

Lead change.  
You can do it.  
Now is the time.  
Here's what it'll take.





Former Chief Strategy Officer and former COO.



Certified leadership-team coach and certified master facilitator.



Career consultant to leadership teams and boards of directors.



Work with winter-outdoor-brand C-suites and executive teams.



# What we're about to do

- 1.** ■ Acknowledge what we're up against.
- 2.** ■ Think about change leadership in 2025.
- 3.** ■ Get a cheat sheet for decisiveness with elegance amid uncertainty.
- 4.** ■ Ponder how we might apply it all.





**Sustainability regs**



**Excess inventory**



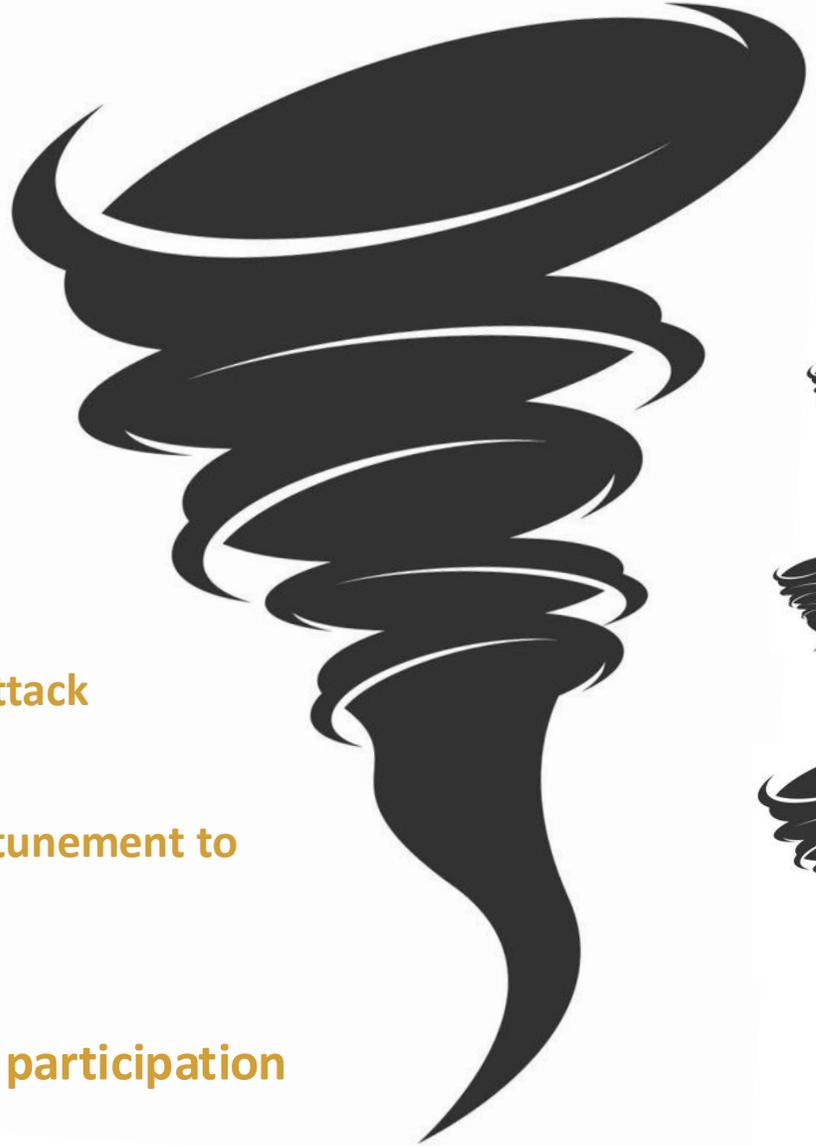
**DEI initiatives under attack**



**Headquarters that that lack attunement to realities of U.S. market**



**Concerning participation trends**



**Tariffs assault**



**Workforce shortage**

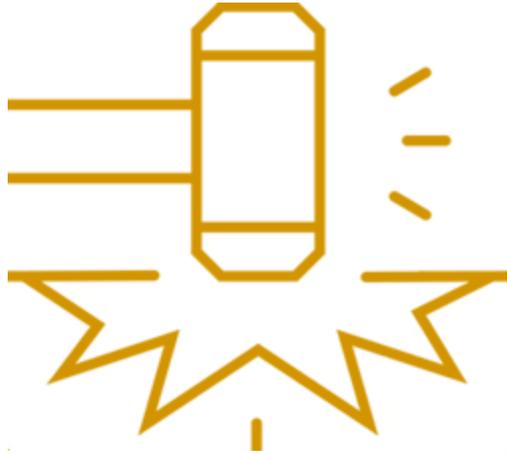


**Specialty retail threatened**



**Will there even be snow?**





And in each of our businesses, there are internal obstacles to leading change.



