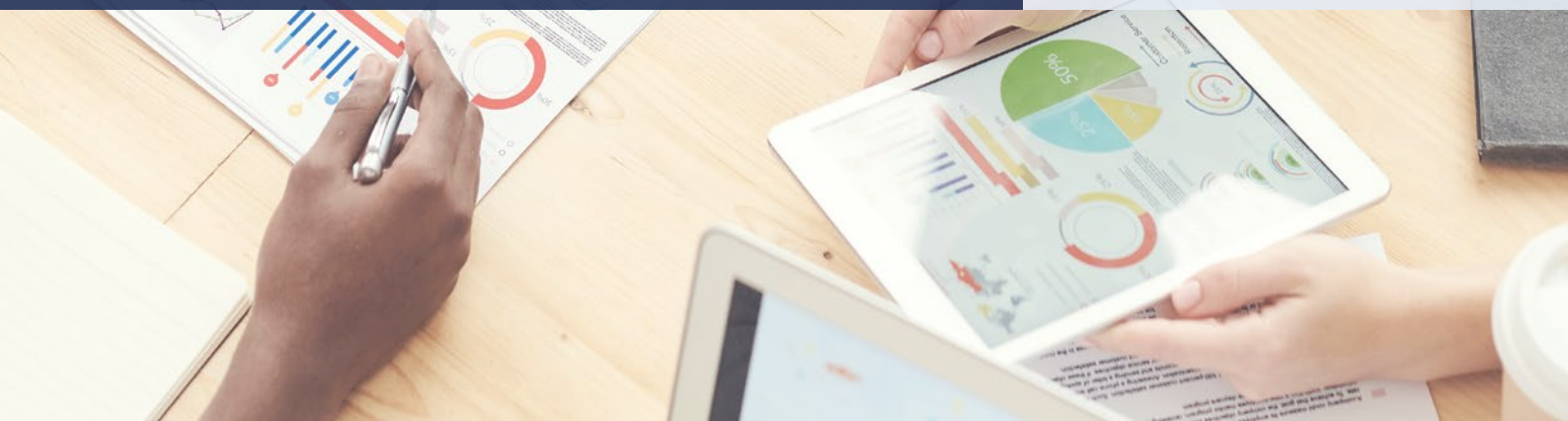




# HOW IS DISRUPTION REDEFINING THE WAY YOU LEAD?

*An Actionable  
Resource Guide  
Executives Can  
Implement Today*





# One of the biggest challenges facing today's leaders: How to handle disruption.

The unprecedented spread of COVID-19 around the globe has thrown the global economy into turmoil, necessitating that business leaders begin strategically assessing how they can prosper and adapt during and after these hard times.

In the age of changing work environments and employee demand for a more dynamic, flexible, and team-focused atmosphere, you may be wondering: *how can I create a disruptor-proof organisation?*

You can't.

In *COVID-19: Implications for business*, McKinsey & Company stated the pandemic is the top risk to growth in every region except Latin America.

This global pandemic has and will continue to redefine the way you lead your team and resorting to traditional methods can prove to be frustrating.

The focus of the leader used to be on being very efficient, and you'd do fine. Now disruption is everywhere, and most company leaders are running to adjust.

Many leaders view disruption as being the first to embrace new technology trends thereby ending up exponentially ahead of the competition.

This mindset can lead you to quickly dismiss the current capabilities that are working well in your company and rush into introducing new products and services before your industry and your customers are ready. This may leave you with nothing to fall back on.

# How do you ensure your leadership can survive this ever-changing landscape?

The short answer is by embracing it! Successfully navigating through disruption can be hard, but not impossible.

Any leader can approach disruption in a braver, more purposeful manner. By understanding and exploring the opportunities that this digital revolution is providing, you will begin to see how effectively navigating disruption can benefit your business in an impactful way.

Stuart has over 20 years working with large international corporations navigating complex disruption challenges (\$1B managed). During this time, Stuart has found a leader's level of agility dictates whether their leadership thrives amid disruption or struggles every step of the way.

Unfortunately, when leaders were not getting the right advice, significant breakdown in work environments and interactions occurred. This lack of right advice led Stuart to help leaders unlock their potential and build high performing teams so that they can orchestrate strategic outcomes.

***Stuart Andrews strives to provide tailored, transparent and honest support and advice that puts your team and customers first.***

## About this Resource Guide

It's time to create a strong foundation to build upon so that your leadership can be on the winning side of the current disruption affecting your team. This process begins with understanding your unique challenges and then defining a roadmap that fits into your organisational strategy and people culture.

