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Business Investigation 1

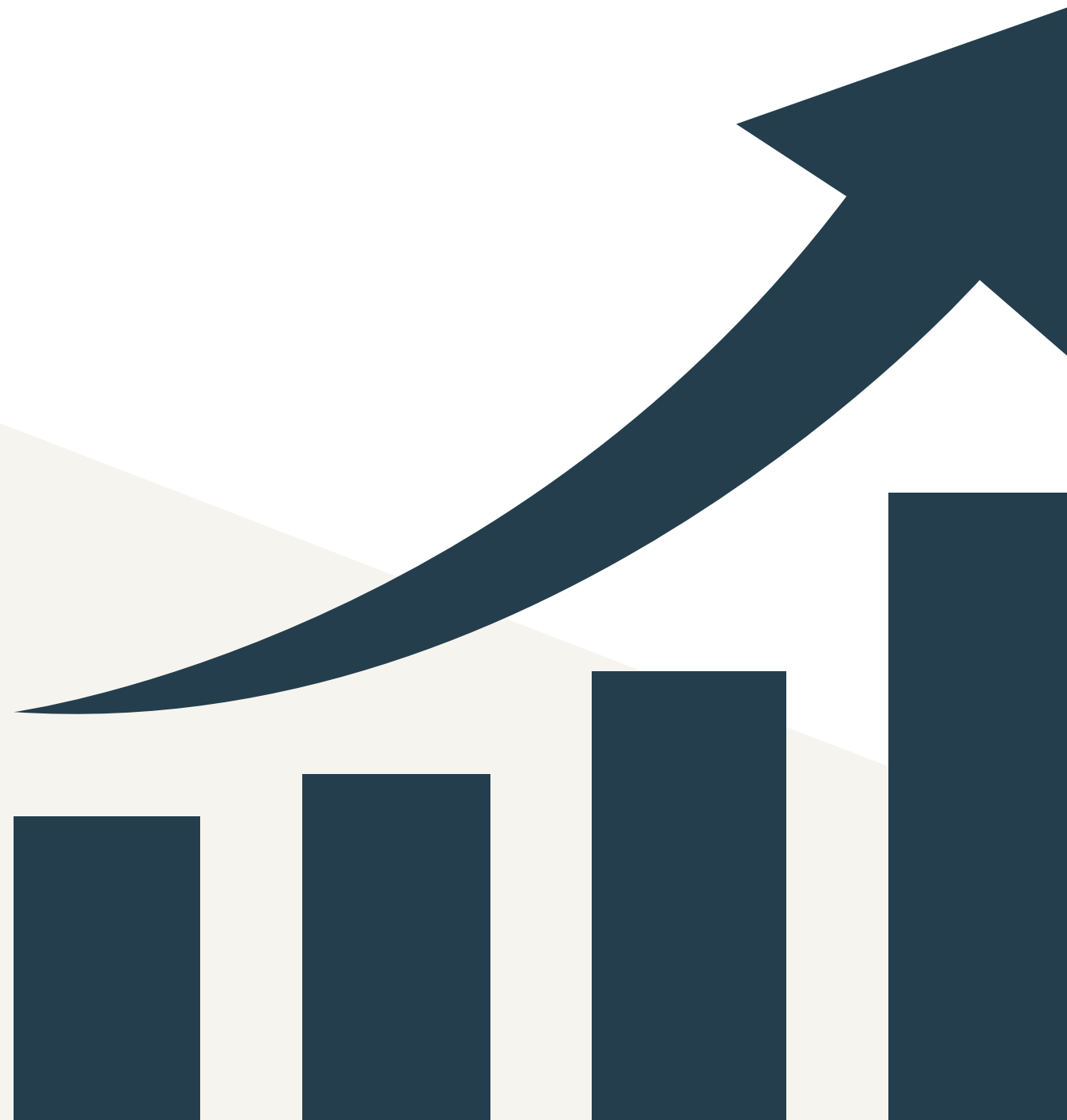
Question: How have Businesses adapted working
practices?

Introduction:

In 2020, COVID 19 (a global pandemic) hit our world, changing not only life; but the business environment as we perceive it. Due to quarantine and travel bans, many business have turned online in order to reach other markets therefore changing traditional working practices and breaking the norm of having to work in an office. This presentation will cover those changes, how they impact a business from large scale multinational corporations to smaller businesses, and how they affect modern working life overall.



