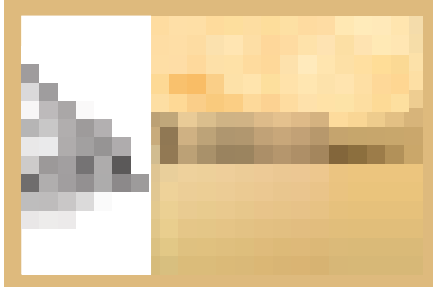




## DESPITE ALL ODDS, WE ARE STILL KEEPING THE FLAME BURNING...



**W**ow ! I must say that I am excited to be writing you this last quarter of the year. Indeed, God in his infinite mercies has seen us

through the worst of times in 2020. The global Covid-19 pandemic has really dealt its blow on the world economy since it broke out in that little town of Wuhan, China in 2019.

The pandemic, no doubt, has created a disruption in the world order as many businesses and economies experienced downturns in huge dimension leading to many corporations shutting down their operations while many lost their jobs in a monumental manner. To date, over 27.3 million people have been infected worldwide with fatalities in the region of 1 million. The resultant effect of the global pandemic is the obliteration of all business forecasts for 2020. As the world continues to search for a vaccine and permanent cure to the pandemic, businesses have taken a new dimension in a bid to stay afloat while technology has become the bedrock of many organizations in the new norm that have confronted mankind.

Companies will need to consider the impact of these changes on the way they design, communicate, build, and run the experiences that people need and want. This is without the exception of the insurance industry and by extension, our dear company, Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc. We are bracing up to the challenges and the opportunities that have emerged from the situation we have found ourselves. For us, we will keep the flame burning while we continue to evolve new ways in delighting our customers and stakeholders alike.

Interestingly, the stage for the company's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting is set haven gotten the approval of the Regulatory Bodies concerned. The Annual General Meeting will be held on October 22, 2020, at The Bay

Lounge Hall, Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, by 11:00am. However, in line with the Federal Government and Lagos State directives on restriction of gatherings of large number in curbing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, majority of the Shareholders will be participating at this year's Annual General Meeting of the Underwriting Firm online via a link on the company's website on [www.stiplc.com](http://www.stiplc.com) with the exception of the approved Proxies of the Shareholders. We look forward to a successful hosting of the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the meeting. This particular edition of the Annual General Meeting is indeed a remarkable one as the company turned 25 years as well.

The big one is here as our dear Nation marks her 60<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary on October 1, 2020. In consonance with the theme of the Independence Anniversary, we say, together, we will continue to build this nation, together, we will all make this country great and together, we will remain one United Nigeria.

Still talking about celebrations, our Head of Sales & Corporate Communications, the one we all call Banky, (Segun Bankole) will be joining the Golden Age League come October 25, 2020 as he turns 50! We wish him very hearty birthday in advance as we pray along with him that God should continue to grant him divine health and endue him with uncommon wisdom. In the same vein, the Head of ICT for Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc in the person of Lekan Oguntunde will also turn 50 in the month of December 2020. We commit his birthday to the Hands of Allah and pray that it will be another positive turning point for his life.

To all members of staff celebrating in this quarter of the year, be it birthdays, wedding anniversaries, promotions, housewarming, child dedication et al, we say a big congratulations to you all. We celebrate with you all and we are hopeful that we will always find a reason to celebrate and rejoice especially as we journey through the last quarter of the year.

See you in 2021! Cheers to an Awesome year ahead!

**Segun Bankole (Banky)**

**Editor-in-Chief**

# Smart Hacks TO MAXIMIZE Your Work Productivity

**THINGS TO NOTE:** Each morning you should take the time to prioritize the top three tasks for the day. Be clear with what you write and use more than a three-word description.

Oct - Dec 2020

## 1. Use the Pomodoro Technique

I'm not sure many of you have heard of this productivity hack, but how exactly does it supercharge your productivity?

The **Pomodoro Technique** is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. The technique uses a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. Each interval is known as a *pomodoro*, from the Italian word for 'tomato', after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer that Cirillo used as a university student.

