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Accelerated Change Management after Covid-19

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a world of accelerated change – more so than ever before. Consider the devastating change wrought by the coronavirus in late 2019 and early 2020 – it has literally turned the political, economic, social, educational, cultural, health, and business worlds upside down. It has had dire consequences for our businesses and personal lives. The scale and rapidity of the change has been overwhelming and unprecedented. In some countries the hospital services were stretched beyond their limits with many patients very sick and even terminally ill.

The unique change management model in this book covers seven elements. These are strategy, structure, systems, leadership people and tasks, technology, culture, and the environment. All of these elements are interconnected and interrelated – when one changes the others change too.

Businesses have been closed down for months throughout the world triggering a severe recession, and the way we transact business and work has changed radically with the wearing of masks mandatory, social distancing, and infection control measures implemented, to make workplaces and retail outlets safer places to work and shop in. The plastic card is now king and cash transactions are discouraged. During the Covid-19 pandemic the role of the government expanded substantially with mandatory lockdowns, and restrictions on the movement of citizens to control and contain the virus.

Social distancing has accelerated the use of robotics, automation, drones, artificial intelligence, the internet of things, and autonomous vehicles. On a positive note, some companies have created ambitious schedules to automate more processes, and have diversified into more profitable areas. Automation in the future will enable people to focus on meaningful tasks rather than repetitive ones. On a less positive note, airlines have been grounded, cruise ships mothballed, and passengers discouraged from travelling. Many countries have closed their boundaries to inessential international travel. The tourist and hospitality industry including pubs and restaurants have been closed intermittently to control the spread of the virus. Sporting organisations have been playing to empty stadiums. Museums and convention centres have closed.

Working from home (WFH) is now practised widely, and is recommended by governments for the foreseeable future where it is feasible to do so. Some multinationals have given staff the option of WFH if they prefer to do so. Twitter has announced that all their employees can work from home if they wish. This option has speeded up considerably the transition to WFH. Contrary to expectations take-up has been rapid and productivity has increased rather than decreased. Remote learning has been adopted by most third level colleges to keep lecturers and students safe from infection.

In technology, the development of the internet and high-speed broadband, and the everyday use of smartphones has facilitated a massive increase in interconnectivity and online shopping. In addition, cloud computing and the massive availability of data has facilitated the science of analytics which is used extensively in the fight against Covid. The rise of internet fraud, cyber-attacks, and bioterrorism is a constant threat to governments, private individuals, and businesses.

There is a new emphasis on climate change, and anti-pollution measures. There is awareness of the damage humans are doing to the environment, and the need to change before it is too late.

This text is organised around an accelerated change model, acronyms, illustrations, examples, and a summary learning map at the end of the book.

Samuel A Malone

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The artwork in this text was produced by the author with the aid of Microsoft's 'SmartArt' creatively combined with the clipart facility in the word package. Some of the artwork was accessed through Google. Known copyright material accessed through Google has been acknowledged. I will gladly acknowledge any other copyright material brought to my attention in future editions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samuel A Malone is a self-employed training consultant, lecturer, moderator, examiner and author. He is a retired ESB training manager. He has published numerous journal articles in learning, study skills, personal development, motivation and management. He is the author of 21 books published in Ireland, the UK and worldwide on learning, personal development, study skills and business management. Some of his books have been translated into foreign languages including Russian, Spanish, Danish and Norwegian, and gone into second editions. His most recent book (2014) is titled *Awaken the Genius Within – A Guide to Lifelong Learning Skills* (Glasnevin Publishing, Dublin). He has a M.Ed. with distinction (in training and development) from the University of Sheffield and is a qualified Chartered Management Accountant (ACMA), Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) and a Chartered Secretary (ACIS) and a member of the Irish Institute of Industrial Engineers. He is a Fellow of the Irish Institute of Training and Development (FIITD).

Previous books published by the author include *Why Some People Succeed and Others Fail* (Glasnevin Publishing, Dublin), *Learning about Learning* (CIPD, London), *A Practical Guide to Learning in the Workplace* (The Liffey Press, Dublin), *Better Exam Results* (Elsevier/CIMA, London) and *Mind Skills for Managers* (Gower, Aldershot, UK) and *How to Set Up and Manage a Corporate Learning Centre* (Gower, Aldershot, UK). The last two books became best sellers for Gower in their training and business categories. *Better Exam Results* proved to be a best seller for Elsevier/CIMA and is still in print 30 years after its earliest incarnation. Most of his books are available online from Amazon.co.uk.

The author has 50 eBooks published by bookboon.com since 2018 including his latest: 'Nudges for Managers.'

1 ACCELERATED CHANGE MANAGEMENT (POST COVID-19)



Fig.1. Accelerated Change Management Model Post Covid-19

'No single model or conceptual scheme embraces the whole breadth and complexity of reality, even though each in turn may be useful in particular instances. This is why management remains an art, for the practitioner must go beyond the limits of theoretical knowledge if he is to be effective.'

– Tilles (1963)

1.1 ACCELERATED CHANGE MANAGEMENT

We live in a world of change – new technologies, health crisis (Covid-19), climate change, leaderships styles, government regulations, changing consumer behaviour, new competition, mergers and acquisitions, and joint ventures. The speed at which Covid-19 spread throughout the world in early 2020, causing economic, social, personal, and political upheaval, is a case in point. In addition, we live in a globalised interconnected world with international

travel, climate change, the seas warming, violent weather disruption, and the depletion of natural resources, pollution, and the emergence of unknown viruses – problems that we have never witnessed before in our lifetimes. Unfortunately, vigorous action has not been taken to reduce the use of fossil fuels and CO2 emissions. These changes in turn trigger off the urgent need for agile organisations, corporate reorganisation, restructuring, reengineering, downsizing, and cost reduction.

EU countries, the UK and USA were enjoying a nice lifestyle before the pandemic. Economies were expanding nicely and standards of living were increasing. We took the status quo for granted and never thought it would end. For most people life was enjoyable, routine, and comfortable – things looked promising and people had the freedom to do and go about their business as they pleased. Many had routines they took for granted like going out to a restaurant for dinner, morning breaks at the local coffee shops, and the annual holiday abroad to avail of some culture or sunshine. I have named this period BC or before Covid. However, in late 2019 and early 2020 things changed suddenly and dramatically for the worst. A deadly virus seemed to come from nowhere and made all our lives fearful, a misery and a challenge. Our lives were under threat with 65 million cases of Covid worldwide and 1.5 million deaths at the end of 2020 (and still rising). I have named this period AD or after the disease.

EU Governments including the UK (which is leaving the EU in January 2021) instituted periodically strict lockdowns since March 2020 to slow and control the spread of the pandemic. As the EU is slowly easing restrictions, businesses are reconfiguring retail outlets, offices and factories to allow for social distancing among return customers and employees. They are rethinking guidelines for working from home (WFH), refinancing debt, conserving cash, and controlling costs. Many businesses are now pushing strongly to accelerate the move to digital transformation. Bricks-and-mortar stores are increasing their online presence, and considering downsizing some of their stores particularly in expensive city centres.

The speed, adaptability, agility, and relatively low cost of the e-commerce model is becoming increasingly attractive. The strategic shift to an e-commerce model follows a rapid increase in smartphone use by people in most countries. Some are renegotiating rents and lease terms. Banks are gradually moving all their customer services online, and manufactures, with the aid of robotics and automation, are redesigning their business model for production and supply chain management. Businesses are automating repetitive jobs such as administration. Plans to digitise existed before the pandemic, but they weren't a priority. The economic, social, and health impacts of the pandemic have speeded up the process.

The crisis has shown that the likely future is VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity). VUCA is now used extensively in business, because most are currently operating in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments with unpredictable futures. This insight helps them navigate through powerful currents of global change, including

artificial intelligence and innovations such as gamification, avatars, robotics, drones, the internet of things, and autonomous cars. We've seen this with the innovative response to the pandemic with businesses identifying new opportunities to create cash flow. They are doing this while operating within the restrictions created by governments, such as lockdowns and social distancing, to deal with the pandemic.

All of the change factors shown in the accelerated change management in fig. 1 above are interconnected, and when one is changed the others change also. This means that when one component is changed, the others will have to be fine-tuned to accommodate the change. The six factors in the model in combination with the environment (both internal and external) are a good starting point to examine and analyse for any change management process. This model is an adaptation of some of the current change management models currently available. The important role that soft skills such as leadership style, communication, empathy, and interpersonal relationships play, with the need for agility, in the implementation of change cannot be overstated. Strategy, structure, and systems are interlinked. Let's consider each of these in turn.

1.2 STRATEGY

Strategy is a general plan to achieve one or more long-term goals. It sets out the direction that the company will take, and may signpost the road for success and the culture to be adopted. Direction is determined by governance, vision, mission, goals, objectives, and environmental issues, and unprecedented events like Covid-19. This forced many companies to quickly change their strategies to stay in business and survive. Strategies needed to be fine-tuned for the unpredictable economic, social and political changes due to Covid-19. The company needed to stay in business in the short-term by dealing with the challenges of Covid, while focusing on and maintaining the long-term success of the business.

