



White Paper  
More than  
Business Continuity:  
True Business Resilience  
for the Digital Age

Why Work-at-Home Agents Are Here to Stay



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## Introduction

### *Necessity is the mother of invention.*

The Oxford dictionary defines this common English proverb as “the need for something becoming so imperative that one is forced to find ways of achieving it”.

While telecommuting technology has been available for decades, it has seen slow adoption in various markets and industries for a variety of reasons. One common example is education. Most educators have been slow to adopt despite the many benefits. However, with the global spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), schools in all regions of the world experienced comprehensive, extended closures. As a result, online learning tools were rapidly implemented out of necessity – to keep students connected to their teachers, schools, and classmates while maintaining a safe distance. So, like it or not, leveraging distance learning tools suddenly became an operational imperative for educators.

Much like the education sector, companies across all industries have also been forced to accelerate the adoption of telecommuting technology. As with eLearning, business conferencing and digital collaboration tools have been accessible for years, but some industries declined or delayed adoption until social distancing became a community – and business – necessity.

Though it’s highly unfortunate that the accelerated adoption of these technologies was triggered by an unprecedented global threat, there is a longer-term, societal impact that will benefit global markets for decades to come.



## Maintaining Business Operations at a Time of Global Crisis

Continuing to serve clients and customers at their greatest time of need became paramount. So, in the early months of COVID-19, before the level of contagion had been fully understood, business response plans reflected a strong focus on maintaining on-site contact center operations. First experienced in the Hubei Province of China, BPOs in the country observed a multi-faceted approach prioritizing business continuity.

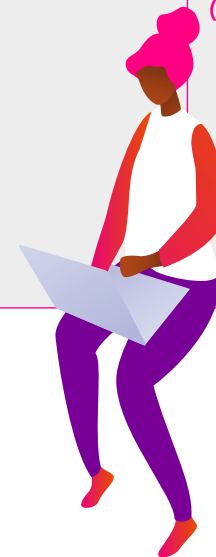
*“The key to this crisis, as well as those in the future, is possessing the right contingency plans to mitigate disruption, and BPO players need to have these at the ready. During disruptive periods such as this, these plans prove their value.”*

Peter Ryan, Founder of Ryan Strategic Advisory, [Coronavirus Pandemic Beckons PBO Contingency Planning](#), March 2020

### Common approaches taken by top BPO leaders:

<p><b>Proactive outreach to all employees and clients,</b> proposing a plan of action which includes preventative measures, constant communication, and back-up while encouraging self-identification for anyone feeling unwell.</p>	<p><b>Health checks and status surveys for employees</b> including adding provisions on-site; ample drinking water, face masks, disinfectants, alcohol, and antibacterial sprays. Many international site locations typically have clinics staffed by nurses and doctors.</p>	<p><b>Elevated cleaning and sanitization procedures</b> at sites, ensuring consistent cleaning of all facilities.</p>	<p><b>Transition of agents, lines of business, and even entire accounts to a <b>Work-at-Home-Agent (WAHA) model</b></b> if necessary.</p>	<p><b>Real-time monitoring of the global situation</b> and daily meetings to review status and take immediate actions if necessary to restore critical business functions to normalcy.</p>
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Frost & Sullivan, [Facts, Not Fear: BPOs Refuse to Let the Coronavirus Wreak Havoc on Employees and CX](#), March 2020



While none of these initial measures became obsolete, it quickly became apparent that COVID-19 represented a greater health threat than originally anticipated and more dramatic emphasis needed to be placed on shifting heavily toward a work-at-home model.

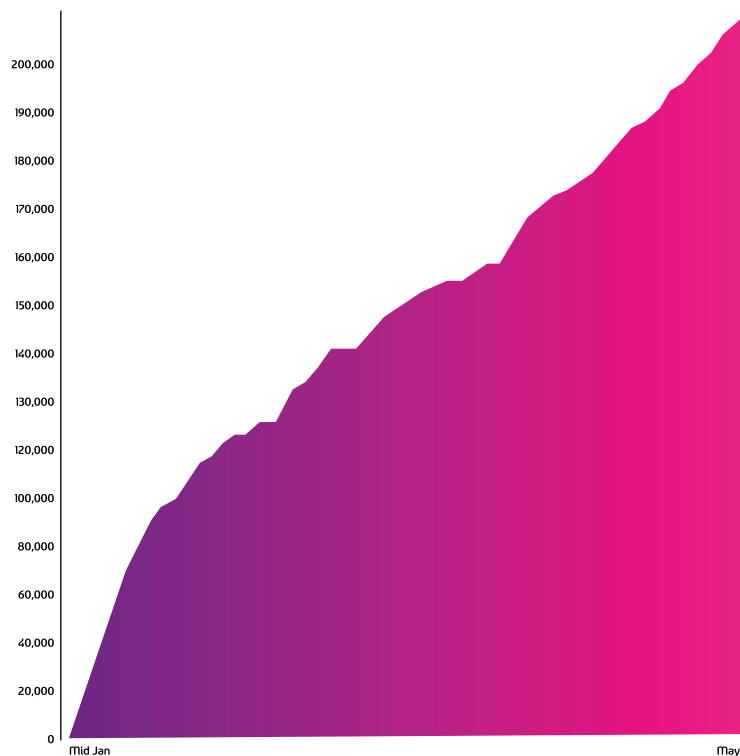
In February, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified COVID-19 as a global pandemic based on the ease and rate of infection, elevated mortality rates, and the degree of global spread to regions and countries around the world. This triggered government regulations, travel restrictions, and, eventually, country-wide curfews and even stay-home orders reminiscent of war-time measures. While guidelines varied by region and country, one common trend emerged – the sudden necessity for both clients and BPOs to view home-based agents as an immediate business imperative.

As the global leader in work-at-home solutions, Teleperformance has long recommended an integrated, hybrid approach that leverages home-based agents to complement the service delivered by those in contact centers. Under normal conditions, this provides the right balance to offer maximum business agility, flexibility, and scalability. In the era of COVID-19, this balanced approach also offers the ability to ensure proper physical distancing for those remaining at operating sites.

Rapid implementations of home-based agents began in service areas around the world, and momentum accelerated significantly throughout March and April of 2020. Prior to COVID-19, Teleperformance led the world in WAHA implementations with approximately 10,000 home-based interaction experts.

As more communities around the world entered lockdown conditions, however, this rapidly increased to 70,000 by late March, achieving 110,000 by mid-April – eclipsing the number of implementations by all other BPOs combined within this time period.

**Rapid Activation of Work-at-Home Agents**



**Client feedback about the migration to work-at-home**



*"Your team is doing a PHENOMENAL job. TP clearly stands out as the partner that has given us the greatest sense of urgency, spinning up capacity at a rate we never would have dreamed of pre-COVID19. The responsiveness has been off-the-charts amazing."* – **SiriusXM, United States**



*"More than ever, we have shown how well we work as a team in difficult situations. We have not only managed to put in place WAHA solutions in a record time, but we have also managed to be even closer to our customers and improve both the resolution and satisfaction."* – **Vodafone, Spain**



*"You are way ahead of the other partners in terms of agility and technology. We really appreciate all the hard work and effort the past days your team has done to move quickly into WAHA".* – **Grubhub**

## Supporting Key, Essential Services and Emergency Response Agencies

Even with such a dramatic transition toward WAHA, it is also often necessary to provide balance by maintaining operations at BPO facilities based on local regulations, and to ensure agent redundancy, key support functions like HR and IT, and support for clients delivering essential services.

So, despite country-wide lockdowns, it remained critical that companies and industries supporting key, essential industries remained operational, continuing to staff their physical locations. While the definition of “essential services” varied by country and even county.



The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) defined essential support as those:

*“...workers who conduct a range of operations and services that are essential to continued critical infrastructure viability, including staffing operations centers, maintaining and repairing critical infrastructure, -- operating call centers --, working construction, and performing management functions, among others.”*

The US Agency went on to specify that

*“The industries they support represent, but are not necessarily limited to, medical and healthcare, telecommunications, information technology systems, defense, food and agriculture, transportation and logistics, energy, water and wastewater, law enforcement and public works.”*

Furthermore, recognizing the growing need for customer support in light of the disruption to people’s employment, finances and mobility, a US Governor even issued an appeal to specific industries that can help those facing financial hardship. Governor Steve Sisolak of Nevada cited that **“all businesses who must remain open should consider hiring those who will be out of work for the next few weeks. Delivery services will need drivers. Call centers need people to handle increased volume. Stores need people to restock shelves.”**

Though considering what could be classified an “essential services” may initially seem like a very short, limited list, it actually tends to be more wide-reaching than one would initially assume.



