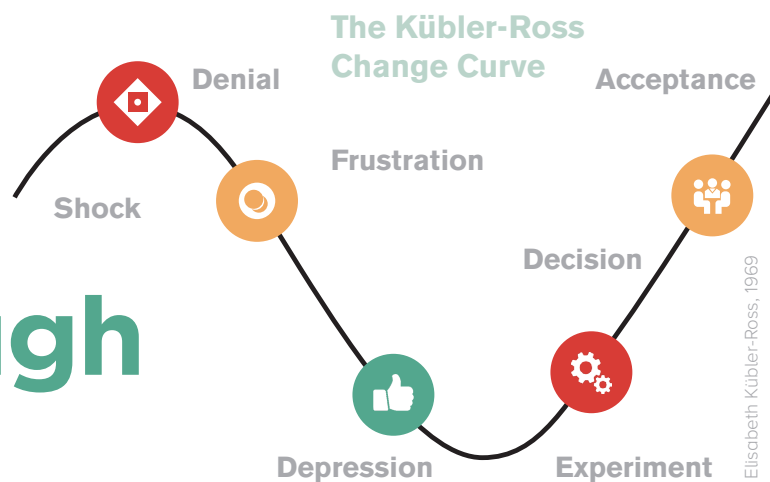


How to lead your (suddenly virtual) team through a crisis



HR expert Aleena Ahmad of Affinity HRM joins Emily Kirton over Zoom to discuss the humanising effect of the recent Covid-19 pandemic on HR and business owners



As we recuperate our businesses perhaps, one of the biggest things we can learn from the pandemic is the concept that change is inevitable, and therefore a business continuity plan is vital for all sized businesses. “The only constant in business is that change will happen, so we should always hope for the best but plan for the worst,” explains Aleena.

Learning from the effects of the pandemic on our businesses, “means a focus on the people within your business,” suggests Aleena. As a leader you can weather nearly any storm by openly communicating, taking responsibility, acting decisively, and taking advantage of the unexpected opportunities that a crisis can bring. Looking at how people respond to change provides an ideal starting block for businesses going through an intense period of change

“I often use The ‘Kübler-Ross’ change curve when working with business owners. It’s a great visual to show the various stages we as humans go through when change is presented to us.”

The relationship any leader will have with their team through any period of change needs to be crucially humanised, each decision or change needs to be effectively communicated with

transparency in order to build “trust and confidence” within your business and create the sense that you are “all in it together,” Aleena explains. “Then, and only then, will your team be on board for adapting to the changes created. Teamwork makes the dreamwork!

“You might not have all the answers your employees will feel valued and supported enough to be on that journey with you as you work through these uncertain times.

“Quite simply, your team needs reassurance, encouragement, they need you to remain visible and accessible as much as possible during a crisis. Seeing you has a calming effect—like the captain of a ship navigating through rough seas. Your team (crew) will stay calm and focused when they see you acting calm and focused. Being visible, keeping them informed, explaining your future direction, and how they are doing will keep them engaged throughout the crisis. During times of crisis, the team needs to both understand what is happening in real time and your future plan,” Aleena adds.

Keen to provide emphasis to this point, Aleena concludes that at the heart of any businesses HR plan should be exactly that,

“ DURING TIMES OF CRISIS, THE TEAM NEEDS TO BOTH UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN REAL TIME AND YOUR FUTURE PLAN ”

a heart. “Now more than ever businesses are seeing the true value of their employees to the success of their business and it’s in tough times that true leadership comes to the forefront. A business that genuinely believes this and puts the right things in place for this reason will survive and thrive a great deal more than those who do not. As a leader, you need to win both hearts and minds!”

Contact Aleena for advice on HR and what it means for your business in the current climate on 0782 488 7544.

Top HR considerations for business owners to plan for a crisis:

- ◆ Prepare a business continuity plan and ensure your team of how your business will respond to crisis.
- ◆ Make sure your team is physically and mentally set up and prepared to work virtually.
- ◆ Have employees cross-trained in critical areas to protect against a loss of specific skills.
- ◆ Have clear, accessible communication channels established so your team knows what is happening regularly.
- ◆ Include a flexibility clause in your employment contracts to allow for changes. E.g. remote working or lay-off. Have the right HR policies in place to support remote working.
- ◆ Have experts advisors to help and guide you in any given situation.