

MARKETING EN LA PRÓXIMA NORMALIDAD

MARKETING IN THE NEXT NORMAL

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Resumen

El entorno sin precedentes, sin fronteras y no revelado por el que atraviesa el mundo -gracias a la pandemia del coronavirus- solo ofrece excitación, dudas y resultados incalculables. La próxima trayectoria humanitaria y empresarial aún no está escrita y nadie sabe hacia dónde se está moviendo, el punto final, ni el momento justo de llegada. Los ejecutivos deben transitar este tiempo con una hoja de ruta no aceptada por la experiencia, mientras reinventan sus organizaciones y el marketing a pesar del camino nebuloso que tienen por delante. Probablemente, el destino final debería reconocerse como un proceso continuo y perpetuo.

Se propone desarrollar una perspectiva sustentable –con condiciones de salud y seguridad- involucrando a la comunidad con un nuevo compromiso y acciones reales. A los fines de lograr este objetivo deviene absolutamente necesario: a) considerar las tendencias emergentes actuales, junto con las nuevas necesidades, comportamientos, preocupaciones, requisitos y gastos de los consumidores, pivotando en una llegada rápida al mercado, plataformas/servicios electrónicos y productos personalizados/customizados, b) enfocar la visión y estrategia de la marca en el viaje de decisiones del cliente y experiencias superiores, innovando y adaptando modelos de negocio/operativos, con enfoques digitales/de bajo o sin contacto/omnicanal, y c) impulsar el crecimiento, desarrollando ecosistemas con socios, articulando los tres reinos estudiados (ahora, recuperación y próxima normalidad), alineando la C-Suite con el resto de las funciones, así como forjando capacidades organizacionales actualizadas como empatía, agilidad, resiliencia, propósito, analítica, cuidado de las partes interesadas y rápida ejecución. En las circunstancias actuales, las organizaciones y -especialmente- la función de Marketing deben repensarse para el próximo período.

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Casualmente, la hipótesis de este trabajo -que fue corroborada- sugiere que después del COVID-19 existe la necesidad de reinventar las organizaciones y -más precisamente- la función de Marketing para la siguiente normalidad con el fin de mejorar el desempeño y los resultados organizacionales, junto con la mejora de la experiencia del cliente.

Se realizó un estudio bibliográfico, con un trabajo exploratorio-descriptivo y una metodología cualitativa. Se utilizó un diseño no experimental y, entre ellos, transversal.

Palabras clave: marketing; experiencia del cliente; viaje del cliente; nueva normalidad; crecimiento.

Abstract

The unprecedented, borderless and undisclosed environment the world is going through –thanks to the coronavirus pandemic- only offers excitation, doubts and untold results. The next humanitarian and business trajectory is still unwritten and nobody knows where it is moving, the ending point and the right time of arrival. Executives must transit this time with a non-experience-accepted road map, while reimagining their organizations and Marketing in spite of the foggy path that they have ahead. Probably, the final destiny should be acknowledged as a perpetual ongoing process.

It is proposed to develop a socially responsible perspective -with healthy and safety conditions-, engaging the community with a new commitment and real actions. To achieve this objective it is absolutely needed to: a) consider current emerging trends together with new consumer needs, behaviors, concerns, requirements and spending, pivoting on rapid time-to-market, platforms/e-services, and personalized/customized products, b) focus brand's vision and strategy on customer's decision journey and higher experiences, innovating and adapting business/operating models, with digital/low-touch/contactless/omnichannel approaches, and c) drive growth, developing partners' ecosystems, articulating the three studied realms (now, recovery and next normal), bringing into line the C-Suite with the rest of the functions, as well as forging up-to-date organizational capabilities such as empathy, agility, resilience, purpose, analytic, care of stakeholders and rapid execution. Under the current circumstances, organizations and –specifically- the Marketing function should be rethought for the period to come.

Coincidentally, the hypothesis of this work –which was corroborated- suggests that after COVID-19 there is a need to reimagine organizations and –more precisely- the Marketing function for the next normal to improve organizational performance and results, along with enhancing Customer eXperience (CX).

It was performed a bibliographical study, with an exploratory-descriptive work and a qualitative methodology. It was used a non experimental design and, among them, transversal.

Keywords: marketing; customer experience; customer journey; next normal; growth.

Introduction

In a prior study, it is stated that the worldwide humanitarian and economic pandemic originated by COVID-19 has impacted abruptly –but differently- on global operations and multiple industrial sectors, proposing immediate changes in a take-it-or-leave-it situation. New emerging trends have arisen, although the most affected sectors are gastronomy, travel agencies, hotels, and household items. In contrast, everything that is connected with e-commerce does not stop growing dizzily. To follow these trends, organizations –in general- and -precisely- supply chains and delivery methods must be adapted.

Nevertheless, Seiler (2020) indicates that executives ended the difficult 2020 year with a positive note and optimistic predictions for the future; however economy, unemployment, industry-wide competition, and disruptions are their main concerns. Other threats to company growth relate to demand weakening, customer needs changes, and business-model disruptions.

New consumer needs, requirements, behaviors, and spending are observed. For instance, Charm et al. (2020) say that although US consumer sentiment improved since the end of July, 2020, it is in a plateau after the elections. Consumer spending –especially on discretionary items- and engagement with out-of-home activities are not showing increases in October/November as Americans feel that their finances won't return to normal levels till -probably- 2022 and beyond. So, diverse tendencies are seen among consumers, proposing new digital habits and intensifying new digital behaviors, as follows: shock to loyalty across brands and channels, in-home alternatives adoption, and digital/omnichannel shift.

Especially, on consumer behavior they point out four important shifts, some of which with long-lasting impact: 1) shift to value and essential items, 2) fly to digital/omnichannel, 3) shock to loyalty, and 4) homebody economy.

In connection with this matter and in the previous work raised before, it is referenced that:

- CX becomes fundamental because consumers are demonstrating their preferences to firms that deliver great services, while reducing risks along their journey. Company focus should not only be on lives and livelihoods, but on new-channels/omnichannel-contactless engagement between companies and customers, rebuilding human experiences among stakeholders and loyalty with the brand. Mapping their journey becomes the starting point to understand their inconveniences and hassles.
- Up-to-date policies and processes are required, instilling agility to approach additional opportunities –apart from the core business- in a safety and healthy manner.

Maintaining brand values is pursued through enhancing management systems, sharing responsibilities for continuous improvement, redesigning customer journeys to digital/low-touch/contactless but human experiences, strengthening employee engagement with frequent communication, along with working across silos to deliver end-to-end customer/employee solutions/experiences.

Through new partnering ecosystems, it is called to shift to less risky operational models and processes/policies redesign, with team working, and collaboration among functions to improve/innovative the customer journey delivery.

- Move to a more human-centered service operation, reducing risks, and upgrading safety/healthy to help employee and CX in the next normal. In addition, the privacy imperative about sharing data must be followed as it becomes a point of differentiation and competitive advantage.

For organizations, huge challenges are ahead. De Smet et al. (2021) indicate that -to better organize in the post pandemic era- it is imperative to understand the following:

- The necessity to collectively explain *who we are* (working on purpose, culture and value added), *how we operate* (implementing flatten structures, decision making speed and talent treated as scarcer as capital), and *how we grow* (through an ecosystem perspective, data-rich tech platforms, and accelerating organizational learning).
- In their way to reenergize people and organizations, executives have the chance to reimagine the organizational identity, and other aspects related with growth and the manner that the firm works; their role is important and urgent. Before COVID-19, they were worried with organizational slowness, bureaucracy, complicated matrix structures and working in silos. Firms were organized for a disappearing, standardize and predictable world, although now competition is shaped by innovative-digital upstarts that propose new ways of winning, based on the following four trends: heightened connectivity, lower transaction costs, unprecedented automation, and shifting demographics/societal moves with more social impact.
- There are bad and good news. The bad one is that there is no time to loose and that the winner-takes-all in this context, as 95% of the profit is earned by top 20% of companies. The good one is that this pandemic offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for change, through discovering organizational “unlocks”, and building more flexible, organic, interconnected, anti-fragile, purposeful, and human systems.
- Old models cannot fit for purpose in today’s environment because their design is mechanistic, and are built to solve for uniformity, bureaucracy and control, goals that undercut creativity, speed and accountability. In consequence, it is not about modifying old models, but to reinvent something drastically better.
- It is concluded that organizations must move from copying to competing, with more flexible, integrated, resilient and human ecosystems, and with a new focus on experimenting, failing, learning, and growing.

