THE ROAD TO

DYSFUNCTIONAL SOCIETY

FEATURED ANALYSIS

Paladin Risk Solutions

ABSTRACT

The current COVID crisis has set parts of the world on a road towards dysfunctional society. The road has predictable milestones, but the unknown will be when and how far down that road we will travel before we take a U-turn towards normality. This Road to Dysfunctional Society analysis and opinion is be presented in 4 parts in the following document.

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The current COVID crisis has set parts of the world on a road towards dysfunctional society. The road has predictable milestones, but the unknown will be when and how far down that road we will travel before we take a U-turn towards normality. This *Road to Dysfunctional Society* analysis and opinion is be presented in 4 parts:

- Part I - the road to dysfunctional society will identify what that looks like and the indicators that verify we are on the road and how far we have travelled;
- Part **II** - will take a contextual look at human behaviour when in crisis;
- Part **III** - will consider some of the risks and vulnerabilities of this journey in particular focusing on how they will impact business during the crisis and recovery period; and
- Part **IV** - will illustrate actions and considerations that can reduce and mitigate business impact and provide thoughts on positioning to best approach to recovery and the second and 3rd wave of this crisis.

The Road to Dysfunctional Society Part I

Ultimately the end of a road to a dysfunctional society would be social chaos. It is not predicted or anticipated, at this point, that we will reach total anarchy that is too frequently illustrated in movies and books as a result of this crisis. Instead, by identifying and recognizing that our society pointing in that direction will enable businesses to consider measures a deliberate proactive approach to recovery. Some of the indirect consequences of risk and vulnerability may be new to many businesses.

It seems that many believe there will be an end date announced when our society will return to normality similar to flicking a switch. There is a misconception that we will be back to our economic and social state that we had in December 2019, with problems of unemployment, business continuity and other issues being resolved overnight. The more likely reality is that the recovery is likely to be a month for every week of the crisis. Isolation, infection and unemployment will linger during the recovery period and, for many, will bring the additional challenges of support programs being phased out.

The North American Situation

This crisis is unique compared to others from recent decades, in the perspective that it is not localized, but a global crisis. This difference invokes a feeling of isolation at national and local level. There are no international aid or relief packages in the short term to help people exist, and those assisting are also vulnerable.

In North America we live in a society where there are several factors that should be considered in any prediction about the journey we are on:

- Unemployment has been typically low
- A large proportion of our society lives in a hand to mouth style with no savings
- Many individuals and families have no family strategy
- Few families have lived in such unpredictable times
- Shortages of food and medication, or the perception of shortages generally has not been an issue for most of the population of North America

- A wide divide between those who have and those who have not exists, which fosters an underlying resentment

Many individuals and families have been thrust into unemployment with uncertain government support for the short, mid or long-term future. Many small businesses may find it difficult to recover to a point of pre-virus operational capacity in the short term, consequently impacting employment in the long run.

Shortages and Perception

Against that background, communities are assured that there are no shortages of food, medicine and PPE. Unfortunately, this does not tally with personal experience. Some supermarkets and stores are struggling to resupply, which may be attributed to excessive buying and hoarding by consumers. Social distancing results in queues at supermarkets which gives the impression of shortages. The background does not matter, what really matters is the perception of the people observing. Seeing empty shelves and other shortages when people are being told there are none have caused confusion and mistrust. There do not appear to be shortages of medicine, although pharmacies/drug stores are limiting supply to customers, thus giving the impression that shortages are on the horizon.

The concept of shortages is spilling over to emergency benefit and financial programs. Government subsidies and support are announced at central level but, even where there is a mechanism, many are finding it difficult to navigate and answer the question "when and how do I get the money?"

One of the challenges with supply chains is that they are dependent on having staff present, so even where there are no shortages , the movement of goods may be inhibited by sick staff. This may not be delivery staff but backroom staff that are responsible for logistics planning. There are reports that some remote areas are suffering shortages of fuel, not because of supply, but due to the logistics of delivery.

