COVID-19 SENSEMAKER® RESPONSE

RESILIENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Using SenseMaker®'s narrative journalling to understand how leaders are building resilience in these times

From 10-30 May, Cognitive Edge's Cynefin Centre, collaborating with the UNDP, launched an experiment in narrative journaling geared towards leaders.

Participants were self-selecting as they responded to a blog post and an email sent out to Cognitive Edge Network Members, and signed up to take part. Future research would look to address this with a wider, more diverse sample. The biggest takeaway from this experiment is meta – humans, in the context of extenuating circumstances, will not withhold knowledge. This pandemic presents a unique opportunity for the UNDP to empower leaders to share and learn from each other.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

652

journal entries were

121

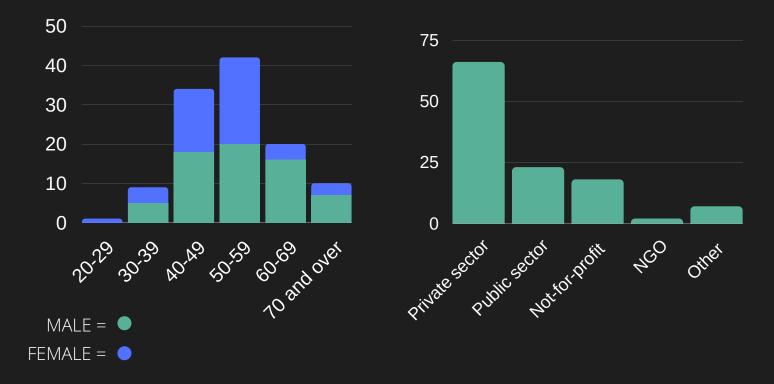
people signed up

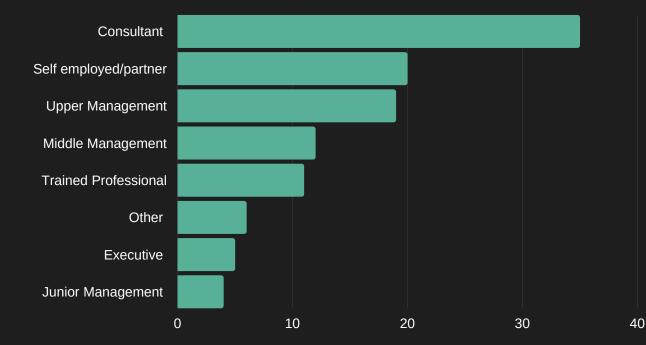


nationalities took

submitted

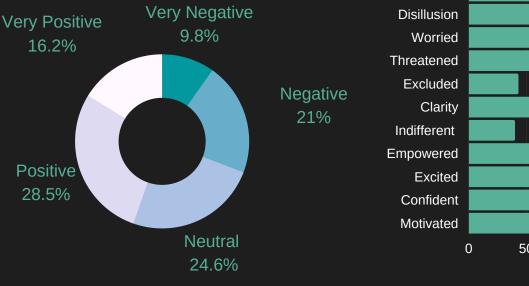
part





OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

Respondents were asked to describe their story, 43% were were either positive or extremely positive



What feelings were present in the experience?

OtherImage: state state

KEY INSIGHTS FROM TRIADS



Societal Concerns

There is strong agreement that we need to Adapt and Transform, not Accept, the challenges that COVID-19 throws at us.



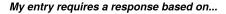
Future Implications

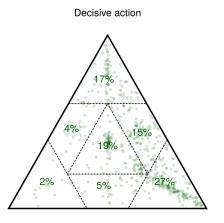
What's required for Transformative Radical Change is reconsidering Habits and Customs.



Personal Resilience

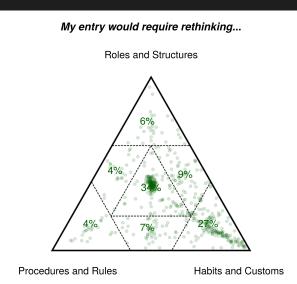
Responding by Experimenting and Learning is related to reconsidering Habits and Customs.





Expert analysis

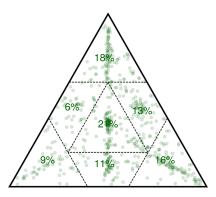
Experimenting and learning



Change and impact

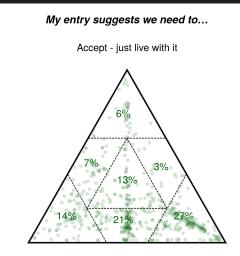
My entry requires...

