LEADERSHIP
SINGULARITY

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HOW MARKETING CAN SAVE THE WORLD

Leadership Singularity

How Marketing Can Save The World

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the first responders, doctors, and business leaders who knew from the start, that the only way to save humanity was for all of us to do our part selflessly and collectively. As long as we are humans on earth, we'll always be "in this together". Hopefully, by the time you finish reading this, you'll be inspired to take responsibility at whatever corporate level you're in to meaningfully contribute to ethical leadership and marketing practices that promote the stability and wellbeing of your community, coworkers, employees and customers.

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NORTHSTAR

Leadership Principles In A Pandemic

This book started as a blog, by author Virginie Glaenzer, that turned into a tweet, that got a comment, that brought together four strangers from entirely different backgrounds just weeks before the worldwide COVID-19 virus drastically changed how humanity conducted commerce, marketing, and corporate leadership.

The authors ***initially*** came together before the pandemic. They aimed to solve the critical question currently plaguing international economies and all human existence: *"How can a global coalition of business leaders build trust, inspire confidence, and expand ethics-infused commerce through innovative marketing strategies?"*

We were seeking to address this issue before the pandemic. When it struck, it only added to the fire within each of us. Interestingly it led to us re-validating our

market research and initial hypothesis in ways that we couldn't have imagined.

In this book, we lay bare a few of the long-held "truths". We unpack some of the evolutionary psychology that led us to our current marketing and leadership practices. We deconstruct the restrictive "scaffolding" that maintains the obsolete system. A system that no longer promotes anything like the social fabric we need for the sustainability of our planet.

The current reality has us all in a frantic search for adaptable and scalable solutions. The authors put the context surrounding the pandemic under a microscope to engineer, improve, and launch a new framework built for the future.

It shouldn't have taken a damn virus to show us just how sick our corporate dysfunction was. Luckily, there's a community of cutting-edge leaders, marketers, and practitioners prepared to provide a cure.

As cultural norms change daily, no government or corporate entity will have all the answers. *Leadership Singularity* offers a new leadership framework and emerging principles through which we can build new corporate strategies that create better companies for humanity.

Our framework won't return business practices to a pre-pandemic state. Instead, it will give leaders the tools

and techniques to empower corporate leadership that can change the future of humankind.

Earth is a place where every species should thrive. It's an incredible place, and we are meant to be well – and with, ethics, morality and practice we shall.

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS THIS EXPERIMENT?

"No matter where you are in your journey, stop and look around. Reflect. This time next year, nothing will be the same." – Mandy Antoniacci

Who was it that suggested that we should never waste a good crisis? When we got together to write this book, we were in the middle of a crisis. Society was at odds with government and business. Nations were at odds with each other. There was a growing polarization of society - and an increase in nationalism fueled by partisan politics and media.

At the same time, we were suffering a significant systemic change in our climate as a result of an uncontrolled use of fossil fuels, unabated population

growth that gave rise to modern manufacturing. Through all of this, we saw an exponential increase in inequality.

And then on top of that came an even bigger crisis: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Every single one of us was affected in some way. There will be many books written about COVID-19. ***This isn't one of them.***

It is about another pandemic, and it offers a remedy. It's hard to avoid clichés such as – "we're all connected" and "we've never had better access to information" – but these are double-edged if we aren't able to counter any adverse effects. Those responsible for how our societies operate have a new responsibility. Between us, we must think more conscientiously and far more long term.

Our world has become a very different place as we have evolved and quite dangerously a result of recent political history. We need divergent thinking, more ingenuity and considerably better leadership if we are to sustain ourselves in the future.

THE PANDEMIC OF MARKETING

The noise from marketing consumes our society. This noise is in a constant battle for our attention. We are now discovering many [mind-bending statistics](#) about the effects of social media on our lives. Social Media is described every day as both "how" and "why" we are infected.

Society has long been fed a diet of misinformation, saturation, and in many cases, overcomplicated information. It's increasingly difficult to avoid the cacophony of criticism. Almost everyone we speak to describes the irritating and irrelevant "marketing" stuff that wasn't asked for and served only to condemn the brand.

Far too often, marketing has been the label given to those in that "department" in effect separated from the business. That has partitioned the expertise so that it's out of reach. Consequently, this has reduced its chance of generating the value that it should. This kind of thinking creates a dangerous boundary. It puts up a wall.

