MEDLEY

namaste

NEW WORLD

EDITORIAL NOTE

I don't think I can iterate enough, the changes brought on by this pandemic. From bringing economies to a halt and industries to a standstill, the virus has disrupted life as we know it. But I'd like to see it as a great equalizer. It is really beyond my imagination, how a crisis faced by all of humanity could bring us to such a grinding halt and yet propel us into the future so starkly. It wouldn't have hurt to be better prepared and we also lost many valuable lives…but it has sharpened the endeavours that need to be taken up right from the individual level to global initiatives.

On the work front, the world saw over 5 million job cuts and there was a natural shift of skilled workers to the gig economy. This also made the shift for corporates to hire from gig economies rather seamless.

Digital transformation, that we saw as a system we wanted to gradually acquaint ourselves to, became the only way ahead. Working from home, opened a whole realm of possibilities to multiple sections of societies. It has broken down rigid ways of working and brought in lean teams, agile projects and flexible systems to corporations.

While healthcare systems were overburdened, the general shift and focus back to the sector has boosted its productivity. The world over, hygiene and sanitation came to the forefront along with the renewed focus on 'standard of living'. On the business front, we have seen a clear shift to buying local. In the long run, this is set to boost regional economies, positively impacting millions of lives, globally.

On the environment front, noise pollution and carbon emissions dropped drastically allowing for the regeneration of ecosystems. This also pushed others to think of more eco-friendly ways to combat the new wave of consumerism that came into motion with the virus. Internationally, brands have become more eco-conscious and are thinking of sustainability ingrained in their future strategies.

We have seen people, organizations and even governments collaborating to offset the effect the virus has had on nations. Can you imagine any other global event that can bring such solidarity, unity and equity in the world?

In this edition of the Medley we cover opportunities that this new world has in store for us. We have topics like mental resilience, disability hiring, reimagining livelihoods, future-proofing organizations and many more interesting reads for you as we look ahead with new hope and a renewed vision.

– Susanne Rodrigues
*Assistant Manager – Human Resources,
Mahindra Partners*

MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE

Extreme and sudden events force us to see things, that were earlier not visible; they make the invisible, visible. The COVID 19 pandemic has done just that, on an unimaginable scale. It's not that many of these realities did not exist; they were always there, hidden under many layers of habit, distractions, and the reluctance to implement change, because of the disruption and discomfort that change often causes.

The realization that partial or complete working from home works quite well for many jobs; the realization that only a financially prudent and a calibrated approach to risk management would help an organization survive a significant downturn; the realization that our police force and health care workers are capable of heroic service for months on end, at great personal sacrifice; the realization of how a hidden and neglected army of migrant workers keep large cities humming. Most people became aware of the term "migrant workers" in April 2020; though they have been building and running our cities for decades.

How is it possible that so much that is around us, is invisible to us? How can leaders in society and all of us working at Mahindra play the important role of "making the invisible, visible"? Hope this issue of Medley provides some answers to these questions.
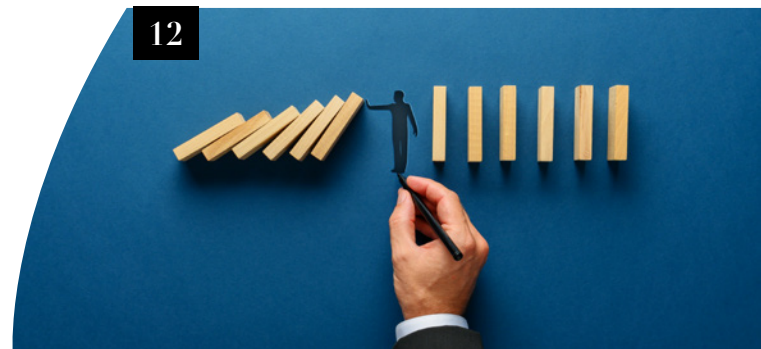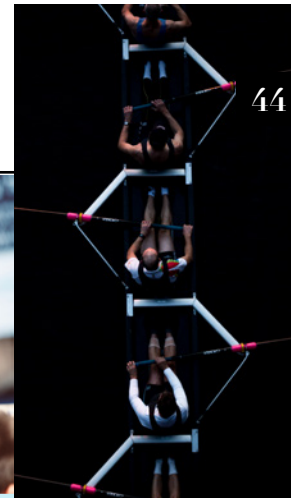
– Rustom Vesavevala
*Vice-President HR and Business Excellence,
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RACE TO
THE FUTURE

Tomorrow

A single word, which spans endless horizons. It could refer to the following day, week, decade, century. And for all of us today, our tomorrow's shall be indelibly seared by the memory of 2020.

In this Foreward, I will attempt to share some personal thoughts on the tomorrows to come. Much of this is initial speculation, but still deserving of thoughtful consideration by us. While we may debate and disagree on the severity or occurrence of many of these changes, we are inevitably staring into the abyss of significant change.

Today

Only for initial context, we must sum up the prevailing situation.

1) The virus has wreaked havoc around the world at 5 G speeds, has surfaced the fractures as well as failures prevailing in global and social relationships and exposed the true anarchy of global governance -the world went back to tribalism. The result has been a peculiar set of circumstances, and we have this surreal situation where
   – We are at war, in peacetime.
   – There has been economic devastation, with no destruction of infra or habitat. -We suffer physical isolation but engage in hyper-digital communication - as the physical doors closed, digital doors have swung open.
2) Black Swan/White Swan: The debate on whether we suffered a black swan event is raging. It is defined by:
   • Being an extremely rare event which causes catastrophic damage, globally
   • It cannot be predicted.
   • Reliance on standard forecasting tools can offer false security.
   • Can only be prepared for by building robust systems.
   The potential for, and impact of, a global respiratory disease pandemic ... has been recognized for years... (Ebola, SARS, Bill gates). One argument states that the greatest COVID-19 failure was the failure to prepare for this emerging threat.
   This debate is likely irrelevant today but does draw our attention to the future. For Eg, our society is already put on notice that climate change and its ensuing environmental, economic and social disasters, is imminent. That a mass extinction of earthly life followed from an earlier inter-planetary asteroid hit is a known fact –should we, therefore, view these occurrences as Black Swan events, or drawing on COVID lessons, galvanise ourselves to prevent/prepare & reduce their possible impact?
3) Consequently, leaders, today are struggling with 3 buckets of decision making:
   – immediate actions: how to keep their people, and communities safe, supporting

> **One argument states that the greatest COVID-19 failure was the failure to prepare for this emerging threat.**

their customers/suppliers while ensuring business survival
   – recovery: how to restart normal operations as lockdowns are lifted,
   – Preparing for a hazy future, but one where opportunity abounds
   It is the last bullet – looking into the future, that I would like us to focus.

Ruin is also a gift, a road to potential transformation. While recovery is an immediate imperative, retooling is an equally urgent requirement

To quote Nassim Taleb –"the wind extinguishes a candle, yet energises a fire". What are the fires we can light for the future? Lets not simply restart our engines, that will be our most retrograde legacy.

Tomorrow:

So the new reality will require our re-think across several parameters, and I detail below some possible trends:

1. **We should prepare, to be prepared. In short, resiliency—the ability to absorb a shock,** and to come out of it better than the competition—will become a central pillar of most Corporate strategies.
   – --Financial contingencies will be worked into the fabric of normal planning. In terms of financial preparedness, a simple guideline which "expects" a major disruption every 5-10 years would ensure that in a crisis, the organisation can buy time to figure out the most effective response.
   – Supply chain resilience will attain a new focus -I don't need to elaborate
   – emphasize resiliency versus cost optimality --Which parts of the value chain do we manage for costs? Which do we manage for redundancy?"
2. **A significant and permanent change in consumer spending behaviours**
   In some industries, consumer behaviours will change significantly, and permanently. Organisations that acknowledge and adapt to these with agility will be winners. Changed consumer attitudes towards the physical distance, health, environmental consciousness and privacy will play out most dramatically in the tourism, travel, hospitality and shared economy sectors. Possibly, one may also see a shift in consumers orientation towards greater savings -- Concern over the possibility of other "black swan" events could change how consumers approach financial security.
3. **Renewed resistance to globalization.** Moving from globalization to regionalization. It is abundantly evident that globalisation is under quarantine. Immigration rules and visa issuance are being rewritten, supporting national industries is being hyped and fiscal policy/stimulus packages favour local firms. And the push to bring supply chains back home in the name of resilience is accelerating. Consequently, trade and a century of its benefits will suffer as countries abandon the idea that services and goods are treated equally regardless of where they originate. An interesting adjunct emerging from this disaster is the unequivocal assertion by China in claiming its dominance on the world stage. A powerful and ascendant China, while increasingly isolated, has dramatic implications from a geopolitical perspective.
4. **Hyperlocalism:** Consumer recognition and confidence in the efficiency and reliability of the local neighbourhood community for demand fulfilment is an unexpected and impactful discovery. As people have been forced to stay at home,

> **Changed consumer attitudes will play out most dramatically in the tourism, travel, hospitality and shared economy sectors.**

they have rediscovered their local area, shops and community and this appreciation are likely to linger for some time. And they will prefer to buy from retailers and brands they trust.

5. **The Rise of brands:** The erosion of confidence will propel trust to become one of the primary considerations for consumer choice. Brands that handle this crisis well, will rise in stature and value. Brands that respond to consumers' concerns about the environment, social justice and equality, with demonstrated compassion and actions, have a tremendous opportunity to reinforce trust and engender loyalty. This will likely be a true test for purpose-driven brand leaders, to respond to this crisis through their agile actions and empathy.

6. **More scrutiny for business:** Following from the point above, governments and society will assess organisations not just for shareholder value creation, but also on all expanded ESG parameters, investing in employees, supporting communities, and dealing ethically with suppliers.

7. **Universal Healthcare:** This pandemic has revealed our societal fissures concerning access to reasonable healthcare. While demands on governments for improvement in both access and standards will wax & wane based on political agendas, employees will increasingly look towards their organisations to fulfil this role. "Wellness", in all its aspects, is likely to claim its inclusion in the definition of ESG.

8. **Workforce mobility and the digital transformation of work.**
The single most startling new realisation to emerge from this crises is that remote, flexible workforces which were earlier considered novel, overnight became essential, and went from the realms of experimental to entirely possible. Probably the most immediate outcome from the trauma of 2020, are actions in this context that are visible on the near horizon. The potential of "work from anywhere" or "global workforces" is still at an evolutionary stage, but has gained unstoppable momentum, and has the potential to revolutionise productivity. As workplaces get digitally transformed, HR leaders will struggle to balance the benefits of socialisation vs flexible, anywhere, workplaces. The question, which has deep organisational as well as social implications -how do you build teams, culture, loyalty & camaraderie in a virtual workplace? This emerging challenge, which I believe will get quickly resolved, provides senior management with a huge opportunity to develop a trust-based culture rapidly. But if not handled with transparency and empathy, will undermine their ability to do so for years to come. This will, however, require a restructuring of the organizational processes for how communication happens, how socialization happens, and how coordination happens.

> **Businesses are forced to do more with less, many are finding better, simpler, less expensive, and faster ways to operate.**

9. **Succession planning will attain renewed attention:**
Weaknesses in succession plans have emerged, as leaders get sick or decide that alternate lifestyles are more meaningful. Companies will realise that succession planning has to go much deeper than the C-suite.

10. **The rise of the contact-free economy**
The virtual century- "If I can do it online, I will". In three areas in particular—digital commerce, telemedicine, and automation—the COVID-19 pandemic could prove to be a decisive turning point. And I believe that the travel, tourism and entertainment industries will rebound with a vengeance after the near term—they

are essential to human nature. They will, of course, do so in a completely transformed avatar.

11. **Greater automation**
Today, we have the visibility to imagine a world of business—from the factory floor to the individual consumer—in which human contact is minimized. While not eliminated, the trends are unmistakable, and probably irreversible. The crises will force both the pace and scale of workplace innovation. Indeed, as businesses are forced to do more with less, many are finding better, simpler, less expensive, and faster ways to operate.

12. **Domination and further entrenchment of Tech giants?**
Beyond a doubt, the last two decades witnessed one of the most dizzying periods of innovation in technology, with competition and consolidation resulting in an immense concentration of tech power, effectively becoming almost essential services.

Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft have jointly amassed almost ½ trillion US $ in cash reserves. Will this be an opportunity for them to further entrench their dominance, despite many regulatory challenges which are mounting?

The trend seems to indicate this is likely – think Facebook's recent investment in Gojek in Southeast Asia or the triumphant march of Jio in India.

> **Despite the tsunami of bad news, we must retain a sense of realistic optimism. This episode will force both the pace and scale of workplace innovation to find more efficient ways to operate.**

To sum up

Despite the tsunami of bad news, we must retain a sense of realistic optimism. This episode will force both the pace and scale of workplace innovation to find better, simpler, less expensive, and faster ways to operate.

To quote Arundhati Roy – "this crisis is a portal or gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks of dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world."

Both in India and around the world individuals, organisations and countries are poised to leverage this opportunity -the race to claim the future has commenced. There will be fatalities, but winners can rebuild stronger foundations for the future.

This is the moment for each of us to step up, be true Rise ambassadors and demonstrate our commitment to our Society –both as an organisation, and individuals.

As we step into the future, let the memory of 2020 remind us of how little we need, how much we have, and the immense value of human relationships. ■■■■

Zhooben Bhiwandiwala,
President-Mahindra Partners & Group Legal.
Member of The Group Executive Board

LISTENING TO PEOPLE NOT LIKE US

The lock-down has forced privileged 'people like us', living within our comfortable gated communities, to listen to how 'people not like us' live. Many of them had built our fancy condominiums. They lived right outside our walls. Some even came in to serve us inside our apartments. Though the physical distances between us were small, the 'social distance' between us was large. How did this happen? Why were we not listening to the people right beside us to know who they really were?

These people do not speak about the things that interest us, and they cannot: about how the stock-market is doing; why the GDP is falling or rising; which airlines have the best service in business class; and the best golf courses to play on. We must become interested in what matters to them.

As businessmen, we are supposed to be interested in what matters to them, because they are the market at the 'bottom of the pyramid' that we want to serve to expand our business. Therefore, we survey their needs, and segment them, to target our products and services at them, and get a larger share of their (small) wallets. However, if we listened to them as human beings, not merely as potential customers, we would get a larger share of their hearts, and their trust in us too.

The 'business of business must be only business'—the credo of Nobel laureate Milton Friedman—has pervaded the world of business since the 1970s. Economist Albert O. Hirschman had pointed out, in his book Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, in 1970, that the more attention business managers pay to listening to their customers and the better they get at it, the less capable they become to hear the voices of citizens in society.

Hirschman pointed out that Milton Friedman had expressed his difficulty in accepting the notion that people should desire to express their views to make them prevail. Friedman described people's desires to be heard as a resort to 'cumbrous political channels'. He would much rather they resort to 'efficient market mechanisms' and use their money rather than their mouths to make their opinions known.

> " The lock-down has forced privileged 'people like us', living within our comfortable gated communities, to listen to how 'people not like us' live. "

Money is a quantity and a precise measure. Whereas feelings and opinions are subjective, and therefore much harder to convert into numbers to feed into equations. Quantification and digital computation have made management more efficient. They have also changed economics into a dry science of numbers. In which human beings are only points of data; and poor humans who do not have money to make themselves heard to businesses, as Friedman said they should, are not listened to by business. The people 'out there' may be in sight, but they are out of mind.

Every human being, rich or poor, is an equal citizen of society, whereas richer people are larger consumers and count more in markets. And though they should not count more in democratic societies, richer people do when, by applying the Friedman rule of market efficiency, the poor are shut out of business as well as political consideration.

All managers in business have responsibilities as citizens of societies. And corporations do too when they talk about 'corporate citizenship'. All citizens of democratic societies must respect the equal rights of all other citizens—no one is 'more equal than others' (in George Orwell's famous description of the pigs who rose to rule in Animal Farm). The greatest respect one can give other human beings is to listen to them deeply, to know what they really care about, and who they really are—and not the stereotypes we make of them, or the numbers they become in economists' and managers' equations.

We must step out of our walls. We must learn to listen deeply to 'people not like us'. So that we hear not only what their opinions are. But can also understand why they have their opinions. And, listen even more deeply to learn their life stories and know who these, our fellow human beings, are. ◼◻◻

> " The greatest respect one can give other human beings is to listen to them deeply, to know what they really care about, and who they really are. "

Arun Maira, Thought Leader, Former member of Planning Commission of India. Former Chairman BCG India and 'Author of Listening for Well-Being: Conversations with People Not Like Us'. The book was published two years ago, with a foreword by the Dalai Lama.