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““

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the most adaptable to change.

**Charles Darwin**



# How exactly does one drive change in turbulent times?



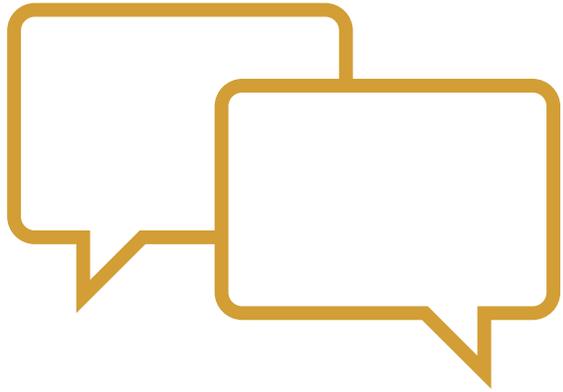
# Traditional thinking



What is the traditional, tried-and-true approach to leading change?



# Traditional thinking



What is the traditional, tried-and-true approach to leading change?

**Pilot projects**

**Minimal investment**

**Build coalitions**



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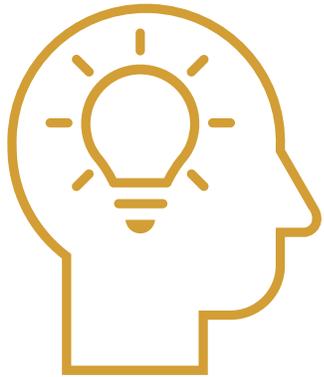
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The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence itself but to act with yesterday's logic.

**Peter Drucker**



# Latest best thinking



**“In our research and experience working with organizations, we’ve observed that when tumult begins, there is a brief window—a temporary loosening of red tape and resistance—when change is actually easier, if leaders go about it well.”**

**“[How to Successfully Drive Change When Everything Is Uncertain.](#)”** Michaela J. Kerrisey (Harvard) and Julia DiBenigno (Yale). *Harvard Business Review*. Aug 20, 2025.



# Latest best thinking

## Unfortunate news:

Prevailing research suggests that under threat, organizations are at least as likely to grow rigid as they are to adapt.

## Great news:

During one moment of profound turbulence, there are examples of leaders who drove successful change ***by working in a very certain way.***

“[How to Successfully Drive Change When Everything Is Uncertain.](#)” Michaela J. Kerrisey (Harvard) and Julia DiBenigno (Yale). *Harvard Business Review*. Aug 20, 2025.



# Latest best thinking

## 1 Select (then reframe) a “shovel-ready idea”



- Idea needs to be well planning out and ready for strong execution.
- Idea needs to be reframed to show how it both:
  1. Is a direct response to turbulence-born problems.
  2. Will contribute long-term value to the business.
- Examples: dormant tech-investment plans, plans for changes to materials sourcing.



# Latest best thinking

## 2 Move quickly to take advantage of a limited window in time.



- Window of opportunity to spot a shift of mindset and act accordingly tends to only be open briefly.
- Seizing requires being scrappy, making do with what you have, and mobilizing team for fast action.
- Choosing shovel-ready ideas mitigates natural risk of moving so quickly.
- Think: Ideas entertained / debated for some time.



# Latest best thinking

## 3 Go bigger (think expansively).



- Explore full range of what might be possible to achieve.
- Going big is relative to the usual scale of a team's work.
- Sometimes means making the investment boldly rather than taking the time to pilot.
- Doesn't mean throwing caution to the wind.

“It means recognizing that such moments bring considerable risk by their nature but sometimes require organizations to act differently. This requires investment and, sometimes, bigger bets on new ideas.”



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness with elegance amid uncertainty

Adapted from: [“Cheat Sheet to Making Your Business’s Big Decisions: Choose with confidence in 6 short steps.”](#) Shane Kinkennon. *The Startup*. Feb 3, 2021.



# Why this?



Equip yourself + your team to start placing bets.



**Make decisions in a thorough, informed, elegant way, even when there's not enough information and there are too many variables.**



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty

**A Know.**

**D Detect.**

**B Orient.**

**E Decide.**

**C Balance.**

**F Commit.**



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty



## Know.

Codify what great decision-making looks like for you and your team.

Diagram it!

- Data:
  - When?
  - From where?
  - Presented how?
  - Needed in what sequence?
- Community input?
- Staff perspective?
- Options and narrowing?
- Pressure testing?
- Gut checks?
- Codification and affirmation?
- Communication/dissemination?



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty

## **B** Orient.

Reground in your business's defining values and reasons for being.

What do your core values and relevant strategies suggest about how you might meet the moment?

- Take a fresh look at any relevant values, strategies, plans.
- Reground in what your business has said it will achieve.



