



The acronym VUCA has been widely used in the global business community and this brings to life what Singapore and Singaporeans are facing. We indeed live in a world that is Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

The spread of COVID-19 has indeed impacted our lives, health and perhaps, some of us have either known someone or even experienced losing someone to this virus! This virus is not going to go away in a blink of an eye or a snap of our fingers! It will take some time before a vaccine is to be developed and passed before human trials can even begin. Thus far, from what we have seen on both mainstream and social media, it has been a flurry of irrational behavior, fear and panic.

Ever since Monday evening, my phone has been going off non-stop with the sudden implementation where the Prime Minister of Malaysia closed its borders. This does not only affect the almost 300,000 workers that commute daily across the causeway but as well the disruptions in supply chain for both countries.

However, I take comfort that at least some like-minded folks have come together, to show empathy, innovate and prepare for uncertain outcomes. Some in the hospitality industry have even come together to offer temporary accommodation for the next 14 days, some have opened up their foreign worker dormitories and others who have accommodation in Singapore are also opening up whatever space is left in their own rental apartments for their co-workers. Some lessons that we can take away from what we have thus experienced as we face the reality of a prolonged pandemic:

- Don't Panic, Embrace Reality – Focusing energy through being panic is the least and last on your mind. It is pointless and does nothing for you and your organisation. Worst, when leaders panic, poor decision-making creeps in and you might be worst off where you had started. Instead, embrace reality and set key priorities to tide yourself and the organisation over this period of time. Bring your people together, brainstorm, allow

creativity to flow, work with what you have and share what you have! – this brings to mind the scene in the movie Apollo 13 where the teams were put together to work out how to bring the crew safely back to earth after a series of explosions.

- Have a plan but execute it with finesse – Most organisations by now should have already a BCP plan. If you have not developed one, there are many resources that one can tap upon, so don't panic. However, most organisations still fail badly in their plans, why? Because it is not executed with finesse! Communications breakdown, systems can't match up, finger pointing etc. When leaders say to execute with finesse, what they are objectively saying is "are the plans clear and do the people know what to do and how to do and when to do it?" Clarity is fundamental and it is not about just having a good paper plan, it is the clarity on being able to communicate the plan that matters! Top down, bottom up, we need to communicate the plans to our people.
- Two is better than one – This is not the time to hold back but instead share what we have. Since Monday evening, a few organisations, such as RELC has come forward to open their rooms etc. SHRI has also put forward a request for members to see what resources there are amongst our members so that resources could be shared among the communities.

Take comfort knowing that there is always a silver lining at the end. Use this time to take a hard look at your workflows; be creative, empower your teams, challenge yet steer them, collaborate and be open to ideas from not only your customers but also from your competitors.

Lastly, SHRI is here to support you and let us journey together to overcome this crisis and invest in developing and preparing our people for the upturn!

Yours Sincerely,

Alvin Goh  
Executive Director, SHRI

For further queries or clarifications on accommodation for affected workers, please contact:

**Ministry of Manpower**

Application form: <https://form.gov.sg>

Online enquiry: [www.mom.gov.sg/feedback](http://www.mom.gov.sg/feedback)

Website: [www.mom.gov.sg](http://www.mom.gov.sg)

Advisory on COVID-19: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19>