



To BCG's network around the world,

No matter where you are in the world, you will undoubtedly hear plenty about the US election today. But in 2016—after the presidential election in the US and the Brexit referendum in the UK—I learned not to try to predict where the votes will land. So I'll save any thoughts about what happens next for the coming weeks. Instead, I'd like to focus on leading our colleagues through these challenging times.

This year has turned people's lives upside-down in so many ways, starting with ongoing anxiety about COVID-19. The pandemic has led to worries about safety, job security, the fate of employers, and adjustments to remote working, as well as basic concerns about health, well-being, and educating our children. Add to that pileup the increasing social unrest and divisiveness of the political climate in many places.

It looks as if these crises are far from over, and many parts of the world are in for a rough winter. I've written to you before about business strategies for leading through adversity, but equally important right now is making sure we [lead with humanity](#). And it's not just about intent but about the actions we take. Here are some that can make a real difference:

Set aside time to check in with your people—asking about their lives, not only their jobs. When it feels right, share your own worries—the everyday challenges you're grappling with—and what you're doing to cope.

Listen to employees and be ready to adjust policy according to changing

needs and concerns—simple gestures that can ease the load and show that you care. At BCG, for example, we’ve offered support for people to upgrade their home technology. And we’ve provided a range of flexibility programs—including leaves of absence with continued benefits coverage—to help people rebalance work and family responsibilities.

Communicate frequently and authentically with your teams. Reinforce a culture of caring, in which people look out for each other. I know from my conversations with colleagues and other CEOs that lots of people are struggling with mental health issues right now. We need to keep employee well-being front and center.

Emphasize purpose. It’s easy to feel a lack of control these days—powerless in the face of the pandemic, climate change, politics, the economy, and more. By emphasizing a strong organizational purpose—one that fills a need in the world—employees can feel that their work contributes to that drive, which can bring a sense of fulfillment and empowerment to their everyday efforts.

Double-down now on all of the above. In the early days of the pandemic, many companies did a great job of authentically connecting with employees and providing support. Just because we’re deep into this period of uncertainty doesn’t mean you can take your foot off the pedal. In fact, leading with humanity is more important than ever as we head into this long winter.

Employees need a touchstone, and it’s our job to help provide it—to instill a sense of confidence and a belief in the better tomorrow we can collectively create as we all find our way through.

Please see below for more on leadership in challenging times. I look forward to reconnecting next week.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rich", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rich Lesser
Chief Executive Officer



Squaring the Circle: Leading Companies in a Contradictory World

What is the secret to good decision making when reality clashes with the traditional way of doing things?



CEOs Reflect on Leadership in Perilous Times

Leaders share their insights on navigating through the crisis.



Four Questions to Protect Your Organization's Culture During the COVID-19 Crisis

The decisions that leaders make today will affect company culture—for good or for bad—long after the pandemic is over.