Workplace transformation in the wake of COVID-19

Thriving in the new environment

As the response to COVID-19 moves from a short term response to a long term shift in how and where people work, organizations that optimally support the new ways of working can thrive. The discussion around employee experience and digital tools, has rapidly intensified; moving beyond attracting and retaining talent to enabling and supporting a fully remote workforce with capabilities and technologies which are now deemed mission critical. Organizations that succeed in the new remote workplace should plan for the entire workplace ecosystem, equip the employee, and support critical business operations. Organizations can rapidly adapt to the new workplace by developing personas to understand how employees want to work and journey maps that highlight critical business touchpoints throughout the employee experience.

Our perspective

With the global spread of COVID-19, social distancing and self-isolation tactics are being recommended or mandated by health officials, forcing companies to redefine how they conduct business. Many organizations have reacted quickly, 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.

As organizations support the new ways of working, focusing on employee experience is essential to keep workers connected, engaged and productive. Organizations must consider all three elements of the employee experience and determine what actions they can take now.

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<th>Environmental</th>
<th>Resetting</th>
<th>Recovery</th>
<th>New reality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure network/VPN can support remote working</td>
<td>Revisit employee assistance programs (EAP), highlighting available mental health support</td>
<td>Embrace virtual collaboration environments (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Microsoft SharePoint, Confluence, Jira, etc.)</td>
<td>Identify gaps that exist across technology domains and develop options for filling gaps</td>
<td>Identify work habits and behavioral patterns within a population to develop personas and prioritize unique and emerging needs</td>
<td>Action the gaps determined during persona needs analysis and journey map pain points</td>
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<td>Assess business critical systems availability and resiliency</td>
<td>Personalize interactions where possible, tuning in to employee engagement (before jumping to the work at hand)</td>
<td>Establish virtual collaboration environments and expectations for a culture of collaboration</td>
<td>Identify areas of AI/Automation enhancement</td>
<td>Explore associated journey maps to determine where the relationship with the organization is breaking down requiring extra interaction</td>
<td>Customize engagement tactics for those uniquely impacted by remote work e.g. those in primary child care roles, caregivers, and other segments</td>
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<td>Adjust IT support models</td>
<td>Accommodate for varying ways of working preferences with flexible work arrangements / ‘online’ time</td>
<td>Set remote working standards and expectations for a culture of collaboration</td>
<td>Implement upgrades/enhancements to availability/reliability as needed</td>
<td>Establish mechanisms to capture the voice of the employee to keep a pulse on barriers to engagement</td>
<td>Adjust the organizational model to support a remote workplace environment</td>
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<td>Ensure employees can perform their job at home (hardware, software)</td>
<td>Validate cybersecurity capabilities</td>
<td>Develop workplace planning principles that align with the new ways of working</td>
<td>Institute tools for measuring workforce productivity</td>
<td>Develop personas to understand how employees want to work and journey maps that highlight critical business touchpoints throughout the employee experience</td>
<td>Design a socially-supportive environment to enable an expanded network for a positive, motivating effect and sense of belonging</td>
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Value proposition

Triggers and pain points

- Business operation disruptions and delays resulting from coordination and communication issues
- Difficulty ensuring critical communication flows through the organization resulting in inconsistent messages
- Significant increases and changing demands of technologies and the IT support model
- Downtime impacting revenue or critical business operations
- Remote working best practices not known or being utilized effectively across diverse generations and skill levels
- Declining employee engagement or productivity resulting in lack of teaming and connection to the organization
- Increased security threats and cyber events resulting in increased needs for data security
### Where am I now? - Qualifying questions

#### Resetting
- Have you identified critical capabilities or processes that will be most impacted by COVID-19?
- Have you assessed your current organizational capability, process and protocols for remote working?
- Can your IT infrastructure support the full adoption of remote working?
- Have you defined the expectations of employees while working away from the office?
- Do your workers know how to get assistance with the various tools they need to work remotely?
- Have you done a risk assessment of your collaborative technology tools?

#### Recovery
- Have you identified the critical functions or processes where you need continued capacity?
- Are your employees able to collaborate with one another effectively?
- Have you created a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in the event your workers are quarantined? Is backup capacity available?
- Do you have a plan to keep employees connected and engaged during this time?
- Are your employees working securely? Do you know if your data is secure outside of the office?

#### New reality
- What will be potential changes in customer service delivery that will have lasting impact on capacity planning?
- What are the new policies you need to draft to balance employee costs and business continuity?
- How will you drive a culture of collaboration?
- How will you build leadership capabilities to manage this agility and ambiguity in the future?
- How will you evaluate virtual employee compliance? Do you need to build new tools?
- How will you start planning for people strategies after the COVID-19 pandemic?

### Getting started

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

- Identify tactics to keep your workers connected, engaged and productive
- Perform a user assessment to quickly identify those workers in your workforce requiring extra attention
- Perform an infrastructure review and capacity planning to ensure the additional load of remote working is supported
- Maximize your current technology capabilities (e.g. educating users on existing toolsets, expanding access, providing best practices on use)
- Develop a remote worker support model to address issues such as laptop failure, onboarding or offboarding workers
- Develop support plans, including rapid deployment of remote capabilities (e.g. VDI/Laptops, collaboration/conferencing, VPN)
- Identify critical security considerations for your organization, ensuring the remote working is just as secure as in-office
- Invest in user persona development for mission critical resources and better understanding of support and capability needs
- Conduct journey mapping of critical business processes to ensure performance while being performed remotely

### 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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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>KPMG in country</th>
<th>Contact information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Bates</td>
<td>Global Leader</td>
<td>KPMG International</td>
<td>T: +1 303 295 5524  E: <a href="mailto:sjbates@kpmg.com">sjbates@kpmg.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeoung Oh</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>KPMG in the US</td>
<td>T: +1 925 683 4558  E: <a href="mailto:jeoungoh@kpmg.com">jeoungoh@kpmg.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Berry</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>KPMG in the US</td>
<td>T: +1 312 665 2866  E: <a href="mailto:dberry@kpmg.com">dberry@kpmg.com</a></td>
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