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DREAM IT.
LIVE IT.

SPEKTRA

Africa's No.1 Design Build Monthly Newsletter

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VIRTUAL OFFICE

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THE CEO'S THOUGHTS

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans ...are your properties insured?"

William Evans Halm (a.g.i.a)

GANG HO!!!

TRANSLATING TO VIRTUAL OFFICE



Author: Rhema Body
HR Officer, Spektra Global Ltd

In the face of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations are forced to work from home in order to keep their businesses afloat.

It is important to communicate clearly with your staff what it means to work from home, what will be expected of them, and the organization's contribution in making it possible. In order to do so, you must set guidelines that will apply to all staff irrespective of their rank or position. As much as possible, recreate a live office environment. Here are a few tips:

WORKING HOURS

It is necessary to specify working hours. Especially for organizations whose work is collaborative, workers must be on the same work schedule. If work is usually from 8:00am to 5:00pm, it should be same while working remotely. All staff will have to follow the same work hours.

SETTING TARGETS AND DEADLINES

Monitoring productively and performance can be challenging while working remotely. It is therefore important for supervisors to set targets and deadlines for each task given and ensure that these deadlines are met.

OPEN COMMUNICATION LINES

Keeping open communication lines is key when working remotely. If the organization has a common communication platform, it must be utilized to the maximum to send important information that affect all staff. Managers and supervisors must give clear directives on tasks assigned to their team members through emails, voice or video calls, professional software or WhatsApp to avoid ambiguity.



Managers and supervisors must be reachable whenever team members need clarity on tasks assigned to them, especially during working hours, to avoid unnecessary delay.

EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This is a great opportunity to make good use of technology and explore.

If your organization already has a software that manages work flow, it must be used in every way possible to make work easier.

MAKING WORKING FROM HOME EFFECTIVE



Get a dedicated work space.

Find a space in your home with a table and chair to mimic a real office setting.

Stick to defined working Hours

this will help to organize your day, help achieve more and help you "close from work" to attend to domestic matters and rest for the next working day.

Make to do lists

It important to make a list of your tasks in order of priority and cross out completed tasks.

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Communicate

Get in touch with your colleagues if you need assistance or an opinion on your tasks and give feedback when necessary. Managers and supervisors must also check-up on their team members to show concern and keep up the team spirit.

The closure of physical offices should not mean the end of businesses. After all the human resource of an organization is the life of the organization. With the proper systems in place, we should be able to operate no matter how far or near we are.



HOME IMPROVEMENT IN TURBULENT TIMES



Ivy Acquah-Dennis
Spektra Global Ltd

Here are 10 great ideas to keep you from boredom during this quarantine period

- 01** Declutter : sort out and discard worn out items in cupboards, ward robes and drawers
- 02** Set up work area for you and the kids
- 03** Reorder your ornaments- a little bit of shuffling around can change the whole feel of your home.
- 04** Create the perfect family room- create warm, enjoyable & comfortable space, enough seating for the whole family plus a few guests
- 05** Annual maintenance: spend time in quarantine to checkup your appliances, heating, plumbing, electrics, blinds, furniture, furnishings & exterior to avoid future break downs.
- 06** Clean, scrub & disinfect surfaces, windows, bathroom fixtures & fittings, tabletops, etc.
- 07** Paint a room a new color to give a room a face lift
- 08** Spruce your outside area- polish door knobs, add plants on your terrace, mow lawns
- 09** Create a kitchen garden- great way of having organic food right outside your door, also a great project for the kids.
- 10** Modernize furniture that needs face lifts, hover/change carpets, show your stairways love by hanging some photos along the stairway.

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

A TALE OF WUHAN'S 10-DAY HOSPITAL

Corona, corona, corona. We either hear this or COVID-19, social distancing, 'avoid hugging and shaking loved ones', or 'don't sneeze into the open air'. The existence of the COVID-19 virus has turned the entire world upside down, confusing economies and leaving many homes broken-hearted and anxious about what's to come.

