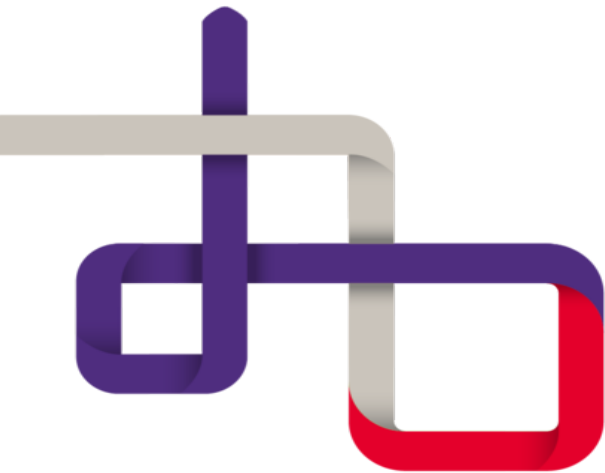


First mate, bring me my red shirt!



Day two on lock down in Curaçao. As a team we decided to start working full remote using all collaboration tools at hand to keep the team productive even during the Covid-19 pandemic which is impacting our society heavily. Even though 'remote working' is also an interesting blog subject, we decided to write a piece regarding leadership in crisis and turmoil.

Our radio interview with Hoyer in Business that was planned today on leadership was canceled due to the circumstances we're in, so we thought this would be a great alternative to still elaborate on the topic. Thinking about what to write this story keeps coming to mind and being the best example of true leadership.

Seems there was a treasure ship on its way back to port. About halfway there, it was approached by pirates, skull and crossbones waving in the breeze!

"Captain, captain, what do we do?" asked the first mate. "First mate," said the captain, "go to my cabin, open my sea chest, and bring me my red shirt." The first mate did so. Wearing his bright red shirt, the captain exhorted his crew to fight. So inspiring was he, in fact, that the pirate ship was repelled without casualties.

A few days later, the ship was again approached, this time by two pirate sloops! "Captain, captain, what should we do?" "First mate, bring me my red shirt!" The crew, emboldened by their fearless captain, fought heroically, and managed to defeat both boarding parties, though they took many casualties. That night, the survivors had a great celebration. The first mate asked the captain the secret of his bright red shirt. "It's simple, first mate. If I am wounded, the blood does not show, and the crew continues to fight without fear." A week passed, and they were nearing their home port, when suddenly the lookout cried that ten ships of the enemy's armada were approaching! "Captain, captain, we're in terrible trouble, what do we do?" The first mate looked expectantly at the miracle worker. Pale with fear, the captain commanded, "First mate.... bring me my brown pants!"

What makes a great leader in times of crisis? Dare to make bold choices and be absolutely decisive. People need a leader that is transparent and acts upon values. But, in addition, people are also looking for courage like the captain in the story. Courage in this context is defined as a willingness to make tough calls, speak up about issues, change tactics when needed and showing real compassion for people (both your employees as well as your clients). Aligning actions against principles, knowing when to choose between the 'red shirt' or the 'brown pants' and being agile to change strategy based on challenges ahead.

"It might be difficult to relate to a superhero, but you can identify with someone who in times of crisis draws forth some extraordinary quality from within and triumphs but only after a struggle"



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