**This resource guide is unique. It gives you the opportunity to step away from the latest trends and tech hype to gain a better picture of what is important to you in the present day, as well as in the future.**

After completing the actionable items in this resource guide, you will have a strategic overview of what is important to you and what to focus on first. This resource guide uses straight talk and concrete examples to help you understand the value of transformation in the face of disruption.

It contains the right questions to ask yourself and your team so that you can solve the right problems. It will allow you to take control of this challenging situation and to make tough decisions in a timely way.



# The Most Valuable Action to Take When Faced with Disruption: Eliminate the Noise

As an innovative business leader in the age of information overload, you are aware of the number of insights, trends and data available on the latest technology and business strategies. It can be challenging to not get distracted with the new or innovative and focus on what is important, especially how quickly things are changing.

The most valuable action you can take right now is to stop. In this world of constant content, opinion and noise, you need clarity and foresight, especially when you're dealing with disruption that is impacting your leadership.

In order to effectively move through disruption, you must first understand what is going on with your team so that you can turn the problem of disruption into an opportunity.

Subsequently, you can match those needs with the right solution in a time that's a fit for your organisation.

Taking a step back can be challenging. While it is good to keep a keen eye on market research and insights, do not fall into the trap of consuming more than implementing. Over consumption of information will lead you to making purchasing decisions based on the best technologies out there, and not what helps meet your specific strategic goals.

Any strategic actions you take should align uniquely with your organisation's structure, challenges, and goals. If your approach is not specific to the key priorities, end goals, and norms of your organisation, it is bound to fail.

As a leader you need to distinguish tech hype from reality. Not taking a step back to listen and collaborate with the right departments, potential vendors and your customers will lead to misdirected and costly decisions.

Here is an interesting example. An entire department at a large telecommunication organisation decided in order to meet their customers' desires to always

have the latest technology, they would replicate the same solutions as their competitor. They figured if the competitor is doing it, "we should do what they are doing." After all, that was the trend. Unfortunately, this approach did not result in the desired outcomes and instead created a misguided business case.

The company blindly partnered with a financier to provide a solution before they determined the best options for their company and their customers. Because there was no involvement from the subject matter experts, this was doomed to fail.

In order to remediate all the issues from the mistakes caused by acting on a premature basis, Stuart devised a portfolio of initiatives and teams to build both tactical and strategic solutions to mitigate financial and commercial losses. This was a direct result from executing agreements in silo that required technology solutions and capability that was not thought of due to lack of consultation.

All of this could have been avoided if they had collaborated with key stakeholders before entering deals and agreeing to new operating models without consultation.

Executive leaders must do the right thing, always deciding in favour of the enriching experience and value. The most effective executives are strong leaders. Responsibility and accountability must inform each other so they cannot be differentiated. Leadership skills and capabilities pull them together. The leadership thought-leader John C. Maxwell famously said, "Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another" (Maxwell, 1997).

You should now have a clear understanding of the importance of gaining clarity and foresight before seeking systems and solutions. So, pause and book a complimentary strategy session to unpack your internal leadership challenges so that together you can build your unique roadmap to solve disruption for you and your team.

# Create a Proven Framework for Solving Disruption and Redefining your Leadership

With “disruption” being one of the trendiest terms in business, you may be worried that your leadership will lead your company into becoming the next Kodak. Moreover, because disruption happens gradually over time, this can create differing viewpoints within an organisation as to what this current disruption means for you and your team.

Take this moment to think about the future of your leadership differently:

- **Evaluate what your business is doing right now.**
- **Acknowledge how disruption is impacting your team.**
- **Take that brave pivot of viewing disruption as an opportunity.**