THE PEOPLE CHALLENGE

The COVID-19 pandemic has led businesses to realise that productivity can be maintained even with remote working. Ruzbeh Irani, President (Group HR and Communications) and member of the Group Executive Board at Mahindra & Mahindra, says that even as the pandemic has provided some upsides by forcing companies to rapidly adopt technology, managing employees' mental health during a difficult time like this remains a challenge. Edited excerpts from an interview for the Economic Times.

What is the biggest change you foresee happening in workplaces in the post-COVID-19 world?

Post-COVID-19, we could have enhanced productivity, quality and commitment brought about by a tech-enabled remote working model. Work from home is here to stay and will be adopted more actively by employers and employees, alike. The pandemic is far from over and it will be difficult to highlight the changes with utmost surety. However, workplaces will need to be restructured or rebuilt to adapt to the social distancing norms – not just at your desk but across the premises. There will be increased remote/virtual work scenarios. The dependence on technology will play an integral role in business functions.

Have there been any upsides to the COVID-19 situation in terms of HR policy and employee engagement?

Rapid adoption and effective usage of technology, to replace in-person engagements, have become a reality. We are also observing that in these difficult times, employees are able to remain productive while working remotely. It has even helped transition training and development to a virtual set-up, which employees can continuously benefit from.

> " Organizations should invest in nurturing their leadership so they can adapt and inspire the workforce. "

How do you think leadership can be nurtured in companies during stressful times?

Businesses pre-pandemic were already operating in the VUCA (Volatile Uncertain Complex Ambiguous) world and at Mahindra, we have been stressing upon the need to embrace change and disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the transition to new ways of running the business and finding innovative solutions, a reality. Organizations should invest in nurturing their leadership so they can adapt and inspire the workforce, more so, at a time when the business landscape is likely to undergo a noticeable shift.

At the Mahindra Group, there could be no better time than now to embrace Rise principles in entirety. In the past two months, a lot of work spearheaded by our leaders resonates our Rise philosophy. Leaders are guided by the three Rise pillars which are basically views of the world we look at: accepting no limits, alternative thinking and to drive positive change. In addition, this is the time to also live by our core values i.e. professionalism, good corporate citizenship, customer first, quality focus and dignity of individuals.

> " At the Mahindra Group, there could be no better time than now to embrace Rise principles in entirety. "

What sort of soft skills are most in-demand in these times and will be in the future?

Employers are investing in upskilling and reskilling employees across the globe. A recent survey of human capital leaders by Randstad found, while 91% of companies felt they should be providing reskilling opportunities, only one in five were actually doing so. As much as role-specific skilling is crucial, soft skills will play a significant role in helping employees contribute meaningfully. Some of the skills that are much needed are listening, emotional intelligence, teamwork and the ability to communicate effectively in virtual, as well as physical, environments.

What is the biggest challenge HR heads will face when it comes to their workforce in the post-COVID-19 world?

The challenges for HR heads in a post-COVID environment will be two-fold. The first is managing employee emotions – to alleviate the outbreak trauma and rebuilding trust in the aftermath of the outbreak. The second is devising a strong and seamless tech backbone for all HR levers. ∎
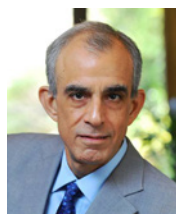
Ruzbeh Irani, President, Group HR and Communications and member of the Group Executive Board at Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

REIMAGINING LIVELIHOODS

Many of us lead complacent lives. Privileged by birth and education we believe our skills are the only ones that matter. The rest are invisible! One thing that the COVID-19 crisis has brought home to us in our cocooned high-rises and bungalows is the importance of the invisible skills all around us.

The skills that not only kept us well fed and well turned out but also kept the house & dishes clean. The skills that reconnected a failed light switch, or a leaky tap, a stuttering car engine or even a little button that suddenly fell off & had to be sewn back on urgently!

Now that we have had to do most of these things ourselves we have realised how unskilled we are, and how much hard work is required just to keep afloat in a new normal!

Perhaps we may have realised now not to take for granted the help we receive in living our lives with comfort and perhaps respect those who provide those comforts, a little more then we have done so far.

The problem in respecting skill is attitude. Skill is not simply the result of higher education. It is also the result of aptitude and ability. And simply because more than 90% of India lives in the unorganised sector and struggles for a living, we believe we are superior in the hierarchy.

Perhaps because of our feudal past, we believe in the superiority of birth and privilege, but it is worth remembering that it is because of the skills of those less privileged, that we actually enjoy those privileged lives!

Many nations around the world have tapped into the energies and the abilities of their populations by engaging the entire industry ecosystem into the development of skills through what is known as the dual vocational system. This simply means that the country's industry and the vocational training system is interconnected and students who directly enter vocational training straight after school also intern at different industrial institutions in the country thus imbibing best industry practices first-hand. Graduate students of such dual vocational training get preference in assignments in relation to students who may have only a University Degree.

I am reminded of a popular Hindi song of the black and white era which roughly goes 'MA kiya, BA kiya, Sab kuch kiya, par avvain kiya!!' (I have done my MA & BA but to no avail).

Imagine, for decades the educational system in India has not been providing the right mix of skills for progress and yet we have not realised the importance of the vocational education system in the industrial future of India!

Because the industry is not connected with the training, even the graduates of government industrial training institutions or ITI's are found inadequate and have to be retrained by industry before they can be absorbed. This is an expensive, time consuming and wasteful effort and reinforces

> **Skill is not simply the result of higher education. It is also the result of aptitude and ability.**

> **It is worth remembering that it is because of the skills of those less privileged, that we actually enjoy privileged lives!**

the natural prejudice towards vocational training as something inferior.

It is interesting to imagine how we may react to a situation in Germany or Switzerland if we needed to get a household item repaired. We would have to wait in line for the skilled person's time and not demand the service immediately. Nor would we be able to bargain because skilled persons are respected in those countries, not because of their birth or education, but because of their abilities. And this would be reflected in the fact that a fully equipped Technician, often a woman, would have driven up in a car larger than yours! Abroad you probably wouldn't think twice about sitting down to have lunch or a cup of tea with her!

In India, you won't think of doing the same thing with your cook or your driver!

And this is where attitude comes in. We must try and help those who are less fortunate than us because undoubtedly they are more skilled than us and we should respect them for that.

Today in the unimaginable distress caused by COVID-19, we need to remember that these skilled people are not shirkers. They are not beggars. They are willing to work, but there is no work for them. Because they're not as educated or articulate, they cannot express the anguish and the tragedy of their lives, where they have suddenly been robbed of the dignity of work and independence.

The Mahindra Group is the most enlightened organisation, right from the very top. It reaches out to small farmers and vehicle owners across the country. It employs local people in its operations and it creates important infrastructure in remote areas. I believe it will be responsive to a Reimagining Livelihoods initiative during COVID 19 which I hope will receive widespread support. Our Surabhi Foundation is a key member of this initiative along with five national organisations who work with the most marginalised of the urban and rural poor, adapting their skills to the new reality and rebuilding their shattered lives with dignity. The Reimagining Livelihoods initiative calls for an award-winning Ideathon nationwide to Reimagine Livelihoods during the Pandemic with a national skill retraining scheme to implement those ideas among those who most desperately need to earn again and survive with self-respect!

And we must recognise our role now in the re-establishing of their self-respect! If anyone doubts the ability of the less educated they should refer to a charming film of yesteryear, The Admirable Crichton, featuring actor Kenneth More who though a butler, becomes the leader of a castaway group after they are shipwrecked on an island. Once they are rescued, he goes back to being a butler in their manor, but now he knows all their secrets!

Remember, the less privileged know all our secrets and our claims to superiority are precarious! ■■□□

Siddharth Kak is the Founder Trustee of the Surabhi Foundation, which has India's largest Audio Visual Cultural Archive of more than 15000 hours of professionally filmed and digitised Cultural Footage of India. He is the Producer & Presenter of the Nationally recognized cult show-Surabhi. His Television Company, Cinema Vision India has established itself as India's leading documentary house and has won several National and International Awards.

BUILDING RESILIENCE

The speed at which the COVID-19 brought the world to a standstill was unexpected. The last few months have seen governments, businesses and individuals endeavouring to adapt quickly. With trade tensions and sinking fiscal values, the dynamics of the global situation keeps changing by the day. In such turbulent times, how does one navigate through the crisis and emerge strong? Can existing capabilities be strengthened for the future? Efficiently adapting to the changing situation and managing stakeholders continue to remain at the forefront of our business missions.

The pandemic has driven businesses back to the drawing board. It has forced all to relook at their business models and to make a paradigm shift in functioning. These times also necessitate that we stress test new models of business. It will help insight if the new systems are resistant to future shocks. It can also help identify if your new model will identify changing business trends fast enough to bank on them.

All in all, we need to hope for the best, but prepare for the worse and ensure our plans have enough flexibility to capitalise on. With the lockdown slowly lifting and things attempting to get back to a new normal, here are a few areas which businesses should inspect to ensure more robust systems.

1. Cash Management

In my article, 'Preparing for the New Normal' in the April 2020 edition of the Partners Post, I also maintained this stand and it continues to hold true; Cash is king. With the slump in revenue and increased operating costs to enforce safety protocols, the pandemic is a true test of an organisation's financial resilience. Are there redundancies in sourcing inventory, raw material or people? Does the organisation have sufficient liquid assets to survive through rocky times? Review the organisation's existing portfolio to see if it is in alignment with the current market demand. Restructure product pipelines based on performance and the expected future projections.

2. Supply chain

The current crisis has majorly disrupted the existing supply chains. How flexible will your supply chain system have to be? How are your key channel partners impacted? Businesses need to build more elastic supply chain capabilities while reassessing their current capacities and their restrictions.

At the outset, the system will have to be able to alter production according to market fluctuations. There is going to be a major shift to 'Local products and services' with the disrupted supply chains. The 'Made in India' sentiment is going to play strong. When thinking of opportunities to double down on, this is a good strategy to prioritize on. While the sentiment is going to play strongly, one must be cautious to not put 'all the eggs in one basket'.

> **We need to hope for the best, prepare for the worse and ensure flexibility in our plans.**

3. Consumer demand

As the competitive business landscape evolves further, new consumer expectations will emerge. Right from the technological adoption to the change in behaviours, it is important to ask the question 'In which way will consumers consume and what is my strongest value proposition to fit this new phase?'

> **Resilient organisations quickly adapt to market disturbances while safeguarding their assets and brand equity.**

As a business, consumer trust and service is going to be the most critical block in making or breaking brands. Brands should aim to strike a virtual connect with consumers and foster brand loyalty further.

4. People

We have seen a huge transformation in organisational culture with the whole shift to working-from-home. Leaner teams, flexible policies and agile processes are a new way ahead here undoubtedly. There is a positive shift to e-learning that is going to go a long way.

One cannot ignore the challenges one can face with the workforce, be it from staff cuts or the gradual return to the workplace that is not going to be easy to handle. While difficult decisions will be taken, it needs to be done sensitively, empathetically and responsibly.

Diversity and inclusion will continue to remain a priority area going ahead. Employee friendly HR policies and frameworks will lead to a purpose-driven culture. There is a momentous change taking place in every organisation and people will continue to remain the backbone of this very systematic shift.

5. Digital transformation

Although human intervention will still be paramount, digitalisation efforts around the globe will make the shift towards blockchain, AI and IoT inevitable. This will impact the market scenario in the long run. How is the business embracing this change? Is the organisation making investments and building capabilities to 'prepare for the shift'? Digital services can create new opportunities for companies to stay ahead of the competition by offering fundamental improvements to existing business models. These technologies can be used to identify new opportunities with precision and efficiency. They also enhance the way businesses connect with stakeholders. Digital delivery channels can help achieve market leadership through price competitiveness too.

While technology is going to be the biggest differentiator in the future of business, it comes with its risks. Protecting consumer data and making robust systems to handle internal information is going to be key in entering this new phase smartly.

Mergers and acquisitions will become an interesting way to enhance internal capabilities, reduce risk and create competitive advantage. Through this post-COVID phase, equitable and sustainable growth is the key. The non-linear shift in consumption patterns along with the 360 adoptions of digital platforms and the resultant changed consumer behaviour are all emerging areas of opportunity.

Through all these economic uncertainties, the reassurance that we as businesses also need to remember is that 'This too shall pass'.

As businesses, one needs to bank on the short-term opportunity, think of the long term with flexibility, and be rooted in the present with agility. The crux of the matter is to identify areas for improvement and pivot faster than the competition in times of adversity. Resilient organisations quickly adapt to market disturbances while safeguarding their assets and brand equity. ■■■

Parag Shah, Managing Partner, Mahindra Partners

THE IMMUNE ORGANISATION:
LEARNING FROM COVID TO FUTURE-PROOF ORGANISATIONS

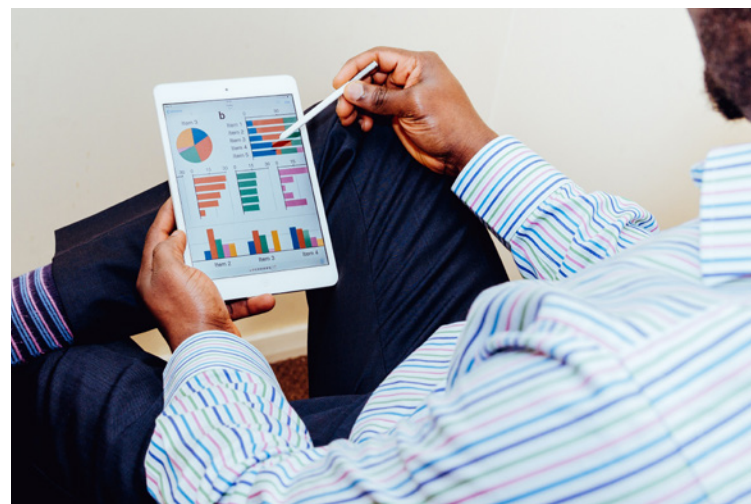

A s the COVID pandemic unfolds about us in all its destructive horror, the whole world is racing to find a vaccine, which would create the right antibodies to destroy future such diseases and make the body immune. What if, I wondered, that COVID itself was a vaccine, and organisations of today could learn from it to build the antibodies they need to futureproof organisations by building immunity against future disruptions/ calamities.

If vaccine technology can help a human body to be made immune with an inoculation of 'weak' pathogens, then conceivably we can take the same approach for our companies. Could we use and apply the learnings of this disruption and leverage technology and design to build an Immune Organisation, which is resilient to future shocks? So, when the next big disruption (like global warming, for instance) comes, it would not totally prevent a business interruption, but the antibodies developed could certainly help it get on its feet much faster.

I have identified seven such 'antibodies' which an organisation can develop:

1. Decentralisation of Work: Decentralisation resists disruption much better than centralization. Take work for example, where Working from Home and, in fact, anywhere has saved the day for many companies. Decentralised kirana stores perform better than malls, decentralised gig-economy like food-delivery and e-commerce have kept many countries running. To survive future disruption, companies need to decentralise their operations.

2. Reimagining Business Models: Businesses with purely digital business models have gained, those with purely physical ones have ground to a halt. Not all businesses can be totally digitalized, but companies will need to rework business models to digitize whatever they can – build e-commerce, health companies to develop telehealth, schools to build online education.

3. Building A Partnership Ecosystem: Companies will need to build a strong, unconventional partner ecosystem. Witness the ITC Foods- Dominoes tie-up, or liquor companies riding on Zomato and Swiggy.

4. Automation: Everything that can be automated needs to be. This will ensure business continuity and productivity, even when human beings cannot be there to do the work. It will also cut costs, unfortunately often at the cost of human jobs. But automation is inevitable for companies and a powerful antibody to immunize a company.

5. Lifelong learning, Multiple Jobs: The Future of Work has been fast-forwarded by COVID. Work from Anywhere is one symptom of that, the other is that employees will need to continuously reskill themselves to stay relevant. Additionally, employees may hold multiple jobs, so that if one goes away the other survives. Companies will be far more tolerant of this, and the permanent-temporary employee distinction will disappear. Lifelong learning, not lifelong jobs, will be the norm.

6. Reimagining Customer Journeys: COVID has changed the customer journey, with social distancing, sanitization, work from home becoming the norm. This will mean that every company will have to tweak its business for this new customer journey, and future proof itself.

7. Mindset and Cultural Transformation: This is the most formidable one of all, the Gandalf of antibodies. While culture and organisation change moves sometimes in glacial, geological timeframes, a cataclysmic event like a pandemic can change mindsets and cultures almost instantly. All the other antibodies require this one most potent one to be developed first. Once created and internalised, it is so much easier to build others and develop a high degree of organisational immunity. For example, CEOs have had an instant change in heart on a previous anathema, working from anywhere. The pandemic has also forced delegation, and authority has moved down to the customer-facing roles.

