

Lessons from the incredible Chile mine rescue

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The incredible rescue

- 33 men trapped under half a mile of rock were rescued dramatically recently in a Chile mine after 69 days in a hell-hole
- These guys were in near total darkness for 17 days and had no communication and survived in 90 degree heat
- They survived on two days' stock of food and water for 17 days
- More importantly they did not even know if someone was searching for them or their rescue effort had been abandoned!
 - The fifth most read about matter online since 2005!

International co-operation

- The people involved in the rescue:
 - Houston's Johnson Space centre , USA
 - Gryo Data , USA
 - NASA physician J.D.Polk
 - NASA Psychologist Al Holland
 - NASA Engineer Clint Cragg
 - Drillers supply international
 - offered expertise for the Plan B drill which reached the miners
 - A drilling consultant from Australia
 - The best brains from around the world were involved

God's hand

- Two drums of not-so-good water –but water!
 - Which they drank few sips each day
- Two days' food stocks—which of course was stretched to 17 days
- 538 sq.ft space which also held the much needed oxygen
- One of the handful Strata 950 drilling machines in the world that could make the type of tunnel required (28 inch hole for 2000 ft) was 50 miles away and was readily deployed

Leadership

- **Luis Urzua (age:54) the foreman who came out last displayed leadership throughout**
- Without him what would have happened is difficult to imagine
- His firm but calm discipline helped
- He judiciously rationed the paltry supplies of canned tuna and oily water and held the 32 people together.
- He was helped by:
 - Florencio Avalos who kept things tranquil below
 - Sepulveda who played the joker to keep spirits up

The dark days

- There were fights
- Thoughts of providing for his children's education spurred on Mario Sepulveda who was the joker trying keep the spirits of his co-workers up
 - When the pressure was too much he would walk away and weep alone so as not to affect others' morale
- They had all but given up by 17th day as drilling sounds had stopped after 15 days

What helped

- They had a pact of brotherhood
- They had a pact of silence
- If one was down others rallied
- One man one vote democracy prevailed
- They worked together to maintain the mine, look for escape and keep up morale
- Used small treats to celebrate
 - In the stifling heat and pure darkness they used light from head lamps as treats using it rarely when they ate etc

The pure bliss

- On the 17th day the drilling started again after two days' gap
- The roof of the tunnel suddenly began showering rocks and the drill came through;
- They started dancing around in pure joy!

After locating...

- A tube was inserted and food, water, medicines were sent down
- A camera was sent down so everything was on video
- They could talk to their families and friends
- Chile Government led by the President asked the entire world for help
- 3 different mining companies were hired to begin rescue ops.
- Latest technology (including space science) used.

Flawless execution

- Whole rescue was flawlessly executed
- No expense was spared
- President himself visited and cheered all family members
- The President said Winston Churchill was his inspiration
 - “He never gave up; never surrendered”



The main things behind the success

- Dedicated families
- Level headed miners
- A good leader
- Advanced machinery
- Proactive government
- No expenses spared

The lessons

- God's grace and Human effort both are needed for any major effort
- The best way to solve a major crisis is to have world's best brains working on it
- Humans are really at their best under extreme adversity
- Leadership, management, organization are not just business concepts
- Embracing emotion aids survival
- The most important thing is the leader:
 - The shift leader took control, rationed supplies, encouraged miners to talk on camera to families etc and kept them together even in very difficult circumstances
 - The President led the rescue effort from the front

Source:

- Many newspaper, website news items