



**Jamil Janjua**,  
CEO, Octara & Chief Editor  
janjua05@gmail.com

## Dear Reader,

It's been a super stressful fortnight, the kind one prefers to have sleepwalked through. A number of us enjoy that luxury of being able to sidestep the seamier side of life and not have to take a hike on the wild side. Increasingly that space is running out no matter where in the world you look. The wild side is getting even more seamier by the day, and there's no place to run and no place to hide; Which is a good thing, for no longer is evasion an option, and the silent majority is finding its voice and raising its pitch to beyond feverish levels.

To retain your sanity when the world seems to be going berserk, keep your focus on the daily grind, and **Tina Olivero** (Founder of The OGM - Our Great Mind) has penned a piece for us titled What has Covid-19 taught us?

"Big Brother Just Got Bigger" is how **Dr. Tommy Weir** puts it and follows it up with "The Wake Up Call".

Providing some welcome relief is "SPIRIT OF THE SAMURAI", an interview of **M. Adnan Khan**, Head of HR, Pak Suzuki, followed by an Article by **Sigal Samuel** "Quarantine has changed us — and it's not all bad". **Darlene Damm** of Singularity University has written an article "Is Digital Learning Still Second Best?"

Octara Online Training Programs in June 2020 feature three of Octara's best:

18-June: Online Training – Social Media Marketing Tactics  
by Dr. Frank Peter

24-June: Online Training – Smart Selling Skills  
by Faizan Ahmad

25-June: Online Training – Being Anchored in an Age of  
Turbulence by Abbas Husain

Also, **Adil Ahmad** shares an article with the readers on "Zooming In on Webinars, Finally!"

Here's wishing Octara's readership the choicest of health, wealth and happiness, ameen. 🤲

Editorial Compiled by **Adil Ahmad**, Special Correspondent, octara.com  
Creative & Design by **Zainab Essajee & Nazim Ansari**

Feedback: info@octara.com

## INSIDE



### What has Covid-19 taught us?

- Tina Olivero - Founder of The OGM - Our Great Minds



### SPIRIT OF THE SAMURAI

- Interview of M. Adnan Khan, Head HR, Pak Suzuki



### • Big Brother Just Got Bigger

### • The Wake Up Call

- Dr. Tommy Weir



### Quarantine has changed us — and it's not all bad

- Sigal Samuel, Vox's Future Perfect



### Is Digital Learning Still Second Best?

- Darlene Damm, Singularity University

### Octara Online Training Programs in June 2020

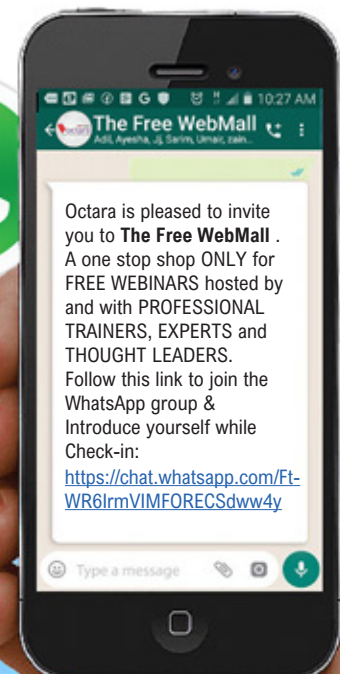
- Social Media Marketing Tactics by Dr. Frank Peter
- Smart Selling Skills by Faizan Ahmad
- Being Anchored in an Age of Turbulence by Abbas Husain



### Zooming In on Webinars, Finally!

- Review by Adil Ahmad

### • Upcoming Octara Training Programs (June - Dec 2020)





# What has Covid-19 taught us?

by Tina Olivero

Founder of The OGM - Our Great Minds

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**W**ell, there's the obvious answer. As the skies cleared and the animals came back, as crime decreased and care escalated, the planet healed.

We also got a very dark look at how we have been living and realized acutely how it does not serve us.

During Covid-19 we had enough time on our hands to stop and think. We saw that:

We lived in a world of high poverty, even though we had abundant riches. We believed that happiness came from eating junk, smoking pot, or drinking wine, yet joy was nowhere to be found.

We experienced profound loneliness amid a global population explosion.

We chose to build wealthy corporations over a pristine environment and a healthy planet.

We traded cars and planes for walking and playing, and we got fat. We sat at a desk for 8 hours a day until our bodies became filled with inflammation and illness.

We threw our waste into our water, and our lands like it were of no consequence. Trees and animals died. People died. We believed friends and family were found in a phone.

We bought into the idea that 'instant' was better than anything else. We fished the world's waters until no fish swam.

We forgot that music is better than drama, and real conversations were better than fake news.

We focused on temper tantrums and media sensationalism over authentic and robust leadership.

We cared more about technology than we did about our children and our animals. We paid attention to the dark side and snubbed our noses at words like proactive health and self-awareness.

We used government money to pay for sickness rather than health. As a result, we perpetuated more heart problems, addiction, depression, and anxiety and taxed ourselves into further debt.

We honored our 'feelings' even when they led us to our own demise. We blamed everyone but ourselves rather than taking collective responsibility.

We overspent to the point that debt became the new normal even though it cost us our sanity.

We threw our coffee cups out the window and polluted our very own streets. We forgot that our elders were our greatest teachers of wisdom and the way. We kept busy and busier to the point that staying still and observing became a lost power.

We honored money over caring, greed, over-contribution, and overindulging over freedom.

### WE HAVE PAID THE PRICE FOR OUR LACK OF CARE

We paid the price for all of this. But we didn't really see it clearly until the entire world stopped during the Corona Virus Pandemic. In essence, Covid-19 has been a gift to the more than seven billion people who call this planet home.

After the virus is over, will we look away, or will we recreate our world with collective intelligence and the big picture in mind? These are the questions of our time.

We have an opportunity to build on our strengths. We already have a deep caring toward others. We are already rich in character music and fun. We already have a resource-rich world. We already have vast lands and incredible scenery. We already have smart, creative, and innovative people. We are already rich in diversity and inclusion.

So if that's all true, how did we get into such a mess? And most importantly, how do we fix it?

