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From the desk of David Simpson November, 2020

"Mountaintops inspire leaders but valleys mature them."

— Winston Churchill (1874–1965), UK Prime Minister 1940–45 and 1951–55

A mature leader has the advantage of being able to stay calm and focused under pressure. Frankly, if a CEO has seen enough valleys, little or nothing will seriously shake them – stressed, yes – panicked, no. So as difficult as the corona challenge has been for many, it is, frankly, just one more valley that needs to be navigated. These days we are seeing many organizations using this time period, valley or otherwise, to their advantage. They are working diligently to ensure their business comes out the other side in as strong a position as possible. For many, the solution to developing that strength lies in the concept of business agility. So many companies are strenuously using this stretch to improve their ability to adapt and innovate in order to out-pace competitors. They are galvanizing the C-Suite to drive agility throughout. Note that agility does not come from adding people who can focus on the topic. Rather, it can only be implemented with those in the top echelons of the business. These are the individuals who must balance day-to-day operations with a focus on developing agility. They must eliminate silos and work in a cross-functional manner to bring their very best "game" forward in order to face the competition. Many CEO's might wonder how to ask senior leaders, who are already working flat out, to find time in their schedules to integrate agility. Because concentrating on the agile part of the business can only be accomplished by the most senior leaders of the company, it becomes incumbent on the CEO to assist, if necessary, in helping the C-Suite team to both ruthlessly and constructively evaluate their senior managers to ensure these individuals possess sufficient competence to allow for some "give" in the system. The bottom line is that even if you and your team are currently fully engaged in day-to-day operations, rest assured that your competitors are very much taking advantage of these times to build out their agility capabilities. To dig into the subject of business agility further, you can find some additional information in the May-June 2020 issue of HBR.

Born exactly 146 years ago this month, there is no doubt that Churchill knew something about the valleys of leadership. Perform better!

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