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ENGAGING MARKETING MINDS

JULY/AUGUST 2020



REIGNITION

FUELING SUCCESS IN THE NEW LANDSCAPE



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OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

Fear is a constant presence for all of us these days. And when great disruption occurs, we can react in ways that hurt our business and not take advantage of growth opportunities. But if we can learn to control the emotion within us, we can be prepared to deal with any challenge in life.

While the future seems confusing, we must remember that ingenuity is rooted with uncertainty. So if we can think clearly in these difficult times, we can improve ourselves and our businesses in ways we could never imagine. In other words, this is a time for inspiration and creativity.

During any crisis, much of what we counted on—a robust economy, buying patterns or tradition operating processes—may disappear forever. And in many instances, it rocks people's worlds to the point that they never get over it. They dwell on what they have lost and hope they can return to what they have always known. They become paralyzed with worry and are unable to adjust.

When disruption of any sort occurs, possibilities abound. We simply need to let go of the past and center our attention on seeking out new opportunities and finding new versions of ourselves and our businesses. We must truly open our minds to the idea that there are lots of opportunities and immediately begin the search for them.

Let us not waste this crisis. Much of the way business was conducted may change, but connecting with clients and building trust will never go out of fashion. This is the time to put the pedal down and communicate in authentic and sincere ways. It is a time to lean on others to help you listen and search for those opportunities. The difficulties can defeat you if you let them, or they can reveal new strengths and partnerships you did not know you possessed.

As we all try to regain our composure, we must look to each other for inspiration. A great start is our cover story, "Reignition," which discusses how to keep the spark alive during the pandemic and how to hit the ground running when it dissipates. In our second feature, "The New Tools of Engagement," we detail some of the critical vehicles that will allow you to engage and discover in the new landscape.

We hope these articles, along with our other insights, provide a little help in finding the new and improved version of your business.

Wishing you health and happiness,



Gina M. Danner, CEO



**Find what works
for your brand**

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deliver what your
customers want**

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Publisher

Gina M. Danner

Graphic Designer

Beau Gailey

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REIGNITION

FUELING SUCCESS IN THE NEW LANDSCAPE

BY MICHAEL J. PALLERINO

THEIR RISE WAS SUDDEN, if not unprecedented. In just two years, Mark and Emily Stallings had grown the sales of their tech accessories startup to \$14 million. Creating an intoxicating buzz via an Instagram account they activated three months before launching their products, the millennial-sibling duo amassed a fanatical following of 200,000 micro-influencers to hype their product. Their timing was spot on. As an e-subscription phone case service, Casely offers fashion-forward accessories for today's new generation of style-istas. Consumers can buy one, or subscribe and continually refresh their cases to keep pace with ever-evolving fashion turns.

Relocating their business from Cary, North Carolina to Brooklyn, New York, the Stallings became the darlings of today's jet-setting entrepreneurial set.

And then it happened. In the throes of increasing growth, COVID-19 stepped in. With a worldwide crisis that does not come with a playbook to navigate the downturns, Mark and Emily drastically changed Casely's business plan. The new strategy places an emphasis on giving and drawing back on sales' outreach. Casely's charitable work includes a partnership with Ivory Ella, an online for-profit clothing store affiliated with the wildlife conservation group Save the Elephants. For their part, Casely is donating 100% of its net proceeds to Project Sunshine, an organization that supports isolated pediatric patients and the #SpreadHope campaign.

The partnership is the first time Casely offered a product where 100% of the net proceeds are donated to charity. It also sets up a new post-pandemic strategy, one its founders believe will only help raise its stature among its millennial following. "Moving forward, I think a big thing we'll see is

"IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT FOR BRANDS TO FIND THEIR NICHE AS TO WHAT THEY WANT TO GET BEHIND AND SUPPORT. I BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A COLLECTIVE GROWTH IN BRANDS' DESIRE TO GIVE BACK."

— MARK CASELY,
FOUNDER & CEO, CASELY

“I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR BRANDS TO EMPHASIZE THE PIVOTING OF THEIR MESSAGING AND OFFERS, AND BE SENSITIVE TO YOUR CLIENTS AND THEIR CLIENTS.”

— ANNE MARSDEN,
FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL, MARSDEN MARKETING

organizations with similar values align more to promote a cause or give to a charity. Finding brands that have a shared mindset will be a big part of our branding strategy following the pandemic.”

