

insight:

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# Responding to new realities:

business winning in  
uncertain times

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**We are all used to seeing the immediate aftermath of cataclysmic natural disasters. Emergency workers rush in to provide medical aid and search and rescue assistance. Non-profits inundate the area with relief supplies, temporary shelters, food and water.**

There's a tendency to focus on short-term relief and not think about long-term recovery. But what happens three months down the line? A year later? Five years later?

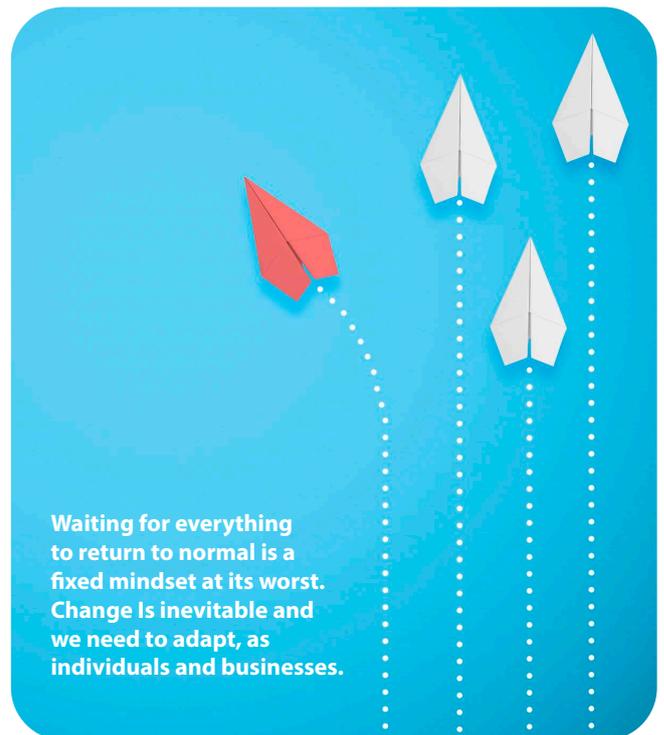
Disasters bring about new realities and we need to respond accordingly.

## RESPONDING TO NEW REALITIES

An organisation with a fixed mindset will sit back and wait for a return to business as usual. If you do this, you're going to get left behind.

The imperative for businesses is to rebuild – take stock, transition quickly and transform for future success. Just as forest fires give new trees the chance to grow, a whole host of new opportunities will open up.

It's time now to focus on strategies for long-term recovery.



**So what does this mean in practice for winning new business? I have identified four key areas that you need to focus on to drive success throughout the pandemic and beyond.**

**ADOPT A GROWTH MINDSET**

**REPOSITION TO WIN**

**FOCUS ON YOUR CUSTOMERS**

**USE AGILE APPROACHES**

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## ADOPT A GROWTH MINDSET

In the face of an extreme challenge like Covid-19, we all have a tendency to shift from a growth to a fixed mindset. In effect we batten down the hatches, hunker down and wait for the storm to pass.

People with a fixed mindset are still in this mode, sitting around waiting for everything to fall back into place again. But the time for indecision has passed. If you want to be winning business when the bids and tenders start coming out again, now is the time to be decisive. Tip the balance in your brain back from fixed mindset to growth mindset.



Any major challenge like the Covid-19 pandemic brings exciting new possibilities as well as threats. Your competitors will be starting to recognise these and it's vital that you do the same. Seize the opportunity to innovate and work harder than ever to drive success.

Start each day with the resolve to be persistent, put in maximum effort, experiment with new ideas and take some risks. 'Resilience' may be right up there with 'new normal' and 'unprecedented times' as an overused term at the moment, but there's a reason! If you want to achieve business-winning success, it's the key.

“

**If you imagine less, less will be what you undoubtedly deserve. ”**

DEBBIE MILLMAN, WRITER AND EDUCATOR

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## REPOSITION TO WIN

If you approach your work with a growth mindset, you will find yourself starting to take control. In the face of so much business uncertainty, now more than ever you need to become the architect of your own success.

