

Positive Ways Technology Leaders are Responding to COVID-19

Falling global markets, travel bans and an inability to host face-to-face meetings have created universal productivity challenges. Business Continuity Planning (BCP) is in full effect, with some companies better prepared than others.

As with all macro events, there are winners and losers. Leaders are working quickly to respond, assessing how they will be able to generate sales, and retain both customers and staff during what will be a challenging year. Absorbing the various news stories each day can be disheartening, but having been in regular discussions with a number of decision makers in the industry, we have looked at some of the more positive trends and initiatives.

Remote Working Styles



Many leaders had prepared and tested their technologies & people's capability for remote working well before more stringent government measures meant no one could quickly head to the office. Speaking with clients, we have found a multitude of different ways this has been implemented with some being more prudent than others. Daily leader/team calls are almost universal at the moment. Rather than using these calls to monitor staff or micromanage, more positively, leaders are using them as a way to connect with their employees, to keep them motivated and engaged and, most importantly, to bring some level of social interaction to their team as they are asked to stay at home. Video calls are primarily being used as an engagement mechanism, but it has also offered employees the chance to talk through work issues, offer solutions and share funny stories in these uncertain times. In fact, a number of leaders have praised the creativity which has been a product of these video calls, leading to ideas that could generate new and potentially critical revenue streams.

For many people working daily from home with one trip to the shop and a possible run around the park will lead to boredom. Many leaders have implemented online pub style quizzes and digital games to help keep employees' morale up. Whilst some of the more active have joined online fitness classes which involves teams doing a "bootcamp" style work out from their homes. Despite offices being shut, employees are continuing to adjust and socialise through-out the week. Here are a few things that some of our network are doing this week;

- Using the ironing board as an adjustable standing desk.
- Spending the usual commute time learning some thing new such as a language.
- Wrapping up a team video call with a drink or two at the end of the day.
- A Netflix watch party (there's a chrome plugin that starts the Netflix film at the same time, pauses it for everyone at the same time and includes a chat window at the side).
- An online board games night.

Focus on Digital

There has been increased recognition of digital technologies. Over the last few weeks, companies have quickly incorporated more digital events within their business, but we have also seen new digital products being built and scaled more rapidly. Some businesses have seen the opportunity to develop digital technologies that might be able to offer quicker revenue returns in the foreseeable future. Despite the lack of face to face meetings companies still need exposure to customers which has led to an increase in Digital Marketing. The best tools to do this will be the production of white papers and the increased use of webinars and the like.

Increase in employee output



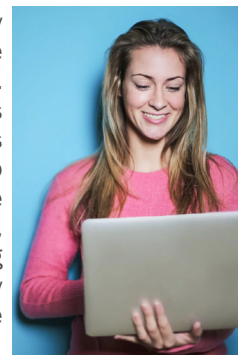
A number of leaders have seen significant increases in productivity and better outputs for the business. It could be that teams feel they collectively need to push a little harder to get through challenging times.

Talent well-being

Concurrently, Leaders are learning to manage a fluctuating workforce that increasingly needs to self-isolate or support loved ones. The overall willingness of businesses to be supportive of their employees reflects how highly they value their talent. The welfare of employees and their families alongside supporting clients in a time of crisis has taken centre-stage, linking the organisation and its people to a true sense of shared purpose.

Hiring

Many would presume that an inability to meet finalist candidates face-to-face would hinder the recruitment process. However, given how critical certain hires are to fast-moving businesses, leaders are thinking creatively around how to push recruiting forward. Increased use of Video calls, extensive referencing, psychometric assessments and relying heavily on your search partners' history with the candidate are all tools we are currently seeing leveraged.



Response Rate

We have noticed a significant increase in the responsiveness of candidates to our approaches relating to searches and new job opportunities. Not surprisingly, this is due to the vast majority of people working from home at the moment.

During our twenty-five-year history, SH Gillamor Stephens has supported our clients throughout a number of periods of considerable uncertainty. For any information or guidance and advice about how you are managing your current or future talent requirements as a response to COVID-19, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Hornby.