

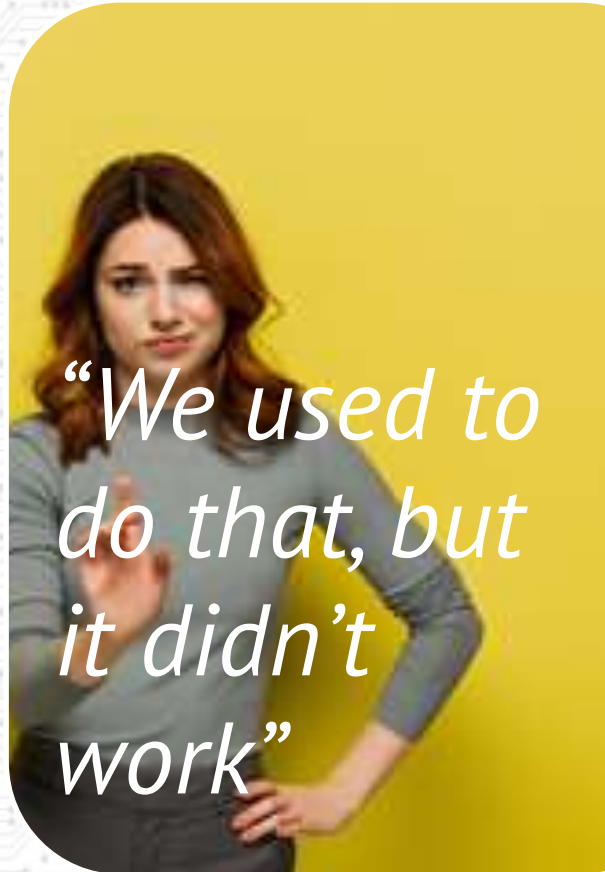
**Your Moment of Truth**  
Confident to Succeed

# Key considerations to deliver effective working schedules for your operation

Dave Vernon – Director



## You can't do that...



*"We have people still working term-time hours and their children now work for us!"*



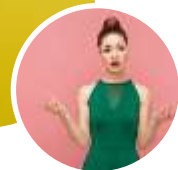
*"Students aren't reliable; their attendance isn't good enough – it's as if their priorities are elsewhere!"*



*"We can't have flexi-time; we'd never know when they turn up!"*



*"I wouldn't want to work that shift pattern, so I don't think anyone else would either"*



*"We don't have the technology to support this and it would be an administrative burden"*

