

Sustainability of an Organisation in Pandemic Times

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Abstract

The businesses are facing competing, overwhelming challenges and uncharted waters as they continue to manoeuvre through the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are technological disruptions that have gained a robust consumer base amidst the uncertainty. Since many years desktop computer was used by employees but then it changed to laptops along with tablets and smartphones. The COVID-19 impacts expedited this trend. The pandemic has changed the way people work as remote working has gained momentum and that has altered the way management assess performance ability of the employees. The major revenue generating industry such as tourism is struggling due to COVID-19. The reinvention of business sustainable strategies is the need of the hour. The management needs to accelerate digital transformation, implement variable cost structures, and establish agile operations. The key factors that can guide resilient sustainability framework are resource efficiency, awareness through reliable and credible information, open-communication between management and employees, high employee engagement and increased motivation, diverse organisational team and good understanding of target audience. The business should take the responsibility for waste minimization to remain sustainable. As the scenarios change, the companies need to keep correcting their sustainability plans again and again. The organisations have to reexamine assumptions, reassess circumstances and revitalize their ability to sense and respond. The sustainability functions of an organisation should not just be philanthropic initiatives but should yield results for society and business at the same time when the organisation is under great pressure such as COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Business Sustainability, COVID-19, Pandemic Times, Remote Working, Agile Operations

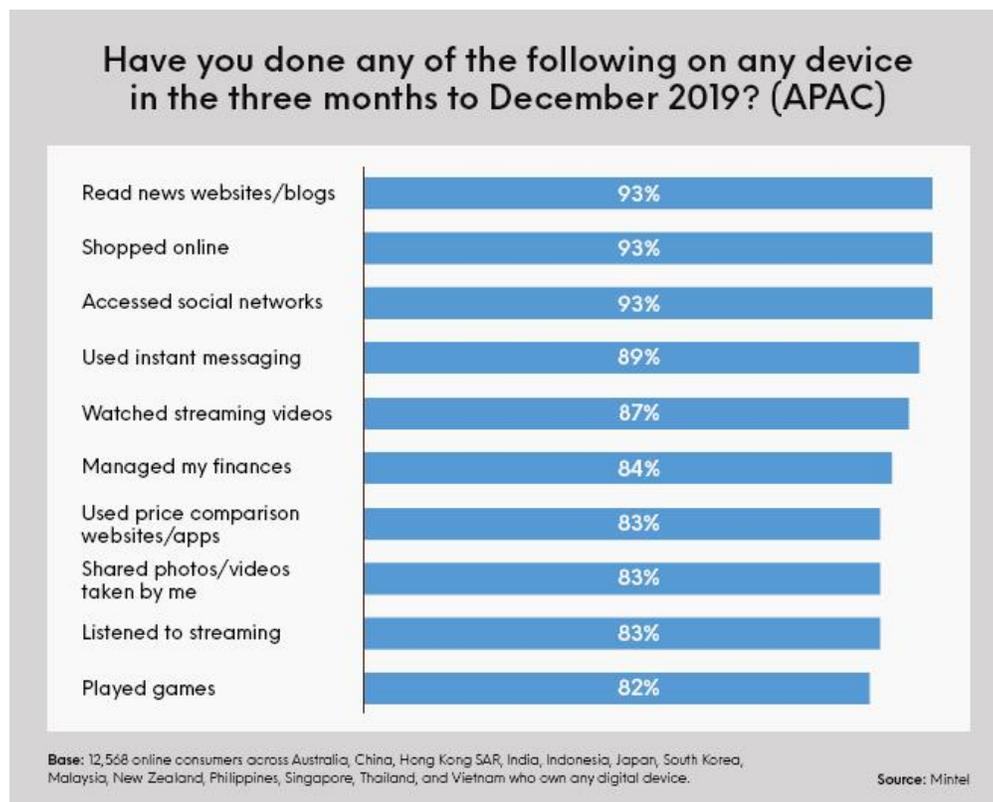
Introduction

Imagine, you invested in a multiplex, considering it a great opportunity to gain revenue from 8 movie screens, amusement space equipped with gaming stations and food court offering different cuisines. But overnight there is a change in the profit generating scenario due to Coronavirus disease. On 26 March 2020, New Zealand went in a country-wide lockdown where the once bustling streets of the nation became empty (“New Zealand announces lockdown,” 2020). The New Zealand Government declared a state of emergency to combat the spread of the deadly Coronavirus disease on a massive scale. In such a situation, people cannot get out of their houses even for recreational activities such as see a movie in multiplex because all enterprises were abruptly shut down. The multiplex owner and other businesses suffer great financial loss in such times.

Environmental disasters are pivotal to the business sustenance with human behaviour playing a vital role in the responsibility undertaken by an organisation in selling goods or providing service as per the customer requirements. According to the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices established in 1999 (Pilot, 2015), from business perspective, sustainability generates shareholder value for a long-term period by accepting possibilities, mitigating threats and reducing loss resulting from environmental, social and economic events. Sustainability in the Brundtland Commission Report (Hopkins, 2007) is defined as ‘sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

Crabbe (2020) has stated that the consumer behaviour in 2019 (Figure 1) exhibited the trend of increase in the usage of digital devices to engage in day-to-day activities and for leisure. These customer experiences continue to rise in 2020 in the pandemic situation.

