

COVID – The Force of Nature or the Force of Choice?

28 August 2020



dr. **THOMAS** brand Ltd.
— DR THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN

dr. **THQMAS** brand Ltd.

The Force of Nature





COVID - DESPAIR





COVID - DESPAIR

I never thought I would say that but COVID brought us the longest period most of us have known of humanity being scared, uncertain and feeling out of control.

For me personally, it had the same impact, within a week, I lost 70% of my income from three disparate regions of the world.

If you are like me, this shatters my self-belief and self-confidence. For four/ five days I was in despair, wondering how I can re-build when the entire world is upside down.

The Monday after I realised this problem will not be solved by anyone but me.



COVID – PREDICTIONS, ILL-CONCEIVED?



COVID – PREDICTIONS, ILL-CONCEIVED?



I am fascinated by the degree of naivety displayed by companies, brands, futurists and other sages:

Remote working is not new at all, maybe just in some countries and for some organisations.

Online buying is not new, it almost reached saturation in some countries before COVID.

Zoom calls and such video calls are not new for most global multinationals, they have operated like this for years.

Yes, the salience of these matter increased and the acceptance of them by a far wider group of companies and individuals.

Uncertainty is a prevailing sentiment and that will impact a few things:

Politics the world-over may turn more conservative.

Many people and companies will be gripped by fear to the point of being paralised and incapable of making any decisions.

Markets and companies will wait for another hit and become more conservative.



COVID - RESPONSE





COVID - RESPONSE

I recently had one of my former clients I am very proud of for what they have achieved, tell me in their industry many large companies are sitting back just waiting for better times to return.

Sadly that is the default position for most large companies as the connection between entrepreneurial founding purpose and current management is entirely disconnected.

Most corporate executives have an inherent incapacity to deal with challenges like this.

I recall a large company in the short-term insurance in SA saying years ago that the market declined hence they also declined. I was just horrified at the sentiment.

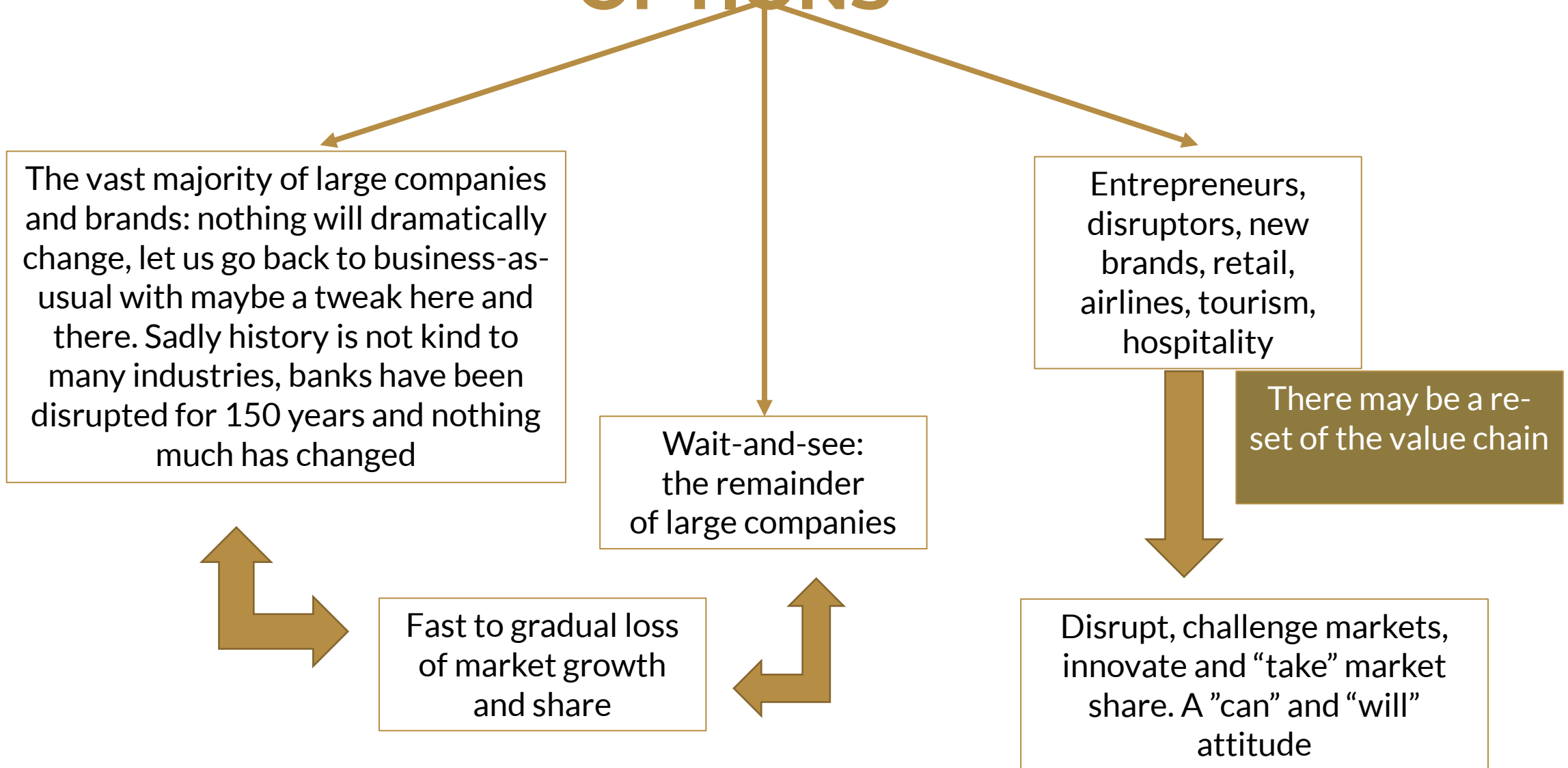
Surely if the market is hard, you appoint someone as CEO to beat the market odds or do their damnest to do it?

