The Ultimate Workplace Guide
for The New Normal

It's hard to believe that Covid-19 has been around for nine months now; the term 'New Normal' is overused, but still many businesses are struggling to adapt because we are living in a 'New Normal.' The time is now for businesses to learn how to adapt or risk being able to keep up and stay afloat during these unprecedented times. In this eBook, we will give you a quick and easy guide to adapting your workplace to the 'New Normal.'

Existing Employees

When Covid-19 first started spreading, most companies switched to a work-from-home model so that employees could still get work done without infecting one another and risking spreading the virus further. In the wake of Covid-19, a lot of companies have decided to make a permanent switch to part-time or full-time remote working and this is a trend that we only see getting bigger in the future.

If you prefer that your employees work from the office, or it simply makes more sense to have employees physically present, make sure that you are still providing a safe environment.

THIS CAN BE DONE IN A FEW WAYS INCLUDING PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING AT THE OFFICE.

1) Try to space out desks and workspaces at least six feet apart or try an alternating schedule where certain employees switch off working remotely and coming into the office.

2) Make sure that employees have their face masks with them at all times in the office and that they are worn when possible.

3) You should also vamp up your hygiene efforts at the office and encourage all staff to sanitize their workspaces, door handles and any other areas that they come in contact with.

4) Another good idea is to come up with a plan for how shared workspaces will be handled, for example, conference rooms and break rooms. What can be done to ensure too many people don't get in the same space at the same time? For example, staggered lunch break times can ensure a limit on the amount of people in the break room at a time.

5) Come up with a set of guidelines and post it all over the office for employees to easily read.

In order to ensure a safe working environment, companies need to find ways to continue supporting flexible approaches to work in the future, and also to ensure transparent communications and the facilitation of virtual collaboration.

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Digital Safety

As our work environment turns more digital, unfortunately the cyber risks increase.

When employees are working from the office, you don't really worry that much about cybersecurity because you know that they are using office computers with the appropriate firewalls, security software and other security measures. But, when you have your employees working from tons of different locations, using personal computers and even public WiFi, it can turn into a cyber security nightmare.

This is why emphasizing data security becomes so vital when it comes to remote working.

1) Find ways that your team can use encrypted communication to keep data secure, be careful what remote desktop tools your employees are using— try to come up with one streamlined service that you know is secure to prevent employees from downloading their own tools from all over the internet.

2) Make sure that everybody in your organization uses a VPN when connecting to the work network. It is especially important to use a VPN when accessing any of your organizations file servers to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of your data and make sure that employees are using secure WiFi networks and never public WiFi for work-related matters.
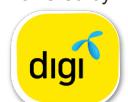
Employee Engagement

Employee engagement becomes a lot more challenging while working from home. But, it becomes more important than ever to ensure that employees are feeling okay, are confident in their job security and their job duties and that a sense of togetherness is formed among your team.

Engagement looks different during Covid-19, but it's not impossible. The good news is that digital media lends itself well to these types of engagements.

1) Coaching, focus groups, coffee chats and one-on-one meetings can all be done online.

2) To facilitate ongoing communication, it's important that you establish dedicated communication channels like chat and online video platforms that employees know where to access and how to use properly.

3) Encourage employees to share personal photos of their pets, kids and other hobbies with the group in order to establish a deeper bond and lasting personal connections with colleagues. It is possible to engage while working remotely, it just takes a little bit of extra creativity.

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Employee Well-Being

Let's be honest, these times can be scary and uncertain. It's important that you check in with your employees and make sure they are doing okay, that they're healthy and that they are coping with all of the sudden changes.

1) Some of the challenges that employees face during Covid-19 are added stress and worry about the virus, their loved ones, the economy and juggling it all.

2) Some workers may not be as technologically savvy which can create stress and concern that they won't be able to perform their job well.

3) Having the kids and spouse at home 24/7 can also be a challenge when it comes to personal space, distractions and being able to get work done.

In order to look after employee's well-being, make sure that you are checking in with employees on a regular basis, create a support group or chat group where employees can lean on one another, launch an employee hotline where employees can speak with medical professionals about any concerns, acknowledge that anxiety during these times is normal and that work is a safe space to talk about the stresses.

For employees who may have weak immune systems, the pandemic becomes that much more stressful. If possible, have employees with weak immune systems work from home for the foreseeable future. If that's not possible, try to separate them from other people as much as possible in the office and make sure that they are always working in a sanitized area away from the masses.
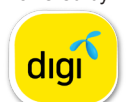
New Employees

Virtual Hiring:

The hiring process and employee onboarding is another area that has been completely upended by the Coronavirus. Virtual hiring is the new normal. The good news is that when you hire virtually, you open yourself up to a much, much larger candidate pool.

