Remote Working Playbook
Best practices & considerations for Remote Working

A guide for Business Leaders to strategically transition work and workers after COVID-19 work from home restrictions are lifted

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Sanjay Tugnait is the Chief Market Maker for IBM’s Global Business Services. He is also a member of the Global Operating Team. He is the Chairman of the Blockchain Research Institute Advisory Board (founded by Don Tapscott) and the President of France Canada Chamber of Commerce (Ontario).

He was the Chief Executive Officer & Chairman of the Canada Country Board for Capgemini Canada. He was also a member of North America Executive Council. Prior to joining Capgemini, he was a Managing Partner in Accenture’s North America Financial Services practice and member of Canada EXOM. He started Accenture India’s Financial Services business for Consulting & Technology practice as the Country Managing Partner while he was also a member of Accenture’s CEO Global Advisory Council.

Sanjay has deep expertise in setting up, scaling remote working capabilities for Fortune 500 companies across Financial Services, Retail, Telecom, Manufacturing and Energy Sectors.

Riva Walia is a global leader with an MBA from Cornell University and 20 years of experience in leadership positions in strategy, management consulting and non-profit organizations. She has managed multi Billion transformational programs with multi-disciplinary teams at global organizations like Accenture and Royal Bank of Canada creating and delivering successful business strategies and remote working engagements shareholder value for Fortune 500 clients.

Riva has experience of setting up and running new business units in four continents- including in United States, Canada, India, Philippines, Luxembourg, Halifax and Guatemala. Through her career journey she has emerged to be a trusted business operator, thought leader, change champion, strong people developer.
Reimagining your Workplace

Preparing for employees to return to the new (ab)normal requires a structured sequence of coordinated actions that promotes health and safety and reduces risk. While each organization has specific needs, this Playbook aims to provide a baseline framework to develop customized workplace and worker re-entry plans.

1. **Priorities for returning to work at a company site**
   - Identify roles that can remain remote versus those best performed at company
   - Map people and/or digital workers to these roles at each company location
   - Re-entry prioritization for business partner and contractor roles
   - Change work responsibilities needed based on recent remote experience
   - Facility considerations impact the number of resources permitted in workplaces

2. **Capabilities needed in place to support re-entry**
   - Create a communications and feedback loop with employees at required frequency
   - Manage health and safety capabilities required
   - Monitor COVID-19 conditions and decide to continue reopening
   - Employee and site tracking and reporting alignment
   - Leverage remote working opportunity for cost reduction

3. **Ready your workforce to work in the new (ab)normal**
   - Manage workforce expectations and upskilling requirements
   - Assess how home schooling and day care closures impact return to company location policies
   - Provide resources and support to meet employee health and wellness needs
   - Transportation considerations may impact who can return to what work locations
   - Leverage available skills for reassignments at company and remote sites
Priorities for returning to work at a company site

Availability of capabilities critical to operations is a clear need that underpins any decision. However, not all capabilities are needed on-site or in offices. The ability to define what work and roles are needed in-person and what can be performed virtually is key.

Bringing on resources in waves based on criticality and incremental value will also be important as workplaces may not have the same capacity for resources as before given the likely need for ongoing social distancing which may not be relaxed for some time.

Some roles are likely to remain remote well into the future. Restructuring of company sites to design away space used by those roles may help increase available facility capacity.

### Identify roles that can remain remote versus those best performed at company
- To categorize employees into waves (e.g., Essential, Select, Prioritized), to return to the workplace
- Selection criteria to be used and what will the governance process be for making decisions on role priorities for re-entry
- Work responsibilities be modified across roles to better reduce situations where only partial job scope classifies a role as a priority for re-entry
- Assess short and long-term remote work options can be formalized as part of company policies

### Map people and/or digital workers to these roles at each company location
- Apply automation and reduce the work that must be executed by resources in company locations
- Structured resourcing as part of the mapping of people to roles that are created post pandemic
- Assumed new responsibilities while working remote or as essential workers and needs consideration for new roles upon re-entry

### Re-entry prioritization for business partner and contractor roles
- Skills and experiences are most critical and what roles tend to be filled with resources possessing these skills and experiences
- Identify employees that possess critical skills for potential reassignment and higher re-entry priority
- Where do non-employees work within end-to-end processes where their participation on-site is key to performing critical business functions
- Manage third parties play a role in management of work best performed on-site

### Change work responsibilities needed based on recent remote experience
- Alter business processes for the good and formalize changes
- Manage decision approval process improvements occurred during remote work which need to become permanent changes
- Create management model for essential workers who operated in a different management model while working remote that should change
- Work used to be considered important but recent experience proved it could be streamlined or eliminated

### Facility considerations impact the number of resources permitted in workplaces
- Facility redesign is needed to accommodate social distance requirements and how does it impact allowable workforce population density
- Create policies for managed use of elevators and other common spaces and how might that impact productivity
- Execute new safety and security procedures
- Manage how new health and safety procedures impact the number of people who can return to the workplace
Capabilities needed in place to support re-entry

It will be imperative that organizations have the ability to continuously monitor the health and wellness of employees, as well as external factors that would require rapid response to curtail and/or contain any additional outbreak.

