GROWTH
DURING DISRUPTION

BUSINESS WORKS CONSULTANT MARINA BLEAHEN BELIEVES DISRUPTION OFFERS
HUGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES WHO WANT TO GROW.

Brutal. That's what 2020 feels like for so many of us as leaders. It's unlike anything we've experienced before in our careers. Everyday I'm on the phone with our clients – SME owners, their senior leaders and managers. All of them are dealing with lots of change and agree this disruption has come too soon. They're trying to grow through disruption. Disruption is a virus that can destroy your team's culture and its impact is magnified with remote working.

Step 1: Clarity
When disruption hits, people tend to segment themselves into three groups: panic, stunned and create. It's important to understand where you and your team are. 10% of us go into blind panic, become totally paralysed, the majority of people will be stunned. These are the 80%, who didn't see the disruption coming, don't know what to do, so they hunker down and await direction. Then, there are 10% of people who go into create mode. These people assess and adapt really fast. The reason so many teams become stagnant and go backwards in a time of disruption is that 90% of people are stuck in the panic and stunned groups.

The lesson is to learn fast and move fast. The leader must establish the key results or expectations the team must deliver in the next 30-90 days. Redefining short-term results is where it's at. Teams that aren't clear on what they need to prioritise or deliver on immediately rarely grow, or even survive major disruptions.

Step 2: Visibility
If your ambition is to grow during disruption, the three leadership

Marina Bleahen,
CEO, Business Works Consulting

traits that will most dramatically impact the success or failure of your company are being more visible, more accessible and more transparent with your team. How you lead your team matters. Managing culture is the most underdeveloped and yet most critical leadership skill as teams that thrive and grow their results during disruption have cultures built for moments like this. You've got to ensure your team sees you communicating transparently and can gain access to you in a meaningful way.

Step 3: Agility
Disruptions punish the status quo. To successfully navigate you must be agile and innovative. Speed to market isn't a skill, it's a mindset. Collaboration isn't a task, it's a choice. Execution and urgency aren't genetic, they're cultural. How can you make

sure you're leading in an agile way that increases speed to market?

Our Agility Engine gives you a framework to use with your team to get them from 'below the line' to 'above the line' where they learn fast and move fast to deliver results.

Step 4: Accountability
The fourth step to grow through disruption is to take accountability for the results you have to deliver in the next 30-90 days and help your team take accountability by assessing their agreement and involvement with the key expectations you establish. So, what does accountability really mean and how do I know if I'm truly demonstrating it? It's a battle to not get stuck blaming everyone and everything for any dip or downward slide in results. And, yet, the only way to change our results is to choose to focus on what we control. That's a daily and often an hourly battle during massive disruptions when there's so much impacting us that we can't control.

Step 5: Empathy
The fifth and final step to grow through disruption is to increase the amount of empathy you're demonstrating to your team. Empathy is curiosity. It's seeking to understand someone's experience from their point of view. Leaders who demonstrate empathy during disruption see accelerated performance from their team. We performate our highest levels when there is urgency and safety.

Visit www.businessworks.ie and find out how business owners and leaders can build a culture of positive accountability.