The problematic that was exposed can be analyzed from two basic perspectives: the company and the consumer. It has its origin in the coronavirus pandemic, and in some

prior tendencies –no necessarily technological- that have been managed at a different pace than what was required by this crisis, as it is summarized in the following Table:

Perspective	Problem/Impact
Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Global impact –but differently- on industrial sectors and operations. ✓ Novel emerging trends, such as e-commerce. Other new trends: heightened connectivity, lower transaction costs, unprecedented automations, and demographics/societal shifting with more social impact. ✓ Threats to company growth: economy, industry-wide competition, disruptions, demand weakening, customer needs changes, and business-model disruptions. Other threads: slowness, bureaucracy, complicated matrix structures, and working in silos. ✓ Old model's design are mechanistic and are built to solve for uniformity, bureaucracy and control, goals that undercut creativity, speed and accountability. ✓ Up-to-date policies and processes are required, instilling agility and approaching additional opportunities. Develop new partnering ecosystems with less risky operational models to enhance/innovate on customer journey delivery. ✓ Supply chain and delivery methods must be reconsidered, moving to a more human-centered service operation. ✓ Better organize for the post pandemic era, replying: who we are, how we operate, and how we grow. ✓ Opportunities are found discovering organizational “unlocks”, and building more flexible, organic, interconnected, anti-fragile, purposeful and human systems. Also, by experimenting, failing, learning and growing.
Consumer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New consumer needs, requirements, behaviors and spending are observed. E-commerce has a boost and new channels were tried in the last year. The importance of the omnichannel experience. ✓ Discretionary items and engagement with out-of-home activities are showing sales increases. ✓ New digital habits/behaviors: shock to loyalty across brands and channels, in-home alternatives adoption, and digital/omnichannel shift. ✓ CX importance: firms that deliver great services and that reduce risks along their journey are preferred. Reimagine human experience through customer journey mapping, following the privacy imperative about sharing data.

Table 1 – Problematic

Source: Own (2021)

The hypothesis of this work asserts that, after COVID-19, there is a need to reimagine organizations and –specifically- the Marketing function for the next normal to improve organizational performance and results, while enhancing CX.

The basic question that guided this investigation refers to if Marketing and CX should have reconsideration for the next normal, while improving firm performance and results.

The objective of this research is to study and analyze current marketing principles, basically after the actual humanitarian and economic pandemic, proposing ideas for staying in business and succeed in the next normal.

It was utilized a qualitative methodology, with a descriptive-exploratory work, and a non-experimental design (within them, transversal, since the information was collected at a given moment of time).

The analysis unit refers to organizations, marketing, and consumers –especially, under COVID-19- and related matters.

This is a bibliographical investigation that considers important world-wide secondary sources; it does not include a field work.

Within the scope of this study, were found some limitations/clarifications that are detailed below:

- Although it is difficult to ascertain that all relevant information has been included, this investigation is connected to works -obtained from significant secondary sources- on business, marketing, consumers, COVID-19 and related matters, applicable to every organization, regardless of the particular sector in which it operates or size.
- The present study is complex and multidimensional due to its highly social content. As a result, what is proposed is shown with an open mind and in a professional discussion tone.
- The conclusion is supported on the elements that have been analyzed and that are part of the present work.
- Based on the understanding that this study has been qualitative, explorative and descriptive -with a non experimental design- it is not possible to generalize its findings, although it intends to contribute to the decision-making process regarding the studied topic.

It is remarked that the limitations/clarifications detailed above have not been an obstacle to reaching reasonable conclusions in relation to the objectives and hypothesis of the present study.

This research took place in the period Oct., 2020-Apr., 2021, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Finally, it is indicated that the hypothesis was corroborated and the objective verified.

1. Theoretical framework

In the following paragraphs are developed the theoretical basis of this study that include what a customer means today and the importance of CX for firm's performance and results improvement.

Then and going deeper into organizational aspects, is covered the huge opportunity for organizational change and how companies can be adapted to the new environment. In this sense, are proposed three main areas to work on: now, recovery and next normal, with a special emphasis on the plan for recovery and how is possible to capture more revenue rapidly.

Finally, are studied what characteristic constitutes the foundation for leading nowadays and the role that the Sales and Marketing Professional (SMP) should have.

These components are intended to help in reconsidering/shaping organizations in order to stay in tune and succeed in actual conditions, while proposing memorable CX.

Rethinking what a customer means through four customer experience practices

COVID-19 has changed the way that customers, employees, and the communities that are served are seen, influencing –among others- CX practices. Therefore, Diebner et al. (2020) say that care, creative thinking and new tools can help to respond to acute customer needs and forge stronger ties in the post-pandemic era, as coronavirus has overwhelmed lives and livelihoods around de globe in a short period of time, especially for vulnerable people. Especially, customers' interactions -with empathy, care and concern- can trigger an immediate and lingering effect on their sense of trust and loyalty, and boost an unforgettable CX.

Thereby, are proposed the following four CX practices, which can help for short-term responses, build resilience and prepare firms for success after this pandemic:

- 1) *Focus on care and connections*: Everything seems uncertain and overwhelming for people. Ergo, they need extra information, guidance, and support to face novel challenges, from keeping their families safe to helping their kids learn when schools are shut down. In this environment, company values and purpose become important, being preferred socially responsible brands with consumers, employees and the communities that are served.

On the consumer side are mentioned different CX examples that have an impact in the short term and can build positive relationships in the long range, such as payment reliefs and credit support (by Ford), marketing budget redeployment to the American Red Cross (by Budweiser), and one month interests' wave (by a credit card company).

Thinking about employees means to be extremely concern about each one and his/her family's safety. As different researches demonstrate that people are concerned about jobs or income, firms like Marriott transparently share statistics on their performance and outlook, the CEO announce a pay cut for him and the executive team, together with trying to build a sense of trust for the future. Other firms continue paying hourly workers at regular rates, despite store closures or even if they remain at home due to illness. For employees that are still on the job, are provided tools, training and support to deliver superior CX in this new context.

Lastly, caring for the community insinuates to extend beyond the actual customer base. Italian firms have donated hundreds of millions of dollars to local hospitals and the Civil Protection Agency to combat the virus, and other firms are manufacturing crucial supplies: luxury-goods companies are producing hand sanitizers, and remote conferencing services organizations have provided free videoconferencing in different schools.

