GRA 19703

Master Thesis

How can Organizations Navigate a Black Swan Event?

A Case Study of the Covid-19 Pandemics Impact on Norwegian Restaurants and Universities. Exploring Planning, Marketing, Collaboration, Leadership and the Impact on Firms Future Prospects.

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Start:	15.01.2021 09.00
Finish:	01.07.2021 12.00

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MSc in Strategic Marketing Management
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Supervisor:

Even J. Lanseng

Hand in date:

01.07.2021

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a part of our MSc in Strategic Marketing Management at BI Norwegian Business School, spring of 2021. This study has been challenging, but we will look back at this time as educational, interesting and inspiring. We would like to express our gratitude to all the companies participating in the in-depth interviews, especially the respondents who took time out of their day to provide us with valuable insights. Our research would not have been possible to complete without your contribution.

And finally, to our supervisor, Even J. Lanseng, we would like to thank you for the continuous support, inspiration, inputs and guidance. Despite the Covid-19 restrictions you have been able to provide us with valuable feedback that has helped us through this process.

Thank you!
Hanne Wiger and Lisa Dybedal

Executive summary

Black Swans are unpredictable events and there is no way to predict what kind of impact they will have. However, we know they will have a greater impact on the affected community than a "normal" crisis. It is uncertain when the next Black Swan event will occur, but we know it will. As these events occur, organizations are forced to adapt their operations to the new environment. Thus, it is important to have the right resources to optimize their outcome. There is little prior research on this topic, especially regarding marketing. Through exploring how companies have navigated the Covid-19 pandemic, examining planning, changing marketing activities, leadership, collaboration and the pandemics impact on firm's future prospects, this thesis contributes towards closing this gap.

A case study approach using a multi-case design was selected for the research. Thirteen in depth-interviews with respondents from eleven different companies were conducted. The findings show that when dealing with a Black Swan event, it is of high importance that the organization is agile in all aspects of their operations. The marketing department is key in a situation like this, as they impact all departments of the organization. Being able to adapt marketing activities to fit the new business environment is crucial in order to maintain the market position. Clear internal and external communication is an important part of crisis management, as this decreases the level of uncertainty for both employees and customers. The findings also show that having a specific plan in place does not necessarily result in any benefits, compared to firms without a plan. As the situation after a Black Swan is so uncertain, plans are likely to be changed. However, if the emergency plans are easily flexible, they can improve response time. It is also evident that sharing information and collaborating with competing firms is very beneficial in a situation like this. By sharing information and collaborating one can reduce costs, speed up processes and improve safety measures for all parties involved.

This study provides managers with useful insight into how they can prepare their organization for the next Black Swan, through examples of how firms from two different industries have handled the Covid-19 pandemic. Altogether, the results shed light on key factors to consider when navigating a Black Swan event.

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1.0 Introduction

In times of an unexpected crisis, the business environment changes. This forces firms to respond, and they need to have a plan on how to navigate their business in order to get the best possible outcome. Unexpected events are often referred to as Black Swans, but there is very little research on the topic. Researchers have studied Black Swans' impact on the welfare state and project management, but there is a gap in the literature when it comes to Black Swans and marketing. Marketing influences all departments of an organization, so when a crisis hits it is key that they are able to adapt quickly. Changes in marketing activities, product offering, and management structure is likely to be necessary. Research has also been conducted on the importance of leadership and collaboration as a firm faces a crisis. If organizations choose the wrong kind of strategy or are unable to adapt to the new environment, they can experience severe consequences like lost market shares, negative press, economic issues or bankruptcy. Black Swans affect firms differently than an event or crisis they are able to predict. Thus, ordinary crisis management might not be sufficient. Hence, it is crucial to study firms' responses to Black Swans to ensure that future planning and responses can be optimized.

This master thesis will explore firms' strategic response to Black Swans. The focus will be on the role of the marketing departments response and crisis management related to planning and responses. We want to find out if there are any differences between private organizations who have no obligation to have a contingency plan and companies who need to have one, to explore if such plans are useful in the event of a Black Swan. We also want to explore whether there are differences between firms that are managed locally versus central management, how the firms have adapted their marketing activities and the impact of leadership and collaboration. As Black Swan events change the business environment dramatically, the research also explores how it changes organizations' outlook on the future and their main learnings.

Our research questions are:

"How can organizations navigate a Black Swan event? How do Black Swans influence organizations' daily operations and which factors are important for a successful handling of a crisis? Exploring how planning, changing marketing activities, collaboration and leadership have an impact on firm's outcome and Black Swans impact firms' future prospects."

We chose the Covid-19 pandemic as the Black Swan event to study in this thesis. This pandemic has affected our lives in a way we never could have imagined when we first heard about the outbreak in the beginning of 2020. It has had a huge effect on the business environment and the government has introduced strict regulations. On the 12th of March 2020 Norway went into a nationwide lockdown ("Tiltak for å bekjempe koronaviruset", 2020). The measures implemented were the strictest and most intrusive ever implemented in Norway in peacetime ("Tiltak for å bekjempe koronaviruset", 2020). All kindergartens, schools, universities, gyms, pubs, bars and all one-to-one services had to close down. As well the cancellation of all sports and cultural events. As this is the most recent Black Swan event and based on the fact that it is so current it was natural for us to use this as our Black Swan.

1.1 Background for the Research

There is very little research conducted on firms' responses to Black Swans and the optimal strategies to choose in order to get through a crisis and the effects of Black Swans in general. There is also little to none research done on marketing in relation to Black Swans and still little in relation to outcome of planning in a real situation. Hence, there is a large gap in the literature when it comes to this topic that we want to help cover. Marketing's role related to Black Swans is also a tier 1 priority on the Marketing Science Institute's list of research priorities for 2020-2022 ("MSI Announces 2020-22 Research Priorities - Marketing Science Institute", 2020). The topic is highly relevant, current and important to research in order to ensure that firms are better prepared in the future. Even though Black Swans are unpredictable of nature, we know they will happen, just not the extent of their impact.

We believe that firms and institutions will learn a lot from this situation and that it is important to study the influence Black Swan events have. It will have a lasting effect on the business environment and will change how they operate in the future. We believe that this experience will make it easier to plan for future events as most people have had a change of mind and new perspective. The goal is to explore different strategies and contribute to existing theories.

1.2 Selected Industries

The two industries selected for this case study are the restaurant industry and the education sector. Both of these industries have been heavily affected by the pandemic in different ways and are therefore suitable industries to answer our research questions. The restaurant industry has been forced to close down due to government restrictions and have had to think of new ways to generate income. The education sector was also forced to close down at the start of the pandemic. They had to restructure lectures, marketing activities and the way they operate. In these industries we can find both centrally and locally managed restaurants as well as private and government universities. The industries and how they have been affected by the pandemic will be explained in more detail in section 3.2.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Black Swan Events

2.1.1 What is a Black Swan?

To get a better understanding of Black Swans it can be useful to contrast it against what it is not. Illustration 1 shows Taleb's explanation of Knowns, Known Unknowns and Unknown Unknowns or Black Swans (Taleb, 2007; Green, 2015). The Knowns on the left side refers to very predictable risks that are expected and occur regularly. The Known Unknowns in the middle represents risks that we know can occur, but it is more uncertain when they occur and the severity of them. Examples that would fall under this category would be earthquakes, or fires (Green, 2015). Finally, on the right side of the illustration we have Black Swan events or Unknown Unknowns. A "Black Swan" is produced when the gap between what we know and what we think becomes dangerously wide (Taleb, 2007). These are events that are unpredictable and inconceivable, and no past knowledge can tell us when these will occur or what kind of impact they will have. This is the most challenging risk category of the three (Green, 2015). We

define Black Swans as *"An unpredictable event with an exceptional or extraordinary character that leads to potentially dramatic consequences"*.
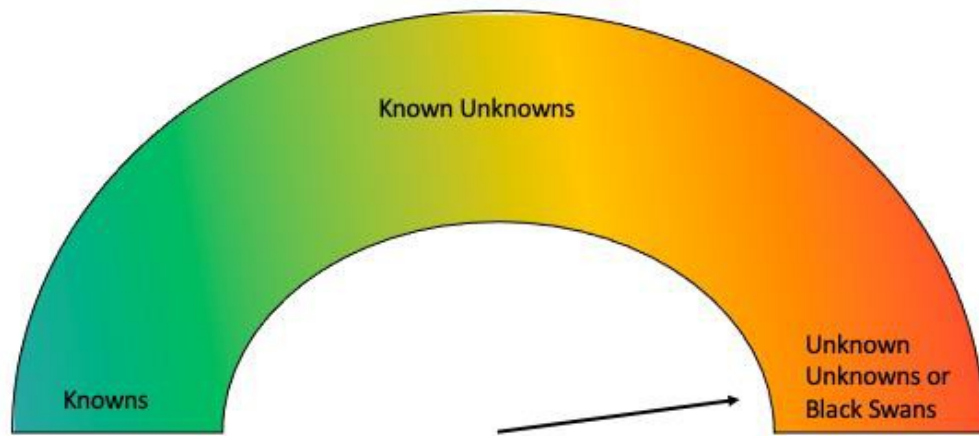
Illustration 1

The consequences of Black Swans are often of negative nature, however, some firms manage the crisis better than others as a result of their strategic choices and quick response time. The affected parties adapt their day-to-day operations to the new business environment as a Black Swan hits and reconsider how to target the market. If they have a contingency plan in place, they will also get to see how well this performs and if they have been able to imagine the situation they experience during a Black Swan.

Examples of Black Swan events in the past include the financial crisis in 2008, war, terror attacks and environmental disasters like hurricane Katrina (Taleb, 2007; Hajikazemi et al., 2016). Another example would be President Macron of France supporting the freedom of speech and the right to show the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. This led to outrage in Muslim countries, and several leaders decided to boycott French products. Hence, French products like merchandise and food were no longer sold in several Muslim countries (Guenfoud, 2021). These make up large markets and the boycott had a large negative impact on the brands affected. We are currently in the middle of a Black Swan event, the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected businesses in several industries all over the world.

2.1.2 The Black Swan – Knowing the Unknown in Projects

Black Swans are "Unknown Unknowns" that can still take an organization by surprise despite having contingency plans in place and taking precautions, they can lead to catastrophic consequences (Green, 2015). Black Swans can be a form of a crisis, but not all crises are Black Swans. Black Swans does not necessarily need to be a crisis, it can also be winning the lottery, which is a positive Black Swan. Regular crisis management could be useful when it comes to Black Swan events, however, due to the nature of these there is no guarantee that ordinary crisis management would help. For instance, a regular hurricane is considered to be a crisis, but only hurricanes that have the power and demolition ability like hurricane Katrina are considered to be Black Swans. Hence, as a business you can have a contingency plan to activate in the case of a hurricane, but if the hurricane that hits have a larger impact than one could ever have imagined, this plan will not be sufficient. This is because no one could have anticipated the scope of the disaster or its impact. Planning for anticipated crises is very different from trying to predict Unknown Unknowns. It is easy to fall into the traps of basing contingency plans on the most recent Black Swan event, while in reality something different is likely to occur. There is a lot of uncertainty related to Black Swans, making the management of them a lot more challenging.

Hajikazemi et al. (2016) studied Black Swan events within project management. It is suggested that early identification of warning signs indicates that a Black Swan event of some sort is likely to take place in the future. Picking up on these indicators can help reduce the negative consequences and impact of the event. Murphy and Conner (2012) also present the fact that Black Swan events have warning signs and if we are able to identify and protect our organization against minor events, then maybe there is a way to reduce the impact of the Black Swan as well. According to the KPMG white paper (2013) managers and stakeholders will have the opportunity to obtain independent project information and avoid catastrophic project failures by ensuring the flow of independent and transparent information within the project (KPMG, 2013; Hajikazemi et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there are no risk analysis tools that can reliably predict Black Swan events and lessons from events in the past should be considered.

Early warning signs of undesired events in projects covers a broad concept. Early warning applies to almost any area where it is important to obtain early indications of developments that will become manifest in the future, and that are usually negative (Hajikazemi et al., 2016). The concept of early warning in a management context was first discussed by Ansoff (1975). He stated that strategic disasters do not happen out of the blue and that it is possible to predict the occurrence of these with the help of weak signals (Ansoff, 1975). All we know is that some threats will arise in the future without a doubt, but that the nature and source of these are unknown (Ansoff & McDonnel, 1990, p.385). Hajikazemi et al. (2016) proposes that applying an early warning procedure with a focus on effective management of knowledge can by far have a positive contribution towards proactive management of Black Swan events. The effectiveness of such an approach depends heavily on the type of event and the extent the project succeeds when carrying out the process involved. There are high levels of uncertainties creating challenges, however the higher level of maturity of the project when going through the process the higher are the chances of a more proactive management in Black Swan situations.

Black Swan events can also have a large impact on the welfare state. Castles (2010) tries to address the question of how unexpected emergencies on a national and international level affect the welfare states intervention and development. In his article "Black Swans and elephants on the move: the impact of emergencies on the welfare state" he asks five questions with the main goal being to answer concerns regarding the impact of Black Swans. Historical evidence shows that the Black Swans like war, hyperinflation, economic depression, terror attacks and environmental disasters have an impact on the welfare state (Castles, 2010). The great depression was a stimulus to the welfare development in some countries like Sweden and New Zealand, and the subsequent development after the second world war played a key part in terms of developing post-British welfare (Castles, 2010). However, researchers suggest that we do not find effects like these today and that the welfare state is considered to be an elephant on the move who is rarely significantly thrown off its course by particular events (Castles, 2010).

When it comes to Black Swans and the impact of market-oriented firms with marketing departments or how marketing activities are impacted by a crisis like

this, there is no previous research available. As a Black Swan hits and business environments change, the marketing department, like most other departments in a firm, is heavily affected. In a situation like this it will be important to make the right decisions and stay relevant in order to not lose market share and potential customers.

2.1.3 Adapting in a Crisis

Based on the fact that there have been seven international health crises in the last twenty years, it is unlikely that the Covid-19 crisis will be the last crisis firms face that is health related (Tu et al., 2020). Some might say that this current Black Swan and others that will come will become the new normal, but it is up to each firm and individual to determine how to adapt to these and similar crises (Reupert, 2020). One can either respond in an impulsive manner and deal with the crisis as it hits and adjust strategies along the way or one can be proactive and plan for such events and try to reflect to find the optimal way to protect customers, the firm, the public and mitigate long term impacts (Reupert, 2020). There are many lessons to learn from a crisis like Covid-19 and it can be used to enrich one's work and personal life in a way that might not have been possible without the crisis (Berger & Reupert, 2020). As a result of the changing environment firms should carefully examine the context or the environment they operate in (Reupert, 2020).

Even though you are aware of the need to act quickly in a crisis it can be challenging to know how. In just a few weeks people completely changed their behavioral pattern during the beginning of the pandemic. It was found that consumers returned to broadcast and cable television as well as other premium media sources as they sought out credible information (Balis, 2020). There was also a trend of consumers seeking ways to escape through entertainment such as apps, games, streaming and spending more time on social media (Balis, 2020). In a situation like this it is important that brands take action and adapt to the situation to take care of their customers, employees and mitigate risks (Balis, 2020).

Balis (2020) presents five ways in which brands can mitigate risks and take care of their consumers during a crisis. First of all, it is important to present with empathy and transparency. In uncertain times like the ones during this crisis it is

better to acknowledge that you do not have all the answers and show corporate social responsibility. Second, use media in agile ways and be quick to pivot creative messages as the environment changes and new segments emerge. Advice three and four cover how to create positive associations to your brand, track trends and build scenarios. The latter is important for the two industries we are looking into as we want to explore how their planning abilities impact their results. The fifth and final advice is to adapt new ways of working to keep delivering. Both restaurants and universities have had to change the way they offer their product or service to their consumers as they have been affected by strict government regulations. Even though they found ways to quickly adapt now, it is important to plan beyond the crisis (Balis, 2020).

2.1.4 Disruptive Change Planning

According to Selsky et al., (2012), managers have to deal with three different kinds of disruptiveness, (1) operational, (2) competitive and (3) contextual. Operational and competitive disruptions are hard to predict and plan for as they follow normal fluctuations in the market, but it is not impossible. Contextual disruptiveness is within the Unknown Unknowns category and cannot be predicted (Selsky et al., 2012). When planning for disruptive events, managers will have to learn routines and management systems so that they can ensure speed in their response and be able to manage dynamic sets of external relationships (Selsky et al., 2012). Little research on this topic indicates that there is a need for more knowledge about disruptive change planning. The Black Swan event Covid-19 is a contextual disruption that companies are currently trying to navigate through, and this study will look into how they can successfully do this.

2.1.5 Organizational Strategy and Crisis Management

Organizations frequently cope with crises that create high levels of uncertainty and are potential threats to the growth of the organization (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001). However, uncertainty can also encourage learning, creativity and innovation, which could contribute to a possible competitive advantage (Eijnatten & Galen, 2002; Hock, 1999). Companies need to be prepared and have the right capabilities in order to manage the changes effectively. There has been different research on this subject with similar findings. Two capabilities that have shown to be valuable when companies manage their environment in order to perform during

crises are market orientation and strategic flexibility as market-oriented firms more easily adapt to the new market demand (Grewal & Tansuhaj, 2001).

According to Zeithaml and Zeithaml (1984) the marketing department facilitates the relation between the organization and its external environment. Research has found that in order to be resilient to change in their external environments, organizations need to be proactive agents with multiple strategies for different scenarios (Aldrich, 1979). Zeithaml and Zeithaml (1984) argue that marketing strategies can be implemented in order to change how the organization works. Webster (1981), however, found that top managers viewed marketing managers as "not sufficiently innovative and entrepreneurial in their way of thinking" (p. 12). Hence, there is a disagreement about whether the marketing department is a positive contributor when dealing with uncertain events. However, if the marketing department can contribute to flexibility, the organization is more resilient to change. Having flexibility will be beneficial in situations where the firm is exposed to Black Swans. These events will in most cases force the firm to do changes to their operations and marketing activities. Flexibility will ensure that the firm can have a quicker response to the situation and could impact the income. During the Covid-19 crisis many firms have had to delay new product launches and scale back or adapt their marketing activities to comply with government restrictions.

Koronis and Ponis (2018) have taken a strategic view of organizational survival and argue that preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability and learning abilities constitute organizational drivers of resilience and provide a new direction when it comes to crisis management. They found that traditional crisis management embedded in manuals often fail to support the organization as they work to survive a crisis. Many executives often complain that the investments and efforts spent in preparing for a crisis do not pay off when companies are hit by disruption (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). However, overall crisis management literature maintains the belief that planning, manuals and intensive training increase the organizations chances of survival (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). Being prepared is relevant in terms of risk evaluation and regular tests improves the process of tasks that need to be fulfilled when a crisis actually strikes. This will however mean that the firm has been able to predict the crisis and its impact, but all Black Swan events will be

hard to predict and unforeseen. Based on this very few firms will have a plan that covers the extent of the crisis, but they might have other plans that will help them.

When it comes to responsiveness, Crandall et al. (2010) argue that any cultural development or preparation may prove to be useless unless the system acquires an ability to respond in an efficient, timely and creative way. This approach indicates that there is a difference between responsiveness and preparedness. Responsiveness consists of the organization's ability to understand events and challenges, frame problems and analyze the impact and maintain social cohesiveness while under psychological and time pressure (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). An example can be how Walmart responded during hurricane Katrina and illustrates how relatively unprepared systems may respond effectively to unplanned problems and Black Swan events. Walmart has easily expandable emergency response protocols that drive the ability to be flexible and agile (Worthen, 2015). The protocols are designed to deal with threats to the company's properties, but as Katrina hit, they broadened the scope of their operations by providing resources for the communities in the areas they operate in and that was hit especially hard (Horwitz, 2009). To ensure that they would be able to open their stores quickly again they immediately moved emergency supplies such as generators, dry ice and bottled water from current warehouse locations to designated areas (Zimmerman & Bauerlein, 2005). Walmart was also quick to offer emergency relief in the areas that were hit hardest (Horwitz, 2009).

Furthermore, Koronis and Ponis (2018) also emphasizes that organizational learning and the ability to absorb knowledge and learn from crises increases its resilient performance. Everything that firms have learned from the Covid-19 crisis can help the organization in the future. It will be important to evaluate the process and choices made in order to gain knowledge on how to best operate and respond in a situation like this. Koronis and Ponis (2018) presents a framework built on organizational trust, employee engagement and identification with the existence of error-free cultures and open communication as the starting point to improve a firm's resilience towards a crisis. The framework illustrated in appendix 1 proposes how these cultural traits are the building blocks for the drivers of

resilience; adaptability, learning, preparedness and responsiveness, all improving the firm's overall resilience in a crisis.

