



**Let us all Emerge a Little Stronger**  
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**May 2020**

What will your new normal look, be, and feel like? We all have questions yet no solid answers. Where and how will you and your team function? Will home offices continue to be the wave of your future? What changes do you need to consider before returning to your former place of business? How will you maintain your team's morale? Your morale?

While we may not have these answers, as a business owner or leader you know things will continue to be different. However, one constant has and will not change—the need to have a strong, cohesive, and healthy organization. Do not wait until you have the green light to open your business back up. Years from now you will look back to this period of crisis and either be proud or disappointed with the actions you choose today.

The health of any organization depends on cohesive leadership centered around trust and accountability along with an aligned clarity of why you are here, what you do best, and what everyone's role is in accomplishing this. Organizational health, the success of any business, is about people management.

One of my favorite Organizational Health gurus and authors, Patrick Lencioni, poses six questions to strengthen the health of any organization. I urge you to work with your key leaders to answer these questions, even if you have answered them in the past. What, if anything, has now changed? Strengthen your team through alignment on the answers to these six questions, which are below and followed by my thoughts.

- 1) **Why do we exist?** Keep it simple. Use as few words as is possible. For example, SW Airlines started 49 years ago to democratize airline travel that was too expensive for the normal person. This is still at the base of all their operations. Each employee, at every level throughout SW Airlines, bases their actions and decisions on this purpose. Think back to when you started your business? What did you intend to accomplish? Are all your people aware of why you exist? Perhaps it is time to get back to the basics of why you exist?
- 2) **How do we behave?** How is each member of your team expected to treat one other, your customers, and vendors? What consistent behavior is acceptable throughout your organization, top to bottom? What is not tolerated? Nordstrom, for example, expects each member of their staff to be customer-service oriented. This determines who is hired, fired, and promoted to leadership positions along with who they align with professionally. Continually communicate and demonstrate the behavior you expect from your team repeatedly. Just once does not have staying power.
- 3) **What do we do?** What business are we in? As businesses grow and marketplaces shift, the answer to this question may change. Keep an eye on it. For example, Nordstrom

started as a shoe store and expanded into clothing, accessories, and makeup. At Golden Visions & Associates we knew early on that being extraordinarily successful professionally does not mean you will maintain this level of success or you will be happy and fulfilled outside of work. We quickly expanded into leadership coaching and the importance of strong, trustworthy leadership in any organization.

- 4) **How will we succeed?** Be specific with your answers to this question as this, too, may change with changing times. How do you differentiate yourself from others in your market? For example, Hawaiian Airlines is the most on-time airline; SW Airlines has the lowest fares; *Forbes Magazine* lists Chick-fil-A as having the best restaurant customer service; J.D. Power ranks Porsche as having the highest customer satisfaction with dealer service. Knowing how you differentiate yourself strengthens your focus on how you will continue to succeed.
- 5) **What is most important right now?** While you and your team may come up with several answers to this question, the key is to narrow it down to one single 'most important' *right now*. Before this COVID crisis that has affected businesses worldwide, I would have said the answer to this question is something that you can accomplish in three to nine months. However, things have rapidly and unexpectedly changed.

What is most important for your business and all people involved? What do your staff and customers need from you, right now? Now more than ever they need to hear from you, they need to know that they can reach out to you with questions and concerns. For example, Gary Kelly, SW Airlines CEO recently spent 30 hours personally checking in with each of the 60 key leaders on his staff. Many of my clients are having one or even two daily meetings with their teams. Five years ago, Zoom had ten million users, today it has over 300 million users. Be creative and vulnerable. Let your people know that you too are human, challenged with current circumstances, that you are all in this together, and will come through this together.

- 6) **Who must do what to make it happen?** Based on the answer to what is important right now, look beyond titles. How can each member of your team contribute to what needs to be done right now? Consider the proven talents and skills of each member of your team. Who needs help? Who can help?

I recently had the pleasure of hearing Alan Mulally speak. If his name sounds familiar, he is not only the former Boeing CEO but also the former Ford Motor Company CEO who is credited with saving Ford from its largest financial crisis in history. The 2013 book [American Icon: Alan Mulally and the Fight to Save Ford Motor Company](#), describes how Mulally's focus upon strengthened Ford's Organizational Health contributed largely to Ford's redemption. His message was simple: 'over-communicate' the answers to all the above six questions to your staff repeatedly. Instead of CEO, he has been called the CRO as in Chief Reminder Officer.

Remind your team constantly and consistently of why you exist, what behavior you expect from them along with what is not tolerable, what you currently do as a business, how you will succeed, what's most important right now, and what needs to be done by whom to succeed.

The time is now, not tomorrow or next week to make a difference in the success of your business and team. It does not have to take weeks or months to answer the above six questions that are vital to the success of your business. I challenge you to step away from social media,

games, and anything else that prevents your complete focus on your next steps. Then over-communicate and emerge from our current crisis stronger than ever before.

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