Casely is not tackling its new strategy alone. The company also is giving work to artists, designers and creative freelancers who have been impacted by COVID-19. Casely is accepting phone case design submissions, where the winners get paid

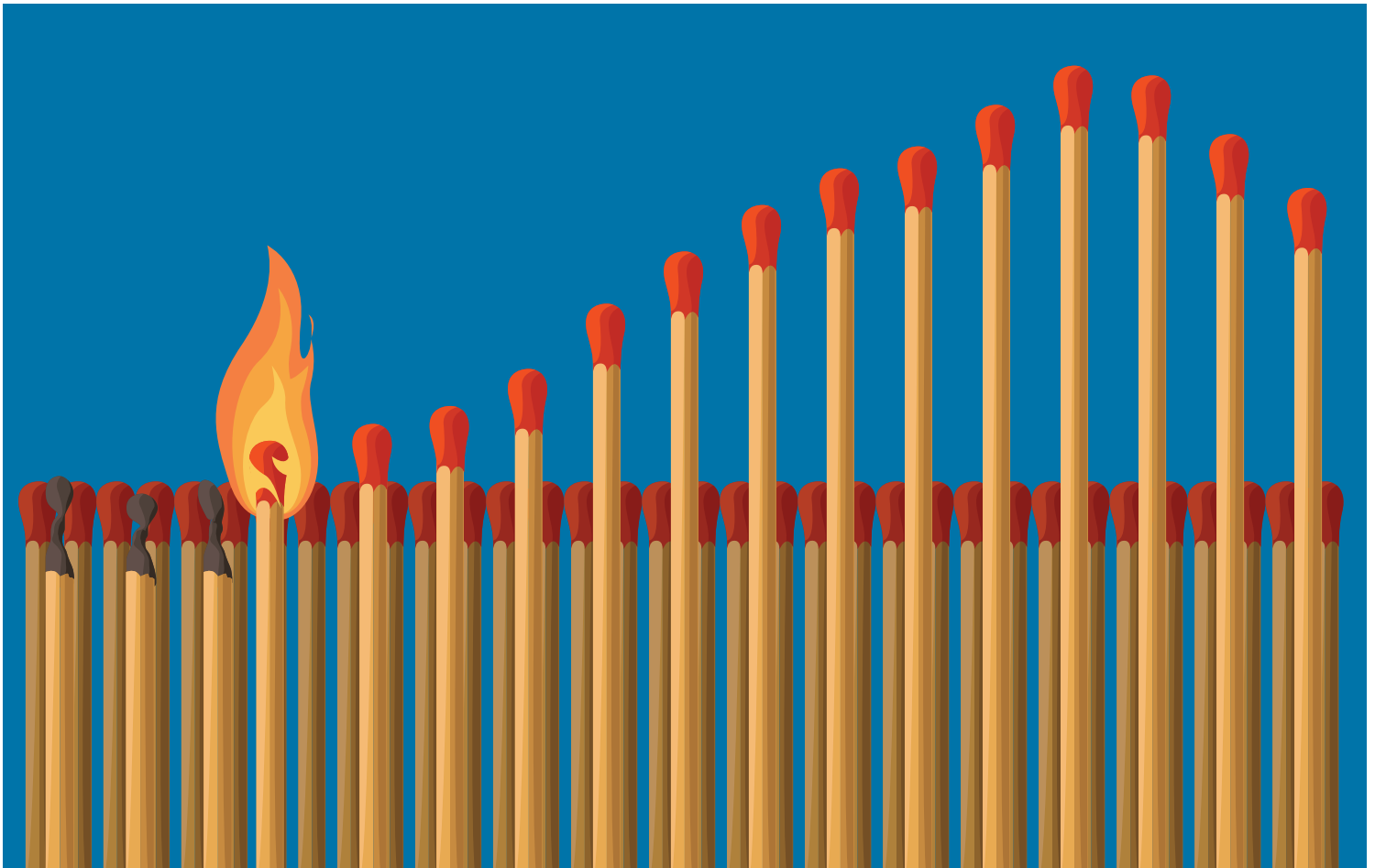
to design upcoming cases. In addition, Casely is continuing its #EveryCaseCounts campaign, in which it donates a portion of its proceeds to a new charity each month.

