

Leading the crisis

How to take the best of our leadership
in the current disruptive context?



Meaningful change is driven by great leadership.

Times of crisis, as we are living, require leaders to adapt their priorities and behaviours to this new context, full of uncertainty, pressure and even fear.

A global study conducted by Odgers Berndtson in partnership with Harvard Business Review Analytic Services revealed that 85% of participants lack confidence in their leaders to manage successfully through disruption or significant change.

We now have a unique opportunity to invert this statistic.

But this requires huge changes in the way each one of us, as leaders, take the lead.

This document aims to provide all leaders – and all those who strive to make a difference – a pragmatic framework to help them to better:

- Understand what meaningful leadership is about.
- Clarify the drivers and barriers of the current crisis context.
- Recommend practical actions to drive change in this crisis context.
- Identify key derailers under pressure and guidelines to self manage it.

We hope this framework could be helpful to leaders to better manage this crisis, inspiring and increasing the confidence of their teams, clients and partners.

If you find it useful, share it.

Because, more than ever, it is time for leaders at all organisational levels to take the lead and fully assume their leadership roles.

WHAT DEFINES GREAT LEADERS?

USING ODGERS BERNDTSON LEADERFIT* FRAMEWORK TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT MEANINGFUL LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT

Leadership, by definition, is the ability to anticipate the future, inspire others and deliver consistent results. If we don't anticipate, we are followers. If we don't inspire, we won't have followers. If we don't deliver, nobody will give us any credibility.

Our global research and experience shows that leaders that outperform their peers in their leadership roles, are more effective in five skills.

ROLE	KEY	SKILLS	DEFINITION AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS
Anticipate “WHY and WHAT”	People do not follow you. They follow the purpose you believe in	1 Strategic Clarity	<i>The ability to analyse the strategic context and create clear purpose and goals that reflect the organisation's vision, values and culture.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates issues and uses sound reasoning to make decisions. Understands and talks about the big picture. Provides direction and motivates others to work for a common goal.
		2 Stakeholder Management	<i>The ability to develop and maintain added value relationships with internal and external stakeholders.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represents the company favourably to outsiders. Explores alternatives to reach outcomes acceptable to all parties. Develops collaborative relationships to facilitate the accomplishment of work goals.
Inspire “WHO”	It is not about you. It is always about them	3 People and Team Development	<i>The ability to build effective teams, coach and mentor people, and leverage diversity.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolves interpersonal problems and disputes with tact and decisiveness. Takes time to engage and develop employees. Uses appropriate methods to build a cohesive team.
		4 Resilience and Adaptability	<i>The ability to receive feedback in a mature way and adapt to change and new situations.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stays calm and composed under stress. Adapts quickly to changing circumstances and is willing to try new methods. Is able to change directions quickly and work without explicit guidance.
Deliver “HOW and WHEN”	Your Leadership is not measured by the results you achieve but for the results you mobilise others to achieve	5 Execution Savvy	<i>The ability to follow through on commitments, make timely decisions and monitor execution.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strives to meet and exceed goals for self and others. Identifies and implements effective solutions to problems. Ensures that clear accountabilities and standards are cascaded.

*Developed in partnership with Hogan Assessment, it is used by 50% of Fortune 500 and with reference benchmarks from 1,500 global organisations.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IN CURRENT CONTEXT?

TO ADAPT OUR LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS TO THE CRISIS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CLARIFY THE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Leadership is situational, that means that its effectiveness and results depend on the way we adapt our competences to each specific context.

In a context of crisis as we live in, there is a set of drivers and barriers that are impacting on each of our leadership roles and competences, and that should be identified to better manage and adapt our behaviours.

BARRIERS	LEADERSHIP ROLES AND COMPETENCES	DRIVERS
<p>UNCERTAINTY</p> <p>Unique situation, with huge impact on economy, society, organisations and people, results in huge uncertainty and difficulty in stablishing predictions or clarifying strategies and goals.</p>	<p>Anticipate “WHY and WHAT”</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Strategic Clarity</p>
<p>GLOBAL PURPOSE</p> <p>The world is united in a common goal against a common invisible enemy, people understand the crisis, the uncertainty and there is no one to blame, so a new energy to participate and co-create solutions is emerging.</p>		<p>2</p> <p>Stakeholder Management</p>
<p>FEAR</p> <p>All stakeholders are living in a context of fear – fear for their health, fear for their families and friends, fear for the business and fear for employment. Fear can result in “paralysis” or “alarmism”.</p>	<p>Inspire “WHO”</p>	<p>3</p> <p>People and Team Development</p>
<p>DISTANCE</p> <p>People are not used to home working and managing teams remotely for long periods of time, and it could impact on the team spirit, team dynamics and people development.</p>		<p>SOLIDARITY AND CARE</p> <p>People and stakeholders are more collaborative and helpful, needing more support but also supporting more. It could be a great opportunity to better talk, understand and care for stakeholders as people.</p>
<p>RESISTANCE/DERAILING</p> <p>Disruptive changes can generate huge resistance, namely in behaviours like negligence, less accountability, stress, anxiety, alarmism. Pressure reveals all our individual and team derailers.</p>	<p>Deliver “HOW and WHEN”</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Resilience and Adaptability</p>
<p>POSTPONEMENT</p> <p>Within a crisis situation people tend to focus only in the immediate and solving urgent situations, not thinking beyond the current context and delaying decisions that can have huge impact on business sustainability in the future.</p>		<p>5</p> <p>Execution Savvy</p>
		<p>COURAGE</p> <p>Difficult times are also great opportunities to reveal the best of people, if we have the courage to take the lead, assume risks and change our own and team behaviours and routines.</p>
		<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>When people understand the need for change and it is inevitable, there is a huge opportunity to create a sense of urgency in finding new alternatives and solutions to improve performance and be more effective.</p>

