

TOP LINE

Past months have shown that successfully navigating the coronavirus pandemic requires undertaking multiple mitigating factors simultaneously. Measures include social distancing, encouraging mask use, improved indoor ventilation, contact tracing, and isolation of contagious individuals. The U.S. has accomplished none of these things – much less all of them together – and remains in a spiral of climbing Covid infections and an uncertain economy.

Meanwhile fire season in the West and, to a lesser degree, hurricane season in the Southeast have emerged in force highlighting the threat that extreme weather events pose to Americans across the country. Mass evacuations in areas not typically exposed to large scale wildfire events have resulted in a surge of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within the borders of the United States. These climate induced IDPs face not only the potential of losing their homes, but also increased risk of Covid infection as their only lodging options are often overcrowded and poorly ventilated makeshift evacuation centers.

Navigating complex events requires a layered approach to problem solving, even as it remains easier for people to view solutions in isolation. The United States' approach to Covid and extreme weather events has been of a reactive nature to date. However, the convergence of the Covid pandemic, wildfires and hurricanes of unprecedented scope place U.S. business leaders in a situation of having to handle multiple complex situations simultaneously. Business leaders are thus in the position of evaluating a web of possible solutions, navigating broken systems, and projecting long term scenarios in an environment where success is not measured by doing one thing perfectly, but by doing multiple things well enough.

Question to Consider:

What steps should business leaders take to promote long term planning in a complex, uncertain world?

COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS

As the Covid pandemic enters its ninth month, infection rates in the U.S. continue to climb. What began as a patchwork pandemic has long since encompassed all 50 states and [much of America remains trapped in a pandemic spiral](#). The pandemic's spread is evaluated by public health officials in terms of a number of markers: the number of daily new cases; the infection rate; the percentage of tests that come back positive; and the percentage of hospital beds that are occupied by very sick patients. Across the U.S. [no state fares well on all four benchmarks and over 50 percent have met less than two](#). This grim picture emphasizes the importance of adjusting our thinking to account for the complexity of the pandemic, where undertaking multiple steps simultaneously is key to gaining the upper hand.

BEYOND THE NOISE: THE NEW NORMAL

Amidst the backdrop of the Covid pandemic, wildfire season soared to new levels of devastation as [at least 4.7 million acres](#) burned across the Western United States between August 15th and September 13th. One of the most unexpected aspects of the 2020 wildfire season has been [wildfires in places that do not usually experience them](#); fires in areas normally too wet to burn ravaged western Oregon and led to the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people in areas that haven't burned since the early 20th century. Additionally, across the American West, increased development converged with climate change, land-use policies, and fire management practices creating [a dangerous tinderbox within forest ecosystems](#). The paradox of fire suppression and overwhelming destruction presents a complex challenge which can only be addressed through systematic revision of century old fire management practices.

TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center
[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic
[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please contact Secure Source International at info@securesource.com to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices..