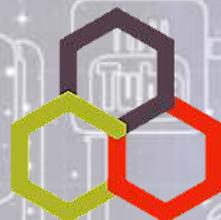


How to Survive and Thrive in a Virtual World



Scale Your Sales

Janice B Gordon

How to Survive and Thrive in a Virtual World

Just last week, my neighbour, whom I have known for many years, had been acting very erratically and was taken into hospital. You must keep vigil over your own physical and mental energy.

Put your own mask on first!

Then keep watch over your family, colleagues, and clients; these are the people on whom you depend and who depend on you.

On a global scale, there are three forces of change: economic downturn, preference behavioural shifts, and digital acceleration, factoring in that the COVID-19 pandemic will likely become endemic. A truly post-pandemic world may be out of reach for several years yet and impacting how global commerce and behaviour are conducted.

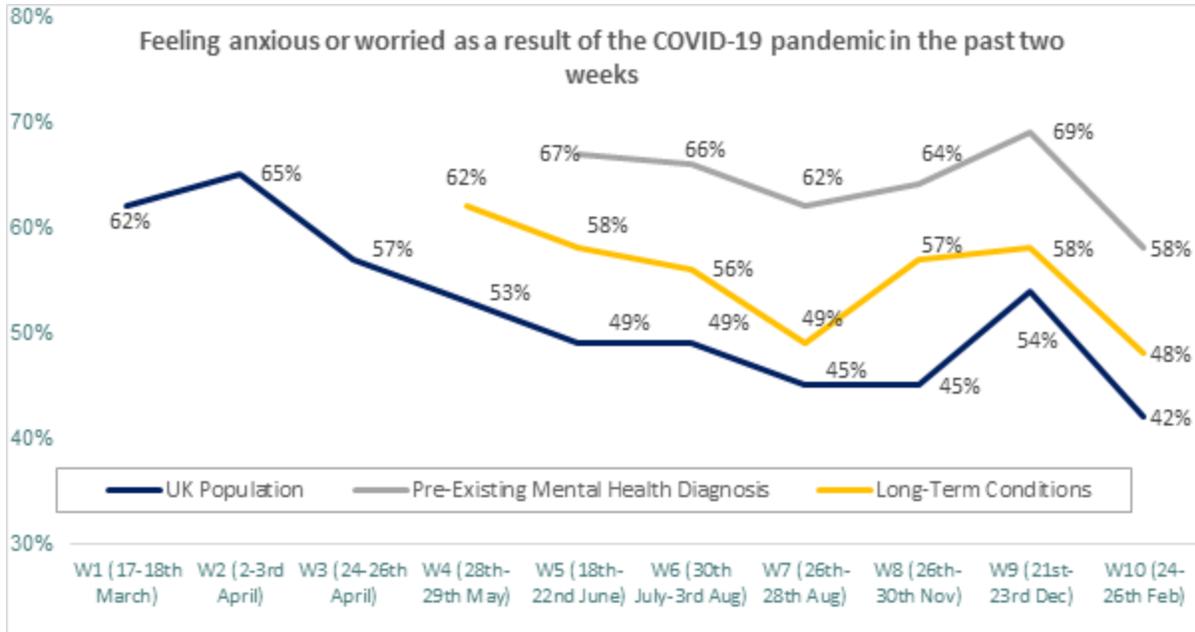
There is still optimism for growth in the South Africa, UK, United States and European markets to cause radical changes in buying behaviour.

If we shift to a micro-level business is quite simple, there is **you**; there are your **colleagues** and your **clients**. This eBook will look at:

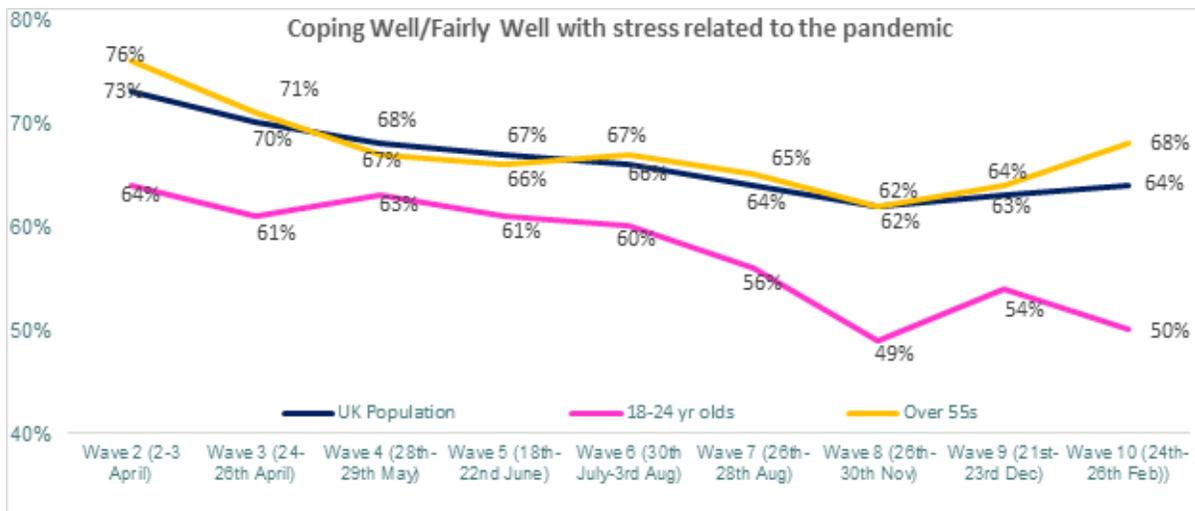
1. How YOU manage yourself to remain mentally and physically energized in an environment take can drain the life out of you.
2. How you can support Your Colleagues to focus, in an environment of many distractions.
3. How you can close the gap on what Your Clients want and expect.

Some Sobering Context!

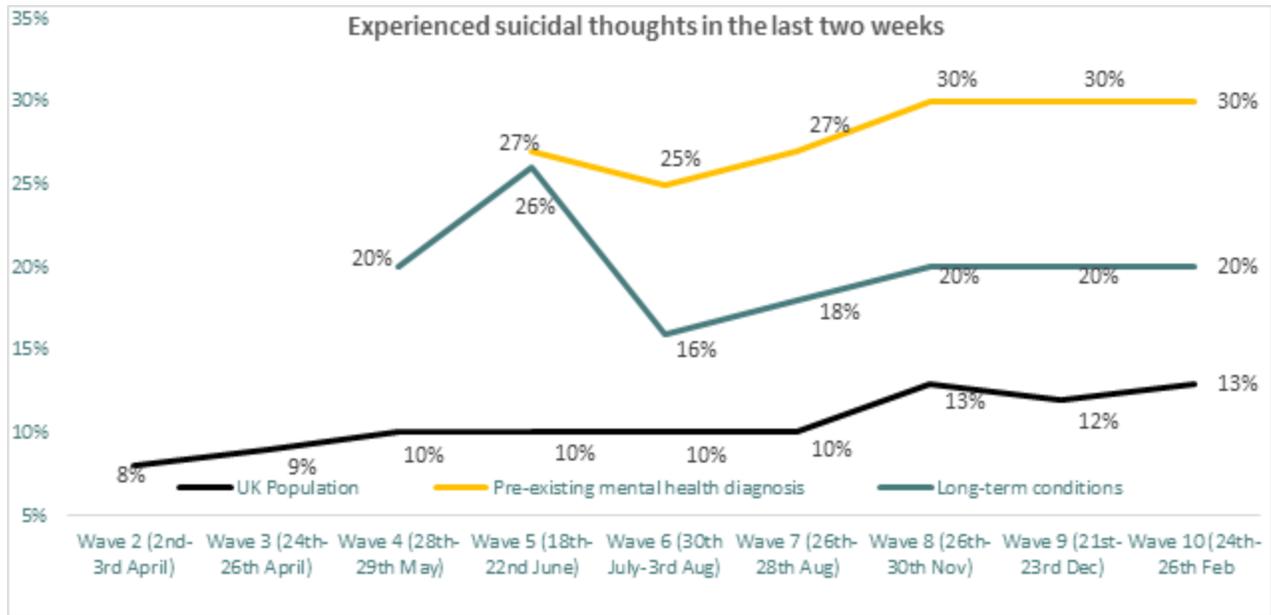
1 - Anxiety and worry due to the stress of the pandemic has declined significantly from 62% in March 2020 to 42% in late February 2021



