Part One
Covid Book Series

Coming Down
the MOUNTAIN

Coming out of this
crisis STRONGER!

TRANSEARCH
YOUR WORLD PARTNER IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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ORXESTRA® INC.

Coming Down
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The TRANSEARCH
COVID BOOK SERIES

Welcome to the TRANSEARCH Covid Book Series. **Part One**, *Coming Down the Mountain*, looks at how to come out of this crisis stronger.

Recognising, as we move forward, how important organization culture is, **Part Two** outlines the *Culture Conversation*. **Part Three** explores the need for leadership agility and what that implies: *Leadership Agility and Learning – The Way of the Dolphin*. Drawing on the reality that tomorrow's organization will be a team of teams, **Part Four** examines what it means to be an outstanding team: *Great Organizations Are Made Up of Great Teams*. **Part Five** moves beyond leadership as a philosophy and drills down into essential skills – *When the Trees Get Bigger and the Forest Gets Deeper, It's Time to Sharpen Your Saw*.

The Organization That Got Us Here Ain't Going To Get Us Where We Need To Be

COVID-19 has cast a lasting shadow on our lives. At no time during the past hundred years has mankind been made to appear so mortal. And yet, the immediacy of this terrible scourge masks a different kind of human drama. One that has not been fully played out. One that has profound implications for our economic well-being.

Part of that backstory is to recognise that we are living "the new normal." Not sometime in the future. Now! And at the heart of that muted narrative? The organization that got us here ain't going to get us where we need to be. Not even halfway. In that beginnings start with endings, we need to first understand how we got here. The twentieth century was a hinge in history. It opened with the horse and closed with jet travel.

We accumulated more knowledge, gained greater progress and introduced more innovation than the combined history of mankind up to that point. We also did more damage to the planet than collectively had all those who had gone before.

The engine that moved the developed world from poverty at the beginning of the century to the extraordinary standard of living we currently enjoy was the, so-called, "modern organization." Hierarchical, control-dominated and ideally suited to a slowly unfolding world (built to last) it may have been but it created unprecedented wealth.

The dilemma? Breakthrough technology, uncertainty and the unprecedented and ever-increasing speed of change demand an organization that is a fit for the challenges of

the 21st century. We are describing not just a better, but a very different kind of way to operate. An organization built to change; one where disruption, agility and speed of learning dominate the leadership conversation.

Which brings us to the COVID-19 crisis. A crisis has three stages. Stage one: acceptance. Stage two: survival. Stage three: growth. And the winners will be? Those who do come out of this crisis stronger.

In a business environment where speed of learning is, arguably, the only sustainable competitive advantage, how you learn is more important than what you learn. No less significant, the learning approach taken now will set the stage for what is to come. Fall behind and the probability is you will stay behind.

All learning starts with an experience. Because we are "programmed" to seek meaning in our lives, a new experience provokes a question. The quality of the question, in turn, determining the richness of the learning. The resulting learning unfolds in one of three ways. Each stage of learning representing not only deeper but exponentially, faster learning.

Simple learning equates to doing what you have always done, but better. "We discovered that technologies such as Zoom are a great way to connect with our current and potential customers. As a result, outside of key accounts, we will incorporate video links into our sales process."

Learning how to learn is exemplified by addressing a central business issue. "We need to totally revamp the supply chain. We got through this crisis but we are clearly less agile than we need to be."

Learning how to learn, limited only by the imagination of those involved is, fundamentally, about transformation. Reinventing the business such that it creates value in a world where the benchmark of success is being strong enough to weather the unexpected and agile enough to take advantage of it. That's exactly how new market entrants will play the game.

Recognising that future business success depends on preparing all aspects of the business for a very different tomorrow … then, "If not now, when?" Finally, in that the genesis of leadership excellence lies in **self-awareness**, "What are you doing personally to come out of this crisis stronger?"

CONTENT

Coming Down the Mountain

The Three Stages of Crisis

Some time ago I had lunch with a young woman who had recently climbed Mount Everest. I asked her an entirely predictable question, "What did you learn from climbing the world's highest peak?" With a totally deadpan face she responded, "Absolutely nothing!" And then, with a broad smile, she added, "Anything I learned occurred as I came down the mountain." Our ensuing discussion focused on the reality that in the midst of "crisis" there is no time for reflection – and without reflection there can be no learning.

There are three stages to a crisis.

- Stage one: Acceptance – shock, denial, coming to terms with the new reality.

- Stage two: Survival – pulling the needed resources together and navigating through the crisis.

- Stage three: Growth – thinking about the business differently. How do we come out of the crisis stronger?

That there are three distinct stages doesn't mean that they are necessarily sequential. While the main body of the organization is working its way through crisis it makes perfect sense to create an "away team."[1] A splinter group charting the course the organization should take as it comes down the mountain. A small sub-group focused on how to come out of this once in one-hundred-year-crisis better equipped than before.

Letting Go of Our Past

In that beginnings start with endings,[2] it's essential to understand how we got here. The recent evolution of the organization is, for the most part, an American story. At the opening of the last century, we inherited a way to think about the organization drawn from the American Civil War and the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad – the two nineteenth-century, large-scale organizations indelibly imprinted on the American psyche. That said, even Henri Fayol, a French mining engineer (1841-1925) and often described as the founder of the modern management method, used the army as his basic model for management (Planning, Organizing, Commanding, Co-ordinating, Controlling).

Thus, we entered the twentieth century with an organization model where hierarchy (decision-making in the hands of the few), control (the worker was not to be trusted);[3] and stability ("built to last" and not "built to change") defined the way forward. Profitability – replaced later in the century by shareholder value – being the only true measure of success.

