

Members Respond to the Coronavirus Challenge

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What's the biggest work/COVID-19 challenge you're facing this week?

- As we enter the 7th week of not-seen-each-other due to the lock-down, the biggest challenge has been to stay connected and being relevant with all stakeholders (team/partners/customers/suppliers/Industry peers). Our business is best done F2F, so this new way of working is a challenge! As a company, Microsoft has enabled to leverage our collab tools like Teams that helps us stay up-to-date and even see each other during meetings.
- Bigger challenge exists with keeping the team morale up, where everyone might have some challenge as WFH is not a cultural norm in India, people are expected to go to work every single day.
- This week, in-line with the Indian government announcement of lock-down until 17th May, we have deferred our office opening to 1st of June, so we got more requests to move desktops/monitors/ergo chairs to employee homes and we are enabling that.
- Also constantly preparing/reviewing the FM teams on the site recovery plans when the lock-down gets over, sharing best practices from both within the company (China) and in the market (peer companies) so we are better prepared to handle employees getting back to work

What's the current situation in your city relative to opening non-essential businesses?

- Since day 1 we have been allowed to have very few critical staff at work to keep the biz running remotely and we have been successful. The Govt. also proactively allowed relaxations to move bonded assets from duty free zones (desktops+monitors+ergo chairs from STPI, SEZ) for the employees to WFH (OSP licenses for call centers).
- The whole country is in a lock-down since 25th March going until 17th May, post which, depending on the # of cases being reported/active there might be relaxations within the Zip codes > City > District > State in that order.

How do you think COVID-19 will bring about permanent changes in corporate real estate and workplace strategy?

- This situation has disrupted companies (or departments within) who haven't adopted or so far opposed to the idea of virtualization and the cloud.
- The BCP situation has technically proven that IT/ITES can WFH, this opens up opportunity for us to talk to biz about seat sharing as we have seen max 70% daily attendance implying 30% of Real Estate is wasted, which could have a direct impact on space usage

- The usage of collab tools (Teams, Slack, WebEx, Zoom, etc.) has brought employees closer virtually and so questioning the need to having one large office in the city vis-à-vis hub & spoke model, so employees can go to the nearest office (spoke) to their homes and once in a while go to their main offices (hub) to be part of the larger group
- The biggest issue we face in any city is traffic, so if companies can encourage employees to WFH few days a week, not only would the employee be productive (avoiding an avg 2.5 hrs/day in commute) but also have a good work life balance, this will have a direct reduction in traffic (especially cars), resulting in lesser pollution (air, noise, light).