

Supporting people through crisis: what can we learn from past experiences?

Future proof your career with 7 career skills



A group of passionate and committed HR leaders came together to share and discuss the human impact of the CV-19 crisis and the diversity of individual experiences it is surfacing. We also reflected on our insights and lessons learnt, and how these can be harnessed as we move forward.

PART 1: INSIGHT

It became clear that while we have some shared challenges, the practical issues facing each of us differ by sector, location and personal circumstances. Participants outlined how the crisis had:

- Accelerated the need for organisational and individual agility; from taking on different roles in HR, through moving more people around their organisation, to completely repurposing the business.
- Activated faster decision-making, and flexible, remote working on a huge scale.
- Increased the desire, and need, for clear communication
- Focused attention on the importance of employee resilience, wellbeing and support as work groups become more fragmented.
- Challenged us to think about the future today; for example what work and careers will look like in 3, 6 and 24 months' time.

PART 2: INNOVATION

David North, one of our senior consultants, shared a personal story of his role in a senior leadership team supporting managers and employees through an extended business crisis. The lessons learned from his experience resonated with participants grappling with our current situation.

David highlighted the importance of:

The CEO's open and authentic leadership style

Valuing personal connection, in particular the support provided by leaders to their team members, and from peer to peer

Equipping managers and supervisors with the information and tools needed to make sense of major change, so they could in turn help their people with the psychological transition involved.

Encouraging people to:

- Listen, empathise, and support colleagues
- Focus attention on what they can control
- Be open to experimentation and learning

In response, we discussed the importance of: data in helping us understand how we're doing; re-defining success for managers; and organisations being seen to be 'good employers' by their people

PART 3: IMPACT

The group acknowledged that the crisis brings long-term challenges, but also strongly believed that it presents opportunities. They were determined that the lessons learned should be applied to the future ways of working within their organisations. For example by:

- Removing traditional obstacles to change, and continuing to work quicker and smarter
- Championing the critical importance of purpose, values and trusted leadership
- Capitalising on what people have shown us they can deliver when given more autonomy.
- Ensuring our mid-level managers have the information they need to lead
- Consolidating new ways of learning
- Building the resilience of all employees to handle a prolonged period of change.