It was, nevertheless, a century of accomplishment, advancement, acquisition, abundance and, in organization terms, no little financial adventure. In the first part of the century, ownership and management were recognised as being quite different; scientific management made further inroads (Taylorism/efficiency); the assembly line (Ford) brought with it mass production; the multi-divisional organization was born (Alfred P. Sloan); and we were introduced to collective bargaining.

Following WW2, we made major strides in better understanding the symbiotic relationship between the team and technology in the workplace;[4] were introduced to strategic planning; launched the matrix organization; through Peter Drucker, discovered management as a

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1   An away team was a team of specialised starship or star base crew members assembled to perform special missions, as per *Star Trek*, created by Gene Roddenberry.
2   Source: William Bridges
3   Even today, the performance management approach employed by many organizations is still more about the "normal distribution curve" than it is about purpose, engagement, ongoing coaching and matching capability with opportunity.
4   The research described was sponsored by the National Coal Board in the UK and focused initially on the coalfields of Yorkshire. Ken Bamforth and Eric Trist's studies at Haighmoor convinced them that there were viable (and better!) alternatives to those that were typical of mid-twentieth century workplaces. Those managing in today's hi-tech environment would benefit greatly from visiting this research.

discipline; and saw General Motors introduce the concept of Quality of Work Life.[5]

Towards the end of the century, we witnessed the flattening of the organization; the introduction of quality circles, Six Sigma, Kaizen, Muda, etc.; and the birth of the process organization – and with it the realisation that outsourcing anything that was non-core unlocked value. Least we forget, the microchip and the Internet introduced global connectedness, the potential for collaborative networks, speed as a competitive advantage and the organization as a community into the competitive arena.

The modifications we made to that basic hierarchical model amounted to one of the most creative things our kind has ever done. In the developed world, at least, millions of people were transformed from abject poverty at the beginning of the century to a standard of living that we now take for granted.

We also went from an orientation of think local and act local to one where every business, no matter its size, is global. One hundred years ago, the business you worried about most came from the other side of town. Today, the competitor who is about to disrupt the market is likely to be an unknown entity from a city your sales team has never heard of.

As for this century, we are experimenting with new organization forms (holacracy) and have watched as organizations such as Airbnb and Uber reinvented sectors that have been around for centuries. Accessing the *support of many* through crowdsourcing and crowdfunding have been no less dramatic. We have also observed the accelerated growth of technology: AI, machine learning, a faster Internet, data analytics, gamified assessment, blockchain, etc. The promise was, however, that by now these technologies would have already taken over our lives. Inroads yes; revolution – far from it. Why? The problem is implementation! McKinsey & Company have concluded that, at the highest level, it's a reflection of a failure to rewire the organization. "In our surveys and our work with hundreds of clients, we've seen that AI initiatives face formidable cultural and organizational barriers."[6] Trying to attach a rocket to a bicycle clearly doesn't represent a very workable business model.

Following a Script From a Different Century

We may have entered a new era but, arguably, little has changed at the top of the typical organization. In one European study[7] it was reported that only 10.59% of Board members were "very clear on our purpose, culture, long-term strategy and have actively checked that all are well aligned." Our own research is that only 20% of organizations "manage culture." The rest are caught up in a philosophy we refer to as "Culture drift." This refers to the

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5   The genesis of today's employee engagement.
6   "Building the AI-Powered Organization" *Harvard Business Review* (July-August 2019).
7   *"Board Leadership in Corporate Culture: European Report 2017,"* conducted by Board Agenda in association with professional services firm Mazars, and business school INSEAD.

assumption that "if we continue doing what we are currently doing we will magically end up where we need to be." Deloitte have evidence that only 19% of organizations believe that they have the right culture.[8]

In a truly comprehensive study of organization culture,[9] McKinsey & Company found that those CEOs who do insist on rigorously measuring and managing all cultural elements that drive performance, more than double the odds that their strategies will be executed. And over the long term, they deliver triple the total return to shareholders that other companies deliver. Additional evidence of being trapped in the past are not hard to find. Half the companies listed on the Fortune 500, at the turn of the century, are no longer there. In the US, according to *Fortune* magazine, 57 million employees have chosen to opt out of a traditional approach to work and are part of the gig employment market.

Lack of attention to organization culture goes a long way to explain why, after at least three decades of work on engagement, according to Gallup, the number of employees who are engaged hasn't risen above 38%.[10] It also surfaces three strategic, red flags. Questions where responsibility, ultimately, lies with the Human Resources Committee of the Board. Namely, if the work around organization culture amounts to conjecture, a best guess or based solely on judgement (devoid of any meaningful measurement): (1) how reliable is the succession process; (2) why are we pursuing a hiring policy for key leaders that embraces unnecessary risk; and (3) what is the source of the cultural premise that underpins the organization's investment in leadership development?

Only yesterday, the business press was dominated by robotics, cobots, machine learning, 3-D printing and their other tech play pals. The human tragedy that surrounds the COVID-19 crisis, as it clearly should, pushed that discussion into the background. And yet both agendas – one because it fueled the human imagination and the other because we are dealing with life and death – mask a very different human drama. Today's organization is shaped by unnecessary hierarchy, decision-making is still in the hands of too few and, as many organizations have discovered as they go through this global pandemic, a distinct lack of agility.

