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WHAT YOU NEED AS AN EMPLOYEE IN THE NEW ERA OF WORK

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TECHNOLOGY

In response to the changes in working practices, it is likely you have had to quickly learn how to use new tools and technologies to effectively do your job and facilitate collaboration with your colleagues and/or customers.

As we transition back to the workplace and evolve working practices further, you should follow the steps below to ensure that technology can support you in achieving your career goals and that the new set of tools aren't holding you back.

Assess your infrastructure

If you are set to continue working remotely for the foreseeable future, you need to ensure that there are no barriers to you performing at your job. Proactively assess your remote working set-up and immediately flag any additional technical support or access you may need to your manager or IT support team.

Assess your confidence in using tools

Like many other professionals, you may have had to embrace and quickly learn how to use new tools to support the increased amount of remote working in your organisation.

Examples of use might include:

- Monthly or weekly team meetings run on Teams
- Virtual pitches with prospects using webinars and digital demos
- Team collaboration and instant messaging using platforms such as Slack

With a few weeks of usage behind you, now is the time to take stock of how these tools have worked for you and ensure you share this feedback with management. Make sure you are aware of all the tools at your disposal and, if you haven't already, undertake training to ensure you're using these tools to their full potential. This training may be offered by your employer, or you can search for online tutorials.

Maximise your productivity

Once you're clear on all the tools available to you and their capabilities, take the time to assess which will enable you to complete your tasks in the most efficient and productive way so you can continue to be successful in your work. As we now move to more hybrid teams going forward, where some team members work remotely and others work on-site, employers will be focusing on improving productivity.

Now is therefore the time for you to take stock and ensure the tools you are working with enable you to be as productive as possible in the new era of work, therefore allowing you to succeed in your role.

Areas to consider might include:

- Are you using technology to be as effective as you can be?
- Have you addressed areas of technology that absorb your time or make simple tasks take longer?
- Are you getting the desired behaviours from the tools?
- Are there gaps in your knowledge which are stifling your productivity?
- If you manage anyone, is your team using the technology to best effect?



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Cyber security

All employees are expected to maintain security standards and protocols wherever they are working, which includes adherence to data protection regulations. Take the time to refresh yourself on any technology and security policies to ensure you are adhering to them. This will protect you, as well as the organisation:

- Liaise with HR/IT to get access to any policies
- Familiarise yourself with technology user guides
- Get help from IT support or designated 'technology experts' in your organisation to ensure you are following best practices

Embracing technology

As technology continues to propel organisations forward in the new era of work, how will you equip yourself for embracing these changes?

- You may already manage a team, but if not, you should start to think about how you can hone your skills and the technologies and tools you'll need to facilitate this. Speak candidly with your manager if you need more support in this area, remember they are likely to be busy coping with the changes as well.
- Telecommuting can also result in isolation and loneliness, particularly for those individuals who are already introverted. You'll need to be self-aware and understand your preferences for management style and be very honest with your manager to ensure that you can perform optimally in a new set-up.

SKILLS

The new era of work demands a different set of skills, both now and as you plan for the future. You should identify the skills you need to succeed and work closely with your employer to fine-tune them.

If you're not sure where to start when it comes to assessing the skills you need, speak to your expert recruiter to help identify the most in-demand skills required for your profession. The skills required to perform at your job may have changed as a result of evolving business operations and it is vital you keep on top of these changes and upskill where needed.

Working in a hybrid team

You'll need to upskill yourself to ensure you can work optimally in a hybrid team – comprising of some people working remotely and some on-site. Important skills to develop include project management, collaboration, agile-working and time management. Consider asking your employer to subscribe to free online training courses, such as [Hays Learning](#), and use the resources on our website: hays.ae/work-from-home to help you tackle some of the following subjects:

Digital collaboration: Hybrid teams need to collaborate using different tools and technologies. You'll need to learn how to maximise the use of these tools to boost productivity.

Communication: Excellent communication is vital in boosting productivity and efficiency within your team. This is even more important when you and your colleagues are working in different environments.