**Healthcare:** Patients need support on behalf of health providers, payers, pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies.



**Government Sector:** Citizens need support understanding public health programs, and accessing courts, public utilities, and transportation authorities.



**Technology:** Business and consumer customers need support for critical infrastructure, technology manufacturers, and supply chain vendors providing hardware and software, and information technology equipment.



**Transportation and Logistics:** Support must be provided for logistics operations, including cooling, storing, packaging and distributing products for wholesale or retail sale or use -- especially in support of the food and agriculture sector.



**Financial Services:** Consumers need help with access to banking and lending services for managing transactions, billing and payments, life insurance, property and casualty insurance, and processing insurance claims.



**Emergency Response and Disaster Recovery:** Citizens need help accessing aid programs and services, along with health and safety regulations and guidelines.



**Energy and Utilities:** Assistance maintaining utilities like water, gas, electricity, and renewable energy services is an essential need.



**Food and Beverage:** Support for global food and beverage distribution, e-commerce and delivery, food retailers, and restaurant and food services.



**Communications:** Access to telecommunications and informational services is critical for sustaining wireless, cable and satellite TV, internet, and media services.



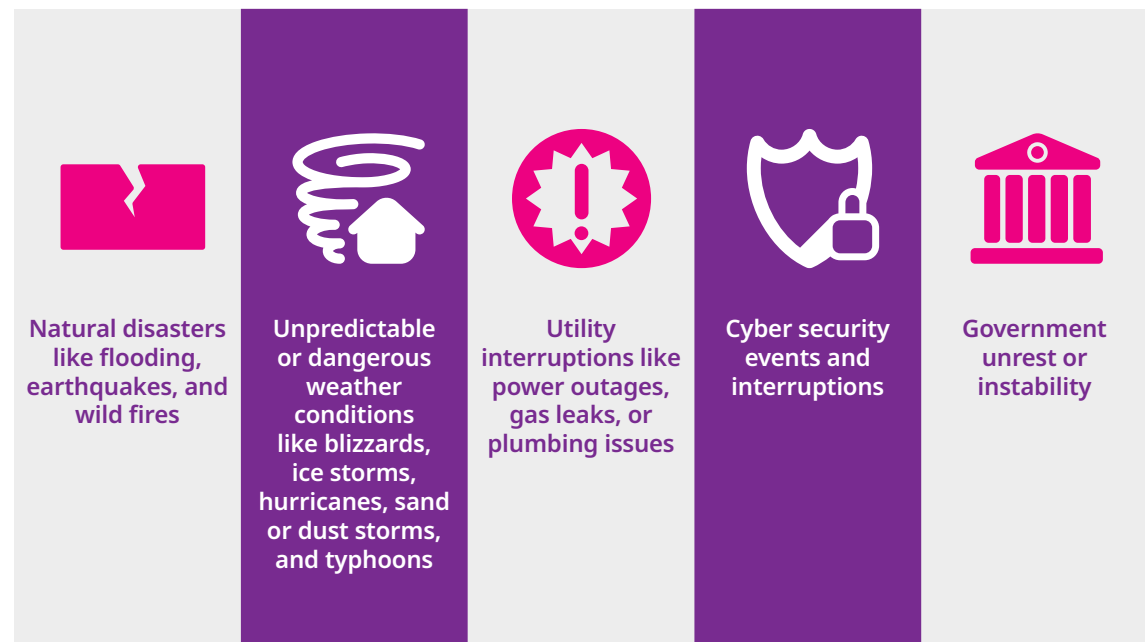
**Travel and Hospitality:** Consumers need help canceling or rescheduling planned trips and stays, processing credits and refunds, and managing rewards accounts.

## Applied Learning: Prepare Your Business to Weather the Next Storm

While the nature of the pandemic has forced many changes to businesses and people lives in a very short period of time, it does offer some positive and long-lasting aspects:

- Key learnings and best practices have emerged
- Countries, industries and professions that had previously been technology-averse have been forced to adopt
- People everywhere are finding new ways to connect
- Legislators, industries and businesses have established blueprints for weathering future disruptions

Business disruption can appear in many forms – not just as a global health crisis. In just the past year, companies and communities alike have experienced operational interruptions due to:



With a blended model including office and home-based agents, resources can be shifted and re-allocated as needed, based on business circumstances. While work-at-home agents aren't immune to any of these threats, they are mobile-ready and can easily relocate to ensure business continuity.