Figure 1. COVID-19’s effect on consumer behaviour in Asia-Pacific (*Source:* Mintel)

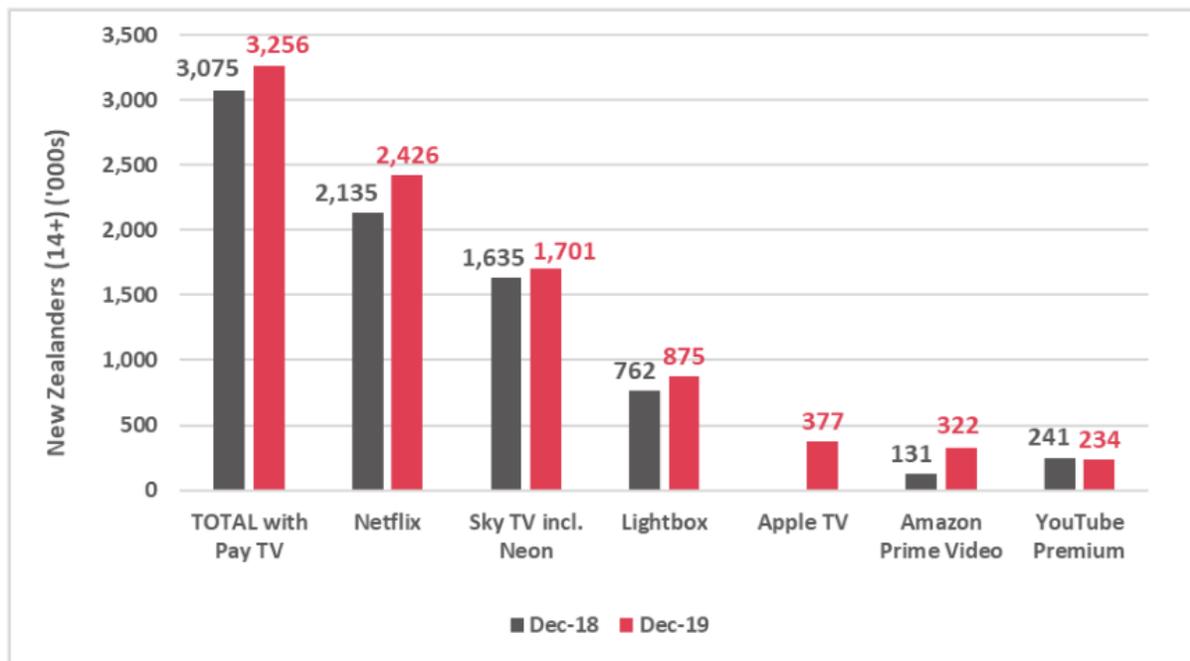


This research aims to assess the process of sustainability strategies and its ethical impacts in a pandemic environment. The objective of this study is to make the team, organisation, industry and customers understand how a business needs to nurture and manage to remain sustainable in the period of an emergency in a country. The management has to think in terms of what is the company responsible for and what is being developed. The organisation has to take into account the demand and supply of the resources, social changes, and shift in the ecosystem factors that change the world in which the business functions.

Post COVID-19 Times

According to the statistics from Roy Morgan Single Source New Zealand (2020), by December 2019, 2.42 million New Zealanders have access to Netflix which increased from 2.13 million in 2018 (Figure 2). And similarly, there have been increase in viewership in Neon, Lightbox and such other over-the-top (OTT) or subscription video on demand (SVOD) platforms.

Figure 2. New Zealand's Netflix, Lightbox and Amazon Prime Video's experience double digit growth in viewership (*Source: Roy Morgan Single Source New Zealand*)



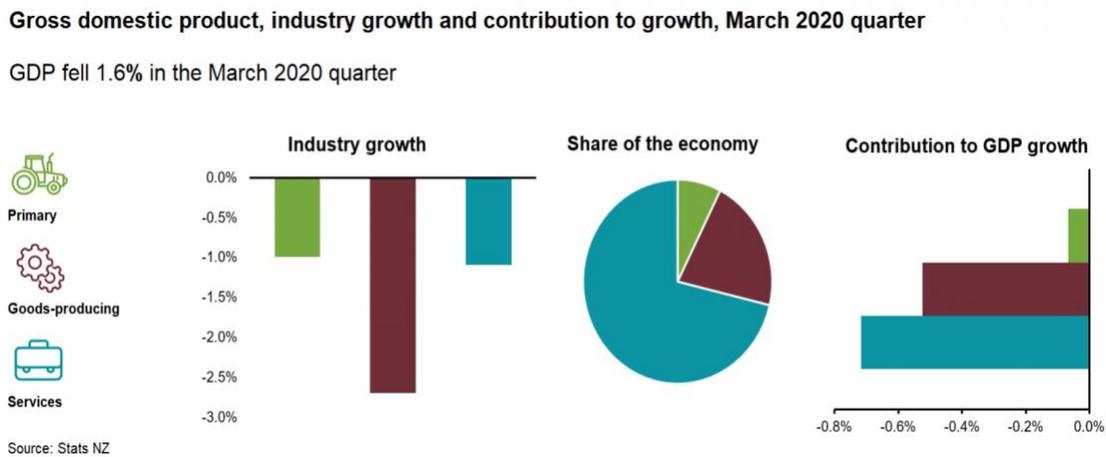
Source: Roy Morgan Single Source New Zealand, October 2018 – December 2018, n = 1,610. October 2019 – December 2019, n = 1,668. Base: New Zealanders aged 14+.