The only thing we know for sure is that we can't go backward. We can't try to recreate the old with a few new options. We can't pretend not-to-see what we now have come to realize.

So.... the only thing to do is build an entirely new future. Build a brand new future. Now, doesn't that sound kind of scary but really exciting to you?

Right in front of us is the possibility of creating whatever we want for ourselves and our lives here in this world. It will take a culture of collective and authenticity responsibility. It will take unity.

Nice words, but what does that mean and what does that really look like? The truthful answer is, we don't know.

Some of us like to presume we know. Some take a stab at it. The reality is, we have failed miserably to act in the best interest of the world. We are in debt, addicted to negative news, we are in ill-health, and we are depressed.

Every single one of us needs to put our thoughts together and put them into a collective pot of sustainable solutions. Every single one of us needs to think with the big picture in mind, or we are doomed to fail once again.

What would it take for every single one of us, to offer ideas and solutions toward a sustainable future? I mean really....what would it take? That's our starting point.

- What would it mean to have our media turned drama content into solution news?
- What would it mean to design an ideas App so everyone could have a say in the designing of our future?
- What would it mean to have "future" hack-a-thons, think tanks, and brainstorming sessions to find ways that ensure we never repeat the mistakes of the past?
- What would it mean to get the ideas of the elders and bring wisdom and insight into the equation?
- What would it mean to embrace fearless children as the teachers of our tomorrow?
- What would it mean for us to revamp education so that people learned what they truly wanted to contribute to the world?
- What would it mean to create cultures of support and inclusion so that outcomes like homelessness and hunger we abolished?
- What would it mean to create a culture without crime as we saw emerging during Covid-19?
- What would it mean to put the planet and animals first and all other things second?

Do you think it's time we created a global forum of intelligence with the big picture at the forefront of all priorities?

Covid-19 made the world stop.

A startup does not mean the virus is over. It means the possibility of a sustainable world has just begun ■

### Did you enjoy this article?

Share your feedback at [janjua05@gmail.com](mailto:janjua05@gmail.com)



# Muhammad Adnan Khan, Head of Human Resource, Pak Suzuki

*P*ak Suzuki Motor Company limited is a subsidiary of Japanese automaker Suzuki Motor Corporation headquartered in Japan. It is assembler and distributor of Suzuki cars & Motorcycles in Pakistan. Currently Pak Suzuki is the largest car assembler in Pakistan founded in 1983 having its head office and plant in Karachi, the parent organization holds 73% of the shareholding.

A dedicated & passionate HR professional with over 15 years of experience in Pakistan's leading automotive manufacturing company, **Muhammad Adnan Khan** is Head of Human Resources charged with managing a workforce of over 2000 highly skilled individuals.

Adnan possesses a versatile HR operational and strategic support skill set developed through a variety of experiences, organizational transitions, continuous education, foreign visits, reading and people networking. Passionate in making differences in peoples' lives through coaching and counseling, a generalist in HR, focused towards managing harmonious Industrial Relations.

Muhammad Adnan Khan has found his niche at Pak Suzuki Motor Company, having joined it as Assistant Manager Human Resources in June 2004 after having acquired a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from the Karachi University.



# ***SPIRIT OF THE SAMURAI***

In 2013, he was certified as Human Resource Management Professional (HRMP) by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI), USA, and in 2015 the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) acknowledged him as their Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP)

Muhammad Adnan Khan very kindly consented to sit for an interview with Octara on a range of issues.

**octara.com:** What percentage of your organizational strength do Millennials comprise?

**Adnan:** The population of millennial in our company is about 50% of our total staff on roll.

**This Lockdown will end soon InshaAllah, but this period has unearthed new ways of getting work done. The post Covid world won't be a snap back to the way it was before. In Post Covid World, organizations which really focus on continuous learning will continue their initiatives that they already have started such as digitalization, contingency planning, and strategic planning on what alliances are essential and what are transactional.**

**octara.com:** How successful has the Work From Home experience been for your organization?

**Adnan:** Crises either crush you or they create you. This world was already changing rapidly but this pandemic has accelerated the change process. This work from home is emerging as the New Normal

and all businesses have started realizing its importance not only during this lockdown or pandemic situation but also even after this pandemic. This new business trend of Work from Home has brought many significant key takeaways which is likely to be with us in long run. We at Pak Suzuki also have set new standards of performance while working from home through leveraging all channels of communication that are available and by using digital tools for team steering. Work from home is flexible yet tough as "Efforts" don't show up in it, only the "Results". Thus for managers and leaders it is a paradigm shift from Managing for Efforts to Managing for Results.

**octara.com:** Please share with us your journey through school, college and university.

**Adnan:** Whenever I look back at my student life I feel blessed that I got chance to go to one of the best School, College and University, and apart from learning, have got ample experiences of volunteering and extracurricular activities which gave me opportunity to learn different life skills. All through, I learned one single rule of learning and that is **"Listen, Think & Ask"** which is the advice I now give to the younger generations.

**octara.com:** How do you de-stress and unwind?

**Adnan:** I am a firm believer of "Disconnect to Reconnect", & here I mean a lot to what I refer to the word of Disconnection. For most of us we use different strategies to get ourselves disconnected but we do not make ourselves unplugged from our devices. So I unwind not only by unplugging from work but also through digital detoxing. Because Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter can wait but your wellbeing cant so I unwind every day by spending some time away from all the devices and have plenty of mindfulness moments through observing what's happening around and by counting blessings Allah has given to me.

**octara.com:** How do you see the future unfolding in the post COVID-19 period?

**Adnan:** This Lockdown will end soon InshaAllah, but this period has unearthed new ways of getting work done. The post Covid world won't be a snap back to the way it was before. In Post Covid World, organizations which really focus on continuous learning will continue their initiatives that they already have started such as digitalization, contingency planning, and strategic planning on what alliances are essential and what are transactional.

**octara.com:** What is your message for the youth entering the workforce?

**Adnan:** The only commitment which always remain in demand in VUCA world is continuous learning. Currently we are living in real VUCA situation in which we are required to be committed with learning new ways of **"Getting Things Done"**. Success is not only about landing in a job; it is about becoming a **"NEED"**. Shift your focus (specially in early career) from "What I am getting" mindset to **"What I am becoming"** mindset.

