



All In This *Together?*

What business leaders have learned
from the COVID-19 experience



With lockdown coming to an end, we asked the following leaders to tell us the lessons they have learned from these months:

Matt Brittin President EMEA Business and Operations Google

Evelyn Bourke Group CEO, Bupa

Rita Clifton CBE Chairman of BrandCap

Iain Ferguson CBE Pro-Chancellor of Cranfield University.

Peter Flynn MVO Director, PwC

Val Gooding Chairman of Aviva UK Insurance

Tony Hall Director General of the BBC

Nick Hampton CEO Tate and Lyle PLC

Richard Iferenta Partner, KPMG

Frances O'Grady General Secretary, Trades Union Congress

David Richards Chairman of Prodrive and Motorsport UK

Peter Simpson Chief Executive, Anglian Water Group

Stevie Spring Chairman The British Council

Ashok Vaswani CEO, Consumer Banking & Payments, Barclays

Richard Walker Managing Director, Iceland

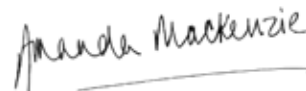
This report presents their reflections and resolutions and will, we hope, prompt your own.

All In This Together?

Global lockdown for seven billion people was a previously unthinkable situation. It has shed a stark light on the disparities in our society and we've seen a fear of widening inequalities come to the fore. In some ways the experience of Covid has brought out a sense in which we don't appear to be 'all in this together'. Amidst this, we've also witnessed that humans can be extremely adaptable as we have found unprecedented ways to exist in the 'new normal'.

In a crisis, we learn what really matters to both ourselves and our communities and amongst the chaos there have been positive actions. The leaders who have contributed their thoughts to this report have shared stories of self-reliance and solidarity, communication and carbon, family and flexibility. This report touches on those themes and the shared desire to build our society back better. There is a growing realization that unless, individually and collectively, we understand that indeed we are all in this together, the outlook for our future is bleak indeed. 'This' – the thing we are together in – can be defined in many ways: the economy, healthcare, a wider sense of society, global co-operation, or the environmental health of our planet. All of these seem today not merely relevant but supremely urgent.

Our hope is that this reflection from some of our finest business brains inspires you to stop, reflect, and ultimately strengthen your resolve to take the lessons you've learnt forward.



Amanda Mackenzie OBE
CEO Business in the Community,
Chair, The Leadership Council



Martin Newman
Director, The Leadership Council,
Founder, The Newman Partnership



Matt Brittin

President EMEA Business and Operations Google

Matt heads up Google's Business & Operations in EMEA - helping consumers & businesses make the most of the digital opportunity. Joining Google in 2007 to help build its business in the UK, he became MD of Google UK two years later. In 2011 he was promoted to VP of Northern & Central Europe before taking over as President of Business & Operations EMEA in 2014. He is a non-executive director of Sainsbury's & a Trustee of The Media Trust. Matt joined Google from the newspaper industry & before that worked at McKinsey. He has an MBA from London Business School, an MA from Cambridge and won silver medals for Cambridge in several Boat Races. He was a member of the British rowing team & has won medals at the World Championships and represented GB at the Olympics.

The importance of flexibility

One thing that's struck me is the speed at which we've had to change track and shift our focus. In order to do this, you have to be agile and open to new, innovative ways of working. What worked for your customers, clients and staff six months ago may be totally irrelevant now. To succeed in this new era, we need to be open to change, to new ideas, to others' points of view.

It's OK not to be OK

Everyone's experience of lockdown is different, and your own feelings can fluctuate from day to day. Some days I feel thankful for the opportunity to slow down and spend precious time with my close family; other days, I feel anxious about the future, or overwhelmed with concern for my elderly parents. My experience of lockdown is vastly different from someone living alone, or with a small child. That's OK - everyone's situation is valid, and we each face a unique set of challenges and triumphs.

Helpful technology

In a socially-distanced world, technology has a huge role to play in bringing people together. Information, exercise, education, social interaction. We've felt our responsibility at Google to do all we can to help people stay connected and informed, help with home schooling and remote working. Helpful technology means people are still able to connect with loved ones, learn, work, and explore the world.





