

**VIRTUAL
SUCCESS
FROM YOUR
SKIVVIES**

by

Devin A. Herz

Thank you to all the front-line heroes that are putting their lives at risk every day so we can stay safe in these unprecedented and unpredictable times.

Knowing your function cannot avoid personal contact, it is the sacrifice you're giving that allows the rest of the world to go virtual, and we can't possibly thank you enough.

Written April 2020 during the
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic



Forward by
Jonathan Slain,
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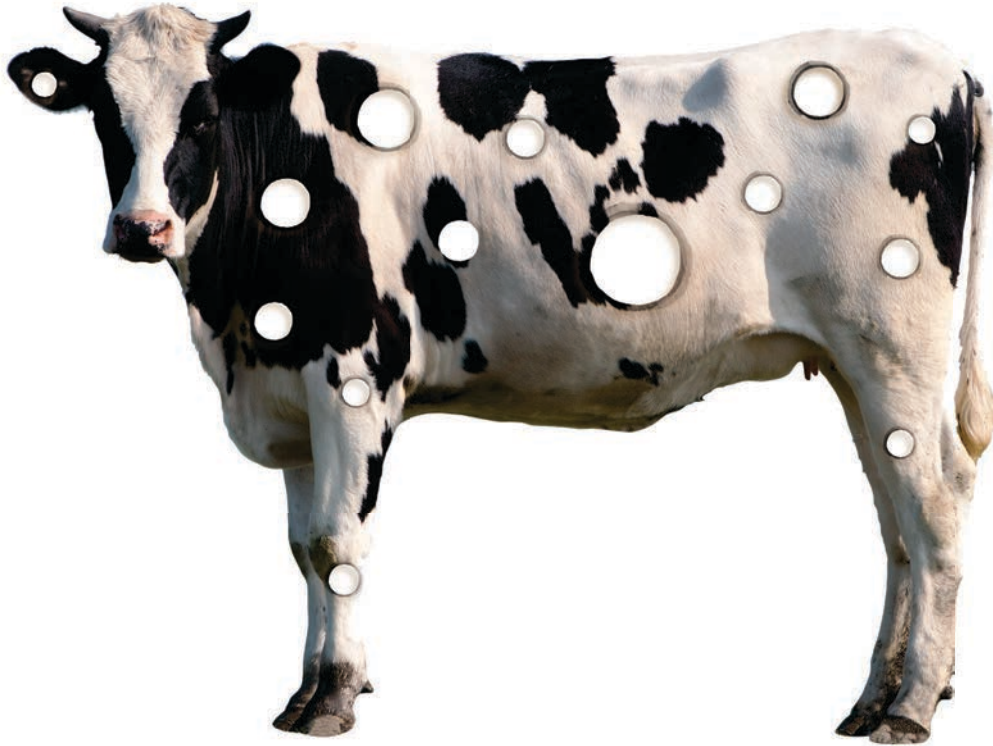
Planning for recessions is what I do, but never did I think I'd have to go 100% virtual with my clients for any amount of time. Fortunately, I've been working with Devin and his associates at DMC (who all work virtually by the way) for several years now and have been converting parts of my business to be virtual. They've even gone so far as to help a prominent produce distributor client of mine, rebrand their business while turning it around to be 100% digital in short order, and turn a profit on thousands of dollars-worth of products that would otherwise spoil or be thrown away.

While I never know if he's wearing pants or not, one thing I do know is that his advice and guidance is solid and his willingness to help business owners however he can is always at the forefront of his business. To those that are finding themselves out of their element working from home and looking for ways to condition their business to withstand these physically isolated times, I encourage you to read Devin's insights and apply them as you can to your business.

We're all in this together and this too shall pass. In the meantime, we can all take comfort in the fact that while business may not be operating "as usual," there are ways to adapt and keep moving the ball forward.

To health, happiness, and going virtual for however long we need to.

ROCK ON!