The media when reporting human experience stories are fueling concern. This concern may progress to panic, we have already seen this in supermarkets. Panic buying fuels more panic buying. Perhaps the best example has been the way in which toilet rolls were stripped off shelves, internationally, but we are assured there is no shortage.

Crime

There is typically a time lag in the production of crime figures but on this road to dysfunction we should reasonably expect crime stats to indicate increases in domestic break ins, particularly second homes and holiday homes. The profile of those break ins will likely change to food and medicine rather than goods of tangible value.

We would anticipate an increase in domestic violence, as many families being thrust together 24/7 against the background of recent unemployment, with an uncertain future and the stresses that it causes to families. Will it be long before we see hijacking of food delivery trucks, crime on an organized scale? Within days of this crisis, scammers were exploiting in an organized way method for extorting money. Further down the road this is likely to be less subtle.

Summary

In conclusion, there are indications that we are on an uncertain road that points towards a level of social dysfunction; however, as the virus plays out, there is a long road to recovery. Our society in North America will suffer hardship that will be alien to many of the people that are affected. It is unclear how far we will travel down this road before things show sign of significant improvement.

One of our key challenges when looking down this uncertain road is that a significant proportion of our population have drawn their learning about a crisis like this one from the perception of a Hollywood dystopian future. Majority, if not all, movies of this type illustrate that during such a crisis the breakdown in supply chains and impact on ordinary people requires them to proactively seek solutions for their own needs. This will be the subject of part II where human behaviour in crisis will be explored and we will illustrate how businesses may face unprecedented challenges that adversely impact the ability to recover when we reach the U-turn road sign on the road to social dysfunction.

The Road to Dysfunctional Society Part II

In part I, the indicators were outlined that suggested that in the current crisis, we are on a road to social dysfunction and all the ramifications that might include. It was emphasized that we do not know where on that journey, the momentum will be arrested and a U-turn towards what we would call normality, or at least a post-COVID normality.

In this part of the analysis, we are looking at human behaviour in the context of the crisis. In the way that human behaviour, generally, is predictable in everyday life, there are also predictable patterns that occur in a crisis. Many of the changes that occur in the way in which people behave are a matter of tolerance and timing. People will suffer discomfort, restriction, fear and expectation for a period of time but at some stage the emotions spill over into uncharacteristic behavior. Large numbers of people will reach a threshold where they will behave in a way they would otherwise consider unacceptable, but they will justify it in the context of the crisis.

There are members of society who are desperate, selfish, aggressive and take every opportunity to exploit anything for personal gain. In the same way that there are those that are compassionate, thoughtful, considerate and kind and would not in normal times cross certain lines of behaviour. Fortunately, this second category are the vast majority of our population in North America.

When thrust into a crisis, as the world is at this time, we see many people behave in a way that is unexpected. In the early stages of crisis, we tend to see a great deal of compassion and community spirit. Of course, we have another section of society who see a crisis as an opportunity to take advantage of others for their own personal gain and greed. This is already demonstrated by the COVID-specific cyber scams and those that seek to hoard and resell sought after goods. In the longer term it is also likely that we will have individuals that seek fraudulently to obtain government funding intended for crisis relief.

We expect and anticipate that those who were greedy and live a life of deception, fraud and crime will continue to do so during the crisis.

However, there are other categories of people that have been thrust into the circumstances of this crisis that will behave in a way that they would never have considered. We will examine here what those behaviors are and why people may change their values and behavior as we move further into this journey.

Human Instinct

All people have basic needs which, if met, do not generally change the way in which they live their life. Basic needs have a very wide interpretation. There is a vast difference of basic needs for a homeless person compared to those individuals that have wealth that enables them to live comfortably even during crises. At those two ends of the spectrum, the immediate impact of the crisis over the next few months is likely to have little impact.

The vast majority of the population in North America live somewhere between those two extremes. The key things that change behaviour of people are the introduction of new stressors in their life. In normal times stressors can include losing your job, the breakup of a partnership, the death of a loved one or a serious health issue. It is amongst this group that qw sometimes find radical changes in behaviour that

can result in extreme violence, even murder and suicide, or sometimes both combined. For example, it is rare to find a murder suicide, that does not have a series of identifiable increased stressors prior to the tragedy.