Evelyn Bourke

Group CEO, Bupa

Evelyn was appointed as Group CEO in 2016 having joined Bupa as CFO in 2012. She is a member of our Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Committee, a management advisory committee.

Evelyn is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Bank of Ireland Group plc and a member of their Audit and Nomination and Governance Committees and on the Board of London First. Evelyn has a strong track record and extensive experience in financial services, risk and capital management, and mergers and acquisitions.

A qualified actuary, she also holds an MBA from London Business School. Evelyn was previously a Non-Executive Director of the IFG Group in Ireland. Previously at Friends Life, she was Chief Executive Officer of its Heritage division, and at Friends Provident she was the Executive Director responsible for strategy, capital and risk and, prior to that, Chief Financial Officer.

We humans are hugely adaptable and resilient. This experience has shown how swiftly behaviours can change when needed. Remote working and technology have been embraced in a very new and different way, and no doubt there is more to come. Even people like my dad are becoming users of zoom!

The crisis has called for unparalleled levels of collaboration rather than competition. There's been a great sense of us all

being in this together, helping one another and breaking down silos. Within Bupa I've seen this in how teams have shared and learned from one another. And we've been able to work with governments in new ways as part of the public health efforts. We should not lose this going forward.

Communications are critical. We need to double-up the volume, i.e. amount, make them precise (misunderstandings are easier in a remote working world), get the tone right (as we don't have the in-person behaviours to nuance) and keep checking (i.e. be careful of assumptions). I'm balancing formal communications, with more one-on-ones. It's Important to ask how people are and what they are experiencing and thinking about things. Kindness is needed and valued more than ever.

Contrary to what I might have thought going into remote working, it's clear that there are no hiding places. In this environment people can be more clearly assessed by what they produce: i.e. output trumps snazzy presentation.

Reputation stems from what you do, not what you say. It's a chance to stand up and be counted. Responding to a crisis separates those who are genuinely in it for the greater good, and those who are thinking about themselves. We need organisations and people who ask 'how can I help?', and get things done.





Rita Clifton CBE

Chairman of BrandCap and Non-Executive Chairman of Populus

Rita has been called 'Brand guru' by the Financial Times and 'The doyenne of branding' by Campaign magazine. The Daily Telegraph described her as 'The brand leading the brands'.

Rita graduated from Cambridge and started her career in advertising, where she became Vice Chairman and strategy director at Saatchi & Saatchi in its most successful period. She then joined Interbrand, the world's leading brand consultancy, as London CEO and then Chairman from 2002. She now also has a portfolio of chairing and non-executive director roles, including ASOS.com, Bupa, Nationwide and Populus, the opinion pollster and research company. Alongside this, she has recently become Chairman and investor in BrandCap, the brand consultancy for the boardroom.

There are certain words I NEVER want to see again if I can help it. Unprecedented. Uncertain. Troubling times. Covid-19 in the headline. All get me reaching for the delete button. I am a natural optimist, but the accumulation of bad news, sad news and mad news has been almost more than the human spirit can take.

Good things I have learned and absorbed?

Seeing business and board colleagues in a different virtual light, with unruly pets, children, elasticated trousers and interesting taste in home décor has hopefully humanised us all.

Realising that we don't have to spend hours crossing London or jumping on a plane to have a productive two-hour meeting is liberating.

Realising that we can all achieve things fast and (not) furiously together when there's an emergency makes me more hopeful of us being able to solve the major climate and sustainability issues we absolutely must address urgently. And that business has a critical role to play in actively creating a better world, particularly as it is capable of uniting people across borders and communities in a way that governments struggle to do. Let's see more 'saviour' brands step forward.

Me? Having finished my book on new leadership and had a bit more time to think, well, it's time to get out and make that happen. The world needs changing, business runs the world, so we need to change business.

It's human after all.





Iain Ferguson CBE

Iain is currently on four Company Boards and is Pro-Chancellor of Cranfield University. Previously he has served as a NED/Chair on several plc Boards, has chaired a Government Agency and has been a NED on two Ministry Boards. His executive career included 26 years with Unilever and 7 years as CEO of Tate & Lyle.

Positive things.

