

# 7 STRATEGIES FOR NAVIGATING INTO THE FUTURE



Creating a path to the future means taking action today.

BY MARK RICHARDSON

I have written and spoken many times about this topic. Today, however, my voice is different. The world has been turned upside down with the health and economic crisis.

How you think about and look at positioning yourself and your company for the future is much different than in the past. Your role as leader is different. Your plans and chess moves are different.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

While I don't have a crystal ball, I believe there will be a future for most of us if we approach it in the right way.

The following are a few themes/strategies to consider as you navigate through these unprecedented times.

1. Redefine 2020 success — This definition is probably not a year of growth and profitability. It may be a year of survival. What would make it successful (through today's eyes)? You need to redefine it and communicate it to others. Is it a breakeven year? Is it keeping your key employees and your client base intact? Or is it just keeping the doors open so you can push the restart button in the future? If you can at least articulate what success is, then you can begin to create a plan and have targeted milestones to aim for and measure.
2. It is time to get scrappy — Scrappy requires really rolling up your sleeves and making things happen. Scrappy puts some processes and systems aside to

just make it happen. Scrappy is hard and unfortunately now 24/7.

3. Proactively communicate with your team, your customers, your suppliers and other alliances as well as your family. It is time to lead. It is time to get real. Try to be transparent but also empathetic. Others may not be able to handle the reality.
4. Think four to 12 months out — Try to imagine a world when it might be more normalized (certainly with many scars and pain). What does that look like? While some current customers may not have cash on hand, they still need product maybe with some creative financing. What do your competitors look like? This is a great virtual discussion topic for your leadership team or family.
5. Cash may be the most important thing right now. Without cash your business may not survive. So, cash is not only a survival element, but it also allows you to position yourself for the future. Make sure you have as much cash set aside as possible. Be sure to collect from all that owe you now. Ask for forgiveness from those you owe with a commitment to pay or make it a loan with interest now. If you have a line of credit, then borrow to the limit and hold/use that money to pay essential bills. Use your credit cards more. Map out a three- to four-month cash plan (worst to best case scenarios).
6. Get better — Now is the time while

you are hunkered down to get better. Make your business better, your communication tools better and your health better. Spend at least 60 minutes a day just devoted to making yourself and your business better (and ask your key team members to do the same). Go back and read the great educational articles in GPN and Big Grower or watch the online webinars at [www.gpnmag.com/edwebinar](http://www.gpnmag.com/edwebinar). Just get better.

7. Believe — If you don't believe, then you will not be able to have a future. What are some themes or adages that you need to revisit? Here are a few to consider:

- "Success is a verb not a noun!"
- "This too will pass."
- "People are your greatest assets."
- "Misery loves company, choose not to participate!"

Begin to build your strategies and tactics off these beliefs to position yourself for the future.

In closing, while I too am anxious, I am also fired up about getting out there and "making it happen." ■

Mark Richardson is an author, speaker, columnist and business growth strategist. He has written several books on business management including "How Fit Is Your Business?" and "Fit to Grow." His latest book is "Control Your Day Before It Controls You: The 7 Steps to Mastering Your Time." All of his books are available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). He can be reached at [mrichardson@mrichardson.com](mailto:mrichardson@mrichardson.com).

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