



# Case Study

## Building Resilience in Turbulent Times

**Situation:** A key customer is expected to downsize due to a decline in business volume

# Case Study – Building resilience in turbulent times



## 1. Challenge - diversify under pressure

One of the client's largest customers expected to downsize, resulting in a need to prepare for an unprecedented workforce reduction.

The president had cultivated a talented and loyal staff and recognized he'd need their help in making changes whilst efforts to diversify continued.

He had heard about resilience as a resource and wanted to identify company strengths and its change capability. He wanted to know about risks, too.

## 3. Results - clarity, understanding and change

Clear measures supported critical discussions.

- Group ownership and innovation competencies were strong and could be leveraged, but also required additional supports to sustain and extend these strengths.

Other performance “blind-spots” were identified. For example,

- Employees who worked primarily at client sites didn't have the same experience, opening up a key dialogue.
- Variations in data using tenure, managerial status and gender prompted discussions about “faultlines” as unrecognized risks to a resilient response.
- The leadership team looked at how policies, structures and norms could contribute.
- Reinforcement, remediation and improvement actions were identified and owned.

## 2. Strategy - engage, learn and act

Under the president's active sponsorship, we introduced the Organizational Resilience Capacity Assessment to the leadership team as a learning opportunity and as a deliberate act to prepare for the unexpected - making change capability strengths more visible and accessible.

Effective change management resulted in a high-level of employee engagement (77% of employees participated in the study).

## 4. Outcomes – increased resilience, relationships and confidence

Whilst there was a small reduction in the workforce, the disruption and impact on remaining staff was mitigated.

With employee discussions that were generative, the client

- Enacted a deliberate and overt reliance on strengths.
- Improved policies, structures, and norms to reduce capability variations across the organization.
- Engaged their clients in discussions about collective resilience, deepening relationships and support.
- Acquired another account.
- Reported a higher confidence in facing future challenges.



## Challenge

The company president had to prepare for a possible and unprecedented force reduction in response to downsizing by a primary customer. He had cultivated a talented and loyal staff and recognized he'd need their help in making changes whilst efforts to diversify continued. He had heard about resilience as a resource and wanted to identify company strengths in change capability. He wanted to know about risks, too.

## Strategy

The president introduced the Organizational Resilience Capacity Assessment to his leadership team as a learning opportunity, a way to deliberately prepare for the unexpected and as a way to make change capability strengths more visible and accessible. They agreed. The president sent all employees a message about organizational resilience and encouraged staff participation in a survey. They would receive a summary of results and follow up conversations would be requested. 77% of employees participated in the study.

## Results

Critical discussions took place. Group ownership and innovation competencies were strong and could be leveraged. More supports needed to be built around these strengths, though, to sustain and extend them. Employees who worked primarily at client sites, for example, didn't have the same experience, opening up a key dialogue. Longer tenured employees gave higher ratings. Variations in data using tenure, managerial status and gender prompted discussions about "faultlines" as unrecognized risks to a resilient response. The leadership team looked at how policies, structures and norms could contribute. Actions were tasked.

## Outcomes

Two months post-study, there did need to be a small reduction in force. The collective resilience capacity review had allowed for deliberate and overt reliance on strengths. Employee discussions had been generative. The recognition of variation in some areas prompted the leadership team to examine policies, structures and norms for action. Engaging clients in discussions about collective resilience was taken as a provocative idea. The president reported acquiring another account and confidence was boosted about facing the next challenge.