**Thank you Muhammad Adnan Khan for some great advice and insights.**

## HISTORIC TRIVIA

Suzuki wasn't always the Motor Corporation. In 1909 Michio Suzuki founded the Suzuki Loom Company in the small seacoast village Hamamatsu, Japan. Business boomed as Suzuki built weaving looms for Japan's giant silk industry. Suzuki's only desire was to build better, more user-friendly looms, and for the first 30 years of the company's existence its focus was on the development and production of these exceptionally complex machines ■

*Interview conducted by Adil Ahmad (Correspondent, OCTARA.COM)*

# Big Brother Just Got BIGGER



**Blog by Dr. Tommy Weir**

Published on May 26, 2020

*T*he pandemic hasn't gone away just because you're bored," read a recent Tweet. The idea stayed with me. The writer had a point, but, we're way beyond boredom now. COVID-19 is really starting to drag, and with each passing day, governments, businesses and citizens, are growing restless. You can see it: frustrations are starting to simmer, adherence to lockdown laws is slackening, and people are getting angry. If the rules don't change soon, societies will start making their own.

There are no quick fixes here and political leaders are faced with the unenviable task of balancing life with livelihoods, human safety with financial security. Making matters worse, scientific consensus indicates that coronavirus is here to stay, and with a state of permanent isolation economically (and psychologically) untenable, nations are left with no choice but to learn how to live with it. Whichever way you look at it, it's time to get back to work. The multi-billion-dollar question is how?

Clearly, there is no magic answer, but here's a clue about the direction in which we're headed: if people were concerned about workplace privacy before, it's about to get a whole lot worse. I'm talking about monitoring with a capital M. But before your alarm bells start ringing, let me say one thing: COVID-19 has changed the conversation. Privacy used to be a question of trade-offs. Now it's a question of life and death.

With the stakes as high as they can get, now's the time to make peace with data-sharing. As a pioneer of AI-driven leadership and productivity tools, I have long made the case for trading elements of our privacy for positive change, and never has that need been greater than it is today.

We need to stop viewing Big Brother as the enemy, and start seeing him as the caring sibling he is – always there quietly watching over us, but only really stepping in during times of need. The evidence is there to see: in the aftermath of 9/11 people didn't call for more privacy, they turned to heightened monitoring and surveillance in order to stay safe. Since then, employees have grown accustomed to key cards, visitor badges and x-ray machines at office block entrances.

Those measures rapidly became the new normal, just as the measures

now being tabled will be in the post-COVID world. Apps that help monitor social distancing, enable efficient contact tracing, and track the health status of employees, are the way forward, and companies are already starting to incorporate them into corporate life.

It is part of a broader trend gaining traction in the business world. Before the coronavirus created the need for companies to monitor health, leaders were already turning to workplace monitoring tools, and when it comes to employee surveillance, Bridgewater Associates reigns supreme. By collecting and analysing vast pools of data on almost every aspect of employee behavior, movement and performance, the firm gains the insight it needs to make accurate judgements and drive productivity. Founder Ray Dalio has received his fair share of criticism for the firm's "radical transparency" over the years, but Bridgewater's success speaks for itself – and people still want to work there.

Dalio's hedge fund is an extreme example, but workplace monitoring in some form or other is happening every single day at companies world-wide. Software can enable employers to see their employees' screens, track time spent away from their computers, check emails and website activity – even monitor keystrokes. You can call it spying, but it differs little from the actions of a good coach. Before handing out advice, great coaches spend time observing and understanding their client, down to the

detail. Ok, so being observed can feel uncomfortable, but it is absolutely necessary if you want to become more productive, and better at what you do.

The need for privacy is human instinct, but so too is the pursuit of self-betterment – and of course, the will to survive. If monitoring can help both, what's not to like? ■

Source:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/big-brother-just-got-bigger-tommy-weir/>



*Dr. Tommy is the leading CEO Coach in the Emerging Markets. Sitting in their shadow, he typically advises CEOs on growth in the emerging markets. He is exclusively working with Octara for his workshops in Pakistan and was the Keynote Speaker of 17th MAP Convention 2015.*

**For Inquiries, [info@octara.com](mailto:info@octara.com)**





# The Wake Up Call

**Blog by Dr. Tommy Weir**

Published on May 19, 2020

If boosting productivity wasn't at the top of your company's 'to do' list at the start of the year, you can bet your bottom dollar that it is now. With workforces disbanded and many office doors still firmly locked, companies are scrambling to keep operations running smoothly – or at all – and to keep employees as productive as possible in this strange new world of ours.

Frankly, every eye is looking for margin improvements, in hopes of eking out a profit.

Even before we added COVID-19 to our dictionaries, productivity growth was worryingly flat. On average, employers were paying for eight hours of work per day, but receiving just three hours of productive time in return. Such was the scale of the problem, research from enable revealed that 645 million productive hours were being lost in America every single day. Now, with skeleton staff responsible for keeping entire companies afloat, the challenge of boosting productivity just got harder – and a whole lot more important.

Let's be clear: the economic recovery of entire nations depends on the productivity of those still able to head out to work each day. It is their activity that will lead to the kind of job creation and re-hiring that will get their colleagues, friends, and family members back into employment. It is no longer about us as individuals (if indeed it ever was); if this is a battle we're in against COVID-19, then growing productivity is the collective war effort. We have a responsibility to each other – a responsibility to get our co-workers back on the payroll and life back on track.

Corporate leaders understand this. What many don't understand, is what productivity actually is.

To recap, productivity is essentially total output divided by total input. In other words, the volume of goods or services divided by the number of labor hours required to produce it. It might seem straight forward – obvious even – but you would be surprised how many organizations get it wrong, and that misunderstanding is risking the much-needed return to business as usual.

I recently read an article about the reluctance of some companies to ask their employees to return to the office, citing the daily commute as unproductive time. It left me confused. I'm sure commuters would agree

that the hour they spend on a crowded metro or sat idly in traffic could be better spent on other activities – an extra hour in bed for one. But the time spent travelling to and from work is not on the company's time; the productivity clock starts ticking once an employee enters the office – not a moment before – and it stops the second they leave at the end of the day.