One of the great paradoxes of COVID is that it has slowed down the world, but simultaneously accelerated change. It is not the easiest of times to live in, but we need to make the most of it; we need to grasp this change, learn from it, and immunize ourselves against future shock. ▪

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Jaspreet Bindra's latest book, a short read called The Immune Organisation released recently on Kindle. He has also authored The Tech Whisperer and is a digital transformation and technology expert. He is also a thought Leader, Advisor, Entrepreneur, Co-Founder UNQBE, ex-CDO Mahindra, Ex-Microsoft, TAS.

SAVING THE PLANET
THE NEED FOR ACTION NOW!

Sitting as we are, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, we quite often hear that "it was all hunky-dory before February 2020." We forget that the last few decades have been stressful for the planet. Increased frequency of storms, erratic weather, floods and droughts, horrible air quality in many metros and industrial zones, increased human-animal conflict, marginalization of communities... the list goes on. And then during the lockdown, we saw images on social media of the beautifully clear Himalayas taken from far away in the plains, rivers and bays so clean that we started associating words like aquamarine, emerald green, and turquoise with our waters again. We all appreciated WhatsApp messages about flora and fauna reclaiming land that was lost to them, but I have a premonition that business, and with it, the world, will get back to our pollutive habits with a vengeance, trying to catch up on what we lost during the lockdown, with no lessons learnt. The Indian vision of a five trillion-dollar economy would be achieved through rapid clearances of projects with hardly any balanced impact assessments, and shortcuts taken everywhere to 'recover.' But what is this 'recovery' that everyone is so keen to gravitate towards?

We just can't have a model that promotes unlimited growth on a limited planet, and obscene opulence accompanied by extreme deprivation. Having said that, is it possible in the interim to come up with an idea that sits somewhere in the middle, between quick and thoughtless 'recovery' in the post COVID world, and a seemingly utopian model (which in actuality is difficult to get to, but the right thing to do) that transforms how humanity co-exists with nature? A compelling statement on this issue by a global thought leader, David Suzuki, puts it in a very logical perspective:

"There are some things in the world we can't change – gravity, entropy, the speed of light, and our biological nature that requires clean air, clean water, clean soil, clean energy and biodiversity for our health and well-being. Protecting the biosphere should be our highest priority or else we sicken and die. Other things, like capitalism, free enterprise, the economy, currency, the market, are not forces of nature, we invented them. They are

> " We just can't have a model that promotes unlimited growth on a limited planet "

not immutable and we can change them. It makes no sense to elevate economics above the biosphere".

As we keep on growing as a population, developing and consuming, we will need more roads, power plants, food, and more goods and services. But surely we also need to be working on separating wants (the nice-to-haves) from needs, and then working on the needs so that they are made responsibly? When we lay a road, a railway line, a power transmission line, a canal or a dam, do we optimize our plans for minimal impact? Can we not look at first finding out whether the need itself for the development is compelling enough or it can be avoided, if it cannot be avoided, then seriously look at minimizing the impact, then pull all stops at restoring what was destroyed, and if all or part of what is to be restored cannot happen there itself, ensure that the negative impact is offset by positive action somewhere else? The ultimate goal is to come back to a near net-zero impact condition. And this is just one small methodology among a host of tools and approaches that exist with us today but are hardly used. What we see happening is shoddy or manipulated impact assessments and poor compliance of an already compromised recommendation.

Can we reimagine our understanding of 'cost-benefit' to one that balances short-term quick gains with long term impacts on us and future generations? When will discussions on quarter-to-quarter performance and projections mean quarter-century to quarter-century? Can we move from shareholder focus to a more balanced overall stakeholder focus where we seriously also look at the community, society at large, the future generations as key constituencies to take care of?

What if these kinds of conversations and steps become the norm in places where decisions are taken on development that cause environmental and social impact? It is time for us to reflect deeply about these questions so that we work towards building a future for the coming generations that is a gift, not a curse. The good news is that solutions exist. It's just a question of the will to do it. And COVID 19 is an opportunity for us to reflect, and then act, so that we don't go back to business as usual with a vengeance to quickly 'recover' to a state that was never sustainable in the first place. ▪▫▫

> " When will decisions on quarter to quarter performance and projections mean quarter century to quarter century? "

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POST-COVID CAPITALISM SHOULD CARE FOR PEOPLE & THE PLANET

The COVID-19 crisis has shaken up how we view the world. It has shown that many of our political and social structures are built on privilege and inequality, breaking through the clutter and smug self-satisfaction of our times, and turning the spotlight on what is truly important. We must never forget that during the crisis we have not been desperate for lawyers, actors, athletes or reality TV stars (or, let me add, business people). We have needed teachers, doctors, nurses, carers, shop workers, delivery drivers and countless others whom we usually take for granted. The crisis underlined that the edifice of our prosperity depends on many who work in humble ways and whose well-being is the foundation of our own well-being. As a business person, it brought home to me how interlinked the cogs are of our economic wheels.

When they flee, because their life has become unbearable, the scaffolding that props up our prosperity collapses. Yet, in spite of their centrality, the underprivileged have disproportionately borne the burden of the virus – not just in India but all over the world. COVID-19 has also demonstrated the incompatibility of our "normal" lifestyle with the natural world, and how quickly nature can repair the damage we inflict upon it if we change how we live. In the nine or 10 weeks of enforced lockdown in India, pollution levels have fallen drastically, the Himalayas are visible from the plains for the first time in decades, birds are back in our cities, and the skies and oceans have shrugged off the patina of grey in which they are normally enveloped. Crises reveal what should be truly important to us. The bottom line is that interconnectedness, of people with each other and with the planet, is non-negotiable. Business leaders who do not get it are going to see their company's brand value erode before their very eyes.

In our group of companies we were fortunate to experience this epiphany some years ago. We recognised, from a business perspective, that if we wanted to grow sustainably we could not rely on a relatively narrow customer base of prosperous Indians. Instead we had to create value collectively for our entire spectrum of stakeholders – colleagues, business associates, shareholders, potential consumers across the economy, local and global communities, and the planet – making them partners in our success.

This crystallised into our business philosophy: "Rise". Our core purpose is to enable others to rise by driving positive change in their lives. It does not explicitly mention profits, because we believe that if we enable others to Rise we will Rise with them and profits will inevitably follow.

In a sense, we were articulating a philosophy of "shared value". This business strategy, the touchstone by which we judge all our decisions, has served us well. It is the galvanising force that brings our people to work in the morning. They feel they are working for something larger than promotion or profits – to make a better world for themselves and others – and that gives meaning to

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what they do. Concern for people has led to our choosing new businesses that make an impact on people and communities. Concern for the planet, and its global commons, has incorporated sustainability into our strategies. That has resulted not only in greater sensitivity and better environmental practices but in innovation and savings too.

Little did we know, when we evolved the Rise philosophy, that it could one day serve as a signpost for the post-COVID world. The coronavirus pandemic has underlined that we are all an inextricable part of a larger community, irrespective of geography, wealth or status. Fault lines have revealed that inequality is a very unstable foundation on which to build, and that what is only good for shareholders, or a class of consumers, is not necessarily in the long-term interest of the community.

I believe one consequence of the crisis will be that communities will act as a powerful brake on the excesses of shareholder-value-led, or even consumer-led, capitalism. Protesters in the United States are holding up placards saying "Eat the rich", but I do not think this is a precursor to class warfare. Rather, it is an indication that communities, and their values and priorities, will increasingly dictate the directions that businesses adopt, enabling them to create shared value in a changed world. Purpose-led capitalism, where enlightened self-interest aligns with community interests, is the future for business. The concept of community capitalism, a step in that direction, has been defined as an approach to capitalism that places a priority on the well-being and sustainability of a community as a whole.

If the pandemic has taught that we are all inextricably interrelated, and that people and the planet should be at the heart of every decision, then community capitalism is the logical next step for business. I would go further, arguing that the definition I mentioned is actually too narrow, localised and parochial to meet the challenges of the post-COVID world.

There is a Sanskrit saying "Vasudhaiva kutumbakam", meaning "the whole world is one family". Only when community capitalism integrates that worldview can it realise its full potential. In our Rise philosophy we interpret community in the widest sense, from individuals to the entire planet. Once we adopt this enhanced approach, then environmental protection, for example, is no longer the zero-sum game that some businesses presume it is.

"Purpose-driven business" has become a catchphrase, but it suffers from an underlying implication that purpose is something that companies have to graft on to their otherwise natural state; that it requires a higher level of human evolution than we have yet attained. In my opinion, that is utopian. Like corporate social responsibility, it will become a mere box to be ticked, rarely comprehensively or with conviction.

I believe that purpose will truly come first when it is aligned to Adam Smith's assumption that people act out of enlightened self-interest. Even in our Rise philosophy there is an underlying assumption that it is in our own interest to enable others to rise, bringing us with them. That does not detract from the idealism of the purpose, but exhorts and enables it. Purpose-led capitalism, where enlightened self-interest aligns with community interests, is the future for business. If the world absorbs the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis, people and communities will look for strong evidence of caring for people and for the planet through adherence to purpose in the company of the future. Those that have this with conviction and authenticity will create the greatest shareholder value. They will understand that in a post-COVID world, the well-known triple bottom line of people, planet and profits, needs to be turned into the equation: People + Planet = Profits. ◼◻◻

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Anand Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group

THE END OF SOCIETY?
PROSPECTS FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

One of the many revolutions collectively known as the first Industrial Revolution was an upheaval in the way goods were produced. The pre-industrial "putting out" system had craftsmen work up raw material in their homes or workshops with self-owned tools and deliver the finished product to merchants. The introduction of the factory system changed that – hundreds, thousands were now congregating under one roof every day, under supervision, and paid for their time, not on a piece rate. Over the next two centuries, organizations, cities and economies grew out of this phenomenon. Labour unions and political parties were formed that would play a crucial role in the democratizing process, in the building of what we now know as Civil Society. In the creation of what Richard Sennett terms 'Public Man'.

The COVID pandemic has sparked what might become the first great reversal of this process. While white collar work is seen as inherently "put-out"-able, the imperative of social distancing could even see a return to much smaller production facilities, even to workshops. Technology like 3D printing with open-source technical designs, Immersive Virtual Reality systems and 5G smartphones helps lubricate this process.

This great dis-aggregation of work will change the way work is done; the question is: what impact will it have on people, on nations, on society?

The Impact on Work & Work-Life

Matt Mullenweg's famous 'Five Levels of Autonomy of Distributed Work' sees us progressing from Physical-only workspaces to the present remote-by-compulsion model to eventually favouring remote, asynchronous work and evaluating only the WHAT of the work done – not the HOW/WHEN.

The remote working model imposed by the pandemic resulted in an unexpected spike in productivity across geographies, working cultures and industries – despite even advanced economies being at a fairly primitive stage in this progression. This spike was caused by a combination of job insecurity and the sudden reduction in unproductive commutes, meetings and distractions at work.

As a recent Wall Street Journal article has revealed, however, the spike is now plateauing; the initial surge seems to have led to widespread burnout. The interminable restrictions and insecurities are taking a psychological toll, manifesting in a sharp rise in Domestic Abuse and Clinical Depression.

There is another reason why – despite organization getting more digitally savvy and people getting more used to interfacing only through a screen – the vision of a remote-only model will take a long time to be realized.

What Mullenweg's model does not take into account is that in a large organization work is more than bringing capabilities to bear on discrete tasks.

In the Information Age, the key differentiator of performance lies not in a technical skill but in the ability to

> ❝ A new recruit who has no foundations of relationships to fall back on; cannot build these through a lap top screen. ❞

align, integrate, counsel or influence without authority – in other words, roles that involve the one thing that technology cannot truly replace – the human factor. Let's call them touchy-feely roles, or - if that's not officious enough - haptic roles.

The conventional wisdom is that in a recession, employers are at an advantage. A firm can safely cut increment budgets without fear of regrettable attrition while shedding sub-optimal talent in favour of the top talent plentifully available at depressed salaries. But when a recessionary job market is combined with an extended period of remote working, this does not hold good for haptic roles. A new recruit, who has no foundation of relationships to fall back on – cannot build these through a laptop screen.

So yes, we can process-ize every aspect of a role, break it down into sub-tasks and therbligs, down to the quirks of the personalities involved and ask someone to perform it remotely. But how does one capture the bonds built across teams after a successful launch made possible by a week of night outs in office? Or the je ne sais quois of a shared bitching session?

The good news is that with remote work a number of Bullshit Jobs, as David Graeber terms them in his eponymous work, will be eliminated. The pandemic aside, however, the future of work will see technical capabilities get process-ized and automated and haptic roles coming to the fore. This does not align with the prospect of remote working.

The Impact on Society

What if Mullenweg's vision comes true – and companies begin to move to a majority-remote model, with only a skeleton staff coming together under one roof even when the pandemic has passed?

This will likely be a first step in a great rationalization, where a number of superfluous activities, (non-haptic) roles – and people – will be excised. There are those who look forward to this. The dream of Universal basic Income – where part of the prodigious profits of largely automated, hyper-productive organizations can provide sustenance for a largely non-employed population – might through this means be realized. This of course resuscitates the old debate between Lukacs and Habermas: is work inherently a burden? Or is the act of positing an abstract end state and applying effort towards achieving it in truth the factor that separates man from beast? Will "freedom" from work unleash the creativity of mankind – or will we be a lost generation, with the minds and tools of Gods but drained of will, of purpose, wandering towards an irredeemable anomie. What has changed is that the booming bass of COVID-19 may now sound out this answer rather than the slow snare drums of automation.

Margaret Thatcher once infamously proclaimed "There is no such thing as society." COVID could make this nightmarish prospect a reality. Human interaction is the foundation of fellowship, of public institutions, of the imagined communities that transform states into nations. We must guard against celebrating its curtailment. ◼◼◻◻

> ❝ Human interaction is the foundation of fellowship..... we must guard against celebrating its curtailment. ❞

Pranav Primlani, Lead - Employee Experience, Human Resources, Dr Reddy's Laboratories

DISTRIBUTED WORK'S FIVE LEVELS OF AUTONOMY by Matt Mullenweg

LEVEL FIVE - NIRVANA
consistently perform better than any in-person organization could

LEVEL FOUR
when things go truly asynchronous

LEVEL THREE
being remote-first or distributed

LEVEL TWO
everything is still synchronous, your day is full of interruptions

LEVEL ONE
no deliberate effort to make things remote-friendly

LEVEL ZERO
a job which cannot be done unless you're physically there

MASK OR NO MASK?
LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

Mask Paratha' (flatbread) to promote awareness' – screamed a headline in the newspaper today. I saw the same on a news channel yesterday and was quite amused. The cook had the mask on his chin as he made the Paratha that was designed to create awareness; the owner of the restaurant was sans mask as he gave a sound byte to the news channel.

Every day, invariably, there are a few scenes in the news channel, of politicians or other dignitaries distributing relief kits or inspecting health facilities. I have a good laugh, and then feel quite sad at what I see.

Social distancing – what is that?

Mask – some for the mouth only, some for the chin, some in the pocket, some removed when they talk to the media.

Restricted crowds -usually, these scenes show a large entourage walking around with the dignitary, and a crowd of people all around.

The cherry on the top – these clips end with the person offering a message to ensure you stay alert, stay apart, and wear a mask!!!!

The men and women, the 'front-line warriors' who visit our house to check on our well-being and the ones who come to sanitise our premises aren't exempt from this behavior. Their pockets are safe from COVID 19 since it is the pocket that wears the mask!!

Is this a Tamil Nadu issue? Is this an Indian issue? Can't be. See the world's largest country and its politicians and citizens. You must have seen enough forwards on social media where people are protesting – wearing a mask is seen as a violation of their freedom. This attitude starts at the very top.

Is the media also expected to play a role? I continue to be surprised that the same media that reports with great anxiety, about the public flouting rules of social distancing and wearing masks, show the news clips where it is flouted - and make no mention or don't point out.

But this post isn't about the pandemic and wearing masks. *I see this as a fascinating case-study in change-management, an opportunity to see how culture is built and changed by leaders.*

> " **It isn't what one says that go into the sub-conscious. It is what they do – every time, again and again.** "

> " **I see this as a fascinating case-study in change-management, an opportunity to see how culture is built and changed by leaders.** "

You would have guessed from the rant at the start – the leader is the key here. What he says should be consistent and clear, focus on the desired behavior. Leaders who 'pooh-pooh' masks send a message, so do the ones who stress the importance of wearing one.

