

## Chapter 4

# What Happened in 2019?

### ABSTRACT

*As the governments and businesses of the world slowly realized the extent of the emergency of COVID-19 and the ensuing pandemic and began to assess the deaths and hospitalizations that resulted, they began to create new rules, operating procedures, and advice that everyone needed to follow. This included the business-to-business (B2B) salesforces who had just concluded their sales years in December 2019 (for most) and were embarking on a new set of goals and challenges for the new year. Quickly, local governments restricted contact between people, and especially between people who did not have a life-or-death requirement to meet in person. B2B salespeople needed to find a different way to continue to sell, to add to their personal value to the customer, and to build on the relationship they had, if any, with that customer. As the reality of the pandemic set in, B2B salespeople realized they needed answers, methods, and ideas.*

### COVID-19 AND THE PANDEMIC

In late December 2019, people in Wuhan, China, began to get sick with a previously unknown pneumonia, marking the beginning of a new infectious disease, later identified as a new type of coronavirus and named SARS-CoV-2. The disease the virus causes was named coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) by the World Health Organization (WHO).

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WHO declared the Covid-19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, and a pandemic on March 11, 2020. (Philanthropy, 2023, p. 2)

As the governments and businesses of the world slowly realized the extent of the emergency and began to assess the resulting deaths and hospitalizations, they began to create new rules, operating procedures, and advice that everyone needed to follow. This included the business-to-business (B2B) salesforces who had just concluded their sales years in December 2019 (for most) and were embarking on a new set of goals and challenges for the new year. Quickly, local governments restricted contact between people and especially between people that did not have a life-or-death requirement to meet in person. B2B salespeople needed to find a different way to continue to sell, to add to their personal value to the customer, and to build on the relationship they had, if any, with that customer. As the reality of the pandemic set in, B2B salespeople realized they needed answers, methods, and ideas.

## **GOVERNMENT REACTIONS**

The U.S. government quickly formed a Task Force focused on what to do and what the public should do.

*The White House Task Force narratives have meandered as the public's reaction to the situation changed: From disbelief and dismissal (denial) to unwillingly acknowledging the threat and shifting responsibility to China (anger), followed by relative nonaction while advancing optimism (bargaining), then briefly resigning to the fact (depression), and finally, an attempt to normalize the situation by embracing it and adapting to the new normal while exploring possible solutions (acceptance). (Dzhurova, 2020, p. 579)*

The result was a situation never experienced by the current citizens and certainly not by the current government leaders. As Greer et al. (2020) saw it:

*Covid-19 is a dramatic global public health challenge, and in many countries has created a ramifying public health, economic, and political crisis. The numbers involved are stupefying, whether they speak of infection and mortality, the scale of public health measures such as mobility restrictions, or the economic consequences for unemployment and public sector spending. Entire economies been put into medically induced comas, unthinkable tough public*

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