

Changing the Way We Work *For Good*

5-Part series that looks to the future of communications in our new work model

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PART 1

Our New Normal – **Work Has Changed For Good**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our world in unprecedented ways. Two areas dominating the global stage right now are public health and the economy. In a catch-22 scenario, we've rapidly understood that these two sectors are completely co-dependent. People need to be safe – physically, emotionally, and financially – but we can only achieve this through working businesses. And companies can only survive if their employees, customers, and supply chains are safe and healthy.

Even as uncertainty prevails, the business response to this crisis has been quick, innovative, and disruptive. Change became necessary, and so companies around the world have reinvented the way we work – a change that I believe will reshape the commercial and economic landscape forever.

With this new way of working and thinking, companies need to become more agile, refocus priorities, and adopt digital transformation now.

Foundational to these monumental changes is communication; it has never been more critical to evolve the way we communicate with everyone involved in our business transformation, starting with our very own employees.

Implications of the New Way of Working

Now that the genie is out of the bottle, we've all been given "permission" to conduct business differently. But what are the implications of this new work model?



Change Rapidly

Forget the phrase "business as usual." I can't think of a single industry that has not been impacted in some extreme way due to these recent events. For companies that are change-ready, their business agility and mindset helped prepare them to adapt to the new normal, even as that normal was ever-changing. Change *must* become part of the DNA of companies right now in order to survive in this new work world. Change is the only constant.



Digitize Now

As we've seen the past few months, digital transformation projects that might have once taken years are now happening in weeks. Global initiatives, such as telemedicine, that have seemed to fall under the "nice-to-have" category the last few years are now being reprioritized. Businesses *must* have a plan to go digital, now.



Rethink Workspace

While remote workers and telecommuting are not new concepts, many companies moved to a 100% workforce literally overnight – and successfully. Brick and mortar businesses moved to adapt quickly, by either making physical changes to keep employees and customers safe, or by retooling how they deliver goods and services, and in some cases are even producing brand new products to help fill gaps in critical shortages. Whatever the case, businesses must rethink their traditional workspace strategies.



Evolve Communication

Communication has always been at the core of any company, but as the world becomes more digital – and noisier – and as change becomes the norm, communications need to adapt. Businesses need to evolve in order to communicate to a diverse, and now more dispersed, set of employees. Communication must drive alignment, productivity, and engagement. For this to happen in the new way of working, it needs to be continuous and personalized, especially during times of change.

Getting Back **on** our Feet

I am continuously amazed at the human spirit when we are faced with a calamity or immense change. 50 years ago, a ruptured oxygen tank on NASA's Apollo 13 mission triggered a series of lifesaving adaptations and innovations on the part of both the astronauts and the teams on the ground. Some of these moves were performed in minutes, hours and days.

This pandemic has knocked us down but together we will get back on our collective feet and be better for it. If this new work model becomes the norm, many companies will have to make significant transformations and innovate quickly in order to survive. Communication will be critical to keeping employees aligned and productive through these changes, and will help make these unprecedented changes achievable.

Be sure to catch Part 2 of this series, Creating a Connected Enterprise, where Keith Kitani will discuss how we can leverage communication to create an organization that's connected, maintains its culture and meets its business objectives in this new way of working.

