

## **Addressing ICT Business Challenges in the COVID-19 and Post COVID-19 World**

The COVID-19 Pandemic came at a time that no business can claim to have been fully prepared. While Businesses with a good Business Continuity Strategy may have been able to respond better, no Business envisaged the extent of impacts of COVID-19 on our national life, business and social life.

The ICT Business Challenges occasioned by COVID-19 may be summarized as follows:

- i. Changing Business priorities – The challenge of **how to keep ICT in alignment with changing business priorities** occasioned by the new realities
- ii. Changing Business Strategy – With Business going more Digital in value creation and delivery; and workforce adopting Digital approach to work, **as businesses, how do we increase investments in ICT to support the Digital Workforce and approaches**
- iii. Increased Business need for technology resources – How do we meet up **with increased resources by Business in a Cost-effective manner**
- iv. Pandemic Emergencies – **How do we optimize processes and Business Continuity Plan** to address the pandemic emergencies like staff sickness or even death.
- v. Supply Chain challenges – With disruptions occasioned by Lockdowns and other logistics challenges, **how do we manage the supply chain to sustain operations and to ensure values are delivered**
- vi. Workforce Challenges – **How do we address the new capacity requirements for the workforce**, i.e. training needs to adopt new processes and technology to create and deliver value
- vii. Increase Information Security needs – How do we address the influx of cyber criminals attacks? How do we address the security risks from remote working? How do we strengthen security defenses

These are few of the ICT business challenges in the COVID-19 and even after the COVID-19 pandemic world.

**Using Galaxy Backbone as a case study**, we were able to respond to the challenges in unique ways that not only ensure Galaxy remain a reliable service provider to its customers but also to ensure Governance in Nigeria continue to

run despite the challenges of COVID-19. Our interventions helped the Nigeria economy in no small ways as we were able to stimulate and keep going, Government to Government, Government to Citizens and Government to Business collaborations and communications.

Preparation - Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, Government has made huge investments through Galaxy in building out infrastructure which includes world class tier 3 certified data center capacity, a nationwide optical fibre backbone and limited terrestrial connectivity. This infrastructure is connecting all of government into a single network which we have named 1-Gov.Net. The network provides a common platform for government agencies to have access and consume IT services like email services, web hosting, IP telephony, video conferencing and telepresence.

At a time like this when physical contact is limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our platform has risen to the occasion by providing the ability for government to continue to function remotely through virtual meetings, including the Federal Executive Council meetings with the ability to share e-Memos. We continue to scale up our capacity and bring on stream services that will further enable Government to deliver on its mandates and expectations.

The first thing we did immediately COVID-19 get to Nigeria was to review our Business Continuity Plan to ensure we are able to work effectively and deliver values to our stakeholders despite the potential impacts of COVID-19. The Plan addresses how staff will sustain operations from Home, offices, and other point of presence. We made arrangement for logistic required for our personnel to work effectively. We also planned for necessary Supplies required to sustain operations, most especially, Diesels to power Data Centres in case of power outages. Our Plan also addressed how we respond if any staff is infected or died. We look at our processes and reviewed them in line with our Business continuity plan.

From operation point of view, we quickly move to ensure that our MDA customers are aware of how to optimize the system already deployed to them to work better in the 'new normal'. We created awareness on information security to ensure vigilance and preventive actions. We repositioned our services to facilitate the Weekly FEC meetings and conducted several tests that reveal needs

to increase Hardware and software resources of our infrastructure. This we were able to do within short period of time. With all these in place, we were able to support Federal Government to keep the Governance going unhindered and keep the Economy running.

Going forward, Organizations need to accept the reality of the ‘new normal’ and position their businesses and operations to adapt quickly to the new reality. They need to ensure continuity of critical business functions and improve their information security status. Organizations also need to prioritize investment in ICT to ensure Business can adapt to different situations.

As lot of things have changed during the pandemic and will remain so even after COVID-19 has passed, organizations need to adopt the positive impacts of the pandemic by building on the progress already made while also retaining the lessons learnt for future emergencies.

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