● **Benefits of Virtual Hiring**

1) Instead of only being able to hire people in your backyard, you now have access to talent around the globe. With virtual interviews, hiring managers and candidates can still connect on a personal level, but have the added benefit of recording the conversation so those unable to attend also have the opportunity to share their feedback.

2) This can also be helpful when a hiring manager is reflecting and reviewing a candidate's qualifications because they can go back and watch what they said in the interview.

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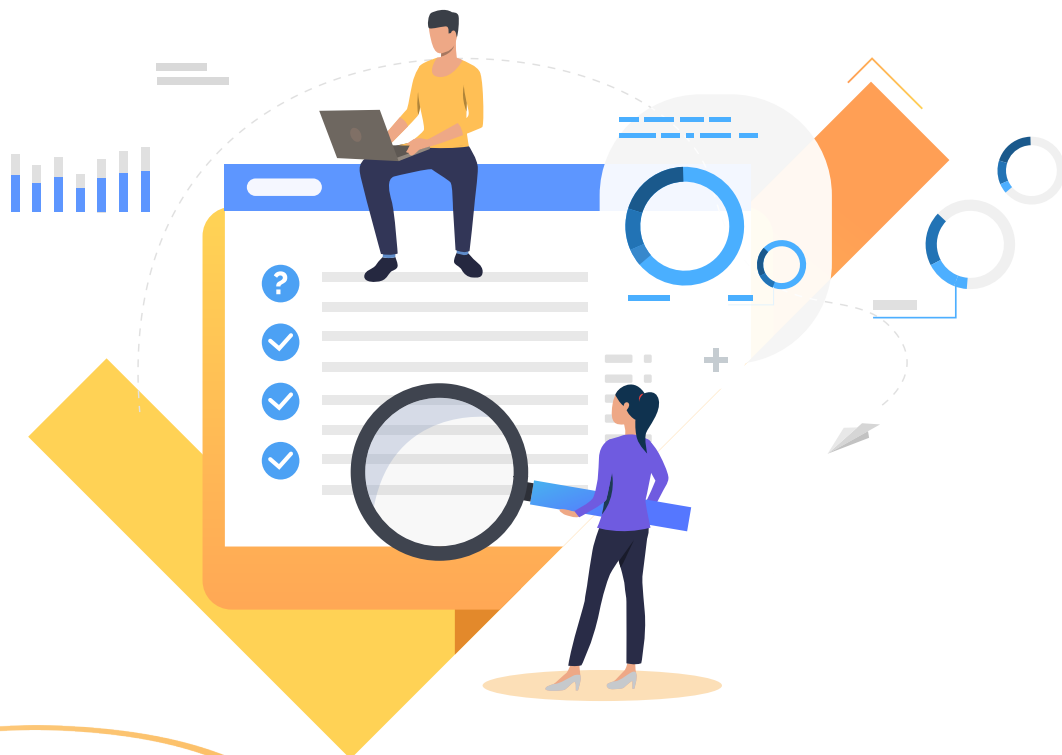
Virtual onboarding:

Once a candidate has been hired remotely, they have to then be onboarded, trained and kept engaged and supported. Companies must find ways to translate their existing employee engagement model for success into the remote world.

● Ways To Onboard New Hires

1) With technology, this becomes possible with things like virtual tours, virtual meet-and-greets, video training sessions, video meetings and any of the other tools that you have implemented to connect and engage remote employees.

2) A virtual walk-through that allows remote workers to see co-workers in action, even if it's not a current video, may still help to reduce feelings of isolation.

3) Make sure your new hires feel welcomed, even though they may not be meeting anybody face-to-face, they can still have communication with their new team members via apps and programs.

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Virtual learning and skilling:

The new normal of working will drive new ways to learn online. In fact, it's been forecast the e-learning market will triple by 2025 to reach $325 billion. We've already seen companies like Walmart and Home Depot turn to virtual learning to prepare their employees for big shopping days like Black Friday and training apps and digital manuals.

● **Businesses will need to find new ways to create engaging experiences which are experiential and fun.**

1) That means incorporating more gamification, virtual reality, and augmented reality for corporate learning.

2) It becomes evident how important digitalization is when we are faced with a circumstance like the global pandemic of Covid-19. In these times we lean on and rely on technology like never before to keep us connected, informed and able to do our jobs.

Digitalization of business helps to improve the efficiency of its process, consistency, and quality and helps keep employees organized and on track. From the recruitment process, onboarding, securing new clients to day-to-day meetings and everything in between, having a company that practices proper digitalization will make all the difference in culture, growth and success going forward in this New Normal.

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