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A Heads Up with Markus Tillmann | CMY Brand Solutions

With Covid-19 lockdowns worldwide and health authorities urging people to self-isolate and practice social distancing on a massive scale as part of an enormous effort to #FlattenTheCurve of this global pandemic ... we are reaching out to industry friends, colleagues, associates, partners, etc., and asking them to share their #StayAtHome and #QuarantineAndChill activities with us during this extraordinary time.

Before the crisis, Markus Tillmann designed and planned a wide variety of projects as a freelance lighting designer, working on exhibitions, events and theatre performances. With much attention to detail, many highly memorable events were created.

Additionally, he continues to develop concepts for occupational health and safety, ensuring that events can run smoothly from start to finish.

Due to the cancellation of all events caused by the Coronavirus crisis, there is currently a situation unique in his 25-year career – no project activities.

Robe: Where are you right now?

Markus: Mainly in the CMY Brand Solutions office in Wuppertal, Germany.

Robe: How are things emerging from the lockdown in your region / country?

Markus: A new normality is slowly returning. The first small events are already being held again. Many online events during the Corona time were not able to replace offline events completely. People's need to go out and experience community and entertainment live is something that the online formats limited to image and sound, cannot truly satisfy.

That special atmosphere and the feeling of community and shared experience with like-minded people with its corresponding exchange about these experiences of e.g. concerts ... is simply missing.

Robe: How did you spend your time during lockdown?

Markus: The isolation and the general shutdown have created a new awareness in all situations. The deceleration of the everyday life has highlighted essential things, like family and friendships, but also simple neighbourhood relations are now in the foreground which otherwise pass too briefly in our fast-moving world.

Despite the almost worldwide lockdown, my network of planners and I did not remain idle and used the time to set up a new company.

CMY Brand Solutions was founded as a full-service agency and covers a complete range of technical AVL planning including health and safety measures. Flexible teams are created to ensure optimal planning and achieve the best possible results, tailored to the needs of customers.

For the current Covid 19 event requirements, a three-stage modular system was developed to enable a secure implementation for organisers and visitors with minimised risk.

At almost the same time, CMY Brand Solutions China was founded in Shanghai for the Asian market, enabling the operative business with local staff and planners.

The broad professional spectrum of planning services and the possibility to work flexibly and location-independently offers customers a significant added value. For example, with a qualified contact person in Germany and access to local personnel in the Chinese market, projects can be implemented cost-efficiently and sustainably.

Sustainable work will play an increasingly important role in the future of the event and show lighting sector and is a central component of the work of CMY Brand Solution.

It is already in the daily planning work, right up to the procurement of the used products on site. This is also where customers and manufacturers can act to help create the appropriate environment.

For example, in the development of luminaires, away from LED "disposable products", and towards luminaires consisting of exchangeable system components with a long life cycle.

It is not acceptable, for example, for sustainably acting customers to illuminate their products with short-life luminaires whose disposal is economically more favourable than maintenance and servicing.

The situation of the last few months has clearly proven that successful and goal-oriented work in virtual meeting rooms is possible and that travel activities can be reduced to a minimum. In addition, small IT units without large server infrastructures of their own allow for a significant reduction of the CO² footprint of an office.

Robe: What are your biggest concerns / considerations as lockdowns ease worldwide?

Markus: The biggest concern is that the careless handling of the regained freedom will lead to setbacks or further lockdowns. The underestimated handling of the pandemic in individual countries and the consequences resulting from it is omnipresent.

Robe: Do you have any thoughts / predictions about how and when live events and the industry will re-start?

Markus: Live events will soon be possible again in a reduced form with appropriate measures. Forward-looking planning will include elements like visitor flow / management simulations and appropriate monitoring, paired with the relevant hygiene concepts.

Robe: Going forward, how do you think live events and the entertainment technology industry will change in a post-Covid 19 world before there is a vaccine widely available?

Markus: One approach, as it is already practiced, is to test all participants for Covid-19 in the run-up to an event. Only people with a negative test result can take part in the event – then actually without social distancing, mouth and nose protection or similar measures.

This procedure is particularly suitable for events with invited guests.

Even large events with international participation and changing visitor waves, such as those usual at dealer meetings, would be conceivable.

For events that do not allow prior testing, the distancing and crowd management measures already described above must remain.

Robe: How sustainable do you think these changes will be?

Markus: In order to avoid another large-scale lockdown with all the known negative consequences in the event of future pandemics, hygiene measures must be established which – independent of Covid-19 – will make it possible to disinfect highly frequented areas quickly, regularly and effectively.

Robe: Has anyone / anything particularly inspired you since this crisis started?

Markus: I was inspired by people like my mother, who had to experience one war and probably had worse experiences there than we had in the Corona crisis. She survived these extreme situations and always looked ahead.

Robe: Own question / answer / message of solidarity or something you'd like to say?

Markus: Every crisis offers the chance to rethink old patterns and explore new ways. Connected with this is to leave our comfort zones. We should spend less time and energy describing how badly we're all doing, and instead look ahead. #OutOfTheBox

