

The Resiliency Model: Resilient Leadership When Disaster Strikes

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As a CEO, you have achieved your position because you have worked hard and possess the qualities of a resilient leader. You have the abilities to cope with the vicissitudes of your work and bounce back from the adversities that beset your business. As a resilient leader, you exemplify certain attributes such as creativity, flexibility, optimism, and self-assurance, and are a role model for your workforce.

What if suddenly you were no longer available? This is a horrible question to contemplate if you think of death or serious illness as the only possible reasons for your no longer being available. These events do happen. On 9/11, the CEO of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was killed at the World Trade Center. Do you have a succession plan? Nevertheless, a more likely scenario would be that a disaster might impede your leading your company. You might be on a business trip and a disaster could ground all flights. Furthermore, communications systems might be down because of the disaster. You would have no way to return. You would have no way to communicate. You would be unavailable. If you think this could not happen, recall what happened on 9/11. What would happen to your company without your leadership during a time of trauma and tragedy? You still could serve as a role model, as your executive staff considers, "What would our CEO do?" But who will temporarily take your place? Who will lead? Who will rally others to action? Do you have a leadership template that can be replicated and sustained? Have you tested it?

What should be done before a disaster strikes? Be prepared. Build an entire team of resilient leaders. Some CEO's avoid doing this because they fear it would make them expendable or others would become too strong through this process and could usurp them. The savvy leader builds a loyal cadre of individuals who realize that they are better served working with rather than against the CEO. How do you develop resilient leadership? Use the Resiliency Model that embraces the view that individuals possess qualities that help them "bounce back" in the face of adversity and that these qualities can be enhanced. A quality of a resilient individual is willingness to constantly learn, and thus, he/she is open to self-discovery and self-improvement. Education – training and learning exercises - is the way. Executive coaching, mentoring, interactive workshops, and self-learning are beneficial formats. The content should focus on enhancing various traits and abilities including:

- ◆ self-awareness
- ◆ self-discipline
- ◆ imaginative problem-solving
- ◆ sense of humor
- ◆ stress management
- ◆ understanding others
- ◆ teamwork

In summary, develop and maintain a team of resilient leaders to enhance the resilience of your organization and position it to continue when disaster strikes.