“It will be very important for brands to find their niche as to what they want to get behind and support,” Mark says. “I believe there has been a collective growth in brands’ desire to give back. While one company may donate to increasing school supplies, another may donate to renovating

soccer fields. Companies will have to determine what makes the most sense for their business and how they can most effectively do good.”

Casely’s reignited mission statement involves tweaking the very strategy that every brand should have been building its foundation on pre-pandemic—community building. Connecting with your audience and building loyalty with customers is what every brand should be focused on. In the months since the pandemic, Casely continues to be innovative, launching a series of Instagram Live videos, ranging from yoga classes to a hand lettering tutorial, and a TikTok company account.

“We’re listening to the feedback from our audience to see if they’re interested in the new things we’re trying out,” Emily says. “We’ve seen our business grow while so many are quarantined and online. We feel taking the risk to explore new platforms and use platforms differently will pay off in the coming months and years.”



FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR BRAND

Every brand, in every industry, everywhere around the world, is facing game changing circumstances. Even so, Anne Marsden wants you to remember this: The marketing landscape—business, social, economic—is too varied to have a single answer for its evolution. The answer lies in your adaptability, a trait she says is one of the great business superpowers.

“I think it is important for brands to emphasize the pivoting of their messaging and offers, and be sensitive to your clients and their clients,” says Marsden, founder and principal of Marsden Marketing, an award-winning B2B marketing agency that offers demand generation, strategy, digital marketing and PR to clients around the world.

The steps that can help you find some balance in these shifting times can be the same ones that you can carry through to the other side. Marsden says that in the commitment to take care of yourself and your brand today, it is equally as important to be respectful to the plight of others, i.e., donate and help wherever you can.

“Be resourceful and creative,” Marsden says. “New opportunities sprout from these crazy times, so you never want to give up. Helping others gives you strength. Sure, it all sound like platitudes, but there’s a reason they’re spoken—they help.”

Marsden offers the following tips for reigniting your playbook moving forward:

- ◆ Rethink your target buyers — Who really can use you, and who cannot? Be realistic, be honest, and be caring.
- ◆ Shift your sales messaging to focus on the first group — Create funding support for the second group.
- ◆ Make it easy for your clients to buy online — Quoting, order submission, proofing, etc.
- ◆ Get adept at home address sourcing for target prospects — This is data that will help your brand in the time ahead.
- ◆ Identify new business opportunities among the chaos — See above: How to better source home addresses since people are working from home now.
- ◆ Shift your messaging to helping instead of selling — The profitable approach is what people will remember.
- ◆ Encourage rather than spread fear — The sky is falling is not a bullet point for a post-pandemic revival.

As brands that are refocusing and reigniting their playbooks will attest, it is important to work harder now because many companies are able to hit a “reset button” during these times. The effort ties directly into the strategy that is on the mind of every brand today—preparation.

“Connecting and building loyalty with your audience, specifically by exploring platforms and trying new things, and listening to the feedback you receive is always critical,” Mark Casely says. “I expect companies to spend less on influencer marketing, as it can be difficult at times to see if each investment is worth it. This is a key reason we are working so hard now. We have been fortunate during this time to not see a decline in our sales, and we are focused on spending our marketing budget wisely to increase market share in the near future.”

While fear and uncertainty are the same emotion, a brand’s resources to cope and connect, and collectively share its experiences is greater than at any time before. Finding a path to the future you want to build is something every brand can find strength in.







THE NEW TOOLS OF ENGAGEMENT

A LOOK AT
WHAT WORKS
AND WHY
BY RAY GLIER

IT IS NOT JUST MARKETING. It is engagement economy. There is a shrinking gap between companies and their customers because the tools of engagement have evolved to make it a tighter connection. No wonder the sales funnel has skipped right over the sales department. Customers know what they want before they pick up the phone or slide

the mouse over the buy icon because engagement allows more research on companies.

Conversely, sellers can do their own research and precisely target a demographic, then re-target that demographic with different engagements.

So what are the new tools of engagement? Here is what the experts say.

SAMIR MULLICK

PRESIDENT, CLOUDTRACK

CONTENT

Content could be text, videos, social media posts. There are so many different types. The content of the content can be educational. The end purpose

is to drive eyeballs, and ultimately drive revenue and sales for an organization. The different types of content help capture attention. Next, you capture trust.