We see the advertising industry decimated. Many commentators suggest it is now all but devoid of the creativity that once caused the sector to shine. The creativity used to have forced creatives to find work in other industries.

Many more businesses are starting to appreciate how each individual is a human being. They are beginning to see the value of considering people as an opportunity for collaboration and value exchange rather than a dollar sign, a number, or a cog in a corporate wheel.

Together, consumers (all of us) have the power to overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic of marketing by voting no to what we don't want. This reality is at the core of how wholesale change can happen. Can you

imagine the collective bargaining power of the consumer together with the commercial might of all business (and the attendant supply chains) being shifted by such a sea-change in business ethics?

Collectively, commercial enterprises have more power than governments. Media owners and marketers have a responsibility to both the businesses who need them and the consumers who consume them. Government stands by and may attempt to remain politically correct but will support a productive economy every time.

Whether consumers realize it or not - they have the power - to vote "yes" or "no" to all of it. Unfortunately, it's not often that everyone comes together in a movement to make a mass change. And imagine if they (we) were persuaded more often as a force for good. Suppose more and more conscientious business leaders with the gift of ethical marketing used that power more often.

It does happen sometimes; but, it's infrequent compared to the extent of change the world needs.

Collectively, and individually, businesses have more power than national governments if they have the will and passion. But beyond that, they will require enlightened leadership. Companies can reshape our lives in profound ways without passing laws or holding elections. The big question is, will they?

Marketing is that last mile. Marketing is the short distance between the product of business and our

attention. Good marketing and leadership have become the same thing - indistinguishable and synonymous in the digital era. The combination of leadership and marketing is what we've chosen to call the leadership singularity.

Imagine enough of this singularity of thought and will in enough purpose-filled leaders. Imagine this power in the right hands. Imagine that power with the right heart and mind. Imagine that power put to positive use and not used to weaponize hatred or promote selfish gain.

WHY ANOTHER BOOK?

In the past, we might have written a business book restricted to the straightforward subject of effective professional practices. Today, a relevant business book must address a more extensive scope and solve the real challenges for which Marketing was born.

The challenge - and increasingly, the opportunity - for business is how to connect big ideas to everyday actions. And in this new world, how to alter beyond recognition the "why" and "how" with the latest science and technology available.

We believe that the immense global problems we face may only be possible for socially responsible businesses to address. They have the power to address these issues directly at their source by thinking and

working differently and at the scale of everyday and individual decisions.

Businesses must work hard to overcome massive barriers that have built up. The words on everyone involved with the strategy's lips is trust. Lousy marketing has destroyed trust for both customers and workforces.

One of the most significant barriers to success is the leaders themselves and the hardest change of all the shift in their mindsets - the attitudes and mentalities, models and ambitions that got us here in the first place.

This book describes a grand vision of what Marketing and business can be and illustrates what these visions could look like in action. It's a wake-up call that Marketing and leadership practices are inextricably linked and critical if the world is to make progress and provide a long-term future for our species.

Based on decades of collective experience, we have written this book in plain language, and we hope it's widely accessible. Our goal is to give hope, insight and guidance for today's leaders - those who want to "market" well and really "lead" in the modern era.

Like never before we see the need to redefine "marketing". It is now, quite literally, a matter of life and death. We've operated for far too long without establishing what a more relevant concept of marketing should be today; and more importantly, how it should be defined for the future.

This book is about how marketing leadership can change the world for the better. Marketing controls the world. **Only marketing can save it**.

CHAPTER 2: WHO IS THE ENEMY?

WHO DID THIS TO US?

That's the typical human response when things are going badly to ask, "*Who did this to us?*"

During the twentieth century, it became abundantly clear that things had gone badly wrong. We needed to know how we ended up here before exploring possible solutions.

Everything was going well. We were in total control. The data showed us progress:

The world is [healthier now](#) than in 1800, when 40% of infants died before reaching the age of five. Now, that number is around 10% and declining.

The world is more [economically fair](#) compared to just 200 years ago when 85% of the world population lived in extreme poverty. Twenty years ago it was 29%. Today only 9% live in extreme poverty while the majority of people (75%) around the globe live in middle-income countries.