There is existing literature on crisis management in regard to the importance of market orientation, strategic flexibility and resilience, but there is no research done on how having these capabilities can be positive for a company during a Black Swan event. Hence, this case study will contribute to this field by investigating this further.

2.1.6 Leadership and Collaboration

When a crisis hits, the management needs to respond quickly and depend on deploying information fast (Calloway & Keen, 1996). Deverell et al., (2019) states that collaboration lies within the core of crisis management. According to Sawahla (2014), Black Swan events consist of three main stages: pre-disaster, disaster and post-disaster, and management actions completed in all three stages are considered crucial. In the pre-disaster stage preventative measures can be carried out and minimize the consequences. Here it is also found that existing collaboration guidelines sets the foundation for a successful collaboration process. A clear leader and the formation of crises teams and clear communication is emphasized as important. The leader's job is to clarify actions and assign tasks. If this structure is not implemented beforehand, the management could lose control of the situation (Sawahla, 2014). In regard to the post-disaster stage, collaboration is an important factor, as it becomes the center for information and can prevent the impact of the crises to a certain extent. Sawahla (2014) also states that in order to create successful teams for collaboration it is important with interdisciplinary teams and cross-sector collaboration. This includes the government, media and nonprofit sectors. The importance of creating interdisciplinary teams and interorganizational collaboration is supported by McNamara (2012), who found that this was necessary to reduce uncertainty. In addition, in order to effectively respond to a crisis, collaboration is fundamental (Waughn & Streib, 2006). In the post-disaster stage, the teams need to go through the actions and measures implemented and reflect on what could be done differently in order to prepare for future Black Swan events (Sawahla, 2014).

Calloway and Keen (1996) findings support the findings of Sawahla (2014) and McNamara (2012). They found that when in a crisis, most companies depend on the management and crisis teams. They also state that the effectiveness of these groups depends on how well it is supported by good communication. Calloway and Keen (1996) created a crisis response plan taking into consideration the needed capabilities where the most important ones are (1) crisis recognition, (2) mobilization and (3) channeling information.

Based on the findings presented, it is evident that a clear management structure is important when navigating through a crisis. Also, the literature supports the need for creating interdisciplinary teams when entering a crisis, and view this as an important aspect in order to succeed. In addition, clear communication between all departments within the organization and the teams are necessary. Consequently, the case study will explore how leadership structures and collaboration impact how well a firm can navigate through a crisis.

2.2 *Marketing's Response to Black Swans*

2.2.1 Agile Marketing

Agile marketing is described as a new approach in marketing to enable resources to be used as efficiently as possible and focus on making the right prioritizations (Aydin & Yasarol, 2018). It can be approached in many ways, but it is committed to improve predictability, speed, transparency and adaptation for the change and improvement of marketing functions (Brinker, 2012; Accardi-Petersen, 2012). Ewel (2013) states that agile marketers are able to set a communication model that increases the speed in a way that it matches the goals of the organization, in the light of a set of rules. The first priority should always be to satisfy the customers in the early stages of solving a problem and create more value. One should welcome change, planned or not, and it is believed that by responding to this change quickly one will create a competitive advantage (Aydin & Yasarol, 2018). In recent years marketing agility has also attracted more attention and has become very central. Lewnes (2020) states how a global event, like the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for teams to move quicker and be more agile. As the market has been affected by a dramatic change in the economic conditions and most people working from home, marketeers have really had to step up. As

Kalaignanam et al. (2020) described it "The digital transformation of enterprises, emergence of new channels and a deluge of customer data is altering the practice of marketing". Meaning that marketing agility has become a mandate and managers should orient their employees, technology and processes around the customer and focus on innovation to become more effective.

Furthermore, as the economy changed during the Covid-19 crisis we moved from a world with digital tools to a digital-only world (Lewnes, 2020). This had a massive impact on both the restaurant industry and the education sector. The ability to be innovative in marketing in today's environment relies on the organization's ability to keep up with customers' ever-changing expectations as they become more tech empowered. Covid-19 has accelerated and emphasized the need to move fast and there is no going back from this (Lewnes, 2020). Hence, this is something we want to explore further to see how firms have worked towards being agile and the importance of it as a Black Swan hits.

2.2.2 Crisis Communication

Beniot (1997) presents some suggestions for crisis communication. First of all, it is important to be prepared and have a crisis contingency plan in order to prevent the firm making mistakes in its initial response to the occurring crisis. The firm should have employees responsible for a crisis response if needed in order to act quickly. All anticipated crises should have a plan developed. Furthermore, once a crisis occurs it is important to understand the nature of the crisis and identify the relevant audience, like the stakeholders. This needs to be in place before one can decide how to respond appropriately. Identifying the audience and who to reach with the communication messages will also be key. This is supported by Argenti (2002) who researched crisis communication in regard to the 9/11 terror attack in 2001. He found that having established channels and strategies for crisis communication that can be used between businesses and customers as well as businesses and employees became a number one prioritization for top management following this Black Swan. The absence of these strategies could increase confusion and employees' trauma as well as scaring customers away (Argenti, 2002).

2.2.3 The Power of Marketing Departments

Marketing power is defined as the capability of the marketing department to influence corporate behavior (Lamberti and Noci, 2009). Some studies perceive the power of marketing departments to be declining (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009; Webster et al. 2005). However, there is little empirical research to support this belief (Homburg et al 1999; Merlo & Auh, 2009). Homburg et al. (2015) reported that they found a positive relationship between firm performance and the power of the marketing department. Based on little research on the topic and no real large-sample longitudinal studies Feng et al. (2015) conducted a study that took place from 1993 up until 2008 where they used a cross-industry sample of 612 public firms. They found that in general marketing departments power increased during the time period of the study and that a powerful marketing department amplified a firm's long-term future total shareholder returns beyond its positive effect on return on assets short-term (Feng et al. 2015). However, managers often tend to get caught up in short-term gains rather than long term profits. Srinivasan and Ramani (2019) looked into how powerful marketing departments can help prevent myopic management including measures such as cutting marketing budgets. In the middle of a Black Swan, it might be easy for managers to focus on savings and scaling back, while the best business decision might be to invest more in marketing during this time. Their hypothesis was that there are internal and external enablers of marketing department power that help a powerful marketing department prevent myopic management (Srinivasan & Ramani, 2019). They tested this hypothesis in a study lasting from 2000 to 2015 using a panel of 781 publicly listed companies in the US. As they suspected, increased power to the marketing department reduces the chances of myopic revenue management and myopic marketing spending.

When measuring a firm's marketing power, this has generally been related to the presence of a Chief Marketing Officer in strategic boards (Webster, 1981; Piercy, 1986). As a Black Swan hits an organization's board faces fundamental challenges to corporate stability. The board are the ones with the ultimate responsibility for corporate affairs and as the company's foundation changes and risk increases so does their responsibility (Peregrine, 2020). Black Swans present fundamental challenges to corporate stability and the organizational response cannot be passed on to executive management, as it would be with more traditional crises. The

board needs to get involved as they have the ultimate responsibility for corporate affairs, and they need to step up when the company's foundation is at risk (Peregrine, 2020). Thus, including a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) on the board, gives the marketing department a greater chance of changing their plans and adapting marketing activities rapidly if a Black Swan event should occur. Having a representative on the board will also make it easier for the marketing department to show the importance of their work and speak up against budget cuts. In terms of choosing a strategy to get out of a crisis it might also be beneficial to have a CMO to get the perspective of the marketing department. Based on the literature we believe that a strong marketing department can be of great help when it comes to dealing with Black Swan events. As the environment changes it can be helpful to have someone who can focus fully on this and deal with communication to the customers.

From the previous research, we can see that increasing power in marketing departments can improve a firm's overall performance and help improve long-term gains. By introducing a marketing-oriented view in management one can change the firm's strategy to benefit shareholders' return on investments and improve understanding of marketing spending. We have also seen how marketing departments have increased their power during the last few decades. From this, we want to see how marketing departments act when a firm finds themselves experiencing a Black Swan event. Some actions might help the firm turn it around and become stronger, while if they are handled the wrong way this might be what drives the firm to bankruptcy.

2.2.4 Marketing Department Impact

Studies have found that advertising expenditures, customer satisfaction and brand equity are some of the factors that have a positive effect on firm value (Barth et al., 1998; Anderson, et al., 2004; Joshi and Hanssens, 2010). Homburg et al., (1999) found that it is valuable to have dedicated departments within the company, as marketing and sales departments are highly influential. It is also important to have support from these departments in order to successfully implement change (Homburg et al., 1999). Thus, a marketing department will be beneficial for a firm during normal circumstances, as well as being a great help

when it comes to implementing necessary changes during a Black Swan event. Also, several studies found evidence that market-oriented organizations are more successful than product-oriented companies (Deshpande′ et al., 1993; Han et al., 1998). Firms without a marketing department can also be market-oriented and customer centric. However, it will be more challenging as the work necessary will come on top of all the other jobs a manager or CEO has if the management group is small.

By having a marketing department or a marketing manager the firm can ensure that necessary updates are made, and that all crucial information reaches the customers. When it comes to planning for the future of the firm beyond a crisis situation, research has found that a powerful marketing department positively impacts a firm's long term future total shareholder return (Feng et al., 2015). Examples of firms who have navigated through a Black Swan event successfully are Kellogg's and Booking.com. Kellogg's thrived during the Great Depression as they invested more in advertising and its people. While other companies chose to lower their overhead during this crisis, Kellogg's doubled their advertising budgets and created more jobs by introducing a six-hour workday. As a result, they increased their profits by 30% and reached new levels of productivity ("How 7 Firms Survived and Rebuilt After an Economic Crisis | CB Insights Research", 2020). This indicates that focusing on marketing and advertising during a Black Swan event can be very beneficial for a firm. As others are cutting their costs you can gain more attention from consumers and grow your market share by increasing your marketing budget. Booking.com faced the dot-com bubble burst in 2001. As the firm presented a new and innovative way of purchasing airline tickets, they were also hit hard by the 9/11 attacks and the following downfall in the industry. However, unlike many of the startups from the late 90s, this firm is still around and very successful in 2021. The company survived by cutting staff, shedding non-core businesses and only focusing on their work in the travel industry. Instead of waiting for the airline industry to improve they made quick decisions and looked to hotels. Some of the acquisitions they made of other online hotel booking sites in the following years allowed them to take advantage of new markets ("How 7 Firms Survived and Rebuilt After an Economic Crisis | CB Insights Research", 2020). This shows that finding new revenue streams in times of a crisis can improve a firm's situation and new offers can still fit the firm's core

competency. These examples illustrate two different strategic approaches to Black Swan events in the past with successful outcomes. They have managed to adapt to the new environment and made the changes necessary in their industry.

The Covid-19 crisis has affected the whole world and it is likely to be one of the most significant Black Swan events of our time. Not only has it affected the business environment, but it has also led to some of the strictest government regulations presented during peacetime. It is evident that this is something that requires more research in order to be better prepared in the future and to help businesses prepare in the best way possible.

Based on the literature presented it is evident that there are substantial gaps, as the existing literature focuses on crisis management and separate firm functions. Hence, the current research focuses on the handling of a crisis, and not on the handling of a Black Swan event. Little research is done on how Black Swan events affect organizations daily operations and which factors that are important in order to securely navigate through the Unknown Unknowns. There is also little to none research conducted on Black Swan events in relation to marketing. Thus, the focus for this study will be on marketing activities, collaboration, management and leadership, and crisis communication. With our research we want to work towards closing the gap in current literature and have chosen what we consider to be the most suitable research design due to limited amounts of previous research. We want to take advantage of the currency of the situation and explore how firms are handling the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.0 Research Methodology

We find it suitable to conduct a case study, as we are interested in exploring the best strategic choices made by the firms and get an understanding of how firms can ensure that they are best suited to handle a Black Swan event. The essence of a case study is that it tries to clarify a decision or set of decisions: how they were implemented, why they were taken and what they resulted in (Yin, 2003). Given the small amount of research conducted on the success of firms' strategic responses to Black Swan events, we adopt a grounded theory approach (Eisenhardt et al, 2016; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), a grounded theory approach makes the

researcher aware of the interference of biases but does not eliminate it completely. This method is proven to be useful when formulating research findings in cases where there is little prior empirical research.

3.1 Research Design

By using the Covid-19 crisis as our example of a Black Swan event we will use a multi-case design and look into firm responses from two industries in the Norwegian market. The evidence from a multi-case design is considered more captivating due to the larger number of cases, compared to a single-case design (Yin 2003; Herriot & Firestone, 1983). Yin (2014) states that a multi-case design allows the researchers to collect excessive and stronger results of evidence than one would be able to achieve using a single case study. The research paper will therefore be considered more valid (Yin 2003; Herriot & Firestone, 1983). It is also important that each of the chosen cases serve a purpose in regard to the research question (Yin, 2003). Including a large number of cases will increase the likelihood of being able to sufficiently answer the research questions. Using a cross-case pattern search strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989) allows us to get insights into real-life decisions as multiple cases of the same phenomenon are explored. This method facilitates the comparison of similarities and differences between the findings of each of the cases and forces us to look beyond initial impressions (Eisenhardt, 1989). After spending sufficient time analyzing the data, relationships between the variables will start to emerge (Eisenhardt, 1989). Even though the crisis is ongoing and firms in the two industries operate under strict government regulations, we will be able to see which key drivers have helped them be successful so far.

Through a triangular design approach (Rosenberg et al., 2012), three groups within the selected industries will be compared. Structuring the design in this manner allows us to compare several categories at once (Eisenhardt,1989).

3.1.1 Data Collection

Data will be collected through a qualitative research approach using in-depth interviews. According to Eisenhardt (1989), the researcher gets a synergetic view of the data by doing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Mixed methods design can help researchers find superior results than what would have been found if only one method was used (Hall & Howard, 2008). However, due to

time constraints it will be more efficient for us to only focus on qualitative research for this case study. By choosing to focus on one method we are able to take the time necessary to go in-depth into each interview and the analysis.

3.1.2 Validity and Reliability

According to Yin (2014) there are four criteria used to judge the quality of the chosen research design. These criteria's are internal validity, external validity, construct validity and reliability. According to Silverman (2005), validity is another word for truth (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 342). It is important to ensure internal, external and construct validity through the research process and the research design.

Internal validity is secured through the multi-case design as we will be doing pattern matching between each of the cases (Yin, 2014). A multi-case design suggests that the researcher create keywords of interesting findings throughout the research process, and to group the findings into themes and sub-themes when analyzing. This ensures that the researcher is looking at every possible pattern and relationship that answers the research question, significantly reducing the possibility of an alternative solution appearing. By conducting the interviews with respondents from top management, the sources are usually more reliable than for employees with lower ranks (Philips, 1981). A multi-case design allows us to apply this by having a large number of in-depth interviews and two very different industries. Thus, this strengthens the internal validity. The analysis is based on our personal interpretation of the data. Also, the chosen method of the comparison of the groups provides the analysis a certain outcome which potentially could have discovered other findings through a different comparison. This could lead to a bias analysis and weaken the internal validity. Moreover, all participants were asked if they wished to be anonymous in the case study, which could contribute to eliminating response bias. However, it is difficult to control whether the participants are responding in regard to what they believe is the socially correct answer or the actual truth. This could impact the internal validity.

In regard to external validity, the researcher should use replication logic in multi-case studies in order to find contrasting results (Yin, 2003). Therefore, two different industries were chosen for the study in order to ensure that the findings

are relevant for a broader base of industries. This is not mandatory for the researcher to do when using a multi-case design, but we found it necessary to ensure that the findings will be generalizable.

According to Yin (2003), construct validity is ensured by using multiple sources of evidence. We believe that construct validity will be ensured through the multiple in-depth interviews. Compared to other approaches like surveys or group interviews, in-depth interviews are the most suitable in order to answer the research questions this study explores. We will go through the in-depth interviews and the analysis several times to ensure that all information relevant to the research question will be included in the analysis.

 In order to increase the case study's reliability an interview guide (appendix 3-5) was constructed (Pettigrew, 1997) for both industries. To strengthen reliability, all data was transcribed, even the information we found less important (Silverman, 2005; Corbin and Strauss, 2015, p. 342). By following an interview guide we ensure that all interviews are structured in a similar manner and that the necessary information is collected. The findings (concepts, theory, discussion) will need to be compared to external literature to look for similarities and contradictions. This will also give an indication of opportunities for future research (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.2 Case Information

Choosing the Covid-19 crisis as our event makes it easy for the participating firms to discuss their way of thinking as their actions are very recent. We want to explore if planning can be useful during Unknown Unknowns, the difference between central and local management when it comes to handling a crisis and how the firms have adapted their marketing activities. We also look at how this pandemic has changed the respondents' perspectives when it comes to future events and if they believe daily operations will change as we return to normalcy.

According to Eisenhardt (1989), it is preferred to have between four and ten cases in order to ensure that the data collected is complex and generalizable. To fulfill this requirement, we have conducted thirteen interviews within the two selected

industries. This will also strengthen external validity as the theory will be applicable for a variety of industries (Yin, 2014).

3.2.1 The Restaurant Industry

The restaurant industry has been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis. This industry was chosen for the study because they are independent actors and are not permitted to have regulations and plans in place for Black Swan events like Covid-19. Hence, by including this industry in the case study, we will be able to compare two very different industries and get a broad analysis and findings. On the 12th of March 2020 Norway went into its first lockdown during the pandemic ("Tiltak for å bekjempe koronaviruset", 2020). All restaurants had to close at 9pm from the 15th of March and on the 21st of March they lost the right to sell alcohol (Gjerstad & Giæver, 2020). Several of them stayed closed until the 6th of May when it became legal to sell alcohol at places where food was sold (Gjerstad & Giæver, 2020), but there were still restrictions as to time period and number of customers. Oslo has been hit especially hard and on the 9th of November it once again became illegal to sell alcohol other than at Vinmonopolet and in supermarkets ("9. november: Byrådet har vedtatt sosial nedstenging av Oslo", 2021). Alcohol is a large part of restaurants income stream and this ban makes a huge impact on their financial situation. Several well-known restaurants have seen no other option than to close their doors as a result of this.

3.2.2 The Education Sector

The second industry chosen for this research is the education sector, focusing on universities. The education sector has also been under strict rules and guidelines. On March 12th, all universities in Norway closed and stayed closed until June 15th (Regjeringen, 2020). During the second and third wave of Covid-19, some universities had to close again. However, this has been dependent on the location of the University. The education sector was chosen because they have implemented rules and guidelines to be prepared for Black Swan events, contrary to the restaurant industry. Hence, in order to answer the research question and find out how organizations responded to the Black Swan event and which factors were important for them, it is necessary to see how institutions that are instructed by the government to have prepared guidelines for unexpected events, actually handles

an unexpected crisis differently than a company that has no prior plan. In addition, we will be able to see how these plans have been helpful during the crisis, and if it has been necessary to adapt them or create new plans. As we want to explore planning in regard to Black Swans, it was necessary to include an industry who has this in place in order to answer this part of our research question.

3.2.3 Case Screening

When selecting the cases, we used theoretical sampling to control for environmental variations and differences among the firms (Eisenhardt, 1989). Both industries have been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis and have had to adapt their daily operations in order to follow government regulations. The different cases are presented in table 1. As some of the participating firms expressed that they wanted to be kept anonymous, the organizations are referred to as "Firm X". The table includes a short description of each firm and the title of the interviewee. For some of the universities we were unable to get in touch with someone who could represent the marketing department and someone in charge of planning and crisis management. Hence, some are only represented to the issues of planning and others only when it comes to marketing, while for others both sides have been interviewed. This leaves us with eleven participating firms, but thirteen interviews have been conducted.

Firm	Interviewee Title	Description
Restaurants		
Firm A	CEO/Owner	Independent restaurant with a long history. One of the oldest in Oslo, located very central with a high capacity and popular among tourists, politicians and artists. Offers a classic Norwegian menu.
Firm B	CEO/Owner	Independent restaurant who started up right before the pandemic.

		Small/medium size. Neighborhood profile and Mediterranean menu.
Firm C	CEO/Owner	Independent restaurant with a long history and neighborhood profile. Small restaurant that offers pizza.
Firm D	CEO/Owner	Independent restaurant with neighborhood profile of medium size. Offers burgers, bowls and a lot of plant-based options.
Firm E	Marketing Manager	Restaurant group who recently entered the Norwegian market with locations in several cities across the country. Own well-known restaurants and bars.
Firm F	Marketing Manager	Restaurant group with several restaurants at different locations in the eastern part of Norway. Gastropubs with a neighborhood profile.
Universities		
Firm G	Marketing Manager and Emergency Consultant	Public university of medium size who offers a wide range of study programs. One campus where all faculties are present.
Firm H	Marketing Manager and HMS coordinator + Senior Advisor	Small public university, all seven faculties located at the same campus. Offers study programs within economics, leadership, teaching and agricultural subjects.
Firm I	Director of Organization and Finance	Large public university has ten campuses at different sizes. Offers a wide range of studies.

| Firm J | HR-Director | Large private university with a wide selection of study programs. The university has three campuses, but these are all located close to one another. |
| Firm K | Marketing Manager | Large private university who offers study programs within the business field. Has four campuses in different Norwegian cities. |

Table 1.