Based on pockets of success, we persuade ourselves that we are on the leading edge and, indeed, we have made great strides in some areas, but what got us here isn't going to get us to where we need to be! The overwhelming majority of businesses are trapped in a paradox – supported by the assumed efficacy of short-term results – following a script from

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8   2016 *Global Human Capital Trends Survey.*

9   Carolyn Dewar, Martin Hirt, and Scott Keller. *The mindsets and practices of excellent CEOs* (October 2019).

10 May 2020: 38% engaged, 49% somewhat engaged and 13% disengaged. Consulting companies in bundling engaged and somewhat engaged together may, in their own self-interest, make the engagement statistics look overly positive but, in truth, no organization should feel good that only a little over a third of their workforce are fully engaged. Note: the US has the highest engagement scores of any developed country.
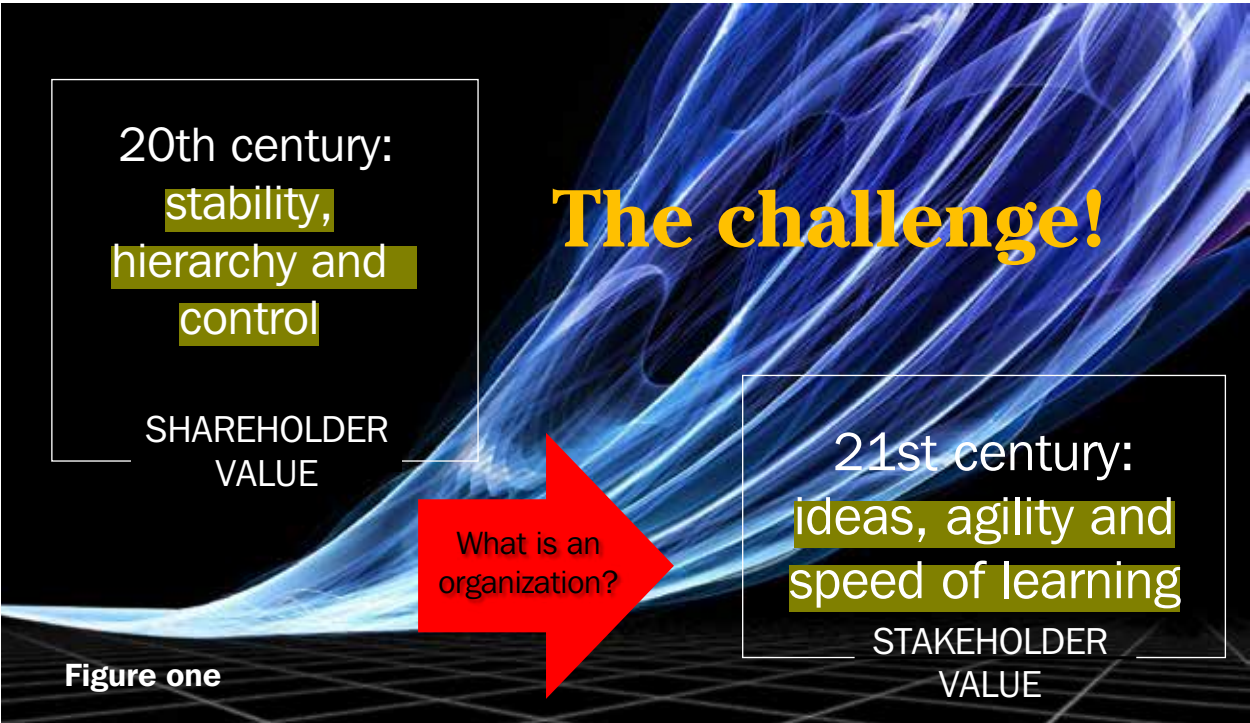
a different century. The organization that brought us this far may be in the third act of an outdated play but it still stands in the centre of the stage.

The New Normal

A good deal is being written describing the "new normal." There is no need to speculate. We are already living the new normal: ongoing disruption; a need for a different kind of leader; the challenge of implementing emerging technology; and recalibrating the organization's clock speed to a marketplace ever-demanding of shorter lead times.[11] Add: complexity; uncertainty; the challenge of a millennium workforce; gig employment; fractures in international relations; the existential threat we, in passing, refer to as "the environment;" a severe shortage of top talent; and you are starting to describe not the world as it will be, but where we are NOW!

The challenge we face isn't simply about skills and capability. The disruptive, tech-driven, speed-oriented world we have created demands a very different way to think about what it means to be an organization: ideas-driven, agile and built to learn faster than future competition. **See Figure one.**

20th century: stability, hierarchy and control

SHAREHOLDER VALUE

What is an organization?

The challenge!

21st century: ideas, agility and speed of learning

STAKEHOLDER VALUE

Figure one

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11 Today is the fastest things have ever been and the slowest they will ever be.

A word is required here about stakeholder value. Cynics may shake their heads but it's an idea being given a good deal of positive support by the who's who of US business. Following their meeting in August 2019, the Business Roundtable released a new statement on "the purpose of a corporation." Signed by 181 top CEOs, they committed to lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders – customers, employees, suppliers, communities and shareholders. That society is demanding a voice in the way businesses are run[12] is further endorsed by a change in corporate law, in the UK, in 2019. Companies on the London Exchange must now report on both the "Employee's Voice" and "Corporate Culture."[13] If that were not evidence enough, consider the impact on businesses, on both sides of the Atlantic, that the death of George Floyd[14] has had. Of course, it's not sufficient to know what's right – you have to do what's right. Meanwhile, businesses that are truly stakeholder-driven have no problem attracting and retaining top talent. Patagonia, for example, receives 9,000 applicants for every internship.