But *it isn't what he or she says that go into the sub-conscious and show us what they believe in. It is what they do – each and every time, again and again.*

So, when you see a leader doing everything exactly as she preaches, you know she believes strongly in her own message. While I am not a fan of some of the leaders in the world today, at least I know that they will do what they publicly say they believe in. No ambiguity there.

The second is what the leader does with her immediate coterie. Does she stress on them behaving in the same manner as her? Does she put down a rule on the public events that can happen or needn't happen? Does a minister have to go to throw open a canal for irrigation, with about a hundred people in tow?

Should the leader pull-up a person and give a strong and stern warning when she sees inconsistent behavior? What does a leader do when he sees his team crowding together or not wearing a mask? Keep quiet?

I love the old story about meetings in one of the old and revered business houses. As a practice, at the exact hour when a meeting was to start, the doors of the room are locked. On a day when the MD came late, he too was not allowed into the room. That is consistent and clear messaging.

Is there congruence between what the leader says in public and in private? What if the leader drives a certain message in public, and then, in the company of a few trusted aides, mocks, and jokes about the same message? Wouldn't it show? Yes, it would.

I wrote a blog in a different context about the role of leaders in building culture. If you are interested, here is the link. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/do-i-say-role-modelling-organizational-culture-usha-rangarajan

In my next post, I will examine another aspect of building culture – how do we change habits to build a new culture? I will talk about appealing to the emotions of pleasure and pain as a strategy.

Meanwhile, do share thoughts, your own experience, ideas, on how leaders can bring about culture and behavioural changes in their teams. ◼️◼️◻️

Usha Rangarajan, Founder and Managing Consultant, UnLEASH, Director Operations - SEE, Partner at Global Gyan

THE CONTRARIAN'S TAKE ON THE BATON OF 'PURPOSE' IN A SHIFTING WORLD

As fascination with the virus gives way to a sombre assessment of the post-COVID world, one thing is certain – the world order is mutating even if the virus isn't. While geopolitics will be the messiest, most exciting and headline-grabbing arena where the mutation is likely to play out, the real change is likely to be elsewhere. And in doing so, it will follow the well-trodden route to progress that humanity has experienced for several millennia – out of the limelight, through successes and failures, with a passion bordering on insanity.

In other words, the operative principle in the emerging world is one of Purpose, howsoever incredulous it sounds.

Purpose itself is a mutating word, meaning different things to different people at different times in different circumstances. At one end, it borders on lofty spirituality, almost synonymous with self-sacrifice. At the other, it comes uncomfortably close to the marketing idea of positioning, manipulation in a respectable camouflage. As always, the reality probably lies mid-way.

Most, if not all, of the fundamental changes over the next few years, will be driven by purpose-led organizations. While governments muddle through the crisis with administrative responses ranging from sublime to the ridiculous, the responsibility of building tools for the future has fallen on tech behemoths, drug research companies, new energy businesses, public service start-ups and so forth. Most of these are organizations with one eye on the public good, and the other on the wallet.

> " **The operative principle in the emerging world is one of Purpose.** "

Which is perhaps how it should be.

The time-worn paradigm of donating one's all for the larger purpose of saving our less fortunate brethren is well and truly over, notwithstanding how stone-hearted it feels. Organizations and people who subscribe to this, venerable as they are, miss a key point. Donation is the cruellest tool of servility; it makes the giver self-righteous and pompous, and the recipient, dependent. Freebies destroy the innate capacity of a fightback in human beings, lulling them into a never-ending cycle of resigned helplessness and parasitic expectations.

Investment, on the other hand, is the selfish, yet sustainable antidote. While the transactional ring about it might be jarring, it brings out the best in all – the donor, the recipient, and the society at large. Whilst there are sterling examples of progress that selfless charity has brought about, the general principle of returns being the primary driver behind investments is more realistic, less hypocritical and aligned with human instincts.

Purpose, therefore, for every organization large and small, across geographical and impact areas, has a common, simple metric – Investment. Which is at once a responsibility as well as contribution. And while it's possible to plagiarize this word to suit individual circumstances, the most productive forms of investment will be of the holy trinity – money, intellect and assets.

As always, there is a flip side. If a purpose-led organization's primary responsibility is an investment, where do resources come from? How do they get allocated? What of the instinct to hoard? And what about the unproductive investments of the past? These are the uncomfortable questions, and hard choices, that lie in the underbelly of every organization that swears by that lofty-sounding, yet misunderstood word – Purpose!

Which is why purpose is likely to become a baton... To be held on for a while, hopefully, made viral by means fair or foul, before being handed on! ▪▫▫

> " **Most, if not all, of the fundamental changes over the next few years, will be driven by purpose-led organizations.** "

Ashutosh Pandey, MD & CEO at Mahindra First Choice Wheels.

THE POST-COVID19 WORKPLACE: INCLUSION OF DIFFERENTLY-ABLED

Growing up, we were always taught the importance of inclusiveness in society. However, the reality is that there are still some wide gaps that need to be filled. The pandemic, however, has brought back some sense of equity into most of our systems. It has changed the way industries and organizations will function. In one of the many new opportunities it has presented us with, is that of hiring from a wide pool of candidates that usually go unnoticed, i.e the 'differently-abled'.

A differently-abled person usually has one disability. Their other senses are as sharp if not sharper than the rest of us. Despite this, they find it difficult to get jobs. For employers, changes need to be made at multiple levels to be able to hire from this cohort. Policy tweaks are easy to make and even equipping the office is not difficult. The real challenge comes up in modifying the workplace culture to foster inclusion and accommodating special systems to aid the functioning of the differently-abled.

How can the Post-COVID19 era be any different?

The pandemic has forced us to relook at everything we do! For an organisation, it offers an immense opportunity to let go of old ways and implement new ways of working.

1. Relook at the company policy

If you do not have a policy around the hiring of differently-abled staff, this is the right time to do so! You can create an integrated system or even a parallel one to function alongside your current system.

2. Work from Home

Now that working from home has become the new normal, it is easy to get on-board employees that are differently-abled while permanently offering them a work from home position.

> "There couldn't be a better time to relook at the potential of the differently-abled."

Managers and teams are well-acquainted with digital technologies which make it easier for the person to be present digitally and doesn't unnecessarily strain the person to be physically present. Organisations like Accenture, Wells Fargo, Sodexo, GM, among others have already incorporated permanent flexible work schedules for differently-abled staff.

> "Now that working from home has become the new normal, it is easy to get on-board employees that are differently-abled while permanently offering them a work from home position."

3. Creating awareness

IBM has a hiring policy that focuses on 3As – Accommodation, Accessibility and Attitude, and was one of the first companies to include 'disability hiring' in the talent acquisition process. It is important to look at the culture fitment and change at every level. Employers need to train their general staff too to be able to transition into a workplace that is differently-abled friendly.

4. Improving infrastructure

With employees working from home, there couldn't be a better time to make tactical changes to the office to suit the needs of the differently-abled. Entry and exit ramps, braille equipment, designated handicap parking spaces, ensuring easy movement in the washrooms and cafeteria, etc. are some of the many changes that can be done in this time.

5. Identifying jobs that are suitable for special groups

Studies have shown that individuals with Asperger's Syndrome are more productive than regular people because of their ability to concentrate; people with cerebral palsy or epilepsy are known for being hard workers, and people with autism are known to have photographic memories. Lemon Tree Hotels started hiring people with Down Syndrome and hearing and speech impairments in the housekeeping department. Sign language interpreters were hired to provide the training. Capgemini has over 200 differently-abled employees in various departments like tech support, accounts and other support functions. Start-ups are hiring differently-abled people for a variety of roles like ORM, IT, customer service, data processing, quality testing and many more.

By focusing on the disability, we tend to reduce the person's self-respect and restrict his/her perception of what they can do. The key is to focus on ability. We need to focus on things that they can do, and in many cases, probably do better than the rest of us. There couldn't be a better time to relook at the potential of the differently-abled. ■ ■ ■

(Written by the Editorial team)

POSITIVITY IN **CHALLENGING** TIMES

Humanity faces it's toughest challenge in history and it has engulfed all of us. No end is in sight and organizations and employees are struggling to cope and survive. The easiest thing in the world is to be a positive thinker when everything is going well. The rubber hits the road when things blow up in the face. That is what separates the adults from the children!

Did anyone promise us that life would be easy? Would an easy life even be interesting? If you have already faced serious challenges in the past, how do you feel about yourself now? Don't you find yourself a stronger, more confident person or organization? Aren't your self-esteem and self-respect enhanced? That's what this all about. These situations arise from time to time. We choose whether we face them as a fragile casting or an ultra-strong forging.

Positive people deal with challenges better than those who worry about them. Anxiety does not solve problems. Well thought out action does.

Here are a few things that have worked for me.

Prayer. The crisis may be too big for me to handle. It is not too big for God to handle. God runs the universe and may or may not care. But I am the stronger for feeling that I have the almighty on my side. Believing is seeing.

Drishti. I do not choose what happens to me. But, I do choose how I look at it and that determines the actions that I take. When the dust settles and I have calmed down, I see the path more clearly. We are not in charge of anything other than our thoughts, feelings and actions. May we never choose negative thoughts, when we can choose positive ones.

Visualize. Where do I want to be? What is the best-case scenario? How do I accelerate and make it a certainty? Here is where positive thinking has a part to play. The positive thinker visualizes a positive outcome. Many of us have experienced the truth of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Seeing is believing.

Have a Plan B. What is the worst-case scenario? How do I prevent it from becoming a reality? Build preventive actions into your plan. Some have made staying indoors, social distancing, masking and sanitizing a way of life. Don't forget contingent plans. Packing a bag for a 2 week stay in hospital. Sharing passwords, making a will, upgrading the health insurance policy, listing all the passwords are excellent

> **Positive people deal with challenges better than those who worry about them.**
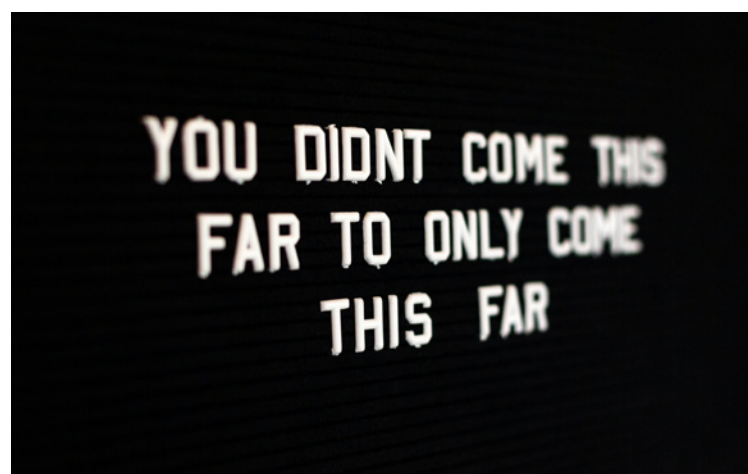
> **Situations arise from time to time. We choose whether we face them as a fragile casting or an ultra-strong forging.**

contingent actions. These preparations build comfort and security.

Action. Thinking by itself will only lead to paralysis by analysis. Positive thinking is one side of the coin. Optimistic action is the other. So what if I can't see what's ahead clearly, a single step in the right direction is progress. Confidently begun is half done! The speed will increase in due course. Action stokes determination. Worry only stresses me out and unleashes inertia. When an action fails, positive thinking comes to the rescue and encourages me to try again. At all stages in this journey, it is better to respond than to react.

How then does one become a positive thinker? Here are a few tried and tested ways.

Self-belief. We need to start believing in ourselves. God does not make garbage. Each of us is special and has immense potential. Self-belief unleashes that potential. Believe that we have the wherewithal to come out of the storm and we will ultimately prevail.

Affirm. Repeated affirmations like 'Every day in every way, I am getting better and better' and 'Come what may, we will succeed' build a positive mindset. When we repeat these declarations , we start believing them more and more.

Relax. Breathe. Long and deep. When we do this, our entire system gets more oxygen and becomes calmer and we can think better and make better decisions.

One day at a time. One step at a time. Initially, we need to have goals and action plans that seem easy to us. Like the old steam engine, we will build up steam. Then, we become more ambitious. We will soon be chugging out of the tunnel!

Avoid Toxic words and Toxic People. Words such as 'unfortunate' or 'problem' colour the crisis negatively. Instead, we use neutral words like 'concern', 'challenge' or 'situation'. We surround ourselves with positive, inspiring people. We shun those that demotivate like the virus!

Together wins. Where an individual might fail, a team makes winning almost a certainty. Build a team, then build support. It all becomes easier and more do-able.

As humanity passes through the COVID-19 calamity, I know that as with other pandemics in the past, we will vanquish the virus and learn to be a better and healthier race with greater value for life and our planet. ■

Parimal Gandhi is the Founder Chairman and Principal Trainer at the Academy of Human Excellence. In the Learning and Development profession since more than 45 years, Parimal is an international facilitator, consultant, speaker and author. He has trained over 110000 participants and 1500 trainers. His client list ranges from Fortune 500 companies to small and tiny industries and families. He has spoken at several international conferences and works in India, Mexico and USA. He has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indian Society for Training and Development and the V Care Foundation Award for 'facing cancer four times with indomitable courage and resilience'.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT- THRIVING IN UNCERTAINTY

I n the history of mankind, we have had several crises, life and death situations. During each crisis, we have had to apply the learnings we have had from an earlier crisis and learn a few new lessons. It's a kind of reality check. It shows things as they are; exposes the lacuna in the ecosystem, biases, weaknesses, false assumptions, and gaps.

"When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters -- one represents danger, and the other represents opportunity." – **John F. Kennedy**

What is CRISIS? Can we say it's a **C**all to; **R**ise; **I**ntrospect the; **S**ituation; **I**deate and; **S**urmount.

Though there have been efforts made by the government, there are still gaps, as expected.

1. India's rate for testing corona is extremely low; 500 per million people, whereas in Pakistan it is 700, Malaysia 3900, Australia 19000. Since we are not testing adequately, we do not have a true picture emerging. We also have a long long way to go, where healthcare is concerned.

Doctors and healthcare workers; out frontline warriors after putting their own lives on the line are being treated with apathy, and also being ostracized.

1. Such a shame.
2. Our migrant workers' problem was handled very badly; it has killed many and scarred many more.
3. Bureaucracy and unaccountability. As part of the relief measures, there were certain quotas of rations which were announced. But unfortunately, here too the corruption and bureaucracy took over, and many of our needy people were left to starve.
4. Slums form a major part of urban cities like Mumbai. They should be actively involved in urban planning. If we could have contained the pandemic quickly in the slums, we could have flattened the curve.

If we look at any major crisis we can see the gaps and key takeaways from each. Here are some of the takeaways from our current situation.

See the Bigger Picture

Leaders need to step back and see the bigger picture. They need to acknowledge the severity of the business economic fallout from COVID-19 and try to pivot their businesses accordingly. This could be in the direction of a new or adjusted set of products and services, or new platforms.

Decentralizing Decision-Making

Leaders should delegate adequate authority and empowerment to their regional heads to respond on key

> " **Through words and actions, leaders need to signal courage and conviction of the promise the future holds.** "

priorities as they may see appropriate, whilst still staying accountable to the big picture and values of the organization.

Trying to Control the Situation

Since there is no point in trying to control the current situation, leaders should develop the ability to rapidly evaluate the ever-changing situation and respond compassionately, and with collaboration. They should develop effective contingency plans to prevent the situation from spiralling beyond control. Also, its important to get comfortable with ambiguity, and navigate solutions on a point-to-point basis by taking regular stock of the situation.

Communicate Communicate Communicate

There should be more frequent planned communications so that members feel less insecure. This will also prevent unnecessary rumours from taking place. Leaders should communicate to their teams why their work matters; each one of them.

Remote-Working - Holistic Employee Engagement Strategy

Business leaders should develop a holistic employee engagement strategy to support the emotional and social health of their people.

Employee stress and burnout levels may be high, along with family health issues and everyone working from home. And leaders should also be cognizant of themselves and their well-being.

> " **Leaders should assure their teams to not fear failure, find new ways of operating and be bold in making decisions.** "

Never underestimate diverse experience in one's Organization

Leaders should learn to tap into the experience of diverse and minority groups in the organization. Leaders should emphasize to their members; individually and as a group — to learn their way forward, to experiment with new ways of operating, to be bold, not to fear failure, pivot to a new track, and work their way to a better future to emerge from this pandemic.

Bond with Customer and Community

The best strategy here is complete transparency with the customer and working in collaboration during the crisis. And convincing them, that despite remote working, they are committed to customer service excellence. Reaching out by engaging in community service will go a long way to build reputation and goodwill like no other can.