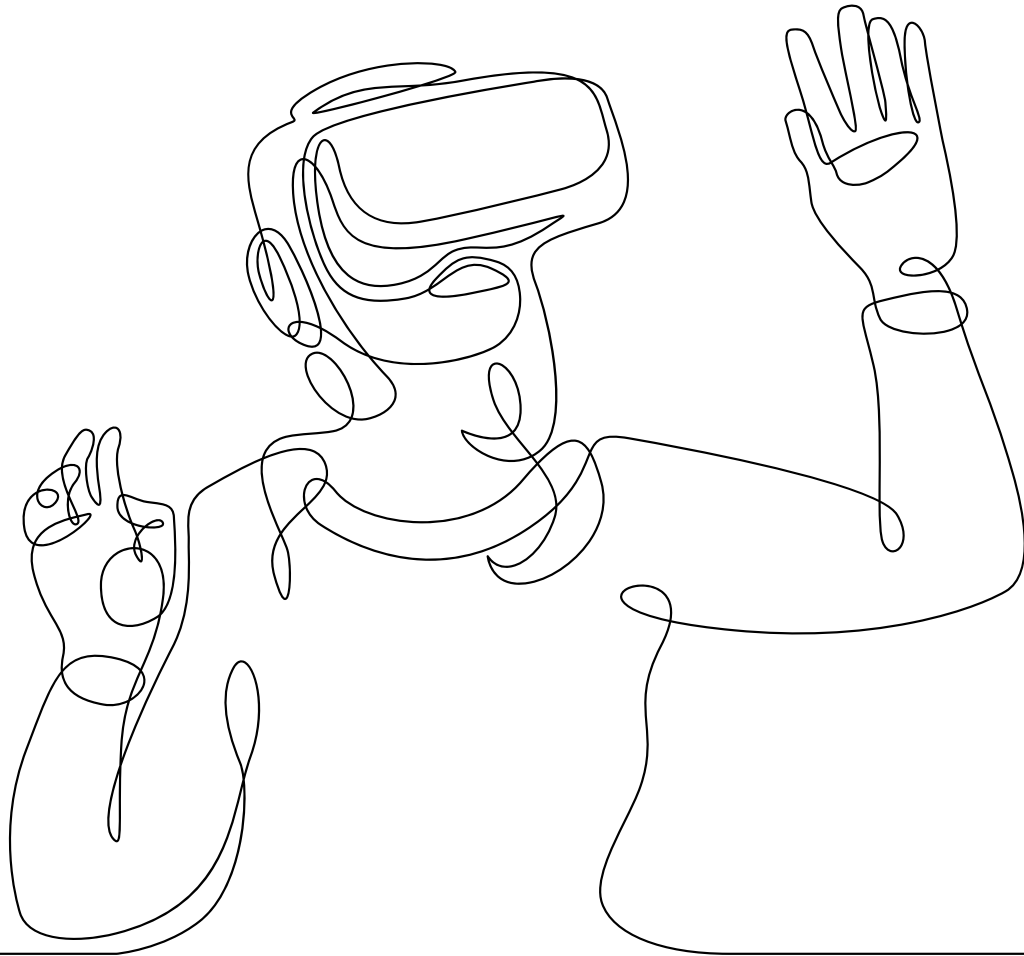


Holy Cow, What Now?

That uneasy feeling you have right now is fully understood and you are not alone. However, now is the time to make great things happen while others may be taking a hiatus. Being a proponent for working virtual for over the past 20 years I want to share with you some of my insights. I started off by building a 6-figure company from my tiny 1-bedroom apartment in the late 90's, then did the bigger is better thing; big office, printing presses, lots of staff, more bills, lots of headaches and the grey hairs. By learning lessons from my good moves as well as my not so good moves we took the company virtual again about 10 years ago and we are now running a 7-figure virtual business with a lot less headaches. Now the new grey hairs make me a silver fox, so my wife says.

I am not going to sugarcoat it here, there is a lot to learn when going virtual. I am here to provide you helpful strategies that will hopefully save you time, energy and money. I am not here to brag or tell you these are the only solutions; I simply want to share solutions we use daily that could assist you. I am sure there are other systems and methods out there, feel free to determine what will work best for you and your business.

We have always been in the business of helping small businesses long before we even knew what a Coronavirus was. I hope you enjoy this quick read and benefit from some of our insider secrets and strategies.



Going Virtual!

More and more businesses are going virtual over the past decade, electing to leave the traditional office or brick-and-mortar setting for a home office—or couch.

This year, companies have been forced to go mobile in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing a seismic shift in how they conduct day-to-day business. From concerns about handling workflow to dealing with keeping everyone on the same page, there are a lot of things that business owners need to think about these days.

Since starting on of my handful of businesses when I was 19, I have relied on having a virtual office—even going back to the days before WiFi was everywhere. Though it can be intimidating, turning your business into a mobile operation has a slew of perks. And by focusing on the following aspects, transitioning to a virtual office can be a smooth process with productive results.



Stop! Collaborate & Conference!

The notion of a “collaborative workspace” may seem like something that can only exist in an in-person office setting. But that couldn’t be further from the truth. When you work in a digital office, you can also have a collaborative workspace—just in a different form. This is the place where you keep track of all of the projects that you are working on. It is a one stop place where you can find all that is necessary to keep projects and communication running smoothly.

To make this happen, there are different software applications that you can utilize. Our go to collaborative software that we utilize on a daily basis is called PODIO, a program made by Citrix. The program allows specific users to access all the necessary files and information, whether it be a task, project details, timelines, charts, etc. Its dashboard lets you keep up-to-date with the latest entries, current notes, instant messenger and the list goes on. A great thing is that it is customizable, allowing you to tailor your workspace for your specific needs.