Scenario planning is a good technique for identifying risks because it focuses on what might go wrong in the future. It identifies potential events and their possible outcomes and implications for revenue and capital expenditure requirements. It is a tool designed to help organisations cope and plan for uncertain futures – 'what if situations,' and alternative futures. What if a third wave occurs and we go back into lockdown? What if it takes 6 or even 12 months to get back to normal even with the arrival of a vaccine? Consider the worst-case scenario, the medium case scenario, and then the good case scenario. Covid-19 has created a world of uncertainties with lockdowns and restrictions forcing businesses to open and close quickly and plan in new ways. Scenarios do not attempt to predict the future, but rather identify a set of future possible states. The pandemic has changed the world fundamentally, so that we need to explore the possible economic, political, technological, cultural, and social changes likely to be caused by the virus. This will enable us to respond with great agility and wisdom as conditions change.

The mission is the core purpose (derived from the vision), and the reason for the existence of the business. It will be expressed in the goals, and quantified in the company's objectives. A vision is an inspirational statement of an idealistic future state for a company usually compiled by the founder. The vision should be inspirational, concise, clearly articulated, focused, feasible, flexible, desirable, easy to understand, and remember. Make sure the vision can be explained in five minutes or less so that stakeholders can easily understand and remember it. For example, the mission of Disney is: *'to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds, and innovative technologies that make ours the world's premier entertainment company.'*

The vision, mission, goals, and objectives drive the business and must be supported by the leadership, management, and employees. In normal times if you want to increase turnover by 20%, then this is likely to be achieved by increased sales of existing products, new products, additional market segments, and customers. This can be done by organic growth or growth through acquisition. Direction determines the products to be made or supplied, and the services to be provided by the company. The company must decide how it will position itself in the market, what markets it will operate in, the type and quality of the product it will supply, and the price it will charge to the market. These aspects of marketing are the basic sources of competitive advantage for the company over its rivals, and the way it will differentiate itself from its customers. Leaders needed to be more agile, creative and innovative during the pandemic to come up with survival strategies to keep the business going.

During the pandemic many were locked down which meant that their business was completely disrupted, and they had to concentrate their efforts on online or click and collect sales to try to compensate for the loss of turnover. Unfortunately, many went out of business. Others had to implement radical cost reduction strategies such as cost saving measures, divestment and mergers to keep the business solvent. Some introduced electronic pre-approved spending limits resulting in administrative cost savings.

The lucky few were able to develop new profitable niches triggered off by the needs of the pandemic such as sanitised hand washes or other hygiene products. For example, Haycarb PLC, a Sri Lankan publicly traded company accounts for 16% of the global supply of coconut shell activated carbon. It has not seen a decrease in demand during the pandemic. This is partly because demand for activated carbon is generally recession proof. It is used widely in gold mining, which has risen in price during the pandemic. Investors invested in gold because it was seen as a safe haven for their money. Haycarb did not lay off or furlough workers during the pandemic, but instead got the chairman and managing director to take pay cuts.

Similarly, some alcohol companies diversified into other areas of business such as hand sanitizers and other hygiene products when demand for their core alcohol products slowed down due to lockdown. Restaurants developed take-away and delivery services to stay in business and keep some of their workers in jobs. Some introduced requirements that all customers must pre-order online instead of ordering by phone. This resulted in considerable staff savings with less people needed to take phone orders. They could also use this source to build up a database of who their loyal customers were for future marketing, advertising and selling purposes. Those who temporarily lost their jobs went on the pandemic unemployment payment.

Many companies saw additional opportunities to accelerate their online businesses when non-essential retail establishments were forced to close. Online trade is increasing so that businesses need to deliver this sales service effectively to provide customers with a seamless experience. Others, despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic and market downturn, hired more people and invested in additional training so that when the situation improves, they will recover faster. They have learned the lessons of the global recession of 2007-2009. Remember the panic about toilet paper shortages during the start of Covid-19? In response toilet paper manufacturers increased production as people stockpiled ahead of lockdown. This inevitably resulted in too much stock, much of it subsequently sold at a discounted price. Business did not think through the shortage problem strategically. Proper models would have predicted and managed the shortages better. Those businesses with foresight see the pandemic as an opportunity to hire and train bright people so that they will be ready when the recession ends, as it surely will.

1.3 STRUCTURE

This is the hierarchy of command as on the organisation chart. It shows how the work is divided and the roles, responsibilities, relationships, and sources of power within the organisation are distributed. Lines of communication are evident on the chart. How work flow happens, how it is coordinated and controlled is also shown. As companies increase in size coordination and control become critical aspects of an organisation. Size tends to create bureaucracy, leading to the need for more manageable business units and more flexibility. If the structure changes it will have immediate implications for people, tasks, and technology. If people are empowered with decision-making and responsibility this will be reflected in the organisation structure. There will be less need for supervision, guidance, direction and control, so that the structure is likely to be flatter with staff more empowered to operate flexibly.

This is what has been thrust upon many organisations because of Covid-19, and the introduction of WFH. This was needed to tackle the issues of social distancing, infection control and hygiene, with people working from home rather than company offices with

little direct supervision and control. The role of work in this new rapidly changing world has to be reimagined. Some companies have even created Covid-19 champions to manage the ramifications of the pandemic, and to ensure that strict compliance with the regulations is adhered to. This means people are empowered with greater scope to use their initiative and think for themselves. Flexible organisations are more responsive than bureaucratic ones which tend to be slow and cumbersome.

Like specialists hired in normal times, remote workers will expect greater scope to exercise their judgement and expertise and demand more respect and less supervision. For WFH a wide range of jobs will have to be reengineered to show the change of emphasis on the way people are organised, supervised, and managed. People are in their own homes with nobody directly in charge to tell them what to do. Leaders must provide remote workers with clear expectations, and promote the right mindsets, attitudes, values, and behaviours, in their staff. Remote workers will need the right skills, stationery, material, equipment, and technology to do a good job and this should be provided by the leader. This will be reflected in the roles designated on the organisation chart. In addition, with regard to Covid-19, the introduction of computerisation, automation, artificial intelligence, and new technology has accelerated. This means the creation of new skilled jobs, and the displacement of old manual ones. Things will never be the same again.



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1.4 SYSTEMS

These are the rules, regulations, policies, processes, and procedures, of how it is intended to run the business. They include, IT systems, financial, accounting, marketing, purchasing, production, sales, human resources, and administrative systems. It also includes sub-systems related to production, stock, planning and control, cost accounting and budgeting, performance evaluation, people management, and so on. Without these systems a company could not function successfully. Since Covid-19 the movement of systems to the cloud has accelerated. This enables businesses to spend more time on important issues rather than processing data.

Financial systems ensure that the company is being run on a sound commercial basis. The most challenging problems posed by Covid-19 relate to business performance such as cash flow, budgets, turnover, revenue per employee, liquidity, and gross profit ratios, and the need to keep the financial plans up-to-date and relevant. Expenditure on travel, entertainment, and consultants has been radically cut. In a crisis, preserving cash flow, as well as obtaining capital, becomes the highest priority. Covid-19 has disrupted companies' capital project plans, and working capital requirements, not only for 2020 but for the foreseeable future as well. Capital expenditure may have to be postponed to conserve cash, and concentrate on those projects essential to the long-term survival of the business. Working capital requirements may have to be monitored very carefully to optimise the amount of money tied up in this necessary resource for running the business. This is likely to have long-term consequences for the business's future.

Discretionary expenditure, not critical to the operations of the business, will need to be cut to conserve cash. Cash payments need to be prioritised and reprioritised so that only expenditures critical to the business's survival is made. All other expenditures should be deferred. So, budgets need constant revision during these volatile times. Budgets for online sales, technology, especially cloud-based, and facilitating WFH should be increased. The purchasing power of many customers has been considerably reduced or eroded during the pandemic. We live in uncertain times where future events are hard to predict, and where the final outcome is unknown.

There is a need for tighter control with daily cash flow statements, frequent cash flow projections, and zero-based budgeting. Incremental budgeting is no longer of much use to many businesses because of the complete disruption to business that the pandemic has caused. If a business has a high level of debt, they must manage it wisely, and conserve overspending, to keep within tight budgets. Receivables and payables must be strictly controlled so that the business has sufficient cash to pay for essentials. With a decrease in cash flow budgets, forecasts need to be revised frequently at least weekly. Deciding to reduce every budget by 2% is not going to work.

Arbitrarily cutting resources without taking the consequences into account is not the right thing to do. For example, airlines laid off thousands of workers because demand has drastically fallen. This was the right thing to do because it is unlikely that air travel will recover for some time. However, many other businesses will come back sooner, and so don't require a massive reduction in labour. For companies with a large number of administrators, it is reasonable to cut down on accommodations costs as it is likely that WFH is here to stay in some form, hybrid or otherwise. Companies need to take strategic cost-cutting decisions based on their workers' and customers' changing needs, and the changing needs of the business. Zero-based budgeting is necessary to remove unrealistic assumptions in times of great volatility and unpredictability.