Getting control over the situation



Caring for relationships involved

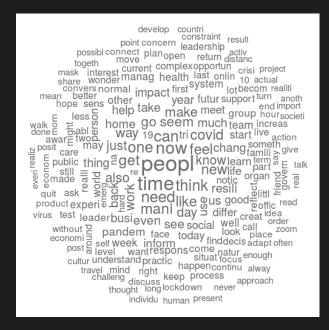
Zooming out in order to see the bigger picture



Adapt - small changes as necessary

Transform - opportunity for radical changes

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NARRATIVE INSIGHTS

Emergent theming was conducted on the narratives and 2 dominant themes were defined. Excerpts of stories, verbatim, around these themes have been included.

Transformation and Learning are associated with Motivation, Confidence, Excitement, Empowerment and Clarity

"In 10 years I would probably see a shift in my resilience pre vs post COVID-19. ...the time spent working from home has afforded me more time to reflect and see things more clearly. I have more time to practice mindfulness and more space to experience the benefits. As a result, I see a difference in how I respond to situations in the moment."

"It seems that there is a shift occurring whereby some people are beginning to interpret the pandemic as 'an opportunity' to re-invent themselves/society. This 'mindset' seems to have fostered a wide array of creative re-envisioning and re-designing of services, deliverables, products and processes -- sometimes, a whole new way of working together (culture). It appears that there may be some truth to the adage Necessity is the mother of invention." There is Worry and Disillusion about how the response to Covid-19 foreshadows the coming climate and other crises

"The COVID pandemic is a

systemic/ecological situation requiring nonlinear thinking and designing in order to fully understand the interdependent structures, protocols, and practices. The majority of leaders and change agents/consultants today tend to operate in ways 'to manage' and control for what is not wanted rather than engaging in ways that will contribute to addressing formative conditions (i.e., causation) while also ameliorating the current socio-cultural

challenges/stress/basic needs. In the postpandemic process, the risk is that leaders will only want to return to previous (familiar) thinking and practices, not recognizing the importance for utilizing a complexity mindset so as to re-design for healthier and more sustainable institutional and societal growth and development."

"... I was about to go to the Netherlands for work with a firm contract in hand. All this has now been postponed. ...when I started to fully grasp the gravity of what was unfolding, I clearly saw that there were new opportunities as well. It took me a few days of feeling disorganized and disoriented before I was able to get focused and I have begun to realize that maybe that what is happening is an accelerated way to transform my work and my focus."

"A small but growing number of senior leaders and executives I partner with or coach are starting to express concerns about remote performance management. They are witnessing diminished productivity, increases in negative habits, newly surfaced waste that requires adaptive action ..., disconnection in 1:1s and many new challenges due to the work from home commitments made to minimize the spread of COVID-19. They are not sure how to strike the balance between keeping business alive and supporting the obvious impacts of their people.We are now experimenting the opportunity to extend 1:1 coaching for struggling reports to help them work through their struggles with a neutral party. So far this is being received with open arms and those who have started their coaching sessions are experiencing shifts in clarity, decision making, action planning and more. The best part is, this ensures the solution is tailored to the individuals needs not the org - even though the org will benefit."

"Managerial thinking continuously fails to understand complex systems. Here an eminent London Business School professor falsely dichotomises resilience and agility. Agility sounds good. It suggests the ability to move quickly. Agile businesses may be small, and fleet of foot, but may also lack heft, and have weak balance sheets. In this way agile can sound a bit more like fragile. Resilience is perhaps a more useful concept. Agility is arguably more about seeing opportunity on the upside, Professor Birkinshaw says, while resilience is about surviving bad times. An ecological or complex systems viewpoint would never attempt to make such a distinction. If we are going to create more resilient organisations, much better thinking is needed."

"It seems that the pandemic has catalyzed responses that would be similar to how a global response to climate change could be undertaken. COVID-19 can be viewed as a pre-test, a trial run, for reference when mobilizing the interdependent areas requiring re-thinking and adapting proactively. A return to any semblance of pre-pandemic 'normalcy' risks the larger endemic climate changes being inadequately responded to in a timely fashion."