

# The Art of Corporate Turnaround

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*A strategic guide for executives  
and entrepreneurs in transition*

Diagnosis · Method · Procedures · Leadership

30 years of hands-on experience distilled into an actionable guide.

*« What saves a company  
is never the plan. It's the moment  
someone dares to tell the truth. »*

— Jean-Paul Rosette

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01

# Foreword

*Why this guide*

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*« What saves a company is never the plan.  
It's the moment someone dares to tell the truth. »*

– Jean-Paul Rosette

This white paper is not an academic document. It is an operational synthesis forged by thirty years on the ground — five successful corporate turnarounds, hundreds of crisis situations observed, and the deep conviction that every struggling company deserves a chance to recover.

It is written for executives, entrepreneurs, and shareholders facing difficulties — whether financial, operational, or strategic — who are looking for a clear framework for action. No slides. No jargon. Proven methods and firm convictions.

This guide integrates insights from three major sources on professional turnarounds, enriched by my own experience and by the artificial intelligence revolution that is rewriting the rules for every company — including the most profitable ones.

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# The Context

*Every company is at risk*

The wave of bankruptcies expected after COVID-19 never materialized as predicted. But payment deferrals, historically low interest rates, and easy growth are now things of the past. The convergence of inflation, geopolitical tensions, rising interest rates, and technological disruption creates an environment where no company is safe.

MOST EXPOSED SECTORS

Sector	Primary Risk	Trend
Retail	Supply chain, costs, customer retention	Bankruptcies rising since 2023
Real Estate	Vacant offices, valuations	Class B & C properties struggling
Manufacturing	Energy, raw material costs	Western Europe vulnerable
Technology	Post-COVID overstaffing, R&D;	Massive restructurings
Services	Margin compression, AI	Accelerated disintermediation

## The Invisible Danger: Profitable Companies

The most dangerous trap is not the visible crisis. It is profitability masking obsolescence. A profitable company today can face mortal danger tomorrow if:

- Its operating model relies on heavy structures (premises, inventory, permanent staff) in a world that rewards agility.
- Its digital visibility is non-existent — no presence on AI platforms (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini) that now shape purchasing decisions.
- Its dependency on a few clients or a single distribution channel makes it vulnerable to the slightest shock.
- Its leadership team manages daily emergencies without looking up to anticipate market shifts.

*« The floor now belongs to creative people — those who think differently, who see what others don't, and who dare to act before the market forces them to. »*

– Jean-Paul Rosette

03

# Protecting the Leader's Health

*The company's first intangible asset*

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This is the topic no one discusses in restructuring manuals. Yet it is the primary determinant of whether a turnaround succeeds or fails.

The smaller the company, the more the leader's health is at risk. Depression has an annihilating effect: it destroys the capacity for vision and action — precisely what an entrepreneur needs most during a crisis.

Accumulated fatigue, creditor pressure, the feeling of failure — everyth  
Yet these are precisely the moments when you need to surround  
perspective reduces the emotional burden, fosters out-of-the-box thin

## Essential Actions

- Strengthen ties with your key executives: CFO, HR Director, Sales Director, Operations Director.
- Contact your usual advisors: accountants, lawyers, auditors.
- Involve your works council as appropriate.
- Bring in an interim manager who provides a fresh, objective, and operational perspective.
- Seek support associations: organisations dedicated to supporting leaders in difficulty (AMAROK, APESA, and similar in your country).

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# Diagnosing Quickly

*The power of an external perspective*

You know your company, its market, and its environment perfectly. But when conditions change and put the business under pressure, the objective view of a third party becomes essential to assess the scale of the situation and identify levers for action.

## Phase 1 — Emergency Measures (0-6 weeks)

- Validate the 6-week cash flow forecast.
- Identify critical deadlines and emergency measures.
- Set up monitoring indicators (cash, working capital, margin).
- Analyse the cost structure and propose immediate measures.
- Absolute focus on cash: weekly monitoring, working capital optimisation (receivables, payables, inventory), limit spending delegations.

## Phase 2 — The Field of Possibilities

- Sales forecast and definition of the financial break-even structure.
- Complete SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats + PESTEL analysis.
- Explore options: mergers, fundraising, factoring, leaseback.
- Partial asset disposals (Carve-Out) — including intangible assets.
- Court protection if necessary.

