RAJEEV BENCIL SURANA

2021 IS NOT A CURSE

A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO THRIVE IN THE NEW NORMAL
Practically everyone we speak to or encounter online wants to erase 2020 and begin afresh.

The joke is 2020 is a virus that needs to be deleted from our computer and reboot it! Well the reality is 2020 will go down in history as a landmark year and we all have to adjust to the new normal.

I boldly say that 2020 is not a curse because we have been averse to the signals of Nature and like to talk about global warming or air quality of a city as a matter of (an) academic discussion and were not ready to take a stance and tough steps required to reset Planet Earth.

Covid19 has taught us the true value of life and how we need to value what we have rather than keep chasing things that may not give us true happiness. It has bought us closer to family and suddenly we are content working from home, watching movies online, and not stepping out to eat in fancy restaurants. The keyword going in the future is sustainability; we need to sustain the planet, our life, relationships, our goals, and whatever you can imagine.

2020 is definitely not a curse; it is an aberration and much-needed pause so that we can reflect on the mess we have created in the name of consumerism and capitalism and find responsible ways of consuming what is required and say no to what is excessive. Once we imagine sustainability in everything we do, we will reimage a new world order which works on responsible creation, consumption, and disposal.

This book is about solid insights on what the future holds for us in different areas which matter to us right from the future of learning to shop & retail to technology in layman's language explained in simple Q&A format without the jargon. This has been made possible by the opinion of 20 eminent experts who have been interviewed by me over the last two months post lockdown in March and their brief profiles are available at the end of the book.

I used the lockdown as an opportunity to write my second book, 2020 is not a curse and
working on my next book which is about inspiring innovator stories.

Special thanks are due to my family for their support & letting me set up my home office with incessant Zoom calls and spending a lot of my time in front of the laptop screen trying to make sense of what the future holds for us not to forget the endless supply of ginger & lemongrass chai which (had) kept me going.

A big shout out to my intern, Siddharth Prasad based in Chandigarh who has been my go-to person for any research or inputs required for the book. It has been a very rewarding experience working with him and wish him the very best in life.

Also our in-house design expert, Trishla Surana who is also my soul mate for her ability to visualize my thoughts and bringing it to life including a lot of time spent on finalizing the book cover.

How can I miss my daughter Suhani for her straight on my face feedback which really helps me never lose track of the precious reader.

Bencil is my favourite character around as also the face of innovation to help inspire you and make everyday innovation possible and is an integral design element of my book. Trishla has been ably supported by my colleague, Devki Panchal who is our in-house designer who has made the book reader-friendly and visually appealing. It is also worth appreciating the fact that even though Devaki lost her relative due to Covid19 during the critical stage of finalizing the eBook, she stood by us and completed her artwork within the deadline to make it possible for us to launch the eBook on 20th June 2020.

Special thanks to Mansi Arora a student of Delhi University for her help in copyediting the book amidst very tight timelines by burning the midnight oil and keeping awake till 5 am to deliver the content like a true leader.

The book is meant for everyone who wants to delve in the future and makes sense of the new normal post Covid19. This book is dedicated to my dearest friend, Rajesh Doctor who is a dear friend & my late cousin Nitin Surana who will always stay in my heart.

Rajeev Bencil Surana

Management Consultant | Patent Attorney | Author | Speaker | Faculty | Marathoner | Dreamer
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Future of Technology & Innovation
INTRODUCTION

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Technology is transforming innovation at its core, allowing companies to test new ideas and adapt to the changing circumstances at a speed that would have been unimaginable had it not been the need of the hour.

At such critical times, fast-paced scaling up is needed even more. Businesses were shut down because of the lockdown and have had to move online to ensure survival. “Digitization” of businesses has never made more sense. As we move towards the easing of the lockdown, social distancing will still be prevalent and companies that can adapt to the changing times and adopt technology will be able to thrive.

Be it contact-less doors or robots installed in hospitals, technology and innovation will be at the forefront in the near future. We have already witnessed innovative products and technologies that are serving health needs across the world. For example, snorkelling masks are being altered to work as ventilators, and hockey mask-making companies are now manufacturing visors to facilitate social distancing protocols.
Q1. How has technology and innovation mitigated the effects of Covid-19?

A1. From using humanoid robots in hospitals, making doors contact-less to making drones equipped with thermal imaging for detecting fever, technology and innovation have played an important role in thwarting the pandemic.

Q2. How has technology provided relief to the education sector?

A2. Whilst the schools and colleges are shut down, usage of e-learning methods have progressed, signifying that learning can't be stopped. The credit goes to edtech companies facilitating the learning process for students globally. Development and introduction of Learning Management Systems (LMS) have thoroughly improved the education system and operated as a bulwark against the pandemic.

Zoom online classes and Google classrooms have become the rage as well as continuing to provide alternatives to a physical classroom setup.

Q3. What has been the role of biotechnology in preventing the spread of Covid-19?

A3. Researchers around the world are working hard to prevent the spread of coronavirus which had infected more than 6.19 million people worldwide till 3rd June 2020. In India, Cipla has partnered with Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) to produce antivirus drugs. Scientists are conducting research activities such as transmission reduction, working on markers, inhibitors, etc to combat Covid-19.

Q4. What is the relevance and importance of innovation during such crises?

A4. When a crisis hits humanity, the places where things could be done better or more efficiently become glaringly obvious. All of a sudden, opportunities for innovation stare us in the face. Covid-19 has had an impact on many industries and sectors. A major concern of the industries globally is whether they will be able to survive the pandemic or not. As a result,
they are innovating and creating new products to sustain their businesses. India’s pharmaceutical industry including R&D outsourcing, for example, has the impetus to evolve and become more agile and responsive to new market realities and is finally getting recognized for its delivery capabilities and intellectual prowess. Encouraging innovation will be the way to move forward.

Q5. How will technology improve the conventional workplace setup?

A5. Not long ago, companies were in a mess as they had to deal with a lot of paperwork, meetings had to be held physically, travel expenses were incurred on client meetings and communication across the organization was not synchronous.

This pandemic has bolstered the use of technology and might be a blessing in disguise as companies are reshaping their workplace setup. From the ways of communication to the methods of solution, technology continues to help businesses improve operational efficiency.

The methods of communication have now been simplified and streamlined with the help of new technology. TCS for instance has already announced that post-COVID, 75% of the 4.5 lakh TCS staff will permanently work from home. That implies a tremendous amount of savings in TCO.

“Now might be the time when investors should be looking at opportunities like they did in the 70s and 80s.” - Ratan Tata

Q6. What are the technological methods through which we can detect and kill the virus?

A6. The two most robust technologies to eliminate the Covid19 virus are ozone and Ultra Violet (UV) technology which is being deployed in different locations based on human traffic and feasibility of the solution.

Plasma technology or UV radiation can be used to disinfect workspaces, classrooms, auditoriums and more. From artificial intelligence to drones to robots researchers are considering every possible thing to fight against corona virus.
A successful method of detecting viruses and allergens is to install sensors but such sensors that measure the microbial load are available in the market but are extremely expensive. This means that they can be installed in limited places that can afford them. There was a pre-existing high demand to develop automated, sensitive and rapid methods for their detection and companies are working on these solutions.

Companies would either install isolated systems to purge or sanitize the rooms or the pre-existing systems can be retrofitted with disinfectant filters to sanitize the room.

Q7. How are technology and innovation helping in tackling Covid-19 in the healthcare sector?

A7. Here are some instances where technology and innovation have improved the methods of tackling Covid-19:

- There are many tools available to frontline healthcare workers that streamline and expedite care delivery. Technology is helping many doctors diagnose (or rule out) coronavirus cases quickly, provide virtual care and prevent the virus's spread among populations.
- Robots and drones are being used to disinfect surfaces, distribute drugs & food and even assessing vital signs of a patient such as temperature, oxygen level etc.
- Telemedicine is also evolving as a sustainable solution for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19. This method enables physicians to communicate with patients virtually thus preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Q8. How has the pandemic inspired innovation?

A8. A valid example of crisis inspired innovation is the modification of snorkeling masks into ventilators for patients. An Italian company Isinnova made its solution- a 3-D printed valve attached to a snorkeling mask- freely available. The valve connects the mask to a non-invasive ventilator.
Another example is that of Bauer- the company modified its manufacturing process of hockey masks and started producing visors to promote social distancing. For door knob safety, a hygiene book has been developed by a British Firm.

Q9. With so many examples of technology and innovation mitigating the effects of the pandemic, has the government been encouraging start-ups and avenues working in this field?

A9. Looking for new combative methods by innovating and creating new technology Indian start-ups have risen to the fore and are creating or reworking their product offerings to meet the COVID-19 challenge.

