



THE INSIGHTS REVIEW

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ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: *“When Molehills Are Worse Than Mountains”* - Strategy&

About this Report

The Insights Review by ICG presents timely abstract reviews of the most relevant 'open published' perspectives and research reports from the world's leading branded management consulting firms.

This publication ensures that executives and their internal consultants are exposed to the widest range of high quality ideas, techniques and methodologies developed across the management consulting industry globally.

Relevant insights are identified and classified once only, either in a general category, or by topic alignment to an industry segment or a functional area using our proprietary taxonomy.

Access to Full Reports

If you find an insight review of interest and wish to access the full report, simply follow the link beneath the title. Where possible, this will take you to the full report. Occasionally, the publisher may require the user to complete a registration or payment process prior to accessing the report.

Links are current at time of publication.

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Insight Sources

ICG sources candidate insights for review from the best and most relevant material published openly by (at least) the following branded consulting firms:

- ACC – The Association of Corporate Council
- Accenture
- AT Kearney
- Bain
- BDO
- BCG
- Capgemini
- Deloitte
- Ernst & Young
- FMCG
- Huron Consulting Group
- IBM
- King & Wood Mallesons
- KPMG
- L.E.K. Consulting
- Macquarie University
- McKinsey & Company
- Mercer
- OC&C
- Oliver Wyman
- Parthenon
- Promontory
- PwC
- Roland Berger
- Strategy&



Message From the Editor,

My topic of the month relates to a new product offering from ICG – our Global Industry Radar (GIR). We have recognized that, due to the pandemic, a lot of our clients have stopped traveling to global conferences and therefore missed out on the whistlestop tours of their peers around the globe. This means their “global radar” or corporate antennae have been switched off, or at least muted. Whilst editions of *The Insights Review* do a fabulous job keeping over 100,000 readers briefed on developments in global consulting know-how, there is no readily available product or service to do this on a sub-sector basis across business models, operating models, customers, products and channels, by peer geographies. Well... until now! If you would like to learn more, please contact your preferred ICG professional or nearest hub to see how our low-cost Global Industry Radar subscription solution will keep you abreast of what is happening across your industry.

Our *Article of the Month* is a clever (my ex colleagues would call it “nifty”) idea related to customer experience that I have never come across before. Thanks to Lisa Hickson (Lisa.Hickson@internalconsulting.com), Customer Experience Practice Leader, for sourcing and reviewing this gem, and our congratulations to the journalist who came across the original paper from a largely Australian research effort.

When Molehills Are Worse Than Mountains – Strategy&

Happy internal consulting!

David Moloney
Global Editor



David Moloney
Global Editor

About

David has enjoyed a stimulating career in the global financial services industry. Unusually for a consultant, he spent the first decade of his career working in banking from retail stores to helping the CEO with consulting firm led transformation projects. Transitioning to consulting via an MBA, he has spent more than two decades serving every segment of the industry in many countries. Importantly, as a global partner at two leading firms, he was well known for developing fresh firm and industry insights and in one firm, was directly responsible for leading the authorship of the most significant global reports for release at the World Economic Forum.



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INSIGHTS
REVIEW**

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Cross-Industry Functional Topics

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Human Capital | Finance & Controlling | Customer Experience & Marketing
Operations & Transformation | Payments & Open Banking
Cyber Security & Privacy | Career transition | Transformation



Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Strategy

Review by: David Moloney | ICG Global Practice Leader Financial Services | [Contact](#)

“A CEO Guide to Today’s Value Creation Ecosystem” – Strategy&

[VIEW PDF \(5 PAGES\)](#)

Lots of journalistic arguments for taking a holistic view of enterprise objectives and outcomes. In an attempt to differentiate from ESG fodder, a PwC strategy team defines Enterprise Value as combining financial productivity, resilience, and societal benefits in three equal measures. The disruptions of Covid and the mood to walk the talk on societal impact make this a convenient, if overweighted, framing. **DM**

“A Framework for Innovation in the COVID-19 Era & Beyond” – MITSloan

[VIEW PDF \(11 PAGES\)](#)

Clever academic stuff from MIT. Firstly, the reminder that there are two fundamental modes of innovation:

1. Innovate around a core consumer problem until you find something that works, and
2. For emerging industries, anchor on the solution and search for a problem that it is suited to.

With this thought in mind, the authors produce a two-by-two by adding an axis which categorizes whether the innovation has utility during the pandemic only, or will be sustained. The result is quadrant labels which better segment innovation behavior/responses and help executives and internal consulting teams to think about next steps within each type. **DM lr**

Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Leadership & Executive Development

Reviews by: Wade Azmy | ICG Global Practice Leader | [Contact](#)

“Nicolai Tillisch on How to Frame Ambition (& Not Let it Frame You)” – Mckinsey

[VIEW PDF \(3 PAGES\)](#)

A McKinsey talk with Nicolai Tillisch, a McKinsey alumnus and author, about his new book, *Return on Ambition*. Ambition is a double-edged sword that can take leaders to new heights, but it is not free from potential hazards. A new approach for ambitious people is to maintain a balance between achieving their aspiration and maintaining personal growth and well-being. These three elements represent “return on ambition.”

The talk itself reveals a deep tradition of scientific research behind the book, and a rich blend of practical experiences by global leaders. A good read for ambitious leaders. **WA** **lr**

Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Governance Risk & Compliance

Review by: Peter Dale | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)
Alan Hui | ICG Practice Leader Governance, Risk, & Compliance | [Contact](#)
Jason Smith | ICG Practice Leader Governance, Risk, & Compliance | [Contact](#)

“A 2021 Risk Agenda for Boards of Directors at US Banks” – McKinsey

[VIEW PDF \(6 PAGES\)](#)

Whilst McKinsey is spot on with its perspectives as to key matters upon which bank boards should be focused, what 2020 highlighted was the importance of having a broad lens on all potential systemic risks – particularly now in 2021, considering flow through of Covid-19 (economic) consequences. This includes considering asset bubble burst; debt crisis in large economies; prolonged economic stagnation; and, in the geopolitical context, economic, political and/or technological rivalries between geopolitical powers (Quad and European Economies Vs China and Russia) resulting in a fracture of bilateral relations, trade rivalries, and/or growing tensions. Closer to home in Australia, we would think that bank boards also need to have a keen eye on the Fintechs and how much of their lucrative consumer credit, payments, and SME lending business will be rapidly eroded by these agile players. **JS**

“Global Risk Management 12th Edition” – Deloitte

[VIEW PDF \(61 PAGES\)](#)

Deloitte’s Global risk management survey, 12th edition, is the latest in an ongoing survey series that assesses the industry’s risk management practices and the challenges it faces. The survey was conducted from March to September 2020 and was completed by 57 financial institutions around the world. Risk leaders would benefit from this article to update their risk profiles and benchmark against survey respondents. Of note, the challenges in implementing and operating a three lines of defense risk management model most often concerned the responsibilities and capabilities of the first line (business and functions). Ironically, whilst the big accounting and consulting firms have been the leaders in risk transformation change advice to clients over the last 15 years, this survey highlights implementation and outcomes have not met clients’ and regulators’ expectations in many cases. **AH**

Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Governance Risk & Compliance

Review by: Peter Dale | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)
Alan Hui | ICG Practice Leader Governance, Risk, & Compliance | [Contact](#)
Jason Smith | ICG Practice Leader Governance, Risk, & Compliance | [Contact](#)

“Refocus on Risk to Thrive - Aligning Strategy, Risk Appetite & Culture” – Deloitte

[VIEW REPORT](#)

This is quite an insightful survey from Deloitte Australia, appropriately highlighting one of the lessons coming out of 2020 is how a well-considered and embedded risk appetite can be key in successfully supporting the navigation of uncertainty. Further, if established appropriately, risk appetite can also help direct a culture which supports the successful execution of strategy. The article also puts an important spotlight on the importance of the risk function being focused on driving risk-intelligent decision making through leveraging quality data and having effective reporting systems to insightfully exploit this data. **JS lr**

“Crisis Put CEO Successions on Hold in 2020. Expect a Rebound in 2021” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(8 PAGES\)](#)

Bain & Company, in collaboration with Spencer Stuart, have produced this short article giving some key insights as to CEO appointments over 2020 and the outlook for 2021. A less than 5 minute read (2 minutes if you skim the headings). At first, you may not be surprised by the insights – but there is some interesting data on regional differences. **GB**

“Global Female Leaders Outlook 2020” – KPMG

[VIEW PDF \(28 PAGES\)](#)

A well set-out article from KPMG with a lot of data presented graphically to report the responses to this annual survey. Time-poor CEOs and CHROs will find the ‘Key Findings’ at the beginning of the report and ‘Conclusions’ at the end interesting. However, your reviewer recommends browsing the entire article as the supporting data reveals deeper insights on leadership styles, responding to Covid-19, and employee engagement. There is a surprising analysis that, contrary to the opinion of many analysts, the respondents are less pessimistic about Covid-19’s impact on women. The authors report some opportunities which may arise as a result. **GB**

“How to Build Data Literacy in Your Company” – MIT Sloan**VIEW PDF (8 PAGES)**

A short article outlining the importance of data literacy as an organisational competence. CHRO's and Chief Learning Officers may benefit from a quick read of this one. The authors provide a summary of experts' views in building a data-literate company. **GB**

