



# RESILIENT CORPORATIONS AMIDST COVID-19

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

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# CONTENTS

1. What is organizational resilience?
2. The organizational resilience tension quadrant
3. A case for Old Mutual Malawi – How we are managing the COVID-19 pandemic
4. Conclusion – Finding fit, managing tensions and avoiding erosion.



## WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE ?

Organizational Resilience is the ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper. (Bsi)





# ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TENSION QUADRANT

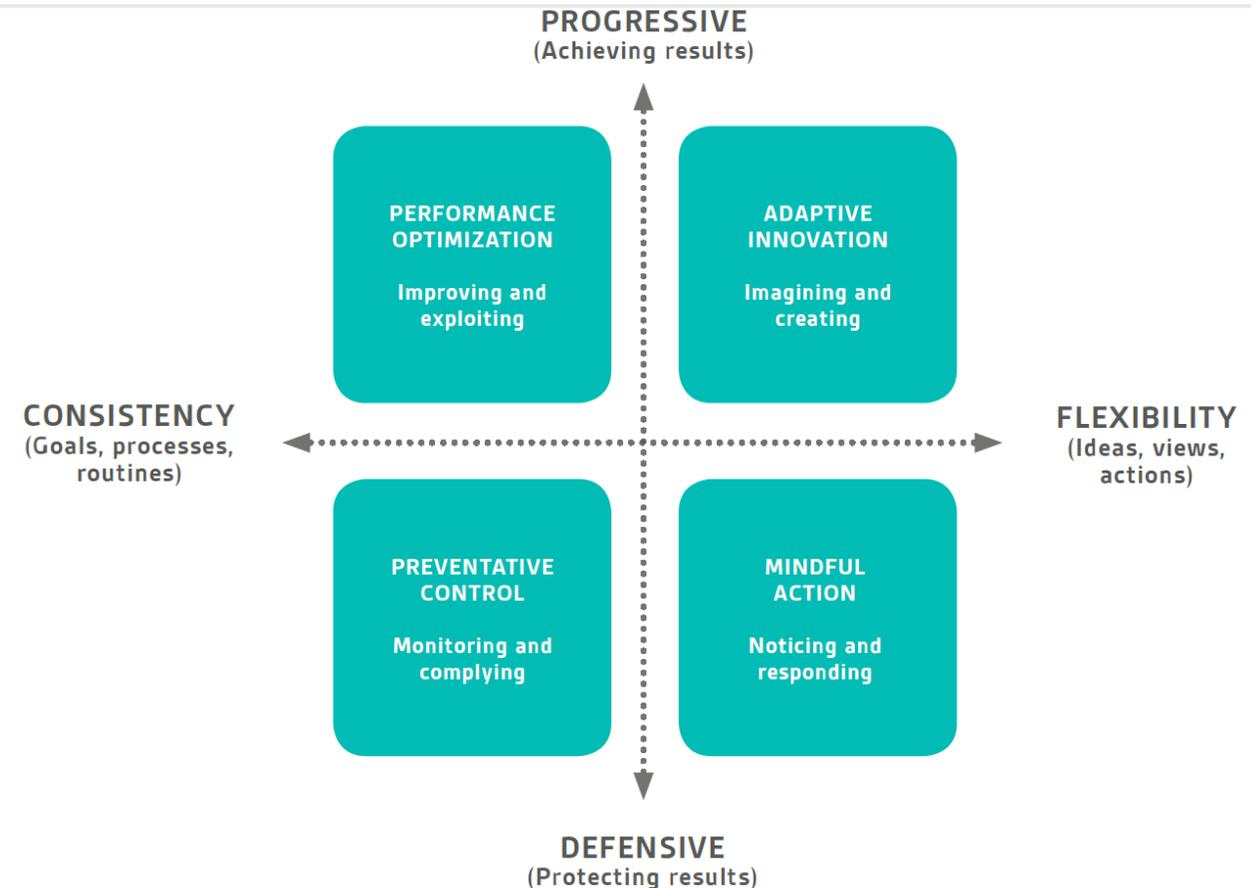
There are two core drivers as to why Organizations strive to be resilient:

- Defensive (stopping bad things happen)
- Progressive (making good things happen)

And organisations approach resilience differently, some opt for consistency in their strategies and others opt for flexibility in their strategies.

So the approaches and drivers result in the resilience tension quadrant.