The Accelerating Growth of New India’s Innovations (AGNI), one of the nine missions of the Prime Minister’s Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) tasked with helping commercialize innovative technologies, has been engaged in building a portfolio of technologies that can support the fight against COVID-19.

In Spain, the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI), a public business enterprise attached to the Ministry of Science and Innovation, approved four new R&D projects, with a total budget of 2.2 million euros and is also funding many start-ups.

Q10. What has been the impact of the pandemic on start-ups in India?

A10. A recent survey by Praxis Global Alliance summed up that 37% of the Indian start-up CEOs interviewed only have 6 to 12 months of cash reserves left in their bank. The widespread uncertainty in the market clubbed with the curbing of Chinese capital inflow in the economy has resulted in an overall slowdown in the Indian start-up ecosystem.

“It is a fact that we will need to learn to live with the virus, build our life and livelihood, and move ahead with activities by ensuring strong healthcare support systems around us.”

- Meena Ganesh, Portea Medical

Q11. How are start-ups responding to the pandemic to ensure survival?

A11. Adoption of technology in India to creating new employment opportunities, start-
ups have been the torchbearers of the overall development.

In recent months companies have resorted to layoffs, freezing hiring and salary cuts to survive. These methods have been adopted by unicorns like OYO, Blackbuck, MakeMyTrip to as well as other start-ups such as Limeroad, Fabhotels, Shuttl and many more.

In the latest report published by a start up media site, In 42 on the impact of Covid-19 on the Indian start-ups, they have concluded that over 246 Indian start-ups have already undertaken layoffs whereas 278 start-ups have announced hiring freezes.

Q12. How will technology remodel the retail sector?

A12. Necessity will drive the need for products inspired by innovation and technology. Plenty of new product categories are expected to hit the markets.

- Washing machines with inbuilt disinfecting capabilities or vacuum cleaners with small disinfecting sprays attached to them are some product ideas which companies will be working on for sure.
- The aforementioned digitization will minimize time consumption and make entire processes of the retail sector safer.
- Website pre ordering, gesturing, button-less elevators, automated retail stores such as Amazon Go will enhance the hygiene of the erstwhile physical retail.

“As a businessman, you can forecast volatility, but you can never forecast a zero-revenue situation.”
- Ajay Bijli, Chairman, PVR
One of my experts whom I was interviewing jokingly said, Zoom is the second most used word after Google these days.

And how true his statement is; Zoom is becoming as ubiquitous for video calling and meetings as Google for search and WhatsApp for messaging.

Zoom is a perfect example of how if the technology is user friendly it can become viral and catch the world by storm.

I believe Covid19 pandemic is a perfect opportunity for disruption and out of which will emerge a lot of innovation including new technologies that are relevant and meaningful. We have to be more balanced in what we do and rethink how we live and work and is a wake up call for us to become environmentally conscious and make our lives sustainable.

With sustainability comes the opportunity to develop new technologies and solutions which are green and can incorporate a 360 degree view right from creation to consumption and disposal so that we don't overburden Mother Earth and in sync with Nature.

This will open up a lot of opportunities across different sectors for sustainable technologies.
Future of Learning & Creativity
INTRODUCTION

LEARNING & CREATIVITY

The pandemic has forced the entire education system to be transformed. Students for some time had already been adopting e-learning tools to gain knowledge but the pandemic has accelerated the process immensely. E-learning methods have proven to be a boon for the education system in many aspects often raising pertinent debates related to overhauling of the entire education system.

Many teachers and faculties are incorporating online tools for the first time into their conventional classes and students are experiencing flexible learning and liking it too! These trends may not transform higher education, but they are likely to accelerate the integration of technology into it.

The past few months have also given us the opportunity to sit back, revisit our hobbies and be creative. There has been a growth in the number of people sharing pictures of the books they are reading, trying out new culinary dishes or taking to painting or music.
Q1. Why is it so important to upskill and reskill the working population?

A1. Industrial Revolution 4.0 has caused a large-scale decline in some roles as they become redundant or automated. This pandemic will force more ousters than ever. The need for people to upskill or reskill is essential for survival. The rule survival of the fittest is certainly applicable here.

As more businesses move online to sustain, reskilling and upskilling personnel is required. Candidates from the technology sector will be more in focus because building up online platforms and businesses will require coders and designers.

Q2. What does 2020 hold for the education businesses and online learning tools?

A2. 2020 has accelerated the growth of online learning as schools, colleges and universities are shut down. With Zoom, Google Hangout and other video learning solutions available globally, learning continues to spread across countries. Such platforms have made video and web conferencing frictionless.

But the core is to ensure building of social skills for children and learners which is best done face to face and is faceless online.

Q3. What are the positives of e-learning?

A3.

- Lower cost of education
- E-learning eliminates the geographical barriers- education is more global than ever with students having access to the best faculties from around the world.
- With simulation software available in the market, physical infrastructure or state-of-art labs won’t be a barrier to learning
- Focused learning- a class room setup is not always the most conducive method to gain knowledge; more learning takes place outside the classroom
Flexibility and choice of learning in a conventional setup, more often than not, students are stuck with a rigid course structure whereas e-learning methods offer plenty of subjects and courses to choose from.

Q4. What are the limitations of e-learning?

A4.

- Social skills of students will be greatly impacted
- Peer to peer learning will cease to exist unless there is a method to make classrooms really interactive
- Technology & internet connectivity issues for students living in remote areas or from underprivileged background

Q5. What will be the impact of the ongoing pandemic on the cost of education?

A5. There have already been instances of educational institutions being forced to lower the academic fee because of the prevailing circumstances. Students from New York have filed separate class-action lawsuits against the likes of Columbia University. They have asked to be partially reimbursed for their tuition and housing costs after their semesters were cut short and moved online amid the coronavirus pandemic which has led to a dilemma for the top universities who have invested millions of dollars on building world class infrastructure.

On an average, an institute can save anywhere between 20% to 60% costs in building rent, electricity, office supplies and administrative costs in the advent of education moving online but they will have to reinvent their business model to pass on the benefits to students. This will fuel new disruptive start-ups which will leverage online and face learning to provide a lower cost and seamless learning experience to students challenging the established incumbents with high cost structure and large entry barrier to learning.
Q6. How can e-learning be improved from the current format by educational institutes?

A6. There are umpteen solutions to offset the problems associated with e-learning. Learning Management Solutions (LMS) software provides various features to help the students as well as the system. It takes cares of the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of educational courses, training or development programs.

There are plenty of simulation applications that provide hands on virtual training to improve education. Online medium serves the option of mixing visuals and audios. This is one of the most important didactics of the present era.

“This virus may become just another endemic virus in our communities.”
- Michael Ryan, WHO

Q7. What has been the impact of Industry 4.0 & 2020 on skill acquisition and improvement?

A7. As the technologies of the Industry 4.0 apply new pressures on labor markets, reforms in global education systems along with lifelong learning and reskilling initiatives will be instrumental in ensuring that individuals who come from less privileged background have access to economic opportunity especially in a post pandemic world.

Q8. How will 2020 improve the pedagogy in India?

A8. 2020 has already accelerated the growth of e-learning methods and such pedagogical tools are being widely utilized. A certain advantage of online classes will be that teachers will need to upskill and be learners again, they will have to work really hard to strengthen their tech skills.
Instead of 60 students, they would probably be teaching more than 100 students. In an online setup with increased focus and individualized attention, normal teaching method won't prevail.

This will work in the favor of India's education system.

Q9. Will the growth of e-learning methods curb the brain drain mentality of Indians?

A9. With global access to education and improved pedagogy, students won't necessarily seek admission to universities outside India. The onus will be on the leading academic institutions to become better in the face of this opportunity and retain the best talent of the country.

Q10. Will 2020 be a boon or a curse for industry-academia collaboration?

A10. As the industries face a paucity of workforce and limitations of damaged supply chain, the collaborations between academic institutions and industries will increase, especially in the R&D sector.

Citing an example, pharmaceutical company Cipla came forward to engage with CSIR-IICT to take up manufacturing of three promising chemical compounds (Favipiravir, Remdesivir and Baloxavir) with anti-viral properties, to treat Covid-19.

The strategic linkage of industry-academia will result in improving the quality of work in both sectors and will lead to more meaningful innovation.

"The secret of crisis management is not good vs. bad; it's preventing the bad from getting worse."

- Andy Gilman
Q11. What systemic educational transformations can be expected in 2020?

A11. The eagerness to adopt technology by institutions has surprised many. It is an indicator of the flexibility of our education system. The following benefits can be expected once normalcy returns:

- Standardized testing across institutions; tough to implement but viable nonetheless
- Online examinations saves time, effort, and resources
- Improved pedagogy where teachers will have to reskill and upskill themselves to be the best for the institutions to attract the best talent

Q12. How to stay creative in times of crisis?

