



EMBRACING CHANGE AND NURTURING A SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Abstract

The current pandemic situation has been disruptive to the economy but however, on the other hand has enabled the customer to leverage the technology and experience the convenience of a technology enabled business model for safe, secure product delivery. This sudden change in customer behavior has enabled many businesses to look at this potential opportunity area to venture into the digital journey for future.



Adapting to the change

Supply chain businesses have gone through strategic business model changes, with some players leveraging the pandemic situation to adapt to the increasing demands. At the same time, many are still hostile in adapting to the changes in the demanding market due to huge investment requirements unravelling with uncertain times ahead. Business models had to go through dynamic changes while new product lines were produced to support the

customer demands. Regular production lines have had huge impact with the restrictions imposed by the governments to supply products based on need (essentials, non-essentials) and workforce availability. Technology led innovations and models for seamless business necessitated huge investments to adapt within a short span of time.

A sudden change to any business model is not possible given the magnitude of

the impact the pandemic has on the business environment. Companies are currently going through predicament as cost pressures from all relevant stakeholders pose challenges to the prevailing business situation. The current situation demands companies to address the business environment challenges and invest in enabling digital technologies to cope up with the demands.

Digital enablement – a necessary requirement

The need to enable digital technologies today is required more than ever for organizations willing to stay abreast in the competition and to tide with the opportunity due to changes in customer behavior. Businesses today constantly have to innovate and be visible both physically and virtually to ensure their customers are serviced around the world. Businesses struggling to supply products and services to the end-customer with predictability will eventually lose their market share. Outlined below are a few of the key expectations from an end-customer's perspective:

- **Physical stores and e-stores**

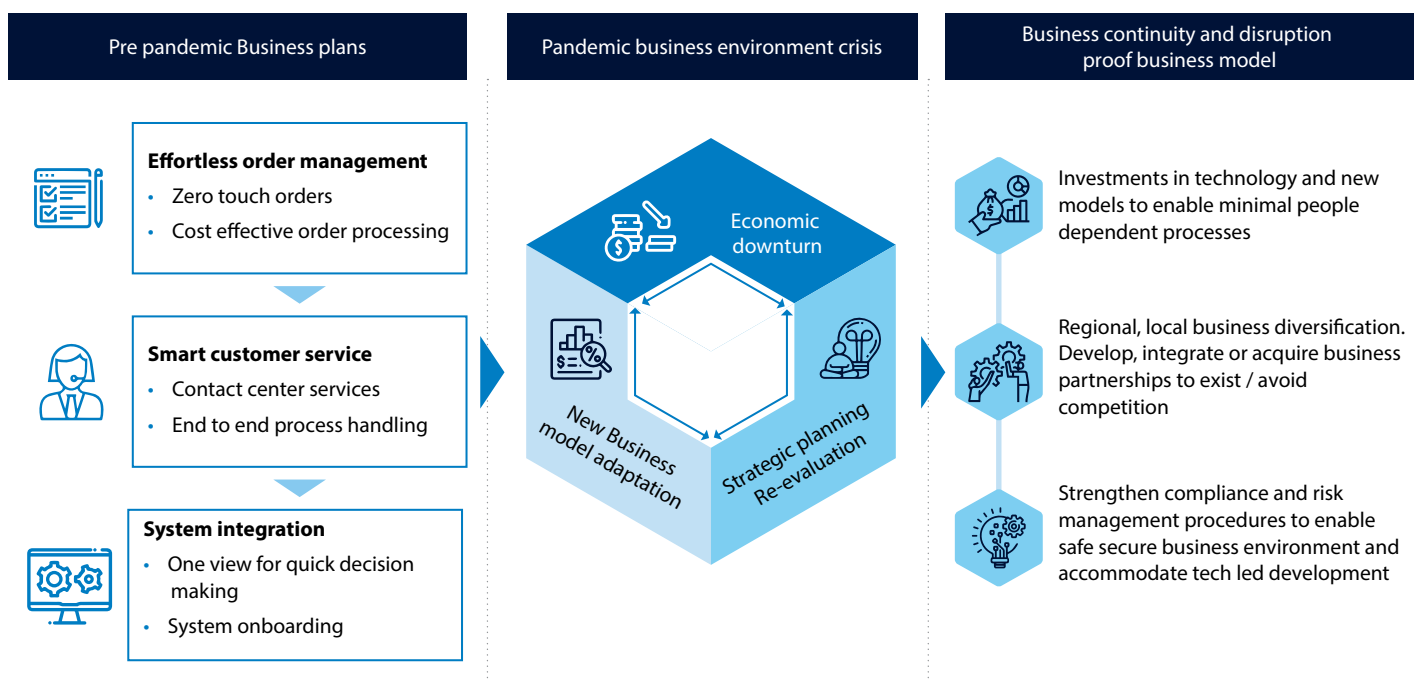
availability: Businesses should look at the opportunity to enable both physical stores and e-stores, by