There are six steps in the original technique:

1. Decide on the task to be done.
2. Set the pomodoro timer (traditionally to 25 minutes).
3. Work on the task.
4. End work when the timer rings and put a checkmark on a piece of paper.
5. *If you have fewer than four checkmarks*, take a short break (3–5 minutes) and then return to step 2; *otherwise* continue to step 6.
6. *After four pomodoros*, take a longer break (15–30 minutes), reset your checkmark count to zero, then go to step 1.

For the purposes of the technique, a *pomodoro* is the interval of time spent working.

Regular breaks are taken, aiding assimilation. A short (3–5 minutes) rest separates consecutive pomodoros. Four pomodoros form a set. A longer (15–30 minute) rest is taken between sets.

A goal of the technique is to reduce the impact of internal and external interruptions on focus and flow. A pomodoro is indivisible; when interrupted during a pomodoro, either the other activity must be recorded and postponed (using the *inform – negotiate – schedule – call back* strategy) or the pomodoro must be abandoned.

After task completion in a pomodoro, any time remaining could be devoted to activities such as:

1. Review and edit the work just completed.
2. Review the activities from a learning point of view: What did I learn? What could I do better or differently?
3. Review the list of upcoming tasks for the next planned Pomodoro time blocks, and start reflecting on or updating those tasks.

The magic happens after repeated usage. Once this hack becomes a habit, your ability to focus during the duration of the timer is 10x better. That's why this tactic is so powerful, it uses conditioning to put you in the zone instantly.

And since concentration is half of the productivity battle (the other half is actually starting to work), this tool is an incredibly powerful hack to add to your arsenal.

## 2. Write down Your Three Most Important Tasks (MITs)

You don't want any ambiguity in your workdays, it's a productivity killer.

Each morning you should take the time to prioritize the top three tasks for the day. Be clear with what you write and use more than a three-word description.

For instance, "*research hotels*" is bad. Instead, use "*review and compare prices of hotels x, y, & z.*" This will prevent you from drifting to semi-related tasks that don't actually accomplish anything.

The key thing about this habit is to **start the day by focusing on tasks that are important (instead of urgent)**.

**Courtesy:** Strategy & Corporate Planning Department

## POST COVID-19 EFFECTIVE PERSONAL FINANCIAL TIPS FOR HEALTHY LIVING:

Unfortunately, personal finance is not a required subject in most high schools or colleges. This lack of basic financial education leaves many young adults clueless about how to manage their money, applying for credit, and how to get or stay out of debt. Saving for retirement is an integral part of any financial plan, no matter what your age is.

Taking the time to learn a few critical financial rules may help you build a healthy financial future.

### 1. Learn Self-Control

If you're lucky, your parents taught you this skill when you were a kid. If not, keep in mind that the sooner you learn the fine art of delaying gratification, the sooner you'll find it easy to keep your finances in order. Although you can effortlessly purchase an item on credit the minute you want it, it's better to wait until you've actually saved up the money. Do you really want to pay interest on a pair of jeans or a box

Cont. on page 3

of cereal? If you want to keep your credit cards for the convenience factor or the rewards they offer, make sure to always pay your balance in full when the bill arrives, and don't carry more cards than you can keep track of. This financial tip is crucial for creating a healthy future for your credit history.

## 2. Control Your Financial Future

If you don't learn to manage your own money, other people will find ways to (mis)manage it for you. Some of these people may be ill-intentioned, like unscrupulous commission-based financial planners. Others may be well-meaning, but may not know what they're doing, like your Mum who really wants you to buy a house even though you can only afford a treacherous adjustable-rate mortgage. Instead of relying on others for advice, take charge and read a few basic books on personal finance. Once you're armed with personal finance knowledge, don't let anyone catch you off guard—whether it's a significant other that slowly siphons your bank account or friends who want you to go out and blow tons of money with them every weekend.

## 3. Know Where Your Money Goes

Once you've gone through a few personal finance books, you'll realize how important it is to make sure your expenses aren't exceeding your income. The best way to do this is by budgeting.

Once you see how your morning java adds up over the course of a month, you'll realize that making small, manageable changes in your everyday expenses can have just as big of an impact on your financial situation as getting a raise.