During the pandemic some supply chains became unreliable. In many cases this prompted a need to switch from Chinese to European manufacturers for essential supplies. For example, during the pandemic the cost of essential medical supplies like hygiene products, face masks, and personal protective equipment for personal and medical staff use, went sky high in price and became very difficult to source. Even a huge and prosperous country like the USA experienced shortages of medical supplies – demonstrating the foolishness of overreliance on Chinese suppliers. It became a supplier's market with many ignoring ethics and exploiting the vulnerabilities of people to make exorbitant profits. This is a natural outcome of the law of supply and demand where most countries in the world were competing for a limited supply source simultaneously. This prompted some countries to encourage their indigenous companies to successfully diversify into making these medical supplies. It seems that there is a silver lining for somebody in every cloud!

Human Resource (HR) management systems ensure that people are recruited equitably without gender, racial, religious or age discrimination. With remote communication, and employees working from home, employers can widen their talent pools, and ensure they're choosing the best person. Training and development systems equip managers and staff with the requisite knowledge and skills to do work efficiently and effectively. Since the pandemic some of these services have gone online. Induction training for new employees is now done remotely while the pandemic lasts. Companies have begun to conduct online interviews when recruiting, and use more online selling and digital advertisements.

Enterprise Resource planning (ERP) platforms on the cloud have enabled teams to work from home efficiently. ERP is a business process management software that manages and integrates a company's financials, supply chain, operations, reporting, manufacturing, and human resources activities. ERP software brings all the different processes together to collaborate and create one fluid system.

Reward systems are important to motivate, incentivize, recognise, appraise, provide feedback, and compensate managers, staff and employees. Rewards may take the form of salaries, promotions, bonuses, commission, profit sharing and stock options. Different business

models will demand different reward systems. The reward systems must provide the right incentive for the right people. Non-monetary rewards are important too and, in some cases, may be more motivational and effective than monetary rewards. These may consist of praise, recognition, and offering challenging work or projects to high performing staff. Leaders and managers should give feedback about employees' progress and achievement and offer suggestions for development and improvement.

Legal systems, including company law and health and safety, are important to make sure the company complies with them. During and post Covid-19 health and safety and wellness programmes will become a priority. Keeping the staff mentally and physically safe ensures the smooth continuity of the business. This is especially so during the pandemic when people's mental health may be severely strained due to the disruption, the fast pace of change, the move to remote work, and the need for frequent marathon meetings. Infringing the law and failure to abide by the pandemic protocols can incur fines and reputational damage. Systems show how work is done, and will also need to be monitored, controlled, and evaluated. The vital role that leadership, relationships, people, and tasks play in change management cannot be overstated.

1.5 LEADERSHIP, RELATIONSHIPS, PEOPLE, AND TASKS

Leaders must sell the change so that it is aligned with the culture of the company. The culture is the shared values such as the norms, beliefs, attitudes, standards, and core values of the business. They include trust, transparency, openness, honesty, passion, courage, customer care, and excellent service. Leaders may believe in a participative or autocratic approach to management, or gradients in-between. Leaders should provide choice for their staff. About 40% of people are quite happy to work from home, while the balance suffers a huge emotional impact by doing so. In any event leaders should encourage their remote workers to be innovative and must ensure that they abide by corporate safety standards. People should be given the choice to work from home or not. Allow staff to carve out 10% of their time to focus on a work project that they are personally excited by.

Covid-19 has forced leaders to reconsider their leadership style when confronted by the needs of remote workers and teams. Different skills are needed to lead and manage remote workers that you can't physically see as often as usual, and who are working at different times and places. It is a leader's responsibility to make sure that remote people have the training and support to succeed. This includes cross training for interchangeability of team members to perform critical functions, in the event of an unexpected absence or quarantine.

Leaders must have an open mindset, be role models, emotionally intelligent, optimistic, show appreciation for the efforts of their team under trying circumstances, and have good active listening and communications skills. Specifically, leaders should explain clearly and accurately the rationale and reasons for the Covid-19 strategies. Active listeners listen without judgement and reflect the feelings of employees and summarise what they hear. They must be digitally fluent. The attitudes adopted by staff is usually a mirror image of the leadership style, and thus may be competitive, hardnosed, sensitive or collaborative. Thus, if the leaders and managers are customer and staff oriented, showing empathy and sensitivity to the needs of people, staff will believe in giving value for money, treating the customer fairly, treating their colleagues with consideration and respect, while maintaining a high standard of customer service.

Relationships. There is no doubt about the importance of the effective management of relationships in the successful running of any company, and especially during the difficult times triggered off by the pandemic. Good relationships are needed within and outside the company. Within the company, it is vital that leaders, managers and supervisors maintain tactful, cordial and empathetic relationships with staff. It is also important that staff and employees foster good relationships with colleagues, so that good communication and collaboration is nurtured and maintained within and between teams, and throughout the company. Likewise, leaders and managers must network and nurture good relationships between fellow leaders and managers within and outside the company.

Do the same outside the company with stakeholders such as investors, bankers, customers, suppliers, government agencies, unions, environmental agencies, health services, and others who may have dealings with the business. In times of crisis, such as the pandemic, customers need to be handled with the greatest sensitivity and respect because of the mandatory requirement to wear masks and maintain social distancing and the inherent anxieties and fears they have about catching the virus. As these demands are unnatural, people need constant prompting and encouragement to carry them out. This means that these relationships have to be managed with the utmost sensitivity and astuteness.

Wherever, you have strictures, there is scope for conflict, disharmony, and disagreement. Poor and undiplomatic communication often adds fire to volatile situations. This is why leaders and managers must be skilled in the practice of conflict resolution, and adept at the skills of negotiation. Leaders should listen attentively to the concerns of their remote workers and teams so that they can identify areas that need attention and can be improved. They should demonstrate appreciation to their remote people for their hard exceptional work during these trying times.

Find opportunities to praise staff for work above and beyond the call of duty. Personalised thank you notes to remote workers and remote teams and their families, during these trying times will be appreciated. The leader who shows genuine care for staff will increase work satisfaction and morale and make them feel that their efforts are recognised and appreciated.

This will generate feelings of pride and motivate them to keep up the good work they're doing. People like to know that their work is making a difference, but must be reminded of this occasionally. They also like to know that their concerns are being listened to, and that appropriate action is taken to meet genuine demands.

People are the life blood of any organisation. They implement the functions, work and services of the organisation. Organisation structures are just empty lifeless shells without the energy, expertise, drive, enthusiasm, motivation, commitment, creativity, initiative, uniqueness, brilliance, and work of people. HR policies play a vital role in the recruitment, selection, placement, training and development, rotation, motivation, and management of people. HR policies are designed to attract, reward, and retain the talent necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the company. It is important to get creative and find online ways to continue the training and professional development of remote people, so that their skill sets are maintained, updated or expanded as needed.

During Covid -19 it was essential that the rules and regulations of the government introduced to deal with the health emergency were implemented fully and precisely. In addition, HRM had to introduce counselling services to maintain the mental health of employees who needed support during these difficult times. The pandemic has taken its toll on the mental wellbeing of many employees. HRM needs to pay particular attention to their sick and bereavement leave policies during this difficult time. Some companies have added new benefits for employees such as childcare subsidies. Others have extended health insurance for part-time staff or hourly workers who previously hadn't them. Temporary replacement staff were needed to cover those who were absent due to Covid-19.

It was recommended that teams should be split in two where appropriate to control the virus and avoid cross-infection. And that people should work from home wherever possible. This means that they should be provided with the right facilities, materials, equipment, and high-speed broadband services at home, to do the work efficiently and effectively. The company should have clear policies in place for this. Some companies offer reimbursements for cost incurred by the employee such as the use of computers, phones, internet, electricity and devoted space of their residence. Remote workers operate with less supervision and leaders and managers must trust them to do the work satisfactorily.

The leader or managers should set clear expectations for them and communicate with them with great empathy, clarity and without undue interference. They should try to ensure that presenteeism or the 'always on mentality' is avoided and actively discouraged. People need to lead balanced lives to remain mentally healthy and stress free. Symptoms leading to stress to look for include insomnia, high blood pressure, and mood swings. Teams will also need a high level of emotional intelligence and social skills to collaborate with each other, and operate successfully in a time of crisis. They will need some training to develop empathy skills which don't come naturally to many.

Boundaries between work and home life become more fluid. There is a danger that remote workers forget that they need to have a balanced life between work and leisure, and may spend an excessive amount of time working. There is a temptation to attend to and answer emails and texts at all hours of the day and night. This can lead to stress and burnout. What is important is that the normal standards and outputs of the workplace are maintained. Metrics and controls should be put in place so that acceptable workplace standards are maintained, without infringing on peoples' personal needs. People working from home will need initiative, agility, adaptability, autonomy, and flexibility to get the job done satisfactorily. After all they will not have direct supervision and control and somebody to get advice and help from nearby when they need it. At the same time, they must be dedicated to do quality work as good as if they were working from the central office.

