The **Challenges** Facing Business

Value driven organisations
ensure sustainable profitability.

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As we return to work businesses are likely to struggle in building momentum with regard to staffing, brand visibility and sales. There is no doubt that business practices will change forever and that we will need to make sense of these changes to reap the many advantages they will bring. There is likely to be a significant increase in the use of technology. Employers and employees will need to embrace flexible working, hot desking and reduced commuting. We hope this encourages a better understanding of the workplace within the community.

Navigation of these changes require elements of socially responsible thinking. For those that embrace change, this will start a process that will help your business create a successful and rewarding CSR policy which will provide tangible benefits and competitive advantage.

Simply re-opening will not be possible in 'the new normal'. Society is currently struggling to find ways to allow people to get back out to do things they want to do. For business in the short term, the immediate focus will be on survival, financial stability and productivity. However now is the ideal time to focus on efforts that not only support the immediate return to work but also address essential changes to operations and goals in the months and years ahead. Our hope is that what we have learnt during this period of short term survival forms long term habits that ensure business sustainability.

What are the key challenges?

- Working practices will change

- Skills training, technology at work, at home, work adaption

- Employers have to ensure that work is a safe space.

- Productivity risk

- Investment risks and finance

- Changes in travel

- Brand reputation

- Bad behaviour

Business must drive a more socially responsible agenda to ensure we learn from the lessons this pandemic has taught us. Adopting the positives and dropping the negatives. During a crisis there are different types of leadership that emerge. The leadership style you may have adopted during non-crisis time may need to change. Some people freeze during a crisis - they close their eyes tight and when the crisis is over, pick up the pieces and try carry on as before.

Some people crave masses of information, charts, surveys and facts in order to decide what needs to be done in a challenging situation. Information is desirable to inform your decisions but in a crisis information is often unavailable, sketchy, inaccurate and constantly changing. The information you require may not be available for decisions you need to make now.

Leaders that are effective in a crisis understand that they need to be brave, they need to make decisions for the company that are maybe made on gut feeling alone. They need to be confident and make quick decisions which will help the business in the short term, based on the information they currently have. Good leaders will accept that some mistakes will inevitably be made but are consoled by the fact that those decisions were based on the information available at the time.

A crisis situation can offer that 'burning platform' that some leaders need in order to make changes they know are necessary but there is no urgency to action. Good leadership is in the best interests of all stakeholders and should support all aspects of the wellbeing of an organisation, including but not exclusively financial. Good leaders will also address the social values of business, to deliver trust, advocacy and engagement. Business needs to demonstrate it is socially responsible not just right now but for the long term. Social responsibility will be expected of companies in the future, by both customers and all stakeholders.

The Importance of Positive Communications

Communications are key to good management and business building at all times but even more so during a crisis. Work harder now to build relationships and show what type of business you are.

Delivering trust and loyalty.

Internal communication with your staff is essential. Ask them how they are, what they need and what they want. Be clear that changes will need to be made and you will try your best to accommodate everyone needs and wants but ultimately you also need to do what is best for the business long term. Engagement

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with staff every step of the way will allow them to understand the bigger picture and support your future direction for the business. Bring your staff along with you.

External communication with your customers and supply chain.

The success of your business depends on this. Sincerity and care during a crisis for their situation on how you can both help and need their services is crucial. An act of kindness or consideration here will build more trust and loyalty for the business after the crisis has subsided. Ask your customers and supply chain how they are, how you can help them and what you need from them. Be clear and keep good communications open.

CSR policy provides a structure to help an organisation plan and act responsibly.

Using our CSR Four Pillars of workplace, environment, community and philanthropy you can identify ways to meet and understand challenges. Beyond human welfare, there are many problems to tackle, including how to support remote working at scale. It is about adapting and being flexible for all staff. Successful responses to emergency measures forced on reluctant companies will form future process. Business must ask itself some difficult questions, such as;

Do we need large city office space with staff relying on crowded public transport?

Home-working could make the rush hour history, which might then affect property values in satellite commuter towns. Businesses may then shift to having smaller, flexible office spaces, or sections of co-working spaces dotted around the country in a far more distributed way for example. What will be the costs, both financially and socially to more home working be for your business after the crisis has subsided? There will be cost savings on reduced office space rental if your staff homework but there may be additional costs to help your staff get set up at home (a desk, suitable chair, laptop, back-up systems, IT support etc).

