Business and people priorities toolkits for the 'new normal'

Post pandemic (Covid-19)

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Business Processes Toolkit

Work
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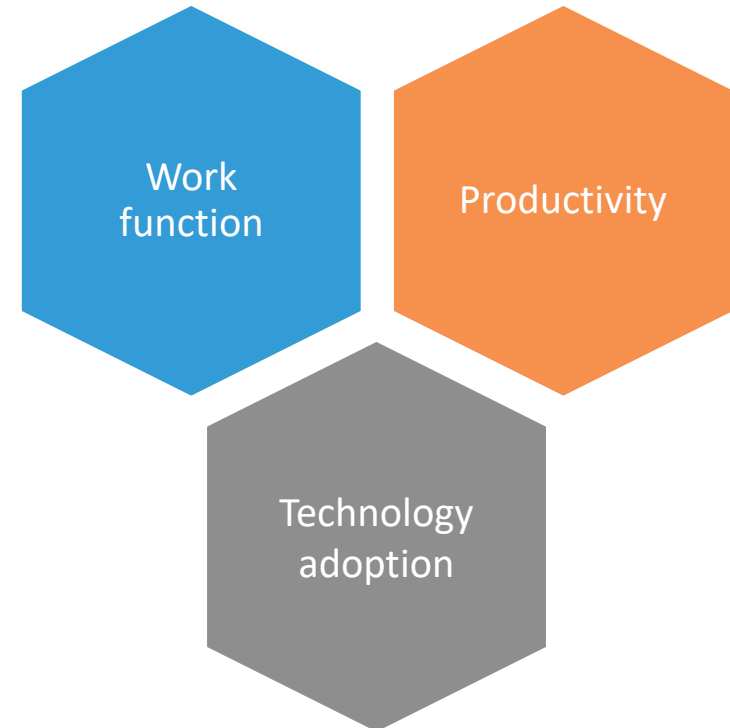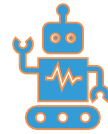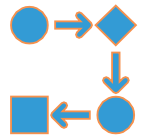
Tips on toolkit

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01 Analyze

Review the learnin

Work function toolkit

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new"

- Socrates

Introduction – how will future of work change

In the world after Covid-19 as we emerge through the crisis

Companies all around the world are likely to ask the following questions after we're through this crisis:

- What did we learn about our people's ability to work from home (WFH)?
- What adjustments do we want to make about our processes and policies to facilitate WFH in future?
- How will these adjustments benefit our business and enable us to attract top talent?
- How do we operationalize new ways of working?

This toolkit has been designed to support companies in understanding how the pandemic has changed the way we work and how we can adapt our work function accordingly.

5 ways in which future of work will change
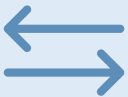
Impact of changes to work function

Tips and sample surveys

5 ways in which future of work will change

Employee expectations are changing

Employee preferences will change in future, especially for those who have experienced 100% remote work.
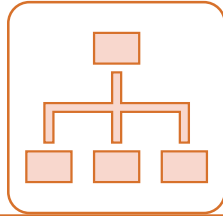
Ideal people manager profile will shift

The way employees are engaged and retained has changed. Skills and abilities required from managers will also change.

Technology related investments will increase

The way employees interact, learn and perform will change, creating the need for digital collaboration and learning tools.
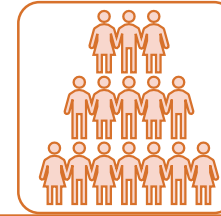
Workforce profile will change

The way organizations hire workers will change, especially the emergence of gig or contingent workforce.

Nature of jobs and tasks performed will change

Tasks & responsibilities have to be re-arranged to better align roles with the changing environment.

5 ways in which future of work will change

Employee expectations are changing
- Employees expect flexibility offered by remote working arrangements
- Standard 9-to-6 office hours could become a thing of the past
- Working hours could be spread throughout the day

Ideal people manager profile will shift
- The core competencies driving manager success will increasingly be deployed across a variety of environments, often at the same time.
- Line management need to be strengthened in order to cope with the shift.

Technology related investments will increase
- Calls will move to video; and meetings will be replaced by email and IM
- More companies will use secure cloud environments and provide the tools needed to easily access and share data, automate processes and communicate in real time

Workforce profile will change
- As companies try to reduce costs, more gig workers will be engaged.
- Skill-based and project-based hiring will be on the rise.
- The workplace could become more equitable for diverse groups of people.

Nature of jobs and tasks performed will change
- What work is performed and how it is performed is fundamentally changing
- Jobs will be reconstructed into components that can be performed by remote workers as well as contingent or gig workers.

