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Discussion:

1. What are the current challenges for businesses?
2. How can businesses be part of a recovery solution?

Chuck Bentley

3 helpful/pragmatic things that we can advise people in the business sector to do right now:

1. Forecast for the worst-case scenario for the short term
 - preserve cash
 - reduce expenses
 - go into somewhat of a crisis mode in the way that you're managing your survival
 - NOT to be confused with pessimism – there's a lot to be optimistic about
2. Over-communicate
 - get your board, investors and customers involved
 - don't turn inward as an organization - people want to know if they can rely on you!
 - constant communication with suppliers
3. In retrospect, this is an opportunity for business to grow and cease new trends and dynamic in the marketplace

David Boan

The WEA formed the global COVID-19 taskforce for the purpose of organizing and orchestrating a response across all member Alliances and through them into local communities.

A special emphasis on partnering with Alliances in countries with impoverished communities. The guidelines for controlling the spread of COVID-19 does not work in the majority of these communities, e.g. in slums there are multiple generation families living in one home with no sanitary facilities and they need to travel to maintain their livelihood.

2 working groups have been created:

1. Health

- issue of face masks
 - church & health facility partnerships
 - family care for infected family members in the absence of adequate health services
2. Impoverished Communities
- issues of physical distancing
 - distribution of food

There is an opportunity to create a 3rd working group for Business. This is not just a health crisis but it is becoming an economic crisis for which there is no quick fix. Especially in the global South where there will be much more economic disruption and the recovery of the business community will be much more difficult.

Reuben Coulter

The Transformational Business Network has been looking at businesses in their portfolio through 3 lenses:

1. businesses that will thrive
 - businesses in the right sector e.g. healthcare, tech companies
2. businesses that will ride out the storm
3. businesses that will be massively affected

Many businesses in UK have an average of 3-4 months of cash reserves which is already depleting quickly. There is a lot of uncertainty.

What will the size of the financial need be for businesses? How do we create an emergency investment fund to support businesses and help them ride out the storm and emerge stronger from the crisis?

- Low interest debt fund which will provide bridging loans, working capital
- Grant funding for organizations providing healthcare etc. to enable them to purchase essential equipment

Matthias Boehning

In Bonn, there are 22 UN organizations that deal with sustainability and disaster risk reductions. What we are now experiencing in the business sector is somewhat similar to the situation we have after huge disasters in developing countries e.g. flood, drought etc.

What can we learn from the humanitarian field that can be applied to the business sector?

Assessment:

- It's all about perception. What is happening atm?
- A catastrophe reveals the best and worst within your team, your business and your whole set-up.
- How do we deal with this and what does this show? How do our team, clients and business models react in this crisis?

Strategizing:

- We need to have resilience building in and beyond the crisis.

- a real crisis reveals the lacks, the gaps but also the **hidden gems** in your business model
- perceive and build upon this

Implementing:

- **Building Back Better.** There is a huge opportunity to build back better - not just singular business models but the way we run humanity/our countries etc.
- Where can we increase connections, network, holistic thinking?
- We rely on healthy eco-systems! From a spiritual perspective, we have messed with creation! This is part of the problem. How can businesses contribute to helping build back our planet, relationships etc.?

Missy Wallace

The City to City Faith and Work department has been thinking through the work disruption that COVID-19 is causing and how the spiritual needs (as an individual, organization, industry etc.) might differ and if there's any pattern to that. This has led to the creation of the Work Disruption Model.

Work Disruption Model

- X-axis: Routine Work Model
vs
- Y-axis: Socioeconomic Flexibility and Agency

Please see the full document [HERE](#).

- Think of the model at a corporate or industry level too, not just at a personal level.
- What are the probable spiritual or physical needs?
- What are the probable temptations?
- What does the hope of the gospel mean for this model?
- How can we show outward love?

Athena Peralta

The business of business is service:

- businesses should be serving customers, employees, society at large but also all creation
- creating dignified jobs & quality products
- ensuring just working conditions
- protecting the environment & investing in communities
- promoting human rights & responsibilities and integrating this into business and society
- committed to working together and praying for one another

As we are now confronted with this global emergency, we need a response that looks to the future. Our Christian faith challenges us to have a long-term perspective rooted in hope even when trying to respond to immediate emergencies in front of us.

How do we respond?

- Christian hospitals and health services/workers are on the front line and trying to serve to the best of their ability.
 - o keep them in prayer
 - o provide constant support
- Christian businesses which are struggling
 - o hope and pray that they can keep jobs, rather than shed jobs
 - o support worker and employers who depend on their wages to feed families etc.
- Businesses in developing countries which don't receive support from the government
 - o churches should push for more national and global measures to help governments support small and local businesses

To what extent can businesses (Christian businesses in particular) address needs such as transport of essential goods, housing for front-line workers etc.?

- Landlords are waiving rental fees
- CEOs are taking salary cuts

How can we collect and share these stories at this time with a view to replicating these good practices?

Prof. Christoph Stueckelberger

As we are dealing with Christian business people, it is our challenge to know how we can encourage others spiritually. Many are struggling with the Christian faith (and other faiths) in this time of suffering. e.g.:

- If I get sick, am I being punished?
- If I lose my job, what good is the faith of my boss? He's a Christian, how could he dismiss me?

How can we face conspiracies from a Christian perspective in order to prevent the conspiracy theories taking over? As Christian business leaders it is important to face this issue and react to it.

On the investment side:

- How can we offer investment solutions during this crisis? Right now, we are seeing the contrary - impact investing is on hold because funds are needed for emergencies. It would be good to learn more about the aforementioned Christian Investment Fund and how it is envisaged.
- Do we have a Christian answer on the debt crisis? 1 trillion will be needed just for debt cancellation in developing countries. How can we address the government? Can we do something as organizations?

Resources:

- <https://covid19.worldidea.org/resource-hub/>
- www.crown.org/coronavirus

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