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Integrity During Uncertainty

BEST PRACTICES

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Our clients count on us for two important elements of integrity: transparency and predictability. To achieve these in business takes rigor and attention. I've written in the past about key metrics we use to help achieve both of these goals through **productivity** and **leading financial indicators**. Along with adherence to agile project management **techniques**, we build transparency and predictability into everything we do.

Both are pivotal to the way we run the internals of our company: demonstrating integrity to everyone who works at or for Clientek.

A number of years ago we went through a bad stretch. Most of us can guess which couple of years those were in this millennia. It has been a while, but the memories and lessons are still clear. As a professional services firm, we felt the effects of a major market downturn early. That was a tough time for us and a tough time for most. Reminders of the importance of integrity were frequent.

We Were Transparent

First, and most important, we met with the Clientek team. Employees and contractors whose livelihood depended on us. We were clear about the challenges and talked about some of the possible ramifications. Tightening belts was needed and everyone was kept informed throughout this time. We met with our bankers and landlord, requesting extended terms while talking clearly about our plans to come out whole.

We met with our clients. First to assure them that we would do everything we could to continue our efforts on their behalf. Second, to let them know we were not jumping ship, that we'd stick with them as they dealt with their own challenges. We told them about our plans to manage during the downturn in clear and honest ways. We sought any advice they would give on ways we could all survive together.

Showing everyone the metrics we tracked, the dashboards we watched, and the plans we'd made was important. Everyone

wanted to hear anecdotal evidence that we could survive. Backing that up with information and a plan is even better.

We Were Predictable

Making sure that communication came often and with attention to clarity and accuracy was incredibly important. The regularity of our updates was a sort of life sign and our attention to them was a signal of our commitment. Regular, predictable, clear, and truthful. Sounds like a no-brainer.

We changed course when necessary, but only when necessary, with a clear warning and a reason why. This might be one of the most difficult things I've ever done in my life: don't try something new every morning just because of that nagging feeling of panic. This took more rigor and attention than I had expected - in the face of the great unknown, make a plan and stick with it as much as possible.

We Survived

Although bankers, vendors, and landlords granted us some relief, we never did take advantage of that. It was there if our plans started to fall apart, for which I am forever grateful, but I am even more grateful that we didn't need it, in the end. Our staff remained intact, albeit with a little less in the wallet for a while, but intact.

Your employees, vendors, partners, and clients count on you and what you do. Of course, you rely on them as well. Always, always act with the utmost integrity, it's the least you can do.

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