With COVID-19 situation, people spent more time watching movies or TV series on Netflix, Lightbox, Neon and such other online video streaming platforms. The post COVID-19 times illustrated that the OTT or SVOD consumers spending more time at home realised that the watching movie on an online platform is cheaper than going out for a movie at a multiplex. If a family of 5 members go to watch a movie at a multiplex it would cost them NZ\$11 per person on an average amounting to NZ\$55 in total. It is expensive. But a Netflix account of basic plan of NZ\$11.99 per month or the free seven-day trial of Amazon Prime or first 30 days free offer of Lightbox is value for money (Keall, 2019). It gave an emotional connection to the viewers in the comfort of their home and they felt they could grasp the content more effectively than watching the same content in a multiplex. Moreover, the viewers could see more than one movie with a single user account. Also, there could be 5 user profiles added to a single account such as Netflix. So, 5 family members or friends could watch the content of their choice with just one user account of Netflix.

It can be observed that the multiplexes that were once movie Meccas for people for entertainment and rejuvenation is replaced by OTT or SVOD platforms such as Netflix, Lightbox and other online media services for streaming movies, an example depicting not merely cases of brilliant innovation but the whole experience of profound change of how business and society is adapting to the revolutionary innovation (All movie theatres, 2020).

According to Stats NZ, in March 2020 quarter (Figure 3), New Zealand economy shrank by 1.6% where service industries were down by 1.1%. Primary business industries had a reduced Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1.0% while the goods producing industries' GDP was low by 2.7%. The first quarterly fall since December 2010 quarter and largest fall since March 1991.

Figure 3. Gross domestic product: March 2020 quarter (*Source: Stats NZ*)



Sustainability through radical change with transformation of business and society tailoring to the great alterations are the challenges that a management will face in these unpredictable times. An organisation needs to have sustainable practice in their operations beforehand to stay functioning even if the pandemic strikes that is bigger than any crisis.

There can be intense changes in government, policy or regulations and investments bringing about a major shift in the New Zealand economy. Sustainability strategies in an organisation should address the impacts of a business environmentally, socially and economically that can occur with ingenious innovations in the pandemic times such as COVID-19.

SMART Goals for Sustainable Business

Some of the core areas of a business to be focused are to examine: -

1. How much waste is created by the business?
2. Are there any issues with the organisational culture?
3. Is there diversity in hiring job candidates?
4. Is the product or service specifically created for a certain audience?

5. What is the impact of the business on the local community?

The organisation can evaluate these horizons and formulate ‘SMART’ goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound to save time, money and energy of the business in the present and future (Kohl, 2016). Once these goals are established, the organisation can comprehend what the business values and how they are going to implement them. These goals will help the company to remain sustainable while remaining profitable. It will help the company to save its resources to work in the long-term. It will also help the business to think about the possibilities to change and how to bring about the change to meet the needs of the present generation without substituting the interests and rights of the future generation. The goals will address the business stakeholders about the returns and risks involved while being resilient in the measures taken to sustain in the pandemic times. These goals will provide a clear view of execution of sustainable infrastructure to the production, research and development (R&D), purchasing, marketing, human resource management and accounting and finance departments in their decision-making in day-to-day business operations. This will help to create links in business processes and obliterate the conflicts in the practice of sustaining environmentally, socially and economically.

Elemental Areas of Business

Waste created by the business

If you use a pen and paper to write a note then pen, paper and time taken to write the note are the resources utilized by you. Effective management of resources is very important task for a business to manage its different projects (Impetus Consulting Ltd, 2008). Resource efficiency leads to waste minimization. Resource efficiency can be achieved using lean management, a generic term for several businesses and planning principles that have originated from the supposed Toyota production system (Schmidt et al., 2019). All irrelevant operations in productions must be curbed. All non-productive (administrative work) must be cleverly arranged and optimized. For instance, a good is transported from A to B and then again back from B to A then the product loses its value and function. This only increases cost and emissions. Customer would not be ready to pay for this waste of time, effort and money caused by the producer (when the product or service has no positive feature).

Lean management in pandemic time is about fostering the problem-solving capabilities of people. It is not about extracting every bit of productivity out of every individual and machine. It is all about practice of standardization for many years that make working together successful in the times of crisis. The organisation in New Zealand comprises of team members working with people across the globe. The companies with standard file structures, shared cloud files, use of web-based communication apps, well-practiced and coordinated internal standards make the team members to work together as a team and not as an individual. This works during the crisis. For instance, a consultancy company team supports a mid-sized organisation who was asked by a local hospital to supply face-shields for the nurses and doctors. This mid-sized business already works with crystal clear medical grade plastic film. So, the company already had the raw-materials to produce face-shields. The consultancy team members worked onsite as they lived close by. The consultancy team had the ability to assist the mid-sized business to design, sample model, test and deliver 2,000 units in less than 48 hours and more face-shields after that duration. This productivity level was not about having super-human capabilities. It was ultimately all about attaining success through client leadership and lean team members.

