



Understanding the people impact of COVID-19

The business world is constantly learning how to adapt. The impact of COVID-19 is affecting how organizations address immediate as well as strategic people issues. It is likely, also, to require a medium term re-appraisal and rethinking about how we organize work. These checklists are designed to start the thinking processes as well as check that “all the bases are being covered.”

Taking action

Understanding the people issues helps organizations frame priorities in assessing and addressing the unique risk for their organization and workforce. The following checklists are suggestions that should be considered in relation to each organization and varying people needs.

KPMG professionals have developed three checklists:

1

Core:

The fundamental activities that must be taken before all else.

2

Now:

Leading organizations have started taking these steps.

3

Next:

These are future-oriented actions organizations will need to address.

Checklist - Core

Capacity



- Have you **accounted for your entire workforce** and the regions they work in? Are any **specific regions** that face greater impact from COVID 19? Are you ramping down capacity there? Is relocation in progress?
- Have you assessed your current organizational **capability, processes and protocols for remote working?**
- Have you changed your view of work from **job descriptions** and what roles people used to do and think about **critical tasks that need doing** and those **people with capabilities** to do them?
- Have you systematically **reassigned resources** from **non-critical tasks** to most critical tasks?

Cost



- Have you changed and cancelled the participation **in travel / seminars / conferences or moved to virtual participation** for the next few months?
- Have you reviewed **reimbursement policies for remote workers**-home office equipment?
- Have you reviewed your **policies on paid and unpaid leaves, project releases, capacity ramp downs and idle employees?** Have you **reviewed and discussed the critical changes** with senior leadership team?
- Have you accounted for **changes in productivity?**

Connection



- Can your **IT Infrastructure** support the full adoption of remote working?
- Have you been **communicating with your employees** regularly on all the changes and next steps? Are you simplifying communication so people are **not overwhelmed by the volume of information?**
- Is remote working supported by **policies, procedures and established norms?** If not, what are the policies that need to be created? Have your **clients been informed** about the remote working arrangements?
- Are you **motivating your employees** to prevent burnout? Are you planning to set up **employee support networks?**

Capability



- Have you **identified critical capabilities in your organization** that will be most impacted by COVID-19 threat?
- Do you have a **short term development plan for reallocating resources** to address gaps / unexpected immediate needs?
- Are **leaders prepared** and do they understand the new norm for making informed decisions?
- Is the current infrastructure available for remote working, **optimum for delivering necessary results?**
- Have you decided to **change performance expectations?** How are you planning to **support your employees** through that?

Compliance



- Do you have a plan to ensure that employees are aware of and compliant with your **social media policy**, especially when social media usage may be heightened?
- Have you done a **risk assessment** of the identified collaborative technological tools?
- Are you communicating the importance of **data security?** **Phishing scams** can be prevalent at this time.
- Have you confirmed the **immigration and visa status of all your expat employees** given potential travel bans? Are there any significant **risks in any specific location?**

Change



- Have you established an **employee check-in process** to understand any key concerns or any **change issues or challenges?** Are you also planning to allow them to write or post anonymously?
- Have you **identified, staffed and trained a crisis response team** to keep your employees, customers and business partners informed?
- Have you **aligned your senior leadership team** on new ways of working e.g. leading virtual teams?
- Have you **communicated the new ways of working and leading practices** to your employees?

Checklist - Now

Capacity



- Have you identified the **critical regions/customers/ functions where you need continued capacity**? Have you started the **conversation with the critical customers and suppliers** on capacity ramp up/down?
- Have you **revised your workforce plan**? Does your workforce plan include **“what if” scenarios**?
- Have you stood-up **an enterprise wide resource planning capability** for the agile reallocation of people to tasks?
- How are you **planning to reallocate work** from one function/team to the other? Is there a process in place?
- Have you **created a business continuity plan (BCP)** in case your employees are quarantined? Is back up capacity available?

Cost



- Are there **new cost implications of remote access** related to technology and tools? Have they been assessed?
- Have you **started reviewing the cost and time impact of changes to the workforce plan**? Are you planning to **activate a hiring freeze**?
- Have you invested in **cross skilling employees** to create talent pools in case there is a hiring freeze?
- Have you evaluated the impact of the external factors on your **salesforce performance and earnings** opportunity?

Connection



- How are you planning to keep **employee motivation and morale** high during this period?
- Do you have the **training and necessary support mechanisms** to enable **full adoption of remote working**? If the answer is 'no', **who needs training and support** and how quickly can it be implemented?
- Is there a structured plan to **promote the wellbeing of employees**, and protect productivity while embracing large scale adoption of remote working?
- Are you planning to **accommodate different timing arrangements** due to closure of schools/missing support system at homes? Will a new **flexible work time policy** be needed?

Capability



- Are you reviewing **employee performance projections** for the year? Have you started prioritising work and listing **mission critical work** items?
- Do you have the **ability to reskill employees** while they are working remotely? Do you understand the current and previous experience and capabilities of your resources? Are you able to determine **which resources can be rapidly reskilled** should demand require?
- Have you identified people who are a **top retention priority** for the organization? Have you spoken with them?
- Have you **trained managers and supervisors** in the skills for running successful virtual meetings?