“Productivity 2021 & Beyond: Five Pillars for a Better Workforce” – PwC**VIEW PDF (19 PAGES)**

A well-presented article from PwC discussing its five pillars of productivity. The authors explore the current situation for each pillar, what needs to happen, challenges, steps to take, and a real example organization. The online article also includes questions which enable the reader to benchmark against other respondents. The article contains very useful insights. Having recently worked with ICG clients using a number of the described techniques/approaches, your reviewer recommends this article to CEOs, CHROs, L&D/OD executives and C-suite leaders seeking to lift productivity in their organization. **GB**




Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Human Capital

Review by: Greg Barnier | ICG Practice Leader Human Capital | [Contact](#)

“The Future of Digital Work Depends On More Than Tech Skills” – MITSloan

[VIEW PDF \(4 PAGES\)](#)

A very short article which outlines examples of the need to not only build technical skills of employees, but also ‘soft skills’ for success. **GB** 



Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Finance & Controlling

Review by: Peter Dale | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)

“CFOs Want FP&A to Marshal Value Creation” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(5 PAGES\)](#)

Trust Bain to be able to put some eternal truths into a few pages. An enjoyable read and a good aide memoir for those interested in this topic. **PD lr**

Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Customer Experience & Marketing

Reviews by: Lisa Hickson | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)Stephen Hewett | ICG Global Thought Leader - Customer Experience | [Contact](#)Jonathan Mindell | ICG CEO, UK & Europe Practice Leader - Customer Experience | [Contact](#)

“How Banks Can Sustain & Grow Customer Relationships Post-Pandemic” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(7 PAGES\)](#)

It is not often that retail banking is linked to good customer service, but this paper from Kearney argues that the pandemic has led to improving customer satisfaction and then suggests ways in which the sector can sustain that upward momentum.

Banks have risen to the occasion by improving online and digital capabilities, making more sensitive credit decisions, and waiving fees as their customers have struggled with the impacts of Covid-19. This has led to an improvement in customer satisfaction, as reported in a survey that Kearney conducted at the height of the pandemic. More customer-focused actions, including responsiveness, has led to an improvement in ‘trust’ and the paper suggests that banks should be clear about their actions not to reverse this trend as things get better. These include the way in which, for example, collection policies get amended as the overall economy improves.

However, the main thrust of the article is in suggesting ways to sustain this customer trust, by addressing the drivers of trust: engagement, reliability, transparency, and advocacy, as well as cultivating and sustaining customer loyalty by re-imagining loyalty programmes, based on three design principles (rewarding good financial behaviors; tailoring product terms based on customer performance, and enabling a gamified customer rewards journey).

Ultimately of course, maintaining the loyalty and trust of its customers will be down to how well banks meet the ongoing and changing needs of customers as we move out of the worst impacts of the pandemic. **JM**

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

“When Molehills Are Worse Than Mountains” – Strategy&

[VIEW PDF \(2 PAGES\)](#)

This article seeks to highlight the serious impact of multiple small service failings vs. the large service problems that are usually picked up in customer feedback. The research shows that multiple ‘microfailures’ can be a bigger driver of customer churn than larger service breaches that actually stop the core service being delivered. This is because ‘microfailures’ (e.g. a glitchy entertainment system, uncomfortable temperature, or a seat that won’t fully recline on a plane) often result in the customer feeling reluctant to complain as this could be seen as ‘making a fuss’ and/ or would not result in any positive change/outcome for them. Conversely, when a significant service failing occurs (e.g. lost luggage or being bumped off a flight) customers typically complain providing an opportunity for the service provider to demonstrate empathy, show remorse, and rectify the situation. These ‘moments of truth’ also allow the brand to both form a lasting positive impact with the customer and systemically improve service. There are more layers to the consumer behavior explained in this article, which is worth a read. **LH lr**

“Support & Control Functions Go Agile” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(11 PAGES\)](#)

Bain explores extending agile management techniques to support and control functions such as finance, HR, and legal. It uses the speed-to-market of Covid vaccine development and distribution and the agility of support functions to keep pace as a proof point. Other case examples include game software development.

The emphasis of the article is on how support functions can effectively engage with agile teams within the business. The key is having these functions operate concurrently with the agile teams and being available and responsive to their needs. The authors go on to suggest that support teams should begin experimenting with agile methods and ultimately restructure and redesign processes to be more responsive.

The report may be of interest to agile devotees, consultants, and management seeking new ways to improve effectiveness through greater engagement and responsiveness. **JL**

“Introduction: Three Objectives to Scale Digital Service Operations Successfully” – McKinsey

[VIEW PDF \(3 PAGES\)](#)

This brief McKinsey article makes the case for Industry 4.0 and the digital revolution that is generating real gains in productivity, sustainability, and speed to market. Furthermore, it observes that new operating models are evolving among digital disruptors and traditional organizations. The authors note that while the change has been rapid, it is still not quite keeping up with the expectations and evolution of digital adoption among users.