Are your staff able to work from home?

Even if employees have jobs that make remote working possible there may be factors that make it difficult. Maybe they don't have space, they have family at home which would make home working difficult. Many people prefer to keep their work and home life separate. Many people simply like working in the office.

Can you trust your staff to work from home?

There is evidence to show that productivity can actually increase with home working. Employees will demand more from employers in terms of flexibility and equipment both IT and to create a comfortable working environment. More people working remotely may also expose weaknesses in some company cultures.

Managing Mental Health and Wellbeing

Most people need social connectivity and interaction to maintain good mental health. For satisfaction in their work they need personal investment in value and purpose. They need encouragement, recognition and the chance to learn and improve. To manage and improve mental health and wellbeing, employers must take all of this into account.

The relationship between a company and its employees can have a big impact on the relationship between a company and its customers. Organisations should embrace their social responsibilities in the workplace as a natural part of their business model. Existing and potential employee values are rapidly changing, along with business models and the need to strive for sustainability.

87% of employees now expect their employer to support them in balancing their work and personal commitments, providing the right support is not a luxury - it's a necessity. Some businesses are taking this a step further, encouraging their people to take on skills-based placements which benefit both the employees and those they're helping. By giving employees the opportunity to give something back, employers have found a way to give their people purpose outside of their jobs – and it's certainly a worthwhile endeavour, 89% of volunteers reported increased job satisfaction and 87% of volunteers reported greater pride in their company.

Poor mental health and wellbeing has a negative effect on productivity, encourages absence levels, increases staff turnover and training costs. What can we do to provide services and support to help staff cope? How is your business managing the worries and concerns of your staff? Establishing a robust mental health and wellbeing policy will ensure increased productivity, loyalty and staff retention.

Society and the business world we once knew has changed beyond recognition. The need to realign our processes with our requirements is now essential. We must understand and adopt technology so that we can work effectively because we simply have no other choice.

There are many actions a business can take to begin the process of change and ensure they emerge from the pandemic on the right side of the up-skilling curve. Attend to immediate mobility concerns, such as reviewing travel rules, update HR policies and introduce mental health and wellbeing strategies. Assess remote working strategies, including asking employees to temporarily work remotely or relocate. Address strains on existing information technology and communications infrastructure in order to support remote working during the crisis.

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Life After COVID19

Environment and Climate Change

One positive aspect of the pandemic is that a huge drop in air pollution and CO2 levels has been recorded in cities across the world, as workers stay home, and transport levels are drastically reduced. New York has seen a drop of nearly 50% in carbon emissions from cars, compared to this time last year, while there has been an estimated drop of 25% in energy use and emissions in China over a two week period. Currently aviation has been dramatically reduced. This could last at least into the medium term as lockdowns in destinations produce travel warnings from nervous governments. This trend may well be exacerbated by businesses having less money to spend and video conferencing becoming the norm. Global travel may never return to pre COVID levels and the number of people using trains, tubes, buses and trams is likely to remain low for the near future. Independent and green modes of transport such as cycling electric scooters are already enjoying a great spike in popularity. What is your travel strategy? The pandemic has shown us how governments can act quickly when they need to - and how willingly populations can respond.

Community, Charity, Brand Visibility and Reputation

Acts of generosity and kindness are currently making a big difference both on an individual and societal level. In a recent poll carried out by YouGov for the Mental Health Foundation it was found that more than 6 in 10 of us feel anxious or worried because of the Coronavirus pandemic. While it is undoubtedly a worrying time for everyone, many individuals and companies have shown just how much they care by going above and beyond to help by supporting their communities and charities that are important to them.

Multinational brewery and pub chain BrewDog has begun making hand sanitiser at its distillery in Aberdeenshire to assist with shortages. It announced via Twitter that these sanitisers will be delivered to NHS hospitals, as well as charities and shelters. Serious Tissues, a 100% recycled toilet paper brand, is donating 100% of its profits to the NHS. Change Please, the brains behind the brand, is already helping homeless people off the streets by training them as coffee baristas. John Lewis & Partners has donated £75,000 each to the charities Age UK, FareShare and Trussell Trust. This funding will be used immediately to assist the most vulnerable during the crisis, providing help to those in local communities who are self-isolating or facing food insecurity While schools are closed, Audible is offering a free collection of audiobooks for children to help with their learning. LinkedIn is making 16 of its online learning courses free, providing tips on how to stay productive, use virtual meeting tools and efficiently balance family life/work dynamics. The list goes on...