Compliance



- Are people **able to comply with your regulated processes** while working from home, e.g., are electronic approval processes in place? Do you have a plan to address **renewal of required professional licenses** for employees?
- Do you have compressed and readily **accessible knowledge transfer** and on boarding programs to address your compliance requirements? How are you planning to **communicate with contract workforce**?
- How do you plan to support **protected workforce groups and enhance overall inclusion and diversity** in this environment?

Change



- How do you **identify, measure and address resistance when working virtually**? Have you identified action plans?
- How do you know **key leaders are aligned to current initiatives and efforts**? Are **leadership action plans** in place?
- Have you identified **what changes are likely to become permanent** and which will revert to pre-pandemic state?
- Do you have the ability to follow through and execute on the **changes required for the in-flight initiatives** in the organization? How will you **keep the teams engaged** even if the initiatives are stopped for some time?

Checklist - Next

Capacity



- How will you **renegotiate the workforce capacity expectations** with your critical customers?
- What will be the potential changes in **customer service delivery mechanism** that will have lasting impact on capacity planning? What will be the **new assumptions for planning capacity**?
- How will that change the **future workforce planning process**? What are the new drivers that will be included in workforce planning? How will you **embed an agile mind set in leaders** for future workforce planning?

Cost



- Do you have mechanisms in place to **review / reallocate resources across high demand areas**? Can you plan **sharing of critical resources**?
- What are the **new policies you need to draft to balance employee costs and business continuity**? Have you fully considered the **impact of short term cost reduction on your longer-term ability to maintain business continuity**, and future business growth?
- Have you started **evaluating incentive plan performance goals** for management and broader workforce?

Connection



- If there is a **delay or constraint in adopting non critical but necessary IT infrastructure**, how is this going to be communicated? Will it impact the **nature of relationships** between different employee groups?
- How will you drive a **culture of collaboration**? How will you **build virtual connections** as part of talent strategy?
- Is your organization equipped to minimise **potential feelings of isolation** amongst your workforce?
- How will you strengthen and empower your **global employee support groups**?
- Have you developed an **on line ideation platform and methods of generating new ideas** from across the workforce?
- Have you encouraged managers and supervisors to **replicate appropriate social gatherings in a virtual way**: Friday night drinks; lunch and learn sessions etc?

Capability



- Do you have a review mechanism in place to **assess the need for remote mentoring** and knowledge transfer?
- Will you need programs to **support the rapid reskilling of the workforce**, or to further develop capability in new or related competencies while working remote?
- How will you define **build, buy and borrow talent strategies** considering this situation extends? How will you create **agile models so that ramp-ups/ramp downs** can be easily managed?
- How will you **build leadership capabilities** to manage this agility and ambiguity in future?
- Have you begun to re-think your ideal **workforce equation** for now and next: The balance between **Buy (Recruit); Build (Train and upskill); Borrow (source from 3rd parties and contingent workers); Bot (Tasks to automate or cognitively enable); and Building (where to locate work)**?

Compliance



- Are you able to **mobilize teams to provide multi-jurisdiction / region wide services** if required for business continuity? What if the current situation extends beyond a few months?
- How will you **evaluate virtual employee compliance**? Do you need to build new tools?
- Are you able to **conduct talent and performance reviews** and implement any necessary short term actions to ensure ongoing compliance?
- How will you design **new T&E policies for employees** for future? How will you **track and manage overtime**?

Change



- How will you support the **changes your organization and employees** are facing from the social, political, economic, and other external dynamics? How will you **prepare your leaders** to lead in future situations like these?
- How will you start planning for **people strategies post COVID-19 pandemic**? What factors will you include in planning? Do you plan to conduct **social network analysis** to understand who your influencers are to align your communication and change strategy?
- Will you use any analysis or focus groups to understand how **employees feel about changes** in the organization?

Related service support

Done

- ✓ Employee master data
- ✓ Business traveler – location impacts
- ✓ Understand what work people do and how they get it done
- ✓ Communications strategy - to manage information overload
- ✓ Communication channel analysis

Now

- Operational workforce planning scenarios (ramp up/down)
- Critical role identification
- Process and impacts of uncontrolled staff absence (illness, quarantine)
- Temporary task reallocation for essential service employees
- Communications planning

- Employee access to work locations (e.g. Discontinuation of public transport)
- Identify outlier risk profile for diverse workers
- Reskill employees for remote working
- Collaborative tool and virtual facilitation training

- Relocation of global travelers
- Employee benefit review especially Leave and Healthcare
- Tax impact of employees working from home
- Evaluate impact of performance based compensation/incentives and sales goals

- Talent risk assessment
- Retention risk identification and mitigations
- Change management coaching
- Change leadership coaching

Next

- Succession plan review
- Strategic workforce plan scenarios and models
- Ongoing reskilling and talent resilience
- Employee Experience and Engagement

- Operating model and organization design review for sustained change
- Organization agility, decision effectiveness, human network analysis

- Evaluate performance and compensation plan impacts
- Restructuring of compensation/performance programs
- Long term impacts to benefits
- Governance to support changing compliance requirements
 - Tax
 - Health
 - Payroll
 - Labor
- Change metrics and analytics
- Leadership alignment and cohesion

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