### CAPITAL — 3 IMMEDIATE LEVERS

1. Chase your clients ahead of payment deadlines and secure invoicing.
2. Renegotiate supplier terms (payment periods, deposits, volumes).
3. Adjust inventory replenishment thresholds and frequencies.

*« The sooner the better. Deciding on a recovery plan early only brings advantages. »*

— Jean-Paul Rosette

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# The 5 Golden Rules of Turnaround

*A proven framework for navigating crisis*

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## Rule 1 — Be Agile

The best plans have been upended in recent years — COVID-19, supply chain disruptions, geopolitical conflicts. Forecasting has become impossible. Staying agile means you can change course without starting from scratch.

Effective communication is the critical component of this agility: all stakeholders in a restructuring must be permanently aligned.

## Rule 2 — Be Proactive

Companies that quickly recognise the need to restructure are better positioned for long-term success. Being proactive helps mitigate risks and liabilities, and manage liquidity needs.

Engage specialised external advisors. Outsource document preparation so your teams can focus on strategy and execution.

## Rule 3 — Be Compliant

Everything can hinge on a paper trail. Distressed companies are subject to strict and comprehensive disclosure requirements. Document compliance is not optional — it is a safeguard.

Communications via SMS, WhatsApp, or unsecured email are not compliant. Use platforms with complete audit trails.

## Rule 4 — Be Transparent

Don't let information access become an obstacle. Creditors and advisors will request considerable volumes of data — business plans, tax returns, personnel files.

Ensure all information is complete, accurate, and accessible in a centralised, secure location.

## Rule 5 — Be Secure

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Resolving a distressed company involves sharing large amounts of highly confidential information with multiple parties.

Multi-factor authentication, end-to-end encryption, and document rights management are necessary measures — not optional ones.

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# Preventive Procedures

*Acting before difficulties become insurmountable*

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It is imperative to act before difficulties become too severe. Many prevention tools exist through confidential procedures. During this period, maintain dialogue with all your stakeholders: shareholders, banks, clients, suppliers.

Your goal: reassure your environment about the company's management.

## Support Mechanisms

- Tax and social payment deferrals — negotiate temporary relief on fiscal obligations.
- Credit mediation — reschedule bank loans (simple and confidential).
- Business mediation — assistance in resolving client/supplier disputes.
- Government-backed loans and regional recovery programmes.

## Ad Hoc Mandates

Approaching the Commercial Court president early is a proactive move. An ad hoc mandate allows amicable negotiation of the company's debt with all or some of its creditors. It is a simple, fast, and effective tool. The mandatary is a legitimate and impartial mediator.

## Conciliation

Like the ad hoc mandate, conciliation is confidential. It aims to reach an amicable agreement with major creditors to obtain debt rescheduling or write-offs. Condition: the company must not have been insolvent for more than 45 days.

## Pre-Pack Sales

Preparing a total or partial sale within the framework of an amicable procedure, implemented at the opening of collective proceedings. This procedure is initiated by the debtor and submitted to creditors under strict confidentiality.

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# Collective Proceedings

*Protection as a springboard for recovery*

## PROCEDURE COMPARISON

Procedure	Condition	Duration	Key Advantage
Safeguard (Sauvegarde)	Not yet insolvent	6 months (renewable)	Director retains full authority
Judicial Recovery	Insolvent < 45 days	6 months (renewable)	Pre-existing debts frozen
Judicial Liquidation	Recovery impossible	Variable	Last resort (asset sale possible)

## Safeguard — An Underused Tool

Often overlooked by business leaders, safeguard proceedings are a powerful tool. The director retains their role and authority. The opening judgment freezes debts and prohibits payment of prior claims. Employee guarantee schemes can cover elements of the payroll.

## Judicial Recovery

The application must be filed within 45 days of insolvency. The immediate objective: gain the trust of the court-appointed administrator to regain control of the company's finances. Cash must allow proforma payment to suppliers to ensure continuity of deliveries.

Advantages: debt freeze, possible contract cancellation, employee guarantee schemes, employee severance.

Disadvantages: public disclosure of difficulties, sense of failure, partial

**PROS VS CONS**

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# The Key Players in a Turnaround

*Surrounding yourself with the right expertise*

There are five types of professionals who can play a decisive role in a successful turnaround. Never underestimate the need for external support: these matters are complex, technical, and often entirely new to the leader.

