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STRONG leadership is never more crucial than in trying times. To help your organization emerge from an economic downturn unscathed, practice these initiatives:

1 Embrace the core mission
Every company has a core mission anchored around its purpose for being in business — the purpose of its existence.

Living the core mission should begin with a mission statement that is not just hanging up on the boardroom wall but also has everyone in the company understanding and embracing it, from senior management to newly joined junior staff.

All activities, policies and systems must be in line with the mission statement, lest it end up just being lip service.

2 Prepare a clear vision
Why is it important to have a vision? Because the clearer the future that is mapped out, the more defined your actions and the more specific your decisions geared towards it.

A clear vision also inspires people to break new ground, like an athlete who constantly strives to break his

How to forge ahead

Here are eight tips to get your organisation through tough times

record and achieve new heights.

Everyone wants to be challenged and excel beyond the status quo.

Thus, mission and vision statements are like guiding lights that engage people, propelling them forward even through tough times and crises.

3 Build a strong culture
When you have enough people embracing certain philosophies and practicing a particular style of doing things, that then becomes a culture — for better or worse.

Leaders can shape an organisation's culture through strong-airn policies or by remaining silent in the face of poor management practices.

Or, they can shape a culture anchored on values such as the pursuit of progression, integrity in business, excellence in work and respect for all.

4 Create a high-performance organisation

To have the organisation performing at optimal levels, it is necessary to have clear accountability at various levels through specific key performance indicators (KPIs).

As companies aspire to be not just "good" but "great", there must be high performance standards that everyone in the organisation understands and is expected to uphold.

5 Get the right people on board

People are not the most valuable asset, but the right people are.

There are employees who may not suit your company's culture as they have values that differ from your company's, or they turn in performances that fall below the

firm's expectations.

In such scenarios, the senior management may need to find them alternative roles.

6 Encourage the pursuit of progression

Companies need to be growing constantly, and that means all employees need to embrace a mindset geared towards change.

Leaders must continually build a culture that challenges everyone to practice new approaches to doing things.

7 Take calculated risks

An organisation's leaders need to take risks all the time to keep the company growing.

Commission research and gather statistics to substantiate business decisions, but do not oversize it to the point that it causes the managers to

succumb to "analysis paralysis".

This will cause them to become too afraid to make any decisions.

The mark of a great company is that it is always prepared to seize opportunities when they arise.

8 Have determination and commitment

Finally, encourage a "never-say-die attitude". There will be good times and bad, but it is perseverance that will determine whether a company succeeds or fails.

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