In addition, keeping your recurring monthly expenses as low as possible will also save you big bucks over time. If you don't waste your money on a posh apartment now, you might be able to afford a nice condo or a house before you know it.

## 4. Start an Emergency Fund

One of personal finance's oft-repeated mantras is "pay yourself first." No matter how much you owe in student loans or credit card debt, and no matter how low your salary may seem, it's wise to find some amount—any amount—of money in your budget to save in an emergency fund every month.

Having money in savings to use for emergencies can really keep you out of trouble financially and help you sleep better at night. Also, if you get into the habit of saving money and treating it as a non-negotiable monthly "expense," pretty soon you'll have more than just emergency money saved up: you'll have retirement money, vacation money, and even money for a down payment on a home.

***Don't just sock away this money under your mattress; put it in a high-interest online savings account, a certificate of deposit, or a money market account. Otherwise, inflation will erode the value of your savings.***

## 5. Start Saving for Retirement

Just as you headed off to kindergarten with your parents' hope to prepare you for success in a world that seemed eons away, you need to prepare for your retirement well in advance. Because of the way compound interest works, the sooner you start saving, the less principal you'll have to invest to end up with the amount you need to retire and the sooner you'll be able to call working an "option" rather than a "necessity."

Company-sponsored retirement plans are a particularly great choice because you get to put in pre-tax funds, companies will often match part of your contribution, which is like free money, and the contribution limits tend to be high (much more than you can contribute to an individual retirement plan).

## 6. Guard Your Health

If meeting monthly health insurance premiums seems impossible, what will you do if you have to go to the emergency room, where a single visit for a minor injury like a broken bone can cost thousands of naira? If you're uninsured, don't wait another day to apply for health /accident insurance.

You can save money by getting quotes from different insurance providers to find the lowest rates. Also, by taking daily steps now to keep yourself healthy, like eating fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, not smoking, not consuming alcohol in excess, and even driving defensively, you'll thank yourself down the road when you aren't paying exorbitant medical bills.

## 7. Protect Your Wealth

If you want to make sure that all of your hard-earned money doesn't vanish, you'll need to take steps to protect it. If you rent, get renter's insurance to protect the contents of your place from events like burglary or fire. Disability income insurance protects your greatest asset—the ability to earn an income—by providing you with a steady income if you ever become unable to work for an extended period of time due to illness or injury.

If you want help managing your money, find a fee-only financial planner to provide unbiased advice that's in your best interest, rather than a commission-based financial advisor, who earns money when you sign up with the investments his or her company backs.

You'll also want to protect your money from taxes, which is easy to do with a retirement account, and inflation, which you can do by making sure that all of your money is earning interest through vehicles like high-interest savings accounts, money market funds, stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

**Remember**, you don't need any fancy degrees or special background to become an expert at managing your finances. If you use these financial rules and tips for your life, you can be as personally prosperous as someone with a hard-won MBA in finance. Start an emergency fund and pay into it every month, even if it is a small amount.

## Mensah Simon

Head of Strategy and corporate planning

Coconut milk is not the liquid that is drained from a coconut when you cut it open like many people assume. In order to make coconut milk you will take the coconut and process the flesh, steeping it in hot water and squeezing the milk out through a cheesecloth. As this liquid sits, the cream will rise to the top, which can be used for creamy applications like curries. Fresh coconut with thick, creamy flesh will create a higher quality milk than older coconuts that have dry flesh. Compared to cow's milk, coconut milk is simple to make, easy to digest and contains an abundance of nutrients.

Below are some of the health benefits of Coconut Milk

**.Calm Nerve Cells.** Coconut milk is high in magnesium that helps to keep your blood pressure at a normal level. The combination of calcium and magnesium in coconut milk also keeps muscle and nerves from becoming overstimulated.

**.Strengthen Bones.** Coconut milk does not contain as much calcium as dairy milk but it does contain high amounts of phosphorus that can help to strengthen bones.

**.Fight Virus and Infection.** The lauric acid in coconut milk will be converted to monolaurin in your body. This compound contains antiviral and antibacterial properties.

