2025

Team Resilience
in Turbulent Times

How to Create Stability When
Economic Signals Are Mixed

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Creating a Culture To Thrive in Economic Uncertainty

If you've felt like the economic signals this year are sending mixed messages, you're not alone. Global growth is forecast to <u>slow to just 2.3% in 2025</u>. At the same time, the Economic Policy Uncertainty Index just hit its highest mark this century.

This uncertainty leads to tension inside the workplace, as teams start to ask questions.

- Is the company okay?
- Is my job stable?
- What does this mean for me?

No wonder "resilience" has become the year's buzzword. In 2024, the use of that word among Fortune 500 companies shot up by <u>200% in earnings calls</u>. But just because business leaders are prioritising resilience, doesn't mean they're feeling it. Around 84% of companies don't feel equipped to deal with the uncertainty they face.

The truth is, building team resilience isn't just about surviving economic confusion. It's about unlocking long-term stability and a competitive advantage by investing in people, transparency, and leadership that leads with heart.

Understanding Team Resilience in an Economic Context

Team resilience isn't just about bouncing back. It's about bouncing forward. It's that rare ability to meet uncertainty with clarity, regulate stress in healthy ways, and move from "What now?" to "Here's what we'll do."

The benefits of that shift are massive. According to Harvard Business Review, companies with resilient cultures outperform their peers by <u>8% in productivity</u> gains during economic slowdowns. But achieving true resilience is getting tougher in today's financial landscape.

Inflation still looms. Banks are being cautious and restricting lending criteria. Global trade is rocky. Plus, we're watching an enormous workforce transformation unfold. By 2030, an estimated 92 million jobs could be displaced by AI and automation (though 170 million new ones will be created).

Most teams aren't prepared. Only <u>23% of employees feel equipped</u> with resilience and adaptability skills, according to research by McKinsey.

So, what's holding organisations back?

Often, this is the default to short-term thinking: a stress management workshop here, a one-off change management meeting there. But resilience doesn't work like that. If we want teams to endure change and thrive through it, we need to start designing for adaptability, not just stability.

Leadership Communication as the Foundation

When things feel shaky, in the market, across the industry, or just inside your business, it's natural for leaders to hold back. You might think, "I'll wait until I have the full picture before I say anything." But here's the thing: people often imagine the worst without communication because silence isn't neutral: It's unsettling.

In the absence of information, people don't assume the best. They fill in the blanks, which rarely ends with, "Everything's going great!"

Silence doesn't calm anyone; it creates a vacuum. And in uncertain times, that vacuum gets filled with anxiety and speculation. Uncertainty doesn't require perfect answers. What it needs is presence. A steady voice.

That means saying, "Here's what we know. Here's what we don't. And here's what we're trying to do about it." That kind of honesty builds trust and confidence.

McKinsey says employees who feel their company is transparent are 12 times more satisfied in their roles. Of course, communication isn't just about updates; it's also about listening. Some of the most powerful words a leader can say are, "What do you think?" Inviting people to share their ideas and concerns tells them they matter.

Surprisingly, you might uncover a solution you haven't thought of yet.

Then there's how you show up. Leaders set the emotional temperature in any workplace. Calm, candid, and compassionate leaders make a difference. When people see their leaders handling pressure with composure, they feel more equipped to do the same.

Finally, great communication needs rhythm and structure. That might mean monthly town halls (virtual or in-person), weekly email updates, or quick Slack check-ins that keep people connected and informed. What matters most is that people hear from you regularly, not just during a crisis.

Supporting Mental Health, Every Day

Mental health is now a central part of performance and retention. Studies show stress and burnout are still among the top reasons people leave jobs.

The good news? Support systems make a difference. Confidential counselling through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), trained managers who can spot signs of distress, and a genuine respect for work-life balance go a long way.

Wellness programs don't have to be complicated or expensive; they need to be relevant.   Explore flexible schedules, wellness challenges, meditation apps, and healthy food options. It's about showing your team that their health matters, not just their output.

The most successful wellbeing programs listen and adapt. Run regular pulse checks. Watch for signs like rising absenteeism or turnover. Most importantly, ask your people how they're doing, then act on what you hear.

Skills Development and Adaptability

The pace of change right now is insane. Every company is exploring new tools, shifting markets, and evolving role requirements. What worked three months ago might be outdated today. That's what makes development such a crucial part of resilience.

Here's something we know for sure: people want to grow. A growing number of employees are actively asking for more learning opportunities. It is formal training and real skill-building that feels useful, timely, and empowering.

