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Musings

#56: Directional Accuracy can be OK

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Far different from an NFL quarterback, as a leader, there can be value in “directional accuracy” where you are not exactly on target, but in the right direction. Whereas Mitch Trubisky deserves all of the criticism he receives when he misses a receiver on the fly, a leader should expect to have a certain lack of precision as he or she sets the direction for their organization especially in uncertain times or farther out. When managing forward, it often matters whether you are directionally accurate versus being specifically in the middle of the bull’s eye.

Right now, everyone is having to speculate on what life is going to look like post COVID-19. Obviously, none of us know. However, a good leader will properly predict the general trends that will be in place following the crisis. For example, you can anticipate that the greater leveraging of technology that consumers have experienced during the crisis will continue. With this greater use of technology there will be deflationary pressure as companies can deliver their service at a lower cost. I would be quite cautious of price increases where there is a cheaper online alternative. Another example, folks have gotten used to working from home, and in many cases, are even more productive. They will not all go back to the office like pre Covid-19. Office planning should factor in a more blended model with some people in the office and some not depending on job function and seniority. See WSJ article: [when-its-time-to-go-back-to-the-office-will-it-still-be-there](#)

One interesting dynamic of more remote models of operation is the lower cost labor it will open up. A business I am involved with just filled a difficult technology role with a talented professional from Puerto Rico at an attractive rate. I would predict a greater use of technology and data professionals from far-away places and be working on how best to orient them into the culture of the organization and oversee their work.

This concept of directional accuracy makes it difficult to for many individuals who come from a background deep on specificity. For example, my mentor Bob King would often tell me he had to “keep the lawyer out of me” as I would get caught up on a detail and miss the big picture. That might make for a good lawyer, but not a great CEO.

Directional accuracy can work because it may lead to something else. Don’t overly focus on the specifics. Discuss the general direction. Some of the best ideas start from an idea “next door” that then gets iterated as it gets explored. Famously, the 3M post-it note came out of work on an adhesive for a different purpose.

Be safe. Work hard.

Jml

Second Thoughts

In Musing #48, I wrote about how there are more women than men in the US workplace now. Unfortunately, a lot of those jobs were service, personal contact type jobs which have been decimated by current crisis. Women are getting more impacted than men. See [coronavirus-employment-shock-hits-women-harder-than-men](#)

The disparity in effects of Covid based on wealth are sad. 40% of households earning less than \$40,000 a year experienced a job loss while only 13% of those earning more than \$100,000 did.

Often the Covid 19 situation is framed as health outcomes vs economic outcomes. Let us not forget the bad health outcomes coming due to neglected care and the media's incessant dramatization. See [Avoiding the hospital](#)