No, our newsletter isn't here to add to the myriad of information circulating social media about how best to stay protected, but rather to talk about a little architectural silver lining amidst all this chaos; the Huoshenshan Hospital in China.

The Wuhan Huoshenshan Hospital

What's Huoshenshan? And what does it have to do with Wuhan in China? We're glad you asked.

As the coronavirus began getting more widespread the situation called for immediate medical actions, both to control the spread and treat all affected citizens. To help cope with the outbreak of this new virus, the China government, together with the military, decided to build a new hospital to support their existing health facilities, which had already begun to run out of space and supplies.

This new hospital was christened Huoshenshan Hospital, a name that translated to 'Fire God Mountain,' and is located in the Caidan District, west of Wuhan. The initial hope was to complete this facility in six days. Still, with the continuous need for construction workers and other necessities, the construction period extended to ten days, which is still a wonder in many construction books.

Construction Team

The scale and speed of construction for China's 6-day hospital needed a lot of workers. These included over 60 diggers and 200 construction workers on the site at all times. The Huoshenshan hospital was built using the prefabrication method, where all parts and portions of the entire hospital were brought onto the construction site bit by bit. Each section was then fixed together.

Think of the entire construction process as the fixing of a vast LEGO set. For such a construction, Wuhan needed tons of mechanical equipment and a lot of construction workers with technological know-how for successful completion.



Design & Systems

The design of Wuhan's hospital is hugely similar to the hospital China constructed in 2003, to help fight the SARS virus. This hospital was built in only seven days, which is why the Chinese wanted to beat that record. Though the design was inspired by the Xiaotangshan Hospital built-in 2003, the newer hospital couldn't be copied, like for like, since the terrain and design conditions were extremely different. Some similar elements were adopted, though, including the use of negative air pressure for the swift movement of ventilated air into but not out of the isolated wards.

The primary concept behind China's 10-day hospital was to create a health facility that will, in theory, prevent the coronavirus from spreading beyond and within its walls. Designing such a large-scale facility with such a concept is a herculean task that the Chinese government tackled with everything they could. The first step was to design the entire hospital in cohorts or zones for the different users of the facility. Zones were created for;

- Those who were to be tested
- Those who had tested positive
- Those who were to be quarantined
- Those who were high-risk patients, capable of contracting the virus
- Those in critical conditions
- All frontline workers Services
- Disposal and sewage of PPE'S And many more.
- Specialist Functions

Every zoned building was completely separate from the other to cater to the physical representation of social distancing. Disconnected from the bulk of the hospital was the second cluster of structures, easily reflecting the wings of different levels of contagiousness. To create a further divide between one part of the facility and the other, designers made use of disinfection facilities, where doctors could change PPE and clean up before moving across to a different group of patients. The design of each disinfection zone was such that they could also be used to separate wards from the low-risk operational command center, where all care will be coordinated by medical staff. Within the low-risk operation centre, workers should be able to do away with their PPE'S because they can get mighty uncomfortable when worn for long hours. With such demands, the operation center by design should be as far from the 'confirmed' patients ward as possible.

Circulation Control

Circulation in design is extremely vital to the success of any building design. For this hospital, the following were implemented:

- limiting movement of patients to ensure that the infected patients do not come into contact with others.
- The use of the 'three zones and two channels' principle, which involved the construction of clean, semi-polluted and polluted areas, and two major circulation channels throughout the clinic for the medical staff and patients, respectively. This made movement swift.
- Two unique barriers, the 'dirty' barrier, and 'clean' barrier. The distance between the two was wide enough for droplets to dissipate.
- The clean barrier: all staff members who were free from the infection
- The dirty barrier: for the confirmed and suspected cases.



Other facilities and provisions made

- From systems for deliveries and patient transfers, ventilation and storage.
- a network computer room,
- medical technology building
- an ambulance decontamination room
- a central supply warehouse

The trick to preventing cross-infection was to design a comprehensive system within the medical facility, independent of the neighboring institutions.

The Huoshenshan hospital, an exceptional 1000-bed hospital, set up in only ten days, was operational on the 10th of February, admitting patients from other health facilities in record time. The hospital did more than break a construction record; it helped combat the spread of a widely feared virus in a small city where it all began, and that's what architecture and design can do in saving lives.