WHY IT WORKS: If you are interested in Oracle Technology, for example, and

you see an article about Oracle Technology Solutions, you will read it. If you see a content distributor constantly pumping out valuable pieces of content on that subject, you are going to subscribe and bookmark their website. You might even like their Facebook page. That's

just one person. Now think about scalability. That is why content works. It is building an audience and then constantly engaging with that audience.

EXAMPLES: Blogs, custom content (publications, newsletters) social media posts, white papers and case studies

VIDEO

Video is content that can be put out on many platforms—website, social media sites, YouTube, Reddit, etc. It is an effective way to get your (organic) message distributed on different platforms. Fifteen years ago, brands did not have the power they have today because of video. You could have your own channel in an hour—one that could attract a select number of views or create a small audience.

WHY IT WORKS: Regardless of the technology, people are people. There are very few substitutes for face-to-face marketing. Video puts you “almost there.” You can connect one on one. You can create YouTube stars via vlogging. People relate to the medium. They can put a face to the name. It is powerful because people are visual.

EXAMPLES: One of the most effective things about video is that you can create free educational content. You can pump out genuine value to an audience about your product or service.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

AI is a mass capturing of data, big data and an analysis of that data of which you can systematically automate certain tasks and decisions based off what you find. Your end goal is to build your brand, and then develop leads and sales.

WHY IT WORKS: Take Facebook, which, whether or not we agree, collects tons of data on users with AI. Even if the user is not active, it can still capture data. Imagine an Excel spreadsheet with your name and different attributes. There are rows of



names, ages, genders, favorite sports teams, etc. Thousands of attributes. The data is collected via AI. As you browse the internet, everything you do is tracked, collected and added to your file. Facebook leverages that data.

EXAMPLES: Say you run a nursing home. You can use AI-only advertisements to recently retired people in selected zip codes. Facebook can post ads specifically to that demographic and collect data. Technology like Salesforce Einstein will inform you of the right time to call or email the lead by collecting and providing key data.

DR. PIYUSH KUMAR

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
MARKETING, TERRY COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

VARIABLE DATA PRINTING/PRINT

Variable Printing uses digital technology to print marketing material in small batches with a high degree of personalization.

WHY IT WORKS: While the idea has been around for more than two decades, the widespread availability of low cost digital printing technology has dramatically increased its usage. In some ways, variable printing has become the simplest way to execute personalized marketing.

EXAMPLES: Marketers use this technology to send mailers and

promotional material to current and potential customers, addressing them by name and sharing personalized content. They are also combining this technology with customer databases to offer variable rewards or discounts, alter the visuals according to customer profiles, and change the language in their communications.



TRADITIONALLY,
MARKETERS HAVE
USED QR CODES
TO VALIDATE
CUSTOMER
CREDENTIALS AND
REPLACE NON-
DIGITAL PRODUCTS
SUCH AS PHYSICAL
TICKETS AND
BOARDING PASSES.



AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)/QUICK RESPONSE (QR) CODES

These are matrix barcodes—a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached.

WHY IT WORKS: QR Codes are a simple way to leverage the widespread use of mobile devices, cameras and scanners to deliver personalized experiences to customers and improve conversion rates.

EXAMPLES: Traditionally, marketers have used QR Codes to validate customer credentials and replace non-digital products such as physical tickets and boarding passes. More recently, marketers have found other creative uses for these codes. For example, QR Codes are being used in point-of-sale displays that enable customers to access dedicated web pages on the spot.

SHIVINA KUMAR

SENIOR BRAND MANAGER, WIX ANSWERS

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Experiential marketing enables brands to create enhanced and engaging experiences for target consumers. The idea is to create memorable and

personalized campaigns that leave a lasting impact on the audience.

WHY IT WORKS: Experiential marketing allows businesses to bring their mission to life and create an in-person connection that facilitates lasting relationships and drives brand awareness. It is consistently cited as one of the most strategic ways to drive significant ROI.

EXAMPLES: Campaigns range from targeted field events, brand activations, theme-specific installations, and more. Recently, businesses are investing more dollars into experiential marketing as data proves it enables marketers to break through the digital clutter and more effectively capture target markets.

NOELLE ABARELLI

CONTENT STRATEGIST, SOLEADO MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media advertising (pick one) is very strong at targeting, i.e., getting your ad in front of your desired audience. You can see a product in your feed, add it to your cart, and check out without leaving an app. It is dead easy and somewhat addicting.