**.Regulate Blood Sugar.** The manganese in coconut milk helps you metabolize glucose in the body to help the metabolism working at the optimum level. Manganese can also help to prevent osteoporosis, PMS, inflammation and vitamin absorption.

**.Lower Cholesterol.** Even though coconut milk is high in saturated fat, but this type of fat raises the HDL or good cholesterol while dairy based products raise the LDL or bad cholesterol. The fat in coconut milk is easy for your body to metabolize which will lower your cholesterol levels overall.

**.Relieves Arthritis.** The selenium in coconut milk acts as an antioxidant that will help to reduce free radicals that can cause joint inflammation.

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCONUT



## Quotes Of The Day!!

No matter how bad you are, you're not useless. You can still be used as a bad example.

A pastor was preaching about death to his congregation. He said, "One day, every member of this church is going to die!"

Akpos, who sat in the front row laughed excessively at the pastor.

The pastor repeated it. "I said, one day, every member of this church is going to die!"

Again akpos laughed out loud.

The irritated pastor asked Akpos, "Son, what's so funny about that?"

Akpos replied, "I'm not a member of this church!"

*The following conversation ensued between angry wife Chidimma and her husband Akpors on phone:*

CHIDIMMA: Where the hell are you?

AKPORS: Honey, you remember that gold shop where you saw the diamond necklace & totally fell in love with it?

CHIDIMMA: (relaxed): Yes, my king

AKPORS: Remember I had no cash to buy it for you that day & I said I will buy it for you one day?

CHIDIMMA: (totally relaxed with a smile & a blush): Yes I remember my love!

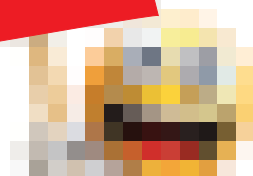
AKPORS: Good, I am in a beer parlour next to that shop.

That awkward moment when you help your crush with her assignment and she gets zero. My brother just forget about the explanation and go your way peacefully.

It was so funny today when a pastor at the market was preaching about alcoholism but using Alomo bitters box to collect the offering

Dating a slim guy is very sexy and romantic, until breeze blows him away from the Relationship

JOKES



## COVID-19: PERSONAL FINANCE IN THE WORLD OF UNCERTAINTIES

As we switch from fear to a gradual state of restart and hopefully even recovery, the questions about personal finances after Covid-19 are stark. Many individuals are starting to complain about having limited resources to get by, following which this article has taken a moment to reflect on the impact of the stay at home narrative on the finances of two (2) classes of people in Nigeria –

- How many people can afford to be on lockdown for an extended period?
- How many people are financially ready for the potential effects of a tighter economy and its associated outcomes like private sector downsizing, stressed business opportunities and job loss?

Statistics show that Nigeria had about 90m people living in poverty, on less than the equivalent of \$1, pre COVID-19. How much worse could things get? The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us some financial lessons we would have preferred not to learn. This article seeks to elucidate personal finance lessons that we have learnt from the ongoing crisis and provide tips that could be employed in managing your personal finances.

### 1. PERSONAL FINANCE LESSONS LEARNED IN THE ONGOING CRISIS

#### 1.1 Emergency funds are not wasted assets

Covid-19 crisis has shown the wisdom of having adequate emergency funds. If there is a pay cut, a delay in salary, or job loss, an emergency fund can help you tide through difficult times. The rule of thumb for creating an emergency fund is to have at least 3-8 months' worth of bare minimum expenses in your kitty. Going forward, building an emergency corpus should be seen as essential. 1.2 Short-term investments are unreliable Panic selling as a result of uncertainty is spooking markets around the world. Therefore currently, you might see around 25% to 30% fall in your equity portfolio. Thus, if you are not having an emergency fund in place and decide to use your investments, this might further prevent you from attaining your investment objective.

#### 1.3 Having an alternative source of income is not a luxury but a necessity

Putting all of your eggs in one basket is never a good thing, and the same goes for trusting that your 8am-to-5pm will always be available to you. This is where an alternative source of income will come in handy. It will help you meet these necessary expenses and tide over difficult times. There is no magical limit as to the number of extra legitimate income streams you should create. An alternative source of income need not be additional work with a regular job. Extra assignments over weekends, a part-time job in the evenings after work, partnerships or home-based work are good ways to earn that extra income.