We wanted to include both independent restaurants and restaurant groups in order to answer our research question. This was a decision we made to make the results more generalizable and useful for a larger group of firms, and to be able to compare and contrast similarities and differences. Independent restaurants tend to have few employees and owners who act as CEOs, while the groups are more likely to have a management group and a central management on top. The restaurants in focus were all located in Oslo so that they have been operating under the same restrictions during the crisis to make them comparable. None of the firms' interviewed have gone bankrupt during the pandemic, but they have all been hit hard. The universities participating are spread out all over the country in order to get a sufficient number of participants from this group. Most of the restaurants have had to cut costs and be creative, while the universities have had to adapt their operations as well as the way they present their service and work towards recruiting new students.

3.3 Interview Process

3.3.1 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews are the most important source of case study evidence (Yin, 2014). The purpose of the interviews is to get an in-depth understanding of companies' crisis management plans, why the companies have decided on their chosen strategy during the pandemic and how they have adapted their marketing activities to suit the government restrictions as this is what we want to uncover

with our research questions. All participants were asked if they preferred to stay anonymous, or if their company name could be mentioned in the research.

Furthermore, by conducting interviews, we get the opportunity to be more flexible and dig deeper if trends or unique cases emerge. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to immediately clarify miscommunication and ask follow up questions to findings of interest. They are also useful to answer our research question as the questions are complex and require a level of explanation. Compared to focus groups, in-depth interviews allow the researcher to explain their way of thinking and explain the reasoning behind their decision making without being affected by others presence or statements. As some of the topics discussed in the interviews can be sensitive, in-depth interviews were preferred. Thus, due to the opportunities presented by conducting in-depth interviews, this was the most beneficial research method for our research project.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to maintain consistency through all the interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 39). An interview guide was created beforehand, in order to ensure that the same topics were covered in each interview. However, the topics were not structurally covered through each interview, as the participant was able to talk freely (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 39). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), having a semi-structured interview also opens up for the researcher to ask additional questions that were not in the original interview guide. This was useful for us during the interviews in order to clarify or get additional information.

Shorter case study interviews were conducted as these types of interviews tend to be more focused and last for about one hour (Yin, 2014). The reasoning for this was that the interview participants have a busy schedule, and in order to get a sufficient amount of in-depth interviews shorter interviews increased our chances of firms agreeing to participate.

3.3.2 Interview Procedure

The interview participants were industry professionals and contacted through email. The email used is presented in appendix 2. A total of thirteen in-depth

interviews were conducted over a time period of two months. All interviews were conducted through Zoom, due to the ongoing pandemic and the fact that some of the respondents were located in different cities. Six interviews were conducted in the restaurant sector, and a total of seven interviews were conducted within the education sector. As all the participants were Norwegian speaking, the in-depth interviews were conducted in Norwegian to avoid language barriers.

Before conducting the interviews, a pre-test of the interview guide was performed on two fellow students to ensure that the questions were understandable and perceived as high quality. The interview guide was then adjusted based on feedback from the test interview. According to Yin (2014), questions should be asked in an unbiased manner, which can be avoided by asking "how" questions instead of "why" questions. This was something we kept in mind when doing the changes. It was evident that in order to get a better flow during the interviews. The questions needed to be grouped more accurately according to our themes and we changed the order of the questions for the interview to flow more smoothly. We also found that for a few of the questions it was a bit difficult for the interview participant to understand what information we were looking for. Therefore, the wording of the questions was adapted in order for us to be better understood, and to ensure that we got the correct data to answer our research questions.

During the interview, we divided the tasks so that one researcher was asking questions and the other researcher was taking notes. This way, it was not necessary for the participants to sign a consent form as the interview was not recorded. Also, participants often feel more comfortable to reveal information when the recorder is turned off (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). By having one researcher to ask questions, a more personal relationship was formed between the researcher and the participant, and the researcher had the opportunity to have some flexibility and dig deeper if we found any trends or unique features (Eisenhardt, 1989). We made sure to start each interview with level 1 questions (unthreatening) to make the participant feel comfortable and ease into the interview. We then continued with level 2 questions to satisfy our needs and get the information necessary to answer our research questions (Yin, 2014). After each in depth interview, the interviews were transcribed to be ready for analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). By doing this directly after the interview, we got an

in-depth knowledge of the data which was helpful for coding. All the interview transcriptions were also translated from Norwegian to English to ensure successful coding.

3.4 Coding and Categories

When coding, categorizing and analyzing the data, we used the method for grounded theory presented by Corbin & Strauss (2015). We started by identifying concepts and patterns through extensive brainstorming and interpretation of the data. The creation of concepts is a method used for summarizing the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). We then continued with grouping the concepts by creating themes and sub-themes. The themes helped us connect the analysis to the research question, which was useful when analyzing the data. According to Eisenhardt (1989) a cross case analysis requires the researcher to look at the data in various ways in order to group the data into categories and find within-group similarities and differences. The category themes can be based on the research question or chosen by the researcher itself (Eisenhardt, 1989). This is the strategy found suitable for this case study, in order to avoid jumping to conclusions.

The themes created were *collaboration*, *leadership*, *planning and crisis management*, *marketing and communication* and *future planning.* These are the factors important for us to investigate further in regard to Black Swan events, to be able to successfully answer the research question. Table 2 presents the themes, sub-themes and coding's. Each theme consists of one or more sub-themes, which are factors that explain and relate to the theme and contribute to evolving each theme. These sub-themes helped us to accurately create codes from the case information. This ensured that the right information was connected to the correct main theme through the sub-theme. Lastly, the codes were created from the sub-themes and several keywords were identified for each of the themes. Each code was carefully thought out and discussed to ensure that they contribute to collecting the correct information from each of the case interviews. A few of the codes were changed during the analyzing process as we found that the code did not completely explain the information found in the cases. Each code was matched with a color to make it easier for both the researchers and the reader, to find the different codes in the in-depth interviews. The transcribed interviews with

the coding are presented in appendix 6. The structure of the coding is presented in table 2 below.

Code	Sub-themes	Themes
Pandemic plan	Planning	Planning and Crisis Management
Action cards		
No plan		
Interdisciplinary teams	Crisis Management	
Staying "ahead of the curve"		
Emergency action group		
Clear internal and external communication	Communication	Marketing and Communication
Press coverage		
Change in product offering	Marketing	
Digital events		
Campaigns/promotional offers		
Delivery services	Collaboration	Collaboration
Collaboration with municipalities		
Collaboration with other institutions		
Adaptability skills	Agility	Leadership
Quick decision making		
Central management	Management	
Local management		
Clear management structure		

Corporate social responsibility		
Change in planning related to black swans	Future planning	**Future planning**
Changes made to future market activities		
Learning		

Table 2.

4.0 Results analysis

Through using a repertory grid technique (Walsh, 1995) one can find differences between the firms and groups depending on how one groups them together. In order to structure our results and make comparisons we have structured the firms into three groups presented in table 3. As we have a triangular design the structure of the results is presented this way as it is the most optimal way to answer our research questions given the selected industries. The chosen grid presents the three groups: independent restaurants, dependent restaurants and universities. These firms within each group are similar in nature and provide a solid basis for comparison.

Independent Restaurants	Dependent Restaurants	Universities
Firm A	Firm E	Firm G
Firm B	Firm F	Firm H
Firm C		Firm I
Firm D		Firm J
		Firm K

Table 3

By using this cognitive mapping approach (Curtis et al., 2014), the analysis will provide an understanding of how the groups and individual firms have acted

during the Black Swan event. We have analyzed the data comparing the groups against each other, as well as comparing each of the individual firms looking at all eleven firms as a whole. Depending on the theme we have highlighted the most important group and/or firm comparisons throughout the presentation of the results.

4.1 Planning and Crisis Management

4.1.1 No plan vs Plan

In regard to planning, it was important to uncover whether the institutions had a plan they could implement as the Black Swan hit or not, and if this plan worked if they had one. We discovered that all of the universities except firm J had a pandemic plan, while only two of the restaurants, firm A and E, had contingency plans in place. However, we discovered that even though most of the universities had a pandemic plan, this plan was based on the Swine Flu from 2009. This was a very different pandemic from the Covid-19 pandemic; the plan was based on large absent percentages among students and lecturers and nowhere near the situation we have experienced now. This shows that they have been unable to think complex enough in their planning. When writing this plan, they have simply used the most recent pandemic as the foundation of their plan without considering other outcomes or situations. This shows that they need to rethink and restructure the way they work when creating these plans, in order to cover more situations and see the bigger picture. This is likely to be caused by the fact that firms are unable to predict the right situations and imagine the extent of the impact for events such as Black Swans and the Covid-19 crisis. Everyone with a pandemic plan based on the swine flu had to revise their plans and take actions to adapt this to fit the actual situations and to fit government regulations. The pressure was on to make quick decisions and adapt as the situation developed, so a more suitable plan could have helped in this situation and removed some of the uncertainty during this period of time.

The two restaurants with a plan included firm A which is independent and firm E which is a restaurant group. Firm A is one of Oslo's oldest restaurants with a long history. Based on their previous experiences including the Sars pandemic and the financial crisis, they have a good system in place when it comes to predicting

worst case scenarios and quickly knew what they had to do. Firm E owns several bars and restaurants in Norway and had a contingency plan in place from central management to ensure that the right decisions were made when the pandemic hit. Both restaurants also had to make some adaptations to their plans to fit the situation, but they did feel like their initial plans helped them, especially when it came to quick responses.

We also see that the remaining firms that did not have a plan also managed to make quick decisions and adapt their operations. However, a common denominator for the ones without a plan was that almost all of them were smaller, independent restaurants. It is easier for them to quickly change their operations, than it is for a large university with hundreds of employees and thousands of students. Firm J, one of the universities, did not have a pandemic plan in place, but they did have an emergency action group that quickly got to work on creating guidelines. Similarly, the others without a clear plan operated with clear management structures and in small teams. This could also be a reason as to why such a plan has not been created prior, as resources are scarce, and they need to make tough prioritizations.

4.1.2 Emergency Action Groups

In terms of dealing with the crisis and managing challenges that arose, emergency action groups have been used effectively. Some have had larger interdisciplinary teams working together on this to cover all business areas, while for the independent restaurants the management has functioned as the emergency action group. By including people from different departments and sectors in the organization, several respondents say that it became easier to get a better overview of what needed to be done and divide responsibilities. In a crisis most firms depend on some sort of emergency action group and the management, and from the interviews it became evident that this was the case for all of the respondents. In terms of frequency of meetings, it varied from firm to firm. Some had meetings twice a day in the beginning of the pandemic, while others have chosen to meet once a day or after new regulations were introduced.

4.1.3 Action Cards

Action cards are also something that was mentioned several times in terms of planning and crisis management. This was mostly used by universities. Action cards are a support tool that guides members of an emergency action group to implement necessary measures in the correct order. They are a way of operationalizing a contingency plan and the purpose is to ensure that all necessary measures are carried out, regardless of the type of incident the organization is facing. Most of the universities mention that they had developed and discussed different scenarios to create action cards to be used in a crisis. However, most of them are saying that they will go back and revise these after the Covid-19 crisis as they now have a broader perspective and are able to imagine crises that have a larger impact on their daily operations than before. Thus, they might not have been as effective as they initially thought prior to this Black Swan.

4.1.4 Staying Ahead of the Curve

Firm E mentioned the importance of staying ahead of the curve. They illustrated the importance of being able to predict future situations and adapt daily operations accordingly. They were able to have information ready to go as soon as closure became a fact and cancelled an event ahead of time that was supposed to happen on the 11th of March. Firm A also saw it coming and started to reduce their inventory to minimize any losses, and Firm J enforced protocols for all employees after the winter break when the virus was coming closer. All employees that had been abroad that week were told to stay home to minimize risks of a breakout on campus. Hence, this was mentioned by individual firms in all of the three groups.

4.2 Marketing and Communication

4.2.1 Clear Internal and External Communication

All three groups found external and internal communication important during the pandemic. For the restaurant industry, external communication was especially important. They prioritized to always keep the customer up to date by informing when the government made changes to the regulations or introduced new ones. They found that a lot of their customers do not keep up to date with the regulations and learned to not take for granted that people always knew the

regulations. Also, they were honest with the customers about the unsure situation, and that they did not have all the information. Therefore, they spent a lot of time communicating the rules and regulations to the customers. The tone of voice is important in times where many feel vulnerable and this is something all firms took into consideration in their posts. All firms focused on what firm E referred to as «boring communication», where they communicated the safety measures in the restaurant, the new menus, their opening hours and the changes in the regulations.

In regard to internal communication, the restaurants found it important to have clear communication with their employees in order to avoid uncertainty as all restaurants needed to furlough almost all of their staff members. Firm A stated that "*All employees were always kept updated on new information, as we found that it is very important for everyone within the company to always have the same information in order to avoid misunderstandings*". As a Black Swan brings a high level of uncertainty it is important to keep all employees updated to remove some of this and keep a healthy relationship between firm and employee. It could also help ensure that the employees will be available as the industry opens back up so that one does not experience losing talent.

For the education sector, all universities initially had a marketing plan before the pandemic started where they had planned the content for their marketing and communication activities. This plan became difficult to follow as the focus on what to communicate rapidly changed. It became more difficult to plan due to the uncertainty of the situation, and the newsletters to the students that originally were planned to be sent out throughout the semester, had to be written and sent out when new information from the government came. Also, all the universities said that they sent out newsletters with repetitive information in order for the students to feel safe. Even though they did not have any particular updates, they made sure to send out regular newsletters as this eased the student's uncertainty and helped contribute to a feeling of safety. It also reduced the number of questions they received. This proves how important continuous communication is in a crisis situation.

4.2.2 Press Coverage

Firm B, C and F received positive press coverage in Norwegian newspapers during the pandemic. They noticed that this had a positive effect on sales as existing customers were reminded of them, and new customers became curious of them and came to buy takeaway. However, this was only temporary attention as they saw that the number of customers were back to normal quite fast. The firms estimated the attention to last for approximately a few weeks. However, it had an effect on increasing the number of new customers. This shows the power of the press, and how a positive review can impact sales during a period of time. Even though the effect might not be long lasting, the chances are that some of the new customers will return. In order to get the most of the increased attention, the companies should also promote this in their own channels.

4.2.3 Change in Product Offering

During the pandemic the importance of innovation has become very evident for firms from all of the three groups, but especially the ones within the restaurant industry. In order to adapt to the new situation, all of the restaurants interviewed needed to make changes. They adapted to the new situation through several measures. All of the firms saw the need to change their offerings through changing the menu to adapt to the new market. Firm A created a new menu containing smaller dishes that was easier to serve outside as the original menu had larger meals.

Furthermore, Firm B changed their menu in order to stand out with their product offerings. They decided to start selling homemade pizza dough for the customers to pick up or order through Foodora and make their own pizza at home. Firm F, that is part of a restaurant chain, got an alcohol license that made them able to sell beer together with food through home delivery, and differentiated themselves this way. In addition to getting a lot of attention for it, they also minimized waste as most businesses had a huge loss when not being able to sell alcohol. This was a huge success for the business. This shows how a crisis forces businesses to be agile when it comes to their product offering and think innovative. As well as the fact that a negative situation like this can create a positive outcome and drive innovation.

4.2.4 Digital Events

As a result of government restrictions all the organizations had to rethink how to organize events. Some of the restaurants used to organize quiz nights and live music events, while the universities have several events throughout the year for both new and current students. Firm F hosts a very popular quiz every week at their locations. As the pandemic hit, they chose to move this online and continue to host this, even though it had to be under very different circumstances. When moving an event from in-person to online some reorganization is required, but they managed to solve this quickly and get the event up and running. Not only were they able to continue to provide this service to their customers, but it also helps in terms of visibility and reminds the customers that the restaurant is still there and needs their support.

The universities also had to move all their events online, this includes firm G-K. Our focus was on recruitment events as the marketing department is heavily involved in these and are the ones organizing them. There were some differences when it came to how they chose to solve this challenge. Some benefitted from the joint recruitment fairs, while others chose to host their own events to have a more singular focus on their university. From all the respondents the feedback was that this worked well, and they managed to meet new potential students through these digital solutions. However, when it comes to international recruitment it becomes more difficult as the competition is so much larger at an international scale. Open day events also had to be online. The fact that the students were unable to visit campus removes some of the personal touch and potentially made it more challenging for them to imagine themselves as students at the different universities.

In order to facilitate all these digital events, the universities have had to invest in development and innovation. This disrupted all the plans made for the different events that were scheduled to happen during the spring of 2020 and beginning of the fall semester in 2020. All the respondents agree that it was a massive challenge to turn the events digital so quickly and they were not prepared for anything like this. It was also challenging to plan for future events as it was impossible to predict how long the restrictions and pandemic would last. Firm H said that they decided to make a decision at an early stage to plan all upcoming

events to be digital. This removed some of their uncertainty and allowed them to focus on planning for this event, instead of hoping for a physical event where the online version acted more as a backup. Several of the other respondents mention that they thought everything would be back to normal at the beginning of 2021, but as time moved on it became evident that this was not the case. Thus, they learned that a plan B and C was necessary to have in place in case plan A would not work. Based on the experiences from this they will change the way they plan future events and be much better prepared should something similar strike again in the future.

4.2.5 Campaigns and Promotional Offers

When it comes to campaigns and promotional offers this is also something that has had to be adapted as a result of the pandemic and the resulting restrictions. Social media is an important tool for most of the respondents in all of the groups. Especially during the pandemic moving from in-person events or restaurant visits, to an all-digital world. The smaller restaurants in the independent group stated that they want to become better at social media, but that it has not been prioritized and that they currently only post from time to time on Facebook and Instagram. On the other hand, the rest of the respondents including the dependent group and the universities, use social media actively as a part of their marketing strategy and are present on several media platforms. As the pandemic hit, the competition increased, and it became more challenging to stand out as everyone focused on digital marketing and the competitive environment changed. The respondent from firm G's marketing department stated *"We would like to try printed ads and see the effects of this since the competition on the digital platforms have been increasing. Based on this it would be interesting to try a new channel and explore the effect of print in magazines, newspapers and the use of outdoor advertisements."* This shows that marketing departments are looking for new ways to communicate to their target segments as a result of increased competition. Perhaps one needs to think more creatively and discover new channels in order to stand out among the competitors and noise on social media.

Firm H's marketing department was the only one of the respondents already using TikTok as a part of their marketing strategy, while firm G and E mentioned that it

is something they are currently considering. The university already using this media is likely to benefit from some first mover advantages and proves that they are keeping up with the digital development and trends amongst their target segments. The representative from firm H states *"On Tik Tok we use student ambassadors, which leads to a lot of traffic and has shown to be important as an additional channel where we have the opportunity to be more informal. It is important to always be updated on the SoMe trends and know which trends are growing and which are declining."* This proves that TikTok is an important channel which provides businesses with an opportunity to be more informal and build strong relationships with their consumers.

Government regulations have also made it more challenging to use digital tools like geo-targeting. This is a tool especially mentioned by firm K that they have used a lot in the past in regard to international recruitment, but with universities closing down worldwide this opportunity was lost. They could no longer target their ads to international campuses where they knew potential students would be. This forced them to think differently and from this experience they learned that google search and paid google ads works well as people seek information themselves. The restaurants were also forced to restructure as they lost a lot of visibility as people stayed at home and the opportunity to eat out was lost. They used their collaborations with delivery apps like Foodora and Wolt to offer promotions and gain visibility. This can be an expensive strategy in the long run, but due to the restrictions and the situation most restaurants that choose to go all in with delivery had to take advantage of these opportunities to varying degrees. Some of the restaurants also tried to implement some in-store promotions during the summer period when they were open. Firm A introduced an offer on beer during the day to attract more customers, however, this backfired as people stayed for a long time and it did not increase the amount of meals sold. Restaurants from both the dependent and independent group have also worked on adapting their price points during the pandemic, but finding the optimal price point is challenging even in normal conditions.

4.2.6 Marketing Departments

Furthermore, the data also showed a difference between the organizations with a marketing department and those without. All the universities and the two restaurant groups, firm E and F, had dedicated marketing departments, and had specific marketing strategies. During the pandemic the organizations with a marketing department benefited as they had someone who could solely focus on communicating with customers and inform about changes in product offerings, campaigns and the current situation.