With sales conversion diminishing and business winning largely on hold, take advantage of the extra time you have to plan and reposition for future success. Although your planning will inevitably focus on the impact of Covid-19 on your customers and the sectors you work in, make sure you think outside this and beyond the pandemic too.

Create a campaign development road map for customers and potential leads, focusing on repositioning yourself to be ready to win business. It's likely to be chaotic when the bidding and tendering process restarts in the months to come. If you're ahead of the game, with everything in place and set to go, you will be able to steal a march on your competitors.

Spend time researching and analysing the new world in which you're going to be winning business. Reopening the global economy is going to be a massive experiment. To be able to respond and adapt intelligently to whatever happens, you're going to need information and understanding.

### Way markers to growth

**To help you set the direction of your campaign road maps, be proactive in finding out as much as you can about the current position of your customers and competitors.**

- What has been the impact of Covid-19 on the industry as a whole? Consider factors such as working patterns, job losses, demand for goods and services, prices, transport changes, government support.
- What has been the impact of Covid-19 on individual customers? How have they responded?
- Do a PESTEL analysis for each customer to identify the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal impacts of the pandemic.
- Are some bids not going to be relevant any more?
- Are new opportunities emerging?
- Does relaxation of governance and sales procedures enable new ways of working?
- What can and can't you do at the moment for each customer? How can you make the biggest impact? Harmonic's Pursuit Optimisation tool is a great way to identify issues and opportunities.
- Look forward. What do you want to be doing for the customer in three months' time? A year's time? In five years' time?
- What are your competitors doing? How can you outperform them? How can you gain a winning edge for when bids and tenders are released?

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## FOCUS ON YOUR CUSTOMERS

Stop for a minute to think about your own experience as a customer since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK. Take high street shops, for example. On the stroke of lockdown, some businesses shut up and disappeared with no message for their customers or indication of plans for reopening. Others kept in touch via social media and notices in shopfronts. They went out of their way to offer support for the community, thought of innovative ways to continue providing goods and services, and quickly adapted to contactless payments and social distancing.

Which approach is most likely to have won your custom moving forward?

Exactly the same principles apply to your business customers. Use this time to build relationships with your customers and you'll be the last one to go if cuts are needed and at the top of their list once new business opportunities open up.

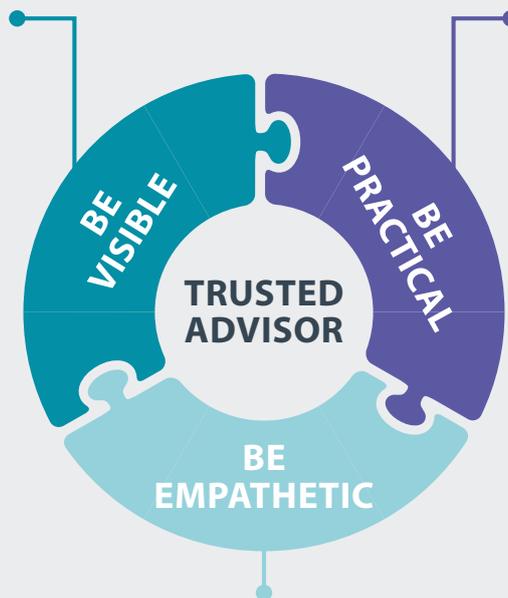
Your goal is to become their **trusted advisor** – to be on hand, empathetic, helpful and, ultimately, indispensable.

### Be visible

You may not be able to engage with customers face to face, but there's no excuse for not staying in touch. Ring them and start conversations. Set up online meetings. Join and run webinars. Attend virtual conferences. Record podcasts.

I recently spent time at a conference that was being run virtually for the first time. The conference usually attracts 300 to 400 attendees; there were just 20 of us online. If you're proactive, this gives you the opportunity to develop your profile and relationship with those who do attend beyond what is usually possible at a conference.

When upping your online presence, make sure you and your team are trained and proficient in using all the services available. Inexperienced use of conference call and webinar tools creates a bad impression for customers and devalues the communication.



### Be empathetic

Bear in mind that many of your customers will be struggling at the moment. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What will they be worrying about? What are their problems? Ask how you can help them, with a focus on understanding their team's position, the capability gap, even issues they might be having at home.