2 - Resilience - In addition, young people (18-24 years old) report consistently lower coping levels than the general population (64% in April 2020 dropping to 50% in February 2021), whereas older people (55+) record slightly higher coping figures albeit still a downward trend (76% in March 2020 to 68% in February 2021)



3 - Across the UK population, 8% of adults surveyed in April 2020 said they had thoughts and feelings about suicide in the previous two weeks. However, this has risen to 13% in February 2021. Figures have been consistently higher across the pandemic for people with a pre-existing mental health condition (30%), those with a long-term physical health condition (28%), people who are unemployed (28%) and young people aged 18-24 (28%). 7% who said they experienced these thoughts said they experienced them once or more a day or more often.



I want you to take away that you must put your own oxygen mask on first and be vigilant in managing your emotional and physical health. You must be prepared that many more of your colleagues and clients may be going through turmoil and may not recognise all the ramifications on their business, and you must go the extra mile.

The prolonged economic and psychological lag that may affect you, your colleagues, and your clients. In a virtual world, there is no separation of personal and professional, one is dependent on the other.

1. How YOU Manage Yourself to Remain Mentally and Physically Energized in An Environment Take Can Drain The Life Out of You.

Why are you so tired after virtual meetings?

So much of what we do is online conferencing, so I am sure some of you have experienced 'Zoom fatigue.'

You may be aware that focusing on a screen for long periods can cause eye strain.

Are you aware that when looking at ourselves, speaking on a video screen, and observing ourselves up close, can also lead to additional self-criticism?

As social beings, we are well-trained to read and interpret non-verbal body language during in-person communication unconsciously. However, when on the computer in this two-dimensional space, our brains must work harder to identify non-verbal cues.

The 'gallery' views on-screen that displays multiple meeting participants can add to the brain drain, as this forces our brains to decode and observe many people and stimulus simultaneously.

Multiple alerts can also pop up on-screen, including email and messaging, which adds to the strain with multi-tasking. It is mental overload and tiring, so help yourself and turn off all alert as much as you can to FOCUS.



Actions

Forever intense hour, take ten minutes to walk away - I am in my garden studio office, and my ten minutes is walking into my house to get a coffee or check the post.

When I present for an hour, I go out for a walk to the Park before getting back to other work.

If I deliver a 2-hour workshop, I will need to take the rest of the afternoon off to replenish my energy.

I am a visiting fellow of Cranfield School of Management and co-facilitate in 4, 5 or 6-hour client sessions over three consecutive days on Zoom; I will then plan three days of re-energising activities to manage my energy.

Why Is Personal Energy Management So Important?

We live in an energy-draining world, and your job is to manage your energy. You might not have the office energy-sucking person around you, but you do have the unavoidable energy-draining virtual World. The skill of maintaining and even optimising our energy is a crucial factor of personal and professional success. Without it, you cannot focus and engage in the tasks you need to progress in your work and life.



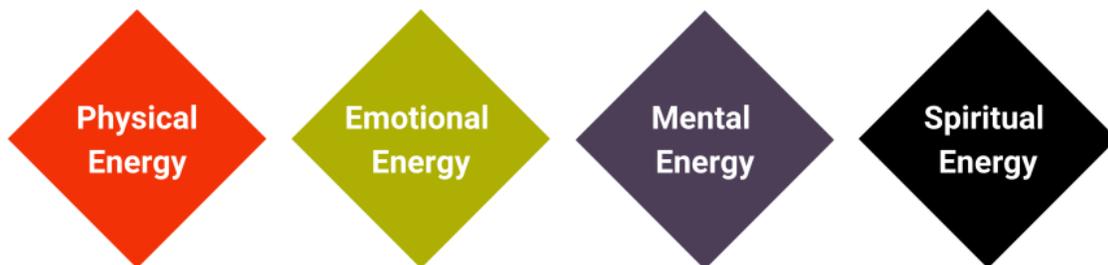
Four Energy Dimensions.

