Brewing Through Uncertainty:

Leadership Lessons in Resilience

Resilience Track, Session 3

DoubleTree Burlington | Room: Emerald II

Facilitated by: Susan Loynd

The Richards Group
An IMA Company

Communicate with Clarity & Purpose



Stay Calm Under Pressure – Travel "Light"



Practice & Preparedness Matter

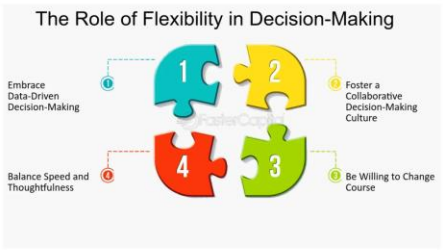


Connection Builds Trust



Notes:

Adaptability in Decision-Making



Perspective Shapes Resilience



Debrief & Learn



Brewery lens: After a recall, flood or failed batch: what did we know, what did we say, what do we fix?

Lead with Emotional Intelligence & Empathy



Notes:

In-Flight Tips

- Don't panic
- Sarcasm at 1,000 feet
- Bird strike w/ Seagulls
- Humor and empathy

Tip Your Fellow Passengers

Make someone's day | Give directions | Customer service moment | Vacation vibe

Roadblocks and Obstacles



1. Line up a backup brewer
2. No direct route → reroute
3. Handle late hops & down lines

The detour is usually where the story is.
Name the obstacle early, then decide who needs to hear it, from your crew to your distributor, and how fast.

Arrive Home

SAFELY & WITH GRATITUDE | APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'VE GOT | WHAT BUMPS?

Recovery is part of the response.
What did the crisis cost your crew, and what will you do differently next time?

Notes:

Taking Risks

Would you rather push for a new fermenter or taproom you believe in and risk your cash flow, or hold off and save your capital for a bigger bet?

- How do you weigh risk when a new fermenter or canning line is on the table?
- What separates reckless expansion from courageous leadership?
- How does a visible risk build, or erode, trust with your crew?



Positive Thinking

Would you rather work for an owner who is relentlessly optimistic about growth but out of touch, or one who is realistic about the market but demoralizing to the crew?

- When has optimism carried your brewery through a hard stretch?
- Can pessimism ever help when planning for a flat market?
- How do you balance hope and realism with your crew?



Empathy

Would you rather pause packaging to support a struggling teammate, or protect the order deadline and address personal concerns later?

- How does empathy change a small brewery crew under sustained pressure?
- What does emotional intelligence look like on a slammed Saturday?
- Where is the line between empathy and enabling?



Humor

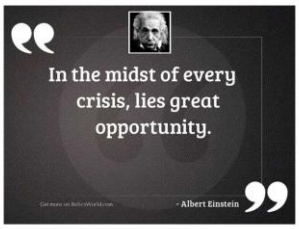
Would you rather work for a head brewer or owner whose humor holds morale up on a bad brew day, or one who stays serious and task-focused throughout?

- When has humor helped you or your crew cope with real stress?
- When does humor cross the line in the taproom, and who decides?
- How can leaders use humor without minimizing what people feel?



Notes:

Would you rather run an honest debrief after a failed batch that names what leadership got wrong, OR move on quickly and protect the crew's confidence?



What's your Legacy?



Would you rather be remembered as the brewery leader who solved the crisis, OR as the one who helped everyone else stay calm, connected and effective through it?



Pick one and commit to following through by saying it out loud at your table.

- One piece of equipment, supplier or process you will plan a backup for.
- One practice you will change in how you communicate under pressure.
- One conversation you will have in the next 90 days, with your crew or a fellow brewer.

Notes:

Brewing Through Uncertainty: Lessons in Resilience "Would You Rather" Questions

Susan Loynd, The Richards Group, an IMA Company

1. Would you rather have a brewery year with no surprises -OR- have chaos half the time (chiller failures, CO2 shortages, bad batches) and your best sales and press the other half?
2. Would you rather keep three reliable core beers that always sell -OR- put real money behind a barrel-aged or limited-release program that could flop but could define your brand?
3. Would you rather tell your taproom team and regulars right away that a batch is delayed or possibly pulled, even before you know why -OR- wait for the lab results and root cause? (
4. Would you rather your crew see you stressed and honest when a tank goes down -OR- see you calm and upbeat even though you are privately worried about cash flow?
5. Would you rather have a 40-page SOP binder for a glycol failure that no one has opened in two years -OR- a crew that has run a drill and knows who calls the chiller tech, who moves the beer and who talks to guests?

Notes:

Brewing Through Uncertainty: Lessons in Resilience "Would You Rather" Questions

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1. Would you rather spend an hour of a crisis day checking in on each team member -OR- use that hour to get the cooler back to temperature?
2. Would you rather decide on a recall or a pulled batch quickly with partial lab data -OR- wait for full results while product is already in the market?
3. Would you rather lead a highly skilled brew crew who is panicking over a failed batch -OR- a newer crew that is calm but still learning the system?
4. Would you rather run an honest debrief after a failed batch that names what leadership got wrong -OR- move on quickly and protect the crew's confidence?
5. Would you rather be remembered as the owner who got the brewery through the crisis -OR- the one who kept the team together, fed and calm while it did?

Pick one and commit*: one process you will revisit, one practice you will change, one conversation you will have in the next 90 days.*

Notes:

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Key Points:



To Communicate with Confidence, I will

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To Build Stronger Teams, I will

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To Turn Setbacks into Opportunity, I will

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Notes:

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