Impact on work function

In the world after Covid-19 as we emerge through the crisis

Employee expectations are changing	→	Enabling employees to work remotely
Ideal people manager profile will shift	→	Enabling line managers to manage a virtual workforce
Technology related investments will increase	→	Greater use of tech tools, virtual collaboration
Workforce profile will change	→	Emergence of gig workforce
Nature of jobs and tasks performed will change	→	Job redesign will become inevitable

1. Enabling employees to work remotely

A virtual team is simply a team made up of members in different geographical locations and communicate largely through electronic means. Virtual working is on the rise and as we emerge from the pandemic, even more employees will demand flexibility in where and how they work. Workplace of the future respondents believe that virtual working will have the single greatest influence on office design, and the way we manage workplaces. Employers who embrace it could reap the rewards in terms of productivity and employee engagement.

Engaging remote workforce offers the following benefits:
- Lowered business expenses due to savings on on-site operations costs
- Greater access to applicants who would otherwise not be available; improved inclusivity
- Increase in productivity, as telecommuters face less workplace distraction and more freedom to work
- Ability to carry on working in the event of natural disaster, local or national emergency
- Improved employee satisfaction and retention; lower absenteeism
- Reduced carbon footprint and positive environmental impact

Tips for employees on remote working

2. Enabling line managers to manage a virtual workforce

In previous years, many managers have expressed concern about hiring remote workers as they fear that they might not get the job done without supervision or be uncontactable when they are needed. On the other hand, employees may also struggle with reduced access to managerial support and communication. However the pandemic situation has necessitated remote working and has also demonstrated that it is advantageous to the business.

Managers can overcome the challenges posed by remote working by having regular check-ins with their teams (or team huddles) and creating structured opportunities for remote social interaction. Such structured communication will make up for the lack of connections that are created from in-person social gatherings and casual conversations that happen day-to-day in a shared office environment.

Managers need to trust and build trust with their teams, especially while working remotely. In addition to giving feedback and guidance to employees, managers should also seek their input on how they are performing. Transparent and clear communication is also important for to effectively motivating and guiding remote employees.

Tips for managers on virtual teams

Sample workplace survey to assess remote working

3. Greater use of tech tools, virtual collaboration

With large number of employees suddenly having to work remotely due to constraints posed by the pandemic, many companies have invested in new technology or accelerated their plans to invest in technology. This includes hardware equipment in the form of laptops or desktops that can be used for remote working, as well as software solutions aimed at virtual connection and collaboration.

Automation

More companies are also adopting automation, as it reduces dependency on people and improves their ability to deal with a crisis. Automation also increases reliability, improves safety and well being, and allows companies to handle sudden spikes in demand.

Many companies have also expanded their use of automation software in recent months to allow workers to operate, monitor, and control systems remotely, thereby reducing the risk of human exposure to the virus and enabling activities to run smoothly without service disruptions.

Virtual collaboration

Virtual collaboration is working jointly toward a common goal using digital resources as the primary means of cooperation. Without physical interaction, distributed teams leverage digital tools that allow for real-time communication, collaboration, and file-sharing.

4. Emergence of gig workforce

Gig workers are freelancers, contract workers or temporary employees who are not hired by a company long-term but only for a specific "gig". Such workers perform fixed-term activities for an individual or a company without being employed by the organization.

Gig work has traditionally been the realm of creative professionals and those whose work is project-based, such as writers, designers, IT professionals and coaches. Lately, however, more and more industries are employing gig workers, especially in insurance, education, health care, legal and accounting industries. One of the main drivers for hiring gig workers is lower cost and absence of liabilities associated with permanent employees.

Having a virtual workforce and employing gig workers offers the following benefits:

- Reduced operating costs
- Faster hiring and on-boarding
- Skill based hiring
- Flexibility and better work life balance for workers

Gig workers do not enjoy the traditional benefits of employment like insurance, leave and retirement benefits. They will also not be included in talent management activities involving career and performance management. Litigation risk is also low with gig workers as they may not be covered under the law.

Tips for managing gig workforce

5. Job redesign will become inevitable

With jobs at the heart of how work gets done, more and more companies are now looking at how work can be re-arranged such that employees can take on different responsibilities to better respond to the evolving needs of their customers.

With more companies moving into hiring freeze or cautious hiring, work is also being broken down into various parts and each part is being given to existing employees. This gives employees new opportunities to learn and grow, while also enabling the company to meet its business goals

Making work portable

Work is being broken down into tasks and projects that can be matched with people – depending upon whether they are working remotely or for a fixed term. Work can now be done from anywhere in the world, if the worker possesses the relevant skills and is available. This also limits the amount of work that must be performed in the office or on-site.

