

8/2020

APRIL 2020
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R SOG INSIGHT

MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE

With the COVID-19 impacting countries at various stages, everyone is trying to understand what is required to protect themselves and their communities.

We spoke to some of our friends around the world, on how it has affected them and their views of the situation.

ABOUT OUR GUEST

Dr Paul Temporal is a leading global expert on brand creation, development and management, with over 30 years' experience in consulting and training. He has worked with many global companies and governments, published seventeen bestselling books on brand strategy and management and is well known for his practical and results-oriented approach. He has provided consultancy across the public sector, including numerous governments worldwide. He was educated at Leeds and Oxford universities in the UK, and he holds bachelor, master's and doctoral degrees in management, a degree in economics, and a postgraduate certificate in education. Alongside his role as associate fellow at Saïd Business School, Paul is also an associate fellow at Green Templeton College, University of Oxford.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in the article are of their own and do not reflect the opinion of Razak School of Government.

VIEWS FROM UNITED KINGDOM

In this edition, we spoke to Dr Paul Temporal, Associate Fellow at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, United Kingdom. Since 2012, Paul has been instrumental in co-designing and delivering RSOG Senior Leadership Programme: Branding Leaders, Branding the Nation and Emerging Leaders Programme: Strategic Branding and Leadership.

RSOG: Hi Paul, how are you? Thank you for taking the time to speak to us.

Dr Paul Temporal: Hello everyone! Many thanks for thinking of me and contacting me at this difficult time. It is great to be in touch again.

RSOG: How has the pandemic affected your daily life?

Dr Paul Temporal: I live in a small cottage on site at the business school executive education centre called Egrove Park. It is a 37 acre park and normally a hive of activity but now is eerily quiet. The buildings are closed and I'm in isolation whether I like it or not! Still, I have a beautiful 37 acre garden with deer and other wildlife to walk in.

Life here in Oxford and the UK has changed dramatically over the last few weeks as it has in most countries of the world. Gone is the normal way of working and living with families, friends and work colleagues and in has come a whole new normal of semi-isolation and digital work procedures. Gone are the happy days of freedom, liberty and laughter and less happy days of loneliness, fear and anxiety have arrived.

As the pandemic has taken lives and established its grip it has forced us to change nearly every aspect of how we live our lives. We have had to learn new ways to work and socialise; to embrace massive change and huge uncertainty, not to mention a new language. The words 'social distancing' are widely used as a part of the lockdown strategies used by most countries. Some people are not happy about this language and say we are not distancing socially but physically, so the phrase should be 'physical distancing'. Academic debate still remains!



Yet, at first, when the virus was spreading fast in other countries but not gaining a foothold here most people in the UK ignored the messages and advice originally given by the government and some say enforcement should have come earlier. Decisions like this are, according to government, 'driven by science' but science produces data that can be interpreted in different ways by politicians. And even scientists disagree with each other. Nevertheless, people in the UK are now largely adhering to government 'instructions' as strategies change and fear strikes into the very heart of society.

Regarding economics, the pandemic has caused stratospheric economic disaster to the UK and many other countries as lockdowns on all but essential work roles bite. The global downturn is already much greater than that following the last financial crash and many believe it will take much longer to recover from the depression. Millions are losing jobs and governments are propping up economies with previously unheard of amounts of money, measured in trillions of dollars.

Economies are being ruined and the terrifying fact is that there are no clearly defined or proven exit strategies post-pandemic. As the virus is new, no-one knows when it will, if ever, disappear. The race for vaccines and tests is on but there are no quick fixes. Worst of all, the awful dilemma exists for governments as to how long they can afford to prop up the economy and support families without work and when they have to start to relax lockdown procedures and try to reboot economies. In the UK there is no exit strategy yet and this is making many economists (not to mention the public) very nervous. However this 'health v wealth' dilemma plays out there is no doubt it will take years for the world to recover and it is the next generation that will bear the burden.


In some ways this is sad, but in other ways, it is likely that the world will emerge from this tempestuous time in a stronger and better form. We are likely to be more creative, innovative and adaptive and more appreciative of our own lives and the lives of others. The post-pandemic world will hopefully have learned the moral and practical lessons of massive and sudden change and not attempt to return to business as usual. The next generation deserves this.

RSOG: Much of your work focuses on brand creation, development and management. How do you see it in relation to the current public health predicament?

Dr Paul Temporal: What we can say for certain is that not all brands will survive as a result of the pandemic. Thousands of small businesses are closing every day. High streets are deserted. Entrepreneurs and businesses in global and regional supply chains are suffering and many will not survive. Those that can adapt and change have a chance but only if they fundamentally change and customers continue to have the money to buy. The big brands have a better chance of survival from sheer size and firepower but even they are having to change their business models and do more online trading. But it doesn't stop there. While there has been a switch to online selling of around 30%, it is limited. Who wants to buy a new dress or shirt when they can't go out or socialise? Giant fashion retailer Next says it will take a £1 Billion hit this year because of the pandemic.