- I have learnt new skills, working remotely, contributing to Zoom and MS Teams meetings and new ways of trying to be an effective chair in a virtual environment.
- I really appreciate the contact that Zoom et al permits and I also value the 'democratisation' of the meeting experience - everyone's Zoom tile is the same size and there is no 'top table'. I feel that this is encouraging broader and more even contributions across teams.
- The people I work with across a range of places are proving to be pretty robust and 'making it work' is a real unifying theme - helped by 'good humour' on many occasions.
- I am spending much less time travelling but have had to learn new ways of finding 'thinking time' and of dividing up the day. I am walking much more (as permitted!) and spending more time reading and even gardening.

Things I miss.

- I miss the company of colleagues and the conversations around and outside meetings - I reflect on how much we used to achieve in 'casual conversations'- this is much harder to achieve online
- I think that the 'flip-side' of the greater democratisation and collaboration in virtual meetings is that it takes longer to reach decisions - but they may be better decisions?
- I miss visiting operations/factories/sites/offices and meeting a broad range of colleagues, it is hard to keep in touch with what a business actually does.
- Conversations that are not directly or indirectly about COVID-19.

Learnings I want to take forward into the 'new normal'.

- We can achieve a huge amount working remotely and interacting regularly in virtual meetings, BUT we will need to find a way of working in a hybrid world and ensure that we don't silo organisations into work at home/work in the office factions.
- There is huge value in the very regular virtual broad team communications that have developed over the crisis period- we've heard more from some colleagues because they have had the space to speak -we need to preserve this into the future.
- The value of face-to-face meetings has been reinforced by their absence - going forward there will be less travel (particularly internationally) and we will need to plan better and be more focussed on organising to get the benefit from fewer face-to-face opportunities.
- I want to preserve my own sense of curiosity and commitment to finding new ways of working and building relationships in whatever form the 'new normal' eventually takes.





Peter Flynn MVO

Director, PwC

Peter is a Director in PwC's Partner Office, which supports and administers almost 1,000 PwC Partners across the UK. He specialises in advising Partners, Directors and senior executives on career transition options, maintaining networks and relationships and supports succession planning and talent management work for PwC. He is also on the board or committees of a number of charities and not for profit organisations, helping them with strategy, planning sessions, governance and fundraising.

Recalling old lessons.

Many of the things I learned as a young leader are very relevant right now. Really knowing your people, their hopes, fears, concerns and what's going on in their lives, is more important than performative strengths, weaknesses and skills at the moment. Leading by example, maintaining high standards, keeping communications open and frequent and always acting with integrity; these are other old lessons that have really come to mind in the last few months.

Leading yourself.

The extended lockdown has isolated people from their teams, the usual support structures and human interaction. In unfamiliar circumstances, the ability to lead yourself, as well as others, is paramount. Staying motivated, positive and industrious rubs off on the team even when working remotely. Consciously stepping forward to collaborate, support others and stay involved is important and requires self-leadership.

Mind, body and soul.

A majority of the time spent in isolation isn't work! Keeping an active mind, by completing training, learning and reading has helped me a lot. Staying as physically active as possible and getting connected to nature, whether it be window boxes of plants or into a park or the countryside when permitted, has been key to maintaining mental and physical health. I've found that all this, when combined with greater 'virtual' connectivity with family and friends, is good for the soul.





Val Gooding

**Chairman of Aviva UK Insurance
and Senior Independent Director at Vodafone Group plc.**

Val was formerly CEO of Bupa, Chairman of Premier Farnell plc and a Non-Executive Director of Standard Chartered plc, J Sainsbury plc, the BBC, Compass plc, BAA plc, the Lawn Tennis Association and the Home Office. Val was also Deputy Chairman at the British Museum.

Val is Queen's Trustee on the Board of Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew.

Three things I've learned about myself during lockdown.

1. I can actually work effectively with just the iPad, phone and good connectivity, which I hadn't really expected to be able to do for such a long period.
2. Although some aspects of working from home are appreciated, I really miss the informal chat, camaraderie, jokes, and creativity of being face to face with colleagues. Jokes don't go well on Zoom I've found.
3. I wish I'd gone into Politics! Although the role of all governments during the crisis has been really daunting, and its good that people are willing to step up to the responsibility, some of the mistakes are cringe-worthy, and it emphasises for me the really important role of getting high quality expert advice, and not just from scientists. Business advice appears to have been sadly lacking.