Collaborative workspaces can also be a valuable link between you and your clients. You can set up specific workspaces with restricted access and keep all your communication in one area versus having to constantly search through your emails.

I would say implementing a solution like this should be a top priority, it will make everything so much easier plus your team and clients will thank you for it.

Even though you may not be having a daily conference in the fishbowl right now, communication is key for anyone with a mobile business. It doesn't matter that everyone is working from their couch or home office. You need to keep driving forward, have those scheduled meetings and stay on task.

Communication is key when you have a virtual office. Make sure that you keep a regular schedule and continue talking to your employees on a routine basis. If you haven't already, this would be the time to get video conferencing software for your company, such as GoToMeeting or Zoom. There are so many benefits to using good communication tools. They provide a level of social interaction, allowing you to see your co-workers and interact directly with them. It's good to see people's expressions, emotions, have the ability to view important visuals or even be able to share your screen at a click of a button. The list goes on and on and on.

Also, if you or your coworkers don't want to be on camera—and, understandably so, since many people are working in their pajamas—then you can always just use the audio feature to set up group chats that are audio only.

Just because you're not physically in the office doesn't mean that meetings do not need to happen. Stay the course, keep an agenda, take notes—basically do everything you would do if you were in the office.



Accountability Creates Stability!

For those who are moving to a mobile office, things will likely be a bit shaky at first. This is uncharted territory for many companies, and there may not have been a plan in place to transition to a remote office so quickly. Yet despite the challenges of going completely virtual, it remains crucial to be accountable.

Deadlines are still deadlines—and meeting with them may be more important than ever. Make sure your team is staying on track and the same goes for yourself. Even though it may be easy to push work off in this current atmosphere, do your best to meet all of your daily goals.

You and your team members are likely dealing with a number of challenges right now, from having the kids home, mounting work to keeping revenues coming in. But instead of getting bogged down by this, find a way to work around it. Triage your assignments, making sure that the most important work gets done first. If possible, stagger your schedule, allowing you and your employees to handle less important matters during quieter times. Keep open lines of communication, giving people an opportunity to help one another if they can. Though times can be tough as you transition to a mobile office, work still needs to be done on time.

In the same vein, one thing that can be done to keep things running smoothly is to create dedicated time blocks for you and your employees. If it works for you, design a daily agenda where each part of the day is dedicated to a specific task, meeting, etc.

Also, one of the benefits of a mobile office is flexibility. Though there are certainly perks to everyone keeping the same 9-5 or 10-6 hours like they would in the traditional office, going virtual allows for schedule staggering. If someone works better in the morning, allow them to start at 6 or 7 or whatever will be the most productive for them. Maybe someone is a night owl and would prefer doing their work from 2-10. If your business can allow for it, this might be a good idea, allowing your company to “keep its doors open” for business hours for the bulk of the day.



QUICK TIPS

1. Try to stick to your "normal" schedule
2. Stay flexible as things evolve
3. Don't be afraid to try new approaches to old tasks
4. Don't let out of sight mean out of mind (goes for yourself, employees, clients, etc.)
5. Stay as positive as possible



It's Automatic!

When it comes to a remote office, making sure things are running smoothly is key. One of the best ways to achieve this is to invest time and money into CRM and automation software, allowing your company to operate quickly and efficiently on a variety of fronts. Automation programs, like KEAP (AKA Infusionsoft), can help day-to-day operations in a number of areas. These programs will keep your contact records organized with notes, status updates, prospect scoring, and reminders. KEAP, which is what we use for our Agency and a majority of our clients, goes way beyond keeping track of your clients, it also allows you automate email marketing campaigns, to provide extensive outreach to existing and prospective clients.

The real power in a good CRM tool are the automation capabilities that are able to manage workflows, sales processes, follow ups and drip sequences that will instantly save you time. Overall, there are many aspects of day-to-day operations that can be aided by automation programs, do your research and choose one that is right for you. Also, do not get overwhelmed by them, there are consultants like us that can do the heavy lifting to get the foundation of your CRM & automation software set up for your use. No need to spend countless hours trying to figure it out on your own when you can get it implemented by professionals quickly.



Keep Your Morale High!

For those who work in a virtual office, sometimes the interaction with other people can be quite limited. It is important to make sure that you and your employees don't feel isolated—especially in these times as the world grapples with a pandemic.

Try to keep morale in the office up as much as possible. There are a many ways this can be done. For starters, you could schedule a social video chat once a day where everyone talks to one another. And not about work and what needs to be done, but instead about anything they want, whether it's about a new show they have binged or a book they've read, what are they doing with the family to keep occupied, etc. Even though people are working from their homes, it's still possible to create an activity that brings some enjoyment into everyone's lives. Try playing an online game together, hold a trivia contest, or even have a dedicated happy hour for employees over video chat. Just because you're working outside of an office doesn't mean that you can't have fun, or have to feel alone.