## Consulting Firms

Intervene in the upstream phase (diagnosis) and in developing a strategic plan. Bring sector-specific and financial expertise.

## Specialised Lawyers

Essential for legal proceedings, creditor negotiations, and the legal protection of the director.

## Accountants and Auditors

Natural partners for validating figures, forecasts, and regulatory compliance.

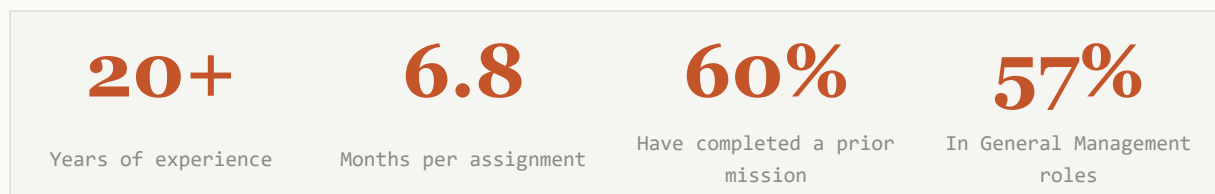
## Court-Appointed Officers

Designated by the court, they oversee collective proceedings and safeguard the interests of all parties.

## Interim Managers

Directly operational, results-focused, free from internal politics. They anticipate, adapt, communicate, and unite teams.

### INTERIM MANAGER PROFILE



Required qualities: humility, self-questioning, communication, listening, composure. The interim manager's freedom of speech allows them to take positions that are sometimes difficult yet necessary.

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# AI in Turnaround

*The new reality of 2026*

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Artificial intelligence is radically transforming the restructuring landscape. What took weeks of analysis can now be accomplished in hours. But AI does not replace human judgment — it amplifies it.

## What AI Changes for the Leader in Crisis

- Accelerated diagnosis. Financial analysis, anomaly detection, scenario simulation — AI processes data volumes that are impossible to handle manually.
- Instant visibility. Audit of digital presence on AI platforms (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini). If your company doesn't appear in AI answers, it's already behind.
- Tenfold productivity. An AI-equipped leader can produce in one day what used to take a week: reports, analyses, communications, action plans.
- Automated drafting of restructuring documents — NDAs, reports, creditor communications.
- Real-time competitive intelligence — sector monitoring, market movement tracking, weak signal analysis.

The greatest danger is not AI itself. It is doing nothing. Thinking that  
Postponing to next year a transformation that should start today. Ever

*« AI is the tool. The human is the direction. Creativity is the difference. »*

— Jean-Paul Rosette

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# My Method

*30 years of field experience condensed into principles of action*

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*« I despise hierarchies, PowerPoints, and meetings that serve no purpose. That's why they call me. »*

– Jean-Paul Rosette

My approach doesn't fit into any box. It was born from raw experience — not from a business school. Here are the principles that guide every one of my engagements:

## **Truth first**

I walk into the company, I listen to the teams, I look at the numbers without any filter, and I say what I see. Without sugarcoating. Complacency kills more companies than crisis does.

## **People at the centre**

The solutions are already inside the company. The people who work there know what's wrong. My job is to create the conditions for that collective intelligence to emerge.

## **Flat hierarchy**

The best decisions happen when every voice counts. I break down silos, install transparency, and unleash initiative at every level.

## **Stay until the end**

I don't deliver a report and leave. I stay until the results are tangible. Hands-on, in the daily operations, alongside the teams in place.

## **AI integrated**

Every engagement now includes a digital transformation and AI visibility component. Because in 2026, a turnaround that ignores AI is an incomplete turnaround.

## **Flow as compass**

The most effective leaders don't force — they create momentum. Clarity of intention, total focus, authenticity. When the team enters collective Flow, performance rises naturally.

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# The Time to Act Is Now

## Conclusion

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By planning how to meet challenges, companies can adapt more effectively to a rapidly changing market. Economic uncertainty is not going away — organisations must take decisive action to weather the storm.

No two struggling companies are alike. Bankruptcy may be the best option for one but not for another. Alternatives exist: safeguard, conciliation, ad hoc mandates, carve-outs, operational restructuring.

Those who engage in the process now will put themselves in the best position to transform, stabilise operations, guard against further difficulties, and achieve the best outcome for the company and its stakeholders.

*« I've driven rally cars and companies in free fall.  
The principle is the same: the one who brakes too early loses. »*

– Jean-Paul Rosette

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