- 2) *Meet your customers where they are today*: executives must act rapidly and innovate in their firm's delivery model to help consumers, as simple activities -like dinning out with friends and a trip to the grocery store- are difficult, risky or even prohibited. As

a consequence, in China it is registered an increase of 15-20% in online penetration, and in Italy e-commerce sales rose by 81% in a single week, creating important supply-chain bottlenecks. Digital-led experiences and low-touch points will continue to gain popularity after this pandemic, so it is necessary to:

- » *Accelerate digital options*, as digital delivery is a must for customers that are confined at home, and for the most digitally resistant ones. For example, different service sector's firms launched digital-value added services like education and advice, and the Chinese PingAn Bank increased their functionalities on their web page, boosting –in 15 days- their page views (8 million people) and transactions (12 million). Also, fitness companies are selecting digital services free or free trials to help existing customers and capture new audiences. The shift to digital and superior experiences is an opportunity for companies as many customers will stick to them after the crisis.
 - » *Bring your business to customer's homes*: as home delivery changed from a convenience to a necessity, in Italy –for instance- online grocery home-delivery doubled between February and March, 2020, and in China a premier food delivery service (Meituan) quadrupled delivery orders in early 2020. Also, quick-service restaurants, pharmacies and aggregator apps offer free delivery to capture demand.
 - » *Make physical operations touch-free*: physical channels are part of the customer journey, but contactless operations are taking their place. In numerous US industries, it is verified a preference for contactless operations. As an example, Walgreens has rolled out a drive-through shopping experience in which customers order products -like household goods, medical supplies and groceries-, the store associate assemble and check out the order, and the customer pick up the order in a drive-through window. Also, different shops add touchless measures -like plexiglass “sneeze guards” at every cash register- to protect employees and customers.
- 3) *Reimagine CX after the pandemic*: after COVID-19 are expected changes in consumer preferences and business models. As an example and in China, it is expected a 55% boost in consumers' online grocery shopping and a 3-6% increase in e-commerce penetration. Also, many consumers will try digital and remote experiences for the first time, and firms will deliver on emerging CX. To make this possible, it will be required to:
- » *Find savings without sacrificing experience*: although in downturns cutting costs is inevitable, it should not come at the expense of a good CX. Improving experience, satisfaction and efficiency at the same time relates to increase digital self-service and to make smarter operational trade-offs. In fact, digital services are less expensive and more effective than branch-and-phone-based approaches, although –for many customers- digital channels are unfamiliar and intimidating. As a result, it is necessary to adopt a customer-centric mindset –migrating them to digital channels-, simplify product portfolios and optimize service-level agreements to raise savings and satisfaction.
 - » *Reimagine your brick-and-mortar strategy*: digital, remote and low-touch options

will surely take -even in rural and older populations- more place of physical retail locations, which have fallen more than 35% in US. Companies will capture the lost volume through mobile, online and geospatial data to optimize networks and omnichannel sales, re-examining the role that physical stores and omnichannel -such as online, dark stores and pickup in store- will play. Existing stores may shift toward experience hubs, offering services and encouraging purchase across all channels, like Nike's store in NY Soho neighborhood in which customers are assisted by personal coaches, and try shoes in various simulate sporting environments -basketball, soccer and outlook track- to choose their preferred product.

4) *Build capabilities for a fast-changing context*: to create value for consumers and maintain a strong CX derives from a thorough understanding of their changing dynamics, new pain points, together with an agile innovation execution. That is the reason why it is needed to:

- » *Keep a real-time pulse on changing customer preferences*: as customer conditions change from hour to hour, traditional customer insights techniques -such as surveys, that have almost a month lag to read their results- are unskilled for actual market conditions. Therefore, consumer sentiment should come from quicker methods and in novel ways to develop new ideas. As an example, in Italy, Facebook had a 40-50% increase usage after the crisis, and a Chinese rental-car firm is closely monitoring social media to identify real-time trends.
- » *Listen to employees*: frontline employee's feedback can provide useful information on customers and how they are feeling in their daily interactions. For many organizations, CX is a top priority but -in contrast- many of these employees think that their ideas often go unheard, although tools and technology exist to collect and consider real-time ideas and feedback from them.
- » *Adopt agile innovation*: it is necessary to accelerate time-to-market for new CX and innovations, which often means better organizational results. Because of this, to build agility across functions -to handle changing consumer needs- becomes important to reap long-lasting benefits. Also, it is crucial to examine the innovation pipeline to set new priorities as needed. Finally and as it shouldn't be assumed that customers will automatically migrate to digital and remote platforms, internal capabilities should be raised to support the experience adoption.

It is pointed out that CX has taken a new dimension after COVID-19. Leaders must care and innovate, anticipating customer behaviors, habits and preferences to build stronger and last-long relationships with them.

As a conclusion of this topic, it is fundamental the way organizations deal with employees, customers and the community in this crisis, because lasting memories in peoples' minds constitute a basic pillar for the next normal.

A summary of what it was said in this section is shown in the following Tables:

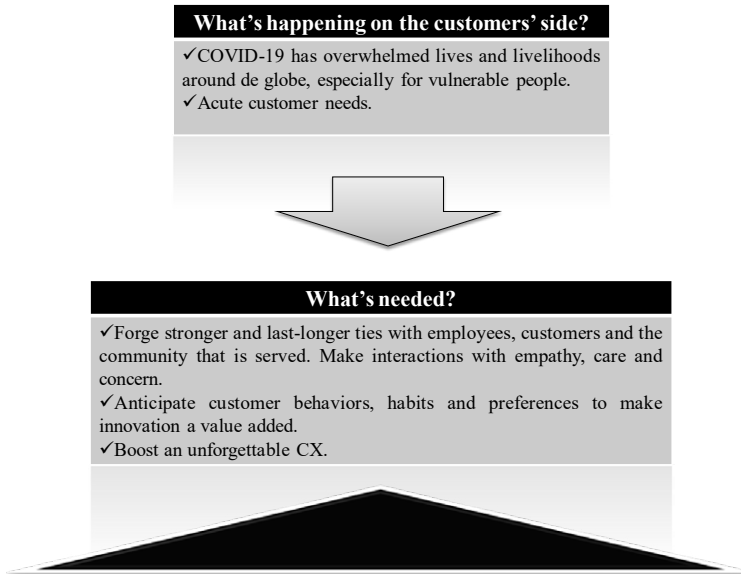


Table 2a – Rethinking what a customer means

Source: Own (2021)

The four practices	What's required?
1. Focus on care and connections.	<p><u>Executives should move to higher company values and purpose, and socially responsible perspectives with consumers, employees and the communities that are served</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Extra information, guidance and support.</i>
2. Meet your customers where they are today.	<p><u>Executives must act rapidly and innovate in their firm's delivery model to help consumers with e-commerce, online penetration, digital-led experiences, and low-touch points</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Accelerate digital options, ex.: digital delivery in value-added services and superior experiences.</i> ✓ <i>Bring your business to customer's home</i>, as home delivery changed from a convenience to a necessity. ✓ <i>Make physical operations touch-free</i>, as contactless operation is taking the place of physical channels, such as pick up windows and plexiglass "sneeze guards".
3. Reimagine CX after the pandemic.	<p><u>Are expected changes in consumer preferences and business models after COVID-19</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Find savings without sacrificing experience</i>: increase digital self-service and make smarter operational trade-offs, adopting a customer-centric mindset, simplifying the product portfolio, and optimizing service-level agreements to improve savings and satisfaction. ✓ <i>Reimagine your brick-and-mortar strategy</i>: physical operations are giving their place to digital, remote and low-touch options, and mobile, online and geospatial data are optimizing networks and omnichannel retail sales. There is a raise of experience hubs, like Nike's store in NY Soho neighborhood.
4. Build capabilities for a fast-changing context.	<p><u>Executives must understand the customers' changing dynamics and new pain points to create value and a strong CX</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Keep a real-time pulse on changing customer preferences</i>, not with traditional customer insight techniques, but with social media to develop novel ideas and identify real-time trends. ✓ <i>Listen to front line employees</i> for useful information. ✓ <i>Adopt agile innovation across functions</i>, handling changing consumer needs and accelerating time to market. Set up the right priorities, examining the innovation pipeline, and raise internal capabilities to assure experience adoption.

