

The end of an Ice Age

 By [Edward Herridge](#)

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Change is inevitable. Along with death and taxes, it is a constant that will follow you throughout your life. Sometimes it happens slowly - and sometimes in the blink of an eye. It happens, has happened and will continue to happen throughout your life. It is an irresistible force that brings sorrow to some and joy to others. The young love it and the old resist it.



Source: www.unsplash.com

Since change is an unavoidable aspect of our lives, why do businesses resist it when history shows us that failing to adapt to change is the death knell of any organisation, no matter its size? Don't believe me? What do you think happened to IBM, Polaroid, Blackberry and Atari?

Businesses that do not adapt to the changing times are left behind to watch their market share dwindle as the new kids on the block gobble up the pie charts.

Frozen assets

The best case study I can think of to illustrate the risk of remaining rigid in the face of change is the frozen water trade. Back in the day, ice was big business in America. It was manually harvested and transported by barge, ship and train all over the world. It was also used to transport perishable goods globally.

When refrigeration entered the game, ice harvesters scoffed at the idea and even spread rumours that naturally harvested ice melted slower than the artificial variety. Unfortunately for the ice magnate's, refrigeration did not remain a novelty, but quickly grew into a very profitable business. One that ultimately contributed to America's expansion as new settlement patterns emerged due to food being shipped farther and lasting longer.



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Today, whether we realise it or not, we are at the end of another such ice age, even though many businesses do not seem to want to accept this reality. What I am talking about is the age of the end of the traditional office. Predictably, as with the ice magnates, most businesses are hell bent on keeping it business as usual. When the government insists, they relax their bums on seats policies temporarily but the moment restrictions are relaxed they literally force workers back into their buildings, where they can be seen and *properly managed*.

Unfortunately, this is a flawed perception - since the world has been in quarantine and a new lifestyle has emerged that will, like refrigeration, grow from novelty to necessity in a few short years.

Slow creep

We have all heard the phrase 'the new normal' used in relation to our current global pandemic, but yet business still seems hell bent on clinging to the 'old normal' by only conceding to lip service towards the world changing event that we are finding ourselves involved in at the moment. This unwillingness to adapt to the evident change will be the determining factor of their demise in the altered future we are now entering into. It won't happen overnight, it will be a slow creep, but it will happen if they fail to adjust to the new reality we are all facing.

What do I base this prophecy on? Human nature. When the majority of the world was forced indoors during global lockdowns, many workers ironically discovered a new kind of freedom in their isolation, the freedom of working from home.



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Had the pandemic not come around, the workers of the world would have remained blissfully unaware of this freedom but, unfortunately for the micromanagers of this world, it has happened - and now everybody's reality has changed. All businesses now need to take heed of the fact that the cheese has moved and if they do not adapt along with the times, it will be their slice of the pie chart that will be shrinking.

Melting ice

The cat is out of the bag, folks. The grumblings and mumblings that are going on in businesses who are forcing their workers back to the office will not go away. Those who can, the ones they actually want to keep, will move on to escape the discontent that being office bound now invokes in them. Those who remain will be the worker drones. The instruction takers. The good little boys and girls who pretend to be busy to keep the boss happy but contribute little to the bottom line.

Here is the truth of it. Natural ice does not melt slower than artificially frozen water. Office bound workers are not more productive than those who work remotely. Set hours and physical presence does not matter. Results matter. Don't get frozen in time. Adapt. Change. Grow. Keep your best people and make a profit.

ABOUT EDWARD HERRIDGE

Edward matriculated in 1992 after which he performed military service and began his working career in printing by studying electronic origination at the South African Printing College. Edward eventually became an account executive for Oakes and Associates at Investec Bank. He then migrated into advertising and became brand manager for Ronin Grain Management Solutions. Edward departed Ronin GMS to pursue his own interest before finding employment at Grey advertng as a finishing artist, re-toucher, motion graphic and digital designer.

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