On the other hand, the restaurants in the independent group had a less strategic approach to their marketing. Marketing on social media and in other channels is something the managers do on the side or have some of their employees help them out with. The marketing activities were tasks that came in addition to the existing workload, this left the marketing activities as an extra burden. The independent restaurants are naturally built up by smaller units, but most of them mention that they want to become better at marketing and use the opportunity social media presents to their advantage. To gain the benefits that come from having someone responsible for marketing they should try to explore low-cost options, like hiring a marketing student part-time.

4.3 Collaboration

4.3.1 Delivery Services

When the pandemic hit Norway, the need for collaboration increased for both the independent and dependent restaurant groups. The restaurant sector needed to focus on takeaway. We found that firms B, C, D and F had collaborations with delivery services like Foodora and Wolt before the pandemic hit. Several of the companies looked into doing it themselves but found it too expensive and time consuming. We found that company B, D and F use both Foodora and Wolt, while company C chose to only partner up with Foodora. One of the restaurants interviewed, firm D, had an order system in place before the pandemic hit, but did not provide delivery through this system. Hence, the customers had to pick up the food in the restaurant. Having their own system reduces cost related to collaborations and removes the percentage per order taken by delivery services. It can also be used as a communication channel. During the pandemic this restaurant

also managed to increase the number of users on their own app from 4000 to 10 000. Thus, this turned out to be a huge success. They also provided home delivery through Foodora, meaning they could reach a larger customer base that were not able to pick up the food.

An assumption would be that all the restaurants interviewed started with takeaway during this period. However, from the results it is evident that this solution was not for everyone. Compared to Firm B, C, D and F, Firm A found that starting with takeaway was not a suitable solution for them as the food they served would not be able to be sold at the same standard through Foodora as it would in the restaurant. So, in order to not sell a lower quality service, they decided not to collaborate with delivery services. They also thought about starting with food kits, but due to the same reasons as mentioned above, they decided not to pursue this idea as well. A different solution that firm E came up with was to not focus on collaborations with takeaway services as they were afraid they would lose too much control and not be able to sell the same service that they would in the restaurant. Instead, they found a partner that would preserve the brand and live up to the standard they aimed for. An example of what they did was to through the help of the partner create an event at the opening of a new building in Oslo and get attention to their restaurants through this. This shows that there are other solutions in order to get attention to your company than through collaborations, and that it can be beneficial to think outside the box in regard to collaboration partners.

4.3.2 Between Universities

For the education sector, the results show that all the universities interviewed collaborated with other universities by exchanging experiences throughout the pandemic. Both the private universities, firm J and K, and the public universities, firm G, H and I were included in the experience exchange meetings. They would ask questions, talk about what worked well for them and what had not worked, so they knew what would be useful to try and not. All the interview participants found these meetings very helpful when navigating through the pandemic, especially in the beginning when the situation was more unsure. However, these meetings are still taking place and will continue until the pandemic has ended.

Based on these findings, one could assume that this is something the restaurant industry also could benefit from by creating for example forums or meetings where they exchange experiences.

Another finding from the education sector was that the universities also collaborated when finding a solution for how to organize the career fairs during a pandemic. In order to still be able to provide potential students with a career fair, they collaborated and found a common digital platform where they all could have the career fair together, as each university had their own online «room». Only one of the universities we interviewed, firm G, chose not to participate in this solution. They did not find it relevant as they already arranged an online school visit through their own channels. A key takeaway from this situation for the education sector, is that they can benefit from collaborating, even though they are competitors. Creating new platforms can be very expensive. Due to the time pressure to get this system up and running, a collective approach is likely to have benefited all the participants.

4.4 Leadership

4.4.1 Agility

For both industries, the ability for quick decision making and being agile was very important. For the restaurant industry, they found that it was necessary to adapt quickly as the situation developed. Common for firms in both the dependent and independent restaurant group was the aspiration to create their own take away system as using Foodora or Wolt was less profitable. Examples of other changes that needed to be done were updating opening hours on all online platforms and communicating the changes to consumers due to changes of restrictions. This is a very time-consuming task and took up a lot of resources as the changes were so frequent. Also, the one-meter distance rule that later was changed to a two-meter distance rule decreased the capacity for seating. Tables that earlier could seat ten people, could now only seat four people, so capacity decreased with up to 70%. Hence, the firms found that the ability to quickly find new solutions was important. New restrictions were implemented with short timeframes, forcing the management to act quickly and really test how agile they actually were.

In the education sector, there was a need to make fast decisions and move all activities to digital platforms when schools and universities were closed by the government on March 12th. Firm H had planned to implement a system for online teaching during 2021, and firm G already had implemented digital tools for streaming, compared to firms I, J and K who did not have this prioritization in their plans for 2021. However, none of the universities had the systems for moving all teaching to digital platforms in place and needed to implement this fast. Firms G, H, I, J and K decided to use Zoom due to the features the software provides, e.g., the ability to raise your hand and the opportunity for recording. When the universities opened up again, they had to follow strict guidelines in regard to distance, the use of hand sanitizers, face masks etc. Hence, there was a need to make quick decisions and changes at the campuses, which the management of the universities handled well.

4.4.2 Central vs Local Management

Two of the universities, firms G and I, had divided the decision-making process into central and local divisions. The use of the divisions depended on the size of the university, as firms H found it more beneficial to only have central management, compared to firms G, I, J and K who saw the need to have both central and local management. These universities chose to have both divisions as the responsibilities differed between them. They are also larger than firm H making this a natural choice.

By dividing into different management levels, it became easier to divide tasks so that all parties involved were trained in their responsibilities. The central division was the division making the overall decisions for the university as a whole and was in charge of the local divisions. The teams created were interdisciplinary teams consisting of the deans for each faculty, the marketing department, the university management, student representatives, the HMS department, etc. The number of team members and the roles differed between the universities, but the findings show that all participants found interdisciplinary teams to be a useful asset in crisis management. For the local divisions, each faculty at the universities became a local division and handled smaller tasks like breakouts on the faculty, and keeping the students informed with new updates. The universities experienced

that when the students were anxious and scared due to the uncertain situation, it was more beneficial for them to speak with someone they knew, like the dean or a lecturer. Hence, they found that it was necessary with a local division to handle smaller tasks. Firm I created a local division later on during the pandemic as they saw that the central division had too many tasks and decisions that could be handled more efficiently at a lower level.

As it is evident that creating a central or local management for the universities were successful, it would be assumed that this is something that could be beneficial to consider for the restaurant industry as well. Firms A, B, C and D of the restaurants interviewed were independent restaurants and could implement a local management group only responsible for dealing with crisis management. The employees could be included in this to remove some of the workload from the managers. The restaurant chains interviewed, firms E and F, took advantage of their central management structure to deal with large decisions, while the local management at each restaurant implemented the changes at each location. Using this kind of structure for dividing responsibility could decrease the level of uncertainty the employees feel when entering the crisis as they know more of what to expect, and the organization as a whole would be better prepared for a new crisis.

4.4.3 Clear Management Structure

In all three groups we found that a clear management structure was important due to several aspects. In the education sector, the division of management and the management structure was more implemented than in the restaurant industry. This is due to the strict government regulations they need to follow in regard to always having crisis management plans in place in case of emergency. For this sector there are several divisions the decision has to go through before being made. However, for the restaurant industry the decision process was fast and short, but with a clear management structure. For firms in the independent group, there were mostly just a few people in charge who made the decisions. Hence, when new regulations came, the decisions on how to proceed could be made quickly and informed to the employees and the customers. For the firms in the dependent group, they had a more centralized approach to decision making, by having a

management group making decisions for all restaurants in the chain, and then informing the employees and the customers after the decision was made.

A clear management structure was important to establish trust and a feeling of safety for both the employees and the customers. For the employees, trust was created by the management performing good communication and quickly informing the staff when decisions were made. Also, in regard to the customers, trust was withheld by showing them that they cared about their safety by having hand sanitizer and distance between the tables and chairs. For example, the restaurant manager of firm B said that when they were allowed to stay open, he approached all the customers with hand sanitizers, compared to other establishments where the hand sanitizers is only placed by the entrance. This made the customers feel safe visiting the restaurant, and the restaurant showed that they take responsibility.

4.4.4 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was something respondents from all the three groups brought up in the interviews. It is commonly known that it is important for firms to show CSR and it is especially important in a crisis situation in order to keep a good reputation and avoid negative press. All organizations should do their best in order to maintain a healthy and trusting relationship with their stakeholders and show that they care about the surrounding environment. The respondent from firm E said *"It is important for us to be viewed as responsible. We have a lot of responsibility for the community and for our young customer segment. For example, we had a concert planned at one of our establishments on March 11th and it was very unclear what would happen that day. We made the decision a couple of days prior to cancel the concert as the situation was so unclear and we did not want to take any unnecessary risks. Some people responded negatively to this decision as it was something they looked forward to. However, the next day the whole country closed so I do believe this was the right decision to make. It is important to show social responsibility and that people feel safe at our restaurants."* This shows the importance of being able to make the right decisions in an uncertain environment. If this firm had decided to move forward with the decision it could have resulted in a massive spread of

the virus and a lot of negative press for the firm. Even though they did receive some negative feedback from consumers at the time, these consumers will most likely have realized later on that canceling the concert was a good thing and in their best interest to keep them safe. To be perceived as responsible and a safe place to visit is also mentioned by several other of the respondents. This proves that it is something most organizations have considered during this time period and it is not dependent on industry or firm structure.

The universities worked according to national principles, making sure the organization is still recognizable in a crisis. Firm H was also contacted by the government and asked to assist with supplies and personnel. This is a university who have clinics on campus and therefore had protective gear available as they offer educational programs within the health sector. They had to show CSR by providing this and help the local community to the best of their ability.

4.5 Future Planning

In terms of future planning and how this crisis has affected peoples' perspectives it was evident from the data that changes will be made. Both the universities, independent and dependent restaurants mention new ways to think about the way they operate, and we will see some changes as an outcome from this crisis that has affected lives for well over a year.

4.5.1 Hybrid Solutions

In terms of future events, and especially recruitment events for the universities, we expect to see a hybrid solution where some events will be kept digital while others will go back to being physical. All the marketing managers we interviewed from the university group said that several of the online events have been a huge success and they have managed to reach a larger pool of potential students by offering an online alternative. Hence, this is something they all want to continue with for the foreseeable future. They will however not continue with only digital events. Some events are simply better to do in person as it becomes more personal, you can tell if people are paying attention and it becomes easier to create connections. From feedback they have gathered, the potential students have also

expressed that they would like to have the opportunity to attend physical events as they want a level of personal interaction.

4.5.2 Learning Points

In terms of planning, all respondents say that they will be better prepared when another crisis hits in the future based on experiences made during the pandemic. They have all made sure to take notes during this crisis and have conducted continuous audits or will conduct an audit when the situation returns to more normalized operations, to evaluate their performance. During this audit they evaluate their responses, decisions made and how they have handled the situation to make sure that they are prepared for the future. Based on this experience, several of them also mention that they will make sure to create a plan for the future and write down their key learning points. The ones that did have a plan will also revisit their action cards to see if they can be improved and update their pandemic plan. They have learned that creating a plan based on the most recent disaster is not sufficient enough and that one needs to be able to think broader and consider different scenarios for a plan like that.

Furthermore, firm D has experienced growth during the pandemic and informed us that they are in the process of expanding their business. Based on what they have experienced now they are including a "pandemic clause" in their contracts. This way they are lowering the risk of renting a location, should another pandemic hit while they are still operational. Even though this is a restaurant that has managed the situation very well, they have seen others in the industry struggle or go bankrupt due to high rental costs. Hence, it is better to be safe than sorry and lower potential future risks. This is something we are likely to see more of in the future and including a "pandemic clause" in contracts might become the new norm as we recover from the Covid-19 crisis.

Moreover, other general learning points mentioned include the use of own channels and becoming better at exploiting these, becoming better at predicting future events and plan accordingly, and to work more systematically with crisis management to continuously conduct training. When it comes to predicting future events the respondent from firm E said: *"We were a bit annoyed at ourselves*

because we saw the development with Covid-19 in Asia and how the virus moved, so we feel that we should have seen it coming earlier than we actually did. " Even though it is impossible to know when a Black Swan event will occur, we know they will happen at some point in the future.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate how firms respond in the event of a Black Swan, how they adapt to the current environment and how it changes perspectives and future planning. The focus has been to explore how changing marketing activities, leadership and collaboration have an impact on firms during a Black Swan and the impact it has on firms' future prospects. The study builds on previous research and supports certain previous findings. Furthermore, it creates a basis for further research on this topic. The key findings presented are essential when it comes to facing another Black Swan and to guide organizations through the next Black Swan event. Thus, the absence of these findings would make it more challenging for firms facing future events and increase their risk.

5.1.1 Planning and Crisis Management

The findings show that planning is helpful if it is carefully conducted, but due to the nature of a Black Swan and the need for continuous adaptation it is not a must to tackle a crisis. The firms who had a plan, had not considered the situation they found themselves in due to the Covid-19 crisis, hence they had to make changes to the plan. This is also in line with Koronis and Ponis (2018) findings stating that many executives complain about the fact that investments into planning often do not pay off when companies are hit by disruption. Based on this there was little difference between the firms with a plan and those without. This proves that it is not necessary with a specific pandemic plan for every situation, and that this is in fact very hard to follow through. This is supported by how Crandall et al. (2010) argues that preparedness is useless without the ability to respond efficiently. However, the organizations with a plan benefited in the respect that they had guidelines to follow and could adapt these, compared to creating brand new ones that can be more time consuming. They also mentioned that they found previous planning helpful when tackling this crisis, and that they will document everything

to ensure better planning in the future. This again aligns with previous crisis management literature stating that planning, manuals and training increase an organization's resilience level (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). Larger organizations are more likely to benefit from contingency plans than smaller ones. Based on the fact that there are more people involved, a restructuring process to adapt is likely to be more time consuming compared to smaller organizations.

We also saw the benefits of interdisciplinary teams and how it helped the organizations reorganize in a crisis. By including members from several departments in the emergency action teams, the organizations were able to cover all business areas and discuss solutions that would benefit the organization as a whole. This strategy is strengthened by Sawahlas (2014) findings, stating that cross-sector collaboration and the composition of interdisciplinary teams creates more successful teams. This is also supported by McNamara (2012) who states that this strategy reduces uncertainty which should be of high importance for all firms in times of a crisis.

For smaller organizations the management is hands-on and present in the daily operations, as they are familiar with all aspects of their organization. Hence, the need for interdisciplinary teams is less present as they have limited resources and the management is more likely to deal with the situation by themselves. This is a contribution to existing literature as there is currently no research available comparing small and large firms when it comes to this topic.

5.1.2 Marketing and Communication

The findings show that both internal and external communication has been important for both sectors, and that continuous information streams is needed. Honesty about the situation being uncertain and that the organization does not have all the answers were found to be important. This strategy is supported by Balis (2020) who states that in times of a crisis it is better to acknowledge the fact that you do not have all the answers. Both industries found that frequent and repetitive information is important in order to decrease uncertainty. Also, the tone of voice is important when presenting information in delicate situations. Using a delicate brand voice in times of a crisis is again supported by Balis (2020).

During the crisis it became more important to the firms to present "boring" messages with little creativity. This finding goes against Balis (2020) who states that one should pivot creative messages during a crisis. Our findings state how the firms changed the way they presented information regarding rules and regulations. This became more important than getting the customers attention in a creative way. This shows how one can reach different conclusions based on the selection of industries and research method.

Press coverage can be a positive attribution, as the firms receiving this increased their customer base which generated more income. The positive boost from the press coverage only lasted for a short time period, so the companies receiving the attention should promote it on their own channels to maximize its potential.

Both industries found innovation to be important during a Black Swan event, as they had to be innovative in order to adapt to the new business environment and keep customers satisfied as their needs change. The restaurant industry changed their product offerings, while the education sector needed to make changes in the way they operate. This is also supported by Bahadir et al., (2009), who found that innovation is important in order to keep customers interested.

Competition online increased as a result of the crisis as we moved into a digital-only world as stated by Lewnes (2020), and it became more challenging to stand out. As competition is increasing on digital platforms, TikTok is becoming increasingly more relevant. It is a new media presenting firms with a new way of connecting with their consumers. However, only one of the respondents is currently present on this media. Many firms are still hesitant to incorporate this into their marketing strategy. TikTok was mostly used among young teens when it was first introduced, and the largest segment of users are still between 13 and 18 years old. However, the 18-25 year segment is just behind them and according to the digital agency "M51 Marketing" there are high odds of reaching the ones from 35-44 years of age as well ("Våre første erfaringer fra annonsering på TikTok", 2021). As this is a relatively new media there are first mover advantages available, and the CPM (cost-per-thousand-impressions) is found to be at around 5.60 NOK. In comparison the CPM on Facebook tends to be higher than 100 NOK and on

Snapchat around 50 NOK ("Våre første erfaringer fra annonsering på TikTok", 2021). According to Bloomberg, Norway is also a country that sticks out as the gender balance is quite even with 44 percent of users being men (Stokel-Walker, 2020). According to Ipsos social media tracker (Ipsos SoMe-tracker Q1'21, 2021) 12 percent of the Norwegian population use the app every day, which shows a huge potential for advertising. It is definitely a channel that will grow a lot in the coming years, based on the fact that it grew from 8 percent (Ipsos SoMe-tracker Q4'20, 2020) to 12 percent in terms of daily use among the Norwegian population from Q4 2020 to Q1 2021 (Ipsos SoMe-tracker Q1'21, 2021). Hence, it is a channel that more businesses should consider using and implement in their marketing strategy. This would be relevant to look into for all of the remaining firms as a way to communicate and build relationships with customers.

From the data it is evident that the firms who are able to think creatively and explore new trends at an early stage gain an advantage. This is easier for organizations with a separate marketing department or marketing manager fully focusing on marketing and communication for the firm. The marketing department facilitates the relation between the organization and its external environment as stated by Zeithaml and Zeithaml (1984). Based on the large changes in the external environment during a Black Swan, this iterates the importance of a marketing department. According to previous research, factors like advertising expenditures and brand equity have a positive impact on firm value (Barth et al., 1998; Anderson et al., 2004; Joshi and Hanssens, 2010). This is something the organizations with a marketing department are able to focus more on and has helped the firm navigate through the crisis.

5.1.3 Collaboration

Collaboration has proven to be of high importance when it comes to handling a Black Swan event. All three groups found it necessary to collaborate with other firms in order to optimize their strategy on how to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, by entering business agreements or through information sharing. Through collaboration they have been able to lower risks and costs. These findings are supported by Deverell et al., (2019) who found that «collaboration is at the heart of crisis management». Information sharing is something that all industries can

benefit from. This can be done by creating forums or through meetings where one exchanges experiences. Sawahla (2014) found that collaboration is an important center for information when dealing with a Black Swan event. Through this kind of collaboration all firms involved will be able to access more information. Hence, firms need to consider their options for collaborations. This can be done as a Black Swan event hits or in advance as a part of planning and can improve firm's response time. This supports Sawahla's (2014) finding stating that implementing collaboration guidelines will increase the chances of a successful collaboration. In uncertain times, it can be especially useful to have some guidelines to follow to reduce stress.

5.1.4 Leadership

One interesting finding from the education sector was the division between central and local management. By implementing these divisions, responsibility was divided, and decisions could be made shortly. Through dividing responsibility based on risk levels for actions that needed to be handled, the universities managed to keep a very clear management structure. By doing so it was always clear who was responsible for different tasks and they did not waste any time communicating back and forth. By creating smaller teams within the emergency action group, it also becomes easier to be agile as the decision process speeds up when less people are involved. Hence, a clear management structure is important for all organizations. As this was such a success for a more controlled handling of the Black Swan event, this is something that should be considered and pursued by firms in other industries as well.

5.1.5 Future Planning

Experiences made during the Covid-19 crisis will change the way organizations operate and plan future events. From our findings it is evident that most firms will choose a hybrid strategy. By having events both online and in person one can optimize reach and choose the most fitting platform based on the event. Managers should evaluate their events to find the most suitable platform and consider the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, audits of the chosen strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic should be evaluated by all firms. It can be easy to quickly go back to strategies used

before the pandemic hit, but it is important to avoid this fallback and rather focus on the learnings from this experience. The importance of revising measures implemented and reflecting on these and what could have been done differently is supported by Sawahla (2014). By doing this firms will be more resilient when the next Black Swan hits.