1. Physical energy is the energy created by the nutrients and oxygen that you put in and help circulate through your body. Physical energy is optimised when we generate a repetition between exercise, stress, and recovery. Recovery is also an essential aspect of an exercise programme because it allows the body time to repair and strengthen itself in between exercise, with improved psychologically benefits.

2. Emotional energy your connectedness with others affects your quality of emotional output. Even when you do not intend it, this energy is seen and felt by others. Whether positive or negative, your energy has a restorative or draining effect on others, and isolation is bad for emotional energy.

3. Mental Energy is associated with your mental processes like thinking, problem-solving, and decision making and dramatically impacts your optimal thinking ability.

4. Spiritual Energy is your purpose and passion that dramatically influences your character and values. When you understand your purpose and seek to make a meaningful impact on others, spiritual energy can be a significant driving force in your life. Spiritual energy has a substantial effect on all other energy dimensions. Purpose helps you set a direction and maintain your motivation with the discipline to achieve the goal. Personal life energy is not the emotion of being super happy; it is the healthy balance of being energised to achieve your goals.



The Benefits of Exercise

Many of us know the many physical benefits of exercise: weight control, lower blood pressure, reduced risk of diabetes, and increased energy. However, the psychological benefits also reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety and sharpen memory.

Exercise is a scientifically proven mood booster that helps depression and anxiety as physical activity boost endorphin, the body's famous "feel good" chemical. Doctors are now prescribing a walk in the Park before medication.

Exercise that increases your heart rate can reverse stress-induced brain damage by stimulating the production of neurohormones. This not only improve cognition and happy mood levels but improve thinking clouded by stressful events.

Losing weight and increasing muscle tone increases self-esteem and self-confidence.

You sleep better helped by exercise regulating your circadian rhythm, our bodies' built-in alarm clock that controls when we feel tired and alert.

Cardiovascular exercise creates new brain cells, a process called neurogenesis that improves your brain performance. It prevents cognitive decline and memory loss by strengthening the hippocampus, the brain responsible for memory and learning, and physical activity is proven to boost creativity and mental energy.



Action:

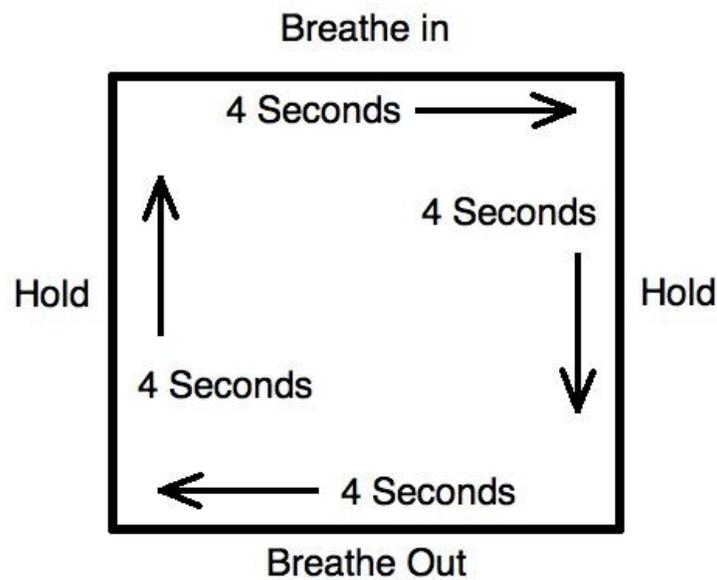
Find an exercise you can consistently practice.

Practice Box Breath Exercise

This is something I do if I deliver a Keynote, needing to have a difficult conversation or just feeling anxious or nervous.