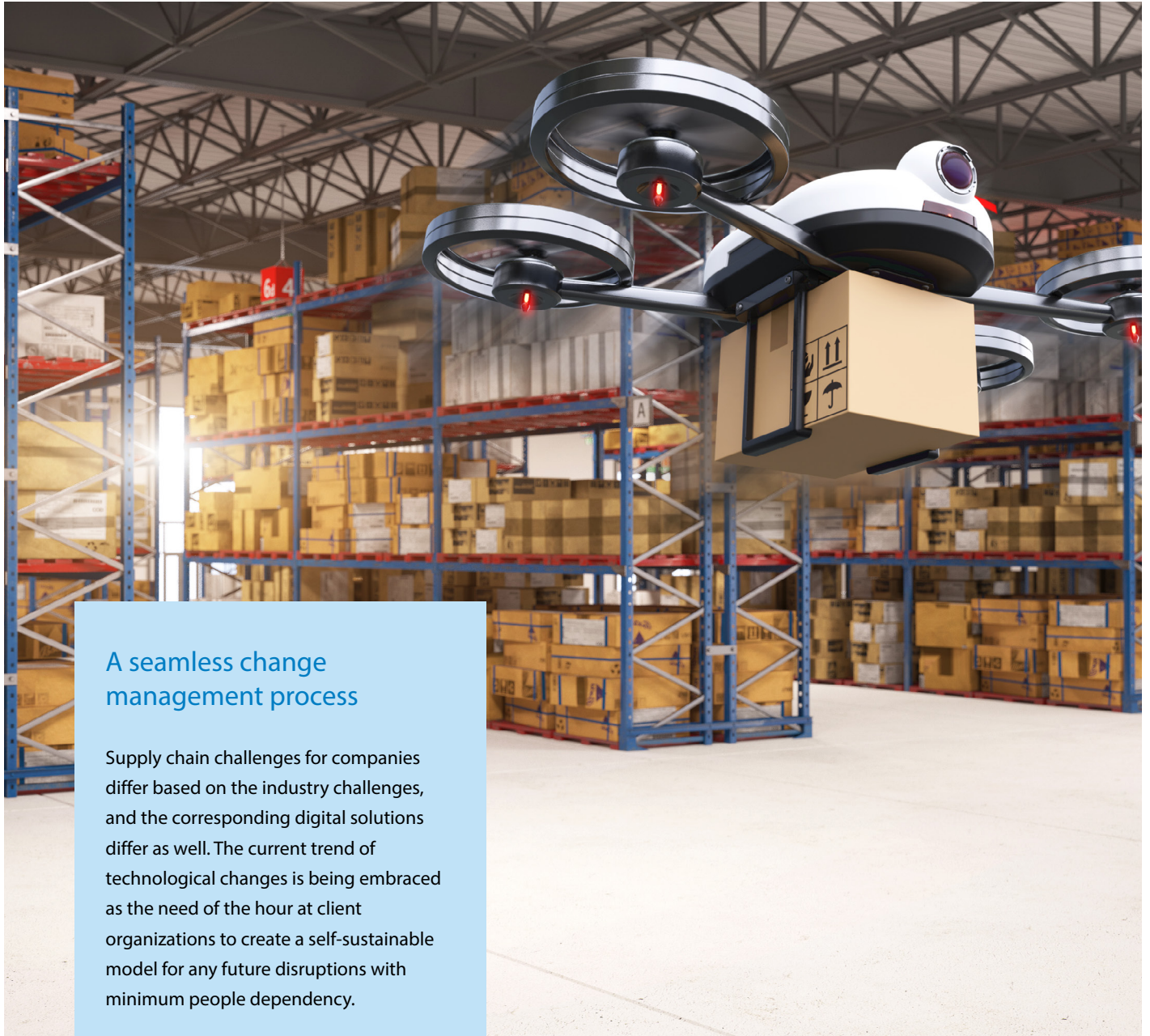
- partnering with local business providers to enable a consistent supply of products without any interruptions
- creating direct order placements by enabling own stores (estores) and keeping proximity with the end customers

