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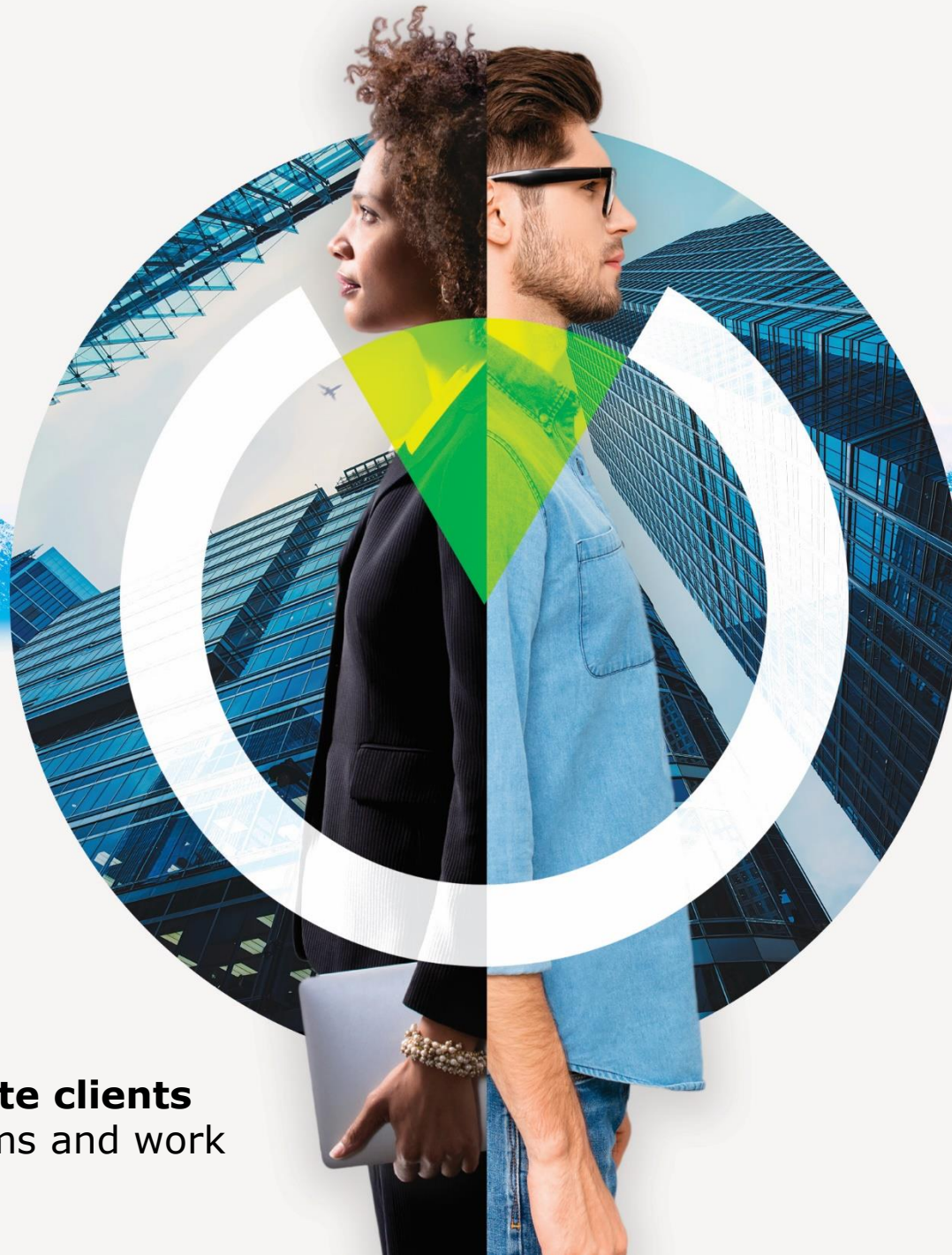

COVID-19 guide for Deloitte clients
Best practices for virtual teams and work
Southeast Asia edition

VirtualOffice™

Contents page

Welcome
Our commitment to you

Deloitte is deeply committed to the health and well-being of our people, and that of our clients. Our Member firms globally have mobilised relevant teams and are actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation in coordination with the Global Security Office (GSO).

During this time we are deploying flexible work arrangements and virtual meetings, among other tools, in order to continue to serve our international client engagements. In addition we are deferring all non-client international travel, and allowing only for essential client-related international travel, under consultation with their member firm leadership if there are any concerns.

In an abundance of caution, and due to anticipated ongoing travel disruptions, all our international conferences, meetings, programs and events, whether sponsored by Global, a member firm or a

geography have been postponed, cancelled or converted to a virtual meeting through 30 April 2020.