For those with new stressors in their life, they can depend on support services to assist and guide them through such events in normal times. During this crisis the number of people and families with significantly increased stressors are way beyond the services available to assist.

We are at a point where millions of people have, in a short period, been burdened with stressors they could not have conceived as recently as last December. The scale globally is unprecedented.

Environmental Impact

Millions have been laid off work, and even with government support offered in the short term, they may not see their company surviving or they may not see themselves being reemployed, perhaps due to scaled back business during recovery. Many have not yet seen the tangible benefit of that government support although their creditors, rent cheques, food and health bills are still arriving. Millions of people in the middle of this stress find themselves in confined domestic space that for many, particularly in small spaces creates tensions and issues.

Perception is a person's reality, so even if there is mid- to long-term support and recovery, this may not be in everyone's vision. Likewise, many forms of relief being offered simply compounds their long term debt. The vast majority of people in this group do not have substantial savings to fall back on, in fact many of them live hand to mouth. Paying for medicine may be a challenge for some and any indication of medicine not being available may be a very significant stressor.

We must remember that even where there are no shortages of medicine or supplies, as the crisis progresses, supply chain workers are not immune from disruption and illness. The chances of increased interruption in the supply chains that may result in shortages or the perception of shortages to the end user. If your family is life dependent on medication and there is even a slight indication of supply chain interruption this generates very serious emotions and even panic.

The compounding of stressors on individuals and families generated by this crisis is creating a potential chain of events that will escalate the journey to dysfunction in society.

We have already seen small but isolated events of looting and public unrest. As this crisis continues the likelihood of widespread disruption and 'crime' will increase. We have seen this kind of behavior in recent years during natural disasters, such as looting and breakdowns in local communities. It is relevant to note that some looters are not motivated by greed but by a fear and perception of survival. This may sound particularly dramatic but there are rarely major crises that do not have an element of crime.

Economic Factors

The current circumstances may be aggravated, like no other crisis, by the obvious wealth gap. At a time when you are told COVID tests are available to all, but in reality you cannot be tested that easily, combined

with media reports that clearly show tests are available to celebrities, sports stars and others that have no meaningful contribution to the crisis, the resentment for some will build. When celebrities tweet and share images of their isolation which simply illustrates to the family of five living in a small apartment that isolation means something very different to others this will reach a point where people become angry at the privilege.

The same may be the case with large business owners whose isolation and conditions at this time is radically different from their basic wage employees that have been laid off. The level of resentment is likely warming up. If we continue on this road, this will eventually boil over into something much different.

Igniting a Dysfunctional Society

So, what are the likely scenarios that will escalate towards a dysfunctional society? Looting and acts of widespread violence have occurred many times in many major cities in the western world. It is interesting to note that those riots or coordinated acts of violence and antisocial behaviors were often initiated by a single spark. To create fire, we require oxygen, fuel and heat or ignition.

In this case, the oxygen is the frustration and resentment that the crisis is building in the form of unemployment, shortages of basic needs, restrictions to movements and financial worries. The fuel is desperation and the inability to see life returning to exactly how it was last December. Ignition is one of the most interesting elements here. Ignition of the fire that is dysfunctional society should be learned from history and, most importantly, that it is not within the control of organizations and governments.

History shows that most acts of civil disobedience resulting in large-scale rioting, looting and violence were initiated by a single act, sometimes by police and sometimes others. The actual circumstances, for this purpose, does not matter.

For example, the death of Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor, following an interaction with a municipal employee Frida Hamdi resulted in the Arab Spring, arguably a world changing series of events that swept the Middle East. Other riots and acts of serious public disorder occurred as a result of police shootings and assaults. There is no judgement intended in this narrative, but these are historical facts that illustrate that a fire requires ignition and social history shows the ignition can be a random event that just happens to fit the circumstances of the time.

