

Leading strategically through turbulent times...

As you no doubt know, many experts are making predictions about the course of the pandemic, and our path to recovery. Here are four popular recovery scenarios currently being debated:

- The V—The Quick Rebound (3-5 months)
- The U—The Gradual Restoration (6-12 months)
- The Swoosh (think Nike logo)—The Slow Renewal (12-18 months)
- The W—The Resurgence (8 months growth, 4 months virus resurgence, 8 months economic resurgence) I call this one the ‘Groundhog Day’ scenario

I think it’s safe to say the first scenario has already passed its ‘best before’ date. More worrisome, though, is the growing support for the fourth scenario. Recent experience with limited reopening shows that many people act as if we’re returning to the ‘old normal.’ Here’s a solid (slightly geeky) science-based analysis that explore three of the scenarios:

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/05/01/three-potential-futures-for-covid-19/>

The bottom line... we’re all still wondering, ‘Which future will emerge?’ The deeper question, however, is, ‘How should we best prepare for *whichever* future actually does?’ A big challenge in doing this is that our standard planning models assume a kind of ‘unbroken line’ of incremental change, with time to navigate our way forward. Most existing strategic plans confidently promise this. Our current strengths will still be our foundation for success... we have time to address our current weaknesses... our opportunities are within our grasp... our threats are knowable, and we can avoid them. Well... maybe not so much today.

So, how do we plan when faced with unknowable futures. That’s where scenario planning comes in. Although this tool has been around since the early 90s, it’s being ‘rediscovered’ as a uniquely useful way of thinking about uncertainty.

The first link I want to share is from **The Bridgespan Group**, a leading US nonprofit consulting organization. They presented a very helpful webinar last week, which included a highly applicable real world case example, as well as several practical tools. Here’s a clip from their post-webinar email. As noted, they’re encouraging us to share this widely:

- [The recording of the webinar](#) and [the slides](#)...feel free to share this, and the link below with your colleagues, CEO / ED, or others from your organization.
- [Bridgespan's COVID-19 nonprofit resource center](#) offering resources on effective strategy, organizational strength, effective leadership, and financial health.

A second brief article was highlighted in a recent **Stanford Social Innovation Research** collection of COVID-19 responses. It includes a tool to help nonprofit organizations and foundations brainstorm scenarios based on a simple two factor matrix: <https://trista-harris.squarespace.com/new-voices-of-philanthropy/Tristaharrisorg/how-nonprofits-amp-foundations-can-use-scenario-planning-to-prepare-for-coronavirus>. The two 'unknowns' are whether the Coronavirus spread is limited or extensive, and the challenge of balancing the needs of your staff and the people they serve. While not a 'pure' form of scenario planning, this is useful for engaging your people in a real-time planning process. There's also the bonus of a free eBook offer.

And finally, for anyone living in fear of having a meeting 'Zoom-bombed' by hackers or other disruptive non-invitees, here's a very thorough explanation from **FastCompany** magazine on how to protect yourself: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90507861/how-to-keep-troublemakers-from-ruining-your-zoom-meetings>.

The second edition of this resource list will include links to articles that focus on supporting a remote nonprofit workforce during this challenging time.

Watch for our invitation to an online ED/CEO Zoom dialogue (NOT a webinar... an actual opportunity to share experiences and ideas with each other.) We'll schedule this for a time when we'll have a better sense of What the reopening will look like. Feel free to share suggestions on how to ensure this is a worthwhile event for leaders like you.



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