

Episode 07: Boosting Workplace Experience During a Crisis with Dr Amelia Mosquera Pardo

Oliver Hussick: Hi everyone and thanks for joining me.

My name is Oliver Hussick and I head up a consulting practice called WXC or workplace experience consulting where we've gathered together some of the finest minds in HCL focused on user centricity. Today we're going to discuss the importance of compassionate change management at a time of crisis. As a practice. We spent a lot of time talking about how people impact and are impacted by any kind of change and right now I met the COVID 19 lockdown.

Most of us are enduring the greatest change that they've ever experienced. That means we're focused less on driving adoption of digital collaboration tools like Teams and Slack because people are being forced to adopt them overnight by virtue of there being no other option and instead focused much more on how we support people through that rapid and effective adoption. Push-out learning content quickly and ensure employees feel both professionally and personally supported, not just sent a laptop by a courier and expected to remain as productive as before.

The issue facing everyone everywhere can't be solved with technology alone and any attempt to do so will be hampered by the people forgotten, not catered to and not yet enabled. Whilst they are equipped in the literal sense do they have the capacity to use that equipment effectively over the coming podcast mini-series, there'll be bite sized action points where we can support and I'll be joined by Dr Amelia Mosquera Pardo or change and adoption lead consultant, the 25 year time served expert in all things change and adoption and Emeline Rousselet-Yasmin on lead strategy and management consultant, highly experienced in all things digital transformation and finally Kirsty Marshall, our delivery lead consultant, an all around expert in service delivery, data center and incident management.

I want to start with you, Amelia and ask you what sort of questions should lead as managers and enterprises think about first how to affect and support this paradigm shift in where and how people are working? What would your recommendations be?

Dr Amelia: Well, in the first instance, I think the focus should be what people need to be productive, stay connected and feel supported and enabled while changing the way that their work to lockdown. Managers are the key here as they need to understand the context in which their teams are working while in lockdown and what impact that context has on their working life and wellbeing. In order to do this effectively, managers need to be provided with the tools that they need to be able to manage, support and enable their teams during the crisis of such as training and development, organizational support and processes so that they can take into account people's individual context while they're managing them. We had developed a rapid crisis spot check tool so that we can assess how well an organization is equipped to respond to the immediate needs of its people in a crisis and to prompt people managers on actions that they should be taking to address them.

Oliver Hussick:

Wow, that's great. Let's say it gives us an idea of the rapid reactions we can make to ensure our people feel supported right now making allowances for their new circumstances at the same time as adopting new tools and techniques for remaining productive. How about in the longer term, what can organizations do to regain and then maintain that momentum?

Dr Amelia:

Well, longterm assessments didn't focus on the impact that a change in operating environment such as introduction of remote working will have on different stakeholders and employee groups and what organizational processes, structures, systems of work I needed to be put in place or modified to roll out and sustain effective people centred initiatives that support and enable employees to the change and ultimately deliver a superior workplace experience for them. Change impact assessments, organizational readiness assessments, stakeholder analysis, all form the basis for the development of long-term targeted communication and engagement and change and adoption plans,

Oliver Hussick: But it's not just about assessments, right? What does one do first? If we're already aware of our gaps or we have more pressing demands?

Dr Amelia: No, you're right. It's definitely, it's not just about the assessments. If you know that you have some gaps in your people-centred response to the current situation, we can start working with you to address them, but when you're in the middle of a crisis, you do not worry about changing strategy or putting solutions in place to long-term problems. What we do is we'll help you prioritize these gaps and address the ones that are having an immediate impact on your people's productivity and wellbeing and saved strategic or long term interventions for when things return to normal. For example, we can help you deploy tactical communications and curated content to support people in making the most of say Microsoft Teams capabilities. Things like instant chat and video calls and screen and file sharing and the apps so that they can connect, share and collaborate and be effective while working remotely during down.

Once the crisis has passed, then can help you address the less immediate gaps such as assessing the ability of your organizational policies, processes and systems of work to enable a long-term good workplace experience for your people. For example, people are likely to ask him quite rightly, if we were able to work effectively from home during the crisis, why can't we do it once things get back to normal. And what we can do is help set up a program change program that will allow you to do exactly that seamlessly and effectively.

Oliver Hussick: Sounds helpful. What might that involve?

Dr Amelia: Um, it could include the development program for your managers or how to manage support and enable remote teams. Or we can develop your in house capabilities, say in people-centred remote communications and engagements.

Oliver Hussick: Very useful stuff. Because to be fair, we could be in this for a little bit longer. Yeah. And might even be able to prove points in individual businesses about the efficiency of remote working due to collaboration and virtual teams.

Let's take this opportunity to thank you, Amelia, for helping us understand how we can rapidly assess how well placed we are to compassionately manage change in a time of crisis.

Over the next few episodes, we'll talk about what you can do next once you've learned where you're at and how we can help. If you have any more questions, you can email us on wxc@hcl.com and be sure to look out for and listen to the upcoming gold mines of information we've prepared on communicating with and engaging your employees and how to act fast as well as effectively as an ad hoc incident manager. Thanks again for listening.