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold your breath for 4, and breath out for 4, then hold for 4.

Often, we breathe shallow and not aware that we are depriving our brain of oxygen, which is why we are anxious. Focusing on the breath and creating the space to calm and regulate the muscles, the breath and helps us to breathe in deep fresh oxygen and reboot the mind and body.



As much as these strategies are good for you, they are also good for your colleagues.

2. How You Can Support Your Colleagues to Focus, In an Environment of Many Distractions.

In the current environment, we are learning many valuable lessons about dignity and what it means to be seen and fairness. To be open and stand with people who may need someone to stand with them. In my book, Business Evolution, helps you identify your core values, and how you are going to show up as a human for other humans?

In a survey by Buffer, 98% of surveyed workers want to have the option of working at home at least some of the time for the rest of their careers, and 75% of employees feel that they have been more productive working from home.

Three types of distance, physical, operational, and affinity distance. Affinity distance has become far more prevalent since March 2020. Affinity distance is the level of familiarity and commonality a team has—the greater the distance, the less cohesion in a team, which reduces productivity.

Disconnecting from work and personal life blurred boundaries makes it more difficult for many colleagues to unplug and disconnect from work and working from home takes its toll on family life and home in work life.

Although there are many benefits of working from home, there are also many more distractions. Such as easy access to social media, household chores, the fridge, ambient noise.



Story

I have worked from my home base for over ten years. I live in a terrace house built in 1890, so no cavity space between the walls, one of my neighbours has three children, the Husband shouts, so the children shout, and the little prodigal son thinks he is a girl like his sisters and just screams, I mean all day. Before I built this studio last summer, I was going a little stir crazy, especially when I was trying to record and deliver online presentations.

Your colleagues may find it hard to concentrate on the job at hand or suffer a lack of self-discipline of the office environment.

Action:

Leaders must support and inspire healthy habits by holding and encouraging mobility breaks, enabling with technology and perhaps meditation sessions, virtual group yoga and mental wellness or mindfulness training.

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a wonderful coping and thriving strategy for you and your colleagues working from home. Mindfulness entails paying attention to what is occurring in the present moment. It is shown to lead to enhanced self-regulation of attention in three ways:

1. By facilitating psychological detachment from work (bridges the affinity distance)
2. By improving attention to work tasks (reducing distraction) and thereby improving performance; and
3. By allowing colleagues to better manage and recover from Zoom or screen fatigue.



The Practise of Mindfulness Leads to:

- The anchoring of attention to the present moment.
- The better allocation of attention or focus with competing demands and distractions.
- The more economical and efficient use of cognitive resources.

Ensuring that their colleagues sustain productivity while maintaining enhanced wellbeing is a crucial responsibility of leaders, and here is how:

- Set clear goal, objective, and priorities, clearly communicate to your colleagues which tasks are top priority and demand first attention. This allows colleagues to use their energy more efficiently by focusing their attention on important work rather than busywork.
- Educate colleagues on how mindfulness can help and share the mindfulness techniques. Let your colleagues know how they can get confidential professional help and what other organisational resources are available.
- Provide space for colleagues to do a quick mindful check-in with themselves or discuss the challenges they are facing in group meetings and encourage discussion. Make participation optional.
- Make yourself available to listen without judgement in your regular 121s. Have a mindful check-in to discuss challenges and review how they feel they are progressing.
- Schedule out of hours emails as this can cause stress, as colleagues may feel compelled and pressured to respond right away.
- To avoid Zoom fatigue, encourage speaking over the phone as an option when not developing relationships. Avoid scheduling back-to-back virtual meetings.
- Encourage the sharing of team insights and success and cross-training of in-company insights. If someone has a particular skill or success story, share it.

Skill sharing workshops provide colleagues with an opportunity to talk about topics they enjoy or skills that they have. Cross-training is a way people learn new skills and develop a deeper understanding of the workflow or end to end customer process. It is also a great way of building relationships across and outside of the immediate team.

Story

A colleague and I often deliver 90-minute interactive sales team kick-off trainings. It sets the cross-functional team on a positive path, helped them gain new tools, and the interaction got them engaged with each other.