In-country, domestic meetings and travel are still proceeding in accordance with local member firm guidance coupled with the governmental requirements in each country.

Deloitte is also recommending that professionals returning from locations impacted by COVID-19, self-quarantine and work from home for a period of 14 days from their date of return. By now, most of the major Southeast Asian economies – including Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand – have been hit by COVID-19, and are responding with travel restrictions and, in some cases, movement restriction orders.

Deloitte will continue to monitor and provide updated information and guidance as needed. We understand the concern about COVID-19. We will continue to base business decisions on the latest facts and data, always keeping the best interests of Deloitte people and our clients as our primary concern.

Deloitte has plans in place to promote continuity of operations in the event of a threat or impact to Deloitte people, property, or systems. While COVID-19 has resulted in some changes to our day-to-day operations, by implementing flexible work arrangements, we continue to serve clients with minimal disruption.

Welcome
Empowering your employees to work differently

Modern day workplaces are complex and dynamic.

Changing market and client expectations, as well as unforeseen external factors like trade wars, political unrest or communicable diseases all carry the potential to disrupt even the best laid plans.

Welcome
Empowering your employees to work differently

Your organisation must be well positioned to take decisive action when situations arise, to ensure continued service to your customers and clients – with the safety and wellbeing of your people as top priority always.

To assist our clients, we have developed the following pack, leveraging the expertise of these teams to assist you with navigating virtual work.

Situations like COVID-19 may result in changes to your day-to-day activities, including travel restrictions and in some cases short term quarantines of employees. It is our hope that your firm will continue to serve clients with minimal interruptions by leveraging the information in this document.

The information within will help you provide your people with the confidence and flexibility needed to make the right decision for themselves, including where and how they work, during this time.

The toolkit has been designed for leaders and outlines practices and considerations for you when empowering your teams to work differently, engaging and collaborating virtually.

Although remote working and other flexible working arrangements may not be new to many individuals and teams, support and ownership from senior leadership during this time is critical – remote working operates more effectively where there is high degrees of trust and communication among the team.

Deloitte's Virtual Office study found that people place incredible value in having flexibility with regard to where, when and how they work and so the advice in this toolkit can be considered as best practice for remote working regardless of the circumstances.

For any questions relating to any content in the following pages, please reach out your Deloitte point of contact (see slide 30).

Remote working in Southeast Asia
Accelerating the revolution

Not a new phenomenon

In a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19, governments across Southeast Asia have advised companies to split staff members into different teams, and allow them to work remotely from home to minimise physical contact and interaction, as well as business disruptions.

But the idea of remote working is not a new phenomenon for many Southeast Asian markets, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. With our digital nomads and vibrant tech start-up scenes leading the way, the recent years have seen a mushrooming of co-working spaces and work-friendly cafés cross the region to support this rising segment of digital workers.

For many workers in Southeast Asia, being location independent has many advantages. In congested megacities such as Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, or Manila, the commute to work every day could take up to several hours, costing employees in quality of life and their economy billions in lost productivity.

Many companies – large or small – are also beginning to realise one key benefit of offering flexible work arrangements, including part-time work, staggered start hours, and remote working: increased staff retention. With employees more likely to stay with companies offering flexible working arrangements, we are witnessing an increasing number of companies introducing and enhancing their range of such working arrangements.

In Singapore, for example, the recent biennial study conducted by the Ministry of Manpower across a total of 3,700 establishments employing more than 1.3 million individuals between June to September 2018 found that more companies are allowing employees to work from home for extended periods of time, as well as giving employees the flexibility to work from home on a case-by-case basis. In fact, 72 per cent of employees now work in companies that offer at least one formal flexible working arrangement.

Accelerating the revolution

As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to accelerate the remote working revolution already in play across Southeast Asia, companies will need to rethink about everything from their collaboration tools to sales and commercial real estate.

Our Approach
Welcome to the Virtual Office

We work in interesting times, with our clients and indeed society shifting from more traditional ways of working to more **agile styles** – it is more than likely that virtual working practices will touch most parts of our firm **within the foreseeable future**.

To ensure we are **ahead of this curve**, last year we launched our Virtual Office initiative. Their purpose is to bring together the best of our **people, places and technology** to create the **Virtual Office ecosystem** – so that our team members can bring their best selves, any where, in any way, at any time to make an **impact that matters**.

In addition, our employee research for the Virtual Office has shown that individuals report much **higher levels of personal well-being** when they feel empowered to have a greater say in **where and how they work**.

