

Editorial: *Paying Attention to the Unrevealed Slice of the Current Unprecedented Crisis: Leadership Accountability, Making Evolving the Business Models and Implementing Lean Marketing Actions*

“Behind every great work experience is a great workflow,”

Bill McDermott, President and CEO, ServiceNow

“The pre-COVID workplace no longer exists... We will do dramatic shifts to make sure we’re safe, healthy, productive and adaptable for the new workplace...” highlighted ServiceNow Chief Talent Officer Pat Wadors, on the occasion of the recent ServiceNow’s Knowledge 2020 Conference, an all-digital experience spanning six weeks. *“You’ll have the head of talent thinking about things like virtual onboarding and how to keep employees engaged... You’ll have the CFO thinking about modeling out cash flow forecasts, supply chain officers thinking about logistics and routes to market. But there’s one thing in common, which is that it’s all powered by tech”*, underlined at his turn ServiceNow CIO Chris Bedi. (Dowd, 2020) The six weeks of ServiceNow’s Knowledge 2020 Conference covered significant core themes (Accelerate, Build, Succeed, Connect, Dream, and Act”), inviting in the last one to *“put all this Knowledge know-how to work with our employees, our customers, and in our jobs”*. (ServiceNow, 2020) It is suggestive that on June 12, 2020, the Chief Editor of the American Marketing Association San Francisco Chapter (AMA SF) Blog, who is also on the AMA SF Board of Directors, revealed key insights from the conference Knowledge 2020 Digital Experience (*Empowering the Company-wide Remote Workforce; Technology Makes the Difference in Times of Uncertainty; Addressing the Human Side of the Equation; Turning the Opportunity into Positive Results*), concluding with the message that is the right time to embrace uncertainty and keep innovating, keeping in mind that communication is king, and generating the necessary sense of community and oneness. (Lee, 2020)

There is no doubt that in these times of unprecedented crisis there is a real need of accountable leaders, stimulating teams to be more connected and resilient within the more flexible workplace, establishing priorities, adequately communicating the strategy, providing a sense of hope for the future while facing uncertainty, innovating and ensuring transformational change, creating lasting value, and nurturing talent. (Jones, 2020) To build a culture of leadership accountability involves starting with self-reflection, advancing step by step, and focusing on key priorities on the basis of accurately understanding the voice of the customers. As a critical issue within their organization, leadership accountability has impact on the performance of a company. (Routley, 2020)

Within the current “new normal” there are significant pledges, for instance, for human-first CEOs, who are remaking jobs work for all employees by reimagining their long-term approach, with a human-first approach to customers (better understanding that business success requires customer success), with human-first approach to community (going beyond being

responsible to their shareholders, and proving a better understanding of the dependence on the community around all of us). According to such an approach now it's time for Human-first Leadership. (Mehta, 2020)

On the other hand, in the perspective of what comes after COVID-19, McKinsey Resilience Advisory Council recommended leaders to not bring together aspirations with a prescience about the future, paying attention to the unknown portion of this crisis, coaching and advising its management team managers to build the organizational capability to quickly learn and act accordingly because resilience comes through speed. They also recommend them to evolve their business models, to strengthen their capability to engage and work with regulators and the government and many other core themes. (Levy et al., 2020)

Of course, we are all consumers, and we know that time is a valuable resource. Without bringing into discussion different approaches of the opportunity cost (which refers to what consumers have to give up to buy what they want in terms of other goods or services, on the other hand also knowing that consumers usually mean opportunity cost when the economists use the word "cost", as reminded by Econlib), it was interesting to note in April this year, thanks to AMA Marketing News, that armed with the new reality (being forced into new behaviors overnight), seeing all through new lenses and beginning to operate in the new ways, having a new baseline of possibilities, consumers see with other eyes their experiences across their customer journey, and do not want any more to waste their precious time, expecting better experiences and real-time communication. (Sweezy, 2020)

Marketing, argued recently the rigorous McKinsey's representatives, is considered *"the primary means of both consumer engagement and driving business value"*, being *"front and center for how companies need to respond to the downturn, especially in terms of building up cash reserves and driving revenue response"*. Under the complex pressure to ensuring companies' businesses successfully navigate the downturn and catalyze future growth, it is necessary to better understand the critical role of the marketing spend management, its impact being game changing if it is done well. Considered the most glamorous component of marketing, spend management (defined here by McKinsey's representatives as "the rigorous tracking and active management of the way marketing dollars are spent") allow marketers not only to rapidly adequately redeploy funds on the basis of agile decision, but also the necessary flexibility to innovate and deliver, all of this on the basis of a fundamental rethinking of the way of working of the marketing organization: *thinking through which services company really need, doubling down on what works* (by creating a flexible and iterative statement of work – SOW, and tailoring company's agency's account team); *changing the way the work is done* (by creating an anti-redundancy culture, working with finance to reform the annual budget process, and continuously demonstrate the value of marketing); *optimizing where the work is done* (by bringing business-critical activities in house, creating the right ecosystem of agencies, and establish a clear client-agency relationship model); paying the right price, knowing exactly what the company is spending (by arming the company with comparable price data, giving agencies a reason to go the

extra mile, and soliciting regular and robust pitches). (Butt et al., 2020) **This is no doubt one of the many valuable McKinsey's works needing to be quickly deepened and valorized.** For instance, take a look at two significant McKinsey's exhibits included in other two valuable McKinsey's works:

- the “*Matrix for prioritizing measures for rapid revenue recovery*” (presented within the context of a recommendation to focus on four strategic areas: recovering revenue, rebuilding operations, rethinking the organization, and accelerating the adoption of digital solutions): (Sneader and Sternfels, 2020)