Stakeholder value is also changing how intelligent organizations think about branding. Brand is more than a symbolic representation of the product or service being offered – it's the organization's story simply told through compelling imagery and rich language. If, in the future, that story doesn't endorse the organization's social and environmental contribution know that consumers will look to a brand that does. George Wallace, Chief Executive, MHE Retail, put it this way: "Brands that can show they are putting people or the environment ahead of sheer profit will be rewarded by consumers and employees and enhance the way they consider the brand." Expect COVID-19 to transform a soft want into a hard need.

Although much still needs to be done around organization design,[15] the way forward is clear. The organization we need to have top of mind as we come down the mountain – enabling us to come out of the COVID-19 crisis stronger – must display five qualities: Fast, Flat, Focused, Flexible and Fertile (to new ideas). **See Figure two.**

We need to add "strong" because agility without strength is fragility – to break easily. "Strength" also implies a strong balance sheet, strong values, a strong brand, strength drawn out of diversity & inclusion and a strong team at the top. Being strong also speaks to the ability, especially in the most chaotic times, to make tough decisions. I coined the term "StrAgility" to convey being both strong and agile.

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12 Fairness is a driving force for change regardless of the age. A little over a hundred years ago, the unbridled power of the few was reined in by the Antitrust laws. The trade union movement wasn't far behind.

13 Expect Boards to be far more involved in organization culture in the future. Having run sessions on culture for Board members it's interesting to note that they quickly move from interest to enthusiasm once they realise that culture can (should) be measured.

14 The 59-year-old, African American who died in police custody in Minneapolis, Missouri – May 2020. Following his death demonstrations took place in cites on both sides of the Atlantic. The public outcry was such that large and small corporations alike took the position that the most damaging response was, no response.

15 For more on Organization design see *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* John O. Burdett (2020).

Generals, invariably, prepare for war with the most recent battles in mind. In WW1 we had the example of mounted cavalry attacking machine guns.[16] Leaders, similarly, faced with a new challenge, all too often default into what worked in the past.[17] The need for agility clearly isn't limited to the organization. And leadership clearly can't simply amount to more of the same.[18] The behaviour we celebrated in the past has to give way to a very different sense of what it means to be a leader. Optimism, hard work and passion,[19] as always, are the start of it.[20] Comfort with ambiguity, tech savvy, resilience, coaching mystery, the capacity to build great teams and cultural adaptability (work concurrently in different cultures) are clearly part of it. But leadership agility[21] is at the heart of it.

"The organization of tomorrow?   **Figure two**

A collaborative network of self-organizing teams

Fast
Flat   Strong
Focused
Flexible
Fertile

"Strong and agile"

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16 In 1914, the 9th Lancers, a British cavalry regiment, charged German infantry and guns.

17 Our brain is wired to save energy. Faced with a new problem or challenge, the default response is to replay a past behavioural repertoire that was assumed to be successful. We have to train ourselves or be coached to see new issues in a new way (mindset), starting with letting go of what worked in the past.

18 It's often said that, "There is a shortage of top talent." The shortfall is in finding leaders who are a fit with the tech-savvy, fast, flat, focused, flexible and fertile business environment we are now in. In fact, there is a surfeit of talent. If by "talent" we mean an executive whose experience is limited to the kind of organization we are working hard to reinvent.

19 **PASS**-**I**nspiration-**ON**

20 In that the more things change, the more some things stay the same. One of the miracles of the twentieth-century was powered flight. Even a cursory look at what the Wright brothers achieved at Kitty Hawk on December 17th, 1903, reveals that the secret to their success was optimism, hard work and passion.

21 Leadership agility includes conceptual, practical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and learning agility.

Coming Down the Mountain

Learning is initiated by an experience. Experience, in turn, prompts a question. The quality of the question(s) dictates the value of the learning. To that end, learning unfolds in one of three distinct ways; each stage representing not only deeper but exponentially, faster learning:[22]

1. Simple learning – doing what you have always done better. Example: we found remote working especially useful and we will build on and improve how we connect with these employees in the future. Simple change. A tactical mindset.

2. Learning how to learn – exploring very different ways to do things. Example: working with our sales force during this crisis prompted us to think about a far more effective approach to business development. Transition. Transition assumes that there is time available to evolve to a new state. If there is time, it's certainly not measured in years.

3. Learning how to learn, limited only by imagination – a recognition that the world has changed and that the business model we have relied on in the past is out of step with today's reality. Example: organization design. Moving beyond a structure represented by a series of boxes that, to maintain the illusion of control, leaves decision-making in the hands of the few. Delivering a way to organize that emphasises agility, recognises the potential for teams to self-organize, and taps into the natural, innovative capacity of the human spirit. A way to compete where unanticipated, ongoing and sweeping disruption is the new normal. Transformation. Creating tomorrow's organization, today.

Change should not be confused with either *transition* or its time-truncated, tough-minded cousin *transformation*. Change is expressed by the actions we, or those around us, enact. Transition/transformation represents the psychological process that we go through that allows us to see the world through a different lens. Change is outcome. Transition/transformation is a process. One is to **do** something differently. The other is, at its core, to **think** differently. Change can be represented by a small, even an insignificant, event. Transition/transformation must always: (1) address the culture we have and the culture we need; (2) involve working at the level of mindset; and (3) be a product of the quality of leadership available.