How has the pandemic adapted working practices?



Due to the changes within the business environment and the introduction of lockdown, it has allowed for the formation of 2 new working practices in the office:

- **remote working**
- **flexible working**

Remote working is the practice of working from another space that isn't within the central location of a business.

Flexible working is a hybrid of both, allowing employees to suit their office hours and work style to their needs.

This has allowed businesses to adapt, and continue to provide goods and services from the comfort of a home, or in our case work during quarantine. The next slides discuss the advantages and disadvantages for both types.

Remote Working: Advantages

For the Employee:

- It allows for freedom in terms of location, allowing people to work from wherever they are, whilst keeping the business stable.
- Increases the motivation of employees and allows them to prioritize mental health, overall allowing for more productive employees.
- It also allows for more sustainable workflow as people choose their workflow and the amount of work done overall.

For the Employer:

- Decreased infrastructure costs as not a lot of employees will be in the office, therefore leading to a decrease in rent and furniture/support costs.
- Reduces absenteeism and decreases turnover to other companies, as it allows for more freedom in terms of services.

Remote Working: Disadvantages

For the Employee:

- Employees may feel that they lose on a work life balance, because some feel that going to the office add structure to their day and separates their work life from their home life.
- Poor communication within colleagues allows for unproductive workflow during remote working and delays certain processes that you may need to achieve a certain target.
- The risk of isolation is higher, people may trade having a social life for more freedom at work, as the work place is also a place to socialize and make connections.

For the Employer:

- Fostering the company's culture becomes more harder, as people tend to feel they are less important than when they were in the office making it harder to maintain a positive company spirit.
- The risk of having disconnected employees becomes higher, leading to: more turnover to other companies, a decrease in productivity, and a drop in engagement.
- New information security risks have evolved, since confidential client files are being sent around servers, the risk of hacking into these files and accessing them becomes higher.

Hybrid Working: Advantages

For the Employee:

- Efficient use of time and task management, it allows for more collaborative and easier work practices.
- Employees believe their current hybrid arrangements improve their personal wellbeing and productivity at work.
- Many employees also believe that they access freedom in terms of where and when they work, leading to less burnout and are overall more happier about their working lifestyle.

For the Employer:

- A hybrid working model allows for an increase in productivity levels and diversity in the workplace.
- Commuting often brings a barrier to many people who have disabilities whether physical or mental, hybrid working allows for a mix of commuting and remote working allowing employees to find what they need and decrease turnover to other companies because of this freedom.
- Technology has allowed for employers to manage teams without hassle making hybrid working more efficient with employees only having to come in for meetings

Hybrid Working: Disadvantages

For the Employee:

- Hybrid working decreases the anxiety of returning back to the workplace after quarantine
- Its more equitable for employees looking after family members or those with immune deficiencies, allowing everyone to have a fair share of responsibility at the workplace.
- It allows people to choose where and how they work, providing people with a sense of choice on their preferred working environment.

For the Employer:

- It can create a barrier between those who lean toward working at an office and those who prefer working at home, leading to burnout or loss of employment opportunities.
- Sometimes hybrid work models don't suit specific industries or specific businesses and their goals, leading to miscommunication and inefficient workflow.
- It may be harder managing two separate teams for bigger challenges like addressing market changes or dealing with inflows, rather having one full team on a problem.

But what does that look like?

Due to COVID 19 shutting a majority of businesses down, I will be investigating the effects on a large scale corporation and a small scale corporation of my choice to find the similarities and differences in working practices and how these new working practices will ultimately effect the business industry as we know it.