5.2 *Managerial Implications*

From an academic point of view this research deals with an existing gap in the literature regarding Black Swans, especially related to marketing where there is little to none previous research. The study offers several implications for managers within different fields to consider, and it can help them prepare for future Black Swan events. We argue that the managerial implications presented are applicable for other industries, public and private organizations and firms of various sizes.

From a managerial perspective, this research presents how firms can adapt their marketing activities when a crisis hits to maintain sales and visibility. Through this study managers can learn and get insights into how others faced the Covid-19 pandemic and adapted their marketing and communication to suit the changing business environment. When it comes to making these changes, planning for the future can be challenging and there is a lot of uncertainty as a situation like this develops. We noticed that the organizations who early decided to plan all events in the near future as digital, managed to remove some of the uncertainty the ones who still hoped to go forward with physical events experienced. This again iterates the importance of management's ability to make quick decisions and remove as much uncertainty as possible in a crisis to achieve optimized results. The ones that planned their upcoming events with the belief that they could do these in person quickly learned that they should always have a plan B and C. This is something managers should keep in mind when planning ahead in the middle of a Black Swan where the environment quickly changes.

The study can help firms in terms of planning for and working with crisis management. It can inspire managers as they get insight into how others handled this situation, and they can learn from their failures. Creating contingency plans

for future Black Swan events might be a waste of resources as they are almost impossible to correctly predict. This results in plans that will require adaptations (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). However, several firms stated that even though their pandemic plan was not necessarily the right one for this pandemic, it was a great starting point when it came to handling this crisis. This shows that individual organizations need to consider their resources and decide if they want to invest in creating plans for future Black Swans or not.

Moreover, agility is key in the event of Black Swans and managers should ensure that their firm or department is agile enough to adapt when the environment is changing. If your organization is unable to adapt you will quickly fall behind and your competitors are likely to have a much faster response time. Agility should be implemented into all aspects of the organization.

Furthermore, the study shows the importance of being able to respond quickly in an uncertain situation and to show CSR. The participating firms practiced CSR by staying ahead of the curve, trying to foresee what regulations would be implemented and act accordingly. This also made the customers and the students feel safer. Having a proactive management approach and focus on early warning signs of Black Swans is supported by Hajikazemi et al. (2016) as a positive contribution towards handling the event. This shows the importance of practicing CSR during a Black Swan event. Managers need to take this into consideration when planning ahead of an unforeseen event, in order to be prepared and reduce response time.

5.3 Limitations

The study is also subject to some limitations. As the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing, the firms have not been able to evaluate the full extent of the situation and the decisions made. This is a limitation to this research as measures being evaluated by the firms as important now may not be considered as important if they look back in two years' time. However, we do not believe this has influenced the results of this study due to the formulation of the research question and other measures taken to reduce this e.g., the research method.

Secondly, based on time constraints for this assignment we only had the time to conduct qualitative research. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that one should do a combination of qualitative and quantitative research in order to get a synergetic view of the data. Hence, the fact that we did not have the time to include a quantitative approach to the research question is a limitation. The lack of quantitative gauges such as regression is also due to the grounded theory approach. Case studies can also be analyzed in a range of different ways, so our chosen approach to the analysis could have had an impact on the results. A different analytic perspective could uncover other findings or disagreements to what we have found.

Moreover, the industries and participating firms selected could potentially limit the generalizability of the obtained results. By selecting two industries and a handful of firms within these, this could have impacted our results. However, we have tried to limit the impact by choosing comparable firms of various sizes and industries who have been hit differently by the crisis. One who has been massively impacted financially and that has been forced to stay closed, while the other one has not been as affected financially but has had to adapt daily operations.

We initially had several requirements for the selection process. We wanted the restaurants to have a certain size in regard to the number of employees and the physical location. However, due to the stressful situation caused by the pandemic and several restaurants closing down fully, we had to remove some of these requirements to ensure that we had enough participants. We also wanted to include several restaurant chains, but they were unable to participate and hard to get in contact with. This could be a limitation in regard to our results.

In addition, it could have been beneficial to conduct more in-depth interviews to collect more data for our qualitative analysis. However, this research process would have demanded a longer timeframe. If this was a project that took place over a longer time period, we would have conducted more interviews and potentially included another industry to make the results even more generalizable.

The limitations should be taken into account as the results of this study are interpreted. However, despite the limitations we believe that this research offers insight to the research area and several important contributions.

5.4 Propositions for Further Research

As there is very little research conducted on Black Swans there are many opportunities when it comes to further research. As our research is conducted while Covid-19 is still very present and government regulations are still affecting daily operations, it provides an opportunity to explore the situation following the crisis. A recommendation for further research would be to explore the effects this crisis has had on firms and if they actually implement any changes as we return to normalcy.

It would also be very interesting to explore the marketing perspective related to this in greater detail and identify the key drivers of a successful marketing department handling a Black Swan event. This case study takes several different aspects into consideration, so it would be interesting to dig deeper into how the marketing department has to redo their strategy and specific actions in regard to a Black Swan, in order to adapt to the new business environment. One could also investigate the difference between companies offering a service and companies offering products to compare.

As this study has a qualitative approach it would also be interesting to look at the research question and adapt this to suit a quantitative approach and compare findings. We hope and believe our research can encourage others to study this topic further and help close the gap in the literature.

6.0 Conclusion

Covid-19 has changed our lives and has had a huge impact on how firms do business. We know for certain that Black Swan events will hit again in the future, so firms need to be better prepared to reduce risk. In order for companies to be prepared, this research paper has looked into how firms respond to a Black Swan event, and how they can adapt their activities to the new business environment.

Our contribution to this field lies within what measures companies can implement to be prepared for a Black Swan event, and how they can safely navigate through an occurring Black Swan. The insight shows that factors like planning, marketing activities, clear communication, collaboration, leadership, and agility are important in order to succeed.

The main findings identified that plans are not necessarily useful during a Black Swan event as it is impossible to predict the outcome. Firms without a plan can perform just as good as those with a plan due to the circumstances of a Black Swan. However, if the emergency protocols are easily expandable and flexible, one can improve the firm's response time and utilize the plans as a starting point.

The marketing department has an impact on all departments of an organization and if they are unable to adapt to a new business environment, the firm will not survive. This includes adapting internal and external communication, product offerings, events and other marketing activities. Clear communication is key and prioritizing both internal and external information decreases the level of uncertainty among employees and customers.

Moreover, the results show that the firms have collaborated within their sector and shared information. By doing so they have been able to reduce costs, speed up processes and improve safety measures. This iterates the importance of working together towards a positive outcome, rather than keeping information secret. Being agile has high importance as companies will be able to quickly adapt their operations and offerings to the new business environment, which will be crucial in this situation. Agility also transfers into the firms marketing department and is highly important.

To conclude, when navigating a Black Swan event, organizations should be agile in all aspects of their operations. In order to do so, one needs to ensure that the organization is structured in a way that allows restructuring in all divisions. This includes being able to follow the market, changing customer segments and customer behavior. Short response time is key and being agile will contribute towards this.

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8.0 Appendices

8.1 *Appendix 1: Framework*

Koronis and Ponis (2018): Framework to improve firms' resilience towards a crisis.
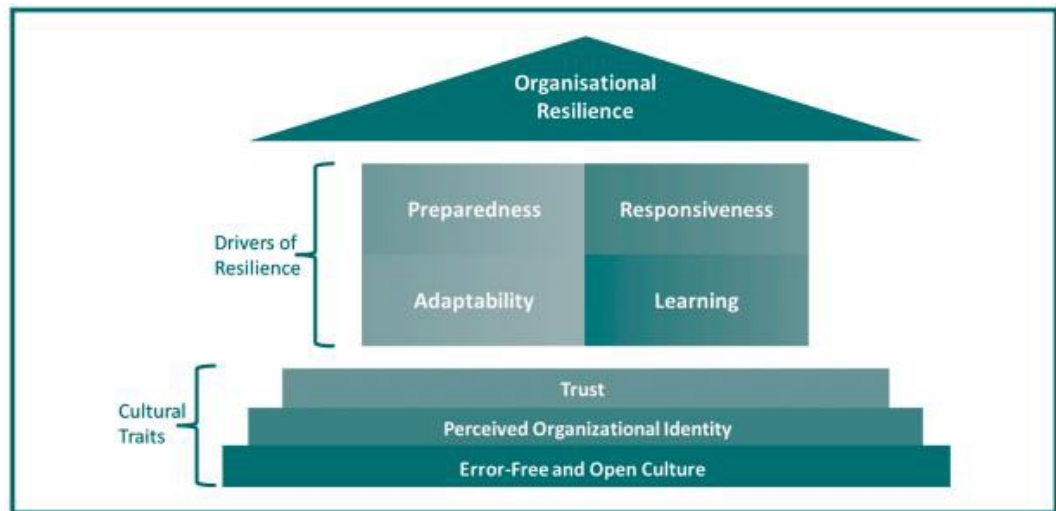
8.2 *Appendix 2: Email to participants*

Hei,

Vi studerer siste semester på en MSc i Strategisk Markedsføringsledelse ved Handelshøyskolen BI. Vi skriver for tiden en masteroppgave med god hjelp fra vår veileder Even Lanseng, hvor vi undersøker hvordan planlegging og handlingsmønstre i forbindelse med Covid-19 har påvirket daglig drift og handlingsmønster. Vi har fokus på markedsrelaterte aktiviteter og forberedelser/reaksjoner relatert til kriser og ønsker å fokusere på to ulike industrier. I forbindelse med dette ønsker vi å komme i kontakt med bedrifter som har jobbet med utfordringer relatert til Covid-19 i løpet av det siste året.

Vi ønsker å gjennomføre et dybdeintervju over zoom som vil ta rundt 1 time. Om ønskelig kan både bedrift og person holdes anonymt. Intervjuet vil ikke bli tatt opp, men det vil bli transkribert.

Det vil være til stor hjelp for vår masteroppgave om du har mulighet til å stille til intervju.

Håper å høre fra deg!

Om du har noen spørsmål eller ønsker å vite mer om oppgaven er det bare å ta kontakt via mail eller telefon.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Hanne Wiger & Lisa Dybedal

8.3 Appendix 3: Interview guide restaurants

Background

- Hvor lenge har dere vært i drift?
- Hovedfokuset vårt er på restaurantbransjen, men vi har sett at dere har litt utesteder også. Hvor mange restauranter/utesteder har dere?
- Hvor mange ansatte har dere?
- Har dere en egen markedsavdeling?
- Hvordan var den økonomiske situasjonen til bedriften før corona?
- Hadde dere hjemlevering før covid-19?
  - o Foodora/wolt
- Hadde dere samarbeidspartnere før covid-19?
- Hvem var deres typiske kunde før covid-19?
- Hvor mange kunder har dere plass til i restauranten utenom pandemien?

Planning

- Hadde dere noen kriseplan på plass for hvordan dere skal reagere om man befinner seg i en situasjon med slik uforutsigbarhet som korona?
- Hvordan taklet dere behovet for å ta raske avgjørelser?
- Har dere hatt muligheten til å ta raske avgjørelser for å tilpasse endringer i markedet, eller er det en lenger intern prosess?
- Vil dere utvikle noe lignende for fremtiden på bakgrunn av erfaringene dere har fått nå?

Activities after march 12th.

- Norge stengte ned 12.mars, hva var deres umiddelbare reaksjon/tanker for bedriftens fremtid?
- Iverksatte dere noen umiddelbare tiltak?
  - o Fikk dere noen nye samarbeidspartnere?

- o Har dere inngått sponsorater?
- Har dere inngått avtaler for hjemlevering etter covid-19?
  - o Samarbeid med ex wolt eller foodora vs gjøre det selv.
- Måtte dere endre allokeringen av ressurser innad i bedriften?
- Er det noen endringer av tildeling av budsjett når det kommer til markedsaktiviteter?
- Hvilke markedsaktiviteter drev dere typisk med før?
- I forhold til sosiale medier, hvordan jobber dere med dette? Er det en viktig del av kommunikasjonsstrategien eller mer sidesatt?
- Hvordan har dere jobbet for å opprettholde synlighet selv om folk har vært hjemme?
- Har dere gjort noen endringer i tilbudet deres? Salg av mat kits eller lignende?
- Har dere fått/søkt om statlig støtte?
- Tenker du at offentlige tiltakene har vært tilstrekkelig?
- Hva vil du si har vært det mest effektive tiltaket?
- Hva har vært det minst effektive tiltaket?

Current situation

- Hvordan er situasjonen i dag?
  - o Per i dag så er det ikke lov å selge alkohol, og restauranter i Oslo kan ikke holde åpent.
  - o Hva har effekten av skjenkestopp vært? Tror du færre drar ut for å spise når de mister muligheten til å drikke alkohol?
- Hvordan har kundebasen endret seg etter nedstengning?
- Om du sammenligner dere med en annen restaurant du kjenner til hvem ville det vært? var dere mer forberedt enn de og hva ville du ha gjort annerledes?

Future prospects

- Har denne situasjonen gjort at dere kommer til å endre hvordan dere foretar markedsaktiviteter?
- Hvordan ser du på fremtiden for bedriften? Hva må til for at dere skal klare å komme tilbake til situasjonen før korona?

8.4 Appendix 4: Interview guide education sector – marketing department

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Spørsmål til markedsavdeling/ansvarlig

- Før pandemien, hvordan jobbet dere med markedsaktiviteter?
- Hvordan har dere tilpasset markedsaktivitetene nå slik som for eksempel eventer og lignende?
- Hvordan har dere løst åpen dag og andre aktiviteter relatert mot rekruttering av nye studenter?
- Hvordan har det vært å forholde seg til usikkerheten mtp planlegging fremover i tid?
- Hvordan har dere kommunisert tiltak og oppdateringer til studenter og andre interessenter?
- I forhold til sosiale medier, hvordan jobber dere med dette? Er det en viktig del av kommunikasjonsstrategien eller mer sidesatt?
- Har måten dere utfører markedsaktiviteter endret seg etter pandemien?
- Hva har fungert best av markedsaktiviteter? Er det noe dere har gjort som har fungert bedre enn andre ting? Har dere noen eksempler?
- Er det noen andre lignende bedrifter/institusjoner dere har sett som har vært veldig flinke med markedsaktiviteter under corona?

8.5 Appendix 5: Interview guide education sector – HMS department

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Spørsmål relatert til planlegging/tiltak påfølgende

- Hadde dere noen kriseplan på plass for hvordan dere skal reagere om man befinner seg i en situasjon med slik uforutsigbarhet som korona?
- Hvordan har denne planen endret seg underveis?
- Har denne planen vært effektiv i praksis eller har dere måttet vike fra denne?
- Har dere tverfaglige teams?
- Hadde dere noen systemer på plass med tanke på hjemmeundervisning?
- Hvordan taklet dere behovet for å ta raske avgjørelser?
- Hvordan har dere jobbet med tiltak på skolen for at reglene skal opprettholdes?

> - Hvordan ser du for deg at dere vil jobbe med kriseplanlegging fremover?

8.6 Appendix 6: Transcribed interviews with coding's

Firm E and G wished to be anonymous and therefore parts of the interview are censored in order for them not to be recognizable e.g., the firm name is written as (firm name).

Restaurants	Code
Independent	
Firm A	
Background **How long have you been operational?** We have been in business since 1937 with the same name but different owners through the years. It has been an indian restaurant for the past fifteen years and then we took over on the first of January 2020 and did some remodeling before we opened. Because of this we have not been elegetable for compensation. We did very well during the first few weeks with a lot of visitors from people in the neighbourhood and the nearby university OsloMet. Revenues increased the second week in march and we were in a comfortable position, usually February and March are low season so this indicated a positive future. However, after the first lockdown only a few people stopped by and most orders were handled through <mark>Foodora and Wolt</mark>. We were unsure of how long the crisis was going to last and had lots of different theories, but we had no idea this was going to last past the summer months. We thought the situation would be less severe and had three though months after the liquor ban was implemented. During this time we had large negatives in our accounting, had to invest more of our own money and realised that this situation was going to last. As it became legal again to sell alcohol on the sixth of may we had a good summer and revenues startet to increase again. We had six new hires and the christmas party season looked promising with over one hundred reservations. However, new restrictions were implemented once again and the	<mark>Delivery services</mark>

cancellations started coming in. We started to do more of the work ourselves to cut costs. At this point we only had one server who worked three to four days, two people who work in the kitchen and with these cutbacks we managed to do okay until January. In January we were expecting the liquor ban to be lifted, but as this did not happen I know that several people are really struggling.

How many employees do you have?
We are two full time employees, but at the moment we are closed. All together we have eight employees, four servers who mainly work during the summer and two people working in the kitchen but these are still in school and work during a few weeks in the fall and winter and during the summer. We are considering hiring a full-time chef and a server, but due to the restrictions this is on hold.

Do you have a seperate marketing department?
No

How was the company's economic situation before covid-19?
As we started up right before covid hit we don't have anything to compare it with.

Did you have home delivery services before covid hit?
- **foodora**
- **wolt**

The collaboration with Foodora is typical american, they want to make as much money as possible. The consultants they have are responsible for several firms and I experience them as very greedy. In the beginning we were eager to work with them based on their large customer base, but with the pandemic they really took advantage of the situation. To give an example we had sales through foodora for 132 000nok in march 2020, of this we received 46 000nok. I have also experienced a feeling of being punished after making complaints and have had customers call in telling me that they can not find us on the app asking if we're closed. After this we said that we would need a new deal in order to continue the collaboration and managed to improve our terms slightly. We have also entered a partner ship with Wolt and have a better experience working with them.

Foodora also have the pink choice badge where they highlight some restaurants and increase

Clear management structure

Delivery Services

competition. This is a service you can pay for. During the first month of the partnership we agreed to do a promotion and offered free delivery. After closing and opening up again they forced us to continue this and it was very demanding to work with them. They also tried to push other promotional offers we had no interest in offering. A partnership like this would work on a long-term basis if you have high revenues and sell a lot through the deliveryservices. But there are a lot of issues related to delivery which can backfire. lf.

Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?
No

Who was your typical customer before Covid?
N/R

What type of marketing activities did you do before the crisis?
None

How many customers can you seat in the restaurant under normal circumstances?
Usually we have forty seats, but because of the two meter rule this has been reduced to fourteen. We learned that our tables are 70x70 and if we had reduced this to 60x60 it would give us the opportunity to get twenty two seats. Generally this would give us more seats which we also need during the christmas season.

Planning
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?
We did not have a proper plan in place. We had savings and started the process of applying to banks for loans as a backup as we understood that we would not get any government help as we just started. We also started a conversation with our landlord who kindly agreed to reduce our rent with 50% for three months in the beginning of the pandemic to help out. We also spoke to NAV as we were working but did not give ourselves any pay. We also cut employee costs and worked as much as we could ourselves. We also did what we could to make the surroundings inviting, offered coffee and lunch offers. By doing this the restaurant filled up

Adaptability skills
Learning

No plan

Change in product offering

until October even though the christmas party reservations were lost.

Marketing
We have made an effort to speak to our customers and studied the development. This has given us a good overview of what we sell and what needs to change. This is mostly done through personal interaction. Location is optimal and the other restaurants in immediate closeness do not function as competitors.

Local management
Quick decision making

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
Only two people in the management, myself and my wife, so we make all decisions and take these as we go on.

Quick decision making

Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally?
We make all decisions related to the financial together. I read and talk to customers, while she has a better overview of the financial. I have a tendency of reacting quickly, while she does not make decisions in panic mode. If we don't agree we take some time to think about the matter. After many years in the industry we have learned that quick decisions are not necessarily the ones that lead to the best result.

Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained?

Activities after march 12th.
Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?

Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?

Delivery services

Campaigns/promotional offers

Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities?

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy?
We have a website, but not our own delivery service or ordering system through this. We are also

present on social media, but this is not used regularly as a part of our strategy. We rely more on word of mouth.

How did you work in order to stay visible with everyone staying at home?
As mentioned we have our website, but our idea is that people will come to us as they are curious. If they like what we offer they will come back. We do not use paid ads and have not have the opportunity to do this. But we would like to improve our website and pay attention to how others have structured there to get inspiration. Digital tools is definitely something we want to look into, but as of today it is not a prioritization. Got a review posted in VG which has had a positive effect making revenues increase again. This reminded old customers that we are still here and encouraged them to come back. We have also been contacted by Aftenposten who wants to do a review closer to summertime so we hope this will have the same positive effect.

Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?
As we understood that this situation was going to last we started selling home made pizza bases during the summer and knew that we would benefit from our allergy friendly offer. During the summer we also tried out an offer on beer where we would lower the prices during the day. This had an initial effect, but then we started struggling to get enough guests who wanted to eat dinner. Most of them were just there for the cheap beer. This is something we learned from and would not do again. We also work constantly on finding the right price points to meet all the segments nearby. As a neighbourhood restaurant this is very important so even though lots of the customers in the area are upper middle class, the restaurant should also feel like a place to visit for students and retired neighbours.

Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government?
No

Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient?
No, I think the measures have benefited the large corporations and not the small and medium size firms in the industry.

Press coverage

Change in product offering

Campaigns/promotional offers

Learning
Campaigns/promotional offers

Change in product offering

Corporate social responsibility

What would you say have been the most effective measure?
We quickly saw the way to go was takeaway and use that. A lot of others used promotional offers, but this was not for us and it only has a short-term effect. We would walk around with antiback and offer it to the customers, and as a part of our customer group are older this helped them feel safer when they came to eat as it's easy to forget if it's only placed by the entrance.
We also work with suppliers of high quality, chose to stick to them even though they can be a bit more expensive. However, we go out and purchase some items ourselves to cut costs.

What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?

Learning

Current situation
How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?
From the beginning we had a vegan student segment, but over the past months these have been lost as they don't have the means to eat out.

Delivery services

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well?

We could have worked more on our website in the beginning, but other media are not as relevant for us. We had to stay open as we only started this restaurant this year and did not receive compensation. I am sure there are things we could have done better, especially in terms of negotiating deals with Foodora and Wolt, but there are positive and negative sides to this. Heim is an example of a firm who renegotiated these deals to make sure the restaurant is left with the largest profit. However, as the situation is right now very little is profitable, you just need to keep your costs low.

Future prospects
Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?

Learning

How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?	
I believe it will be though now up until the summer, but after the summer hopefully we will all be vaccinated. I do not expect another major lockdown of society, but we need to use this summer well and continue to keep costs low. The restaurant industry will get back on it's feet, but I am sure that a lot of smaller restaurants will go bankrupt. It might take some time before people get their purchasing power back, and <mark>we will continue to keep our costs low and work on our prices.</mark>	
Firm B	
Background **Hvor lenge har dere vært i drift? How long have you been operational?** Since 1857 **How many employees do you have?** Around 30 employees working full time. **Do you have a separate marketing department?** No **How was the company's economic situation before covid-19?** Very good, we had a high and increasing turnover. **Did you have home delivery services before covid hit?** **foodora** **wolt** <mark>No</mark> **Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?** We had no home delivery, but we <mark>cooperated with hotels, hotel receptions, Visit Oslo, big meetings, Oslo meeting, Oslo guide central etc.</mark> **Who was your typical customer before Covid?** We can divide our customer segments into 3 or 4 different groups. The public sector like for example the parliament that is located close by, comes in when they have large meetings and dinners. The public comes in when they are celebrating jubilees(?) and birthdays.	<mark>Delivery services</mark> <mark>Collaborated with other institutions</mark>

In the summer, we have a lot of tourists as Engebret is the oldest restaurant in Oslo and we are visible in books, online, in city guides etc.

During christmas, we have around 33000 guests for christmas parties, and we are already fully booked this year.

We have a very broad customer base and this is a conscious choice as we dont want to put all our eggs in one basket if something similar to for example the finance crisis, SARS etc happens again. Crisis comes all the time, so it is important to reach a broad customer base and be prepared for that the market could turn around fast.

What type of marketing activities did you do before the crisis?
We do very little marketing, this is something we want to become better at.

How many customers can you seat in the restaurant under normal circumstances?
On a normal day during the summer, we could seat 240 guests inside, and 100 guests outside. In november/December we had table settings in three seatings with 240 seatings per round, and we had 70-100 guests for lunch every day.

We were open during this summer with ca 54% of seatings left. We have a large restaurant with more rooms, so we have the opportunity to spread out the seatings. However, this is a large reduction of seatings.

Planning
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?
Yes, we had a plan in place based on previous experiences. This plan had to be adapted along the way and we had to comply by government regulations.

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
Several of the decisions were made for us by the government, so there was not a lot we could do ourselves. We had to close in a sensible way and focus on minimizing costs and warehouse. We bought very low quantities before the government forced us to close in order to be prepared for anything to happen. We reduced the costs that could

Pandemic plan

Adaptability skills

Pandemic plan

Staying before the curve

be immediately reduced, like turning off the ventilator and stacking up inventory. It was an extremely uncertain situation as we did not know when we could open back up. It was little we could do, we could only listen to the government and do what they told us to do.

Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally?
We are two owners who own 100% and we therefore have the opportunity to make quick decisions. We talked with and informed the management and they informed the rest of the employees. Everyone was always kept updated on new information, as we found that it is very important for everyone within the company to always have the same information in order to avoid misunderstandings. When opening back up, de decided to focus on seniority when deciding which employees were going to come back to work.

Quick decision making

Local management
Clear internal and external communication

Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained?
It is important to keep it in the back of your mind. Even if your business is going well, it is important to remember that unforeseen events can happen and when it happens you need to be prepared. We have long experience and know that unexpected things can happen. Even though the last 10 years have been good, we need to keep the financial crisis and SARS in the back of our mind and have a plan. It is not certain that the plan will work, but it is important to have a plan in place, and pay attention to the changes.

Change in planning related to black swans

Pandemic plan

Activities after march 12th.
Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?

Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?

Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities?

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy?

We use facebook and instagram to reach customer and to inform them. We do not use advertising. We have been here for such a long time that we feel we don't need advertising.
On social media we have shown for example that we had a movie recording and concerts to show that we are ready to open up when the government lets us.

We have used more information about our collaborations and the partners we collaborate with. Every year we invite the receptionists for dinner and see a great positive effect from this. We sell more of an experience with art on the walls, the artist Munch have his own table here, our piano is previously owned by Grieg. Some guests feel that they are in a museum, and we also have strong christmas traditions. So when it comes to advertising, we let the customers advertise for us and by providing us with positive WOM they become a type of ambassador for us. This leads to an increase in customers.

We have been contacted by influencers who want to eat here and publish it on social media, but we have declined these offers.

We are also one of the only restaurants in norway that have been on international TV, as we have been broadcasted on several travel shows in Japan, Korea, Canada, USA, Denmark and Sweden. This is good for us long term as it is reliable communication. The customers have a valid reason for going as they want to experience the culture. We have worked a lot on building a profile, and people believe what they see. We are many the least minimalistic restaurant in Oslo.

During the summer, did you have any changes in your offerings? Price reductions or promotions?
We did not need to have the menu in english as we did not have tourists. We adapted the menu by having more small dishes so we could have a larger variety of dishes. This way the customers could eat more varied, and to a lower price.

We have a large amount of loyal customers who want to support us. This shows how important it is to take care and value your guests while you have them in your restaurant. It is also important to have a good booking system where you answer all

Collaboration with other institutions	
Press coverage	
Change in product offering	
Campaigns/promotional offers	
Clear internal and external communication	

customers. A lot of the customers have built relationships with the employees, and the employees also contribute to building new relationships. We also have to remember the generation that is up and coming now. Most of our loyal customers now are people who are 40+, who knows what they want - traditional norwegian dishes. This is thei "reason of going". So our main goal is for people to know our concept and food selection when they are choosing restaurant. When they visit us they will always know what they get. **Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?** We thought about it for a while, but it was difficult to implement so we decided to drop the idea. It was difficult to know if it would become a success or not as norwegians are not used to this kind of offering. It could also be hurtful for the customer relationship if the customer picks up the food late, the food will be less appealing. Some companies have done this and become very good at it, while other companies have become good at serving food without alcohol. The sales of alcohol is 45% of the yearly turnover, so its a big part. We are located in a business area (kvadraturen) with few apartments located nearby, so we are not top of mind when it comes to purchasing food without alcohol or purchase takeaway. **Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government?** Yes, we received financial support from the government, it covered around 60% of our fixed costs. So we have had an economic loss, but it is better than no compensation. **Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient?** **What would you say has been the most effective measure from your side?** **What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?** It is difficult to say. We had to try out our opportunities. We tried to have the outdoor restaurant open to increase the sales of alcohol. But	Change in product offering

when we had guests they had to sit two meters apart, which made it hard to actually make money as the guests take up a larger part of the restaurant. For example, 16 guests at one table take up space that normally would have seated 60 guests. We had for example the american army and the prime minister for lunch.

Current situation
How is your situation today?
- As of now we are not allowed to sell alcohol, and the restaurants in Oslo are now allowed to keep open.

What has been the effect of not being allowed to sell alcohol? Do fewer people go out to eat when they can not purchase alcohol?

How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well?
I feel that we were pretty well prepared. We saw it coming quite early and thought that this could become a tough period. We started to cut down in inventory and the purchasing of food and beverages. We did not know how fast it would hit us, but we knew it would not be a normal summer. We only bought what we needed, and always cut down in order to decrease the inventory. On the 9th of march we had a full restaurant, on the 10th of march we had ¾ full restaurant and on the 12th of march we only had three guests. So it all went really fast.

We also have to think about our suppliers. We had to contact them because we wanted the relationship to last also after the pandemic. We had to call and tell them how the situation was, and agree that we were all in the same situation, but that we were all good to go when the crisis ended. The suppliers was very flexible and we were able to come to an agreement.
In regard to our customers, we handled it pretty well. We contacted every customer who had a booking (30 000 customers), and explained the situation. We also answered all mails from customers, and most customers moved their

Margin annotations:
Pandemic plan
Staying "before the curve"

Clear internal and external communication

bookings. This took a lot of time, but it was well worth the time and the money invested as we were able to keep the relationship with the customer.
It is important for us that the suppliers, customers and employees have the same information. We have seen a difference between the new restaurants in the business, and the older restaurants. The new restaurants don't always see the value of these relationships. However, there are a lot of people (customers) who don't pay attention to the covid-19 restrictions and it is therefore important that the restaurant take time to answer the phone or email and inform by explaining the situation. It is important with personal relationships, as the customer should feel that they are visiting an authentic restaurant and not a large group.

Future prospects
Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?
What we are already doing has worked well for us as the turnover has increased every year. But it is important to always evaluate and think about what we are doing and become more professional, learn to always become better at SoMe or get help in order to reach a larger potential customer base, especially towards the international market and different webpages. We have considered getting more insight into where customers gather their information about oslo. There are a lot of smaller travel pages out there, and not just consider google.

How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?
We have had money saved up so we have handled the pandemic well, and we expect to be back in business when we are allowed to open up. We believe the norwegian market to come back to normal quite fast, but the international market may take a bit longer. For us, the tourists and conferences are an important source of income from may to june, but we expect this to take some time before it is back to normal. No countries in Europe have had conferences during the pandemic, so we are aware that it will be an increased competition. Oslo need to have more to offer in order to stand out from the competition and for the guests to see that it is worth to pay a bit more to come here, also the government should look for opportunities to increase the financial support. This will become a

Learning

Changes made to future market activities

Learning

discussion, as it is difficult for the hotels to do this alone, especially in the competition for the larger conferences.	
We have learned that it is important to take action fast and always reconsider the decisions, not just hope that things will turn out the way you wish. You need to think about how the situation can develop and do what you can to be prepared.	
We survived the spanish flu and will survive this as well.	
Firm C	
Background **How long have you been operational?** 28 years **How many employees do you have?** 10 full time employees, several students and part time employees. We have 3 employees at the restaurant every day in addition to myself and cleaning. **Do you have a seperate marketing department?** No **How was the company's economic situation before covid-19?** The economic situation was good, the restaurant was always full. When it closed everything went downwards fast, but we have always been had positive economy. **Did you have home delivery services before covid hit?** We had a cooperation with Foodora but it was mostly for the marketing benefit. **Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?** No, only Foodora **How has the collaboration with Foodora been?** Its been OK, but they take a large part of the profit and we need to push them in order to make a better deal. We would not use them if it was not totally necessary for us. When we are back in full business we will end the collaboration. However, right now we dont have the money to pay for an employee to	Delivery services Delivery services Learning

drive, therefore we will not hire someone internally to do this now.

Who was your typical customer before Covid?
We had a large customer base. We are a small family owned company, and our main customer was between 30-60 years - families, but not a lot of students and young adults.

What type of marketing activities did you do before the crisis?
A little facebook and instagram.
The employees take pictures and post on social media and communicate with the customer through facebook and instagram. We also had a press coverage in the newspaper now during corona where we saw an effect during the two first weeks. We have not spent money on advertising. WOM is important for us.

Campaigns/promotional offers

Press coverage

How many customers can you seat in the restaurant under normal circumstances?
30-35 customers, but during the pandemic we could only have half of this in the restaurant. During the last round we could stay open we could only have tables that fit 5 and 2 people, and some tables with 12 to 4 guests.

Adaptability skills

Planning
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?
We were very surprised by the situation, we had meetings and started to work from that. We were totally unprepared for the situation and the consequences.

No plan

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
We kept open a few days, made rules and spent time on that. But I ended up in quarantine and we panicked a bit after that and closed the restaurant for two weeks. Then we had one week of lay offs and rules and one week of redecorating the restaurant. We started with take away and tried to lift the mood by planting flowers etc, keep the restaurant open and keep the students in work. We did positive things, looked for new solutions and did not have to close again after this.

Local management
Quick decision making

Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally?
I make the decisions myself so they are made quickly. The employees have been informed about the process and that this is how we have to work now. Some employees needed to quit because they needed more flexibility.

Clear internal and external communication
Adaptability skills

Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained?
If I though we would be in business for several years ahead I would definitely develop a similar plan. But right now the main task is to go from being in a deficit to profit, so if something similar like this happens again we will close the restaurant and stop the business. It is an extremely demanding situation where there are always crises, diseases and things happen all the time. It is a tough world to work in.

Change in planning related to black swans

Activities after march 12th.
Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?
No other immediate actions than the ones already mentioned. We are small and old fashioned, but we did think about deliver the food ourselves, but because of the size of the company we have limited capacity. There are not a lot of new things we can do as there are not a lot of people on the street. It is the neighbours that come and buy takeaway from us.

Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?

Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities?
Did not have a marketing budget.

Change in product offering

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy?
Answered in the start.
How did you work in order to stay visible with everyone staying at home?
SoMe, flowers outside in order to look open.
Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?

No

Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government?
Yes, we received the small amount of support we were able to in march and april last year.

Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient?
Not really, we did not need to lay off many employees compared to other companies in the industry, but when the government decide to shut us down and force us to pay salaries for 10 days, the measures were not sufficient. A lot of money disappeared in house rent, salaries. The salaries were the main cost.

Press coverage

Campaigns/promotional offers

What would you say has been the most effective measure?
Being published in the newspaper was very efficient for us, as it was published at a good time as all restaurants were open. We find it hard to measure the effect of paid advertising and we think that we reach the same people as we already do. We saw a great effect of decorating the entrance with flowers. We have tried to publish a bit on social media, trying to get people to support the business. However, it is the alcohol sale that contribute to profit, but when we could have open but not sell alcohol the customers disappeared.

What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?
Can't think of anything.

Current situation

How is your situation today?
Trying to take the restaurant from a deficit to profit.

How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?
Maybe a bit older segment started to come, a lot of families came because they were in the same cohort. Smaller groups started to come. Feel like the customers have used this as an excuse to get outside and meet friends, it is a special vibe in the air since people are so greatful to get outside.

Change in product offering

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well? We were one of the first to open back up again, but larger restaurants have more opportunities. We have been spoiled by having loyal customers that comes back without us having to invest in marketing activities. Other companies have made kits customers can take home. A lot of restaurants have also started home delivery. People are becoming less motivated due to the uncertainty. **Future prospects** **Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?** I think we are very traditional and know our limitations when it comes to marketing capabilities, so I need someone else to do the marketing and communication. I think there are many restaurants that need to put more effort into social media and use influencer marketing to attract the younger segments. **How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?** When the city reopens we will be back in business immediatly. The effect of a reopening will last a long time. By being able to keep the restaurant open we have been able to keep our customers, and also us being here for several years have helped us through the crisis as we benefit from the customer knowing our company. It would be less expensive to just close now, but we want to keep open. It is important to keep customers and employees informed.	Changes made to future market activities Clear internal and external communication
Firm D	
Background **How long have you been operational?** We are two owners with a background from the restaurant industry. Earlier we have managed companies with around 70-120 employees. In October 2018 we took over Tiffanys. We wanted to create a concept offering burgers and have later included bowls, all takeaway friendly, it feels fresh and is something different. We've also made sure that we have vegan and plant based alternatives and have a feminin concept.	Local management

How many employees do you have? Four working in the kitchen and three full time servers as well as two people in the management. **Do you have a seperate marketing department?** We have a friend who is helping us out with social media and postings, but other than that we do everything ourselves.	Campaigns/promotional offers
How was the company's economic situation before covid-19? We had a very tough year due to many reasons when we first opened up, and to be fair we thought it was going to be easier. The concept was to keep this a casual and inviting place with a price point that makes it possible to get the same customers to come back several times a week. In May of 2020 we introduced the bowls as a part of our concept and this was a great success. We started selling as many bowls as burgers.	Change in product offering
Hadde dere hjemlevering før covid-19? **Did you offer home delivery before covid-19 or had any collaborations?** • foodora • wolt We had our own ordering system through the app "we order" in place before covis with around 3-4000 users when covid hit. Now we have around 10 000 users and we waited to introduce delivery until October 2020. We wanted to wait until we had nailed the packaging to ensure that the quality was at our standard before we started collaborating with Foodora and Wolt.	Delivery services
Who was your typical customer before Covid? As a neighbourhood restaurant we rely on people living in the area. Our typical customer lives close by, orders takeaway and this especially goes for the ones who order our burgers. We've become a place for people to meet and we have been conscious in terms of pricing as we know that about 40% of the people who live here are younger than 30 years old.	Campaigns/promotional offers
How many customers can you seat in your restaurant under normal circumstances? Inside we have a mix of seating options depending on the occasion but it's about 60-70 seats and outside we have a capacity of 100.	

Planning **Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?** We did not, but we got a lot sorted quickly. We were in the process of introducing a new partner who started just a month before covid hit. He also later backed out as the workload became to much. We (the two owners) have chosen to work a lot ourselves and furlough staff to cut costs. By doing this we made a profit in April and have been doing well since.	No plan
How did you manage the need to make quick decisions? As there is only two of us in management this is easy for us.	Quick decision making Clear management structure
Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally?	
Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained? Yes, we are already working on signing deals so that we can open up more locations and we see a change in leasing agreements with the introduction of a pandemic clause. We run our business on a week to week basis which makes sure that we have hands on information as we go.	Change in planning related to black swans Learning
Activities after march 12th. **Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?** We quickly got started and really got hands on to make the most out of the situation. However, we did have some challenging days because of the uncertainty, the uncertainty is the worst part.	Quick decision making
Have you started collaborating with anyone to offer home delivery?	
Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?	
Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities?	

What kind of market activities would you normally do? We have made small changes in our own takeaway and worked a lot with Wolt in terms of campaigns. We've also done some of this with foodora lately. We also tried to work on our digital marketing, but what stood out to us that there is little flexibility in people's mobility. We notice that the same customers come back weekly, which gives us a steady income.	Change in product offering Campaigns/promotional offers
In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy?	Campaigns/promotional offers
How did you work in order to stay visible with everyone staying at home? We've made sure to stay visible and used social media.	
Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?	
Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government? Applied during the first round in April and got our application granted. We've also benefited from the automatic payment system based om turnover.	
Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient? We have not had the need for more support, but feel that the financial support has been handed out a bit strangely as others who would have needed the support more than us has received nothing. The most annoying thing has been how they have regulated the rules related to furloughs and the obligation to pay our employees, this duty is extended from the businesses even though they are forced to close down. I find this a bit strange.	Learning
What would you say has been the most effective measure? We have been good at adjusting to the market and our customers' needs. 1. We made a strategic decision to make sure we did not rely on a single customer segment, we chose the neighbourhood profile with the right mix of menu and pricing and our takeaway friendly menu really benefitted.	

2. We decided to face the challenge head on from the beginning even though we did not know what to expect. We've also seen how loyal our customers are.

What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?
The market share of third party actors have gained a lot of power and are definitely the ones who get the highest profil. There is a clear message that they only want more customers and a larger platform. How the situation has been handled towards restaurants should have been more regulated.

How much have you had to reduce the seating capacity in the restaurant?
We were lucky and did not have to reduce this a lot due to the layout of the restaurant, only 10-12 seats had to be removed.

Current situation

What do you consider the effect of the liquor ban to be? Do you think less people go out to eat when they cannot drink alcohol with their meal?
Strictly financial a very important part has disappeared. Customers feel less safe as their customer journey changes and for the ones working days can feel long as there are less customers. Hard for the consumers to make the decision if they should go out to eat or not.

How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?
People have spent more time discovering Oslo so we've increased the customer base by people going on a weekend getaway or just on a walk to explore a new area. We have received a lot of good feedback on google and have a high rating at Foodora. Especially during the summer it was noticeable that we had a lot of new customers.