Goods and services would not be designed and manufactured, sold and distributed without the work of people. What skills, abilities, and training do they need to achieve the goals and objectives of the company? Decentralised organisations require people with initiative, while centralised ones tend to be bureaucratic and governed by rules. An entrepreneurial company will need to have suitable policies to attract people who are not afraid to work hard, take risks, use their initiative, and be flexible and creative. Training and development are needed to make sure that people have the requisite skills necessary to manage and run the particular type of company now and in the future.

Special training programmes to educate and inform staff about the Covid protocols were put in place and strictly adhered to. In addition, the contacts of employees who have tested positive need to be traced. The health and safety of both staff and customers must be a priority. The right attitudes, beliefs, values, personalities, and behaviours are necessary to drive and motivate people especially those working from home and those working in the frontline. This demands that the right people with the right talents, attitudes, and aptitudes are recruited and selected for the jobs that they will do.

Media reports highlight the terrible disruption that Covid-19 has visited on the personal lives of people. Marriage celebrations were cancelled or postponed because of the possibility of cross infection. In hospitals cancer diagnosis and treatments were delayed because Covid-19 patients were given priority. General practitioners were overwhelmed, and had to put special protocols in place to see patients while ensuring social distancing. The entertainment to be provided by musicians were cancelled as well as hotel receptions for weddings. The numbers attending funerals were reduced considerably with church ceremonies conducted remotely and attendance at gravesides severely restricted.

Increases in mental health issues due to the complicated and unresolved grief issues are likely to occur because of the circumstances of death during the pandemic, where people often had to die alone without the support of loved ones. Nursing home visitations of loved ones were confined to one window visit a week much to the disappointment, distress and

disconcert of patients. We know that Covid-19 poses a much greater risk to elderly people and those with underlying conditions. Hence the strict visitation regulations for nursing homes. Domestic violence in private homes increased substantially putting pressure on an already overstretched police force. All of these were extra to the existing inconveniences suffered by the general public.

According to McKinsey research, motivating employees to be focused, quick and agile is the biggest challenge to driving innovation during a crisis such as Covid-19. Their research suggests the following steps to help the process along. The acronym **CEASED** will help you recall the main points:

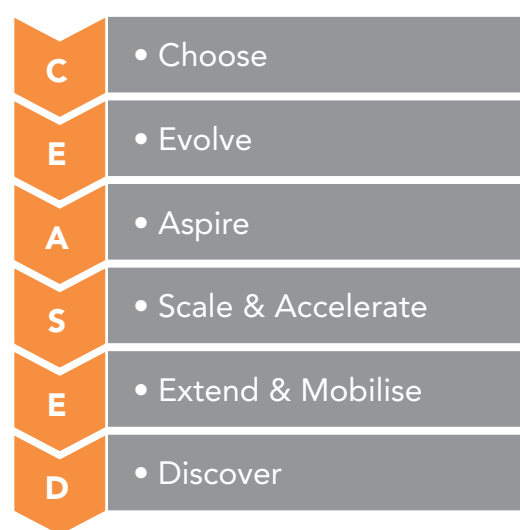


Fig. 2. Challenges to driving innovation during a crisis

- **Choose.** Revisit the innovation process. Challenge core assumptions supporting each initiative. Determine which initiatives to focus resources on, continue, or cut. Obviously, the emphasis is on maintaining essential services and generating creative solutions.
- **Evolve.** Assess which parts of the business have been adversely affected, and are unlikely to recover after the pandemic is over. Brainstorm with staff the activities that will generate the most value. Experiment with new business models to see which ones suit the needs of the organisation best.
- **Aspire.** Define the capabilities and strengths of staff that are likely to survive beyond the crisis, to challenge previous aspirations and outmoded assumptions and set new ones. Develop those that are best suited to get the business through the pandemic.
- **Scale and accelerate.** Reinvigorate and reorganise the supply chain and other resources to quickly make and launch new products and services geared for the new demands and unique conditions operating within the market. Implement specific supply chain management information systems to help get supplies timely and efficiently.

- **Extend and mobilise.** Leverage external partnerships with suppliers, competitors, and businesses from different industries. This will achieve a bigger return on innovation investments, reduce risk, and help shape regulatory policies. Instil an agile and creative culture in the business to help innovation, and persist despite the hardships imposed by the crisis.
- **Discover.** Analyse how the crisis has changed customers perceptions and buying behaviour. Mindsets are probably now focused on essential items rather than frivolous purchases. Recognise new patterns and understand how they will impact the business. Exploit these findings and meet the emerging consumer needs with new products or services. To increase revenue streams, redirect business development towards industries least affected by the pandemic.



Fig. 3. Digital nomads

Digital nomads. In every crisis there are always opportunities created for adventurous self-sufficient people with initiative, self-reliance, and self-discipline. One way of doing this is to become a digital nomad. The motto of digital nomads seems to be ‘have laptop will travel.’ This trend is likely to be accelerated after Covid-19 when the restrictions on travel are lifted, and people have the freedom to move about internationally again. The trend towards WFH has accelerated throughout the globe and is likely to continue and even accelerate when restrictions are removed. Digital nomads are people usually young who want to work remotely using Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

These people have plenty of tech savvy, ambition, initiative, and creativity – they are not afraid to express their opinions and move out of their comfort zone. They have a desire to move around the world to countries with warm climates, new cultures, attractive tax regimes, and low cost of living. The freelance style of earning a living is attractive to them enabling them to work when and where they want to. However, this style of lifestyle does not only attract the younger generation. It also, attracts retired and semi-retired people,

entrepreneurs, independently wealthy people, individuals from developed nations seeking a challenge and a more attractive lifestyle, and refugees fleeing from politically unstable and war-torn countries.

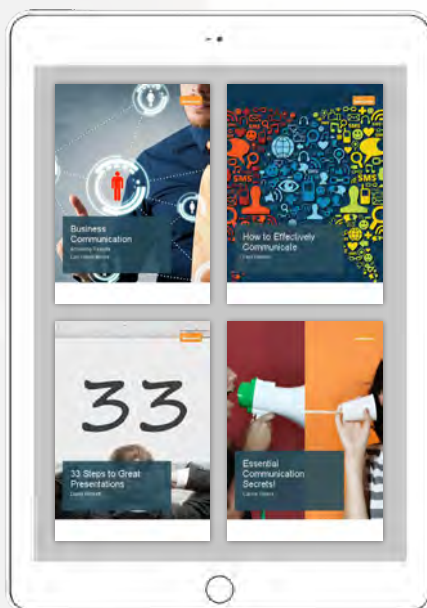
Digital nomads are location-independent, and use ICT to do their jobs. They focus on the highest value jobs while keeping their operational costs low. This means they can maximise their incomes. The reason people want to do this type of work is that it gives them financial independence, and the freedom and flexibility to work when and where they like. They also want to exploit the nice weather, meet new people, learn new languages and cultures, lower accommodation costs, and attractive lifestyles in certain countries while availing of a lower cost of living.

However, the disadvantages of the digital nomad lifestyle should be considered such as:

- Digital nomads often mention the loneliness and isolation of this work. You are far away from friends and relatives, and surrounded by people you don't know with strange customs and language. You will especially miss the milestone events at home such as weddings, birthdays, celebrations, and even funerals. Thus, it may be difficult to maintain long-term relationships with partners, relatives and friends.
- If you are not self-reliant and self-disciplined when doing your work, you may get the balance of activities between work and leisure out of sync, leading to stress and even burnout. Practising good time management is so important to achieving a balanced lifestyle, and to avoid the trap of always feeling that you should be working.
- The work available may not use your talents to the full extent possible leaving you feeling frustrated and undervalued.
- The job may not pay that well, be less than traditional office work, and need to be supplemented with other streams of income.
- There may be bureaucracy involved in getting work visas. Some digital nomads attempt to legalise their stay in foreign countries by taking up part-time jobs in teaching English as a foreign language, as well as undertaking studies in their host country.
- It can be difficult to maintain international health insurance.
- It can be challenging if you are not familiar with the local language and have to abide by local customs and laws. It can be mentally draining to be understood when you don't know the native language. Obviously, if you understand the local language it can facilitate engaging and integrating with the local population and officialdom. It may also avoid the risk of complications if you have to go to a local hospital for treatment.
- Time zone difference may present communication challenges.
- There may be difficulties finding a reliable internet connection.

However, there are substantial advantages to the digital nomad lifestyle:

- You may be able to leverage currency exchange rate differences and cost of living difference to advantage.
- You can pick out locations that give you the best quality of life both healthy and active at an affordable cost.
- You are likely to accelerate personal and professional growth. You may be surrounded by knowledgeable people, and have opportunities to attend interesting events. You will be confronted by new challenges and develop new perspectives and in the process learn more about yourself.
- You avoid office politics which can be time consuming and wearisome.
- While travelling around the world you experience different cultures and meet interesting people. This can be incredibly satisfying, creative and inspiring.
- You may be able to optimise the tax position by taking advantage of low tax regimes enabling you to hold on to more of your hard-earned money.
- You can quickly leave where you are and go where you want to be when it suits, taking advantage of better weather and cost of living conditions. You can plan work around your lifestyle rather than the other way around.