Agile project management: This is a modern, flexible approach to project management. It allows teams to break large projects down into more manageable tasks, which are tackled in short iterations or 'sprints'. Agile project management enables you to adapt to change and deliver work quickly.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There are certain skills that most organisations will be looking for in a post-COVID-19 era, so being able to demonstrate some of these will stand you in good stead to advance your career:

Soft skills

As we continue into the rapidly changing world of work, professionals who can demonstrate their adaptability and resilience to change, as well as other related soft skills, will be sought after by employers.

These important soft skills include:

- Resilience
- Adaptability
- Team working
- Innovation
- Flexibility
- Problem-solving

If you are interviewing for new roles, think about how you can articulate these with examples using the STAR method – situation, task, action result. Bear in mind that employers will be looking to hire employees who can adapt well to change, so use this time and the lessons you have learned during the last few weeks to hone your change management and adaptability skills.



Technical skills

As many organisations have shifted their business models to allow virtual delivery of services and products, it is not surprising that digital skills will remain highly valued by employers.

There are a number of other skills and roles that continue to be sought after, for example:

- There is increased hiring for IT security roles across all organisations, as employers look to set up and defend infrastructure to support remote working
- As retailers focus on e-commerce models, there is an increased requirement for digital skills across both marketing and technology. This includes software developers, data scientists, cloud infrastructure specialists, digital marketing and UX/UI specialists

- Demand for telephone and online customer service contact staff across all industries remains high
- To fulfil the nation's requirement for critical supplies, such as food and medical equipment, there is more pressure than ever on the manufacturing and supply chain industry
- There is a surge in demand for both permanent and interim HR professionals, particularly for SMEs who need expert support as they manage their workforces through the changes ahead

LONG-TERM CAREER PLANNING

If the pandemic has put you in a position where you are looking for a new opportunity because you have been made redundant, or otherwise re-thinking your long-term career prospects, it is never too early to start planning.

Regardless of your situation, you should use any spare time to take your career planning into your own hands. For example:

- Re-skill or upskill in both the technical and soft skills that are needed for your profession
- Organise a career consultation with an expert recruiter who can update you on the job market and help you prepare for the future
- Update your CV and social media profiles to ensure you stand out to potential employers and hiring managers

Identify transferable skills

The impact of the pandemic on some industries such as education, leisure, hospitality, tourism and retail will be significant.

If your career prospects are threatened, or you are otherwise looking for work due to unforeseen circumstances, you may want to start thinking about how you can transfer your skills and enter a new industry.

It will be imperative that you can articulate any transferable skills on your CV and more importantly, in an interview. By identifying the transferable skills beforehand, you can demonstrate that you are adaptable and can use your previous experience to succeed in your new role.

Use any spare time to identify the transferable skills you possess and make sure they are reflected on your CV. You should also practice and prepare for interview questions such as “what relevant experience do you have?”.

Fine-tune your virtual interviewing skills

Most employers have now embraced virtual interviewing, and this is likely to remain the case for some time until social distancing eases. As with all interviews, preparation is vital, and if you haven't experienced a virtual interview before, these can be quite different. You'll need to ensure the technology works and pay close attention to your body language.

You can find further advice on how to succeed in video interviews using the resources on our website: hays.ae/work-from-home

Maximise time spent on leave

If you are on leave, whether it be because you've been furloughed, have been made redundant or had a reduction in your job role or hours, you should use the time productively. You can broaden your career horizons, stay up-to-date with industry trends and develop skills that you wouldn't have had the time to do otherwise.

There are a number of ways you can upskill during this time. Schedule some time to undertake the training and development resources that are available to you through your employer. You can also speak to them about signing up to [Hays Learning](#) which provides a full library of training courses designed to help you personally and professionally during this time. You can also do your own learning through online courses, a number of which are free.



This time is also a good opportunity to build the roadmap for your future career. Consider the direction your profession is taking, such as any major technological changes taking place, and think about how your own career goals fit into this. Break down what you want to achieve in the next six months, the next year and the next two to three years as a start and begin to develop in the areas you need to in order to make your career aspirations a reality.

Our consultants are experts in each specialist industry and profession, so use this time to get in touch to discuss your career plans and the options that are available to you.