Action:

Team meeting should not be all work but create engagement and inject fun, bridging the affinity distance.

Whatever you thought you knew about buying behaviour in 2019 is out of date in 2021. We have covered a decade of digital adoption in days. Behaviour changes are not linear, and their stickiness (Adoption) will depend on how satisfying the new experiences are for your clients. The truth is with the advancement of technology, it is the soft skills that are the fundamental skills.



3.How You Can Close The Gap on What Your Clients Want and Expect.

You do not get to go to the gym once, and then you are in shape for the rest of your life! The same thing is true for a learning mindset; you must be curious and open (ready) and poised for change because change is constant for you and your clients.

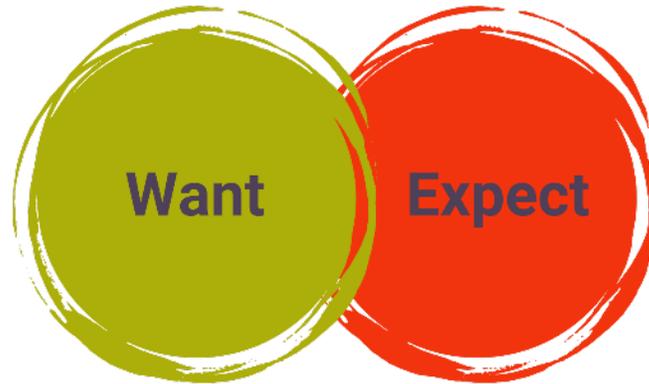
Technology has accelerated behavioural change in all aspects of life and work. The distance between B2B and B2C is negligible because we are talking about human-to-human behaviours.

We are now comfortable with telemedicine, I do not know about you, but I never want to sit in a doctor's surgery ever again. These and many more behavioural changes will reshape consumer decision journeys, and firms will need to adapt fast.

How to Survive and Thrive in a Virtual World

What has not changed is that clients do not want to hear about your company and what it does. Clients only want to know how your service will help them through this unusual time. Your clients want to experience that you care.

Tapping into your clients' pain points through your marketing can build an emotional connection between them, you, and your service. Now is the time to cement connections and build trusted relationships.



Your clients are measuring your success through the digital experience lens of emotion, effort, and result, thinking:

1. How did it make me feel?
2. Was it easy to achieve my goal?
3. Did I get the result I required?

Having spent a year fully immersed in the digital environment they have no tolerance for difficult interactions, if you can demonstrate empathy, efficiency with entertainment you will win on loyalty.

Delivering consistent results is based on your capabilities and strength so assess what this is and make it the cornerstone of your business.

- Your customers' experience must be hassle-free and seamless.
- You must allocate resources in line with a multi-touchpoint journey and increase your digital engagement.
- You must develop a connected customer-relationship-management system to win in the loyalty stakes consistently.
- You must become buyer-aligned to creatively walk alongside your clients as they tackle unmet goals and issues.
- You must approach every digital experience with a human-centric approach remembering that there is a client at the end of it.

69 % of buyers are willing to pay more for a more personalization experience. Building relationships through virtual means is essential, think of your marketing to key customers as one to one conversation. Develop your marketing tactics that make sense for a more advanced digital world, using social media marketing and email marketing with video, and do not forget the phone.



Why is Social Media an Essential Part of Your Sales Methodology?



75% B2B buyers & 80% of executives' buyers use social media to make purchasing decisions (IDC study) & are more influential, have larger budgets & buy frequently.



72% of Twitter followers are more likely to purchase from your business after an online engagement. (Shopify)



31% of B2B sellers said social Selling allowed them to build deeper relationships with their clients. CSO Insights and Seismic



Social sellers attract 45% more opportunities (LinkedIn)

If you want to accelerate your results in a digital and virtual world then engage and nurture your clients online, this means mastering social.

Scale Your Sales Framework



I developed the Scale Your Sales Framework to help companies modernise their sales methodology, focus on retention and customer growth strategies, and build strategic relationships into profitable partnerships.