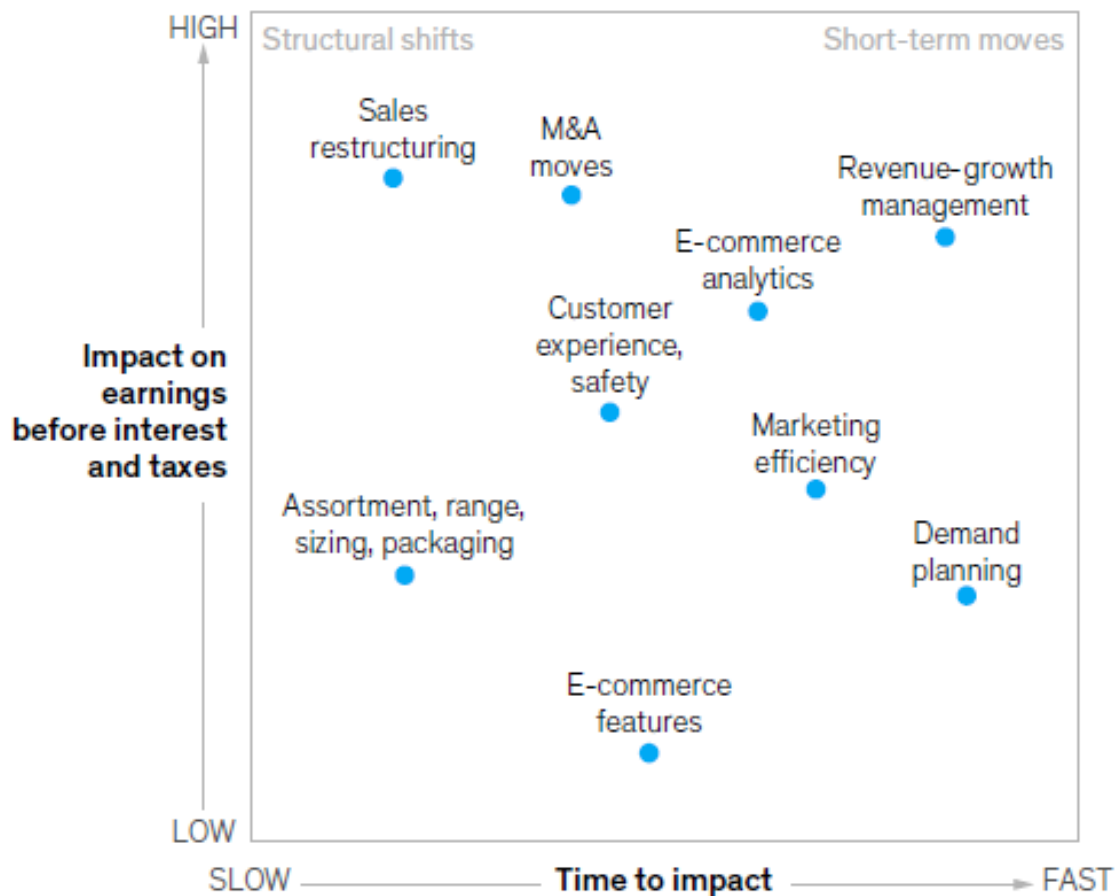


Figure no. 1: Recovering revenues is an important element of reimagining the return. Matrix for prioritizing measures for rapid revenue recovery, illustrative

Source: Sneader, K. and Sternfels, B. (2020). From surviving to thriving: Reimagining the post-COVID-19 return, McKinsey & Company, May 1, 2020 (work cited)

- “An agile-squad model can raise a company’s metabolic rate” (presented within the context of developing a rapid-fire agile operating model, with agile squads assigned to specific areas of focus, from consumer/customer insights to digital marketing, and this while considering three for effective marketing-and-sales responses to the COVID-19 crisis: navigating the now, planning for the recovery, and leading in the next normal): (Gregg et al., 2020)

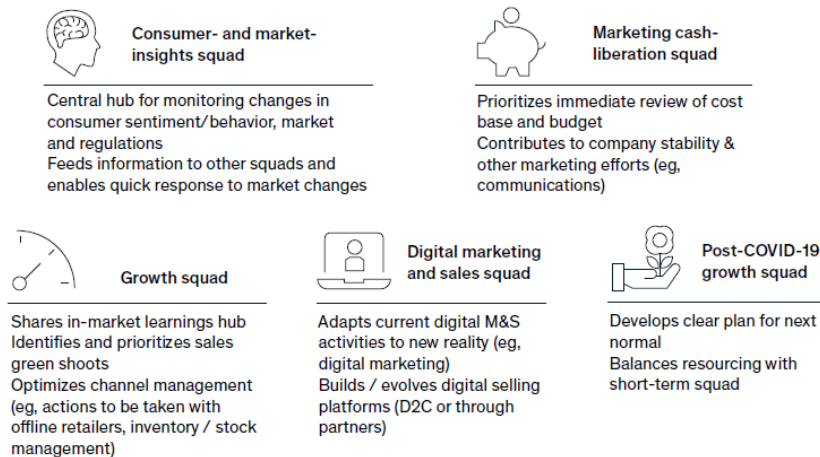


Figure no. 2: An agile-squad model can raise a company's metabolic rate

Source: Gregg, B., Hazan, E., Kim, A., Perrey, J. and Spilleck, D. (2020). *Rapid Revenue Recovery: A road map for postCOVID-19 growth*, McKinsey & Company, Marketing & Sales Practice, May 7, 2020 (work cited)

We express the conviction that these are truly lessons to learn, and paraphrasing Seth Godin (cited by us in 2011), we started in the present approach from the fact that “all our HMM customers are smarter than average”.

Theodor Valentin Purcărea

Editor-in-Chief

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