

Managing Through the Power of Paradox

10 Things You Must Do To Exploit Tough Times—*And* Good Times

We thought things were **better than they were**. We were sure things would be **better than they are**. But here we are—in **meltdown**. We need to use the **leadership paradoxes** to win.

Meltdowns come in a variety of nasty ways. Your organization—from a department or division to a business unit or entire organization—can be turning sour before your eyes. And the whole economy can implode, collapsing in a discouraging mess.

Success in one or two areas can be impacted by meltdown in a third. A beautiful business strategy in a reviving or booming economy can be wiped out by inhabiting a fading industry. An industry can be sent into disarray by market leaders with bad bets on the wrong horses. A strong economy can be brought to its knees by businesses that forget the value of cost control in *good* times—and earnings at *all* times.

Sometimes meltdown, like bad news, comes in threes—you look around and see that your organization, industry *and* economy are all wilting away.

In response, you need to change. You need to create. You need to build. You need to do the things discussed here. You need to exploit those dangerous meltdowns, however they're packaged.

We can take you into the heart of meltdown management. This is a no-baloney, hands-on, crucial mission. Being tough is part of the equation, but you have to know *how* to be tough. With the right tools—and toughness—you can turn potential disaster into real wealth.

10 KEY ACTIONS

There's no magic to managing meltdown. It always requires hard thinking and hard work.

To *exploit* tough times, you must lead with apparent contradictions. Take these 10 key actions, and go from victim to victor:

■ **Spread optimism and spread the ugly truth.** Be a pragmatic idealist. Mix optimism and ugly truth in equal amounts. **Broaden the vision and narrow the focus.** What else are we passionate about? Which are the best shots for scarce resources?

■ **Nurture customers and fire customers.** It is always the time to love your customers, but now's the time to *really* love the ones with cash and orders—and to clean the marginal ones out of the rolodex.

■ **Invite people in and send people home.** Present meltdown as a challenge to be great. Sort by how they respond.



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■ **Increase freedom and clarify boundaries.** Give more freedom to do what no one else is doing—unless someone else can do it much better.

■ **Expand creativity and eliminate ideas.** Create forums for ideas and liberty to implement them fast. And create incubator teams that can kill thoughts—without killing thinking.

■ **Execute better and make more mistakes.** Weed out all waste, no matter how small.

Do it to free up resources to make more mistakes trying new things.

■ **Move faster and take more time.** Meltdown requires both feet—one on the gas, the other on the brakes.

■ **Increase spending and reduce costs.** Meltdown managers reduce costs a lot in some areas so they can increase spending a lot in others.

■ **Increase pressure and reduce stress.** Meltdown's a time for war rooms *and* party rooms.

MELTDOWN MASTERY

What do great leaders do when there's a meltdown? They focus on how to exploit those tough times. And they build tough-time thinking into the organization for the *non*-meltdown times. In the end, they know that meltdown is awful, frightening, traumatic, soul-shaking. And if they handle it right, it's the opportunity of a lifetime.

For over 20 years Luman Consultants International, Inc., has offered a unique leadership and organizational approach. We customize our unique principles to your unique needs. We have helped develop passionate leaders, people, teams, and organizations, across a wide array of industries.

If we work with you, we promise to help you build your organization into something better, more effective, and more satisfying. We also promise that you will never look at leadership and the daily life of organizations in the same way ever again.



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