

## **Volume 16, No. 1 (2020)**

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings again from the University of Houston – Clear Lake and welcome to this year's issue of the Small Business Institute ® Journal. Volume 16 begins our fourth-year hosting SBIJ and we offer our continued thanks to the Small Business Institute ® and our participating authors and reviewers for their scholarly work.

SBIJ continues its move to continuous publication. Works submitted are now published as ready, allowing us to add articles to a year's volume, rather than await the next issue. We believe this is an important innovation, taking advantage of our online, open-access format.

It is impossible to consider this present year without discussing the present global pandemic. At the time of this writing, nearly 800,000 persons have died globally with nearly 178,000 in the United States alone. We live in one of the most significant crises of all time and most certainly the most severe of our time. The loss of life is staggering, and we grieve alongside many who have lost family, friends, and loved ones.

As a business journal editor, I do not wish to over-emphasize the business impact of the pandemic, clearly the loss of our loved ones takes greater precedence in our thinking. But it is appropriate in this venue, I believe, to consider the pandemic from a small business lens. At this time, we do not yet know the magnitude of the economic contraction associated with COVID-19. We do know that millions have lost jobs with nearly 15% of the United States civilian labor population unemployed at the peak of the pandemic and well over 10% remaining unemployed at the time of this writing.

We have, similarly, lost many small businesses. Some, hopefully, will return to operations as pandemic conditions subside. Others will never return. These lost businesses are more than the sum of their economic activity. Our places of work are more than just our places for paychecks, revenues, and costs. To quote Gregory Peck from *Other People's Money* our businesses are “the place where we earn our living, the place where we meet our friends, dream our dreams. It is in every sense, the very fabric that binds our society together.”

There exists reason for hope, amidst all this loss. Many nations have successfully contained the virus and having succeeded in containment, they and their small businesses are resuming a sense of normal operations. Many different vaccines are in late-stages of human-subjects testing with the possibility of an approved, tested, vaccine sometime in the next year. We are also witnessing the power of Big Data, with so much of the rapid learning occurring in this pandemic a function of the ability of our world to develop and share massive quantities of data. At each step of the way, we find small businesses involved.

To close, I ask our scholars to apply their expertise to the study of this event. Our research in small business is vitally important because it helps those businesses which make up the largest providers of jobs in our economy – helping them dream their

dreams, meet their friends, and earn their livings. I look forwards to seeing COVID-19 scholarship in small business research.

To our contributing authors, thank you for choosing SBIJ as your publication outlet. To our reviewers, thank you for your tireless work. Peer review represents the best method known to build excellence in scholarship and your work, often invisible to the outside world, is recognized in its importance. Thank you also to my fellow editors and the student workers who assist in various parts of our editorial process. A journal is more than a single-person operation and this year's issue would not exist without their contributions.

Kindest Regards,

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