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How has the trend towards a digital nomadic lifestyle come about? It has been facilitated by content management software, cheap internet access through WIFI, smartphones and Voice-over Internet Protocols (VoIP), together with cloud-based applications. This type of remote working is facilitated by using Apps such as FairyTrail, TourBar or other similar products. All of this technology helps you keep in touch with employers and clients irrespective of the location in the world. Clients may guarantee a certain amount of work. Alternatively, you may need to supplement the income through private means such as the rent received from letting out your home (if you own one in your home country), and selling some or all of your possessions.

Where do people do their remote work from? There are numerous places you can do so such as cafes, public libraries, hotel rooms, or even beaches. You can also share offices, and co-working and co-living spaces to cut down on operating costs. YouTube and Instagram are used by some digital nomads as a way of earning income through the delivery of content directly or indirectly by sponsorship and merchandising without having a central workplace or living space.

Your location can be anywhere attractive throughout the world such as Portugal, Cyprus, Bermuda, Barbados, and Croatia. For example, Cyprus has good weather, beautiful scenery, low tax, and a quick company set up process. Some of these countries, welcome digital nomads. For example, countries like Estonia and Georgia in Eastern Europe, and Bermuda and Barbados in the Caribbean, are relaxing their worker visa requirements to lure digital nomads, largely to boost their economies suffering from a reduction in tourism. It is important that you keep all relevant documentation up-to-date such as visas and passports. If not, you could break local laws when traveling abroad. The jobs most suited to this type of remote working include knowledge areas, marketing, graphic design, information and communications technology, writing, blogs, media, tutoring, and consultancy. In the UK digital nomads have found Bristol, Brighton, and Birmingham suitable if you don't want to go too far from home.

Tasks. Tasks are how work is done and services performed. They contribute to the achievement of organisational goals such as higher productivity and profitability. Tasks must be matched to peoples' skills, aptitudes, and abilities. People will need to have adequate experience, or be trained to do the tasks involved to the required standard. Technology will change the way work is performed, and will assist in the efficient carrying out of tasks. Suitable compatible tasks will be combined, streamlined and automated. Previously, organisations may have generated ideas through meetings, brainstorming on a digital or physical whiteboard, and assigning a chairperson to record and refine the resulting ideas. After Covid-19 this process will change. The new process may include a period of asynchronous brainstorming to gather ideas from across the organisation, followed by debate and refinement on an open videoconference.

In finance robotic process automation (RPA) is used to automate tasks. RPA is a virtual robotic worker that drives processes across applications by performing tasks previously done by humans manually. The system has been operating across the L&G Group and its Investment Management divisions over the 2019 and 2020. This equates to about 40,000 hours of manual work being processed by RPA annually. The robotic workers cover a wide range of business areas and processes and sometimes operate 24 hours a day.

A car manufacturer with automation and robotics will need different types of assembly lines less, but specially trained employees with specific skills, and more engineers and technicians. The new jobs are unrecognisable to the manual ones they replaced. The goals and structure of the business will need to be changed in line with the technology. Robots don't need to be socially distanced, will work beyond normal hours, and don't pick up the virus. This means that there is an inherent attraction to invest in them instead of human labour, which is prone to get sick and be absent at the most inconvenient time. The facilitation and acceleration of technology in the change process is of vital importance.

1.6 TECHNOLOGY

These are the tools, equipment, machinery, and computers needed to help a business perform its tasks more efficiently and turn inputs into outputs. The work is done more productively so that less people will be needed to run the business, and those engaged will have different jobs than previously. More specialist type jobs will be created, and there will be less need for manual unskilled workers. With regard to people if a company is computerised, it will need computer literate people in all departments with digital skills to run the business. This requires the constant inhouse training of suitable staff with the right aptitudes required to do these jobs, or hiring information and communications technology (ICT) specialists from outside the company. This in turn will generate demands from the highly qualified people for better salaries, higher grades, better conditions of employment, and more responsible work.

Technology has a knock-on effect on the company's structure. An ICT department is likely to be set up to train, organise, coordinate, and control the specialist computer people you'll need. Different and more flexible grading and management structures will have to be set up for this purpose. In a reorganisation of the business sometimes tasks are consolidated and combined so that job roles, rewards, and responsibilities are changed and simplified. This will be reflected in the business structure and in the recruitment, selection, placement, and training policies of HRM.

Surveys by Deloitte in 2020 suggest digital transformation can increase sales and profits by increasing product quality, customer satisfaction, and workforce diversity, all achieved while reducing adverse environmental impacts. However, they maintain that the performance gains rely on seven digital elements. The acronym **COWBIRD** will help you recall the critical points:

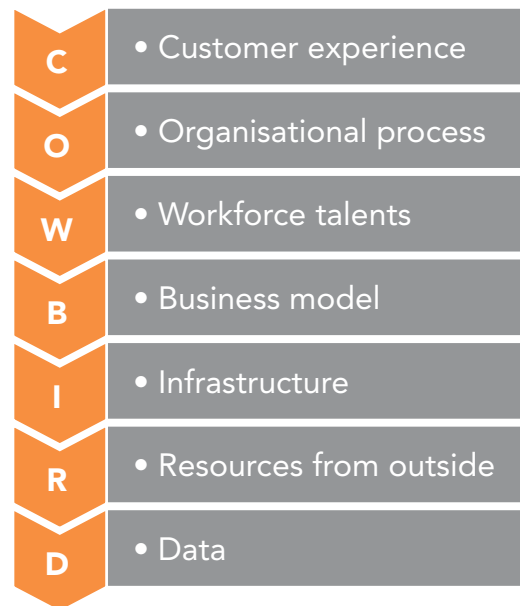


Fig.4. Digital transformation

- **Customer experience.** Digital and human customer interactions should be coordinated business wide to ensure a seamless and enjoyable customer experience. Blaming the computer for delays and mistakes is not acceptable to justify incompetence and poor customer service.
- **Organisational processes.** Company workflows should be updated and expanded to put human and technological resources to best use. The digital transformation should result in improved, smooth, fast, and efficient customer services.
- **Workforce talents and skillsets.** Training, selection, and recruiting programmes should be redesigned allowing rapid access to talent and skillsets according to the needs of the company. The right people with the right aptitudes should be selected. Covid-19 has prompted the necessity for training needs analysis to assess the extent to which the skills and knowledge of employees are suited to the new reality.
- **Business model.** Business models and revenue streams should be tailored, optimised and expanded so as the business is able to adapt and cope with the rapid changing environments and market conditions. This is particularly so in times of rapid and unpredictable change due to the pandemic. Since cash flow is the life blood of an organisation it's important to develop cash flow models that are timely and flexible.

- **Infrastructure.** Technology related assets and capabilities should balance cybersecurity and data privacy with the business's ability to increase capacity up or down depending on customer demand. The increase in the incidence of computer fraud is a timely reminder of the need for the best cybersecurity possible. This should be the best government standard level of security. Hackers are increasingly able to breach firewalls, and enter networks via a compromised memory stick or indeed hundreds of other ways. Once they get past conventional cybersecurity tools they can spend as much time as they need to steal money from accounts or identify the most valuable assets to hold you to ransom. This is a very serious problem as a 2020 report claims that 60% of small businesses that were affected by ransomware went bankrupt within six months. To counteract this threat some organisations have introduced facial recognition software as a form of cybersecurity.
- **Resources from outside.** The business should tap external business partners, such as research and development organisations, technical incubators, and start-ups where they can avail of resources like technology, intellectual property, and specialists.
- **Data.** Departmental unused data on products/services and operations should be collected, analysed and reinterpreted with the goal of optimising efficiency, revenue growth, profitability, and customer engagement. Sometimes in large organisations the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

Due to Covid-19 there has been an accelerated use of new technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), Avatars, 3D printing, Zoom and Skype for virtual meetings, and drones for surveys, surveillance, spraying disinfection, designing flight corridors, and deliveries. In some parts of China drones delivered parcels to residents asked to limit travel. Ireland's ESB's power generation business is using drones and AI to monitor the performance of its wind turbines. An interesting development was the use of 3D printers to make protective masks for the healthcare profession when there was a shortage of supplies. Many companies specialising in this area offered their services free.

In the fashion industry, and to comply with Covid-19 social distancing recommendations, fashion shows with live models have been postponed. Instead, virtual shows using avatars have been used remotely. There has been an acceleration in the technology of using avatars so that eventually they will be hardly distinguishable from real people. The technology raises ethical issues involved in the use of avatar images which are the personal property of the models involved. These issues will have to be sorted out to the satisfaction of the parties involved. There is the added problem that avatars could be exploited for pornographic purposes without the consent of the owner.