The Virtual Office and our ability to **pivot effectively to collaborative virtual work** is critical to us being able to provide continued **service to our clients** with minimal disruption.

VirtualOffice™

Definitions
Working differently

Where
- **Working remotely**
- **Predominantly from home**

When
- **Adjusting schedules to accommodate team members**
- **Considerations for home & client situations**

How
- **Adopting technology solutions to enable seamless collaboration and teaming**

How much
- **Flexing to meet fluctuating business and personal requirements**

Changing the location of where teams get work done can impact how and when they work – and so working differently takes these considerations into account.

Setting up for success
Virtual ways of working

Working remotely, whether from home or another location, can be an effective alternative to office-based work as long as the individual, organisation and client are aligned on expectations and the 'rules of the game'.

Setting up for success
Virtual ways of working

**There are four key areas to consider in setting expectations:**

1. **Educate** business and team leaders about their role in setting the right tone around remote working, emphasise the benefits and the expectation that disruption for practitioners and clients should be minimal.

2. **Consider additional support and flexibility** in situations where remote working may not be ideal (i.e. during COVID-19 quarantine staff may have small living quarters, multiple generations in the same living space, limited options to get out for wellness, or children at home due to school closures).

3. **Map out** jobs and tasks that could be impacted by COVID-19 and challenge assumptions about specific jobs that are not typically done remotely, and be willing to experiment.

4. **Adopt** a set of guiding principles to support remote working, for example:

   - **Support** flexibility and choice in terms of where, when and how teams work.

   - **Recognise** the expectations of external and internal clients, as well as those of each team.

   - **Challenge** the widespread perception that "face time," "presenteeism," or visibility in the office automatically equals productivity.

- **Recognise** that a relationship of trust, respect, open communication and clearly defined deliverables is essential for success.

- **Accept** that the success of remote working will be the shared responsibility of practitioners and their team leader.

- **Encourage** remote workers to disengage at the end of the work-day and maintain appropriate work-life balance.

- **Proactively** leverage ever evolving collaboration tools and technologies to effectively team when being onsite in an office location isn't possible.

Setting up for success
How to practice good security when working virtually

With enhanced flexibility comes enhanced responsibility to ensure that we each continue to practice good security behaviours to your organisation's and your clients' data and information.

When you are not working from your organisation's premises, there are simple things you can do to make sure you practice good security when working remotely.
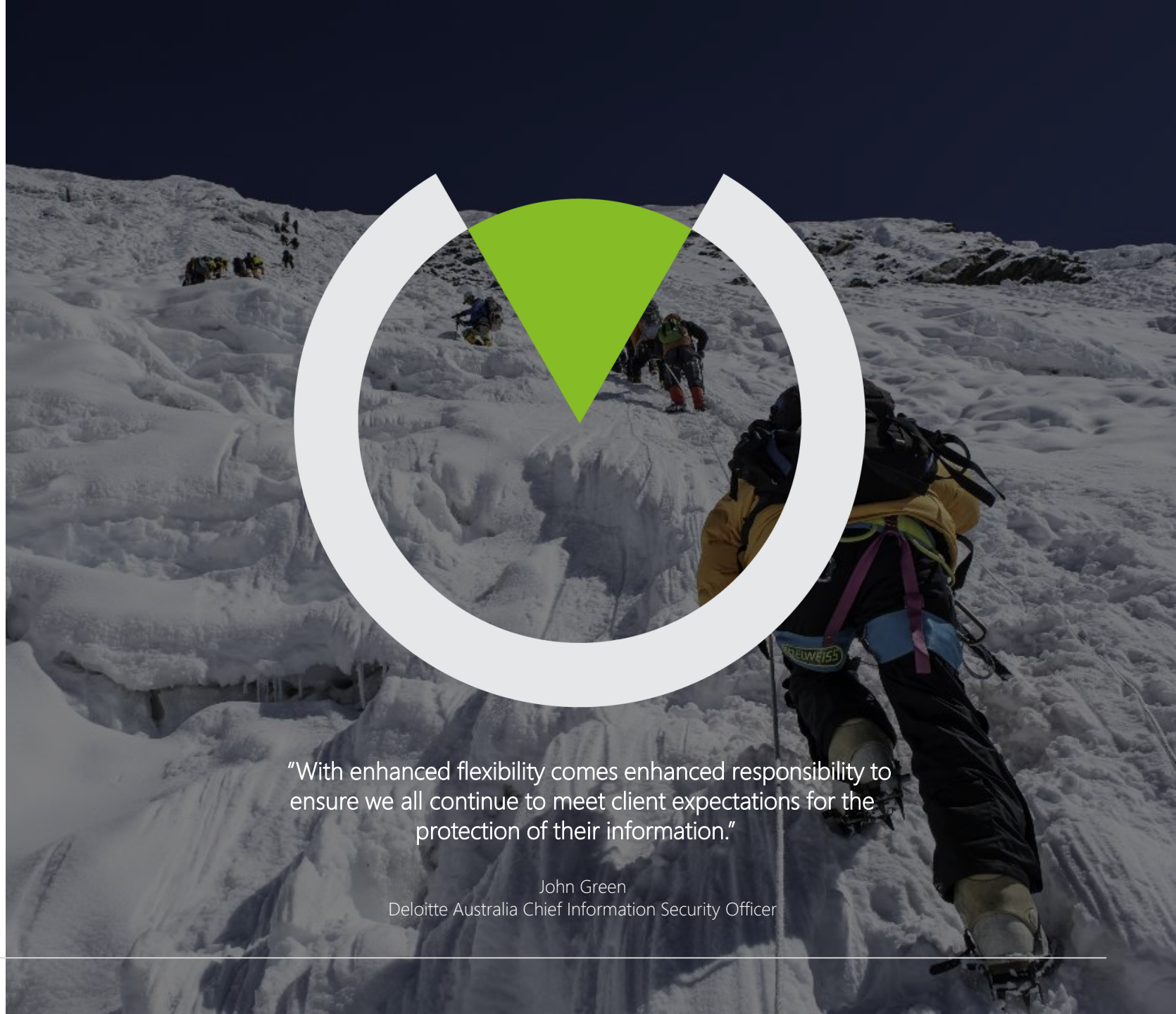
"With enhanced flexibility comes enhanced responsibility to ensure we all continue to meet client expectations for the protection of their information."