But there's a more fundamental problem. Business leaders don't just miscalculate when productivity starts and ends, they don't even know how to measure it. Some employees are saying they're more productive now, others saying they aren't. But how are they measuring it? When a company employs a person, they buy their time – and time wasted is a productivity opportunity lost. With that in mind, leaders must decide what the hours they buy are supposed to produce, determine how many hours (not how many people) are required to produce it, and help every

employee to make the most of every second, minute and hour of their working day.

The good news is, despite rife misunderstanding over what productivity is and isn't, business leaders agree that it is the key to recovery – and they have a new tool that was unavailable when economic crisis last hit.

That tool is artificial intelligence. From solutions that accurately measure productivity, such as enable's Productivity Score, to platforms that

turn underutilized data into actionable recommendations, one of the greatest appeals of AI is the tangible insights it can yield, and the personalized recommendations that it can generate to help employees improve their productivity, whether in the home office or head office of their company.

Breathing life back into the economy and getting people back to work depends on boosting productivity, and help from AI, that depends on us ■

Source:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/wake-up-call-tommy-weir/>



*Dr. Tommy is the leading CEO Coach in the Emerging Markets. Sitting in their shadow, he typically advises CEOs on growth in the emerging markets. He is exclusively working with Octara for his workshops in Pakistan and was the Keynote Speaker of 17th MAP Convention 2015.*

**For Inquiries, [info@octara.com](mailto:info@octara.com)**

# Quarantine has changed us — and it's not all bad

## Here are 8 new habits people want to keep post-lockdown

Article by Sigal Samuel

Published on Jun 9, 2020

Image Credit: Anthony Wallace/AFP/Getty Images

**Exercising daily and spending more time in nature are two of the habits people say they want to maintain post-lockdown.**

Cities are reopening. Lockdowns are lifting. And some people are starting to feel they can glimpse a return, however slow and partial, to “normal.”

But the pandemic has changed us. Although being on lockdown has been pretty grueling on balance, the surprise is that many of us have realized there are some things about quarantine life that are worth preserving. We're questioning the very fundamentals of the “normal” we'd all come to unthinkingly accept — and realizing we don't want to go back, not to that.

For some, going back isn't even an option. Those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, for example, have suffered a tragic and irrevocable loss. Millions who've lost their jobs don't have any work to go back to, and many essential workers have been working through the pandemic without much choice. Older and immunocompromised people are still advised to stay home.

At the same time, living in quarantine for months has offered some — mostly the privileged among us — a rare opportunity to reflect on our lives and, potentially, to reset them.

Workers whose jobs defined their lives are now asking what all that productivity was for, and whether we really want to measure our self-worth by the yardstick of hypercompetitive capitalism. Many are finding that the things that made them look “successful” actually also made them feel miserable, or precarious, or physically unwell.

Quarantine has allowed them to experiment with new habits and new lifestyles. And they want to keep some of these things going, even in a post-lockdown world.

I asked Vox readers to tell me which specific changes they want to maintain as they emerge from quarantine and stumble their way to a new normal. More than 100 people responded across the globe, from the United States to the United Arab Emirates and from Portugal to Pakistan. Some broad trends leaped out in the responses. Below are the eight most common.

### 1 Reducing consumerism

This was by far the most popular response. Many told me they want to spend less money shopping for new material goods like gadgets and clothes. A long period of being shut in and not spending as much has led to the realization that so much of our consumer behavior is about instant gratification, not lasting happiness.

Several people also noted that they plan to eat out less often at restaurants. Eating in during the lockdown has enabled them to save money, and some have discovered a taste for home-cooked meals.

A few said they'll look to “mend and make do” more often. In situations where that's not possible and they'll have to buy something new, respondents told me they want to be more mindful of where they spend their money.

“I think I will be more inclined to direct my consumption toward small local businesses,” said Nora Zeid, a 23-year-old illustrator and designer in the United Arab Emirates. “It breaks my heart how much they have suffered lately and how, unlike big corporations, they are less likely to survive.”

### 2 Slowing down and putting less pressure on ourselves

Being stuck in our houses has made many of us realize that we've spent years rushing through life, pressuring ourselves to get the “right” jobs and attend the “right” events, even if all that status-chasing was making us miserable.

“Quarantine has forced me to slow down in ways I haven't since I was a kid. From high school and college, through my 20s and a master's program, I have been on the go constantly for half my life. I always said I was one who liked to be busy, but the last two months of forced slowdown has really called on me to think about what I want my life to look like moving forward,” said one Vox reader in the US who preferred to remain anonymous. “I'm trying to figure out what it would look like to intentionally build in space in my life to breathe, reflect, and focus on the most important aspects of life — the people around you who make it all worth it.”

Some younger respondents told me they want to put less career pressure on themselves because they now realize work is not what matters most in life. A couple of older adults told me they'd been considering retiring before Covid-19 came around; the pandemic pushed them to finally do it. And even for some who were already retired, the slower pace of life created by the lockdown has come as a relief.

Post-pandemic, the goal will be to “not fill every waking moment with a commitment of some kind,” said Patricia Murray, who lives in Savannah, Georgia. “Even retired persons, like myself, need leisure time. I seem to work as much as a volunteer as I did in paid jobs; slowing down is the biggest change I've made and it feels good.”

Again, it's worth noting that the ability to slow down entails a great deal of privilege. Millions who've been pushed out of the workforce wish they could be working more, not less. And some older and immunocompromised people have had to go back to work, even if they don't feel safe doing so yet, because they need the income and the employer-provided health insurance.

### 3 Prioritizing family and friends

When the chips are down, you see who really shows up for you. Several people told me they've come to appreciate the family members and friends who've been there for them during this tough time, and that long after the coronavirus dies down, it's this group that they want to re-up their investment in.

“Quarantine has reinforced the necessity of telling people how you feel about them,” said Andrew Goldberg, a recent graduate from Syracuse University. “With social distancing and stay-at-home orders in place, it is easier than ever to feel isolated from the world. But as the days stretch into weeks, I've decided that the only way I'll be able to keep my spirits up is by making sure the people I care about know exactly how I feel about them.”