- **Presence across all digital platforms:** Business should create a wide social media presences and secure tools that can enable them to be connected to the end-customers in real-time, which will further enable them to get better business insights and real-time customer connect
- **Investments in technology-lead differentiations:** Businesses need to leverage digital solutions such as process automation, artificial Intelligence, and machine learning capabilities, both at the production and services front, to reduce manual work and create a smart environment with minimal defects



Current business situations and business continuity model





A seamless change management process

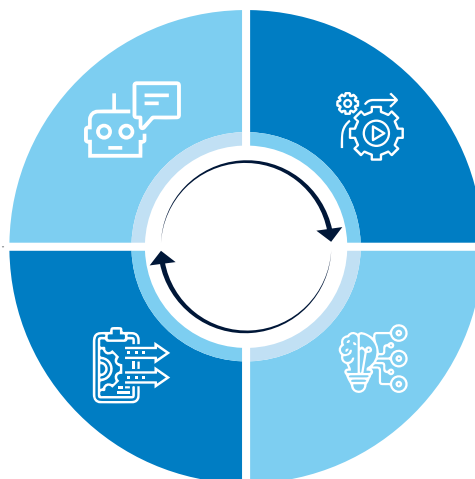
Supply chain challenges for companies differ based on the industry challenges, and the corresponding digital solutions differ as well. The current trend of technological changes is being embraced as the need of the hour at client organizations to create a self-sustainable model for any future disruptions with minimum people dependency.

Chatbot services

Providing virtual assistance leveraging bots round the clock for issues requiring minimum decision making

Geospatial information systems and Data Analytics

Product and services to incorporate location intelligence into business models. Spatial data and big data Analytics



Automation, Machine Learning and Artificial intelligence

Identify redundant work requiring minimal / no manual intervention and automate the processes both at manufacturing and services front.

Digital presence and IOT

opportunities to do business seamlessly with clients \ Users with the help of technology. *Social media presence, e-store application, cloud services, mobile.. Etc*

While the economic disruptions have businesses strive through the toughest of situations, a huge investment in technology would only be feasible with an environment suitable to adapt the technological interventions. Timely actions would ensure retaining the market share and getting ready to deal with the new competition. Two major areas of quick technology implementations with the required environment to assist business through the current situation through enhancement are - customer services process and order management process leveraging IT/ITES service providers. Given below is an illustration of incorporating new age technology innovations into the services.

