

Overcoming Leadership Challenges

212-Careers



They say that in each life, a little rain must fall. Isn't that the truth? Leaders are often blessed day after day with sunny skies and highly efficient, productive team members. There are also those weeks or months where the professional outlook is cloudy skies and thunderstorms.

Facing hardships is part of being a leader. Here are a few ideas for helping you find the silver lining in the cloudiest challenges to quickly get your team back on the path to sunny days and productive results.

Prepare for Challenges in Advance

Meet with your team members. Ask them if they can see any potential issues with the team's path to achieving their goal. Develop a game plan to head off any issues you can. Create a plan for tackling the rest in the event they happen. Preparing for the worst and hoping for the best is a smart action plan.

Develop Respect by Asking for Input

A problem has popped up, and everyone is looking at you, their fearless leader. Ask for input if you need more clarification about the smartest course of action. Let your team know you respect their opinion and want them to join the solution.

You can uncover unexpected and productive solutions to the problem this way. You also develop respect by showing you value the opinions of your team.

Look for the Opportunity

Shortly after James W Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mine in early 1848, the California Gold Rush began. As 300,000 people flooded the area, demand for mining tools exploded. Before long, stores everywhere were selling picks and shovels, pans, and sluice boxes. Supply quickly outstripped demand, and prices dropped as competitors desperately tried to attract customers.



At the height of this precious metals rush, a Bavarian immigrant named Levi Strauss opened a dry goods company in San Francisco. He quickly discovered it was a problem offering what everyone else was selling. He overcame this challenge by developing rugged, durable clothing that could endure the demands of his hard-working customers.

He reinforced stress points in his clothing with copper rivets. He used tough denim to create a pair of waist overalls. He saw a business challenge as an opportunity that led to immediate success. Today's Levi jeans are direct descendents of those gold rush blue jeans. Look for the opportunity; don't obsess over the problem.

Beware the Chicken Little Mindset

Chicken Little (sometimes called Henny Penny) is a fairytale character known for dramatic exaggeration. One day, as he was resting, an acorn (in some tales, a rose feather or something else insignificant) fell upon his tail. He awoke with a start and, true to his apocalyptic outlook, declared that the sky was falling.

Chicken Little and his friends meet an unhappy ending in most versions of the tale. Don't let that happen to you. Problems that appear out of nowhere often seem impossible at first glance. You feel their impact will be devastating. That's rarely

the case if you examine the situation analytically and objectively without letting your emotions take over.

Challenges make good leaders stronger. They are seen as opportunities for growth rather than doomsday events. These practices give leaders the best chance at creating a positive outcome when challenges come calling.

A special note: LinkedIn is a daily source of thought-provoking visual presentations on leadership. Every day there are excellent posts perfect for discussion in a workshop or coaching session.

