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YOUR GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRENT AND NEW ERA OF WORK

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The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed many employers to fast-track their digital transformation. Those that can take any lessons learned and strengthen their business models will be ahead of their competition.

Employers have accelerated infrastructure enhancements (both hardware and systems) to enable remote working

on a larger scale and are using tools for engagement and collaboration more widely.

In this guide we cover the need to review current technology and provide guidance to help you plan for future requirements.

TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR NOW

Assessment of tools used

There will likely be a range of tools now being used by a greater number of users in your business for different purposes, by different user groups or departments.

Examples of use might include:

- Monthly board meetings or weekly meetings run on Teams.
- Virtual pitches with prospects using webinars and digital demos.
- Team collaboration using the Office 365 suite and instant messaging platforms, such as Slack.

There are some immediate actions which will help you to decide on the best course of action:

- Get feedback from different users and departments, find out what tools they used and how they worked for them.
- Decide which tools should be retained for the future and which employees will require access to them.
- Start thinking about the IT security and compliance infrastructure needed to support these new tools in your wider digital ecosystem.
- Start planning for how these tools will integrate into your existing processes.

Assess your infrastructure

Although remote working tools may have operated well, has the supporting technology architecture been stable, expandable and flexible? Did your security and compliance protocols take a back seat in the haste to implement remote working on a large scale?

“ Get feedback from different users and departments, find out what tools they used and how they worked for them. ”

As you prepare for a return to work, take the time to audit the new structure, both in its own right and in how it connects with legacy systems.

You should also ensure that you have the right level of IT support available to meet the requirements of any new working arrangements. For example, you may need to offer an extended timetable of support hours or include coverage for different tools. If IT support is outsourced to a provider, review contracts to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

The checklist on the right provides some practical guidance for employers to follow in this area.

CHECKLIST

Assessment of tools

- i. Review the tools and technology you have used to facilitate remote working during the pandemic and gather feedback from key users
- ii. Assess and decide what your technology suite for the future looks like

Investment

- i. Assess the resources and costs required for newly deployed technology to connect/integrate with existing company systems and operations
- ii. Assess the requirements for IT support during this new way of working. Your organisation may need to offer additional or different support coverage to staff working at home

Security

- i. Audit and assess new tools against cyber security/data protection/data security, to ensure seamless integration into existing IT infrastructure
- ii. Ensure that workplace technology, such as PCs and networks left idle during the crisis, are updated with the latest anti-virus software for return to work
- iii. Ensure cyber security/data compliance of all IT systems

Policies and frameworks

- i. Work closely with HR to update technology policies and frameworks that provide governance to employees concerning the correct use of approved technology, software and websites such as social media
- ii. Does your technology policy need updating; for example, concerning Bring Your Own Device?
- iii. Do any of your other policies need updating to cover technology use and workstation set up for remote workers?
- iv. Ensure employees are reminded of best practice when it comes to maintaining the security of systems and data when working remotely, for example, through e-learning modules

Training

- i. Put in place adequate technical support, training and troubleshooting
- ii. Assess technology training needs for staff

Connectivity and playbooks

- i. Reassess your processes and playbooks to allow employees to use technology to do their jobs
- ii. Review operational efficiencies and workflows, for example, can employee training be delivered online instead of face-to-face?
- iii. Consider any hardware you may need to provide employees that will be working remotely more often such as laptops

Please note: this is a guide checklist and should be tailored to the specific needs of your organisation.

TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

How will technology continue to propel your organisation forward in the new era of work, and what is the balance between physical and virtual interactions?

As you build out your infrastructure for regular and potentially widespread remote working, you should be thinking about the knock-on effects on the hiring, onboarding, training and performance management of your employees.

Is your organisation prepared to manage and coordinate hybrid teams which could be operating to different schedules, such as working different hours while others work remotely? How will you ensure key projects are managed and key performance indicators set when workers are no longer in the same location?

Telecommuting can also mean isolation and loneliness for some members of the workforce, so how will you communicate with remote workers, create a shared culture, ensure effective collaboration and build better employee experiences across digital platforms?

You'll need to think about how you upskill your existing workforce and hire tech expertise to deliver and maintain any new technology investments. There is also the opportunity to explore built-in learning and micro-learning techniques.

Technological enhancements are now more rapid than ever, so you'll need a way to continually evaluate suitability of tools and technologies as things evolve, what works today may not be fit for purpose tomorrow.

“COVID-19 has forced change that many organisations have spent years discussing - a change in how we work and the speed at which technology has been adopted for different work processes. However, the opportunity is less about the technology itself and more about the psychology of being able to adopt an ‘agile’ mindset and maintain an openness towards further change. It will require managers to put their trust in their staff, place less emphasis on which hours are being worked and focus more on outputs delivered.”

Christiaan Cumine,
Director of Systems & Change, Hays

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING YOUR PEOPLE & CULTURE

1. What does your technology suite for the future look like?
2. What is the technology investment required to allow employees to continue to work remotely, for example, do all staff need company devices or will you allow them to use their own?
3. What investments are required to create a technology environment that will enable your company to thrive in the future? Are there specific productivity or work-scheduling tools needed?
4. How are you enabling and supporting organic adoption of technology?
5. If there has been a stigma about remote working within your organisation in the past, how will you remove this?
6. How can your leaders act as catalysts for the change in the way your organisation uses technology and inspire their workforce to be agile to these changes?
7. How will you maintain connectedness and build a company culture against a backdrop of social distancing and digital divide?
8. How will technology help you create a culture amongst dispersed employees?
9. How do you build trust between users in a digital network without social contact?
10. How will skills and roles need to evolve as you adopt new technology? How will increased automation impact the functions and skills required in your business?
11. What tools will you use in your recruitment and onboarding process?
12. Which stakeholders and business users need to be involved in the decisions around deploying and using technology?

Whatever you decide to do, rest assured that Hays consultants will be on hand to help recruit the people you need to make your business a success.

If you want to view more advice and tips on managing in the new era, please visit our management hub hays.ae/manage-from-home. Or, if you have any further questions or concerns about hiring in the current climate, email us at clientmiddleeast@hays.com.