

Business UNusual



Keeping Britain Connected

COVID-19: The Challenge for Telecoms

Capita

The Telecoms challenge

As the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic forces the UK government to adopt ever-tighter restrictions on its citizens' movements, the vast majority of the population is coming to terms with the reality of enforced isolation as a means of protecting themselves and their loved ones from what is now a very real threat. This means that:



Workers are now almost totally reliant on internet access to work from home successfully.



People are relying on their digital devices (smartphones, laptops, tablets, etc.) more than ever to access key services, including requests for emergency assistance, checking medical symptoms and ordering medicines, groceries and other essentials while in isolation.

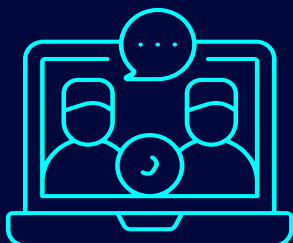


Children and students require hugely increased access to the internet to continue their educational activities whilst schools and universities remain closed.

The internet is fast becoming the primary source of information for people to access critical updates from government and medical authorities. The situation is extremely fluid, with new measures and directives being announced daily and sometimes even hourly.



The demand for net-based entertainment - from movies to video games - has risen dramatically as people come to terms with enforced isolation.



People are making much greater use of online access and internet-based calls to stay in touch with loved ones and maintain their social networks - and their emotional wellbeing.

In short, the population of the UK is now almost entirely reliant on the connectivity provided by the nation's telecommunications companies to minimise the risk of disruption.

This has already created challenges for many service providers, with customers of all major network operators reporting problems across voice and internet services.

The telecoms industry is under extraordinary pressure to keep downtime to a minimum and to manage increasing demand across networks that have rarely experienced this level of sustained demand from consumers and businesses alike.

What's more, operators are doing this in an environment where their own employees may also be obliged to self isolate if they fall ill or need to take time off to care for

children/elderly relatives. Despite call centre staff and engineers being designated by the government as key workers, staff shortages remain a serious risk due to illness and/or familial obligations.

As measures to combat COVID-19 are stepped up, the telecoms industry faces specific staffing challenges. Firstly, call centre employees traditionally work together in large numbers with systems that have been designed for campus-style working. They rarely work from home and may not have the systems or the cultural experience to do so successfully. Secondly, large numbers of engineering staff with specialised knowledge work remotely. Their job involves being out on the road in public places, potentially putting themselves at risk in the current environment. If they fall ill or have been advised to self isolate, they will be not be able to do their jobs properly.

All in all, the telecoms industry is facing a series of extraordinary challenges in a volatile and unpredictable operating environment. How individual companies respond to these challenges will, to a large extent, determine their success - or otherwise - in the near to medium term.



Business UNusual

At Capita, our priority is to support our clients as they adapt to unprecedented circumstances in order to ensure that critical national infrastructure, businesses and services are kept running smoothly.

We are here to help and support you and your teams.

In terms of the here and now, we can provide solutions that are quick to deploy and can immediately solve some of the specific challenges faced by the industry, using customer and employee data to help you make the best use of the resources available to you.

Looking to the future, we can help you adjust to new norms post-COVID19. As the industry continues to reinvent itself, our consulting team can accelerate your transformation, using our rapid accelerators around design thinking, low code development and agile execution to help you rapidly respond to new expectations from your business and consumer base.

“Our priority at Capita is to protect the well-being of our colleagues, clients and partners – and to carry on serving the communities and societies in which we operate.

Despite the uncertainty we are all facing across the world, our business operations are resilient. Our colleagues across Capita are doing everything they can to carry on serving our clients and helping them to maintain the vital services they provide to customers and citizens.”

Jon Lewis



Supporting your customers

As your clients are now almost entirely dependent on digital communications channels, any problems or issues with these services will need to be resolved quickly and effectively. Managing and resolving high-volume calls and queries, and surges in demand, are among the biggest challenges facing telcos, not least as they also seek to prioritise the health and wellbeing of their workforce.

Leveraging realtime customer data alongside the latest digital technologies and best-in-class strategic and analytical thinking, Capita stands ready to assist our telecoms clients make the best use of the available resources and the right commercial decisions.

These capabilities include:



Conversational AI

We can implement and advise on the optimal use of messaging apps, speech-based assistants and chatbots to automate communication and create personalised customer experiences, thereby enabling teams to deal with surges in demand quickly and at scale. What's more, the data and analytics can provide additional insight in realtime into customer challenges, allowing you to deploy your resources more effectively.



Contact centre support

With many countries around the globe now on shutdown, off shore resources are no longer available for overflow. We can bring in our own experienced call centre agents to supplement your team and triage the first-line response, freeing up your specialists to solve more complex issues. This can be scaled up and down quickly and easily, as required.



Remote working

Through softphone enablement, we can help you ensure that all calls are re-routed to your employees' mobile devices and laptops, allowing them to work effectively from home and continue to deliver best-in-class service to your customers.



