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RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

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COVID-19 Industry Focus: How to stop your ship from sinking in the pandemic storm?

When life gets back to 'normal,' do you want to go back to being the same? Or would you like to come out of this storm the other side, a changed person or business, a little better, healthier, wiser?



Almost overnight, the game has changed for leaders and businesses. Pre-pandemic, we seemed to be in a relatively stable world where many factors were known. Growth was relatively predictable and achieving success for some was the pursuit of perfection. Our ships were merrily sailing across the oceans delivering “Made in China” products to consumers at an increasing rate and profit.

Suddenly, our supply chains have become a liability. People are scared. Dr. Michael Ryan, of the World Health Organization who we keep seeing on the news channels, says when managing a crisis: “If you need to be right before you move, you will lose. Speed trumps perfection. Perfection is the enemy of good when it comes to emergency management.”



Dr. Michael Ryan, World Health Organization

Many leaders are currently in the middle of an emergency management situation for their countries and businesses and perfectionism has been thrown out the window in some cases.

Due to the uncertainty, leaders across all industries are adjusting strategies and supply chains, rewriting the rules of operating, and sometimes making

things up as they go. This kind of leadership demands mental agility. However, there is a challenge: our minds are not naturally built for agility

How does Operational Excellence come into play?

Well-run Lean organizations utilising Operational Excellence techniques will successfully weather this pandemic because they are superb problem solvers and able to manage in a crisis. No doubt, these Lean organizations will not only conceive the means to manage through the crisis but will emerge even stronger when the world comes out of it. They are the businesses when performing their daily work that are all about eliminating wastes and maximising value to the customers because value is what customers need and expect and are willing to pay for.

Those with simpler systems, processes that are mapped and have governance alongside their culture of innovation are lighter on their feet. They are faster at making decisions, meeting customer needs, and getting value from new products and services. This will matter even more as they look to turn this crisis into recovery.

Some leaders have a natural tendency during times of crisis is to hunker down and retreat. Now is not the time for this. Now is the time for laser-like focus. Follow the lead of Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba, who only looks to hire people smarter than him. Surround yourself with smart people. Create an environment for ingenuity by empowering teams to be innovative within the framework of operational excellence. This is especially important when so many people are working remotely.

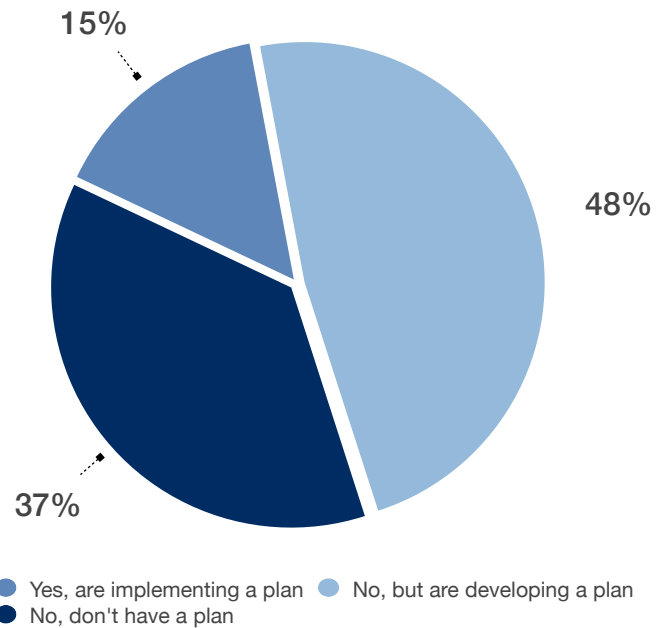
“Once the storm is over, you won’t remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive - Haruki Murakami”

“ Latest April 2020, Dubai Chamber of commerce survey finds that 85% of companies did not have a business continuity plan in place pre Covid 19. Find out what your business should be doing concerning Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity (DRBC) by listening to our upcoming vodcast with Mark Lutton on the 3rd episode of our post Covid 19 series.”

Plans to handle the global disaster

Impact of Covid-19 on Dubai's Business

Question: Having a business continuity or pandemic preparedness plan in place?



Source: Dubai Chamber: Covid-19 Impact on Business Survey - April 2020

What is your plan?

If your organisation has an Operational Excellence plan today, it is time to evaluate it. Leaders will need to have the willingness to make changes to this plan and potentially walk away from it and start a new plan. The two most important questions that must be asked:

1. What must we stop doing? (So, we can move our focus elsewhere)
2. What must we start doing?

A clear definition of what recovery means for each leader and organisation will make the answers to these questions easier to find.

Organisational alignment is essential

This recovery plan must be aligned to the organisation. Once developed, it will be important for leaders to step back and evaluate their organization through the lens of the plan itself.

1. Will there need to be a new structure?
2. Will additional capabilities need to be injected?
3. Are the processes outlined in the plan appropriate going forward?

It will be important to create that momentum within the business to drive improvement and let the operational excellence plan be successful.

An organization achieves operational excellence with four things enterprise-wide alignment of strategies, priorities, policies, and decisions. This must be across different functions and up and down all levels of the organization consistently driving the right behaviours and results.



To become better, faster, and cheaper, leaders need to ensure that everyone in the organization is willing and able to do well to be operationally excellent everyday. Whilst planning the deliveries on those ships sailing across stormy seas delivering their products no longer “Made in China” to consumers who purchase online and work from home.

To quote the famous Japanese author Haruki Murakami: "And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person “or business” who walked in. That's what this storm's all about."

Let us hope this storm blows over soon and our businesses have become a little better, healthier, and wiser.

The discussion does not end here. Tune into our vodcasts or subscribe to **Logistics Executive TV** ([Subscribe Here](#)) where we are featuring a COVID-19 series covering the current global situation all the way through to the impact on driving business forward and future supply chains. Talk to us about how we can partner with you to:

- Evaluate, redesign, and implement your operational excellence plan
- Integrate operational excellence tools within your organisation
- Coach your talent to be operationally excellent
- Train your workforce to embrace the new norm

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