For the public sector, it is a really tough time and nation brands are suffering both in economic and image terms. The tourism industry has nearly ceased to exist as has the travel industry. Nations are compared (without clear information in many cases) and judged on numbers of cases and deaths. Politicians as brand ambassadors are in the hot seat and often have to defend decisions they have made whether based on science or not. The 'health v wealth' dilemma strikes again. Some nations such as Italy will take a long time to re-position themselves whereas others like Germany have strengthened trust and reliability based on the extremely (relative) successful control of virus case numbers and deaths.

The entirety of any nation's public service is affected by the pandemic. Public servants are often working night and day to implement government decisions and devise new ways to operationalise policies. They are largely unseen but the nation depends on them and has high expectations of them. And media are quick to judge them when results do not match what has been promised by the government.



In this situation, transparency is paramount. People can understand if explanations and information are current and honestly given. Frequent, meaningful communications to citizens is therefore very important.

It is important for outward-facing departments in the public service to maintain communication with all stakeholders. For example, with tourism, economic development and trade, keeping up conversations with stakeholders and helping them survive and look to the future in these dark times is important and will be appreciated. As economies eventually get back to work, these actions taken now will become enablers later.

RSOG: Based on what you've seen happening with regards to the global pandemic, are there any stories that you feel reflect the brand story that an individual, organisation, government or a country has?

Dr Paul Temporal: Many stories are derived from the moral and human elements of kindness. New partnerships, a sense of giving and helping others, competitors forming alliances and partnerships abound.

For example, the two largest drug companies (GlaxoSmithKline and Astrogenica), normally arch-competitors, have joined resources in order to expedite the development of a vaccine for the virus.

The second, more emotional story, is that of a second world war veteran called Captain Tom Moore who will celebrate his 100th birthday at the end of April. He and his daughter set up a crowdfunding site to raise £1,000 for the National Health Service charities by Tom walking 100 times around his house and garden. He started his walking on March 20th and by 15th April Tom had raised over £6 million! As I write this now (20th April) the sum has risen to £27 million! He says he will not stop walking until donations stop coming in. A real hero and a kind person who leads by example. All he would talk about when interviewed on television was the fact that doctors, nurses and all healthcare workers deserved the best we could give them as they put themselves in grave danger every day. This story also illustrates the generosity of the public in hard times, millions of whom have lost their jobs because of this pandemic.

A third example is one of where companies that have the expertise change what they are doing to use this for the benefit of others. For example, fashion brand Burberry used its garment production skills to make protective gowns for front line medical staff. LVMH and Estee Lauder have converted some of their perfumery and fragrance production factories to produce hand sanitisers to be donated to hospitals, Prada produced tens of thousands of gowns and masks for staff working in the healthcare sector and Dyson, the highly rated and innovative engineering brand, turned its skills into the manufacture of assisted breathing equipment for hospitals caring for very ill patients. Airbus and some Formula 1 teams have combined to produce ventilation equipment for intensive care. This is innovation in action running at speed based on existing skills where brands have used the opportunity to help others. These brands are likely to be remembered for their contributions.

RSOG: One of the important elements of brand strategy and management is brand values. Could you elaborate on that a bit more?

Dr Paul Temporal: This can be a testing time for organisations and governments. Brand strategy is largely concerned with developing a strong emotional connection with consumers based on purpose and values (often expressed via a brand's personality). Brand management activates the strategy and includes generating a great experience at every touch point customers encounter. It also involves internal employee engagement as staff need to embrace the vision and the values of the brand they represent. After all, they are the ones who make it possible for brands to deliver great products, services and experiences. Brand management also includes two-way communications with customers to deliver the brand promise and express the brand personality – its human side – and to engage with consumers in a positive way to help them. Strong brands are described as 'trusted friends' by their customers.



It is the human side of brands that is critical in connecting with consumers affected by a global disaster and many brands have used social media to message customers with uplifting messages and demonstrate empathy. Others have created inspiring videos made by and featuring their employees.

Most organisations promote their visions and values but unprecedented adverse times expose whether values are meaningful or just cosmetic rhetoric. Many banks, for example, are communicating messages that relate to being there for customers when there are hard times but the truth is they are not. Banks are still treating SME's in the same way as before and must learn that they and their clients are serving society not themselves. In the UK, where the government has made available huge sums of money to help companies survive and keep employees, banks have been very slow to release money that is needed quickly.

