Not taking lockdown lying down: A 360 industry overview

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An overview of Bizcommunity's Press Offices, companies and organisations putting the grit in integrity, by continuing to communicate and innovate despite the many challenges of the Covid-19 lockdown.

A few weeks still to go under lockdown extension measures issued by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 9 April 2020, to see if stay-at-home measures will flatten SA's Covid-19 curve, and the word of the week must go to 'pivot'. As we see even more companies implementing strategic, operational and managerial turnabouts, we release the second of our overviews of how SA's leading companies are using the business-to-business media in a crisis.

We resonated with the news from Azure Fey, former media and crisis communications manager at SAB and AB InBev on why big business in South Africa should continue communicating during this time of crisis; from Leigh Crymble that South Africa ranks second as the country with the most reliable Covid-19 news and the view from trend authority Bronwyn Wiliams that business empathy will be the new face of "kind capitalism".

Covid-19 news from our Bizcommunities and Press Offices:

Marketing & Media:

From our flagship Marketing & Media community, Grey Africa CCO's, Fran Luckin and M&C Saatchi Abel's, Robert Grace shared essential "Day in the lockdown life" insights, showing how SA's leading ad agencies are definitely not taking lockdown lying down.

An explosion of pivotal activity continues across all sectors and platforms - from the 10th SA's RadioAwards inviting registration for their online event; Mann Made shared promising V-Hive virtual event innovation and Multi-Media their #WTF - what the future release about what events might look like after lockdown.

Kantar's Dr Sibongile Vilakazi's article on customer experience in the age of #Covid-19 received great responses, and Kantar is also running a Business Impact Survey via Bizcommunity, so be sure to add your input to this valuable data gathering exercise. MegaVision Media offers advice on how brands might prepare for life after #Covid-19 and, in line with other pivotal manoeuvres we wish the best of luck to Homemakers as they move online with their trendy new digital magazine.

Great news that Loeries, SA's premier advertising awards, is now literally a free-for-all as the industry body announced free entry to the 2020 awards as a unanimous board decision across Africa and the Middle East, in response to Covid-19 conditions.

Africa:

With a footprint in sub-Saharan Africa, Biz Press Office partners Dentsu Aegis Network shared info about the Dentsu Data Labs Intelligence Centre launch, to assist brands in planning and decision-making through the Covid-19 crisis; executive director at ReimagineSA, Luvuyo Madasa, explained why we must commit to active citizenship in a time of crisis and Henley Business School shared intellectual capital on building businesses that build Africa.

Agriculture:

We published the many agri events that have sadly had to be cancelled or postponed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but hope this may encourage new and fruitful collaborations with the above-mentioned virtual event solution providers. Agricultural news and lifestyle platform Food For Mzansi, in partnership with Grobank, embraces virtual events by offering a free webinar on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on food systems, food security and agricultural livelihoods. From John Hudson, National Head of Agriculture Nedbank Business Banking, the article on unlocking the full potential of SA's agri sector is worth noting now.

Automotive

Looking at the Automotive sector, we see companies offering support to the community and finding solutions to business challenges. The likes of Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (FMCSA) has commenced production of 57,000 protective face shields that will be donated to front-line medical and essential services personnel who are most at risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus, KIA Motors South Africa has pledged to assist customers with service, maintenance and warranty concerns and OUTsurance has implemented a 15% premium discount on all existing vehicle insurance policies for the month of May 2020.

Construction & Engineering

Mohau Mphomela, executive director of Master Builders Association (MBA) North voiced serious concerns that the lockdown and its aftermath are set to raise all sorts of issues for and already troubled construction industry, and Jacky Burke, principal scientist at SRK Consulting explained that until the Covid-19 lockdown comes to an end in South Africa, water use licence (WUL) application timeframes have essentially been put on hold and the implications.

On a positive note, Foster + Partners designed a prototype for reusable face visors to fight Covid-19, and The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has started to produce mass manufacture of disposable face shields for healthcare professionals.

CSI & Sustainability

Companies doing good and sharing good this week include Matriarch, who explains how virtual volunteering can make a difference; Trialogue's Noxolo Hlongwane, Head of Nedbank Private Wealth Philanthropy Office on the value of crisis philanthropy; and Adverb publishing on behalf of SA Harvest's Cape Town and Johannesburg food rescue initiatives.