Model the behaviour you want to see

Leaders should use their body language, words, and actions to signal we are moving forward with conviction and courage.

All of us will be remembered for how we manage ourselves and others through this crisis, how we navigate through it with perseverance and positivity.
How will we emerge from this experience collectively stronger, and better...

(Compiled by the Editorial team)

ECONOMICS OF THE LOCKDOWN

The government has allowed a cautious but gradual reopening of the economy after a lockdown of the economy that was ordered on 24th March 2020. The stringent nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of the Coronavirus also curtailed economic activity and put it into a "medically induced coma".

Added to this, a combination of lower incomes and heightened uncertainty added to the drag on consumer spending and business investment. This 'black swan' event has snowballed into a one-of-a-kind crisis. What started as a supply-side shock owing to disruption in Global Value Chains and shutdowns, has eventually also transpired into a large demand-side shock. This makes the crisis unique - India has not witnessed a simultaneous slump in demand and supply in the past. Consequently, expectations are that in FY21, the economy will witness its first contraction in 40 years – something that is unthinkable for most people today.

The moot question now is - how will the reopening of the economy play out and to what extent will this crisis impact consumption demand? Analysing consumer wallets provides some clues to this question.

Importantly, some parts of the demand have continued as the government has allowed essential activities to continue.

- Non-durable goods account for ~39% of Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE). These largely include essential goods, with food & beverages accounting for over 75% of these items. These have held up and going forward too the segment is unlikely to be impacted significantly.
- Then there are goods which buyers can postpone and recoup later ie that of durable goods (account for ~11% of consumption demand) such as clothing & footwear, furnishings, household appliances, purchase of vehicles and durables for recreation.
- However, when it comes to services (account for ~50% of consumption demand), there can be permanent demand destruction in items such as the operation of personal transport, transport services), recreation, restaurants & hotels and alcoholic beverages as the forgone taxi ride, air travel, vacations, movies or eating out are extinguished opportunities and hence lost forever.

It is important to highlight here that the entire latent demand for durables is unlikely to materialise. This is because Households are likely to be cautious in large-ticket spending owing to fears of pay-cuts and job losses and would build up precautionary savings. This phenomenon is also likely to impact the demand for services in the post lockdown period, apart from the need for social distancing, given that person-to-person interaction plays a key role in the consumption of services.

The private corporate sector, which accounts for ~40% of India's investment demand, is likely to cut CAPEX sharply

> **Watch out for behavioural shifts in consumers and consumption activity**

> **Migrate from "just in time" to "just in case" strategies to reduce concentration risks.**

owing to poor cash flows and on account of low capacity utilisation levels following weak demand. Households, which account for another 40% of investment demand are also expected to go slow on investments owing to labour market distress. Thus, investment demand may remain low in the near term.

What next?

Given the nature of the crisis, there is scope, in theory as well as practice, for a rapid return to previous levels of activity. Once the virus has passed and restrictions are eased, the economy's capacity to produce goods and services in select sectors should rebound strongly which means the supply-side should resume even if at a lower capacity utilisation level. Importantly, the government has announced an "INR 20 trillion" package to support the economy. Most of the announcements are in the form of off-balance-sheet measures such as credit, guarantees and regulatory easing.

We must understand that in India the national shutdown was Swift and pre-emptive. However, we can see that the re-openings are staggered and gradual. This part is the most difficult and akin to the Mahabharata story of Abhimanyu and the "Chakravyuh".

The question of when restrictions will start to be loosened is less important than how restrictions will ultimately be loosened. This will depend both on when the restrictions affecting different sectors are lifted but also result in behavioural changes.

What should businesses watch out for:

- We are in the middle of perhaps the biggest crisis faced ever in modern times. Just three months ago, the IMF was expecting positive per capita income growth in > 160 member countries in 2020. Today, it projects that over 170 countries will experience negative per capita income growth this year! So, watch out for further government action to prevent loss of productive capacity and a demand-side stimulus somewhere down the road.
- Businesses would also do well to monitor state government actions and policies from hereon as they will play a key role in the revival of business activity on the ground.
- Watch out for behavioural shifts in consumers and consumption activity. There is some evidence that this is happening in China. As per a survey conducted in China, there has been a shift in consumer preferences from public transport to private vehicles. In India, we are seeing precautionary savings going up.
- Watch sectoral moves: One consequence is that sectors like manufacturing and construction are likely to rebound sooner than services segments such as leisure and tourism.
- Prioritise risk mitigation instead of cost optimisation and migrate from "just-in-time" to "just-in-case" strategies to reduce concentration risk. ■■▢▢

Sachchidanand Shukla,
Chief Economist,
Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.

NIGHTINGALES NEXT

How India's premier home healthcare brand is surfing the waves of COVID- induced change to reinvent itself and its patient services

Nightingales, which pioneered healthcare at home back in 1996, was acquired from the founders by Medwell Ventures in 2014. It has since become a Mahindra Collaboration and part of the Mahindra Partners portfolio after the Mahindra Group invested in Medwell Ventures. Nightingales have constantly set the standards for home healthcare and built a reputation as one of the best brands of home healthcare in India. Several factors have contributed to this success: almost all Nightingales therapists and caregivers are on its payroll; strong training ethos; excellent product development capabilities; constant focus on delivering high customer satisfaction.

Come April 2020, and the COVID-19 scourge and the resultant lockdowns, and Nightingales like all other corporates saw its business take a hit and slow down to a virtual crawl. Both patients and caregivers were apprehensive, and the lockdowns too did not make the delivery of home healthcare feasible in its normal avatar.

> " To assist those in home quarantine, special tele and video consultation packages have been developed. "

Nightingales quickly regrouped by bringing together its think-tank of senior leadership, its investor group and domain specialists, and developed a response to the new consumer and business realities. In the weeks since April, Nightingales has not just recalibrated its offerings, but has also created all-new products to serve new consumer needs, and is actively moulting itself to be prepared to embrace the new normal and to deliver a compelling, winning proposition to new and existing customers.

Some of the initiatives undertaken by Nightingales in this regard are:

1. **Teleconsultation:**
   Since visiting doctors became difficult with the lockdown, Nightingales quickly aligned its doctors to provide teleconsultation to patients. Doing so also allowed Nightingales to extend its service reach beyond the cities of its operations, and serve patients pan-India.

2. **Video Physio:**
   Through offering video consultations with its physiotherapists, Nightingales helped its existing patients continue their physiotherapy sessions, and also served the needs of others who required to consult with a physiotherapist.

3. **Nightingales Workplace Health Safety Program**
   As the lockdown restrictions started to be lifted and organisations began reopening their offices and factories, Nightingales developed an all-new offering specially designed to ensure the safety of returning employees to the workplace,
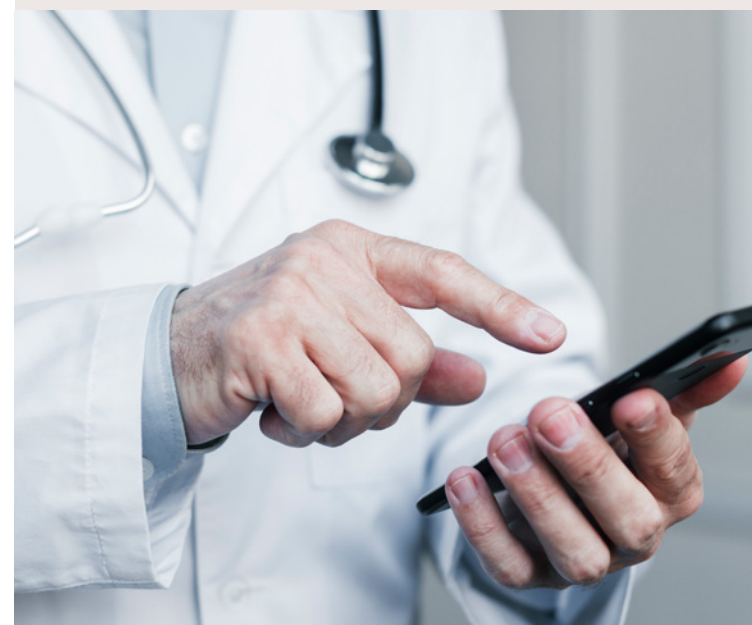
and that of the workplaces itself. This program was conceived virtually overnight and has already seen a positive uptake amongst corporates.

4. **Greater institutional focus**
   The early success of the Nightingales Workplace Health Safety Program has made the company increase its focus on institutional business, and this segment is expected to contribute significantly to revenues in the coming months.

5. **HealthSafe with Nightingales**
   In response to the heightened concerns in the minds of both patients and caregivers related to their health safety in these COVID-19 times, Nightingales developed a special set of enhanced health and safety protocols that are designed to keep its patients and therapists health safe, as they go about taking and delivering Nightingales services. A campaign to spread awareness of this new HealthSafe protocol was also quickly developed.

6. **Recalibrating existing services**
   Since patients were concerned about potential exposure to COVID-19 through their 12hour bedside caregivers, Nightingales repurposed the offering to turn the 12-hour service into a 24-hour service so that the caregiver did not have to travel back-and-forth to the patient's home. This change has been welcomed by patients.

7. **Using social media for therapist-led patient engagement**
   Since the lockdown was announced, Nightingales has run twice weekly Facebook Live sessions with its physiotherapists, who have demonstrated exercises and addressed queries from patients. The initial few FB Live sessions garnered over 100,000 views.

> " The company is working to strengthen their Patient Management System to incorporate best in class digital health solutions. "

8. **Addressing the home quarantine segment**
   Since a large number of people need to undergo home quarantine in case they are tested positive for COVID-19 or as a precaution after they travel, special homecare packages for such patients which involve tele and video consultations have been developed.

9. **New partnerships to serve senior citizens and residential associations**
   In response to the heightened concerns about travelling to a hospital to see a doctor, Nightingales is exploring and creating new partnerships to serve different customer segments in their homes or through Digi-consultations.

10. **Enhanced technology focus to deliver a high-quality digital-ready service**
    The company is working to strengthen its Nightingales Patient Management System and incorporate best-in-class digital health solutions to serve its patients seamlessly be it in their homes or remotely through video and telehealth services. ■■■

Ashok Lalla is Chief Marketing & Digital Advisor of Nightingales. He is also the Digital Business Advisor to the rest of the Mahindra Partners portfolio.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF
VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT
— A MIRAGE OR
REALITY

It is a bright, sunny morning in January 2022. The post COVID world has truly arrived. Ankita, General Manager Sales, has just completed her Pizza Town Hall with employees in the company. The leadership team debated, deliberated and genuinely had fun interacting with all employees over digital pizza. The company has ambitious plans for an enhanced geographical presence, including some big-ticket global acquisitions.

Ankita did a quick Yoga stretch and digitally met her team over a steaming cup of coffee. Her's is a distributed team with employees of different cultures and time zones. With the planned acquisition of a company in Spain, Ankita and her team have online Spanish language sessions scheduled during the coming week. She's looking forward to learning a new language. Last year she did a course on basics in Arabic which helped her interact with her customer in UAE in their native language.

During her lunch break, Ankita was reminiscing of the pre-COVID world. Work from Home has helped her reduce her commuting stress, yet she misses the chatter and energy of interacting personally with people around. Hence she ensures that a minimum of 2 days in a week she is there at her workplace.

The team now says they will all come together on a particular day and have an in-person interaction. They quickly check if workstations are available - now one books the

> **One needs to feel the company culture through Experiences.**

workstation online - and voila they will all meet in the office on Friday, the in-person pizza party is a bonus.

Ankita shares her mantra for virtual employee engagement, she calls it CARE (Community, Alignment, Reach out and Enjoyment)

Community – Employees working remotely need to feel a sense of community. Ankita adopts a variety of ways that encourage check-ins so employees feel a part of a community. Teams also meet together virtually at a set frequency. Also, beyond technology, nothing like a real catch up at a café or office. This can also help collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Alignment - Goals and alignment are important. Remote employees need to be clear on work expectations and outcomes. This also helps create meaning in their roles and experience alignment with the organization's vision.

Reach out – Ankita communicates much more often than she did in the real office scenario. When employees are working remotely, they often wonder what's the latest, what's happening, they may feel disconnected. It is important to feel truly included. Engagement is closely linked to trust. A virtual workplace may not provide the avenues for informal chats like a personal interaction. Employees miss the water cooler conversations or the coffee vending machines chats. Managers need to take extra effort to have conversations that are purposeful and yet meaningful for the employee's motivation and career goals.

Enjoyment - Have fun…..right from a virtual treasure hunt to fancy dress to involving the family in the virtual party. All of this adds to the experience and 'feel' of the company culture.

Ankita believes that the organizational culture is built by every interaction that she has with employees. Building and nurturing relationships with her team and stakeholders at large has helped her truly engage and CARE. ■■■

(This is a piece of fiction)

> **Managers need to take extra effort to have conversations that are purposeful and yet meaningful for the employee's personal motivation and career goals.**

Nora Bhatia is the Vice President- HR & Corporate Administration Team, Mahidra Accelo. She endeavors to live the philosophy of '*be the change you wish to see in the world.*'

PORTRAIT OF A LIFE-AFFIRMING ENTERPRISE

For the first time in the known history of humanity, we've reached a point where four distinct and synchronous "meta-factors" are altering our planet's ability to sustain all varieties of life. These meta-factors - which together release powerful forces that also propel human activity - are:

1. Unprecedented population growth
2. The *relentless consumption* of natural resources (minerals, timber, freshwater and food) and fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal).
3. Antiquated, linear models of doing business, that work on the erroneous assumption that natural resources are *infinitely available*, and
4. *Flawed economic metrics* that measure business performance but do not take into account the social and ecological cost-externalities of enterprises; or the fact that humans just cannot live full-lives without happiness, peace of mind and an enduring sense of connectedness with Planet Earth and the environment.

You'll notice that except for the first of these meta-factors, all the rest are front-and-centre within the realm of businesses. As the COVID19 pandemic has also driven home, any laxity in mitigating the down-side of these meta-factors, therefore, jeopardizes the future of our planet and that of all living beings – including humans themselves.

But before we start to blame businesses for where we are today, let's not forget that enterprises have contributed significantly to improving the Quality of Life of people over the past century. Businesses have served as the engines that enable the creation and delivery of value to society. Well-governed firms, especially, are a force of benign and constructive transformation for humanity. The many aspects of our lives that we take for granted – from healthcare to mobility, from nutrition to communications, and from security to entertainment – are all the results of many scientific advances and innovations, that businesses have smartly converted into affordable products and services, that are today within the reach of most people. Furthermore, it is the power of enterprise alone, that serves as a potent magnet to attract technologies, novel ideas, talent, capital, and design-innovations; and then harnesses them together for the benefit of humanity.

Strategic-thinking, humane and progressive leaders who understand this, also realize, however, that in this day and age, enterprises that contribute to Life (that is, those which are *Life-affirming* and good for Earth) alone stand a chance of serving the Greater Good and making profits. They also appreciate that today's enterprises function in an interconnected world. No business can, therefore, pretend that its adverse impacts – and hence concerns – are limited to local issues or restricted

> **Well-governed firms, especially, are a force of benign and constructive transformation for humanity.**

geographies. The supply-chains of large corporations meander around the world, and the direct and indirect impacts of business actions – both positive and negative - are well-known and widely discussed and questioned by societies everywhere.

Concerned business leaders are therefore bound to ask: "What should we do to neutralize the three meta-factors so that ours is a life-affirming, responsible and profitable enterprise?"

The answer, when we get down to implementing it, calls for leadership with both courage, and commitment. It involves taking actions – with a long-term focus -to bring to fruition the following essential outcomes:

1. **Transitioning from the linear model of business –** where natural resources are extracted, manipulated into products, shipped for consumption and then dumped indiscriminately after use – to a **circular model of value-creation**
2. **Treating products as services,** that are offered to consumers for a fee, and
3. Ensuring that **reverse-supply chains** – controlled or overseen by the main business - are created locally, "around the consumers" and integrated with the new, circular model of enterprise.

You would notice that all the above are integrated aspects of the same broad trend: of evolving to a circular model of business, and of creating and delivering value through reliance on reusing, recycling, and renewing raw-materials; while also offering exceptional service to the consumers.

When the **Circular Model of Value-creation** (CMVC) becomes a strategic imperative for a progressive, future-oriented enterprise, a number of its internal processes change. The design and development of new products/services places CMVC and the Consumers at the heart of the innovative process. Manufacturing processes add-value, knowing that the inputs are diverse, and "re-sourced". Products are shipped to consumers to use – not own. This allows consumers to use the "product as a service", upon the payment of a fee. Since the consumer no longer "owns" the product, the fee charged is for the "functionalities" and desirable "quality attributes" of the product that the consumer finds *truly valuable*.