When values are expressed they must be seen to be delivered upon. Take Tesco, for example, with its brand promise of "Every Little Helps". This story is one concerning Dave Lewis, CEO of the UK's leading supermarket chain and the largest UK private sector employer with 320,000 staff, who has had to recruit an additional 45,000 staff since 20th March. Lewis says "we interviewed people in the morning and they started work in the afternoon after safety training". He goes on to say that "we have changed more in a few weeks than in ten years". He says that the pandemic has "put lots of pressure and difficulty on the system, but I have seen more humanity and consideration and care than any other time in my career. How do I feel? The word I'm looking for is humbled." Tesco overcame supply chain issues and provided food for all adjusting quickly during the panic buying phase of the pandemic. The brand was also quick to allocate special shopping hours for health service workers and older people and special preferences for home delivery.

For governments and the public service, the same rules apply. Stakeholders and citizens will trust ministries and departments that deliver on their promises, go the extra mile so that they receive a great service experience. In times of hardship and pressure such as the pandemic that is with us, it is sometimes difficult to find ways to do this in the midst of chaos and panic. But calmness alongside change must prevail and, as the goal of the public service is exactly what its name implies, leaders must find ways to help and inspire both their own staff and the nation's citizens.

Finally, action speaks louder than words and kindness is inherent in human beings. When a call went out for volunteers to help the national health service by doing many tasks such as calling old people, delivering medicines and so on, over 750,000 people enrolled in just 4 days.

And while we are talking about kindness we must show appreciation to people who put their lives at risk to save ours. Every Thursday evening at 8 pm in the UK most households come to their doorway where they clap their hands for two minutes in a show of appreciation for those public servants that often are not appreciated. Besides front line medical staff these include the fire service, police, care workers, cleaners and porters in hospitals and many other occupations. Indeed, such appreciation covers many people in public service who are never seen but keep the country and vital services going.

RSOG: In your opinion what would be the top three leadership lessons that we can learn from this global pandemic?

Dr Paul Temporal: There are many lessons to learn I think, but for all leaders perhaps the most important thing to do, while trying to survive, is looking after your people. There are many reports of CEO's and leaders who now realise, when having to work from home, how much they rely on their teams. Let them know how much you appreciate them and their work. Sometimes when things are going well and we are very busy, we forget to show our appreciation to all those people we know and work with. And when times are tough, it's easy to lose our perspective and upset others with our own behaviour albeit unintended. The pandemic has shown that kindness is still alive as more and more people help others and reach out to those not so fortunate. Kindness brings out the caring human spirit in everyone it touches and inspires them.



Secondly, public service leaders are brand ambassadors and must lead by example. They should be role models who live their own values and those of their departments and ministries every day. At the same time, they should allow others who demonstrate passion, enthusiasm and skills to assume leadership roles. Everyone can have a great idea and leaders must allow everyone to flourish. Innovation has become the means to defeat the pandemic and leaders have to involve everyone in producing ideas for positive change.

The third point is to never stop communicating. Be transparent, open and honest. Physical/social distancing brings loneliness to many people and can damage mental health. Communicate more with those you know and you will find you are not only strengthening existing relationships and helping people but you will find you develop new relationships with others. We are seeing the democratisation of workplaces in terms of the collective effort connecting colleagues virtually that might not have met in person.

RSOG: Any messages you would like to share with our alumni and everyone involved whether directly and indirectly in curbing the COVID-19?

Dr Paul Temporal: Perhaps I can start by mentioning a small quote from Her Majesty the Queen, who gave an unprecedented speech to the nation recently, which included the following:

“Using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal, we will succeed, and that success will belong to every one of us. We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return. We will be with our friends again. We will be with our families again. We will meet again.”

This was immensely emotional for all citizens of the UK spoken with calmness and assurance from a royal leader and arguably the UK’s most admired and valued brand. The quote points to the fact that we are all together – one community in the face of adversity – and the spirit of togetherness will prevail.

Secondly, the pandemic has proved that everyone can be a leader – many people can do small things that in total add up to large things. During hard times, leaders can encourage and fast-track leadership in others.

Thirdly, all brands can play their part in times of chronic emergency and tragedy. More than ever, now is the time for the public and private sectors to work together, to combine their brand strengths for the good of the nation.

Fourthly, the public sector must improve its speed, adaptability and efficiency. Most countries were unprepared for the ferocity and speed of the virus attack and some have been very slow to react to new and devastating circumstances. This means that adaptive leadership is essential in facing ‘wicked problems’ and wholesale change. At the end of the day, it all comes down to trust, whether you are a leader, an organisation or a nation. Working hard to earn people’s trust is the only route to achieving strong brand status.

Finally, I wish all of you and your families a healthy and safe journey through the pandemic situation. Terima kasih.