John Green
Deloitte Australia Chief Information Security Officer

Setting up for success
How to practice good security when working virtually

As always, the key to setting up for success is to prepare as much as possible. Here are some steps to complete while you are still connected to your organisation's network, before you leave the office.

1. If you haven't done so for a little while, we recommend you restart your computer to make sure you have your organisation's latest updates installed.

2. Take your laptop, power adapter, headset and mouse home with you each night. Leave monitors and cables/adaptors in the office.

3. If you haven't done so in the last month, it is a good idea to reset your password while you are in the office to avoid having to complete this while you are off your organisation's network and working remotely.

4. Please make sure to read and understand your organisation's relevant Information Security Acceptable Usage Policy.

5. Understand what digital collaboration tools your organisation has available – for example Microsoft Teams or Slack. Digital workspaces allow you and your teams to collaborate more effectively.

6. Know how to connect to your organisation's Virtual Private Network (VPN). You may need this to connect to your organisation's network to access specific applications and to keep across updates posted on your internal Intranet or other systems.

7. Know how to use any applicable Multi-Factor Authentication set in place by your organisation's IT department, as you may need to access some applications off your organisation's network. We recommend using an App Authenticator option so that staff are able to easily authenticate.

Setting up for success
How to practice good security when working virtually

Virtual Private Networks

A VPN provides an additional layer of security when accessing your organisation or client's confidential information remotely.

- You should use VPN when accessing your organisation or client confidential information (including sending emails) while using a *public or unsecure Wi-Fi network*.

- When using a *secure network*, it is usually OK to do so without connecting to the VPN before accessing confidential information, however you should check with your organisation's relevant policies.

How to know if your personal Wi-Fi connection is secure

If you are not using the VPN when working remotely, it is good practice to ensure you are using a *secure network*. A network is considered secure if you exercise *some level of control* over the network settings we recommend the following:

- Change default password on the router

- Ensure that Wi-Fi network is secured by a *strong password* (i.e. at least 10 characters, made up of lower case, uppercase, numbers and special characters)

- Check wireless configuration to ensure that WPA2 encryption is selected. Contact your internet provider if you are unsure on how to do this.

Look for warning signs when browsing the internet

When browsing internet outside of your organisation's network you should exercise additional vigilance to identify potentially suspicious or malicious activity. This includes:

- Avoiding unsecure websites, indicated by:
  - HTTP in the URL instead of HTTPS; or
  - The absence of the padlock icon in the web browser bar.

- If you are browsing any website or resource owned by your organisation and a pop up asks you to "trust a certificate" we recommend that you disconnect and use the VPN.

Setting up for success
How to practice good security when working virtually

Be extra vigilant to avoid phishing attempts

Most organisations have implemented security measures to help protect you from email phishing attempts. To ensure that you remain protected when working outside of your organisation's network, it is even more important to be vigilant to phishing attempts including:

- Do not click on links or attachments from unknown senders.
- Verify the email address of the sender (i.e. check they are who they purport to be).
- Where an email contains a link, verify that the sender's email address and the domain in the link match.