The business resources are raw materials, labour (staff time), utilities (water, energy), office supplies (consumables) and machinery. Materials and wastes are often overlooked opportunity to improve organisational sustenance. You have to measure what you can manage. The companies need to track use of energy or water resources over the period. The businesses can implement Eco-KPI hierarchy system that elucidates sustainability indicators to evaluate area specific normalized indicators concentrating on the related industry (Seliger, 2012). There is also Eco-tracking process that is essential for long-term observation by gathering energy, emission, waste data in addition to the production activity data and converting them into pragmatic information by making use of eco-KPIs. Eco-improvement consists of methodology and decision support framework that will be created to decrease the energy consumption and emissions occurring from the production processes at initial stages of product design and production planning. The data collected using these waste minimization tracking systems can be a benchmark to save money, increase recycling to cut disposal cost. Minimizing and replacing the inventories wisely is prerequisite for the waste reduction. The production process and the product designs can be eco-friendly so that it is easy to dismantle for recycling. This way it is cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

Hunt (2017) has mentioned that Netflix, an over-the-top content platform, aims at sustainable business practices that reduce environmental impact with responsible human behaviour. This online platform is constantly doing server optimization to decrease energy use, enhance speed and other performance metrics. In this manner, it only takes half as much energy to furnish the same output. For instance, they are able to bear 200 percent of the bandwidth per watt since 2017 than they were supporting previously. Netflix uses cloud services as larger part of their energy utilization. Based on optimization theory, the cloud service providers try to increase the resources accessible with their data centers by meeting the users' requirements with the least use physical resources that results in reduction of the energy utilized by these resources (Rao, 2015). This promotes using renewable energy. This illustrates optimal resource utilization is a sustainable business practice.

Issues with organisational culture

The companies need to evaluate whether the employees are bored, feeling discouraged or generally unhappy, are the supervisors under-equipped or do they over-supervise. The employees often express about work in different ways. "Mark is acting superior since he got promoted as he makes others do the job but hardly does any work himself." "Danny is not submitting report on time." "There is network connection problem. I had informed Richard but he has not yet checked the issue." "The air conditioning is not working and it feels very hot in here." From these office conversations, it becomes clear whether the employees are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. The nature of their feelings about work arises from the details about their turmoil. If two friends meet after a long time and one asks the other "How is your job going on?" The response can be, "The work is fine. It is easy. It's just that there are some days when we are inadequately understaffed and the team suffers." This is the job attitude that determines the issues with organisational culture. Herzberg's Motivation theory states that there are specific factors (motivators) in an organisation that creates job satisfaction while there are other set of factors (hygiene factors) that engenders dissatisfaction. These factors are independent of each other (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1993). Factors such as achievement, recognition, the job itself, responsibility, growth and advancement are the characteristics of job satisfaction. On the other hand, the company policies, supervision, relationship with manager and peers, work environment,

salary, status and job security are the characteristics related to professional dissatisfaction. The management has to address the dissatisfaction, the employee is facing and encourage motivating factors to function in order to create job enrichment. A happy and talented employee is an asset to the company and vital for the organisational sustenance.

The business needs to take into account whether there are open lines of communication, is the turnover too high with people leaving the company for a better job or are there conflicts that is disrupting the flow of a job process. The organisation needs to check whether the communication is from top management to entry level staff and upwards from the lower-level employees to the higher-level management. Also, the business has to explore horizontal organisational communication (exchange of information between employees of same designation) and cross-channel communication (interaction between employees working for different departments/teams). The dual-concern model deploys five various conflict management strategies depending on the situation: competitive, avoiding, accommodating, compromising and problem-solving (Elgoibar, Euwema & Munduate, 2016). In critical theories of organisational communication, the upper management must always endeavor to motivate lower management and employees who lose motivation and are inclined to oppose managers. The organisational communication takes on the role of eliminating conflicts, averting problems among the team or departments, supporting employees to express their issues and providing guidance that will unite the workforce under a single goal. The enterprises have to examine whether the managers are only telling staff what to do instead of taking time to discuss with staff such as – “What do you think about it?”, “Is it a good idea?” or “How would you think differently?”

According to Qualtrics research study, there is a high level of employee attrition in New Zealand and Australia as compared to other countries. The 2020 employee experience trends research has indicated that 23 percent of employees in New Zealand and Australia has the intention to stay in their current workplace for less than a year. Almost 40 percent of employees are looking for a change of jobs when the work period is extended to two years (Hilton, 2020).

It is the management’s responsibility to develop work methods and company policies that encourage and grow emotional connections between employees and their organisation. The management has to motivate the staff to remain committed to their workplace for the long-term. It is essential for the practice of acknowledgment by the company management for business sustenance in these pandemic times.

