

# COVID-19–The 30-Day Mark – A Discussion by Companies on Navigating the New Reality

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On April 14, 2020, the Sheppard Mullin French desk hosted a webinar on the impact of COVID-19 on various business sectors. The webinar was organized as a roundtable discussion with two business leaders, Christopher Mars, the U.S. COO of Marie Blanchere, a leading European traditional bakery brand, and Daniel H. Connor, the U.S. CEO of Sia Partners, a leading international independent management and AI consulting firm. The discussion was moderated by partner and Chair of the French Desk, Valérie Demont, and associate Karl Buhler and focused on the following:

- Each speaker emphasized their foremost concern relative to staff safety and health as well as the proactive steps they have taken and continue to take in order to respond to protect their people and customers as well as ensure business continuity in these challenging times.
- Both business leaders discussed their experience with the Paycheck Protection Program. The takeaway there is it is best to work closely with individual banks and have all paperwork completed and verified so that submissions could be approved as quickly as possible.
- The speakers discussed the enhanced needs for client and team engagement. All-staff videoconferences continue to be an effective way of coordinating logistics and operations among teams as well as to keep team morale.
- The experts also discussed their strategies of maintaining the most protective and proactive cybersecurity programs in place, a need which will become even more central to business continuity as many facets of commerce are moved online.
- In the midst of all of the uncertainty, both business leaders spoke about the need to give back and their efforts to help their communities and support staff and customers alike.
- They both discussed lessons learned from the crisis and ways in which they plan to further improve communication among team members and with clients and customers.

This was the first of many similar roundtables of business leaders who are thinking about the ways in which coordination and proactive business changes will ensure the success of companies navigating a post-COVID-19 landscape. A recording of the full discussion is available [here](#)

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