



Innovation Borne Out of Crisis Through Agility, Resilience and Adaptability

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Dave Buss

Chief Executive Officer at OpenDrives

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Since joining [OpenDrives](#) as CEO late last year, never did I anticipate that my first written thought piece would come amid economic and societal upheavals our world is currently enduring. Yet, these are the times in which we live and, while we didn't necessarily choose these circumstances, we must deal with them...head on. This time has also given me the opportunity to

reflect and recognize the challenges of today through the lens of my past life – as a Vice Admiral and combat-experienced aviator in the U.S. Navy, where I served 36 years.

I have found that in moments of uncertainty and crisis for any organization, a critical dilemma must be addressed: Each team member pursuing a personal view and of his/her **individual** solution and benefit, or **all** team members pursuing a common vision and set of actions to drive to an outcome for the benefit of all. This is true for large, public companies, emerging tech startups or even military units. If an organization wants to push through intact, the latter choice is the only choice: The team must collectively pull together, lean on one another, and strengthen and leverage interdependencies to make it to the other side.

My experience from conducting combat operations as a naval aviator taught me early, and reinforced in me often, the inextricable link between strong teamwork and good outcomes (like mission success and survival under fire). We all intuitively know and understand that, but in times like these it is worth deliberately thinking about.

Looking ahead, more never-before-seen challenges await: First, reopening the economy and the gradual return to work, school and social activities. While the facts of each challenge are unique, I believe that the key to overcoming adverse circumstances finds its foundation in these core attributes: **agility, resilience, and adaptability**. And when these attributes blend with team chemistry, that's when breakthroughs, fundamental growth and new ways of thinking, doing, creating and innovating arise.

Crisis, in any form, can fuel innovation, and never has that been more true than it is now.

Shifting from Deliberate to Crisis Action Planning

In the military, during routine times, “**deliberate planning**” is utilized. We implement this planning model when there is plenty of time to forecast goals, strategize, secure resources, create an action plan, develop branches-and-sequels (“What would happen if...”) and see a well-developed plan through to fruition. When faced with crisis during combat, a team must rapidly shift to “**crisis action planning**,” as when under enemy fire. There is no time to plan in the traditional sense and instead, the combat unit's mode must shift to calculating the level of risk it is willing to assume. If you've seen the movie, “Saving Private Ryan,” you'll soon realize nearly every scene is a textbook example of crisis action planning.



When I moved from the military to the corporate world a few years ago, I saw the same principles apply time and again. And most recently, when the pandemic arrived and work-from-home orders rippled through the economy, many were forced to shift from deliberate planning to an entirely new level of crisis action planning. We certainly did at [OpenDrives](#).

We shifted from a fast-growing, outwardly-focused business gearing up for one of our biggest events of the year, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) trade show, to fighting for our industry's very survival. Just as the nation shut down overnight, our team moved to crisis action planning just as suddenly.

Weighing Risk to Ensure the Well-being of Both Teams & Customers

Since I joined the company as CEO in 2019, I've been humbled by our team's commitment to excellence and passion for customer service. And when the pandemic hit, this commitment only strengthened, deepened and accelerated.

The entire company came together to imagine change; debated how we needed to be agile, innovative and adapt; and, in the end, developed an entirely new skill set in order to not only survive, but thrive, following the drastic shift in our economy and our old, legacy OpenDrives way of doing business. We did crisis action planning just the way it was designed! While we didn't have bullets whizzing over our head on the beaches of Normandy, I think Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg would be proud.

What risks were we willing to take now in order to ensure the future?

Everything comes down to our company’s mission statement, which is deep in our DNA: ***an unrelenting focus on the customer’s success.*** This fact helped inform the level of risk we were willing to take in order to survive as a company by adapting with resilience and agility. What’s more, we had to factor in our own health in the process. It has been a true balancing act. Here are two concrete examples of risk identification and mitigation in crisis planning:

Customer Support. Our customer support group is business-critical and considered our “front line” team. They needed to be available to our customers 24/7. We knew that if our reps came into the office, we were not only risking their health and, if the coronavirus spread throughout the customer support team and they were unable to perform their jobs, we’d also be risking our customer base—and that combined risk was not one we were willing to assume. So we made the decision early-on, before the mandates were issued, to have our first wave of employees work from home.

Remote Solutions. Another example borne of our crisis action planning is the creation of ***OpenDrives Anywhere***, an [entirely new delivery model](#). For an industry as hard-hit as media and entertainment, building out remote infrastructures that can handle the type of compute-intensive workflows common for digital media is financially unfeasible. Plus, generic remote solutions cannot provide the high performance (characterized by sub-millisecond latency) required by post-production professionals.

Our solution? Again, customer-driven. We reallocated some of our own infrastructure to support our customers in the new remote-working world.



Leaning on Agility, Resilience and Adaptability Breeds Strength and Innovation

By collectively and creatively planning ways to help customers bring their projects to fruition, we also ended up ushering in a new remote business model that we're confident will be a permanent fixture for many of our current customers—and a very appealing option for new ones.

As we slowly spin up the economy, I don't see these new innovations disappearing. We moved our business and our customers' businesses forward, and we created an exciting new business opportunity, with more even more advancements on the horizon. Out of crisis comes innovation!

For [OpenDrives](#), the pandemic became an opportunity for growth. It also furthered our mission in delivering solutions that helped maintain and even boost performance during crisis and uncertainty for our customers. Our team demonstrated agility, resilience and adaptability that resulted in breakthroughs the likes of which are only possible with incredible team chemistry. Mission accomplished...and I couldn't be prouder of our OpenDrives warriors!

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This has been an extraordinary time for so many of us. As CEO of [OpenDrives](#) and through my previous career in the U.S. Navy, it has given me the opportunity to reflect on key attributes I believe will help carry organizations through. I'm excited and humbled to share this piece on agility, resilience and adaptability. I've been so inspired by our incredible team at OpenDrives and hope that this read will bring inspiration to you too. [hashtag#innovation](#) [hashtag#technology](#) [hashtag#covid19](#) [hashtag#leadership](#) [hashtag#teams](#)