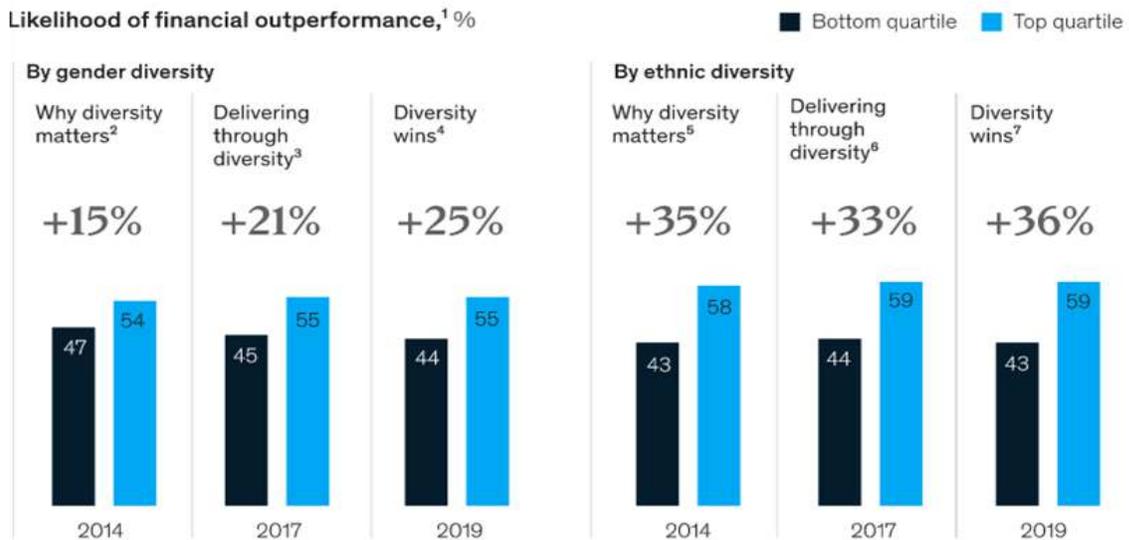
Diversity in hiring job candidates

An organisation should ensure the hiring procedures are free from any bias related to candidate’s age, race, gender, religion and so on. An assessment needs to be made to find the diversity strengths and challenges in hiring practice. Resource-based theory of diversity management demonstrates the impact of diversity implementation on organisational resources (Machado & Davim, 2018). The businesses possess four resources categories: physical capital, human capital, financial capital and corporate capital resources. These resources can either aid or restrain the company operations. The companies strive to utilize these resources in ways that will definitely help and augment the business processes. Organisations that are more diverse have a competitive advantage from a business outlook than homogenous organisations. Racial heterogeneity within a company elevates financial performance when a growth or innovative strategy is effectuated. The companies with more diversity management implementations exemplify low turnover rate with increased

innovation leading to higher productivity and efficient as well as effective market performance. Organisations with active diversity management practices will be unique and hard to replicate that will ensure entrepreneurial sustenance.

The Mckinsey analysis in 2019 (Figure 4) showed that the organisations in the top quartile with gender and ethnic diversities gained in profitability (Fyle, Dolan, Hunt & Prince, 2020). It indicated that greater diversity representation made the organisation more productive that is vital for company sustenance.

Figure 4. How Diversity & Inclusion Matter (Source: Mckinsey & Company)



Likelihood of financial outperformance vs the national industry median; p-value <0.05, except 2014 data where p-value <0.1. ²n = 383; Latin America, UK, and US; earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) margin 2010–13. ³n = 99; Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2011–15. ⁴n = 1,039; 2017 companies for which gender data available in 2019, plus Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; EBIT margin 2014–18. ⁵n = 364; Latin America, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2010–13. ⁶n = 589; Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2011–15. ⁷n = 533; Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US, where ethnicity data available in 2019; EBIT margin 2014–18.
 Source: Diversity Wins data set



According to McKinsey research in 2020, the companies with diverse leadership teams performed better on profitability than the less diverse work teams, in this pandemic environment. The executives stated that their Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) gave moderate or top priority to diversity even with the ongoing pressures of the crisis. The management has seen diversity as a strategic capability for business sustainability during pandemic condition.

The New Zealand Workplace Diversity Survey 2020 (Table 1) found that wellbeing/wellness, gender and bias are the three most significant diversity issues for organisations in New Zealand (Diversity Works, 2020).

Table 1: Diversity Issues

DIVERSITY ISSUES	March 2020 (%)	March 2019 (%)	April 2018 (%)	April 2017 (%)
Wellbeing/wellness	75.4 (1)	79.6 (1)	62.4 (1)	66.9 (1)
Gender	56.1 (2)	66.8 (2)	36.1 (5)	45.0 (5)
Bias	54.6 (3)	63.0 (3)	42.0 (4)	48.3 (3)
Flexibility	54 (4)	58.4 (4)	49.0 (2)	54.6 (2)
Ethnicity	47 (5)	47.3 (5)	33.9 (6)	41.4 (6)
Bullying and harassment	45 (6)	42.1 (6)	31.5 (7)	35.8 (7)
Aging	34.3 (7)	37.0 (7)	42.9 (3)	47.0 (4)
Sexuality	29.8 (8)	29.6 (8)	12.4 (10)	17.9 (10)
Disability	26.3 (9)	24.2 (10)	21.2 (9)	24.2 (9)
Employment transition for younger staff	24 (10)	26.1 (9)	26.8 (8)	27.5 (8)
Religion	14.7 (11)	11.7 (11)	8.5 (11)	12.3 (11)

Source: Diversity Works

Considering the work environment, Table 2 encapsulates, mental health of employees, work/life balance and stress, as the three most critical wellbeing issues in New Zealand.

Table 2: Wellbeing / Wellness Challenges

WELLBEING/WELLNESS CHALLENGES	March 2020 %	March 2019 %	April 2018 %
Mental health of employees	74.0	72.0	56.8
Work/life balance	70.6	71.2	71.9
Stress	69.0	70.7	66.8
Physical health of employees	48.8	45.7	51.3
Health and safety	48.2	53.8	43.7
Flexibility	42.6	45.4	37.9
Cultural inclusion/diversity	36.7	32.1	25.4
Implementing wellbeing measures	32.6	31.0	22.1
Illness and absenteeism	19.7	17.9	18.6
Aging	18.6	20.1	23.1
Disability	9.8	11.1	7.0
Don't know	3.4	2.2	0.7
Other (please specify)	1.7	2.17	3.8
None	1.3	1.4	3.3
Not applicable	0.6	0.3	2.0

Source: Diversity Works

This is the time where two-way conversations are necessary to build the bridge of trust. In a crisis such as COVID-19, it is essential to encourage peer support among managers and staff. Boosting motivation and enhancing employee engagement through alignment of employee well-being with company objective can help organisations achieve sustainability goals.