Increased use of technology has also automated certain tasks, resulting in job changes. Some jobs will get new tasks, while others disappear. This creates the need to rearrange these tasks and responsibilities to align them with the changing reality of work.
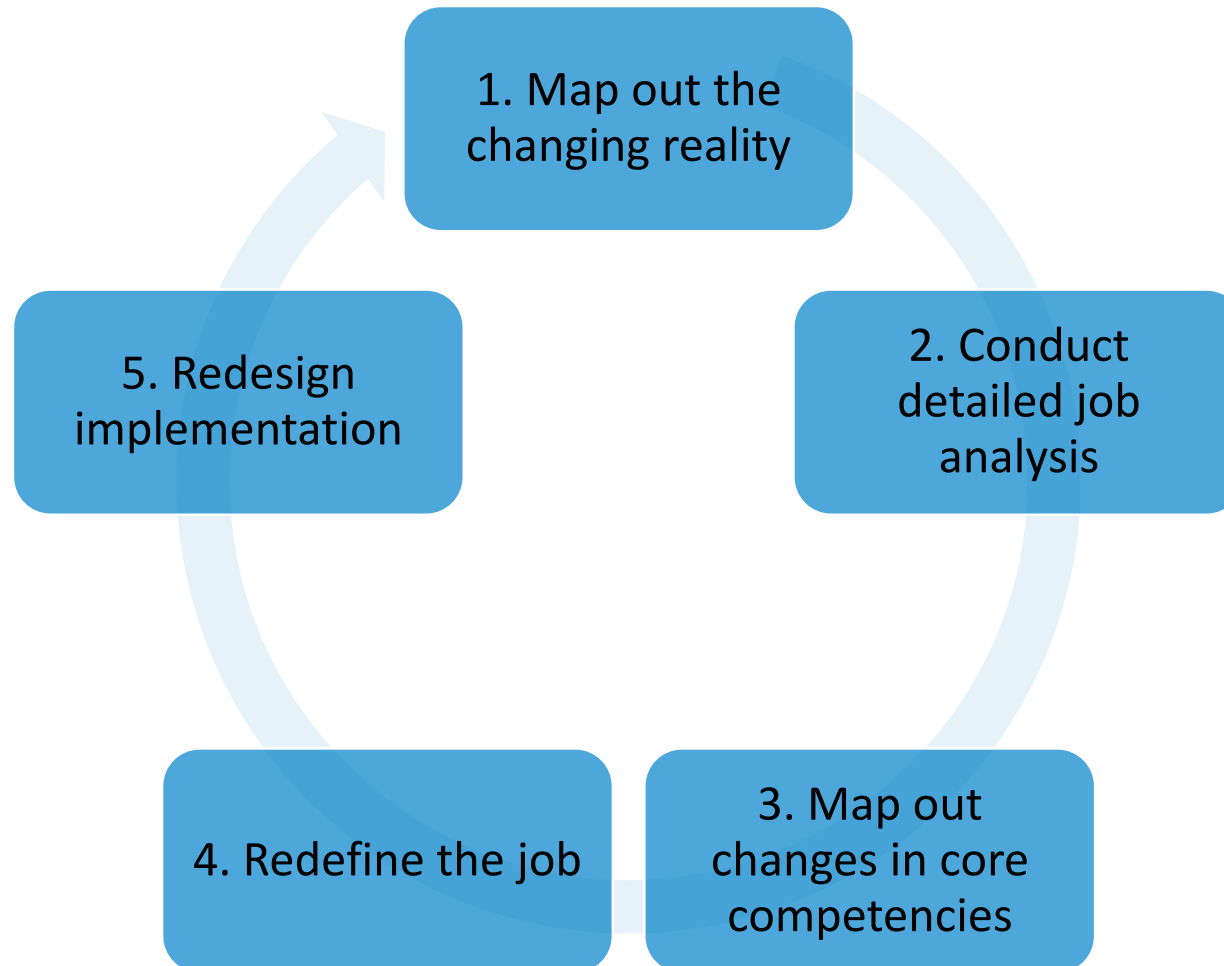
Job redesign – a structured approach in 5 phases

The following is a structured approach to job redesign broken down into 5 phases:

1. Map out the changing reality

2. Conduct detailed job analysis

3. Map out changes in core competencies

4. Redefine the job

5. Redesign implementation

1. *Map out changing reality*

Job redesign becomes relevant when requirements have changed and need to be updated. This can be because tasks are automated and need to be replaced, or because tasks require new skills. As a first step, identify the changing need and select the number of jobs or job categories that are most impacted by this change and therefore should be analyzed for redesigning.