# Working Patterns – Collaboration!



# Intangibles that Make It Hard to Leave



Pay



Working Patterns



Physical Environment



Bonus

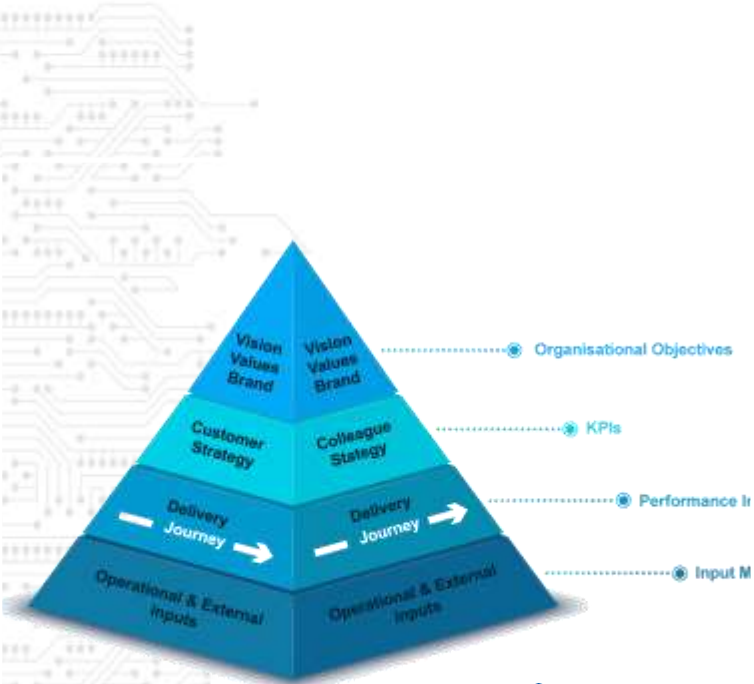


Development



Appreciation

# Purpose



Commercial



Customer



Colleagues

# Avoiding the Fairness Trap



# Key Considerations



Operating Model



Channels



Skills

# Choice, Certainty & Control



Choice



Certainty



Control  
**Autonomy**



# Choice: Location



Home



Hybrid



Office

# Choice: Working Patterns

Rotational patterns

Fixed

Trade-offs

Term-time

**How can we use these?**

Students

Second jobs

Job share

Annualised hours

**when should we use them?**

Time-bank

Zero-hours

Flexi-time

## Flex & Stretch: Additional or fewer hours

**Annualised  
hours**

**Time-bank**

**Over-time**

**Contractual  
over-time**

**Zero-hours**

**Flexi-time**

**Unpaid  
leave**

# Collaboration



Senior Stakeholders



Operational Stakeholders



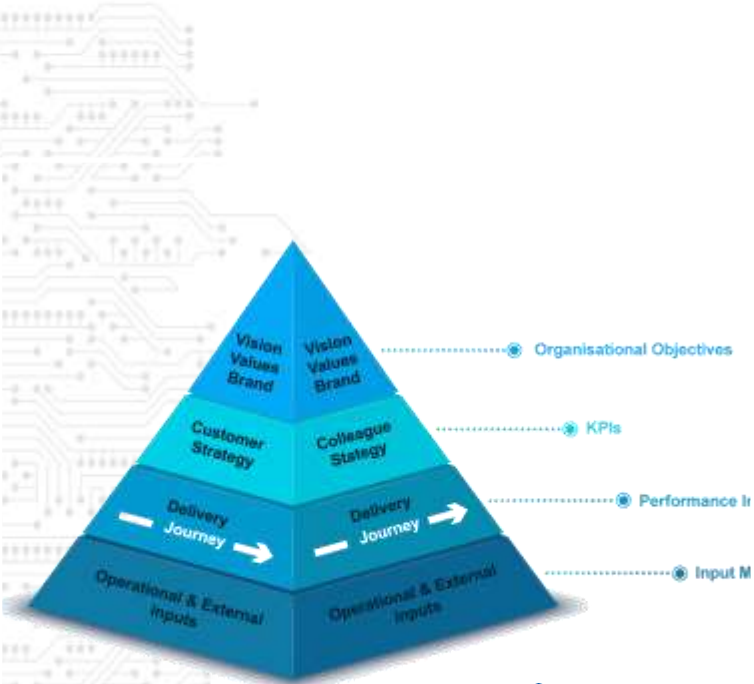
Planning Team



Advisors



# Measures of success



Commercial



Customer



Colleagues

# Summary



**Everyone is different**



**Define your limits**



**Collaborate to shape the strategy**



**Develop a range of solutions**



**Track, measure and celebrate success**

**Best Practice Guide 2021**

The Forum  
Raising Standards in Customer Operations

**Unlocking Opportunities**  
You are the key

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**Best Practice Guide 2021**  
Twenty one years of our professional community

The Forum  
Raising Standards in Customer Operations

- 01** **Unlocking Opportunities: You are the key**  
We look at the part you can play in influencing the people around you, changing mindsets and overcoming the issues that block or slow down progress in our organisations.
- 29** **Planning beyond COVID: hybrid working and wellbeing**  
After unprecedented restrictions and turbulence, what do we learn? How can we think or act differently? What gets left behind? What leads us into future operating models?
- 59** **Predictive analysis and data-led decisions**  
Explore the four stages of insight and answer new approaches to analysis, automation and budgets. Be ready for a changing world as planners, analysts and leaders.
- 83** **Are customers & colleagues the heart of our technology?**  
With customer operations forever changed by the scale and pace of technology evolution, where should we focus? How can we deliver what our customers and colleagues need most?

## Workforce strategy: a framework for forward thinking

8 areas have been identified, from our strategy round tables, as key to a future-proof operating model for the 'next normal'

**M**any organisations and sectors have faced exceptional stress during the pandemic, both economically and operationally, in terms of working from home and responding to so many changes at such short notice. While sectors have been impacted differently, the most successful organisations during the pandemic, in each sector, have been agile and resilient, as recent research by McKinsey demonstrates (see next page).

