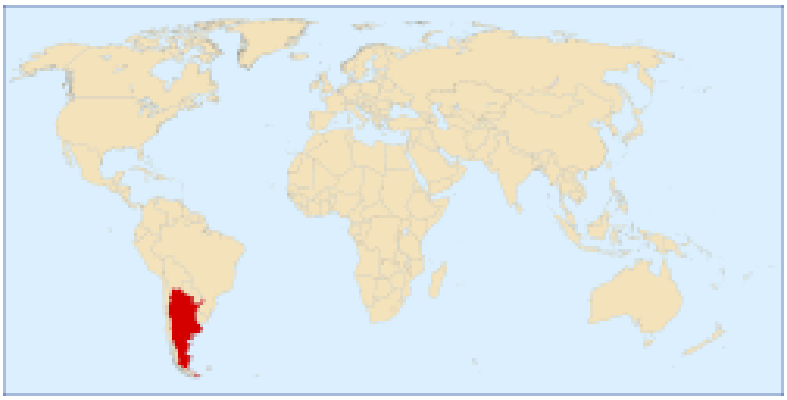
Project Management Update from Argentina [1]



By Adriana Cibelli
International Correspondent
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Agility, a built in capacity in new generation people?

This Coronavirus crisis has led us to understand that there is a latent solidarity in our society capable of being activated in times of crisis.

Well about the start of the mandatory quarantine in our country due to the current COVID19 pandemic, Lab-a, an start up of young programmers, engineers and designers, whose mission is to create high-impact solutions through technology in the field of health, decided to start thinking about "how to be helpful in the context of the national emergency", in the words of its CEO, Facundo Cancino, a 26-year-old electronic engineering student.

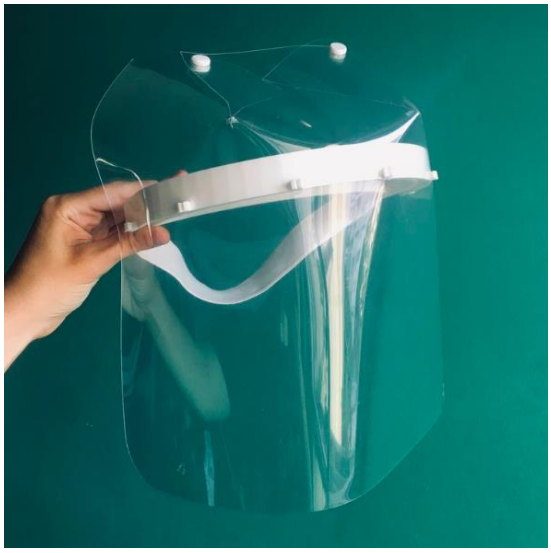
The work team had declared quarantine in its workshop long before the government decreed it as mandatory. At that time they began the search for what would be the most necessary protection elements for health professionals and found that they were facial protection masks consisting of a support headband fastened to the upper part of the face with a frontal transparent acetate sheet to protect both the eye area, the nose and the mouth at the same time.

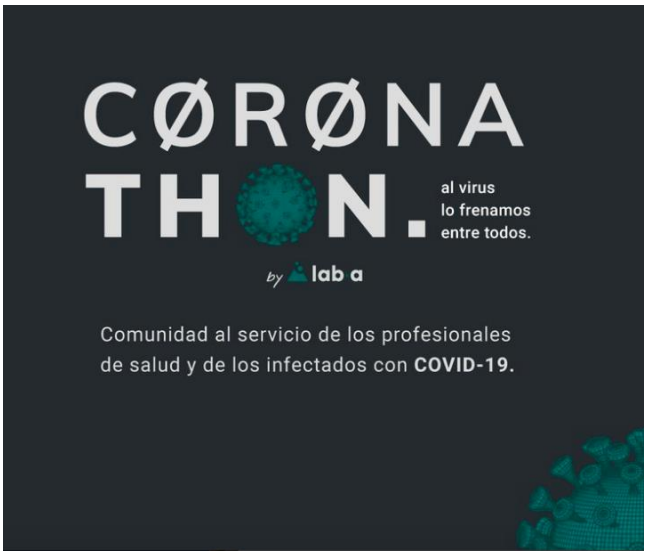
They designed a prototype that was soon submitted for validation to a group of infectious disease specialists, immunologists and respiratory kinesiologists from the Santa Catalina Clinic and the Hospital de Clínicas in Buenos Aires City. The initial design was improved in this incremental way until its approval by the specialists and at that point gave birth to the initiative called CORONATHON, a solidarity-based,

[1] How to cite this report: Cibelli, A. (2020). Agility, a built in capacity in new generation people: September 2020 Project Management report from Argentina, *PM World Journal*, Vol IX, Issue IX, September.

non-profit endeavor, whose guiding idea was to manufacture and provide these personal protection solutions at no cost.