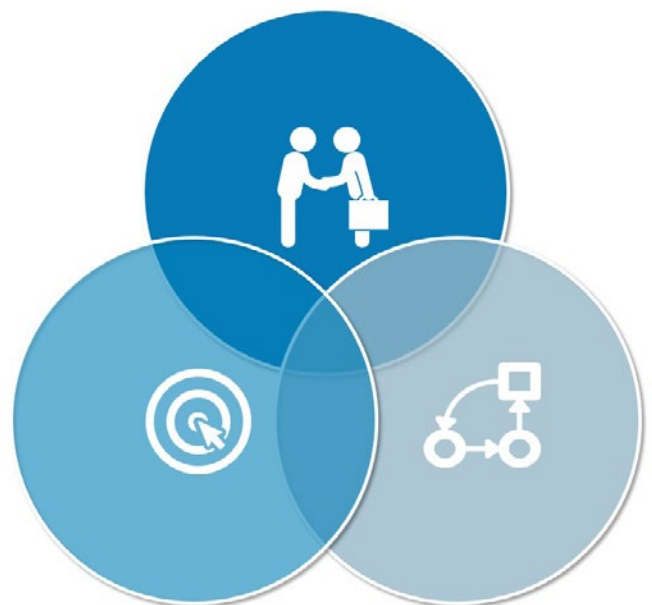
With a new mindset and deeper empathy for your team and customer cultures, you’ll unlock the true potential of innovation. You’ll be able to pinpoint the exact areas in your leadership that require attention and have a clear roadmap to present to those who may not see resolving disruption as a current priority.

Undoubtedly, even the awareness of disruption will require some form of transformation within your organisation. **A successful transformation encompasses the whole of your business: people, systems and process.**

Throughout the remainder of this resource guide, we will focus on these three key areas of your leadership.

You will find powerful questions to discover how disruption is affecting your team’s culture, enterprise architecture, and customer experience. This will not only give you a clear picture of the exact areas that need attention, but you’ll also have a strategic overview to share with other stakeholders.

By the end of this process, your team will act less like a machine, and more as a living organism. Your team will no longer face disruption in a chaotic and uncoordinated manner, burying mistakes instead of learning from them. Ultimately you will lead in a manner that adapts to new strategies and face disruption with a strong commitment to reflection and learning, adopting new ideas if appropriate or discontinuing those that are not.



***Successful Transformations  
Encompass People, Systems, Process***



## People

***“Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first.”***

***– Simon Sinek, author of Start with Why***

This abrupt time period has demonstrated how important your employees are and how much good teamwork and collegiality can influence your business' success.

Even if you have a strong company culture, when you ignore the wellbeing of your employees while handling disruption, you will destroy the very culture your organisation worked hard to build.

Prior to the pandemic, many companies did not encourage work from home arrangements. However, this period has forced companies to re-evaluate their positions and accept remote work environments as a valid option.

Employees used to remote working will be expecting company policies and norms to include benefits to reduce work-life conflict, which will increase productivity in the long run.

By positioning your people at the centre of what you do as a business, you foster an environment for collaboration, innovation and growth. This type of company culture is your competitive advantage in how you lead.

When Stuart worked with a large global financial institution's executives and board during a complex acquisition, there was a strong focus on solutions, yet leadership wasn't prepared to guide their employees through all the aspects of the process. They had already failed twice at managing this transition.

With Stuart's support, senior-level executives mobilised their teams to help problem solve and drive solutions. In having the difficult conversations and cutting through the politics, Stuart helped this organisation through a successful transition. They were able to maximise customer/shareholder benefits and meet board responsibilities within the tight time and budget constraints.

# Know and Understand Your People

Evaluating the impact of disruption regarding the people of your organisation can be complex. Knowing and understanding the current state of the people sector of your organisation is crucial in evaluating whether disruption is affecting this area of your business. It will also determine the effectiveness of implementing change to handle disruption in other areas of your business.

Answer the questions below to determine whether the people sector of your business requires immediate attention.

1. Do you have a shared purpose and vision across your organisation?

Yes No

2. Is everyone aware of this shared vision and purpose?

Yes No

3. Does your organisation structure resemble more of a triangle with a top-down hierarchy? Or is it more circular like an organism with leadership as its nucleus?

*Top-Down Hierarchy*

*Circular w/ Leadership as Nucleus*

4. Are there clear roles and responsibilities defined for everyone in your organisation?

Yes No

5. Is there a sense of complete honesty and transparency in day-to-day working? Or do people in your organisation communicate a feeling of not being heard?

*No One Feels Heard*

*Honesty & Transparency*

6. Are new ideas quickly evaluated and adapted if appropriate? Or are changes implemented in a chaotic and uncoordinated manner?

*Chaotic Change Environment*

*Positive Change Environment*

7. Do you feel your employees have a deep sense of fulfilment and achievement at work? Or do they keep their heads down, focusing only on delivering work?