I recall working with analysts in the petro-chemicals industry on behalf of a client years ago when the sentiment expressed to me was “We know the industry is volatile, yet we need to have the confidence the CEO will do his/her best to beat the odds with either a lesser decline or even a stable position.” Common sense. The company was Polyfin, a JV between Sasol and AECI. The client CEO was Trevor Munday, later Deputy CEO of SASOL, who bought into this sentiment and lived up to it.

We don't know what we don't know and we certainly will never know more by doing the same.



THE COVID SITUATION LEAVES THREE OPTIONS

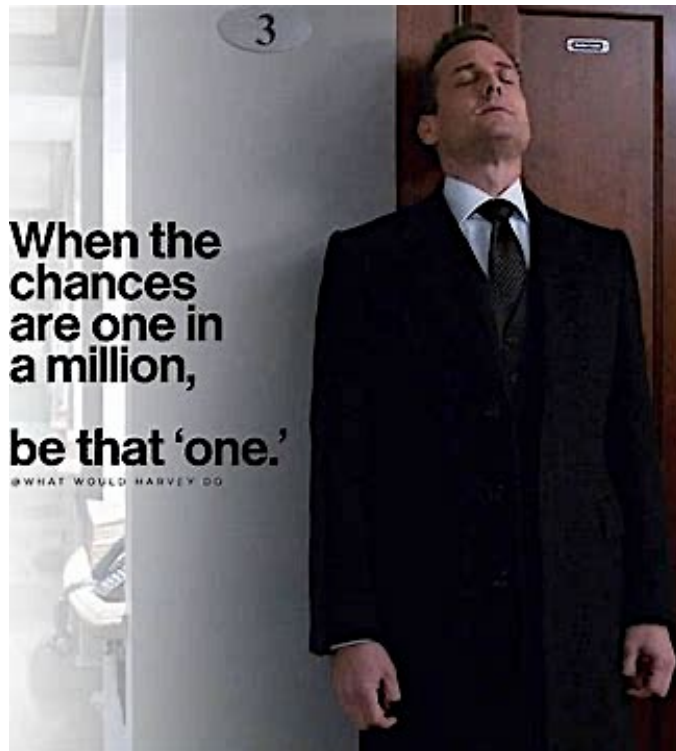




COVID - IMPACT

When the force of gravity is down, we can either go down with it (when we do nothing as most now) or refuse to go down with it.