McKinsey offers three areas for organizations to focus on to accelerate change and improve returns on efforts. These are raising aspirations, expanding the toolkit, and delivering with impact. It offers little in the way of practical guidance, but rather a call-to-action of sorts.

The report may be of interest to those looking to increase the pace of change within their or their clients' organizations. It is a quick read and potential motivator for change. **JL**

“Three Ways Banks Can Improve & Optimize Their Spend Management” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(6 PAGES\)](#)

This article from Kearney presents ideas for banks looking to reduce costs in the face of low interest rates and revenue gaps. It notes that 80% of surveyed banks plan to implement a cost reduction program within the next two years. Kearney focuses on opportunities to reduce third-party spend.

The article also suggests a three-pronged approach anchored on organization efficiency, external cost takeout, and supplier relationship management. It explores each of these areas and identifies potential improvement opportunities through automation, demand management, and improving vendor relations and communications. The authors support each opportunity referencing a case study.

This article will be of interest to executives and consultants working in the banking sector and looking for ways to improve cost management, profitability, and competitiveness. **JL lr**



Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Payments & Open Banking

Reviews by: Ryan McQueen | ICG Global Payments & Open Banking Practice Leader | [Contact](#)

“Navigating the Path Toward Enterprise Payments Success” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(5 PAGES\)](#)

A short article which tackles the question of whether banks need an enterprise payments strategy or just default to offering what is generally available in the market. The article poses five great questions addressing payments related services, the breadth and depth of the payments strategy, prioritization of product and services, investment in innovation, and finally organization. This quick read is recommended if you constantly find yourself trying to calibrate how your payments capabilities and investments fit with your broader business. **RM** **lr**



Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Cyber Security & Privacy

Review by: Mike Trovato | ICG Global Cyber Security & Privacy Practice Leader | [Contact](#)

“Simplifying Cybersecurity: Have Our Institutions Become Too Complex To Secure?” – PwC

[VIEW PDF \(16 PAGES\)](#)

The title asks a question that most security people will easily answer “yes” and most board members will spend a bit more time pondering, but often thinking “that’s not true,” while suspecting the odds are against them. The authors posit boards must translate simplicity and complexity reduction into business priorities that enter into the strategic dialogue of the board, CEO, and the rest of the C-suite. They give some good examples, but the problem is daunting and CIOs will be familiar with the struggle to manage strategy, cost and risk, with risk often being the last thing focused on and oftentimes skipped all together for such things as urgent and important acquisitions or hitting short term financial goals. In this reviewer’s mind, boards should focus on organizational resilience and carefully define the outcomes that they are aiming for, to determine the right simplicity and complexity reduction required to drive performance and manage risk. **MT** The MT logo is a small, stylized icon consisting of a square with a vertical line and a horizontal line intersecting.

“The Future of Work After COVID-19” – McKinsey

[VIEW PDF \(152 PAGES\)](#)

This is a significant piece of work by the McKinsey Global Institute with an in-depth report and executive summary offering. The report assesses the lasting impact of the pandemic on labor demand, the mix of occupations, and the workforce skills required in eight countries with diverse economic and labor market models: China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Together, these eight countries account for almost half the global population and 62 percent of GDP.

The report reveals that up to 25% more workers than initially estimated will need to switch occupations as a result of the acceleration of ‘future of work’ trends in response to the pandemic, such as remote working, e-commerce, and automation.

McKinsey also examines occupational, industry, and societal impacts from individual, organizational, and government perspectives, including opportunities to support this massive scale of transformation.

A must read for CEOs, CPOs and CIOs. **MW** **lr**



Cross-Industry Functional Topics

Transformation

Review by: Lauren Robins | ICG Global Subject Matter Expert Transformation | [Contact](#)

“Making Transformation Your ‘Lifestyle Change’ For 2021” – KPMG

[VIEW PDF \(5 PAGES\)](#)

The author reflects on the recent World Economic Forum’s theme to set out ‘The Great Reset’, and how business not only now needs to transform from A to B, but needs to do so in such a way that enables C, D, and E when needed – which could be right around the corner. This includes adopting a “transformation lifestyle” – urging that when we transform business operating models, we not only look to automate processes but truly re-imagine them and the skills/capabilities required to deliver the work after that’s been done.

Good thought provocation on a timely topic for transformation leaders. **LSR**

“Today’s Bank Transformation: Moving Beyond the Incremental” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(8 PAGES\)](#)

Kearney highlights that banks are facing unprecedented short-term pressures and long term possibilities that demand new, bold, strategic operations transformations that will position them to deliver better customer experiences. Six key strategic shifts recommended include:

1. Having a “zero-based” mindset
2. Developing partners, not providers
3. Being unapologetically customer-led
4. Breaking through silos, and
5. Challenging data boundaries.

