or having hidden agendas. It's darkness. The counterfeit of creating transparency is being open… to a point. It's an illusion, revealing some things and covering up others, worrying that too much information might make people fearful. It's when we share information in a way, or to a degree, while still trying to control people's response to it. But that causes more destruction and harm.

If we try to hide the bad news, we will lose credibility and trust with our audiences, our constituents, and our people. They'll likely find out at some point anyway. The best way to handle this is to be up-front about the information we have. When we know things, we share what we know. When we don't know things, we say what we don't know and what we're doing to learn those things and how we're trying to respond. If we know things we can't share, or it wouldn't be appropriate or responsible to share, we tell people that we can't share and why. We are transparent about why we might not be able to be transparent. We model transparency. We tell the truth in a way people can verify for themselves.

TALK STRAIGHT

Now more than ever, we have to tell the truth, even difficult truths. We have to call things what they are.

The opposite of talking straight is lying or deceiving, but I especially want to contrast talking straight to the counterfeit, which is when we spin, position, posture, or manipulate. During times like today, it's very understandable to think, *I don't want to panic people.* So the temptation is to soft-pedal the news. We might feel like we're going to be less alarming and frightening if we downplay things, but if we do that, then every time we speak, people will wonder, *Are they sugarcoating again? Is this real? Can I trust this*?

At the same time, some might swing the pendulum all the way to the other side. We're not trying to become alarmist and paint the absolute worst-case scenario, which can cause an emotional contagion that's extraordinarily distressing. But we also don't want to go to the extreme of saying everything is fine, there are no problems, and nothing is going to change—when everyone can look around and see everything is changing in front of their eyes. We have to find the sweet spot.

Get a reputation for being clear and up-front about bad news. People might not always like what they hear, but they'll learn they can trust what they hear. With that, our ability to communicate will go up; our ability to connect with our people and instill confidence in them will go up.

One of the most potent ways to Talk Straight is to start our meetings, discussions, and communications by *declaring our intent*. We should give not only the "what," but especially the "why" behind the information we're sharing or the direction we're asking teams to take.

EXTEND TRUST

During crisis and disruption, the tendency for even high-trust leaders is to backtrack and revert to more of a "command and control" style of leadership.

Think of a person who's moved to another country and spoken the language fluently for years. When they stub their toe, they aren't going to swear in the foreign language—they'll go back to their native tongue. Extending trust is like an acquired language: it's not necessarily instinctive and natural for people, especially under stress.

And during crisis or disruption, our tendency is to go back to what we know—what we were trained in, scripted in, and maybe what we're good at. For many, that means going back to "command and control" versus what I refer to as "trust and inspire."

So often the reason is fear—fear of the unknown, of the risk of it going wrong, that people aren't ready, that they'll take advantage of it, that they aren't capable, that they aren't motivated, or that they won't deliver.

When we lead in a way that shows distrust to our people, it doesn't inspire any of the kind of performance we need from them; it does just the opposite. Not only do we show them we don't believe they can rise to the occasion, but we deny them the opportunity to even try. And our distrust is reciprocated. One of the main reasons employees in many organizations don't trust their managers is simply because the managers don't trust their employees. Thankfully, this reciprocity goes both ways. Trust begets trust. People rise to the occasion. They perform better. Trust brings out the very best in others. In fact, I would say that being trusted is the most inspiring form of human motivation.

Neuroscience is strong on this: High-trust cultures are more energized, more engaged, less stressed out, and less burned out. In *Harvard Business Review*, researcher Paul J. Zak reported on more than a decade of research, and his data showed that compared with people at low-trust companies, people at high-trust companies report:

- 74% less stress.
- 106% more energy at work.
- 50% higher productivity.
- 13% fewer sick days.
- 76% more engagement.
- 40% less burnout.
- 41% greater sense of accomplishment.

THE MORE TRUST SOMEONE HAS IN THEIR LEADER AND THEIR COMPANY, THE LESS FEAR THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE.

The more trust someone has in their leader and their company, the less fear they're going to have. My definition for trust is confidence. And in many ways, confidence is the opposite of fear.

We must both say and *demonstrate* that we trust our people. The strength of this behavior is in the reciprocity. Distrust is contagious, but so is trust. Trusting our people can become a virtuous upward spiral where trust and confidence create more trust and confidence, and everyone feels inspired by it.

So trust your people. If someone says they're sick, believe them. (I just read about an organization requiring a doctor's note if employees call in sick—during a pandemic. Talk about a lack of trust!) Trust your teams, and not only will they perform better, the trust will come back to you.

The very act of modeling the first three behaviors—Confront Reality, Create Transparency, and Talk Straight—demonstrates extending trust to others, because it shows that you believe they can handle the truth of what's really going on. Conversely, when you model a counterfeit version of those behaviors, it shows that you don't really trust them to be able to handle it. So again, *trust your people*.

TRUST YOUR TEAMS, AND NOT ONLY WILL THEY PERFORM BETTER, THE TRUST WILL COME BACK TO YOU.

Nearly all organizations are currently facing this in the context of telecommuting. Many organizations haven't allowed remote work for some or all of their employees. So often leaders have justified this by saying, "We have to be together to collaborate." That might be true, but in at least some situations, the dominant mindset of leaders is really "We have to be together because I have to keep my eye on everyone. If they were on their own, in their homes, they might be goofing off." Remote work is a trust issue in many respects, even though some leaders might never acknowledge it.

If we implement remote work with a surfeit of rules, we're allowing fear to overcome trust—and people can sense it. As a result, we'll suboptimize performance dramatically, send the wrong message, and lose a huge opportunity to extend (and receive) trust.

The opposite of extending trust in this context would be saying, "I flat-out don't trust you, and I'm telling you I don't trust you." The counterfeit of extending trust in this case is saying we're going to trust people to telecommute from home, then loading them up with excessive rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. Our words might say we trust them, but as we then micromanage them through systems, our actions say very clearly that we don't. We dictate methods and procedures and processes. We're basically communicating, "I *don't* really trust you; I just have no choice now."

Leaders are used to being in control. They're often fearful that people could take advantage of remote work. The reality is that a few might, but we shouldn't let 5 percent of the people we can't trust define 95 percent of the people we can. Both leaders and team members want to make sure the job gets done and want to succeed. If we set clear expectations, agree upon a process for accountability, and build it up front into an agreement, we can extend Smart Trust.