Product/service creation specifically for a certain audience

The company needs to know consumer interests, purchase intention, customer experience to differentiate between target audience and target market. Multi-attribute utility theory represents the satisfaction, a person gets from various outcomes, such as buying a product and/or availing a service. A utility function survey outcomes to utilities (Karat, Blom & Karat, 2004). The values are in the range of 0 to 1. An outcome can consist of different values for specific attributes. Multiple levels of criteria or lower-level criteria of a scoring tree mapping attributes leads to utilities aggregation topology. It generates a cumulated score for an outcome. For example, digital cameras are outcomes and their attributes are camera features such as weight, pixel resolution, storage and so on. In order to understand consumer behaviour, the key driver of the approach is the extension of generic scoring tree evaluation model to study the consumer needs, customer benefits, desired product and/or service and constitute them as predetermined and high-level product or service evaluation criteria in the scoring tree. These criterias show the potential utilization of a product or service by a customer.

The TACCT attributes are technical, aesthetic, content, culture-based and target audience specific (Young, 2009). This framework offers ways to classify and analyse large data sets distinct to product or service design. Technical characteristics are directed at optimal operating ability precisely facilitating the technology to work or function well. Aesthetic features are all about visual appeal to boost the product appearance and/or service design. Content traits integrate details about the product and/or service that are stored in the technology implemented. Culture-based properties are non-specific or customized as most design specifications can be classified as culture related or culture neutral. Target audience is the set of customers that a company plans to sell to or reach with marketing activities. A target audience is the group or segment within the target market that is being served advertisements. So, the target audience becomes a subset of target market. The existing or potential customers can be of a certain area, region, state or country as part of target market. For instance, McDonalds' fast meal products are for families with children whereas McDonalds' special campaigns can be aimed at children in the age group of 5 to 10 years. When the product and/or service design incorporates all of TACCT qualities, it becomes an effective tool to identify and categorize design specification and make strategic decisions based on the categorization. TACCT evaluates Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). It helps to collect preliminary data and provides a pathway to proceed. The product and/or service design specification created and technology implemented as per TACCT are self-sustaining.

Due to COVID-19, many people became redundant in their workplaces. The jobless rate increased. New Zealand economy plunged into recession. There was decline in production due to border closure and lockdown. Companies and households adapted to trading with limited face-to-face contact since March 2020. In December 2020, the economy bounced back in V-shaped recovery. Consumer spending increased with massive fiscal and monetary stimulus.

But New Zealand's primary revenue generator avenue which is tourism industry has taken a major hit. Known for its scenic beauty and a favorite holiday destination among international travellers,

New Zealand tourism is in severe crisis due to COVID-19. For now, there is reduced injection of foreign currency into New Zealand economy through international tourism. The nation focused on attracting domestic tourists through its 'Do Something New, New Zealand' activity ("Kiwis' October travel," 2020). The campaign consisted of a song that was released in October 2020 and 8 out of 10 New Zealanders can recollect watching the video or other campaign components. The campaign resulted in motivating New Zealanders to indulge in something new and more than half of New Zealanders having seen the campaign were encouraged to see around the country. Hence, there was demand for domestic tourism during the summer months. It is evident that Tourism New Zealand performed service creation specifically for a certain audience by identifying the consumer interests, purchase intention and customer experience through this campaign for tourism industry sustenance in New Zealand. But still the tourism revenue may be down by 50% as domestic travellers spend less than international visitors. And with no definitive timeline for border closure, the healthy outlook of New Zealand tourism remains uncertain.

Impact of business on local community

Businesses operating in the community hire local people so that can have a huge impact on the local economy. Local community support local businesses by purchasing the essentials required from them. Local taxes paid by local businesses are used to build and improve roads, schools and other civic spaces. According to social contract theory (Fryer, 2014), business makes a voluntary agreement with society to receive the benefits provided by the society such as transport and communication infrastructure to move its products and sell them or offer business services in the community. The companies employ qualified and skilled people who have been educated by the society. The companies are also reliable on law-enforcement officials to ensure security of their business premises and to make certain people honour the contracts that are vital to business investments. All these facilities offered by society are at public cost. Businesses sacrifice through taxation to avail the resources given by the society. The agreement as per the social contract theory can be written in the form of laws or it can be unspoken or unwritten agreement on social standards of human behaviour.

The business deals with number of community affairs in their interaction with local community. The community matters can be (Marsden, 2008):

- a) Employment of community members and indigenous people.
- b) Training of local people.
- c) Land rights negotiations with the local community members.
- d) Conducting social and community research
- e) Discussion with stakeholders
- f) Paying attention to community concerns regularly.
- g) Contribution to local community welfare.
- h) Compensation to the community for negative consequences.
- i) Charity work in the community and formation of philanthropic foundations.

j) Collaborating with government, NGOs and industry affiliations on social issues.

Dealing with the local community depends on the business size, operating in the community, size of the local community, company capabilities, willingness of the business entities including the cooperation of the government and civil society. The community initiatives can vary from big to small depending on the funding procedures, planning, execution, evaluation and reporting of the organisations functioning within the local community.

In this pandemic situation, the responsibility of the business functioning in local community has increased. The companies have to give, earn and sustain in the community. There is a rise in the requirement of front-line workers, fundraising, partnering with local charities to offer food baskets and daily essentials to the needy.

The local community can help local businesses to survive in the form of grants such as low interest, deferred repayment loans, property tax deferment, healthcare and financial assistance for front-line workers and business staff who are struggling. There can be emergency grant programs to help local businesses meet payroll and cover expenses such as utilities and rent. The town or city council can initiate these grants.

Therefore, it is a give and take policy for the local businesses and local community to sustain together. The need to help each other is extremely essential in the crisis such as this COVID-19 pandemic environment.

