

## THE EXTRAORDINARY NORMAL

It is quite normal for a person to think that they are living in extraordinary times. Yet, history clearly teaches us that there are periods of upheaval and periods of calm. Historians will surely look upon Covid-19 and the global response it elicited as a period of uncertainty and extreme challenges.

And while opinions on how the pandemic was managed vary, I want to propose that we look rather at the lessons that could be learnt to implement structures and workforce enhancements into our operations that will ensure that future pandemics, or any other upheaval, can be navigated confidently and with resilience.

## BLACK SWANS AND GRAY RHINOS

As a technology company, we will obviously look at technological solutions. But before we get there, let me just mention two useful analytical tools that can be used to gain some perspective, or, at the very least, create categories into which events can be allocated.

The first is that of a Black Swan event. Black Swan events are typically seen as events that occur that we had previously regarded as near impossible or extremely unlikely. You don't spend your time preparing for something that maybe happens once in a lifetime. You spend your time preparing for that which happens every day. Yet, Covid has certainly taught us the cost of this error. And even if we knew that a pandemic could happen, nobody outside of the military or health services gave it much thought.

The second type of event is Gray Rhinos. These events are characterised as crises that we know are definitely going to occur, that will be catastrophic but are set to happen so far in the future, that they may be safely ignored for the moment. Yet, we are running out of those moments, and no one seems to be raising the alarm bell.

**Climate change is often still viewed as a gray rhino.**



*By Wilhelm Swart, Managing Director,  
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*By going digital, you are not only preparing  
for the next Black Swan, but also for the  
Gray Rhinos.*

## DEALING WITH GRAYS AND BLACKS

But I want to propose an even more obvious Gray Rhino that many companies are still approaching at a pace that will soon see them wishing they had learnt harder and faster lessons.

That Gray Rhino is "Going Digital". In many instances, the companies that managed the pandemic the best were those companies that had the best developed digital infrastructures.

The last and biggest Gray Rhino is ignoring the potential impact of digital tools on sustainability.

Advances in digital solutions offer Dynamic Modelling and Remote Monitoring. This allows for better design and safer operation.



Let's look at some specifics:



Companies that are at the forefront of implementing digital technologies to deal with sustainability and climate change issues are also those companies that are attracting new green investment dollars.



Many international thinktanks have earmarked digital technologies as frontline measures for dealing with climate change.



Digitalisation is a crucial enabler for meeting business and sustainability objectives. The IEA has found that digital technologies can increase energy efficiency by up to 30%.



Digital tools have been targeting sustainability objectives for decades. These cost savings were mostly related to waste and discharge reduction.



New digital tools are looking at different energy sources and reducing carbon footprint.



Advanced digital solutions offer Dynamic Modelling and Remote Monitoring. This allows for better design and safer operation.



Monitoring and Control solutions, including predictive maintenance and digital twin technologies, are taking production into the Metaverse.

## THRIVING IN UNCERTAINTY

Digital technologies are the best and often only solution to not only climate change challenges, but all challenges that could affect people's ability to move freely.

**By going digital, you are not only preparing for the next Black Swan, but also for the Gray Rhino's.**

**Contact 4Sight's Operational Technologies division today and learn how we can deploy digital solutions to help your business thrive in uncertainty and meet any challenge the future may hold.**