

A 7-Step, 2-Week Framework to Reinvent from Global Disruption

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Joseph Schumpeter in 1942 theorized that Creative Destruction was the dismantling of long-standing practices to facilitate innovation. This observation was in observation of manufacturing and transportation innovations through the 20th century and have held true through artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles and regenerative tissues. What he didn't address was the impact of global transformation initiated by a pandemic such as COVID-19.

Successful organizations reflect upon what constitutes their larger marketplace. As disruptions of global demand, supplies, needs and wants are occurring, there are methodical ways to facilitate conversations that matter for strategic survival and long-term relationships. Reinvention can be born from extreme necessity. Let's consider what you can do to ensure your company's long-term viability starting now.

Step One: Attitude

It is incumbent for you, as a leader, to provide optimism to your Customers, your Prospects and your Employees. Leadership must include the ability to have vision and communicate it. This gives context your company can provide which can help your audiences through this disruption using the benefit of your perspective, experience and, possibly, solutions. In any case, your audiences need to know you care and are behind them, ready to do whatever you can. This will deepen your relationships regardless of specific momentary outcomes.

Leaders help Customers, Prospects and Employees process their current state and advise them through decisions. When talking with Customers/Prospects/Employees, ask them about their pressing concerns. At the same time, share what you or your other Customers have done to address those concerns, or what you could do to address them once known.

Background

What really happens during disruption? First, there are all the ramifications and consequences for your business: the shock that comes from customers who are responding to market conditions that may change their relationship with you as a provider, supply chain changes, social behaviors adapting to emerging insights and requirements, employee work habits transitioning to new protocols, etc.

Despite these changes within the dynamic business landscape, remember that business IS still occurring. The difference is that buying priorities and patterns have shifted. Everybody is doing "the dance." Following is a framework you can use to understand your customers and respond to their needs while stabilizing your own infrastructure.

If you don't yet have a solution or the examples of others, it may be more appropriate to say, "let me look into that," and then come back for a follow-up.

One caveat: it is critical to NOT improvise or give hopeful platitudes on why things can be better or what we have done before if that has not been the case. Authenticity, transparency and generosity of spirit and knowledge will build relationships; anything else will create a loss of trust and could cost the relationship.

Step Two: Reality Check

Before you can connect with your Customers/Prospects/Employees, company leaders need to collectively gain perspective.

How was your company doing before the big disruption?

What is your corporate culture?

Start with your corporate strategy: how can it be QUICKLY refined and leveraged?

What are your company's operational strengths?

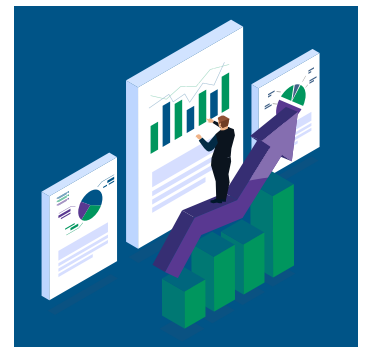
What were the issues your company was facing previously? Set them aside. What are your issues now? Prioritize them



It is natural to see fears surface as a result of asking these questions (or, more importantly, answering them). It's important to acknowledge current status and then move discussions to what you are doing next to improve outcomes.

Step Three: Get Strategic

Gather your Company leadership and enlist their support for Steps 4-7, but it starts with everyone seeing the need to change tactical directions for the strategic course. First, capture their knowledge of the concerns of your Customers. Consider what is likely to be discretionary changes for your Customers in their adaptation to the greater disruption. Think through their likely tactical plans – i.e., what they must do to survive. Then think through what would be logical for them to do to survive. Think about what they could do to leverage this disruption to thrive as an innovative approach they may not yet be considering.



Get clear on what your new "value-add" could be to strategically adjust to your customers' needs and concerns. Can you take an existing solution and "twist" it to be more helpful? Have you been working on a new solution that could be fast-tracked to help your Customers? Based on what you know about your Customer market and the nature of the disruption, what could you do differently to be even more helpful?

Step Four: Brainstorm

Open the doors of innovation to all team members. Invite customer-facing and back-office team members alike to suggest customer-centric services to the management team. You will greatly increase the buy-in to the brainstorm effort and likely to get the door-busting idea(s) that would change the course of progress for your company and your clients.

However, you MUST charge your management team together to come up with three ideas each for 1) a new service or a new spin on an existing service that would help your Customers, Prospects and/or Employees, and 2) develop the conceptual “pitch,” “close,” and “delivery” of that service. Within the week, vet the ideas for those with the greatest potential positive impact, ease of launch and resource viability, then agree to “go to market” on those ideas in the next two weeks.

Step Five: Productize and Systematize

To help these new services/solutions get traction, the resource mix used to power them should be in-house. That means using either existing resources or reallocating staff duties to accommodate delivery.

How do you repurpose current assets to deliver these new services?

What are your current capabilities to the new “value-add” as you’ve defined it?



Where do you have easy extensions of or unexplored talent within your capabilities ?

Charge your Delivery Leaders to define the Framework, Methodology and Tools for each new service within the week. This may mean taking some of your best people off of their current commitments to make the investment successful. Remember, you’re going to want to be responsive and launch in the next two weeks!

Step Six: Marketing

Helping people understand what’s available in easy to understand language and content is vital. It’s great that you’re gearing up to help your Customers/Prospects/Employees; however, if they don’t know it or understand how it works or how to access it, it’s not going to be helpful. So you will need to market what you’ve come up with for visibility and consumption.

- Make needed (or even overdue) changes or additions to your website. Update your navigation and SEO.
- Create single-page documents for succinct team understanding as well as post-call attachments.
- Send a special edition of your newsletter addressing the concerns of your audience and what you’re doing about it to help.
- Capture and promote a video of your company leaders talking about this new service.

Remember that Marketing is step one of Sales; Marketing provides context and makes the case for your Customers to consider your new solution(s). Sales personalizes the solution and then closes the deal.

Step Seven: Sales

By now, you can see that this is all about helping your customers achieve their revised business targets. Here is how your Sales process is pivotal to building relationships with your existing Customers. It is not likely your company will attract new business but those who know, like and trust you already are the most likely to expand or re-allocate their resources to work more extensively with you.

- 1 To make sure your plan is solid, ask each of your sales reps to call their two of their most “trusted” clients and ask about their pressing needs and concerns. Confirm with them what you are thinking re: new services and get feedback! DO NOT try to sell on these calls; Ask and Listen!

Delivery needs to adjust and the voice of trusted customers ensures your first delivery is on-target. This activity should happen during week one. Remember, you want to launch your new service(s) two weeks from the day your leadership first meets.

- 2 Prime-the-Pump: schedule check-in calls with every active account during week two as a “Disruption Check.” How are things going for your Customer? What are they seeing? What do they believe would help them most? As a Customer, you (and I) would be grateful for a good account executive to call and check in to help me with my pressing concerns and share potential solutions and resources.
- 3 Execute by having your Check-in calls while having a Divisional or Corporate Leader who can best advise the Customer on their business and how the Disruption is impacting them. This call is a mutual consultation in terms of discussing pain points and needs; they need solutions and you are looking to see how what you have, know and can access could help them.
- 4 Schedule Follow-up: one call is good but a follow-up to share valuable insights and information is even better. Make sure you have the right team ready for the next call.

Throughout this process, make sure you tell the truth. You and your Customers/Prospects/ Employees have a “common enemy” in thwarting/adjusting/marginalizing/neutralizing/defeating the Disruption. You are, in a sense, comrades in arms. When you do it right to turn disruption into opportunity, you will become blood-bonded and, chances are, have a relationship for life.

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