Others emphasized that the bizarre, unprecedented nature of this global pandemic has allowed them to reach out to people they haven't spoken to in ages. Suddenly they've found themselves on Zoom with estranged



family members or old college roommates halfway around the world.

"I've talked with my older nephews more in the last few weeks than I've talked with them in years," said Nancy Skinner Ringier, a retired speech-language pathologist, adding that they now share recipes and jokes.

#### 4 Ethical action and activism in our highly interconnected world

This was perhaps the most encouraging set of responses: People told me that the global health crisis has shown them how interconnected we all are, and that they want to keep doing more for others after the pandemic ends. They're donating more to charitable causes, trying harder to reduce their carbon footprint, and engaging in more political activism.

"I'd like to keep my home a headquarters for the three different county mutual aid coalitions I'm affiliated with," said Erin Brown of Tazewell County, Illinois. "I currently have donations stored here that delivery volunteers and folks in need come to collect. My landline, which is part of my internet package, was never used before but is now a mutual aid contact number. I'm in a good location, near all three of those counties, and I suspect mutual aid will be vital for some time to come."

The protests against police brutality have also galvanized millions to fight for racial justice.

"For the longest time, I did not keep up with current news. It's not hard to see why — our world is a shitshow, and my mental health is bad enough as is," said Adrian DeRoy, a 27-year-old reader in the US. "But the black community rising up yet again to face their challenges made me look, and seeing the world slowly but surely start to fall in step with the protests here, the voices crying out as one ... it gives me some small semblance of hope. Hope that maybe we will get through all this, and come out better than we were before."

#### 5 Exercising daily

This was another very common response. Many people who weren't previously into fitness have been getting into running, yoga, and other activities as a way to cope with lockdown. And they've been astounded at how much daily exercise can improve life.

"Desperate for any excuse to leave the house, I've finally been able to keep up a daily exercise routine. It's incredible how much difference even a short jog every morning makes!" Katie Reynolds, a Vox reader in the US, told me. "My sleep is better, my brain feels clearer, my mood is improved, and it feels easier to keep up other good habits. Definitely will be keeping this habit, at least until there's ice on the ground again."

#### 6 Baking, vegetarian cooking, and growing herbs

Yes, the sourdough obsession is real. Several people wrote to me in glowing terms about their starters.

"I believe I'll be keeping my sourdough starter. It's like another family pet at this point," said Matthew Schreiber, who lives in New Orleans.

In addition to baking bread, people also mentioned that they plan to keep fermenting things like sauerkraut and generally cooking more of their own meals so they can eat less processed food.

Specifically, people want to cook more vegetarian meals and lean away from meat-eating. The impulse seems to be coming not only from the fact that there are meat shortages in some US grocery stores, but also from the knowledge that a live-animal market in China may have given rise to the coronavirus and that the giant factory farms that supply 99 percent of America's meat are a pandemic risk, too.

Many also told me they're enjoying growing herbs like mint and cilantro on their patios, or growing vegetables like celery and scallions in little glasses on their windowsills.

It's not really surprising that the coronavirus crisis has prompted this reaction. It's reminiscent of World War I and II, when Americans grew their own fruits and vegetables in "victory gardens." The back-to-nature impulse offers psychological comfort at a time of great uncertainty, as well as a practical safeguard against supply-chain problems: If the stores run out of food, at least we'll have our vegetables!

#### 7 Spending more time in nature

Getting outdoors has been, for many of us, a crucial way to maintain our sanity during lockdown. In particular, parents have wanted to give their cooped-up kids a chance to run around and release some energy (which, frankly, is probably as crucial for the parents' mental health as for the children's).

"I have developed a morning routine that involves 'quiet listening' on the porch with the kids. It's a great way to start out calm with my wild little ones," said Sharon Lapin, a painter in Atlanta.

Others are simply enjoying the chance to reconnect to the natural world. Its rhythms and resilience can help to calm our anxious minds.

"I want to stay in this less distracted zone and enjoy the time I have with my husband by taking advantage of the natural world (hiking, kayaking) and taking trips in our camper," said Camille Costa Nerney of upstate New York.

#### 8 Working from home, if possible

Lockdowns across the globe led to millions of people suddenly working from home — and guess what? It turns out we can do many jobs just as well in the comfort of our own homes (and sweatpants) as in our offices.

Of course, for many people, this is not an option. It's a privilege to be able to work from home. That said, the myth that remote work isn't as practical as a 9-to-5 office job has been proven to be just that: a myth. Some are finding that working from home actually offers unique benefits.

"I'm a counseling psychologist, and I have been doing client work remotely. I think I will keep doing it remotely! It's quite convenient," said Raphael Doval-Santos. "My practice also gets to be more global, and my new clients are not just within my city anymore."

Several respondents said they love no longer having to commute to work. It means no pollution, more sleep, and less stress.

"I actually like this now; it's better this way," said Hermee Sorneo, a 36-year-old customer service team leader for a data management company in the Philippines. "There's so much benefit in working from home, and I think the world should do this voluntarily, with or without pandemic, at least once every 10 years for at least three months."

The "with or without pandemic" point brings up a key question. Lots of us say we want to maintain our new habits in a post-pandemic world, but will we, really?

As anyone who's ever tried a New Year's resolution knows, maintaining new habits is hard. But psychologists who specialize in behavior change say there are things you can do now to make it more likely that you'll succeed down the line. For instance, you can prime your environment, whether by setting up an automatically recurring monthly donation or putting running shoes by your bed to nudge you to go for that morning run. It's also good to reward yourself each time you engage in the target behavior — but make it an intrinsic reward, not an extrinsic one. So instead of reaching for a smoothie after every run, pause to savor the extra energy and strength you feel.

Finally, it's important to note that if you don't emerge from this pandemic with any great new habits, that is absolutely all right. Sometimes surviving is an accomplishment in itself.

"With my quarantine, good habits came of it. But I want others to know it's okay if good, bad, or nothing came out of this quarantine," said Farishta Saifi, a 23-year-old home health aide. "The world is a scary place right now, and just you living another day is excellent enough."

