

# The "What's Next" Syndrome

By: [Paul Shearstone](#)

Terms like Postpartum, Post Traumatic and Post Gulf War are all well-known Syndromes - mysteries no longer to the medical community or even those of us who count ourselves among the great unwashed. We hear and read everyday about the negative outcomes from life-threatening trauma. The 9/11 attacks in New York City demonstrate all too clearly the psychological devastation left behind long after upsetting occurrences.

Depression [for some, chronic] is often the most obvious symptom that denotes residual damage from 'post psychic-scare' and one need not be an expert to know that if left untreated, depression can deepen or intensify other more extraordinary forms of psychological discomfort.

Depression, however, is not the only indicator that establishes the presence of psychic-unbalance especially in the setting where we spend most of our time - the business workplace.

New and atypical phraseology now permeating boardroom conversations by the 'once undaunted' young vice presidents as well as the impromptu get-togethers, at corporate water coolers, should serve as warning signs for problems that will systemically affect corporate infrastructures.

## Legitimate Questions – Pertinent Executive Concerns

Given the unrest in the global economy and the uncertain business climate, is it unnatural for young senior executives to reevaluate their long-term personal strategies, which may or may not include their long-term commitments to you or your company?

Is it possible employees from all levels of business are extremely nervous and uncomfortable about the future - more specifically - "How they'll play a part in it?"

Is it safe to assume that due to the current challenges we face today, most people are feeling disenfranchised – disenfranchised with the present and especially the future both personally and corporately?

The fact is, they are! And they are suffering from something else. The "What's Next" Syndrome.

The tendency for companies to cut back on budgets that govern things like motivation, advertising and sales training is not uncommon, particularly in down turned economies. It may be self-serving for me – a professional Sales Trainer and Motivational Speaker – to cast aspersions on the merits of such logic, nonetheless, there are too many well-documented studies over the last few decades that clearly demonstrate the importance of strong leadership and motivation expressly in times like these.

There is no argument anymore that most people are not natural leaders, preferring rather to buy into the visions of others and work for them. That said; we, as leaders, have a tremendous responsibility to do what needs to be done in these extenuating times – MOTIVATE and LEAD!

It may be necessary to reduce headcount but that should serve to emphasize the importance of the remaining team – what are you doing proactively to influence [in a positive way] the thinking of your team today?

An example of what I mean took place in England during the WWII Blitz in a small factory that manufactured parachutes for the British war effort. To say the war at the time was not going well for the British people what with the nightly German bombing raids, was an understatement. The resulting fallout at the factory was missed deadlines and shoddy workmanship due mainly to demoralized and uncertain factory workers.

Still faced with the daunting task of motivating his workers, the factory owner was successful in the end, but due only to his ability to inspire employees to refocus their activities on a higher purpose and clear goal.

"You may work in a factory," he said, " but you are not factory workers. What you do for a living is Save Lives! The quality by which you affix every buckle, every cord, every stitch – when put to use on the front lines – can mean the difference between life or death for your sons, your fathers, your neighbors, your friends... YOUR COUNTRY!"

With a renewed sense of purpose, a clear vision and a belief that with their efforts, positive outcomes could be achieved, morale went up in lockstep with the quality of workmanship and the ultimate success of the factory.

The point not to be lost here is; if we are to focus ourselves, our employees and our country on a higher purpose and away from the fallout of negative thinking from down turned economies, NOW is the time we must step forward with Motivation and Leadership.

Workers can only be galvanized for success through strong motivation and leadership principles that are made clear thereby circumventing the inevitable outcomes from uncertain thinking,

We would do well to remember the wisdom of Sir Winston Churchill who said, "Never, Never, NEVER GIVE UP!" and the omniscience of the Chinese who say; "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago... and right now."

Sage advice indeed for answers to the "What's Next" Syndrome.

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