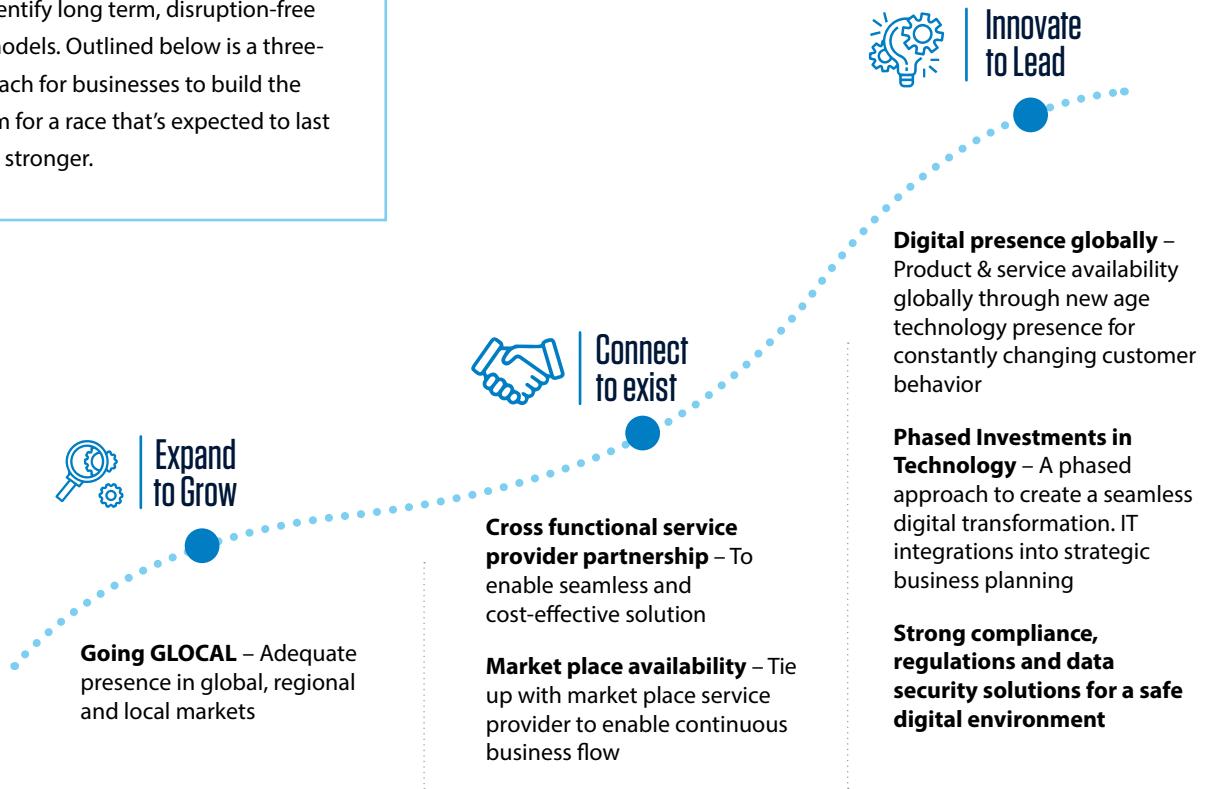
Big companies have proactively started supporting their vendors and enabling them to up the game by providing financial support to create smart environments that help connect better with the customers. Amazon for example has provided financial aid for its marketplace vendors to ensure business continuity.

Zoom had risen to 300 million users where companies had used the video conferencing service to connect with all their stakeholders. Going beyond the product market, the service had more than 90,000 schools across 20 countries using the app. WhatsApp Business had introduced a range of new features to help businesses and consumers connect via the app. Instagram has been testing its Shops Tab with a small pool of global users. As per the reports from a business application research company, customers spent over \$23 billion in app stores in Q1 2020 alone. This spend indicates to the businesses on the readiness of the end-customers to experience and welcome the digital connect.

Large technology companies, including Amazon, Flipkart, Google, Pine Labs, as well as emerging businesses such as Jumbotail, Khatabook, ShopX, Dunzo and Bounce, have moved faster to offer technology-backed sourcing, supply chain, financial services and value-added services to strengthen digitization.



The demanding situations have enforced the businesses that lack the digital environment, to evaluate their needs thoroughly in order to identify long term, disruption-free business models. Outlined below is a three-step approach for businesses to build the momentum for a race that's expected to last longer and stronger.



Conclusion

Every challenging situation spawns a set of opportunities to embrace, and all opportunities generate a set of respective challenges to overcome. While a disruptive market allures quick decision making to address the situation at hand, there are also possibilities of a downfall. It's important for businesses to invest in technology-led innovations during the crisis. However, a well thought through approach with a long-term view is imperative to gain during unfavorable times. Challenges are different for every business and function, and the dependency on external factors are higher to acquire the investment benefits. Change in market dynamics and customer behavior are inevitable, and businesses who are ready to embrace the change will survive adapting to a model that is future-ready to face any challenges. This situation calls for greater collaboration with partners and service providers who can enable supply chain companies to overcome challenges and resurrect their business by adapting to new digital technologies and customer behavior.



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Mothiraj has over 18 years of experience spanning across customer service, operations management, training Center of Excellence, and solution design.

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Mothiraj holds a bachelor's degree in business management and a post graduate diploma in business administration.



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Lakshmanan has over 18 years of experience in the BPM industry with extensive domain and delivery experience in supply chain, order management, and customer service. In his current dual role, he heads the Infosys BPM Chennai DC, and is the Delivery Head for key supply chain and order management accounts at Infosys BPM.

In his core operations journey, Lakshmanan had the opportunity to set up offshore delivery locations for some of the fortune 500 companies from the base levels to building a successful long term relationship, encompassing all stages of outsourcing. He has also dealt with various business continuity challenges over the years and has been successful in mitigating risk for all stakeholders he had the opportunity to work with.

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