Twitter Thread by Kat Cole



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Over a month ago, we completed a big restructuring @FOCUSBRANDS to adjust for scale and prep for next growth phases. My 2nd big reorg in 10 years there, and I'm so proud of it! Will share more soon, but here's a thread on making changes before you are forced to + tough calls.

I am so grateful for leadership changes we made over the last 2 years - wish I would have made some even earlier. I can't imagine going through a large reorg (+2020) w/o the new presidents and leaders we promoted, invested in and hired, which also meant parting ways with some.

Making changes when you "don't have to" is a bit of a paradox. You DO have to. It's just that you aren't forced to (yet). I've learned to redefine crisis & know that a time will come that pressure-tests my team. I know that I "must" do it before I "have" to do it.

I use that knowledge to initiate changes in human, caring, and direct ways. An example of one of those convos (major paraphrasing): "you were a fit for some time, but no longer, we're not parting ways today, but we need to unwind by "X", let's build a plan to do that together"

There is much left out of that little clip of a sentence: development attempts, collaboration, etc. etc., but when you know, you know, and often (always in my experience) they do, too. At that stage, their optimal growth will be somewhere else - I want to get them there.

The reality is, I am failing the company, the team, and that individual if I DON'T make changes. After many experiences with this, including having not done it and dealing w/the damage, I have learned to confidently and lovingly approach even the most sensitive changes.

These decisions, the related conversations and managing all the cultural implications are not easy, but you can build a muscle for it. And if you pay attention and listen to your teams, you'll get better over time. If you are in hyper growth mode, you are likely doing this often.

A reminder: In the absence of alternative information, people come to their own conclusions. Communication (while respecting all HR/legal guardrails) of what is going on (when and why) is key to protecting culture + helping people normalize & organize change in their minds.

If you are the CEO, founder, or team leader, this is your responsibility. If not you, who? If not now when? Remember also to not go it alone: fellow leaders (+HR) should co-architect big changes in the org and then own it as a result.

Having the right team makes all changes, challenges, etc. far more smooth & impactful. Grateful for mine, and I hope you are feeling great about yours. If not, make the changes now, for the good of them, the team, and your company. You never know what is coming around the corner.