These masks would provide certain degree of protection to people assisting COVID 19 patients, since this kind of elements were not produced or at least not at the needed scale in the country. This was an alarming issue in our health system nationwide.





Lab-a decided to put aside their normal operations and redefine its focus to fully dedicate to this initiative.

Since they had 3D printers, they decided to make the support bands with that technology. Logically, due to the large scale, the printers they had would not be enough, so they asked their colleagues and acquaintances for help and thus a great number of people voluntarily joined the initiative immediately to help, each one performing the tasks from their respective homes. This gave them hope, filled them with energy and gave them strength to face, almost without sleeping during three long days, the hard work the had ahead to organize the entire production and logistics chain, in their own words.

What is surprising to me is not only the hjgh spirit of solidarity of all these young people, but the effectiveness with which they raised the project and started it in a record time of 4 days, as well as how they managed it in such an outstanding way with results worthy of being admired by the most experienced project managers.

During those 4 long days, they organized as a community, met with the National Ministry of Health, generated a registry with all countrywide public health centers, made alliances with an transparent acetate sheet supplier, who also performed the cuts and piercings according to the design, they also partnered a logistics company, which delivered supplies to the 3D makers, transferred their deliverables to the assembly center and then dispatched the finished product all over the country.

To fund this project they resorted to anonymous donations, collected by a cross funding organization serving start ups with socio-environmental impact.

The project was planned to be executed in two phases, the first of which would use 3D printing to elaborate products, and the second one would consist of manufacturing the masks by plastic injection technology, releasing volunteers to recover their 3D printers and return to their normal activities.

The initial objective was to produce 10,000 masks per month and during the first month, 13,000 masks were manufactured and by the end of May 32,050 masks had been delivered to professionals in more than 150 public hospitals in the country.

In order to satisfy the needs of more hospitals and health centers, a relationship was established between the number of masks to be delivered and the number of beds available for care of those infected by this virus. This ratio was 0.7 masks per available bed.

The distribution of roles and responsibilities excelled.

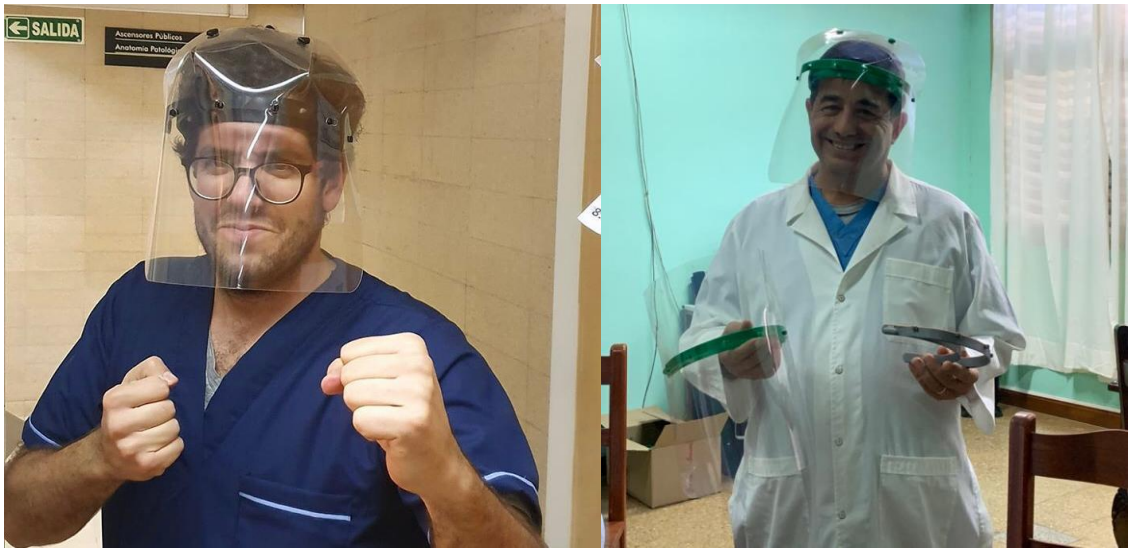
The initial product design and its progressive adaptation was carried out by the Lab A team. They acted as Product Owner of the project. The production team consisted of more than 300 people who printed 3D supports from their homes, with more than 600 3D printers working at the same time; there were 10 persons working as coordinators who were in charge of organizing production and contacting hospitals and health centers to receive orders and coordinate deliveries, each of them with geographical areas under their responsibility with proximity as the assigning criteria. There was also a general coordinator role working directly with the team of coordinators, holding a virtual daily meeting every day at 8 PM so as to synchronize the teamwork and detect impediments to normal progress that might be present needing immediate resolution.

