



Post-Pandemic Planning:
Getting to a New Normal

Kevin Aldridge
NADD National 2020

1



© Aldridge Palay, 2020. All rights reserved.

All material is to be used, duplicated and/or
distributed with permission only.

2

The greatest danger in times of turbulence
is not the turbulence; it is to act with
yesterday's logic.

~Peter Drucker



3

- Preliminaries
- Key Assumptions
- Challenges
- Analysis
- New Normal



4

Preliminaries
Preliminaries

Where are we now? New restrictions. New dangers. New practices. New levels of stress.

- Sudden supply-chain management demands
- Increased costs
- New demands on recruiting and workforce management
- Added pressure points on turnover




5

Preliminaries
Preliminaries

Business model changes: An obvious answer for some, but not for others

- A human services organization can change some aspects of its business model, but not a lot. Planning should concentrate on taking advantage of what can be changed.
- The pandemic is creating a whole new business and economic reality. Knowing and articulating what your agency does well and what value it offers to all its stakeholders (your “value propositions”) is a matter of survival.



6

Key Assumptions Key Assumptions

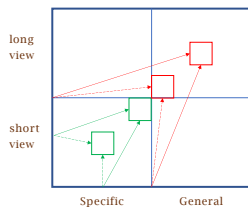
1. In a crisis, planning contracts in both duration and scope:

- Planning is identifying the questions about an organization's future, answering them, and then articulating concrete steps to achieve those answers.
- In a crisis, that process contracts both in duration (how far out you look) and scope (how specific the steps get).



7

Key Assumptions Key Assumptions



Normal

Planning normally looks into the future, (three to five years) and is general in scope, like plans for expansion. Specifics may be included as short-term objectives.

During the pandemic

During the pandemic (through 2022), planning is shortened and concentrated, dominated by operational issues.



8

Key Assumptions Key Assumptions

2. There's nothing normal about this crisis.

The stages of crisis development do not apply here:

- a) During
- b) Immediately aftermath
- c) Long-term stability

So, our normal responses also do not apply here:

- a) Crisis management
- b) Project-based adjustment
- c) Management as usual



9

Key Assumptions
Key Assumptions

There's nothing normal about this crisis.

10

Key Assumptions
Key Assumptions

3. Managers must have a “new normal” perspective.
Four all-but-certain outcomes:

- Organizational weaknesses you had before the pandemic will likely be made worse by the pandemic
- Operations may be similar after the crisis, but they will not be the same
- The communication of values and belonging can no longer be assumed
- Opportunities for new or improved capabilities will present themselves

ap

11

Challenges
Challenges

The initial crisis has come and gone, and we've worked through the initial crisis management phase. Now, for the foreseeable future, dealing with this ongoing pandemic is the norm.

So forget management-as-usual and get used to a short-term project management style. What does this mean?

- Quick and flexible
- Team-based
- Concentration on fast actions with high detail
- Consider every problem you face is *temporary*.
- Solutions are *temporary, too*

ap

12

Challenges
Challenges

New Stuff

You probably don't remember how busy you were before all this hit. Now, suddenly, you have three new gigantic processes in place:

- New supply chain management demands (PPE)
- New screening mechanisms to make sure everyone is safe.
- New response protocols that kick in at the first hint that someone may not be safe.



13

Challenges
Challenges

Labor Market Volatility

Hiring

- This is going to be volatile in two ways: too many applicants one month, not enough the next. Volatility at the front end creates instability throughout.
- Volatility at the front end creates instability throughout (increased turnover at higher costs).
- Concentrate on gaining efficiencies (turning a higher percentage of starts into long-term staff).



14

Challenges
Challenges

Training

Training

- Harder to recruit, harder to train—and new stuff to train (infection control, tracking protocols, reporting protocols, etc.). Its all too easy to fall into the “warm body trap”. You need people ready to make good decisions in the field. That means training.
- Examine your pre- and in-service training.
- Pour training into frontline managers/supervisors
 - Host discussion groups to work out problems
 - Look for and create teachable moments




15

Challenges Regulatory Relief

Regulatory relief

- Manage it, don't let it manage you. Use it if you have to but don't use it if you don't have to.
- As you take advantage of it, plan a way back into standard compliance.
- It's a borrowed tool—not a gift.




