

MODULE6_SESSION1



TOPICS

- **HRM –Role and Responsibilities AMIDST the Covid-19 Situation**
- **How The COVID-19 Crisis Has Made HR One Of The Most Important Jobs Today**
- **An IT Perspective on COVID-19**

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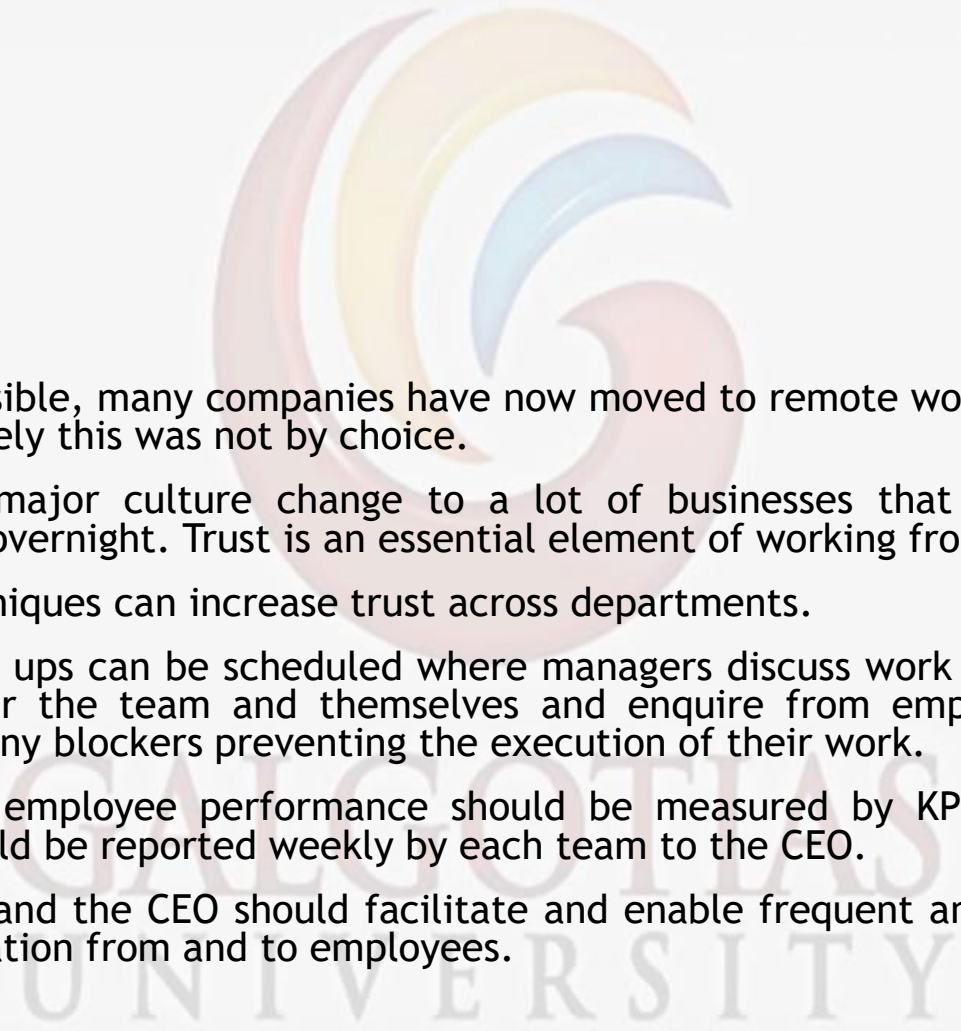
Three challenges facing HR during the Covid-19 pandemic

Communication

- With information from governments, health authorities and labor organizations continually changing, companies need to communicate with their employees quickly as they react to changes even quicker.
- CEOs and managers should connect with their staff daily to reassure them that the business is reviewing government guidelines and how they plan to comply with them.
- They should also update employees on a weekly basis on how the business is performing and reassure staff that they are investigating all government assistance in order to protect employees.
- Finally, a space should be provided for employees to chat as if in the office such as a virtual coffee break.
- Talking things through with others will really help during this distressing time.

Trust

- Where possible, many companies have now moved to remote working and unfortunately this was not by choice.
- This is a major culture change to a lot of businesses that has just happened overnight. Trust is an essential element of working from home.
- Some techniques can increase trust across departments.
- Daily stand ups can be scheduled where managers discuss work priorities per day for the team and themselves and enquire from employees if there are any blockers preventing the execution of their work.
- Team and employee performance should be measured by KPI metrics which should be reported weekly by each team to the CEO.
- Managers and the CEO should facilitate and enable frequent and honest communication from and to employees.



Rapid policy change

- As these are extraordinary times nearly every company policy has been affected and needs to be updated for Covid-19 clauses.
- As HR departments are accountable for the lion's share of company policies, they have a lot of work on their plate with very little time.
- There are some elements that HR departments should consider. Fast communication is key at this time and they should ensure that the business has the ability to communicate to all staff (even out of hours) when an important immediate policy change is needed due to new government guidelines.
- They should take advantage of the numerous webinars that companies are providing in order to arm people with advice and the tools necessary to get through the business disruption that has been experienced.
- They should try to be flexible and empower managers to make decisions in relation to their teams as it is too difficult to have a policy for absolutely everything that has changed over the past few weeks.

