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Strength in Adversity: Enterprise Service Resilience During the COVID-19 Crisis

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Introduction

At its start, 2020 promised to be a year of increased focus on enterprise digital transformation, customer satisfaction, agile innovation, and increasing shareholder value. However, the story that unfolded has been drastically different. COVID-19, that started off as a regional health crisis, spread globally with unparalleled fervor creating a global human crisis of historic proportions. Not only did the virus adversely impact human health, it also turned out to be highly disruptive for the global services industry.
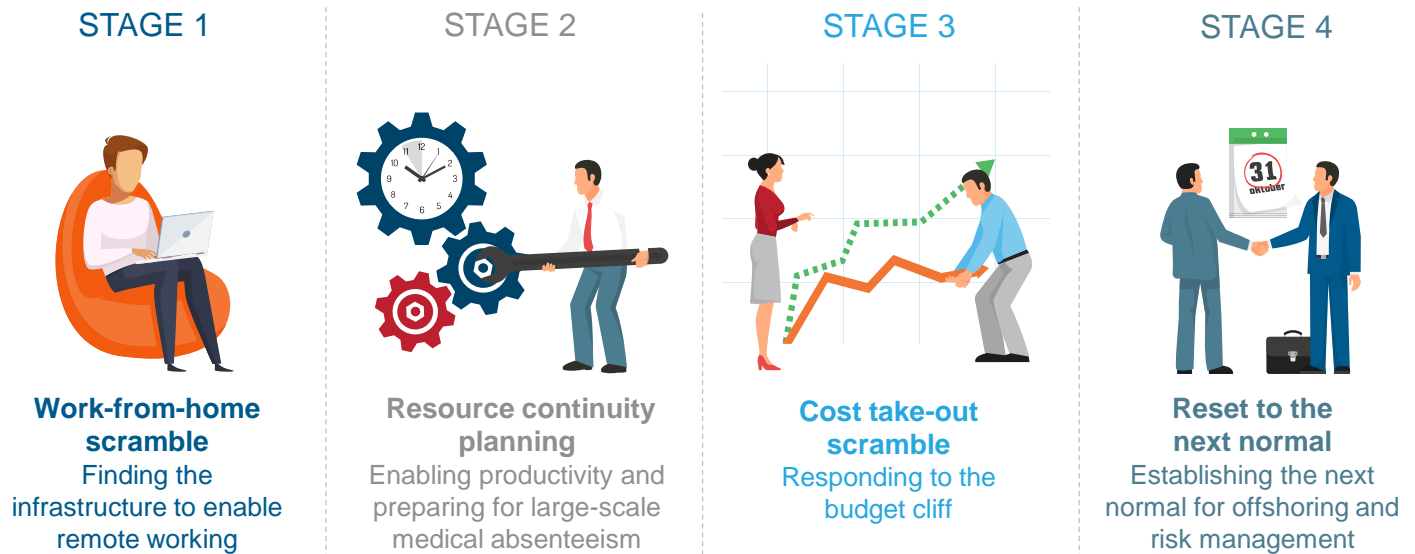
The level of volatility and uncertainty induced by COVID-19, coupled with geographic non-uniformity and dynamic responses, triggered extraordinary business challenges for enterprises and their service providers. Rapid spread of the pandemic across the globe, affecting multiple locations simultaneously, caught many enterprises off-guard and resulted in patchy business continuity. At the same time, many enterprises demonstrated admirable business resiliency by pivoting to a remote working model with minimum business disruptions. Service providers have played a pivotal role in enabling this transition and keeping the lights on.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfurl and play out on a global scale, enterprises find themselves at different stages of the COVID-19 response continuum.

EXHIBIT 1

Stages of enterprise response to the COVID-19 pandemic – Where do you stand?

Source: Everest Group (2020)

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Work-from-home scramble	**Resource continuity planning**	**Cost take-out scramble**	**Reset to the next normal**
Finding the infrastructure to enable remote working	Enabling productivity and preparing for large-scale medical absenteeism	Responding to the budget cliff	Establishing the next normal for offshoring and risk management

This report explores the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and global services, examines enterprise response in collaboration with service providers to address business challenges, and outlines key learnings & implications for enterprises in the post-COVID-19 world.
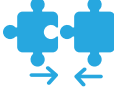
Impact of COVID-19 crisis on businesses and global services

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a human crisis of epic proportions, threatening lives and well-being of global communities. Enterprises have found it challenging to cope with the volatility and uncertainty of the situation and are struggling to respond with the requisite agility and flexibility. Below, we explore a few key challenges and the near-term implications for enterprises.

EXHIBIT 2

Impact of COVID-19 crisis and near-term implications for enterprises

Source: Everest Group (2020)

Challenges	Manifestations in the global services industry	Near-term implications for enterprises
Demand reduction	• Early signs of recession • Cashflow and liquidity concerns	• Enabling cost take-out and financial engineering • Balancing efficiency versus transformation investments
Supply chain disruption	• Reduced hardware availability • Impact across the globe	Leveraging thin clients, VDI technology, and easily available base models
Business continuity challenges	Fragility of location-based business continuity plans exposed	Abandoning traditional BCPs and exploring innovative ways of working
Service continuity challenges	• Office operations curtailed • Legacy infrastructure rendered incapable of extended remote working	Accelerated focus on enterprise digital transformation
Cybersecurity risks	• Increased phishing attacks • Compromised cybersecurity posture	• Temporarily relaxed controls to enable remote working • Accelerated focus on improving security controls

Demand reduction

With most business activities muted, financial pressures have forced enterprises to reevaluate their cash flow & overall liquidity. Enterprises are prudently realigning investments with business resiliency, employee safety & well-being, and cost optimization. Enterprise buyers have actively pursued cost take-out and financial engineering measures such as 15-50% monthly billing "abeyance" demand across industry-verticals, major transformation projects shelved or postponed, and 90-180 days push out of cash cycle.

According to World Trade Organization (WTO), world trade is expected to fall by **13-32%** in 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupts normal economic activity and life around the world[1]

Supply chain disruption

With at least 216 countries, areas, or territories[2] reporting COVID-19 cases and a vast majority of these countries enforcing some form of "lockdown," global supply chains have experienced significant disruption. To add to this conundrum, multiple global locations are reeling under disruptions simultaneously, affecting enterprise business continuity and responsiveness. To tackle the shortage of laptops and other devices in the short term, multiple enterprises have increasingly leveraged thin clients, VDI technology, and easily available base models.

Business continuity challenges

Enterprise Business Continuity Plans (BCP) were traditionally location-based, with contingency built to preserve business continuity and ensure resiliency in times of challenges with one or more of their global operating locations. These conventional BCPs were grossly ill-prepared to face a global crisis that COVID-19 precipitated. Most enterprises are now abandoning traditional BCPs and exploring newer ways to ensure business continuity.

Everest Group survey on enterprise response to COVID-19 reveals that nearly **70%** of enterprises want to incorporate more business continuity planning in future.

Service continuity challenges

Regulations and restrictions imposed by local governments and industry bodies meant that operations from offices / business premises had to be curtailed. With employee safety & well-being as the primary concern, enterprises had to quickly pivot to a remote working model to prevent business losses. However, existing infrastructure, be it hardware devices, network connectivity, or VPN capacity, lacked capabilities to support an extended remote working model. Interestingly, in the US there was a sudden surge in demand for COBOL programmers to support legacy unemployment insurance systems that were overwhelmed by exponential unemployment benefit claims.

" There will be lots of postmortems and one of them on our list will be how did we get here where we literally need COBOL programmers?

- New Jersey Gov. Murphy

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1   WHO COVID-19 outbreak situation assessed on June 1,2020;
     https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Cybersecurity risks

Enterprises have found themselves in an unenviable and precarious situation of ensuring business continuity by enabling remote working as well as ensuring appropriate cybersecurity controls. Many enterprises have had to relax the strict perimeter controls and password & authentication measures to enable remote access; and in certain cases, to enable bring-your-on-device (BYOD). Proliferation of devices, increased use of public internet connections, and leverage of susceptible third-party tools have considerably heightened cybersecurity risks. Furthermore, malicious actors have unleased phishing attacks to target increased attack surfaces and exposed and isolated employee systems.

According to Barracuda Networks, phishing attempts have soared by over **600%** since the end of February, not only around traditional impersonation scams but also business email compromise (BEC) and extortion attacks.[1]

Response of global services industry to the COVID-19 crisis

To ensure minimum business disruption, enterprises had to rapidly implement measures to modify the operating model to ensure employee health and well-being, "always available" customer service, and business continuity in a stringent timeline.

Many enterprises and service providers did a commendable job of tackling the challenges raised by the pandemic. Our research into COVID-19 responses by enterprises and service providers reveals that there were a few key tenets that underpinned most successful approaches. These include:

- Employee health and well-being: acknowledging that COVID-19 pandemic was primarily a human crisis
- Customer centricity: being available for customers during the challenging time
- Empathy: intangible over tangible – empathy over SLA or commercials
- Technology: adopting/pivoting to transformational technologies
- Risk-balanced: pragmatic decision-making balancing risks vs customer needs

The case studies showcased below highlight these and some other interesting success tenets:

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1   https://blog.barracuda.com/2020/03/26/threat-spotlight-coronavirus-related-phishing/

Case study 1

How 8x8, in collaboration with CSS Corp, maintained customer experience during the onset of COVID-19
Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview
8x8 is a cloud provider of enterprise Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) communications solutions that enable businesses to communicate across voice, video meetings, chat, and contact centers. 8x8 offers unified communications platform solutions to enable secure collaboration across teams.

Background
8x8's business resilience & continuity were paramount during the onset of COVID-19 as it enabled enterprises to stay connected with their end-customers. Amidst the COVID-19-induced volatility, uncertainty, and anxiety, 8x8 intended to maintain a seamless, customer-focused service delivery model. It wanted to ensure easy access for customers to solutions and services experts. CSS Corp, operating from Costa Rica and India, was one of its channel partners that offered phone and chat support to customers.

Challenges
The company and its outsourcing providers' global locations were being subjected to non-uniform, volatile, dynamic, and highly restrictive government & regulatory directives. The existing infrastructure and processes were built to allow seamless work from office, but the experience could have been hampered in an extended remote working environment. Concerns around local regulations and unplanned delay in enabling remote working of some channel partners considerably strained the system. With employee well-being as a fundamental prerequisite, action was needed to pivot to a remote working model and to manage the surge in support requests.

Actions
Taking cues from an early spread pattern of COVID-19, the CIO organization at 8x8 proactively started assessing the organization BCP. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) was mandated to assess Business Continuity Plan (BCP) preparedness and to explore the means to enhance resiliency. To this effect, 8x8 conducted a "Trial Week," wherein one global location was asked to work remotely every day. Practical and on-ground experiences from this trial helped 8x8 execute California State's "Shelter at place" order and then later cascade the newly created standard operating template to other global locations. 8x8 was simultaneously engaging with service providers to ensure business continuity. CSS Corp pivoted to remote working with minimum disruptions and took over additional volumes of service requests to ensure high customer satisfaction.

Key learnings
8x8 was aided by proactive planning, a pre-established Emergency Response Team (which acted as the COVID task force), extensive adoption of cloud, and a nimble partner in CSS Corp. Enterprises and service providers should consider aggressively testing and validating business resilience of the entire business chain to ensure flexibility and preparedness of stakeholders.

Case study 2

How an international organization, part of the UN, in collaboration with LTI, ensured core infrastructure support for its mission-critical activities
Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview
An international organization, part of the UN, having operations across the world, works to make significant impact to the lives of people in developing and developed worlds. Its assessment of each member country and their published views require detailed analysis and maintenance of high security of communications between headquarters and remote site offices.

Background
The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an economic crisis that exposed financial vulnerabilities of global communities. Mitigation measures have severely curtailed economic activities, thus creating substantial uncertainties about communities' lives and livelihood. With many countries reeling under enormous economic strain caused by the pandemic, the agency's mission to secure financial stability has become very important. The international organization needed to ensure that core IT infrastructure functioned with minimal disruption. LTI was the organization's IT infrastructure managed services provider and responsible for providing interruption-free uptime.

Challenges
In response to COVID-19, the organization had to pivot to a complete remote working model. The existing IT infrastructure support model was not designed for an extended period of remote working. Access points to the secured network had to handle considerably higher traffic. Increased demand for virtual collaboration and critical meeting caused suboptimal functioning of the tool. With office locations shut down and high health risks, remote hardware support service became challenging. Operations in hundreds of remote site locations added to the complexity. With multiple uncertainties and changes in operating model, help desk had to cater to a high spike in calls and requests

Actions
Given the criticality of "always available" IT infrastructure, the organization pursued a pragmatic, risk-averse approach in a secured manner. It quickly pivoted to the cloud version of the collaboration tool and introduced additional measures to scrutinize every change recommendation to avoid unwarranted downtime or failures. The organization, in partnership with LTI, rapidly implemented several emergency measures such as firewall and remote access link upgrades to maintain service resiliency. LTI ensured smooth day-to-day operations and addressed unique challenges such as redesigning standard operating model of remote hardware support and increased request volume in helpdesk.

Key learnings
Enterprises and organizations should possess the ability to rapidly scale to address worst-case scenarios. The international organization undertook a pragmatic, risk-averse approach, ably supported by an efficient service provider in LTI, to successfully address the magnitude of changes raised by COVID-19 pandemic.

Case study 3

How a leading global insurer, in partnership with Mphasis, stayed connected with customers through a challenging time

Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview

The insurer, a leading Swiss multi-line insurer, provides a wide range of property & casualty and life insurance products and services in more than 215 countries. The end-customers of the insurer include individuals, small businesses, and mid-sized and large companies, as well as multinational corporations.

Background

For the insurance provider, maintaining business continuity and delivering an "always available" customer service amidst the global pandemic was of paramount importance. COVID-19 being a humanitarian crisis, insurers are playing an essential role in communities' fight against the virus. The COVID-19 crisis progressed swiftly across multiple regions, demanding rapid enablement of remote working. The insurer intended to guarantee business continuity and interruption-free customer service. Mphasis is one of the insurer's global outsourcing partners that provides critical business processes support.

Challenges

The insurer had to evaluate BCP and assess internal and external preparedness to handle critical processes without deviating from data security norms. The insurer and many of its service providers relied on a location-based business continuity plan that would need rapid overhauling to respond to a global pandemic. To pivot to a completely remote working model, the insurance provider had to ensure availability of key personnel and IT hardware assets that met industry regulations with respect to data governance and privacy. A few service providers had a predominantly desktop-driven workplace environment, and in certain cases, shared hardware assets were utilized.

Actions

The insurer and Mphasis formed a key governance team to identify risks and review proposed mitigations from the perspective of employee wellness, business continuity, and risk & compliance concerns. After balancing business risks with end-customer needs, it was decided to ship desktops to enable remote working amidst uncertainty and local risks on the ground. The key governance team executed a process & metrics-driven transition to ensure that critical processes were managed with minimal disruption. Collective & business-critical decisions were taken at the right time to shift a couple of key processes temporarily to onsite, which prevented end-customer impact. Extended working hours by partner's staff aided queue recoveries in quick time and restored BAU service delivery for end-customers.

Key learnings

During volatile and uncertain times, enterprises should rely on a collaborative and process-/metrics-driven approach. The insurer's leverage of a central governance team to arrive at pragmatic decisions, its relationship strength robustness with Mphasis, and strong working practices helped it to keep serving customers during a challenging time.

Case study 4

How Capgemini, in partnership with Tata Communications, rapidly scaled its core network infrastructure to facilitate remote working

Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview

Capgemini is a global service provider that provides consulting, technology & engineering, application, and managed services. With its headquarters in Paris, France, Capgemini has more than 200,000 employees in over 40 countries.

Background

Capgemini has a workforce of 120,000+ people in India operating across 12+ cities, making India its largest service delivery location. To ensure business continuity during the COVID-19 crisis, it was necessary for Capgemini to rapidly enable remote working for all India-based employees. One of the key elements was to enhance the core network or infrastructure backbone to enable employees connect securely to the VPN servers without any bandwidth constraints. Tata Communications was the network connectivity service provider tasked with scaling network connectivity in an expedited fashion.

Challenges

Capgemini had invested extensively to create a strong core infrastructure connecting its offices to global internet network – however, VPN connectivity and internet bandwidth lacked the scale required for 120,000+ employees to work remotely. Capgemini has geographically dispersed delivery locations in India and connectivity of each location had to be enhanced. Some locations were in densely populated areas, thereby increasing complexities of laying new internet pipes. Capgemini's experiences in China and rapid spread of COVID-19 in Europe meant that the entire procurement and implementation process had to be completed within five to six weeks. Capgemini could not afford any downtime for core infrastructure during the implementation, as that would adversely affect enterprise operations worldwide.

Actions

Given the critical role of delivery locations across India to ensure business continuity of Capgemini and urgency of the matter at hand, the entire project was executed in an agile manner and within stringent timelines. The project was simultaneously coordinated with multiple stakeholders such as hardware vendors to add cards on existing VPN hardware and connectivity providers to increase the internet bandwidth. To expedite the process, Capgemini used existing hardware to the maximum extent possible. Tata Communications played a pivotal role in circumventing dense environment concerns, and the entire network connectivity enhancement was completed within the stipulated timeline with limited downtime or disruptions.

Key learnings

Capgemini proactively prioritized immediate measures such as scaling up internet bandwidth and strengthening VPN connectivity to facilitate remote working of 120,000+ employees, with Tata Communications providing disruption free, on-time delivery. Enterprises need to treat network as an essential component of their core infrastructure strategy to ensure digital readiness in future.

Case study 5

How a large telecom operator in Continental Europe, in collaboration with Tech Mahindra, accelerated enhancement to the omnichannel sales platform

Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview
The telecom operator provides mobile phone, fixed line, cable internet, and TV services to customers across Continental Europe.

Background
The rapid spread of COVID-19 across Europe resulted in the introduction of strict social-distancing measures by the various EU governments. The telecom operator had to shut down offices and retail stores and switch to a remote working model in a very short span of time to ensure safety & well-being of employees. The operator, being a provider of essential connectivity and communication services, had to ensure all sales channels remained operational to maintain uninterrupted customer service. Tech Mahindra needed to immediately roll out a new sales engine for retail agents to remotely serve customers.

Challenges
The telecom operator had to cater to increased demand for seamless connectivity products at home as more and more customers were confined to their homes. With retail shops closed, retail sales force had to pivot to remote working to ensure business continuity and customer satisfaction. The telecom operator had to empower the retail sales force with new, robust tools to facilitate remote customer servicing, as legacy sales tools used in retail stores were incompatible for remote working. Modifying legacy tools was not feasible, given the urgency of the situation.

Actions
The telecom operator launched a transformational program to create a converged sales platform for all its Business to Customer (B2C) sales leveraging Tech Mahindra's omni-channel sales platform. The operator created a new retail sales engine by repurposing and customizing settings designed for tele-sales, a sales module that was already developed pre-COVID-19. Tech Mahindra helped the telecom operator in accelerating the configuration and rollout of the omnichannel solution, and also training and equipping the sales force for a smooth transition.

Key learnings
The telecom operator benefited from proactive initiatives to leverage an extendable platform to transform its business-critical legacy applications. The operator, in partnership with Tech Mahindra, ensured business continuity by relying on flexibility and scalability of the platform. Ability to adopt and onboard new technologies through an extendable environment is key for managing unforeseen scenarios.

Case study 6

How Falabella, in partnership with ThoughtWorks, continued its business imperative digital transformation journey during the COVID-19 crisis
Source: Everest Group (2020)

Enterprise overview
Falabella is a multinational, integrated retailer, with headquarters in Santiago, Chile. It is one of Latin America's leading integrated retailers, with operations in Chile, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and Mexico. It operates five business units: department stores, home improvement, supermarkets, real estate, and financial services.

Background
With the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases across Latin America, the retail industry witnessed significant disruption. Panic buying and exponential rise in demand for essentials caused additional stress to an already burdened supply chain. Falabella had to continue serving communities while addressing health concerns of stakeholders and adhering to the pandemic mitigation measures in place. Meanwhile, Falabella was in the middle of a technology transformation journey aimed at creating a digital retail backbone for its end-to-end operations. This initiative, focused on accelerating e-commerce and digital adoption, now gained greater importance due to the crisis. ThoughtWorks was Falabella's strategic partner for this digital transformation.

Challenges
COVID-19 mitigation measures forced a large portion of physical retail stores to remain closed, drastically affecting business operations of Falabella. Consumers opted out of essential shopping in brick-and-mortar stores and preferred online and digital channels for purchasing. This meant that e-commerce became the most important channel for business continuity and resilience. Falabella wanted to ensure that day-to-day operations for its e-commerce channel remained unaffected while the digital transformation journey continued. Business-critical releases of its digital platform needed to meet delivery commitments, requiring a delicate balance between operations resilience and transformation demands.

Actions
Falabella India created a BCP team tasked with a mandate to enable secure and uninterrupted availability of on-premise as well as cloud resources. Falabella and ThoughtWorks collaboratively formulated and executed a plan to ensure that milestones and delivery commitments were met. They identified and implemented digital projects to promote safety and well-being of consumers and employees in physical stores and ensured continuity of business-critical digital initiatives.

Key learnings
Falabella's adoption of digital-native technologies and processes along with a collaborative partner in ThoughtWorks helped it pivot to a remote working with minimum disruption, and also to push forward on its digital transformation journey. Enterprises that wish to stay ahead of the curve should treat this crisis as an opportunity and accelerate digital transformation while ensuring business continuity.

Enterprise learnings for the post COVID-19 world

As we emerge from this pandemic, we will enter into a world of the "next normal" rather than "return to the normal." We believe that COVID-19 will act as an inflection point, giving way to structural changes in the global services industry such as ushering in new models of delivery/work, enabling enterprise pivot to "newer" business models, and increasing the appetite for modernization and digital transformation. Based on the case studies and broader market conversations, we discuss some key takeaways for enterprises in the post-COVID-19 world in the subsections below.

Evolve enterprise services delivery model

In the past, many enterprises harbored serious inhibitions toward something as trivial as remote working. COVID-19 has profoundly challenged and shaken these inhibitions and given way to "art of the possible" with every traditional practice up for debate.
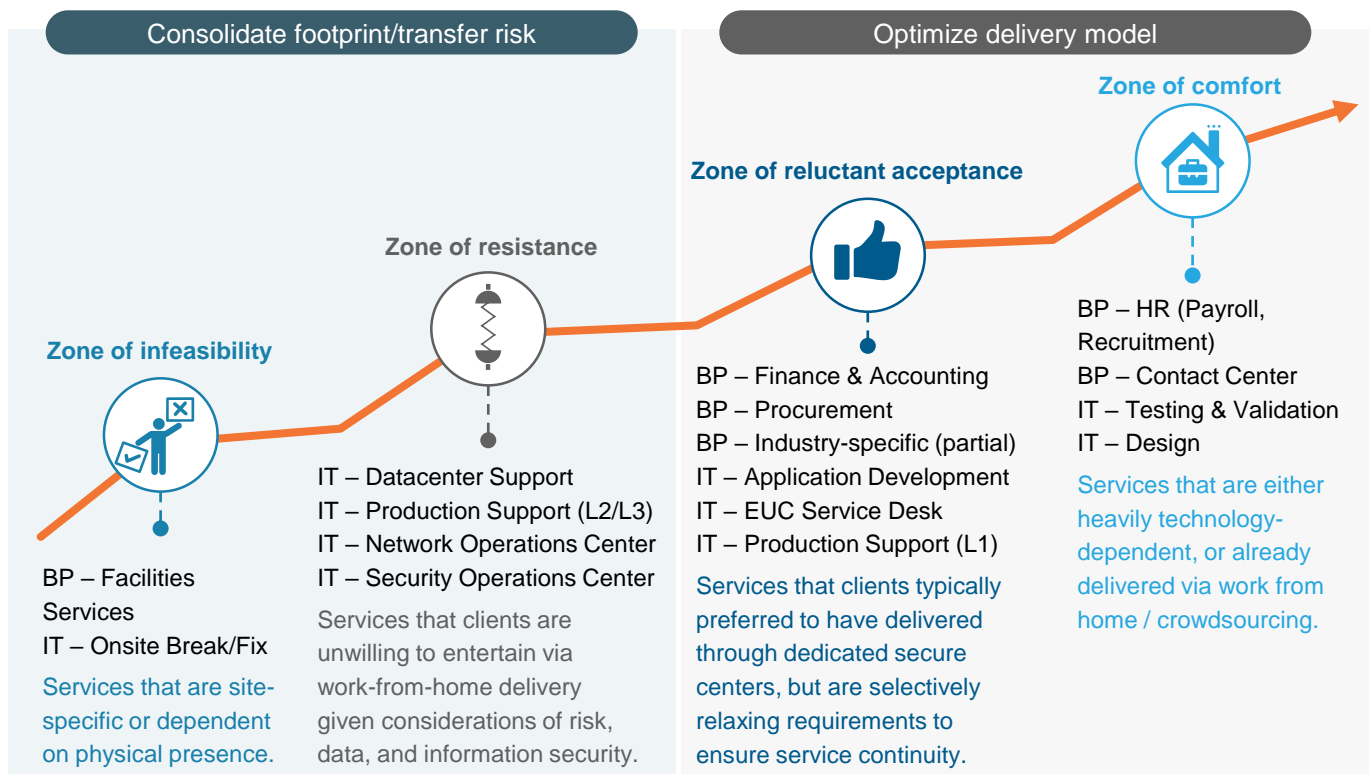
- **Invest in a sustainable model:** Enterprises may have addressed immediate concerns around enabling remote working, but they need to bring in organizational and technology changes to sustain the model for a longer haul
- **Build empathy in the workplace model:** Enterprises should aim to enhance employee productivity and morale while ensuring efficiency, effectiveness, and security

Exhibit below explains how enterprises can use this opportunity to relook into their mode of working and outsourcing strategies.

