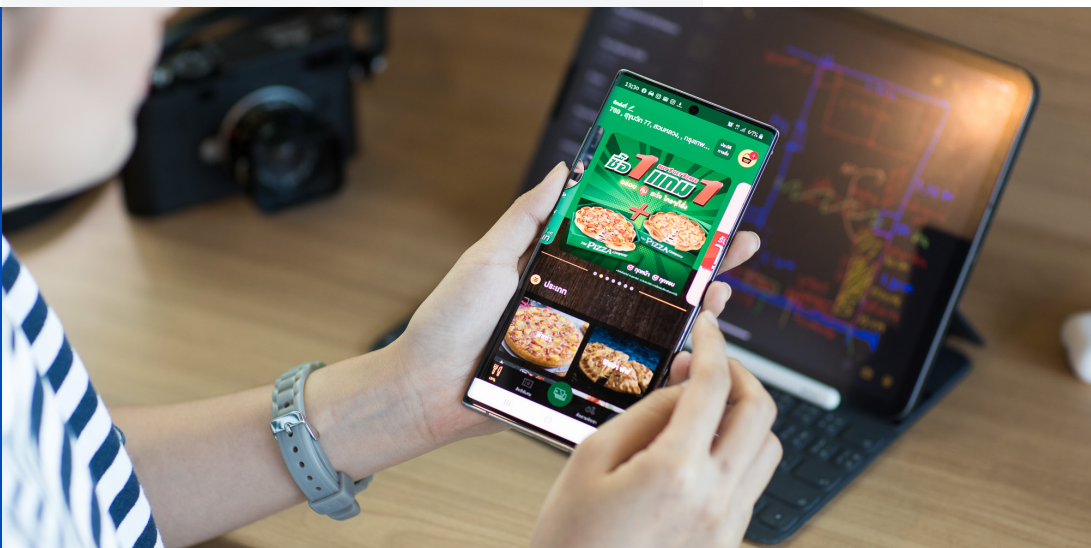


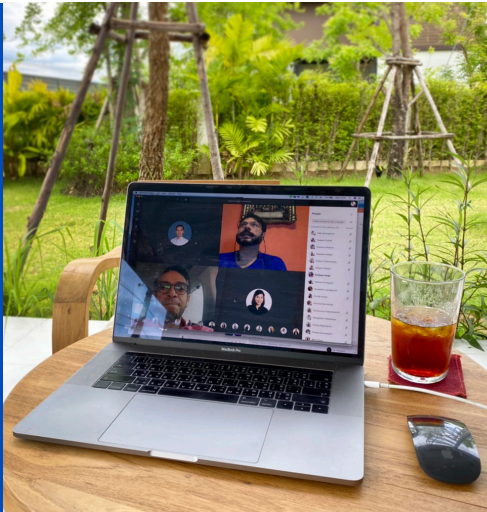
A Community's Reflections on the New Normal



No doubt, 2020 is the year that will continue to test not only everyone's leadership capabilities but also the organization's resilience to operate in an extremely turbulent environment with the fog of uncertainty looming in the horizon. Covid-19 has forced all of us to reimagine how everything around us including ourselves will change and will continue to change.

In the face of Covid-19, everyone is talking about the "New Normal". However, the "New Normal" is itself really not new. This term was also coined in business and economics to refer to financial conditions following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the aftermath of the 2008-2012 global recession. Somehow however, this new normal seems different. It feels even more tangible and impends with even more permanence. Moreover, the challenge with this "new normal" is that we are in uncharted territory. What it will be after the dust settles is still up in the air.

As a community, we are equally uncertain together with the rest of the world, what exactly the "new normal" will be. Nonetheless, we are sure that the business landscape has and will continue to change, and as some doors close, the "new normal" will also open a rich set of possibilities for organisations who have adaptable and agile people and leaders. To this end, the Minor HR Community has put together our thoughts and insights on what the 'new normal' might shape-up to be as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.



“New” Ways of Work

Even with lockdowns lifting and future vaccines, the COVID virus will most likely leave a permanent mark on the way people see work, how work is organised, and how work habits will be altered. The permanent marks we might expect could include:

- The traditional definition of ‘work’ will continue to evolve.
- Collaboration becomes Hyper.
- Remote work or Virtual work (WFH) will increasingly be a norm.
- With distancing comes autonomy. WFH allows people more autonomy.
- Trust glues everything together.
- Digital learning explodes.
- People’s wellbeing is a business agenda.
- Purpose before process.

Leadership through the Crisis & Beyond

The COVID-19 pandemic is asking leaders to embrace a baptism of fire. As a leader, it might feel like hell right now, but those with the right mindset and capabilities will not just come out unscathed, but they will come out as far better leaders. To do so, multiple leadership muscles must be exercised. In our view, this would include the following.

