



## Responsible decisions under pressure

COVID19 is having an unprecedented impact on businesses globally. Leaders are having to make responsible decisions on a moment-by-moment basis. This short guide will help you think about our natural responses in crisis, and what to think about to ensure your decisions are responsible.

“Often in crisis, its not about making the best decision, its about finding comfort in the least worst decision.”

### Introduction

As leaders, we are facing an unprecedented time, where there is no clear answer on how to respond. Across the world, leaders are coming together to make hard decisions for which there is no clear ‘right answer’.

These decisions need to be made fast to reduce harm; and yet they are likely to be the most scrutinised decisions

of one’s career. It is life or death. Prosperity or poverty.

This guide provides leaders with insight into what they can expect from themselves and their teams as they navigate these decisions; as well as some simple guidance for responsible decision making.



### Transforming under pressure

Decision making in crisis is a team effort. Each of us responds differently under pressure. You have to move fast; but you also have to constantly question the source of the facts, your assumptions, your agenda and what's changing.

- ✓ Has our decision process changed? Why – stress, external stakeholders / lack of data?
- ✓ Does our purpose remain the same? Are we prioritising the organisational purpose?
- ✓ Are our values the same? Are we living by them?
- ✓ Are our corporate priorities the same?
- ✓ Is our prioritisation of stakeholders the same?
- ✓ Has the event changed tactical, operational, strategic priorities?
- ✓ Do we have the data we need to make an informed decision?
- ✓ Is the uncertainty causing us to change behaviour?
- ✓ What level of control do we have over the decision? Are we making a decision or managing consequences of decisions made by others?

### Know your crisis personality

Each of us respond differently under pressure. Controlling. Detailed. Evasive. Calm. Procrastinator. Decisive. Flexible. Empathetic. Understanding your crisis personality, how you respond under pressure, is essential to critical reflection in decision making.

### Resilience though rest

Being resilient in a crisis doesn't mean working 24/7 to save a business, a job, a life.

Resilience is built in the down time between decisions. It's the recovery period, when we have time to stop and reflect that enables us to be resilient.

People are scared, finding a balance between being vulnerable and helping them know you have things in hand is critical to enabling authenticity and trust.

### Listen and act together

Crisis impacts a business systemically, so many voices need to be heard to identify the best solutions.

Having a clear criteria to determine when a crisis team should come together to make decisions, and which decisions can be made alone or by others, is critical for not overwhelming the response team.

Leaders need to balance empowerment of people and taking charge of direction in crisis.

When you've made your decision, be open and honest in your decisions, the action you will take and why you made it. People will respect transparency and authenticity.

### Revise and evolve

Waiting to the end of a crisis to reflect and revise on decisions throughout the crisis can be too late. By not learning as you go, you repeat the mistakes at the beginning throughout the whole crisis. Question how you work as a team, how you decide, how you act, and how you measure the impacts of your decisions.

### Diversity breeds creativity

Leaders can be prone to wanting to make decisions rapidly, without exploring and debating the breath of options.

Leaders in a team can be told to get onboard with the decision, even when it feels morally wrong or the reasoning behind the decision has not been communicated.

Surrounding one's self with a diverse range of stakeholders, each affected differently by the decision, can have a dramatic effect on ensuring creative solutions. And it can ensure robust debate about issues, helping to identify the best solutions to minimise harm.

### Cast your ethical shadow

Your people, customers, investors, suppliers and community are watching right now.

Be clear about who you are as a leader, and as a leadership group – know what you stand for – your purpose and values. Agree those things that are non-negotiable – that you won't stand for.

Consider different aspects of the decision: does it align with your corporate purpose and values? Does it have the best impact for the most people? Are you fulfilling your duties and obligations?

Decisions need to happen fast, but ensuring it aligns with your personal values can be one of the hardest things for a leader to navigate in crisis.

As leaders we cast an ethical shadow, which our people will follow. In times of crisis, we set the tone for what is possible and what is acceptable for today and in the long term.

There is not always a 'good' or 'right' answer, but there are steps you can take to ensure you have the best of the bad outcomes.

“At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou



Corporate Value	Description	Weak expression		Strong expression
<b>Service</b>	We are here to help and delight our customers	We meet our client needs		We exceed client expectations
<b>Collaboration</b>	We work together to deliver the best outcomes for our customers and shareholders	This option has limited points of view		This option brings the best of multiple points of view
<b>Respect</b>	We are fair and honest to our customers, our people, our partners and our communities	We treat our relationships as a means to an end		We respect the dignity, character and wisdom of those involved
<b>Excellence</b>	We strive for excellence to deliver results	We satisfy quality expectations		We are innovative in exceeding quality expectations

For illustrative purposes only: Deloitte tool to enable debate balancing corporate values in a decision



**Victoria Whitaker**  
**Partner – Ethics, Human Rights  
and Culture | Deloitte Risk Advisory**  
Mobile: +61 424 206 631  
Email: vwhitaker@deloitte.com.au



**Rachelle Koster**  
**Partner – Crisis & Resilience  
Deloitte Risk Advisory**  
Mobile: +61 421 051 630  
Email: rkoster@deloitte.com.au



**Murray Lawson**  
**Director – Ethics, Human Rights  
and Culture | Deloitte Risk Advisory**  
Mobile: +61 410 620 417  
Email: mulawson@deloitte.com.au



**David Shaw**  
**Director – Crisis & Resilience  
Deloitte Risk Advisory**  
Mobile: +61 410 262 135  
Email: dashaw@deloitte.com.au



**Dennis Gentilin**  
**Director  
Deloitte Risk Advisory**  
Mobile: +61 3 9671 6561  
Email: degentilin@deloitte.com.au

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