Sign up for the Future Perfect newsletter and we'll send you a roundup of ideas and solutions for tackling the world's biggest challenges — and how to get better at doing good ■

Source:

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/6/9/21279258/coronavirus-pandemic-new-quarantine->



Sigal Samuel is a Staff Writer for Vox's Future Perfect. She writes about artificial intelligence, neuroscience, ethics, and the intersection of technology and religion.

For inquiries, [info@octara.com](mailto:info@octara.com)

# Is Digital Learning Still Second Best?

Article by Darlene Damm

Published on Mar 20, 2020

As Covid-19 continues to spread, the world has gone digital on an unprecedented scale. Tens of thousands of employees are working from home, and huge conferences, like the Google I/O and Apple WWDC software extravaganzas, plan to experiment with digital events.

Universities too are sending students home. This might have meant an extended break from school not too long ago. But no more. As lecture halls go empty, an experiment into digital learning at scale is ramping up. In the US alone, over 100 universities, from Harvard to Duke, are offering online classes to students to keep the semester going.

While digital learning has been improving for some time, Covid-19 may not only tip us further into a more digitally connected reality, but also help us better appreciate its benefits. This is important because historically, digital learning has been viewed as inferior to traditional learning. But that may be changing.

## The Inversion

We often think about digital technologies as ways to reach people without access to traditional services—online learning for children who don't have schools nearby or telemedicine for patients with no access to doctors. And while these solutions have helped millions of people, they're often viewed as "second best" and "better than nothing." Even in more resource-rich environments, there's an assumption one should pay more to attend an event in person—a concert, a football game, an exercise class—while digital equivalents are extremely cheap or free. Why is this? And is the situation about to change?

Take the case of Dr. Sanjeev Arora, a professor of medicine at the University of New Mexico. Arora started Project Echo because he was frustrated by how many late-stage cases of hepatitis C he encountered in rural New Mexico. He realized that if he had reached patients sooner, he could have prevented needless deaths. The solution? Digital learning for local health workers.

Project Echo connects rural healthcare practitioners to specialists at top health centers by video. The approach is collaborative: Specialists share best practices and work through cases with participants to apply them in the real world and learn from edge cases. Added to expert presentations, there are lots of opportunities to ask questions and interact with specialists.

The method forms a digital loop of learning, practice, assessment, and adjustment.

Since 2003, Project Echo has scaled to 800 locations in 39 countries and trained over 90,000 healthcare providers. Most notably, a study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that the outcomes of hepatitis C treatment given by Project Echo trained healthcare workers in rural and underserved areas were similar to outcomes at university medical centers. That is, digital learning in this context was equivalent to high quality in-person learning.

If that is possible today, with simple tools, will they surpass traditional medical centers and schools in the future? Can digital learning more generally follow suit and have the same success? Perhaps. Going digital brings its own special toolset to the table too.

## The Benefits of Digital

If you're training people online, you can record the session to better understand their engagement levels—or even add artificial intelligence to analyze it in real time. Ahura AI, for example, founded by Bryan Talebi, aims to upskill workers through online training. Early study of their method suggests they can significantly speed up learning by analyzing users'

real-time emotions—like frustration or distraction—and adjusting the lesson plan or difficulty on the fly.

Other benefits of digital learning include the near-instantaneous download of course materials—rather than printing and shipping books—and being able to more easily report grades and other results, a requirement for many schools and social services organizations. And of course, as other digitized industries show, digital learning can grow and scale further at much lower costs.

To that last point, 360ed, a digital learning startup founded in 2016 by Hla Hla Win, now serves millions of children in Myanmar with augmented reality lesson plans. And Global Startup Ecosystem, founded by Christine Souffrant Ntim and Einstein Kofi Ntim in 2015, is the world's first and largest digital accelerator program. Their entirely online programs support over 1,000 companies in 90 countries. It's astonishing how fast both of these organizations have grown.

Notably, both examples include offline experiences too. Many of the 360ed lesson plans come with paper flashcards children use with their smartphones because the online-offline interaction improves learning. The Global Startup Ecosystem also hosts about 10 additional in-person tech summits around the world on various topics through a related initiative.

Looking further ahead, probably the most important benefit of online learning will be its potential to integrate with other digital systems in the workplace.

Imagine a medical center that has perfect information about every patient and treatment in real time and that this information is (anonymously and privately) centralized, analyzed, and shared with medical centers, research labs, pharmaceutical companies, clinical trials, policy makers, and medical students around the world. Just as self-driving cars can learn to drive better by having access to the experiences of other self-driving cars, so too can any group working to solve complex, time-sensitive challenges learn from and build on each other's experiences.

## Why This Matters

While in the long term the world will likely end up combining the best aspects of traditional and digital learning, it's important in the near term to be more aware of the assumptions we make about digital technologies. Some of the most pioneering work in education, healthcare, and other industries may not be highly visible right now because it is in a virtual setting. Most people are unaware, for example, that the busiest emergency room in rural America is already virtual.

Once they start converging with other digital technologies, these innovations will likely become the mainstream system for all of us. Which raises more questions: What is the best business model for these virtual services? If they start delivering better healthcare and educational outcomes than traditional institutions, should they charge more? Hopefully, we will see an even bigger shift occurring, in which technology allows us to provide high quality education, healthcare, and other services to everyone at more affordable prices than today.

These are some of the topics we can consider as Covid-19 forces us into uncharted territory ■

Source:

<https://singularityhub.com/2020/03/20/is-digital-learning-really-still-second-best/>



Darlene Damm is Vice Chair & Principal Faculty of Global Grand Challenges at Singularity University. She has spent nearly two decades leading organizations and initiatives in the field of social innovation.

For Inquiries, [info@octara.com](mailto:info@octara.com)

# Social Media Marketing Tactics

June 18, 2020 | 11:00 am – 4:00 pm (PST)  
At Zoom Meeting Room

## ► Course overview:

Social media and inbound marketing continues to become an increasingly important avenue for your businesses to get found by and to engage with potential customers on the web. In this hands-on workshop, we focus on the most important avenues: Social Networks, Blogs and Online Videos.