A12. The average person has over 50,000 thoughts in a single day. Immersing yourself in a creative act; be it oil painting, making doodles, playing a musical instrument or even leisurely gardening for that matter can help focus the mind and let go of the stress and anxiety of external circumstances.

Creativity is unstoppable; even when if the physical activities of the world have come to a stop!

Q13. Why is 2020 not a curse from a creative standpoint?

A13. The pandemic and the consequent lockdown can be viewed as a blessing in disguise because it has given an opportunity to work on projects that most of us had put on a back burner. It allows us to be more creative, go back to our hobbies, innovate and create something new.

The onus is on us as people to make use of the flexible life, the silver lining in the clouds instead of worrying all the time. We can use the lockdown as a time to tap into our
creative self and abandoned hobbies to perk up our lives till “Planet Earth reopens”.

Q14. How has the lockdown been beneficial for artists and creators?

A14. Brands have commissioned work from artists and agencies during lockdown and they are seeking refreshing content with only indoor shoot feasible given the limitations and saturation on social media platforms.

It is a great opportunity for artists and creators to create and work on 'out of the box' ideas. We know that Art is certainly a good way to heal our self.

“COVID-19 has humbled us to experience life from the eyes of an elder.”

- Saumyajit Roy, EMOHA
AUTHOR’S VIEW

LEARNING & CREATIVITY

When one of my expert panelists brought to my attention that parents have filed lawsuits in USA against top Ivy League schools for a partial refund of fees since all the classes have moved online, I realized we are at a cusp of a change of business model for education institutes.

And then one of my other panelists mentioned that a lot of top colleges have decided to move at least 25% of the classes online as a long term strategy it is clear education is moving online in a big way and accessibility will be the key.

We will see a hybrid business model with online being a key delivery mechanism and a slew of education start-ups who will challenge the existing status quo in terms of delivery, pricing and options available to students.

Covid19 pandemic is also an opportunity for top education institutes in India to further improve their systems and learning experience for students as a lot of Indians who travel abroad for further studies will look at alternatives to study in India over the next few years.

One of the other encouraging sign we are observing is that people now are getting back to their creative pursuits which were long forgotten and indulging in basic pursuits such as gardening, cooking, painting or playing their favorite musical instrument.

This has been made possible by people working from home without the stress of travel.
Future of Supply Chain
INTRODUCTION

SUPPLY CHAIN

The pandemic has disrupted the entire global supply chain network and the effect has relegated to business processes, consumer habits, and the worldwide economy.

Without a doubt, COVID-19 is wreaking havoc on most of the global supply chain. Businesses have had to make drastic changes to continue serving their customers and communities. Will this pandemic lead to the changes in supply chains forever?

The answer is yes.

There are many aspects of transportation strategies, logistics operations, and supply chain management that have been forced to pivot quickly. With modernized workflows and new technologies and techniques adopted, there’s no going back.

Now, there’s an urgent need to optimize supply chains to maintain operations, contain costs, and keep businesses running. Business continuity is intertwined with supply chain strategy and having a resilient supply chain is the answer which is not the same as having the lowest cost supply chain.

The world has also realized the over-dependency on China for supply chain and is looking for alternatives internally as well as externally. India and Vietnam are the frontrunners to provide an alternative to China.
Q1. Why is it a problem to have overdependence on China for global imports?

A1. Yes, the world is over dependent on China for its imports and the impact on global supply chain is evident during the pandemic and therefore every country is reconsidering their dependence on China and looking at alternative providers as also encouraging local companies to manufacture key components in-house in their country itself. For e.g. Japan has created a fund to encourage Japanese companies to take their manufacturing outside China back to Japan and other alternative destinations.

Q2. Which countries have the potential to (partially) replace China as a Global Supply Chain provider?

A2. Mainly Asian countries due to young working population and resources such as India & Vietnam followed by Thailand & Indonesia as also South American countries such as Mexico & Brazil.

Q3. Is it possible to replace China as a Global Supply Chain (GSC) provider?

A3. It seems impossible for any country to replace China for the next decade at least. Even after that, a lot of ground realities have to change to be able to compete with the Chinese. We need to keep in mind that China is a master strategist and has been using its export policy to incentivize local companies to produce in bulk and supply cheap thus building scale and proficiency over a period of time so needs long term strategy, cooperation and hard negotiation to reduce dependency on China as GSC provider.

Q4. Why is 2020 not a curse and might prove to be an opportunity for India to become a successful GSC provider?

A4. The pandemic has successfully raised the issue of too much reliance on China's supply
Companies have realized this fact and are thinking of reducing risks by putting fewer eggs in the Chinese basket. Companies had started looking for alternatives since the trade war began in 2017.

The social welfare tax and compliance costs for Chinese environmental rules have driven up the factory operational costs. While better wages are good for China, they’re not necessarily cost-effective for manufacturers. Labor costs have progressively risen in China; as a consequence global supply chains seek a new home for manufacturing and sourcing. As an eminent innovator, Sonam Wangchuk put it aptly; it’s time to go “SWADESHI” and hurt Chinese wallets.

Q5. What are the challenges that India faces to replace China’s supply chain?

A5.

- The trade legislations and tariffs are not conducive for businesses to invest
- The savings made by a company due to the cheap labor negates the higher tariffs it has to pay for imports.
- The foreign investment policies have to be made supportive for businesses to invest in India
- Non standardized manufacturing practices
- Infrastructural inadequacies

“There’s no going back to the ‘normal’ – all we should focus on is building for the 'new normal.”
- Deepinder Goyal, Zomato

Q6. Considering that China is an integral part of their supply chain, how is Europe and USA coping up with the pandemic?

A6. Covid19 which originated in China forced companies across the world to rethink about
their dependence on Chinese products. European countries are looking for another leg to stand on and they are definitely considering India.

India has offered land the size of Luxemburg to the investors and is strategizing on how to on-board global companies.

Also Governments are incentivizing local businesses to start manufacturing critical products such as medical devices, electrical components such as Printed Circuit Board (PCB) which is used in most of the electronic devices etc. in their country to ensure their supply chain is resilient.

Q7. How can businesses make their supply chain more resilient?

A7. Earlier businesses would only look at cost when they would be sourcing products and therefore a lot of the products which were part of a supply chain for a business would come from China but now the thinking is to make the supply chain resilient and not look at cost alone.

A form of vertical integration & backward integration can be an effective method to eliminate foreign supply chain. In this strategy, a company expands its role to fulfil tasks formerly completed by other businesses in the supply chain.

For example, a company might buy their supplier of inventory or raw materials. Companies often complete backward integration by acquiring or merging with these other businesses, but they can also establish their own subsidiary to accomplish the task.

Q8. How has the global opinion about China changed in 2020?

A8. There is a highly negative sentiment across the world which has resulted in an opportunity for India. The onus is on India to make the best of that opportunity. Assume that the global market is going to shrink and a piece of that will be on offer, India has to
The supply chain is very delicate and as a result there is opportunity for India. Since world’s reliance on Chinese products is reducing, there’s a good opportunity for India and this time it’s comparatively easier to compete with China.

Q9. What is the financial challenge that India has to address before we can invite foreign companies to our shore?

A9. Toy manufacturers of the world have been looking to invest in India but to compete with China, financial ground realities have to change. For instance, they expect us to invest a billion dollars but in a country like India, the incremental capital expenditure is very minimal.

For us to become an alternative to an industry of 3 billion we realistically need at least half a billion dollars’ worth of investment. Funding for such projects will be tough to procure considering the overall situation of industry and different economic sectors looking for relief.

Q10. As COVID-19-related restrictions begin to lift in Asia, how can tech organizations resolve supply-chain issues at pace?

A10. Global management consultancy firm, McKinsey suggests the following steps for companies to return to production in technology:

-love • First, building a central nerve centre to create the transparency required for agile decision making and to oversee the implementation of both strategic and tactical actions
-love • Second, the company examines demand with a skeptical eye, understanding customers’ tendency to over order and looking for opportunities to manage demand to match supply better
In parallel, specialists must assess components for criticality and risk, reaching as deep into the supply chain as possible to create a full picture.

Finally, from those insights, it’s possible to optimize limited production capacity.

“Be prepared to make your firm survive and see the tough times through.”
- Shripati Acharya, Prime Venture Partners
AUTHOR’S VIEW

SUPPLY CHAIN

As the joke goes, a kid in far off land asked his Dad 'Is God made in China'? That startled his Dad.
The Dad asked innocuously why the child thought so, to which the kid replied 'Because all the products we buy are Made in China'!