In the USA in April 2020 video conferencing solution Zoom saw the number of daily meeting participants increased from 10 to 300 million daily participants. This represents a threefold increase since December 2019. It responded to customer feedback to improve the product and learn directly from users. Teams were formed to respond to customer's concerns. Zoom expects that AI will eventually translate voice in real time, enabling people with different languages to have conversations on Zoom.

The growth was triggered off by the global pandemic, which in turn caused so many people to start working from home, and doing video conferences with people integrating Zoom into their work, learning, and personal lives. Zoom is an example of a company that has boomed during the pandemic. Similarly, Microsoft Teams' daily active users increased from 32 million in March 2019 to 75 million in April 2020. Google reported in April 2020 that its teleconferencing service was adding three million users daily. Remote workers use Zoom and Skype to keep in touch with the office enabling face-to-face communication to take place. Video conferencing creates a unique opportunity for personal reflection and learning on how you and others see you on screen. This feedback can be used to advantage to improve your presentation.

Managers are using social media and collaborative tools like WhatsApp, Twitter, and Slack to monitor and control teams remotely. There are specific online meeting schedulers expressly designed for remote teams. These will help control scheduled meetings and calls and synchronise people, schedules, and outcomes. Making phone or video calls is easy within these platforms. In the banking industry the use of electronic banking has increased, and elsewhere there is widespread adoption of electronic signatures on purchase orders, author contracts, and other business agreements.

Medical services have promoted technological changes to facilitate access. This includes the use of telehealth and virtual meetings for diagnostics, medication management, nursing, case management, and peer support. In some cases, these developments have caused changes in laws about confidentiality and privacy to enable the wider use of technology.

Educational institutes and universities cancelled live classes during the pandemic because of the fear of the spread of the infection. Instead, they opted to conduct classes through internet, digital devices, and online platforms. They have even implemented virtual graduation ceremonies. The adoption of new technology and teaching styles is creating several challenges. These include changes to learning plans, acclimatization issues with new online platforms, and conversion of lessons and hands-on learning materials to remote learning and communication. Furthermore, many students and parents do not have access to proper technologies for distance learning, like the internet and digital devices, or the necessary skills to use them.

There has been an increase in cyber-attacks during the pandemic. The increase in WFH has increased this threat. WFH people, often with inadequate IT security, are increasingly vulnerable to malicious cyber activity. There has been concerted attacks by sophisticated criminal gangs online, on government departments, universities as well as businesses and ordinary people, particularly the elderly, who are not as computer savvy as the youth. A cyber-attack can, in the click of a mouse, have a significant detrimental and devastating effect on your business and personal life. In the case of the elderly their lifetime savings have been wiped out in an instant. Technical safe guards for work and home networks are a key to reducing any vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks.

Since the arrival of the pandemic the uptake for cloud computing has increased significantly. This service allows users access to utility computing resources. Companies pay for computing power as they need it. It all started in 2002, when Amazon Web Services launched its service on the cloud. During this time Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, SAP, and others began to offer 'pay as you go' models. In 2017, Microsoft launched its cloud-based Office 365 service. Today, a large percentage of companies are running their businesses in the cloud. There are five basic reasons why companies should consider using the cloud for their IT.

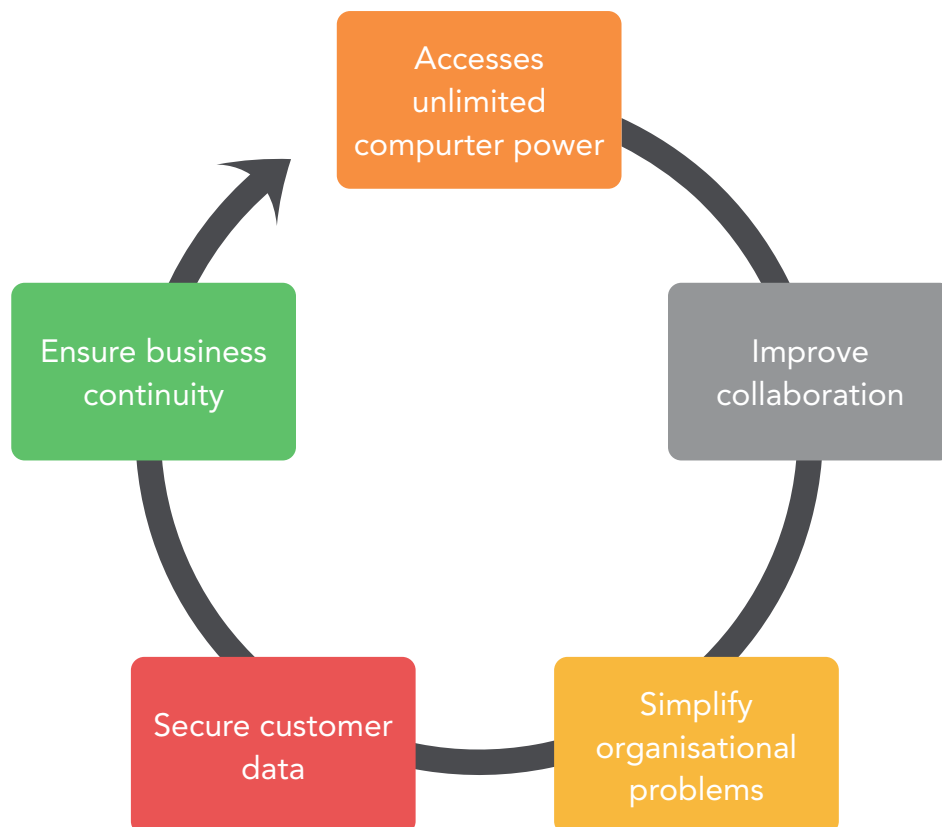


Fig. 5. Reasons why companies should use cloud

1. Access unlimited computer power. With a cloud solution, your company doesn't have to worry about network switches, storage discs, servers, and all the other paraphernalia of information technology. It doesn't need to worry about running out of memory or having insufficient IT capacity. While a cloud solution needs to be properly configured and managed to minimise costs, you have the confidence that it will support the particular transaction load for the business irrespective of how large it is. This gives you the trust to focus on the core products and services rather than on the infrastructure needed to support them.
2. Improved collaboration within and across teams. Cloud collaboration, teamwork and WFH is made possible in real-time across time zones. Documents can be created and edited in real-time and version control is facilitated – updates of shared documents reside in the cloud. The global pandemic and WFH have accelerated this process. Cloud computing is particularly suited for this paradigm shift.
3. Simplify organisational problems. The time and effort involved in recruiting, training, motivating, and retaining a competent IT team is significant. The technical roles involved may be done by the cloud provider. Engineers and other IT specialists are no longer on the payroll. The majority of these roles will be done by the cloud provider, so that you can concentrate on the other business priorities.
4. Secure customer data. A hosted cloud solution will provide encryption that is unique to the cloud. This level of security will assure customers without the necessity for an internal data security team.
5. Ensure business continuity. Disaster recovery plans are needed for any business in the event of hardware failure, a natural disaster, or other unforeseen situation. In such cases data will need to be recovered to keep the business going. In the case of cloud computing this is the responsibility of the cloud provider. They will have sophisticated contingency plans in place to address these risks ensuring business continuity.

Disadvantages of using cloud

- Cloud computing depends on a good fast internet connection. Make sure you have stable and reliable access before starting on the cloud and that it suits the business.
- There may be a security issue. It can be difficult to know exactly how the information may be used and how the risk of data loss can have on the business. And people may be worried what will happen to their data if they cancel the service.

- Downtime is possibly the biggest disadvantage of cloud computing. Since cloud computing are internet based, service outages can occur at any time and for any reason. Can you afford the consequences of an outage or downtime?
- Since all information is online, this means you are very vulnerable to cyber-attacks and security breaches. Make sure that security receives the attention it deserves.
- The cloud infrastructure is entirely owned, managed, and monitored by the service provider. This means that the customer has minimal control over it.
- Vendor lock-in is a problem. You may not be able to switch easily from one vendor to another because of platform differences.
- Using cloud computing services on a small scale can be expensive, but significant cloud computing can save costs. Pay-as-you-go cloud services provides more flexibility and lower hardware costs, but overall costs may be more than expected.

In summary, cloud computing reduces internal complexity and frees up the time and energy needed to focus on critical business issues. The culture of the company will change to accommodate all the other changes in the accelerated change management process.

1.7 CULTURE

Culture is the way an organisation does business and constitutes the leadership styles and the unwritten rules of behaviour. Change must be aligned with culture. For example, if an organisation wants to change its culture to become more innovative, leaders must communicate that vision clearly and act as role models. They must openly promote innovative employees, and hire people who are creative. Culture is determined by the values, beliefs, behaviours, norms, conventions, and ethics of the business. Succinctly, it is the way a company conducts its business. Some organisations understand the value of training and development and are committed to it. Mentoring and coaching may be difficult to do in a WFH environment so new ways of coaching remotely are being developed. Employees are having a very different and unique experience of work. It may be possible to reconfigure the process to get the best of both worlds – the personal and the remote. During Covid-19 resilient organisations and engaged committed employees will survive and thrive during these challenging times.

