



## Leading During COVID-19: On Leaders, Heroes & a New Humanity



In one way or another, 2020 blindsided all of us. We started the year with our hopes and plans and goals, and COVID-19 threw all of that into turmoil. Some thrived. Others struggled. Toddlers and spouses and pets interrupted Teams calls. There was no playbook, and leaders had to improvise.

Though missteps were taken, many lessons were learned and the course was quickly corrected. Despite all the difficulties 2020 has brought, there has also been a collective camaraderie—a sense of solidarity—that only a challenge of this scale could rouse.

To close out the year, we caught up with the leaders of Adlib to reflect on what 2020 taught us about life, leadership, and humanity. Here's what they learned, and what they see on the horizon for 2021 and beyond:





"It hasn't been easy,  
to say the least." - Marc



**Marc Fuentes**

Sr. Director Growth  
Marketing

Overnight, we were forced to do the counterintuitive: go home to go to work. We all had hazy notions of remote work. Telecommuters have done it for years, but everybody all at once with no warning? How would workflows adapt? Would teams survive, continue to produce? Would projects and products continue to appeal to our customers?

Our people had to draw on emotional reserves, sometimes heroically. Juggling work and home life can be an immense challenge even at the best of times. In 2020, the boundaries were blurred, and work and home life coalesced into one imperfect mess.

We did it, and we're still doing it. Hats off to us all. Adlib banded together, and we supported each other. Teams stayed team-like at a distance. Productivity notched upward, in spite of our physical separation. We exemplified what our company stands for: intelligence; bringing order to disorder; making sense of it all. We showed that we are a resilient company. And we demonstrated through our support of each other a commendable corporate humanity, a virtue we can all be proud of.

Corporately, we remain strong. And when the world emerges from the grip of COVID-19, through vaccines and herd immunity, the companies that stayed resilient, that thrived despite the adversity, will have opportunities they could not have predicted. We intend to be one of those companies.

"Success is based on people and systems."

- Scott



**Scott Mackey**

SVP, Market Strategy

The pandemic has highlighted a key truth for any business: success is based on the people and systems that combine to deliver products and services that drive corporate success. Being forced to work in new ways and in new, largely separate locations has quickly surfaced any friction points or process weaknesses. Ensuring you have the necessary systems, workflows, and technology in place is only one element of creating an agile, resilient business. Focusing on the physical and mental well-being of your team in a time of unprecedented change is critical.

Leading with empathy while simultaneously ensuring ownership and accountability needs to be a natural way of doing business.

Moving quickly to address gaps is important but must be done with the needs and realities of each team member in mind. Since the impact has been global, we have seen empathy extend beyond corporate boundaries into and among our customers and partners. Moving into 2021 and beyond, I look forward to using the lessons learned, and adaptations made, to help everyone return to a healthy, new normal.

# "Begin with trust."

– Joan



**Joan Leroux**

SVP, Global Sales &  
Customer Success

People inherently want to do their best. No one wakes up and says, “I’m going to do a crappy job today.” Our team has risen to the challenge of our new working environment in ways that make me proud every day. I don’t sweat the small stuff.


When people are focused on outcomes and not activities, productivity follows—even if you have your cat or child on your lap and fuzzy slippers on your feet!

Our team shows up each time with intention and commitment. Managing a team through transition can be difficult. Leading a team through a pandemic redefines the word. Small victories are meaningful and contribute to a person’s sense of value, contribution, and connectedness.

It’s important to expose your own vulnerabilities and create an environment that lets people know it’s okay to be a little “off” now and again. Encourage self-care when planning the day. Mental breaks and mindfulness are critical to maintaining the pace you expect of yourself.

Looking into 2021, I’m excited to move forward. We have set the course for our success and have wind in our “sales,” so to speak.





