

COVID-19

...The Dream that Nightmares are Made of

“Dreams are for those who sleep”¹

Yes, COVID-19, and its aftermath, will be with us for a very long time. The thought that it will not affect our lives once there is a vaccine is a dream and if you are of the mindset that the business world will not have to deal with the repercussions of this pandemic for very long, you need to WAKE UP!

The long-term medical complications from COVID-19 can be severe.

The long-term **business complications** will be tantamount to a disruptive technology that changes the way things are done and therefore affects your business. Every aspect of your business will be affected and the driving force spear heading this disruption will be the **Remote Workforce**.

Just designating which employees will be remote workers without analyzing the functions, positions and the employees that will fill these roles without considering the complex interconnection of operating procedures, personalities and environment, has the potential for disaster.

You need to determine not only if your company is ready for a remote workforce...but where you should start and why you should start there. You will need to determine, before implementing this initiative, what the pain will look like if you do not adequately design and implement a hybrid workforce scenario and what the benefits will be if you do.

Each company is different, even if in the same industry. The differences, on the company side, are in the existing processes, IT function, management style, environment, and traits of the individuals that will work remotely. On the employee side, the differences reside within the home dynamics, performance orientation, agility, and remote employee traits.

You will need to ask pertinent questions of your employee base to determine feasibility of the idea for a remote workforce and you will need to understand the sensitivity associated with questioning employees. Decisions will have to take into consideration the state of mind of those that will not be a part of the remote workforce. Will they be accepting and willingly integrate remote people as a part of the team, or will there be resentment, jealousy, and vindictiveness? How will the attitude of those that are not remote workers affect the entire company and how should you position this dynamic?

The premise of this type of questioning is that anonymity of each respondent and controlling the number and the subject matter of the questions will result in responses that are truthful and insightful. No employee should be asked questions they are not qualified to answer and the number of questions asked of any employee should be controlled and reasonable.

There are two, equally effective, methods available for collecting and analyzing the data for this type assessment:

¹ Make it With You – Lyrics by James Griffin, Robb Royer, David Gates

1. **All the data is anonymous** – Standard response analysis - All employees entering data will remain anonymous. This will guarantee that the answers will not be biased and will reflect what the employees know to be the current reality.
2. **Potential remote workers may elect to allow their data to be available, confidentially, to those responsible for building this workforce.** - Waiving anonymity allows the company to understand the concerns held by the individual proposed remote employee and address and mitigate them for the benefit of that employee. **All other employee respondent data remains anonymous.**

Option two introduces a dimension that is quite unusual when assessing an employee base for a new initiative. It conflates two philosophies in the same assessment: anonymity and identity. To be clear, it offers the two philosophies in the same analysis, selectively differentiating one demographic from all the others. The objective is to individually address the concerns of specific individuals while integrating the data entered by those individuals with the global anonymous data. These concerns for remote workers usually revolve around compensation, home dynamics and environment.

In conclusion, designing and implementing a Hybrid Workforce requires the management to make judgements mimicking the hiring of new employees; while dealing with personal situations in a way you would not consider when hiring a new employee. The goal is to investigate the company's propensity to add a remote workforce while integrating and accommodating all functions, positions and locations.

About the Author:

Michael St. Angelo is the President and CEO of NeuraMetrics Inc. Mike has held executive sales and marketing positions at a company that was the worldwide leader in process automation, an industry analysis firm that studied and advised major corporations and utilities and a company that marketed enterprise software. He has led the development of an efficient and robust method to conduct mission critical, process and organizational assessments, benchmarking and studies. His methodology and tools offer expanded insight into causes of organizational performance including analysis of process behaviors. Mike has taught undergraduate courses and provides freelance articles occasionally for industry publications.

He may be contacted at: stangelo@neurametrics.com