Phishing attempts cont.

- Watch out for spelling mistakes or other indicators that the email is not from a legitimate source.

- Be aware of emails that prompt you to take urgent action or request you to perform a task involving user accounts

- If you suspect that you received a phishing email report it to your organisation's cyber risk team and include the original email received.

Practice good laptop security

When working remotely it is important to protect confidential information from being viewed or accessed by unauthorised third parties.
Here are some helpful tips:

- Lock your computer screen when you are away from your laptop.

- Avoid letting family members or other people to use your laptop/devices.

- Do not use personal PCs or other devices that do not have a company portal installed to access confidential information.

- Do not use personal email accounts or other non-approved cloud platforms (e.g. Dropbox, Evernote, Google Docs) to store confidential information – these may vary by organisation, so it is best to **check and be aware** of what has been approved, prior to use.

- Ensure you keep your laptop secure when unattended (including at client premises).

Setting up for success
How to practice good security when working virtually

Secure any hard copy materials

When working remotely be conscious of your physical environment and exercise additional caution, such as:

- Home printers are not as secure as your organisation's printers, this means you should avoid printing materials containing confidential information wherever possible.

- Do not print documents containing high-risk confidential information (i.e. personal information, market sensitive information) on personal or public printers.

- Avoid storing hard copy documentation containing confidential information wherever possible.

- When unattended ensure any hard-copy documentation is locked away securely.

Having confidential conversations

A public place is never private! Ensure that when having conversations involving confidential information, you are in a private space where you cannot be overheard by unauthorised third parties.

What to do if you suspect a confidentiality, privacy or security breach?

It is always a good idea, if you suspect that the confidentiality of any data may have been compromised (regardless of whether or not information has in-fact been the subject of unauthorised access or disclosure) that you report the incident to the relevant teams within your organisation: cyber risk team, information management office, ITS or other.

Enable community
Structuring remote work

Member firm and geography business and talent leadership must clearly define remote working options and expectations, empowering practitioners to make the best decision for their wellbeing.

- Launch defined remote working options and expectations through an ongoing communications campaign, answering FAQs and providing tips and best practices.

- Conduct webinars to demonstrate leadership commitment to the success of remote work in support of our clients and our people.

- Ensure all practitioners are familiar with relevant policies and understand their responsibilities, including member firm/geography confidentiality and computer & data security policies.

- Provide necessary mobile technology solutions (i.e. laptop, cell phone, home network) where not yet available and establish expectations for device security and data privacy (i.e. VPN, encryption).

- Ensure your organisation's IT teams are aware of shifts to remote working and are prepared to support an influx of remote workers.

- Work with clients to ensure ability to leverage their technology platforms while working remotely.

- Provide virtual training as needed to ensure all practitioners are skilled in using the technology required to perform their work from a remote location.

- Consider whether your remote access function is set up to handle the entire user base coming in at once. Usually it has been set up to account for approximately 5-10% of users. A large influx could cause system crashes and lag.

- In addition, organisations should consider the increased amount of voice and video collaboration.

- Lastly – what will happen post disruption? Will you scale back down to levels prior to the disruption or maintain the higher bandwidth at potentially greater cost.

Stay agile for accelerated outcomes
Form mission-based, cross-functional teams

Volatile times present an ideal opportunity to unleash cross-functional teams and help unlock complex problems through human-centred design and agile ways of working.

- Identify the most challenging, complex problems or opportunities now facing your organisation.

- Focus on the highest value, meaning and customer interest and assign these 'missions' to cross-functional teams. Your operational response to COVID-19 could be one such mission.

- Identify the organisational capabilities required to solve the challenge and assign members based on relevant skills, knowledge and interest not job title or function.

- Each selected team member should bring to bear diverse perspectives, unique skillsets, and broad experiences.

- Empower team members to contribute dedicated time, make decisions, and give freedom to take on new roles as needed to achieve the mission.

- Induct each team in the principles of Agile ways of working;

- Put the customer and outcomes at the centre of every decision.

- Maintain adaptability by failing fast and delivering work frequently, stressing collaboration over individual contribution, promoting frequent virtual meetings to identify issues and make decisions, and reflecting at regular intervals on how to be a more effective team.

- Utilise virtual team platforms, such as MS Teams or Slack, to enable uninterrupted dialogue and ensure sponsors, stakeholders and teams maintain visibility of the overall mission, objectives and progress.

