

# CONTINUUM LEADERSHIP MODEL

**Predictable phases for leading through crisis and novel unknowns**

Your guide to deploying the right leadership, team and organizational approach at the right time



*Few, if any, business recovery and continuity plans accounted for a global pandemic such as COVID-19. The breadth, scale and long-term impacts of this and similar threats and crises evolve over time and can be categorized into phases along a continuum of intensity and resolution.*

The key to leading through any major change or novel unknown is understanding the predictable phases you and your organization will encounter so you can deploy the right leadership, team and organizational approach at the right time to yield the best outcome.

The stakes are always high for organizations. The actions you take today will determine how well your organization fares now and thrives when you emerge into a new normal. The degree to which your organization experiences each phase will depend on its unique situation.

The COVID-tested Continuum Leadership Model is your map and the Continuum team can be your guide.

We stand ready, as always, with leadership, team and organizational resources to support you along the way.



**PHASE 1**  
**Oh Sh\*t!**  
Crisis Hits

- Organization focuses inward
- Laser focus on critical core business only

**What to Expect**

- Everyone in crisis mode
- Disruption unfolds faster than can be understood
- Standard approaches ineffective
- Leaders in long meetings, realize they are not prepared
- Attempts to secure reliable sources of information
- Leaders make rapid, critical decisions with focus on prioritization, communication, contingency plans, finances and questions of survival
- New systems tested and created to accommodate work
- Leaders work to manage their own fears and concerns while making tough decisions for an organization in chaos and facing uncertainty
- Efforts made to protect employees, give sense of purpose, belonging, assurance

**What to Do**

- Manage emotions through self-awareness and self-regulation - stay grounded and centered
- Overcommunicate and ask the right questions to accurately assess and ensure alignment
- Trust your experience and instincts when making decisions - you will not have all the information you would like
- Triage priorities and execute rapidly
- Focus on business core and leadership basics
- Keep people focused on what they can do now
- Consider establishing a "Crisis Nerve Center" for assessing, planning, managing responses



**PHASE 2  
What Now?!**

Early New Norm

- Immediate stabilization occurs
- Organization continues focus inward and on key partnerships



**PHASE 3  
Wait! There's More?!?**

Later New Norm

- Transition from initial stabilization to early reconstruction
- Organization moves toward outward focus while maintaining inward focus

What to Expect	What to Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial damage assessments complete</li> <li>• Initial decisions made on workforce safety, alternative working conditions, recession forecast, supply chain stabilization</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment, prioritization, and decision-making under way, creating portfolio of actions</li> <li>• Collaborative platforms under development for virtual management</li> <li>• Leadership focused on keeping people engaged, connected, focused, managing feelings of isolation</li> <li>• New ways of customer engagement emerge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead with backbone, heart, compassion, confidence under pressure</li> <li>• Authentically communicate, share the vulnerable truth to secure trust</li> <li>• Promote a "Crisis Rally Cry" to sustain team purpose and identity</li> <li>• Decide and act without the total picture</li> <li>• Rapidly prototype new systems – be prepared to fail fast, adjust, learn and move on</li> <li>• Manage production/work capacity</li> <li>• Re-skill employees for new processes</li> <li>• Look up, reach out, connect, support all stakeholders</li> <li>• Continue self-care, balancing family, personal and work</li> <li>• Attempt to "squint" into the future</li> </ul>

What to Expect	What to Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 2 efforts continue with increased innovation, easier adoption of initial changes</li> <li>• Clarity still scarce, certainty fleeting; limited ability to rely on past solutions</li> <li>• Crisis fatigue emerges with heightened frustration, stress, sickness, death, grief, fear, uncertainty</li> <li>• Economic impact assessments, adaptations for uncertainty and strategic planning under way to determine way forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin preliminary strategic scenario planning to secure future success</li> <li>• Optimize work processes</li> <li>• Equip organization to manage trauma, grief, PTSD</li> <li>• Continue focus on people (cohesion, engagement, motivation)</li> <li>• Review new ways of working and innovations to carry forward</li> <li>• Ensure adherence to company and societal values</li> <li>• Make decisions based on the big picture, consulting diverse sources and considering feelings and facts from multiple perspectives</li> <li>• Implement wellness strategies so you and team members can sustain and rejuvenate</li> </ul>



**PHASE 4  
We've Got This!**

Reconstruction

- Organization looks outward and forward to consider what is possible now



**PHASE 5  
What's Possible Now?**

Regeneration

- Organization looks inward and outward to imagine and prepare for a sustainable future

What to Expect	What to Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most pre-Covid-19 plans no longer valid due to economic and structural impacts</li> <li>• Leadership and teams regroup, reorganize, assess, create new visions, goals, priorities and work plans</li> <li>• Some innovations that worked during the crisis continue and become the new norm</li> <li>• Ongoing fiscal planning for recession proofing and harnessing the economic headwinds</li> <li>• Major adjustments made (scaling up or down, merger, acquisition, shut down)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver plans in a disciplined, efficient way, remaining flexible to adapt to the changing landscape</li> <li>• Continue addressing emotional impacts (PTSD, grief cycle) while moving forward</li> <li>• Adjust approach to problems and people to match changing conditions</li> <li>• Re-establish relationships with external stakeholders and partners</li> <li>• Evaluate pros and cons, risks and benefits of solution options</li> <li>• Balance strategy with culture and the human component of the organization</li> <li>• Determine the innovations you want to institutionalize</li> </ul>

What to Expect	What to Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silver lining in sight</li> <li>• Exploration of growth opportunities for future market resilience</li> <li>• Reluctance of team members to go back to the "way things were before" and desire for instituting long-term change</li> <li>• Desire to preserve any ecological gain from the crisis while regenerating the economy</li> <li>• Discovery of what's possible when integrating regenerative business models to reduce waste, expand business scope and profit, and contribute to sustainable economy for people, planet and profit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage the change to explore new possibilities for growth, production and systemic impact</li> <li>• Become a regenerative leader, nurturing the well-being, education, and prosperity of your employees and your customers, as well as their communities</li> <li>• Develop and implement regenerative business models</li> <li>• Evolve mission, vision and ways of working, fostering complex and reflective systems thinking throughout the organizational ecosystem</li> <li>• Re-galvanize the workforce with new skills and innovative strategies to ensure attraction and retention</li> </ul>