WHY IT WORKS: Nearly half of the world's population is active on a

social media platform, so it offers a fast, inexpensive and effective way to reach an enormous population.

EXAMPLES: Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and more. Users can follow brands they love on different platforms and keep up to date with new products, services, etc.

EMAIL/WEBSITE MARKETING/SEO

SEO is all about positioning yourself to be found in searches. To do this, you must identify the keywords people use to search for products and services, and optimize the use of those terms on your website.

WHY IT WORKS: SEO is an ideal way to ensure a site is shown in search engine results. When done correctly, an SEO campaign will put a site in front of the right people and increase traffic from search engines. This is done by pushing the brand higher in search engine rankings and increasing the site's visibility.

EXAMPLES: There are tons of tips and tricks to consider, including using keywords in specific parts of a page or post, optimizing meta descriptions, optimizing images with alt text, using URL structures that include the keywords, etc.

EVENT MARKETING

Trade shows, user conferences or events held by businesses provide opportunities to unveil new products, fortify brand loyalty and show customers a brand cares.

WHY IT WORKS: Events offer a great alternative to digital marketing. It is nice to meet face to face with prospects and customers. People also are hosting events online via webinars, Facebook Live, etc. Social media platforms also make advertising online events doable.

EXAMPLES: Event roadshows. Experiential activation. Startup networking events. Publisher conferences. Virtual events. Seminars. Company meetings. Trade shows. Industry roundtables and award ceremonies. Fundraising galas and product launches.

TACTICS

CONTENT CREATION 3.0

WHERE YOUR CONTENT SHOULD FALL IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY FUNNEL

Brand awareness. Thought leadership expertise. Building connections. Pick a reason, any reason, and having a strong content marketing strategy can help. The key is knowing how to utilize the content throughout your customer's journey. According to the Content Marketing Institute's "B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets & Trends 2020" report, 90% of top-performing B2B content marketers put their audience's informational needs first, as opposed to simply broadcasting the message they would like to communicate. Here is a look at the percentage of total content they create for content marketing purposes:

50%

Top of the funnel

Generating awareness/interest

22%

Mid funnel

Consideration/intent

14%

Late stage

Evaluation/purchase

11%

Loyalty/brand advocacy

Post sale

3%

Other areas



LOADING...



WALK THIS WAY

3 WAYS DATA CAN DELIVER WHAT YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT

Consumers are fickle. They are unpredictable. They confound us in ways that are hard to fathom. So, when they stop buying on price and look for the holistic experience your brand delivers, what is your next move? It is not more messaging. According to Social Media Link (www.socialmedialink.com), you have options. Here are three ways you can use data to deliver the brand experience your consumers want:

1. FOSTER PERSONALIZED ENGAGEMENT

Good marketing starts with

understanding your customer. They see 5,000-plus brand messages a day, so you need a new plan. To make an emotional connection, ask your customers what they care about, then use the data to create messages that align with their values, lifestyle and behavioral preferences.

2. DELIVER TAILORED PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

Marketing is not only about delivering the right message, but the right product, too. Take the time to learn about your customers up front (their pain points) and you can design a

product experience that aligns with what they need.

3. OPTIMIZE THE OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Write this down: Brands with omnichannel strategies see a 23 times higher rate of customer satisfaction than those that do not. Without consistent messaging across channels, your consumers will have disjointed brand experiences. Customer data can help bridge the gap between touch points by understanding what consumers want from each individual experience.

YOUR 5-STEP PLAN TO CREATING A WINNING BRAND PLAYBOOK

In today's ever-evolving media landscape, making an emotional engagement with consumers takes work. But with a little effort, you can do it. Google's chief evangelist of brand marketing, Gopi Kallayil, offers these tips for getting on their radar:

NO. 1 REDUCE CONSUMER FRICTION USING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY

Look no further than how mobile devices created the Uber and Lyft universe. By finding your advantage with the latest technologies, you can win consumer favor.

NO. 2 PARTNER WITH NEOFLUENCERS

A traditional way to build a brand was through celebrity endorsements. But the new influencers (neofluencers) hold unprecedented power and reach. Think

YouTube and social stars, for example.

NO. 3 RESPECT THE MODERN CONSUMER'S POWER OF CHOICE

The old-fashioned model of brand building was to shout about your brand wherever the largest gathering of humans took place. To succeed today, you must respect new consumer choices and play by their rules.

