

“Never Let A Good Crisis Go To Waste” - Preparing now for a post-crisis competitive ramp-up

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In a span of a few months, the Corona virus has spread around the globe like wildfire, bringing world economies to a screeching halt, forcing people to hunker down in their homes and workplaces. This global crisis has dominated our lives in ways that are unprecedented in peace time.

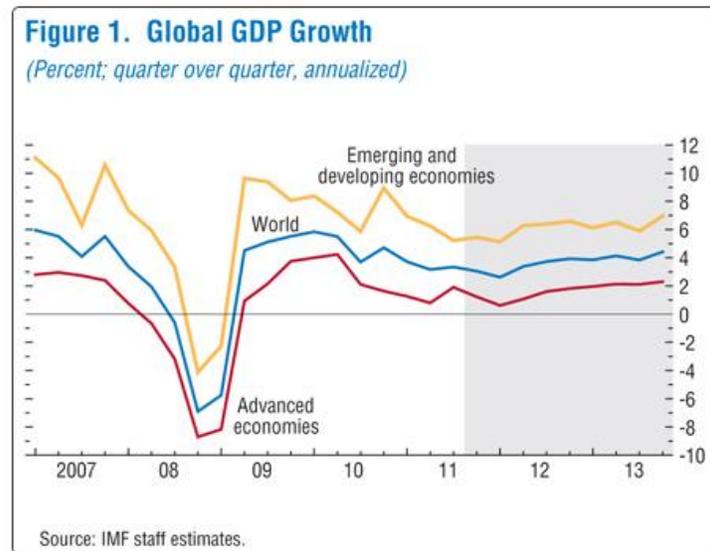
For business leaders and senior managers, the COVID19 global crisis has undoubtedly added a new level of complexity to their already challenging roles. Instinctively, in time of crisis we tend to look back in search of similar experiences to provide us valuable insights and guidance in handling the situation at hand. However today, we feel disoriented, at a loss, and hard-pressed to find, in our lifetime, any precedence for such worldwide pandemic.

But is that really the case?

It was only 12 years ago, that most of us experienced the full impact of the financial crisis of 2008/09. While a different kind of crisis, we also faced a global economic melt-down and experienced a similar feeling of helplessness, forcing us to navigate in uncharted territory. At the time, pessimists suggested that the crisis would last for years and that the world would never be the same afterwards. Many countries' economies imploded, riddled with huge debts. Governments implemented austerity measures that economists felt would curtail consumer spending. Fear about the future permeated every aspect and level of society.

However, by 2010 the global economy recovered and launched into a record period of economic growth and prosperity. Companies, whose leaders had the vision to use the slowdown of business activities to drive real and radical change, reaped the benefits of their strategy, rapidly growing post-crisis, expanding their market share and beating the competition. Companies which had solely focused on managing the crisis and had cut back too aggressively on headcount, inventory and investments fell behind as they faced great difficulties ramping up quickly and fulfilling customer's demands.

Let it be clear, the corona pandemic of 2020 is not the financial crisis of 2008. The financial crisis was a foreseeable man-made event. The COVID19 pandemic appears to be more likely a caprice of nature catching everyone by surprise, as if overnight someone put the world's economy "on pause". Today, faced with extreme levels of uncertainty most leaders are operating in survival mode. Company GM's and senior managers are busy monitoring their cash flow, winding down the operation, setting up remote work infrastructure, fixing broken supply chains, replacing key personnel missing due to corona and so on.



However, it is now, in the middle of the crisis that we need make time to plan our post-crisis strategy. For there is one thing we can be certain of. When medication or vaccines become available it will send a clear signal that the crisis is being brought under control. Economies around the world will restart and businesses will need to be ready to reopen and operate at full speed to meet market demand.

Churchill famously said: "Never let a good crisis go to waste".

As strange as it may sound, dire times can be the spark that ignites changes companies needed for quite some time but never got around to initiate. The coronavirus pandemic crisis is one of those sparks that can lead to much needed changes and transformations.

