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13 Ways New Leaders Can Course Correct After A Setback

In our executive search practice, we're commonly asked to confidentially install new leadership for under performing companies. Recently, members of Forbes Human Resources Council came together to discuss some of the most effective ways new leaders can regain composure and continue to lead productively after suffering a setback. We found their insights helpful and in line with the same goals our clients discuss with us daily:

1. Be Completely Honest

Leaders need to be honest with employees when they fail and be accountable for their failures. More importantly, employees need to see their leaders demonstrate the recovery by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps to try again. Setbacks in business happen every day. It is how leaders demonstrate the recovery that helps employees believe in their leadership. In addition, employees have a model for how to handle their failures. - Tracy Bittner, SPHR,

2. Take Responsibility

Employees follow the leader. If leadership plays the blame game, then setbacks or missed outcomes will always be someone else's fault (and culture will take a huge hit). Instead, the leader must transparently share what they could have done better, how they will learn from this experience and what they will do differently in the future. This provides a safe environment for everyone and will improve future performance. -

Cristin Heyns-Bousliman, Blake's Lotaburger, LLC.

3. Focus On Vision, Goal And Transparency

Business outcomes are almost always achieved through multiple work activities. Missing one doesn't mean the business goal will be missed. Communicate understanding and commitment to the goal, the now-modified path to get there and what's needed from the team to be successful. Support the culture with vision and open dialogue - encourage people to engage and answer their questions directly. - Dr. Dale Albrecht, Alonos

4. Show Strength In Vulnerability

Missed outcomes are common when leaders set ambitious goals - and there is strength in a leader's ability to be vulnerable and open about "the what and the why" of any setback. The key to turning the outcome around is to expose the learnings as the bright side of the setback. This combination of being vulnerable, open and willing to learn and grow from a setback is a critical piece of what makes leaders truly great. - Heather Doshay, Rainforest QA

5. Lead By Example

Leading by example doesn't end at success; it needs to happen in failure too. A leader should identify what caused the setback and come with a solid plan on how to fix it and prevent it in the future. A lot of the anxiety of failure comes from not knowing what to do next. By giving solid direction, your team will recover more quickly and stay confident in your leadership. -

Steven Jiang, Hiretual

6. Build Confidence

The best thing to motivate employees after a missed outcome is the confidence from their leader that they can regain momentum and get back on track. Show your genuine faith and trust in them and they will exceed your expectations. - Lotus Yon, NCH

7. Seek Small Wins

Be honest about yourself and the mistakes you have learned from the setback. Then quickly (i.e., within minutes to hours) seek small wins. Feeling sorry for yourself is not good for anyone. - Ben Martinez, Secret Tech Sauce Talent

8. Re-Align To The Team's Purpose

When setbacks occur, the key for new leaders is to re-align to their team's purpose. The leader should remain calm, ensure that employees understand the miss and how each contributed to the "big picture" value of the business. They must be reassured that overcoming hurdles is a natural part of achieving success and that their feedback is integral to future strategies for success. - Genine Wilson, Kelly Services

9. Stay Confident Even When Times Are Tough

Remain calm and gather the people you need to assess the process and where it might have gone wrong. Then confidently lay out the plan for where to go next. If a person or group needs to be addressed regarding the missed outcome, talk to them privately. Finally, remind your people that failure is always a learning opportunity. - Cameron Bishop, SkillPath

10. Acknowledge And Recover

Everyone has a setback or missed outcome and it's usually pretty visible. Quickly accepting the reality of the situation and envisioning a positive outcome can help leaders regain composure

and set a path forward. Employees need to see humility and a willingness to acknowledge the situation to help them regain confidence in leadership. - Jennifer Marszalek, Havas Chicago Village

11. Include Team In The Decision-Making Process

Good leaders make fast decisions and keep the company moving forward. Sometimes those decisions backfire and we experience setbacks. But if the leader makes his or her team feel empowered, then the success or setback is used by the entire team to enhance future decision-making. A successful leader makes the entire team feel empowered. We are all in it together. - Abhijeet Narvekar, The FerVID Group

12. Don't Be Afraid To Experiment

While setbacks are not desired, I'd so rather a new leader miss while pursuing a goal aggressively, than hesitating or standing still. Sometimes it's good to give employees permission to experiment and try again. Doing so provides a safe, trust-based work environment in which new leaders can thrive. - Stacey Browning, Paycor

13. Maximize The Experience

New leaders must realize that setbacks and missed outcomes are part of the success equation. If goals and objectives are easily achieved, you may not really be leading. You will fail, you will win. The key is to maximize the experience of either, so you are in a continuous learning process of becoming a better leader. Employees need to observe resiliency in leadership during these situations. - Maximo Rocha, CSG Systems Inc.

*Source: Forbes.com; Forbes Human Resources Council

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Corporate Security Director- US Based Multinational

VP Global Engineering- Access/Video/Intrusion Solutions

Regional Service Sales- Building Automation- SaaS solutions: Chi, LA, Seattle, SF

Director of Architect, Engineer & Consultant Programs- Enterprise Software- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Capture- Network Video Software- Northeast

VP, Strategic Alliances- Enterprise Software- **COMPLETED**

Business Development Manager- Transit/Transportation Vertical- Network Video Solutions

Regional Business Consultant- IoT/Connected Building Solutions- Southern California Region

Regional Sales- Access Control - Metro NY

Regional Sales Manager- Access/Video/Intrusion- Texas Region

Regional Sales- Southern CA, Central FL and Chicago Territories- EM Access Control

Service Sales Executive-Named Accounts- HVAC/Controls/Fire/Life Safety- Chicago

Area Vice President- Enterprise Software- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Software- New England Region

Regional Sales- Managed Access Control/Video- Denver

Regional Sales Manager- Access & Video Solutions- Carolinas

Regional Sales Manager- Access/Video/Intrusion- MN/WI/MI- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Network Video Solutions- Northern California

Regional Sales, Critical Infrastructure- Enterprise Software- NY Region

National Account Manager- Network Video Solutions- Midwest- **COMPLETED**

Regional Sales Manager- Enterprise Software/Surveillance- Pacific Northwest

Major Projects Capture- Chicago Region- Integrated/Connected Building Solutions

Regional Sales Manager- Access/Video/Intrusion- DC/VA/MD Region

Product Manager- Fire & Life Safety

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