We will get through this crisis. Some organizations will struggle. Others will see sales increase. The winners, however, won't be those who merely survive, it will be those that come out of this ahead of where they were. The advantage of "an away team"[23] being that

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22 For more on Organizational Learning see *The A-Z of Organization Culture*. John O. Burdett (2017).
23 A small sub-group given a strategic mandate.

they can step outside of the tactical bubble that the rest of the team is trapped by. In doing so, they can start to think strategically; they can focus on very different questions.

A great question does three things: (1) asks for what you want – not what you don't want; (2) challenges the assumptions the listener has about the topic; and (3) introduces new language. The latter because the same old language results in the same old thinking. "New language" includes: metaphor, story and the value of a conceptual model. The more senior a leader is, the more likely it is that he/she is a "gestalt learner."[24] The closer you move to the top of the house, the greater the value of a conceptual template. The map itself can never be the territory but, to quote Kurt Lewin, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

After the harrowing journey we are going through, not a few leaders will opt for a tactical view of where to go from here. Others will be bolder and see this as an opportunity to address business fundamentals. A third group will recognise that there is a compelling need to take a twenty-first century approach to the business. Indeed, one could ask, if not now, then when?

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24 Gestalt learners are drawn, one might even say compelled, to find meaning in patterns. In visualising how all of the various pieces come together, they draw from the whole far more than the sum of the parts. Only those who can see what others cannot see, can do what others cannot do.

It's tempting to start by seeding ideas across the organization in the hope that they take root. This may create the appearance of momentum but it won't deliver any real movement. Hope isn't a strategy. And false hope is, at best, disengagement, disappointment and dysfunctional behaviour that hasn't yet happened. To change an established habit, we need to go deep. We need to address all of the forces that combine to make up the organization's culture.[25] With "StrAgility" providing an ever-present prompt, coming out of this crisis stronger is initiated by seven fundamental questions.

1. What strategic imperatives define future success? More specifically, what assumptions can we make about why customers will buy our product or service tomorrow? Think of this as your "business model."[26]

2. What culture do we have today (roots)? What culture do we need tomorrow (wings) to maintain/add to our competitive position? This implies: (1) the ability to shape the conversation such that informed dialogue[27] about culture emerges;[28] (2) that there is a robust, business-oriented measure of the culture we have and the culture we need; and (3) that the central role that mindset plays is fully understood. In my own work with major corporations on organization culture, the interventions that have been most effective, invariably, addressed mindset. For an appreciation of the different levels of culture and where mindset fits in see **Appendix one**.

3. What makes us special? What core business competency or unique capability can we ill-afford to dilute or lose? What supports our value proposition that is sacrosanct? Change that erodes the source of your competitive advantage is a Faustian bargain.

4. What technology shortfalls do we need to address? Where could we employ technology to give us an immediate competitive advantage?

5. Where and in what ways do we need to become more agile?

6. Moving forward, what leadership strengths are we able to build on? What succession concerns have emerged as a result of this crisis?

7. As we start to create tomorrow's organization today, are we meeting the needs of **all** of our stakeholders? Shareholders are well represented. Customers and, indeed, suppliers have their own leverage. A millennial/iGen workforce will ask, propose and then demand that the organization be more than a commercial enterprise – that it fulfills its twenty-first century role in society.

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25 Culture is a system and, like any system, only as strong as its weakest part. Addressing only part of the culture is likely to lead to future, unintended consequences.

26 Source: Peter Drucker.

27 The main reason top teams put culture on the back burner isn't lack of awareness regarding need. It's that, for the most part, they don't know how to have the conversation.

28 See *The Culture Conversation.* John O. Burdett (2020).

Why Culture Matters

The Russian poet Fyodor Tyutchev observed that Russia "cannot be understood with the mind." Measurement (of culture)[29] is essential but like an old sock, you need to pull the organization's culture on to truly know the way things really happen, where the holes are, what it is that makes your business strong. As you walk through an organization, you have to "feel" the culture, work your observation gene, interpret not only what you see but what you don't and become the alter ego of the middle manager, for only their full support can make the needed culture come to life.

There are two cultures … formal and informal. The latter is, ultimately, the more important. In moving forward, it's not enough to connect with those who shape the strategy. You have to inspire the organization's informal leaders, a new generation who now make up the majority of the workforce and, no less important, those who do work for you but choose to do so remotely.

It should not be assumed that the informal organization applies only to frontline employees and those who are assumed to have little real power. In reality, how decisions are made often happens outside of the discipline and rigour suggested by the organization structure. This is especially true if the team works remotely or in different locations. Indeed, if the intended lines of authority were strictly applied, the business would become a bureaucratic