Explore:

- Workshops that help people stay ahead of industry shifts or master new technologies.
- Mentorship that connects junior talent with more experienced voices, not just for knowledge sharing but also for confidence-building.
- Flexible access to online learning platforms so that people can learn in the flow of their day, not despite it.

It's not about turning everyone into a tech expert overnight. It's about creating a culture where learning is normal, expected, and fun.

Making Adaptability a Core Skill

Adaptability helps people adjust quickly, think creatively, and stay grounded even when things get unpredictable.

Organisations that invest in adaptability see real results: smoother change management, smarter decision-making, and fewer people feeling overwhelmed when plans shift. Here's how you build adaptable teams:

- Give people a chance to step outside their silos. Let them join cross-functional projects, try new roles, or shadow a different team for a week.
- Reward curiosity. Create space for experimenting, asking questions, and failing sometimes. That's where growth lives.
- Ensure people have the tools and time to develop new skills. (Stretching without support leads to burnout, not growth.)

Technology Integration

Technology sometimes gets a bad rap; many think it's out to replace people. But the right tech, used correctly, can improve people's jobs.

Automation can free up time to focus on meaningful work. Smart tools can help teams stay aligned, make faster decisions, and spot problems early. But the rollout has to be thoughtful.

That means:

- Training, not just announcements. People need to feel confident, not confused.
- Choosing intuitive tools that solve a problem, not just shiny new software.
- Encouraging input from the people who'll use the tech every day. They know what works (and what doesn't).

When teams are trained and empowered, technology becomes less intimidating and much more exciting.

Measuring and Monitoring Resilience

Resilience might feel like a "soft" trait, something you see in your team's attitude or energy, rather than on a spreadsheet, but that doesn't mean it can't be measured. And if you want to strengthen it, you need to know where you're starting from and how you're progressing.

Here's what you can track:

- Engagement scores: If people are staying connected, contributing, and showing up with energy, that's a strong sign your culture is holding.
- Turnover during tough times: Are people choosing to stay even when things get hard? If so, you've built something they trust.
- Recovery Time Objective (RTO): How fast can your team get back on track after a disruption? The quicker the bounce-back, the stronger the system.
- Adaptation speed: How long can people get comfortable with a new process or platform after it is rolled out?
- Innovation metrics: Are employees offering ideas? Are you tracking how often they're implemented? Innovation is a powerful proxy for psychological safety and trust.

Remember, keep the pulse, not just the score. Behind every number is a person; if you want the full picture, you must listen and measure.

Run quarterly resilience reviews, where you take time to reflect as a team on what makes people feel supported or overwhelmed. Hold post-crisis debriefs, where everyone gets involved, and invest in ongoing feedback loops that keep communication strong.

Bouncing Forward, Not Just Back

The word "resilience" gets thrown around a lot, but building resilience isn't just about enduring hardship. It's about learning from it. Growing through it, and using it to create a more stable, human, and future-ready foundation.

Moving forward, the most resilient businesses will lead with clarity, invest in adaptability, and put their people first. They'll communicate openly, respond swiftly, and support their teams in weathering storms and finding their way through them.

Start with transparent communication, build psychological safety, embed learning into the culture, not just the calendar, measure what matters, and, most importantly, treat resilience not as a core business strategy.

Because the economy may be unpredictable, but your culture doesn't have to be.

A little about Sarah Bishop and Recruit Recruit Ltd

Whether you're a sole trader hiring your first team member, a VC-backed startup needing to scale fast, or a corporate looking for top-tier C-suite talent, one thing stays true:

Your business grows when your people grow.

I help founders, CEOs and business leaders build brilliant teams through:

- **Recruitment:** finding and placing the right people for the right roles or embedding a talent team into growing businesses
- **Sales & Leadership Training:** developing high-performing teams that sell, lead and deliver
- **Speaking & EmCeeing:** energising events and conferences with insight, humour and practical takeaways
- **Coaching:** supporting leaders to grow confidently, communicate better, and build culture that sticks

Over the years, I've supported businesses at every stage, from bedroom startups to scale-ups and established firms navigating change. What they all have in common? A vision to grow and the ambition to get the right people on board to make it happen.

I bring no-nonsense advice, energy, empathy and results, whether I'm:

- Hiring a game-changing leadership role
- Training a founder-led team to sell with confidence
- Speaking on stage about team-building, fearless follow-up, or people strategy
- Coaching a business owner through their first ever hire

So, let's talk If:

- You're ready to grow and want to hire with confidence
- You need training or coaching to get more from your team (or yourself!)
- You're planning an event and want a speaker or EmCee who brings both energy and value

Drop me a message or connect - let's build something brilliant together.

Contact

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