Such has been the dominance of China in the last decade or so that practically everything we picked is made in China or PRC (People Republic of China) used to avoid the negative sentiment attached to China.

A very important point made by one of my expert panelists was that it is no more about being cheaper but resilience which is extremely important to ensure the supply chain is intact.

With Covid19 pandemic having exposed the fragility of the supply chain globally and the overdependence of the world on China, it is time to rethink one's supply chain strategy which will open up a host of opportunities for emerging nations especially in Asia and South America.

Another interesting trend is that countries will try to take critical production of medical technologies, Defence equipment and electronics either in-house or to preferred partner nations as already seen in the case of the USA and Japan.
This presents a great opportunity to India as well to capitalize on the anti-China sentiment globally and the need for a viable alternative to China.

Although India has strength in services due to our demographics and young English speaking population we also have the technical manpower and engineering expertise to provide value added cutting edge products to the world.
Future of Workplace
INTRODUCTION

WORKPLACE

The coronavirus pandemic has interrupted the daily lives of people around the world. For India, the economic impact of the virus has led to new categorizations of “essential” workers, a large-scale move to remote work and skyrocketing unemployment that is expected to continue increasing.

Amid the lockdown orders across the country, office workers have ditched their daily commutes to work from the comfort of their homes. Many may find themselves in this situation for the long haul, as businesses struggle to find a path forward while restrictions slowly lift.

Work-From-Home will have a trickledown effect on many aspects of what a conventional job entails: an agile way of working and communicating with colleagues; meetings being held virtually; abandoning the large offices and massive saving on commuting time in large metros.

The transformation has already shown positive outcomes as employees have become more productive with flexible timings and are doing more than the task at hand. This has also allowed them to maintain a much better work life balance and go back to their hobbies which used to a luxury pre lockdown days.
Q1. How will 2020 change a conventional workplace setup?

A1. Clouded by a pandemic, 2020 has forced organizations to become more flexible and adapt to changes which may well become permanent even if the situation becomes normal someday.

Looking back, after 9/11, amidst the fear and panic of 2001, companies stopped allowing their people to travel, for example. Those policies faded with time but airport security changed forever.

Many of the major coronavirus changes that we’re experiencing now will evaporate, and things will go back to the way they were without much notice but the coronavirus will permanently alter many elements of how we work.

Q2. How will technology transform the workplace?

A2. Thanks to technology, businesses had the option to continue operation in some capacity.

Zoom and Google Meet enabled video conferencing and meetings replaced the conventional board room meetings for example. Technology is helping employers and managers in easy supervision of activities that is certainly helping to keep everything on track.

During the lockdown, the IT industry transitioned to Work From Home (WFH) model rather smoothly providing business continuity to clients without lowering quality or productivity, surprising industry leaders and customers alike.

Many companies have moved their finance and IT department to their respective homes where they continue to work. TCS went on to announce that 75% of its workforce will work from home itself in the near future.
Q3. Will Work From Home be a permanent option for employees in the future?

A3. Some business leaders are seriously considering WFH as a permanent feature and have started evaluating its merits and challenges. In fact, one large company announced that they will shift from current 100/100 model to 25/25. They meant that 25% of employees will attend office at any given time and overall employees will spend 25% of their time in the office, huge shifts in our way of living life will be obvious.

Q4. Why are businesses considering WFH as a permanent option?

A4. It has been well documented that the operating costs comprising of people and infrastructure can be reduced by 30% to 60%. Businesses will be saving a lot of cost in the transport, real estate rentals and operating costs. Also, this will provide a viable option against any future similar crises.

Businesses have realized the benefits and are ready to make WFH a policy decision keeping the future in mind depending on the job requirement so if one is a frontline worker such as a Doctor or Technician then there will be a limitation of working remotely.

Q5. What has been the effect of productivity in the WFH scenario?

A5. Reports have gathered that in general, productivity of employees has increased while working from home.

According to Knight Frank’s survey of 232 companies across the country, 28% have seen productivity improvement in the 2 months (April & May) of WFH, but in 61% cases it has either declined or remained same.

On the other hand workers who have small apartments and growing up kids are finding it challenging to work from home but are managing by getting up early and finishing their work before the household gets up.
Q6. What are the reasons for increased productivity of employees working from home?

A6. There are multiple reasons for the increased productivity:

- Travelling: In cities like Bengaluru where an employee wastes about 7% of their time on travelling not to mention the physical and mental fatigue, WFH is a blessing in disguise.
- Flexible timings: A 2019 survey by Airtasker found that remote employees spend less time on distractions and on average work 1.4 more days every month (or 16.8 more days every year) than office workers.
- Telecommuting: In the digital era, it’s no longer necessary for employees to be in the same room to stay connected and accomplish work. Significant company resources are saved in WFH.
- Almost everyone hates to be seated and work in the same cubicle for hours.

Q7. What are the considerations that the companies will have to make for employees so that WFH is beneficial?

A7. Establishing communication and accountability protocols for your employees is a good way to transform the working conditions of the company.

The right software will have to be optimally utilized to improve efficiency. Applications like Google Chat, Slack; licensed access to Zoom, GoToMeeting or similar conferencing software will facilitate the transition.

The focus should be on the output and the volume of projects completed instead of...
noting down the “logged in time” that often yield disengaged employees and time-wasting tasks.

Q8. What are the challenges that some businesses faced or continue to face moving operations online?

A8. The operational expense of real estate expenses of work from office versus work from by all means, this saving has to be measured against qualitative aspects of the business such as lack of control, retention and attraction of talent, competitive edge, data security etc.

One major issue is- frequently upgrading and testing their technology infrastructure.

Additionally, operations moving online will create problems like client & data confidentiality, lack of onsite support and network security.

Q9. How will the HR practices and policies of a company change as a consequence of businesses adopting WFH?

A9. Companies will have to alter many employee concerned processes such as hiring, performance appraisals, supervision, incentive and rewards to accommodate the new mode of work whether it’s a major shift or small tweaking for non-core operations.

Q10. What will be the mental impact of WFH on employees and consequently the organizations?

A10. While there are certainly benefits, there are also a number of pitfalls of WFH. Research shows that being “always on” and accessible by technology while working remotely leads to the blurring of work and non-work boundaries, particularly if you work from home. A study shows that the working hours of an average employee have increased. Feelings of isolation, loneliness and being unable to “switch off”, as well as the lack of
social support are issues which the companies will have to grapple with.

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."
-Socrates

Q11. Which sections of the workforce can adapt WFH in a business?

A11. The front line employees for example machine operators in a manufacturing company can’t work-from-home but non frontline departments such as Finance and IT can move their operations online with much ease. It is expected that WFH will become a trend soon.

Q12. What are the steps that businesses can take to make WFH transition a success?

A12.
- WFH Applicability: All businesses are not capable of adopting WFH for example operations that include hands-on labor or heavy-duty hardware
- Smooth Transition: To make a smooth transition from a conventional work setup to WFH, clear strategies and goals have to be kept in place. For example, if the working hours are not flexible, appropriate software should be installed to monitor the work and progress of the employee
- Software Platforms: The right software need to be in place to avoid miscommunication between colleagues, managers and clients
- Employee Satisfaction: It is important that the leadership does not resort to the transactional style of leadership and gives enough space to the employees to avoid mental fatigue.

“Technology now allows people to connect anytime, anywhere, to anyone in the world, from almost any device. This is dramatically changing the way people work, facilitating 24/7 collaboration with colleagues who are dispersed across time zones, countries, and continents.”
-Michael Dell
AUTHOR’S VIEW

WORKPLACE

I will be honest enough to share that I could never imagine that I will be able to work from home and always used to look forward to going to the office the first thing in the morning.

What a transformation we have seen post lockdown where we all have settled working from home and in fact, when I spoke to my cousin in Australia he seemed the happiest person I have come across during the lockdown.

When I asked him why he quipped 'Who wants to see the face of your boss every morning'?? And why waste time travelling every day to work.

n fact, he works for Australian Government and for Government organisations to take their operations online is a big challenge but as with everyone were forced to do the same and now the results are more than encouraging.

Work From Home (WFH) or remote working has been a matter of great discussion for a long time but this pandemic has shown that it is very much possible.

This will transform the way we report to work, attend meetings and do team building and will lead to a greater trend of the gig economy where more and more people will choose to work for themselves and be freelancers rather than being employees.

This will be a hit for commercial real estate but at the same time, we cannot eliminate the effectiveness of face to face meetings and team bonding.
Future of Travel
INTRODUCTION

TRAVEL, TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

As the lockdown is being uplifted strategically, there has been a consequent easing of travel restrictions. Grounded for many months, airlines are beefing up their summer schedules; airports are still mostly ghost towns, and international long-distance travel is all but dead.