"The emergence of heroes, leaders, and a new level of humanity." - Brett



**Brett Mellon**

CEO

The swiftness and scale of the pandemic posed extraordinary challenges for our employees, clients, and partners throughout 2020. It is easy to comprehend why seasoned and upcoming leaders missed opportunities for decisive action and honest communication.


The pandemic has transformed the way we live, work, and communicate. It has prompted us to evolve our processes, adapting practices to fit healthcare guidelines and social distancing protocols to keep our families, employees, clients, and partners safe.

As leaders, we all wished we had a COVID-19 playbook to draw upon and begin communicating step by step with no mistake; but it is a mistake to think that failures or lapses in leadership are all one can expect during COVID-19.

If history has taught us anything, it's that the greatest challenges often have a silver lining: the emergence of heroes, leaders, and a new level of humanity.

You won't have to look far to see the outpouring of global support for humans regardless of race, religion, and geographic location. 2020 will go down in the history books, and I am proud of Adlib and every employee who demonstrated adherence to healthcare protocols and our "better together" philosophy.

I am excited for 2021 with Adlib's new focus on Content Intelligence. I look forward to collaborating deeper and wider with our employees, clients, and partners to accelerate the world's transition to intelligent data.



"Transparency builds trust and cohesiveness."

- Catie



Catie Sirie

VP, Business Operations

A strong foundation is key to weathering any storm, even a global pandemic. I am extremely grateful for Adlib's strong foundation. With tools to support a completely remote workforce, and clearly defined goals and initiatives, the team adapted to focus on what matters most.

For me, the most valuable lesson of 2020 is this: It's never been more important to prioritize and invest in our valued team members. Leading with empathy and listening—even to what employees weren't saying—is a renewed skill I will continue to hone.

Adlib invested in mental health solutions, and this played a critical role in helping our team adjust and cope during this stressful time. We increased the frequency of communication as well. At times, our message landed, and sometimes we missed the mark.

Transparency builds trust and cohesiveness, and, in a strange way, the global pandemic further amplified the importance of these two traits. I'm proud to be part of Adlib and can look back with pride on how we came together to manage through 2020. I'm equally excited for 2021 with this rebuilt resilience.

"Create more human touches."

- Peter



**Peter Duff**

Chief Product Officer

The impact of COVID-19 has been challenging for everyone from a personal, family, and work perspective. The speed that this change was imposed upon society was a shock to the system, resulting in major changes in everyone's day-to-day life. As a company, we needed to contemplate the health and well-being of our customers and our employees. For Adlib, that meant shifting overnight to a fully remote workplace, as everyone built out their home offices and adopted new ways of working and collaborating.

As leaders, we ensured that we created more human touches using technology for our teams to help keep them focused, and to understand how we may need to support each employee as they adapted.

We developed a greater sense of empathy for how people needed to shift their own approach to work, keeping kids, spouses, and the overall stress of the situation in mind. I am very proud of our whole team for continuing to support the vision of building a great product and a great company.

In 2021, I look forward to an invigorated team with more resilience, more flexibility, and more drive to be successful in their roles and in achieving Adlib's vision. We will continue to do so with a lot of humanity and caring for each other, battle scars and all.

"Leaning in for support  
and pushing forward." – Kathryn



**Kathryn Welsh**

VP, Customer Operations

It certainly has been an interesting year, one that I will not forget. Leaning into certain areas of leadership has certainly helped me navigate better and rally my team. Being vulnerable, sharing my own challenges, listening more, and being empathetic to others helped guide me and my team in the right direction.

Keeping the team focused on our goals, being responsive to the changing needs of our customers, celebrating our successes—and recognizing when a team member needed help, support, or simply a break—has been a recipe for success. Everyone continues to embrace the challenge and deliver.

As we finish 2020, I look forward to capitalizing on some of the changes we have put in place to deliver exceptional results to our customers, to lead the content intelligence market, and most importantly continue to raise the bar for how we meet the needs of our customers.



Thanks for the words of  
wisdom, Adlib leaders.  
May 2021 bring health  
and happiness to us all.



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