



# Retail Service Leadership Exchange Forum

## Virtual Meeting & Survey #3: Themes & Takeaways

### Sphere of Influence/Pushing Us Out of Our Comfort Zones



- **As more businesses open back up, leaders have to manage both staff and customer comfort zone issues.**
- **Teams:** May be in a different place than the leader
- **Customers:** Will have specific emotional/other needs that will have to be addressed before they're comfortable shopping in stores again
- **Key skills:** Empathy and asking for input
- **Between Stretch and Anxiety Zone:** Growth, new learning, relearning take place
- **In the Panic/Stress Zone:** Energy is used up managing and trying to control anxiety; little left over for learning
- **Your Comfort Zone is expanded** each time you step into the Growth/Learning Zone
- **Focus energy and tasks on where you can make the most direct impact.** Avoid focusing time and attention only on the things that are out of your control, especially now when so much is
- **Flexibility and adaptation are key,** with more team collaboration and synergies when influencing.

**POLL: Where are you on the Comfort Zone Model?**

**Stretch: 65%**  
**Anxiety: 30%**  
**Stress/Panic: 5%**



### Focused on Reopening & Go-Forward Strategies

- **Priority focus:** Reopening plans and creating new training for expected new normal
- **#1 challenge and criteria for reopening:** Ensuring locations are safe and up to new COVID-19 standards for employees and customers
- **Next biggest concern:** Making sure associates and store leaders are trained to address customer safety; resetting expectations of associates to respond to customers' current needs
- **Targeted training topics** are a productive way to fill managers' time while they wait for stores to open
- **Varying stages** of reopening, preparedness, and approaches to reopening
- Feeling of **light at the end of the tunnel** with reopening dates confirmed
- **Profitability, finances and inventory levels:** Spring, Easter, Mother's Day business lost; Father's Day is debatable. Merchandise in stores is not a match to current summer needs.
- **Uncertainty** around if and when customers will return to stores