HOW CAN I TAKE THE BEST OF MY LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CURRENT CRISIS CONTEXT?

5 LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES AND 20 PRACTICAL ACTIONS TO MANAGE AND DRIVE CHANGE IN THIS CONTEXT

Based on our experience in advising, coaching and developing leaders in different contexts, and taking into account best practices behaviours in crisis situations, here we present a set of guidelines and practical suggestions.

5 GUIDELINES		20 BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipate “WHY and WHAT”	1 Create a meaningful purpose and keep the team focused on the key priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance and align the team in a meaningful purpose, considering the value that the team can bring in this phase to business, clients, colleagues, partners and society. Co-create it with the team. Get your priorities right, focusing on the must do’s and identifying stop doings. Assuming the pareto 20/80 rule. Define and align scenarios – have a plan B and plan C. Take time (ex. 1-2 hours per week) to challenge the team to identify opportunities to improve the business or processes. Reflect beyond the crisis.
Inspire “WHO”	2 Take care of your stakeholders and identify new opportunities to bring them value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define a fixed daily time to talk, listen, support and take care of your critical stakeholders: clients, partners and colleagues. Connect and network with other leaders and teams to share information, experiences, best practices and achievements. Identify new opportunities to bring value to stakeholders and win-win solutions in this context. Find an external mentor/advisor that can listen to your challenges and doubts, and support you during the change process.
	3 Find new ways of working and take time to engage and develop the team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new ways of working, like regular (ex. daily or weekly) short update team meetings. Be more effective in communication and meetings (less people, more pragmatic). Take time to listen and take care of the individuals as persons and not only professionals. Think of people as people, not as resources. Regularly celebrate short-term achievements and successes.
Deliver “HOW and WHEN”	4 Promote a positive energy and learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show positive energy to engage people in a “new normality”. Keep calm and pass a safe message to the team and stakeholders. Create regular moments with the team to share and learn from achievements and failures. Take the opportunity to learn as a team. Take regular pulse of the team emotions and feelings (ex. 1 per month).
	5 Empower and challenge people maintaining the sense of urgency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show trust in your team. Empower people to be accountable for finding solutions and showing results. Apply - NIFO - Nose In, Fingers Out. Challenge the team to adapt processes to be more effective and find out-of-the-box solutions. Keep regular track of the actions and results, keeping focus and sense of urgency.

HOW CAN I DEAL WITH MAJOR RESISTANCES?

THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING OUR OWN LEADERSHIP DERAILERS UNDER PRESSURE AND UNCERTAINTY

The role of the leader can be very solitaire. Under pressure our “dark side” can emerge, revealing all our leadership derailers. We can be our major resistance. These derailers might interfere with our ability to build relationships with others and create cohesive, goal-oriented teams.

Our research identifies seven major leadership derailers with great impact on teams and results. To better understand and memorise it, we use an analogy with the 7 Deadly Sins. To be able to self-manage these derailers is crucial for our success as leaders under pressure situations.