NO. 4 USE A MODERN MEASURING TAPE

The variety of data points available

today to marketers (likes, view-through rates, comments, etc.) do not always tell the full story. Instead, seek a single overarching business metric tied to your brand goals that can extend across every touch point and the consumer's journey.

NO. 5 BE CONSISTENT ACROSS ALL TOUCHPOINTS (BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN)

Today, your brand is shaped by every digital surface it shows up on, every way it behaves and everything said about it. To succeed, you must show up consistently across all the touchpoints that the consumer may access to explore or experience the brand.



A Thousand Words

STUDY SHOWS VISUALS LEAD MARKETING STRATEGY

INFOGRAPHICS. SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS. STOCK PHOTOS. The digital age brought an increased use in photos and images in all types of marketing. Visual content is essential to any marketing strategy because it communicates quickly and effectively. According to a study by Vengage, marketers saw a 10.5% increase in visual content usage between 2018 and 2019. Nearly 200 content marketers were surveyed and expected that number to grow throughout 2020. Let's take a look at how frequently they are publishing that content that contains visuals each week:

36% ▶ Less than 3 times a week

39% ▶ 2 to 5 times a week

17% ▶ 5 to 10 times a week

6% ▶ More than 10 times a week

QA

ON THE RECORD WITH **ASHLEY PRISANT**

LEADERSHIP COACH SHARES THOUGHTS
ON LEADING AFTER THE CRISIS



What opportunities do you see emerging in the post-corona landscape?

They say that necessity is the mother of invention. So, I think one of the biggest opportunities will be innovation in general. As an example, I went to pick up something from Best Buy the other day and they had created a slalom course through products in order to minimize touching and still get that product to you. I truly believe this is a time to get out of the box.

How do we ignite the kind of mindset that is “out of the box?”

You need to have something new if you want to get ahead. My pivot plan is to look at what you had before and then turn it on its side. Then you need to find your brightest people and elevate them. Because the problem is that very rarely do you ever see the best and brightest in the senior positions. You need to find those idea makers, and tap into them to generate innovative thinking. There is a tremendous opportunity for leadership right now.

Leadership isn’t about believing you are the smartest person in the room, is it?

No. The best leaders are the ones that shut up and surround themselves with smarter people. It can be difficult but the best leaders are the ones that allow the other people to make decisions or have the conversation and step in when needed. There's a great article that I have my students read called “MacGregor” that details extreme leadership where he works only a few hours a week and he delegates to all of his people. I think a very good leader doesn't have to work hard because their team does all the elements right now.

What are the key attributes of leadership?

Accountability and communication are both critical. It's easy to lead when you know where you will go. In times like this,

From Naval Officer to corporate office to teaching college courses, Ashley Prisant has seen and done it all. She spent five years creating and managing Amazon's rapid-fire growth in operations and finance and has been running her own consulting firm, Square Peg Solutions, focused on business and leadership optimization since 2015. Her book, “Go Beyond the Job Description” can be found on Amazon, and she has particular expertise in rapidly increasing productivity, helping teams deliver results in a shorter amount of time with limited resources, and optimizing their leader's skills to maximize engagement and the bottom line at the same time. Prisant, Ph.D, MBA, currently teaches Business, HR and Organization Behavior courses at Harvard Extension and Queens University. We sat down with her to get her insights on what leadership looks like after the crisis.

you never know where you want to go, let alone what lies ahead. Therefore, when you're leading a team, they need to know as

THERE IS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP RIGHT NOW.



much as you can tell them, at least where you think you're going. And you need to be honest with them because, borrowing Jim Collin's phrase in “Good to Great,” you have to keep the good people on the bus. It doesn't matter what seat they're on. So get those people that are okay being uncomfortable and let them understand the pain points. Don't be afraid to tell them and say, look, we're looking for help.

And while communication is important, you must hold people accountable for whatever they say they're going to do. You can get creative and innovative all you want, but the customer has to get their product or else you don't get paid. And if your team doesn't do what they say they're going to do, then you need to hold them accountable. You can recognize they made a really good effort and say that you are proud of them, but if we just lost a million-dollar contract they must be held accountable.

Any parting advice?

Some advice I received at boot camp many years ago was to change 10%. Focus on the areas that you have the ability to influence and let go of the rest. Focus on what you can control and let that motivation be your guide.

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