Remote communication and collaboration
Teaming virtually

When establishing the expectations for remote working, ensure all team leaders and practitioners understand how to communicate and collaborate effectively when working remotely.

- Team leaders should review and update team member responsibilities, ensuring the clarity of roles and objectives within the team while working remotely.

- All practitioners should be responsible for ensuring open and consistent communication occurs across all team members, resolving conflict and potential misunderstandings in an effective and timely manner.

- Teams should set expectations by discussing how to be reachable, responsive, and dependable, and define what "urgency" looks like, and the best way to contact one another in those situations.

- Team leaders should allocate time during check-ins to discuss what's going well and what to build further on while the team is working remotely.

- Encourage all practitioners to use available virtual collaboration technology, including:

  - Relevant video conferencing tools such as: Skype for Business or MS Teams for virtual team meetings, client meetings, check-ins, and other touch points, utilising virtual whiteboards and screen share capabilities as needed.

  - Use MS Teams chat or Skype chat for short, timely communications.

  - Video conferencing to reinforce the sense of team and enable non-verbal clues.

  - Virtual workspaces like Microsoft Teams, SharePoint Team Sites.

Setting expectations
Client discussions

Business leaders and client engagement partners must be prepared to discuss business continuity with their own clients, including the role of remote working.

- Business leaders should be equipped to explain to clients what a remote team will look like in daily practice, and ensure any questions or concerns around impact are openly addressed.

- In particular, set expectations around availability of your staff teams and also of your client's team members, when and how they will stay in contact, and which channels will be used for sharing business critical information.

- Having established there will be no business disruption, your organisation's Leaders should be able to speak to the benefits of remote working, including:

  - *Time and productivity gains due to reduced travel.*

  - *Streamlined client communication.*

  - *Continuity of team members resulting in consistent service levels.*

  - *Cost savings and positive impact on sustainability.*

Setting expectations
Inclusive meetings

The six signature traits of inclusive leadership were developed by Deloitte Human Capital and outline the qualities of inclusivity that help to foster diversity of thought – delivering better outcomes for people, customers and communities.

In a virtual office setting, some team members may only rarely, if ever, step foot into an office and therefore it is important for us to be inclusive of our colleagues and customers who may not be in the room with us.

Setting expectations
Inclusive Leadership in Virtual Teams

1. COMMITMENT

Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because these objectives align with their personal values and because they believe in the business case. They speak up and challenge the status quo.

Acts of Inclusion

Agile, always - Proactively commit to agile work practices which meet the needs of others – this could include meeting time flexibility, using webcam technology, use of digital collaboration tools.

Call it out – Hold others to account for non-inclusive behaviours, with particularly sensitivity toward those who don't have physical presence in the room.

2. COURAGE

Highly inclusive leaders are courageously humble about their strengths and weaknesses.

Acts of Inclusion

Admit mistakes – Own it that you are learning to be more inclusive in a virtual context, nobody expects you to be perfect.

Don't be all high and mighty – You might be more adept at working flexibly and remotely, others might not. Don't act as if your way of working virtually is the only or best way.

3. COGNISANCE OF BIAS

Highly inclusive leaders are mindful of personal and organisational blind spots and self-regulate to help ensure fair play.

Acts of Inclusion

Check yourself – have awareness of and know your biases – self regulate your behaviour and seek feedback from others, for example favouring those present with air time and information vs. those working remotely.

Rewire the system – Challenge entrenched organisational attitudes, practices and systemic processes that promote homogeneity, for example clock watching or viewing flexible work as a perk for those senior enough to have 'earned' it.

Setting expectations
Inclusive Leadership in Virtual Teams

4. CURIOSITY

Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, a desire to understand how others view and experience the world, and show a tolerance for ambiguity.

Acts of Inclusion

Tell me more – In virtual meetings, create space in the conversation to discover the other person's perspective and keep an open-minded frame – listen actively, suspend judgement, respect all perspectives and speak your voice.

Rewind… playback – Sometimes when you're interacting via technology, certain helpful indicators can be lost i.e. body language. Re-affirm that you 'get it' using paraphrasing: "So is this what you're saying…" Accept that ambiguity is OK.

5. CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Highly inclusive leaders are confident and effective in cross cultural interactions.

Acts of Inclusion

Cultural traveller – working virtually often means remotely interacting with others based intercity or even overseas. Take an interest in learning about other cultures, in particular seek information on the local context, for example, politics and local business customs/ways of working.

When in Rome – Talk to people, find the stories and broaden your horizons and knowledge, then adapt to suit the culture you're in. Remote workers need to be skilled at working with others from different cultural backgrounds and change their style appropriately when cross-cultural encounters require it.

