

RESILIENCY IS THE NEW STRATEGY By Rick Boxx

An article written by business experts at Fortune magazine makes the assertion, “Many companies will need to rebalance their priorities, making additional resiliency measures as important to their strategic thinking as cost and efficiency.” Change has always been a factor in business planning, but never more than in the past couple of years.

In large measure because of the global pandemic, resiliency is finding its way to the top of the priority list on strategic plans for many businesses across the nation. It has become a resiliency that requires a level of flexibility greater than anything most businesses have needed in decades past.

There are many factors involved, quite a few of them related to COVID-19 and its many consequences. Business shutdowns and reduced service capabilities; shortages of people willing or able to work; escalating costs; supply shortages; government mandates of many kinds; employees forced to perform their jobs from their homes rather than traditional offices. These are just some of the changes business owners, executives and managers have had to deal with in recent months.

The impact of all of this has extended beyond the carrying out of standard procedures and practices. These dramatic changes also have created feelings of affliction, perplexity, and crushed spirits. Physical health of employees has always been taken into account; now their mental and emotional health also must be given consideration. Understandably, many MBAs are probably thinking, “They didn’t teach us about this in business school.”

With all of these changes, along with the likelihood of more yet to come, it is clear that resiliency will be a major determining factor for success or failure. Many businesses have endured a hard hit. They have been struck down, blindsided by circumstances beyond their control. But rather than descending into discouragement and despair, we can look at these times as opportunities to rebuild, to restructure, even to reimagine. And to focus on resilience.

Whenever I feel a need to find hope and encouragement, I like to turn to the Bible for its timeless wisdom and practical principles. Here are just two examples:

When knocked down, bounce back up. Sometimes a key to success is a refusal to quit, determining never to accept failure. Writing to followers of Jesus Christ in ancient Corinth, the apostle Paul said, “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

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Confront challenges with hope and faith. A sign a friend displays in his home reads, “Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass...it’s about learning to dance in the rain.” This shows resilience. As James 1:2-4 admonishes, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When you think of resiliency or resilience, what comes to mind? Have you seen any notable examples of these since the global pandemic began?
2. How has resiliency been necessary in your specific circumstances, both where you work and in your everyday life?
3. Many people have suffered considerable mental and emotional distress over the past year and a half, in part because of COVID-19 restrictions, along with other factors. What steps – if any – have you taken to cope with the heightened levels of stress and uncertainty?
4. In one of the Bible passages above, it talks about the “all-surpassing power from God.” What does that mean to you? Have you experienced this power in any way as you have tried to confront unprecedented challenges and struggles? How does this relate to our need for resiliency in the business and professional world?

NOTE: *If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:* Proverbs 16:3-4,9, 19:21, 20:24; Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10; Romans 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

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