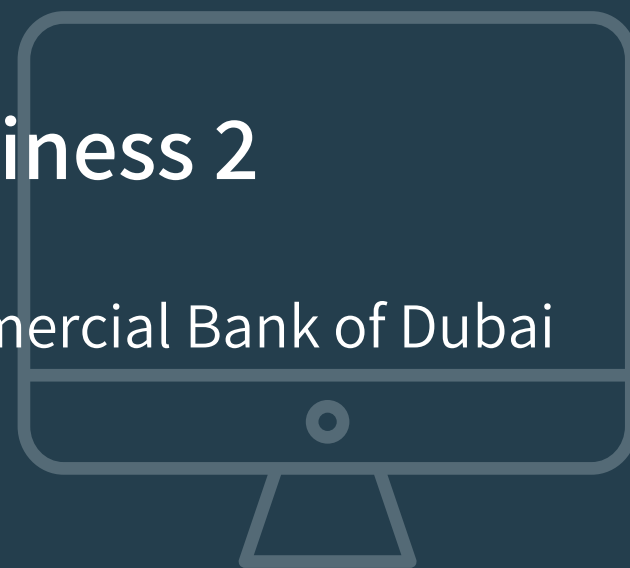
Business 1

HSBC Bank Middle East



Business 2

Commercial Bank of Dubai



Businesses Chosen:

Many businesses allowed employees to work remotely due to changes within quarantine and the introduction of lockdown. Including businesses scaling from multinational corporations to smaller scale corporations (like government funded banks) which began to flourish during the pandemic, therefore providing different outcomes in terms of working habits; this also differs in different industries, so the industry I have chosen is the banking industry. The businesses I have chosen are Commercial Bank of Dubai (government banking) and HSBC Bank Middle East (international banking).

Commercial Bank of Dubai

During the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020 to December 2020, the Central Bank of Dubai (CBD) implemented hybrid and remote banking cultures across all sectors, including offshore operations. Throughout this period, both employers and employees enjoyed the benefits discussed in earlier slides. However, there was a growing concern for the mental wellbeing of employees due to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Post-2020, the bank significantly reduced the hybrid working environment. Leading to the launch of a mental wellbeing campaign called "SANAD" across the organization to address the mental health needs of their workforce.

As a result of digitalization and the impact of COVID-19, systems within the bank became more efficient, leading to a reduction in paper-based processes and manual approvals. This transition to digitally managed work has increased sustainable workflow and eased the audit processes within the bank. Control functions like audits have particularly benefited from these automated system controls. Auditors no longer need to visit branches to physically perform audits but instead can access and analyze data remotely, resulting in significantly reduced turnaround times for the bank overall. This shift is primarily attributed to the availability of a vast amount of data and information that can be utilized to perform audits within a remote location.

Additionally, the government provided support to individuals affected by COVID-19 through a zero-cost lending program, with the Commercial Bank of Dubai, subject to specific eligibility criteria. This initiative aimed to alleviate the financial burden faced by the people and contribute to their recovery during these challenging times.



HSBC Bank Middle East

Since the beginning of 2020 and before COVID 19, HSBC used and supported a hybrid working model because of their large global presence. During COVID, this business model was further enhanced with system enhancements to support both remote and hybrid working models, this helped the bank globally to reduce the number of premises used for working and overall developed shared workspaces to maintain and increase sustainable energy for financing. Like CBD, HSBC has also managed to receive the benefits of hybrid working. This model has worked positively for the bank without the need for a dedicated mental health program as if offered the choice of working from home or working within the office whilst keeping mental health in check.

Post COVID 19, HSBC has still adopted and maintained the hybrid working model, with the digitization aiding in the removal of manual processes and fast tracking processes. The digitization of these manual systems helped HSBC to automate the process making it more streamlined by eliminating the need and validation of manual documents whilst also saving paper by accepting digital copies. With a hybrid working model HSBC can still keep up with the number of businesses it aids, by allowing for more productivity and efficiency as well as improving a sense of work life balance. This business model has also helped reduce operating costs by reducing real estate costs and office supply costs and other expenses.



Conclusion:

- Many businesses use hybrid working models to this day with very few using both 100% in the office and remote working.
- Many people prefer hybrid working as seen in a report from McKinsey and Company stating that over 20 to 25 percent of the workforces in advanced economies could work from home between three and five days a week, without a productivity loss.
- Employers will find it easier to manage teams as everything is in one secure location.
- “This represents four to five times more remote work than before the pandemic and could prompt a large change in the geography of work, as individuals and companies shift out of large cities into suburbs and small cities.” This quote from the same report demonstrates a more flexible market for all types of businesses, and allows for more equity in businesses.





Thank You!

Credits to: My mom and dad for information :)