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

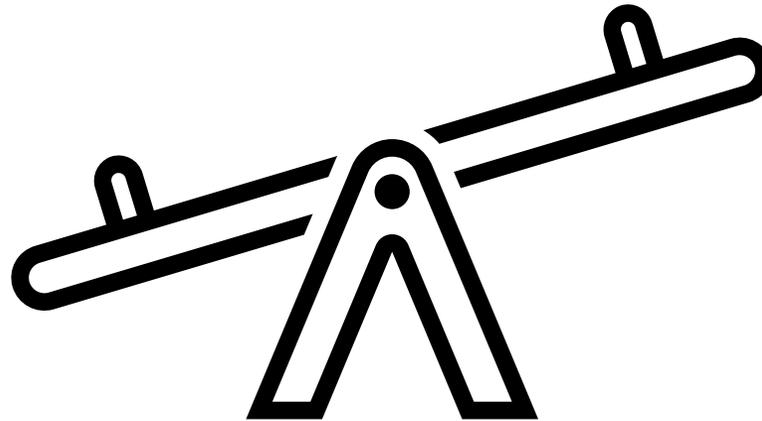
with elegance amid uncertainty

## **C** Balance.

Consider both what the data says and what intuition is signaling.

### Data

What does the relevant data (both internal and third-party) tell you? What does it *not* tell you? What can be accepted as fact?



### Intuition

What do you know in your gut that your customers or other key stakeholders truly want? What do your most talented teammates and staffers deeply believe?



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty

## **D** Detect.

Detect fear of bad decisions so it doesn't cloud judgment.

Fear is a fact of life. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

We just can't let it overtake us when we sit in a leader's chair.



- Know when fear is at work!
- Look for signs like a clenching jaw or tightening of the chest.
- Breathe through fear when it arises to get adrenaline and cortisol back in check.



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty

## **E** Decide.

When your business needs you to decide, do so!

This one may seem obvious, but it can prove elusive to even the most conscientious and competent of leaders.

- Trust your decision-making way, even if you still lack info or if pieces remain in motion.
- Decide when it's needed. Don't delay, procrastinate, hedge, or excuse.
- Decisiveness amid turbulence inspires confidence in leadership, which boosts performance.



# Cheat sheet for decisiveness

with elegance amid uncertainty

## **F** Commit.

Once the decision is made, practice and exhibit conviction.

- Give the decision time to mature.
- Show interest in follow-up strategy and learnings.
- Don't react to the first negative indicator (but don't be overly attached either).
- Deciding, testing, and evolving is an unavoidable part of being a business leader in these times.

If in time, outcomes suggest a revision is needed, be humble, transparent, and forthright – don't defend or gloss over.



# Assignment

1. Divide into groups.
2. Discuss:
  - a) **What is one adaptation you as a leader of your business could drive in response to at least one of the major challenges we've talked about here today?**
  - b) **What are the first three things you would do?**
3. Consider:
  - a) How will you hold yourself accountable?

## Remember!

1. Select then reframe a shovel-ready idea.
2. Move quickly to take advantage of a limited window in time.
3. Go bigger / think expansively.



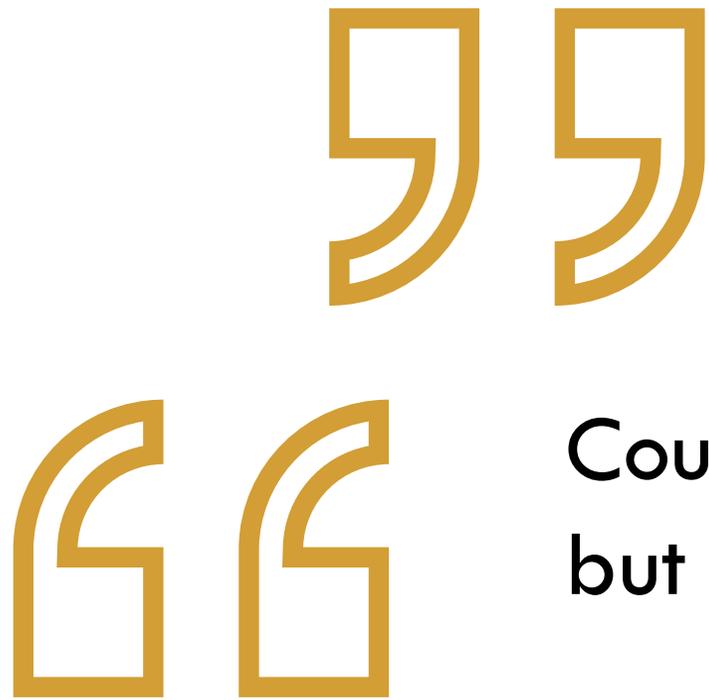
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There are two options: adapt or die.

**Andy Grove**





Courage is being scared to death  
but saddling up anyway.

**John Wayne**



