



After the War Against COVID-19 Is Won, Who Will Win the Peace?

Description

A few evenings ago, I watched a BBC News report of people trying to escape from Delhi. Hourly paid workers with the prospect of no food. Thousands, young and old, desperately trying to get back to the safety of their villages, when, in fact, they will carry and spread the virus throughout India.

It made me cry, but it also got me thinking: which countries and economies will emerge first? Which economies will reignite and dominate the global markets first—China? Europe? Will the U.S. lag behind simply due to the timing of the outbreak hitting their shores? How far behind will India and other similar emerging economies find themselves, and what will this mean for the world economic order?

As I mused, looking up at the indigo sky of an eerily silent London, my mind wandered back into business.

In a post-COVID-19 world, how will we reignite our businesses, and how will we restore the organizational and professional fitness we once enjoyed?

When we are afforded the luxury of looking back at the damage (both human and economic) this pandemic has wreaked, we will do so from a very different world, one in which many businesses will have to operate very differently, if they are to operate at all.

Our organizations are currently in various states of commercial and emotional shock. But we must not allow this shock to paralyze us; we need to start to prepare, and prepare with imagination, for a post-COVID-19 economic and social landscape.

Key Considerations for Our New Competitive Landscape

The businesses that emerge first and in reasonable shape will dominate their competitive landscape. They will have considered their:

Purpose

What is the purpose of our business? What do we do for our customers and clients and the wider community that

matters? Not just what they've been paying for but what matters to them?

The relationship between ourselves and our customers is going to have to be remade in a new environment. Their needs, priorities, and appetites will have changed. Are we preparing ourselves to meet them? Do we have the commercial resilience to bear the inevitable losses and the agility and energy to pivot to meet the opportunities that the new landscape will offer?

Products

What are we good at doing? This is the most unwelcome, but most revealing, product testing exercise imaginable. What have you found out so far? What is your key product? Are you still able to serve your clients? When we can't give our clients and customers what they need now, how are they reacting? Are they going without? Are they finding alternatives? What alternatives are you exploring?

I am in the learning and development business. The "face-to-face" element of our business has ground to a halt. Those businesses that do not have a significant digital element are in limbo. Given the current rush to explore online alternatives, and the predictable squeeze on training budgets that will follow this crisis, they are unlikely to find clients with either the budgets or the appetite for classroom training on the same scale as before.

People

What about the most important part of our business: our people? How have they coped? How have we supported them? Now is when our mettle as an employer is tested.

But our people have a responsibility, too. Who are the people in your business with the ideas and energy to reimagine our business and shape it up for the day this is over? [Simon Taylor](#) has written about how difficult situations are the best test of potential and talent. As you look around your business, who is stepping up? Who is showing the agility and attitude to adapt? Who is waiting in vain for the return of business as usual? [Danielle Chircop](#) describes how people can take control and attain the skills needed to adapt and manage.

Our Performance

How will we judge our success in managing our businesses through this crisis? Our partner [Jim Kirkpatrick](#) has written a piece on assessing the performance of a business. This is valuable work in normal times; these days, it is invaluable.

As Jim notes, "Learning must be integrated into the on-the-job environment and not viewed as separate or discrete." It is those businesses with the ability to learn and apply these skills in the workplace—identifying opportunities, developing new skill sets, applying new knowledge, and solving problems—that will come through this terrible period with renewed purpose and vigor.

Ready to see how you can meet your organization's learning and development needs? [Learn more](#) about the unique digital learning environment of [Kaplan Performance Academy](#)

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