#### 1.4 Arrange your investments in different kitties

Diversification premium is an investment cure for coronavirus. Having a mix of assets across sectors and geographies is the best way to ensure that one spell of volatility, as in this pandemic, does not take

your portfolio down.

#### 1.5 If you don't measure it, you can't manage it

Budget, a listing of income and expenses, is the most basic and effective tool for managing your money. Every budget must start from the same place: figuring out how much you're making and how much you're spending each month. By figuring out where your money is going, you'll be more aware of where you need to cut back to have enough money for the things you need and the things that are important to you. It is vital to your financial health and everyone should do it.

#### 1.6 Health is also wealth

If there's anything the COVID-19 virus made us realize, it's that our health remains our most valuable asset. What good is your wealth if you don't have a strong and able body to enjoy it? As we all know, the penetration of health insurance is very low in Nigeria. Even if your employer provides health insurance, it's always better to have your own insurance. This is because the health insurance offered by your employer won't be in effect in the event of a layoff/job loss.

#### 1.7 The best-laid plan of men oft go astray

The year 2020 was earmarked to be the '20-plenty' year. The United Nations labelled it a year that would usher in a decade of ambitious action to deliver peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. On a personal level, COVID-19 has affected many facets of life—from career changes, and family vacations, to renovation projects, business plans for expansion and growth, retirement plans, etc.—all have been altered, set back or permanently impaired. It's so easy to get caught up in the business of the day that we neglect to take time to do the things that we know will bring true wealth as we look back on our lives. The pandemic has provided the much-needed break from our busy schedule to sit back and reflect on life and career or business choices. Staying financially secure is a crucial step in getting through your daily life, and this challenging time has once again instilled this lesson. Tough times do not last, but tough people do. In times such as these, let's try our best to remain optimistic and positive.

### 2 TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR PERSONAL FINANCES

#### 2.1 Examine changes in your expenses

The crisis might have brought significant changes to your work and lifestyle. Take stock of your new financial situation by creating a monthly personal income statement - List and add up your monthly income, List and add up your monthly expenses and subtract income from expenses Analyze your personal income statement to know where is your money going? Are you in debt? Do you have any savings? Are you a big spender? What expenses have decreased? What do you need to invest more in? Your financial problems can be solved with the right mind-set and selfdiscipline. It is important to determine what you can reasonably achieve from your budget.

#### 2.2 Find ways to boost your cash reserves.

This can be achieved with a firm resolve to ensure your monthly expenditure is less than your income, in what I would call living below your means, and by identifying smart ways to cut back on your expenses – this is not the time for mindless spending. You would do well to go through your finances with a finetooth comb, identify the non-essentials taking your money and cut back accordingly.

### **2.3 Consider taking advantage of low interest rates**

As the feeling of uncertainty takes hold around the world, interest rates are dropping. If you have a good credit score, then you can likely take advantage of extremely low rates for all kinds of borrowing. If you have outstanding debt such as a mortgage or student loans, then now is the time to refinance. You could potentially save thousands over the course of your loan.

### **2.4 Understand debt as a financial tool**

Know why and when it is okay to borrow, what pricing is optimal, how to restructure should the need arise and more importantly, when to pay it off. You don't want to be owing exorbitant amounts in a recession, coupled with job loss.

**Live within your means** - Don't ever finish spending ALL your money. If you can't afford it now, don't borrow to buy it and avoid bad debt

#### **Good debt versus Bad debt**

**Good debt** - Helps to build your future net worth - Where you finance something that appreciates in value and, eventually, provides a financial pay off. Use debt as a tool to achieve goals, such as - Taking a mortgage to buy a home, Investing in education, Investing in a business, Advancing your career skills

**Bad debt** - Diminishes your future net worth – That is borrowing for things that are easily consumed and do not appreciate in value such as Depreciating assets: fleet of vehicles, spending on lavish holidays, buying expensive clothes, jewellery

### **2.5 Manage your credit availability**

Whether it's through your credit card or the equity in your home, having an open line of credit at your disposal could be a helpful tool. At the same time, be thoughtful about how you use credit so that you don't compromise the future of your financial well-being for the sake of the present. If you need assistance considering whether a line of credit or refinance is right for you, seek a neutral financial adviser to discuss your specific situation.