Two mindsets

There can be two sets of people with different motives for sustainability. The one set of people can think sustainability just in terms of an investment bringing about a change that would lead to disruption with significant implications in terms of investment, policies and the initiation of new technology and infrastructure. For example, Internet of Things (IoT) network of devices embedded with sensors and network connectivity to collect, exchange and act on data often without human intervention to generate revenue annually (Lee, 2017). The IoT is utilized in tracking of high-value goods, monitoring condition of chemicals and damage from handling, port delays and so on in real time to raise revenue with supply chain management capabilities progression. The change established with sufficient finance, ample political will and technological expertise. The change that will only replace the power house of the current economy with another intelligent entity and rest remains the same.

The other set of people would see the sustainability challenges as not only achievable but also whether it is desirable, viable and feasible (Kuratko, 2017) -

- ✚ Desirable - in terms of whether the sustainability challenge is relevant and usable to customers.
- ✚ Viable and valuable - whether it meets real customer needs and is it much better than alternatives.
- ✚ Feasible - A project that takes 6 months to end is asked to be completed within 3 months. Is it feasible to complete? Can the organisation make it happen with the existing team? The feasible solution should work in the long run.

This set of people will think whether the core of the innovation can be the enemy of sustainability and whether it is beneficial to the society in future.

Therefore, efforts need to be made to find a common ground between these two sets of people with their different versions of ideologies behind sustainable practices. An organisation should examine itself if the sustainable transformation is practical for the economic growth and whether the very nature of this major transformation is useful to the environment and the society.

A sustainable business environment - From the 'new normal' to a 'new future'

It is important for business to sustain in the unpredictable times. Companies operating in New Zealand should have sustainable development goals (SDG) to address global challenges such as inequality, environmental degradation, climatic change, peace and justice, and so on. These goals should be for a long-term period. The first sustainable set of targets should be aimed till 2024 with the targets' evaluation done during the same time span in real time. The second target space should be aimed till 2028 and further targets should be continued in similar fashion.

These sustainability development goals should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. The sustainability development goals can be -

- ✓ 90% of employees in the workforce even after redundancy by 2022
- ✓ Gender balance across all levels of management by 2023
- ✓ Zero waste to landfill and incineration by 2022
- ✓ Zero discharge of hazardous chemicals and pollutants by 2022
- ✓ 100% sustainable raw materials those are renewable, reusable or recyclable by 2022
- ✓ Science-based decrease in emission level in line with a 1.5°C pathway (UNEP, 2015) by 2023
- ✓ 100% recovery of resources with all the raw materials and products retrieved and reused at the end of the use or can be recycled by 2022
- ✓ Neutral land degradation including zero deforestation by 2023

In these sustainability development goals many variables can be assessed that are essentially sustainable resource use, social and economic development, and universal values such as quality expectation, consumer use of products based on gender, age and so on. Each goal can have its aligned objectives.

Since March 2020, although work from home existed priorly for many freelancers, the remote working style became the new norm for many professionals. There have been varied thoughts about this. The employees feel that the long meetings that took place in the confines of meeting/conference room are all wrapped up in emails now. According to a survey conducted by One Identity, 54% of participants in Australia and New Zealand indicated that cloud infrastructure is more essential than ever before during this health crisis (Knowles, 2020). It has been observed that chiefly Information Technology (IT) and security teams toiled to transform their processes to assist remote working in a secure and monitored framework.

Metrics evaluate team performance in a company in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Data is the set of numbers or calculations gathered for a specific metric. In this data, variables can be actual number of days or average number of days that each team member works. All these performance indicators of employees changed since the pandemic. The companies can

implement online data dashboard reporting to allow the teams to collect data from numerous sources and store it into a single, data dashboard or easy-to-review report. It is a motivational tool for employees and analytical performance management tool for team leaders. By letting employees see their tracked KPIs, it helps the staff to stay on track in achieving their goals.

Keeping in mind the changes wrought in 2020, the strategic business sustainable plan in 2021 is to develop a multi-plan approach with a new understanding. There are different kinds of scenarios such as the current health crisis, continued openings and closings, reopening at a slower pace, remote and on-demand business environments and becoming fully functional again. The companies need to formulate a new timeline for product and/or service development considering the factors that continue to impact the process. The timeframe should be expanded for product and/or service launch in order to make strategic business decisions about labour, marketing and so on.

The company strategy should be focused on potential customers and customer-facing action plan. The organisations need to focus on adding to the value that you render to the customer and those actions should align and assist the revenue objectives. The management needs to carefully assess the marketing plan with the right content that offers access to valuable resources that provide information to customers. It may not deliver immediate revenue considering the pandemic situation but if can be effective in engaging prospects now so people are ready to buy when the situation improves.

