

Post COVID-19: The evolution of work culture in Nigeria.

Imagine a Lagos state with tamed bus stops, uncrowded motor parks, and rush hour commutes that still moved in a steady pace. A Lagos with enough space to actually walk on pedestrian lanes. One where a journey by 8am across 3rd Mainland Bridge would not consume the bulk of the energy you had stored up for the day. Imagine a traffic free Aba road in Port Harcourt, one where journeying from Artillery to Trans-Amadi would be a breeze, that you could navigate the city with ease despite the poor road connectivity. As early as December 2019, some of these might have seemed like a farfetched dream. Recently, it has become a more likely reality as the world tackles the swift riding, aggressively contagious novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the pestilent COVID-19 disease that it brings.

The Nigerian culture surrounding work, efficiency, and productivity is undergoing a shift, forcing businesses into an untraditional way of operation. A shift that the country is ill-equipped and unprepared for. The electricity situation is epileptic at best, coupled with sparse availability of affordable and reliable internet connectivity. In many government offices, transactions are still manually driven with significant amount of information stored in physical files.

“This pandemic might be the catalyst for strengthening the organisational and cultural framework required for remote work on the side of businesses, and hopefully a wakeup call for the government to improve on the infrastructure

Combine the institutionalised lack of infrastructure with a culture that is averse to remote work, and it's easy to see why companies are unwilling to have their employees work remotely. The premise of this culture is a lack of trust in employees to carry out the best interest of companies when they cannot be supervised physically. Inadvertent change has however been thrust upon us! It is clear that post COVID-19, work, as we know it, will have to change.

This pandemic might be the catalyst for strengthening the organisational and cultural framework required for remote work on the side of businesses, and hopefully a wakeup call for the government to improve on the infrastructure. The genuine concern of managing employee effectiveness when work is done remotely, can be achieved through deployment of appropriate technology. From online meeting and conference applications, project management applications and even time-tracking applications, it is increasingly becoming easier to monitor performance. Management is further inclined to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals as assessment and appraisal can so easily drift to employees just showing up at the office and creating activities as against the achievement of set objectives. It can even be argued that remote staff are compelled to be more productive as they have to show tangible results for work done.

Not all job roles can be performed remotely, but a lot can. When this disease has been beaten, the world will form contingency plans to reduce the spread of similar disease and combat any resurgence. The ability of economic society to still carry on as smoothly as possible even if there be need for a lockdown will be paramount. The proactive response for Nigerian businesses is to therefore begin to embrace remote-work possibilities, invest in tech based solutions (virtual workspaces, databases, security) as well as align company culture to shed any animosity towards such.

Now imagine your business saving millions of naira on expanding office infrastructure every year while still being able to have multiple staff in various locations. The reality of COVID-19 is forcing businesses to see these advantages. Hopefully, this will also push government agencies to embrace more technological solutions.

The Nigerian work culture is evolving, and the “Millennial” work culture might just be the next phase of its evolution.

Contact us:



Abel A. Onyeke
Managing Partner

+234 803 311 3132

abel@nexianigeria.com