Make sure everyone is clear on the expectations of what we're trying to accomplish:

- What results are we after?
- Are there any guidelines we need to be aware of? (Guidelines might be the closest thing to rules, but guidelines should be broader. The moment leaders start to prescribe methods, they then become responsible for results. We want to give the team member that responsibility.)
- What resources do we have to work with?

Then shift accountability to the team members. They will report back on how they're doing against the agreement.

Leaders still build in control, but it's self-control. It's coming from the team member. It's not a micromanagement control coming from a hovering supervisor. It looks and feels different. In fact, there's actually more control in a high-trust culture than a rules-based culture. The reality is that you can't come up with enough rules to "manage" people you don't trust. So learn to trust them.

A LEADER'S FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE THEIR OWN CREDIBILITY

An important note: These four behaviors will give you a clear path in the coming months. But if we practice the behaviors without the foundation of our own *personal credibility*, the behaviors could become manipulative or technique-like, and they will backfire. Think about the term "con man": it's short for "confidence man." Confidence is trust; so a con man is someone who earns your trust now, with the intention to hurt or deceive you later. They perform the behaviors to earn trust, but their credibility is lacking. They don't have integrity; their intent is self-serving.

The behaviors absent from the foundation of credibility ultimately don't work. They're counterproductive and could even exacerbate problems.

The behaviors do accelerate trust when they're based on the foundation of *credibility*. I define credibility as character and competence:

- Character is our integrity and intent. *Integrity* is more than honesty; it's being congruent, inside and out. It's aligning our actions with our values. *Intent* is our motive and agenda. Trust grows when our motive is based on care, and when our agenda is straightforward and based on mutual benefit. Essentially, it's "Yes, I care about my win, but I care about your win as much as I do my own. And I care about you."
- Competence derives from our capabilities and our results. Are our *capabilities* current? Are they relevant? In the pandemic crisis we're facing, we need to borrow strength from experts in public health, because most leaders don't have capability in this area. We can't act like we know something we don't know. We can't

pretend we're an expert in an area we're not an expert in. We need to bring in their strength so we stay capable and relevant.

Our competence secondly derives from *results*—our performance. Does our track record give people confidence that we deliver, that we do what we say we're going to do? Are we modeling what we want to see in others?

Before we implement any high-trust behavior, the onus is on each leader to first look in the mirror and assess their credibility. Then with that in place, these behaviors are great accelerators and vital dimensions to building trust during disruption.

THE ONE THING THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

Almost without exception, trust tends to go down during change, transition, or crisis—if we're not intentional about cultivating it. And most leaders are not deliberate, because they're caught up in reacting and responding to the emergencies that are arising.

But if we're intentional about building trust through our behaviors, we can actually increase trust in a time of crisis. It's not easy, but it is possible—by confronting reality, creating transparency, talking straight, and proactively extending *Smart Trust*, all from a foundation of personal credibility.

We can communicate and collaborate and innovate and solve the challenges facing us. We can be agile and adaptive and responsive and creative. We can conquer these challenges and come out even stronger, but only if we trust each other first.

EXECUTING IN UNCERTAINTY AND COMPLEXITY

CHRIS McCHESNEY

People can only handle so much ambiguity.

It's a bit like carbon monoxide poisoning—it doesn't matter if we're getting a little poisoned at the office or a little at home, the human body can only take so much before it crumbles.

We're currently experiencing "ambiguity poisoning" in every aspect of life. But we can lower the ambiguity threshold by saying: *We know the one thing we're going to do right now. We're going to chunk this goal down to targets. Everyone's going to try to move a lead measure. We're going to scoreboard our progress, and we're going to attack it every week.*

But more commonly during periods of ambiguity and uncertainty, people will go to one of two places: (1) they either bury their heads in maintaining the day job and retreat to tasks that seem familiar, controllable, or comfortable, or (2) they become distressed and distracted by everything outside their control, such as checking the news, conferring with colleagues, and hypothesizing.

While those reactions are understandable, neither will help an organization proactively fight through a crisis.

Executing strategic priorities is always about maintaining focus amid distraction and complexity. Under normal circumstances, everything inside the organization wants to dilute the focus. But once you're in a crisis, distraction and complexity skyrocket, and a person's ability to maintain focus becomes that much more difficult. Focus is more critical than ever, *and* it just got a lot harder.

Leaders must understand that there's been a massive amount of ambiguity injected into their teams' lives on every front, and people have a minimal ability to handle it. We can manage our day jobs—they come at us fast, but at least we know how to deal with them. But new goals, strategies, and priorities represent uncertainty. We don't know how we're going to accomplish them. Putting too many goals on team members right now will cause them to paralyze or retreat to the "day job."

More than ever, leaders need to clarify the one goal their team should focus on accomplishing.

We have a million things we can—and must—work on during the pandemic. To determine the one thing our teams should be laser-focused on, let's start by reducing complexity.

MORE THAN EVER, LEADERS NEED TO CLARIFY THE ONE GOAL THEIR TEAM SHOULD FOCUS ON ACCOMPLISHING.

AVOID THE COMPLEXITY TRAP

Execution thrives with simplicity and transparency.

Execution doesn't like complexity. As complexity increases, it becomes more and more difficult to maintain focus. But the 3,000 leaders we've worked with over the last eighteen years all seem to say the same two things, now more than ever:

1. We have to narrow our focus.
2. I have 20 or more things that need my immediate attention right now.

These statements both feel true, and they don't get along. Everybody knows this feeling: *I'm missing a critical project deadline. Two people were supposed to be hired last month, but I don't know if hiring has been frozen. I have to report to the GM at the end of the day about two emergency initiatives, and a KPI just took a nosedive.*

And in the middle of that conflict, we know the one thing that would have the most significant impact on the operation isn't getting our attention. And if that top priority isn't getting our attention, it's probably not getting our team's attention.

If we can view our priorities through the lens of how those priorities will be executed, we can start to remove a lot of unnecessary complexity.