## Work-at-Home: A True Business Advantage, Not Just a Contingency Plan

### Introducing our new, innovative Cloud Campus model

With over 200,000 work-at-home employees, no one is better equipped to manage remote teams than Teleperformance. To provide a more effective and efficient way for managing home-based agents, we have created our revolutionary TP Cloud Campus.

Remote agents can live anywhere, and remain connected to their supervisors and colleagues via a centralized Cloud Campus Hub. This digital command center has been designed from the ground up to provide optimal support for recruiting, hiring, managing, motivating, and cultivating the most talented interaction experts in the world -- wherever they may live.



### Access to geographically dispersed work force

**Interaction experts can work from their home location.**

A work-at-home model allows access to untapped talent pools at a time when talent is scarce, while improving work-life balance, mental wellbeing, and the quality of work produced by remote workers.



### A resilient business continuity plan

**Avoid business disruption when the unexpected occurs**

When something unexpected happens in terms of health, natural disasters or even simply a transportation strike, a flexible model allows resources to be shifted where and when needed.



### More Flexibility

**increased flexibility in the recruitment process and in scaling to meet seasonal volume spikes**

A work-at-home model provides a more extensive talent pool, and the ability to easily scale to address peak season & intra-day, week and month demand fluctuations.



### Sustainability

**It is a sustainable and inclusive model**

A work-at-home model lowers the carbon footprint and gives working opportunities to people living in peripheral zones, as well as empowering disabled people.

With reduced overhead costs and increased employee and customer satisfaction, incorporating work-at-home capabilities represents a solid win-win for all parties. However, the success or failure of a pilot or full implementation depends upon the expertise of those managing the deployment. This is where BPOs offer a distinct advantage over in-house implementations.

According to Frost & Sullivan, **“Employing work-at-home agents (WAHA) is a prominent growth opportunity for the customer care industry, including outsourcing service providers (SPs) and organizations with in-house contact center operations”**.

There are many benefits for considering a work-at-home model, including those outlined by **Frost & Sullivan in The Transition to a Successful Work-at-Home Agent (WAHA Model)**, March, 2020:

- **Agent rather than an on-premises agent**
- **Access to an untapped talent pool**
- **The ability to establish operations in cities, regions, or even countries where the company does not have a physical infrastructure**
- **Better work-life balance for employees, which leads to lower absenteeism and attrition rates, especially in big cities where commuting could be particularly difficult to intense traffic**
- **Flexible shift scheduling, making it particularly suited for seasonality peaks. This also drives down absenteeism rates.**



## A Successful Model Built on Decades of Experience and Scalable Best Practices

Again, like the eLearning example, telecommuting technology isn't new – and neither is the work-at-home agent model. So, Teleperformance has decades of experience implementing proven solutions based on years of industry-specific use cases and best practices. Our track record in this space is unmatched, ensuring a deep knowledge and understanding of how to properly align resources to the needs of each client and ensure they are implemented, managed, and maintained successfully.

**No other company in the industry, whether a BPO or in-house-technology vendor, can match Teleperformance's global scale and reach.**

Teleperformance has the global scale, in-depth expertise, and solution breadth and depth to help address concerns regarding data security, agent accountability and productivity, and employee engagement.



### Employee Engagement and Tools

Remote connection tools enable the management of remote teams through real-time assistance, coaching, one-on-one chat, team meetings, as well as daily briefing and debriefings. This maintains a constant connection between supervisors and the interactions experts, ensuring the same operational standards for remote agents as those in a brick & mortar model. High quality and feature-rich remote connectivity is critical for a streamlined experience and effective engagement.

Teleperformance has established exclusive best practices in performance management, and a commitment to excellence through its tools and management processes.

