



A Shot in the Arm

People world-over are waiting for a shot in the arm. We're counting the days until we can get that *literal* shot in the arm (ok, probably two shots for many)—a vaccination to help quell the COVID pandemic.

Young and old, rich and poor, city and suburb and rural...we're all anticipating the day when there's enough immunity in our surroundings to help us get back to some semblance of normalcy.

What are you doing in the meantime, though? If you own, or lead, or work in a business, what preparation are you making so that you'll be ready when the go-ahead is given?

That's the topic we cover in this month's edition of **EA Insights**. Let's think together about a few areas of planning that may make the transition into better days better indeed!

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC



Post-Pandemic Preparedness: 3 P's for Planning Today

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Never in my lifetime have I seen so many people anxious to put a year behind them. Then again, never have any of us lived through a year like 2020!

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Quotes

"I think I've changed my business strategy every year.... You have to be watching the horizon constantly. The rug has been pulled out from under our feet so many times."
~John Allison

"The toughest thing about managing is knowing your personnel and what it can give you under all conditions."
~Walter Alston

"The pandemic has been such an awful time for so many people around the world, but it has also been a reminder for us about the things that really matter -- the people in our lives and the love we have for them."
~Ananya Birla

"To be the best, you have to have the right equipment at your disposal."
~Hafthor Bjornsson

"For organizations, flexibility is a must to cope with fluctuations in demand and remain competitive, and people must be able to develop adaptable attitudes to quickly embrace evolving business conditions, new business opportunities, and shifting strategies."
~Alain Dehaze

"We are living in a world that has been changed by COVID, and our ... priorities need to support our communities and our workers to address

Chief among the many challenges of the year that we just closed out was the pandemic. COVID has affected every aspect of our lives—the way we celebrate, worship, travel, and work.

Though we've arrived at 2021, and there's hope on the way with the emergence of vaccines, we still have a way to go before we're truly ready to turn the page on this chapter of our collective experience. So, what might we be doing now, as we wait, to prepare for the time when all of this is just a rear-view mirror image? Let me offer thoughts and pose some questions in three "P" areas to get your planning started.

People

Health – At the core of regaining some semblance of normalcy is ensuring that enough people receive the vaccine in order to boost the immunity of the community. For that reason, taking the vaccine ourselves, and encouraging others to do likewise, is key in jumpstarting a return to business.

Critical Questions

- *Do I know the vaccine priority groups for my state, and the group into which I fall, so that I can secure my vaccination in a timely manner?*
- *As a business leader, have I collaborated with human resources partners to develop a reasonable and legally sound approach to vaccines for all personnel in our company?*
- *Until there is a full return to work, do we have a consistent policy and process for COVID testing, contact tracing and notification, and quarantines for instances in which there are possible exposures so that we can support safety for staff, customers, and others in the spaces for which we are responsible?*

Return Logistics – It would be nice, but it's not realistic, that on some date certain, we'll flip a switch and everyone will simply come back to work. There are numerous logistics to be considered in determining when and how that resumption of regular work will occur.

Critical Questions

- *How do we coordinate a full return to work with the timing of school reopening?*
- *What decisions must be made to accommodate staff members with underlying health issues?*
- *Does all staff return at once, are returns staggered, is everyone onsite at the same time, or is some hybrid model rolled out?*
- *Will our approach be agile enough that we can pivot in the event of another outbreak?*

Personnel Gaps – As reported daily, there are many whose lives are being taken by COVID. Also, some are making work-life decisions that will leave their seats empty when the doors open again. These personnel gaps must be accounted for any planning effort.

Critical Questions

- *Have we taken an internal census to know the team that intends to be a part of our business' future? How frequently should we repeat this activity?*
- *How do we anticipate and close the knowledge, responsibility, and/or productivity gap(s) resulting from staffing changes?*
- *What steps are appropriate to help the team mourn the losses—whether through death or departure of some sort?*
- *Do the organic staffing changes, or COVID-forced functioning adjustments, offer opportunities to rethink organization structure and/or staff responsibilities?*

Property

Office Space – Over the past year, where we work has transformed significantly. Many physical offices

the needs of our new environment.”

~Jeff Van Drew

“Plans are nothing; planning is everything.”

~Dwight D. Eisenhower

“You change your business plan to anticipate and adapt to changes in the marketplace.”

~Jon Feltheimer

“You'd like to transition with continuity, have people in your own organization rise up and continue forward[.]”

~Jim Irsay

“It comes down to the difference between what you were planning to do and what life throws at you and you have to end up doing. The one who knows how to improvise is the one who comes out ahead.”

~Jason Isbell

“We can reorient our products and business strategy because we are an agile organization.”

~Baba Kalyani

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.”

~Alan Lakein

“Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.”

~Paul J. Meyer

“The thing that I learned early on is you really need to set goals in your life, both short-term and long-term, just like you do in business. Having that long-term goal will enable you to have a plan on how to achieve it.”

~Denise Morrison

“It's very important that we all have a common understanding of our purpose as a business—what we aspire to—and a strategy for achieving it.”

~Dennis Mulienburg

“Leaders of companies of any

are empty or populated only by skeleton crews of the most essential. Given that, in preparation for a post-COVID world, considerations about workspaces must be resolved.

Critical Questions

- *Given what we know now, how much, and what type of, space do we need to perform our work?*
- *Can we realize a cost savings by moving to new space, especially given the space that may be available from COVID-related vacancies?*
- *If our current location and space generally is appropriate, are the conditions ripe for renovations or internal moves that could be undertaken before many people return?*

Equipment – To call it a “purchase flurry” is an understatement. However, that is exactly what occurred in many organizations as activity shifted from an in-office, to an at-home, setting. In thinking about how work will be performed post-COVID, decisions must be made about equipment.

Critical Questions

- *Based on the business-approach adjustments made during this period, what are our equipment needs going forward?*
- *How do we dispose of equipment that either is outdated or not aligned with our new way of operating?*

Prospects

New and Returning Business – Our world’s roughly 1-year blip has had unmistakable effects on many organizations. Few, if any, businesses or individuals have been spared financial impact to some degree. So, with a break on the horizon, attention to planning on the new and returning business front is appropriate now.

Critical Questions

- *Will our current business model and product/ service offerings be on point to meet the new or changing needs of a post-COVID market? If so, how do we make ourselves even more marketable? If not, what changes should we make?*
- *How do we begin to connect with potential new, or reconnect with existing, customers now to make or reinforce relationships?*

It all boils down to this critical question: *How do we maximize our time NOW to plan and lay the groundwork for a business that will be successful in a post-pandemic world?* Yes, grappling with today can be enough of a challenge on its own; however, forward thinking about, and preparation for, the future also is essential.

Today, we touched on just a few critical questions, but there certainly are more. If you could use planning assistance as you get ready to take off your mask and get to it all again, reach out to us at [**Executive Advantage**](#). We are here to help you assess where you are now and prepare for a future that we all anxiously await. [**Contact us today.**](#)

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At [**Executive Advantage**](#), we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

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size, at any stage of development, spend a lot of time focused on growing the business. We develop our game plan and ensure that we are optimally executing on our objectives. We concentrate on looking forward.”
~Dinesh Paliwal

“Amateurs do tactics; experts do logistics[.]”
~Joe Sestak

“A strategy is something you can touch; you can motivate people with; be number one and number two in every business. You can energize people around the message.”
~Jack Welch