



# RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF SHIFTS IN WORK MODES

VALUES FOR POST PANDEMIC  
SUSTAINABILITY

VOLUME 2

**Kemi Ogunyemi**  
**Adaora I. Onaga**

# **Responsible Management of Shifts in Work Modes**

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# **Responsible Management of Shifts in Work Modes – Values for Post Pandemic Sustainability, Volume 2**

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To our families, especially the generations to come.

May everyone who picks up this book find within its covers some actionable reflections on living sustainably and responsibly in the new normal.

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# Contents

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| List of Figures and Tables | <i>ix</i>   |
| About the Contributors     | <i>xi</i>   |
| Foreword                   | <i>xvii</i> |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Chapter 1 Responsible Leadership for the New Normal:<br/>Ensuring Fairness in Business and Health</b><br><i>Kemi Ogunyemi and Adaora I. Onaga</i> | <i>1</i> |
|--|----------|

## Part 1: Leading the Way

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 2 Ethical Leadership in Time of Crises:<br/>Implications for Small Business Leaders</b><br><i>Nneka Okekearu and Stanley Ibeku</i> | <i>23</i> |
|---|-----------|

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 3 New Normal and Old Wisdom: Converging<br/>CEO and Academic Perspectives for Responsible<br/>Management Education and Leadership</b><br><i>Umesh Mukhi and Camilla Quental</i> | <i>35</i> |
|--|-----------|

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 4 Corporate Governance in a Post-pandemic World</b><br><i>Oluwakemi Ojenike</i> | <i>51</i> |
|--|-----------|

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 5 People Management in Fluid Workspaces:<br/>Transplanting Corporate Values and Ethical Culture</b><br><i>Gloria Nnanke Essien</i> | <i>67</i> |
|---|-----------|

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Chapter 6 Responsible Management in Covid Pandemic Times:<br/>The Case of James Cubitt Facility Managers</b><br><i>Kemi Ogunyemi and Akunna Osa-Edoh</i> | <i>83</i> |
|---|-----------|



**Part 2: Leading the Way While Staying Strong**

|                   |   |     |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| <b>Chapter 7</b>  | <b>Triaging and Managing Covid – Inequities and Ethical Decision-Making</b>   |     |
|                   | <i>Emmanuel Effa and Akaninyene Otu</i>   | 97  |
| <b>Chapter 8</b>  | <b>An Intersectional Analysis of Health Inequalities and Vulnerabilities During the Covid-19 Pandemic</b>   |     |
|                   | <i>Monir Mazaheri and Henrik Eriksson</i>   | 109 |
| <b>Chapter 9</b>  | <b>Ensuring the Health and Safety of Employees at the Risk of Intimate Partner Violence While Working from Home: New Insights Gained During the Covid-19 Pandemic</b> |     |
|                   | <i>Leah Okenwa-Emegwa</i>   | 119 |
| <b>Chapter 10</b> | <b>Unpacking Opportunities and Challenges for Responsible Healthcare: Nigeria’s Covid-19 Experience</b>   |     |
|                   | <i>Nkemdilim Iheanachor, Oluseye Jegede and Emma Etim</i>   | 129 |
| <b>Chapter 11</b> | <b>Community Health Structures and the Covid-19 Response in Low-Resource Settings: The that Case of Village Health Teams</b>  |     |
|                   | <i>Kyamulabi Agnes and Mugambwa Joshua</i>  | 143 |
| <b>Chapter 12</b> | <b>The Covid-19 Pandemic and the Future of Work: Developing Resilient People and Upskilling</b>   |     |
|                   | <i>Rukevwe Olughor</i>  | 163 |
| <b>Chapter 13</b> | <b>The Business of Health and the Health of Business: Principles and Virtues Post Pandemic</b>  |     |
|                   | <i>Adaora I. Onaga and Kemi Ogunyemi</i>  | 177 |
|                   | Index   | 191 |

# List of Figures and Tables

## Figures

|            |   |     |
|------------|---|-----|
| Fig. 5.1.  | Culture Operating System.                         | 72  |
| Fig. 5.2.  | Vision Attainment.                                | 73  |
| Fig. 5.3.  | Simple Talent Management Plan.                    | 78  |
| Fig. 7.1.  | Consensus Agreements on Guideline Considerations. | 101 |
| Fig. 10.1. | Competing Goals.                                  | 132 |
| Fig. 10.2. | Health Expenditure in Nigeria (2019, 2020).       | 136 |
| Fig. 10.3. | Covid-19 Cases in Nigeria as of 3 July 2020.      | 137 |

## Tables

|             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Table 1.1.  | Leadership Qualities for Responsible and Fair Stakeholders Management.                              | 6   |
| Table 3.1.  | Arianna's views on wellbeing and leadership during Covid-19 period.                                 | 39  |
| Table 3.2.  | New Normal transformation contrasting the Classical and the Holistic views of Management Education. | 46  |
| Table 5.1.  | Highlighting Values as Action Words (Behaviours).   | 75  |
| Table 5.2.  | Profiling Form Template Used at SiSa.   | 77  |
| Table 10.1. | Doctors Trained in Nigeria Versus Number of Doctors Practising in Nigeria.                          | 133 |
| Table 10.2. | Destinations Where Nigerian Doctors Prefer to Practice.   | 134 |
| Table 10.3. | Pattern of Healthcare Financing in Nigeria Before the Outbreak of Covid-19.                         | 135 |
| Table 10.4. | Outcome of Healthcare Financing.  | 136 |
| Table 11.1. | VHTs Response to COVID-19 in Rural Communities.   | 151 |
| Table 11.2. | Code Book Development.  | 154 |
| Table 13.1. | Virtues for Sustainability in Business Health and Health Businesses.                                | 188 |

