

Dear Associates,

It's already week eight of working from home! As we learn and adjust to the new ways of serving our customers and solving business problems, we are also accelerating our journey towards the *Future of Retail*. Today, our associates are innovating in response to the crisis that needs social distancing, zero contact shopping experiences & last-mile deliveries. Such significant changes in the retail industry will shape up the 'new normal' in future.

In continuation to the series, the “**Covid-19 impact: Tech and Product response – Part II**” webinar received much interest. We launched smart subs across 1300+ stores and are developing solutions to restrict panic buying. We have been enabling pick-up and delivery service of medicines at the parking area, launching a new help-center, launched a chatbot to solve customer queries and enabled self-service. The Design, Product and Tech teams came together to brainstorm the most optimal solution. This in turn led to a five time increase in eCommerce order sales and the customer journey was simplified with better processes in place.

I'm also delighted to announce the launch of **Data Science Council** at IDC! This council, spearheaded by a team of our senior Data Scientists, will mentor projects and ensure that we continue to have a high bar on data science. It will help bring together the community and facilitate cross-pollination of ideas as we drive change here, one learning problem at a time. With ~265 million transactions a week, wherein every transaction involves deep-rooted technology, this is an initiative which will take the Data Science at Walmart IDC a notch higher!

Click below to learn more about the Council



We continue to garner attention for the seamless way in which we have adjusted to WFH - thanks to the amazing support from our cross-functional teams and thanks to the remarkable flexibility you all have shown during this time. The below feature in **The Times of India** speaks about finding 'the new normal' amidst such turbulent times. It is a proud moment for us to be acknowledged for how we have been leveraging virtual tools and delivering critical business features while striking the right balance between *Work From Home* and *Work For Home*.

Here's a glimpse of the feature

WITH DESIGNATED WORKSTATIONS AND A GREATER FOCUS ON FITNESS:

Corporates adapt to work from home as the new normal

By [Ajaytha Chakraborty@thehindmag.com](#)

In tandem with the revised guidelines issued by other state governments on the work-from-home facility for the employees of MNCs, IT firms and other corporates during the lockdown, Karnataka CM BS Yeddyurappa also announced that only essential and critical services will be carried out from offices, and that the remaining staff should continue to work from home (WFH). "This is no longer an ad hoc model that needs to be sustained only for now. Many are making changes in their lifestyle and work models to adapt to this model of working, which may soon be the new normal."

CORPORATES ARE ENSURING A SMOOTH TRANSITION

"We are leveraging virtual tools to stay connected amid the lockdown. Our associates are delivering critical features to enable business operations to run smoothly worldwide," says Hari Vasudev, Centre Head and Senior Vice President of Technology at Walmart Labs, adding, "We are even providing financial assistance to buy furniture, so that they can have an ergonomic workspace at home, while also delivering laptops to new entrants."

"The 'new normal' has forced us to adopt innovative ways to serve our customers without disrupting their deliverables," says Anand Subramanian, Chief Delivery Officer, Next Digital Engineering.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS BECOME CRITICAL AT THIS TIME

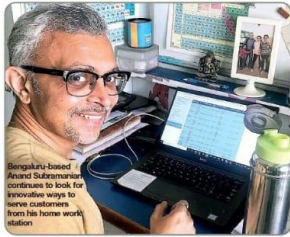
'WFH HELPS KEEP THE TRAFFIC STRESS AWAY'

IT professional Vivek Kamath says, "In a city like Bengaluru, WFH brings in the advantage of saving one's commute time and the need to deal with heavy traffic every day. Although it was initially difficult to adapt to this format, we have gotten used to it now. In retrospect, WFH does look like a solution to traffic and pollution."

The biggest change has been in the way teams and co-workers communicate, and many say that mastering effective remote communication is almost vital for their CV now. Abhishek Raibla, a senior consultant with an IT giant, says, "I have to communicate better because my meetings are now on video or calls. I can't rely on my body language or non-verbal communication skills anymore. I've taken time to understand the apps and platforms we are using to communicate, and that has helped me a lot."

'TO BE PRODUCTIVE, ONE MUST HAVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE'

However, employees also tell us they tend to be always available and working round the clock when working from home. Aditi Nargolkar, Corporate VP with an MNC, says, "Working from home means you save at least an hour of commute every day. Some people use that extra time for work, which isn't healthy. This is a



Bengaluru-based Anand Subramanian continues to look for innovative ways to serve customers from his home workstation.

chance to achieve greater work-life balance. Utilising the extra time in relaxation, recreation or just spending time with family keeps you mentally sound." Meanwhile, some companies are working towards ensuring that employees are not compelled to spend long hours in front of the screen. "We are educating our associates to be disciplined about work timings. Also, the absence of long commute times means that we can plan our day better," adds Hari Vasudev by [Abhimanyu, Mathur@thehindmag.com](#).

WFH LAWS IN INDIA DON'T COVER THE CORPORATES

Only a few countries have a legal structure governing the WFH model. In India, the Ministry of Labour defines home-based workers as those working at home in unorganised sector with low income and outside the social security net. The policy does not extend to white collar workers.

VIDEO CALLS KEEP PEOPLE ALERT!



Rashmi Mohanty, a senior finance professional working in Gurgaon, says, "I liked going to office, because I felt more productive. But I've had to adapt to the WFH model. It's important to feel involved in work, and for that, I have team meetings on video, which improves productivity and leads to a better lifestyle while working from home."

'MAINTAIN PROPER WORK DISCIPLINE'



Bipin Kaul, senior executive at a private bank, tells us, "I wake up and continue with the routine I had when I used to go to office. I get dressed and work at my designated workstation in my room, and not in my pyjamas on the couch. You need that discipline in order to sustain this model for a long time."

DOs AND DON'Ts OF WORKING FROM HOME

- DOs**
1. Never arrive at seriously and professionally as working from office.
 2. Dedicate a workstation for yourself at home.
 3. Make sure your family understands you are working at home. Chores must not disrupt work.
 4. Observe the technology that facilitates your work from home. That is your most important co-worker right now.
 5. Measure your productivity on a daily basis.
 6. Take a break if you are inefficient; you are losing the time saved in commuting for nothing or with family. Don't look to increase working hours.

- DON'Ts**
1. Do not work from the bed or couch. That results in decreased productivity.
 2. Do not multitask. Eating, talking to family, etc., should not be done while on the clock.
 3. Finish your work dry at your regular office time. Just because you are home doesn't mean work should continue in overtime.

Ending my note this week wishing all the wonderful mothers who have always supported us with love and compassion - Happy Mother's Day!

Stay Safe! Stay Connected!

Hari Vasudev

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