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Nautical Daze

Weather the storm. Navigate rough seas. Man the lifeboats. Or is that (wo)man overboard?

This recession has sure (shore) had its share of nautical metaphors.

With [recovery](#) on the horizon, it's a good time to take a look at where your organization has been, and where it might be headed.

Batten down the hatches. Many companies, including providers of recruitment products and services, have hunkered down during the recession. Budgets have been slashed, staff has been cut, and the philosophy has been to keep a low profile while waiting it out.

Treading water. This approach may involve some of the same cost-reduction measures as battenning down the hatches. But rather than watch and wait, a company in this mode has been a bit more proactive in its efforts to stay afloat. Nevertheless, no bold strokes have been used. Think dog paddling.

Don't rock the boat. An organization taking this approach views this recession as it has past downturns: We've got a boat, it's a sturdy boat, and it will see us through. An outlook of business as usual prevails, despite these highly unusual times.

On an even keel. The goal of a company operating in this mode is to keep everything steady, even as the boat lurches from side to side. Moving resources is one way an organization attempts to do this. Restructuring and realignment are common approaches.

Bale out. When times get tough, a company may choose to exit one or more facets of its business--or focus less on it. For example, this recession has seen a number of executive recruitment firms move away from their core business into job coaching.

All hands on deck. Realizing that every employee's contribution counts, some companies have taken the opportunity to build worker relationships and foster a greater team spirit during the recession. The feeling that we're all in this together can go a long way toward creating a positive internal atmosphere--and that upbeat attitude radiates outward.

Forging ahead. This doesn't mean business as usual. Instead, forging ahead requires continuing to cultivate employee creativity, investing in research and development, and exploring new opportunities. It's about keeping an optimistic outlook, sure, but it's also about ensuring that when the economy surges you'll be ready.

Smooth sailing. Ultimately, this is what everyone, from captains of industry to deckhands, wishes for their corporate ship. How your organization has approached the recession will in part determine how it is able to ride the tide of recovery.

Where have you been during the recent economic journey? Where are you now? What adjustments can you still make to help buoy success?