

## It's time to grab the opportunities

The nature of the world we live in is that we are surrounded by threats and opportunities. Today we are faced with multiple new threats - The threat of viral infection, weakened healthcare services, being left in the dark at home as a result of load shedding, and just general negativity home and in business.

By [Jake Shepherd](#) 30 Mar 2020



Jake Shepherd, co-founder and technical director at Synthesis

Many years ago, I learned that the way to tackle threats is to see beyond the threat into the opportunity that presents. In fact, our company Synthesis has been built on the back of opportunities that initially looked like threats.

For example, cloud computing threatened to disrupt the traditional software models, but by embracing cloud technologies, Synthesis has managed to leapfrog competitors and position ourselves as highly competitive in the new world of cloud computing.

I want to invite everyone to look beyond the threats posed by this current crisis and see how we can grab the opportunities that will present themselves over the next few months. However, in order to recognise the opportunities for what they are you need to be open to them and really be looking for them.

The next few months are really going to be hard on our relationships. Let's use this crisis as an opportunity to strengthen these relationships and make them more resilient than ever.

### **Work relationships**

We are going to have to work harder at connecting with one another because we cannot just rely on bumpi

into one another at work. There are real skills in maintaining and fostering distance relationships with each other and with our clients.

Let's use this as an opportunity to practice these skills. Reach out proactively and communicate:

- Let clients know what we are working on and the challenges we have overcome on their behalf. Provide regular updates via email and follow up telephonically.
- Practice and perfect the art of working remotely with one another - what we discover now can influence how we work together effectively in the future.
- Actively think about what your team members need in order to succeed. Call them up to discuss and then deliver.
- Ask yourself the question: How can we show clients and colleagues that we care? Both how much we care about the work we are doing and care about them as people.

### **Home relationships**

Schools are cancelled and children are home. Husbands and wives are now at home together - the regular cadence of at home and at work has been disrupted. This change to the normal rhythm of life is going to put pressure on our home relationships. By recognising these challenges and confronting them constructively we can:

- Have a discussion with the whole family to talk about how home life will be impacted.
- Create the necessary boundaries; Mommy and Daddy are at home but need to work and it is not like everyone is on holiday.
- Assist your children to put together a schedule for their day. Use this as an opportunity for children to be given responsibility and to grow

### **Relationship with ourselves**

Going into a workplace forces a daily schedule; you have to wake up at a certain time, get dressed, change mindset from "home" to "work" and then back again at the end of the day from "work" to "home".

This mindset change is key to a healthy work-life balance. Most "work from home" initiatives fail because people underestimate or don't acknowledge how much self-discipline is required to work effectively while at the same time maintain balance.

- Explicitly recognise how much of a challenge this period of self-discipline will be.
- Create a personal schedule; Define specific times to wake up, exercise, eat, work, learn and play. I would suggest a psychological trick where we change into exercise, work and play clothes as per our schedule. The change of clothing is a subtle reminder of what we should be focusing on right now.

- Before going to sleep each evening measure how well you manage to stick to the schedule and come to improving the next day (keep a diary of these self-evaluations).
- Use this as an opportunity to build the skills needed to work from home. For example, LinkedIn is offering free courses to skill up for working from home. I recommend the Dave Crenshaw course on Time Management.

This period of time is going to force us, our clients and our families into a different way of working and interacting.

Don't waste this amazing opportunity. This is a time of significant challenge, but I urge you to view it as an opportunity for significant growth. This is the time to embrace this challenge, take it seriously and emerge stronger than you are today.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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