Many companies, experiencing tremendous growth during the fast-paced economic recovery of the 2008 financial crisis, now realize that they have been operating sub-optimally in times of abundance. Burning platforms, ignored for too long, can serve as a catalyst for significant changes. Let us challenge ourselves with the following questions:

- Do we apply **Lean principles & practices** in our organization?
- Is our **Supply Chain** robust enough for future growth?
- Do we have agile and **flexible** suppliers that can react quickly to our demand?
- Do we have the **know-how** and the expertise to further grow our business?
- Do we have an engaged and enthusiastic **workforce** that welcomes and embraces change?

- Is the philosophy of **Continuous Improvement** practiced by our workforce at every level in our organization?

“Every problem is an opportunity”, but too often it takes time to realize the opportunity and to act accordingly. As world economies stall, and production activities remain low, now is the time to evaluate the strength of the organization’s fundamentals and lead radical change if necessary. When the economies restart, companies will be under immediate pressure to fulfill customer orders. Leaders who will have taken advantage of the crisis to improve or retool their organizations will leave their competitors in the dust.

You do not have to face this crisis alone. This is a time of opportunity and Altix partners are ready to support you, bringing you and your team’s decades of operational experience, a wealth of expertise and resilience and a pragmatic attitude to help you navigate through this crisis and on to a bright and successful future.

In our successful careers across many countries and continents, we have encountered all kinds of exciting opportunities as well as our fair share of challenges. In addition to leading companies and corporate functions during the recent financial crisis of 2008/09, we have:

- Faced and recovered from highly destructive events like tornadoes, snow-storms, flooding, fires, civil wars...
- Experienced many new factories start-ups, site transfers and closures
- Launched and phased out thousands of products
- Operated in high labor and highly automated environments and many somewhere in the middle
- Turned around factories that were set for closure converting them into benchmark sites
- Led and been part of many mergers & acquisitions and experienced the excitement, disappointments, highs and lows, culture challenges and emotional roller coasters that comes with those

Our core principles in leading a transformation rely on Lean Thinking and Practices. With decades of successful lean implementations in large global organizations, we have learned the hard way what works and what does not. We bring industry leaders and their teams our proven records both in high and low-cost environment across North America, Europe and Asia. We are proud to share one of our many success stories as documented by the Lean Enterprise Institute [in the attached paper].

We bring best practices from world-class global companies to the middle-market industry champions. We lead successful, sustainable transformations by teaching your most valuable asset your workforce, the philosophy of Continuous Improvement and Design. We help teams understand and implement best practices from the Lean Toolbox, ensuring that employees will work more effectively and safely.

In today’s COVID19 health crisis environment, we have adapted to the new reality of social distancing and safety measures. We connect and work remotely using on-line tools to support our clients who are making the most of the downtime. We help them initiate Lean transformations to strengthen their organizations foundations and prepare them for a post crisis competitive ramp-up.

From our extensive experience in industry, we understand the challenges leaders face in time of crisis. We recognize the struggles and importance of balancing crisis management with post-crisis forward thinking leadership. Leading in time of crisis is not only hard, but it is also lonely trying to keep the trust and meet the needs of your employees, customers, suppliers and communities. We at Altix are here to help get you through this, and with a newly enthused workforce that the Lean way of working always brings.

ABOUT LIAM CASSIDY:

Liam has a 40+ years track record of turning around operations, supply chains and suppliers, applying Lean Principles and leadership skills necessary to implement them and ensure long term success.

ABOUT CHRISTIAN LEONHARD:

Christian brings 30+ years' experience leading complex industry transformations across Europe, North America and Asia, developing and implementing new strategies in multicultural environments.

ABOUT ALTIX:

Altix is the middle-market international industrial champions' management consulting partner, providing business strategy, technology and innovation, and operational excellence support, in the world of advanced manufacturing and international supply chain. www.altixconsulting.com