Of course, the entire project team organization went on improving, adjusting their processes in an agile way as the project evolved.

As part of the project, Facebook and Instagram profiles were generated and a web page was designed, www.coronathon.com.ar, where requests for masks were received from health centers and where the number of masks produced, delivered and those that remained to be produced according to the settled objective were reported in real time. This website also showed the number of masks delivered per day and the health centers receiving them.

At the bottom of the web page, eloquent photos of health personnel receiving the donations and names of all the working participants in this magnificent initiative were placed.

Truth must be told, most doctors and nurses, especially those with ages close to those considered at risk, felt distressed being exposed to infections on a daily basis, many of them even traveling in public transport to go to their jobs which increased their risks. They got some amount of personal protection elements from their institutions which were not enough in quantity to what the situation required. In this context, when receiving the protective masks from CORONATHON, they showed a deep gratitude, great joy and enormous emotion.



I had the great satisfaction of interviewing Daniela Sosa, a young 24-year-old audiovisual producer working in a small company of 3D printing collectibles called Cogonauts. Daniela worked from the beginning of the CORONATHON project as a volunteer fulfilling the role of coordinator,

Cogonauts is a startup of young industrial designers and audiovisual artists, one of them in charge of developing the stories of each character, founder of the company and Daniela's brother. Cogonauts suspended their operations to strongly collaborate with the Coronathon project, although the online store continued to be active providing that they had enough stock to respond to the demand for 30 days ahead.

Now that Cogonauts returned to its normal operations, Daniela continues to serve as volunteer coordinator in the second phase of the CORONATHON project; all 3D printers have been released and so have the production teams, only coordinators remained working in this second phase of the project.

I was moved by our talk, she transmits so much sensitivity and so much desire to help the community; with an agile mindset, she is a very active worker, with a perfect understanding of her role and responsibility and an interesting vision.

Daniela says that working on the CORONATHON project was an exhausting task, they ran against time, but the feeling of working for social good kept her and her team absolutely motivated. She was willing to have an active role in this pandemic, staying home was not enough, she needed to help in some way. And by helping, she helped herself. She said: “Coronathon saved me in this quarantine, it helped me to go through this instance of so much fear and uncertainty by collaborating with society”. But she added even more, she said that besides some kind of friendship arose between those who worked together and that those beautiful experiences will be beautiful stories to tell their grandchildren in their maturity.

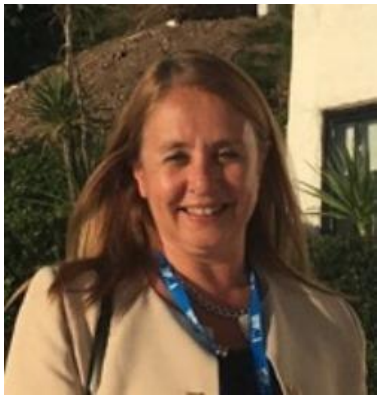
The CORONATHON iniciative was a successful project case that delivered value, not only to health personnel, but to society as a whole.

As a citizen of this country, I am tremendously proud of this initiative and the way it was managed. As aunt of 6 doctors, an enormous THANK YOU comes from the deepest of my heart.

https://lab-a.com.ar/

https://www.cogonauts.com.ar/

About the Author



Adriana Cibelli

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Adriana Cibelli, PMP is Director of activePMO, a Project Management and Leadership consulting services and training firm in Argentina.

Adriana has a degree in Electronic Engineering from Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, and a post degree in Design of Intelligent Buildings, from the same university and has managed projects for more than 20 years. She is a professor and director of Project Management and Leadership programs in some important Universities of Argentina and an International speaker. Adriana holds the Project Management Professional (PMP®) credential, is certified as Scrum Master (CSM) from Scrum Alliance, PMO-CP from PMO Global Alliance, and an SDI Certified Facilitator from Personal Strengths©.

Mrs. Cibelli is member and volunteer of PMI, has been Professional Development VP of the Board of Directors of PMI Buenos Aires and is the former Governance & Policies VP in the same chapter. Elected President in 2019, Adriana will become President of the PMI Buenos Aires Chapter on January 1st, 2021. She is currently working as a coordinator for the C.A.P.A. committee with the goal of integrating efforts and sharing resources between Argentinian PMI Chapters.

Adriana serves as an international correspondent for the *PM World Journal* in Argentina since February 2020. She can be contacted at adriana@activepmo.com and www.activepmo.com.