



# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

## HOW TO EFFECTIVELY STRATEGIZE DURING “SLOWER” TIMES

BY SCOT MCCARTHY

**D**epending on your generation you might associate the phrase “Taking Care of Business” most closely with Elvis’ TCB Band or perhaps the Bachman-Turner Overdrive song of the ’70s. As a business performance consultant who assists organizations across the Commonwealth, the number one challenge I consistently hear from business owners and employees is that *they just don’t have the time to slow down and focus on taking care of business.* (Many have had more time lately, but we’ll get to that in a moment.)

History shows us that the highest performing companies remain high performing because they force themselves to dedicate the time to reimagine themselves in a future world and then proactively realign their products and services to meet those upcoming needs. They take the time to focus on:

- Updating organizational goals to meet future customer needs and capitalize on/create new market opportunities

- Helping team members understand and mentally engage with reaching the evolving goals
- Revamping work processes to reach updated goals in the most effective and efficient way
- Making sure the business roles suit the new processes and, where needed, updating roles so that employees have a complete understanding of who does what and how all the roles coordinate to deliver for the end customer

The COVID-19 pandemic is certainly the most disruptive phenomena this generation has experienced across all aspects of life. But with every challenge comes opportunity, and this unprecedented time is no exception. Creating physical space between each other (aka social distancing) has become an effective tool in our healthcare fight. Likewise, the pandemic has created the figurative space for leadership and staff to slow down and focus—not only on how best to survive these times, but also on how to thrive as we collectively move forward into the phases of recovery. We need to take this time to consider these questions:

- How have our customers’ needs changed in the last few months and what will their needs be in the “new normal”?
- Have we done everything possible to meet changing needs of our current and future customers?
- Are we updating goals and processes in a way that creates a work environment where everyone can do their best work and enjoy what they do?
- How can we revise work processes to make sure in these economically challenging times we deliver in an effective and most cost-efficient way?

While organizational effectiveness experts like myself can help you capitalize on these business opportunities, the reality is the most knowledgeable organizational consultants are already inside the organization—the *employees*. Employees love to eliminate the defect and rework headaches from their day. Employees know what drives customer satisfaction and they inherently know how to optimize work processes to best meet customers’ needs.

Business leaders have an opportunity to capitalize on and convert any extra time and space into an opportunity for employees to identify process issues and create their respective solutions. And by converting this temporary reality of increased space and time, we not only are taking care of business, but we are also taking care of employees. Each of us gets up every morning wanting to belong, wanting to add value, and wanting to do good work—in turn, we want to feel good about ourselves. In many cases, it is the organizational tools, technology and processes that get in the way of employee success/problem solving and the customer experience.

Yes, the pandemic is creating many new challenges for the business world. There is no doubt about it. But it is also creating a most opportune moment to engage the hearts and heads of employees to not only survive this pandemic-driven downturn, but to thrive going forward. *Go take care of business.* ■

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