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As we all know, the world is currently navigating one of its greatest economic and social challenges propelled by the global pandemic.

In an era of unparalleled change, the powerhouse of the G20 have an opportunity to transform the global trading landscape, which must be done in parallel to addressing the healthcare, economic, and social impacts of the pandemic.

During the Presidency of the G20, the leadership of The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in

2020 has focused its efforts to build a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable world, under the guardianship of its primary goal of "Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century For All," which includes themes such as: empowering people, safeguarding the planet, and shaping new frontiers, all of which are ever-more prevalent and essential in the world we live in today.



That said, as business leaders, we too have a responsibility and opportunity to realise prospects for the new world in which we live in, which will require us all to rise to the challenge together.

Prior to the pandemic, commonly the trend to change management involved numerous debates, consultations, and deliberation, placing strategy, finance, technology, and people into the equilibrium of such change.

Our collective reaction to the pandemic was one of continuity activation, which needed adaptations to refine for the unforeseen current scenarios which businesses were facing, along with quick investment and retuning of technology systems in order to enable employees to work remotely, whilst remaining connected to clients.

The quick responsive measures which took place provided many proof-points and confidence for leaders in respect of agile change management and swift strategy and process realignment.

This sentiment of agility and ongoing evolution of strategy and process will remain central for businesses to pivot beyond their current position and hence it is important for leaders to adapt their style, philosophy, and ethos to the new world which we are living in.

Whilst considering the changes needed, there are 4 change agents which most of our clients and wider B to B industry leaders have told us are a focus for them, which will also relate to wider businesses, these include:

1. Acceleration of digitisation and innovation

Connectivity, digital technologies, and policies have played a key role in strengthening the response to the pandemic and facilitating the continuation of economic activity. However, we must not become complacent with the tools and investments made, it is important to continue innovating and find new ways of working which provide agility and impact for your people and clients alike.

Businesses should now consider forging wider external stakeholder relationships to connect humanity by accelerating internet penetration and bridging digital devices.

Automation of routine work and a human-centred approach to artificial-intelligence is required to continue innovating.

The rise of technology inherently has also increased the risk of cybercrime threats; therefore, businesses should remain vigilant and ensure they have robust mitigating strategies in place.

2. Redefining the notion of working models

Whilst remote working was conceptually accepted and available across advanced economies, the Middle East has a legacy of face-to-face engagement and human interaction, therefore building in remote working into business practices was both new and required understanding and accepting by legacy leaders. Now that this has been implemented and proven to work for many businesses, whose operations and productivity remained, the working model globally has been disrupted to align with the new age of tech.

The hybrid workplace will remain, which requires businesses to rethink social dialogue and support its people through training and reskilling for the new and emerging roles and innovation needed.

Likewise, to ensure remote and hybrid working models are effective a sense of empowerment will be required for people, hence leaders will need to refine their management styles to ensure its empowered people are able to deliver agile services to its clients without a lag in time, particularly as the market competitive dynamics have changed significantly.

Business leaders will have access to a greater pool of resources from global outsourcing to the increased gig workers available, therefore the integration of such resources and its

impact to organisational culture and current employee sentiment will need to be considered and managed

We must all work to ensure the pandemic does not widen gender inequalities and undermine the progress made in recent decades. Leaders must continue to promote gender equality, as well as combatting stereotypes, reducing pay gaps, and addressing the unequal distribution of care responsibilities between men and women.

3. Push for green recovery

Mobilizing sustainable finance and strengthening financial inclusion are important for global growth and stability, growing private sector participation and transparency in these areas is required.

Businesses need to continue investment in infrastructure which enables supply chains to freely move forward, with particular consideration to green solutions being developed to protect the environment. Technology will play a leading role in such developments, along with the notion of localisation.

The pandemic has raised the case further to ensure we each lead recovery in a green and sustainable manner, where we prevent environmental degradation, conserving, sustainably using and restoring resources,

whilst tackling climate change, which have all become pressing challenges of our time. As the world recovers from the pandemic, leaders must remain committed to safeguarding the planet and building a more environmentally sustainable and inclusive future for all people.

And finally,

4. Moving to resiliency and agility

The pandemic has reinforced the need to build lean and agile operations which enable businesses to adapt and realign themselves to changing circumstances, whilst leveraging the new found opportunities which such economic and social changes bring.

Resilience is the latest business critical skill which is required in both its people and business operations.

In closing, we must address the vulnerabilities revealed by the crisis and commit to taking the necessary steps to recover stronger, and work to ensure that future generations are safer than we have been.



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