

# *HR Matters*

## Namibia Newsletter

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A quarterly newsletter published by PwC Namibia providing informed commentary on current developments in the People & Organisation arena.

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# 3 Must-Learn lessons from the Pandemic

## *The New Future of the Workplace*

For many — if not most — industries, the pandemic has dramatically altered the way business is done. From day-to-day operations and the services and support they provide, to customer perception and employee expectations, “business as usual” is anything but.

Through this time of unprecedented anxiety, uncertainty, and unrest, HR has emerged as the MVP for businesses big and small. They took on the challenge and put their heads and hearts together — making their companies stronger, smarter, and better, and their workforces more efficient, flexible, and resilient.

As the pandemic dust settles, many HR professionals may find themselves asking, “Can we go back?” But perhaps the right question to ask is, “*Should we?*” In fact, 90% of respondents to a Gartner survey<sup>1</sup>

said they’ll continue to allow employees to work remotely at least part of the time, and 44% anticipate offering additional benefits (mental health, childcare leave, etc.).

Despite its utility during this unexpected season, the “survive” mentality focused on the tasks and issues of today has often come at the expense of forward-thinking, employee-centric strategy. One-hit-wonder tools and procedures act as temporary band-aids for long-established (and likely to endure) problems with employee engagement and experience.

In this article we’ll take a look at three of the biggest lessons earned from the pandemic.





## Lesson 1

### *Amp up your Agility*

Agility and adaptability — they made it possible for many businesses to survive the change and disruption caused by the pandemic. Others have even thrived.

From curbside pick-up and expanded delivery to robust ecommerce and virtual solutions, successful business owners and managers have stepped out of their comfort zone, stepping up their game entirely.

Though the pandemic has redefined the way we think about change and disruption, they've always been part of the job for HR professionals. The differences are the scale and speed of change. Organizations accustomed to planning three- and five-year goals look at significantly shorter goal windows planning, instead, for a year, a quarter, or even a few weeks. For HR, agile planning means taking control of change instead of just reacting to it.



#### **Manage Change**

Prepare your organization and workforce to stay productive without missing a beat. Start with solid digital infrastructure to help facilitate communication and remote working, manage schedules, maximize flexibility, and optimize work life balance. Set your company and employees up for a seamless, successful transition and make it easier to implement future changes as needed.

#### **Manage Communication**

Anyone trying to keep up with the news and guidelines during the pandemic knows how quickly things can change. The same is true for your organization. HR is challenged with making sure changes are communicated effectively and efficiently. With your entire workforce on the same page at the same time, you can help avoid breakdowns in communication and workflow, minimize frustration, and maintain corporate credibility.



## Lesson 2

### *Give Your Employee Experience a Refresh*

Whether your leaders and people managers are well-acquainted with remote work or were thrown into it for the first time this year, it's easy to lose touch with the needs of your workforce. To help employers and employees stay connected, HR professionals have had to redefine, reimagine, and recalibrate the employee experience.

#### **Redefine Engagement**

Staying in tune with employee needs means staying in touch. It's critical that HR executives make a concerted effort to identify or innovate new tools and techniques to both encourage and measure employee engagement, whether it's employee surveys or tips for helping managers stay ahead of communication breakdown and the loss of emotional connection that comes with remote working.

#### **Rethink Onboarding**

Research by GlassDoor shows that a good onboarding process can improve an organization's new-hire retention by 82% and productivity by more than 70%. Whether your organization hires remote workers on a regular basis or made the shift during the pandemic, having a blended workforce of remote and on-site employees is the new normal.



That means developing an onboarding process that provides a consistent experience for every new hire — whether on screen or in person — is critical to preparing them to hit the ground running.

#### **Reimagine Management**

When the pandemic first hit, HR focused on making sure employees were set up for remote working, but many overlooked (or never fully acknowledged) the need to equip managers and executives with the tools and training they need to manage a remote workforce. Experience has taught us managing by email and video conference takes a very different set of skills than managing a team sitting outside your office. Providing training for managers will help them effectively and confidently manage things like productivity and team morale.



## Lesson 3

### *Make Employee Well-Being Priority #1*

HR has always been about the people. But companies shifted from prioritizing the work people do for them to ensuring the company works for the people as well. This means leaning into the human experience and asking, “Is this the right experience for the employees?”

The issues impacting employees personally will eventually impact them professionally. So it’s increasingly important that employees know the issues that are meaningful to them are also meaningful to the company they work for.

#### **Destigmatize Mental Health**

Not a new issue, mental health awareness has been slowly gaining momentum. But the pandemic has brought the issue speeding to the top of many HR priority lists. In fact, by March of 2020, 68% of organizations added at least one new wellness benefit to help employees during the pandemic. The stress and pressure the pandemic put on the workforce are tremendous, and everyone is experiencing grief. But there remains a stigma associated with mental health, and HR is in a position to help change that. By including mental health in the everyday HR conversation, you can normalize talking about it — and that’s the first step toward managing it.



#### **Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Another topic simmering on the back burner of organizations for years, talks of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have often been limited to unconscious bias. But the recent social unrest has inspired many organizations to develop robust DEI programs that not only improve diversity in hiring but also ensure that the corporate experience is balanced to give all employees a true sense of belonging.

#### **Practice Transparency**

As we emerge from this season of intense uncertainty, one of the most impactful ways to promote well-being amongst your employees is through transparency. Transparency builds deeper employee trust and respect for the organization — which goes hand-in-hand with employee well-being. Building trust through transparency can start with something as simple as clearly outlining expectations and goals for your employees openly sharing organizational goals, successes and, yes, even failures with employees goes even further. Vulnerability inspires empathy. Trust begets trust. Show them that you’re in it together.

*Source: Paylocity e-Book*

# Is flexible working contributing to worker burnout?

*When working from home becomes living at work*

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As organisations start to look ahead and plan for a return to the office and what that may look like, many companies are offering a much more flexible and hybrid approach to the workforce and workplace.

[PwC's 2021 Hopes and Fears survey](#) of 32,500 workers from around the globe, found that only 9% of respondents whose jobs allow for them to work remotely would choose a traditional face to face work environment full time. Unsurprisingly, three-quarters prefer a mix of face-to-face and virtual working.

On the whole, this is a positive. Enabling workers to take responsibility for how, where and when they work, creates a culture of trust and inclusivity.

However, there is a danger that for some, being able to work more virtually and flexibly can lead to them working harder and longer than if they were tied to the more traditional “nine to five” schedule in an office.

The advancements in technology, which have enabled many employees to work remotely, mean people are now continually connected to work. One phrase I heard from a client recently was, ‘we don’t work from home anymore, we live at work’.

Many workers have worked harder and longer than before the pandemic — perhaps because they have fewer distractions than when in the office and are able to always be connected.

Whether it’s email notifications pinging on your phone, work instant messaging groups or back-to-back video calls, technology has enabled people to “always be on”. Logging off and leaving your computer at work for the next day is a thing of the past.

Worryingly but maybe not surprisingly, [PwC's 2021 Upskilling Hopes and Fears survey](#) found that only a third of respondents are able to disconnect from work outside of working hours.

That means that 65% of workers can’t switch off in the evening, on weekends or on vacation. And that has massive implications for organisations with productivity levels becoming unsustainable and risking that their people will burnout.



Becoming more virtual and flexible requires that companies focus on their employees’ well-being. And yet only a quarter of workers say their employers help them to manage stress and focus on creating mental and emotional well-being. And only 23% of workers are encouraged by their employer to take short breaks throughout the day.

Leaders and managers must lead by example, so employees see it’s okay to switch off and take proper time away from their screens, particularly when working remotely or flexible hours.

Flexibility alone is often not the issue. At PwC, we work with clients who have great flexible working programmes in place, but often they don’t see the take up of these by employees because they believe it will hurt their careers. Employers must recognise that everyone is facing flexibility demands – it’s not a life-stage or gender-only issue – they should help and encourage their people to take advantage of the initiatives in place.

Employers should give their employees a clear understanding of the expectations on both sides of the employment equation, including information about career progression, and open conversations as to where they stand and what is expected of them to advance their career, so they can make their own case successfully and trust the feedback they get.

Navigating today’s challenges successfully requires an engaged and agile workforce. The actions that leaders take to support their people can have lasting impacts on engagement, organisational reputation and on the business more broadly.

Those companies that don’t act now risk losing prized talent and failing to attract the very people they need to adapt and compete. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

For suggestions on how organisations can help their people avoid burnout, here [is a previous blog](#) by the Author with initiatives which have made a difference to people from around our global network of PwC firms.

# 8 Steps on Salary Benchmarks

*Here is a step-by-step layman's description of the lifecycle of the remuneration process.*

1. Companies have employees who need job profiles (descriptions) summarizing what their duties entail.
2. Each job should be evaluated (graded) to test the complexities of the responsibilities, both internally and externally against similar positions in other organisations. There are several job evaluation tools available for this purpose. We obviously recommend our own REMeasure® on-line system.
3. As economies grow, salaries and benefits need to keep in line with this growth, (to motivate and retain high performers), so annual increases are awarded.
4. The development of pay scales, based on market remuneration information and also taking present salary levels into account, ensure that salary increases are not thumb sucked. Believe it or not, this still happens.
5. To explain market remuneration information and salary benchmarking - organization provide their salary information, to their choice of survey provider, and all these “payrolls” are consolidated into one big pot from which can be extracted data by position, grade, region, industry, gender, age, etc. We recommend the REMchannel® survey.
6. Next, is the tricky bit, the sample of information in either the national database, or by the relevant geographic sector, is then extracted for use of remuneration benchmarking and used to develop a pay scale which is market related.
7. Once the pay scales are developed, an organization can compare employee salaries to the revised scale and determine whether an employee ‘fits’ in to the new scale and calculate the potential cost implications of adjusting employees to align to the pay scale, i.e. to the market related salary. The implementation need not necessarily happen all at once, a phased approach may be followed over a period of 2-3 years. The alignment or increases awarded should be based on the company’s budget, as well.
8. It is important to note that a market alignment of salary scales is a once-off exercise, however benchmarking should be performed every 3—5 years to ensure alignment to market remuneration and to ensure the company’s remuneration remains competitive to retain the necessary human capital for your business.

*Contact our Remuneration Consulting team if you need more guidance or assistance with remuneration benchmarking within the Namibia market*

[Click here](#) for more information of we can assist



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## Upcoming events - June 2021

Date	Training	Location	Link to Info/Register
30 June	Unmatched Potential Build your Business Program	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>

## Upcoming events - July 2021

Date	Training	Location	Link to Info/Register
8 July	Corporate Governance Training	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
13-14 July	Practical approach to Microsoft Excel	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
15 July	Anti-Money Laundering Training	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
20-21 July	Excel Skills for Remuneration Practitioners	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>

## Upcoming events - August 2021

Date	Training	Location	Link to Info/Register
8 July	Finance for Non-Finance Managers	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>
13-14 July	Affirmative Action Compliance Training	Virtual Session	<a href="#">Click Here</a>



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