

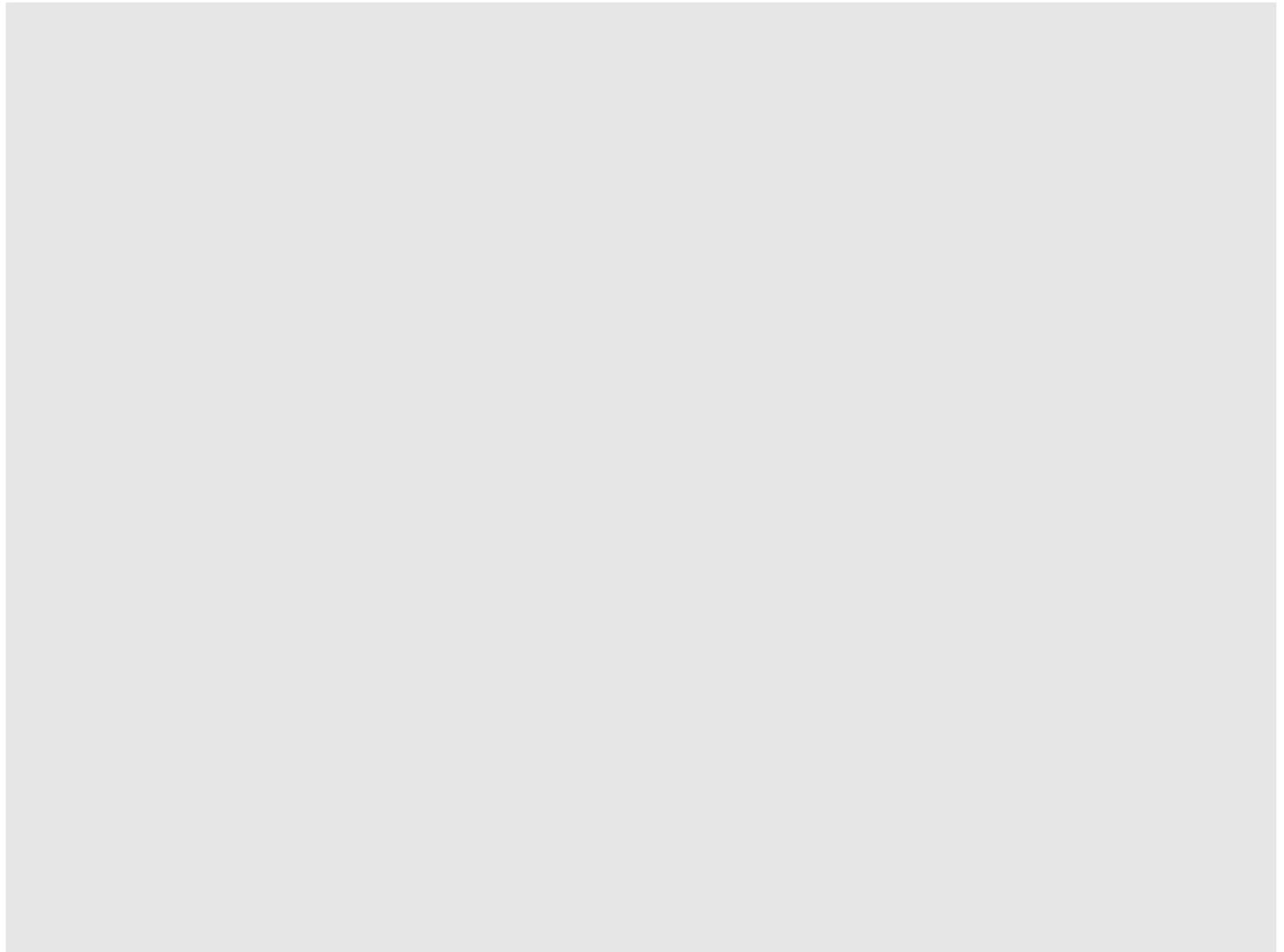
https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/business/woodruff-scientific-persists-in-coronavirus-era/article_006087fa-7912-11ea-8342-db30957a9ad6.html

MAKING IT THROUGH

Woodruff Scientific persists in coronavirus era

By Simon Woodruff For The New Mexican

Apr 13, 2020



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Luis Sánchez Saturno/The New Mexican

Editor's Note: As COVID-19 grips business and employees throughout New Mexico, The New Mexican is asking some to chronicle their experience through this unprecedented crisis.

The day things changed for us at Woodruff Scientific was the morning of March 23, when a customer called to delay shipment of his order “until the coronavirus had passed.”

The reason?

Due to lockdown orders, the customer didn't know if his company could receive it. But this was a big job we had been working on through the weekend to get out the door, so I had to explain that we would not make payroll unless the order left the lab.

He called his management, and in the interim, I called the shipping company to ensure they could deliver.

Finally, he got clearance and we shipped.

But that's when I knew things would be different.

Customers are working from home, and some are managing to get orders to us, but everything is slower or delayed. We have seen new contracts evaporate — one of our biggest clients has laid off thousands of workers and is itself requesting a bailout.

We were in the process of hiring but have had to put that on hold. A government contract is in limbo. Sales and marketing trips have been canceled. New partnerships have been put on ice.

After the stay-at-home order from the governor on March 23, we let most staff set up at home. We are staying open, but out of seven staff, only two are in the lab keeping things moving (while distancing and maintaining a fastidious cleaning schedule).

Our Seattle office closed a month before the lockdown here, but we already were used to working remotely, staying productive over video calls and sharing docs with staff at home.

However, this is not an ideal teleworking situation: Both of my boys (kindergarten and third grade) are home also, doing their classes over Google Classroom and videoconferencing with their teachers. My wife and I juggle our work and home responsibilities, communicating about upcoming meetings so we don't have kids wandering into the video call, as in a now-famous BBC interview that illuminated just what it's like to share a workspace with children.

It has been exhausting.

But it is not all bad.

There is a super-supportive community of small businesses in Santa Fe, organized in part through the Santa Fe Business Incubator, which now hosts its regular meetings virtually and on Slack. We are discussing what we can do in response to COVID-19.

We followed the COVID-19 stimulus bill closely and are exploring our options. We persist, we innovate.

As a family, wagons are circling: We are talking and working through worries about our relatives in New York City, the United Kingdom and Australia, communicating daily over video calls. In the last few days, I have seen more of my sons than in the last few months combined. I love seeing into their workdays and helping them. The youngest said, “I love having Teacher Mama.”

Though isolated at home mostly, we are not alone — we are in this together with everyone in Santa Fe and around the world. No one is unaffected. We’ll get to the other side of it, but there are indicators that home, school and work life will never be the same. Stay well, and flatten the curve!

Simon Woodruff is the president of Woodruff Scientific Inc. and CEO of SciVista Inc. and Compact Fusion Systems Inc., two Santa Fe-based startups.