



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## **LIVING IN THE FUTURE - TODAY**

The coronavirus pandemic is the cause of significant disruptions in all aspects of daily living around the world. Many countries and states are demanding, if not enforcing, social distancing by closing restaurants, bars, spectator events, and non-essential businesses. The President extended our quarantine through April—another 30-days on top of the 14 or so we've endured. My clients, and you, my subscribers to DISPATCHES and Marketing Matters, are all working from home, as am I.

It's time to get our heads out of the daily grind. We need to look up to see what the future holds for our businesses and brands. We may not have a clear-cut vision—it doesn't seem anyone knows anything for certain—but we can identify alternate scenarios and plan to optimize our marketing for each or, if you prefer, the “most-likely” scenario. It is probably wise to make contingency plans for “best- and worse-case” scenarios too. Importantly, we should establish “lead indicators,” which will serve as our listening posts, to enable us to understand which case is manifesting itself and to address it based upon our contingency planning and the latest information.

To assume everything is going to return to pre-coronavirus days may be one of your future scenarios. However, to make it your only choice and rely solely upon it is not adequately preparing for the future. And, not to consider the future is misfeasance of your stewardship of the brand. Unfortunately, the governments around the world had not planned and, therefore, adequately prepared for a virus that would be more pernicious than SARS and devastating than 911.

Moreover, we need not feel helpless about what the future holds for our business or our ourselves. We can springboard to the future to gain a competitive advantage. Joseph Jaworski, business leader, author, and son of Leon Jaworski, famed special prosecutor of the Watergate trials, offers sound advice. During his business career, Mr. J. Jaworski led the Royal Dutch/Shell's Group team of scenario planners. He influenced the way the company framed and used scenarios as a tool for developing strategies. He further transformed the company to use the tool to generate better futures, not merely to create and adapt to the different possible future scenarios. In other words, Mr. Jaworski encouraged the company to create the future and, accordingly, its future.

What should we consider doing?

- 1) Identify alternate scenarios for the future of our business or brand.
- 2) Choose the “most-likely” scenario.
- 3) Develop contingency plans for “best- and worse-case” scenarios.
- 4) Identify and monitor lead indicators to ascertain which scenario is coming to fruition.

- 5) Adapt our strategies based upon learning from lead indicators and the latest information.
- 6) Race to create the future. Be the first one to get there by making it happen sooner!

One other point worth noting, if we are going to create the future to gain a competitive advantage, we need to take action today. We build our future and that of our business upon what we do today and each day thereafter. We need to begin living in the future in our thinking and planning today.

*Make your marketing matter more. Check out my new book, AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing. Regardless of your level of marketing, this book will share how you can take it to the next level. Learn more here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>*

Continue staying home. Stay SAFE. Be well. Here's to a better future together!

Peace and best wishes,



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