Once the "product" has reached the end of its productive life, the enterprise – on its own -recalls the product and through its local, reverse-supply chain, extracts all the re-usable components, metals, and useful items. When these recycled components are cleaned, purified, tested and put back into the value-stream, they contribute to the creation of new, and innovative products that again can be used to serve more consumers – globally - for a fee. The consumer meanwhile continues to receive uninterrupted service!

The Circular Model of Value-creation is a powerful way for businesses to become life-affirming, wholesome and aligned with Earth. Simultaneously CMVC creates a socially just, and humane organization, that makes profits and diminishes the adverse impacts of meta-factors. ■■□□

> **The Circular Model of Value-creation is a powerful way for businesses to become life-affirming, wholesome and aligned with Earth.**

Bharat Wakhlu is a transformational Thought-Leader, a Futurist, an innovative and ethical Value-Creator, Leadership Coach and a facilitator of beneficial-change. He has had an international career with the Tata Group and Sikorsky Aircraft spanning over three decades. A Fellow of the American Society for Quality (ASQ), and of the All India Management Association, he is also the co-founder of the Foundation for Peace and Compassionate Leadership and the author of four books. Read more: www.bharatwakhlu.com or https://www.linkedin.com/in/bharatwakhlu

SIMPLICITY IN
COMPLEX TIMES

A major challenge of today's time is 'increased complexity in business' in the face of a VUCA world.

The world is getting more complex...more so post COVID.
1. More stakeholders with more demands
2. More customers with more choices, more markets, having more conflicting demands & faster, unpredictable changes.
3. More difficult to create value

Business responds by getting more complicated
1. More procedures, process, layers, structures & scorecards
2. More time spent managing work ... & less time doing it; working harder at emails and meetings, but not adding value.

Despite applying best management thinking and following best practices, all these have failed to bring in success. Ironically, conventional wisdom in management when applied, has often made things worse.

Smart Simplicity and its Six Rules can offer a viable solution.

Complexity can be a 'good thing' if the business can master it and convert it into 'competitive advantage' so that if you master it you win! But not otherwise.

Rules procedures and structures get in the way of performance & make organisations worse, not better. Organisations get rigid... can not respond fast, especially when it comes to making judgements about conflicting requirements. People work harder on activities that add less and less value and make less difference.

Organisations take one of two approaches-or sometimes both.. and they are ineffective.

> **Cooperation means improving the effectiveness of others in the creation of a joint output.**

The hard approach:
Structures, processes, systems & financial incentives

- This approach assumes that systems are predictable & people are the weak link in the chain of reliability. Systems are designed to control people.
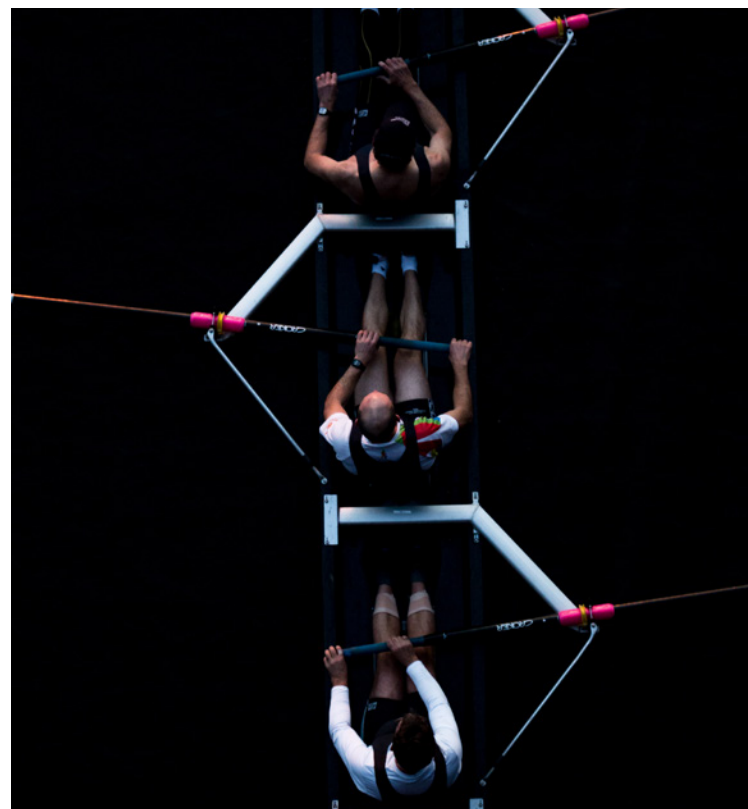
The soft approach:
- Team building, people initiatives, off-site retreats, focus on leadership style & emotional incentives.
- This approach assumes that the performance depends on interpersonal relationships & psychological needs, you can control them.

Both approaches seek to achieve control. In doing so they make organisations complicated – slower and more bureaucratic, bogged down in process & more important, unable to manage the complexity of the environments in which they operate.

What is needed is:
- Less direct control based on the hard & soft approaches
- Fewer systems
- More flexibility
- More autonomy

Such an organisation is nimble- and better prepared to respond to complexity because it leverages judgement ad energy better.... Thereby achieves 'Smart Simplicity.

Six Rules of 'Smart Simplicity':

Rule 1: Know the context that shapes the 'behaviours', what's happening. Learn how your people cooperate, find resources & solve problems- or fail to do so.

To understand the context, you must understand 'Goals, Resources, & Constraints' framework and manage them well. People generally sidestep constraints and leverage resources in achieving goals.

Rule 2: Identify 'integrators' the people, units, who bring others together & drive processes. Eliminate layers & rules & give integrators the power, authority & incentives to do the entire task successfully.

Cooperation means improving the effectiveness of others in the creation of a joint output. It differs from collaboration and coordination, which forces people to make hard choices, rather than only maintain good interpersonal relationships and avoid confrontations. Hence, the solution is to turn managers into 'integrators. Minimise rules, rely on their judgement than purely on metrics.

Rule 3: Increase 'Total Quantity of Power'

Power is not 'zero-sum game', increasing the total quantity of power available in the organisation, allows managers to think about and act on more performance requirements. By doing so organisations become more flexible, adaptive & effective.

Rule 4: Increase reciprocity

Work is getting more interdependent. People need to cooperate directly rather than only relying on coordination structures or procedures. Reciprocity ensures that people have a mutual interest in cooperation. This can be achieved by eliminating internal monopolies, creating multiplexity of networks.

Rule 5: Extend the shadow of the future

Actions have consequences & experiencing those will boost performance. The realisation of what happens tomorrow because of what they do today will bring in new realisations. This can be achieved by tightening the feedback loop, bringing the endpoint forward & make people walk in the shoes they make for others.

Rule 6: Reward Co-operation

Simply put, make it riskier not to cooperate! Performance appraisals and R & R to be used not for punishing failures but encouraging cooperation.

The primary objective of these rules is to create more value by better managing business complexity.

> **Complexity can be a 'good thing' if the business can master it and convert it into 'competitive advantage.' But not otherwise.**

Nitin Tikle is the Vice President Change Management and Organisation Design at Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. He has over 34 years of experience in multiple fields like HR, Organisation Design, Business Transformation, Change Management, R & D, Quality, Sourcing, Strategy, M & A, Manufacturing etc; 16 years of which was in the Appliances industry and 18 years in Automotive Industry.

LEADERSHIP FROM BELOW

For a very long time, our understanding of leadership has been defined by structures and the people who are at the apex of those structures. In any kind of structure; whether it's the government or the corporate world, our view of leadership invariable gravitates towards the top of that organization. We tend to view leadership as a group of people at the top, or view it as a quality that needs to be exhibited by people at the top. The unprecedented impact of COVID 19 has pushed us into the realization that the best results are achieved, when we broaden this definition and understanding of leadership, and the reason we need this broadened definition is so that we can achieve outstanding results.

Countries that have managed to limit the extent of disruption from the COVID pandemic have shown how this dual definition of leadership has worked. Strong leadership at the top of all institutions; political, social, healthcare, and at the same time very strong leadership shown by all the citizens. Across the globe, wherever this has happened, the fallout of COIVD 19 has been contained. Countries like New Zealand, Japan, Germany and South Korea are examples of this dual definition – great leadership shown at the top and across all levels, all the way down to the average citizen. There have been other countries, where very poor leadership at the top and at the level of the citizenry , has led to the crisis spiralling out of control; and those countries have paid a very heavy price, and continue to do so.

While the virus is too small to be seen, what has become clearly visible in the past five months is the remarkable leadership shown by people at the bottom of the pyramid. In hospitals it was the junior most staff that saved lives; nurses, junior doctors, and other health care workers, who worked twenty-hour shifts for weeks on end; suffocating in their protective gear while they helped seriously ill patients, breathe once again. In Dharavi, one of Asia's largest slums, with the highest density of human beings per square kilometre anywhere on the planet; it is the local street policeman and primary health care workers who struggled in unimaginable conditions to bring the spread of the virus to an almost complete halt. And this would have not been impossible if the people living there had not shown leadership.

It is this kind of remarkable leadership that prods us into asking some fundamental questions. Questions such as : If we could tap into the potential leadership of everyone across the organization, how different would our companies look? In a company with 1000 employees, rather than identifying 25 or 50 people as the leadership team, if all 1000 per categorized as leaders how would that change our definition of leadership? What does it take to get everyone to do outstanding things, without being pushed into doing so by a crisis? To what extent does poor leadership at the top dilute the quality of leadership shown at all levels across the organization? These questions, and many more, come to mind, when we look to cultivate leaders at all levels.

So much organizational effort goes into "leadership development" at companies all over the world. And yet there is often ambiguity of what this means or what it takes to transform ordinary people into great leaders. Perhaps leadership stories and examples of great leadership in the corporate world, need a new template or a new language. Perhaps we need to define leadership from the perspective of what people put in, in addition to the business outcomes that we have been using to measure leaders. In a war, it's the leadership story of the unknown soldier that inspires us the most, more than the tales of any high ranking general; maybe we will get some answers by understanding why. ◼▪▫

> **So much organizational effort goes into "leadership development" and yet there is often ambiguity about what it takes to transform ordinary people into great leaders.**

> **If we could tap into the potential leadership of everyone across the organization, how different would our companies look?**

Rustom Vesavevala is the Head of HR and Business Excellence at Mahindra Partners. He has over 25 years of experience and has expertise in the areas of Human Resources, Learning & Development, Service Quality and Business Excellence.

HOW DO OVERWHELMED SYSTEMS COPE?

I f the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that uncertainties will always be a part of life. COVID-19 has exposed deficiencies as well as inefficiencies in almost every social system around the world. But we've also seen many stories of resilience and agility in coping with these unforeseen circumstances. Taking a cue from how overwhelmed systems from across the world have coped with the situation, here are some lessons that we can apply to our organisations.

1. Be open to change and quick to adapt

It is imperative to be aware and respond appropriately. Allowing for flexibility in processes makes it easier to make modifications to the system when necessary. USA's failure to respond to the rapid spread of COVID-19 despite many countries already enforcing strategies to contain the virus has made it one of the world's worst-hit countries today. India kept a cautious check on the virus and implemented a strict lockdown in the early stages. While the way it was done and the impact is debatable, given the vast population of the country that lacks basic availability to sanitation, it has helped contain the spread to a large extent.

2. Communicate effectively

Transparent, simple and empathetic communication is the backbone of any change management process. It is a powerful tool during a crisis. The Russian population's general lack of trust in official statistics left people doubtful if the pandemic was even real! As a result of this, the public failed to comply with social distancing norms and the usage of masks early-on. In another example, vacillating communication that changed every day, downplayed the danger, as exhibited in the

> " While we may not be fully equipped to cope with every situation that is thrown at us, a level of preparedness is required to ensure survival. "

United States has only caused panic in the country leaving people confused about the seriousness of the situation.

3. Think forward

Consider possible scenarios in the near future and the effect that present decisions can impose on them. This will lead to more practical evaluation of the options available. Under political and economic pressure, states in Brazil are reopening businesses despite the number of cases in the country being on a steep ascending curve. As a result of this, the country is seeing a stressed healthcare system that is unable to cope with the rising demand. In sharp contrast, during the early stages of the pandemic, South Korea had identified a major congregation that often-had large gatherings in closed spaces around the country. Large scale testing and contact tracing were first enforced among this community to slow down the rate of spread of the virus. Their foresight to enforce effective detection and containment measures prevented a major outbreak in the country.

> " Allowing for flexibility in processes makes it easier to make modifications to the systems. "

4. Have a contingency and an exigency plan

Plan ahead for a likely disaster and its mitigation. The plan should consider all possible emergencies and ensure adequate resources are set aside to deal with the exigencies. Bhutan, a landlocked nation, that shares its borders with populous countries of India and China, houses only 300 doctors and relies highly on medical aid from abroad. Before the onset of the first case of the virus in November 2019, Bhutan had gone through a simulation exercise to assess the country's response to a virus outbreak. The country was therefore aware of their pitfalls and was able to respond quickly by enforcing early quarantine, testing and border control. Planning and preparedness kept Bhutan from overburdening its healthcare system, and the results are evident with the country reporting zero deaths so far.

While we may not be fully equipped to cope with every situation that is thrown at us, there is certainly, a level of preparedness required to ensure survival through difficult times. As an organisation, if there is one definitive lesson to learn from this pandemic is that those who prepare for an emergency are better equipped to handle one.

Susanne Rodrigues, Assistant Manager – Human Resources, Mahindra Partners

REIMAGINING THE
SUPPLY CHAIN

Person: Rajesh Kumar, Head of Supply Chain of a multinational consumer electronics firm having products in personal care, medical devices and imaging. Rajesh is pacing nervously in his bedroom, which has been his office space for the last 50 plus days in the COVID related lockdown in India. New guidelines for 'Lockdown 4' are expected at any time. Rajesh had to do the business impact assessment of these guidelines.

He looked at his To-Do list:
1. Movement of containers stuck at JNPT
2. Material safety on trucks stranded on the highway
3. Supply to the plants of PCBs manufactured by a startup in Chennai
4. Payment to the transporters
5. Alternate arrangement if there is a shortage of labour and drivers due to migration

He was feeling overwhelmed as he did not have answers to many questions. He had never faced a situation like this in his 25 years of career. As he was thinking, his mind flashed some of the awards he had received:
1. Lowest cost of manufacturing in Asia Pacific
2. Lowest inventory among all the plants for medical devices
3. Best cost reduction idea: sourcing from China

He was reflecting whether the awards he received were for the short-term benefit or they were sustainable. COVID crisis has questioned all known norms. He remembered the points he had made at the Round Table on SCM earlier in the year.

"The role of the supply chain is equally critical in all the end markets. However, the shape, size, length, complexity differs. For end markets like vegetables, it is the shortest – producing and consuming locations are quite close. Whereas in products like electronics and automobiles it could span a few continents. The material would move for a few weeks between the origin and destination."

He had to present a point of view on the supply chain in the post COVID era. His thoughts were still muddled. The critical question was - what will be the interim impact and what could be permanent changes?

Slowly, his thoughts started to crystallise as he kept focusing on first principles.
1. Demand will be uncertain as consumers would first assess the personal financial impact of COVID before committing to any purchase

> **Supply chain professionals are not just 'behind the scene' players.**
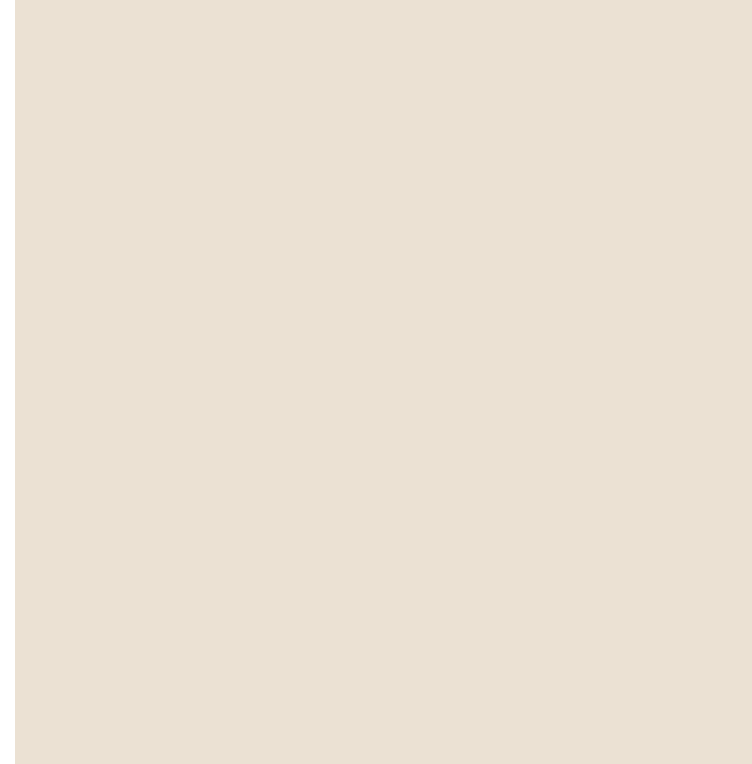
2. Further penetration of Ecommerce as consumers have got used to it for many more categories in lockdown.
3. The universal principle of Total Cost of Ownership and not only focusing on the purchase price or logistics cost.

