

BBDO

RE START

a **BBDO** approach

LISTEN

Currently, public opinion suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has battered the world with an intensity unparalleled in modern times.

But what is often forgotten in the annals of history: a viral outbreak on this scale has already happened once before.

The 1918 influenza, also known as the “Spanish Flu”, was one of the most severe and deadly pandemics in human history – and has important implications for modern-day society.





LISTEN AND

REPEAT

Despite its severe toll on the global economy, the years of the devastating pandemic were followed by a period of wealth, luxury, and innovation.

A new, exciting era also referred to as the “Roaring Twenties”.

Can the lessons learned from the Spanish Flu and the subsequent economic recovery echo in our own Twenties, a century later?



THE WORLD

Changed by a virus.

The world is in shock. Everything feels as if we've walked into an old recurring nightmare - a new global virus that keeps us trapped in our homes, disrupts our daily routine and forces us to distance ourselves socially from our friends and family.

It's not a dream. COVID-19 has become our new reality and is already reshaping our relationships with government, the outside world, even with one another.

It is inevitable that we will experience dramatic political, economic, social and technological changes that will restructure the ways in which businesses and society have traditionally operated.

We can't go back to normal - but history has taught us that we can choose to make the best out of this situation in order to build a better future.



CHANGING THE WORLD

Because of a virus.

Crises are the cue for change, often for the better.

At the present time we can observe an increased level of collaboration, more advanced and flexible use of technology, less individualism, a shift in consumer habits, and a revived appreciation of solidarity. While some of these behavioural changes may be temporary, many may be more permanent, opening the door

to social and economic progress. With so much changing so fast during this difficult time, what actions can leaders take to seize the opportunities offered by the crisis, reduce risks, and take care of their people?



LEADERSHIP DRIVES TRANSFORMATION

The battle against COVID-19 is one that places extraordinary demands on leaders in business and beyond. Regulatory barriers to working from home have fallen and traditional leadership styles have become outdated overnight.

Since it will be near impossible to put that genie back in the bottle, executives must actively embrace digital change by uniting digital transformation with the company's greater, long-term goals.

Beyond that, it is crucial for leaders to plan and prepare for the "new normal", i.e. the post-viral era that will emerge after the crisis.

What will the aftermath of the global COVID-19 pandemic be for businesses? What immediate actions can leaders take now and in the coming weeks?



RESTART: BBDO's approach.

This crisis will undoubtedly pass.

But your company's position during the crisis, immediately after it, and in the longer term, is determined by the actions that you take now.

To support you in this time of great uncertainty, we want to provide you with a strategic framework for responding with structure yet flexibility to the challenges ahead of us.

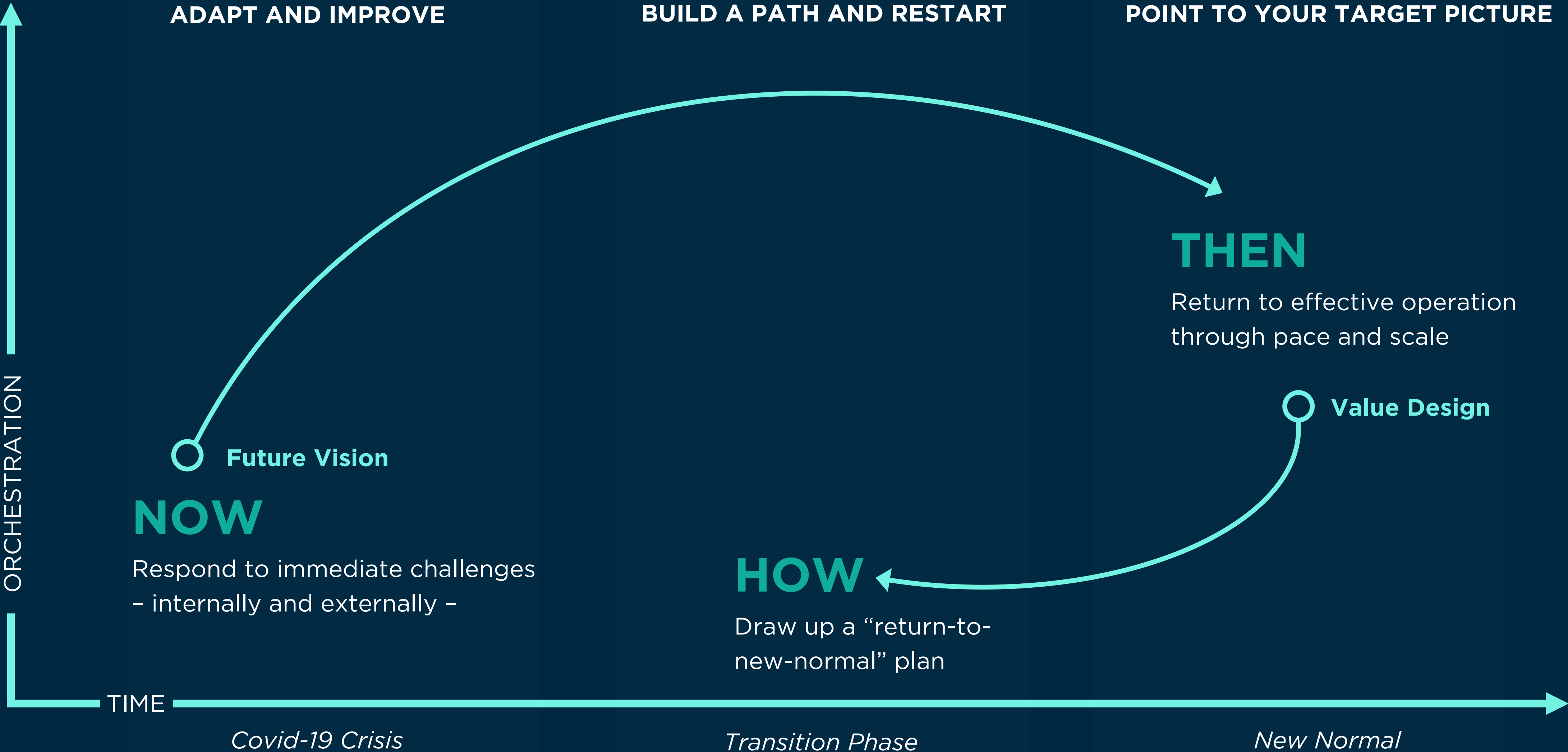
By mapping your immediate, short- and long-term strategies across three horizons, you will be able to maximise business continuity while identifying disruptive and incremental changes in the transition.

