

dB Audio Namibia Keep Staff Safe During Lockdown



db Audio Namibia team at the end of 2019 (and before social distancing)

With more than a third of the world's population on lockdown as countries implement measures to slow the spread of Covid-19, priorities are being thrown into sharp focus.

In Windhoek, Namibia, technical production and rental company dB Audio's first concern was to ensure that its staff would be safe and well during the lockdown period which started on 27th March and was extended to May 4th by President Hage Geingob.

dB Audio is normally involved in a wide range of live events – from corporates to dance and music shows, experientials and awards presentations through to commercials – Namibia's abundant and beautifully desolate desert locations and unspoiled coastline have long been a favourite for location scouts. Over the years, the company has been a steady investor in Robe moving lights.

But all live events stopped on March 16th when public gatherings were banned.

Now, together with others, dB Audio Namibia's management are talking to officials and bureaucrats and fighting to get the industry recognised, together with for example tourism, as a "most affected" sector ... and be eligible for financial assistance from the government.



Example of posters (Jacqueline van Zijl)

Luckily at this stage, although temporarily ceasing operations, dB Audio Namibia has managed to keep nearly all staff in place. Those who can work from home are doing so – at negotiated reduced wages and hours – but at least enough to survive.

“Communication has been key in getting ourselves organised for lockdown,” explained dB Audio Namibia’s Ernst Steynberg.

First priorities were to secure some financial stability for their team of almost 40 who cover all the technical production disciplines, and importantly to ensure that everyone had somewhere safe to stay, access to water and the ability to sanitise.

Those living in townships and settlements with shared toilet and shower facilities were particularly concerned, so the whole team pooled minds, resources and energy into creating a raft of temporary solutions ... one of which was to build chemical toilets for those who didn’t have access to their own.



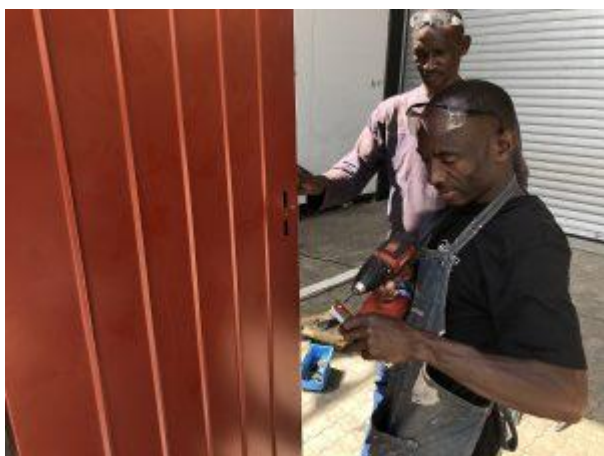
The Toilet Building Team – from left to right Andreas Ipinge, Lehto Shivute, Victor Joseph, Desmond Coetzee and Patty Fagan.

The set and staging departments designed and built the metal toilet cubicles and installed them at people’s

homes, while a deal was cut with another local supplier to fit these with removable tanks containing non-toxic biodegradable chemicals.

Ernst elucidates the big efforts made to keep everyone informed before the lockdown of the ongoing Coronavirus situation and of what they could realistically expect during the lockdown period, so they had all the basic facts required to keep themselves safe and protect others.

Technical staff with more time than usual on their hands can access the company's production laptops via a loan system so they can join some of the online learning facilities and product information seminars set up by various manufacturers and brands. Similarly, the Client Service, Design and Production staff have taken on a couple of mock projects to improve their overall efficiency and creativity when it comes to quoting, designing and planning.



Toilet cubicles being constructed (Victor Joseph and Andreas Ipinge)

"We encourage everyone to learn, develop and grow as much as possible during this 'down' time," explains Ernst.

Further enabling this process, the company's mobile WIFI routers are also being rotated between staff who don't have their own internet access at home and assisting others with data to do the same.



Finished toilet cubicles.

"We are all thinking positively and also learning from this whole experience as to how we can better ourselves

and the communication support we offer in the future,” says Ernst. “I believe when things start to open up again and we can begin to rebuild, we should expect a very different industry – as vibrant and exciting as before, but with very different needs and expectations.”

Ends.

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