- Resilience is vital when the chips are down.
- Agile and adaptive leaders will cope.
- Transparent, sincere, and clear communicators will win hearts and minds.
- Build multiple leadership muscles through learning agility.
- Empowerment and inclusion are currencies of trust.
- Re-imagine and carve the future together.
- Be digitally savvy or be left behind.
- Decisive leadership balanced with empathy and compassion.

Getting Ready for a Business Reboot

It is clear that sooner or later the business would need to reboot. Still, it is hardly realistic to expect that we can simply pick up where we left off, with no impacts on customer behaviour nor in the way we do business. Thus, to get the business ready for a restart, as a community, we are expecting the following.

- An online world of physical contact-free e-commerce.
- Business will come back slowly and cautiously.
- Stricter regulations to boost consumer confidence.
- Marketing would need to go collaborative.
- Brand realignment a possibility.
- Rapid testing- rapid commercialization can be the new norm.



Mindset and Self-Mastery

Moving forward, what mindset should we lead with?

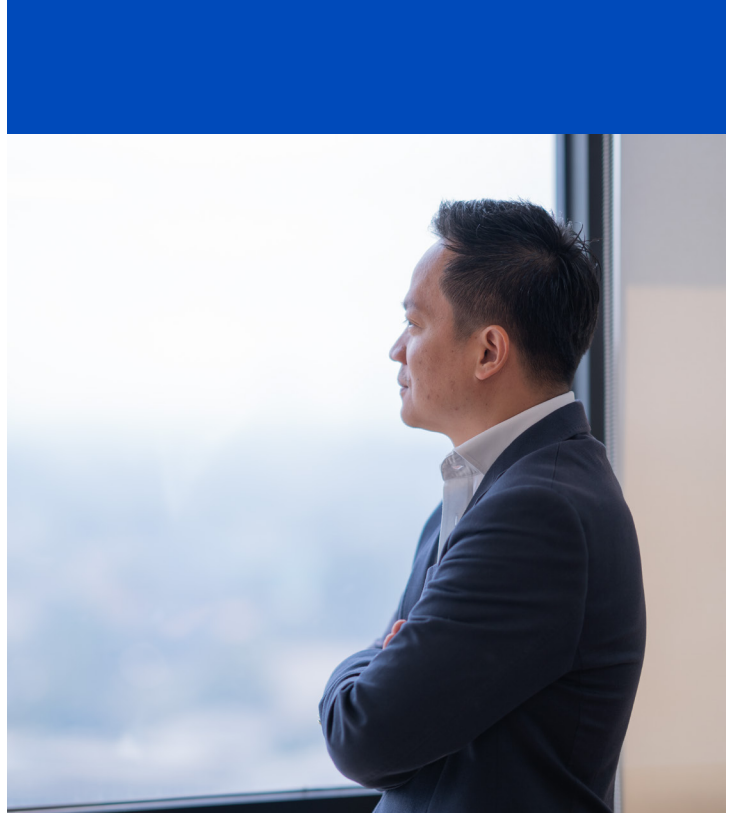
Leaders' mindset influences the quality of their response. **An open and agile mindset** is important in times of uncertainty as it allows leaders to have a wider and sharper lens to cut through the clutter and unravel new opportunities.

Both **'expansion' and 'growth' mindsets** would also be essential. These mindsets would permit leaders to move from fear to abundance and growth thinking. Rather than be paralysed, these mindsets can empower leaders to 'envisage worst-case scenarios', and at the same time stay optimistic that with deliberate focus, they can take responsibility for actions needed to better the situation. This will also enable leaders to navigate the many paradoxes and ambiguity that arise from these challenging times.

A **sense of urgency** begins in the mind. The pandemic has fuelled a sense of urgency to respond quickly and adapt given unforeseen changes. The "new normal" reinforces this need, and it should not take another pandemic to sustain it.

Globally, we will need to rethink **hygiene** and **safety**.

It moves from background to forefront of everything we do if we are to win back consumer confidence quickly. Where in the past, consumers assumed sanitation and safety, now, these will become the first question consumers will demand and even contractually secure. If this is the mindset of the customer, more so should it be paramount as our mindset. To cope with this, we all need to be individually responsible, personally informed, and maintain a sense of citizenship.



Last but not the least, **grit** is critical. As psychologist Angela Duckworth points out, "grit combines resilience, ambition, and self-control in the pursuit of goals that take months, years, or even decades". We are all in this together for the long haul, we need to **focus on what matters most**, look at the big picture, and ignore the energy vampires that drain our resolve.

In conclusion, the year will push all of us, leaders and team members alike, to rethink, reinvent, and adapt to the **"new normal"**. The faster we move from denial to accepting it, the better. Perhaps in the near future, we will even need to revisit the **"next new normal"**. All these uncertainties lie ahead. Despite all these, one thing needs to be steadfast, that we remain a strong community that supports our people, our business, and each other.

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