Around the globe, the collapse of the tourist economy has bankrupted hotels, restaurants, and private transport - and thrown millions of people out of work.

With uncertainty and fear hanging over traveling, no one knows how quickly tourism and business travel will recover, whether we will still fly as much, and what the travel experience will look like once new health security measures are in place.

One thing is certain: Until then, there will be many more cancelled vacations, business trips, weekend getaways, and family reunions.

Just as mass unemployment leaves indelible scars on labor markets, so the current travel and tourism collapse will bring long-term changes to patterns of international or domestic movement for both business and pleasure.

It is evident that travel companies & tourist destinations will coax people to start exploring again using creative and subtle marketing & backing it up with the promise to take care of them in any eventuality.
Q1. What has been the impact of Coronavirus on the Travel & Tourism industry?

A1. Coronavirus has emerged as a crippling blow to the entire Travel and Tourism industry, not only in India but in the entire world. The disruptions that it has caused are across the entire value chain i.e. Airlines, Hotels, Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Restaurants, Rail Networks, Roadways, Water Transport and Cruises, Taxis, Auto-rickshaws and a slew of other indirect providers.

Q2. What has been the impact of Coronavirus on the hospitality sector specifically?

A2. As corporate India works from home, and Air, Rail and Road connectivity has been shuttered, the Hospitality industry faces a loss of revenue of around Rs.1.10 lakh crores. Almost all hotels in India are running at very low single-digit occupancy rates if they are at all open. With that we have seen a lot of future booking cancellations too.

Q3. What was the contribution of the Hospitality sector in India’s GDP before the pandemic?

A3. This sector used to contribute about 10 per cent (between 9.2 per cent and 11.6 per cent) in India’s GDP and employed (directly and indirectly), between 43 and 50 million people.

Out of total revenue loss likely to be faced by the hotel industry, organized hotel operators are estimated to face a revenue loss of over Rs 40,000 crore. During March, the occupancy in hotels across top 13 markets dropped by 53 per cent compared to the same month last year.

Q4. What will be the road to recovery for the three sectors?

A4. Since the government has not announced any relief package for the sectors yet, the
next 12 to 18 months will be bumpy and it is expected that 20 to 30 per cent voluntary or involuntary consolidation will happen.

However, the reversal of fortunes is likely to be led by the young and fearless travelers, tempted by low costs and great value propositions and a strong push back by customers who have been “boxed-in” for months in their homes and are yearning to break free as soon as possible.

Q5. What can the companies do to survive this pandemic in general?

A5. Companies that can conserve cash and stay close to their customers and employees will survive the crisis. The engagement has to be constant to thin out the competition.

It will also be critical to look at reinventing, for example becoming arbiters of “fit to travel” for customers on one side and hotels, airlines and destinations on the other.

"Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are all in this together."
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

Q6. What is the potential loss that the Indian Airline industry may face?

A6. The aviation industry in India could incur losses worth ₹ 27,000 crore ($3.3-3.6 billion) in the first quarter of 2020-21. The passenger growth of airlines is likely to fall sharply to a negative 20-25% growth for 2020-21.

- Experts have emphasized on the need to focus on the potential of domestic tourism and try to gain some profit through it
- Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) suggested setting up a ‘Travel & Tourism Stabilization Fund’ with direct benefit transfer to each unit to prevent financial and job loss
- The experts also recommend cost optimization at all operational levels
Q7. How can technology and automation help travelers and tourists circumvent the impact of Covid-19?

A7.
- Mobile/remote applications which can reduce the load on call centers and helps you reschedule your travel bookings streamlining the rebooking and refund process of passengers
- Infrared cameras and sanitizing apparatus at various check points to ensure safety
- A measurable device to optimize cost and reduce the complexity of processes reducing the overall cost to companies
- A system to manage disruption in real time. It can provide travelers with pre-trip health and safety advice, real-time monitoring of travel disruptions

Q8. How are airports being converted to fortresses to improve safety?

A8. As the main point of entry and exit in most countries, airports play a key role in managing health crises. The objective is to detect and identify passengers that could potentially pose health risks for the country. Airlines are now allowing one liquid hand sanitizer, up to 12 ounces/ passenger.

At IGI, Delhi, specially designed UV (ultraviolet) based tunnels to disinfect checkpoint trays and baggage are in place. Mobile UV towers to disinfect surfaces in the terminal area, hand-held UV devices, passenger trolley disinfection systems and walk-in shoe sanitizer mats are some facilities incorporated for passenger safety. Movable mobile disinfection towers have also been installed at the airport terminal to sanitize electronics items like mobile phones, laptops, etc.

Q9. Amidst the furor of the pandemic, the following question has worried many citizens- Has COVID-19 infected international air travel for good?

A9. Airline analysts believe that business travel is likely to recover quicker than leisure
travel. But understandably, consumers are likely to take some time before taking up any attractive pricing offers made by airlines to try and lure back the lost traffic until the anxiety around the highly infectious nature of coronavirus dies down.

Q10. What will the post Covid-19 world look like for the hospitality sector?

A10. Top hoteliers identify the following suggestions and changes in hotels working to safeguard the tourists and guests from the pandemic:

- Temperature Scanners at doors to complement the door frame metal detectors
- Masks being worn by all frontline staff and the security(valet staff who are greeting customers before they have been scanned
- A focus on hygiene, and sanitization of all surfaces, possibly even multiple times a day Ultra Violet technology to be implemented to sanitize luggage
- In addition to guests, staff will have to be screened more carefully in future. Staff with cold, cough or running temperature will not be allowed on the premises until they get well
- Laundry will have to incorporate more intense cleaning

"When the world is running down, you make the best of what’s still around.”
-Sting

Q11. What will be the positive outcomes of the pandemic?

A11. As international travel will be arduous due to restrictions, and likely more expensive in a year where everyone has taken a financial hit, domestic locations and domestic flights will greatly benefit from the increase in traffic.

Q12. Is there a silver lining for the tourism industry in the pandemic affected 2020?
A12. Domestic tourism industry might pick up aggressively. Locations which are a short drive from a large city would benefit first. People have been cooped indoors for months and will probably continue to be for some extended time, will head for the hills, or the beach.

Goa will upstage Dubai, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

Globally Italy which is a much sought after tourist destination has come up with interesting strategies to win back tourists with insurance and free stay in case of a tourist contracts Covid19.

In fact, Cinquefrondi, a small town in Italy which prides itself as being corona virus free is offering USD 1 houses for reverse migration and the project is called ‘Operations Beauty’ to recover lost and degraded parts of town.

Q13. What are the real estate problems that the hotel owners are facing?

A13. For those who are leasing hotels, Covid-19 is likely to result in a hectic period of negotiating with one’s landlord. Hoteliers are already engaged in hectic parlays with lawyers, trying to see if Force Majeure or the Doctrine of Frustration applies to their particular case, and if so, how they can benefit from the same.

Also, businessmen constructing hotels with debt will probably have to shelve the project looking at the dramatic circumstances. Hopefully like another business catastrophe, this shall too pass.

Q14. How will the pandemic impact consumer behavior?

A14. There will be a general weariness of going to public spaces for some time. This feeling will be enhanced because people will be wearing masks, and there will be all kinds of testing for accessing public places.
Non-essential travel will be indefinitely put off once people get used to video conferencing and start using collaboration apps to communicate, stay in touch and get things done.

“There’s no going back to the 'normal' – all we should focus on is building for the 'new normal.’”

- Deepinder Goyal, Zomato
AUTHOR’S VIEW

TRAVEL, TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Who would have imagined that travel for us would be restricted from the living room to bedroom to the kitchen?

When 9/11 happened we were all scared to travel and take a flight but that slowly changed when things settled down and security was beefed up at the airport.

But because Sars-Cov2 virus is highly contagious maintaining social distance has become a norm and therefore travel is now being undertaken only on need basis.

Also with business meetings taking place online and all the major events for the year 2020 being cancelled there are very few options left for the industry to revive.

For one, every country / region will have to provide insurance and safety cover so that in case a tourist develops Covid19 then they will be taken care of by the authorities and insurance will cover their treatment as seen in the case of an Italian destination which is offering to treat patients in case of Covid19 at their cost and offering them a virtually free trip.

Also, there will be a need for marketing campaigns to reassure tourists and take their minds away from Covid19 and all the negativity surrounding it.

Now will be the time for responsible travel and tourism!!
Future of Shopping
INTRODUCTION

SHOPPING & RETAIL

Humans are social beings and love shopping. A lot of effort is made to ensure that the customer has a great retail experience!