One final thought: I've been struck during the crisis by the vital importance of business leaders having operational skills and experience. There's been a gradual drift over the last couple of decades to over-value planning, policy making, forecasting, consulting and analytical skills, at the expense of the operational skills. Perhaps it's time for a rebalance?





Tony Hall

Director General of the BBC

Tony Hall is one of the key figures in this country's media and arts industries. As Director-General, Tony is the BBC's creative, editorial and operational leader. He oversees all the BBC's services across the UK and around the world, both public service and commercial. Tony is also President of the European Broadcasting Union, championing public service media across the world.

He became the BBC's 16th Director-General in 2013 and announced this January that he would step down from the role in the summer to take up the position of Chair of the National Gallery.

He was awarded a CBE in 2006 and was made a life peer in 2010. He sits on the crossbenches in the House of Lords as Lord Hall of Birkenhead.

My lessons from Covid

All of us are anxious to return to 'business as usual', but we're also aware there is no longer any such thing. This crisis will change the way our organisations operate forever. The lessons we have learned during this period will – and must – profoundly re-shape how we lead in the future.

The first lesson I would highlight is about collaboration. In recent weeks I have seen the BBC come together across teams and divisions like never before. We have always worked hard to instil a culture of 'One BBC', but the way our people have broken down all barriers and overcome all obstacles to respond to the needs of the nation has been extraordinary.

This is not just about collaboration within the BBC, but externally too.

In only a few weeks we pulled together the BBC's biggest-ever educational offer to support children, parents and teachers while schools remained closed. We were able to do it because the UK's world-leading education industry worked alongside us like never before, the majority for the very first time. It's a powerful spirit of can-do collaboration we must carry into the future.

This leads me to a second lesson: clarity of mission. This is a period that has brought the clarity of the BBC's public service mission – to inform, educate and entertain everyone – into even sharper focus. It has guided our response to the crisis at every step. We have reconfigured all our output to serve audience needs, from trusted news and information to educational support to culture, humour and escapism. The coronavirus crisis has applied a new lens to the role the BBC plays for the UK and we must continue to see this so clearly.

The final lesson I would pick out concerns care. I have been deeply impressed with the flexibility and ingenuity our people have shown in creating brand new ways of working. For some that has meant continuing to come to the office every day to keep the BBC broadcasting. For others it has meant battling major obstacles to work remotely while juggling a host of personal pressures and challenges.

Perhaps most impressive, however, has been the culture of care that has grown up during this period, from increased support for mental health and wellbeing to everyone who has taken it upon themselves to check in with or look out for a colleague. We know there will be no return to pre-crisis operations. How we care for our people as the 'new normal' takes shape must remain a pressing leadership concern.





Nick Hampton
CEO Tate and Lyle PLC

Nick was appointed Chief Executive of Tate & Lyle PLC in April 2018, having joined the Company in September 2014 as Chief Financial Officer. Nick has a wealth of knowledge and experience of the global food and beverage industry having held a number of senior general management, strategic, financial and operational roles in large, multinational businesses. He has also led several major transformational projects.

Prior to joining Tate & Lyle, Nick held a number of senior roles over a twenty-year career at PepsiCo, including Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Europe from 2008, and from 2013 as PepsiCo's President, West Europe Region and Senior Vice President Commercial, Europe. Nick is a non-executive director and Chairman of the Audit Committee of Great Portland Estates plc. He holds a Master's Degree in Chemistry from St. John's College, Oxford University.

He was awarded a CBE in 2006 and was made a life peer in 2010. He sits on the crossbenches in the House of Lords as Lord Hall of Birkenhead.

The Power of Visible Leadership – Calm, decisive, agile, compassionate

More than ever the world is in need of calm, decisive, agile and compassionate leadership. This was true before Covid-19, vital as we navigate this human tragedy and will be critical as we emerge into a “new” normal.