He zeroed on the following changes in the supply chain:
1. *Responsive supply chain as against just efficient* – make to demand and not on forecast. This would mean a need for flexibility in resources including manpower.
2. *The tradeoff between RISK and COST.* As a strategy, companies would have the following sourcing guidelines
   a. At least 2 sources of supply for all components.
   b. At least one local/indigenous source.
3. *Shared resources* – warehouses, trucks, manpower. It has already started in some parts; it will get accelerated as companies focus on flexibility and costs at the same time. This will give rise to more multiuser facilities, part-load shipments etc.
4. *More digital supply chain.* Paper will be substituted with apps and scans. Even B2B customers would expect visibility like B2C e-commerce.

He thought about the migrant issue. Man vs machine tradeoff. But he concluded that migrants would come back within a few months and India will continue to have more labour intensive work. He fleetingly thought about 3D printing. Then he concluded that it is certainly a possibility, but it will take some more time to mature and replace the current manufacturing processes.

He concluded that irrespective of the likely changes, the supply chain would continue to be at the forefront of business strategy.

"Supply chain professionals are not just 'behind the scene' players. Everyone knows about the 4Ps of marketing – product, price, promotion and place. COVID has proved again that the important P is the place for the brick and mortar economy. Goods must be available for the consumer at the point of consumption. "

He was reminded of Robert Barrow, US Marine Corps General, who summed it up nicely "Amateurs talk about strategy and tactics. Professionals talk about logistics and sustainability in warfare".

> **Irrespective of the likely changes, supply chain would continue to be at the forefront of business strategy.**

(This is a piece of fiction)

Prasanna Pahade, Vice President - Automotive & Engineering Business at Mahindra Logistics Limited

STAYING CONNECTED
WITH CUSTOMERS DURING
CHALLENGING TIMES

When Rustom called to share a few perspectives about the subject, I sat to write. My daughter who was sitting along, without knowing what I was seeking, just uttered, that it's been a while we went on a holiday. Something that brought back many memories – of walking the streets and the friendly hawkers, eating some street food at an old famous store, a nervous roller-coaster joyride and the old gentleman at the ticket counter, friendly banters on a holiday evening and the smiling young boy who serves tiny bits to munch on, visiting a friend's place with a small gift and the store guy who helps us choose, a jump in the pool and my daughter's favourite gear, and many more kinds. Seems life was a privilege. Paused, do they also miss us as we miss 'em?

We are connected and thriving in a world of consumerism. We are all consumers if we are consuming service or product of a brand. Brands, that are in turn, a figment of our (consumer's) imagination because they bring value to our lives in some way. And value, something that can only be delivered to someone else. Someone else (like us), who needs such value and sees the brand as a part of their lives and does not mind spending to attain it. Consumers, that need to be connected to and nurtured in these times, and are anticipating the end of these times for the better.

> " **Costovation is an innovation that cuts costs while exceeding customer expectations.** "

In a world, despite choices, spending has reduced significantly. Brands still stay strong in our minds. In airlines, spending has come down by 91%. Hotel booking related spending has come down by 83%. Despite the grim statistics, the world, like my daughter, is hoping that the worst should be over so we can recover from the muted state.

Professor Noriaki Kano developed the Kano Model in Japan in the 1980s. The idea was to create something that classified customer preferences for attributes of a product or service and is a sweet spot between what consumer prefers and what their preferred brands can deliver. Kano grouped these customer reactions into five categories: Extraordinary (Innovative), performance of the innovation, indifference to such performance (extraordinary becomes ordinary), must-be (becomes a need) and undesired (time to innovate again as many choices of the same product exist).

The world stage is at a similar inflexion point. Its needs an extraordinary touch of healing and needs refreshment. We have short and long relationships with our consumers. And if we go by the potential of lifetime values, there would rarely be a brand that wouldn't want to have a long term consumer. But consumerism will need extraordinary healing in these times, to recover from the anxiety and stress of not being impacted by the fears of such deadly pandemic. So, they will be sceptical of stepping out and purchasing. And any purchasing will be basis sweet spots. Sweet spots occur only when the ordinary is busted and something extraordinary occurs. As Harvard states, the one thing caused by COVID-19 is innovation. The way we will purchase, the way we will interact, the way we will connect, and more so digitally, all has changed.

> " **The way we will purchase, the way we will interact, the way we will connect, and more so digitally, all has changed.** "

The brands that remain of choice will be the ones that with like in Ho'oponopono – an ancient Hawaiian practice defined as "mental cleansing" to make right, correct, adjust and amend, had four things that you need to work on, and in this context here, with the consumers. And the method was new and distinctive, rather extraordinary. The four things to heal, restart and/or continue relationships, are: Subtly regret the mistakes and try and undo them, seek forgiveness by being kind in these times, express gratitude for them being your consumer, and express your love for them to stay with you forever. But how:

1. **Keep your consumers loyal:** Why bother driving to your local neighbourhood family-owned grocery store, when you could have ordered what you need online? The entire family in the store is now serving the consumers lined up. 'Like a family where members are close'. Keeping your customers close is always critical, but it's especially so when everyone else is offering convenience, job security is low, and spenders are holding on tighter to their wallets. Go over their records and make relationship amendment calls.

2. **Customer Job to be done:** The coronavirus has reshuffled priorities. It has made customer jobs to be done more important than before. I was reading that 'Keep my kids entertained' is one that's taken on quite a new level of importance while consumers are in the middle of company-wide video meetings. Companies like Audible are adjusting offerings to reflect the most urgent needs of the moment and announced the launch of Audible stories, which allows anyone anywhere to listen to over 200 children's stories for free. As a bonus, parents can feel good about how their kids are spending their time (an audiobook beats hours of television!).

3. **Adjust to new consumer habits:** It's hard to stay six feet away from other people in a crowded supermarket. Countless companies are investing in just beginning delivery. Meanwhile, eat-in restaurants have been turned upside-down as their main draw—the experience and the atmosphere of dining out—is no longer an option. Revisit your policies.

4. **Delight customers with Costovation:** As per Forbes (Contributor Stephen Wunker) – I like this the most. Costovation is an innovation that cuts costs while exceeding customer expectations. Business owners might realize that a fully remote workforce means less overhead, and homebuyers might decide that on-demand virtual tours are a better option than crowded open houses. All companies should be thinking critically about which of their customers' newly adopted habits might stick in the long run and reduce the cost of serving as well. Using the information you have about your customers' priorities and needs, a little creativity and a lot of flexibility will go a long way toward making innovation happen.

All the best! Stay safe – Stay Well. ■■□□

Sujit Paul, Chief- Member Experience and Business Excellence, Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Limited

REIMAGING LEARNING IN A
POST COVID
WORLD

I t was Bruce Barton, the American author, advertising executive, and politician who served in the U.S. Congress, who once commented, "Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance."

A corollary to this self-assuring statement is the emergence of new possibilities that emerged as stakeholders across communities and diaspora were engulfed with insurmountable challenges with the emergence of the global pandemic at the beginning of 2020. The human race is adaptive to adversity and wo/man's (from a diversity and inclusion standpoint) propensity to manage trials and tribulations is embedded in his intrinsic spirit to succeed. The annals of history are littered with examples of how the human spirit of enterprise has married uncertainty with resilience and catastrophe with confidence. Civilizations have harnessed the power of innovation and leveraged on free enterprise to accelerate collective comfort and convenience. This spirit is visible in the efforts undertaken by leaders, across all spectrums and positions of leadership, to build trust and make those that they influence feel protected so that they can cope with 'new normal' and relate to global uncertainties with a higher level of immunity. This has provoked every

> **The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.**

stakeholder and community with an opportunity to reflect on the what, the how, the when, the who and the why of becoming agile, rapidly 'unlearn-learn-relearn' and through the process of metamorphosis, emerge stronger.

Alvin Toffler, regarded as one of the world's outstanding futurists and known for his works discussing modern technologies, including the digital revolution and the communication revolution, prophetically said, "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." where he reiterated that change is not merely necessary to life, but is life.

The new possibilities that have emerged due to COVID-19 have challenged the fundamentals of learning, especially that of instructor-led learning. Technology has been harnessed, habits and preferences have been questioned and stakeholders across various levels have realized that they have no other choice but to quickly unlearn, learn and re-learn by making the best use of available resources. This has created new windows that were earlier frowned upon where boundaries and time do not matter, presence is based on trust, preferences are one's prerogative and attention is based on one's quest, might we say thirst, to know more. Both employees and management have realized that self-learning can be accentuated by introspection, work can be executed virtually and the boundaries of work and family can co-exist seamlessly. When you reflect on the profound words of both Bruce Barton and Alvin Toffler, you realize that wo/man's spirit to RISE above circumstances with grit and purpose is the true force-multiplier to ensure that we're superior to circumstance.

> **The new possibilities that have emerged due to COVID-19 have challenged the fundamentals of learning, especially that of instructor-led learning.**

Rehan Farias, Head - Talent Management & Organizational Development at Mahindra Logistics

MENTAL RESILIENCE

We are all in very challenging times, there is no precedent, no learning from a past event, nothing that we have ever experienced. The world is literally unfolding per day in our lives.

To be able to thrive through change and come out stronger the key factor is in building our mental strength. By building our Mental Resilience, we will be able to manage most situations in a better calmer and stronger manner.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

It is the ability to recover and 'bounce back' from stressful events of life and ever-changing circumstances. It is about having the necessary inner strength and resourcefulness to cope with the changing demands

In simple terms, everything that happens out there is happening out there, how we let every single thing affect us is our power in life. I call them filters, how I allow the outside to invade my inside. The external world is not in our control, but our internal world we can have control.

The reality out there is constantly unfolding, and you may have little or no control. But there is another very real, very personal, very emotional reality that we are experiencing and that is all happening in our mind.

The Mind is where the show is going on, and here we can control and be in the power of it. Our reality is how we think it, which in turn means how we are experiencing it. Our thoughts create a feeling and emotion and we live in that space.

There is enough research that shows optimistic people are more resilient. Positive emotions can be a big buffer against stress.

In the famous words of Louise Hay and the book The Secret, "Our thoughts create our reality ".

Living mindfully is being aware of our thoughts, and keeping them in a positive state. Controlling the negative mental chatter that can go into an endless loop, from anxiety, to fear of helplessness. This downward spiral is very dangerous.

> " **The Mind is where the show is going on, and here we can control and be in power of it.** "

Be in the present, ask yourself, are you okay now? Most of the time you will be okay in the present, it's the past or the future that makes us upset, angry or anxious.

But life is only lived in the now, today, this moment.

There are many different ways to enhance your positivity:

Start your day in a conscious mindful manner, with a routine. A routine creates discipline and an environment that nurtures a successful life.

There is a psychosomatic connection between the mind and body. So treat yourself the better.

Take care of your body, eat sensibly, a healthy body and good immunity makes us stronger.

Physical exercise release endorphins, they are happy hormones. And when we are physically fit we have more energy and this makes us deal with problems better.

Sleep is a very important component of not just your physical body but even your mental wellbeing. Lack of sleep makes you irritable and lowers your energy and every problem seems very bigger. A well-rested mind and body cope with stress far better.

Good relationships are very important in boosting happiness, keep your social connections with family and friends.

We don't realize how important social connection is and sometimes how painful isolation can feel.

Find a purpose to your life, beyond the economic one. Find the passion that makes you feel alive and happy. Do 3 things for yourself that enhance your positive quotient.

Challenge the so-called demons that we are constantly confronted every day, talk to a good friend or seek professional help. Put things in perspective, ask yourself whether this will be applicable say 3 months from now. When we realize that everything is passing and this too shall pass.

Gratitude, however, is the clear winner, when we are in gratitude we sense a state of calm and it lowers stress. Gratitude is a very powerful silent prayer.

There are so many ways to build your positivity and happiness, and some may be personal to you.

Be your own best friend!

> " **To be able to thrive through change and come out stronger the key factor is in building our mental strength.** "

Farhana Vohra, Business Facilitator, Certified Trainer, Life Coach, Motivational Speaker. Read more: www.miraki.in

INNOVATION IN
TIMES OF COVID

Strange as it may sound, but adversity also presents opportunity.

One ideal case in point is Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). The IT giant has successfully moved 85% of its employees to a Work from Home (WFH) model. TCS decided, even pre-COVID to move to this model to optimize costs and productivity. Before the lockdown, TCS had 20% of its employees working from home. This has currently jumped to 90% working from home. This is due to a new software 'Secure Borderless Work Spaces' (SBWS) developed by TCS. They have let go of their 20-year-old operating model, in favour of this new one. To achieve this new work model, TCS has built-in AI and automation into most of their functions like infrastructure, networks, and others.

TCS has even decided that up to 2025, up to 75% of their 4.5 lakh employees will work from home. Their top management has decided that they do not require more than 25% of their employees at the office, to be 100% productive.

This means that each employee will be in the office on an average for 25% of his/her work time. This will result in huge savings in office space and operational costs. And will also result in better business continuity and agility.

For employees too, WFH will be beneficial as it will save on commute time and enable them to be more productive. Though earlier, India did not have a WFH mindset, COVID has changed all that. According to NASSCOM, there is a permanent shift, going forward, in how Indian companies will look at employees vis-à-vis WFH. Companies will, however, need to revamp to have a robust security infrastructure in place and enable their employees with all the facilities to WFH.

The Indian automotive industry had been adversely impacted by the decline in the economy in the last 2-3 years, and now it has been impacted further with the COVID pandemic. It may start showing signs of recovery only towards the 3rd quarter of FY 2021. Post the pandemic, the general public will be more cautious towards their health and safety. Thus, in the short term, they will prefer their mobility vehicles.

And due to liquidity crunch, they will prefer used vehicles. And two-wheelers. Thus, the automotive sector will have to devise innovative purchase/leasing schemes to drive sales.

> **Organisations must stay in touch with consumers and retain customers through innovative ways.**

Thus, service-based models such as pay-as-you-go, and lease rentals may see an upswing in the coming months. These and more innovative ways of doing business will be seen soon. OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) are launching online sales channels to connect with consumers on the digital platform. Some automotive companies are employing the 'Protect-Restore-Rebound' approach to cope with the current crisis in the automotive sector.

In the 'Protect' stage i.e. next 6 months, OEMs must quickly assess financial and operational viability of dealers and suppliers, and categorise them into healthy, moderate and high-risk, and assist them through liquidity planning, and cost optimizing ideas. And they must stay in touch with consumers, retain customer sentiment through innovative ways.

Suppliers must also work out their costs more efficiently, to ensure adequate working capital. To ensure regular payment inflow, they should honour contractual terms with their customers, despite reduced availability of manpower due to the lockdown, as well as follow social distancing norms as required. And never compromise on customers' safety.

In the 'Restore' stage i.e. next 6 -12 months, by this time, OEMs will have better clarity about consumer sentiments, global supply developments (eg China-related), and viability of dealers and suppliers. They should plan and conduct digital or soft launches. Both OEMs and suppliers should focus on driving further production and logistics efficiencies, and off-loading assets with low utilization. Every effort should be made to reap cost efficiencies.

In the 'Rebound' stage i.e. post 12 months, OEMs and suppliers should leverage low valuations to acquire or co-create digital capabilities for automation, AI, blockchain, e-commerce, mobility platforms, and advanced safety systems.

Both should define the right mix of new product and services portfolio considering new customer segments, health, hygiene and connectivity needs. Suppliers must cultivate a strong 'quality first' mindset to capture a larger share of the global business.

- On the front end, the main focus should be on driving a great 'digital' customer experience, building on analytics, and optimizing on the network footprint and showroom sizes.
- Product and R&D teams should review and expedite required changes in product specs. At the same time, they should keep a close eye on product and technology costs and drive increased modularity, to enhance per-unit margins.

Finally, OEMs must work at shifting a large share of the business to Indian suppliers after carefully evaluating any geographical risk (China, North America & Europe). And should also build on their emergency capital reserves to take care of future turbulences.

All this will ensure better continuity of business in the long term. Isn't this what all businesses aim to achieve?