YOUR PLAN

STROKE OF THE PEN	BREAKTHROUGHS	WHIRLWIND (THE DAY JOB)
• New Compensation Model • New Machinery • Contact Management System • Media Buy • New Operations Director • Outsource Purchasing	Increase Number of New Clients From ______ to ______ by ______	• Customer Satisfaction • Project Completion % • Number of New Clients • Production/Hour • Reduce Waste • New-Product Revenue

SORT EVERYTHING INTO THREES

Think about the major aspects of your plan or strategy. We're going to divide those elements into three columns.

We'll call the first column "**Stroke of the Pen.**" These elements require either money or leadership authority to happen: for instance, changing the compensation system, purchasing new machinery, changing an existing procedure, making a media buy, or hiring a new staff member. These actions typically have a significant impact, and we have a fair amount of control over them.

The middle column is for "**Breakthroughs.**" These are vitally important goals that are at considerable risk of not being achieved.

We refer to them as "Wildly Important Goals®" or WIGs®, and although they usually *originate* in those other two columns, they can't be *achieved* in those columns. Breakthroughs can't be realized with the stroke of a pen. You can't mandate them, and you can't buy them—if you could, you would have already. Breakthroughs won't happen through your existing processes either. They won't happen unless the organization starts working differently. They almost always require a *change in behavior* and a high degree of human engagement.

We'll call the final column the "Whirlwind." Think day job. This column contains the critical standards that must be met to sustain current operations. People often call these key performance indicators, or KPIs: customer-satisfaction scores, project-completion percentage, new clients, production metrics, or revenue numbers. This column is maintained by existing processes and by a great deal of firefighting.

FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE COLUMN

To identify a breakthrough, start by asking yourself this question: In your mind, what lives at the intersection of *really important* and *not going to happen* (unless you do something very different)?

Keep in mind that this breakthrough is not always the most important objective—it's the most important objective that probably isn't going to happen without dedicated focus. By definition, breakthroughs require us to close some gap.

Breakthroughs are more resistant to direct-management influence. They tend to require commitment more than compliance. Leaders have a fair amount of control of the stroke of the pen and the existing processes in the whirlwind. In those columns, you can often get away with compliance.

Think of each of these columns as requiring a different execution treatment. Leaders can be strong in one column and struggle in another.

In our experience, the greatest frustration and the most complexity are experienced in the conflict between the breakthroughs and the whirlwind. These efforts do not get along. They compete for time, energy, and attention. And in most organizations, the urgency and the intense distraction associated with the whirlwind dominate the strategic importance of any breakthrough.

Here is the critical, brutal truth to understand to keep from drowning in complexity: The whirlwind is going to eat up 80 percent of your organization's energy before you get any traction on a breakthrough requiring a change in human behavior.

This is a hard truth, because no matter how necessary or how compelling our breakthrough strategy is in the moment, it will never feel as urgent to everyone as the day job—as the whirlwind. This is even more true during times of crisis, when people want to flee to the comfort of what they know.

No leader gets a pass on this. No leader gets to paint on a blank canvas. Eighty percent of that canvas has already been painted on.

Quite possibly, the most important strategic question any leader answers is *How will I spend that 20 percent*? It doesn't take long to realize that if you spread that 20 percent out across too many breakthroughs at the same time, you paralyze the organization.

The 4 Disciplines of Execution® is nothing more than a process for applying that sacred 20 percent of your energy toward executing on the breakthrough goals. This framework is used by leaders and by leadership teams to execute on critical goals while staying out of the complexity trap.

> *THE 4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION* HELP A LEADER **CREATE** A WINNABLE GAME...

APPLY *THE 4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION* TO YOUR BREAKTHROUGHS

The 4 Disciplines of Execution help a leader create a winnable game that will give you the power to execute your most important goals in the face of competing priorities and distractions. The disciplines are powerful yet simple. But they can be tricky to apply and sustain because they require us to work differently than we normally do.

Let's discuss how leaders can implement each discipline, as well as essential nuances about applying the discipline during a crisis.

DISCIPLINE 1: FOCUS ON THE WILDLY IMPORTANT

Focusing on the wildly important requires you to focus on fewer to accomplish more. Start by selecting one Wildly Important Goal (WIG) from your "Breakthrough" column instead of trying to work on a dozen goals all at once. We're not suggesting you ignore the whirlwind or the work necessary to maintain your operation. We are suggesting you apply a different treatment to your WIG.

To define a WIG, identify where you are now, where you want to be, and by when. Said differently, define a starting line, a finish line, and a deadline: From X to Y by When.

Psychologically, it's very important to have a single measure of success. This is the discipline of focus, and it's the first step to creating a winnable game.

Discipline 1 Amid Change and Uncertainty

Many goals are actually a concept masquerading as a *goal*. These concepts often have an illusion of clarity to the person who's doing the talking and setting the direction. But in actuality, the concept can go in any direction. For example, when leaders at NASA first said they wanted to lead the world in space exploration, it might be easy to think, *What else do you need to know? Just beat the Russians.* But that concept could mean a million different things to each team and employee. Then John F. Kennedy set the goal to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade and return him safely home. He set a clear goal with a starting line, a finish line, and a deadline.

Discipline 1 is always a challenge, but amid uncertainty and change, leaders really hesitate to draw a line in the sand because they're dealing with so many unknown variables: *Well, I can't say when, because we don't know what's going to happen. We don't know if we're going to get the resources. We don't even know if we're going to be open in two weeks.* The higher the ambiguity, the less likely leaders are to draw a line in the sand, but that's exactly what they have to do. The hardest time to focus on the wildly important is during times of uncertainty, and that's when it's most necessary.

If circumstances change in the future, you'll adapt. But still recognize that despite the intense amount of uncertainty, you must create a starting line, a finish line, and a deadline. Clarity is the first step toward creating focus.

And it's not enough that the organization does this. Each team needs to define their Wildly Important Goal. Every team needs to know, in addition to the day job—all this stuff we have to do just to survive—the one result we are going to focus on and stay focused on amid distractions to help achieve the organizations' WIGs.

DISCIPLINE 2: ACT ON THE LEAD MEASURES

No matter what we're trying to achieve, our success will be based on two kinds of measures: lag and lead.