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well?
We should have focused more on our own sales channels rather than using suppliers and created more value in that, but at the same time we had to act quickly as the need for a delivery service was

Adaptability skills

Learning

Delivery services

Changes made to future market activities

==strong.== This is something we are looking into but I think we can change this and focus on our beer garden when we open again to bring people back. We are losing some revenues to the suppliers so we would rather have this all in-house. **Future prospects** **Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?** ==More focus on our own channels and promotions in our own app.== **How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?** In Oslo you find restaurants that are a bit outdated, we want a new neighbourhood concept but we see that there is a lot of competition out there. ==For the future we are looking at new locations and as we have done well during the pandemic we are hopeful that this will last.==	==Learning==
Restaurant groups	
Firm F	
Background We have restaurants in several places and they have all had to be dealt with differently due to different restrictions in the municipalities. This has been very challenging. **How long have you been operational?** We started up in march 2015 and established the firm during the fall of 2014. The following year we opened our Oslo restaurant at st. hanshaugen and used the next five years to open five more restaurants. We spent a year organizing the organization and implementing different systems and were ready to expand further when covid hit. **How many employees do you have?** About 140 employees, the majority of these are working part-time. We are ==seven employees working in management== and then there is about eight to nine full-time employees per location. We have 27 nationalities represented in our company so it's a very diverse environment. **Do you have a seperate marketing department?** Yes, I work full time with marketing.	==Central management==

How was the company's economic situation before covid-19?
It was good, if you look at our results you won't see this as our profits are invested into the next project but we have a high top line and are amongst the top three compared to our competitors if we look at revenue.
 	
Did you have home delivery services before covid hit?
    • foodora
    • wolt
No, we did not have any collaborations before covid. However, this was in our plans, this was just pushed forewards because of this situation. So we entered partnerships with both foodora and Wolt. Foodora takes 30% of the profit so we really want to push our own delivery options. Takeaway has really exploded in Oslo.
 	
Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?
No, this is all new.
 	
Who was your typical customer before Covid?
It is hard for us to target a concret segment. Most of our customers are around 35 years old with an even distribution of men and women. But then we also have students and elders who use us one way or another. This makes us less vulnerable as our customer base is larger.
 	
Planning
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?
No, we didn't have anything. Ten days before the shutdown we started to discuss covid in our board meeting and quickly had to make changes. We are a small organization with great power of action created by entrepreneurs.
 	
How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
From the 10th of March we had daily meetings on how we dealt with the crisis and had short processes when making decisions. The organization is owned by a couple who own 80% and everyone in the management has worked together for a long time.
	Delivery services
	
	No plan
	Staying "before the curve"
	
	Quick decision making
	
	Clear management structure
	
	Quick decision making

Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally? We made quick decisions.	Change in planning related to black swans
Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained? We have now created contingency plans to be prepared if anything similar happens in the future. Everything is also documented and will be evaluated.	
Activities after march 12th. **Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?** It was a immediate shock for us that this could happen and we were refused to operate like we do. It looked worse in the beginning than the actual situation we found us in after a while and we quickly changed our business model to suit this new way of working. The largest success for us was that we were aggressive and turned our mindset into new ways of making a profit and generating revenues with a new way of working. E.g. we did not use to offer take away, quickly implemented systems and deals with delivery services. We also created a virtual pub quiz as this is one of our most popular events and in three of the municipalities we even got a licence to deliver alcohol with the takeaway. Beer is a large part of our offer and we have 90-130 different brands, as we got the licence to sell this we got a lot of attention and reduced the amount we had to waste. As the liquor ban was lifted in may we went back to our normal licence as you cannot have both at the same time, but this was a huge success.	Adaptability skills Digital events Campaigns/promotional offers
Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?	
Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?	Press coverage
Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities? Organic activity mostly, the marketing budget has been put on hold. But we have managed to get attention in the press and a platform there to inform	

people about our concept and history. We have put some events on hold and there has been minimal activity compared to our usual.	Clear internal and external communication
In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy? We use it a lot based on campaigns. This is also something we adjust to the different markets we are present in. In Hamar and around Mjøsa we can see that Facebook is the most important, while around Oslo almost no one pays attention to our facebook posts, so we use other things there. One example is paid posts on Instagram, but this is very costly. With digital marketing we have used google display and this has worked well in Oslo. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, google display and other channels all need to have different strategies for the different markets. In order to optimize this we use agencies as we are not able to follow the quick development of all these channels ourselves. We have tried to make some content on Youtube this year to see how that performed compared to other actions. Tiktok is also becoming more interesting, as of today the users here are younger than our main segment, but more and more adults are using it. We were also some of the first to use snapchat when that entered the market.	Campaigns/promotional offers Press coverage Delivery services
Campaigns Burgerdeal, firm and photographs, christmas season is very important	
How did you work in order to stay visible with everyone staying at home? Media coverage and takeaway	
Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?	
Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government? We did apply and have received the normal compensation and have also applied for funding for new projects. Felt a bit hopeless sometimes as it would have been better financially to close and furlough employees than to stay open and keep the employees working. But for us it has mostly been okay.	Adaptability skills
Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient?	Change in product offering

What would you say has been the most effective measure?
1. extremely well managed cost control, get in resources who have solely focused on accounting and finance as well as a manager with lots of experience.
2. Been proactive with analysis and managed to react quickly.
3. Takeaway and delivery has been very important and something we did not have before that has helped generate business.
4. Implemented simple measures as reducing the menu and inventory to reduce costs. QR order system also allowed us to have one server working instead of two.

New activities have been working as a positive supplement and PR and branding has worked well.

Change in product offering

Adaptability skills

What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?
We have done well and are very happy with the way we have handled things. We have had an evaluation and believe we did the best we could with the resources available to us.

How much have you had to reduce the seating capacity in the restaurant?
30-50%.

Current situation
- As of now we are not allowed to sell alcohol, and the restaurants in Oslo are now allowed to keep open.

What has been the effect of not being allowed to sell alcohol? Do fewer people go out to eat when they can not purchase alcohol?

Change in product offering

Digital events

How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?
This has not changed.

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well?
We have solved this a lot better than many others and been more proactive. Others have done innovative things like kits, but that is easier for restaurants with a bit of a different offer in terms of

food compared to us who mainly sell burgers and fries. Some have also done some live events, but there is not a lot of money to make from that. **Future prospects** **Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?** **How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?** Think it will happen quite rapidly. As soon as the liquor ban is lifted and people feel comfortable going out to eat again we believe people will come back. We need the vaccine and more normalised seating capacity in our restaurants. When this is all in place people are predicting an insane boom and tendencies close to the roaring twenties in the event and restaurant industries. People are excited to get back to normal and are likely to be willing to spend as we open up again.	
Firm E	

Background
How long have you been operational in Norway?
We have been in Norway since spring (year) under the name (firm) Many of our restaurants and bars existed before but with other owners. We bought several companies (number) in Norway immediately. Before starting in Norway, (firm) existed in (country) since (year). Now we have (number) companies in Norway.
 	
How many employees do you have?
(number) employees
 	
Do you have a seperate marketing department?
Yes, we operate on a partner model, sentral unit but also contact persons (?) on each restaurant and bar. We have plans made centrally that they all have to follow.
 	
How was the company's economic situation before covid-19?
It was good, we had viable results, so all over it was very good.
 	
Did you have home delivery services before covid hit?
   • **foodora**
   • **wolt**
	Central management
	
	Central management
	
	Local management

Did you have any partners you collaborated with before covid-19?
Not really, but mostly because the restaurants didnt want to have it. When corona hit, this was something we thought about right away, and we considered creating our own platform or create kits etc, but ended up finding a partner that could preserve the brand and live up to the standard. We have also had collaborations within events and marketing, like for example (location). However, it opened and then closed right away, so it was a lot of work for nothing.

Collaboration with other institutions

Who was your typical customer before Covid?
It very much depends on the restaurant, but all over our customers are young professionals between the age of (number). It also depends on the day of the week. For example, our restaurant in (city) has a different customer segment that is a bit older and dines for other occasions, and a younger segment for lunch. Places like (city) og smaller places have a larger community feeling that creates a larger variety. Our restaurant at (location) for example has a younger customer base (age), so generally it is extremely spread out.

How many customers can you seat in the restaurant under normal circumstances?
N/A

Planning
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19?
Yes, kind of. For operationally purposes we always have contingency plans in place that our mother company have created. They have to answer to the stock exchange market right away. We also had a plan within marketing, but the plan was not even close to dealing with the situation we are in today. The plan was more targeted to handle if something unexpected happened at one of our restaurants, and emphasized that we needed to be "before the curve", like knowing that we have to close before the government tells us to. We have a lot of responsibility for the community and for our young segment. For example, we had a concert planned at (location) on march 11th and it was very unclear what would happen that day. Towards the end of the day the country closed. It is important to show

Pandemic plan

Staying "before the curve"

Corporate social responsibility

social responsibility and that people feel safe at our restaurants. We feel that we closed down in a proper way. We got a lot of criticism for cancelling the concert as many of the participants did not understand why we had to cancel. They all got the ticket refunded.

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
It all went really fast, we started to make decisions very fast. We sent out a letter where we warned about the shutdown. Many other places copied this text. We sent out an email to everyone at the same time, because they are listed on the stock exchange you need to deliver numbers pretty fast. We also reassured the customers by emphasizing how well the restaurant was cleaned as well in communication with them. However, the basic things were already in place as the restaurant business already is pretty regulated. Also the employees got several new routines to follow. The customers and the employees were very alert and seeked information.

Do you have the opportunity to make quick decisions and adjust to changes in the market or does this require a longer process internally?
As this is a large organization with a clear organizational structure we made decisions pretty fast.

Would you develop something similar considering the experiences you now have gained?

Activities after march 12th.
Norway shut down the 12th of March, what was your immediate reaction and thoughts about the firm's future? Did you take any immediate actions?
The reactions were very varied. A lot of people thought the first day was an overreaction. Within our company we made a risk assessment. You need to acknowledge the risk, and always think worst case scenario in order to be prepared. We were a bit annoyed at ourselves because we saw the development with covid-19 in Asia and how the virus moved, so we feel that we should have seen it coming and see it coming earlier than we actually did. We have an advantage when it comes to the business structure as every employee have set roles

Quick decision making

Clear internal and external communication

Clear management structure

Staying "before the curve"

Learning

Adaptability skills

and focus on their tasks. Smaller companies often have one person doing everything which could make these uncertain times more challenging. Having a large team gives us an advantage in regard to structure.

Did you take any immediate measures?
- **cooperations**
- **sponsors**

Have you made deals for home delivery after covid-19?

Clear internal and external communication

Did you make any changes in the allocation of resources within the company?

Has there been any changes in how you allocate resources in regard to marketing activities?

What type of marketing activities did you do before?
It was very weird when we got to open back up again in may, march and april. Very black and white information without touching any grey areas. In content writing you have to think about every word you write and how they can impact the reader, so it is important to be clear and precise. It was dull marketing we were doing at this time, but this was the whole point. After the opening in may there was not a lot to talk about, the government had provided us with a new compensation but they did not take inventory into consideration. If you then had too much inventory the risk was high as it was difficult to sell "hand to mouth". It was a lot of new things to relate to. We had to go into every bookingsystem and make changes, we had to change opening hours. And all of these little things take up a lot of time.

Change in product offering

Campaigns/promotional offers

Clear internal and external communication

Inventory and offering was a challenge, many of the places had events during the weekends with a small menu. The marketing strategy had to be changed even though it was working because we had little to talk about other than that we were open and had food. We also had a limited menu so we did not have all the offerings that the customer was used to. The customer segment between (age segment) years was more scared and did not want to go out. This was a moral problem, because were we really supposed to promote offerings towards people who

are scared of going out and which could lead to several negative consequences. So therefore we did "boring" marketing, very information based. Many companies started to make group offerings in order to create more predictability for the company. It has been a challenging year in regard to marketing.

Well established customer relationships, have this helped you?
Absolutely an advantage in regard to the partner model. We purchase from the companies that have helped to start the company and bring them with us on the journey to keep the relationship. The customer do not get a relationship with (firm) so have seen a lot of the same at the smaller restaurants and bars we have talked to. This is more of a challenge at the restaurants with fine dining as you don't visit these places as regularly as you do with a gastropub with more regular customers. A lot of the bars have a business model that needs the regular customers several times a week, while the pubs and restaurants that target (segment) work more with staying relevant. The companies think differently about regular and loyal customers.

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your strategy?

How did you work in order to stay visible with everyone staying at home?

Have you made any changes in your offerings? For example selling food kits?

Did you apply for or have you received any financial support from the government?
Yes.

Do you believe that the public measures have been sufficient?
No, last year we felt that the support was quite positive in the first round, but this was mostly because they provided the support fast, not that the specific measures was great. This is a industry with little profit, you might get 4% if your lucky. Everytime we have met a new challenge it has taken a lot of time before the government have acknowledged it. Inventory was recently included in the measure, we have been one of the largest actors in Norway to put pressure on the government. Restaurants all over Norway has been

Clear internal and external communication

hit by the crisis, but restaurants in Oslo have been hit the hardest. A lot of frustration around the "dugnad" because when norway closed again after the summer we had done everything right and redid the daily operations but you are still forced to close which this lead to a depressing vibe. If the government close the restaurants they should also provide us with a solution to the occuring problems. It feels very unfair that a solution that is not sufficient takes 4 months to be delivered to us. It has been bad communication from the government.

Corporate social responsibility

What would you say have been the most effective measure?
The decision of starting communication early have made the customers and the employees life a lot easier. Also the tone of voice is now less important than it was before. The measures have worked well together, and worked together towards a common goal. It is hard because the measures and rules change so fast. Extremely demanding to implement all the measures while we were open, as just getting employees back from redundancy is very expensive.

Adaptability skills

What has been the least effective measure implemented from your side?
It has been important for us to be viewed as responsible, but there is not really anything that stands out. It is difficult to keep people updated all the time as they might for example check the opening hours once and expect them to be the same.

Current situation
How is your situation today?
- **As of today it is not allowed to sell alcohol, and restaurants in Oslo are not allowed to keep open.**
- **what has the effect of not being able to sell alcohol been? Do you think less people go out to eat when they dont have the opportunity to purchase alcohol?**

We started to talk with (company) long before it was mandatory to have alternative paying options to minimize the human contact. However, we have met some obstacles as for example elders don't like that they can not pay cash and the companies are viewed as the bad guy while they were actually only following the rules. There might be an

Changes made to future market activities

inconsistency between the rules and what you think is logical.

How has your customer base changed after the shutdown?

Adaptability skills

If you compare your business to another in the same industry you know of, who would this be? Do you believe you were more prepared than them and is there anything they have done you wish you had implemented as well?
I can't think of anyone I feel have done very well compared to us.

Changes made to future market activities

Future prospects
Has this situation caused you to change how you conduct marketing activities?

How do you look at the future of the firm? What needs to happen in order for you to get back to where you were before the pandemic?
A lot of the same as we have already done. We need to be clear in our communication. The customer base has changed during these two years, there are for example two years of new students in the city. The customers who come back have money, and I believe the summer will be good as people can not travel abroad. I think we will either make the most money during the summer or during the Christmas season. If there is still the 1m rule you will still lose ca 2 months with sun and the spring and summer season. Consumer behavior have also changed because I believe less people will go out on Fridays and saturdays as they have experienced the economic benefit of not going out, and this will impact the business. Going out can become more occasion based, as you wish to gather people. In regard to marketing, it is important to convince one person to come to your place and they will bring 10 friends as most people don't have a very strong opinion of where to go as human contact is more important (10 pers rule). When the rules will allow 50-100 people, this only benefits the larger companies and events. My guess is that the customers will come back fast.

We had to lay off (permittere) all except for one employee in November and most of them are still not back to work. I think we will see a lack of competence due to the lay offs, as people think they

need to find something new in order to have an income.	
Universities - planning and safety	**Coding**
Firm J	
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19? No, we did not have a plan but we did have a emergency action group. In this group we've had regular meetings where we discuss different cases and action cards to be used in different situations. However, it is very different to discuss a hypothetical scenario than actually finding yourself in a situation like this. We had to really work hard after we got the first signals that the corona virus would affect us after the winter break. We had employees that had been in Austria to ski and told them to not come into the office. As vi did not have a pandemic plan ready we had to write new guidelines for the situation and these were written in half a day before being presented and approved by the top management. The first set of guidelines were ready to go on 28th of February and the school closed on 12th of March. One of the situations we found ourselves in was that we had students abroad and had to decide how to act in regard to them. We started with weekly meetings within the emergency action group and worked our way through the different situations. We also met every time the government presented new regulations in regards to how they would affect us. From being insecure when it comes to how to handle a situation like this we have discussed a lot and know better now whats important and requires our attention. We also consider what we are communicating and what platforms to use in order to get info out to employees and students the best way possible. **Did you have systems in place before the crisis related to homeschool and online teaching?** We have a cultural advantage as we are an old "letter school". We already had a mentality of getting things sorted and facing challenges head on in our culture. We managed to switch from one day to another and made sure employees got crash courses in how to use the digital tools we implemented and checked their broadband. We also decided to cover costs of broadband for our employees up until a certain price every month as	No plan Pandemic plan Action cards Staying "before the curve" Emergency action group Clear internal and external communication Adaptability skills

we knew that there would be a lot working from home moving forward. We also purchased equipment to improve quality and do what we could to make the situation better. In some of our meeting rooms we also facilitated hybrid meetings. **How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?** **How do you imagine that you will work with crisis management and planning related to this in the future?** Now that we have had a live test that shows how important and in the times this is we will definitely continue to improve. We will keep our meetings where we discuss different scenarios and expand and revise our action cards. This way we can look at the current plan, evaluate if they are good enough and identify if there are any issues we need to revisit. It will be easier to make decisions now that we have this experience and it has done something to our mindset. Communication towards students: There was a lot of uncertainty which made it difficult to communicate a steady plan. We did the best we could with the information we had available and had to adjust to follow government regulations and advise from FHI at all times. We also offer courses within art and health that requires face to face interactions and treatment of patients. To make sure they have been able to progress with their studies we have constantly dealt with applications for permission to break the distance rules. **Measures on campus:** Use of security, markings on chairs, the floor etc., watch how people move, make sure they are using masks etc.	Learning Change in planning related to black swans Clear internal and external communication
Firm H	
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19? We had a pandemic plan based on the swine flu, but it is important to mention that we worked according to national principles. Responsibility, closeness and to not change the organisation, e.g. it should be recognizable in a crisis. We have an emergency action organization with three levels, the strategic,	Pandemic plan Corporate social responsibility

operational and the tactical level where we find the faculties.

We have created different themes of action cards on how situations should be handled.

Covid-19:
We quickly started to plan how to deal with this situation. It became evident early on that the pandemic plan we had was not going to be sufficient as this was planned more related to large number of employees and students getting sick in a more normal situation. The emergency action group got the go ahead to start working on a new plan. In the beginning it was very challenging to deal with the development of government regulations. By looking at communities around, the situation in Ås and by collaborating with the municipality we managed to stay ahead of the curve. Our decisions were suitable for new regulations.
In terms of communication it was hard to communicate both external and internal info. We have a communication department within the emergency action group and also brought in student leaders. We had meetings everyday as new information became available and had to interpret this. A Lot of people had different needs, we had planed on implementing teams and Zoom throughout 2020, but this was cut down to a 14 day implementation period. which ended up with a good result.

We started working well ahead of 12th of March and in January we introduced strict travel restrictions and had regular meetings regarding corona to evaluate our strategies. We decided to shut down or campus on the 11th of march, the day before the national lockdown. People were added to the emergency action group as we saw a need for it and two people from each important department were included so that there would always be one present with that competency in case one got sick or could not join. In the beginning we had two meetings per day. We were also contacted by the government to see if we had any protective equipment, students that could act as backup health personnel and if our clinic could be used.

We had not planned on this to last as long as it has and have been constantly making risk evaluations regarding what we can allow and not. We also do

Clear management structure	
Action cards	
Quick decision making	
Change in planning related to black swans	
Collaboration with other institutions	
Collaboration with municipalities	
Stay "before the curve"	
Clear internal and external communication	
Staying "before the curve"	
Interdisciplinary teams	
Corporate social responsibility	

not have the option to shut down all operations as we have some research in labs that need someone to be present 24/7 as well as animals and plants on campus that need attending to.

On campus we have had QR codes to register presence, this has been voluntary, but we are considering making it mandatory.

If yes, did this plan change along the way? Has it been effective or have you moved away from it completely?