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BE A PHOENIX; let the crisis work for you

Do you feel good after you've worked hard at something challenging? Sure, you're tired and exhausted. But there's a feeling of great satisfaction from a job well done. Maybe you had to make changes in employee schedules. Perhaps, you've had to find funds to give relief loans to your workers. Or even negotiate with your suppliers for increased service at no additional cost. There's something nice about the tired feeling you've had after you've overcome an obstacle. That feeling is what makes you a champion!

Leaders, you cannot become successful if you don't master how to stay calm amid crisis. Peter Stark said, "In a moment of crisis, reactions set the leaders apart from the followers." There are many hurdles that business owners face daily. A way to minimize the effect of any crisis on your business is for you to emerge a better version of yourself.

Unfortunately, the role of personal development in business success is often underestimated by many. Personal growth is the toughest and most rewarding process any business owner could ever go through on their journey to success. So here are a few coping strategies to help you keep your calm and feel more empowered to tackle the wreckage after the storm.

Be positive

Research has it that a lot of people suffer mental breakdowns during periods of crisis. Where their minds are assailed by negative thoughts and worst-case scenarios. If you are inclined to be pessimistic, adopt positive thinking as a skill to shore up your natural disposition.

Meditate daily

whilst focusing on your strengths to boost your optimistic levels. Keep a gratitude journal where you write down the things you are thankful for, which helps you focus on the good things in your life. If you want to get the most out of your business amidst disruptions around, you must manage your emotions and stay positive.

Focus on your health

Since exercise lowers the level of stress hormones in our bodies – a stressful period is a perfect opportunity to start a workout regime and stick to it. So eat well, have enough sleep, stay hydrated (limit your caffeine intake; you don't want to be spiraling after a quick burst of adrenaline) and exercise more regularly. A healthy body will help you function better, increase your memory and emotional intelligence.

Give your plans the 'green card'

Every business must have a contingency crisis management plan – and if you don't, draw one up ASAP. A simple proactive crisis management plan may contain:

- a crisis team
- key risks
- map for a full recovery

Focus on the things that you can control. A crisis is the best time to move your systems into a controlled emergency mode and not waste time and effort trying to change things you can't control. Whatever kind of situation you find yourself in, staying calm and in control is essential to your survival.

Practice 'care call'

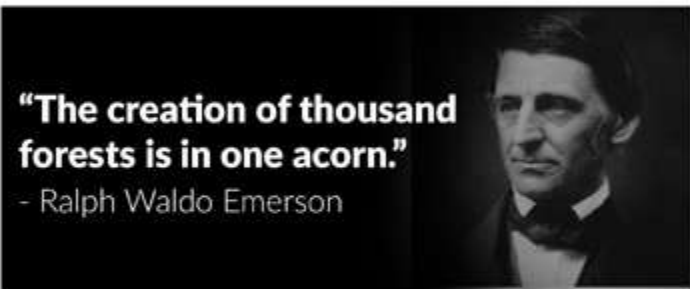
A leader's emotional connection with employees will determine whether or not they will rally behind him/her. So it is vital to make every one of your employees – from cleaner to senior executive – feel a sense of belonging. Show you genuinely care by connecting with them in authentic ways such as picking up the phone and giving them a call. Also, reach out to your clients rather than sending out a broadcast message.

Change and disruptions can be a useful catalyst in your leadership and personal growth – if you can see it as a challenge and stretch yourself to overcome and use it to your advantage. But this can only be achieved if you stay calm!

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**CAN YOU FIND THESE STORY
BUILDING BLOCKS?**

- CHARACTER**
- CONFLICT**
- GOAL**
- MOTIVATION**
- RESOLUTION**



ABOUT THE EDITOR

Karen Evans Halm is an architect and an associate of the Ghana Institute of Architects with over a decade's experience in the field, specializing in Interior Design and Landscape Architecture. She is also the co-founder of Spektra Global Ltd.



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