The main aim of Social Media Marketing is not to bluntly advertise or sell your products & services, but to build an online relationships with your followers and fans. Once your company has achieved an authoritative reputation and credibility, your fans will tell others how good you are without you having to do it yourself.

## ► Key Takeaways

- **Identify** your Organizations Social Media Goals and Objectives
- **Identify** ideal Target Audiences/Customers
- **Determine** where Social Media Marketing Fits
- **Audit** your Current Social Media Status and Research Competition
- **Build** your strategic Communication Plan
- **Map out** a Content Marketing and Curation Strategy
- **Allocate** Budget and Resources
- **Choose** Channels and Tactics
- **Decide** what Platforms to use
- **Use** Analytics to track Progress
- **Adjust** your Strategy as needed



**Facilitator**

**Dr. Frank Peter, Ph.D**

International Expert & Speaker on Digital Marketing & Digital Transformation

Click here to view complete profile of Frank  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/drfrankpeter/>

## ► Who Should Attend?

- Marketing Managers
- Communications Specialists
- PR Executives, Managers and Consultants
- Anyone interested in learning how to make sure social media works for their organization

To register, please click here:  
**<https://bit.ly/2MjFIQM>**

Workshop Investment

**PKR 13,500/-**  
+PST/SST Per Participant

**Fee Includes:**

- e-Learning Material
- Digital Certificate of Attendance
- Virtual Business Networking
- Post-Workshop Advisory Services
- Octara Loyalty Card\*\*

\*\* Entitles card holder to 15% discount on all future Octara Trainings (online & classroom)

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This workshop can be customized to suit specific needs of your organization which may lead to significant savings.  
Please contact Sarim Atique at [sarim.atique@octara.com](mailto:sarim.atique@octara.com) or call at 0345-8949470

For Details & Registration contact

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# Smart Selling Skills

“ IF YOU ARE NOT TAKING CARE OF YOUR PROSPECT, YOUR COMPETITOR WILL. – BOB HOOEY ”

June 24, 2020 | 11:00 am – 4:00 pm (PST) | At Zoom Meeting Room

## Program Overview:

The modules in this Online training venture will play an important role towards helping the participants practice and hone their selling skills which include building and maintaining rapport, negotiation & closing the deal which enables them to take advantage of sales opportunities and aggressively expand the business.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Learn the current market trend and getting hold onto your products.
- Identify true needs of your customer.
- Determine the difference between proactive selling and reactive selling.
- Discover the art to come out with a win-win negotiation

## Program Agenda:

### Building Customer Relationships:

- Breaking the ice
- Following mirroring technique
- Empathetic listening skills

### Pro-Active Selling:

- Scenario based questions
- Utilization of SPIN questions
- Selling new products

### Negotiation – Win/Win Strategy:

- Working on emotions intelligently.
- Influence in your pitch.
- Hitting target assertively

## Who Should Attend?

This course is suitable for frontliners and experienced managers in Sales function who are interested in improving their performance and productivity.

To register, please click here:  
<https://bit.ly/3cNER5z>

### Course Facilitator:

## Faizan Ahmad

- Head of Learning & Development, Multinet Pakistan (Pvt) Limited
- Over 16 years of corporate experience across sales, services, telecom & banking
- Certified Presenter & Business Leader from Dale Carnegie Training
- With 10+ years of training experience successfully conducted trainings sessions for blue-chip entities such as Engro, PTCL, Ufone, UBL, HBL, Byco petroleum & many others



### Click to view complete profile of Faizan:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/faizan-ahmad-13a33913/?originalSubdomain=pk>

**Workshop Investment**  
**PKR 4,000/-** +SST/PST Per Participant  
**Group Discount Available**

### Fee Includes:

- e-Learning Material
- Digital Certificate of Attendance
- Virtual Business Networking
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# Being Anchored in an Age of Turbulence

June 25, 2020 | 11:00 am – 4:00 (PST) | At Zoom Meeting Room

## Program Overview:

This 4-hours online training will reflect on a profound question: **what are the perennial truths that matter?**

Let us explore our inward selves with tools and ideas we don't often get a chance to do, with open hearts and minds. This session will offer the participants a set of unique tools and mindset changing ideas about how to navigate daily living in an age of over-stimulation.

## Program Agenda:

Four themes will be explored:

- Creating an island of safety amidst the high tide of distractions
- An attitude to time in an age of instant replay
- We must choose money over fulfilment. Really?
- A media diet to promote social health

## Methodology:

By means of (short) readings, videos, power-point slides and well-crafted discussion strategies, this workshop will be an unusual, unique experience.

## Who Should Attend:

Participants who are in their 30s' and above; in mid-level and senior managerial positions, who are responsible to oversee a number of staff in their organizations.

## Learning Outcomes:

From this session each participant will leave with **an action plan regarding** the most pressing issues demanding his/her attention today: **time, money and the media.**



**Facilitator: ABBAS HUSAIN**

- Abbas Husain directs the **Teachers Development Centre (TDC)** since 1997.
- MA (English) from University of Karachi, and M.Ed (TESOL) from University of Manchester
- Received professional training from Universities of Toronto, Pittsburgh, Louisville and Chicago
- Reached 65,000 teachers in a variety of training sites and settings all over Pakistan
- Conducted trainings in Oman, UAE, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and India
- In February 2020, he received Lifetime Achievement Award from **Millennium Institute of Professional Development Islamabad** on his dedicated work in teaching excellence
- He believes that the youth of Pakistan with vision, guidance and purpose will lift it out of the present morass it is in for a future worth living in.

**Abbas Husain** is known for his highly interactive facilitating style. He gives a high priority to each participant's voice, and thus the explorations of all the above themes promises to be a **rich discussion** where we bring to the table our perceptions and experiences and cast a powerful look at them, **with compassion and wisdom.**

His vast erudition, interest in the teaching-learning issues in formal educational institutions, and a critical study of the interface of modernity with spirituality have made him a formidable presence in all policy-making sites in Pakistan.