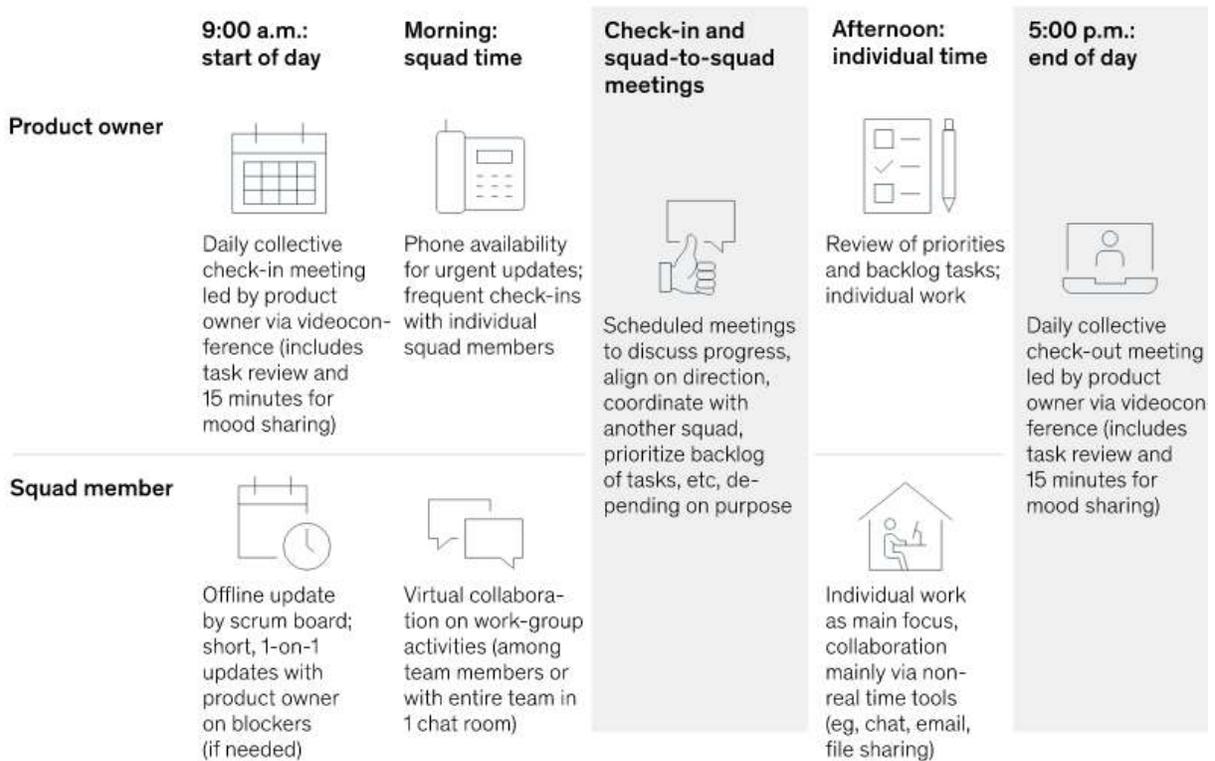
This is the time for business improvement and upgradation with complete digital transformation. This should also include the testing and execution timelines of new technological processes. By doing this now, the organisations are getting prepared for optimal functioning when the business picks up. This will help the management to connect well with the customers and offer better digital experiences that they now expect and are accustomed to in their day-to-day life.

There should be quarterly financial evaluations to help the team meet their growth ambitions and optimize their working capital. The management needs to assess the company's current market position. Create a fact base and then utilize it to form a range of scenarios such as a best scenario (optimistic), a worst case (pessimistic), a momentum environment (continue on the present trajectory) and a probable case (most-likely scenario). Align financial plan with the best actions and moves. Identify trigger points that causes the business to adjust forecasts and adapt financial plans with prompt responses. The main goal is to help the business to sustain through the worst of the crisis than authorize the plan-ahead team to develop future financial plan. Once the worst scenario has passed, there will be suitable circumstances for the management to discuss about the need for change of entire planning process to resume its full-fledged operation. The companies have to rebalance their risk and liquidity while exploring growth opportunities coming out of the economic plunge. The companies need to address short-term liquidity challenges while solving cost and profitability to generate fund for investing in new opportunities.

The need for enterprise agility has increased with high-performing teams called squads (Figure 5) consisting of data analysts, user-interface designers, developers, testers, customer-service specialists and so on (Jadoul, Nascimento, Salo & Willi, 2020). Agile companies can perform better in a crisis because they can accelerate their work and adapt faster in new industry landscapes. Agile teams work well in remote working style.

Figure 5. Agility in the time of COVID-19: Changing your operating model in an age of turbulence (*Source: McKinsey & Company*)

Remote agile workday (illustrative)



McKinsey
& Company

COVID-19 has brought this transition in the work structure in many organisations and the way work is done needs to be reinvented for a long-term sustenance. According to Garter survey, 74% of CFOs plan to implement remote working for employees permanently (Magazine NZ Regus, 2020). It can be deduced that, although businesses are operating from their physical spaces now in New Zealand, there are organisations that see the remote working as a feasible and flexible work culture for sustenance.

Conclusions

Before COVID-19, sustainability was one of the priorities as part of the organisational policies. Post COVID-19, sustainability is no longer a niche entity of a sector. Now all industries are embracing sustainability practices considering the environmental, social and economic risks. There is change in the consumer behaviour because of the pandemic as majority of the consumers are doing their day-to-day activities online. The customers and other stakeholders are rethinking how the businesses are behaving in a crisis. They expect a positive response and transparency in the organisations' information sharing system. The companies have to create excellent digital touchpoints in the entire process of acquiring new customer to retaining the customer loyalty. The organisations can build effective and efficient remote and virtual sales and/or service model to

keep customers engaged. The companies need to have precise brand messages that are stable with organisational values.

Agile business operations with strong and secure alignment of goals, strategies and priorities can lead to teams working independently with less handovers and better work coordination. It can take over 6 to 9 months for the company to redesign, rebuild its processes and improve itself better, faster and be resilient. The sustainable transformation can be an independent initiative or it can be a substantial cost reduction or delayering process with critical focus on enhancing R&D and new product and/or service progress and delivery.

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