

## One Secret of Highly Productive Teams

Leaders must learn how to make the future in the midst of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. It is hard to even think about the future if you are overwhelmed by the present, but that is exactly the time when foresight can be most practical. Looking to distant possibilities can provide new insight for the present.

Some leaders will judge too soon and draw simplistic conclusions while others will decide too late and pay a price for their lack of courage or inaction. Some will be overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness while others will become cynical and question everything around them.

Leaders need not be overwhelmed by the volatile world around them. They must have the skills to take advantage of those opportunities, as well as the agility to sidestep the dangers.

Leadership is more preparation than planning. Planning relies on predictability. But preparation helps leaders stay clear amid uncertainty. Planning assumes continuity; preparation equips leaders to be flexible enough to seize opportunity.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Navigating Chaos](#), by Jeff Boss

Jeff Boss has faced and overcome uncertainty in the most tumultuous circumstances. As a Navy SEAL, he worked in some of the most unforgiving environments on earth and faced enemies that constantly changed, much like today's business landscape. In a world of chaos, how do individuals and teams stay together to find certainty in a world where there is anything but? This book reveals how. Using anecdotal experiences from both the military and business worlds, Boss highlights the individual mindsets, team practices, and organizational considerations for how people and companies can forge certainty amidst inevitable chaos.

### A SIMPLE SOLUTION - **Keep Your Performance Capacity High**

Albert Einstein reportedly said, "We can not solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them." Others have restated that thought as, "What got you here won't keep you here," or something similar.

No matter how you say it, that line of thought is very true in the church you lead as you face the complexities of ministry that seem to be changing all around you – every day – and speeding up!

How do you plan for the unknown? You can't really, but you can definitely have the confidence to try.

*The typical organizational response to chaos is to become more efficient – to improve productivity – and the byproduct is increased stress for each and every employee. Greater stress levels lead to toxic environments, impatience, communication challenges, and short-term focus – the very antithesis of superior performance.*

The secret is to keep the performance capacities (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) fulfilled, as doing so sustains energy levels to perform, to adopt, and to lead.

The three elements of performance, adaptability, and leadership are the principles and behaviors that will make you and your organization successful. The PAL Model<sup>®</sup> refers to the way in which any team – whether at work, on the athletic field, or even at home – can borrow this dynamic from the SEALs and apply it toward their own efforts toward success.

The most fundamental of the skills needed is **Performance**. Does each and every member of your team have the skill set in place that is needed to advance the team's collective cause?

The next skill is **Adaptability**, which enables any team to tackle the unknown and strategically improve their position at a moment's notice.

The final skill is **Leadership**. Without effective leadership in any situation, communication breaks down and things rapidly spin out of control.

Jeff Boss, *Navigating Chaos*

## A NEXT STEP

When was the last time you reviewed performance markers for your team when jobs or financial implications were NOT involved? How up-to-date are the teams job descriptions and your review process? How do the mission and values of your organization, coupled with a long-range view of God's better future, impact who does what in your church?

Non-stress, everyday conversations are the best time to ask these questions and make the necessary adjustments BEFORE the problems force quick action. Set up a 1-1 with each of your team members and ask the following three questions, try your best to simply listen and ask appropriate follow-up questions.

1. What one thing do you wish I knew about your role in our church?
2. What is one thing I can do in the next three months to help you lead?
3. In what way do you feel like you are most fulfilling our mission?

After a season of prayer and thoughtful reflection, make the necessary adjustments to your leadership. If needed, begin an intentional and well-timed process of recalibrating the roles and responsibilities of team members. Do not rush this and make this a healthy season. Allow misplaced or under-performing team members time to improve or seek other ministry options.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting excerpts from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders.*

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