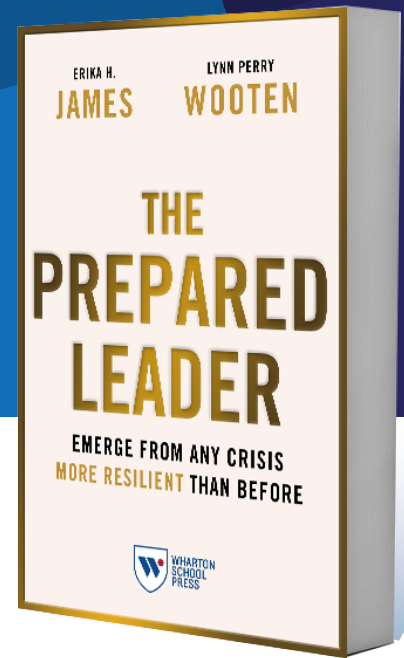


# The Prepared Leader Checklist

## 9 Skills You Need Today

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Crises are inevitable. They happen over and over again. And yet crises always seem to catch us off guard. Leading through a crisis effectively and building resilience to weather the next storm is contingent on one thing, and it's this: being prepared.

Part of being a Prepared Leader is knowing that crises are hugely challenging, but they're also *eminently manageable*. That's because we know that crises always unfold in 5 distinct phases:

- PHASE 1: Early warning and signal detection
- PHASE 2: Preparation and prevention
- PHASE 3: Damage containment
- PHASE 4: Recovery
- PHASE 5: Learning and reflection

We also know, from years of research, that there are leadership capabilities—9 distinct skills—that you will need to develop and deploy across the crisis lifecycle. Honing these skills today will stand you in great stead for the next crisis to hit you and your organization tomorrow.

Assess your readiness for the next crisis. How many of the 9 skills do you have down? How many do you need to develop?

### EARLY WARNING AND SIGNAL DETECTION SKILLS

#### Skill #1: Sense-making

Deciphering real signals from background noise means considering *all the scenarios* in which a risk could become a genuine problem. Do you routinely scenario-plan? If not, why not?

#### Skill #2: Perspective-taking

To see all the implications of a looming crisis, you need different viewpoints. Do you regularly seek out diverse feedback? What can you do to capture diverse perspectives?

### PREPARATION AND PREVENTION SKILLS

#### Skill #3: Influence

When a crisis is looming you need to mobilize everyone fast, which means you need trust, transparency and the ability to explain your decisions. Is this the case now? If not, why not?

#### Skill #4: Organizational agility

Mobilizing people is one thing, but they need to be empowered to act independently. Does your team have the autonomy they need to make decisions? If not, what's stopping them?

#### Skill #5: Creativity

You're going to need creative ideas to minimize a major threat. Ask yourself: do you incentivize and reward ideation and open discussion in your organization?

### DAMAGE CONTAINMENT SKILLS

#### Skill #6: Communicating effectively

To align, mobilize and empower multiple stakeholders, you need to engage them around a clear purpose *and connect with their emotional needs*. Can you do this?

#### Skill #7: Risk-taking

Crises are atypical situations and inherently imply risk. Ask yourself: in high-stress contexts, do you tolerate failure and learn from mistakes? Does your team?

### RECOVERY SKILLS

#### Skill #8: Promoting resilience

People are resilient when they are challenged, stretched, and supported when they fail. Do you encourage your team to learn new skills and bring new ideas without fear of reprisal?

### LEARNING AND REFLECTION SKILLS

#### Skill #9: Individual and systemic learning

To brace for the next crisis, you need to learn from this one. In your organization, do you actively capture learning and enact lessons to drive change? How could you improve this?