

BUSINESS IN A DANGEROUS TIME

The first issue of MBR was published earlier this year at the peak of the COVID crisis. This second issue is being released as we enter what we devoutly hope is the beginning of the end of the crisis (and not, as Churchill famously quipped, the “end of the beginning”). Launching a new publication during a global pandemic would certainly not have been our first choice. But Churchill is also credited with saying “never let a good crisis go to waste,” and we strive to follow that advice.

Because we knew that lockdowns and work from home policies would limit word-of-mouth communication, we doubled down on email and social media distribution. The huge number of enthusiastic responses we have received seems to indicate that the first issue was well and widely received. We offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone who took the time to send us encouraging, constructive, and thought-provoking feedback.

Understanding the financial pressures the crisis has imposed on both organizations and individuals, we have decided to distribute all four issues of the first volume free of charge. You are free to share these issues with anyone and everyone who you think might be interested, and we heartily encourage you to do so. The more readers we attract, the more topflight articles we will be able to publish, and the more useful MBR will be to all of us.

Most importantly, though, the COVID crisis has cast into sharp relief the reasons for which we launched MBR in the first place. As Rebecca Henderson noted in the first issue “The COVID-19 pandemic has given us a profound opportunity to rethink our society and our institutions.” In her article, Henderson pondered the opportunities for competitive business to address the grand social and environmental challenges which humanity faces. COVID has made rethinking the very character of capitalism more plausible and more pressing.

The pandemic has also made us all painfully aware of just how much our lives depend on the successful execution of basic business practices. Product shortages

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ranging from critical drugs to mundane paper supplies have made us intensely aware of our total reliance on global supply chains for our health, safety, and well-being. Labor shortages and record rates of resignation have forced managers to reconsider the very essence of their workplace cultures as well as the details of their employee contracts. What, only a short time ago, were considered the esoteric minutia of business, now inspire front-page news stories and letters to politi-

cians. The new normal may be very different from the old normal, but perhaps that is a good thing.

MBR was founded as a platform from which to probe, discuss, and debate matters of strategic and executional management. It publishes articles by both scholars and practitioners so as to maintain both a research and a practical perspective. Like the first issue, this one includes some articles that explicitly

address the impact of COVID, while others are written from a more general perspective on the future of business and management. This combination of writings provides fuel for a vital conversation about how business can better serve the needs of all of us, in good times and bad. We hope this issue stimulates your thinking about this essential question and that you will share with us your reactions and ideas.



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