



Keep Calm and Survive Russia's Crisis

By [Stuart Lawson](#)

February 03, 2015



For the past few months, almost all the news seems somewhat negative and there is a danger that this will build up a level of stress in all of us that will only make matters worse. To lighten the mood somewhat, please see below a series of suggestions to ensure that you get the very best out of your crisis. If you follow these simple instructions, it is guaranteed that whatever the situation, this will make matters worse.

- Whatever you do, do NOT plan ahead. Hope for the best and if at first that does not seem to produce a result, hope harder. Visualization is the key, imagine it and it will come to pass.
- Avoid assigning any responsibility to people and ensuring that if they are made responsible, there is no target date.

That way they are able to utter the immortal phrase "I am working on it," signaling that it was a good question, but they would rather you move onto the next topic.

- Remain focused on past performance and use it to predict the future. Naturally whatever worked in the past is sure to be equally successful in the new environment. After all, no one ever crashed by focusing on the rear-view mirror, did they?
- Keep your door firmly locked and whatever you do, do not venture into the corridors —

people may ask you questions to which you don't have the answers. This is also an extremely good way of ensuring that rumors spread fast and creates a highly desirable sense of constant fear and urgency.

- Surround yourself with high-strung people who view you as a god and will, without question, do whatever you tell them to do. This way there is no chance of someone having a novel idea or proposing previously unidentified options.

It is also extremely helpful in ensuring that no one will point out that you are leading the whole team over the precipice of a cliff.

- Take your time deciding what actions you should take. After all, time is on your side, what could go wrong? Remember that procrastination is your friend, as is the ability to make obscure and oblique references to actions that may or may not help.

- To keep everyone on their toes, start conversations with one topic in mind and then abruptly, and for no apparent reason, change the subject entirely and ignore the bewildered looks of your colleagues.

- Ignore new sources of information, as they may be wrong and, more importantly, you have not had time to review the figures from the previous year. It is important to gather vast quantities of information and create the impression of activity.

It may be useful to demand useless reports at immediate notice to ensure that your subordinates are kept busy at all times.

- The same applies to prioritization. There is no need to expend effort on determining what should have priority. Simply work through your in tray on a "first come, first served" basis.

- Allow no interruptions, particularly from people who claim to have urgent news on critical situations. Ask them to make an appointment.

- This is a time to follow the rules, remain rigidly focused on your long-standing traditions. Flexibility might cause you to unexpectedly identify new solutions that might actually work.

Stuart Lawson is finance and investment chairman at AEB, EY Moscow and CIS. He has acted as a crisis manager for Citibank in four countries.

The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/02/03/keep-calm-and-survive-russias-crisis-a43503>