Lag measures track the success of our Wildly Important Goal. Lags are our results: revenue, profit, quality, customer satisfaction. They're called "lags" because by the time we see them, the performance that drove them has already passed. We can't do anything to fix them at that point. They're history.

In contrast, lead measures track the critical activities that drive or lead to the lag measure. They predict the success of the lag measure and are influenced directly by the team.

Simple enough, but be careful. Even the smartest people fall into the trap of fixating on a lag measure they can't directly influence, especially because lags are easier to measure.

In our personal lives, a common lag measure is weight loss. Which activities or lead measures will lead to weight loss? Diet and exercise. Proper diet and exercise predict the success of weight loss, and they're activities we can directly influence right now.

Discipline 2 Amid Change and Uncertainty

Think of a Wildly Important Goal as a boulder, and a lead measure as a lever (steel beam, 2 x 4, etc.) that moves it. We can't influence the boulder on our own—it's too heavy. But we can influence the lever. And when we influence the lever, the lever moves the rock.

In times of uncertainty, it's so important that we win at something—that we have some degree of control over some important result. Even if the 80 percent of the rest of our life is crazy, we can stay grounded if we're making progress on one critical thing amid the chaos. And lead measures, when done right, give us the ability to see progress much faster than lag measures can.

I like relating this to raising a teenager. As parents, it seems we can never do enough to alleviate the storm of drama in a teenager's life. What we *can* do is help that child have one thing in their life they're winning at, despite everything else. Apply that same principle to our current situation: We can't make a pandemic go away, but we can give our teams one meaningful thing they can win at.

DISCIPLINE 3: KEEP A COMPELLING SCOREBOARD

People play differently when they're keeping score. If you doubt this, watch a group of kids playing basketball. See how the game changes the minute scorekeeping begins. It's not a subtle change. Similarly, the lag and lead measures we create in Discipline 2 won't have much meaning to the team unless they can see progress in real time.

Discipline 3 is the discipline of engagement. People perform best when they are emotionally engaged, and the highest level of engagement comes when people know the score—whether they are winning or losing. It's that simple.

The best scoreboard is designed for, and often by, the players. A player's scoreboard is quite different from the complex scoreboard coaches love to make. If players know the score—if they can influence the lead measure, and if the lead measure moves the lag measures—then they know they have a winnable game.

Discipline 3 Amid Change and Uncertainty

Remember, it's not a winnable game if you stop after Discipline 2. It's only a winnable hypothesis. We might have a great idea, but there's something about human psychology that requires a scoreboard to go live to attract people's focus and energy. It's not a game until we keep score.

DISCIPLINE 4: CREATE A CADENCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Discipline 4 is how we play that game. The cadence of accountability is a rhythm of regular and frequent team meetings that focus on the Wildly Important Goal. These meetings happen weekly, sometimes daily, and ideally last no more than twenty minutes. In that brief time, team members hold each other accountable for commitments made to move the scoreboard.

One by one, team members answer a simple question: *What are the one or two most important things I can do this week that will have the biggest impact on the scoreboard?*

In the meeting, each team member reports:

- If they met last week's commitments.
- If the commitments moved the lead and lag measure on the scoreboard.
- Which commitments they will make for the upcoming week.

People are more likely to commit to their own ideas than to orders from above. And when individuals commit to their fellow team members, not only to the boss, the commitment goes far beyond professional job performance to becoming a personal promise.

When the team sees they are having a direct impact on the Wildly Important Goal, they know they are winning. And nothing drives morale and engagement more than winning.

Discipline 4 Amid Change and Uncertainty

If we take the lever analogy one step further, now we're creating force against the leverage. Amid all the uncertainty, all the distractions, all the desire to go back and do the day job, the WIG

Session forces everyone to put energy against the lever. What are the one or two things we're going to do this week to cause the lead measure to move?

Here's a common misconception among leaders implementing the 4 Disciplines. They think the weekly commitment is "diet and exercise" from our earlier example. Actually, no. Every week something will occur that can hedge your bet, which will enable you to achieve the lead measure of diet and exercise. *Rain is in the forecast, so I'm going to get rain gear to go running. I'm going to find a running partner.* Commitments are actions that ensure we can maintain that lead-measure focus.

A lead measure is not just a metric we look at and then go back to our day job. We have to do something every week to put energy on it. Necessity is the mother of invention, and when we're drawing these commitments from our team members, they'll start coming up with ideas we would never have gotten any other way.

There's another benefit too. One of our clients texted me during this pandemic: *I am two minutes from doing my WIG Session. Simply having a routine meeting weekly is helpful in this situation because there is an established routine.... So grateful we had this weekly cadence established in advance.* Having that routine, that ritual, amid the chaos tends to ground everyone.

WHEN THE TEAM SEES THEY ARE HAVING A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE WILDLY IMPORTANT GOAL, THEY KNOW THEY ARE WINNING.

Note: Although we only refer to focus in Discipline 1, the fact is that each of the 4 Disciplines is an increasingly more intense way of ratcheting up focus in an organization. Everything in an organization wants to dilute focus: Decide you're going to focus on something, and before the day's out, five things will try to pull you off that one thing you said—come hell or high water—you were going to focus on. Remember, everyone's day job has a gravitational pull away from the organization’s breakthrough strategies. Leaders have to fight that tendency. We call the first discipline “Focus on the Wildly Important,” but zeroing in on lead measures, getting a scoreboard in front of everyone, and maintaining a weekly cadence are all mechanisms of focus.

TAKING THE AMBIGUITY OUT OF GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

When ambiguity increases in one part of our life, we have less tolerance for it in another.

In his book *Nonsense: The Power of Not Knowing*, author Jamie Holmes shares a clever example of what happens in uncertain times. After the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, both marriage and divorce rates went up. This was not because people were drawn together or apart, but because the more dominant human dynamic was that they couldn’t handle any more uncertainty. If they’d been wavering about ending or starting a relationship, the stress and ambiguity of the crisis drove them to resolve those questions abruptly. They just couldn’t take any more ambiguity.

The 4 Disciplines take the ambiguity out of goal achievement. They create focus by lowering the uncertainty against one clear Wildly Important Goal:

1. Focus on the Wildly Important
2. Act on the Lead Measures
3. Keep a Compelling Scoreboard
4. Create a Cadence of Accountability

There’s a surprising by-product of this process: increased morale. When people are facing chaos, they’ll feel a spike in engagement if there’s even one element in their life where they feel like they’re winning and it matters. There’s no better time to determine your Wildly Important Goal and rally your teams around it.

