



# 新肺炎大流行： 冠炎 1人1講

## COVID-19: IN and OUT

### Alternative Arrangements to Meetings under COVID-19: The Role of Telecommuting in Workplaces

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With the safe social distancing and prohibition on Group Gathering Regulations implemented in Hong Kong to prevent and control COVID-19, the operations of different companies and corporations were experiencing growing difficulties when conducting general meetings for stakeholders or members.

In order to minimize negative effects that can affect the companies' operations, "Telecommunication" became a common countermeasure in workplaces. Benefits by the advanced information technologies nowadays, the application of e-channel can provide a mean to maintain general meetings in workplaces regardless to distances, environment and times. Nevertheless, to implement arrangements for the employees and stakeholders, several difficulties and concerns had also been raised.

First, the application of telecommuting is highly relying on the network intensity during the meeting. Poor network connection

during meeting can create a disturbance and nauseous interruption in the middle of a discussion due to the stuttering conversations. This kind of interruptions can cause misunderstanding and miscommunication which will affect the procedures for decision making and voting.

Besides, cybersecurity threats and concerns will be increased when employees or meeting attendees work outside the office setting. Since not every people will have separate computers for personal and business usage, it is hard for the company to check the security software and measures (e.g. The activation of Firewall) in the personal computers when people use them to attend the meetings. If there are confidential information mentioned in the meeting, the risks of exposing such confidential information will increase.

To overcome above concerns, all meeting attendees should run a network test before each meeting, and the meeting host should distribute a clear agenda to all attendees prior to the meetings. This can make sure the attendees can understand the issues for discussion and they can stick to the flow. In addition, the meeting host can also record meetings' process as a video, and provide a password protected file to the attendees to allow them to review the meetings' contents at their convenience.

Moreover, companies that use telecommuting for meetings should make sure all attendees have used a VPN to connect to the office network. The meeting host should also create a secured room in the telecommuting software and enable the function that every personnel who want to join the meeting should receive a permission from the host first. All files being viewed in the system should be encrypted. The recorded videos should be password protected, and can only be



reviewed by the relevant personnel and within a limited period. During the meeting, attendees should also ensure that there are no other irrelevant personnel who can peek on your conversation, especially when you are working in an open area.

With the continuing pandemic of COVID-19, it is vital to maintain the operations of companies while complying the necessary safe social distancing measures with their employees and stakeholders. These alternative arrangements are not only helpful in allowing flexibility in conducting and organizing corporate meetings, but also providing security to the modesty of these meetings. All companies or corporations can also take this as a good opportunity for them to evaluate their contingency plans in operations and review their constitutional documents for the adoption of these measures in future. Eventually, we hope the COVID-19 pandemic will terminate very soon, and all these alternative arrangements will only be a temporary measure once and for all.

~The END~