EXHIBIT 3

Evolving enterprise services delivery model to cater to the "next normal"

Source: Everest Group (2020)

Consolidate footprint/transfer risk

Optimize delivery model

Zone of comfort

Zone of reluctant acceptance

Zone of resistance

Zone of infeasibility

BP – HR (Payroll, Recruitment)
BP – Contact Center
IT – Testing & Validation
IT – Design

Services that are either heavily technology-dependent, or already delivered via work from home / crowdsourcing.

BP – Finance & Accounting
BP – Procurement
BP – Industry-specific (partial)
IT – Application Development
IT – EUC Service Desk
IT – Production Support (L1)

Services that clients typically preferred to have delivered through dedicated secure centers, but are selectively relaxing requirements to ensure service continuity.

IT – Datacenter Support
IT – Production Support (L2/L3)
IT – Network Operations Center
IT – Security Operations Center

Services that clients are unwilling to entertain via work-from-home delivery given considerations of risk, data, and information security.

BP – Facilities Services
IT – Onsite Break/Fix

Services that are site-specific or dependent on physical presence.

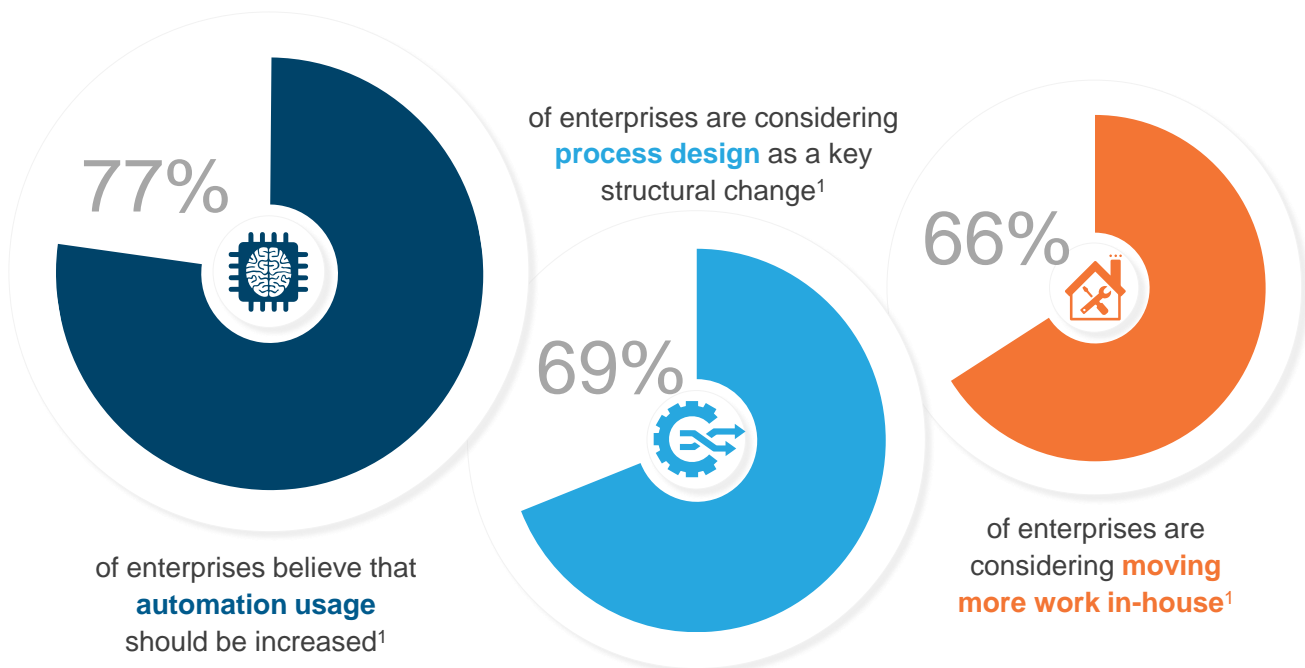## Aggressively seek efficiency and optimization measures

With recessionary signs and muted market demands, many enterprises continue to face pressures to maintain operational vitality and meet financial obligations. In an attempt to maintain cashflow and liquidity levels, many enterprises had to implement measures such as cutting down operations, laying off / furloughing employees, and withholding/reducing employee salaries.