I've been amazed by the power of visible leadership over the last 3 months. I've talked to over 50% of the Tate & Lyle family in “Virtual Cafés” over Microsoft Teams in the last 4 weeks – from Brisbane to Chicago, from Singapore to Sao Paulo – without leaving my study! Allowing a two-way dialogue with the CEO about priorities, the state of the business, the challenges at the front-line – personal, direct and inspiring. It creates clarity, provides reassurance and gives me direct insight into what's really going on in the business. No crafted corporate communications and no filtering. A new, efficient and powerful way to have a two-way and personal conversation. Must not lose this in the “new” normal.

The Power of Purpose

The other thing that has been crystal clear through all of these conversations is how our Purpose of “Improving Lives for Generations” is a powerful motivator for our people. It has been our North Star as we navigate Covid-19 – keep our people safe, support our local communities, and serve our customers well so they can keep the world supplied with food and drink and other vital supplies.





Richard Iferenta

Partner, KPMG

Richard is a Partner with KPMG in the UK specialising in taxation in the Financial Services Sector. Richard joined KPMG in 2000 and has been a partner since 2004. Prior to that he worked as a solicitor in the Tax Department at Simmons & Simmons (the City law firm) and as a VAT specialist with Deloitte, Ernst & Young and also worked for HM Customs & Excise (as it was then called). Richard also practised as a barrister in Nigeria for a couple of years before moving to the United Kingdom.

It is clear that technology has advanced so much that most of my client and team meetings can be just as effective virtually as they used to be on a face to face basis. I am also finding that I am increasing my efforts to stay connected with all members of my team by using the Teams platform which is just great. This gives the whole team a buzz and maintains the team spirit. Post-COVID, I expect us to see many more people working from home as well as a significant reduction in business travel. I recognise that it is important for us to still meet on a face to face basis and that certain colleagues actually prefer to work from the office rather than from home. The new norm will take account of these new working patterns, hopefully providing a good balance for all and more fulfilling work lifestyles.

I have also learnt how important it is to communicate effectively. We have had great briefing sessions from the leadership of our business to the partners ensuring that we fully understand how we, as a firm, are responding to COVID developments. In turn, I cascade the knowledge to my teams by way of virtual meetings and it is clear that this is highly valued. We all want to understand how change will impact us to enable us to prepare and adapt accordingly.

Resilience – COVID has presented us all with huge challenges as individuals, as communities and as businesses. It is fascinating to see how we have all come together with a clear focus on protecting jobs for all rather than having a “me” focus. We have been as productive working differently and flexibly, and have learned invaluable lessons to prepare for what needs to be done to ensure we come out on the other side stronger together. This is a good sign and one hopes to see that culture continue beyond COVID times.





Frances O'Grady

General Secretary, Trades Union Congress

Frances became general secretary of the TUC in January 2013, the first woman ever to hold this post. She joined the TUC as campaigns officer in 1994, and launched the Organising Academy in 1997. Frances headed the TUC's organisation department in 1999, reorganising local skills projects into unionlearn, which now helps a quarter of a million workers into learning every year.

As Deputy General Secretary from 2003, Frances led on the environment, industrial policy, the NHS and winning an agreement covering the 2012 Olympics. She has served as a member of the Low Pay Commission, the High Pay Centre, the Resolution Foundation's Commission on Living Standards, the Commission on Economic Justice and the government's National Retraining Partnership.

The crisis has reinforced my conviction that real leadership is about empowering working people.

Whether it's proper PPE for frontline staff or the Job Retention Scheme to protect livelihoods, the trade union movement has put workers' interests centre stage. Not just giving working people a collective voice - but winning real change. That's why, when this is over, there can be no going back to business as usual.

If I've learned one thing, it's the importance of winning a place at the table for workers and our unions. We've asked ministers on prime-time TV whether they could live on £95 a week statutory sick pay. We've highlighted why workplace safety and community accountability must come first in government's return-to-work plans. And we've argued for a better recovery plan with good green jobs for the young at its heart.

The lesson? Solidarity really does get results.





David Richards
Chairman of Prodrive and Motorsport UK

David Richards is Chairman of Prodrive, a motorsport and engineering business. He is also Chairman of Motorsport UK and former Chairman of Aston Martin. David won the World Rally Championship in 1981, following which Prodrive has won numerous championships in various categories of motorsport over the last 40 years. David was awarded a CBE in 2005 and with his wife Karen owns The Idle Rocks Hotel in Cornwall.

