

Pandemic forcing us to think outside the box

 By [Cindy Peters](#)

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As part of our #LockdownLessons series, Bizcommunity is reaching out to South Africa's top industry players to share their experience of the current Covid-19 crisis, how their organisations are navigating these unusual times, where the challenges and opportunities lie, and their industry outlook for the near future.

We chatted to Wayne Neary, MD of ICON Group, to get his take.



Wayne Neary, MD of ICON Group

■ **What was your initial response to the crisis/lockdown and has your experience of it been different to what you expected?**

Wayne Neary: Our initial response was concern for our clients, teams and suppliers. Thankfully, we had the benefit of observing the process unfold overseas before it directly impacted us, which helped us manage and plan for the process.

■ **Comment on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your organisation or economy as a whole.**

Neary: The impact has been felt by all sectors of the economy and construction has been heavily impacted. Thankfully, we have a well-established business with resources built up and paid for over time which has ensured we've been largely sheltered.



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■ **How is your organisation responding to the crisis?**

Neary: We have purchased all required safety equipment, PPE, etc., and conducted extensive training on all aspects.

■ **Comment on the challenges and opportunities.**

Neary: The challenges will be to ensure that we can restore full production while ensuring our employees, clients and suppliers remain safe. The opportunities are endless, with the pandemic forcing us as a nation and global population to think outside of the box and work more efficiently while commissioning new technology.

■ **How has the lockdown affected your staff? / What temporary HR policies have you put in place regarding remote working, health & safety, etc.?**

Neary: The lockdown has had a direct impact on all our staff, processes and policies. We have adopted a work-from-home policy where possible. We have also implemented social distancing, screening and hygiene regiments for all our essential staff.

■ **How are you navigating 'physical distancing' while keeping your team close-knit and aligned?**

Neary: We have embraced technology such as Zoom for meeting where necessary, but have always encouraged our staff to work independently while still driving team objectives.



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■ **Any trends you've seen emerge as a result of the crisis?**

Neary: Trends in our business are to have smaller more focused teams working in relay where possible.

■ **Your key message to those in the sector?**

Neary: Keep positive! Stay focused!

■ **What do you predict the next six months will be like?**

Neary: That is the million-dollar question. I think it will be challenging, but ultimately rewarding to find ways to overcome the adversity and come out the other end stronger as a result.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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