Shifting employee mindset from traditional work setting to WFH needs a lot of conditioning in a short span of time. Realising this important need, the entire top management team frequently interacts with employees and teams at various levels within the organisation and clients, states Rajesh Mirjankar, MD & CEO, InfrasoftTech, as he tells us how his firm is tackling the Covid 19 crisis

InfrasoftTech holds the well-being of its employees as its utmost priority. We hence had to ensure that a large part of our workforce maintains work from home and the minority of those who worked from office had a safe environment at the office and while getting there.

Keeping that in mind, we leveraged tools such as Facebook Workplace, Zoho, and other Project Management tools to ensure effective collaboration. We moved to a work-from-home model as part of our business continuity plan.

Being in the business of providing financial solutions and services, data protection & network security is crucial for our clients and us. We hence provided secure VPN access for our employees from our own secure build of machines.

Key Challenges

Being a Product development organisation catering to Banks and Financial Institutes as our clients, 24 X 7 support is imperative, and we ensured this continued to be provided. WFH for us needs to address the following key challenges:

Employee health and well-being in this pandemic scenario were of utmost priority. Hence, we revised our BCP plan to include a high percentage of work from home rather than from the alternate delivery centre.

The Scrum meetings were moved to video/audio conference to ensure accountability and visibility for the task allotted.

We moved all incident reporting and management to a cloud-based tool to ensure access to clients who also worked from home and for our teams.

Data Protection & Network Security – both through physical assets and digital mode.

With complete lockdown, maintaining boundaries between work life and home life is a challenge and ensuring employees are made aware of it was a task. Managers are vigilant and sensitive to ensure adequate breaks are accommodated to fit in with the employee's home schedule.

Since we have employees and clients across geographies, working over different time zones and ensure continuous communication is tedious but achievable by increasing the collaboration using tools since 98% of the organisation workforce was working from home.

Shifting employee mindset from traditional work setting to WFH needed a lot of conditioning in a short span of time. The entire top management team frequently interacts with employees and teams at various levels within the organisation and clients to deal with this need. If managed well, working from home can be more productive than working from office since time spent in travel is saved, and further meetings are more focused on the subject and frequency is lesser.

Employee Collaboration through tools and wikis has ensured that they are in sync with updates, and employee connects in fact, has been better than business as usual.

Key lessons learnt:

*   Communication is the most critical aspect of a crisis.

*   BCP is not just moving centres for work but could also be no access to any office, and there could be a need for over 98% work from home.

*   When you are dealing with the provision of essential services such as banking regardless of the situation, we need to plan for meeting the highest benchmark on SLAs.

*   Working from home in an employee situation has to be different than in an employer situation of a pandemic. Managers need to accommodate the plans of each individual since the families too need attention.

We had to ensure proper video conferencing and audio conferencing between team members whilst ensuring that we had a portal for sharing general and company updates. Project Wikis too were necessary when having a vast majority working from home. Our attendance management had to be on the cloud, and the project process adherence had to be paperless, and hence tools were deployed for these processes.

Future

While this pandemic scenario has changed how people live their lives, it's likely that one of its main non-health and economy-related effects will be the rise of remote work. According to recent market research, "By 2030, the demand for remote work will increase by 30% due to Generation Z fully entering the workforce."

This estimate may already be quickened due to the current situation forcing employees and companies both to consider the feasibility of remote work and the underlying infrastructure necessary to allow for sustained remote work. The alternative workplace if provided with correct infrastructure, can give companies an edge in vying for—and keeping—talented, highly motivated employees.

IT solution companies will need to adopt continuous build environments and deploy AI-based automation for testing, release management and deployment. The cloud-based model will get more popular with the increasing workforce being remote. Device security and Data Protection will be a high priority in addition to network & cybersecurity. Incident Management will get more driven by Machine Learning and AI.

By: Srikanth RP Last updated Apr 24, 2020

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