Remote call centre working

Using our ResponsEye software originally developed by Capita for the NHS 111 service, this solution allows call centres to manage their services via WhatsApp, meaning staff can work directly from home rather than having to log onto on-premises CRM systems. This is particularly useful for telcos with large billing and operational call centres which need to remain open and available to customers.



Field engineer support

Using our ResponsEye software originally developed by ResponsEye also means we can support remote working in the field by providing access to a live video stream from a customer or another employee. This enables collaboration across teams in the event that an engineer requires a second opinion from someone working remotely.

Supporting your people

Supporting your staff through this period is imperative. In such uncertain times, it would be easy for them to become disengaged and demotivated, leading to poor performance and service delivery.

As remote working increasingly becomes the rule rather than the exception for many in the telecommunications sector, potential new concerns around employees' mental health and wellbeing will also come to the fore. It is also essential that employers have access to data that will allow them to manage team capacity and workload properly. Such concerns - and the need to tackle them promptly, effectively and with empathy and compassion - should not be underestimated by employers.

88% of Technology, Media and Telecoms HR leaders say that loneliness caused by a lack of face-to-face contact will impact wellbeing.

85% point to flexible-working fatigue, where people have difficulty establishing daily routines in situations where they increasingly need to work with others in different time zones.

78% cite a lack of social contact due to remote working as a threat to wellbeing.

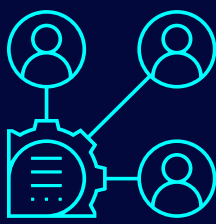
Source: Capita Human to Hybrid research 2019

The shift to a remote working brings new challenges and concerns about long-term employee wellbeing. We can help ensure your staff remain motivated, productive and in good mental shape during extended periods of homeworking by delivering programmes that prioritise:



Employee engagement

We can create and deliver digital training and development programmes to help maintain productivity and employee engagement, thereby helping staff protect their mental health whilst working remotely or in isolation.



Management development

Through delivering management and leadership training programmes, we can help managers adjust to managing remote teams and to understand, identify and mitigate the specific challenges of remote working and wellbeing. We can also ensure your managers can use data to analyse and manage capacity and workload effectively.



Employee communications

Communication is more important than ever to ensure your people feel supported and engaged during this time of change. We have expertise in delivering smart multi-channel employee communications to provide reassurance and motivation at every stage of the employee lifecycle, from onboarding onwards.

Supporting your operations

It's important to remember that none of the day-to-day challenges of running your business go away during a time of crisis. Your staff still need paying, your infrastructure needs maintaining and protecting from other risks such as cybercrime. There may be extraordinary measures being implemented to ensure a company survives and thrives during the pandemic, it's still 'business as usual' for major parts of your organisation

To this end, we can provide comprehensive operational support to help you keep the show on the road, whilst mitigating against new challenges that may arise.

Key solutions include:



Workforce engagement

Our workforce management software solutions keep payroll and HR processes running smoothly, no matter where employees are working. It allows staff to log their hours and absences remotely using web and mobile devices and gives employees peace of mind that they will be paid accurately for the work they have done. This can be expanded to include support centres for query management and emergency or temporary payroll, ensuring that your people continue to be paid. This can be set up and actioned in a matter of minutes.



Cyber protection

We can work with you to ensure your systems and people remain protected from the threat of cyber attacks even while remote working, through rigorous testing to check that remote working isn't exposing your network to unnecessary security risks.



Field resources

Capita has its own highly trained telco engineer workforce, which can be made available to support your engineers and keep downtime to a minimum. Additionally, we have a dedicated in-house team to vet security requirements in the event that you need to quickly upscale your capacity for secure projects.



Business continuity

We may be in crisis mode already, but we have no idea what is round the corner. Business Continuity planning is more essential than ever. In addition to being able to provide you with expert staff in areas in which you may be experiencing a shortage, our business continuity testing service allows you to test your business continuity plans to the limit, putting it under intense levels of strain and stress in order to reveal any flaws.

Digital reinvention

The telecoms industry has long presented flexible and remote working as an inevitable outcome of digital transformation and the demands of a digitally native workforce. ‘Digital disruption’ has been the favoured buzzword of many in the industry - but few could have predicted how a global pandemic would impact, or indeed advance, the concept so profoundly.

COVID-19 has effectively forced business’ hands by creating a situation which obliges them to adapt to remote and flexible working if they want their enterprise to survive. It’s hardly an ideal scenario - but it has advanced the digital agenda considerably.

When this crisis is all over, things will not go back to how they were.


People will no longer be willing to be deskbound in a large office, miles from home, for 35 or 40 hours a week. Many will not want to lose the family, home-centric routines and work/life balances that have evolved.



We have to accept that there will be new norms – but that in itself provides space for businesses to invent, to innovate, to test new ideas and rapidly launch new tools and services that address these challenges.

In this atmosphere of innovation, public and private sector organisations alike will look to the technology and telecoms industries for digital leadership. This, then, is a moment when telecoms can reinvent themselves into agile digital services providers.

It might not seem like it to some right now, but the future is potentially very bright for Britain’s telecoms industry.



To learn more about how Capita can help you, visit our website or speak to your Account Director today.

www.capita.com