

Be a Resilient Leader in the Face of Adversity

Written by: Jason Orloske | June 1, 2018



I was assigned as a Program Manager of a major merger and acquisition effort. This M&A was challenging because the area I lead was Medicare, so the compliance requirements were many and those who understood them were few. The team and I were tasked with integrating this area of the business in 8 months, which was going to be a tall feat but one we felt we could accomplish.

I worked hard to develop a very dynamic, collaborative and cohesive team that could “role with the punches” and handle issues as they came up. We were making progress as we approached the 60 day go-live mark. Then it happened; half of my key compliance team members and two lead technology developers were given their severance package and escorted from the building. Someone decided their services were no longer required and they became a casualty of the merger. As the core team gathered the next morning a question reigned clear; why did they get let go and what are we going to do now?

Adversity will come at you from anywhere. Most often, you can't control it. Companies can terminate personnel at any time for any number of reasons. People will say or do things

that can't be easily explained. Adversity can cause you stress and anger because it is forced upon you.

However, adversity can introduce you to your resilient self. When you're a leader, from a small team to a large department, your reaction will determine whether the adversity will consume you and your team, or whether you'll not only survive, but thrive from it.

Though you can't always control the adverse conditions you're faced with, you can control your reaction to them through resiliency. Resiliency is your ability to withstand, recover and grow in the face of adversity. Resiliency is what you need when everything blows up in your face.

When these events happen, a true leader will not panic. They will stay focused on what matters and is most important to them and the team. They have a knack for taking this adversity, dealing with it and looking for the hidden opportunities. Leaders understand challenges are everywhere and remain flexible when the unexpected happens. They then take charge and keep everyone moving forward.

As for my M&A team, I felt I needed to take control of the situation before it consumed the team and we lost our moral and momentum. I told them though it was unfortunate we lost some of our key people, we weren't going to let that slow us down. I believed in our team and asked them all for their input to keep going with minimal impact. I had to be a leader and be resilient in the face of some tough times. We experienced short-term pains but ultimately succeeded.

About the Author



Jason Orloske

I am a seasoned project, program and portfolio manager with over 15 years' experience in the healthcare, retail, legal, and regulatory sectors. I believe that a successful project is more than just delivering on time, scope, budget and quality. It starts with a solid understanding of the requested project and ensuring it aligns with organizational goals and market needs. Through a governance process, I have worked with executive teams so only the right projects are approved, as well as agreement on priority. I have created a culture of success with project teams through well-defined processes, open communication with and among team members, and continual stakeholder engagement. I'm a clear communicator who can interact with executives and their teams about technology, business and financial topics.