6. COLLABORATION

Highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups.

Acts of Inclusion

Create the space – Use digital collaboration tools and applications that create an environment where people are equally able and feel comfortable to speak up, whilst providing all team members with transparency in relation to work load and ownership of items.

Empower, uplift – Foster an agile working environment where team members are given the freedom and power to handle difficult situations that may arise and to be able to make decisions on issues that impact their work.

Tips and additional resources
Practitioner support

Lastly, consider sharing the following tips and resources with team leaders and practitioners to help them be successful while working remotely.

10 top tips for remote workers

1. Designate a workspace for focus in your home
2. Develop a daily routine
3. Embrace technology tools for collaboration
4. Communicate frequently with your team
5. Communicate openly with your clients
6. Remain contactable
7. Do not over-rely on email/IM – use the phone
8. Block your calendar for "working time"
9. Dedicate time for informal social interactions
10. Regularly review performance with team leader

How we meet virtually
Virtual meeting hacks

1. Virtual first - Include dial-in details on all meeting invites

Including relevant MS teams, Skype or Zoom details on all invites is a small act that goes a long way, ensuring virtual workers are always included.

2. Let us see that smile - Turn on your camera

Turn on your video wherever possible and be camera ready. This helps all participants get the most out of virtual meetings.

3. Cone of silence - Take your call somewhere quiet

Find a quiet space to participate. Open plan environments are saturated with background noise – make sure you use a professional headset.

4. The other cone of silence - Use the mute switch

Use the mute button to prevent transmitting background noise when you're not speaking.

5. Early bird gets the worm - Be on the call 2-3 minutes prior, or more if you are hosting

Join virtual calls 2-3 mins early to ensure an on time start. If you are the host aim for 5 minutes prior to ensure everything is working correctly.

6. Efficiency experts - Time your meetings and keep them short

Not all meetings need to be 45 – 60 minutes long. Aim for short concise meetings that run efficiently - stick to an agreed agenda.

7. Inclusive always - Give everyone an equal opportunity to share their voice

Meeting leaders should use purposeful breaks so that evyerone has an opportunity to contribute. If you're a participant, use the raise hand feature if you can't find a break in the conversation.

8. Sharing is caring - Use digital collaboration tools

If one or more members in the meeting are attending virtually, consider using digital collaboration tools such as an in-built whiteboard.

9. Have a plan B - Include meeting agendas/provide everything needed

In the event that screen sharing does not work ensure others have copies of the file prior to the call (at the very least the facilitator).

COVID-19
Maintaining customer loyalty and trust during times of uncertainty

As the world joins forces to contain the current COVID-19 crisis, businesses are concerned with consumer optimism. The two foundations of customer loyalty, trust and confidence, are being put to the test. While we all hope this is a temporary situation, anxiety is high, and people are worried.

This global crisis is truly about customer moments that matter. By putting your customers' interests first, this can be a time for your company's brand to shine. Even though you might be taking a short-term hit to your bottom line, putting flexible refund and change policies in place, and finding other ways to help your customers through this crisis will be beneficial to the long-term health of your company.

COVID-19
Maintaining customer loyalty and trust during times of uncertainty

Here are some suggestions to help you maintain your loyal customers during the current situation:

1. **Let your brand shine.**

   During times like these, every interaction with your customers and partners is an opportunity to demonstrate what your organization is all about, and to be true to your brand and your purpose. People are paying attention to how organizations are responding, and purpose-based companies that show empathy will likely emerge as the leaders.

   For example, a popular U.S.- based retailer just announced a revised sick leave policy that allows all employees, both full-time and part-time, to work from home with pay. Another example is how airlines have shared their guidelines on cabin sanitization and the use of state-of-the-art HEPA filters which have a viral and bacterial removal efficiency of greater than 99.99 per cent.

These filters have been in use before the current crisis, but this was a good time to educate customers about the sanitation measures airlines have always had in place to help build trust and confidence.

2. **Communicate with customers.**

   Be in touch with your customers. Let them know how much you appreciate them and care about them - even if they are buying fewer goods and services from you. Remember that many of your customers have customers too, so what you communicate may reach an even greater audience. In addition, working even more closely with your customers during difficult times such as this will have the added effect of helping to forge even stronger relationships and form bonds that are likely to endure for years.

3. **Communicate with your employees.**

   Communicating with your employees, especially the ones who serve your customers, is crucial as it will be necessary for employees to assure customers of uninterrupted service, or to advise them of any issues that might arise, as well as to come up with solutions. If your business has in-person customer interaction, make sure your employees are aware of operational processes to reduce the possible transmission of the virus from person to person, and let customers know how you sanitize your public spaces.