Of course, it may be an interaction that does not go well between an individual and an authority figure. However, the likelihood of a resulting incident being subject to copy-cat incidents across a country are much more sensitive and likely as the crisis progresses. Unlike previous events of public disorder, the frustration and desperation are also in the minds of not only marginalized members of society but by ordinary law-abiding citizens.

Is it likely that ordinary people could be drawn into serious acts of public disorder, looting and violence?

Again, the lessons come from history. In this sort of activity, we see ordinary people that are caught up in a moment of madness, when their opportunity to vent frustration and perhaps find an opportunity to obtain something that assists their family at this time of crisis, even where the actions have no long term benefit, they may act. Crowd dynamics shows that behavior in a crowd environment is often

uncharacteristic for individuals. Particularly in fast moving situations and often under the cover of darkness individual behavior is a collective rather than individual and considered behaviour.

In the same way that a sports crowd can be whipped into an atmosphere of excitement with many behaving in ways that they would not normally, people also behave differently in public disorder scenarios. Many of the participants would never consider throwing the first rock, being the first to steal or exhibit hostility but when in a crowd they can easily be caught up. The stressors on ordinary people during this crisis could result in sufficient numbers acting out of character and fueling disorder in society.

We should also remember images of ordinary people 'looting' in natural disasters, who will say, arguably quite rightly, "I need this water or food to live, this is not crime, it's my basic needs."

In our current circumstance we are starting to see increased numbers of law enforcement being tested positive for COVID, not surprising as they cannot always exercise social distancing in their role. So is damage to society will occur and involve ordinary law-abiding citizens who are either bursting with frustration, or simply desperate.

So, what in our current circumstance could we do to change human behavior to result in the road to social dysfunction being extended sufficiently to provide time for the U turn to normality before reaching critical points of widespread disorder? What can businesses do in this developing crisis to mitigate the risk of or impact of widespread societal dysfunction?

Considerations

We need to consider how we are identifying and securing the assets we will need to revive and recover our business, protective from any widespread disorder. We need to consider the stresses on our current or laid off staff by providing them with, where appropriate, hope and vision for their future and continually communicating with them.

In conclusion, there is no doubt we are on the road towards our society becoming dysfunctional. The question no one knows is how far down that road we will travel before things change. Businesses and employers can assist in reducing the fuel and oxygen, that is the concerns and worries of our staff and business community.

There is also no doubt that like the Arab Spring, the ignition of large-scale dysfunction is possibly a local interaction between two individuals or groups over which no one other than those involved have any control. We need to be in fire prevention mode by doing everything we can to provide mid to long term hope and assistance to our employees and ex-employees, that as business leaders we are determined to drive things back to 'normal' as soon as the constraints of COVID are over.

In Part III we will consider some of the risks and vulnerabilities of this journey in particular focusing on how they will impact business during the crisis and recovery period.

The Road to Dysfunctional Society Part III

In part II we explored human behaviour and how it changes in a crisis and how, as the crisis progresses over time, the likelihood of social dysfunction manifesting as public disorder, looting and a range of other antisocial activities emerges from frustration and desperation accelerated by copy-cat actions across countries and continents.

In this part, we will explore risks and vulnerabilities on this journey focusing on how business will be impacted.

The threats to business are extensive and complex. The threat in this context are those things over which you have no control; interruption in supply chain, reduced or different demands for services or goods, staff sickness, financial challenges, restrictions on movement of goods and personnel and acts of civil unrest.

The vulnerabilities are the opportunities that exist for the threat to cause harm or damage and they include the actions that you take (or do not take), decisions you make (or do not make) to secure your assets, loyalty of staff and location of assets.

The risk is the combination of the threat and the opportunity provided by your vulnerability.

Expanding on the threats we should consider not only the here and now but the process of returning to operational and business efficiency. What are the key threats at this time and the emerging threats going forward?

Many of the threats are obvious and are no doubt receiving daily attention and recalculation. The complexities of our business networks and dependencies exposes us as never before. Unless you are providing an essential service, you are no doubt impacted by the disruption, both upstream and downstream. If your suppliers are not operating, even if you are able to do so, your business has challenges. If you are producing products that cannot be distributed due to transportation, shipping abroad or simply you customers are not positioned to make purchases, these disruptions are out of your control. For those in the service industry the immediate cut in revenue, bookings or reduction in services has generated financial challenges.

