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2020 Challenges: All New, But with a Familiar Ring

In my recent conversations with past, current and prospective clients, as well as some consulting colleagues, I've heard a couple of different suppositions about the state of our business as we face down [more of the unknown](#) in 2020. One is that, as management consultants, our pipeline must be bone dry as companies scale way back on big-ticket projects, implementations and transactions. The others assumes that we are overwhelmed with companies that are looking for guidance as to how to safely open, operate and maintain continuity in the current environment.

The reality, of course, is somewhere in the middle. While we aren't as likely to see our clients investing in the same areas they were prior to the pandemic, we're still seeing plenty of growth activity and certain segments where demand is way up. And while we are fielding inquiries on a number of topics related to day-to-day organizational functionality, the internal operations teams at most of the businesses to which we've spoken are not, for the most part, overwhelmed or in panic mode; they're managing to do what they do best – triage situations on a case-by-case basis and react appropriately.

Instead, our engagements over the past few months have tended to be much more pragmatic. While many management teams are concentrating on getting their organization through another day, week and month without significant interruption, we've heard from a number of businesses that are now being forced to tackle some of the tougher initiatives that they had been putting off but are now considered mission-critical, such as digital transformation, ERP implementations, mobility, customer centric applications, etc. Utilizing limited resources within a challenging working environment, these companies are seeking a partner to help them map out their next significant, transformative move.

When ESG was launched in 2008, businesses were dealing with chaotic economic conditions that had no precedent. Those who worked with ESG at that time are likely to recall the position they were in when they first called us. Whether it was for M&A activity, a CRM implementation, workforce assessment, etc., their businesses were in vulnerable states, there was little clarity around the global economy and many companies were facing complex transformations with ambiguous outcomes. Working with ESG gave those management teams a neutral, third-party team of experienced pros with which to strategize, create and execute on big picture plans, freeing

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organizational leaders to focus on operating and maintaining their businesses profitably and efficiently.

In 2020, the specifics are obviously quite different, but the overall conditions are strikingly similar. Just as they were in the last economic slowdown, business leaders, already operating with relatively low budgets and small teams, are facing down vulnerability mixed with a lack of clarity, and incredibly complex changes loom on the horizon. With executives dealing with everything from reconfiguring office floor plans to identifying transportation issues, or mitigating against manufacturing delays and shifts to the product roadmap, preparing for and successfully executing on any transformational initiative seems borderline impossible.

And so, just as it was in 2008, ESG is well-positioned to support its clients in this time of ambiguity. Our team has only become stronger and savvier – not just through M&A integration activity, but other complex projects including discovery, roadmapping, prioritization, corporate positioning and full-scale changes to the customer experience. As organizational resources concentrate on responding to the COVID-19 crisis and maintaining business continuity, ESG is there to listen, learn and keep those organizations on track for growth and significant transformation of all kinds. We act as extensions of our clients' teams, making their long-term goals our own, while supplying time-tested and unbiased guidance that reflects decades of corporate and commercial experience.

We would [welcome the opportunity](#) to learn more about your current business challenges and determine where ESG can provide support.

—By Mark Newhall, ESG Founder and CEO

Based in Denver, Colorado, Execution Specialists Group (ESG) is a strategy execution-focused consultancy with extensive global experience engaging with client senior leadership to plan and deliver on complex post M&A integration and digital transformation objectives. Recognized by Forbes as one of America's "Top Management Consulting Firms" for the past five years (2016-2020), ESG clients include Advance Auto Parts, Bridgestone, Caesars Entertainment, Gordon Food Service, Office Depot/OfficeMax, Target Corporation, Whole Foods and more. To learn more about ESG, visit www.esgimpact.com