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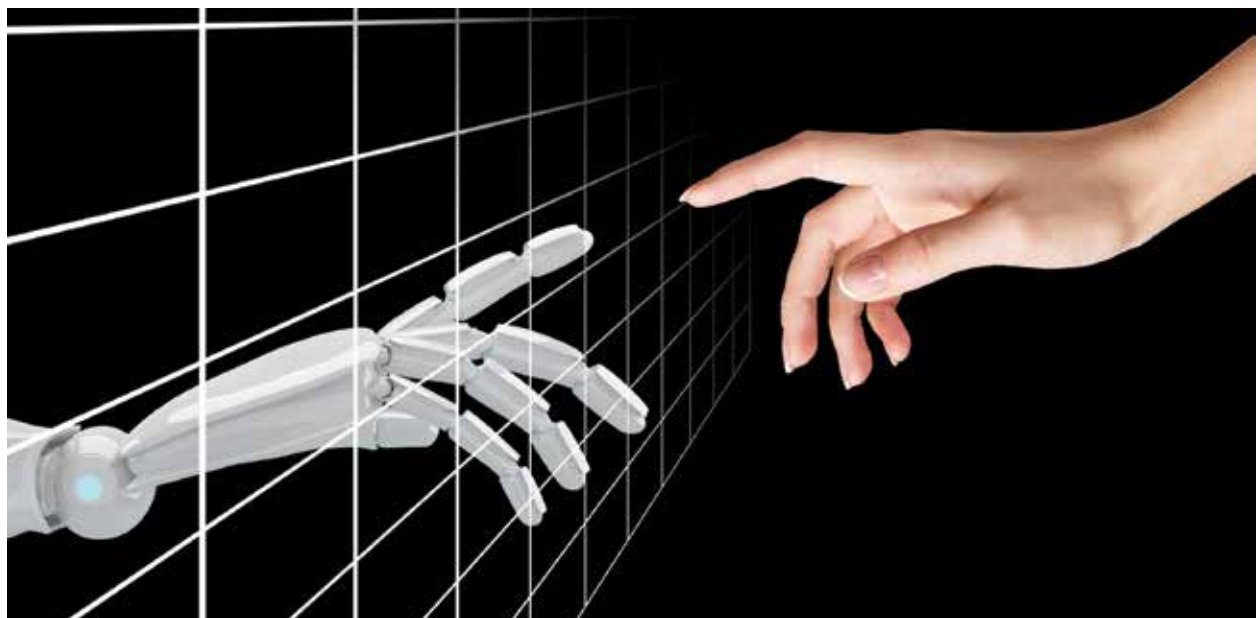
29 Measuring from "what" to "what," using business terms, aligned with the emerging context and pragmatic enough for middle management to fully contribute. If the language used sounds like it should be in a third-year psychology class, it belongs in a third-year psychology class.

quagmire in a week. Influence, informal relationships, caring, shared values and trust, not lines on a chart, are the real lubricant of leadership. And guess what? We are describing, precisely, the qualities needed to navigate through a crisis. This merely goes to endorse that the ideal organization, by way of design, would: (1) reflect how, given the opportunity, people would choose to work together; and (2) assume that the team leader works for the team and not the other way around.

In charting a course for a different future it's essential to: (1) be informed by the emerging social, political, economic and competitive environment for therein lie both what's demanded and what's possible; (2) recognise that developing strategic scenarios are essential; and (3) understand that you can't sprinkle agility onto the organization; it has to be fully embedded in the culture. No less important, in a world where even organizations with a reputation for legendary service have to compete on ideas, innovation is ill-served by a way to organize defined by a series of hierarchically arranged boxes. Indeed, the term "structure" conjures up unhelpful imagery and should, ideally, be replaced by what we really mean – "the performance platform."

As we seek to "reinvent possibility," technology clearly makes an enduring contribution. Here we need to recognise that, although not an end in and of itself (as many suggest), if it can be digitalised, it will be digitalised. Why the compelling need for digitalisation? Speed, simplicity and service are characteristics of competitive success that, more often than not, determines who wins and who goes home. If dissatisfied, customers are rarely without easy-to-access other options.

Next Steps

Amid the veritable avalanche of "me too" advice on how to get through this crisis it is easy to overlook two central questions. One: "How will your business come out of this stronger?" Two: "As a leader, how will you personally come out of this stronger?"

In support of both of those questions and in addition to points made in the body of the text, consider the following:

1. Appoint an away team. Make the mandate – coming out of this crisis stronger.

2. Measure both the culture you have and the culture needed to succeed in the future. What will you do to make tomorrow's culture start to come alive in the organization, today? Revisit the work on succession, leadership development and talent acquisition with tomorrow's culture in mind.

3. Review the organization's structure (platform for success). Where and how can the structure be retooled to: (1) push decision-making closer to the customer; (2) make agility a competitive strength; and (3) better complement the technology

being introduced? Culture is a system. Structure is an integral part of that system. Embed your drive for agility into **all** aspects of the culture. See **Appendix one.**

4. With tomorrow's success in mind, revisit the leadership competencies.

5. Initiate a robust conversation at the top of the house to identify the mindset demanded to thrive in a business environment marked by disruption. What needs to change? See the Mindset Assessment beginning on page 15.

6. Tomorrow's organization will be a team of teams. Define what it means to be a great team. Use the current emphasis on teamwork to: (1) measure how key teams are currently operating; and (2) use that measure as a benchmark for ongoing team development.

7. Have each key leader go through an assessment of resilience. Support the insights gained with ongoing coaching.

Crisis doesn't make a leader – but it does reveal who you really are!

3 X 3: CRISIS, CULTURE AND CHANGE

To come out of this chaotic period stronger you need to: (1) move through **all** three levels of crisis ; and (2) address **all** three levels of organization culture.

CRISIS

Stage one: Acceptance

Shock, denial, coming to terms with the new reality

Stage two: Survival

Pulling resources needed together and navigating through the crisis

Stage three: Growth

Thinking about the business differently. Learning how to come out of this crisis stronger

From strategic thinking to strategic doing

ORGANIZATION CULTURE:

WHAT IS SACROSANCT? WHAT MUST CHANGE?

Level one: Issues that are clear and obvious – overt behaviour, systems, technology, processes and/or structure.

Level two: Enshrined habits and the values being promoted – the underlying assumptions about what the company gets paid for, the brand promise and how it lives inside the organization, what does it mean to be a team, the support (or otherwise) from the informal organization, how key decisions are made.