Did you have systems in place before the crisis related to homeschool and online teaching?
Our plan was to implement this as a part of our digital strategy throughout 2020. We had the systems, but they had not been tested on a large scale like it has been utilized now. We have streamed a bit in the past so we had some experience with this. We also faced challenges regarding privacy concerns related to the use of Zoom that we had to consider.

Emergency action group

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?
By the use of our emergency action group.

Emergency action group
Quick decision making
Learning

How do you imagine that you will work with crisis management and planning related to this in the future?
Last fall we felt like we had control over the situation and that we were back to business as normal. We noticed that the emergency action group made quick decisions that normally would have gone through several instances. At one point we saw that this was "taken advantage of" and people would bring up issues that should be dealt with at a tactical level within the faculty. When this was noticed we managed to make sure that these cases were dealt with at the correct level to not waste time for the emergency action group.
We expected to have higher infection rates than we've had. We have not had any major breakouts. We have also had emergency drills to prepare our employees for different situations and try the action cards. If something has not worked we have changed this so that they are improved in the case of a real emergency.

What measures have you implemented on campus to ensure that the rules are followed? Our campus has been closed to a long time now and we are just getting ready to open back up (end of March 2020). We have marked areas to ensure social distancing and created an infection control course all students and staff need to take before they come back to campus. We also have dispensers with antiback placed around the campus and make sure it's easy to follow the rules. We will now also have students tested and masks will be mandatory. During the pandemic we have allowed small events where they have been allowed to borrow our facilities to stream or film for digital events and the student union has been present to preserve a good mental health among students **What have you learned?** We have been reassured that we have done well with our emergency drills, but we will continue to practice even more. We have also learned a lot related to the importance of communication and being clear, we now know better when we are making ourselves understood and students have less questions after receiving information. We have also learned that not everything needs to be in person, online meetings have been very efficient. But then we also miss the personal interaction and the social part of that. Our newsletters have been very important and even though there is little new information we have sent it out with reminders of social distancing, hand wash etc. to show that we are still present. There is also the challenge related to privacy concerns, who is supposed to know who is infected and not, what to do about it and so on. Other than that we have had meetings with other universities and the ones in charge of these measures. That way we have been able to share information and help each other come up with the best way to deal with this.	Digital events Learning Collaboration with other institutions Collaboration with municipalities
Firm G	
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19? Yes, we had a contingency plan and a pandemic plan as a part of it. But we have now seen that none	Pandemic plan

of the plans were developed enough to handle this specific pandemic as we could not predict the extensive consequences like a shut down. Our pandemic plan consisted more of leave of absence in regard to deceases, like what we would do if 25% of the employees were sick etc. While what we actually have dealt with now is how to teach online, home office solutions, digital solutions etc.

How has this plan changed along the way?
Crisis management have been reviewed as a whole through the pandemic. The structure of this crisis management is: strategic leader, the plan is long term, we have people working operationally and centrally, as well as employees from the different faculties. What we have done very well here is that we have had a good cooperation between the different departments and we have gotten a good insight into how we can do further when the next crisis happens. It could be IT-shut down, bomb threats etc.

Did this plan change along the way? Has it been effective or have you moved away from it completely?

Did you have systems in place before the crisis related to homeschool and online teaching?
Just like many others we had to quickly find solutions and systems for online teaching and home school. In some subjects we had already used digital solutions as some students could not be there physically. But we did not have an overall plan for the implementation of these systems. It was difficult to predict this pandemic happening and the consequences of it before it actually happened, so we did not have the infrastructure in place. However, we were able to adapt pretty quickly and started using Zoom and Teams. It has not been easy for everyone in regard to digital competence etc.

On an operational level we have been trained at gathering for the first meeting for example during a crisis. On a local level we have not been able to have the same amount of training. It took a while from Covid-19 reached Norway and until we had the first case of infection on campus, but we needed to be prepared. We have a number the students can call, good routines and training in advance. This was very useful when the first case of covid happened on campus. The local level had to deal

	Clear management structure
	Central management
	Local management
	Interdisciplinary teams
	Quick decision making
	Adaptability skills
	Learning

with the case and the communication, with the support of central level. We have discovered that it is useful that the Dean/course responsible that knows the students handle the communication with the students if we have an covid outbreak. The students get worried, and with a lot of uncertainty it helps if the communication is done by a person they trust.

The Operational emergency team is an interdisciplinary (tverrfaglig) team with for example the director, HR director, communications director, director of construction and administration, with local adaptations.

How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?

In the beginning of the pandemic the handling of the situation was very centralised and all decisions were made in the department of operational emergency management (operasjonell beredskapsledelse). However, we quickly realised that it would be cumbersome for this group to make all decisions in a fast manner in a fastly changing environment, therefore we implemented an emergency management on each faculty, and these groups have gradually gotten more and more responsibility which have been very positive in regard to making quick decisions with the support of the operational emergency management team.

What measures have you implemented on campus to ensure that the rules are followed?

We have worked structured from the start and want the students to have access to campus. One of our strategies was to follow the set plans, but also follow the guidelines of national and local authorities. We focused mostly on things like information, information about keeping distance and hygiene. We are also looking into the use of facemask which can decrease the infection rates. Also there have been practical issues in regard to teaching and student work that have to be done at school. We can't just stop these activities and need to work with solutions that make it possible for the students to get the classes they need to graduate. We make decisions based off of risk analyses. But the most important part is the work we do with getting out information and the cooperation with other actors like (City name) municipality and the health department.

Interdisciplinary teams

Central management

Local management

Collaboration with municipalities

Learning

How do you think you will work with crisis management in the future? We will evaluate our performance and how we have divided responsibility within the organization. We will also work with what we have learned from this situation. We will work with crisis management systematically and divide between training and training on different situations. We will also continue to have regularly training and create a new structure for how to divide responsibility within the organization. Crisis should be managed at the lowest level, so preferably at faculty level.	
Firm I	
Did you have a contingency plan in place considering how to act if you got into a situation with a lot of uncertainty like covid-19? We made a pandemic plan after the swine flu some years ago. However, this has not been used and needed an update. We also have emergency planning that became relevant to use in this situation. **If yes, did this plan change along the way? Has it been effective or have you moved away from it completely?** We quickly did a concret update of our pandemic plan early on. Quickly got a new revised document. We are a large organization with around 4000 employees and 17000 students across four main campuses where the one in Tromsø is the largest. The organization is made up by the management, faculties, institutions etc. The faculties are spread out geographically in Harstad, Alts, Tromsø and Narvik. We have a emergency action group for the institution as a whole and local emergency action groups at the different faculties. What we noticed was that a lot of the decisions made were important for the whole institution, based on this we increased the group and included the dean from the different faculties. We've had a lot of meetings and involved the whole organization. When we started the fall semester we saw that there that there was an increase in single cases that only affected one faculty or a single group of students, in these cases the local emergency action group would deal with the situation. All in all I would say we've had a very active and comprehensive collaboration throughout the organization.	Pandemic plan Adaptability skills Central management Local management Central management

	Interdisciplinary teams
Do you have interdisciplinary teams? Yes **Did you have systems in place before the crisis related to homeschool and online teaching?** We were lucky to have implemented microsoft's solutions like teams and skybased solutions that made it easier to work from home as we had access to everything. We had also changed from stationary computers to laptops that make it easier and possible to work from any location. In terms of lecturing it has been very challenging and this has been a serious situation for the institutions. Most of our lecturing is based on physical presence and we have courses who require lab work, feld work etc. where one has to be present. The largest amount of work went into digital learning where we really had to put in an effort in March 2020. In many ways we have been successful and we have been able to operate close to normal and all the teaching has worked through digital tools. We've also put in a lot of effort when it comes to training the lecturers on how to use these tools. We do however not believe that this is the way to go in the future, but will use it to some extent. We see the negative effect as students lose the interaction they have in a classroom and the dynamic within student groups is different. It's also harder for students to be active and participate in class when it is digital with a lot of other students present. Our main concern is our students and we want the best for them. We have made it mandatory to turn cameras on during lectures to have some sort of interaction. **How did you manage the need to make quick decisions?** I would say it was effective to gather all the participants in a meeting and also bring in student reps. It quickly became quite a large group with all instances represented, but this way we made quick decisions and when decisions were made actions were made swiftly. We also sped up the process of informing people by doing it this way. **What measures have you implemented on campus to ensure that the rules are followed?** We have done several things. We have a website that is used by all campuses where we communicate	Adaptability skills Learning Quick decision making Clear internal and external communication Adaptability skills

all important information and info about the current situation. We have also markings around the university about where to sit, distance reminders and have removed tables and chairs. Infection control equipment is placed around the school and we use security to ensure that rules are followed on campus. We have also identified important areas, e.g. tight spaces where people move in and out like from a lecture hall. We know how important the library is for the students so we have prioritized to keep this open, but with clear and strict rules in place to follow regulations. We have placed great emphasis on the campus being used by students.

How do you imagine that you will work with crisis management and planning related to this in the future?

The basis of planning is risk analysis. We have had good experiences and even though we have not done the evaluation yet, I would think that there are some positive findings. We have managed to handle the situation well, and our overall operations or the offering to our students have not been affected in a way that interferes with their study progress. We have avoided negative incidents such as the spread of infection on campus and can not link outbreaks among students to the university.

As employees we've also become more comfortable working with people across the organization and we know how we should put together an emergency action group. As we are located in northern Norway where the regulations have been less strict than further south and we've had less cases we know that we've not been in the toughest situation compared to others.

Drills with staff

In an early phase we organized drills together with Tromsø multipancy in regards to infection outbreaks on campus. This way we got to have a test run of how the multipancy and the university worked together. We've also had some actual cases that have been real examples we have had to manage along the way. Made it easier for those involved that we had had this drill.

Hardest

The hardest thing to handle has been the students learning situation, it has been very important and the most fragile. We operate in a government sector

	Change in planning related to black swans
	Interdisciplinary teams
	Collaboration with municipalities

with safe conditions around us. Given this, I think we have handled the situation in a pretty ok way.	
Universities - Marketing activities	**Coding**
Firm K	
Before the pandemic, how did you conduct marketing activities? Our department consists of marketing and recruitment. For international marketing it was digital both before the pandemic and now, as we only have digital channels with different markets that we focus on. We have one large campaign around every recruitment season, where we use all channels, but mainly facebook and instagram. We use snapchat in some markets, and youtube etc. But the strategy we use and the way we create campaigns is quite similar. Recruitment: Before the pandemic the recruitment relied heavily on physical meetings where we used digital marketing to advertise the fairs and open day etc, but the attendance was physical. Vi go to fairs, school visits, embassy visits, alumni events, we work with agents who work for us in the different markets etc. When the pandemic started the marketing stayed the same, but the physical meetings were moved to digital platforms with digital fairs, digital webinars, information sessions etc. All communication with students go through digital platforms. Even though the campaigns have been the same, the way we worked to create the campaign was different than before the pandemic since we all worked from home. **How have you adapted events for the current situation?** **How did you solve open day and other activities related to recruitment of new students?** Open day was moved to a digital platform, and all big events happening on campus or school visits were done digitally. We also work with external suppliers that deliver digital platforms for gathering a large crowd. **How have you dealt with the uncertainty in regard to long term planning?**	Campaigns/promotional offers Digital events Digital events Clear internal and external communication

This has been the main challenge because everything have been very unpredictable and unsure. The biggest problem we have had is that the students rely heavily on information, so the need for information have been bigger than normally and we have not been able to give any promises to provide certainty. We can not guarantee that the campus will open, that there will be class room teaching etc. This is out of our control since we just have to see how this unpredictable situation develops. So the need for information has increased but we have not been able to meet this need.

When you can't provide the students with information it is difficult to plan. We need to be proactive and find several solutions to each problem and plan, so we needed to have a plan A-C instead of just a plan A. A lot of things that normally is just routine for us, is something we now need to have several solutions for and plan for different scenarios.

How did you communicate measures and updates to students and other parties?
We have focused on being consistent with providing students with information so we have therefore focused on sending newsletters often. Through a normal year we plan how many newsletters we are sending out and what to send. This has changed during the pandemic because there are continually coming in new information as the situation changes and we have to kept the students updated. We have used both email and text messages. So when there are changes in the situation and BI or the government have confirmed this, we send out information to the students. It depends on the recipient if the information is sent from the communication department or the marketing department, and which content we send out. For example, international students receive different information than the local students etc. We also communicate with the students through the student portal. E-mail is the most preferred medium to use in regard to data privacy.

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your communication strategy?
There are several reasons for us using paid socials. Facebook is easy to use in regard to segmentation since we get access to data that makes it possible to

	Adaptability skills
	Clear internal and external communication
	Campaigns/promotional offers

segment more specific. For many in our target group we see that facebook have become a medium that is more information based with advertisements, newsarticles and commercials. So facebook allows us to segment broadly and correctly. We also use snapchat and youtube, but these channels have more restrictions than facebook and instagram. But we also use the channels for organic information through our owned pages, these pages are to a high degree controlled by the students.

Has the way you perform marketing activities changed after the pandemic?
Yes, I think most companies believe that there will be a hybrid solution in the future. We have learned a lot about what works well digitally and what doesnt work, and based on these experiences i think there will be a hybrid solution as we can see that we reach a larger segment digitally. Some events need physical attendance like when you meet the students face2face it is easier to create a relation with the person. So we have learned that some events need physical attendance and some events work well to do digitally. We also think that people now expect that more events etc will happen digitally.

Which marketing activities have worked best for you? Is there anything you have done that has worked out better than others?
The marketing activities are the same as before as we communicate through campaigns and advertising, so what we communicate is the same. However, we had a challenge as we use geographic segmentation since we often advertise with the location of one of our partner schools. Now that the schools have closed we don't reach the same amount of people as before using geographic segmentation. We see that google search have worked well because people are more active in regard to seeking information themselves since they are not being as exposed to it as before. We therefore have more opportunities to reach more people through google. People are more open to finding information themselves and to receive information digitally.

Are there any other institutions you have seen that have been good at marketing activities during covid-19?

Changes made to future market activities

Learning

Learning

Yes, we often look at what our competitors are doing. What is difficult for us at BI is that we are aware of who our competitors are here in Norway, but internationally BI is not a known brand. So theoretically we are competing with 15000 other business schools. But we compare ourself with prices, educational programs, strategies, marketing etc. Last year when the pandemic started there was a high level of uncertainty and how things would turn out so we had to pay attention to what other schools were doing. There are also global portals that we have access to that contains a lot of research on this and how universities have handled the situation and how the marketing activities have changed. We don't see everything other universities are doing except for what they do on social media. We have also talked a lot to other universities about how to handle the situation etc.	Collaboration with other institutions
Firm H	
Before the pandemic, how did you conduct marketing activities? Within marketing, NMBU have traditionally worked with student recruitment. We need to meet the target group of potential students. These segments are either high school students starting their bahcelor or bachelor students starting their masters. As a tool the university have tours, open day and a large SoMe campaign to sell the university to the target group, Open day and SoMe on snapchat and tiktok have provided good results. We also have communication on our research and innovation, that contribute to build our brand. On tiktok we used student ambassadors, which leads to a lot of traffic and has shown to be important as an additional channel where we have the opportunity to be more informal. It is important to always be updated on the SoMe trends and know which trends are growing and which are declining. Marketing requires you to always think innovative, gain insight into your brand in addition to finding your appropriate sales channels. All of this needs to be connected. **How have you adapted events for the current situation?** **How did you solve open day and other activities related to recruitment of new students?**	Campaigns/promotional offers

We have invested in development and innovation in order to move all events to digital platforms. We participated in a digital tour with all universities where we had different virtual rooms for each university. We also collaborate well with 20 student representatives. We had a lot of 1-1 conversations. This worked out pretty well. For the future we would like to do a mix of online and physical presence as we can reach a larger amount of people this way.	Digital events
For open day, it is only the people within the municipality that can come and experience campus. Therefore we also find that an online open day is something we want to continue with for the students that can not travel to Ås. The student recruiters also did live meetings from their homes.	Changes made to future market activities
We also collaborate with Forskningsrådet by creating Forskningstorget together with UIO and OsloMet. Here we have Forskning Grand Prix which is a competition for scientists to reach and junior high school and high school students. Forskningstorget was cancelled but all the other events were moved to digital platforms.	Collaboration with other institutions
We think that you should learn from every crises, and innovation and creative will (skapervilje) will be something we take with us moving forward. We believe you can get a lot of learning from it.	Learning
How have you dealt with the uncertainty in regard to long term planning? Our experience was that we had control over the situation. Decisions was made early where we decided to have all marketing activities digitally. When this decision was made we removed a lot of uncertainty and risk.	Quick decision making
How did you communicate measures and updates to students and other parties?	
In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your communication strategy? When I started the job I created a strategy process for the work on communication and the brand. We wanted to go further in the strategy for brand building by finding what made the university unique. We interviewed the target group and created the core of the brand, which made it easier to work with the campaign. The campaign was	Campaigns/promotional offers

called "Tett på". We are a smaller university with close contact with each student. We got positive feedback on the campaign In regard to SoMe, we do the posting ourself instead of hiring an agency to do it. This way we can monitor the results closely and change what is not working. This gives us the opportunity to be hands on and understand the campaign better. **Additional information:** When you are not in the office you can't have the quick discussions or decision making that you can have in the office, but at home you get to be more focused on your tasks. I have experience from the private sector and worked with increasing our marketing budget when I started in this job. In regard to risk management, we have had two meetings each day from march 12th until june. We increased the crisis team very fast and made decisions fast. During the fall we decreased the meetings to one meeting each day until christmas. After christmas we had 2-3 meetings each week. **Has the way you perform marketing activities changed after the pandemic?** Yes, answered above. **What has worked best of marketing activities? Has something worked better than others? Examples?** Yes, answered above. **Are there any other institutions you have seen that have been good at marketing activities during covid-19?** I have noticed that NTNU have performed well, but they also have a much larger budget than we do.They are also very good at what they do and have a strong voice. NHH has also been very good at SoMe.	Campaigns/promotional offers Emergency action group
Firm G	
Before the pandemic, how did you work with marketing activities? We have mainly used our student ambassadors that are being trained and hired. They work to promote the university and they have a lot of credibility. they are sent to fairs and school visits. We also have campaigns on SoMe and youtube. We create	Campaigns/promotional offers

content that tells the student about the different programs and how it is to be a student at (university).

How have you adapted events during these times?
How have you solved open day and other activities related to student recruitment?

We had open day on digital platforms, as well as school visits and the fair that was digital. We did not participate in the fair with all the other schools as we did not see the point of joining both as there is a high fee related to the fairs.

| | Digital events |

It is difficult to measure the effect of the online school visit as we dont know how many people actually paid attention. So it is hard to measure the effect of the online events and the results and effect it gives. Also technical issues can be challenging.

| | Digital events |

How have you dealt with the uncertainty in regard to long term planning?
It has been difficult because one year ago we had no idea that we would need to have digital events in january. However, our plan B was to move the events to digital platforms. During the summer and fall we understood that more events would have to be digital, which was extremely challenging in regard to planning since it took a while before we realized that it had to be digital. We had to learn how to do it as we had never done it before. We used Zoom conference since we already had the system and not a lot of time for planning. We are pleased with not choosing another system.

| | Pandemic plan |
| | Digital events |

How did you communicate measures and updates to students and other parties?
We have used the webpage, SMS and email to send out updates about new measures, and we have used (learning platform).

| | Clear internal and external communication |

In regard to social media, how do you work with this? Is this an important part of your communication strategy?
We have used most of the SoMe channels, but not TikTok. We were one of the first to start advertising on snapchat, but i think we were a bit too early so we had to take a break from it before we started using it again. We have also used youtube, facebook and google ads. Not a lot of printed ads.

| | Campaigns/promotional offers |

Has the way you perform marketing activities changed after the pandemic? I think it will change both consciously and unconsciously. The advantage with the digital platforms is that it minimizes the travel to for example schools that are located far away like the schools in the north. We will use more digital platforms, but through feedback we see that most people prefer physical visits if they could choose. It is also easier to keep the students attention if you have them attend physically. **Which marketing activities have worked best? Is there anything you have done that has worked better than others?** All other universities have also operated digitally at the same time, which have lead to higher competition as we have all used the same channels. We could have increase our budgets to increase online advertising. There are both positive and negative sides since we have reach our target group well but at the same time the competition has increased. **Are there any other institutions you have seen that have been good at marketing activities during covid-19?** No one have really stood out as we have all done similar things like different activities to talk and meet the students. We have had more live content while other institutions have had more recorded content. The students have said that they prefer live. **Additional:** Try printed ads and see the effects of this since the competition on the digital platforms have been increasing. So would like to see the effect of print in magazines and newspapers, outdoor etc. We have considered tiktok, but not used it yet.	Changes made to future market activities Learning Digital events Changes made to future market activities

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