The pandemic has forced the shopper behavior to undergo a fundamental and long-lasting evolution and this will have a dramatic impact on the retail industry.

The pandemic has caused acceleration of many consumer trends; from the move to digital, to more responsible consumerism which centers on sustainable and local products to the evolution of the experience economy as we know it.

Never have retailers had to think about how people come into the store, the distance to be maintained between them, people are going to have to wear masks while shopping or the need to have screens to protect frontline staff.

This is a completely different way of thinking and it will be like this for some measurable period of time. Technology will obviously come to the rescue of many retailers as well as eager shoppers.

Online ordering, home delivery, premium charges on essential services, inventory management are the only options left with consumers. The retail business too would be out the Covid-19 storm and retail will evolve to provide customers with a seamless online-offline experience.
SHOPPING & RETAIL

Q1. Considering the wholesome view, how can we define the retail scenario at this point?

A1. The global threat from the coronavirus pandemic will eventually pass and business operations will revert to the old normal, however, customer experiences and interaction are likely to be different. The current crisis serves as a reminder to the entire retail industry that, to have a contingency plan is an important part of critical strategic planning.

Q2. How has the weary supply chain affected retail stores?

A2. While consumers are seeking ways to makeshift their everyday needs, albeit, in a socially-distanced environment, retailers are dealing with the hit to non-essential goods and services as their marketing and application have been severely affected by the lockdown in place.

Q3. How long will retail industry take to recover from the pandemic?

A3. Top industry associations like Retailers Association of India (RAI), National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI) have said that the clothing, catering, hospitality and grocery retail industry will take about a year to recover.

Q4. Is the consumer buying behavior going to change?

A4. The market changes resulting from the present circumstances could shape many aspects of the way people shop for food and other goods; even after COVID-19 will be abated. Many live consumer panels have concluded that where people were once comparing differently branded items in the stores, are now buying what’s available.

Q5. Is the changing consumer buying behavior good for the retail industry?
A5. Customers are found to have become more patient and disciplined. The old hue and cry is amiss and everyone awaits their turn to be serviced graciously. The courteousness shown by the sales person as well as the customer is heart-warming and hints at a larger transformation in buying behavior.

“Let us remind ourselves that our ancestors saw nature as mother, and asked us to respect it. At some point in history, we forgot ancient wisdom. When pandemics and abnormal weather phenomena are becoming the norm, it is time to pause and wonder where we lost the way, and how we can still make a comeback.” – President Ram Nath Kovind

Q6. How can the retail stores survive in such perilous times?

A6. Businesses will have to try and reinvent themselves, with that they will have to seek different solutions. People are using the internet more than ever before and when the consumers feel the need for a product or service, they head to social media and search engines to order or find about it. Many businesses have already realized the importance of spreading out on digital platforms. There has been an increase in digital marketing spending along with website creation and app delivery services.

Q7. How can retail businesses weather the pandemic financially?

A7. One major factor that increases the ability of a business to weather this storm will be the amount of liquidity that retailers will have to navigate the rough waters ahead, and access to capital. There have been recessions before as well, and those eventually passed in relatively short order to smoother sailing. But today, a recovery in this case is unlike anything any retail business has had to endure or experience for over 100 years. It will take time, and that time will require the generation of liquidity and access to capital.

Q8. What is the ideal recovery plan for retailers?

A8. The general view is that retailers and consumer goods and service companies need to
assess potential future threats and challenges on a global level through a logical set of steps that might build their capability to sustain the impact and then rebound.

- Assess the risks around customer sales patterns and traffic, and supply of product
- Implement Key Performance Indicators and dashboard tracking of product supply, addressable cost structures and human capital
- Develop a set of contingency plans
- React and capitalize on short term opportunities, increase product discount levels and term out deferred payments.
- Rebound and plan for the recovery

Q9. What are some methods to reopen stores whilst following the safety regulations?

A9. Every store can work on a skillfully adapted flow to promote social distancing and safety.

The controlled flow implemented by the retailer coupled with the cooperation of both customers and retailers will make the process seamless.

Another way to make the shopping experience less strenuous is by installing a digital board outside the shop listing out the items available in the store, which will significantly save the time of many customers and requesting customers to pay digitally.

Q10. What changes will e-commerce undergo?

A10. There will be other compulsive, unwelcomed changes in the retail businesses as well, especially e-commerce.

For example, there might be a premium levied on returns. Much alike the mature model of the airline industry where in the cancelled flight ticket fare is only partially returned to the customer. The customers will be disciplined and less pampered.
Earlier, a customer would have ordered 10 t-shirts and returned 9 without incurring a loss- a headache for the retailer and a burden on the inventory. A premium or a small added cost to every return might be the way to go considering COVID-19 is highly contagious.

“The biggest challenge for start-ups is to stay in business. With debt capital, they can continue to scale and focus on the things that work for them.”
- Saurabh Srivastava, TiE Delhi-NCR

Q11. There has been quite a huge furore over reopening of salons and other personal grooming parlors. What can they do differently to offer their services keeping safety in mind?

A11. The precautionary measures included sanitization of salons, allowing entry to only one person at a time, providing only essential services to customers by appointments, no walk-in services, limited staff, those involved in service must wear PPE kits, preference to online payments, etc. The essential services identified for salons are- haircuts, dyeing hair, waxing and threading.

Q12. How will the Fashion retail change?

A12. The format of lifestyle shopping will change within the next 12 months. There will be shrinkage in the sizes of the massive fashion retail outlets; Inventory management will become efficient.

The entire erstwhile reality of retail will change- there will be a faster blending of Ecommerce and physical retail more so because of pandemic. Many luxuries such as free returns and the luxury component of walk in retail shops will be curbed. The whole industry will be turned upside down.
Q13. What are the ways to make grocery shopping more efficient by the use of technology?

A13. Phononic’s research has found that 89% of shoppers want to shop in a grocery store that understand how to make buying groceries an easier and more efficient experience.

A key way to this can be achieved is through the layout of the store: 92% of customers say it is important that the layout of the store makes it easy to find things, and food executives agreed, with 87% saying it has proved successful to create an optimized store layout.

Technology can improve the layout and suggest ergonomic measures to optimize the whole shopping experience.

Retailers are also looking to automated technologies to improve processes on the business end and to augment the efforts of employees.

For example:

❤ Robotic janitors in Walmart or Martys in Giant Food Stores will be highly impactful in giving customers a sense of safety while grocery shopping
❤ Cashier-less checkout or innovations that may eliminate checkout altogether.

“It will be super important for us to always keep safety and hygiene as an important consideration while designing in the post-lockdown phase.”

- Anurag Arora, Uber
AUTHOR’S VIEW

RETAIL & SHOPPING

When one of the expert panelists landed up at a DMart 24*7 store in Powai, a posh residential area in Mumbai at 1 am in the night little did they imagine there will be such a queue whereby they had to wait an hour to get in the store but such was the hysteria during lockdown that people were queuing up and hoarding whatever was available.

But never before in India have we seen consumers stay in such long queues and maintaining discipline for their turn to arrive which is what responsible consumerism is all about.

The trend towards online will get accelerated and Omnichannel distribution which we have been talking about will be the order of the day which simply means we will leverage the reach of online sales channel and leverage the depth of offline stores in serving customers.

Also, an interesting trend is people are suddenly realizing they have a lot of clothes in their wardrobe and are questioning the need to buy more responsibly.

We will also see drone deliveries, virtual dressing rooms and personalization where customers will offer more details required for online ordering especially in the case of wearables to ensure they are served properly and the right stuff is recommended to them.
Future of Media & Entertainment
INTRODUCTION

MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

GUESS WHAT?

Sound rolling, camera and of course, action! WOW!

We have it “all” on OTT platforms amidst lockdown. Disney Plus made its way to India
and has launched in our country on April 3rd of 2020 via Hotstar.

It's true that no industry has been safe from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic but
for some it may prove just a temporary blip. But for the world of television and
entertainment, the economic shutdown is hastening an unsettling inevitability: a
permanent shift in how we watch and pay for content.

OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime are the major players benefitting from the
pandemic and the lockdown. People are consuming content virtually and with more time
on their hands, appreciating the ability to access entertainment 24*7. It's not just the
movies, spectator sports have also been forced to think of alternatives such as assembling
giant screens in stadiums to give the players a more natural feeling of competition.

Experiences such as going to festival or gigs surrounded by thousands of strangers, which
would have seemed normal just a few months ago, for obvious reasons may be less
appealing today. The entertainment industry and the entire universe around it have come
to a standstill.