*Employees Focused On Delivery Only*

*Employees Feel Sense of Fulfilment*

8. Does management act in a self-less supportive way? Or do they act more authoritative and give orders?

*Authoritative Leadership*

*Self-Less, Supportive Leadership*

## Actionable Tasks: Managing Employees Through Disruption

There is no one solution to develop the right culture for your organisation to handle disruption. It depends on your leadership style and the people inside the business. However, **always keep your employees' wellbeing in mind**. They can recognise the difference between cosmetic changes and more meaningful, satisfying changes that occur when employee experience is taken into consideration. Here are some ideas to consider when leading your organisation through disruption:

- Lead by example in the way you communicate to your employees and what you expect from them when they are communicating with your customers.
- Observe interactions at all levels in your organisation. Notice how meetings are facilitated, culture and how employees are interacting.
- Create transparent and honest communications across all levels of the organisation. Admit you don't always have the answers and seek their opinions.



## Systems

If your organisation has held back on enterprise solution upgrades or replacements, the latest hype may insist your company is on the verge of becoming obsolete. With the buzz around AI, RPA, AR, IoT, having an intranet, video conferencing and call centre may seem as low tech as a fax machine.

While there is some truth to staying current with technology to provide the best customer experience and work environment, **implementing system changes without preliminary considerations will lead to unnecessary expenses.**

Even if a competitor has launched the latest technology in omni channel customer support and experience, it doesn't mean you have to urgently do the same. You must first consider the impact the change will have on your employees.

The purpose of having an efficient business system is to invite collaboration across all departments so that your organisation is focused on results in a way that fosters high productivity and engagement.

Implementing technological change without considering how people within your organisation will react leads to a closed working environment. No one will openly share their time and talent to help resolve your current challenge of losing market share.

When working with a large Australian telecommunication company on a complex transformational initiative, Stuart realised the changes would affect all front line and customer service staff. So, he ensured an enterprise wide change impact assessment was undertaken before new systems were implemented. This enabled the company to understand what and how significant the impact would be on each department. It formed the basis of a significant "people" change management plan. This enabled the digital transformation to be understood by all staff. As a result, new mode of operation across the organisation was fully embraced.

# Ensure Your Technology Transformation is Based on Need, Not Hype

It's easy to fall into the trap of idealising the latest technology as the ultimate solution to regain your market share. However, to guarantee your company will have the same or better success than your competitors, **you must utilise a system that aligns with your business strategy and objectives.**

*Answer the questions below to ensure you are implementing the right system, not the trendiest.*

1. Does your current system support collaboration and communication?  
Yes      No
2. Can your current system scale as your business grows?  
Yes      No
3. Do employees complain about continuous interruptions to access to data?  
Yes      No
4. Does your current system allow you to efficiently determine inventory and/or forecast sales?  
Yes      No
5. Is information stored in one centralised secure location or stored in separate systems and databases?  
Centralised Secure Location      Separate Systems and Databases

## **Actionable Tasks: Guarantee a Smooth Systems Transformation**

When a business decides to complete a systems transformation, how their people react is oftentimes an afterthought. As an innovative leader, you must be mindful of the general wellbeing of your employees. After all, it's those employees that need to be engaged to deliver the solutions required for the successful outcomes that have been set by the executive leadership team.

Here are some ideas to consider when implementing changes to your systems:

- ✓ Prepare a detailed plan that takes your people on a journey of the potential impacts the system change will have on your organisation.
- ✓ Train personnel in the ADKAR change management framework so you can define and manage the communication plan for system changes.
- ✓ Provide digital adoption tools to help your employees adopt new technology.
- ✓ Provide internal change agents who have the ability to connect the dots. This will increase understanding and action among your employees.



# Process

When it comes to business processes, most organisations have two challenges: their business processes are broken and/or their team members are resistant to change. These challenges lead to wasted time and confusion, which will impede the innovation necessary to regain your market share.

Even if you have a clear profitable solution, it's impossible to lead the pivots required if your organisation is disorganised and unwilling to change.

Your team members may express a shared desire in providing the best customer experience for you to regain market share. However, it's also human nature to hate change. Team members can get stuck in their ways of doing things. Most people are used to the traditional organisational form of siloed departments, each caught up in their own individualised responsibilities.

As an innovative leader, you must rise above these challenges and create an environment that invites cross-functional solutions. Not only do your employees need to understand the value in the changes required to regain market share, but **each team member must see what's in it for them.**

Stuart found innovative leadership to be the driving force when a large Australian telecommunication company was implementing a new digital online portal. This portal would improve internal operational efficiency yet negatively impacted certain groups. This led to employee disengagement and reduced productivity. Management was forced to deal with project delays, as well as poor team morale.