Education

The Academy of Digital Arts shared a plan for creating and connecting through a crisis; while the story of the brainchild of Africa Teen Geeks (ATG), proactively approaching The Department of Basic Education (DBE) with their Lockdown Digital Classroom project solutions is definitely one to follow!

Energy & Mining

Hot news that HOTT3D, Africa Oil & Power, an Afrika Umoja initiative by Cape Town's temporary architecture specialists, HOTT3D and pan-African energy event organiser Africa Oil & Power (AOP), will team up to build temporary hospitals,

clinics and homeless shelters to combat coronavirus; you can also head to Webber Wentzel's podcasts on South Africa's mining sector in lockdown and the future in a post-Covid-19 economy.

Entrepreneurship:

One of the most solid of solidarity sectors last week saw organisations such as Giving For Hope Foundation (GFHF) - a group of businesses, led by Willowton Group and Al Baraka Bank - joining forces to provide lifelines to SMMEs; Adclick Africa's release of a white paper - the *SME Landscape Report: An Assessment of South Africa's SME Landscape: Challenges, Opportunities, Risks & Next Steps' 2018/2019* is only a click away; as is Edge Growth's survey allowing government and corporates to get an accurate picture of the Covid-19 impact; and GoDaddy EMEA's tips to SME's on staying connected with customers through a pandemic.

Finance & Insurance:

Read as Press Office partners FMI Insurance share what you might need to know about Covid-19 income protection; financial and strategic advisory company Fluence Capital's pro-bono support for South Africans facing the potential losses due to the Covid-19 lockdown; Christine Rodrigues, partner and insurance law specialist at Bowmans on whether lockdowns might lead to permanent regulatory reforms in the SA insurance sector; while over at Brightspark's Press Office, beginning 20 April 2020 FICO invites financial service providers to attend *FICO® Virtual Event – Building Resiliency*, aimed at helping leaders manage operations, customers and new fraud scams in the current crisis.

Healthcare

Visit the Press Office of North-west University (NWU) if you want to read about about how their Covid Agile Manufacturing Solution Response Team is addressing medical device development and rapid manufacturing solutions for local healthcare systems and Covid-19 challenges; Bonitas Medical Fund announced the extension of its free virtual medical consultations to all South Africans, Havas Johannesburg's release on behalf of leading global mobility client Michelin, announcing 10 European plants set to launch production of medical masks and visors from April 2020; Meltwater's market intelligence analysis report; and publishing partners Cipla teaming up with local comedian Tumi Morake to provide light-hearted lockdown relief.

HR & Management

Matthew Kibby, VP, Services, Sage Africa & Middle East offers advice on how to modify your hiring strategy during Covid-19, while CareerJunction helps fill medical vacancies during the Covid-19 crisis. CEO & co-founder of Press Office holder Promise Group analyses the question of many companies' lips at the moment: What to do with our big, shiny offices? and Directors at Werksmans Attorneys Bradley Workman-Davies and Jacques van Wyk explain the Update to UIF TERS benefits regarding forced annual leave.

ICT

As part of #TheLockdownSeries, The Argility Technology Group's Tanya Long shares the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on business, how they prepared for lockdown and it's impact on operations and employees, as well as lessons learned that we can take into the post-Covid-19 era. We also explore the question of can SA handle the increased internet traffic?, and the chances of ransomware attacks during the pandemic, amidst security concerns there are 10 tips for Zoom security and privacy so that you can stay in touch with loved ones, and how to protect your web conferences during Covid-19.

Legal

Catching the wave of new virtual team management, senior advisor at Webber Wentzel Giles White advises why robust corporate governance is more important than ever during these extraordinary times, and Stephanie Esterhuyse, consultant in the litigation practice at Bowmans, suggests that while telemedicine may be a lifeline for practitioners and patients alike

during these times of social distance and self-isolation, it has been an area fraught with regulatory pitfalls and seemingly conflicting guidelines.