It should be recognised that the return to the new normal will not occur on a designated day but in a series of stop/start steps that will bring their own challenges. The threat of COVID will, at some stage, start to diminish, although science has not determined exactly what that looks like in terms of timing. In the meantime, the remaining threats, over and above those that face us every day, will continue with varying a level of impact.

The threats outlined are the threats that businesses could reasonably anticipate and may be a local or regional challenge or incident. This series of comments and analysis is looking at the emerging threats that result from the journey towards social dysfunction created by COVID. Businesses are increasingly vulnerable to a wide range of criminal and antisocial activity.

The identification and protection of assets has a different flavor at this time. The threat may vary according to the geographic location of assets. Many businesses are in the unusual position of having

assets that are normally utilized and buildings occupied daily to having those assets not under constant and regular gaze. Assets that previously would not be seen as a first choice for theft may have a different value at this time.

Preparing for Threats

One of the unfortunate issues, previously mentioned, is that for many, their current awareness and preparedness is based on the Hollywood depiction of such a crisis. Although this may not be far from reality, the movie version of society working towards a breakdown is highly likely to influence many in identifying what is important or even essential during the crisis and provide an indication of how they must behave even justifying antisocial behaviour as necessary. The idea that breaking into premises simply to raid a freezer, steal a generator, and household products is not necessarily foremost in the thoughts of business managers. It is of course not the loss of the items that matters as much as the damage that may be caused in the process of a break-in. A good example is that a homeless drug user would not hesitate to cause thousands of dollars of damage to a vehicle to take the $5 bill in the coffee cup holder.

If the person carrying out a simple break and enter to strip the freezer or kitchen is an ex-employee or an employee that has been laid off, who incidentally is the one likely to know that there are goods of value of value on the premises, is it possible that the resentment and frustration and their fear for the future could be acted out while in the premises? How much damage could a person do in one of your premises left for 40 minutes, the individuals frustration brimming over to acts of vandalism. When people suffer frustration and resentment, they often become capable of actions that would otherwise be alien to them. This is not to say that ex-employees or laid off staff would cause such damage but frustration and resentment compounded by the other stressors that so many are currently feeling certainly raises this as a possibility.

Is your business or premises in a location surrounded by other businesses that would be an attractive target for significant anti-social behaviour, rioting or looting? Your business may not be the primary target but just a victim of proximity. Your vulnerability can be reduced by carrying out an environmental and proximity scan to assess what scenarios, as the crisis develops, could impact your business and provide you the opportunity to consider mitigation.

Vulnerability may be caused by your company's actions or inactions at this time. For many companies the rapid move to layoff and termination of employment may have resulted in a reduced focus on denying access to premises, the changing of alarm codes, retrieval of equipment and locking staff out of IT systems etc..

How have you ensured the integrity of IT systems? Are staff working from home using personal computers that might not have the same integrity as office equipment. Are staff sharing computers for company use with a teenage family member? Do home computers have the same level of protection as office equipment? How is this being monitored?

Recognizing the social gap

Many people are using social media to provide lighthearted relief to their 'viewers' during the time of lockdown, does this negatively impact perception of social advantage? Vulnerability may be increased by social media posts of senior staff that show any kind of advantage they may have over junior staff during the crisis. Images of managers relaxing in a garden during the crisis may fuel the resentment of staff who may not only have an uncertain future but may also be isolated in small apartments with landlords waiting for their rent payment.

We rarely see our staff and managers in their home environment. In our current situation with the increased use of video calls, how conscious are users being of the background they display? This may not be seen as a vulnerability at first glance, until you consider that it may fuel a sense of frustration and resentment seeing managers who may be in homes that display more comfort than other staff that are struggling at this time of isolation.

For companies that can continue operating in these times connection with staff is significantly more important than previously. Would you know if staff members that are still working are feeling vulnerable but are simply financially unable to take time off or restrict their work. Deliberately or obliviously exposing staff to additional risk will not benefit the company in the long term. To that effect, individuals remember how they were treated during industrial action, and they will remember how management treated them during COVID.