Unlocking opportunities will depend on how behaviours change as the pandemic recedes or changes course. We certainly won't be going back to business-as-usual, some changes are here to stay. In thinking about new operating models, and hybrid working, we need to discuss and decide: what do we want to create and what do we need to re-build? Indeed, are there patterns from the past we are glad to be rid of? It's important we stimulate and share this **new thinking** across our organisations, to support a growth mindset and challenge fixed opinions. We need to rethink and continually improve as others. We can allow ourselves to return to an old, established way.

So, what do we need to take into consideration? At The Forum, we've evolved a **framework for forward thinking** over the course of six months from October 2020 to March 2021. This was shaped by inspiring, remarkable discussion with members in our **Leadership, Strategic & Leadership** focus. While some round-table groups focussed on how to operationalise technology transformation (see chapter 4), most of our discussions focused on making work at home or the challenges of a fast-changing pandemic, situation. This article takes this thinking and looks at how we move from here into the **next normal**.

The first four areas in our framework are significantly changed when you have home working at scale. Of these, social connection and engagement are perhaps the most fundamental drivers of change.

### 1. Social connection and engagement

At the middle of the pandemic, two conversations stand out to me from our awards programme as focusing my mind on this. A home working team manager talked about caring in each day and feeling as if his **team** were all sitting with him, like in the traditional call centre. They weren't even on work calls, but they did all chat as they came and went and asked each other about how the evening had been or the previous day.

Contrast that with another team manager elsewhere, used to a really strong team feeling face-to-face but benefit of that in working from home. If we want to build home-working as a permanent option in our new operating model, we need to build the **habits and mindsets** that are carefully developed in operations that are specifically designed for home working. We probably also need some different technology solutions that make for a truly integrated digital workspace. <https://www.theforum.social/insights/2021-03-16-remote-work>

Then consider what this may mean if you are planning a **hybrid model** (a blend of home and office for instance). Will team interaction only happen on office days? What's the impact of that? How will home-based teams interact with those who purely work in the office? If you've learned in lockdown to communicate with multi-site calls or on-demand videos, perhaps tracking responses and creating accurate information, are we just going to let that go?

Take another member, a coach in a multi-site operation, who has saved so much time and found ways to engage so many more people, by being virtual. Are we going to lose that in coming back to offices? 'Yes, what will office-based colleagues think if others want to interact still from home? Will it be ok? Are these interactions that just can't work that way? Many who chose home working, from before the pandemic, believe most things at work could absolutely be done in a virtual way. Certainly, we've all been surprised at what has proven possible when needs must.

Think about **team interaction**, whether in your own team, the wider operation, or the leadership teams. It's critical that no-one feels abandoned or left out. How will we communicate with our silos now? Some of us have been using MS Teams a lot in the last year. Is that enough? Are we even scraping the surface of what is possible with it? Do we set up other channels of communication? WhatsApp groups or Yammer have proven popular for instance. What's more the role of team leader and manager will be changing, as they need to adapt their style and time management to different locations and situations by office - hybrid -

home). Where your operating model combines different groups of people working in different ways, you need to consider fairness. People based in the office or at home can't be being seen to be above favouritism.

### 2. Physical environment and systems

Another key area where change is needed is the physical space and the systems we use, both at home and in the office. Up to now we had been able to 'make do' in many cases because people are moving to home working for safety, and we all recognise the exceptional situation of the pandemic. But this can't go on for ever and, if work from-home is partly a permanent choice, it may be appropriate to put conditions on this. What are the **minimum factors** to ensure that home or office are a good, safe working environment?

Systems and connectivity is there a standard set of facilities and hardware, such as desk, chair, desktop or laptop, additional screens, mouse, all connected to the network. Broadband and phones need to have a minimum bandwidth to ensure that the system is available to speak to customers without interruptions or calls dropping. **Who will pay for that?** Will the company cover this cost? It has been an exchange for savings in commuting costs? Who will take responsibility for technical issues? Some companies are future workers to provide and maintain their own equipment and if they cannot work due to issues this is unpaid time. You will need to consider whether this is a standard setup as it is with specialist framework.

<https://theforum.social/resources/best-practice-guides/2021-best-practice-guide>