

Using tech for social needs in lockdown

By [Dylan Verhave](#)

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With the lockdown in South Africa in full effect, many are turning to online communities to stay updated and share in each other's concerns, provide tips, and even help with the influx of homework. During the current Covid-19 pandemic, such online communities and tools will become paramount to easing the collective anxiety being felt.



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Concepts like social distancing, self-isolation, and others have become part of the daily dialogue. Many countries are in complete lockdown with citizens having restricted movement...only being allowed to travel to buy food and receive medical care. This is where technology can really highlight the benefits of people being able to digitally connect with one another.

The past two weeks have seen local businesses starting to implement work from home policies for staff able to do so. And with all non-essential services currently closed for 21 days, the focus is on the efficacy of technologies available to still provide people with the means to earn a living and keep industry going.

Understanding the impact

A lockdown does not mean a complete shutdown of a country. Instead, it is focused on minimising the movement of people to limit the spread of Covid-19. But even though working from home might seem like it can only be a wonderful experience, it is easy to become isolated from colleagues and friends. This can lead to depression and a lack of purpose, especially for people who simply cannot fulfil their work responsibilities from home. A community app, therefore, fulfils an invaluable social need in these difficult times.

Being able to communicate with members of one's community will arguably become critical over the next several weeks, especially when the realities of the lockdown start to hit home. Companies, communities, and other groups still need an effective way to get their respective messages across. And while instant communication tools such as WhatsApp are good, they cannot fulfil all the requirements of the content that needs to be distributed.

In this regard, communities mean more than just a neighbourhood. It can translate to a sales team or the entire staff body, a church congregation, a school, or even an entire municipality. To this end, PeppaComm has developed a White Label solution that can be branded and themed according to any community - whether corporate, governmental, or even personal.

Stay informed

This app uses push notifications that are backed up on email. It consists of several modules that clients can easily customise, add, or remove according to their unique community needs. For example, message groups can be created with several sub-groups to send relevant content to members. A news or messages module can be used to distribute payslips and important health and safety information as it becomes available.

Rich, multimedia content distribution is critical during the lockdown. The more accurate and relevant the information people have access to, the less stressed they will become. The full impact of the lockdown is yet to be felt. And even when it eventually ends, the economic and social repercussions could remain for years to come. Using innovative community-based apps can help mitigate some of the risks associated with self-isolation and ensure people remain well informed during the national health crisis.

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