How The COVID-19 Crisis Has Made HR One Of The Most Important Jobs Today

- **1. Communicate with empathy** Demonstrating empathy and listening to employees is critical, particularly during a crisis that can be daunting. Employees are keen to be heard, and the HR team plays an important function in providing that support.
- **2. Keep up with having less** Many companies are currently facing budget constraints. Instead of pushing mindless employee activities, HR must adopt innovative ways to continue to provide positivity and fun. Offering free online courses to employees and their families can also be a way of keeping employees connected and engaged.
- **3. Invest in training** One of the things that keeps employees engaged is knowing that the organization cares about educating and upskilling them. Changing workplace needs require employees to pick up new skills to stay relevant. The company's HR team can lead this initiative and build training plans that target various work functions, benefiting not just the employee but the organization as well, which can expand its scope with multi-skilled professionals to tackle new areas of the business. Renowned global platforms such as Harvard University and LinkedIn have made many courses available for free online to support learning for individuals and companies. Reflecting on the high demand for e-learning, digital platform Coursera reported a 750% increase in the UAE in enrolments for skills in social science, the arts, and personal development in March 2020, as compared to the same time last year.

- **4. Provide strong support** Global HR functions have been building “priority teams” that are tasked with ensuring a smooth workflow during crises, while managing employees fairly and effectively. The team identifies sustainable practices that keep the company and its employees in sync during trying times, as well as in the long run. These can include check-ins and monitoring of employee health and well-being. In addition, regular emails offering healthy work-from-home tips and highlighting supporting policies and practices will go a long way in combatting the always-on culture, while convincing employees that the company cares for their well-being.
- **5. Showcase compassionate leadership** Among the challenges HR teams are faced with during these times are managing health and safety, ensuring work continuity, and promoting well-planned and ethical policies. HR needs to constantly showcase its sound leadership by being there for the employees.

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An IT Perspective on COVID-19

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HR to play a bigger role during and after Covid-19

- Experts believe that Covid-19 may significantly impact the USD 180 billion Indian IT sector.
- The silver lining is that this is expected to be a short-term challenge for the IT industry.
- Though the IT spend will initially dip in 2020, IT companies will gradually see a rise in market opportunities, especially the product companies.
- The need for **remote working** would grow the demand for **automation** and **collaboration** tools and increase the shift to cloud computing.
- It is imperative to keep employees motivated and enthused to achieve this future together.
- In these times, human resources (HR) department is tasked with ensuring adequate enablement and engagement of teams while also preparing for some hard decisions.

- The organizations which were prepared for the work from home were better equipped to deal with the nationwide situation without any significant impact on productivity.
- The HR department of every organization has been in the frontline, leading the efforts to facilitate employees.
- In situations like these, HR, in addition to handling the business requirements, is also responsible for managing concerns and apprehensions of their employees.

As the initial chaos settles, HR has to step up and support their employees and prioritize their mental and emotional wellbeing.

- These unprecedented times can induce anxiety and raise the stress levels of a person, and the onus is on the employers to channel these emotions in order to keep their employees safe, motivated, and productive.

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Preparing for the New Normal

- With the current disruption in the industry, traditional ways of working have become things of the past.
- The present and future of IT companies rely on remote working with minimum investment in infrastructure.
- It is crucial for HR to revamp the policies and processes in accordance with the new normal.

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The Way Forward for HR

- The onboarding practices for new employees need to be reviewed to align them to the organization's vision and goals while ensuring a seamless remote joining experience.
- The entire employee journey will have to be planned as the HR gets ready for the new challenges that come along with a distributed virtual atmosphere.
- This could mean the modification of recruitment practices, rewards and recognition policies, engagement initiatives, exit processes, and everything in between.

How do the Future Organizations look like?

- Working hours, locations, and even the work arrangements to become more fluid
 - Remote working to be an integral part of every organization
 - The popularity of contractual jobs and freelancers to grow
 - Workforce to constantly upgrade and work on capability enhancement to remain competitive
 - Focus on learning and development to increase to make employees future-ready

New Normal will not be without its Challenges

- Data suggests that employees are working longer hours and have experienced a significant drop in absenteeism during the crisis.
- Organizations feel that the employees have showcased commendable agility and resilience to adapt to the new ways of working.
- However, the ability to sustain this momentum poses an immediate challenge to organizations.
- This enthusiasm could be short-lived as job security is a driving force for most employees in the current situation. As the market sees an improvement, productivity may roll back to pre-Covid levels.

- The new way of work may create a need for some new roles, render some roles redundant, or require upskilling of existing resources.

Digital is a savior in times like these when the only way to operate is in a remotely distributed environment.

- This crisis has presented the IT industry with an opportunity to empower businesses with technology, and further emphasized the focus on innovation to survive and thrive.
- It is heartening to see the commitment of our workforce during these trying times.
- Striking a balance at this time will be the key to effectively forge a path towards the future of work.

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