Shared values might also include honesty, passion, courage, and excellent service. It may involve giving value for money, willingness to share knowledge, treating customers fairly while maintaining good business practice and profitability. Sometimes culture needs to be changed. For example, when a company is set up it needs an entrepreneurial or innovative culture, but later on, as it matures, a more stable conservative culture may be more suitable.

In a post-pandemic situation, the distinction between being physically present in the office and WFH will collapse. This will be facilitated by always-on videoconferencing, seamless in-person and remote cooperative spaces such as whiteboards and asynchronous collaboration, moving quickly from futuristic to standard practice.

During the Covid period there was a particular need for people to be agile, creative and innovative to deal with the ever-changing issues and challenges, with most governments and businesses learning as they went along. This ability to be agile should be incorporated into the company's culture. Darwin in his theory of evolution maintained that it's not always the strongest who survive but rather the most adaptable. In addition, people need to be self-reliant and disciplined, and to have the initiative to work on their own without close supervision. Agility is about responding quickly to new challenges and innovation, and about gathering information, brainstorming to find alternative ways of solving problems, and exploiting opportunities. Leaders, managers, and teams are expected to practice more emotional intelligence, and be empathetic and sensitive to the needs of others.

With people WFH, dress codes, formalities, and business hours have been relaxed, and evidence of pets and children in the background in video conferences have become common place and acceptable through necessity. In the future some of these changes in norms and mores of behaviour may be permanent. There is even a feeling that there are cultural benefits to increased personal work relationships.

Businesses also began to realise how important it was to create and maintain a loyal customer base to the success of the company. Nothing in living memory was comparable to the trials and tribulations created by Covid. The anxiety, fear and uncertainty it created, in addition to the personal tragedies, was hard to deal with. All the changes discussed heretofore in this model have been triggered off by the pandemic which started in Wuhan China and then spread rapidly to the rest of the world.

1.8 ENVIRONMENT

This consists of both the internal and external environment. The internal environment of companies has changed due to Covid-19 with the need for social distancing measures, travel restrictions, the wearing of masks, stringent infection controls, quarantine, curfews, and ventilation standards. Many premises are unable to satisfy these requirements and so the necessity for WFH. External factors can be recalled by the acronym **PESTLE**. This stands for **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **L**egal and **E**thical. The technological environment is treated separately under 1.5.



Fig. 4. PESTLE Model of Change

Political includes central and local government rules and regulations, including the type of system of government, whether socialist or capitalist. During the pandemic the role of central and local government has expanded substantially, with interventions to control, contain, and slow down the virus. Efforts that proved successful have earned a growing respect from the public. Lockdowns were imposed with everything, except essential services such as supermarkets and pharmacies, closed. Travel restrictions were put in place.

A continuous advertising campaign on radio and tv to instruct, inform and create public awareness about the rules and regulations in place to combat the virus was run. These included the need for social distancing, frequent washing of hands, infection control, the use of hand sanitisers, and the wearing of masks. People were advised to WFH where possible, avoid crowded spaces, and the use of public transport unless essential. On a positive note, the level of cooperation between governments to find a vaccine is nothing more than astounding. It has resulted in a successful outcome with the roll-out of the Pfizer/BioN-Tech Covid vaccine already being done in the UK from Tuesday the 8 December with more vaccines produced by other pharmaceutical companies on the way. The EU is likely to follow shortly after with a roll-out from late December 2021. Countries are now hopeful that the start of the end of the pandemic is in sight with prospects of some sort of return to normality by next summer.

Economic includes globalisation, competition, markets, branding, consumer behaviour, and government taxation policies. The arrival of Covid saw a significant world-wide fall off in GDP due to lockdowns and the resultant loss of demand for non-essential services. The pandemic has resulted in a significant disruption to world trade, with the World Trade Organisation forecasting that it will fall between 13% and 32% in 2020. On the other hand, the food and medical sectors saw increased demand due to panic-buying and stockpiling of food products. The IT industry has boomed during the pandemic. The lockdown has also resulted in serious loss of revenue for both national and local government. Many businesses were made bankrupt despite generous grants and subsidies.

Businesses in general have been pushed across the world to work in new more agile and resilient ways. Others have responded creatively to keep their businesses open. On a positive note, multinationals have come together and combined their resources to fight the pandemic. This has resulted in unprecedented cooperation in the manufacture and supply of medical products.

Low-income and underrepresented groups will suffer most from lockdowns, rising unemployment, and unexpected medical costs. The economic and labour crisis created by Covid-19 could increase global unemployment by almost 25 million, according to a new assessment by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Unemployment has a significant impact on individuals' abilities to pay rent, mortgages and other household expenses. There was a substantial increase in unemployment especially among young people. Job schemes and special training programmes for reskilling were created for unemployed young.

Peoples' spending patterns have changed dramatically with a significant rise in personal savings. Some people have lost their jobs and must survive on the pandemic unemployment payment. The rest are WFH and spending more locally which has helped local businesses while adversely affecting centre city ones especially coffees shops, pubs, and restaurants. Consumers are inclined to spend on essentials such as groceries and health products and when they go shopping for non-essential items, they know exactly what they want. Impulse buying seems to be a thing of the past. They are spending on casual rather than formal wear. Home cooking and baking has increased while eating out has collapsed.

Post Covid-19 governments are investing more in green infrastructure to support a net-zero recovery and create employment in sustainable businesses in the future. However, in a post-pandemic recovery, the government must eventually pay back the cost of the crisis, and therefore taxes are likely to rise in the future. This could prolong the recovery period from the Covid-19 crisis.

The real estate industry is facing economic uncertainty due to Covid-19. Social distancing requirements have reduced the number of house views - an essential part of the selling process. Sellers are concerned about the health of potential buyers coming to view properties. Some estate agents are offering house tours via Skype and FaceTime to minimise the risk of infection. Others are asking buyers to register their interest for viewings to gauge their level of interest and likelihood of purchase.

The restaurant industry has been forced to limit indoor seating and the sports industry has put games on hold or played to empty stadiums. Some restaurants are operating click-and-collect or take-away services only. Online shopping and remote working are more prevalent than ever. Millions of people moved their grocery purchases online. As life slowly returns to normal, we have developed more appreciation for our family, friends, neighbours and health, and we even miss the intimacy of local shops that were forced to close because of the pandemic. It was all a timely reminder not to take anything for granted as life is short and lives can be turned upside down in an instant.

The travel and tourism industry has been particularly badly impacted by the pandemic with hotels and airlines operating at a fraction of their capacity incurring substantial losses. The World Travel and Tourism Council has warned that 50 million jobs in the global industry may be at risk. To counteract this, some airlines, to keep their businesses afloat, have converted their passenger aircraft into cargo-only flights transporting daily necessities, personal protective equipment, and other urgent medical supplies. The more perceptive airlines are taking advantage of increased time on the ground for training and education. Museums, libraries, galleries, and convention centres were also closed.

People were discouraged from travelling abroad. Cruise ships have been mothballed because people now consider them a petri dish for the pandemic and so extremely unsafe to travel in. Some even had difficulty finding ports to dock in as some governments were unwilling to allow them to do so because of fear of the infection. Executives are no longer hoping on a flight to attend meetings abroad, but instead are using virtual meetings which are addressing the same needs and resulting in the same outcomes. Because of the reduction in travel there was less traffic and pollution.

Social includes the makeup and breakup of the population as determined in demographic surveys. It also includes their attitudes and behaviours. With the increased prevalence of WFH there was less commuting and less wasted time stuck in traffic jams. It is likely that a hybrid type of working will emerge with some people WFH and some working from central locations. The remote workers will operate from home mostly with a monthly trip to headquarters meetings with colleagues at a shared destination. The hybrid will share their time between home and headquarters, thereby benefiting from social interaction, and the creativity

generated through the process. Face-to-face interaction is required to facilitate collaboration, build relationships, solve complex problems, and generate ideas. The conventional office may have to be entirely redesigned and transformed for a post-Covid-19 world.

The need for office space in large cities will decrease and some of these spaces will be sold and converted for domestic living to bring a new vibrancy to city life. Rent, capital costs, facilities operation, maintenance and property management are the largest cost incurred by a company outside of wages and salaries. After Covid-19 these are likely to be reduced considerably. On the other hand, with improved broad band availability, the attraction of working from small towns and rural areas has increased. This has boosted the demand for accommodation in small towns and rural areas making these properties more attractive and brought life back to these places. It will also enable remote workers to substantially downsize their estate costs and move to the countryside. Country living has special attractions because of its slower pace of life and friendly intimate atmosphere.