I spent 10 weeks away from all the support infrastructure that I've become used to - no PA, no accounts staff or IT support, not even anyone to make me a cup of tea!

During this time I've learnt to be far more self-sufficient and as a result much more in control and less reliant on others. I've gone back to solving a lot more problems for myself and whilst this might appear rather basic there's something very satisfying about it.

Being based in one location has also avoided an enormous amount of travel and yet I've managed to keep in touch with everyone via video conferencing.

I very much doubt that I'll ever go back to my old ways of working as this new 'independence' has allowed me far more 'creative time' away from the day to day pressures of the office..

Of course this will not suit everyone, but many in my management team have had similar experiences and the "new norm" will be far more remote work via video conferencing.

We'll definitely not be returning to our traditional commute and rigid office bound style of the past, those days are gone for ever.





Peter Simpson

Chief Executive, Anglian Water Group

Peter Simpson has been Chief Executive of Anglian Water Group since October 2013, and was previously MD of Anglian Water from January 2010, and Chief Operating Officer from 2004. He was Chairman of Water UK from April 2012 to October 2013, and is a Past President of the Institute of Water.

Peter is a member of Prince of Wales Corporate Leaders Group, run by the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership. This influences at a national, EU and global level to reduce carbon emissions, and to champion resource efficiency in water, energy and other natural resources.

Peter also works with Business in the Community (BITC) as Chair of the Water Taskforce as well as being part of the BITC Circular Economy Taskforce and the Place Leadership Team. He is also on the Board of Trustees of WaterAid.

Peter is a Chartered Water and Environmental Manager, a Chartered Scientist and Chartered Environmentalist. In 2016 he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Society of the Environment and an Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, as well as Companion of the Chartered Management Institute. He holds an MBA from Warwick Business School.

The commitment to establishing a strong Purpose and clear set of Values pays back multiple times. It has genuinely helped guide our decisions from frontline to boardroom and has been invaluable in navigating through the last few turbulent months.

Secondly the investment in training and developing technical and leadership skills has, at least in part, been squandered. In the last few months our employees and partners have shown us the gap. We can now go much further in driving decisions closer to the frontline and to those best able to make them. After all they are the closest to our customers and the environment. Thirdly that digital wins. The accelerating effect on our business has been enormous. The opportunities to take what we've learnt and tackle the other major global crises are there for the taking.

Finally, trusted companies are looked to for answers and with that comes a huge responsibility.





Stevie Spring

Chairman The British Council

Stevie Spring CBE is Chairman of both the British Council, the UK's international cultural relations organisation which has revenues of £1.5bn and operates in over 100 countries; and Mind, the UK's largest mental health charity. She previously chaired BBC Children in Need and the Groundwork Federation. Described by The Guardian as 'a media industry grandee', her commercial career included being CEO of two international media companies. She is now a director, investor and adviser to private equity. She Chairs Kino-mo - a global technology company specialising in 3D holography; is a director and Chairman of Remuneration for the £10bn turnover Co-op Group; and she most recently completed the sales of both Ladbroke Coral Group Plc to GVC and the ITG Group to Equistone. Stevie was named by GQ magazine as one of the UK's 100 most connected women; and is on the Telegraph/Debretts list of Britain's 500 most influential people.

What have I learnt about myself?

That doing the quite uncomfortable breathing exercises religiously did help me through a nasty bout of CV19!

That there is no such thing as over-communication. Colleagues are individuals not a homogenous collective. They have experienced lockdown differently depending on whether they're carers or shielding; whether they are feeling isolated or anxious; whether their home is a place of safety or a source of threat. Frequent two-way communication is the only way to manage and support our teams.

That managing a portfolio career is particularly stressed when every organisation is in concurrent crisis : I need to be careful not to overcommit when my natural curiosity and enthusiasm veers toward the truism that if you want something done, ask someone busy. I'm learning to say 'no'.





Ashok Vaswani

CEO, Consumer Banking & Payments, Barclays

Ashok Vaswani is the CEO of Consumer Banking & Payments at Barclays overseeing the execution of plans for the Group's consumer banking, private banking and payments businesses in the UK and internationally.

