

A Newsletter from the



January
2021

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Important Message for Chamber Members:

Start 2021 by creating a LOGIN to our NEW member directory online.

1. Go to catonsville.org at the top of the homepage in the light blue band you will find the **Member Login**.
2. Click create an account. Use your primary representative's name and email.
3. You will then be sent an email to create a password.
4. Then go back to the website, fill in **Member Login**, and that will take you to the Member **INFO HUB**.
5. Take some time to view the video. Then make any changes to your membership listing, add a description of your services, pay your renewal invoice or add events, job postings, hot deals. And depending on your membership level, add representatives, a video, business hours, photos. It gives you great control over your membership's listing.
6. Feel free to contact the chamber if you have any questions: chamber@catonsville.org

The Chamber VIEW



WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR BUSINESSES IN THE NEW YEAR

Happy 2021. I can't think of another year in recent history that we wanted to end more than 2020 or a new year begin more than 2021. So here we are! And with the start of a New year we love to look down the road and make predictions for the year ahead as well as annual resolutions for improvement. But one of the many things 2020 has taught us is that no one can truly predict what lies ahead. We could never have guessed when 2020 began with such promise and optimism that we would face the COVID pandemic that rocked the world's health and economic survival.

However, there are a few business predictions resulting from what 2020 has taught us that will certainly become the "New Normal" in 2021.

Here are five of those predictions made by Shep Hyken, contributor to Forbes.com, that I believe our members must consider as 2021 begins.

- 1 Excellent customer service is a MUST!** Customers keep getting smarter about customer service and experience. They tolerate fewer customer service failures and demand better because they know it's possible. They learn from other "rock star" businesses that set the bar higher for everyone. It could be a major brand or a small business down the street. When a customer receives great service from any type of business, an expectation is either created or confirmed.

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The Chamber VIEW

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Chamber of Commerce is to have a strong voice with the county government, business and local community; to affect positive change in our area; to foster growth and expansion of our members' business; and to achieve the betterment of the Catonsville community.

Chamber Web Site:
www.catonsville.org

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES

Event Sponsorship

Your company can be highlighted at one of our Special Events.
(Costs vary)

Network the 'Ville Host

Invite the Chamber to your location for on-site promotion.
(No cost)

Website

Depending on Your Membership Level:
Logo Advertising
Newsletter Advertising

All Members Enjoy Online

Job Posting, "Hot Deals"
Member-to-Member Discounts

Check the Homepage of the Chamber's website for additional opportunities to promote your business

Email the Chamber Office
chamber@catonsville.org

for more information.

The Chamber Working for You

President's Message



I hope everyone had a great Christmas, and Holiday! I'm sure that all of us are happy that we have said goodbye to 2020.

Looking forward to 2021, there is wonderful news that several drug companies have been

shipping the COVID vaccine. Hopefully, this will help us get control of this awful virus.

Our board of directors is hoping to get back to normal at some point this year. We

miss all of our events, and as soon as the Governor allows us, we will be ready. Ready to help promote your business with networking opportunities, and all of the events we offer.

Don't forget to send any promotions for your business to the chamber so we can share them with all of our members. If you haven't joined the Chamber Members Only Facebook page, please do. There are opportunities to share on that platform as well!

Happy 2021 and see you around the 'Ville.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

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That makes it harder on customer service laggards that don't step up to meet their customers' standards. To make it perfectly clear, customers don't just compare you to your direct competition; their standards are set higher by the best service they have ever received from anyone. Companies that expect to get paid for what they do should provide the expected level of service—or better. Customers continue to expect the brands they do business with to deliver on their higher expectations. Furthermore, brands and organizations are continuing to invest heavily in ways to give their customers a better experience. As customers become smarter, customer service will beat price and, in some cases, even product.

2 Customers are becoming impatient. They want what they want NOW. Let's put some numbers behind this. From a 2020 Achieving Customer Amazement Survey results, a whopping 96.2% of customers are willing to leave because of bad customer service. That number will stay high and is more important than ever during a pandemic. Customers appeared to be more patient with the companies they

did business with during the first few months of the pandemic. That patience diminished as customers saw some (and now all) companies returning to pre-pandemic levels of service. Customers also continue to be influenced by the companies that get it right (remember prediction number one). The result is an impatient customer. A term being used lately is the "**Now Customer**," who expects to get what they want almost immediately. This goes beyond a lack of patience with having to wait on hold or stand in long lines. When customers can order online and get rapid delivery (sometimes two hours or less), they are training their brains to enjoy the experience and hope they get it from every business. They don't want to wait for merchandise to be delivered, wait on hold, wait in line at a restaurant ... you get the idea. **The customer wants it now!**

3 Convenience is no longer optional. Customers want convenience and a low-friction experience. This once was a differentiation that could help distance a company from its competition. The Covid-19 pandemic forced many

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INVESTMENT LESSONS FROM 2020



Matthew Dunigan
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
Contributing View Columnist

As the year drew to a close, it's fair to say that we've all learned something about the social, political, physical and environmental forces that have affected everyone. And, in some ways, our lives will be changed, perhaps permanently. But as an investor, what lessons can you learn from 2020?