REDUCE FEAR AND ANXIETY

JENNIFER COLOSIMO

Fear is a natural human emotion, particularly when the stakes are high and include threats to health, safety, or our ability to financially support our families now or in the future. In true fight-or-flight situations, fear is critical to survival. Our adrenal glands kick in, ramping up the energy in our body to do what we need to survive.

As leaders, it's critical that we allow and validate these natural emotions in ourselves and our team members. Organizations face a unique challenge in unpredictable times when fear is ever-present or evolves into a continuous undercurrent of anxiety that wears down the body and mind. Left unchecked, fear and anxiety deteriorate our higher-level thinking abilities, memory, and concentration. We diminish our capacity to think critically and solve problems creatively, exactly when we need those abilities the most.

As President Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated in his inaugural address, "[L]et me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

Leaders can influence bringing the higher-level functioning of our team back online and converting "retreat into advance."

In this white paper, we'll discuss three strategies for managing fear and anxiety in our leadership roles:

- Listen empathically to your team as they express their fear and anxiety.
- Foster connection.
- Focus on your Circle of Influence® and help team members focus on theirs.

LISTEN EMPATHICALLY

People will likely be anxious when the outcomes of a situation are entirely unknown. Some might put it into words: *I'm scared I'll lose my job. I worry about my elderly mother.* Others will uncharacteristically lose their temper or break into tears during a minor conflict.

> PRACTICING **EMPATHY**...WILL HELP TEAM MEMBERS **MOVE** TO PERFORMANCE.

When emotions are high, particularly at the onset of a crisis, slow down and be human. While your head is swimming with urgencies—retaining customers, increasing cash flow, saving the business—you won't get the effort required to address those urgencies if emotions are hijacked.

Practicing empathy, besides being the right thing to do, will help team members move to performance. Research by Jane Dutton at the University of Michigan suggests that "leaders who demonstrate compassion towards employees foster individual and collective resilience in challenging times."[1] One way to practice this compassion is to listen empathically.

Most leaders are well-versed in the importance of listening, but they listen with the intent to respond or solve. Empathic Listening, on the other hand, means listening with the intent to understand another person from their frame of reference. It requires you to move off your own timeline and agenda and intentionally check into another person's point of view and emotional state.

Encourage your people to talk to you, then listen empathically to what they share: *How are you, really? How are you adjusting to your kids at home? Do you have a comfortable and focused workspace? Do you have the supplies you need?* Effective leaders view this as a chance to "check in" rather than "check on."

Empathic Listening is taking off your shoes and putting on someone else's. In practice, reflect back what another person feels and says in your own words until the person feels understood. The basic framework for Empathic Listening is "You feel _____ about ______," or even remaining silent and simply nodding. It means not judging, probing, evaluating, advising, or interpreting. This may also require you to check a natural tendency to interrupt or immediately solve their problem.

Do leaders get the chance to speak and be understood? Of course. But the sequence is critical. When emotions are high—which they almost always are right now—stop talking and listen empathically until that person signals they feel understood. When emotions de-escalate, you can respond, ask clarifying questions, share your point of view, or give advice. Once that foundation of mutual respect and trust is established, you can get to work!

If possible, use video during these conversations so that you can see facial expressions, body language, and other nonverbal communication. Without seeing the person, it's much harder to listen empathically and develop a deep understanding of thoughts and feelings. Make sure your phone is on silent and your computer notifications are set to eliminate distractions—even from clients and bosses. We demonstrate respect by giving people our full attention.

Note: Clinical anxiety disorders or other mental health illnesses are outside the scope of this white paper and shouldn't be confused with natural and elevated levels of human concern. Consult your human-resources department about the appropriate supportive actions if needed, confidentially and quickly. Options may include mental health education to destigmatize mental illness, employee-assistance programs, or workplace accommodations.

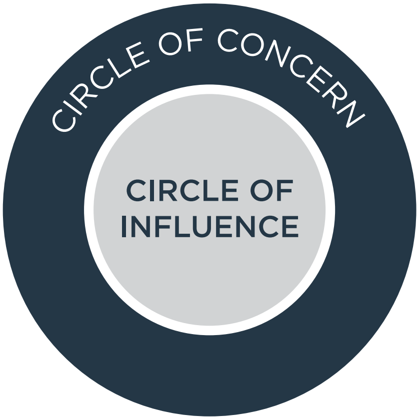
FOSTER CONNECTION

Be very deliberate in how often you meet with your team. Our regular cadence of meetings and 1-on-1s is not enough in times of crisis or uncertainty. Huddle each morning for 15 minutes to respond to questions or convey new information. Encourage subgroups to work on challenges while supporting each other. Utilize technology and build structures and processes for virtual collaboration. Foster this connection not just with your team, but with your clients, partners, and interdepartmental colleagues.

Additionally, think about your own process for working through your emotions. As my colleague and *FranklinCovey On Leadership with Scott Miller* podcast host Scott Miller says, "Just because you're a leader doesn't mean you're immune to having the same fear and anxiety reactions." Consider how much to share to create a connection with your team—what's private and what's public? Beware of oversharing your own fears, but you may choose to share some challenges and reactions to show we're all in this together. People thrive more when they can relate to their leader.

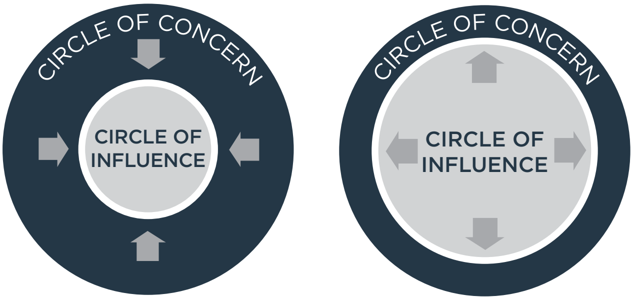
FOCUS ON YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE AND HELP TEAM MEMBERS FOCUS ON THEIRS

No matter what our title, we don't have control over everything. It's critical that we influence what we can versus investing time on things over which we have no control. One strategy is to write down everything on your mind in a stream of consciousness: *How do we keep sales up? Is my son doing his homework? How long is this going to last? Will I have a job next month? Is the product launch going to delay? What's going to happen to my family member who was furloughed? How much cash runway does the company have?* Write them all down—personal and professional—and everything else you're concerned about. This is your Circle of Concern®.