Rollback processes to prepare for future closure events, PR strategies to manage media, and enhancing engagement of employees are key elements to consider.

Availability of PPEs, confirmation of supplier readiness, and making changes to existing policies, processes and procedures may be important prerequisites.

Create a communications and feedback loop with employees at required frequency

- Manage immediate, short, and long-term (ongoing) communication needs
- Identify channels are most efficient and effective
- Leverage opportunity exists to leverage a virtual assistant to improve content timeliness and consistency
- Govern expectations have been set for communications during the pandemic and can that change moving forward?
- Gauge employee sentiment and respond with empathy and care

Manage health and safety capabilities required

- Perform health screenings and on-site testing as required
- Leverage testing arrangements with nearby medical facilities
- Equip, prepare, and protect anyone performing on-site health checks
- Procure What PPE for employees to feel safer to perform their work on-site
- Confirm a continuing supply of PPE to distribute to employees
- Educate employees on how to properly use, maintain, and dispose of PPE

Monitor COVID-19 conditions and decide to continue reopening

- Create dashboards to aggregate external and internal risk factors to support decision making
- Define plans and criteria for possible rollback
- Establish decision rights to act swiftly
- Use sensors, monitors, (self) reporting, and other means to provide meaningful metrics to inform re-entry and operating decisions

Employee and site tracking and reporting alignment

- Gather employee and site data to track and inform decision making
- Keep employees informed about the safety and (open) status of their workplace
- Have online and mobile alerts been enabled
- Mitigate potential outbreaks with employee screening at entry and exit points
- Establish contact tracing measures for when positive testing is uncovered

Leverage remote working opportunity for cost reduction

- Acknowledge the lessons learned and assumptions about where work must be performed have been disproven while working remote
- Accelerate technology changes to increase resiliency and reduce costs
- Assess facility cost savings are possible if some remote work stays remote for the long term
- Greater use of virtual meetings to reduce internal travel costs
- Use virtual learning for closing skill gaps while reducing instructor led training costs

FRANCE CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ONTARIO
Ready your workforce to work in the new (ab)normal

The rapid pivot in work locations and practices from COVID-19 also disrupted social aspects of work. So, work is different and life outside of work may also be more stressful. Some living alone feel extra isolated in our social distancing culture. Others are balancing work and child care with kids home from closed schools or day care. Most people know someone who has had compromised health or loss of life from coronavirus, creating even more stress.

This leaves workers with many challenges in bringing their full selves to work. Re-entry to the new (ab)normal will be another change and will require a strong change management program to help reduce unknowns that add stress. Wellness will also be important to help keep people healthy and productive.

Manage workforce expectations and upskilling requirements

- Identify the effective way to inform employees about what to expect upon returning to a physical work location
- Get feedback from employees and confirm their understanding and acceptance of re-entry processes and procedures
- Define additional steps are needed to reach 3rd parties and contractors involved in re-entry?
- Keep employees and others informed of facility status as conditions change

Assess how home schooling and day care closures impact return to company location policies

- Extend policy options to employees who need to care for children who would otherwise be in school or daycare
- Execute work processes where workers are unable to show up for re-entry due to child or elder care obligations
- Provide support to enhance ability to perform roles for those unable to re-enter due to family obligations
- Prepare for waves of resource availability as schools reopen

Provide resources and support to meet employee health and wellness needs

- Define how will protective masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, and other PPEs be provided
- Promote wellness & assistance programs are in place for remote and re-entering workers (e.g., financial, family care, mental well-being)
- Communicate enhancements to Employee Assistance Programs needed to cover on-site and remote issues and needs during re-entry
- Understand potential mental risks in worker populations and needs for assistance

Transportation considerations may impact who can return to what work locations

- Accommodate employees who rely on public transportation to return to work in cases where public transportation is not operating
- Establish new transportation policy so employees can return to work using alternative means while transportation constraints exist
- Address worker concerns about being in crowded mass transit environments
- Explore alternatives available when showing up for re-entry is not possible

Leverage available skills for reassignments at company and remote sites

- Understand how work processes have changed while working remotely and what changes to keep
- Assess skills individuals have that can applied beyond their defined roles to provide more resourcing flexibility
- Identify opportunities exist to restructure work and roles around what can be performed remotely versus at a company worksite
- Use virtual learning help close skill gaps and increase flexibility in how work is assigned and performed across roles
Shopify

- “Shopify won’t open its offices until 2021 and after that, most of its employees will work remotely permanently. “Office centricity is over,” CEO Tobi Lutke said.”
- “Shopify is giving its employees $1,000 to furnish their work-from-home setups with whatever gear they need because of the coronavirus”

Twitter

- Twitter will oversee the reopening of the offices; however employees will have the deciding action whether they working-at-home is still the best course of action.
- Twitter has guaranteed that if workers want to work from home forever, Twitter will enable them to do so.

Bank of Montreal

- Bank of Montreal (BMO) is promoting a blended home-office work schedule, with 30-80% of employees expected to have some remote, at-home work. “an evolution in the way that we work”.
- BMO believes that the blended work schedule provides opportunity for a more diverse recruitment portfolio and a wider talent search.
Let’s collectively define what’s next...

For more information:
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