Worth a read for COOs and CFOs – good lessons learned from organizations that have had a head-start, and some simple strategic, operational, and cultural mindset shifts critical to drive a meaningful and successful operational transformation at scale. **LSR** The LSR logo is a small, stylized 'lr' in a square box.



Industry-Specific Topics

In this Section:

Macro Financial Services | Retail & Business Banking
Fintech | Corporate & Investment Banking
Wealth & Advice and Investment and Fund Management
General Insurance | Local Government & Health




Industry-Specific Topics

Macro Financial Services

Reviews by: David Moloney | ICG Global Practice Leader Financial Services | [Contact](#)

“New Survey Shows Rise of CSO Roles in Financial Services” – Deloitte

[VIEW PDF \(2 PAGES\)](#)

A very helpful survey-based overview of the CSO role in financial services. Deloitte sets out the three main reasons CSO roles are established, the argument that a background in strategy is critical to success, and talks to the reasons why governance is so important and why CSO-related activities are and will continue to grow. **DM** 

Industry-Specific Topics

Retail & Business BankingReviews by: Julian Cappe | ICG Practice Leader Retail & Business Banking | [Contact](#)**“Want to Maintain Digital Focus Post-Pandemic? Banks Should Make These Four Moves” – Kearney****VIEW PDF (16 PAGES)**

A now familiar theme, but well packaged in this article, the Kearney team looks at changing consumer behaviors through the pandemic. Survey results show that the shift towards digital channels is likely to endure after the pandemic, with a very high proportion of respondents across demographic segments indicating that they are likely to continue to use digital channels more.

These results highlight the extent to which the pandemic has “shocked the system” and accelerated the trend from physical to digital channels by up to a decade. Banks should review their existing plans with an eye toward accelerating and strengthening their digital strategy road map – and those who don’t take action will be left behind. **JC**

“From Boomers to Zoomers: Kearney’s Predictions for the Credit Industry” – Kearney**VIEW PDF (7 PAGES)**

A shortish article which will be of interest to observers of the disruptions taking place in the credit industry as new challengers – including neobanks and the “buy now, pay later” providers – have rapidly captured a significant slice of the Millennial and Generation Z segments. These challengers have been able to take advantage of new capabilities – such as big data, AI, and social media marketing – to develop a differentiated offering that has taken the major banks by surprise.

The article seeks to highlight some ways that incumbents can appeal to the “Zoomer” base – including through mobile-first, personalized offerings, rewards, and transparency. The article shows some promise across a topic that warrants a more comprehensive review. **JC lr**



Industry-Specific Topics

Fintech

Reviews by: Richard Dale | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)

“Pulse of Fintech H2 2020: Global insight” – KPMG

[VIEW PDF \(72 PAGES\)](#)

This is the latest February 2021 version of KPMG’s half-yearly global fintech trends report, which covers fintech deal activity across the venture capital, private equity, and M&A spectrum. It is a regular favorite of ours for its breadth and consistent time series metrics. As the years roll on, trends and patterns are revealing themselves. The picture that emerges is one of a larger but maturing and consolidating industry, with deal volumes decreasing, but deal sizes increasing. Of course, the commentary in this edition reflects the impact of the pandemic, which fintechs have generally benefited from, as everyone switched to doing as much as possible online. The report is organized in convenient sections: global overview, segments (payments, insurtech, regtech, wealthtech, cryptocurrency, cybersecurity), and regions, so you can flip to the sections that interest you. **RD lr**



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ICG



Industry-Specific Topics

Corporate & Investment Banking

Reviews by: Andrew Boyes-Varley | ICG Financial Services Practice Leader (UK) | [Contact](#)

“Global Private Equity Report 2021” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(76 PAGES\)](#)

This report by Bain has two distinct parts. Firstly, it is a comprehensive review of PE activity over the last year (2020). This is well set-out to provide the reader with the 60,000 foot view of recent PE activity history with Bain’s typical focus on the data. In summary, PE is in rude health notwithstanding the unusual and tumultuous year we have just had.

It then shifts to providing a set of discrete articles – that Bain no doubt considers to be the PE topics of the moment: ESG, portfolio company talent decisions, virtual selling (very COVID-19 relevant), SPACs, and buyout relevance.

An interesting read for those that want a view into the PE world, but the key message (as is typical for these reports) is: “we at Bain know about PE”. Your reviewer agrees, they do. **ABV** The Ir logo is a small black square with the letters 'Ir' in white.

