



Our team asked five of the brightest business speakers in the industry for their thoughts on the stimulus package. We think you (and your audiences) will not only be encouraged, but inspired by their perspectives.

Looking at the economy, in light of the stimulus package, are you optimistic about the future?

Michael Treacy: Only a fool would bet against America. In past crises - the Savings & Loan collapse, the Long Term Capital debacle, the Internet investment bubble - America has demonstrated unequalled capacity to quickly and capably address the root problem.

"Oh, . . . but this time it's different. This one's overwhelmingly large. We've run out of options." Nonsense.

What's the attitude leaders should be taking?

Jason Jennings: All people want three things out of life; assurance that things will be okay, a better tomorrow than today and the roadmap for getting there. It's the leader's job to provide reassurance, a direction toward the better tomorrow and the roadmap for getting there.

A real leader should be taking steps to grow market share and steal business away from competitors with jelly for a backbone who are busy retrenching, cutting expenses and laying off people. Laying people off and slashing costs is an admission that the business was fat and bloated to begin with and any leader who allowed that to happen should be fired instead of being acknowledged or rewarded for suddenly realizing it.

Some "hot" issues might get pushed to the backburner as companies focus on the fundamentals, what shouldn't fall through the cracks?

Dan Esty: Some observers have suggested that companies will put environmental and sustainability concerns on the back burner. But the facts say otherwise. A great many executives are pushing ahead with their efforts to bring an environmental focus to their business strategies. They recognize that an eco-efficiency focus can help reduce waste and cut costs - which drops straight to the bottom line. And tough economic times are often a good time to find ways to seize market share - and smart companies recognize that differentiating products based on environmental qualities continues to appeal to significant segments of the public.

The Obama Administration's economic recovery package - with tens of billions of dollars committed to water and transportation infrastructure projects, energy efficiency, and the search

for cost-effective sources of alternative energy - promises to keep the "cleantech" sector vibrant. Thus, environmental sustainability remains a powerful business element of strategy both in the short-run and the longer-term.

What's the message to leaders need to spread to their shareholders, employees ... even their competition?

Tim Sanders: We need to spread the message of abundance: that we can find enough to go around. To really stimulate the economy, we need to restore their ability to trust and dream. We must help people find a better perch or perspective, one that gives them the confidence to declare "there's enough to go around", even when the manna has not fallen on their yards (yet).

We need to promote a new way of thinking. Currently the gurus of personal finance promote a new way of acting. But that's not addressing the root of the issue. We've got to react to the outside world from a different starting point: "If we are willing to work, adapt and trust each other, I believe that there's enough to go around." Taking a page from Napoleon, a leader must "gauge reality and give hope." True words during these times.

Beyond the message, what's the difference between today's challenges and those in the past?

Robert Tucker: If you're approaching this economic upheaval with the usual countermeasures—conserve cash, downsize, crisis management, lower your breakeven—it may not be enough this time. There has never been a more critical time to retool your business model going forward.

As Rahm Emanuel, who is President Obama's chief of staff, said about the global financial crisis, "you never want a serious crisis to go to waste." Meaning it's an opportunity to do things that maybe you think you couldn't do before.