

ethikos Volume 33, Number 2. February 28, 2019 It's FATE: Navigating and leading change ethically

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Many industries, from healthcare to retail to logistics, are experiencing rapid disruption and change that correlates to a transition from storefront to online businesses. These changes include an increase in virtual and internet businesses. In general, customers seeking more convenience at a reasonable price and competitors driving an online retail path are causing this change. If an industry, organization, or company is not nimble in keeping up with the changes driven by customers and companies (e.g., Amazon, Netflix), they may face restructuring, bankruptcy, or closure. A few former industry leaders come to mind: Blockbuster, Toys R Us, K-Mart and Sears. Leaders who will succeed in this rapidly changing business environment must embrace new skills to identify and meet customer demand and to articulate new vision for the future of the company and its employees. "FATE" (Flexible, Accountable, Thoughtful communication, and Ethical) is an acronym to help leaders navigate and lead through change ethically. Think of it as a tool to guide you and the FATE of your company.

F – Flexible

The old way of doing business may not be what your customers are looking for anymore. It is important to be flexible and innovative, because your customers are tired of waiting. In the healthcare area, for example, patients do not want to wait on their providers for appointments. And why should they, since they can log onto their computer and have a virtual visit with a provider from the comfort of their home or convenience of their office. They don't have to waste their time driving to the provider's office, checking in, sitting in the waiting room (for heaven's sake—the name even implies waiting) and then waiting in the exam room. Then maybe waiting for a referral, or a prescription, or a lab draw. And then more waiting for results or more referrals.

For smaller organizations, being flexible and innovative may mean finding ways to provide telehealth to your patients. For larger organizations, it may mean bringing a physician onsite to provide primary care services. Or it may mean having a virtual store instead of a brick-and-mortar store. Or it could mean conducting more business virtually instead of in person and accepting this meeting mode as productive and the norm. Or it could mean allowing your employees to work remotely to provide work-life balance, or allowing flexible schedules to meet customer demands. As of this writing, Amazon, a company that has changed the way we shop, is diversifying into healthcare. They will change the way the healthcare is delivered, and it will not involve building clinics as we currently know them.

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