The world is more [literate](#) now; and over the last two centuries, literacy rates have spread from a group of wealthy elite citizens to a reality where eight out of 10 people can read.

In the US, for example, 2019 was a thriving year for Americans. The [unemployment](#) rate had been at 4% or less for 16 consecutive months, the longest streak in 50 years and jobs grew for 106 straight months, also the longest streak on record.

We were on top of the world. With only two days for a product to be distributed worldwide, we had become "*fast, efficient, and futuristic*". Yet somehow undetected, a self-perpetuating cycle of greed and consumerism was spreading a human behavior pandemic of its own.

We've watched helplessly as business best practice – trust, creativity, personal development, achievement, marketing, and leadership; all fell by the wayside.

Sadly, the year 2020 has provided humanity with an ironic vision built out of pure hindsight. To the world's chagrin, it has become apparent that the foundation of our situation is very much not under control. What accounts for our failure to translate these concerns into corrective actions? What did we miss, and how could we have got it so wrong?

Marketers and Leaders alike are the frontline practitioners of their trade. They are in the battle for dominance of their markets. They currently exist within an influencer-driven, celebrity fueled capitalistic construct.

Marketers and leaders have been facing off against the following six familiar enemies for years.

ENEMY #1: DATA

We have an unacceptable lack of intangible data.

Historically, marketing has found it quite challenging to evidence its value. In other words, by lacking data and information to establish its position, marketing has been lacking the ability to make its case for delivering value across the organization. But today, marketing is driven by data and backed by research and customer information captured at every stage in the buying process. Deploying techniques that can assess social and behavioral

consumerism leads to smarter tactics. In some cases, the leaders of marketing teams find themselves tempted to tap into addictive strategies.

Without getting too technical, they are using "prefrontal cortex" manipulations that urge the masses to consume – rather than the more subtle, yet thoughtful approaches of integrating coherently into what constitutes "real" value to the customer.

Yet even with all these sophisticated tools, many marketers struggle with the amount of data at their disposal. These are the real-time insights they can access. What's more alarming is that as useful customer information slips through the fingers of marketing leaders, there's a growing movement to restrict corporation's use of the data from the customer end due to the loss of trust.

This lack was painfully evident in Edelman's 17th annual trust and credibility survey, which found that only "[52% of respondents to our survey said they trust business to do what is right](.)".

How can corporations even begin to effectively service customer needs, when this is the starting point? The response metrics are even worse.

By way of illustration:
- Only a fraction of firms can react to online customer interactions immediately – (SiteCore)

- 43% of the reactions happen in the pre-purchase stage, 38% during purchase, and just 35% post-purchase
- 31% of the firms lacked in-house skills necessary to analyze the data and just 12% have data at an individual customer level (vs segment or demographic group)
- 65% of brand respondents' organizations are using digital analytics software, with only 30% planning to adopt it

Still to this day, even in digitally savvy organizations, marketing is stigmatized with the incapacity to provide data, for what is conveniently called "intangible" data.

For example:
- How can you measure the level of trust you apply to a brand when you're walking through a supermarket?
- How do you calculate the causal familiarity that will compel you to put a product in your shopping cart?

Unless marketers can reach a statistically significant correlation through, for example - leveraging an Internet of Things (IoT) strategy, they will not have a full framework for consumer behavior. If this remains the case, we may never be able to capture that information outside of

controlled online shopping funnels. Even then, do we know the psychological data to inform brand loyalty, or have we simply conditioned consumer behaviors conveniently and predictably?

ENEMY #2: SYSTEMS

Our systems are rigged.

Business processes, systems, and procedures are (in many cases) hard coded in the handbook for how an organization works. They are typically designed/engineered by an extensive external consulting practice complete with all kinds of reporting, measurement, and monitoring techniques and capabilities (if they've been compensated appropriately to do so).

Those processes dictate how departments report their functional activity. Once those systems have been established, it becomes difficult for anything other than the prescribed procedures to be changed.

Marketing is now having to report to the Sales and Finance departments in a way which makes Marketing impossible to report on because the system doesn't allow it.

These systems are designed for the primary benefactor – the organization – not the customer.

As an example: a large national bank in the US is trying to offer new financial services in a very competitive market fixed by core banking processes. In the banking

processes, only partial customer data transactions are captured. These data go to external third parties who own the data because that process is hosted outside the enterprise.