### Be practical

You may not be able to go and see your customers or win business from them, but you can still try to help them. In times of uncertainty, the long-range business plan goes out the window and the clients will be focused on immediate matters. However, you will still be able to help them keep the business on track by supporting their business-winning ambitions while they deal with short-term issues.

Provide practical support whenever possible. If a customer refuses help, offer to be there to talk things through. Forward information that might be useful, take them through their crisis plans and run webinars on their chief concerns, whether it's taking costs out of supply chains or making the most of tools for remote working. Offer to run a free workshop or provide support with solutions. Be a problem solver, not a problem creator.

Your customers will remember the people who stepped up to help them through tough times. Be one of them.

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## USE AGILE APPROACHES

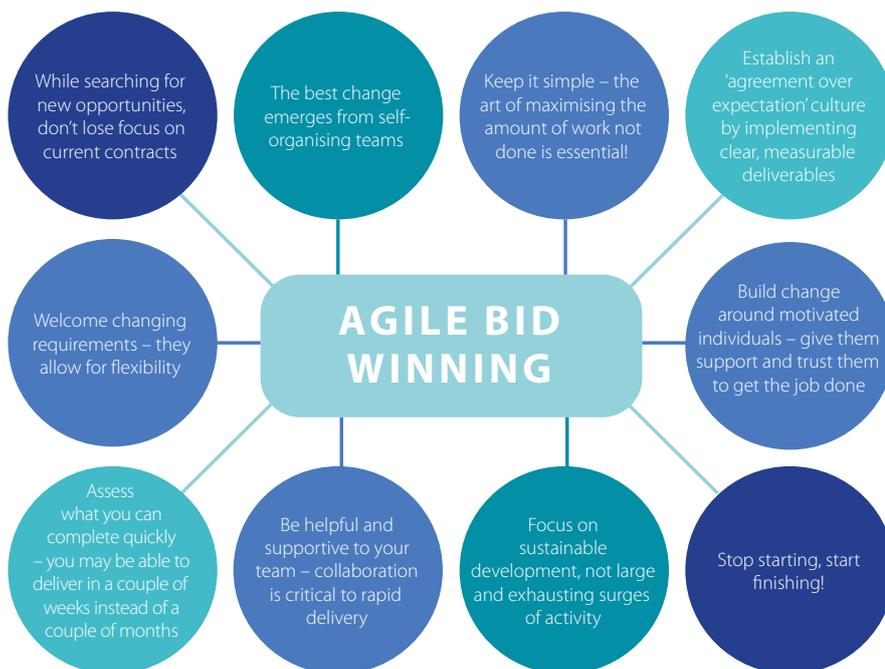
So you've adopted a growth mindset and are ready to focus on your customers and reposition to win. The challenge now is to drive change through incremental actions that generate value quickly.

Drawing on agile methodology can be a great way to achieve this in the current times of business uncertainty and volatility.

Agile is a dynamic approach that focuses on delivering value through change while enabling collaborative, transparent decision-making.

At Harmonic, we've implemented agile principles across our client base – including business winning – resulting in:

- The reduction to the cost of bidding by 20-30%
- The ability to reduce bid team size whilst improving productivity and outcomes
- Significantly improving collaboration through leveraging off-the-shelf digital tools
- Driving productivity and enabling bid teams to focus on the most important aspects of a bid, instead of being reactive.



### Top things to do right now

1. Prioritise key manageable outcomes and focus on value
2. Evaluate the current position of your customers and competitors
3. Change from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset
- 4 Collaborate frequently with your business and clients

## HOW CAN HARMONIC HELP?

Disney incorporated during the Great Depression; Microsoft incorporated during an oil crisis and stock market crash; WhatsApp was formed during a stock market crash... Let us help you capitalise on the current crisis.

Our unique combination of bid, technical, programme and commercial expertise, along with innovative tools like ValueSeek(r) and Pursuit Optimisation, can help you come out of the Covid-19 pandemic ready to win more, bigger bids than ever before.

Get in touch today to find out more – either drop me an **email** or give me a call on **07547 792221**.



**PETE BLUNDEN**