

COVID – 19 EMERGING STRONGER, BETTER & *not bitter!*



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It was almost this time last year when COVID – 19 created havoc and send across waves of uncertainty to the world at large. In order to curb the spread of the disease, the Central Governments of almost all countries pronounced lockdowns. This meant an abrupt halt to almost all economic activity, suspension of travel – both domestic & international, overnight shift to remote working & several other consequential changes which were alien to human imagination.

The words 'lockdown', 'curfew', 'social distancing' became a part of our daily vocabulary. Slowly & steadily as lockdown's lifted & the world started living in the reality of a 'new normal' which meant – limited & restricted social interactions, shift to remote working, restricted travel amongst many others.

The Year 2020 would certainly go down in the history of mankind and the lessons it taught us were invaluable. It was year of challenges which brought about a complete transformation in the way businesses functioned. Almost every business owner – a local shopkeeper, vegetable vendors, mid – size organizations, large corporations faced the heat of unprecedented change which the pandemic brought with itself. Much indeed did go wrong and much was indeed lost. But, human spirit is invincible and survival was difficult but not impossible.

Here's what the COVID – 19 crises taught us :

Flexibility is the Key

Roger von Oech has rightly quoted “*flexibility is a requirement for survival*” and Covid – 19 only proved that.

Every business organization that needs to grow has to be flexible & willing to adapt to change. If an organization is flexible & able to respond quickly to changes in the external environment, it is in a better position to maintain its competitive edge. Due to the sudden lockdowns pronounced, organizations had to overnight shift to remote working. Maybe initially, this sudden change seemed quite unworkable, however with time – certain organizations have come to conclude that work from home is in fact a better option as it is quite effective as it helps reducing overhead costs. Several companies have implemented work from home/ flexible working policies based on the requirements of their organization.



Digital Transformation

Business owners have understood the need for making technological upgradations. Technological upgradations are extremely crucial to the success of any organization. Better technology helps organizations function more effectively and to a certain extent also helps reduce costs.

The pandemic forced almost all organizations to move out of their comfort zones & undertake a digital transformation journey. From increasing quality levels to optimizing operational efficiencies & taking advantage of the present increased demand, businesses need to draw up long term & short term plans to recover.

Also, here it is pertinent to mention that understanding the need of technological upgradations, the government has announced various schemes & subsidies to help MSME's to become more tech savvy.



Always have a Plan B

One must always be open to innovation. Several businesses went out of work during the pandemic. However, in order to survive and keep the financial wheels moving, it became essential to change gear & use the unutilized capacities. This of course served a two fold purpose – helping the community at large & also helping to reduce the financial impact of the losses incurred due to the sudden lockdown.

Several fashion brands switched to manufacturing masks & PPE Kits, food delivery apps like Zomato started an online marketplace to deliver essentials like fruits, vegetables & other necessities, automobile manufacturers like General Motors & Ford diverted their available resources to manufacturing of ventilators.

Even after the lockdown was lifted, restaurants realized that their sales were drying up since people were hesitant to eat out. That's when they shifted focus on ensuring food reaches their customers in the safety of their homes while taking the necessary precautions for health & hygiene.

There has to be a consistent effort to innovate, develop and implement new ideas to keep up with the emerging trends & deal with circumstances – pleasant and unpleasant as and when they arise.

From profit to purpose

Helping & supporting your community is an essential part of the existence for individuals and organizations alike. During the pandemic several restaurants helped with feeding the needy & providing supplies to the underprivileged. Large & medium sized organizations donated hand sanitizers to citizens, PPE Kits for frontline workers & ventilators to support the medical treatment of who couldn't afford these. During the lockdown, OYO rooms reached out to stranded travelers & helped with their accommodation across their various properties.



Organizations should in fact make CSR activities an essential part of their policies. The value of helping & serving the community can never be undermined.

Importance of Wellness

Physical & mental wellbeing are of utmost importance. However, prioritizing mental & physical health is often an afterthought. The pandemic has once again revealed the importance of the age old saying 'Health is Wealth'. The work from home culture has definitely taken a toll on both the mental & physical wellbeing of employees as work life balance has taken a backseat due to erratic work schedules. Organizations should make an effort to understand this & embrace policies to support health of their employees. Large organizations already have group insurance policies for their employees in place & maybe it's time the mid size & smaller organizations also follow suit. This certainly helps boost employee morale & makes them appreciate their workplace even more.



The pandemic made us realize that tough times don't last but tough people do. Crises makes us value what we take for granted & help us discover opportunities for our betterment & growth. Resilience & optimism are two qualities which go hand in hand & the importance of both of these cannot be undermined. While we cannot wait for COVID – 19 to become history, it's essential that we carry with ourselves the lessons the last year taught us.