

## The Vermeer Podcast – Episode 12

### Leading Through a Crisis

Bill Blackorby:

Hello. My name is Bill Blackorby. I'm the Vice President of Operations for Vermeer. I've had the misfortune of leading through two crises in my two years here at the company. We had a F3 tornado come through in 2018 that destroyed two of our factories, and now a global pandemic known as COVID-19. As I was asked to do this podcast, I was reflecting on my experiences over the past couple of years. It's really what you're trying to do is put pieces together or sometimes, in the case of a tornado, pieces back together. And so I thought of an analogy and the analogy deals with being a welder. We weld thousands of pieces, if not hundreds of thousands of pieces, of metal together every day. And when you're welding, you're bonding two pieces of metal together and you create a bead. And that bead is the seam that runs through the metal. And so just like a welder creates a bead to bond two pieces of metal together, as a leader, you're trying to lay that bead to bring the pieces back together of the organization.

So when you lead through a crisis, you have to create the BEAD. The B: be visible, be there for team members, be on the frontline, be there always present and providing direction. E: empower team members, make sure that they know that you'll remove obstacles for them, make sure that people understand where to go to get information and know that they're accountable for results. The A: assign responsibilities; in a time of crisis, you have to make sure that people know how to get the facts, where to take those facts, and then how to drive the organization forward. And then D: develop a process for accountability. Make sure there's a process that people get back together and they understand and report on results, educate the rest of the organization, and know that they are accountable for delivering results that lead to driving the organization forward.

Just like a welder creates a bead to join various shapes, sizes, and types of metal together to create art or, in Vermeer's case, amazing machines that simply do more for customers, as a leader, you have to do the same. You have to get people from all different beliefs, expertise, functions, all working together, and that use that bead to create a common bond that moves the organization forward. So with that, thank you for listening today, and we'll talk to you again soon.