In conclusion, working from home and the perception of disadvantage create different vulnerabilities that may negatively impact the business. Operating in unconventional ways where innovation, with a lack of checks and balances, may create longer term risk to your organization. Attention to IT standards and home working practices are as important now as ever. Crime and those with ill intent have no intention of giving you a break during the crisis. The way in which business has spilled into people's homes has opened other potential issues related to staff perception of managers and colleagues. Only by objectively identifying the vulnerabilities can you introduce mitigation.

Part IV will illustrate actions and considerations that can reduce and mitigate business impact and provide thoughts on positioning to best approach to recovery and the second and third wave of this crisis.

The Road to Dysfunctional Society Part IV

In part III, we explored some of the risks and vulnerabilities to businesses created by COVID-19.

In this part of the analysis, we are looking at actions and considerations that can reduce and mitigate business impact and provide thoughts on positioning to best approach to recovery and the second and third wave of this crisis.

The first consideration is what will a second and third wave look like? There are, of course, optimists that would suggest there will be no second or third wave. There are others, that we consider realists, who suggest we will continuously be in crisis into next year, if not several years. When looking at the balanced analysis expressed by the right professionals and not being influenced by political rhetoric, it appears obvious that we will see a move back to normality. By that we mean an easing of restrictions, a reduction in the death and infection rate and pressure reduced for medical services followed by second and third waves of this, or a similar crisis.

The timing of a second wave will be directly linked to how we revert to normal activity. The immediate relaxing of social distancing and all the other measures that have become part of our lives whilst the virus is still in our community could very easily create an upswing and second wave.

For those who are still sceptical about the virus, perhaps living in areas where the problem either does not exist or is not recognised, and for those that feel civil liberties are being abused by restriction and political/scientific intervention in their lives, an interesting link may illustrate what a 'virus hot spot' really looks like. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRM5yyaDkMc .

Even if the virus comes under control and even if a mutated strain does not appear later in the year, people and communities will be in fear of anything that looks like the start of another virus. Few people understand or have paid any interest into the regular pattern of a less serious outbreak of flu, and therefore may not recognise as just another variant of the regular flu. This may result in fear and the public demanding restrictive measures be reintroduced. There are media outlets that will also fuel this fear and politicians who will also use a regular flu outbreak to further their agenda playing to public emotion. All this could occur without the conspiracy theorists and those on the ill-informed fridges of society that see any platform as an opportunity to be heard.

So, the reality is that even in the unlikely event that a second wave of COVID does not occur, or if there is another COVID-19 type event, the sensitivities of communities, particularly those that have suffered loss and illness during this outbreak circumstances, could inject fear. This fear could prompt hasty or even appropriate action that has another significant impact on our communities and business. This atmosphere will likely prevail, even in the absence of a real event, for at least 5 years.

How will people, communities and businesses respond to a second lockdown? How will the learning from this event educate and prepare for the next? Will panic buying occur on a larger scale and faster next time, will people recognize advantages and opportunities to exploit the citation faster and harder with their benefit of learning from these events?

The critical question for the purposes of this paper is - what can business do at this time to assist during the crisis and through the period of recovery?

The way in which businesses prepare for this pandemic will determine their strength and speed of recovery. No one could say this was totally unexpected. In the past 20 years we have seen indications that this type of event was likely to occur. Most companies that were around during previous, similar but smaller outbreaks, spent considerable time and effort pandemic planning.

Like most contingency and business continuity planning, the drive to prepare plans in the past could be found last December at the back of a shelf or drawer or deep in the depths of hard drive having not been viewed or amended for a very long time, or perhaps signed off every year as still relevant but unlikely, and therefore not attracted any revision. If your plans were up to date, no doubt the extent of this event will cause you to revisit the plans anyway, but your corporate pain and ease into recovery will be easier. If they were at the back of a shelf or deep in the server, I suspect they added little value to you over the past and coming months.