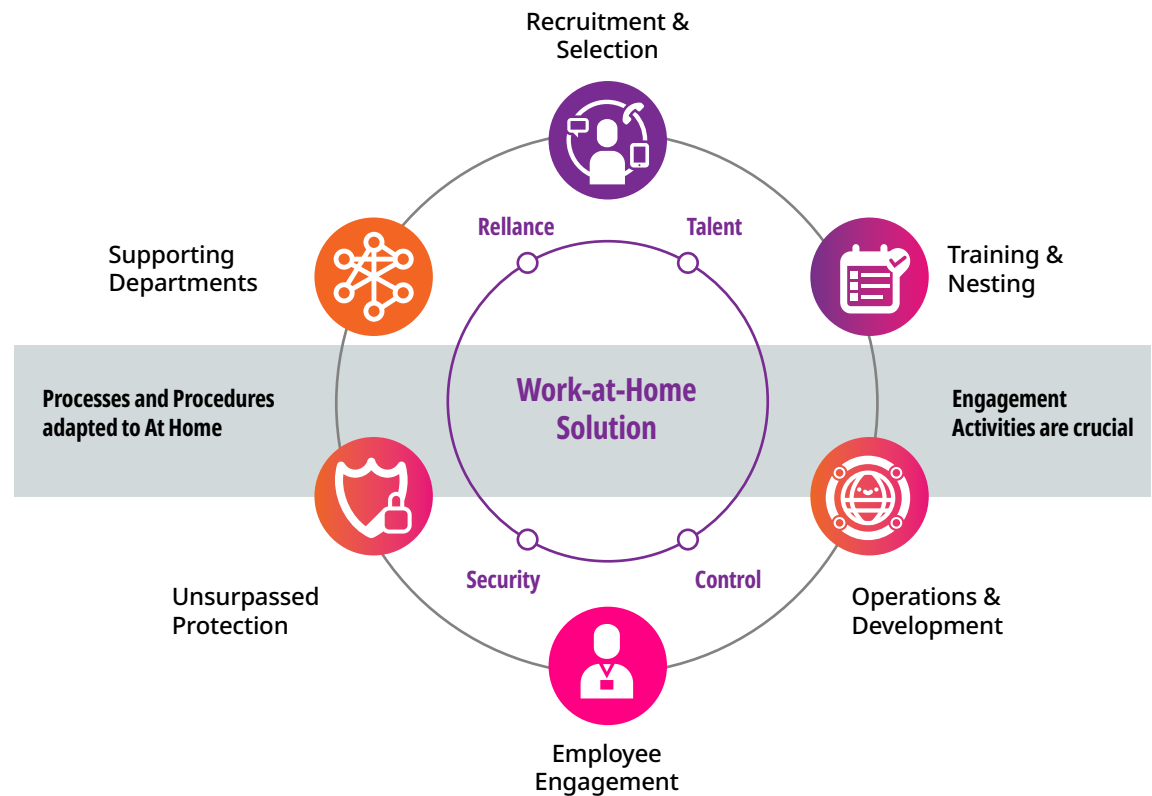
Operational processes for remote workers have the same consistency as on-site

## TOPS

**Teleperformance Operational Processes and Standards (TOPS)** is a proven, detailed, daily performance management process that ensures uniformity and quality management in our programs around the world. TOPS delivers excellent business results in any market, and increases productivity and quality by ensuring that all Teleperformance clients get exceptional service, everywhere.

## BEST

**Baseline Enterprise Standards for Teleperformance (BEST)** is Teleperformance's methodology for operational management. By defining, sharing, and implementing worldwide best practices, Teleperformance assures consistency and quality in all its operations in every location.



## Your Data Security is Top Priority

Typically, the strongest reservations companies express regarding deploying WAHA is around data security. However, with the breadth and depth of Teleperformance's experience in this area, we've established well-defined processes, stringent policies, proactive management methodologies, and cutting-edge technology specifically designed to prevent security breaches. Combined, these elements ensure a company culture that proactively seeks, anticipates, and acts on potential fraud and data breaches before they even happen.



**Frost & Sullivan** Competitive Strategy Innovation and Leadership Award for global best practices in compliance, security, and privacy



**HPE-IAPP** Privacy Innovation Award in the Privacy Operations category

### Risk Assessment

Teleperformance provides a risk profile of a company's industry that features the most common vulnerabilities faced and, through a more customized Security Risk Assessment, identifies threats more specific to the company to help prevent fraud, theft, and data breaches.