Level three: mindset – the mental models people access to shape their reality.
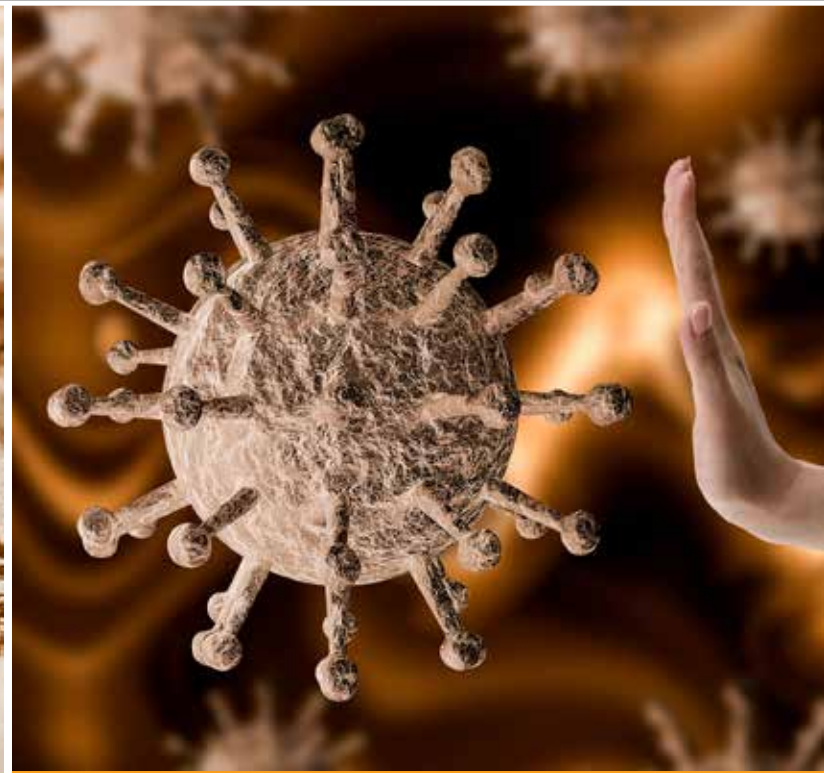
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Appendix one

Will You Come Out Of This Crisis STRONGER?

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John O. Burdett

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TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT –
WILL YOU?

Coming Out Of This Crisis STRONGER

Ancient maps had beautiful imagery that captured, what was then, the "known world." Beyond what was known was left blank and described simply as "Here lies dragons." The coronavirus has moved us beyond everything we thought we knew.
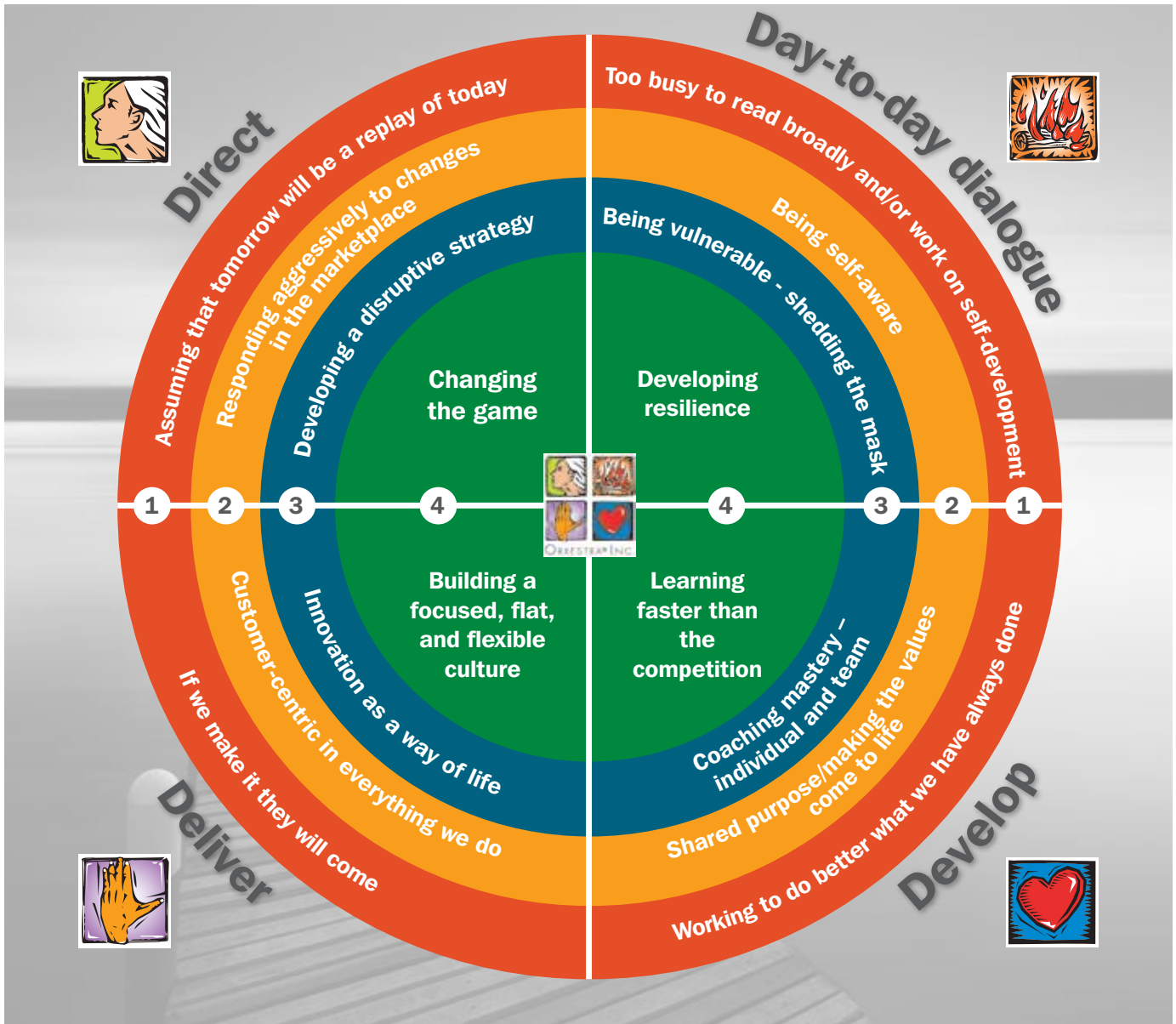
Confronting those dragons implies a number of challenges: (1) rescuing the business; (2) recognising and celebrating that there is a new definition of what it means to be "a team"; (3) developing one, three- and six-month strategic scenarios; (4) partnering with customers (and invariably developing new digital platforms to do so) to develop the best way forward; and (5) regularly revisiting the question, "How **will we** come out of this stronger?"

