

Think about the year 2020 so far: a global pandemic, a worldwide work-from-home experiment, children learning virtually alongside their parents in the home office, economic uncertainty, a human rights movement. No matter how these events have impacted them on a personal level, your team has been through a lot. If their minds aren't entirely on work right now, can you blame them?

For revenue teams, 2020 has presented many unique challenges. We're sales and marketing people - we're used to talking, face-to-face. We're used to travel. We're used to events. Even though many industries and organizations continue to grow quickly through this time, the way of life as we knew it in 2019 has changed, most likely permanently.

Still, life (and work) goes on. As a growth team leader, you can't protect your team from life's uncertainties, whether change happens inside your organization or out. But what impactful, effective leaders can do is show their team how to identify what's important and put everything else aside. The best teams have leaders that do these six things when uncertainty surrounds nearly everything in their lives:

1. Be Human

No matter what, empathy comes first. Team members may have had their families affected by the coronavirus, they may be struggling to keep up with their children's schooling, or they may be desperately lacking human interaction. It's your job to relate on a human level first, team leader level second. Just acknowledging how each person is struggling - that's the most important thing any leader can do right now.

2. Be Flexible

Especially in sales, it's essential for leaders to fully understand and accept that numbers likely won't exceed targets. That's okay - if the deals aren't there, there are still many other ways your team can work hard now to make up ground later. For example, we're conducting customer interviews, we're investing in training, and we're implementing new tools to help everyone do their job more effectively.

3. Be Positive

While you accept what cannot be changed, it's vital to keep your sights set on the silver lining. Maybe you are home for dinner with your family. Maybe you have more time for a morning run. Make sure you're finding the good for you on a personal level and sharing that in your conversations. Encourage others to do the same. No one completely controls what happens, but they control their response.

4. Be a Role Model

If you'd like your team to turn on their video during calls, you do so first. If you are looking for your team to communicate with you more often, it starts with you. If you want to build real relationships with your team, make yourself vulnerable first. As a leader in a time of crisis, you set the tone more than ever.

5. Be Decisive

Leaders have a big responsibility in times of crisis - they must maintain a [deliberate calm](#). McKinsey calls it the pause-assess-anticipate-act cycle, and it involves slowing down long

enough to apply a methodical decision-making process, even though the instinct may be to react too quickly. Everyone is looking at how you'll take in information, consider different paths, then rally the team around the chosen way forward. Especially in times of uncertainty, it's less important that you make the "right" decision, and more important on how you approach it. You're molding the culture of decision-making at the organization, and that is what will ultimately define long-term success.

6. Be Open

Every leader always says their "door is open," but there are precious few who truly mean it. If your team isn't coming to you with questions and concerns, it's a sign of trouble, because you can bet they want to. My best advice for a leader who's working to establish an open flow of communication is to schedule one-on-one time with members of their team. Send personal notes. Ask specific questions. Don't shy away from transparency - even if you don't have the answer for them in the moment.

Teams with leaders who do these six things are more motivated and productive because you're showing through actions that you care.

If you want to know more about how I approach team growth, check out this webinar, [How to Scale Your Sales Team Internationally](#).

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