

Prepare Your Organization for the NEXT Pivot

Using this period of disruption, leaders can accelerate change management initiatives that will sufficiently equip their organization to take action on what it knows today and afford it the systems and processes required to adapt as new data is available.



Problem: Leaders who are not conducting a comprehensive readiness assessment will not be prepared to make the pivot into new marketplace realities beyond this current season of uncertainty.

Opportunity: Using this period of disruption, leaders can accelerate change management initiatives that will sufficiently equip their organization to take action on what it knows today and afford it the systems and processes required to adapt as new data is available.

Resolution: Establish a team of key stakeholders who will help you assess, design, plan, and execute the necessary change management that will position your organization to meet the demand on the other side of this disruption.

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After the initial shockwaves from any disruption or period of intense change wear off, leaders begin to shift beyond the stabilization conversation and move into planning what the next 90 to 180 days will look like. No one knows exactly what will happen. No one ever does.

Most likely you'll need to revisit your assumptions, data, and planning every fourteen to twenty-one days over the next couple of months. But if you wait until a new normal sets in, you may not be able to catch up with demand—let alone your competition.

That means it's time to assess your readiness and preparedness as an organization to make the pivot—not just today's pivot, but the NEXT pivot. If you want to be able to have confidence that you can meet or exceed your fiscal year revenue goals during seasons of uncertainty, there are five key areas of readiness that need to be assessed immediately:

1. Finance
2. Communications
3. Sales and Marketing
4. Supply Chain and Distribution
5. Technology

Within each of the categories, there are five questions you'll need to answer:

1. **What is the change impact on your current reality?** How does this disruption impact you? It's possible no impact has occurred or is anticipated. However, that is unlikely as you consider the interdependent nature of business processes and systems.
2. **What new risks need to be assessed?** It's much better to call out both the risk and mitigation strategies as a way to balance resource allocation to resolve the most potent risks first.

3. **What is the gap between your current state and future needs?** If you want your change management to be successful, you need to anchor yourself in the reality between now and next. Without that, you'll waste time and resources without necessarily making any progress toward adapting to new market conditions.
4. **What stakeholders need to be enrolled in the change process?** No business operates independently, even a business of one. Identify everyone who will be impacted by each particular change. Invite them into a collaborative conversation where you can transfer a sense of ownership about the preferred future. Your leaders and managers will be much more likely to follow along if they believe they are co-creating your new reality.
5. **What impact will this have on business processes and culture?** It's possible this shift will have a permanent effect on your business, which may affect people, departments, and initiatives that are visible and deeply embedded in your organization. Get ahead of this to establish a narrative about your future. If you don't, a narrative will be established one way or another and could inhibit growth measures. At a minimum, you risk massive distraction without a future-leaning narrative grounded in growth.

When No Comprehensive Data Model Exists

There is no comprehensive data model for what is taking place right now. That, of course, doesn't mean you shouldn't model. Work with the data you have. Just understand that you'll need to evaluate your models far more regularly and rapidly than you have previously. Otherwise, your algorithms will depreciate sooner than anyone might have predicted.

When you have limited confidence in your lagging indicators, you must spend more time on your leading indicators. You may not be able to control outcomes, but you can control the development of leading indicators. Determine what that looks like for:

1. **Finance:** Evaluate your capital position and liquidity.
2. **Communications:** Evaluate your messaging and delivery systems.
3. **Sales and Marketing:** Evaluate your processes and technology.
4. **Supply Chain and Distribution:** Evaluate availability and access to raw materials as well as the functionality of distribution networks and systems.
5. **Technology:** Evaluate where you need to adapt human-centric processes to more digital-driven processes, as well as determine what technology you need to adopt within the context of each key function.

Establish a Project Team for Assessment and Recovery Plan

You can't make these changes on your own. Create a cross-functional, interdependent team of key stakeholders tiered with executives, managers, and team leaders. This will afford you the opportunity to work through strategy and implementation both vertically and horizontally. If it's just a group of

executives, you'll be long on ideas and short on implementation. If it's just team leaders, you'll be long on initiatives and short on organizational alignment and symmetry across functions.

Give this project team whatever they want. Don't limit their scope or be too quick to criticize their directional thinking. Executive leadership should have regular check-ins to ensure sound thinking and planning.

This is an opportunity to allow your leaders to lead. Those who do will confirm their status. Those who don't will confirm their future. To achieve an adaptive and resilient culture through massive change requires a high degree of trust and a willingness to let a team wander a bit—and even stumble—until they get it right.

The Time for Intervention Is Now

You don't want to just shuffle the deck. Your new reality will require new thinking, new ideas, and new insights that will take you to new places. Your ability to accelerate through this disruption is directly related to your capacity to prepare for the intervention required to equip your organization to pivot and make progress.

This is not the time for compliance and risk officers to attempt to suffocate collaboration, ideation, and strategy development. Rather, this is the time you get to rethink your playbook and size up your capacity to meet the demand that will be waiting for you on the other side of disruption. There will be time for compliance and risk strategies to shape final decisions. But that's not now. Right now we need entrepreneurial thinking from visionaries—not managers. And those who lead will win big.

About

Ben Stroup is Chief Growth Architect and President at Velocity Strategy Solutions where he helps leaders design, develop, and deploy smarter business growth strategies. Ben is a futurist, disruptor, and data champion. He leads a team that takes a structured learning approach to business challenges, which allows them to assist leaders in bridging the gap between ideas, innovation, and revenue—taking ideas from mind to market.

Velocity Strategy Solutions is an on-demand, next-generation business strategy and management consulting firm which provides clients with a relentless focus on data, execution, and results that positively impact the bottom line. Velocity delivers integrated people and revenue strategies combined with a disciplined approach to growth architecture that elevates the capacity of leaders, teams, and organizations to succeed and win more.