Then look at those concerns and highlight everything you can influence, focusing on your personal strengths. This is your Circle of Influence®, consisting of the challenges you have the power to influence. You might see possibilities for transformative, quantum-leap influence. Or you might see chances for small, incremental change. Either way increases your personal power.

An interesting phenomenon occurs depending on which circle we focus on: When we focus on our Circle of Concern—the things we absolutely can't influence but still care about—we have less time and energy to spend on things we can influence. Consequently, our influence and power shrinks. But when we focus on things we can influence, utilizing our creativity, agility, and innovative ideas, our Circle of Influence grows.



This is a great exercise to share with your team, especially if they seem stuck. But remember the importance of the order: The more you can help them reboot their "thinking brains" by practicing empathy and fostering connection first, the more likely they are to move their focus from their Circle of Concern to their Circle of Influence.

In the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, one habit surrounds all the others: Habit 7—Sharpen the Saw®: The Habit of Daily Self-Renewal. There's an important reason for that—you are the most valuable tool you have. And your organization, colleagues, and customers won't benefit from your leadership if you are fatigued and frazzled. Renewal includes the following four dimensions, all within our Circle of Influence:

- Physical. At the moment, many of our physical habits are subconsciously trending us toward comfort, which is understandable in the short term, but might make us feel worse in the long term. Assess your eating habits. Notice if you're subconsciously turning toward carbs and sugar, or whatever foods you find calming. If you find it difficult to stop, at least raise the habit to consciousness by thinking, "I'm choosing to eat for comfort right now." Many of us are also seeking comfort in the form of staying up late to binge-watch shows or scroll social media—understandable, yes, but try to curb the habit if it's disrupting your sleep schedule. And finally, curling up on the sofa can give us a much-needed sense of comfort as well, but make sure you are also breathing in fresh air and moving around to the extent you can.
- Social/Emotional. If live celebrations are on hold, try celebrating virtually. Perhaps schedule working lunches with colleagues, virtual dinners with family members, or remote games with friends. If appropriate, consider deploying some of the video-conferencing technologies from your day job to connect with people important in your life and broaden your perspective in other people's experiences. One of my colleagues hosted a virtual forum to share best practices on well-being with her clients. Because they were focused on what they could *do*, not just how they *felt*, they essentially created a collective Circle of Influence that left participants uplifted and renewed.

- Mental. We can't control the news, but we can control how often we check it. The news is captivating but also debilitating. Things are changing fast, but not so fast that we need an hourly update—we can catch up on everything we need to know by checking the news once a day. Just as you would restrict or limit conversation with a toxic friend or family member, set boundaries or a schedule on how often you check for updates so they don't hijack your emotional state all day. This is a perfect time to "carry your own weather," as written in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, and not let your moods and well-being become subject to the whims, emotions, and updates (often exaggerated) by others.
- Spiritual. How do you find meaning? Might you express gratitude more often, get out in nature if possible, or seek solace in faith practices? In what ways can you contribute to the community in which you reside, making a difference for those facing significant challenges? In many parts of the world, one of the most important things you could do right now to serve your community is to stay home.

What one small practice could you implement each day in each of these categories? When you make conscious choices about your own well-being, you're focusing on something within your control and expanding your Circle of Influence.

Another way to proactively influence our well-being is to become more aware of and leverage our energy's natural ebbs and flows throughout the day. FranklinCovey recently interviewed social scientist and famed author Daniel Pink in our weekly *FranklinCovey On Leadership with Scott Miller* podcast.

He explained that each of us experiences energy peaks, troughs, and periods of recovery throughout our days. They will vary greatly for each of us and may be disrupted in times of crisis or uncertainty. Take some time to self-assess: When are you at your personal "peak"? Can you use that time to marshal your mental and physical energy toward projects or relationships that need your best thinking and focus? Same for your trough: When during the day are you naturally at an energy slump? Perhaps instead of trying to power through it, we can accept this energy low point and lighten our schedules to coincide with it so we renew and are recharged for the coming recovery.

We can also work within our Circle of Influence by distinguishing our emotions from facts. In her *FranklinCovey On Leadership with Scott Miller* interview, Harvard Medical School psychologist Dr. Susan David, author of the bestselling book *Emotional Agility*, reminded us that emotions, feelings, and facts are important to consider, but we must be careful not to confuse them. Facts are often more helpful in making proactive decisions, whereas emotions and opinions tend to drive us into the Circle of Concern.

ANOTHER WAY TO PROACTIVELY **INFLUENCE** OUR WELL-BEING IS TO BECOME MORE **AWARE** OF AND **LEVERAGE** OUR ENERGY'S NATURAL EBBS AND FLOWS THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

Finally, I believe one of the highest uses of our Circle of Influence is to draw on four uniquely human gifts, described by Dr. Stephen R. Covey in his *7 Habits* writings:

- Self-awareness is our ability to stand apart from ourselves and examine our thoughts, moods, and behavior. *How am I feeling? What am I anxious about? How am I managing that? What am I communicating to my team—directly and indirectly? What's it like to work with me right now? What's it like to be confined in a home with me right now?*
- Imagination is our ability to visualize beyond our experience and present reality. We're not talking about visualizing our eightieth birthday right now. *Can I visualize July? September? 2021? Do I know what I should do now to prepare for when this is over? How am I going to make it day to day to get to that point? What do I need to do now to be positioned to emerge in the future?*
- Conscience is our ability to sense right from wrong. *What is the right thing to do? What can I do to help others?* It brings to mind the adage "Humble leaders are more concerned with what is right than being right." Especially during a pandemic like the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus), recognize what you can do to minimize the risk to other, more vulnerable people both in your community and at work.