We also see the call from lawyers urging the justice minister to re-open more courts, the backlash of the lockdown ban on the sale of hot food, the announcement of guidelines for spaza shops and the new certificate required by essential services businesses.

Lifestyle

You can do your bit to support the arts by visiting the Press Office of HaveYouHeard to read of the new platform, harnessing QR technology that has been launched in South Africa to help performers and music artists generate income while live streaming, while Business and Arts South Africa NPC (BASA) has also announced that its Supporting Grants programme will be extended to allow support for South African creatives infected or affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Production designer and filmmaker Johnny Breedt talks about Sergio and how the coronavirus pandemic has severely impacted the entertainment industry, and we see the launch of Safe a new non-profit organisation to raise relief funds for the music industry (among the hardest hit due to Covid-19).

Read about how SA chefs are helping the most vulnerable during lockdown, visual artists capture Covid-19 experience in #TheLockdownCollection initiative and visit Showmax's Press office on Bizcommunity for the 5 best local hits to stream now.

Logistics & Transport

With South Africa's domestic economy officially in recession, learn why compliance in SA's logistics industry more important than ever, and get more info from Kingsley Ighobor, a public information officer for the United Nations, New York, who says that up to 20 million jobs in the formal and informal sectors in Africa could be lost because of Covid-19, which could cost Africa $500bn.

Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has urged pilots and drone owners to comply with the regulations and directions of the Disaster Management Act aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19, while globally destructive economic instability has pushed fuel prices into drastic retreat, leading to some very rare good news for South African motorists, according to the Automobile Association (AA).

Property

From the Biz Property portal, some of the main stories were CEO of the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners (SAIBPP), Vuyiswa Mutshekwane's 11-point plan to rebuild economy, property sector post Covid-19 and CEO, BetterBond's Carl Coetzee contextualising the the recent announcement by the governor of the SA Reserve Bank, Lesetja Kganyago of a further drop in the repo rate by 100 basis points to 4.25% per annum, taking the prime lending rate down to 7.75%; while the RE/MAX Housing Report reflects the state of the South African housing market under more pressure owing to Covid-19.

Press Office partner Private Property offers advice on home insurance claims during the lockdown as well as the ins and outs of searching for a home in this new reality.

Retail

The latest in retail responsibility releases were from Clicks Group, another large SA retailer announcing the donation of a portion of senior management's salaries towards the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, and local stories of doing good and sharing good continued to flow in, with South African packaging manufacturer Mpact Versapak, announcing they are pivoting production in response to urgent market need for face shields, South African meal kit delivery service UCook launched a Food Fund to help South Africans in need, and Woolworths rolled out a drive-through click and collect shopping service.

Retail Futurist Howard Saunders is sure Covid-19 will bring about a retail apocalypse, MD at Everlytic JD Engelbrecht noticed that SA's email lockdown open rates were higher than Black Friday month, and Borderless Access investigated the top concerns for South African consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tourism

Still showing grit, innovation and communication, news in from the business-to-business tourism sector includes City Lodge sharing the financial status and impact of Covid-19 on the hotel group's operations; the team behind the @southafrica Instagram account's lockdown launch of *This is South Africa* website, where everyone can start posting images and planning post-lockdown road trips; and from Domestic Flights South Africa's how to manage post-lockdown business travel risk.

Sadly, it's possible the Covid-19 crisis could spell the end of the line for cruise ships, as stranded cruise ships have become a symbol of the pandemic. On a more positive not, regional director for Africa of international hotel group Minor Hotels Mark Havercroft in confident that Africa will be at the forefront of future hospitality investment post-Covid-19 as the continent's resilience to tragedy through years of experience and our natural optimism, along with our burgeoning population growth, certainly sets the continent apart.

Virtual communities, real business

The Bizcommunity nine-dot logo represents connectivity. As business physically distances but virtually comes together, our online platforms continue to provide a valuable snapshot of the energy and enterprise of the business communities of our continent and region, proudly uniting to meet these most challenging of times from one of the most economically challenged positions in the world.

The Biz team is working remotely as usual, ready to promote your company news, virtual events, courses, seminars and crowd-sourced activations on the indispensable business-to-business website from South Africa to the world.

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