



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: ARE YOU LEADING EFFECTIVELY NOW?

Effective leadership during this pandemic is delivered by people who have a unique set of skills, knowledge, and abilities, also known as SKAs. These crisis SKAs inform leaders to be mindful, to pay attention, and to exemplify these behaviors when interacting with stakeholders. To lead effectively during a crisis, leaders must demonstrate integrity, treat people with respect, and maintain composure. They must be able to make decisions with incomplete information, so they need to remain open to others’ ideas.

The SKAs crisis leaders need are many of the same ones needed for exceptional leadership during the best of times. Therefore, leaders who are strong leaders during normal times, usually have what it takes to lead successfully during crises. However, every crisis is unique and, to be effective, a leader must have a clear understanding of company vision, mission, and strategy, and the external environment as well. Some of the most important SKAs of effective crisis leadership, drawn from research, are noted below. It is vital to ensure that you and your leaders are consistently “living” these SKAs so that your stakeholders know you are intentional about outcomes.

Checklist: How have you been leading during the crisis?

	Leadership SKAs Required to Lead During a Crisis
	Ability to rally and inspire followers around a common goal
	Ability to foster an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Open communication. Candor – speak the truth and accept the truth.
	Competence to accurately assess what is likely to happen in the future and to clearly articulate it so that the team around you can take appropriate action.
	Capacity to motivate your team and care about the individuals.
	Adaptability, flexibility, agility, and nimbleness. Continuous learning.
	Ability to make decisions with incomplete information. Decisiveness.
	Respect for the expertise of advisors.
	Generous cooperation with others. Egoless – without assigning blame or grabbing credit. Taking ownership. Establishing accountability. Unselfish behavior.

Really, the key is to offer hope when everyone is near the end of their rope. We are going into holiday time and it will be tough. We, at EXCN, encourage all of you to be highly supportive leaders and to model compassion, both toward yourselves and toward others.

As you lead in today’s ongoing crisis, ask your stakeholders, “How am I doing?” rather than hazarding a guess.

FURTHER READING

- [The psychology behind effective crisis leadership](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [What should crisis leadership look like?](#) (The New Yorker)
- [Behaviors that help leaders manage a crisis](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Look to military history for lessons in crisis leadership](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Self-compassion will make you a better leader](#) (Harvard Business Review)