**According to BSI and Cranfield University**





Wind shaped trees - Sea Point, Cape town

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# A CASE FOR OLD MUTUAL: HOW WE ARE MANAGING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On 17 May 2020, Old Mutual Limited clocked 175 years of existence. This therefore means that Old Mutual Limited has witnessed quiet turbulent times testing our corporate resilience:

- First world war in 1914
- Second World War in 1939
- Apartheid regime in South Africa until 1993
- Spanish Flu in 1918
- HIV/AIDS since 1981
- SARS in 2003

However, this is actually the first time Old Mutual in Malawi is tested with such an equal or much more dangerous storm; the COVID-19 Pandemic.





## 1. LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS

- **Can Direction** from **leadership** determine the resilience of a business?
- “Across the continent, the coronavirus crisis is exposing different leadership styles, .....



Tanzanian President Magufuli



President of Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa



## 2. Having Tools/structures that work

- One of the challenges of managing a pandemic is that you must not only focus on managing it but also manage the Business.

### **Business Continuity Management**

- This is a process that is taken as top priority for the company and hence is managed by senior officials
- With BCM Team as an existing structure COVID became just one of the many health risks that an organization can face. As much as there were already at least 80% laid down **Standard Operating Procedures** on managing a health scare, what we needed to do was improve **efficiency** in especially how to handle COVID-19 in the workplace significantly on **incident by incident basis**.





## 2. Having structures that work

A few examples of interactions taken by Old Mutual are sited as below:

- 14 Days quarantine for all employees who had travelled as early as February 2020
- Travel Ban since March 2020
- Office closures due to sanitization since February



**OLD MUTUAL MALAWI BLANTYRE  
OFFICE TEMPORARILY CLOSED FOR  
DISINFECTION**



### 3. Be willing to embrace change - Think Global. Act Local ”

There is no better time than now for leaders to understand the need to appreciate the interconnectedness of the world's events and its nuances.

- Just like most of us, we learned through media, about the Corona Virus as it affected China then the rest of the world
- We anticipated that it was a matter of time before it reached Malawi and our office





### 3. Be willing to embrace change – “ Think Global. Act local.”

- We learnt that it is highly contagious, and we immediately identified and implemented measures to ensure minimal contact - One of the first things we did was to immediately have all our office doors open for staff to go in and out of the office without ever touching the doors while we heightened our listening and learning for further mitigation measures
- **Important to watch and learn from trends afar!**



## 4. Be willing to embrace Change - " Adapt"

- " The wise adapt themselves to circumstances, as water molds itself to the pitcher" Chinese proverb.
- **Interventions that were taken to adapt to the COVID situation :-**
- Identified and capacitated all critical staff to be able to work from home.
- Implemented a work from home policy
- Opened parallel office arrangements
- Regular provision of PPE to staff i.e. Hand sanitizers, face masks, temperature checks at every entry point into our offices
- Fast tracked means of engaging with customers from face to face to digital means.
- This was to limit contact.



## 5. Be willing to embrace change – Can one bend without breaking?

“Adaptability “

- MindTools.com defines it as – the ability to change (or be changed) to fit new circumstances.
- Rates it as an important competency in emotional intelligence and a crucial skill for leaders.
- There is need to balance the transformation and adaptation intervention benefits against the costs. In most circumstances financial investment is inevitable.





## 5. Be willing to embrace change – Can one bend without breaking?

- Some financial investments were made in
  - Procurement of laptops for almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all our staff.
  - Provision of data to support work from home policy
  - Provision of transport to members of staff through a staff car pooling system
  - Rented new offices to accommodate parallel teams – Working stations



## 6. Create and Maintain Synergy

- In our learnings we identified as a need to have prior engagements with key existing professional partners/suppliers whose scope would significantly assist us in managing the Corona Virus Risk and key included:-
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- **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**
  - This is a private entity of medical practitioners whose purpose is to provide medical related support our organization as part of normal business activities.
    - Covid 19 was immediately onboarded as one of the health issues our organization Faced.
    - They have played a big role in providing credible medical awareness and psychological support for staff and immediate family members exposed to Covid 19
- **Sanitization Services** – whose services would be required in cases of exposure in our offices and customer service centers
- **Ministry of Health** – Through District Health Offices - engaged on continuous guidelines for managing Covid 19 in the workplace and insights on national preparedness and response.



## 7. Maintain open Communications with all stakeholders

- Communication is kept open with all stakeholders including the public, customers, staff and suppliers to maintain and establish trust.
- Ad hoc information is provided to stakeholders ranging from ranging from awareness messages, incident reporting and status updates.

