



TEMIN AND COMPANY

REPUTATION MATTERS

JUDGING JUDGMENT:

11 Attributes to Look for in
Your Crisis Manager

www.TeminandCompany.com

JUDGING JUDGMENT:

11 ATTRIBUTES TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR CRISIS MANAGER

The world is awash in experts — so how do leaders know which ones to choose, and trust?

Since the pandemic, leaders who faced that crisis, succeeded in getting their workforce to go remote, and kept their companies afloat, now consider themselves to be crisis managers. But in reality, it takes far more than that to give strategically great advice and help clients steer away from trouble, and towards value creation.

In the first part of this two-part series we discussed how to judge judgment. After decades serving as a trusted strategy and crisis advisor to leaders in hundreds of different industries, settings, and situations, here are 11 stress-tested suggestions for how leaders can recognize whose advice to trust, and who to turn to in crisis:

1. Choose an Advisor Who Shores up your Weakness. Just as great leaders hire full-time lieutenants who help illuminate their blind spots, so

self-aware leaders identify their own weaknesses and hire advisors to compensate. They know that such advice may not always seem intuitively correct to them, but they are willing to stretch themselves in order to make sure that their blind spots don't destroy them. (But that also means they can identify "false prophets" — or those who only pretend to have the skills they are looking for — and are unafraid to terminate those relationships.)

2. Look for "String Theorists":

Serious crises are never straight forward. They are multifactorial, endlessly intertwined, and all pulling in different directions at the same time. They are more like chaos than crisis, and similar to the situation the university Presidents faced in Congress — a bit crazy. A superb advisor will have a significant amount of experience making as much sense as possible of highly complex, overlapping, chaotic situations and probabilities, and know how to cut to the chase, and help clients make the best and most ethical decisions possible.

3. Choose an Expert Adept at Seeing Situations Through the Eyes of "the Other:":

The most effective coaches and crisis managers know that one must understand an unfolding situation not only from one's own perspective, but from the

perspectives of all the other players. What are *they* looking for? What will be a win for them? How can our wins reinforce one another? Once leaders give up the fantasy that they are always right, they begin to see where they can make accommodations for a more win/win solution to an issue, be it unionization, front line priorities, or board and C-Suite control dynamics.

4. **Put Humanity First but Focus on Success:** The best advisors know how to ultimately succeed by putting people first. Human, humane, and pragmatic but compassionate, great advisors not only have their unique moral centers, but help their clients find their own. They model how to put people first, whenever possible, especially over inconsequential considerations. So, when laying off significant percentages of the workforce, do they try to do so humanely, without walking people out of the building with security? Yes, if they can. Thus the fortunate leader who takes their advice will be remembered as a consensus builder, humanitarian, and winner on both personal and professional levels.
5. **Indefatigable:** To handle a real unfolding, multifactorial crisis situation, you have to be tireless. I like to say we work 25/8 when needed, so we can do all that needs

to be done to find the best resolutions possible. Endless energy; a precise mind, little need for sleep, and an abiding love of coffee all help!

6. **Humor:** No matter how dire the circumstances, an appropriate sense of humor always helps. Plus, it encourages the feeling that “we’re all in this together, and we’re battling for the same team.”
7. **Love of the Game:** The best advisors put their own skin in the game. They manifest a curiosity as to all the details, and the “why” of the situation; a joy in the doing and figuring it all out; and a need to help. They care.
8. **Mutual Respect and Even Friendship:** This is the oil that soothes the machine. And in tough going, a profound respect and like of one another gives all parties the grit to prevail against the odds
9. **Be Prepared for the Black Swans — Flocks of Them.** No matter how strong your strategy, curve balls come at you from every direction. Expect them. Plan for them. See them as a challenge. And live up to them! The advisors you engage should set the standard.

10. Story tellers: We now know that people learn best from stories. These are the lessons that are truly remembered. Choose an advisor with a huge reserve of tremendous, inspiring, true stories, that can unlock for you new possibilities, new passions, and new learnings. Then, once you have established such a relationship, nurture it. You'll never know when it will save the day...

11. No matter what goes wrong, look for advisors who keep their equanimity, and help you keep yours. When you're being raked over the coals, it's only human to show some disdain for your antagonists. Don't! Try not to express that smirk that curls on your lips every time you catch them in a gaffe, or you make a point. Rather, try to keep your affability if you can. It will make the medicine go down more smoothly, and prepare you for the life of a continuous problem-solver and a trusted advisor yourself.

Originally published in [*"Reputation Matters" on Forbes.com*](#)

About Temin and Company

Temin and Company Incorporated creates, enhances, and saves reputations.

Temin and Company also markets by leveraging the expertise, ideas and insight of its clients to produce differentiated intellectual capital and content.

The firm helps corporations, professional services firms, and other institutions define and strengthen their public image – and their bottom line – through strategic marketing; branding; media relations; thought leadership; social media; speaker, media and leadership coaching; financial communications; and crisis and reputation management.

Strategists, coaches, writers, and social media experts are available “25/8” to assure that every crisis is addressed, and every opportunity leveraged.

Clients include the CEOs and Boards of some of the world’s largest and most well-known corporations, financial institutions, portfolio companies, pharma and biotech companies, law firms, consulting firms, publishing houses, venture capital and private equity firms, authors, politicians, and colleges and universities.