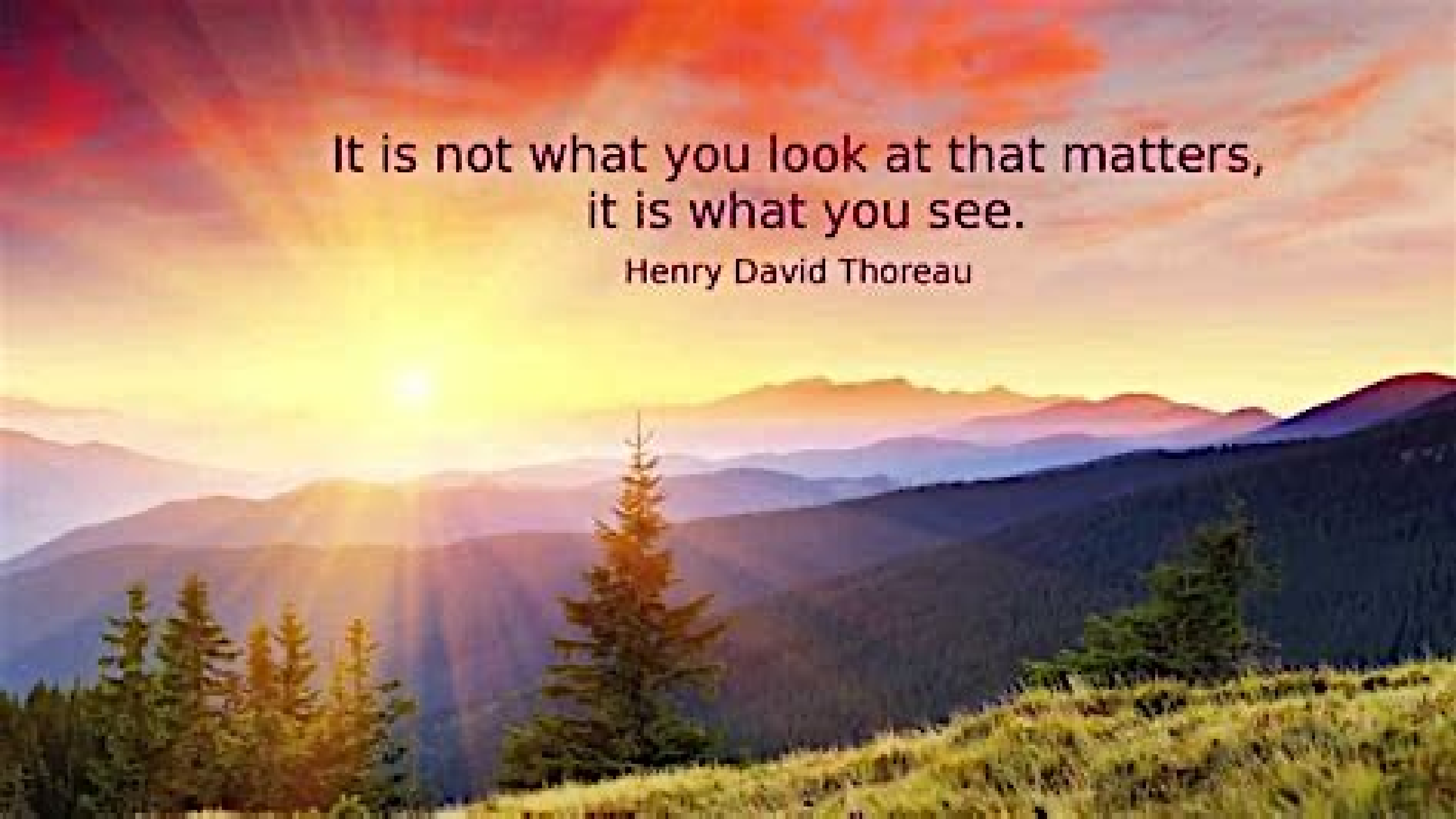
It really is our choice.



dr. THQMAS brand Ltd.

The Force of Choice



A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with vibrant orange, red, and yellow clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, there are several evergreen trees and a field of tall grass. The background features rolling mountains and hills, some of which are covered in dense evergreen forests. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and majestic.

It is not what you look at that matters,
it is what you see.

Henry David Thoreau



The Force of Choice

At the risk of being over-simplistic, my view is that COVID challenge is no different from the challenge most challenger or new market entrants face in mature or declining markets.

All new brands face uphill, unless markets grow so fast that even badly conceived brands “work”.

I naturally gravitated towards entrepreneurs that started new brands in established categories.

Together we built brands and campaigns that became major forces.

OUTsurance, e.tv, AngloGold Ashanti, BR!GHTROCK, 20twenty, McCarthy Retail, CFB, Zoopla, ITL, askafrika...

Doing work for large companies and organisations with a risk-aptitude.

Sasol Oil, MTN, Emirates, UAL:CSM, T-Mobile, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Fallon = these icons are a very tiny percentage of the companies I did work for in my life.

Few things inspire our creativity more than when we know we “have to.

In three months since late Feb, I gained more business than what I lost through COVID.



The Force of Choice

The COVID challenge is no different from the challenge most challenger / new market entrants face in mature or declining markets.

All new brands face uphill, unless markets grow so fast that even badly conceived brands “work”.

Few things inspire our creativity more than when we know we “have to”



“If you’re not pissing off at least 50% of the people, you are not trying hard enough”

– Yvon Chouinard, CEO of Patagonia

How to Tell if You're a Challenger Brand



Do any of these characteristics fit you or your organization?

- Aggressive/Determined
- Possessed with Intensity/Confidence
- Maverick/Risk-Takers/Bold
- Intrusive & Unapologetic
- Self-Aware
- Thought Leader
- In a Hurry
- Evokes Emotions
- Keen to Fund Marketing and Public Relations Efforts to Move Your Brand Ahead

If you've checked off
at least 50% of this list,
chances are you are
(or work for)
a Challenger Brand!

dr. **THQMAS** brand Ltd.

To Conclude





BE A CHALLENGER BRAND

...create markets, challenge convention, be customer-obsessed, be value-obsessed

When there is no market growth to be had, grab share and value. Own something new. Lateral thinking does not cost anything, we can all do it.

“Life is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration”

When you sit down at your desk and just start, things happen “magically”. Creativity inspires everyone.

Study something whilst you have time. Read. Listen to talks. Write. It opens our minds. It creates connections.

Don't mingle with negative people and negative clients.

As Nelson Mandela said, it is how we deal with life's blows that makes us excel.

**Thank
you for
being here**



For more detail see below:

t) +44 (0) 7798 693 753

e) thomas@drthomasbrand.com

 [linkedin.com/in/drthomasbrand](https://www.linkedin.com/in/drthomasbrand)

 [thomasoosthuizen](https://www.soundcloud.com/thomasoosthuizen)

www.drthomasbrand.com

dr.***T**HQMA**S** brand Ltd.
— DR THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN

