

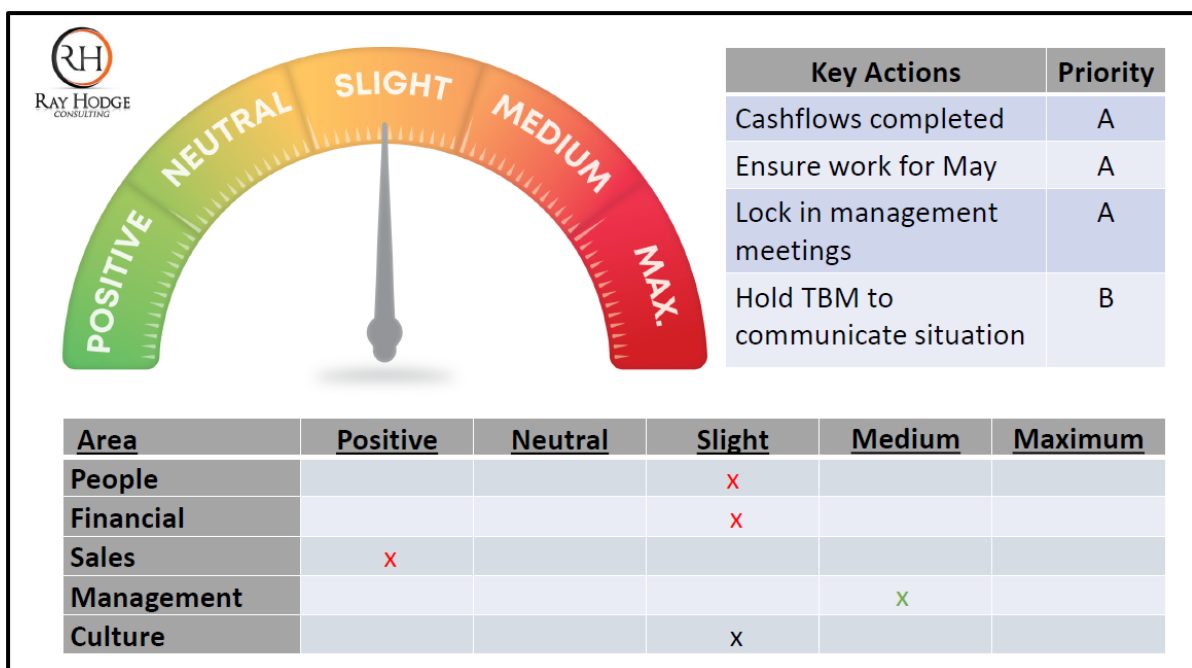
TURBULENT TIMES CALL FOR DECISIVE LEADERSHIP

Last week when speaking with the business owner of a nationwide company, he told me his current mode of operating was like a Commanding General. Recent Australian research suggests this guy has got it right. Catherine Douglas, head of the Crosby Textor Group's Australian research said that "People are really looking for their leaders to take the bull by the horns and make decisions to get things done and are perhaps less concerned about people's feelings right now." She goes on to say, "What people don't care about right now is a kumbaya approach and patting people on the back – that has really changed 180 degrees in just two weeks."¹

Over the years I have observed the most effective leaders bring the best out of others by adapting their leadership style to that of the individual employee. And different times call for different leadership styles and in the current climate, a more assertive and direct style is required. Andrew Mohl, the former director of Commonwealth Bank in an article entitled *Crisis Calls for 'Ruthless' Leadership*², "argued that the turmoil created by the coronavirus pandemic called for a more direct style of leadership as old business strategies were torn up and decisions needed to be taken quickly." He also provides a good perspective on speed. "I think when you've got to move quickly and you wait until all the analysis has come together to work out what to do, it's too late."

Due to the rapidity of change that is taking place, we do not have the luxury of locking ourselves away in boardrooms for days and weeks to do strategy and planning work. Things are often changing within the day and to be able to assess situations quickly and plan key actions is critical in keeping positive momentum. Obtaining instant clarity can also be a challenge when our minds and external voices create those misty clouds of confusion.

I have developed the Impact Gauge (below) to assist business owners and leaders gain faster clarity on the various levels of impacts across their business and then to prioritise the key actions required to address those impacts.



In the example above you will notice the level of impact in the different areas of the business. For the sake of brevity, I have only listed five areas but on the template I've provided there is provision for more. (See link in the footnotes³). The red X indicates this area could quickly head toward maximum negative impact and should be granted ongoing attention, at least in the short term. The green X, in this case, assumes that the management team is solid, and communication breakdown was due to work overload that week. By locking in management meetings, (as defined in the key action area) it should immediately correct itself and head toward the positive zone reasonably quickly.

The gauge can also be laid across your personal life, the impact on your customer base to assist in where your marketing should be directed, your management team and so forth.

In times such as these, we can default to a heightened reactive leadership style where we continue to bounce from issue to issue without pausing to accurately assess the situations that are arising. My recommendation is you download the template to keep on your desk or screen, review for a few minutes before the start of each day and move forward quickly and decisively.

¹ AFR – April 2, 2020

² AFR – April 15, 2020

³ <https://www.rayhodge.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Impact-Assessment-with-action-items-v2.pdf>

Ray Hodge is a writer, speaker and advisor to businesses and organisations with an emphasis on improving critical efficiencies to dramatically increase key results. He has coached and provided consulting services to leaders and teams for over 30 years.