

With every challenge, therein lies an opportunity

 By [Sindry 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 Lerato Poee, general manager of the South African Institute of Valuers (SAIV), to get her take.



Lerato Poee, general manager of the South African Institute of Valuers

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

Lerato Poee: Given what was going on globally, it was inevitable that we would be affected as a country. But having said that, nothing could've prepared us mentally for what was before us in terms of the restrictions.

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

Poee: We are a voluntary association that looks after the interests of property valuers in South Africa. Our members operate within the broader economy and have been significantly impacted as they have only been able to operate where the valuations are supporting valuations for essential services; which has meant a loss of income for a lot of our valuers who are commission earners.

As an institute, one of our core objectives is to provide continued education and training for our members through hosting events and seminars. Due to the pandemic, all scheduled physical contact events had to be cancelled, and will remain cancelled until the foreseeable future, or until we're at Level 1 Lockdown. This has meant a loss of revenue for our organisation.

#LockdownLessons: As we look for and leverage opportunities, we must remember our shared humanity

Sindry Peters 20 May 2020





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

Poore: We've had to vigorously seek alternative ways to engage with our members and beef up the already existing platforms such as our website, social media and email communication. We've also had to look at online conferencing platforms to ensure continuity with learning and knowledge-sharing with our members.

▣ *Comment on the challenges and opportunities.*

Poore: Challenges: Being a voluntary association and being the eyes and ears of valuers and having to filter out information and ensuring that valuers are equipped with correct information was somewhat challenging in that there have been some grey areas in as far as government regulations were concerned, more so when people are eager to work and generate an income.

Opportunities: With every challenge, therein lies an opportunity. As an organisation, we had been planning on introducing webinars and online platforms for engagement and Covid has now forced us to adapt and introduce this as a way of doing business.



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

Poore: We're perhaps a few of the fortunate organisations who haven't been affected from an HR perspective. We're a small team and could very easily and immediately implement a work-from-policy without many hassles. From the get go we've been able to work from home, notwithstanding having to deal with the kids forcibly becoming a part of the online meetings. But it's all been part of the journey and one has to take some humour from it all.

▣ *How have you had to change the way you operate?*

Poore: We've also had to look at online conferencing platforms to ensure continuity with learning and knowledge sharing with our members.

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

Poore: The adaptation to technology stands out. Increased webinars from all organisations, regular messaging not just on business but also checking in on people.



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

Pooe: Keep safe, practice social distancing, monitor systems and, above all, reach out to those in need. Use the time to watch webinars and get involved in collabinars. Be kind to yourself.

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

Pooe: Depending on the lockdown period, I would say an eagerness for people to work and hopefully support of local, small companies. Compassion for fellow humans and the firing up of the entrepreneurial spirit to ensure that all are given opportunities to feed and keep their families safe.

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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