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# Foreword

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought out the *worst*, and the *best*, in people and organisations. The *worst* has been reflected in the abuse of emergency funds released to ease the economic burden faced by business and society; public–private collusion and sheer corruption; and putting people, especially workers, in harm’s way to further profits. The *best* has been displayed by business and civil society leaders, and their organisations, going beyond the call of duty to support society as it grappled with an unknown and frightening future. Values can be broad and inclusive, or they can be narrow and self-serving. Positive values show conscience, a sense of duty towards others – values such as integrity, transparency, support, care, and many other positive values come to mind. When thinking of some of the most disgraceful examples of greed that have come to light, values such as dishonesty, selfishness, and self-indulgence, reveal themselves.

Responsible Management of Shifts in Work Modes – Values for a Post Pandemic Future comes at an opportune time as management faces a forever changed work-life environment – the ‘new normal’. It is a stage when businesses must plot the course forward in a still-uncertain future. To do this with integrity will be the challenge of our business leaders. The book reflects on the past, present, and the future in the face of the pandemic, founded on excellent thought leadership and empirical research, to provide important observations into the new reality of work modes. The editors, Kemi Ogunyemi and Adaora Onaga have made an exemplary attempt to chart a course and stimulate conversation on the important topic. The book is well-structured, reads well, and is a must-read for not just academics, but business practitioners and policy-makers as they confront this changed working environment. What values should be inculcated in business during this shift in work modes? This book provides some valuable insights in this regard.

The introductory chapter (Kemi Ogunyemi and Adaora I. Onaga) considers the business–health intersection and reflects on the ‘chaotic and unprepared (health-care) system’ – this vulnerability constrained healthcare delivery during the pandemic. The narrative then turned to the significance of leadership and the importance of building collaborations starting with the employer–employee relationship. This relationship, I concur, is critical. At the heart of such collaboration, at the heart of such engaged relationships, lie values. Values are the invisible tie that binds people and creates an aligned organisation committed to ethical values and as a result, effective service delivery should naturally occur. The chapter is then followed aptly by a focus on ethical leadership, this time considering

small- and medium-sized enterprises – possibly more susceptible to the economic challenges the pandemic posed (Nneka Okekearu and Stanley Ibeku).

The book then continues its journey, contemplating Arianna Huffington views on the new normal, and the relationship between corporate governance and organisational resilience post-pandemic (Oluwakemi Ojenike). The workplace then takes centre stage with a chapter (Gloria Nnanke Essien) on people management in fluid workspaces, and which suggests a need for adaptation, flexibility, and intentionality by organisations to ensure survival during such a shift to survive. A management perspective of responsible leadership during a pandemic was presented (Kemi Ogunyemi and Akunna Osa-Edoh). A later Chapter 12 focuses on the future of work and the need for adaptability from an employee perspective and upskilling in order to develop resilient people, which in turn, will contribute to resilient businesses (Rukevwe Olughor).

The healthcare sector from a specific African perspective, is often reflected upon in the book. This is an important contribution by the book as it contextualises the unique challenges faced on the continent during the pandemic. For example, medical doctors providing their insights on ethically complex decisions during the pandemic triage process and the need to ensure inequities are not exacerbated in the procedure (Emmanuel Effa and Akaninyene Otu). It speaks to the necessity of introducing well-considered protocols and capacity building for health workers that takes onto account acceptable ethical considerations. Inequities and vulnerabilities received further attention suggesting a need to address the ‘structural and systemic racism’ in the healthcare sector (Monir Mazaheri and Henrik Eriksson). A later chapter focuses on Nigeria suggesting that while there have been positive and negative consequences for the healthcare sector in Nigeria, the negative impact has been overwhelming with grave consequences – highlighting the need for investment in infrastructure and support for healthcare workers (Nkemdilim Iheanachor, Oluseye Jegede, and Emma Etim). The rural, low-resource setting in Uganda received consideration by Kyamulabi and Mugambwa, suggesting that village health teams faced a difficult task when the basic necessities, such as water, soap, and masks were not available.

Another important topic on intimate partner violence receives scrutiny in the book – a topic relevant considering the shift of many employees to remote working from home. It identifies the responsibility of business to be proactive in protecting employees at risk of such violence and presents some useful guidelines for businesses such as introducing relevant company policy, providing team support, and access to information and training (Leah Okenwa-Emegwa).

This book concludes with an in-depth inquiry into the principles and virtues needed for the future with specific reference to the healthcare sector in which the editors, Kemi Ogunyemi and Adaora I. Onaga, carefully navigate the various philosophical views. They suggest that such a time of disruption during the pandemic sets the stage for moral learning and that the virtues of humility, fortitude, patience, and resilience can be acquired or improved.

*Responsible Management of Shifts in Work Modes – Values for a Post Pandemic Future* (Vol. 2) is a compelling read that eloquently considers the challenges posed by the pandemic on the health care sector, small business and business in

general, and on business leaders. It investigates the impact this has and will continue to have on employees as the workplace evolves and identifies constraints to employee engagement and risks the employees face. The African context is important, and issues of vulnerabilities and inequalities are established and evaluated. Values remain the ‘golden-thread’ that binds the book, and that provides the orientation for responsible management for the future.

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