The bank has, therefore, lost the crucial transaction data of their customers. The business is now unable to understand the behaviors of the customer journey as it goes through the bank processes. As a result, the Marketing department can't even send an email (or surface mail) to its customers without frustrating and confusing them, because the customer may well have already bought that product from the bank.

To change that system would cost millions. The system is not designed from a customer standpoint, but rather for the customer benefits, and that's true for far too many companies and industries.

Systems are our enemies because they have been allowed to grow weeds, and to create expectations and definitions that are inappropriate and no longer valid as the digital world has transformed the way customers think.

They are designed to move and analyze data at speeds that often hurt their intended purpose. Moreover, they are not able to accurately include weighted metrics to explain the emotional psychology of the customer experience outside of a number scale or emojis without violating some element of needed privacy for the customer.

If the marketing department can't provide the value proposition of needing that data, that core banking system won't change. The challenge, therefore, is to raise the consciousness and enlightenment of the executive leadership to alter their mindset in a sufficient enough way for them to make more intelligent investments.

ENEMY #3: ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN
Our organizational DNA design is broken.
Back in the days when America started to make railroads, the organizational chart was a pyramid, with one guy at the top, and there was delegation, delegation, delegation and more delegation. There was also a pension and expectation of lifelong employment that was rigorously aligned with the coal mine working hours of 9 am to 5 pm.

According to the Dunbar Number, you can't have more than 150 people in your corporate sphere of responsibility because beyond that; one can't cope with the number of connections. Thus, to go above 150 people leads to breaking down a structure into various subdivisions with their leadership, subculture, governance, language, data, and information.

In the digital world, every cross-functional system or process works to ensure interdependence across the organization, which is why transformation is so hard.

To simplify – let's imagine marketing and leadership jointly as the brains of a "corporate body." Now imagine if they could not appropriately identify, communicate, and simultaneously direct the body with efficiency towards a goal. What happens under these conditions is total anarchy and usually results in the downfall of that corporation. We want to avoid these common shortcomings, but how?

The reality we are facing now is from the damage done over decades of business practices that harden cultural flexibility. When organizational cultures are stuck in the past, they resort to unethical means to remain unaltered. Call it irresponsible, lazy, or immoral leadership – it's clear from examples like the [Wells Fargo](#) scandal, that outdated governance and cultural norms contributed to extensive corporate greed. Add to that the predatorial customer practices and hundreds of millions in legal fines from the US government and private citizens. While the company has survived from a business perspective, their trust and reputational prowess have tanked.

This undercurrent of organizational malfeasance is an untenable lack of self-awareness, hidden from leadership, and cloaked in contextless bureaucracy. Business practices like "foursquare" quadrant diagrams and SWOT analyses put everything into neat little and often meaningless boxes to satisfy an attempt at organization excellence. Yet, they will fail due to lack of

application. Humans don't operate like that, and when they're forced to collaborate in the context of an organizational construct, acting as a leading entity is a failing issue because marketing is now indivisible from manufacturing.

ENEMY #4: KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is the real culprit.

What we ***know*** is based on what we ***knew***. That was possibly fine then, but what about now when so much has changed? The context changed so does the reality of what we now know.

Knowledge tends to get in the way. Knowledge emerges through repetitive behaviors fueled by our own experiences and education. Most educated leaders think of marketing as science when the practice is, in fact, closer to art (creativity). MBAs are taught a definition of marketing, which bears no resemblance to the reality of what's needed to do the job.

Most concerningly, even fewer MBA programs include discussions around the importance and application of ethical leadership. Why is that?

Is it because our conditioned corporate ethos has roots in overcoming the odds; thus, it ignores the necessity for risk analysis? Are we afraid to learn that our current value system for business behavior is outdated?

Are we scared to admit that we're simply "no longer with the times" – especially now as it relates to the increased global focus on individual consumerism?

Whatever lagging indicator we think we've captured, one thing's for sure – it's no longer working, and our rate of failure is significantly outpacing our rate of relevant education. What we knew isn't helping any of us.

Is it possible to capture actionable data at the enterprise level that is intelligent and simultaneously aligns with marketing and leadership objectives? What knowledge system have you encountered that can effectively deconflict a set of constantly changing priorities to respond in real-time to a global customer and environmental needs?