(Compiled by the Editorial team)

> **An organisation should build on their emergency capital reserves to take care of future turbulences.**

THE WORLD OF WORK
GETS A FACELIFT

The pandemic has changed the world order, in more ways than one. Our ways of working and thinking in the corporate world, have been transformed too. Here are some of the areas we can expect to see a big change.

Flatter organisation structure

Gone are the days of hierarchical structures. Flatter structures make the system more agile, more responsive, facilitate faster decisions, and encourage boldness in decisions. Overall win-win.

Small empowered teams

The pandemic has seen a rapid proliferation of small, intimate teams. Clarity – in roles, objectives as well as in performance metrics, combined with empowerment for execution makes them nimble and results-focused. Higher morale and ownership are natural consequences.

> **The pandemic has sprung some pleasant surprises like what substance leaders are made of.**

Hybrid way of work

The new normal will see more of the 'hybrid' way – business conducted as a mix of the in-person format, as also remotely. This will allow organizations access to a wider range of talent, more flexibility, increased productivity and lower real-estate costs. This will find ready takers in millennials who, besides being tech-wired, worship independence and flexibility.

Narrowed focus for top leadership

The drastic shake-up affected by the pandemic has led to the surfacing of multiple new challenges. Too many for a small team of top leaders to wrestle with successfully. Although historically an important leadership skill, this current condition makes delegation by senior leaders more needed than ever before. Indeed, the sharpening of talent through the leadership pipeline is a given added benefit of such empowerment.

Nurture future leaders today

The pandemic has sprung some pleasant surprises; it has revealed what substance leaders are made of. Those with resilience, the boldness to face challenges head-on, dance with uncertainty, and through it all, deliver results most of all. This is priceless for building a robust leadership pipeline. Progressive organisations will seize this opportunity.

Reskilling & upskilling

Reskilling facilitates a smooth transition into a new role or an existing role. It involves learning job-specific skills. Ongoing learning and development of the team are way more cost-effective than bringing in fresh hires. Plus, it accounts for a more driven, motivated organization climate.

With the redefining of many roles demanded by the current situation, it will do organisations good to roll-out short, impactful, informal learning experiences to help

> **Flatter structures make the system more agile, more responsive and encourage boldness and speed in decision-making.**

the team slide quickly into their new role requirements. Going forward, members may upskill themselves by enrolling in more intensive courses, even earning new qualifications.

Increased use of technology

Technology has emerged the hero through the pandemic. Be it digital payments, telehealth, online shopping, and a similar multitude of contactless services, technology has allowed a semblance of normalcy in distinctly abnormal conditions.

Hearteningly, the remote work option kept the wheels of many organizations running. Technology will continue to be hero, and organisations will need to invest in it substantially.

Big data analytics

The big data analytics market worldwide is growing by the day, almost exploding. This is driven by the sharp upsurge in the use of smartphones and other smart devices. Every click, share, streaming, produces millions of gigabytes of data every day. The global market of big data analytics is estimated to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 11% from now until 2023. This will but naturally intensify the demand for sound data professionals. Data Analytics will quickly emerge as a coveted profession. Increased investment from government and healthcare sectors will drive this market in the post-pandemic world.

Digitization

These past few months have seen a rapid acceleration of digitization and deglobalization. With online consumption multiplying manifold, businesses have had to respond by ramping up their digital transformation plans within a few months instead of years. A classic example is TCS which has built-in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation into its very fabric of work, and through its workplace model- 'Model 25/ 25', has almost 85% of the team on a 'Work-From-Home' WFH platform. The resultant cost reduction is huge.

Collaborative partnerships on the rise

The pandemic has seen companies forge partnerships for maximum synergy and extraordinary impact. For example, an organization with the perfect design for an emergency ventilator-expansion device partnered with another organization equipped with the necessary distribution capability. Manufacture and distribution were both seamless. The future will see more such synergies, with organisations leveraging their intrinsic strengths.

To sum it up, the world of work is transforming. And will continue to do so faster every day. Future-ready organisations will be the ones who joyfully and willingly embrace this future that awaits. ■■□□

Shernaz Kapadia, Executive Secretary to President, Mahindra Partners

THE WAY WE SEE A PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM!

The solution, that we create for our current problem, often becomes a new problem for us in the future. Our successes many a time create a blindfold of ego, that does not allow us to see anything beyond our constricted periphery. Our failures many a time create fear of not trying again. Our beliefs created in a vulnerable moment get so deeply embedded inside us that we start feeling them as part of ourselves. It is not easy to see our shackles and prison. Only through self-reflection or an expert's help can we know our beliefs and work on them to widen our perspectives. Central to widening our perspective is acknowledging a new context as a missing part of larger Truth and learning a new way of adding meaning to what is happening to us. Continuous widening of our perspective is a lifelong excellence journey. The land of growth lies outside the strong fort of our belief system. It is very important to take a periodic stroll outside the boundary of our comfort and fear.

At this point of time, I am going back memory lane to narrate a story of a successful company preparing for an International award. Way back in 1999 Tata Metaliks (TML), an iron-making company in Kharagpur, Bengal, where I was working as Corporate Quality Head, decided to go for next level of excellence– JIPM-TPM (Total Productive Maintenance). At that time, TML had covered good ground on its excellence journey. It was the first ISO 14001 certified company in Tata Group. It had established good TQM processes and won several awards in the areas of quality, environment management and people practices. Immediately after entering the factory, one would see a lush green garden, with many varieties of roses and marigolds. It was hard to believe that you were entering an iron-making factory with a blast furnace, casting area, and yards for storing raw materials and finished product. In the Tata Group, the wholesome success of Tata Metaliks, a rather smaller company, had become a matter of discussion. I fondly remember participating in a discussion at "Bombay House" on the implementation of the environmental management system and being showered with accolades for what we achieved in TML in a very short time, by the veterans of Tata group companies.

We thought that the TPM consultant will enter the TML factory and get mesmerised at first sight and would immediately recommend TML for JIPM TPM award. It was just the opposite! The JIPM TPM consultant arrived and after some time we took him for a plant visit. Before reaching near the blast furnace we paused near a big steel board, that had a long and audacious vision statement. One senior person started

> **Only through self-reflection or an expert's help can we widen our perspectives**

> **The consultant pulverised our ego to powder and destroyed our beliefs during his association with us.**

explaining him in an eloquent manner of our vision of becoming a world-class company. The Japanese consultant, who was a man of few words and fewer facial expressions, suddenly put his right hand on the board and wiped out some dust from the board. Then looking at us he asked – With so much of daily loss of your product dust on your vision board how can you become a world-class company?

None of us was prepared to answer such an unprecedented, shocking question. After walking a few steps further, the consultant asked – How old is this factory? The factory head, cautiously replied, 10-years. The consultant stopped and exclaimed with wide eyes- 10-years? It looks like a 30-year old factory. Your equipment is crying for maintenance and you are talking about being a world-class company? I'll teach you how to become a world-class company. Finally, we reached near the blast furnace. The hot air was laden with carbon dioxide, coke, flux dust and graphite flakes, that we were quite used to. Liquid metal was being tapped from a furnace and poured into ladle at ~ 1300-degree C. There was the big hump of slag underneath and in the surrounding area of the furnace. The consultant was shocked. The environment is very hazardous here. Please improve the condition and bring it to a state so that we can have a tea party here next time. My fee is very high. Please call me only when you are ready. While coming back one of us mentioned to him that we have planned to reduce accidents by 75 % of last year. We asked him whether he would consider that as a good target? He sarcastically said, –so are you planning 25% accidents? This is a crime. Go to the root of these accidents and make them zero. I'll teach you how to achieve zero accident, zero defect, zero downtime. Visualise and strive to achieve Zero Fuguai (a Japanese word for "deviation from ideal"). The consultant pulverised our ego to powder and destroyed our beliefs during his association with us. He helped us create completely new mindsets. He taught us how to plan annual targets based on Loss Cost concept, completely different from the traditional way of % increase or decrease over last year. In the TPM journey, he taught us many more powerful and counterintuitive tools and techniques, the implementation of which transformed every aspect of our operations and people management. However, one approach which fundamentally changed our work orientation was the fanatic way of Fuguai identification; and then running Kaizen to improve the state of places, processes and working like Picasso. We launched TPM in December 2001 and won the TPM JIPM award in 2002.

It takes great effort and wisdom so that the solution you implement today, does not translate into a problem tomorrow. ■■□□

Sanjay Jha, CHRO and Senior VP Business Development and OEM Relations, Mahindra First Choice Wheels Ltd.

OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MEETINGS, WORK-FROM-HOME

Digital meetings are nothing new. They have gone viral though, with the COVID breakout. Let's refresh some housekeeping basics for professional demeanour during VCs, and some hacks when working from home.

Video Conferencing (VC)

1. Setting/ background

Ensure that your face is visible. No way should you have a source of light (like a window) behind you, else your face will appear as a silhouette. If a window is unavoidable, draw the curtains. Keep the background neat and professional looking. Many VC applications have provisions to 'Blur the background'.

2. Infrastructure – hardware/ software

Maximise the bandwidth for your laptop during the VC. Disconnect wi-fi from other devices. Use headphones for better voice clarity. Bandwidth permitting, keep the video-mode on, even though not speaking. Use a video conferencing software which is easily accessible, and does not require complicated technology to run it. Know which app/ software will be used for the meeting, and as much as possible, download it at least half an hour in advance. Familiarise yourself with it, so you navigate with ease, basic functions like show/ hide video, mute/ unmute audio, share screen, chat/ ask a question, raise a hand, join/ leave the meeting.

3. Your personality

Dress professionally. It enhances your confidence, as much as the image you convey. Hold an erect posture, maintain engaging body language. Do give occasional visual cues that you are 'in' the discussion, through a slight smile, a nod. Looking into the camera instead of at the screen is received by other participants as eye contact. Not always comfortable for you, but try doing so especially when you're the one speaking. Suitable hand gestures that the camera catches, reflect vibrancy, energy and spontaneity. Just take care to not overdo nor let them cover your face. Keep feet on the floor, NO tapping! You do not want others to see a bouncing head. Avoid nervous quirks. You are on camera!

Keep voice reasonably audible. Articulate clearly, speak at a medium pace. Cultivate tonality that projects cheerful energy. Check with the audience quickly if you can be heard to ensure your effort is not wasted. Keep audio on 'mute' when not speaking. If you are the host, ensure that all except the speaker are muted.

> " Ensure you are audible and cultivate tonality that projects cheerful energy. "

4. During the meeting

As host, limit the meeting to 45 minutes, and no more than 60.

> " Take short breaks. A stretch-break, a coffee-break, a hug-my-child break...choose your energizer! "

Beyond this, attention will waver. Run through the agenda mindful of the time to devote to each point. Keep it brisk and crisp. Preparation prevents unnecessary rambling.

If host or presenter, you absolutely must log in at least 15 minutes before starting time. Confirm all settings and functions, and set yourself up to warmly greet people as they join. Spend a couple of minutes to build rapport. Make the participants comfortable. Address people by name. Personalising engages people better. Encourage all to contribute. Ask questions, make notes, follow-up on them.

Summarize, then conclude at a logical point. And maybe, fix a tentative date for the next meeting.

Work From Home with elan

1. **Work station.** Try to reserve dedicated space for work. Given our compact apartments, just a corner will serve you well enough. Select a space that has a light, is quiet and will minimize distractions from others at home, without demanding that they tiptoe around.
   Organise this space for efficiency, embellish it with your personal touches. Stationery, a favourite picture, a stress-buster, a plant... .make this 'your' space. You're going to be living(!) there a lot for some time more.
   Get the ergonomics right. Check the height and back-rest of your chair. If required, prop yourself up with cushions or pillows. A screen protector helps protect eyes and reduce the fatigue of extended screen-time.

2. **Take short breaks.** A stretch-break, a coffee-break, a hug-my-child break...choose your energizer! Do what you need to do to make work-time enjoyable.

3. **Stay connected with colleagues.** Replace the spontaneous social strokes of the office with calls, voice mails, teams chats, even tea and samosa catch-ups!

4. **Guard against time-nibblers.** Do not give in to temptation. Keep at bay the digital devil! Net surfing, forwarding random messages, checking Facebook likes... No no-no. Five-minute nibbles here and there, and before you realize, they have hijacked an hour. Or more. Cultivate discipline. Schedule breaks. Do what you like then.

5. **Do not hesitate to say a polite 'No'.** Do what you can as best as you can, stay flexible, stretch when the situation demands, go out of your way when the task is critical. All that done, remember to draw the boundary lines. Work From Home does not grant a license for indiscriminate infringing on your time. Gently and assertively, say 'No' when you must.

6. **Unplug, unwind, recentre.** A bit of a challenge when working from home, yet with some practice, perfectly doable. Close the work-day at a scheduled time. Thereafter turn your attention whole-heartedly to your other roles. Revive a hobby. It is rejuvenating, helps you maintain balance (and sanity!) while of course preventing you from neglecting aspects of who you are besides professional.

7. **Be planned.** A to-do list helps. Provided of course that you refer to it at regular intervals.

8. **Keep the communication channels open.** Be transparent with your manager, colleagues, all key stakeholders. Especially when working remotely, communication is key, to keep relationships nurtured.
   Remember - This new 'normal' will be the springboard for the future.   ■□■□

(Written by the Editorial team)

LEADING
THROUGH A
PANDEMIC

As the world moves on with all the unpredictability, the coronavirus pandemic has brought to the forefront some exemplary leadership. It takes courage, honesty, dedication, determination and practicality among other traits, to bounce back during a global crisis. These are a few world leaders who have led by example and proven successful in handling the crisis.

1. **Jacinda Ardern - Prime Minister of New Zealand**
   Jacinda Ardern has proven her ability to handle a crisis time and again - be it the shooting at Christchurch, the recent volcanic eruption in White Island or the COVID-19 pandemic. New Zealand was quick to respond and proactively took measures to combat the virus. At a very early stage, the country enforced a mandatory quarantine for all inbound travellers and a nation-wide lockdown was in full force. Frequent and informal communication through Facebook Live chats helped build trust and garnered cooperation from the citizens.

2. **Angela Merkel - Chancellor of Germany**
   Despite being a late starter to deal with the virus, Angela Merkel took a pragmatic, scientific approach to it. While the country did not enter a stringent lockdown like others, Merkel appealed to the masses to follow social distancing and especially avoid contact with the elderly. Her calm way of handling the crisis gathered a lot of public support and cooperation during the lockdown.

3. **Tsai Ing-wen - President of Taiwan**
   The President of Taiwan's quick response to the pandemic has helped prevent a major outbreak in the island state, despite its proximity to China. Taiwan's prompt and judicious action has taken them a long way and they are even forecasting a 2% growth in GDP this fiscal year, unlike most countries

> " Talking of leadership, it takes courage, honesty, dedication, determination, practicality and more to bounce back during a global crisis. "

> " While meeting the demands of the already jolted systems, these leaders anticipated further disruption and managed all stakeholders efficiently. "

across the world. Tsai Ing-wen took to simple strategies to control the spread of the virus. Travel restrictions and strict protocols for quarantine were enforced at the earliest and contact tracing were done for affected travellers. Commodity prices were monitored and panic was prevented by local production and distribution of masks. The country also managed to donate equipment to battle the virus to affected countries. Taiwan is a classic example of a successful collaboration among all stakeholders - medical professionals, public and private sectors and the general community.

4. **Mary Barra - CEO of General Motors**
   Mary Barra had taken over as CEO of GM when the auto industry was facing challenging times. During the pandemic, GM partnered with a start-up to use its idle assembly lines to deliver ventilators for the US government. Mary Barra's rational way of handling situations has helped GM survive through the auto slump and stay in business even through the pandemic.

5. **Jeff Bezos - Founder and CEO of Amazon**
   Jeff Bezos, known to focus on long term projects, shifted his attention to daily operations to cope with the changes during the pandemic. Amazon had initially struggled to respond to the increased number of orders during the initial phase of the pandemic. Since then, Bezos was actively involved in daily inventory checks and supply chain issues as well as combatting price surges due to the rising demand. On the delivery front, Amazon hired 175,000 new employees and incorporated safety and sanitation measures at warehouses. The company also increased its fleet size by leasing 12 new cargo aircraft. The strategy worked, with the company jumping to No. 2 position on the Fortune 500 list.

   A common thread that can be drawn through the examples of these leaders is that of stakeholder management. While meeting the demands of the already jolted systems, these leaders have had the foresight to anticipate further disruption. Their proactive and bold decisions along with transparent communications increased their adaptability to the situation. This rendered their plan successful even through all the uncertainty and the evolving global situation.

(Written by the Editorial team)

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