To register, please click here: <https://bit.ly/3gRCmm6>

**Workshop Investment**  
**PKR 4,000/-**  
**+SST/PST Per Participant**

## Fee Includes:

- e-Learning Material
- Digital Certificate of Attendance

- Virtual Business Networking
- Post-Workshop Advisory Services
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Promoted at Octara – The Free WebMall

**LIFE IN TUNE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**  
DISCOVER YOUR BILLION DOLLAR BRAND

With Frank Furness

And Freddie Ravel

**Freddie Ravel** **Frank Furness**

**The Free WebMall**  
Adil, Ayesha, Uj, Sarim, Umair, zain...

zainab  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/tcsoctaratrainings\\_tcsoctara-passion-purpose...](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/tcsoctaratrainings_tcsoctara-passion-purpose...)

MEET **FREDDIE RAVEL** from Santana in a Zoom Room on Thu, 11-June at 9PM ( Pak ) / 8PM ( UAE )

**OCTARA presents**

Free Webinar - Life In Tune with Social Media, How to Discover your Billion Dollar Brand hosted by our dear friend **FRANK FURNESS**.

IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN MUSIC AND BUSINESS

Sign up soon  
<https://www.productivitycentre.com/lifeintune>

...Promoted in Pakistan by Octara.

- Review by Adil Ahmad

The tech has been there all along but we have just been reluctant in embracing it wholeheartedly. If one had a choice between meeting in virtual space and pumping flesh in person, our instincts would lead us to the intimacy of physical interaction, seeking the comfort and security, not to mention the high energy field that draws people together in close physical proximity. Or used to, before the pandemic struck, sending flying out of the window long established paradigms of how business was conducted.

## CRYSTAL BALL GAZING

Some might say that Octara had seen this coming, although it hardly needed a crystal ball to foresee the future. Kate Sweetman and Shane Cragun had come to our shores many years ago preaching the gospel of Disruption and Reinvention. The hyper-connectivity of the global village was raising concerns even then amongst the discerning few, though by and large the people and their governments were too consumed by the old paradigm of wealth generation to bother with what lay around the corner.

The only reason change creeps up upon us and catches us by surprise is because we are firmly ensconced in our comfort zones. But for those prone to taking the periodic flight in the helicopter as advocated by Roger Harrop, the richness of the horizon reveals itself, gathering storm clouds and all.

But there is nothing that could have prepared us for the mayhem that arrived in the form of COVID-19. Go with the flow is the advice on offer, and this unprecedented tsunami has required the ability to pivot with speed and grace, and shed old skin and grow new skin in double quick fashion.

My own conversion to the new paradigm was fairly seamless and painless. Work-from-home was my kinda work which earlier had singled me out for some good natured ribbing by colleagues not familiar with the virtues of keeping business overheads down. But now, with man collectively crossing the threshold of stupidity and forced into a state of house arrest, I have been vindicated.

What has emerged over the past few months is an unprecedented cross-fertilization of ideas in virtual space by thought leaders one had not heard of before. These webinars and zoom meetings are free, but clearly, given the high potency nature of the content, there is an expectation of a price tag sooner than later.

## MUSIC AND BUSINESS?

Meeting Freddie Ravel in a Zoom Room conducted by Frank Furness was possibly the high point of my virtual week that brought back a flood of priceless memories. **Freddie Ravel** is an American keyboardist, a former member of the band Earth, Wind & Fire, and has worked with artists such as Sergio Mendes, Flora Purim, Bobby McFerrin, Carlos Santana, Madonna, Al Jarreau and Prince. Freddie has transitioned from a formidable musician to an impactful motivational speaker. Is there a connection between music and business was the question posed as people look to Life in Tune with Social Media, and how to discover your billion dollar brand.

From the present global fixation on murder and mayhem, are we now perhaps at the point of inflection wherein music can drown out the drums of death and destruction, and make in the process a billion dollar brand?





Topic	Day/s	Trainer	Month
<b>Online Training: Social Media Marketing Tactics</b>	1	Dr. Frank Peter	18 June
<b>Online Training: Smart Selling Skills for Front-line Professionals</b>	4-hours	Faizan Ahmed	24 June
<b>Online Training: Being Anchored in an Age of Turbulence</b>	4-hours	Abbas Husain	25 June
<b>HR Leadership Using HR Metrics &amp; HR Analytics</b>	1	Talha Asim	July
<b>Designing Agile Organizations</b>	2	Frederik Haentjens	July
<b>Managers as Coach</b>	1	Shiraz Ahmed	July
<b>Post Budget Workshop</b>	1	TBC	July
<b>Cyber Security Management</b>	1	TBC	August
<b>Key Account Management</b>	1	David Vachal	August
<b>Visual Merchandising &amp; Shopper Marketing</b>	1	TBC	August
<b>Microsoft Power BI Including DAX &amp; Queries</b>	1	Irfan Bakaly	August
<b>Corporate Etiquettes for Sales Professionals</b>	Half-Day	Ghaus A. Jafri	August
<b>Understand the FinTech Space</b>	3	Petros Geroulanos	September
<b>Effective Marketing Techniques</b>	Half-Day	Dave Nelissen	September
<b>Effective Selling Techniques</b>	Half-Day	Dave Nelissen	September
<b>Creating Content that Sells</b>	TBC	Hira Saeed	TBC
<b>Direction, Drive and Discipline</b>	TBC	Umair Jaliawala	TBC
<b>Certificate in Maintenance Planning / RCM</b>	2	Ben Stevens	TBC
<b>Emotional Intelligence for Leadership Excellence</b>	1	John Bentley	TBC
<b>Measuring Return on Investment of Training</b>	1	Jack J Philips	TBC
<b>Interviewing Tomorrow Workforce</b>	1	Uzma Chishti	TBC
<b>Creativity &amp; Innovation using Design Thinking</b>	2	Rody Vonk	TBC
<b>Channel Management</b>	1	Tony Lewis	TBC
<b>Crisis Response and Communication Management</b>	1	Ben Pronk	TBC
<b>Successful Product Launching and Brand Positioning</b>	2	Darren Coleman	TBC
<b>Health Care Operation Management</b>	1	David Ben Tovim	TBC
<b>Learning and Development Management Program</b>	2	Ian Thomson	TBC

\* All training programs are subject to change as per the guidelines from GoP on CoVID\_19



## For Details:

Karachi: 021-34520093, 34547141, 34520708

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