



**WHAT'S NEW IN THE NEWEST NORMAL NOW by Kathy Graham**

There were three new market factors present in 2020 that weren't present before December 2019:

1. The pandemic, which caused the first recession since 1870 that was totally caused by a pandemic...and that means that no one living has ever experienced a situation like what we're still living through.  
**TAKE AWAY #1:** Fear, emotional reactions, and UNCERTAINTY remains high.
2. Many companies have most of their workforce working from home...still.  
Note: working from home during a pandemic when your job and lives could be at risk, where your children are there e-learning, your spouse also working there, in an area that might be cramped with those many people always there and often no outside cleaning or other help, that's not the same as "working remotely."  
**TAKE AWAY #2:** C-Suite, executives, and Board Directors have greater SAFETY risks than before—the safety of remote data, remote stressed employees, remote intellectual property, remote work that may or may not be occurring.
3. In December 2019, The Business Roundtable said that a corporation's purpose was now to serve all stakeholders—its customers, employees, environment, community, other ESG constituents, and shareholders. That thinking is still revolutionizing corporate America's C-Suite, executives, and Board Directors' communications and approach.  
**TAKE AWAY #3:** REPUTATIONAL RISK is greater than ever, given the increased social/digital proficiency spawned by the pandemic forcing people to work virtually from home, which makes many more individuals who are now stakeholders just a click away from having the potential to share a negative comment with all.

**STORYTELLING is a tool that C-Suite, executives, and Board Directors can use** to effectively manage the above risks. The story message is delivered authentically in a bulleted manner, such as:

- The purpose of the company is X and we're driving it through this period via Z, and our department is doing Y to make this X AND Z occur.
- I remember when we faced something similar before, and we did this and that—and you were phenomenal at A (or remember when this and that happened (laughter or shared grimace), and look how well we did afterwards...we can do it again even better/faster/etc.

When this story message is delivered authentically and repeatedly at all levels in different presentation modes, MEANING AND PURPOSE of each stakeholder becomes clear. When people have meaning and purpose to their work/role, they become less fearful and more hopeful. When people become less fearful and more hopeful, they deliver more productive work. More productive work helps all reach their goals, goals they've contributed to, which continues a virtuous circle of success with all of a corporation's stakeholders.

For more tools that can assist C-Suite, executives, and Board Directors in growing their companies, which also grows their careers, listen to my [VIDEO](#) from my presentation as one of the ten speakers at AICPA national ENGAGE 2020 virtual conference. It's addressed to "Rebranding the CFO," but the tools shared—one of which is the STORYTELLING technique above—are applicable to all C-Suite, executives, and Board Directors interested in growing their companies and careers in this Newest Normal Now.