- **Rescue and revitalize in the short term:** Enterprises should aggressively seek efficiency measures to rescue and revitalize their financial position. Short-term focus should be on immediate saving levers such as aggressive cost control and financial engineering. Enterprises should critically analyze outsourcing engagements for optimization avenues to take out costs from operations, assets, and other resources

- **Prepare for the "next normal" in the long term:** While short-term measures would provide enterprises with some breathing space, they should aim to garner growth and to be in a position of strength for the "next normal". Enterprises should explore more profound long-term structural changes to bring in sustainable efficiency and optimization such as automation, process redesign, setting up in-house centers, exploring offshore/onshore options, and examining outsourcing scope.

EXHIBIT 4

Enterprises are seeking to bring in structural changes to bring in sustainable efficiency and optimization

Source: Everest Group (2020)

77%
of enterprises believe that **automation usage** should be increased[1]

of enterprises are considering **process design** as a key structural change[1]
69%

66%
of enterprises are considering **moving more work in-house**[1]

Push towards modernization and digitalization

The global pandemic has subjected enterprises to an involuntary Proof of Concept (POC) on benefits of accelerating modernization and digitalization. Enterprises that are well-advanced in their modernization journey displayed better business continuity and resilience than others.

- **Build an investment roadmap**: In the short term, enterprises should focus on modernization and digitalization to enable business continuity and resiliency. In the long term, they should intelligently prioritize initiatives for competitive advantage
- **Identify the most effective transformation levers:** Legacy modernization, transition to cloud, omnichannel presence, data visibility & modeling, enterprise knowledge management, and AI/ML are few of the transformation levers enterprises need to adopt to stay relevant

> " This crisis highlights how important digital capabilities and products are, and how important speed and seamless integration are. But, I think we need to ask ourselves, as an industry, are we moving fast enough?
>
> - New Jersey - Jamie Warder, Head of Digital, KeyBank

Pivot to newer business models

While verticals with the maximum COVID-19 impact such as energy & natural resources, manufacturing, physical retail, transportation, and travel & hospitality will undergo drastic changes in business models, other enterprises should also pivot to newer business models to ensure stakeholder health and well-being, while ensuring operational vitality.

- **Leverage next-generation technologies:** Enterprises need to adopt next-generation technologies such as automation, IoT, AR/VR, and advanced AI
- **Reimagine the supply chain:** Enterprises need to ensure considerable relocation of supply chain elements to increase business resiliency
- **Focus on continuous innovation:** Verticals such as healthcare, life sciences, BFSI, and telecom are in need of drastic innovations such as fast-tracking a critical vaccine, increasing data visibility across the value chain, expanding reaches of digital banking, and decluttering network bandwidth

Invest in talent of the future

Though the economic meltdown has led to large-scale unemployment and oversupply of job seekers, enterprises would be unwise not to focus on strategic workforce planning. One of the key reasons for this is that the available skills in the market are not expected to match enterprises' current and future talent requirements.

- **Acquire or develop talent in emerging skills:** Enterprises should be conscious that demand for emerging skills will spike even faster, and they should proactively address the need for reskilling, alternative talent models, and productivity enhancement
- **Prepare talent for the remote working model:** COVID-19's stubborn persistence and enterprises discovering newer ways of working will likely make the remote working model an integral component of the overall service delivery
- **Overhaul the employee engagement model:** These changes will have significant human resources implications around motivation, employee engagement, performance metrics, reporting metrics, communication protocols, and collaboration. Organizations will need to proactively address these to optimize productivity and enhance output

Everest Group survey estimates that **69%** of enterprises already have a talent shortage, and **75%** of enterprises believe there will be a talent shortage for key roles in future.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has shown enterprises the necessity to be aware of the fundamentals – in a global market, location-based business continuity plans are archaic; there is need to have emergency response teams and processes in place; malicious activities are constant and vulnerabilities are only increasing; and continuous testing & trials are essential to ensure resiliency. These are truly testing times, but only those who drift this curve will emerge as leaders in the post COVID-19 world.

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