



THE NEW NORMAL IS COMING! THE NEW NORMAL IS COMING!

By Tim Kennady



How-to-Prepare-Your-Concrete-Polishing-or-Cutting-Company-for-“The-New-Normal”

Aren't we kind of late for preparation? Isn't this like preparing for pregnancy in your second trimester?

10-Secrets-to-Surviving-the-New-Normal-in-Concrete-Polishing!

10 Secrets? How numerically convenient.

What's your “new normal”?

Post-crisis-concrete-polishing-and-epoxy-business-models.

This one might be the closest one yet, but it continues to perpetuate a terrible myth.

What exactly is meant by “the New Normal”? We hear it thrown all around. Heck - I used it numerous times, until one day, it was said back to me and I immediately rejected it. NEW normal? What was my OLD normal? And why am I supposed to mourn its death? WHY did I allow my business to even have a ‘normal’ that did not include evolving and adapting as part of its natural ethos?

According to Wikipedia, and marginally modified for context of this article; “A new normal is a state to which an economy, society, etc. [YOUR COMPANY] settles following a crisis, when this differs from the situation that prevailed prior to the start of the crisis.” That’s actually a very accurate description of really poor business vision and planning. In fact, there is one deadly word in there that did not get my attention until I read it several times. Read it again...now tell me, what is the most dangerous word in that paragraph? Settles. ‘Settles’ is EXACTLY why businesses inevitably fail when change occurs. It ‘settled’ as the ‘Old Normal’ before the ‘New Normal’ and it will likely settle again into a new old normal.

“Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good

life.”—Jim Collins, Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't

In my opinion, the delta between good and great is the buffer to all crisis threats. The brain trust and imagination that makes a company great will not fail during a crisis and I’m hesitant to suggest they even perceive an actual threat during such events. History suggests that these businesses actually thrive, likely because they see opportunity through the noise and chaos.

Every business is subject to one or more significant events that changes the vision, direction or goals of a company. These don’t have to be the result of a pandemic, war or a housing market crash. For most small businesses, they include divorce, marriage, children, death, new ownership, new partnerships, ending partnerships, retiring and/or leaving “rockstars”, natural disasters, crime, social or economic or regulatory/governmental environmental contributing factors and any substantive change that

impacts a company and distracts its leadership from a complete macro peripheral perspective. Um, I hate to be the guy to yank that out of some of your hands right about now, but, that actually IS 'normal'. Nothing 'new' about it. If every time something happens in your company that it creates a 'new normal' - I suggest you fire your 'Imagination Manager'. Unfortunately, for most of us business owners, this is usually our job.

So, lets leap across the success divide into some highly successful organizations, none of which planned for a 'New Normal', yet all of them have one major thing in common - change is normative. Amazon, Apple, Google. A 'New Normal' for these, and thousands of other companies like them, would be sustained stability doing the same thing every day and failing to continually evolve and adapt to new opportunities, while enjoying anemic marginal growth. You can look across the spectrum of companies and see this is true. Comcast, Netflix, Tesla, SpaceX, Nintendo, Clorox, Kroger and thousands of others in all sectors - and I'll wager that even one of your local competitors is among them!

How about we don't chat about how to survive THIS crisis. Instead, let's discuss your 'normal' and leave others to settle into their 'New New', soon to be 'Old New' normality. Then, when the next 'event' occurs, your company will thrive as its natural, 'normal' response. Yeah - That sounds WAY better!

Your company exists for one primary purpose ONLY;

CREATE VALUE THAT EXISTS TO SERVE SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME BEYOND NOW.

That's a basic fundamental fact - regardless of your mission, vision or values. It doesn't matter if it's for your personal wealth, retirement, kids/grandchildren, colleges, generational wealth, employees, their families, the community or the increased value of your customers interests and/or quality of life. Value is relative to the seeker and does not always define itself as money, but 99% of the time, it does. Your company is a vehicle for that acquisition of value. Since the world is continuously evolving and the desires of people change - why wouldn't your company work each and every day to successfully provide that? Better yet - inspire change, regardless of circumstances out of your direct control. Don't be the world's leading wooden wheel manufacturer when the world is going to steel wheels with rubber tires.

DON'T BE THE COMPANY THAT FIGHTS CHANGE - LEAD CHANGE.

OK - What does this have to do with your concrete polishing or cutting/demo/ GPR company, during a pandemic, where the government is interfering and shutting everything down and making this out of your control? Many companies in our industry are thriving right now. They've identified key market segments that are working and like-minded companies that see opportunities presenting themselves in their market segments. They paid attention to trends, watched markets and moved gracefully, like business ninjas. They were always diversified, and they maneuvered and adapted to the winds - and it had nothing to do with a crisis. Nope - they always operate that way.

Model your business to be about change, always adapting, seeing and listening acutely. So many of us dig in, stay stubborn, refuse to change, resist forces greater than us and take the lazy path of least resistance when the wounds are calm.

Here are a few things great businesses do really well before, during and after a crisis.

Identify the business's purpose

- Convert that purpose into an achievable economic number value to work towards. I call this your 'Power Number'.
- Make sure everyone is working towards that purpose.
- When making decisions, ask: does this decision help that purpose?
 - If not, don't do it.
 - If so - don't hesitate to execute.
- Evaluate, every day. Did you move closer to the purpose?
 - If not, identify why and adjust
 - If so, identify ways to do it better
 - Adjust the purpose when appropriate. Identify it and start from the top.

Be prepared for a virtual, digital, automated world

- Hiring: Why limit your administrative and estimating talent pool to your geographical region? Outsource those jobs. They don't need to be at a desk in the next room.
- Outsourced payroll and financial services take a lot of mistakes and time sucking activities out of your team's hands
- Utilize Technology Accelerators
 - Bid board/Service Subscriptions
 - Take-Off Software

- Computer/Tablet Technology
- Cloud Based Solutions for ease of data access
- Apps vs Software opportunities - especially for field staff

Embrace and Empower

- Strategic Partnerships
 - Turn competitors into resources. Partner with them on bigger projects. Go to lunch and stay friendly competitors.
 - Build a strong supplier relationship network. DO NOT penny pinch your supply chain. It suggests you're financially weak or petty. If you are focused on saving five cents a square foot, you are losing a dollar a square foot. You are not gaining respect as a master negotiator, I promise.
 - Subcontract when necessary and take the lead in your market.
 - Acquire opportunities when they make sense to do so to increase your available market geographically or through a new service/product offering, like polishing companies going into epoxy markets. You will be more successful, faster, in acquiring a struggling existing company rather than starting from scratch.

Empower Your Team

- Get your team(s) involved in inspirational change. If you have an amazing team that you believe in - ask them what they would do differently.
- Reward performance.
- Pay a performer's wages and most people will feel an obligation to perform to that level. If you are one of those, 'show me first' managers - you are starting the relationship backwards. A typical worker in today's market will exceed performance when they are being valued.

Open your eyes wide, hear the sounds, increase your field of vision to as close to 360 degrees as possible and be the Imagination Manager you were when you started your business. That also goes for you too, motivated excited 'new guy'.

Pandemic? Oh yeah, there is that... Well, I think we will manage through that pretty well. How about you?

Tim Kennady is President of XrQ Corp, a concrete surface treatment company and industry consultant based in Roseville, CA. XrQ Corp is a CSDA member company.