COVID-19
Maintaining customer loyalty and trust during times of uncertainty

4. Develop new ways of working with your customers.

One big topic on the minds of employees is travel and meetings. Given that sales and service organizations are often the largest travellers, your travel policies should be based on mitigating risks to impacted areas. Educating your employees who need to travel on the ways to mitigate the spread of the virus is first and foremost. It is also likely that COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on how companies operate long after the crisis is over. People will likely prefer to work from home more, and companies will have to accelerate the move to remote working. Educational institutions will also increase their online teaching and group collaboration platforms.

As remote working becomes more common over the coming weeks and months, look to the parts of your organization that already work effectively with remote teams.

Agile processes and project management tools can also help your customer-focused teams collaborate, identify impediments, and track status, when team members work remotely. Agile techniques that can be adopted by a wide range of operational teams to transition from in-person to remote work include organizing work into sprints, holding 15 to 30 minute stand-up meetings at least twice daily, and using online Kanban boards with daily percent-complete updates.

5. Try to team-up.

We are all in this together. Now is the time to team-up with alliance partners and even competitors to put resources to good use in the local communities where you operate. For example, if you run out of inventory, could you source from a competitor to help maintain your customers' trust and confidence?

6. Do your best to take care of your loyal customers.

Every business has its most loyal customers, so decide what special services you can supply to these valuable customers if resources become scarce. Although all your customers are important, it may become necessary to make the decision to take care of these customers first.

7. Give special offers and discounts.

This could be the time to give special offers and discounts to retain your customer base, and potentially attract new customers. But keep in mind, you can only do this if you know you will have the ability to service everyone equally.

COVID-19
Maintaining customer loyalty and trust during times of uncertainty

8. **Assess your orders, inventory, and service levels.**

    If you rely on inventory to fulfil customer orders, it's important to look at your existing orders and compare that against your inventory and confirmed incoming shipments. Then you need to let customers know if you can still deliver the goods and provide delivery dates. This can be a time for sales forecasting and supply planning to come together to re-run the sales and operations planning algorithms. Inevitably there will be disruption to your supply chain, which in turn will affect your customers. Knowing what inventory you can get and by when, will be key to managing your customers' expectations. As supply chains restart, they will take some time to ramp back up to normal synchronized operations, so it is important that you communicate your product priorities to your customers so they know what to expect.

Now could also be a good time to look across your industry and strengthen relationships with other companies in your sector to find alternative products and solutions or make referrals for your customers.

9. **Review your marketing and advertising.**

    This may require shifting and rebalancing, as there's no point marketing products and services that may be in short supply or unavailable. You may have to delay the marketing and advertising around launches of products and services, and review your spend on paid search, as well as traditional paid media, relative to your ability to fulfil service levels.

10. **Also review your digital properties.**

    If some products and services aren't available, you will need to remove them from your company's digital experience. If a price increase is necessary due to COVID-19, make sure you explain the reasoning behind it to your customers. Since people may be avoiding going out due to COVID-19, digital channels are seeing a bigger uptick in usage. For example, during this epidemic China has seen a significant increase in online shopping demand in many items, including fresh food and groceries. This unexpected shift in channels has created challenges for many companies as they have insufficient ecommerce capacity to meet demand, insufficient inventory allocated to the online channel, and a severe shortage of last-mile delivery service capacity. Consumer oriented companies should assess the implications of a potential shift of demand from traditional retail to online, and move quickly to prepare.

COVID-19
Maintaining customer loyalty and trust during times of uncertainty

11. Use advanced technology.

Besides remote working, augmented reality (AR) innovation may help keep people safe and healthy during this epidemic. For example, using AR to walk people through procedures with easy to follow visual instructions has been successful, especially in field service. Setting products up for use, installing spare parts, and maintaining products can all be done by having experts in a central location, working via AR.. Also, recent innovations on natural language processing, sentiment analysis, facial recognition, and emotional resonance could be useful to your business. The capabilities of chat-bots are increasingly taking on more and more human work, and this could be an effective way to keep the lines of communication open with your customers.

12. Remember that cash matters.

Companies tend to get lax about receivables when the economy is booming, interest rates are relatively low, and cash flow is not a concern. In uncertain times companies are delaying payments to suppliers, so don't be surprised if your customers are thinking about doing the same thing to you. That's why it's important to improve the rigor of your collection processes. Focus on customer-specific payment performance and identify companies that may be changing their payment practices. Also, get the basics right, such as timely and accurate invoicing. Any errors in your billing process can lead to costly delays in receiving payment.

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