Not many come to mind, right? So now take that practical and obvious concern, and then overlay that these systems usually take at least eight months to influence fully – not to mention the internal resources needed to maintain effectively. This rigid, obtuse, and heavy systems-based approach does not encourage the creative capability necessary to syphon real-time data and quickly solve customer concerns – for right now.

Our concern is apparent – our limited knowledge is based on our fixed beliefs, and that prevents us from being creative in a complex world. Whether we call that complacency or enlightenment, somewhere between the two lies our ability as individuals to accept that we know

nothing and therefore must start fresh every day to create responsively.

ENEMY #5: MEANING

Overcoming the age of meaningless.

Our definition of meaning is the sense of something. What is meant or intended? It is the conscious, unconscious, and possibly biased intent behind how we align ourselves and influence others. It's this significance that drives performance. It is also at the core of whatever we're trying to get across to others – to market.

History has taught us as a society that we're capable of making a massive impact if we can convey the right meaning. This impact can be either good or bad, but it's still very dependent on the application. Several key factors influence meaning and why we find them to be problematic.

A false meaning will emerge from a corrupted system. And it will be a force to be reckoned with.

Capitalism is predicated on profits. That's the context in which marketing and leadership models have to operate. The motivations for marketing are almost always to drive sales and reputation, which, in turn, drives more sales. All of this creates a profit-based motive and outcome to deliver a return-on-investment (ROI) for shareholders.

In many cases, this sales machine is guided by false or outdated information. As a society, we love to caution against those curious enough to learn "how the sausage gets made," but maybe this old idiom tried to warn us all along. We've seen many [organizational studies](#) expose how the current system isn't working for those who make it possible. These fissures from within, always find a way to break confidence in the customer experience, which in turn further damages the corporation's ability to establish and market sustainable meaning.

Meaning comes from definition within a context. When the context is a system that values shareholders more than people, marketing and leadership are governed by decisions predicated on profit. When the system is no longer driving sustainable results for the people, and the planet, it becomes ineffective and corrupt.

Take, for example, the [case of WeWork](#) and their recently disenfranchised founder Adam Neumann. The coworking giant created a deceivingly outsized expectation that its definition for the future of work should be rooted in a specific cultural and operational model. As it turns out, the context in which they created this definition was a poisonously self-serving agenda that manipulated EBITDA, investors, and customers.

Billions of investment dollars were dumped into the idea that somehow their proposal would provide for a

sustainable practice. Yet, everything crashed down after Neumann was forced to reveal the unethical underbelly of WeWork's operation that didn't align with their lofty goals of establishing credibility as a workplace of higher purpose.

The context WeWork attempted to create, was based on a false pretense. The subsequent damage has been significant. Competitors have swooped in to take workshare as lawsuits, infighting, and cultural confusion indicators have all validated - that meaning without a contextual alignment is quite merely, meaningless.

If marketing is no longer the growth engine, what is its purpose? Should the core value of marketing be in the context of enlightened leadership – the definition of its practical utility must be to weaponize marketing for good – to support businesses role as purpose-driven and accountable leader.

Therefore, a new meaning would arise for a CEO as being purposeful for whom the standard definition of a purposeful goal creates the purpose-driven organization.

In essence, it doesn't matter what we believe the definition of marketing to be because everyone will have their interpretation. It is, however, the responsibility of marketers or leaders to redefine and rethink the meaning of marketing in our new context.

Enemy #6: Gaming

We've gamed the system.

Gaming the system is manipulating the rules designed to govern an economic ecosystem to gain an advantage over other users, and it has become a widespread practice. It's resulted in a culture that can freely accept known lies, diversionary strategies, misinformation, gaslighting - this pandemic has many names. It breeds a society of stupidity.

As an example, in marketing, black hat SEO methods, such as keyword stuffing, are an attempt to game the search engine's system for ranking websites. Similarly, the actions of patent trolls are an attempt to game the system established to protect the rights of legitimate patent holders.

In the operational structures discussed earlier with divisions, each manager games the system for their ends. With such different attitudes, the leadership at the top of the company can be completely innocent about what's going on inside the organization.