DERAILERS	DEFINITION AND IMPACT	ADVISES TO OVERCOME IT
Avarice Myself over the others	The individual objectives and gains impose themselves upon the collective objectives and gains, resulting in mistrust and lack of confidence in leadership.	Focus your energy in creating value for stakeholders and the team. People will only follow you if they believe you worry about them and you will take actions to bring them value.
Pride Underestimate change	The feeling of superiority and arrogance prevails, limiting the objectivity in understanding the reality that surround us, as well as the humility to recognise the need for change, learn and improve.	Don't overestimate your ability to deal and overcome the impact of the crisis. Be confident but humble. Ask questions and try to learn from others/benchmark. Find a good advisor or mentor.
Envy Excess of competitiveness	Competitiveness prevails over collaboration and cooperation, limiting the collective gain of the teamwork, the sharing of resources and knowledge, and synergy between areas.	Surround yourself with the right people to support and advise you. Co-create and cooperate with them. Show solidarity with others. In difficult times people will expect you to be cohesive.
Lust Focus on immediate results	The short-term pressure imposes itself upon the anticipation of future, not allowing the identification of opportunities beyond what's obvious and immediate.	Balance short and mid-term. Think beyond the crisis. People expect you to take immediate actions, but they also expect you to show them the “light beyond the tunnel”.
Gluttony Lack of focus	The urgent overcomes what's important, turning people's focus away from the key priorities required to achieve their objectives.	Avoid “overwhelming” initiatives. Sometimes more is less. Get your priorities right and stay focused. Focus the others on what really impacts.
Sloth Lack of actions/decisions	The fear of unknown and the stability of the comfort zone overcomes the urgency for improvement, risk taking and delivery of results.	The uncertainty cannot paralyse you. Things will change and you must change with them. It is riskier if you do nothing. Challenge yourself and others and take action. You are the leader, so take the lead.
Wrath Tendency to criticise and be negative	Criticism and penalisation prevail over appreciation and recognition, leading to intolerance, fear, anxiety and limiting the creative potential of people and teams.	Take a deep breath. Stay calm. Don't push too much for negative feedback, because it will generate even more anxiety. We are all learning and adapting. Remember it is necessary 3 positive feedbacks to overcome 1 negative. So be constructive and recognise people.

SO WHAT?

KEY MESSAGE: TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY, TAKE ACTION, TAKE THE LEAD

Difficult times require great leaders.

Because we are living a unique situation, there is a unique opportunity for you to find new ways to lead. And others need you to do so.

Here we recommend you take action, managing your own derailers and implementing a set of actions to better anticipate, inspire and deliver.

In summary:

- **Create a meaningful purpose and keep the team focused on the key priorities**
- **Take care of your stakeholders and identify new opportunities to bring them value**
- **Find new ways of working and take time to engage and develop the team**
- **Promote a positive energy and learn**
- **Empower and challenge people, maintaining the sense of urgency**

Leadership development is all about consistency.

Changes in our behaviour require a proactively change in our daily, weekly and monthly routines. Like when we go to the gym or when we start a diet, we don't see necessarily immediate results, but if we keep the consistency and discipline in these routines, something extraordinary can happen in a short period of time. The same happens with our behaviours.

Today we have an extraordinary opportunity to change our routines, but it is important to keep this discipline to **keep the momentum.**

Because, **difficult times also emerge the best of us and others.**

And we all need it.

So, please, just do it.



WHERE CAN WE HELP?

HOW IS ODGERS BERNDTSON HELPING OUR CLIENTS TO LEAD THE CRISIS?

Odgers Berndtson has a worldwide track record in providing best in class solutions to help Leaders and Organisations to better lead and manage the crisis, namely in four areas:



Our leadership manifesto

Change is all about people.

About everyday activities and ideas. Millions of small acts that push for progress.

Change starts with...

...**passionate and audacious people, who dare to think differently.** They are not defined by status, race, age, gender or religion. They are defined by what they believe in.

...**people who anticipate the future,** determine new visions and point out new paths, without giving into the pressure.

...**people headed towards uncertainty,** resilient in adversity and effective in execution.

...**people who inspire** more people and make them grow.

...**people who change** the context. Dare not be changed by it.

...**people like you, me, everyone.**

Because the world, with the slightest push, from the right person at the right time, can move.

All we need to do is believe we are this change.

So, lets take the lead.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Luís Sítima is Managing Partner at Odgers Berndtson and Ray Human Capital in Portugal.

Prior to this, he served as Senior Partner at Korn Ferry, Executive Director at Korn Ferry Hay Group Portugal and was a member of the Leadership Development, Strategy and Board Effectiveness global communities within Korn Ferry. In addition, he was a worldwide shareholder of Hay Group, member of the Hay Group Leadership Team for Southern Europe and Visiting Professor at Lisbon Catholic University. He was also a member of the board of the Economists Association (Direção da Ordem dos Economistas) and Growth Mission Association (Associação Missão

Crescimento). Throughout his career, Luís has worked with hundreds of leaders in a wide range of industries and geographies, managing projects and implementing Executive Advisory Leadership Development, Change Management, Talent Management and HR Strategy solutions. He is also a Visiting Professor at Porto Business School where he coordinates the Global Advanced Leadership Program, in partnership with IMD. Luís is an author of several books on Strategy, Leadership and Change Management and a frequent guest speaker at international and national congresses.

He has a degree in Business Administration and Management from Lisbon Catholic University and a master's degree in Business Strategy and Organizational Development from ISCTE.

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