### **2.6 Keep calm and stick to your investment plan**

Your investment strategy should match where you are in your retirement planning and for some, that may mean your investment portfolio will move to lower risk options as you near or enter retirement. This can help protect you from market fluctuations. Depending on your situation and how far or close you are to retirement, watching your investment balances can cause anxiety. If your retirement is still a way off, it's likely best for you to take a long-term approach to financial planning and try not to fixate on the day-to-day valuations of your investments or other assets. One apparent impact of COVID-19 is the increased volatility of the stock market. Although it can be tempting to panic and sell your stocks during this time of crisis, that's not a good option right now. In fact, choosing to sell your stocks now could result in a realized loss of thousands of dollars. It can be extremely painful to watch the value of your stock crumble. However, it's overwhelmingly likely that the market will recover. If you are feeling uneasy, or want to ensure that your retirement plan is still on track with your goals, seek the guidance of a financial adviser with a reputable affiliation.

### **2.7 Practice Healthy Lifestyle**

Like outstanding debt, health problems compound the effects of a

financial crisis. Do what you can to stay healthy and avoid non-routine medical expenses. Eat nutritious food, exercise at least 30 minutes a day, lose weight (if necessary), and quit smoking (if applicable). Good health is an important part of a person's human capital. When people “invest” in their health, they reduce the risk of incurring expensive medical bills. If health insurance ends as a result of unemployment, seek alternative coverage or the purchase of an individual health insurance policy.

### **2.8 Avoid scams and online security dangers**

Scammers are even more active during uncertain times with juicy fake offers. To protect yourself and your family, be sure you know what scams to watch out for. Use extra caution and scrutinize emails, texts, calls and social media posts that offer financial relief or promote the sale of cure-all products or limited-time special offers. If you are interested in the information being offered to you by a business that is known to you, contact that business or service provider directly from their website or by calling the customer service number you already had for them, or that appears on your billing statement.

### **2.9 Ensure you have access to digital banking**

Be prepared for times when you aren't able to make it to your financial institution's branch office or if call wait times are longer than expected. The best way to ensure that you have uninterrupted access to your accounts online is to download the most recent version of the app and test your login. Digital access to your accounts allows you to monitor your accounts, make payments and contact your financial institution anywhere, any time. Learn more about OnPoint's Digital Banking.

### **2.10 Protect your assets with insurance**

Be prepared for the unexpected. Maintain and protect your assets. Do you have adequate insurance to protect your assets in the event of an emergency, crisis or disaster? Ensure you have at least, adequate insurance cover for Car insurance, Home owner's insurance, Life insurance - particularly for primary breadwinner

### **2.11 Develop Human Capital**

Do everything you can to make yourself “marketable” to employers in a tough economy. Learn new skills and cultivate new business contacts. In addition to keeping up with your profession or trade, invest the time to learn technological skills such as social networking and the use of a smart phone. Many employers now expect new and current employees to have these skills. Undoubtedly, there are many challenges during this crisis but don't panic – There are many concerning stories about COVID-19 and the state of the economy. Pay attention to what's happening around you and consider carefully before making significant decisions. This may be a good time to seek advice of a trusted expert and to get each and every family member involved in your family's financial health. This is the time when we can focus on our fundamentals and growth strategies. Assuming that the worst of COVID-19 doesn't impact us, we can worry about economic recovery. It will take weeks if not months for things to be rebooted. But this is not the first time we have survived a crisis. The narratives will change and transform things into normal bringing positive opportunities. In the final analysis, what really matters? Money is not the most important factor; Life is not measured in naira or dollars. Money does not buy long term happiness and fulfilment It is about loving and good relationships with your spouse, children, colleagues, friends, employees and your relationship with God!

**Sanni Oladimeji – DGM/Head, Risk Management & Compliance**