A few years ago, we worked with a pharmaceutical drug company launching a new drug for schizophrenia. What causes schizophrenia is an imbalance in dopamine which goes through our central nervous system and runs up the back of our neck into our brain. Schizophrenia results in individuals losing touch with reality. The same is true of smokers. People who smoke have similar

characteristics common to schizophrenia because half of their brain is telling them that it's okay.

Every habit or addiction we have, whether it's obesity, smoking, or alcoholism is caused by a more or less mild form of schizophrenia. So when the company decided to do both, sell digital cigarettes and the drug that can solve the addiction, for some reason, somewhere in that organization, someone had persuaded themselves that was a right decision based on an irrefutable and undeniable alternate schizophrenia, and that is gaming the system.

Today, many unsatisfied and realistic leaders and marketers are looking for a new game. A game that would allow each of us to start our day by bringing our experiences, making new judgments (without being prejudicial to or ignoring what needs to be done), and result in inappropriate decisions.

This new game is a journey of making decision quality and finding a way to be authentic with the system with values that are beneficial for profits, people, and the planet.

From our traditional leadership model – of a few individuals at the top "feeding" the people – is emerging a new way where everyone is empowered and motivated to do the right thing, more often than the wrong thing.

A FINAL THOUGHT

The six enemies of marketing are, in effect, nested like Russian dolls.

The "enemies" we broke apart above are deeply interconnected and entangled. Each enemy was made more potent by reliance on the other. Understanding this interconnection, we can design a different future.

- By understanding data correctly, we can develop more appropriate systems.
- Armed with systems that use data for more valuable outcomes, we can create and empower more purposeful organizations.
- Organizations that are this dynamic will ensure sound knowledge of a more real-time nature that solves for today's not yesterday's challenges.
- The meaning that emerges will be more compelling and valid and significantly remove the need for harmful and corrosive gaming of the system in the first place.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT BROUGHT US HERE?

Leadership and Marketing in the Age of the Pilotless Plane

WHO'S FLYING THIS THING ANYWAY?

Have you ever woken up from a nap, to hear that lovely message: "*please put your tray tables away and your seats in their full upright position, we've begun our descent, and we'll be landing shortly*"?

It's a great feeling, isn't it? You've been delivered to a destination unconsciously, without a single worry. The question is, did you land at your desired destination? If not, you're looking for the first place to air that grievance

as you solemnly swear to never fly with that airline again. Frustrating is hardly the word, right?

As leaders of the plane, pilots know that diverting a flight plan can have a dramatic impact on the passengers and crew. Those along for the ride have no control over the flight decisions or external conditions. You bought a ticket knowing full well that plans were "*subject to change*" (your baggage may end up in Bermuda as well).

That's where we are today with Leadership and Marketing. We've committed tremendous resources, infrastructure, and brainpower building the internet – humanity's most highly coveted method for transporting new business objectives. The ecosystem expanded, modified, and commercialized to a predictive degree that has seamlessly prescribed our human behavior right into the caring hands of those in charge.

The robots gave us wings, but will they buckle our seatbelts in turbulence? Vast swaths of consumers have been packaged, virtually assigned a seat, autonomously loaded on planes through predictive funnels, moved through cyberspace with behavioral models, artificial intelligence (AI), and avatars. How fast you walk, what vehicle you're in, your search preferences and connections are collated before you even arrive at the gate. We enjoyed this early on; we felt the warm embrace of systems that seemingly knew what we wanted at every turn.

Was Coronavirus the flight detour we desperately needed? We thought that building automation into every aspect of our lives would save us time, money, and pain in every way. Sure life has picked up speed, but was that really "*a want*", or did we mistakenly program it into humanity as "*a need*"?

Is this the point where we lost cabin pressure? Maybe this was the litmus test of the automated system. It failed to get to the heart of the issue. When the robotic receptionist treated us wrong, we cried out for a human to fix the problem. We found ourselves obsessively pressing "0" until we got a customer service representative. There's something instinctual about exclusively entrusting other bipedal homo sapiens to not only field our problem but also help us resolve how we feel. So until AI can reproduce humanity without our input, we're going to need human leaders to help us navigate through it.

