



Workforce, people and communications in the wake of COVID-19

From crisis response to thriving in the new environment



Real insights

First and foremost, this pandemic is decidedly human. The fear and uncertainty that your customers, employees, families and friends are dealing with is very real. Your focus as technology executives is to enable and support your company through this crisis. Engaging employees and providing the technology capabilities should lead to the same level of productivity in this work from home (WFH) environment and improve the overall effectiveness of your technology team.

Critically important in this role is to focus on how to enable your workforce strategies. We believe you should focus on:

1. Capacity – how does resource location, work assignment and productivity impact how and what work can get done?
2. Connection – how are you staying in touch with your employees, keeping them motivated and collaborating with one another?
3. Capability – do you have the right skills for now and the future, and what do you do if you find gaps?



Triggers and pain points

- Downtime impacting revenue or critical business operations
- Declining employee engagement, morale and productivity
- Increased staff absences due to illness, caring for others, etc.
- Increased stress due to the inability to disconnect from work while at home
- Stale succession plans for key resources and decision makers
- Remote working best practices not known or being utilized effectively across diverse generations and skill levels
- Inconsistent messaging or information overload around COVID-19 in your organization
- Uncertainty on performance measures and expectations for remainder of the year

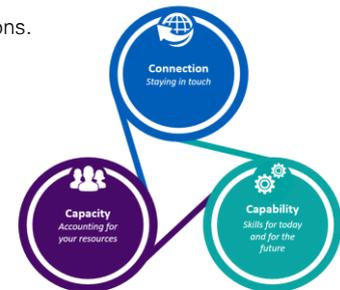


Our perspective

Many organizations have reacted quickly as a crisis response, doing what's required to keep the lights on and their employees working safely. Moving forward, as more of the workforce discovers they can be effective working remotely, organizations need to evolve their capabilities to best support their employees and business operations.

Our recent client discussions have validated 3 key capabilities that technology executives should consider:

1. Capacity - Be creative in solving age-old problems such as system go-lives with your teams: *"... pandemic didn't stop us [from going live], in fact we leveraged cloud enabled teams and collaboration tools to creatively build a virtual command center"*
2. Connection - Be mindful the WFH concept has blurred the lines of work and life: *"I found that our teams were working longer hours and always connected way into the evenings"*
3. Capability – New ways of working may require new skills and training: *"The crisis has highlighted the need for our organization – and our people – to be agile and swift to changing circumstances"*



	Resetting	Recovery	New reality
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Account for all employees across the world and identify region-specific impacts as this pandemic spreads – Prioritize behaviors and mindsets to the new paradigms – Perform stress test to remotely monitor and manage all core systems in case no personnel could come to work – Ensure sufficient coverage in all core areas of support to cover increased volumes of work and reassign non-core tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create and model what-if scenarios into your workforce and capacity plan – Understand proactively what the crisis shift means and what your new operating model should look like – Compare your company's efforts against others to determine the right policies and levels of support for your employees – Ensure that VPN and other remote access solutions are continually patched so they are hardened against threats and sized appropriately to support a fully remote workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identify ways to drive up productivity as you work to mitigate downturn impact from this crisis – Determine if a dynamic resource and staffing model is effective for the portions of your workforce – Review, challenge and quantify business critical portfolios, workflows and customer agreements
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communicate clearly and consistently with your employees – Acknowledge that your employees are focused on caring for their loved ones and trying to stay healthy – Get creative about instituting work-from-home policies and making adjustments to ongoing business practices – Hold virtual meetings and encourage everyone to turn on video – Stay laser focused on customers, tracking their radically shifting behaviors and needs, knowing that they are also dealing with their own human elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote adoption of new collaboration tools continuously as your workforce navigates through these uncertain times – Create network of teams to carry out responses outside of normal operations, as well as adjustments to routine business activities – Document revised WFH policies and guidelines – Consider reviewing and adjusting employee performance measures and provide support – Identify critical resources that must be retained and reach out personally and provide extra support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Utilize this experience to build stronger virtual/remote work and culture of collaboration – Strengthen and empower your global network
Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Overcome the normalcy bias and stay vigilant to the possibility of crisis going from bad to worse – Improvise crisis responses to manage unfamiliarity and uncertainty to better prepare for the future – Set clear priorities and empower your employees to discover and implement solutions that serve those priorities – Ensure succession plan has named backups for key resources and decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Evaluate all of the core skills required to support business critical operations – Create virtual training curriculum to support employee growth and development plans – Reinforce desired behavioral outcomes, invest in advanced trainings, and certifications – Test disaster recovery, vendor succession and technology risk backup processes frequently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a capability matrix of the new skills and ways of working that will be required for the organization post crisis – Develop programs to support the rapid re-skilling of the workforce – Deploy modified performance management processes and tools to account for the new work paradigm – Rollout tools designed to give more transparency and accountability



Where am I now? - Qualifying questions

Resetting

- Have you accounted for your entire workforce and the regions they are in?
- Are you addressing remote working and capacity ramp up/down arrangements?
- Have you identified the regions and capabilities most impacted by COVID-19?
- Are you communicating regularly with your employees to inform them on impact, changes and next steps?
- Have you assessed your current organizational capability, process and protocols for remote working?
- Can your IT infrastructure support the full adoption of remote working?

Recovery

- Have you reassigned resources to support critical processes, systems, and personas?
- Do your employees have access to open communication and collaboration?
- Do you plan to create a flexible work time policy?
- What support networks are you providing to prevent burnout and promote well-being?
- Are you creating or identifying programs to support new skills and capabilities while working remote?
- Are you administering training and certifications online?
- Are you working closely with your security team to ensure that hackers don't take advantage of this virtual collaboration?

New reality

- How will you empower your global employee support groups?
- How will you build leadership capabilities and model capacity plans to manage ambiguity in the future?
- How will you keep teams engaged on initiatives that may be on hold during this time?
- What changes will be made to employee performance evaluations? How will you provide support through the changes?
- How will you integrate an agile mindset for future workforce planning?
- Are you testing new business models?
- Are you closely tracking the changing customer behaviors and fluctuations?



Getting started

As with any journey, the biggest challenge can be taking that first step. Organizations can take the following actions to get started:

- Find or develop a model to visualize the current impact and the trajectory of COVID-19 at all work locations, including WFH locations
- Send a survey for employees to rate how well help desk, self service, FAQs, technology, etc. are enabling remote work
- Confirm employee is set on their top priorities, which should be shifted to what is critical to the business
- Empower employee support networks with data and best practices to identify and address burnout, isolation, confusion and stress
- Check the tone and length of your communications, maintain an empathetic and human touch, and invite everyone to collaborate
- Promote virtual trainings, mentorship, and group learning that can help address current skills shortages
- Ensure continuity of key resources and decision makers with backup contacts who are in regular correspondence
- Provide extra support to key resources who have been identified as a top retention priority

Contact us

If at any time you need help, please use the information below to get connected to a specialist for more advice and support:



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