



Liz on Leadership

Slow Down to Speed Up: How to Succeed Today and Thrive Tomorrow

September has always been one of my favorite months. The weather in the Northeast US is lovely. The foliage begins to change, displaying a dynamic array of colors. The air becomes crisp and the mornings cool. On a personal note, I get to enjoy another birthday, which somehow remains a treat well beyond childhood.

This year marks a milestone for me. As I reflect on my upcoming birthday, I feel incredibly fortunate to find myself enjoying good health and surrounded by a wonderful family, extraordinary clients, and a business that continues to evolve, grow, and reward in myriad ways.

My greatest challenge lies in maintaining balance and consistently applying a strategic mindset throughout my busy days. Amid the hectic pace of business and personal commitments, I must be especially thoughtful about how I spend my time, set priorities, make decisions, and position myself for the future.

I see the same phenomenon with my executive clients. Jammed calendars, competing priorities, and the ongoing challenge of balancing short-term pressures with long-term goals make it difficult to remain consistently strategic and get the right things done.

If this sounds familiar, take the following steps to ensure you're leading an organization that favors proactivity over reactivity, strategy over tactics, and calm over chaos.

1. Slow Down. Yes, it may sound like an impossible feat. After all, there are decisions to be made, actions to be taken, targets to be reached. But let's be clear.

Running as fast as you can will not get you the best possible outcomes. On the contrary, going too fast paves the way leads to poor decisions and repeated errors that can seriously set you back.

2. Foster a thoughtful workplace. Tell your team what you expect and have them help you cascade it throughout the organization: *We are going to think before reacting, strategize before we execute, communicate before forging ahead, and look to the future rather than striving only to survive the day.*

3. Maintain a laser focus on priorities. Short-term challenges can easily distract you from the long-term vision. Don't let it happen. Instead, launch your day, week, quarter, and year with a strategic view of top priorities. If your short-term actions don't support long-term growth, they're probably not true priorities. While you can't walk away from all the pressing items, you should certainly say *no* to some. Ask yourself: *Do I do this now/later/never?* (This framework and many others can be found in my new book, [Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World.](#))

Slow down, think, prioritize. Remember these straightforward ways to create your own "slow down to speed up" organization: one that is fully prepared to succeed today, adapt to the unexpected, and thrive well into the future.

Did you miss my last newsletter?

Great Leaders Help Weather the Storm

As I sat down to this article, Houston was in the early stages of recovery from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The Caribbean was reeling from the wrath of Irma. And Florida was bracing itself in anticipation of the storm's descent.

Over the past two weeks, Houston's corporate leaders have rapidly stepped up, reassuring their workforce in words and action—ensuring paid time off and providing resources to recover, repair, and rebuild. And in Florida, workers have been guided to focus on safety for themselves and their families, with offices shuttering in advance of the monster storm.

My client, John Cuomo, Group Vice President and General Manager of KLX Aerospace Solutions, wanted to convey his unwavering support to his Miami-based organization. He stayed closely connected, sending targeted communications like the following September 8th email (excerpts shared here with his permission).

Miami Team,

I hope today finds you all finalizing your preparation to be in a safe and secure place to ride out the storm. Our outside offices will handle the business matters. Your time should be focused on your safety and the safety of your family.

Our Miami campus will close for today, Friday, September 8 and Monday, September 11. Please check the employee hotline for status updates and do not hesitate to contact me directly should you need anything.

We are a strong community and will be there for each other as the storm passes and to support each other as we transition back to life and business as usual. I

wish each of you, and your loved ones, a safe and peaceful few days ahead.

John

John's email serves as a demonstration of leadership in times of crisis, when it is most essential to convey care and concern, provide clear direction, offer support, and model optimism for what lies ahead.

Every organization has storms to weather. They may not be as acute as a natural disaster, but organizational crises take many forms:

- *Large scale layoffs.*
- *The sudden departure of a CEO.*
- *A steep economic downturn.*
- *The loss of key customers or marketshare.*
- *Reputational damage and the erosion of investor confidence.*

Each of these (and more) can turn an organization upside down. To protect your people and speed a healthy rebound from crisis, here are three simple steps you should take.

1. Inform your organization. Rapidly and honestly, let your people know what's happening—before they read about it in the newspaper or overhear rumors at the proverbial water cooler.

2. Reassure your workforce. Provide authentic assurances and back them up with action. Help your employees know you're aware of the difficulties, have a plan to address them, and are prepared to take care of your people. Help them gain confidence from your confidence, and let them see your unwavering leadership.

3. Be responsive. Provide multiple venues for your employees to gain clarity and dispel rumors and misconceptions. Be open and non-defensive as you address concerns.

Organizational storms are unavoidable but the effects can be mitigated with this kind of thoughtful, honest, and genuinely caring approach to leadership.

My thoughts, prayers and support go out to all those impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. May your recovery be swift and your future bright.

Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World

I'm thrilled to announce that my forthcoming book, *Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World*, is officially in production! It's a highly actionable book, filled with pragmatic advice to help you, and your company, thrive in today's fast-paced world.

If you would like the book for yourself or a colleague, or if you want to submit a bulk pre-order, you can go directly to the [Business Expert Press](#) website. If you have any questions or would like to discuss ways to leverage the insights and tools in *Slow Down to Speed Up*, just send me an email: liz@bywaterconsultinggroup.com.

Stayed tuned for additional details and offers!

"Liz provides an in depth look at something we all struggle with. Finding the balance. These real life examples provide insight into some innovative new thinking around the pragmatism of finding high impact results in the middle of changing priorities and the constant search for overall effectiveness."

David and Esperanza Neu
Founders, Neu Center for Supportive Medicine and Cancer Survivorship

"I have worked with Liz and greatly benefitted from her advice and the tools she has developed over a long career of advising executives. She creates a very easy system to get you to Stop: reflect, reprioritize, and create a vision for personal and career success. I love having all the tools in one book. Having the toolkit to put your thoughts into action is invaluable. "

Lorrie Vogel
Former VP, Nike Material Science and Innovation

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About Dr. Liz

Dr. Liz Bywater has been called a one-of-a-kind leadership expert. Working at the intersection of business and psychology, she brings together pragmatic experience, advising top executives across the Fortune 500, with an advanced degree in Psychology and a dynamic personal style to inspire, engage and counsel her clients.

For more than a decade, top global organizations have requested Liz's help in resolving issues such as creating extraordinary client relationships, increasing market persuasion, and driving productive collaborations in an increasingly complex world.

Liz advises senior leaders at some of the world's most successful companies, including Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Thomson Reuters, Bristol-Myers Squibb, AmerisourceBergen and more. She uses her expertise in human behavior to drive commercial success. She helps her clients propel innovation, exert influence and lead their organizations through change.

A thought leader in organizational excellence, Liz provides expert commentary for such publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Fast Company and USA Today. She is on the editorial advisory board for **Life Science Leader** magazine and is a featured expert on such radio broadcasts as CBS Philadelphia's **Philadelphia Agenda** with Brad Segall and **Woman of the Week** with Marilyn Russell.

Liz earned her PhD in Psychology at the Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University. Her undergraduate degree is from Cornell University, where she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude. She is a longstanding member of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Advancement of Consulting.

She lives in Bucks County, PA, with her husband, teenage son, and a FaceTime away from her college freshman daughter.

Stay tuned for Liz's forthcoming book, **Slow Down to Speed Up: Lead, Succeed and Thrive in a 24/7 World** (Business Expert Press, November 2017).

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