Industry-Specific Topics

Wealth & Advice And Investment And Fund Management

Reviews by: Barry Johnston | ICG Practice Leader Wealth Management & Superannuation | [Contact](#)**“An “Open Source”
Approach to Liberate
ESG Investing” – Bain****VIEW PDF (7 PAGES)**

Brief but excellent article proposing a robust approach to ESG investment selection that will improve client engagement and leave the asset management industry wondering how we ever got along with it. Eventually, this approach will likely underpin a whole new suite of factor-based investment strategies, creating a feedback loop for corporations to guide their own ESG priorities. Essential reading for internal consultants, macro strategists, and industry executives. **BJ**

**“COVID-19 Investor Pulse
Check #14” – BCG****VIEW PDF (14 PAGES)**

A periodic pulse check of stock markets that provides executives and boards with insight into perspectives of major investors, particularly in the United States. A key feature is timeliness, with results released just weeks after data are collected (data for this release was collected in early February). Readers can skip to a useful one-page summary on slide three, and delve deeper into individual insights as required. Readers are unlikely to be surprised by the insights in this month's report, but in general, this series is an excellent tool for industry players to stay abreast of market thinking and emerging trends. **BJ** **lr**



Industry-Specific Topics

General Insurance

Reviews by: Peter Dale | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)
David Harrington | ICG Global Practice Leader Insurance | [Contact](#)

“Digitalization in Insurance: A Golden Opportunity for GCC Insurers to Get Ahead of the Competition” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(14 PAGES\)](#)

Whilst a regional review, this is actually a very good article around digital innovation. Well worth a read, as it has a global application. **PD Ir**

Industry-Specific Topics

Local Government & Health

Reviews by: Graham Simmons | ICG Practice Leader Local Government & Health | [Contact](#)
 Chris Maxwell | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)
 Paul Norris | ICG Subject Matter Expert | [Contact](#)

“A Five-Step Agenda for Smarter Government Spending” – BCG

[VIEW PDF \(6 PAGES\)](#)

With a prolonged crisis due to COVID -19, public sector organizations are facing unprecedented pressures to reduce costs whilst fulfilling their new civic role in a pandemic. This is compounded by the need to maintain previous service levels. This article recognizes the challenge to create and implement an effective cost management agenda and suggests five key principles to reduce costs, effectively doing more for less.

A useful guide for senior decision makers and strategists in the public sector, the article suggests that they can learn from best practices within the private sector although will need to consider economic, public safety and social elements not just profitability and return on investment.

The authors suggest use of SMART KPIs, monitored through dashboards, setting aggressive targets for cost reduction. Among a wide range of techniques, they emphasis centralizing leadership to drive initiatives and ensure accountability, the importance of transparency in decision making and communicating the rationale for cost cutting decisions. The principle of zero-based budgeting, requiring year on year review is an ambitious but effective proposed approach.

While the article contains well-argued and robust suggestions for ‘doing more for less’, it doesn’t question why ‘more’ is the desired output or whether the customers or end users of the service actually need the services they are striving to fund. It recognizes that services levels may require changes to scale or scope and might require pause or permanent halt to some activities, but doesn’t describe how these services or their level of delivery, are identified to meet actual need. Nevertheless, the concept of a structured, strategic, and robust process to manage cost reduction is a worthwhile and enlightening read. **PN**

“How Purpose Can Empower Those in Public Service” – BCG

[VIEW PDF \(5 PAGES\)](#)

The third of three articles, this piece centres on the key things that agency leaders must get right in order to ensure their employees are engaged, motivated, and able to drive progress on the organization’s priorities. Primarily, these fall into two categories:

1. Rally the workforce around the agency’s purpose—reflected in the value it creates in a way that motivates and energizes people.
2. Mobilize the organization to act on the agency’s priorities, such as by fostering a culture of trust and transparency and setting up teams to drive implementation of certain critical priorities.

The article argues that if new leaders do both things successfully, they will unleash the power and potential of their workforces.

An engaging article set in a contemporary context of modern-day challenges, well worth a read. Although it is directed at the American state sector, it has great resonance for all organizations – linking mission to purpose, and using purpose to motivate. The article also contains a useful action plan setting out the basic steps that new leaders should take in order to achieve this. **GS lr**

REVIEWS OF THE WORLD'S LEADING INSIGHTS



THE INSIGHTS REVIEW

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ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS



ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

FEBRUARY 2021

“From Survive to Thrive: The Future of Work in a Post-Pandemic World” – Deloitte

[VIEW PDF \(10 PAGES\)](#)

This article from Deloitte is a highly recommended read for CEOs and CHROs this month. There is a detailed analysis of the faults in job design today as we consider the future of work. The authors posit that organizations are adopting technology solutions without considering human capabilities in relation to the work design. Examples of how some organizations are humanizing work are provided, together with suggested approaches as to how organizations can create an environment to optimize human potential in today's technology-driven world. Leaders are required to set the enterprise mindset, recognize that the biggest motivator for humans is work itself, and re-orientate from past performance to future potential. For each point as to what needs to change, there are useful suggestions as to how to get started. Make an investment of your time to read this one.