It's Time to Adapt!

For some businesses, working remotely is a natural fit. However, as many companies are being forced into a remote model, changes need to be made. It is important to be able to adapt on the fly. A number of businesses are going to lose streams of income in the wake of everything that is happening right now.

Rather than taking those losses, try to find ways to adapt and find new methods of bringing in money. For instance, you may have a company that relied heavily on in-person corporate trainings for a chunk of their annual revenue. Since that's not an option right now, why not adapt the training, create a webinar, and offer it online instead? This way, you can still bring in money, increase your outreach, and deliver the same product in a different form. Or for businesses that relied on a storefront, why not change to a delivery model for the time being or create a new e-commerce model? This may not be possible for some, but for others, finding new and creative ways to generate revenue is key.



It's All About Connections!

For businesses in the current climate, one of the most effective ways to keep things going could lie in creating partnerships. As many businesses shift to a remote model, finding ways to team up with other companies could create quite a boon. For instance, if you're in a certain industry, such as the conflict mediation field, you provide clients with a certain array of services. However, there may be a practice area or two that you can't offer. But in this current climate, you could team up with another firm that hypothetically lacks one or two of the things you provide, yet provides clients something you don't, creating a mutually beneficial business partnership. In this scenario, you partner on project or refer clients to them, and they can refer clients to you.

Ultimately, as more and more businesses shift to a remote model, there is an opportunity to keep things moving on the financial side. Don't be afraid to reach out to others in the field, as creating ways to team up could potentially lead to continued business down the road.



Trim the Fat!

Whether you are being forced to go mobile or electing to start a virtual office on your own accord, going remote offers an opportunity to reflect on how your company spends money. For businesses who are changing their model in the wake of the pandemic, this is an opportunity to evaluate the financial side of your company. What are the truly essential costs? Where could we spend less or completely cut and still be okay? These are the types of questions companies are asking right now.

When you go remote, it becomes crystal clear that not every expenditure is necessary. Maybe it is not worth paying for software you don't use, possibly cut dollars on your internet service or you can possibly pause other services that are not currently needed while no one is in the office. Though times are tough throughout the country right now, this current climate does provide a chance to give a second look at how money is being spent and how it can be spent more efficiently.



**Market More While Your
Competition is Snoozing!**

Now that you have moved to a mobile office, you may think that marketing shouldn't be one of your immediate priorities. However, that is the opposite of true. Right now is the time to let everyone know you are there for them. Your approach to how you market might be different than what you have done in the past, but now that you are in a virtual office, keep your foot on the gas and think about the ways you can reach existing and potential clients. This could mean stepping up your email marketing, increasing your footprint on social media, or creating videos.

This is also a great time to re-evaluate your brand and marketing materials - maybe it is time to freshen things up. When was the last time you updated your website? Is it up to today's standards, is it mobile compliant, does it highlight your latest projects, share your latest success stories? We hear it all the time and yes I have even said it myself, "We don't have the time" well maybe now is the best time to take advantage of advancing your business forward so you when all is said and done, you have a plan and the tools you need to thrive.

As you transition to a new environment, don't forget about the basics.



Be There Without Being There!

During these times, having a strong video message can go a long, long way. This is where PrintAVizion comes in, this is the most effective direct marketing technology on the planet that allows thin LCD screens to be built into just about anything. Video brochures, hardbound video books, video postcards, video business cards and even video boxes can combine video, audio, and print to reach and WOW your target audience.

Using PrintAVizion can help you reach your audience in a variety of manners. Perhaps you want to make a video catalog to showcase your products, a welcome video book to share valuable information on your services, a video business card to highlight your testimonials.

Video messaging can have a tremendous impact on your business and is a great tool to build credibility. Through the many options offered by PrintAVizion, your customized video message can be created swiftly and effectively, allowing you to market in a whole different way and put the power of a video message directly in your audience's hands.

This is a solution that we have been implementing for ourselves and our clients for over a decade.



Be Resilient!

Not only do we all need to survive, we need to thrive. How can you take advantage of this trying time that we are all going to experience together? This is the time for leaders to step up, help people, and come together to make a stronger future. Don't get too bogged down by the negative and be creative on how you can make difference, whether it be for yourself, your business, or for others.

From someone that has been through the recession of 2008, we have to take action and not sit back and think things are going to get better. Don't just look under the hood, look down the road - focus on priorities then build short-term and long-term goals. Keep your team engaged, discover their deeper talents and all work for the common good of keeping things on track.

We wish you all the best and hope you found some strategies that will help you through this blip in our history. Staying healthy and enjoying time with your family is paramount.

When you are ready to discuss strategies or ways to re-imagine/re-engineer your business, please schedule a call with me at yourdmc.com/schedule.



Schedule your strategy call with Devin at
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