### Fraud Prevention

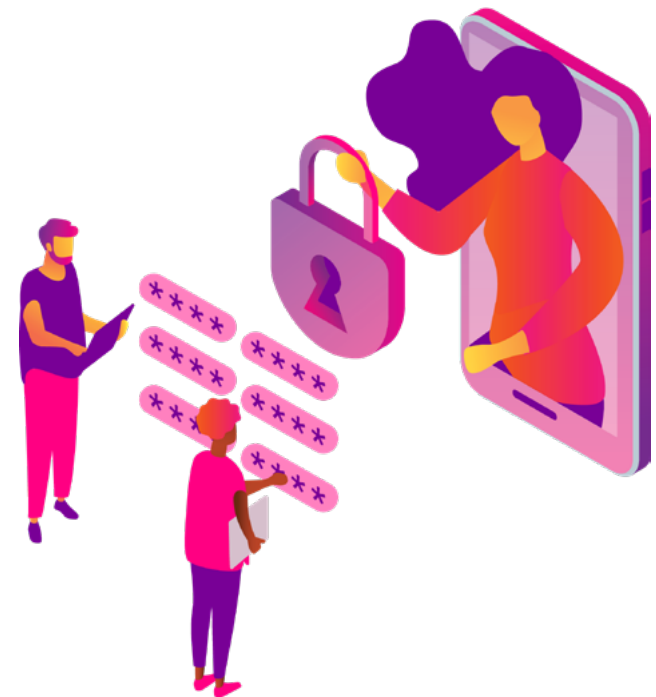
Through rigorous controls and policies, prevention is based on learnings and knowledge from not just one company or industry, but from hundreds of companies across dozens of industries. Teleperformance has the largest, best-equipped, and most awarded security work force in our industry.

### Patented Monitoring Tools and Technology

TP Observer, Teleperformance's patented security monitoring system, uses both AI and human review to identify suspicious or unusual activity in the contact center, and can be customized for specific environments.

### Strict Adherence to Compliance and Security Regulations

At Teleperformance, we adhere to all security standards and regulations, including Global Essential Compliance Security Policies (GECSPs). This group of policies governs Teleperformance's approach to security.



Our security structures are designed to address the main security concerns for a

## WORK-AT-HOME Environment

and mitigate the most common data breaches and fraud situations.

### HIGHLY SECURE ACCESS CONTROLS

End Point Inspection provided by Citrix Netscalers validates PC firewall configuration, security settings, and antivirus scans.

### ENCRYPTED DATA COMMUNICATION

Dedicated VPN appliances ensure encrypted data path from agent's PC to virtual machine in data center. Citrix Netscaler uses an ICA proxy with no data path except local agent-accessed ICA protocol for virtual environment entrance.

### NO DATA STORED LOCALLY

Data remains within data center and connections made from virtual machine that boots from "read only" hard drive with "redirected start menus" and no local or mapped storage. Reboot to default state after each connection.

### NOISE CONTROL

Agents are required to sign a zero noise tolerance form and supervisors monitor for any infractions to certify that agent is alone in their workspace at home. All infractions are reported to HR.



### TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Required authentication factors. Agents are issued unique identifiers, strong passwords, and duo-issued controls.

### LOCKDOWN DEVICES

Citrix remote desktop strategy ensures encrypted to virtual desktop in secure data center. It prevents local data transfers, cut and paste, screen prints, drive mapping, etc. Entire screen is taken over by virtual machine.

### CLEAN DESK ENFORCED

Policy reviewed during recruiting, orientation, and training that requires agents to sign a document stating they understand policies and expect frequent supervisor reviews.

## The Blueprint for Long-term Business Resilience is Here Today

Though an exceptionally difficult time for humanity on a global scale, COVID-19 taught us many, lasting lessons – and they're not all negative. Families everywhere were able to reconnect, and the global work force embraced technology at an unparalleled rate. Even the most technology-averse had to adopt new technology in order to remain connected to family, friends, educators, employers and colleagues.

Because of the many business benefits offered by incorporating work-from-home capabilities, and the rapid adoption of the technology during the global health crisis, we expect that it will have staying power in the Customer Experience industry. Companies will find it difficult to relinquish their new-found business agility, flexibility, and scalability. In parallel, many employees will also find the work-life balance and scheduling flexibility difficult to concede.



With so many benefits,  
and extremely few drawbacks,  
work-at-home solutions are here to stay.



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