

The four key attributes to become a good leader

Predictability – this is not about routines, but more about forward planning and giving people plenty of notice of when things may be expected to change

Understanding – be transparent and communicate, communicate, communicate. The article suggests that if you are not bored silly of giving the same messages again and again, then you probably haven't told people enough times!

NB : in the same edition of HBR I spotted an interesting piece of research – apparently decision makers under excessive scrutiny tend to make the choices that are easiest to communicate rather than those they think are best (Philip Tetlock, Beware the Cone of Silence, HBR June 2009) Now, how many times have you seen that happen ?!!

Control - most of us respond better when we are in control of the situation rather than someone is controlling what happens to us. There is an example where by breaking down the giant task of turning around the sales of an organisation many easy wins were found (as well as some tricky ones!) and when people see that positive things are possible momentum will build.

Compassion – Remember that as a leader you will have prepared your story and got used to the change before your people - and so you are going to be ahead of them in the emotional cycle of transition. They need the time and space to cope in their own way. It's important to allow those that leave to leave with dignity – even veiled messages that “only the strongest remain” can be perceived as destructive.

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