Economists eager to calm jittery nerves have advised us that the economy is certainly not heading into a second Great Depression as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The distinction, they tell us, is that while there were fundamental structural problems with the financial system for at least a decade before the Wall Street crash of 1929, there are no such structural problems in the economy today. The fundamentals of the economy are healthy, they say, noting that before the arrival of the coronavirus, we

had enjoyed 11 straight years of growth, the longest bull market in history.

Such advice, along with substantial financial generosity from government agencies, has been sufficient to soothe the stock market. Nonetheless, within this reassurance itself is hidden the fundamental structural problem that poses the greatest threat to the economy. When economists say that "*we*" have enjoyed the longest bull market in history, they are describing people like themselves. For many others, the last decade has been characterized by economic stagnation or even recession.

Enter the leaders, marketers and mavens of modern information. The people who are in charge are the ones who influence what the masses consume across the nation. Humans are resistant to change, as our evolutionary code favors stability and safety. Indeed the lifeforce inside each of us wants to expand and grow – but without having other humans to share in that expansion - are we going where we really want to go? Or are we only mindlessly responding to an automated demand that is spinning our mental wheels in the sand?

Reverting to the time before the virus, we noticed something missing. We asked why our leaders are turning over in [record numbers](#) at our corporations. We were sick of misinformation, unsourced, unscientific, biased, and baseless as it all was. We missed looking into the eyes of someone – to test the empirically intangible emotional

intelligence quotients – a skill we spent millions of years refining in evolution.

Our trust grew weary, our patience thin. We made promises that we would never work for poor leadership again. Many resorted to self-employment, rather than expose themselves to a scenario that only would annoy them.

According to the Pew Research Center, even in the United States where the social safety net is thin and private investment is more prevalent than in many other countries, only 52 percent of families own any stock at all. What's more, most of the families that own stock have small portfolios – a median of $40,000 in the entire U.S. population, and a median of only $26,000 in stock among middle-class households with annual income of between $53,000 and $100,000. Most stock is held by the wealthy. The 1 percent most wealthy American families own 50 percent of stocks. The top 10 per cent owns 84 percent of the available stocks.

For most people, financial investments are a minor part of the economy. They get by on their wages, rather than on dividends. Wages, unlike the stock market, failed to grow at all for the decade after the end of the 2008 recession. Only in 2019 did wages begin to rise.

Alas, can we put all the blame on leaders? Did they not see

this coming? Did they not care to put the human at the center of our fresh and sexy software code?

Then, the unthinkable happened.
A vicious worldwide virus made us shelter in place, separating humanity from in-person interactions, and connecting us only through cyberspace. Ironic that we had all the tools we thought we needed in spades, but in reality, all we really needed was to see another human face.

We lost the pilot, don't trust the robot, and now every piece of crucial [information seems increasingly less credible](#) than we ever could have thought.

Within one month, a quarter of the U.S. population was thrown out of work. As a result of prolonged wage stagnation, many ran out of savings within just a few weeks. In March of 2020, one-third of American families could not pay their rent. Because of a lack of investment in strong healthcare infrastructure, the United States suffered the greatest shock of the COVID-19 crisis so far.

Of course, the problem isn't restricted to Americans. Just as the virus has spread around the world, so has the economic impact. Just as working Americans have taken the brunt of the blow, the uninvested majority of the global population is dealing with trouble that the investors of the world don't have to cope with.

Even as news of this economic suffering spread, stock markets rebounded. The economy of the fortunate

has remained fortunate. For the rest, depression looms large.

Inequality is the fundamental structural problem in the economy that economists have been unable or unwilling to see. Behind this economic inequality, however, rests an even more troubling social division, a gap that has made the blindness to inequality possible. The growing distance between investors and workers reflects a larger estrangement in commercial culture: a chasm between the machinery of financial productivity and the human beings who live and work in the economy.

The severe method of social distancing that has characterized the COVID-19 crisis is not a complete departure from previous practice, but a dramatic amplification of what was already taking place.

Was this the moment of truth? When our faith in leadership gave out? When marketing was exposed as manipulation of those with the loudest shout? Time always gives us the power to look in reverse, the sick trick is now all of us are faced with re-evaluating our belief systems before we end up in a hearse. So for now, we'll call this diversion a blessing – for our regularly scheduled human flight path – but, as always only time will tell if it all adds up after we do the math.