Moving beyond today's crisis – as indeed we will – isn't simply about having a better plan. To come out of this stronger **you** need to think differently about the business **that will emerge**. Our mindset will determine not only what is possible but, more importantly, what becomes possible!

Go through the simple assessment that follows. What state of mind shaped how you and your team made decisions in the past? Go through the assessment a second time (ideally with your team) and reflect on the question, "To come out of this crisis stronger, what collective mindset is demanded?"

Tomorrow **Will** Be Different – Will You?

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TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT –
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Direct

- Assuming that tomorrow will be a replay of today
- Responding aggressively to changes in the marketplace
- Developing a disruptive strategy
- **Changing the game**

Day-to-day dialogue

- Too busy to read broadly and/or work on self-development
- Being self-aware
- Being vulnerable - shedding the mask
- **Developing resilience**

Deliver

- If we make it they will come
- Customer-centric in everything we do
- Innovation as a way of life
- **Building a focused, flat, and flexible culture**

Develop

- Working to do better what we have always done
- Shared purpose/making the values come to life
- Coaching mastery – individual and team
- **Learning faster than the competition**

Scoring scale: 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 | 4 — 3 — 2 — 1

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Mindset: choose the one statement in each of the four domains of leadership that best describes how you made decisions prior to COVID-19. Scoring:

# of ▮ x 1 = ☐	# of ▮ x 2 = ☐	# of ▮ x 3 = ☐	# of ▮ x 4 = ☐

TOTAL: ☐

4	8	12	16
Wedded to the status quo	A recognition that tomorrow will be different	Working aggressively to become more agile.	Perfectly positioned to embrace a black swan event.

TOMORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT –
WILL YOU?

Agility/speed of learning →

Direct (Head)	Assuming that tomorrow will be a replay of today ▢	Responding aggressively to changes in the marketplace ▢	Developing a disruptive strategy ▢	Changing the game ▢
Deliver (Hand)	If we make it they will come ▢	Customer-centric in everything we do ▢	Innovation as a way of life ▢	Building a focused, flat and flexible culture ▢
Develop (Heart)	Working to do better what we have always done ▢	Shared purpose/ making the values come to life ▢	Coaching mastery – individual and team ▢	Learning faster than the competition ▢
Day-to-day dialogue (Spirit)	Too busy to read broadly and/ or work on self-development ▢	Being self-aware ▢	Being vulnerable – shedding the mask ▢	Developing resilience ▢

Coming Out Of This Crisis Stronger:

The assessment on page 3 reflects the mindset that dominated in your business prior to COVID-19. The simple chart on this page prompts you to think about coming out of this crisis stronger. Step one: from page 3 capture the dominant mindset before COVID-19. Mark with an (✘). Step two: recognising that tomorrow will be different, what mindset will be demanded to drive future success? Mark (with (✔). To lead is to start to make that change, now! How are you going to orchestrate that shift?

Note: There are three distinct levels associated with "getting stronger:" (1) addressing issues that are clear and obvious – overt behaviour, systems and/or processes; (2) the brand promise, enshrined habits and the values being promoted – how the brand promise lives inside the organization, why things happen, what does it mean to be a team, the role of the informal organization, what has primacy when it comes to decision-making; (3) mindset – the mental models people access to shape their reality. Together they define the "organization's culture." Successful leaders are already addressing the first two levels. Not to work on mindset, however, is to negate much of the value that comes from those actions.

John Burdett has worked in over 40 countries as an executive and as a consultant for businesses that are household names. He has worked on and continues to work on leadership development and organization culture for some of the world's largest corporations.

His ongoing partnership with the Bedford Consulting Group and TRANSEARCH INTERNATIONAL means that his proprietary work on talent acquisition, in any one year, successfully supports many hundreds of top leadership appointments on six continents.

He holds a doctorate in management development and since 2000 has published more than a dozen books (a number of them best-sellers) on various aspects of leadership and organization culture. His Talent Trilogy was completed in 2016. The first in the series, *Attract, Select, Develop & Retain TALENT,* was published in 2013. The second, *TEAM: Align, Build, Connect and Develop*, came out in early 2015. *The Empty Suit*, in 2016. *The A-Z of Organization Culture* came out in 2017. *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* was published in 2020.

John has a number of books available for download. Go to any of the major, online bookstores. Access using author's name: John O. Burdett

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