Never in history had the entertainment industry witnessed such desolation that the
COVID-19 pandemic has made it to go through but the silver lining is that we have a lot
more online collaborations amongst artists, singers and musicians such as Together at
Home concert conceptualized by Lady Gaga in partnership with World Health
Organization (WHO).
MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

Q1. What were the growth projections of the media & entertainment sector before the pandemic?

A1. According to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) report, the Indian Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector reached Rs. 1.82 trillion (US$25.7 billion) in 2019 (a growth of 9% over 2018). Further, as per the report, the M&E sector in India was expected to cross Rs. 2.4 trillion (US$34 billion) by 2022, at a CAGR (Compound annual growth rate) of 10%.

Q2. What are the predictions for the media & entertainment sector post Covid-19?

A2. CRISIL credit rating agency is expecting that the Indian Media & Entertainment industry’s revenue will reduce by 16% or Rs. 25,000 crore to Rs. 1.3 lakh crore in the current financial year.

This overall reduction in revenue is expected to severely impact the profitability of the M&E sector. It has already led to almost zero content creation due to cancellation of shootings; postponement of Indian Premier League (IPL) which is known to be one of the marquee media events of the year.

Q3. How will the workforce of the M&E sector be impacted?

A3. The workforce of the M&E sector can be divided into two parts. One group comprises all the employees who are on the rolls of the broadcasters, production houses, event management companies, etc. and are employed permanently. The other group is of the temporary workers and freelancers who are kept on a contractual basis for specific projects.

For permanent employees, the Ministry of Home Affairs through its order dated March 29, 2020, directed the states and union territories to take measures to ensure that all employers must pay wages to their workers without any deduction for the period their
establishments are under closure during the lockdown.

For contractual workers, the majority of the workforce in the M&E sector belongs to this group and is most adversely affected due to the cancellation of shoots and events.

Q4. How has 2020 proved to be a boon for the online content industry?

A4. As the world is adjusting to a new normal, consumer behavior is also expected to change rapidly and we can already see a part of that change. Lockdown has fuelled the demand for at-home entertainment and consequently, television and streaming platforms have seen significant growth which is likely to persist in the future as well.

Experts predict that even after the lockdown ends, social distancing norms will continue impacting how the M&E sector operates.

Q5. Has Covid-19 increased the viewer’s appetite for online content?

A5. According to the BARC-Nielsen study on Covid-19 and its impact on TV and smartphone landscape, the time spent on it during Week 1 of the pandemic has increased by 1.5 hours, a gain of 6%. Breaking all the records was Prime Minister Narendra Modi 21-day lockdown announcement which was watched by 197 million viewers. According to the same report, Ad volumes on TV rose 16% in the 20th week.

“With knowledge comes the courage to experiment, for now the fear of the unknown is replaced by the excitement of exploration.” - Pavan Soni, Inflexion Point

Q6. Why are the OTT platforms experiencing a paradigm shift? Is it because of the content itself or the lockdown?

A6. OTT is giving viewers fresh and new content which nowadays is making them spend more and more time on online streaming applications. The audience has more time at
their disposal and ends up spending more quality time with family, completing household chores, and consuming content via OTT platforms.

In the first quarter of 2020, Netflix added a staggering 15.8 million paid subscribers as a locked-down audience turned to the platform in the absence of other entertainment options like daily soaps, reality shows, etc.

Q7. How will the core of content creation change?

A7.

♥ Methods of content creation will significantly change as the production houses and content creators will have to focus a lot on social distancing norms while shooting a movie, video or even theatre
♥ Many elements of content would be created digitally to minimize the requirement of human contact
♥ Type of content which is created will change as it will also cater to an audience which is consuming it via the internet on different portable devices

Q8. Which part of the M&E sector has and continues to face the biggest loss?

A8. Live events and event management business are the biggest casualties as regulations do not permit large gatherings. Large sporting events will likely be played in empty stadiums catering only to TV and mobile audience.

Large concerts may be replaced by live streaming by performers on YouTube or Instagram Live and consequent revenue models too will change.

Q9. What will be the impact of Covid-19 on sports?

A9. The key revenue generation for sports bodies is through licensing of television broadcast rights. With the stoppage in sporting events, most sporting bodies will likely
face financial hits.

Indian cricket could be relatively better placed when compared to other Indian sports as well as international cricket. Smaller countries like West Indies, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka could face challenges if their respective media contracts will not be renewed.

Sports other than cricket might find it harder to return to normal in India because they do not have financial pockets as deep as the Indian cricket.

Q10. How will the Indian GDP be hampered if a global sporting event like IPL is cancelled in 2020?

A10. BCCI revealed that the 2015 IPL contributed Rs 1,150 crore to the Indian GDP. The loss would also be felt by industries linked to the tournament. The breaking of the chain of industries supporting sports is likely to hurt the Indian economy more than the marquee event itself.

Support staff, logistic companies, airlines and hotels are some of the sectors which could face the harsh brunt.

“Life doesn’t get easier or more forgiving; we get stronger and more resilient.”
-Steve Maraboli -

Q11. How has esports fared in 2020?

A11. The absence of “real” sport presents an opportunity for virtual technologies to grow. Already, sports leagues across the world are using esports (They are in the form of sports competition using video games) to maintain interest and a sense of competition during shutdowns.

Esports has grown massively in recent years and presents a new way to engage fans and
bring in revenue. An Indian gaming company, Nazara Technologies has plans to invest USD 20 million in e-gaming startups.

Q12. With all the disruption that sports are facing globally, what strategies are the industry adopting in response to the disruption?

A12. The industry is trying to capitalize on the spike in media consumption by finding new ways to engage consumers. In the absence of live games, this means deepening the pool of content available to fans. For example, sports broadcasters such as Star Sports, ESPN and Fox Sports are showing classic games, archived content, documentaries, holding live interviews with sportspersons in a bid to keep consumers busy watching all the possible content.

Individual leagues are doing the same. The NFL is making every game since 2009 available for streaming on its direct-to-consumer channel Game Pass, a strategy that led to a 500-fold increase in daily sign-ups for the service.

Q13. How will technology help to keep live events, sports matches relevant while practicing social distancing?

A13. Immersive technologies could enable fans to experience games live, without having to be physically present - an idea that once may have been counterintuitive but now seems logical.

Crowds are not likely to be present for sporting events this year following the pandemic. Instead, large and small screens will bring us close to the action and we could have new camera angles and mikes, the widespread use of drones that can bring spectator-level views from different parts of the stadium, and different types of augmented reality (AR) to bring you into the action.

People who previously may have used technology only to make a phone call or for sending
texts have now spent weeks putting technology at the centre of their lives. Their interest in technology is certainly helping the sports industry in growing rapidly.

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."-Marie Curie-
I have to admit that I am a movie buff and had to go to the theatre every week for a new release with friends & family along with a tub of popcorn.

And when my daughters used to coax me to get Netflix I would always argue that we go to the theatre every week and have Amazon Prime so why do we need Netflix??

But as soon as the lockdown began we bought a Netflix subscription and ever since I have got hooked on to Netflix.

Now I find it very convenient to watch movies and web series from the comfort of my home with family; what a transformation!

We will see a huge spurt in online content delivery across different genres and languages including concerts and live events and online content and booking platforms have to gear up for the same.

As far as theatres go they will be hit in the short term and have to provide a more holistic entertainment experience to their patrons that includes virtual reality gaming, live music events, stand-up comedy etc. to win back customers.

Sports are best watched in packed stadiums and we will hopefully get back to that reality but again Esports is fast catching up for interactivity and real life experience.
1. Siddharth Bothra | Founder, IQ Group of Companies | Mumbai

Siddharth is one of the most driven and fearless people I have come across with a clear intent to become a successful businessman when he first came to Mumbai in 2001. He quickly established a successful venture whereby he work with large corporates in India and provides them with a global supply chain assurance to ensure their factories are always working.

Siddharth has a keen interest in politics and is a an avid philatelist.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/siddharth-bothra-0605347/

2. Amit Shorewala | Director, Ace Institute of Technology | New York

Amit is one of the most resourceful people I have known and runs a skills training institute in New York City and a problem solver at heart. He skills and resskills students and unemployed youth in NYC so that they can be employed, be productive, and earn their own living.

He is candid and doesn’t mince words when required!

https://www.linkedin.com/in/amit-shorewala-14174813/
3. Abhijeet Kini | Cartoonist & Creator of Bencil & Angry Maushi | Mumbai

Abhijeet has been drawing cartoons ever since he was 11 years old, many thanks to all the comic books that acted as inspirations and fuel for passion. His mother gave him a Eureka moment when she took him to meet the famous Uncle Pai, Editor of Tinkle cartoon magazine which was a dream come true and led to his first assignment as a cartoonist.