Legal includes company and commercial law including health and safety. People have become more conscious of health and safety issues because of the pandemic. Employers must ensure that health and safety standards are strictly adhered to especially in relation to Covid-19. They are also more aware of the risk factors involved in catching the disease. The rules and regulations implemented to combat Covid-19 has had a direct effect on the way business is run in the public and private sectors. Sick leave in the health service has put the remaining care staff under stress coping with overwork. It has also highlighted that some companies have no paid sick leave schemes. After the pandemic improved hygiene standards are likely to continue in supermarkets, retailers, offices and commercial establishments.

Ethics. Finally, the role of ethics should not be forgotten as it may contribute significantly to the longevity and reputation of a business, or alternatively, bring it into disrepute or closure because of a lack of compliance with ethical standards. The role of essential workers, many of whom are badly paid and have inferior conditions of employment, is now more valued and hopefully this will have a knock-on effect on their employment conditions.

During the Covid many companies disregarded ethical standards and overcharged for vital personal protective equipment because of restricted supplies and increased demand. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of ethics and good corporate governance, since incidents of corruption and fraud have increased. When companies are financially struggling there may be a temptation to manipulate financial results. Accountants can support organisations by being vigilant and making sure that their colleagues in finance and elsewhere understand the importance of ethics. Companies must be seen to practise good ethical standards if they want to retain a loyal customer base.

1.9 CONCLUSION

Covid-19 is a catalyst for companies to reinvent the future. It is likely that more digitisation, automation, online buying, WFH, and flexible working conditions are here to stay. My accelerated change management model for Post Covid-19 has six elements such as strategy, structure, systems, leadership, technology and culture all dynamically linked to environmental effects both internal and external. My model is an adaptation and combination of some well-known change models. The model highlights the need for strategies, structures, systems, technology, culture, people, and relationships to change in line with the changes needed to deal effectively with the pandemic.

Strategy, structure and systems are interconnected. Changing any one will have an effect on the other two. Strategy is a general plan to achieve one or more long-term goals. It sets out the direction that the company will take, and may signpost the road for success and the culture to be adopted. Direction is determined by governance, vision, mission, goals, objectives, and environmental issues. Unprecedented events like Covid-19 forced many companies to quickly change their short-term and long-term strategies to stay in business and survive. Companies must ensure that technology is part of their core strategies as a key driver and accelerant of change. The technology chosen should help to build a better and more sustainable world.

Structure is the hierarchy of command as shown on the organisation chart. It shows how the work is divided and the roles, responsibilities, relationships, and sources of power are shared. Lines of communication are evident on the chart - how work flow happens, how it is coordinated and controlled. As companies grow coordination and control become critical aspects of an organisation. The unique challenges of the trend towards WFH and the Covid -19 protocols must be reflected in the structure of the company.

Systems are the rules, regulations, policies, processes, and procedures of how it is intended to run the business. They include, IT systems, financial, accounting, marketing, purchasing, production, sales, human resources, and administrative systems. Without these systems a company could not function. Special systems are needed to cater for the implementation of Covid-19 protocols.

The leadership style adopted will be influenced by the shared values or culture of the company. Leaders must lead by example, be trustworthy, emotionally intelligent, optimistic, and have good active listening and communications skills. The leader or managers should set clear expectations, objectives, and timeframes for WFH and communicate with great empathy, sensitivity, encouragement, consideration, and clarity. They should try to ensure that the culture of presenteeism or the 'always on mentality' is actively discouraged and realise that the old 9-5 office mindset is gone and needs to be reconfigured. A focus on productivity is

needed instead. After the roll out of the vaccine leaders will bring employees who wish to work in the headquarters back to offices, but must ensure that when they return, workplaces are both productive and safe.

Due to Covid-19 there has been an accelerated use of new technology such as automation, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), Avatars, 3D printing, Zoom and Skype for virtual meetings, cloud computing, and drones.

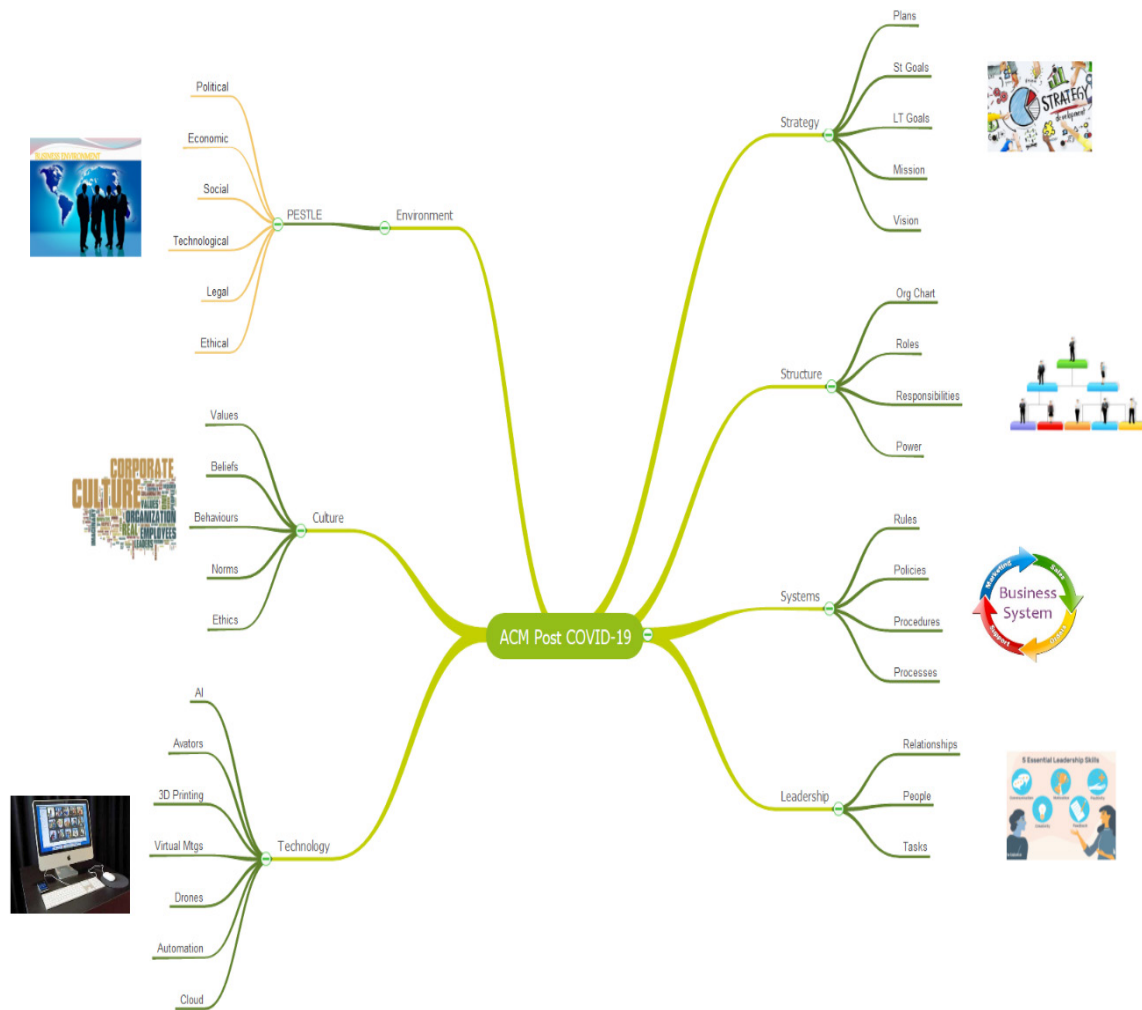
Throughout the world, since April 2020 the video conferencing solution Zoom saw the number of daily meeting participants increase substantially. Remote workers have adopted video conferencing, and is a great opportunity to reduce business journeys including non-essential road, rail, and air travel. Zoom and Skype are used by remote workers to keep in touch with the office enabling face-to-face communication to take place. Managers are using social media and collaborative tools like WhatsApp, Twitter, Slack and so on to monitor and control teams remotely.

Culture is the way an organisation does business and constitutes the leadership styles and the unwritten rules of behaviour for the company. It is determined by the values, beliefs, behaviours, norms, conventions, and ethics of the business. Succinctly, it is the unique way a company conducts its business. Culture is established over many years and is reinforced by habitual ways of doing things, traditions, and practices. During the Covid period there was a particular need for agility, creativity and innovation to deal with the ever-changing issues and challenges of the pandemic with most governments and businesses learning as they went along.

The environment consists of both the internal and external environment. The internal environment of companies has changed due to Covid-19 with the need for social distancing measures, personal protective equipment, the wearing of masks, stringent infection controls, and ventilation standards. Many premises are unable to satisfy these requirements and so the necessity for WFH. External environmental factors can be recalled by the acronym **PESTLE**.

The pivotal role of ethics should be kept in mind as it may contribute significantly to the longevity and good reputation of a business, or alternatively, bring the business into disrepute or closure, because of a lack of compliance with ethics. During the Covid many companies disregarded ethical standards and overcharged for vital personal protective equipment because of a shortage of supplies and the increase in demand. Companies must be seen to practise good ethical standards and be seen as fair and honest if they want to retain a loyal customer base.

LEARNING MAP SUMMARY OF BOOK



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