16

Analysis

Use Value Propositions

A value proposition is a commitment to a specific set of values on the offering side of a value exchange.

This is a marketing term that can be used as a management tool.



17

Analysis Identifying value exchanges

Value Exchange	Questions
Your organization to your customer base.	What values will your interaction with our staff provide you? (consumer experience)
Direct Support Professional to the person they're supporting	What are the key values in this relationship? (Friendly, considerate, caring, knowledgeable)
Supervisor to Direct Support Professional	What are the most important ways to support staff? What attitude should managers have about this relationship? How are the organization's values portrayed in this relationship?
Organization to prospective employees	What does the organization offer to employees? Besides getting paid, this is what you get working here: (belonging, sense of purpose, fulfillment, opportunities for advancement)

18

Analysis Analysis

Five Questions:

1. How did things work before? Remember, the weaknesses you took into this crisis are probably getting worse now.
2. What do your customers want?
 - Primary customers: *the people you support*
 - Secondary customers: *family, regulatory bodies, payors*



Ritter, T. C. I. Pedersen. "Assessing Coronavirus Impact on your Business Model." Harvard Business Review. Article and workbook, April 15, 2020.

19

Analysis Analysis

Five Questions:

3. How do information and values get communicated/demonstrated: who, what, when, where, and how?
4. What is changing and what is stable? Examine your organization's capabilities and competencies.
5. What are your greatest short-term weaknesses and your best bets to alleviate them?



Ritter, T. C. I. Pedersen. "Assessing Coronavirus Impact on your Business Model." Harvard Business Review. Article and workbook, April 15, 2020.

20

Analysis Analysis

What's next:

- Identify the key value propositions
- Boil them down to a few concrete directives
- Train them (short, quick, frequent)



21

New Normal
New Normal

Management Practices

Management and supervision practices are open to change, so define management functions in terms of value-increasing propositions, not compliance and punishment.

*Example: Equip supervisors to support and assist, and through those activities, monitor. Supervisors **should not** monitor and then reward or punish.*



22

New Normal
New Normal

Management Practices

Communicate all the time. You're not in the office much and so you need to compensate for the lost intangibles:

- Informal learning that happens in hallway conversations and peer-to-peer interactions
- Feelings of belonging and inclusion; a sense of being part of something important is constantly reenforced through the camaraderie COVID has hit.

The cohesion that makes your agency *your agency* must be reinvigorated. It will not happen by itself.



23

New Normal
New Normal

Management Practices

Some functions, operations, or actual objects in your organization might not be as valuable as they once were; new functions may become suddenly much more important

Ask yourself: What makes this role/activity valuable?

Example: How you use office space is likely to change significantly. This can mean long-term financial changes.



24

New Normal
New Normal

Management Practices

Quality Management: Create a clear path for value demonstration:
How do people know this role/activity is valuable?

- Demonstrate that you are doing what you're supposed to be doing (regulatory and compliance measures). Are you capturing these efficiently?
- Turn supervision into quality management and improvement. Make quality management and improvement an ongoing process, not an outcome. Involve direct care staff as much as possible.



25

New Normal
New Normal

Management Practices

Quality Management, continued

- Consider a tiered quality management system so that when things break down, the organization's value proposition remain active and known throughout the organization.



26

New Normal
New Normal

What will the "New Normal" value?

- A professional workforce, skilled at being responsive to the amplified stresses of living in a post-pandemic world, will become even more important and even harder to find. This is largely a policy issue.
- Professional management staff, skilled at supporting professional staff in a highly stressful environment, will become even more important and even harder to find. This also is largely a policy issue.



27

New Normal
New Normal

Providers must

- Equip professional staff to *get* the values of the organization and *feel* part of doing good work—staff capable of and invested in making sound decisions in the field.
- Equip managers to assess quality provider support and correct what needs to be corrected seamlessly.



28

New Normal
New Normal

This means

- Training, backed by lots of contact and constantly reinforcing the organizations value propositions
- Continually assessing, non-judgmentally, successes and failures—and taking the lessons from those assessments quickly and thoroughly.



29

New Normal
New Normal

"My reason may very well be hanging by a thread. Well, my friends, it is my belief that the best things happen just before the thread snaps."

--Geoffrey Tennant



30