2. *Conduct detailed job analysis*

In the second job redesigning phase, the selected jobs are analyzed. Tasks are identified along with time spent, frequency, skills required, characteristics of performers etc, thereby explaining key components and attributes of the task. In many cases, an importance rating is assigned along with identification of new skills required.

3. *Map out changes in core competencies*

Depending on the scope of the job redesigning project, there may also be a change on the organizational level.

Many organizations work with clearly defined 'core competencies' that apply to everyone in the organization. These competencies are required for everyone in the organization – not at the same level but everyone needs at least a basic proficiency in these. Changing or updating these company-level competencies means that all functions will be affected.

4. *Redefine the job*

All inputs from the previous phases are then used to redefine the job. This can be a minor redesign, or the job can be combined with others.

Depending on the impact and degree to which the job has changed, different stakeholders will be involved, and their agreement is necessary to proceed further. Oftentimes they are better able to put things into perspective as they understand the nuances of the job.

Where possible, fitting the employee with the job will create a person-job fit which leads to more satisfaction.

Different jobs will be affected differently, and the changes will have to be communicated.

5. *Redesign implementation*

The work that has been done on the redesign will be officially communicated to different employees, and action will be taken.

Job redesigning efforts may result in learning and development programs that reskill employees. It may also change the criteria for recruitment, promotion and rewarded. Some attrition is likely during the process – both voluntary (as employees may not see themselves fit in the new roles) and involuntary (when the company does not believe that a person can be successful in the new role).

A crucial part of this phase is communication. Ample opportunity should be provided for employees to get involved and develop themselves towards the new reality. People need to understand the need for change, be involved, and be motivated to go along with it.

Appendices

Tips

Useful links

Tips for employees on remote working

1. Designate a workspace or home office

2. Keep clearly defined working hours and create a morning routine

3. Get dressed like you were going to office, invest in technology and get comfortable office furniture

4. Join meetings by video if you can and be heard

5. Over communicate to break barriers and have a positive mindset

6. Focus on the most important work, stop procrastinating and stay focused to meet deadlines

7. Socialize with colleagues, even if its virtual (example: virtual coffee breaks or virtual lunch meet ups)

8. Leave home and get outdoors, exercise and stretch regularly

9. Schedule breaks and take them in their entirety

10. End your day with a routine and make it personal

Tips for managers on virtual teams

Communication

1. Communicate and compensate for the fact that you're not bumping into each other

2. Be available to talk and have regular 1-on-1s with your team or stakeholders

3. Use collaboration tools already made available and focus on visual communication

4. Track hours worked by your team members and track their work output

5. Clarify tasks and processes, not just goals and roles

6. Do a quarterly review to see how your virtual team members are coping

Productivity

Culture

7. Create a virtual on-boarding process for new employees for better assimilation

8. Meet in person at least once a quarter and nurture virtual friendships

9. Trust your people; they were hired because they can get the job done and do well

10. Have a team ritual (example: Happy Fridays to celebrate team achievements)

Tips for HR professionals

1. Keep yourself up-to-date with new legislation and government guidelines

2. React quickly to comply and adapt to the changing environment

3. Prioritize workplace safety and well-being

4. Understand your employee expectations and how it has evolved

5. Adopt a data driven approach to analyzing feedback and changing expectations

6. Enable managers to succeed in managing distributed and remote teams

7. Adjust your people processes to suit remote working

8. Modify your policies and benefits to suit gig workers

9. Make positive and tangible changes

10. Solicit feedback to ensure success

Tips for managing gig workforce

1. While hiring a gig worker, thoroughly understand their needs, priorities and motivations

2. Set clear expectations and plan their schedule in advance

3. Equip gig workers to stay connected and have seamless access to work related documents and tools

4. Understand them well so that long term relationships can be fostered

5. Gig workers like to feel that they are part of a team, so make them feel like it, by including them in meetings, give them a company email address, invite them to team lunches etc

6. Maintain confidentiality as appropriate and have them sign a non-disclosure agreement

7. Establish clear reporting lines and have a leader for your gig workforce

8. In the absence of performance reviews, have regular conversations with them to share feedback; offer training where possible

9. Recognize their work and ensure that they are visible in the organization

10. Include them in leadership communication and engagement activities

Useful links

1. Job Redesign by Skills Future SG and WSG

    https://www.ssg-wsg.gov.sg/employers/job-redesign.html

2. Hotel job redesign initiative

    https://sha.org.sg/job-redesign

3. Job redesign grant

    https://snef.org.sg/incentives/workpro/job-redesign-grant/

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