DECEMBER 2020 - JANUARY 2021

“A Strategic Approach to On-Demand Talent” – BCG | HBS

[VIEW PDF \(32 PAGES\)](#)

We couldn't resist including this great insight from our dear friends at BCG who now also recommend the use of online talent platforms such as ICG. Their argument is you cannot maximize organization outcomes without fully embracing on-demand talent platforms as part of your culture, policy and processes, and approach to projects. A must-read for anyone wanting to optimize their role in the agile enterprise – and an obvious choice for our *Article of the Month* as it talks so precisely to the ICG business model!

ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

NOVEMBER 2020

“The Working Capital Treasure Hunt” – Kearney

[VIEW PDF \(8 PAGES\)](#)

This is a great read and very insightful. Your reviewer loved the working capital tree diagram, and urges all executives to read this article. It is very much on-point, and a real example of the benefits that strategy houses deliver when they put their minds to operational issues.

OCTOBER 2020

“Sustainability is The Next Digital” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(12 PAGES\)](#)

A must-read insight which signals the scale of impact that the move to sustainability will have for organizations around the world. The insight takes a top-down look, highlighting the relative poor performance of sustainability change programs compared to other efforts, and provides thoughts on strategic and implementation choices. With some compelling up-to-the-minute examples, this insight is a must-read for all internal consultants and their clients.

“Building Trust to Enhance Employee Potential & Leave Your People & Your Business Net Better Off” – Accenture

[VIEW PDF \(37 PAGES\)](#)

On first reading the introduction to this article, your reviewer thought that Accenture had discovered the obvious: trust in the workplace is important. Going further, the authors have introduced their ‘groundbreaking’ new Net Better Off model. People have long understood the importance of financial health, physical health, and emotional/mental health in the workplace. The ‘Net Better Off’ model goes further to address fundamental human needs, and it is well worth the reader taking an interest!

This article also provides further insights as to what organizations can do to provide the right environment to create ‘Net Better Off’. This article is a must-read for all senior executives looking to build employee engagement and enable value creation through their workforce.



ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

SEPTEMBER 2020

“Having an AI Strategy is Essential to Survival” – Roland Berger

[VIEW PDF \(12 PAGES\)](#)

This fascinating article is a book and interview summary for Roland Berger, authored by a senior journalist. The book is titled *Competing in the age of AI* by Harvard Professors Karim Lakhani and Marco Lansiti. In it, the authors argue that AI is not something to be applied in the future when the technology has matured, instead they provide countless examples of companies that are already embracing relevant applications of AI to reposition their businesses for advantage now. This includes small firms, not just what they call the ‘Digital Super Powers’.

The traditional view of AI is it only works in narrow applications like chess. The authors argue this is just fine for huge, globally-scalable businesses like ride-sharing, which will self-improve through their experience curve. The critical point for executive readers is that general AI is not going to replace management any time soon, but managers who use AI in narrow applications will replace managers who don’t. The critical point for internal consultants is that companies need to be thought about from an abstraction “What is it that we’re serving? Why do customers come to us? And what did we learn from those customers?” Strategy then becomes about choosing data streams which apply better algorithms, to deliver better service, to generate more usage, to generate more data, and so on.

The article also includes a classic four-stage transformation model applied to the digital operating model. It evolves from siloed data to a pilot, to a data hub, to an end state in what they call an “AI Factory”.

A great book summary and advertisement for the book – and a must-read for all *TIR* subscribers.

AUGUST 2020

“Have We Hit Peak Profits?” – Bain

[VIEW PDF \(11 PAGES\)](#)

Wow – a superb article from Bain that is a level above the usual high quality we have come to expect from them. This up-to-the-minute, macro-level look at strategy and growth draws together many varied and newer thoughts from a study of 13,000 listed firms, creating a very coherent story that will lead to many reconsidering Bain as more than the NPS/Loyalty Effect consulting firm.

This is a deserving winner of our Article of the Month – our hearty congratulations to the authors.



ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

JULY 2020

“The End of Management as We Know It” – BCG

[VIEW PDF \(20 PAGES\)](#)

A fascinating insight into the impact of an agile philosophy on management as we know it. Based on a survey of 5,000 employees across five countries, the findings paint a stark picture of managers' current beliefs – including 63% saying they don't want to stay in traditional management roles, and only 1 in 10 non-managers saying they aspire to become managers. It is argued that the breaking point has been reached: current managers' roles are now fixated on reporting and politics and “complicatedness” rather than getting things done. Agile approaches are becoming the game-breaker with their focus on work, mastery, and coaching. However, moving to a true Agile environment comes with a condition: people need to learn the skills that make Agile successful. To do so requires individuals to take responsibility for the establishment of their own career paths and professional development. A must-read for both organizational executives responsible for leading the path to agile, and those individuals wanting to flourish in this environment. Reviewer's note: ICG Careers' method is a direct fit to this approach.

JUNE 2020

“Reopening Safely: Sample Practices From Essential Businesses” – McKinsey

[VIEW PDF \(11 PAGES\)](#)

The McKinsey article captures learnings from ‘essential businesses’ that continued operating throughout the pandemic while others temporarily shut down. The advice is evidence-based, with a focus on implementing tailored safety across a broad spectrum of activities both within and external to the business.

Exhibit 1 provides an excellent framework for assessing risk by work group. Others sections of the report examine risks across the working environment and extending into workers commuting risks. This is a well thought out article with substantial detail and actionable recommendations.

The article is well worth a read for executives and consultants implementing their own restart initiatives.



ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

MAY 2020

“Recovering From a Crisis & Boosting Resilience” – BDO

[VIEW \(18 PAGES\)](#)

A comprehensively structured checklist packaged in an easy to digest PPT format makes this new insight from BDO a deserving winner of our article of the month. While the authors are clearly UK-based, the messages and wisdom are globally applicable. The insight starts with what has become the industry standard R-filled acronym: React, Resilience, Realize, and Rethink, and as appropriate for a firm with a financial heritage it then details the most relevant financial scenarios, but then dives deeper than the other firms with an interactive web tool that provides up to the minute guidance on seven key areas for management attention: premises, financial, legal and compliance, suppliers, employees, customers and management and leadership. Each section contains a well-developed suite of initial items for action or review. For any internal consulting function or management team, this insight provides the perfect starting point for planning an optimal covid response.

MARCH 2020

“Future of Finance: The Human Perspective” – KPMG

[VIEW PDF \(13 PAGES\)](#)

This paper is a valuable resource for CEOs, CFOs and CHROs looking to ensure that proposed finance transformation programs have the appropriate investment in people to ensure the programs success. The article is easy to read and covers the catalysts for a finance transformation and examines the key findings of a global survey and good practice case studies. This is more of a useful tool or resource rather than just another research paper. It includes questions for the reader with the ability to see instant results from all respondents to those questions. Figure 2 details a model for the shape of the finance function in the digital world.

A well prepared resource which would be a great investment of time to review!

ARTICLES OF THE MONTH

THE BEST INSIGHTS OF THE PAST 12 MONTHS

DECEMBER/JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019-2020

“How Can Your Growth Strategy Evolve Faster than the Market?” – EY

[VIEW PDF \(9 PAGES\)](#)

A helpful and novel insight from EY which appears to expose the IP they have acquired through a boutique acquisition.

The insight starts with a general introduction regarding how to define a strategic context and rightly emphasizes that innovation and technology can make traditional approaches obsolete. (Side note: ICG solves this issue by helping clients to build a strategic disruption radar capability that continually monitors and updates the most likely strategic consequences of new entrants, and innovations. This reviewer also personally recommends a summary analysis he calls “Who is winning and why? And, who is losing, and why?” as the best way to illuminate strategic choices that are working or not).

The rest of the insight focuses on a new industry portfolio tool which uses Relative Market Share (rather than absolute) and absolute return on sales. This approach nicely demonstrates the margin benefits that accrue from scale which will work well for commoditized industries; those industries with players targeting high margin segments will need other tools.

A helpful contribution and well worth a read by all our readers.

NOVEMBER 2019

“Global Retail Banking 2019: The Race for Relevance and Scale” – BCG

[VIEW PDF \(32 PAGES\)](#)

An excellent article from BCG explores how digital disruption is reshaping retail banking value chains, resulting in a shift from vertical integration towards a platform-based or “stacked” industry structure. This is a transformative change, leading to the emergence of new business models.

For example, companies that develop leading customer interfaces can offer consumers a broad variety of financial and other services through ecosystems, without having to develop their own banking products and infrastructure. At each layer of the stack, technology enables the modularization of services and challenges the integrated universal-banking model.

Incumbent banks will need to develop new capabilities, and to carefully determine the business model they want to pursue in the emerging industry landscape – whether full-service, ecosystem-based, or product-only. The article includes a very useful taxonomy of the business model design choices available to incumbents and insurgents.

Well-presented, and highly readable.



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Candidate insights are compiled by an expert team of researchers. Reviews are written by partner-level subject matter experts from our industry and functional practices.

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MARCH 2021