

**Subject:** Actually, you DO have the control

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## Actually, you DO have the control

Let's be honest — we like control. Even though we've opted to work for and own a business in an ever-shifting industry, we get to call a lot of the shots. And much of our success is a result of our own efforts.

Which is why this worldwide pandemic has knocked us so far off our game. It feels like we've been stripped of all of our control. I am talking to agency owners all day, every day. Some of them have lost a significant portion of their business. Others are busier than ever and hiring. And you know what — they're all experiencing panic at exactly the same level. Everyone is feeling like they're on a fault line, just waiting for the earthquake. They don't know when/if the earthquake will come or how powerful it will be. And so, they assume the worst and become paralyzed.

The sense of lack of control could not be further from the truth. You actually are in total control of the situation. You may not control all of the variables, but what you do control is the final result. You possess everything you need to land right where you want to land when things go back to post-COVID-19 normal. I want to make sure you absorb that — YOU possess everything you need to land right where you want to land when things go back to post-COVID-19 normal.

You need five mini-plans of action. In this week's newsletter, I'll briefly walk you through each of the five and then in subsequent issues, we'll dig deeper into each. But don't wait for me — start building them out now. You know how to do this. But before we get into the mini-plans, let's agree on some truths.

Truth #1: Here's the most important truth that I think you need to internalize and whisper to yourself when you feel the fear creeping in. You are going to be fine. You will be able to keep feeding your family. You are not going to lose your home. You may have to completely reinvent how you go to market or who you serve — but you're good at this and you know everything you need to know to get to the other side.

Truth #2: You can't control how long this crisis will last, how your existing clients react, who will be ready to buy, or how your team will respond. Those are variables we cannot control. But we can manage our way around them because we know how to do that. You've been doing it for years.

Truth #3: This crisis is going to shine a blinding light on all of the places within your agency that

have flaws and cracks. You can either wallow in the brokenness or you can be grateful for the insight and fix what needs to be fixed.

Truth #4: You can choose to shed your malaise and get to work today. Or tomorrow. Or next month. The only difference will be how many agencies get out ahead of you. Don't give away your advantage by staying stuck for too long.

Here are the mini-plans I want you to formulate and have in place within the next few weeks:

1. **Operational/financial plan** (How will you get the work done on time and on budget? Once you've determined the minimum acceptable profit margin for your agency, use agency math to manage your way to never dipping below it.)
2. **Team plan** (How will you keep them motivated, efficient, profitable, and striving to serve each other and your clients?)
3. **Client plan** (You need to proactively guide each client into a position of readiness so that when they can step back-in — they're ready and more prepared than their competitors.)
4. **Prospect plan** (What can you talk about that will be valuable? Base your conversations on what your prospects are ready to hear at any given moment in time.)
5. **Vision of the future plan** (What parts of normal are worth rushing back to and what could/should be different?)

With every one of these plans — you set the course. Yes, there are factors that are beyond our control but we control the outcome. You may not get there as quickly as you want but I have watched many of you survive and thrive in the harshest conditions over the past few decades. You survived and thrived because you were simply not willing to give up. Did you have to pivot? Sure. Do you look different than you did at the beginning? Absolutely. Was it all sunshine and roses? Nope.

I'm not saying any of this is going to be easy or without sacrifice. But what I am saying, as loudly and clearly as I can, is that you can do this. You don't need one thing more than what you have right now.

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## Open Mic webinar — Friday, April 17 at 2 pm CST

This week's open mic webinar is Friday from 2 pm - 4 pm CST. [Sign-up here](#). I will talk for a couple of minutes and give you insight as to how each agency is coping. From there — it's your call. We'll field your questions, discuss whatever you want to chat about, and strategize what comes next.

If the CST doesn't work for you because you're halfway around the world and you'd like us to hold one at a time you can attend live — shoot me an email and I will schedule one. I know our content has been a little US-centric of late and I want to make sure we're available to ALL of you — no matter where in the world you may be.

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## **Build A Better Agency Summit is now Nov 11-12 and it's going to be a celebration!**

Given what is going on here in the states, I couldn't risk leaving the Build A Better Agency Summit in May. So, we've moved it to November 11-12. Same city, same hotel, and same amazing lineup of speakers and sponsors.

But now — on top of networking, learning, and taking time to strategize — we are going to be CELEBRATING! We're going to celebrate our resilience. We're going to celebrate our community and how we supported each other. And we are going to celebrate that we are tougher than any pandemic!

I know that many of you probably aren't in a place to buy a ticket now — but please at least put the dates on your calendar so hopefully, you can join us. If you want more details or you do want to buy a ticket, [check it out here](#).

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### **AMI's workshop schedule**

[Running Your Agency for Growth, Profit](#) (and a little sanity): August 11 & 12, 2020 in Chicago

[Selling with Strategic Insights](#): August 27 & 28, 2020 in Chicago

[AE Bootcamp](#) (for project managers, account coordinators and AEs with less than 4 years of agency experience): Sept 3 & 4, 2020 in Chicago

[Advanced AE Bootcamp](#) (for AEs with 4+ years of experience) Sept 1 & 2, 2020 in Chicago

[Money Matters](#): (for owners and CFO/accountant types): Dec 3-4 in Orlando

[Build & Nurture Your Agency's Sales Funnel](#): January 21-22, 2021 in Orlando

[Selling with Strategic Insights](#): January 26 & 27, 2021 in Orlando

Don't forget — If you are an [associate](#) or [network](#) member, you get a discount on all AMI courses — live or [on-demand](#).

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### **This week's video episode — give your brain & body a rest**

There's a lot of stress packed into a pandemic and agency owners are scrambling to cover payroll, help clients manage through the crisis, and trying to tamp down their own worries....

But we can't forget that if we go down, the whole ship could go down. You've got to give your brain and your body a break or you won't be able to go the distance.

Please take care of yourself through all of this! [Watch here.](#)

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## **This week's podcast episode — leading your agency through tough times and remote working**

Agency owners wear many hats and certainly one of the most important is the leader hat. There are days when that's easy and fun. And then, there are days like the ones we've been having lately, when the weight of that role can become pretty heavy. Our employees need us to guide them through these uncharted waters. And to do that, we need to stay calm, confident, and compassionate. But how do you do that when you can't even be in the same room?

The current COVID-19 crisis is pushing teams and agency leaders to their limit. Fortunately, leadership and culture expert Adam Carroll has tools and insights that will help you show up to be the best leader possible; in a time when that leadership is sorely needed.

[Listen here!](#)

Many thanks to our presenting sponsor, White Label IQ. They're an AMI agency that offers wholesale design, dev, and PPC to other agencies. [Check out their AMI special offer here.](#) What makes White Label IQ a smart choice is the combination of their proven production team working with 40+ agencies so far, but also their software platform that makes the project management and time tracking even easier and more cost-effective....it's that one-two punch that makes WLIQ so compelling for the agencies of the future.

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## CMI resources for agencies

Our friends at [Content Marketing Institute](#) have released two new resources just for agencies.

1. The first is a [resource guide](#) with all kinds of research, content, etc.
  2. They've also created a playlist with [complete videos of their top CMWorld 2019 sessions](#), including the session Susan Baier and I did together.
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## What agency owners & leaders wanted to talk about this week

- Our productivity is plummeting. How do I talk to the team about it without demoralizing them?
  - We're having cash flow issues. How do other agencies avoid this challenge?
  - I like working from home. What do I do if I don't want to go back to the office?
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