

People Matters - 19-6-2020

[Head HR of Bank of Baroda on upcoming trends post COVID-19](#)

In an exclusive interaction, Joydeep Dutta Roy, Chief General Manager & Head - HR Integration & Strategic HR, Bank of Baroda shares his thoughts on the new workplace and adapting the new normal.



COVID-19 has forced extensive changes to the workplace, the way we work, and the way we even think about work. With a huge proportion of the global workforce now operating remotely, we are rethinking everything from technology to social interaction to the definition of productivity. In an exclusive interaction, **Joydeep Dutta Roy**, Chief General Manager & Head - HR Integration & Strategic HR, Bank of Baroda shares his thoughts on the new workplace and adapting to the new normal.

What are some of the changes which Bank of Baroda has introduced in the workplace as lockdown comes to an end?

The Bank has put in place a post-lock down policy for the workplace. This includes the following:

- Maintenance of strict Social Distancing norms in office
- The spacing of work stations or alternate seating
- Regular use of sanitizers, handwash stations, etc. kept at various locations in the office premises

- Mandating all meetings in e-meeting mode even among officials or participants in the same office.
- Disallowing congregations in common places like canteens, etc.
- Movement between floors restricted
- All employees to mandatorily wear masks
- Entry protocols to be observed like disinfecting footwear before entering, thermal scanning, non-use of any bio-metric attendance devices
- Cashiers/staff handling cash/instruments to mandatorily use gloves
- Housekeeping/security staff given additional protective equipment, masks, etc.
- The entry of customers in branches being organized in a way that limited number are there inside the Branch at any given point of time
- In case any employee is infected, proper protocol has been created for quarantining other staff who came in contact with the infected staff and for the closing of premises

What percentage of the workforce has been brought back to the office? How was that decided?

Being a provider of essential services, most of our operations have been operating throughout the lockdown. However, we had been following a Team A - Team B alternate working concept where both teams alternated in reporting to work. This way, the risk of exposure to our employees has been reduced significantly. We also always had a back-up team in place, in case of any exigency. Post easing of the lockdown, we have continued the alternate team working concept in 8 cities where the number of cases are still very high and in all centers/areas which have been classified as 'Containment Zones'. In other places, we have resumed full attendance.

However, employees with chronic ailments like uncontrolled diabetes, respiratory ailments, cancer patients undergoing treatment, ladies on the family way, persons with disabilities, etc. in all places have been exempted from coming to the office and given 'work from home' responsibilities. In some of the critical functions, some employees have been made to work from home with necessary technical support and security protocols to ensure uninterrupted services.

Therefore, during the lockdown period, approximately 50% of employees were coming to work at a given point of time, however, the number will increase to around 80% post lockdown given that some cities and areas are still following the alternate working concept.

How will HR ensure that people working from home do not miss out on the same employee experience as the office?

The bank had been following an alternating team concept where one team was coming to the office and the other team worked from home at any given point of time. So all employees have got the same experience of office working as well as work from home (WFH).

Bank has also put in place technology solutions to make WFH more efficient and seamless for its employees like daily logging in through App, getting tasks and reporting about the status on work completion to supervisor on the App on a daily basis, paperless approval mechanism, etc. We expect these tech-driven processes to stay with the Bank in the post-COVID world also.

What are some of the trends that will become the norm in the post-COVID workplace in the coming six months?

The work from home regimen through technology solutions, apps, paperless working, stoppage of all physical meetings, etc. have been introduced in the Bank which are also helping to enhance employee productivity substantially. Most of these will continue in the post-COVID world.

How will the employee experience of employees be different in the post-COVID workplace compared to before?

The employee experience in workplaces is definitely going to be different compared to earlier. All discussions and conversations are conducted only through e-meetings to avoid gathering. Paperless office has been initiated and employees are provided training to work smoothly in e-mode, especially on recently introduced tools/apps for paperless working, remote working logging-in / reporting, etc.

Canteens are closed temporarily and employees have been bringing food from home, to be consumed at their respective work stations. Garbage disposal processes have been made more frequent. In multi-storeyed buildings, employee movement between floors is restricted except for recorded and special reasons. An open-door policy has been started where all doors are kept open and sanitizers and hand wash material are kept at all prominent locations at the entry and exit gates.