**MEASURES**  
TO PREVENT THE SPREADING OF COVID-19

AS A WAY OF REDUCING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19,  
WE ARE IMPLEMENTING FURTHER PRECAUTIONS AS FOLLOWS

- 1** Face shields will be worn by staff to ensure customers and staff safety.
- 2** Maintain social distance of a minimum 1.5 Metres.
- 3** Upon request, customers will be provided standard grade masks in line with WHO guidelines.
- 4** Hand sanitizer is freely available.
- 5** Old Mutual provided pens are disinfected between use.
- 6** You will be required to be screened when you enter Old Mutual premises.



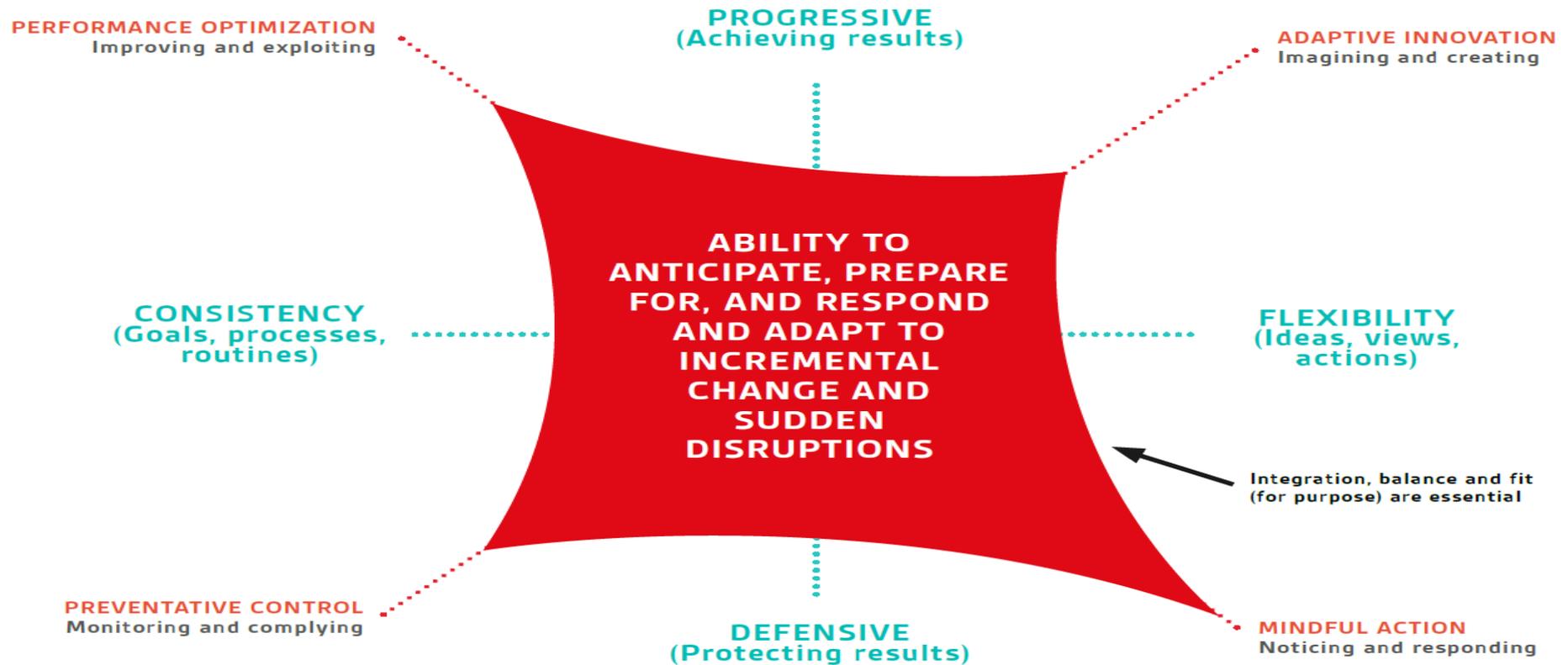
## Conclusion – Finding Fit, Managing Tensions And Avoiding Erosion

As a leader, you need to strike a balance between:

- Resilience strategy that is **fit** for a purpose
- Managed **tension** :
  - between the drive for both defense and progressive strategies;
  - Opt for either the consistent or flexible approaches and/both approaches.
- Organisation resilience requires constant effort. If resilience strategic planning is neglected, the resilience will **erode** over time.



# Conclusion – Finding Fit, Managing Tensions And Avoiding Erosion



Organizational Resilience Tension Quadrant: blending defensive and progressive thinking



THE END | THANK YOU