Table 2b – Rethinking what a customer means

Source: Own (2021)

An opportunity for organizational change

The actual environment can be seen in different manners, while pursuing diverse objectives. Choy et al. (2020) emphasize that executives require speeding up their organizations to serve consumers -as COVID-19 impacts with uncertainty and volatility-, and that it becomes an opportunity for change, gain new customer insights and demonstrate agility to adapt and grow. Also, it may be seen as a call to action on digitalization initiatives and supply chain improvements to better respond to emerging consumption trends across different markets. They add that:

- To succeed companies must be guided by their values and accelerate their way to market.
- People are more digitalized and using technology in ways never imagined before. In consequence, it is needed to speed up the digital use to engage with the market. As an example, it is cited that -in China, and with digital commerce and O2O (online-to-offline- people place an order in 30 seconds and get them in the pharmacy in 30 minutes. The acceleration of new capabilities' development constitutes one of the lessons from channel shifts that are verified.
- The needed capabilities and skills relate with data and technology, requiring to build them fast to construct end-to-end consumer-data-management platforms. In addition, becoming a more agile execution powerhouse -with a growth mindset- needs a big learning curve, too.
- It is imperative to increase the demand and inventory levels' visibility in real time, delivering products faster to customers. As a consequence, demand forecasting, supply chain, stocks and consumer demand come to be key issues for organizations. In fact, air-freight shipping may be seen now as a commitment to customers and consumers, not only as a cost increase and a matter of profitability. Company integrity and reputation come first.
- The mission of many companies express -in different ways- that they are to help people to do more, feel better and live longer. With this in mind, consumers and employees' obsession turn out to be top priorities, and -consequently- manufacturing plants and supply chains must operate -even on holidays- with adequate safety and health conditions.
- Especially in the pharma industry, it is verified an impact of new consumer insights, as they want to have more control over their health, wellness and preventative health. For instance, they are looking for supplements to boost their immune systems, being important to bring consumer knowledge and an end-to-end approach into product innovation.
- Future is worrying as there are many things that are not known -such as what will be the changes in consumer behavior-, how a firm can be consumer obsessed -understanding them more quickly and deeply-, and -also- if there is a manner to be faster and more agile.

- Firms must be globally conducted –with guiding principles, support and resources- and locally led, by a local GM and his/her team. As decisions must be made close to markets and consumers, people’ empowerment gets to be fundamental in companies’ decision tree. Moreover and as decision making must be localized, learning must be shared between different units/markets.
- Speaking about the Asian and the Western regions, it is referred that Asia is composed of many economies -at different stages of development- and local cultures, which is a benefit for consumer needs adaptation and agility. Australia, South Korea and Japan are more Western and developed, but China and India are emerging and fast-developing countries. Also, Western firms benefit from global insights and brand-building experience, although their disadvantage is that are less agile than Asian ones, as they are used to a global way of working. If Western firms want to compete on equal terms, it is required to balance global with local by empowering local leaders, and processes simplification becomes a must.
- Leaders must quickly identify priorities; consider opportunities and challenges; analyze how they shoulder their leadership responsibilities/accountabilities; together with how they connect with people and care on them. It is fundamental how they execute; engaging customers and using technology to improve touch points. Finally, leaders have to be agile, decisive, quick and focused on customer engagement.
- Specifically and during pandemic, resilience constitutes a key asset for executives and -as it is not a short battle- energy must be preserved. It’s necessary to be purposeful with meetings and who the participants are; informational meetings must be declined. Consequently, one-to-one and more closely connections are required.
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The following Table shows the most important concepts of this section:

What COVID-19 brings?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An opportunity for organizational change. ✓ Understanding of new customer insights and trends. ✓ Possibility to demonstrate agility to adapt and grow. ✓ Call to action on digitalization initiatives and supply chain improvements.
What's needed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Speed up organizations to serve consumers</i>, with a guidance to values. Company integrity and reputation comes before cost reductions. ✓ <i>Accelerate the use of digital capabilities and channel shifts</i> to engage with the market. ✓ <i>Build capabilities and skills fast</i>, constructing end-to-end consumer-data-management platforms, and becoming a more agile execution powerhouse. Induce to share learning through different units/markets. ✓ <i>Increase demand and inventory levels' visibility in real time</i>, delivering products more rapidly to customers. Key issues: demand forecasting, supply chain, stocks and consumer demand. ✓ <i>Make consumers and employees' obsession a top priority</i>; following safety and health conditions. ✓ <i>Bring consumer knowledge/insights and an end-to-end approach into product innovation</i> as –for instance, and in the pharma industry- consumers want to have more control over their health, wellness and preventative health. ✓ <i>Address unknown matters</i> (such as changes in consumer behavior, and how a firm can be more agile and consumer obsessed) that are worrying executives. ✓ <i>Guide firms globally and lead them locally</i>; so people's empowerment and local decision making become fundamental. ✓ <i>Distinguish regions</i>. For example, Asian and western regions propose diverse contexts for business. ✓ <i>Leaders have to be</i> decisive, quick, agile, resilient, purposeful and focused on customer engagement.

Table 3 – An opportunity for organizational change

Source: Own (2021)

Organizations must adapt to the new environment

As it was said before, consumer behavior is changing, obliging organizations to adapt to a novel context. In this sense, Arora et al. (2020) suggest that after lock-down and self isolation restrictions on pandemic are being removed, gradually, by governments, going to a next normal situation. New trends in consumer behavior –changing what they feel, say and do- and granular data monitoring become important for marketers in order to build long lasting relationships with them.

Consequently, the authors observe that COVID-19 is modifying consumer behavior in six different areas -some are an acceleration of existing trends and others are emerging now- and leaders must work on adapting their organizations quickly to this new domain. These areas are described in the following paragraphs:

- 1) *Expanding digital borders to improve the shopping experience*: many consumers tried digital for the first time and many others reduced physical contact to access to products/services, increasing their share of online shopping. Higher-income and Gen Z/millennials consumers are magnifying this trend. For example, social commerce on Instagram raised 34% based on an influencer recommendation.

From the customers' view point, this shift is likely to stick because e-commerce is more efficient, safer, convenient and less expensive for them in comparison with

shopping in physical stores, which will be reduced between 7-8% in different European countries like UK, Spain and Italy. Moreover, Amazon reported a 26% sales increase in 1Q/2020 compared with 1Q/2019.

Thence and for marketers, it is imperative to better connect with consumers, strengthening e-commerce and digital channels, and specifically focusing on the role of direct-to-consumer (D2C) e-commerce.

For rapid revenue recovery, speed-to-market becomes crucial. That's the reason why it is so important to build platforms quickly and understand how to use data, personalizing offers and messages to narrower customers' segments.

Analytics progress toward being a key ingredient for tracking consumer preferences and behaviors, and to enable precise responses to opportunities and threats. Subsequently, it should be quickly adapted to catch up with behavioral data of the next normal, creating a better shopping experience between digital and physical borders no matter the consumer might be.

Consumer shopper journeys should also be redefined for the ones that may be in a different state of mind. As an example, at home shoppers may have more time to think, browse and add to cart at different hours.

2) *Going to e-services through new service platforms*: in the past years, e-services adoption varied through different industrial sectors. Media, entertainment and banking are among the highest penetration and -thanks to COVID-19- consumers expect not only to buy, but to perform tasks and access to services as well. As a way of illustration, telemedicine visits increased in US twice comparing Q1 2020 with Q3 2019, and in UK 38% of telemedicine users have started using online services.

It is seen an increasing consumer confidence in the use of e-services, suggesting an opportunity to create new connections and, consequently, a potential surge in demand.

The focus should be on developing partner ecosystems for brands, interconnecting service platforms. To give examples, food, e-health and fitness marketers can cross-promote their benefits to more people, as well as a home-buyer platform may partner with real state, mortgage, bill-forwarding services and moving, for a single experience.

3) *Seeing home as a multifunctional hub or an activities' central command*: this crisis has made home a place to live, learn, shop, work, and play, experiencing new ways to do things -like working remotely- and new options of home entertainment. In Europe, for instance, it is verified an increase of 10% in new users of online streaming and a 13% in online gaming. In addition, Fortnite -the popular video game- hosted 12.3 million users in a recent concert.

If the at-home activity is physical (ex.: cooking became a family activity for many people) or digital, it shouldn't matter to marketers. Smart devices and good interfaces are needed at home to deliver adequate messages to every device they may have, simultaneously as they are using other devices and interacting in a way not to be seen an intrusive. As a consequence, the media mix should be rethought with a new

mindset to a larger set of channels; virtual reality, videoconferencing platforms and video games are new ways of home integration in the new required ecosystem.

- 4) *Localizing experiences in the community*: with a near-total travel shutdown and other constraints, local neighborhoods became much more important, connecting local volunteers and mutual-aid groups with community pages.