Caring and acts of kindness are not just 'nice things to do' - giving back is a key trend showing customers and stakeholders that you are a business that cares. It's a trend that, as it becomes a behavioural norm, will be something you will be remembered for.

Supporting a cause that aligns with your interests or expertise can be both a win for the recipients AND the the supporting business. Brand exposure through new channels will enhance customer visibility and revenue streams. Kind gestures are an important force in the way we conduct our personal and professional lives. Giving builds trust, loyalty and improves the reputation of your business.

Social responsibility policy provides a structure from which you can plan for the future.

Everything we have discussed counts towards an organisations CSR commitment. Each of our CSR Four Pillars is designed to help you audit, benchmark, improve, and impact report on areas such as energy and travel, health and wellbeing, community engagement and supporting charities. This forms the basis of an ongoing CSR Policy which will help you face and meet the challenges ahead.

Social responsibility policy is not just an investment in your business but in your staff, helping to enrich the quality of their lives with value and purpose. You will see a significant return in investment through improved reputation and an engaged and productive workforce. You will become an employer of choice, be more successful when looking for investment and tendering and gain vital consumer loyalty.

Social responsibility makes us feel 'good' because the message is about something 'good'.

Become CSR Accredited to show you value social purpose and you have a commitment to building a more rewarding workplace now and for future generations.

Doing Good is **Good Business**

It is now more important than ever to show that we are doing everything we can to improve the world we live in for future generations, not only by reducing the negative impact we have on the environment, but by building a better and cohesive society. It's amazing what we are already doing that we don't talk about. CSR-A provides the perfect opportunity to tell your positive story.

Driven by the heightened consumer awareness about environmental issues, coupled with tightening government regulations and reduced funds available for community projects, companies are now looking for innovative ways to meet their social responsibilities. It is clear that firms who understand their social responsibilities and explore ways in which CSR can be built into strategy are more likely to reap the rewards of enhanced competitive positions in the future, benefiting not only their shareholders but all stakeholders involved and the society at large.

There is now increasing recognition of the fact that CSR can be used as source of competitive advantage through good corporate governance, effective execution of innovative social projects and ethical management. In order to maximise this potential, it is essential for firms to smartly communicate their CSR efforts to ensure that consumers view them as driven by intrinsic (genuine) rather than extrinsic (profit led) motivations. The importance of integrating CSR into the culture, governance and strategy development initiatives of the company along with its current management and incentive structure is clear. This requires considerable corporate commitment, with senior management leading the implementation of strategic CSR efforts to ensure organisational 'buy-in'.

Why become Accredited?

CSR Accreditation encourages a culture of **sustainable and social purpose with profit**. It has many advantages that can apply to any business, regardless of its size or sector. Positive CSR improves a company's public image and relationship with stakeholder, clients and consumers.

It is all about reputation - a good reputation improves:

- Stakeholder/Client/Consumer loyalty
- End user loyalty
- Staff loyalty

Customers want to trust organisations they engage with. Employees want to work for values-driven employers and investors want to know that a company is addressing its ethical responsibility.

How do I get Accreditation?

Accreditation is a great way to pull together what you are already doing in regard to CSR. This helps you easily report on your sustainability, workplace and community engagement. The Accreditation application process provides a simple and straight forward template against which you can record your organisations activity using our CSR Four Pillars system - environment, workplace, community and philanthropy.

Each CSR Pillar is designed to help you audit and impact report on areas such as energy performance, recycling, staff engagement, health and well-being, community engagement and supporting local and national charities. This audit then becomes an invaluable CSR, CR, ESG policy which you can use to show all your audiences that you are a caring and responsible organisation.

The CSR-A Mark of Excellence

The CSR Accreditation Mark should be displayed on your website, in your reception and throughout your marketing materials, proudly showing that your organisation has been independently recognised for its CSR endeavours.

All successful applications will receive a Gold, Silver or Bronze Accreditation pack. Any applicants that are unsuccessful will receive a gap analysis report on their application and a chance to re-apply within three months.

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CSRA
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ACCREDITED
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CSR-Accreditation, 97 Cock Lane, High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 7DZ
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