



MEDIA ADVISORY

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The Chairmen's RoundTable Shares Top Ten Ways to Stay Focused in Tough Times

San Diego, CA – May 11, 2009 – The Chairmen's RoundTable (CRT), a San Diego-based, non profit volunteer organization that provides gratis mentoring and business advice to CEOs and presidents of local, private businesses, is providing these Top Ten Ways to Stay Focused in Tough Times, as part of a Tough Times series of media advisories targeting business owners.

"Our organization's model is to reach out and provide mentoring to one company at a time," said Jeff Campbell, Chairman of the CRT. " We can clearly see that there are many more in need than our model can accommodate. We've asked our members to put together some tips we can share with a larger audience, in hopes that they may prove helpful to those who are trying to navigate through these tough times."

The following tips were assembled by CRT member Holly G. Green:

Top Ten Ways to Stay Focused in Tough Times

1. Stay the Course

Tough economic conditions may mean that you'll need to reevaluate some of your destination points (where you are going) in light of changing conditions, but it does not mean you should abandon your focus on achieving those clearly defined goals and objectives.

2. Slow Down

Take a little time to pause, ponder, and refine your destination points as needed. Then reevaluate your operations plan accordingly. You may feel like you are slowing down when you desperately want to run, but taking the time to do it right will get you where you want to go faster and more efficiently.

3. Locate the Energy Drains

Ask yourself what is most important for employees to stay focused on this week and next? Identify what is currently draining energy and how can you as a manager influence it? Chances are there may be informal thought leaders in the organization that you can depend on to help spread positive messages so make sure to utilize them. Ignoring problems is a big mistake so determine the biggest worries employees have and address them even if it is just acknowledging there is nothing you can do.

4. Prioritize the List

It's important for leaders and managers to prioritize and establish which customers must be retained. Is there an executive sponsor assigned to each critical one? Determine ways to allocate or re-allocate current resources to these important customer relationships.

5. Take Time to Listen

Make sure you know what your customers are concerned about. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to spend time just listening to them even if it is about something other than your own organization. You might be able to identify a hidden value that you can do or say to meet a particular need when others might be ignoring them.

(more)

6. Look Closely at Product Offerings

Determine the products that require immediate attention. What development can be sped up to produce revenue sooner? Can you give away a free product or extend a service to build loyalty? Conversely, this is also a time to reevaluate whether there are some products or upgrades that might need to go into a holding pattern for the time being.

7. Make Cuts with Precision

Are there costs that can be delayed or cut? Perhaps there are investments that can be postponed? It's important to remember that you do not want to make random cuts equally across the organization. Cutting equally is a silly exercise when you consider how important some initiatives or efforts are as compared to others.

8. Teach Good Spending Practices

Tough economic conditions can provide us the opportunity to correct excesses and bad habits gained when the going was good. Remind employees to think more about cost savings.

9. Think Twice Before Letting Go

Reducing headcount should be a last resort especially during tough times. Building back your talent takes much more time than anyone ever anticipates and is a sure 'jump ship' signal to the rest of the organization.

10. Don't Forget to Communicate

As you take the necessary steps to strengthen your organization, always make sure that you provide insight on both 'what' and 'why'. Distill your messages into bite size pieces so your employees can grasp them, apply them and move on. Disseminate the information in every channel you have – intranet, memos, breakrooms, meetings, etc. Lack of this communication will only breed negativity and create additional problems.

About Holly G. Green

Holly G. Green is the chief executive officer and managing director of The Human Factor, Inc., a full-service organizational and management consulting firm (www.TheHumanFactor.biz). She has over 20 years of experience developing strategic plans and comprehensive business strategies for FORTUNE 100, entrepreneurial, and management consulting organizations. Green is also a highly rated speaker for Vistage and provides mentorship as a CRT member. Previously, Green served as president of The Ken Blanchard Companies, a global consulting and training organization, and the biotech firm LumMed, Inc. Her current book, [More Than a Minute: How to Be an Effective Leader & Manager in Today's Changing World](#) has just been released. Green earned her Bachelors degree in behavioral sciences and her Master of Science degree in organization development from American University in Washington, D.C. She is currently on the staff at Webster University and teaches in the executive education programs at University of California, San Diego and San Diego State University.

About Chairmen's RoundTable

The Chairmen's RoundTable is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised of 45 current and former Chief Executive Officers with extensive board of directors experience and diverse industry backgrounds. CRT mentors provide businesses in San Diego County priceless business advice and mentorship without compensation, as a way of giving back to the community. CRT's well-defined mentoring program is ideal for small to mid-sized companies at a strategic crossroads that are looking to gain an outside perspective on key business issues. To date, over 200 local companies have benefited from CRT's mentorship. For more information and to read about past client successes, please visit www.chairmensroundtable.com.

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