

IN THE LAST EDITION OF THE REVIEW WE FOCUSED ON CRISIS. ONE OF OUR core points of view at Brunswick is that we don't believe in the old concept of crisis management. A crisis, by its very nature, is unmanageable and uncontrollable. You can act in certain ways and say certain things that will affect its significance, trajectory and outcome, but you cannot fundamentally control it—by failing to recognize that, you could actually make it worse.

We do believe that you can survive the challenges of rapid or profound change and specific crises and, as the saying goes, what doesn't kill you can make you stronger. The critical questions are what resilience you need and how you build it.

What have you got in place that enables you to make the right decisions under pressure and have you got the reputational capital and capabilities to survive and come out the other side, possibly even positively, from the experience?

In our mind, the practices that create resilience usually work in three parts.

The first is your systems. There is a lot of focus in crisis preparedness on response systems, and this is a cornerstone of what clients seek. We are well practiced in crisis manuals and simulations. What is not always so obvious is the quality of the intelligence systems that allow you to fully understand not just what is going on, but crucially why it is happening. Your intelligence systems that can deliver insights and inform critical decision making under pressure are often overlooked.

The second key element of resilience is the state of your relationships with key stakeholders. In the old days, when stakeholders were still called audiences, communications was more like a 1.0 broadcasting business. In a world transformed by ubiquitous connectivity, relationships are live and ongoing. The quality of these relationships are genuine assets that need to be nurtured and invested in.

Building better relationships is at the heart of what Brunswick does, whether with the financial community, political and regulatory networks, or the internal and consumer communities that drive so many of the challenges companies now face. Much of this engagement is focused on building resilience through increasing trust. Familiarity generally creates favorability but that can be superficial. Real trust is built on a deeper knowledge and the experience of being tested. In this way, as with so many others, business is no different from our personal lives.

The third part of building resilience is perhaps the most difficult. This is the mindset of the leadership team and key internal communities. Confidence is a critical commodity, it keeps buoyancy in rough weather and creativity when there is limited space to maneuver. Confidence generally grows with experience. Captains who have got the team through big game days before are hugely valuable.

Resilience is built on understanding the situation—the how and the why. Many critical situations appear because an organization's activities collide with a larger social conversation. A promise is seen to have been broken. Product quality isn't what it's supposed to be, performance wasn't delivered, data wasn't protected. Understanding how other people see the situation is valuable because you can communicate that you too are committed to creating the best solution possible.

The final critical element of resilience is whether you are able to bounce back. Extreme challenges can be shocking, saddening and frightening—when you are in the eye of the storm it can be hard to see the opportunity to respond effectively in the longer term. Quite often that becomes clear only later.

“Never waste a good crisis” is part of a resilient mindset. “Never surrender” is the same. Most stakeholders know that bad things can happen. If you can communicate your determination to put things right, those relationships will prove resilient as well.

I hope this edition of the Review gives you greater insight and different perspectives on these topics. These are fascinating, fast developing subjects which are very much at the heart of what we care passionately about at Brunswick. ♦



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