Remote work has been expanding since the 1990s. Remote interactions between businesses and their customers have been on the increase as well, as customer

service counters gave way to customer service call centers that in turn are being replaced by automated telephone service and chatbots.

This growth of social distancing within business has delivered an undeniable growth in financial efficiency. However, this economic benefit has come at a cost: an impoverishment of the human experience of business.

SHOULD LEADERS AND MARKETERS WEAR THE MASK, A LITTLE BIT LONGER?
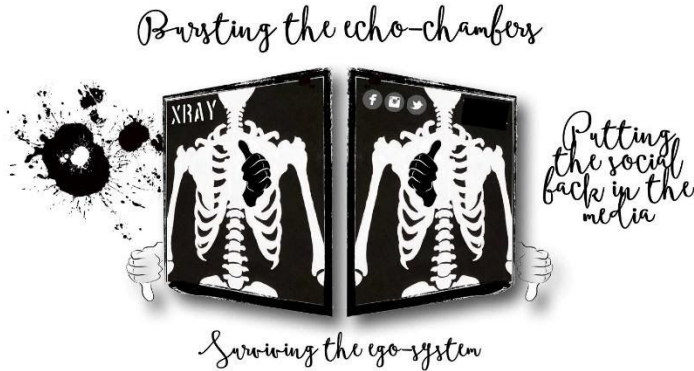
Information was [lost and manipulated](#) as much as our faith in corporate leadership. We were reaching an iteration where virtual approvals, likes, and follows weren't making us better human fellows. We entered a drift. A minefield of information, apps, and dinner choices that caused a rift. In the same room, but miles apart, we failed to blend the advantages of technology into the human heart.

Traditional leadership models built pyramids, promoted pensions, and put people last far too often. Toxicity in the workplace has skyrocketed at a [record rate](#), even at corporations that we once considered to be great. Whether exposed online or sued until they ran out of money and time - the once covetously secure position of

leadership is now more endangered than a tiger at Joe Exotic's Zoo.

Without the human connection that was once at the core of business, trust in brands has withered. The pervasive automation of marketing has led most brands to become mere commodities. The result is a business landscape populated by vast monocultures where once diverse economic ecosystems thrived.

The machine learning that powers business today, both depends upon, and delivers predictability. When times are good, the yield is remarkable. However, as with all monocultures, the system has grown vulnerable to rapid disruption when pestilence arrives.

But wait, there's more.

What was once our primary information system commonly found as a staple on the kitchen table, turned into 140 characters and an emoji of what you see on the barn floor of a stable. Left to our own devices, the masses consumed everything about humanity that we can clearly classify as mindless vices.

The leader's role was becoming less and less critical, and trust was about as reliable as finding treasure in a "Goonies" pirate chest. To simply observe, we got here by going nowhere fast and when Coronavirus came along – it exposed just how long we allowed this mindless,

heartless, and leaderless way to last. **If we remove the pilot, let's see how far we can really fly.**

CHAPTER 4: WHAT ARE THE NEW IDEAS?
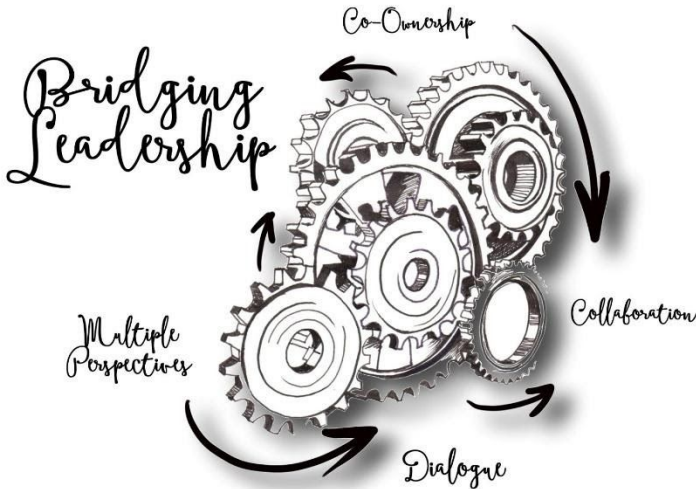
"Sometimes, problems don't require a solution to solve them; Instead, they require maturity to outgrow them." – Steve Maraboli

THE RISE OF THE NEW MARKETER

END OF PREVIEW

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