As a result, marketing localization –including messages tailored to different neighborhoods- may be a method to expand connections with consumers, and business as a whole. Redirecting operating models to hyper-local activities and engagement, together with building capabilities around personalization, should provide granular presence at scale. The challenge refers to differentiate from other brands, and understand consumer behaviors and concerns.

- 5) *Creating a space for health and affordability*: economic wellbeing and personal health became people’s top-of-mind concerns across the globe. Thence, foot traffic in stores, travel and events will return when people trust that spaces are virus free and safe. Stores are connected to cleaning and disinfecting, and with customers and employees wearing masks. Younger generations are adopting contactless activities, like curbside pickup and self-checkout.

In this regard, marketers need to think new shopping experiences, coordinating with other functions, such as Sales and Operations. Layouts and traditional store boundaries are also changing because of preferences for self-checkout and scan-and-go behaviors.

New store brands are challenging traditional brands showing that 20% of consumers have switched their predilections to store brands, while 50% intend to stick with their new choices. Value is replacing luxury as a desirable attribute in consumers’ choices, and trust also got to be a key purchase factor.

Marketers must maintain customer trust on data and privacy concerns as a point of differentiation and competitive advantage; privacy and sharing data concerns –from publicly taking temperatures to enter in stores to wearable devices that transmit health information- are growing around the worldwide population, and its use is far from uniform with sharp divisions over the idea of trading privacy for freedom of movement and the economy opening.

- 6) *Brands must step out to higher standards*: the current crisis is accelerating trends to socially conscious values. By a way of illustration, Australian households are more focused on doing the right things for the individuals and the society, with consumer’s activism. In fact, 61% said that brands must respond well during the pandemic to continue buying when the crisis is over. That is why marketers must communicate a stronger sense of brand’s purpose; so, the cause why it stands for and its real differentiation. Important factors to carry out this job are: a) partners and projects that are chosen, b) the way they treat their employees, and c) messages that are sent to customers. In conclusion, a new commitment and real actions on causes they believe in or newly risks on consumers and society should call the attention of marketers.

An outline of what it was said before is shown in the following Tables:

Area	What's happening?	How to approach it?
1. Expanding digital borders to improve the shopping experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Many consumers tried digital for the first time. ✓ Physical contact reduction to access products/services = increase the share of online shopping (higher income and Gen Z/millennials magnify this trend). ✓ E-commerce is more efficient, safer, less expensive and convenient than shopping in physical stores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marketers must better connect with consumers through e-commerce, digital channels, and D2C. ✓ Speed-to-market, building platforms. ✓ Personalize offers and messages through data and analytics. ✓ Redefine consumer shopper journeys <p>Objective: create a better shopping experience between digital and physical borders.</p>
2. Going to e-services through new service platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ E-service adoption varied through different industrial sectors, with the highest penetration in entertainment, media, banking and telemedicine. ✓ Increased consumer confidence in the use of e-services. Opportunity to create more connections and demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop partner ecosystems for brands, interconnecting service platforms.
3. Seeing home as a multifunctional hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Home became a place to live, learn, shop, work, and play. ✓ Online streaming and gaming increase. ✓ Various smart devices and good interfaces are needed at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Launch new channels integrate them at home in the new required ecosystem: videoconferencing platforms, video games and virtual reality, which are changing the media mix.

Table 4a – Organizations must adapt to the new environment

Source: Own (2021)

Area	What's happening?	How to approach it?
4. Localizing experiences in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Local neighborhoods became much more important after a near-total travel shutdown and other constraints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marketing localization to expand connections with consumers, and the business = hyper-local activities and engagement, and personalization. <p>Objective: provide granular presence at scale.</p>
5. Creating a space for health and affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ People's top-of-mind concerns across the globe: economic wellbeing and personal health. ✓ Returning to stores connects with cleaning, disinfecting, masks usage and contactless activities. ✓ Preferences switched to store brands and many intend to stick with their new choices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Think new shopping experiences with self-checkout and scan-and-go behaviors. ✓ Replace luxury with value and trust. ✓ Maintain customer trust on data and privacy.
6. Brands must step out to higher standards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trends acceleration to socially conscious values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communicate stronger sense of brand's purpose. ✓ Choose the right partners and projects. <p>Objective: New commitment and real actions with society.</p>

Table 4b – Organizations must adapt to the new environment

Source: Own (2021)

As a final proposal, the authors offer an up-to-date marketer's playbook -which must be rethought for the next normal, monitoring strictly these trends- that should include the following elements:

- Adapt the brand's vision and strategy to emerging trends and new customer demands.
- Know your customers and the segment level you compete, driving personalization and customer experience in an increasingly borderless environment (home, stores, local, global and services).
- Improve your analytic capabilities to identify opportunities and act on them rapidly.
- Articulate the C-suite with the rest of the functions to drive business real growth.
- Use the best channels to effectively reach and influence your consumers across their decision journey.
- Customize products, services and prices to new changing needs.
- Adapt your organizational and operating model to the next consumer step.

They conclude that it is impossible that things will go back to where they were, although nobody knows the exact limits of the next normal. Marketers should monitor trends and indicators, and commit to new changes in strategy and investments, building agility and flexibility in their organizations.

The three main areas to work on

As a complement of what it was said before and seeing what's happening from another perspective, Gregg et al. (2020a) admit that speed, agility and novel customer values are key factors in the next normal. The pandemic is affecting not only people's lives, but also families, communities and the global economy. Organizations must respond by focusing on protecting lives and livelihoods, as well as understanding the crisis impact on business and the best way to respond. As emerging opportunities constitute a crucial business factor for many more organizations all over the globe, it is recommended that the best leaders should work on three main areas:

- 1) *Navigate the now*, leading with purpose, taking care of customers and employees, and building up cash reserves. In more detail, Gregg et al. (2020b) insist that it is necessary to go through an uncharted territory, dealing with the crisis and the resulting economic downturn. For that, it is required to:
 - » *Lead brands with purpose in their communities*, including social-responsibility initiatives as people are frightened, unsure and facing economic difficulties. Examples: Starbucks providing front-line healthcare workers with free coffee, along with LNMH and Estée Lauder repurposing facilities to make had sanitizer.
 - » *Take care of employees and customers*, safeguarding their well-being and safety.

Domino has invested in contactless delivery, and Apple, Bank of America and Patagonia have committed to a no-layoff policy.

- » *Build up cash reserves*, through optimizing price management, marketing-spend, markdowns and inventories, as many sectors may have declines in demand for extended periods of time. Spending reallocations to programs that deliver rapid savings and revenues, besides targeted personalization and customer experience initiatives that improve customer loyalty are also crucial at this time. Another example is Tesla, relying on its virtual CX capabilities increased by 40% their sales in China, demonstrates that online-only can contribute to growth.
- 2) *Plan for recovery*, speeding up digital and analytic capabilities, and being ready to capture early demand. For that, Gregg et al. (2020b) say that forward-thinking leaders focus on capturing demand from the old playbook, although rethinking tools and capabilities to connect with customers. Specifically, they need to:
- » Accelerate digitalization and analytics, through a rapid shift to e-commerce and digital channels. Are required investments in digital tools and capabilities to upgrade analytic engines, including predictive analytics, virtual sales, pricing and promo, and sales effectiveness to personalize customers' offers, prioritize sales pipelines and improve sales activities. The remote-work and omnichannel environments should be rethought, too.
 - » Capture demand. Different markets, like South Korea and China, are showing an increase in demand in luxury fashion, and some items are demonstrating retailer's ability for an inventory reallocation between offline locations or between offline and online.
 - » It is fundamental to know better customer values and to be ready for demand tools and alternatives, such as mobile apps to order; unbundling products/services to tailor them to customer needs; restructuring payments and investing in value-selling capabilities that can help to win and remain relevant to customers.
 - » It is important to say that algorithms and advanced analytics always relay on past behaviors that won't be the same when the crisis ends. Thereby, they need to be retrained on new patterns and behaviors to get a better picture of developing demand.
 - » In addition and in volatile markets, market price tests become obsolete after some time. For that, pricing-sensitivity research and tests need to be run periodically to set up new price points.
 - » Also and after this crisis, customers are trying and sticking to new brands based on convenience, promotions and trial. The battle is on brand awareness, which became a fundamental determinant of purchase intent. As a consequence, brands should be revisited on what they are and what mean for customers.
- 3) *Lead in the next normal*, reimagining ecosystems and emphasizing virtualization. Gregg et al. (2020b) say that it is impossible to predict what the next normal will look like, although there are changes that show remarkable advances and new domains, such as AI to better predict the spread of COVID-19, innovation applied to find a cure,

and some important telemedicine advances. New capabilities, processes and ways of working are needed to be implemented in many more business realities, as follows:

- » *Rethink ecosystems*: Capabilities must be scaled and CX should be more integrated, for which it is required to develop connected ecosystems through trusted outsourcing and partnerships. Value chains re-engineering for flexibility, better inventory management and channel rebalancing become a must. Additionally, to build a resilient ecosystem that can minimize impacts on parts and products affected by new behaviors and business models.
- » *Virtualization*: virtual platforms are becoming more comfortable for customers; they can “try” cars or “visit” properties. They may connect virtual trials and virtual sales in connected homes with AI-enabled services, requiring fundamental business-system redesign.

The following Table proposes a digest of what it was said in this section:

Area	Objectives	How to approach them?
1. Navigate the now.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To lead with purpose, take care of customers and employees, and build up cash reserves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Lead brands with purpose in their communities</i>, including social-responsibility initiatives. ✓ <i>Take care of employees and customers</i>. Safeguard their well-being and safety. ✓ <i>Build up cash reserves</i>, through price management, markdowns and inventories optimization; programs spending reallocations; targeted personalization; CX initiatives.
2. Plan for recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To accelerate digital and analytic capabilities. ✓ To be ready to capture early demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Accelerate digitalization and analytics</i> through a rapid shift to e-commerce and digital channels. ✓ <i>Capture demand from different markets and products</i>. Reallocate inventories from offline locations, and from offline to online. Consider demand tools and alternatives. Algorithms and advanced analytics must be retrained after the crisis to capture the developing demand. Pricing-sensitivity research and tests need to be run periodically to set up new price points. Brands should be revisited on what they are and what they mean for customers.
3. Lead in the next normal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To reimagine ecosystems and emphasize virtualization. ✓ To implement new capabilities, processes and ways of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Rethink ecosystems for resilience</i>, connecting them with trusted outsourcing and partnerships. Reengineer value chains for flexibility, improve inventory management and channel rebalance. ✓ <i>Virtualization, as virtual platforms are becoming more comfortable for customers, are used in connected homes with AI-enabled services</i>. It is needed a business-system redesign.

Table 5 – The three main areas to work on

Source: Own (2021)

The plan for recovery to capture more revenue

In these paragraphs, the focus of the analysis will be on the recovery area and the acceleration needed to capture more revenue for a rapidly recovery plan. In this respect, Gregg et al. (2020a) assure that speed and agility are extremely important to surpass this

once-in-a-generation challenge and to understand the trades down that many consumers are doing buying less expensive products and/or changing the low and high end markets. Brand repositioning and digital channels are opening a new battle front for new and existing customers. In this environment, to capture revenue is not enough; it should happen quickly and at scale to reap significant rewards. It is presented a mental model, called SHAPE, which has the following five elements:

- 1) *Start-up mindset*, as there are uncertainties in actual markets it is required to research, test over analysis and make daily check-ins in teams. Additionally, it is needed a resilient spirit focused on embracing change, agile thinking, innovation, flexibility, change in customer needs and purpose, with the right attitude of questioning accepted patterns and cash obsession. As a case in point, there are cited organizations that rapidly allocate marketing budgets to launch an e-commerce business in a matter of weeks.
- 2) *Human at the core*, rethinking operating models and building it around on what people work best. It is important to invest in people and on supporting them through the crisis, and thinking ahead of talent needs. The next normal will require the latest set of skills and capabilities; for that, executives and HR will need to work closely on their development and retention.

Current remote sales models -that work more effective than the old ones- are applicable, enabling people to contribute and collaborate with a state-of-the-art set of technological skills and capabilities to meet changing consumer expectations.

- 3) *Accelerate digital, tech and analytics*, shifting quickly to enhance the digital CX with digital channels, and expediting advanced analytics with a better combination of new and innovative sources of data, like satellite imaging.

The new reality is an inflection point in the shift to digital, demanding a tech-based response. Better analytics –that provide a more objective and dynamic assessment in comparison with traditional methods- and digitalized processes should support an improved decision making environment that will help to understand customers at scale, drive business innovation and channel rollout.

- 4) *Purpose-driven customer playbook*. In uncertain times, the brand –as something known and authentic- may be seen as a tremendous asset. Hence, the brand should be revisited to understand for what it stands for and its customers' value proposition. It is required to put customers at the center of business and recalibrate how they make decisions in their decision journey, taking in consideration new approaches for customer segmentation. A purpose-driven customer decision journey –that create trust, confidence, loyalty and a memorable experience- should become the final objective of every company.
- 5) *Ecosystems to drive adaptability*. Supply chains and offline buying have adapted to survival together with accessing opportunities rapidly. Thereby and in the short term, adaptability may mean to work with partners and agencies, but in the long term it will require non-traditional collaborations, up-to-date models of co-opetition and new partnerships through strategic M&A.

The article concludes that nobody knows how the future will look like, but it is clear that we are in front of a generation-shaping moment with a new emerging world. The Sales and Marketing Professionals (SMP) role is crucial for determining if their businesses can succeed or not.

In the following Table it is shown a compendium of this section:


What is needed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓Speed, agility and scale. ✓To understand the trade down that many consumers are doing buying less expensive products and changing the low and high-end markets. ✓Brand repositioning and digital channels. ✓Stronger Sales and Marketing Professional (SMP) role.

How to approach it? – The SHAPE Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓<i>Start-up mindset</i>, based on research, testing over analysis and daily teams' check-ins. Resilient spirit. Embrace change, agile thinking, innovation, flexibility, change in customer needs, cash obsession and purpose, questioning accepted patterns. ✓<i>Human at the core</i>, rethinking operating models and building it around on what people work best. Think ahead of talent needs. Invest in latest set of skills and capabilities for development and retention. Current remote sales models enable people to contribute and collaborate in better ways. ✓<i>Accelerate digital, tech and analytics</i>, shifting quickly to enhance the digital CX with digital channels, advanced analytics and digitalized processes. It is demanded a tech-based response to improve decision making. ✓<i>Purpose-driven customer playbook</i>, revisiting the brand to understand for what it stands for and its customers' value proposition. Put the customer at the center and recalibrate how they make decisions in their decision journey. Conduct a purpose-driven customer decision journey. ✓<i>Ecosystems to drive adaptability</i>, implementing traditional and non traditional collaborations, up-to-date models of co-opetition and new partnerships through strategic M&A.

Table 6 – The plan for recovery

Source: Own (2021)

Rapid revenue recovery

Emphasizing the revenue recovery, Gregg et al. (2020a) propose three steps for a rapid process, although each firm's situation can require a different combination of them:

- 1) *Identify and prioritize*: your start up point and demand patterns must be understood to know what to do and when.

The authors identified a dozen of marketing and sales activities –connected with different areas- that can capture revenue, which may be more relevant for B2C or B2B organizations:

- » *Strategy*: brand repositioning, M&A moves, networked ecosystems and clean-sheet demand planning.

- » *Productivity*: marketing efficiency, sales productivity, inside sales and data-driven performance management.
- » *Digital channels*: scaled digital sales and services, e-commerce and digital marketing effectiveness.
- » *CX and insights*: CX and customer journey; personalization, loyalty and CRM; product value propositions; analytics-driven sales; and dynamic pricing and promotion optimization.