Ashok is a member of Barclays Executive Committee, and a board member for Pratham Board and the Trustee Board at Citizens Advice. He also sits on the advisory boards of a number of institutions such as Rutberg & Co and is Founder Director of Lend-a-Hand, a non-profit organisation focused on rural education in India. Ashok has previously served as a Non-Executive Director on the Board of Barclays Africa Group Limited, The Board of Directors, Telenor ASA and the advisory boards of S. P. Jain Institute of Management, Insead Singapore and Visa Asia Pacific.

He was born in India, is married to Veena, with a grown up daughter who is working in San Francisco.

The unprecedented impact of COVID-19 is something no-one could have predicted as we entered 2020 and the implications of the crisis are huge. Whilst there is a lot of uncertainty in the world right now, we do know that there are new opportunities that we must embrace.

Rapid advances in technology have made an incredible difference to our lives through the crisis and will only continue to increase and dominate industries. Emerging technologies are playing a critical role in the shift in ways of working going forward. The stigma around working from home has essentially gone, instead these technologies enable us to adapt to remote, on-demand and flexible working habits. They are also helping us stay connected with colleagues and loved ones which is more important than ever, as we try to manage our wellbeing during times of stress and anxiety. Technology is establishing a new normal at pace.

We also have an important opportunity to reflect on our societal purpose and the positive contributions we can make. How do we help communities emerge confidently and adapt to this new reality?; How do we make sure we continue to really value our key workers?; How do we ensure we maintain our focus on the issues around climate change? Questions we will need to find answers to as we navigate our new world.

But above all, I am a believer in human resilience and ingenuity. I know that we will overcome this. It will no doubt be extremely difficult, as we have seen already, but we will overcome.





Richard Walker

Managing Director, Iceland

Richard graduated in geography from Durham University before qualifying as a chartered surveyor and developing his own property businesses in Poland and the UK. He joined Iceland in 2012, spending a year as a shelf-stacker and cashier in London before becoming an Iceland store manager and then moving to head office, where he became a director in 2015 and took up his current role in 2018.

Richard is a committed environmentalist who has led all Iceland's recent sustainability initiatives including its pledge to eliminate plastic packaging from the Iceland own label range by 2023 and to remove palm oil as an ingredient from its own label food by the end of 2018. He is a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, a member of the DEFRA Council for Sustainable Business, and a regular panellist on BBC One's Question Time. Outside family and business, his greatest passions are trail running, skiing, surfing and climbing.

In March Iceland faced immense logistical challenges to our supply chains, caused by the unprecedented spike in panic buying. And in April we had to pivot our business model: adjusting to a renewed interest in frozen food, a dramatic increase in demand for online shopping, and meeting new regulations on PPE and social distancing.

But the thing that has struck me most through this crisis is that we have an opportunity to recalibrate how heavily we tread on this planet. Covid has served as an early warning wakeup call to the greater challenge of the climate and nature emergencies. We must do everything we can to ensure that our recovery is a Green one, and that we build back stronger and more resilient. Most of all, that both social and climate justice are viewed as two sides of the same coin.



theleadershipcouncil

Founded in London in 2005, The Leadership Council brings together senior figures from commercial and public life.

We meet regularly to debate the leadership agenda, annually publishing the findings of our research into a specific leadership issue.

The work of The Leadership Council is supported by Audley and The Newman Partnership.

www.leadershipcouncil.co.uk



Business in the community is the oldest and largest business-led membership organisation dedicated to responsible business. We were created nearly 40 years ago by HRH The Prince of Wales to champion responsible business.

We inspire, engage and challenge members and we mobilise that collective strength as a force for good in society to:

- Develop a skilled and inclusive workforce for today and tomorrow;
- Build thriving communities where people want to live and work;
- Innovate to sustain and repair our planet.

www.bitc.org.uk





the**leadership**council



The mosaic artwork of the Corona Virus featured in this report is by Helen Miles. It is one of a series of mosaics inspired by the virus, using its strange exoticism as a source of inspiration. Helen is a mosaic maker, teacher, writer.

www.helenmilesmosaics.org