

CHECKLIST

for Leading in Hard Times

Based on the principles in:
It's Not About the Coffee

Lessons on Putting People First from a Life at Starbucks

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Portfolio 

- Are you being true to yourself and your values?**
In difficult times you're more likely lose your sense of self. Fear can take over if you're not careful. Your own ethics can slide. Overwork and worry can limit your perspective. Yes, it's important to deal with the realities of the day in terms of concrete goals and objectives. But don't let go of your values, even when you're hungry; they will keep your soul (and your organizations) alive.
- Are you listening and basing your actions on the best information available? Are you paying attention to the accepted as well as the unaccepted truths and insights?**
Listen, listen, and listen some more—in every nook and cranny in and outside your company. Listening is the most important part of communication and it is your greatest tool when trying to figure out your best next steps. Even in hard times, there are pockets of success in your organization and your industry. The more you open yourself up to what is going on around you, the more opportunities you will discover.
- Are you clear about your role, purpose, and contribution? Are you doing the right things for the right reasons?**
Recommit to your dreams and your organization's purpose. Don't worry about the personal credit, promotions, glory, or financial rewards. Hard times give us an opportunity to let go of self-interest. With creativity and purpose we can focus wholeheartedly on what we can contribute and the success of the organization.
- Is the right person making the right decisions?**
Ask yourself if you're the person who is responsible for a particular issue or if there is someone else who is closer to the situation or problem. If you're in management, watch the tendency to close rank or micromanage when times are tough. Who knows more about what is going on in the marketplace than the people who are closest to the customers and clients? Give your people more information than you think they need—and give them room to decide, act, and continue learning. Give them room to be creative because it's what's needed more now than ever.
- Are your decisions and actions building trust and showing you care?**
Actions that demonstrate you care about people as human beings have a lasting legacy. If you are looking at layoffs, postponing or cutting back benefits or promotions, or ending relationships with certain partners and suppliers, don't let the trust you have worked so hard to build break down. The people who remain will be observing how you treat those that are leaving. You don't need to increase the costs associated with downsizing or other changes, but you do need to show that your values and principles are intact.
- Are you taking responsibility and holding yourself accountable?**
Good times or bad, nothing relieves us of the responsibility to produce the results we committed to achieve. You may miss your plan for the year, but you must put your house back in order. There can be no blame or finger-pointing. Only dealing with issues in a productive, positive, and blameless manner can you move your organization forward.
- Are you letting truth be your guide?**
Listen to your inner voice of confusion, loss, disappointment, hope, or fear. Give that voice courage and share it with those around you. That small inner voice has a place. Honest conversations keep you from being immobilized and stuck in your uncertainty. You can get through hard times when you listen to the truth, share it with others, and remember that you're not alone.