It is necessary to perform an assessment of the short and long-term EBIT impact of these measures and the firm's ability to execute them quickly, based on customer's granular views and possible economic scenarios.

Also, should be considered advanced analytic scenarios –taking into account multiple sources of data- to forecast growth opportunities at granular levels. This may help with resources reallocations and/or ratcheting back popular but underperforming programs.

Finally, clear targets for growth and profitability should be established and periodically reviewed.

- 2) *Act with urgency*: based on a prioritized activities map, executives should reallocate resources quickly to capture the biggest and readiest growth initiatives, including sales coverage models, product adaptation to specific customers or shift to high performing channels. To accomplish incredible things in short periods of time has become a key capability for firm's differentiation and value added propositions. As a result, agility, looking at customers in new ways, commitment to data-driven decisions and focus on a continually improved execution are some examples of what it is required nowadays.

As an example and as of Feb., 2020 when the COVID-19 surged, a leading rental car in China –with more than 5000 locations- had an order volume collapse of 95%. Studying consumers in more detail, they realized that many tech firms in southern China were telling their employees not to use public transportation, letting them to offer car rentals for five days –having a company reimbursement- and get two free, using the car on the weekend. In addition, first-time customers who cancelled orders were called in order to reassure them on safety steps, like “no-touch” contactless car pickup. Moreover and through geolocalization analytics, they identified customers that could need a car and their destination. Campaigns were launched in two to three days in opposition to the normal two to three weeks needed before the pandemic. Consequently, a new focus on customers allowed that -in a period of seven weeks- the firm recovered about 90% of the business -compared with 2019 level- through new value propositions, and assistance to customers in a critical time.

In this and other cases, the impetus for significant growth required a start-up mindset, new trade relationships, rapid spending reallocations, product mix shifting, use of digital channels and the shortest amount of time applied for implementation.

3) *Develop an agile operating model*: as speed up in decision making is necessary, agile teams must work on highly focused tasks and clear Key Performance Indicators (KPI), making their own decisions. Approvals and bureaucracy are part of the past when solving problems in the current context. Cross-functional teams -with key skills such as data analytics, sales operation and design- must work on different areas -from customer insights and strategic deals to digital marketing- and from more long-term views to short ones, all of them combined with experts in Legal, Finance, Risk and HR as needed. Scrum masters should oversee squads, allocating and coordinating resources for the highest value initiatives.

That is why agile operating models should be built around customers, supported by the right processes, governance and working practices. Future growth depends on what the firm does today to capture revenue quickly.

In the following Table, it is proposed a synopsis of this section:

Area	How to approach it?
1. Identify and prioritize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capture revenue, understanding your start up point and demand patterns to know what to do and when. ✓ Marketing and sales activities were identified on four areas: strategy, productivity, digital channels, and CX and insights. ✓ Assess the short and long-term EBIT impact of these measures and the firm's ability to execute them rapidly. ✓ Forecast growth opportunities at granular levels with advanced analytic scenarios, reallocating resources and/or ratcheting back popular but underperforming programs. ✓ Establish and periodically review targets for growth and profitability.
2. Act with urgency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reallocate resources quickly to capture the most interesting growth initiatives (ex.: sales coverage models, product adaptations or shift to high performing channels). ✓ Key capability: accomplish things in short periods of time for differentiation and value added propositions. Consequently, agility, looking at customers in new ways, commitment to data-driven decisions and focus on a continually improved execution are required. ✓ Other capabilities: impetus for significant growth, start-up mindset, new trade relationships, rapid spending reallocations, product mix shifting, use of digital channels and shortest execution time.
3. Develop an agile operating model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Speed up in decision making, working on highly focused tasks and clear KPI . ✓ Avoid approvals and bureaucracy. ✓ Implement cross-functional teams with Scrum Masters, collaborating with experts in different functional areas. ✓ Build agile operating models around customers, supported by the right processes, governance and working practices.

Table 7 – Rapid revenue recovery

Source: Own (2021)

The Sales and Marketing Professionals' (SMP) main characteristic and role

Gregg et al. (2020b) indicate that the SMP have an important role to play to drive organizations through the actual crisis and conduct them to success, and that empathy

has become the basis to lead after the individual and social devastation that is seen as an unprecedented global economic reality is impacting everybody's lives, from how they buy to how they communicate. Growth needs reconsideration after new behaviors and business perspectives are observed. Thus, SMP are put in the recovery front line, focusing on what matters most and executing multiple initiatives in the best manner. Leading with purpose and taking care of employees, customers and communities become a must in this environment, emphasizing on three areas: now, plan for recovery and lead to the next normal, as it was said before.

In this new reality, some factors must be taken into consideration:

- *Digital adoption*: online consumption and shopping is a new reality, with deep losses in the offline world. It is verified a move to digital in more than 50% of Chinese consumers, an uptick in first-time users and in established customers' usage in several categories (like entertainment streaming, restaurants, grocery delivery, online fitness and education, and e-sports). This change is also verified in B2B businesses, as four in five B2B sales are done through videoconference or phone, behaviors that are becoming permanent, especially in countries where online penetration is higher. For example, a 55% of Chinese consumers said that they prefer to shop online for groceries.
- *Consumers have important concerns about the economy*: Chinese and Indian consumers are more optimistic than their European counterparts in terms of what they expect from the economy in the near future, concerns that are reflected in a lowered expected spend level (through reducing or delaying it). Significant quick rebounds are not seen anywhere with higher expectations of decline.
- *Huge market uncertainty*: some sectors have performed well, nevertheless many have collapsed (ex.: travel, hospitality, oil, and retail), showing a cut back of discretionary spending of approximately 50%, which translates in a 10% reduction in GDP. In B2B, 50% of firms have cut their short-term spending due to the crisis and declining demand, and another 50% is expecting to reduce their long-term budgets as well. Yet, the outlook is not the same in every reality as -for instance- some B2B executives are optimistic for their companies in the near future. Hence, there are expected big shifts in the marketplace, from business closures to consolidations, and from novel business and partnership models to innovations that address emerging opportunities.

The authors suggest three lessons from downturns of the past 50 years:

- 1) *Build a resilient and lean firm* to manage the downturns and come out better than competition. The lean mindset should be extended to accelerated decision making and rapid execution.
- 2) *Optimize resources divesting slow- or no-growth assets*, looking for strategic investments and new market opportunities.
- 3) *Maintain a growth mindset to increase sales*. That is why investments in crucial

capabilities and a continued reallocation of resources to keep up with demand shifts become important for resilient companies.

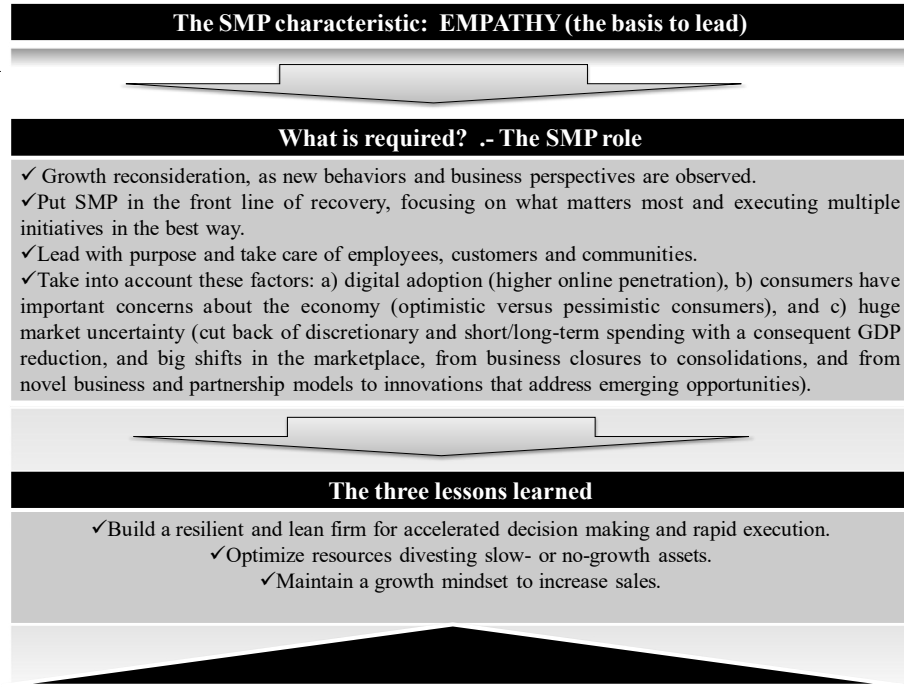


Table 8 – The SMP main characteristics/role

Source: Own (2021)

2. Conclusion

After the present global pandemic, customers, employees and communities are meaning different things for organizations as COVID-19 has submerged worldwide lives and livelihoods, especially for vulnerable people. New acute consumer needs are observed, which forge organizations to establish stronger and long-lasting empathic relations with their stakeholders, and anticipation of customer behaviors, habits and preferences are required to make innovation a value added, while boosting a memorable CX.

