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Business Survival and Success Comes to the Adaptable

As the economy continues to struggle, business practices and financial metrics are in a state of flux. The greatest risk for business leaders and managers across industries is ambiguity.

Indecisiveness and low commitment is showing up at every level of management because no one is sure what the future holds.

In ambiguous times like these adaptable leaders are the ones who survive and thrive.

Cisco Systems leadership was a good example of adapting successfully when the internet bubble burst. CEO John Chambers has been credited with effectively refocusing Cisco on its core business during a time of devastating decline in growth rate and share price. Cisco not only survived the crisis, but once again is a leader whose products support the flow of the majority of the world's digital information. Chambers recently explained that how setbacks are handled are key to leadership development. Those leaders who handle setbacks effectively refuse to hang on to past success and quickly adapt to new realities.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation."

Adaptability means power of resistance. To build up a resistance to something is to develop the ability to not be affected. This is especially true of adverse or ambiguous circumstances. In tough economic times and crisis, adaptable business leaders develop the ability to overcome adverse conditions and find breakthrough solutions to problems. They are resilient emotionally and versatile in their approach to challenges and opportunities.

Adaptability means power of assimilation. Those who adapt not only develop the ability to not be affected by adversity, they use the situation

for the advantage and profit of their organization. Changing conditions, even adverse conditions, are integrated and used for their benefit.

There are three adaptability performance metrics essential to business survival and success.

1. Capacity. Adaptability determines the quality and quantity of output of your team and employees. Increasing productivity and profitability involves a combination of willingness to look at things differently and the capability to make adjustments in approach in order to stay in business and grow the business.

2. Appropriateness. Highly adaptable leaders demonstrate the ability to respond to situations appropriately to bring stability and the proper focus. They think in terms of actions they can take or arguments they can make that will have a positive impact on the situation and free their team from unnecessary change and chaos.

3. Effectiveness. Adaptable leaders embrace ambiguity confidently by asking, 'what is required' for us to succeed in the current economic realities? What will work? What will not work? They are concerned primarily with the effectiveness of their team, their decisions and their plans.

We can sum it up by saying that adaptable leaders have developed a high resistance to adverse conditions and use both negative and positive realities to their benefit. They increase the quality and quantity of output within their organizations through appropriate and effective responses and decisions. Adapt and prosper!



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