

Work-At-Home: A Paradigm Shift That Strengthened Business in Face of Pandemic



Costa Rica registered the first case of contagion by COVID-19 on March 6, 2020. A few days later, the government of the Republic imposed strong sanitary measures that included social distancing and reducing building and office capacity for workers to 50%.

SYKES' response was immediate; within days, 40% of the staff began working from home, and a month later, that percentage increased to 66%. The rest of the workforce who stayed in buildings relied on complex circuits and high-security schemes to handle information that did not make teleworking possible. SYKES then operated in five buildings in four locations, and those who kept working in person were strictly protected, cared for, and attended with protocols strengthened every day. Both efforts — the new sanitary measures announced by government authorities every week and the guidelines defined internally by SYKES — increased personnel protection, reducing the risk of possible contagion.

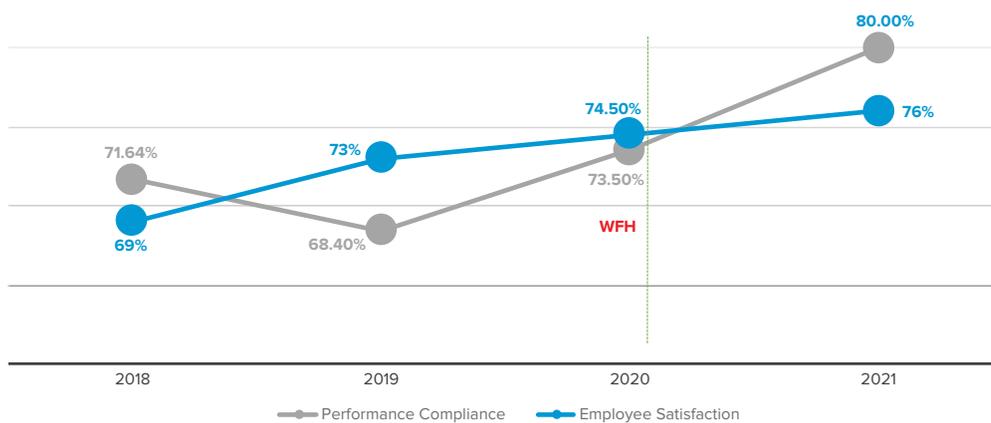
Additionally, as of April 2020, a few days after recreation and public service places were closed and driving restrictions were imposed, each worker who required it received door-to-door transportation before and after their shifts under strict health controls.

All English, technical, and new employee product training processes, which involved more than 1,000 people, also transitioned to the virtual model.

Remote work already existed before the pandemic as an option for certain types of tasks and collaborators; however, what seemed to be just a change of place to perform daily tasks turned out to be much more complex due to the new associated control processes.

Despite these challenges, SYKES adapted to the changes and strengthened the new model for continuity of operations, providing the necessary tools to handle calls, tasks, and other transactions. In addition, we provided the appropriate technology to guarantee the integrity of data and the security of sensitive information that each collaborator handles. The company also strengthened the platforms for business continuity in any eventuality associated with power outages or natural disasters, providing secure areas in the closest buildings to employees' homes, so commuting would be expeditious and agile if necessary.

The company ended a year of significant challenges with higher performance than previous years and better satisfaction levels from collaborators. Consequently, some clients have allowed keeping a percentage of the workforce teleworking permanently even after the sanitary crisis.



This way, amid so much adversity, SYKES managed to grow operations by 10%, generating more than 500 new jobs. Additionally, the organization established a new site outside the Great Metropolitan Area under a "prosperity hub" model. SYKES became this way, the first company in the corporate services sector to invest in developing talent to attract new businesses and support organic growth under a sustainability approach that allows greater efficiencies.

The company is moving forward with this new business model, understanding that times have changed. Teleworking allows the company to be more competitive and relevant for our clients, constructing higher added-value proposals that positively impact all stakeholders.



About one of the Covid Team members:

Oscar Agüero is the Business Information Manager at SYKES Costa Rica, with more than 14 years of experience in the service, sales, and financial industry. He graduated in Business Administration. His career has taken him from front-line roles to operations account management in sales, finance, and customer service. Oscar is also part of the ad hoc committee COVID-19 as a liaison from the operations side.

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