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Hawthorne Services, LLC
PO Box 1001
Goshen, IN 46527
Chuck: 574-361-6166
[Email Chuck](#)
Karen: 574-596-3058
[Email Karen](#)

Dear Chuck Bower

Challenging times call for exceptional leadership, and COVID-19's impact has greatly tested our society in ways the Great Recession did not. We turned to several sources of wisdom, Travis Bradberry, Tim Leman, and Craig Groeschel for our lead article. Our newsletter also includes a thought provoking question from Jeff Umbaugh, of Kuhn, Dillon, Umbaugh. And we've also repeated a wise quote from Charles Swindoll on attitude.

As always, past newsletter articles are available at www.hawthorneservices.com/resources.

Sincerely,
Chuck Bower, 574-361-6166
Karen Kehr, 574-596-3058

Challenging Times Call For Exceptional Leadership

These challenging times require extraordinary leadership. In a [2015 Forbes article](#), Travis Bradberry listed twelve great leadership virtues.

First, consider the need for authentic communication with all stakeholders. Self-awareness is crucial to recognize one's own struggles and feelings and use those to advantage in fueling their sense of purpose. Bradberry points out that we seek courage in leaders to know it's safe to be courageous on our own, and flock to leaders who address formidable challenges head-on. Humility and generosity are critically important when people are ready to contribute, and want to believe their contributions will be heard and considered.

We don't want to hear the word "infectiousness" today, but passion and infectiousness drives and attracts followers to leaders who provide clarity and a sense of purpose. Bradberry correctly points out how meaningful these virtues are, especially now.

In [rEvolution](#), Tim Leman relates the "Letter that started it all," which put a spotlight on satisfaction with the status quo. How timely, just before the Great Recession, to ignite change and a drive for clarity in courageously tackling their weaknesses to become a

stronger organization. It took a measure of daring and audacity to suggest that even while business was fine, it could be significantly stronger. In 2007, how many organizations should have begun this process, and did not survive?

Craig Groeschel's podcast, [Leading Through Crisis](#) illustrates the opportunities that a crisis brings to leaders. Unexpected problems, as Groeschel relates, provides opportunities that go previously unnoticed. Practical opportunities offer the time to work on those things that can be improved. One of my clients has taken today's shutdown opportunity to replace his factory's lighting system, saving a significant amount of ongoing utility cost. Another client has exploited downtime to make major equipment upgrades that would have been impossible before.

Groeschel also correctly points out that unexpected problems offer business opportunities. Unexpected problems require solutions, and thoughtful and nimble organizations will bring great solutions to their clients and customers. In one case, a competitor finds they can no longer service a business segment, opening an opportunity for others. Mission opportunities arise for nonprofits and for-profits alike. Leaders with foresight know they can provide solutions, but only when they focus on the problems that matter the most.

Today's fear of COVID-19 disrupts decision making and permits paralysis to infect our organizations. You are not alone. Use the lessons of Bradbury, Leman, and Groeschel to turn crisis into opportunity, and be stronger than before.

Are You Prepared For The Next Challenge?

A valued member (Jeff Umbaugh of Kuhn, Dillon, Umbaugh - Plymouth, Indiana) of my Renaissance Executive Forums group raised a thought provoking question to his clients. Many are facing immediate COVID-19 challenges, and others are dealing with less impact. In either case, Jeff's question (rephrased by me) was, "How are you preparing for further extraordinary challenges or shocks to your business?"

Jeff poses an excellent question. What if today's challenges are only the tip of the iceberg? What is your plan if your business sees a prolonged decrease in revenue of major proportions?

Consider these questions:

- What if your largest supplier(s) cannot survive a prolonged period of business difficulty?
- What if your largest customer(s) cannot survive?
- How prepared is your leadership team?
- What does your organization need to do to be ready?
- Who are the key players that will get you through prolonged difficulty?
- How will your business and your markets change as a result of COVID-19?

During the Great Recession, "Cash is King" was the mantra of many organizations. Being prepared for an even more difficult "what if" should be on every business leader's mind. Are you prepared?

Charles Swindoll on Attitude

One of my favorite quotes comes from Charles Swindoll, pastor, author and educator. It resonates even more today:

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, the education, the money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.”



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