I am also proud to say that our comic character, Bencil has been created by Abhijeet Kini about a decade back for our company, Scinnovation Consultants Pvt. Ltd.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/abhijeet-kini-60b771b/

4. Robert Lobo | Co-Founder, Anterprise Network & Retail Guru | Mumbai

When I first Lobo along with my co-founder, Trishla at the go-to place Candies Cafe in Bandra seeking advice on scaling our foot care venture, Colour Me Mad he was all ears and asked us why customers buy our footwear instead of the usual number crunching!

This exposed us to Lobo, the suave and vocal retailer and angel investor who is very animated when it comes to fashion trends, spotting opportunities, and reading consumer behavior.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/robertlobo/

5. Fatima D'Souza | Chief Operating Officer, Zelle Biotechnology | Bangalore

Fatima is one of the most articulate women I have come across who knows what she is talking about and has tons of experience working in the life sciences space, be it with Kiran Shaw's Biocon to her current role at Zelle Biotech, a small firm into outsourced pharma research.

She keeps shuffling between Bangalore where she lives & Mumbai where she works every
week but now the lockdown has given her an opportunity to spend more time with her family and work remotely.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/fatima-d-souza-7339853/

6. Vivekanandhan K. | Managing Director, Faraday Ozone | Coimbatore

Vivekanandhan is a gritty entrepreneur and a pioneer in ozone technology that can sanitize any environment and kill the dreaded Covid19 virus. He has developed a range of technology solutions in hygiene & sanitization space and has received global acclaim for the indigenous technologies developed by his company, Faraday Ozone.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/vivekanandhan-koodialingam-1a359117/

7. Saurav Kumar | Partner, Indus Law | NCR region

Saurav is a partner with Indus Law with over 15 years of experience in advising domestic and international clients across a broad spectrum of corporate transactions.

He provided his sharp perspective on legal implications post lockdown and how India can overhaul its legal and compliance framework to become a trusted supplier of knowledge & goods to the world.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/saurav-kumar-65687753/

8. Rahul Agarwal | Founder, Polygons Design | Ahmedabad

Rahul is into his 20s and pretty much looks like a student on the block but his astuteness has made him the 1st Indian to raise USD 1 million on the crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter for his hexagonal, flat spoon which can measure different tea & tablespoon sizes.

Sounds simple but that’s the beauty of design that merges seamlessly into the product. He
is a graduate from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and dreams to launch a design-focused product company that is scalable & successful.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/rahul-agarwal-5418a890/

9. Christopher Bluemel | Founder & Director, i-CHESS Chemicals | Mumbai & Germany

Christopher is a German national who founded i-CHESS, a specialty chemicals company in 2006 in Mumbai. He previously worked with Bayer in various businesses and countries for 18 years.

He has made the suburbs of Bandra his home and carries a strong opinion on a lot of issues.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/christopher-bluemel-928b392/

10. Biplab Ketan Paul | Director, Naireeta Services & Sustainable Green Initiatives Forum | Ahmedabad

Biplab is one of the grittiest people I have come across who lets the action speak louder than words. He is dedicated to the cause of farmers and works with them hands-on providing them technological intervention required to improve their farming skills and make them sustainable.

He can effortlessly move from the fields in the interiors of India to speaking fluently on international forums and humbly taking accolades for his work along with his spouse, Trupti who is his partner in his social venture.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/biplab-ketan-paul-06a6a47/

11. Rahul Mehta | Investor & Founder, Mentor Cap | Mumbai

Rahul Mehta is disciplined, logical, and always has his ears on the ground. He is unlike
other investors and sweats it out with the founders of a company he is investing in and spends a lot of time providing them with the much-needed management bandwidth.

He is a marathoner and used to be spotted early mornings over breakfast meetings at Cricket Club of India (CCI) in South Bombay, which is pre-lockdown!

https://www.linkedin.com/in/rahul-c-mehta-b249699/

12. Rudolf D’Souza | Chief Knowledge Officer, AFCONS Infrastructure Ltd. | Mumbai

Rudolf is a seasoned innovation professional who loves to inspire his team and the people around us on innovation and how it should be discussed in the boardroom of every company. He specialized in gamification which is a terminology now catching up in India.

He was recognized at World HRD Congress in July 2016 among "50 Most Influential Knowledge Management Professionals".

https://www.linkedin.com/in/rudolf-d-souza-58195820/

13. Erik Zabala Versteeg | CEO, Zabala Consulting | Pamplona, Spain

Erik runs one of the most successful innovation consulting companies in Europe and based in the scenic town of Pamplona in Spain which is ill-famous for the bullfight.

Zabala has offices across Spain, Europe, and Americas and is represented by Scinnovation Consultants in India.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/erik-zabala-versteeg-31a26560/
14. Ratnesh Jain | UGC Assistant Professor in Engineering Sciences, Institute of Chemical Technology | Mumbai

Ratnesh Jain is the recipient of the prestigious Ramalingaswami Fellowship at the Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai. He has published over 25 research papers in reputed journals across the globe.

Ratnesh has a vision of connecting academia with industry and is a thorough professional in his conduct making you wonder he works in a top corporate job and not an academic institution.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/ratnesh-jain-1b300b15/

15. Hemant Sahal | Founder & CEO, CollPoll | Bangalore

Hemant is a dreamer; the one who knows how to achieve his dream and made a world-class e-learning product, CollPol which has been a boon for educational institutes especially during the lockdown where schools & colleges have to take their classes online.

He is the director of Adianta School for Leadership and Innovation and a Social Entrepreneur at heart.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/sahalhemant/

16. Santosh Hulawale | Founder & CEO, Robotech Research | Mumbai

Inspired by the Japanese animated show- Giant Robo, Santosh Hulawale developed an early passion for the field of robotics.

He created his first robot when he was 11 and a fully mechanical four-legged robot at the age of 13. Currently, he is the Founder & CEO of Robotech Research, a robotics company that majorly focuses on building humanoid robots.
17. Varun Gandhi | New York

Varun Gandhi works with an investment firm that specializes in medical technology investments and based in New York City.

He is deep into the medical devices field and has the experience of acquiring a start-up and creating value before it is sold off to larger companies.

Varun loves Bollywood and sports and if not on the computer screen will be immersed on his TV screen.

18. Captain Sandeep Dhawan | Geo Political Expert | Mumbai

Sandeep comes from an Indian Navy background and currently a commercial pilot with an Indian carrier, but his interest and knowledge of geopolitical issues is vast and prolific. He has opinions on India’s neighbors and how India needs to act diplomatically and militarily to achieve its true prowess.

You can follow up on his blog, https://insightful.co.in

19. Paul Thachil | Allana Group | Dubai

Very few people know about Allana Group which has vast operations in India & the Middle East with a heritage of 150 years. Paul is a soft-spoken CEO of one of their consumer businesses based in Dubai and rarely does one see him lose his calm. He has a very global perspective of businesses and the complexity of global supply chains.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/paul-thachil-a8346126/
Charles is a technocrat and loves to research emerging technologies such as 3D printing, robotics, and recently on Covid19 related technologies such as contactless knobs or sanitization chambers.

Charles runs an R&D incentives company in New York State which helps corporations and start-ups benefit from tax savings for spending on research.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/charlesrgoulding/

Siddharth Prasad

“I am a mechatronics engineer pursuing MBA in Marketing. Cricket is my first love and just like Jonathon Livingston Seagull, I wish to be infinite.

What started as a short research internship has evolved into an insightful book. I will be eternally grateful to Rajeev sir for including me in this project.

For a person like me who will take the crutch of Donald Trump to justify the notion that “reading doesn't ensure success”, It is a gigantic gesture from Rajeev sir to acknowledge me for my contribution to his book.”
ACTIVITIES

ANSWERS: CHINA COVID HYGIENE NEWNORMAL NOVEL PANDEMIC QUARANTINE SANITIZER SHUTDOWN VACCINE WORKFROMHOME ZOOM
2. NEW NORMAL CROSSWORD PUZZLE
Solve the following crossword with the help of the clues provided.
Clues:

Across

4. Nature of disease that spread from one organism to another. (10)
6. Widely used video communication platform. (4)
10. We thank all ____ workers for their services. (9)
11. Doesn’t need water and cleans our hands. (10)
12. Isolation prevents the spread of the virus. (10)
13. How many seconds do we have to wash our hand for? (6)
14. Country that exported the virus. (5)
15. Social Distancing can flatten the _____. (5)

Down

1. The cause of all the upheaval in 2020. (11)
2. We are all living under a _____. (8)
5. Preventive apparel worn on hands. (6)
7. Worn over nose and mouth. (4)
8. Mammal responsible for spreading the virus. (3)
9. The outbreak of disease across many countries. (8)