One element of the Scale Your Sales Framework is created to accelerate online client Attraction, this is Engage, Educate and Elevate your client relationships.

Scale Your Sales 7 Strategies to Engage Your Client Effectively Online

1. Who Are Your Most Valued Customers?
2. Define and Optimise Your Personal Profile for Sales.
3. Understand Your Audience Better Through Social.
4. Engage and Connect with Personality.
5. Create Visibility Through Content that Engages and Educates.
6. Turn Social Conversations into Sales Opportunities.
7. Create a Social Selling Customer Growth Plan.

The success of these strategies is based on knowing your client well enough to anticipate their wants and needs.

Understanding Your Key Clients Better:

- Their business and personal goals.
- Their biggest problems/challenges.
- What they value, their why.
- What sets them apart.
- What prevents them from accomplishing more of what they want?
- Understand their psychographics.

I love social media access to information; it is listening to your neighbour and not getting caught. **Social listening** allows brands to track, analyse, and respond to conversations on **social** media. You can use social listening for more profound social media audience research. Monitoring relevant keywords and hashtags reveal what interested people are saying about you and your competitors online.

Action:

Create a persona of your ideal key clients, identify who they are and interview your favourite clients for targeted feedback. Listen intently to what they say and how they say it, record their language; these real-world words are what you use in your marketing material. Understand their preferences, their ambitions and lifestyle. Talk to them about your new services and co-create, ask whether your existing processes work for them? An essential final question is asking them, "how they feel about what was discussed?"

Action:

Focus on responding to what is their desire and what they value. Service the need of want is relevant, valued and not fulfilled. Some of these things could result in additional work through the expansion of scope and services. Others might be nice things you do to help your client get closer to their goals. Either way, focusing on what they value is going to help strengthen your relationship with your client.

Potential and existing customers are online, so you must be visibly engaging online with consistency. Content marketing is low-cost and can produce an ROI that is three times higher than traditional marketing. Make it relevant and personalised to whom you are engaging, building on what will help them to move forward.

How to Survive and Thrive in a Virtual World

This eBook looked at the three forces of change: economic, behavioural, and digital acceleration, and a significant catalyst for this change is the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can get lost in macroeconomics, none of which can you or I change. However, when you look on a micro level; you, your colleagues, and your clients; you have infinite scope to influence and make a difference.

There is a shift towards more meaningful experiences because of the dynamic changes in behaviours and all this is within your influence with the digital experiences you create and deliver.

You must put your own mask on first and show you care.

Because people do business with people that they know, like and trust and in my experience, people like those who help them move forward in their goals.

This is by showing up in the virtual environment and being present.

Summary of Takeaways:

- Put Your Own Mask on First.
- Personal Energy Management.
- Benefits of Exercise and Box Breath
- Colleagues and the 3 Distances
- Benefits of Mindfulness
- Buyer and Client Behavioural Shifts
- Engage Your Client Effectively Online
- Gain Targeted Feedback.

References

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How to thrive in a virtual world wellbeing

Article: <https://www.clarityleadership.co.uk/blog/developing-your-culture-virtual-world>

About the Author



Through the 1990' I worked in sales for a customer experience consultancy in 2005. Then in 2006, I started and grow a restaurant and bar employing 20 people, winning awards every year over establish businesses, using email marketing and Facebook to keep our customers engaged. This was when I realised the power of social media.

I am the author of **Business Evolution Creating Growth in a Rapidly Changing World**. I have managed my social capital actively and was awarded #25 of Sage Top 100 Global Business Influencer in 2017. Recommended by LinkedIn Sales as 15 Innovating Sales Influencers to Follow in 2021. Listed as the Top 50 Global Thought Leaders and Influencers on Customer Experience (Nov 2020) and 150 Women B2B Thought Leaders You Should Follow in 2021. I am a Consultant, Speaker, Trainer and Facilitator. Known as, The Customer Growth Expert, I host **Scale Your Sales Podcast and Framework – Reimagining Revenue Growth Through Customer Excellence and Sales**.

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