BBDO RESTART MODEL

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2020

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NOW: Adapt and improve.

In times of crisis, it may be hard for leaders to know where to begin. Your initial actions should therefore focus on resolving the immediate challenges that COVID-19 presents – internally to keep performing, and externally to keep your business up and running. Recommendations for immediate action include:

1 focus

Focus on determining the key areas of your business that can be easily and quickly adjusted to be digitally delivered/enabled.

2 communicate

Communicate clearly and with compassion and adapt to new ways of working with employees and key stakeholders.

3 be ready

Be ready to use alternative ways of doing things and adapt your marketing strategy to current changes in society.



THEN:

Paint your target picture.

To return to effective operation through pace and scale, businesses should clearly define where they want to be when they enter the “new normal”. At this stage it is not important to predict the future, but to be well prepared for any unexpected challenges. To emerge from this crisis in a position of strength, businesses should:

- 1 be agile and flexible**
Have an agile, flexible organisation with fast response times to changing customer needs.
- 2 switch mindset**
Switch their mindset to customer centricity, as it lays the foundation for all other digital transformation decisions.
- 3 be prepared**
Be prepared to offer new value and purpose to customers, adapting products and services to deliver the most efficient and innovative solutions.



HOW:

Build a path and restart.

To get from the adapt-and-improve phase to a life beyond the crisis, businesses are well advised to establish a “return-to-new-normal” plan.

This includes all transition activities and ideas required to keep delivering after the virus passes, such as:

1 challenge

Challenging the status quo by reviewing and stress-testing existing processes, financials, IT systems and supply networks.

2 learn

Leaning into digital ways of working and connecting with customers, knowing that this will likely have a lasting impact.

3 reassess

Reassessing your business focus by tracking all trends and outlooks surrounding human behaviour.



PITFALLS AND IMPEDIMENTS

The COVID-19 crisis reveals many delayed and missed opportunities for digitalisation in the past. Certainly, the virus has forced many time-honoured bastions of traditional business to adapt faster and go virtual, but there's also the threat of organisations returning to their old 'analogue' habits as soon as this crisis is over – not realising that they run the risk of being disrupted and replaced.

Change is hard and one of the common pitfalls in digital transformation is to base technology decisions on the needs of the organisation instead of the customer.



PITFALLS AND IMPEDIMENTS

When done properly, digital transformation should be driven by the goal of making clients' lives easier – but without patronising them.

Before digital transformation can truly begin, we need to establish an “error culture” that moves away from seeking the perfect solution. Particularly in Germany, we need to overcome our lack of imagination and drive new ideas that provide unprecedented value to customers – even at the risk of failing.



A man with a beard and dark hair is looking down at a smartphone in his hands. He is wearing a grey t-shirt. The background is dark with warm, out-of-focus lights, suggesting an indoor setting like a cafe or office at night. A large blue triangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the main text.

OUTLOOK: Winning businesses & models.

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO STEP UP.

In just a matter of days, the obstacles to adaptation have become less formidable than ever before: people are embracing digital. Whether it is connecting with others or attending virtual events. Grocery delivery is now the norm for many people who never even considered it before and the call for new business models such as “Everything as a Service” (XaaS) is becoming louder.

This opens up new opportunities for businesses. And the timing couldn't be better. Never before have there been so many technologies available: augmented or virtual realities, blockchain, artificial intelligence. But these are just the enablers. The real winners are the businesses which embrace what was mentioned earlier: Create value and be customer focussed.



RESTART INTO THE NEW TWENTIES

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Perhaps the only certainty is that any attempt at a definitive forecast will fail.

However, history has taught us that the battle against COVID-19 is one that leaders need to win if we are to find an economically and socially viable path to the “new normal”.

Brands that adapt their strategies, act quickly and understand that there is no possibility of moving ahead as usual will be the first movers in a new society with unique trends and behaviour patterns. So if you get moving now, we can shape what will be our own “Roaring Twenties” together, instead of being overwhelmed by the uncertainty of what the future might hold.



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