

Get More From What You've Got

HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR ASSETS IN LEAN TIMES

By Sophie Sabbage

In austere economic times leaders of organizations need astute creative measures to get more from what they've got. It is easy to settle for getting by, staying in business and surviving. However, it is in these times that more is needed more than ever...

More resourcefulness. More partnership. More energy. More insight. More savings. More learning. More productivity. More confidence. More purpose. More power. All of which will lead to more prosperity. More security. More enthusiasm. More innovation. More success. More than you can imagine.



Transforming attitudes makes it possible to get more from what you've got. When the pressure is on people often think in terms of scarcity, restraint, conservation and cost-reduction – which may be appropriate if based on realistic assessments of existing limitations, but which are often exaggerated by fearful and dramatized perceptions that profoundly limit choices. We tell ourselves we “have to do X in order to avoid Y” and firmly believe we “have no choice” when making tough decisions like laying people off, closing branches of the business, reducing L&D spending or terminating product lines. But the moment you “have no choice” you can be sure that your attitude has just shut down any hope of creative alternatives.

On the other hand, most of us have experienced times when the chips are down and we respond at our very best, finding inner resources we didn't know we had and innovative solutions we hadn't previously thought possible. Yet, instead of recognizing the higher purposes and transformative attitudes at play in those times, the situation is often accredited for 'bringing out the best in me'. Which means waiting for another unusual circumstance for the best to be brought out again. And that can mean waiting for a very long time.

In reality, it is our attitudes that close off or open up possibilities. Those rare creative bursts in response to exceptional situations can actually be generated at will in any limiting or challenging situation. This involves harnessing transformative attitudes consciously and purposefully. By verifying beliefs that arise instead of treating them all as true, you can gain a clear perspective on what's happening and see the variety of choices that are actually available. This is what NASA engineers and astronauts needed to do to bring the crew of Apollo 13 home after an oxygen tank exploded and crippled the service module upon which the command module depended. With limited power, loss of cabin heat, critically low water supplies and a damaged carbon dioxide system they refused to believe the situation was impossible and worked out how to get the astronauts home using only what was available to them out in space. It is a now classic example of getting more from what you've got and a potent example of attitudinal intelligence at work.

When your business is struggling and your people are scared it is vital to build their morale, raise their confidence, win their loyalty and unleash their discretionary effort. In our experience this is counter-intuitive in these times. With the exception of increasing targets - which is often an unrealistic and aggressive management reaction that intensifies pressure when it most needs to be alleviated - leaders tend to cut back on investing in people because it seems 'unnecessary', 'a low priority' or 'too expensive'. However, a disengaged, held-back, stressed workforce will put your organization at even greater risk. If business performance is low your employees' high performance will make a major difference to turning things around. By developing their Attitudinal Intelligence™ you can get the best from your people, make the most of your assets and release the untapped resources in your company. It is one thing you can invest in that will help you make more of everything.