- Independent will is our ability to act outside of external influences. In emotional-intelligence parlance, that means self-managing. *Am I making choices each day that align with my vision, values, and conscience, despite urgencies, worries, and obstacles that arise?*

During this challenging time, leaders must remember to be human by practicing empathy through listening, fostering connection, and focusing on what we can control—and help our team members do the same. Remember that the order is important: If we don't first help our team members feel understood through empathy, we won't be able to guide them through strategies that will help reduce fear through connection and our Circle of Influence. In the words of William James, "Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

NARROW YOUR SALES FOCUS

RANDY ILLIG

Even in the best of times, sales leaders hardly ever hit their sales targets quarter after quarter and year after year. In fact, more than 57 percent missed their target the previous year, according to an analysis on Forbes.com.[2]

Now in the midst of a global health and financial crisis, hitting the number has become exponentially more difficult. And it may even appear impossible.

Most of us probably began the year with optimism and a strong strategy to hit our targets. Everything has changed, and your company and team members are looking to you for results. Here's the hard truth: No matter how difficult the situation, some people and organizations in your industry will not only hit their targets, but also exceed them. It might as well be you.

Let's assume your target is no longer achievable, your plan no longer relevant, your team distracted, the economy stalled, and your customers on pause. So, what will successful sales leaders do that the rest of us won't?

NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THE SITUATION, SOME PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN YOUR INDUSTRY **WILL** NOT ONLY **HIT THEIR TARGETS**, BUT ALSO **EXCEED** THEM.

The answer: They will focus on less. Through many thousands of client engagements, FranklinCovey has proven that sales leaders are far more likely to achieve their targeted sales results when they narrow the focus.

But everyone already knows that, at least in theory. So why won't they achieve great results during this challenging time? Because they're focusing on the wrong things. Here's what to do instead:

1. FOCUS LESS ON POCKETS OF GREAT PERFORMANCE AND MORE ON CONSISTENT EXECUTION.

By pockets of great performance, I mean great sales teams, top-performing salespeople, best-in-class leaders, etc. In every organization, some people simply accomplish more great things and get the desired results. It's tempting to focus solely on these pockets to survive during this crisis, but you do so at the risk of consistent execution.

The market cares about consistent execution more than anything else. Without it, your customers, employees, and shareholders will not trust you. Keeping your commitments makes the difference between success and failure.

When goals or strategies falter, leaders tend to change direction. The problem, however, is usually not with the strategy but with inconsistent execution of the strategy.

At the core, execution of a new goal means people must change their behavior and habits—and the behavior that enabled the execution of goals several months ago will no longer suffice. Successful sales leaders focus less on the high-performing pockets and make it their mission to move the middle—the underperforming pockets—to consistently execute like the pockets of great performance.

WHEN GOALS OR STRATEGIES **FALTER**, LEADERS TEND TO CHANGE DIRECTION. THE PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS USUALLY NOT WITH THE STRATEGY BUT WITH **INCONSISTENT EXECUTION** OF THE STRATEGY.

Moving the middle, getting "righter and tighter" on the performance curve, requires changing human behavior. And changing behavior is hard: When was the last time you tried to change one of your own habits? to eat less, cut down on social media, or exercise more? That's nothing compared with trying to change the behavior of other people. Have you ever tried to change the habits of your spouse or partner? If changing your own behavior is hard and changing someone else's is even harder, how about changing the behavior of a whole lot of people in your organization all at once?

New goals you have never achieved before will require new behaviors you have never done before.

2. FOCUS LESS ON THE BIG NUMBER AND MORE ON THE LITTLE NUMBER.

Most businesses have some momentum in terms of revenue—revenue that will be generated if nothing is done differently or if no one did any additional work from here on out. I call this "lights-out revenue."

A sales leader's role isn't to hit the lights-out revenue. Their role is to hit the difference between the lights-out revenue and the revenue target. Let's call this number "the gap."

During "normal" times, lights-out revenue is usually between 50 percent and 80 percent of an annual revenue target, depending on the industry and product or service. Now, with the global pandemic, this momentum has suddenly been shocked and turned on its head. The first trick to hitting your number is calculating the new gap.

SHARE YOUR THINKING AND THE NEW GAP WITH YOUR ENTIRE TEAM. IT'S **CRITICAL** THAT YOUR TEAM BE **ENGAGED** IN THIS WORK EFFORT.

I recommend a collaborative top-down and bottom-up approach. Often in times of crisis, decision making is centralized, collaboration is shut down, and "command and control" is the new status quo. Resist this urge. As the leader, look at the gap from the top by examining the current situation with revenue, customers, sales productivity, and any other data points relevant to your team. What new lights-out number are you confident in? What is the new gap? It may seem unachievable at this moment. That's okay for now. It's a place to start.

Share your thinking and the new gap with your entire team. It's critical that your team be engaged in this work effort. Over the next few days, have your team work independently to complete the same exercise. Make sure no one is pressured into inflating the new lights-out number. Keep an open mind and reward transparency.

3. FOCUS LESS ON THE LAG MEASURE AND MORE ON THE LEAD MEASURE.

Now that you've established the gap, how do you close it? Many leaders focus too heavily on the gap itself, which is a lag measure; by the time you see the result, the performance that drove it has already passed.

Most sales organizations I've worked with have an overabundance of reporting around what happened: prior-period sales by customer, product, rep, team, and so on. Pipeline reports sliced this way and that way and then weighted to arrive at a prediction of the future. Management often pores over these reports and invests countless hours in calls and meetings to review them. All the while, *none* of this data helps close the gap.

Top-performing sales leaders understand this, and they spend less time on lag data and more time on the lead measures that produce the desired results. Lead measures are both *predictive*, meaning they lead to the accomplishment of the lag measure or goal, and *influenceable*, meaning you can do something about them. Focusing on lead measures means narrowing your focus to the two or three actions that "lead" to the lag measure, or the result.

Often I hear leaders say, "I understand lead measures. We need more proposals and pipeline. Got it." Well, no: Proposals and pipeline are lag measures. Sure, they may be predictive of results, but they are not very influenceable.

When deciding on the right lead measure for proposals or pipeline, the question to ask is *What behavior leads to more proposals?* In our organization, we know that more high-quality time with both current clients and new prospects leads to more high-quality proposals. Face-to-face (Zoom or equivalent) time is our lead measure, and we focus on scoreboards, reports, and meetings that relate to it.

