



Embracing Our Time

Writing some 160 years ago, Charles Dickens foretold 2021 when he began *A Tale of Two Cities*. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

For many segments of the consumer technology industry, 2021 is indeed the best of times. The COVID-19 vaccine fueled an economic rebound. Low interest rates, record-breaking stock markets and government largesse put lots of cash into circulation. People cocooning at home, teleworking and swapping public transport for personal cars drove strong demand for our products and services.

But this year has, in other respects, also been the worst of times. Supply chain slowdowns, shipping container scarcity, factory shutdowns in Asia, port backlogs, worker shortages and unpredictable demand, alongside the continued burden of tariffs, will continue to stress many industry executives.

Since January 2021, when we swore in our current president, it has been the age of wisdom simply by comparison. Business leaders have taken on an increasingly visible role as politicians fail to course-correct. It's no surprise that Americans



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increasingly trust businesses more than their own government.

But 2021 has also been the age of foolishness. The tragedy of January 6th was compounded by politicians choosing to downplay the mob's criminality. Even now politicians kowtow to bullies to avoid “primary challengers,” rather than stand by the principles of ethical behavior and our Constitution.

Of course, neither political party is blameless. Both have shifted to extremes putting party politics above the nation's critical needs. The majority party discourages personal responsibility, disparages the First Amendment and is preparing to foist crushing debt on future generations.

2021 has been the era of belief when more incredulity is needed. Too many Americans cheer political grandstanding and extreme political views. It pains me to watch tens of millions of Americans forsake the wisdom of a proven vaccine or parrot “facts” from biased news sources. It makes me fear for the future of our republic.

2021 has also proven to be a year of innovation. We are benefiting from a vaccine produced in record time! This life-saving development was made possible by CTA Digital Patriot Congressman Fred Upton, who championed the 21st Century Cures Act. The Act authorized vaccine makers to produce, and the government to pre-order, vaccines even before FDA approval. Combined with Operation Warp Speed, this legislation delivered vaccines just a year after the first COVID-19 cases were diagnosed in the United States. Now that is incredible!

Looking back, we have lived through seasons of light and seasons of darkness. Now, with a better understanding of vaccine efficacy and treatments, the lights are shining brighter. We are returning to our offices, traveling and dining out. Americans are defining the “new normal” differently, but we are moving in the right direction.

Gary Shapiro,
President and CEO