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What Winning Looks Like Today

by Alec Kotopoulos

We live in changing and challenging times, which are evolving into what many are calling the "new normal." The phrase "new normal" was coined by Mohammed A. El Erian, a renowned investment manager. His warning: a huge downturn in the global economy and significant crash in the global equities markets was inevitable, and the result would be fundamental market changes.

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In the midst of ongoing change, many industry experts, economists, academics and consultants believe this downturn will have a long-term impact on businesses around the globe. The scenario:

- *The international and US economies will grow at rates significantly lower than those experienced over the past two decades (This includes Asia, where growth will continue but not at its once blistering rate)*
- *Unemployment, particularly in the US and across Europe, will remain high for a sustained period*
- *American and European consumers will significantly reduce personal debt and begin to save money*
- *Asian consumers, particularly those in Japan and China, will significantly reduce their already low levels of discretionary spending*
- *Investors around the globe will take a more conservative approach and reduce their overall investments*

Companies of all sizes are trying to get their arms around the "new normal" and how this dynamic will impact organic growth. The rising tide of the past two decades (with a few notable exceptions, such as the early 90s recession and the dot.com collapse) raised a lot of business boats. But many of today's managers, effective at cost-cutting, are unprepared to now build their businesses in this new economic climate.

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So, what are best in class organizations thinking hard about to improve their odds of achieving a decent growth rate given the new normal?

We'll go on record stating that shrinking your way to growth was a necessary tactical step that most companies had to take. Doing so helped them stem the bleeding and provided a lift to many a market cap. Yet, focusing on the bottom line is a good short run tool that does not provide the fuel for sustained organic growth.

Winners in this new space will require timely, accurate, smart and implementable ideas to help them grow. These ideas can come in the form of new product and/or service offerings. They can take the shape of identifying new targets or sub-targets. Organizations can become more efficient in how they deliver their wares, and pass the savings on to customers, deepening their loyalty in the process. Finally, winners will ultimately position themselves as the choice for business by executing against a high return marketing and sales strategy.

New ideas, new products, new targets and sharpening the efficiency pencil are all critical components of growth. However, none of these factors will be optimized without:

- *The right people and a solid implementation plan to turn each factor into a growth engine*
- *The flexibility to move and/or turn quickly when opportunity strikes*
- *A steady infusion of timely and accurate market intelligence which forms the bedrock of corporate decision making along with senior management knowledge and intuition Investment in revenue producing tactics, operations and strategies well before the competition gears back up in a big way.*

Trinity Marketing would be surprised to find that sustained growth above whatever the average of the "new normal" yields occurs at companies that are not aggressive right now in their planning and investments geared toward revenue generation. We'll even step on the ledge a bit and state that many firms should refresh their thinking, rather than just dusting off the traditional marketing and sales plans and applying the same level of trust in whatever tools they used in the past to achieve revenue objectives.

Instead, we say take the bull by the horns and get ahead of your competition while they are in retrenchment or stasis mode. Refresh your market knowledge base; use it as the foundation of your go-to-market plan, and watch the revenue roll in.