SPEND MORE TIME ON THE LEAD MEASURES THAT PRODUCE DESIRED RESULTS.

LEAD MEASURES ARE BOTH **PREDICTIVE** AND THEY ARE **INFLUENCEABLE**. FOCUSING ON LEAD MEASURES MEANS NARROWING YOUR **FOCUS** TO THE TWO OR THREE ACTIONS THAT "LEAD" TO THE LAG MEASURE, OR THE **RESULT**.

4. FOCUS LESS ON BROAD SKILLS AND MORE ON WHAT WILL MOVE THE LEAD MEASURE.

No matter how capable or experienced, your salespeople can get better—much better—at the selling skills needed to move the lead measure.

Notice the nuance here: "Move the lead measure." Most training is done very broadly, and everyone is trained on the same thing. But that's a mistake.

Let’s work with virtual face time as the lead measure. What skills would someone need to excel at virtual facetime, so that your clients and prospects would rave about the time spent and even refer you to new prospects? Which of your team members need to improve on those skills? Or imagine you were meeting with a group of clients and prospects, and you asked them to design an ideal meeting with a sales team, one that would be immensely valuable to them. What would they design?

I have asked, and here’s what they don’t want: your company story, your perspective on the industry, your product or service overview, to play a game of 20 Questions, or to develop rapport. What they do want is help and expertise in addressing important and pressing issues in their business. This is more important now than ever. Now what skills would your salespeople need to excel at to create this kind of meeting? Let’s say that they would need to have deep domain expertise and excellent problem-solving skills. These skills, when expertly applied, would create high-quality virtual facetime with clients and prospects, lead to meaningful proposals, create more pipeline, and result in closing the gap.

To become truly expert at these skills requires more than training. Application and practice make the difference. Set aside mandatory time each week to practice and hone these skills.

5. FOCUS LESS ON INTERNAL TASKS AND MORE ON YOUR TEAM AND CUSTOMERS.

Look at your calendar. Mark the number of times in the past month you met with a customer or spent quality time with your frontline salespeople. If you’re like most sales leaders, the number is simply too low. Your days are filled with meetings, calls, texts, and emails, all focused on urgent internal tasks. FranklinCovey refers to these as Quadrant 1 tasks, and we know they still need your attention. They are important and urgent, but rarely lead to closing your sales gap and hitting the goal.

THE TIME MATRIX©

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	**Q1 NECESSITY** Crises Emergency meetings Last-minute deadlines Pressing problems Unforeseen events	**Q2 EFFECTIVENESS** Proactive work Important goals Creative thinking Planning and prevention Relationship building Learning and renewal Recreation
NOT IMPORTANT	**Q3 DISTRACTION** Needless interruptions Unnecessary reports Irrelevant meetings Other people's minor issues Unimportant email, tasks, phone calls, status posts, etc.	**Q4 WASTE** Trivial work Avoidance activities Excessive relaxation, television, gaming, Internet Time-wasters Gossip

Gap-closing activities live in Quadrant 2: important but *not* urgent. That's also where lead measures live. In Quadrant 2, you learn what's working and what needs to change with your team. You see firsthand the level of expertise your team members have.

After a week in Quadrant 1, it often seems like nothing has been done, whereas a few hours in Quadrant 2 almost always visibly moves you ahead.

Prioritize your Quadrant 2 time with your team. Coaching, planning, skill development, practicing, and preparing for client meetings are all examples of Quadrant 2 activities. Most of us are now working from home, removed from in-person interaction. Do not be stopped by this temporary barrier.

I commonly see sales plans presented as narrow and focused, only to uncover numerous sub-goals, programs, projects, and initiatives. We've been conditioned to reject things that are simple and easy to explain, viewing them as simplistic, lazy, or incomplete, when the opposite is true.

Chris McChesney, the lead author of the bestselling book *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, said, "There will always be more good ideas than there is capacity to execute." Focusing on less is exactly what is required to win in this crisis and to be counted among the few successful sales leaders who emerge stronger. This is your moment to shine.

THE ONE THING THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

Almost without exception, trust tends to go down during change, transition, or crisis—if we're not intentional about cultivating it. And most leaders are not deliberate because they're caught up in reacting and responding to the emergencies that are arising.

But if we're intentional about building trust through our behaviors, we can actually increase trust in a time of crisis. It's not easy, but it is possible—by confronting reality, creating transparency, talking straight, and proactively extending Smart Trust, all from a foundation of personal credibility.

We can communicate, collaborate, innovate, and solve the challenges facing us. We can be agile, adaptive, responsive, and creative. We can conquer these challenges and come out even stronger—but only if we trust each other first.

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CHRIS MCCHESNEY

Bestselling Author

Chris McChesney is the lead author of the #1 *Wall Street Journal* bestselling book *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. In his current role of Global Practice Leader of Execution for FranklinCovey, Chris is one of the primary developers of *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*® work sessions.

For more than a decade, he has led FranklinCovey's design and development of these principles, as well as the consulting organization that has become the fastest-growing division of the company.

JENNIFER COLOSIMO

Senior Vice President Sales,
United States and Canada

Jennifer Colosimo currently leads sales and operations for FranklinCovey in the United States and Canada. In addition to sales and operations, she has led teams in IT, learning and development, and corporate social responsibility while with Accenture, DaVita, FranklinCovey, and several private equity-backed organizations. She coauthored the book *Great Work, Great Career* with Dr. Stephen R. Covey. She has been a featured speaker and panelist at numerous conferences speaking on business acumen, strategy execution, culture change, employee engagement, and women in leadership. Jennifer has delivered on-site training and keynotes to over 50,000 people across 45 states and 12 countries.

RANDY ILLIG

Global Leader,
Sales Performance Practice

Randy Illig is the global leader of FranklinCovey's Sales Performance Practice. Randy helps train, consult, and coach leaders at Fortune 500 companies on how to win more profitable business and build sales cultures that win. Having successfully founded, built, and sold two companies, he knows the day-to-day experience of chasing a quota, managing and leading sales teams, and working with clients. Randy coauthored the book *Let's Get Real or Let's Not Play: Transforming the Buyer/Seller Relationship,* and has won awards from Ernst & Young and Arthur Andersen for his sales and leadership work.

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