Executives are urged to act quickly and innovate in their business/delivery models to help consumers with the latest tech-oriented alternatives, such as e-commerce, digital-led experiences, low-touch points and higher online penetration. Additionally, to stay on the competitive ground and succeed creating value and a strong CX, it is crucial to develop a socially responsible perspective in connection with customers' changing dynamics, and resolve new pain points that arise. To achieve this objective, it is needed to focus on care and connections, meet customers where they are today, reimagine CX/journey after the pandemic, and build capabilities for a fast-changing context.

From the organizational stand point and through new understandings on customer insights and trends, it is verified an opportunity to implement change, agility, digitalization initiatives and supply chain improvements, calling for the following elements: a) speed up organizations to serve consumers; b) accelerate channel shifts and the use of digital skills/capabilities, building them fast and becoming a more agile execution powerhouse; c) increase demand and inventory level's visibility in real time; d) propose consumer and employee as a top obsession, and include consumer knowledge/insights into product innovation in an end-to-end approach; e) make more visible the unknown matters; and f) guide firms globally but lead them locally –with decisive, resilient, focused and purposeful leaders- while distinguishing differences among regions.

Ergo, organizations must adapt, considering: a) digital borders expansion to enhance the shopping experience, through connecting better with consumers and redefining the shopper's journey; speeding up time-to-market with platforms; and personalizing offers/messages with data and analytics, b) go to e-services via new and interconnected service platforms and developing a brand partner ecosystem, c) see home as a multifunctional hub, integrating novel channels and modifying the media mix, d) localize experiences in the community, providing a granular presence at scale, e) create a space for health and affordability, replacing luxury with value and trust, as well as maintaining data and privacy, and f) step out brand to higher standards, communicating with purpose, together with choosing the right partners and projects. The final ambition is to engage with a new commitment and real actions with society.

In consequence, there are three priority areas to work on: a) navigate the now, leading brands with purpose in their communities, taking care of customers and employees, and building up cash reserves, b) plan for recovery, accelerating digital and analytic capabilities, and being ready to capture early demand, and c) lead in the next normal, reimagining ecosystems for resilience, emphasizing virtualization with virtual platforms, and implementing new capabilities, processes and ways of working.

Specifically and on the plan for recovery to capture more revenue, there are different ingredients that are needed, such as: a) speed, agility and scale; b) consumers' trade down understanding; c) brand positioning and digital channels; and d) a decisive SMP role. The way to approach this challenge is to implement the SHAPE mental model that is proposed: Start-up mindset; Human at the core; Accelerate digital tech and analytics; Purpose-driven customer playbook; and Ecosystems to drive adaptability.

It is stated that a rapid revenue recovery is essential, for which three considerations are necessary: 1. identify and prioritize growth opportunities/projects at granular levels, establishing adequate targets; 2. act with urgency, reallocating resources rapidly and applying appropriate capabilities; and 3. develop an agile operating model around customers, speeding up decision making and implementing cross-functional teams.

SMP empathy becomes essential; their role turn to be a crucial element to accomplish this new business/marketing challenge. They should be placed in the recovery front line

with the intention of reconsidering growth; leading with purpose; and taking care of employees, customers and communities. An additional set of their responsibilities relate with digital adoption, new consumers' concerns about the economy and the huge market uncertainty that is faced.

Lastly, are proposed three lessons that were learned from past crisis: 1. build a resilient and lean firm for rapid execution; 2. optimize resources; and 3. maintain a growth mindset for sales increase.

3. Proposal

This work has the intention to help in reimagining Marketing in the period to come; a next normal will arise after the turbulent times we are going through. As a consequence, there were identified four big areas on which it is possible to work on and what to do, as is shown in the following Table:

Area	What to do?
Emerging trends & customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understand/monitor emerging trends, and know your customers and segments. Make employees/customers a top obsession forging better connections. ✓ Meet customers where they are today. See home as a multifunctional hub. Redefine consumer shopper journey/experience. ✓ Speed time-to-market with platforms and e-services. Develop partners' ecosystems. ✓ Personalize/customize products, services, prices and CX in an increasingly borderless context and with an end-to-end approach. Resolve new pain points that arise. ✓ Reach and influence across your consumer's decision journey through adequate channels. ✓ Improve supply chain, and increase demand and inventory level's visibility in real time.
Brand's vision, strategy & growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Guide firms globally, but lead them locally, distinguishing the differences among regions. ✓ Commit to new changes in strategy and investments. Dive into the unknown. ✓ Consider digitalization initiatives and adoption, new consumer concerns about the economy, and market uncertainty. ✓ Innovate and adapt business/operating models to the new requirements. ✓ Adapt brand's vision and strategy to emerging trends and customer demands. Step out brand to higher standards. ✓ Drive growth, bringing into line the C-Suite with the rest of the functions.
Organizational Capabilities (OC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Articulate the three studied realms: navigate the now, plan for rapid recovery, and lead in the next normal. ✓ The basic OC for a fast changing context and growth: Agility, flexibility, change, resilience, empathy, lead with purpose, analytic, act quickly, take care of stakeholders, and execution powerhouse, .
Social Responsibility (SR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a socially responsible perspective. Engage community with a new commitment and real actions. ✓ Localize experiences in the community, and choose the right partners/projects. ✓ Replace luxury with value and trust. ✓ Maintain data and privacy.

Table 9 – Proposal

Source: Own (2021)

The road map to the next humanitarian and business trajectory is still unwritten; the uncertain times that the world is going through are partially understood, and nobody

knows where it is moving, the ending point and right time of arrival. Probably, the final destiny should be acknowledged as a perpetual ongoing process.

The C-Suite and SMP should work concurrently and relentlessly on three fields: the now, the rapid recovery and the next normal. But, also, on never-seen fields -with undisclosed patterns and trends- building up visions and strategies that meet customers where they are today, and influencing the consumer journey with personalized/customized products, services, prices and CX. Home has become a multifunctional hub where consumers live, work and play, and must be reached with omnichannel experiences. More than ever, consumers should be anticipated in their needs/behaviors/requirements to succeed, with e-services and platforms, and state-of-the-art offerings.

Organizations are not what they were, but nobody can assure where they are going. New consumer concerns about the economy and market uncertainties are changing business/operating models and the whole organizational landscape. Diving into the unknown is making growth, strategy, innovation and investments arid grounds; digitalization deepens even more these processes.

Organizational capabilities changed, too; purpose, empathy, agility, analytic, care and execution bring about a top precedence in this environment. Executives should reimagine new development methods to turbocharge their firms with up-to-date competences and skills.

Finally, it is required to evolve to a socially responsible perspective with a new commitment and real actions on stakeholders, localizing experiences in the community, replacing luxury with value and trust, and maintaining data and privacy. Organizations must put their soul and heart on social needs and pains for a sustainable and livable world.

This unprecedented, borderless and undisclosed worldwide environment only offers excitation, doubts and untold results. Nevertheless, executives must transit this time with a non-experience-accepted road map, while reimaging their organizations and Marketing in spite of the foggy path that they have ahead.

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