Here are some to consider:

- **The markets look ahead.** Here's something many investors discovered in 2020: Investment prices don't always move in the same direction as the overall economy. This might not have seemed apparent right after the COVID-19 pandemic struck in mid-February, as the overall economy and the stock market took big hits. But just about five weeks later, the markets began a rally that lasted several months. During this time, the economy also recovered somewhat, but still remains on weak footing.

What can explain this discrepancy between the markets and economic activity? Essentially, economic numbers, such as the unemployment rate and gross domestic product (GDP), reflect what's happening today, but the markets are always looking toward tomorrow, which means they are anticipating a stronger economic recovery and the results that come with it, such as greater corporate earnings in 2021. No one can say for sure what the future holds, but you can usually know the market's opinion by its performance.

- **Opportunities will always exist for investors.** Although the coronavirus seems unprecedented, the equity markets have rebounded from many crises before it. From war to global financial meltdowns, the market has seen it all. But even at the height of these events, when the markets might be most affected, individual segments or industries can do well.

For example, in the current environment, when many people have been forced to work and shop from home, and get their entertainment online, it's probably not surprising that some parts of the technology sector have seen their economic activity grow, along with their stock prices. Here's the key point: Investment opportunities always exist, especially in times of market stress – and smart investors will find them and incorporate them into their portfolios in a way that's appropriate for their goals and risk tolerance.

- **Patience and discipline can pay dividends.** As mentioned above, the stock market dropped sharply in the weeks immediately following the pandemic, but then gained steadily for months afterward. Investors who tried to "cut losses" and exited the market likely did so at the wrong time and missed out on the beginning of the upturn. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon – investors who overreact to market declines often find themselves on the investment sidelines just when a new rally begins. Rather than being reactive in this way, you may be better off sticking with a long-term investment strategy, and buying and selling investments only when it makes sense for your situation, such as when you need to diversify your portfolio.

For many reasons, it's unlikely that we'll see anything exactly like 2020 again. But some of the investment lessons we learned are applicable in every year – so keep them in mind for 2021 and beyond.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

STAY HEALTHY THIS WINTER

Five Ways To Fight The Flu and COVID

By David Clark
Patient First
Community Relations Manager

Colder temperatures are here and so is the annual battle of the bugs. We all think about the flu this time of year but people also suffer through colds and other infections. What are the best ways to fight off colds and the flu? Here are a few tips to help you win the war:

1. **Wash Your Hands** – This is the single most important way to stop the spread of colds and flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 80% of infectious diseases are spread through touch alone. Scrub with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol is a good substitute if soap and water are not available.

2. **Cover Up When You Sneeze and Cough** - Many of us were taught to cover our mouths and noses with our hands when sneezing and coughing. However, a better option is to use the crook of your elbow or a tissue when available. This way the germs will not get onto your hands and spread through contact with others.

3. **Disinfect** - Cold and flu germs can live on surfaces for hours. Disinfecting items like remote controls, doorknobs, table tops, keyboards, phones, and toys can kill the germs and stop them from spreading.

4. **Don't Share Your Germs** - Take steps to stop the spread of colds and flu at home and work. Stay home from work when you know you are sick. The same goes for sending sick children to school. Keep them home. If you have the flu, be sure to stay home until you have been fever-free without medicine for at least 24 hours to avoid making others sick.

5. **Live Healthy** - Help yourself win the battle of the bug by eating healthy, getting a good night sleep, exercising, and reducing stress. These things can help strengthen your immune system and potentially make your body more capable of fighting a cold or virus.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

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convenience strategies to go from added value to the expected way of doing business. Before, delivery was a nice option that some businesses offered. Now, it's an expectation that businesses have scrambled to incorporate into their day-to-day experience. The good news is that the 2020 Achieving Customer Amazement Survey shows that 67% of customers are willing to pay more for convenience, and when that convenience includes delivery, that number increases to 90%.

4 The virtual and remote workforce is business-as-usual.

Covid-19 forced many companies to learn how to work virtually, which is another way of saying "work from home." There are many companies that would have never thought it possible before but now embrace it to the point of saying, "We're shutting down offices." Not every company thinking like this is going to go 100% remote, but the option is there if they want—or need—to take it to that level.

5 Companies and brands find more ways to automate and digitize the experience.

This is a nice follow-up to the previous prediction. Automated and digitized experiences can be good—until they're not. The more a company automates its processes, the more it distances itself from the human-to-human connection that helps drive an emotionally connected sense of loyalty. If you want to see a prediction come to life, just look at what happened in the first few months of the pandemic. Companies were forced to adapt and adopt technologies that they would have eventually used, but not for three to five years. Covid-19 pushed us into the future. You just witnessed a prediction for the future come to life in real time.

PANDEMICS CAN BE STRESSFUL

Tips for Coping While We Wait to be Vaccinated

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, and/or alcohol and other substances.

Healthy ways to cope with stress

- Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about COVID-19.

Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.

- Know where and how to get treatment and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telehealth services).
- Take care of your emotional health. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.
- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.



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Quote for the New Year

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."

—Thomas Jefferson