



SOCIETY FOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE NIGERIA

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT (II) THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT



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In our Paper 1, we addressed the Leadership role of the Board in providing functional guidance and advisory support to Executive Management in achieving key corporate goals on sustainable business profitability, effective Governance and statutory compliance. This role is basic but becomes more challenging in these contemporary times of externally induced crisis.

In this Paper 2, we will examine the Role of Management not only during crisis but also in the lessons learnt for life thereafter. As we can all begin to imagine a New World of Work will be defined post Covid-19 that will leverage technology to impact global and local efficiencies and competitiveness. Only resourceful, creative, forward-thinking and well led Organizations will sustainably prosper and survive.



As we know, Corporate Leaders have the responsibility for developing and flawlessly implementing strategies for sustainable business performance and growth through aligned People, Projects and other functional resources of the Organization. In doing this, Business Leaders must demonstrate an array of skills such as creative focus, initiative, courage, strong influence and flexibility to be able to surmount the challenges that are inevitably thrown up during unforeseen crisis.

The dynamics of day-to-day work may change significantly during moments of crisis. Such dynamics may become an opportunity for business efficiencies and enhanced competitiveness if properly managed. Alternatively, it may become an existential threat. The impact of a crisis on an organization will largely be determined by the proactiveness of its leaders in the key areas of Emergency Preparedness and Training (Scenario Planning, Role Playing and Exercises, Communications, Provision of Appropriate Tools, etc.). All Stakeholders (Employees, Contractors, Guards, Community, etc.) must know what to do in the event of a crisis. In the current circumstance necessitating remote working, Roll Out must involve key employees at middle and even lower levels depending on job functionalities within the Organization. Laptops, telephones and Data Support will be key enablers as business tools.



Undergoing a crisis is no excuse for Executive Management to drop the performance ball. Shareholders can be unforgiving and often have short memories. Leaders must therefore keep a close eye on the business by developing a practical framework for monitoring and ensuring optimum performance of the Organization as it navigates the difficult social, financial and economic uncertainties during crisis.

This paper identifies a few key areas of focus which are by no means exhaustive.

1. Proactive assessment of employee performance:

Organizational productivity or performance in a crisis is largely influenced by the ability to sustain efficiency in people and processes. In continuing to keep employees' performance at an optimal level in a crisis situation especially such as we are encountering now that has necessitated remote working, it is pertinent for management to clarify to employees changing responsibilities and assessment techniques that will keep them on their toes and functioning effectively. To achieve this, it is important to first ensure that you have set the right tasks, work plan and reminders for employees that are aligned to the changing priorities and requirements of the work environment.

It also helps in clarifying parameters for measuring output that may quickly help identify areas of weaknesses or lags in employee productivity

- 2. Embrace the New world of Work:** A Crisis situation may be an opportunity for an entire Business Process Review- organization, structure and model. Practices and activities which are no longer relevant can be done away with whilst processes leveraging new technology for operational excellence must be explored and embraced.



- 3. Adopting new models for management:** The reality of a changing business environment, as impacted by a crisis, requires that Business models be sufficiently fluid to adjust to these changes or become ineffective and obsolete. The advent and reliance on technology already has had an impact on Business models that allows for a flexibility for

- quick changes as necessary. However, in a crisis situation, organizations and Management will not have the luxury of resources and time in analysing and formulating plans for a new ways of doing business. To minimise any instability that may result from fast paced changes, it might help that Management has a protocol in place pre crisis for quick assessment of changes, impact and new requirements to ensure synergy in people, processes, tools, techniques in alignment to a new business environment during and after a crisis



Business Continuity

4. **Business continuity plan and implementation:** **Strategies** are required for business continuity in a crisis and whilst a plan may have been put in place in preparing for a crisis, the type, extent and dynamics of a crisis may require new and untested dimensions for implementing any pre existent Business continuity plan. This does not take away from



- . the importance of having a Business continuity plan in place before a crisis, it just reinforces the need to understand that in implementation, Management may be required to be realistic enough to accept that the best technique for business continuity in a crisis may be changing an existing plan in its entirety. Rigidly following the regulations of an existent continuity plan may no longer be the ideal in the face of a crisis. Therefore whilst a plan ensures preparedness, however, Management has to take into cognizance all the factors at play in the current situation to determine the best and applicable strategies for implementation

In conclusion, what is most important in a crisis is that Organizations must be able to react speedily and continue to function as a single unified entity against any situation that threatens its current and continued existence. Therefore, management must in preparing for and effectively managing a crisis define and implement communication channels between all factions, employees and departments of the Organization that supports, coordinates and encourages everyone to consistently work together in achieving set corporate goals.

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