We discussed in Part II the aspects of human behavior and how ordinary people can become part of a violent and unruly community. Some of the consequences of this crisis may result in people who lost their jobs recently still being unemployed at the time of a second wave. In such cases, it is easy to imagine that we may start from a point further down the road towards social dysfunction than where we started in this round. If that is the case, then the time between the start of the events and real challenges in our communities may be shorter next time.

Having suffered a period of unemployment and economic difficulty following recovery from this round of COVID-19, combined with recovering businesses that will be more fragile and vulnerable than they were in January 2020, make up factors that should be considered with some concern and focus for the future.

What can we do?

The recommendation is that you consider the next 18 months in a series of three phases:
1. The existing crisis
2. The recovery phase
3. The start of the second wave through to recovery

Current Crisis

As previously outlined, you should be considering and securing what is essential for the recovery of your business. Looking at how to foster the loyalty of employees that may be suffering from, at best, financial hardship, and at worst, with a family tragedy. This includes employees that are temporarily out of work that you may reemploy during the recovery. Ensure your processes and procedures for letting staff go have not left vulnerability to your information and assets.

Recovery Phase

In addition to recovering your business and changing from the temporary stance your company has taken for survival, it is most important to commence the process of learning how to position yourselves for the next wave. This event is not, as some describe, the 100-year event. In your recovery phase, in addition to the actual recovery of contracts, opportunities, company relationships and new business generation,

objectively learn from decision making and timing of decision over the past months. What would you do differently? This is the moment to devote some time to identifying, not what you got away with, but what you learned from near misses.

Preparing for the Second Wave

To take seriously pandemic planning, not for the planning to be a file tucked away somewhere but front and centre in your continuity planning. Carrying out vulnerability surveys to identify, whenever these rounds finish, what vulnerability you had or would have had, if it lasted longer. Wherever we turn on the journey to dysfunctional society, consider where events and communities could have progressed on our current trajectory and how you would mitigate the dysfunction.

If you look back and were lucky enough not to have been in an infection hot spot, look across the world, and we are certain you will find a hot spot that your community can identify with.

Ask yourself, why were we not a hot spot in the current crisis? You could kid yourself that it was because of the measures your community took to avoid the spread of the virus or you could recognize that it was luck, when in reality, a professional convention, a tour bus or a returning group of tourists did not enter your community infected and unidentified before the infection takes hold locally, may be the real story. in this round of COVID to identify and mitigate risk in your business, whether you are functioning as a fully operative or dormant business. You would be unwise to consider the end of these events as a crisis to be the conclusion of the story. A second wave of this virus, the next pandemic, or even the fear or perception of another crisis of this scale could be as disruptive to your business as these events are.

Wherever this road to dysfunction is arrested or U-turned back to some normality, calculate and assess, 'what has this done to our business?', 'what if the virus were more severe or lasted longer?' 'Is my business going to survive because of the strength of our planning and preparation or does the crisis turn around just in time, has some luck been on our side?'

There is no substitute for planning, and in this context, it should be carried out against a background of vulnerability assessment so that you clearly understand what it is that will give your business the best opportunity of survival through this, and the inevitable second and third wave. What measures do we have in place to protect our assets and business continuity? Finally, will we allow ourselves to be so distracted in the recovery process as not to devote time and energy into identifying the things that will provide us the best opportunity for our business riding through the next waves? Or will we ensure that we devote time to the identification of our vulnerability and ensure that we have in place hard measures practices and procedures to maximize our recovery a second and third time?

In conclusion, there is no doubt we are on the road towards our society becoming dysfunctional. The question no one knows is, how far down that road we will travel before things change. Businesses and employers can assist in reducing the fuel and oxygen, that is the concerns and worries of our staff and business community.

There is also no doubt that like the Arab Spring, the ignition of large-scale dysfunction is possibly a local interaction between two individuals or groups, over which no one, other than those involved, have any control. We need to be in fire prevention mode by doing everything we can to provide mid- to long-term hope and assistance to our employees and ex-employees, that as business leaders we are determined to drive things back to 'normal' as soon as the constraints of COVID are over.

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