Stuart advised the leaders with building a sponsorship coalition to support, engage and influence employees not only during the transition but into the future. He encouraged management to communicate the value of the employee and their contributions to the change outcome.

**Stuart's coaching of leadership led to the creation of a structured people change management process. The ongoing support resulted in 90% of employees feeling they received sufficient support to help them embed the change. Moreover, 90% of employees also felt they were provided with the knowledge and skills to help them execute their post-change responsibilities.**

# Examine Your Business Processes Holistically

Executing effective changes to your company's processes begins with examining the holistic view of processes, which includes activities that transform inputs to outputs, as well as the people, systems and resources involved in execution and management of business processes.

Use the questions below to examine the effects your current processes have on your ability to handle disruption in your market share.

1. Are individuals in your organisation resistant to change?  
Yes      No
2. Are processes well defined, documented and clear to all team members?  
Yes      No
3. Is there a shared understanding of the benefits of each process to the organisation and team members?  
Yes      No
4. Do the tasks add value to the customer experience?  
Yes      No
5. If the tasks do not directly add value to your product/service, is it necessary to the function of the business?  
Yes      No
6. Does your organisation allow space for trial and error to optimise for the best customer experience?  
Yes      No

## Actionable Tasks: Get Work Done and Improve Employee Experiences

Well-defined **processes aren't useful unless they are implemented and continuously evaluated**. Here are a few ways to ensure your processes are helping your team to save time and money while you work to regain your market share:

- ✓ Ensure there is a safe forum for your teams to communicate openly and provide feedback on day-to-day operations across all departments. Utilise both formal and informal methods.
- ✓ Set up dedicated cross-functional continuous improvement teams.
- ✓ Allow your team members to have fun in the workplace. This helps to inspire them and to promote creativity and continuous improvement.
- ✓ Celebrate innovation. Allow your employees to take calculated risks to try and test their ideas.

# Asking the Right Questions Solves the Right Problems

You've learned in this resource guide that disruption-proofing your leadership is a waste of time and energy. Disruption is inevitable and affects most businesses and every leader. Your job as an innovative leader is to successfully navigate your company through whatever disruption comes along.

Reflecting on the questions in this resource guide should give you a clear understanding of the areas in your business and team that require your immediate attention. However, this is only the beginning of the opportunities available to you.

As you begin to implement strategies to address these challenges, you will begin to free up your resources so that you can create other innovative competitive advantages to further your leadership.

## Validate Your Ideas and Coaching Objectives Now

Although this resource guide has helped you design the framework to solve your disruption challenges, you may still be wondering: *Am I moving in the right direction? Will any of these changes even work?*

It's time to brainstorm your ideas with professionals who are experienced in the challenges you're facing and care about the success of your leadership and business. That's why Stuart would like to offer you a *complimentary Your Next Steps Strategy Session*.

### ***During Your Next Steps Strategy Session, you will:***

- Share your unique business needs
- Receive my insights to fill any gaps in your ideas or new perspectives to consider
- Receive a tactile plan with actions you can implement straight away

Every leader has their own unique set of challenges. Your strategy session won't be a reiteration of boilerplate suggestions, nor will it be a cheerleading session. Information will be shared with honesty and transparency, and Stuart will help guide you to create the solutions that you see fit for your leadership and team.

***Stuart looks forward to learning more about you to ensure your continued success in this ever-changing and demanding world!***

**BOOK YOUR NEXT STEPS STRATEGY CALL NOW!**

# About the Author

**Stuart Andrews | Managing Director SMA Consulting**



Stuart is an executive coach and transformation specialist who loves to help leaders unlock their potential and build high performing teams so that they can orchestrate strategic outcomes.

With experience supporting clients across diverse industries, organizations including Fortune 500 companies ranging from C-suite to mid-level management, Stuart enjoys providing new perspectives on challenges being faced and helping leaders link employee experiences with customer expectations.

Stuart has more than 20+ years experience leading strategic and complex transformations. He has helped leaders solve board and C-level challenges with on the ground foresight in best practice team management, including organisational culture and performance, vendor partnerships and speed to market. Stuart partners with his clients to build unique experiences that help them grow at both an individual and organizational level.

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