



While many companies were trying to sustain their existence, Zoom, the video conferencing platform grew immensely, during the pandemic. Zoom, which went public last year has doubled its customers and its stock value has grown four times this year. Zoom made \$328 million in revenue in the February–April quarter. It is more than double from the same time last year, when it made \$122 million. Schools, families, businesses have all been using Zoom, thus making it their ‘essential infrastructure’.

In sync with its meteoric growth, Zoom had to quickly step up operations and keep up with the market demand. Setting up operations during a pandemic, came with challenges. But Zoom successfully tackled the rocky road with its partner KMC Solutions, a shared service facilitator. In 2019, Zoom had (appx.) 1700 Employees. And as of today about 2500 employees together with KMC, Zoom set up operations in Manila, Philippines to support its growing Asian Market.

In a webinar with SSON, Larah Salonga-Teng, Country Manager, Philippines, Zoom Video Communications; Thomas Cragg, VP for Growth, KMC Solutions Philippines and John Chess, Managing Director, KMC Solutions, USA, talk about how they had to adapt quickly to new hiring processes, to succeed during a full-blown worldwide pandemic.

Here are some things they did, which helped them grow.

Actively spotting talent on social platforms

Zoom found it hard to find and tap the right people to set up its operation. Larah explains in the webinar that people didn't want to change jobs during a pandemic. So, if no one wanted to leave the house, how could you find/ recruit them? So, Zoom cut down and reworked its typical recruitment process. "Even before we wrote the job description or put it out, our hiring managers started combing the social platforms for talent, says Larah. Zoom was very creative in tapping talent.

They used a 5-step consultative approach with the help of KMC in the talent acquisition process. John from KMC, believes that it is the 'workforce' that makes a global services operation successful. "We put in tremendous effort in this area and we used the CATS system," he says. CATS is a customized hiring workflow system used by KMC for hiring.

Primary screening before actually meeting candidates

Hiring processes before Covid were fairly long. The recruiter would first schedule meetings and speak to the candidates. "And it would be a good 3 hours before we decided to go further," says Larah. Now, Zoom and KMC came up with filters and tests that they used at the beginning of the hiring process, to screen candidates. This saved them time.

"After that, all meetings and interviews with candidates were done virtually using the Zoom platform," says John.

The Philippines work law allows for a 6 months' probation period and Zoom made use of that. "When you hire in large numbers, it is quite possible that you may not have selected the right person," explains Larah. "And you may want to cut your ties early on. We wanted people who are a 'good add' to Zoom, to make the customers happy," she says. Zoom also leaned a lot on employee referrals. "We found that when employees are involved in building the team you have the skin in the game," explains Larah.

Reworking the benefits

The employee benefits needed to be enticing enough for the pandemic. For instance, if you have a health and medical plan and you tell employees that you will be able to avail it after 3 months on the job – "This is not gonna work," says Larah. "They need to have a health plan right away because of the pandemic. We

had to take a relook at sick leaves. If people get sick, they can't be earning their leaves, we have to give it to them right away! So, we had to find a compensation strategy that is reasonably attractive and at the same time sustainable because we are here for the long run."

"After selecting people, we used remote methodologies like the Hellosign app to sign employment agreements," explains John. "We have a partnership with Ph's best digital bank for payroll implementation."

Onboarding staff remotely

When you are onboarding people in 100s and everyone comes from different cultures, without knowing each other, you need to get them to gel in a short time span. "We partnered with Enboarder, an employee onboarding platform to create a customized onboarding solution, says John. And this app was used to facilitate the new candidate's interaction with our talent acquisition team, right from signing the contract up till his day of joining.

Creating flexible infrastructure

Along with KMC, Zoom implemented the Hub and Spoke (satellite office) system of work. (Hub and Spoke model are a cluster of small offices spread across various locations in a city instead of one big sprawling HQ). This allows an employee to use the office that is closest to his house. "It reduced employee travel time to work and also limits their exposure on public transport," explains Thomas. KMC also used a geo mapping software with employee addresses to guide employees to their closest workspace available. According to Larah, the Hub and Spoke model made sure that employees get enough 'face' time with people whom they would usually work with, in the office. Zoom also implemented a 'Work from home' model because of which they had access to a larger talent pool.

Larah also talks about some key enablers that helped Zoom succeed. First was the vision, that they would hire and they would succeed. It wasn't the original plan they had in mind before Covid, but they had a brilliant product that was and is extremely useful during the pandemic. Second was the partnership from KMC – their flexibility and adaptability fitted well with Zoom's needs. KMC provides premium office spaces and high performing teams to multinationals that want to set up their SSCs in the Philippines. KMC's model operates by eliminating the

management (middleman). Which means that the client directly interacts with the KMC service providers (employees) regarding their requirements. This model prevents the gaps in communication and the clients' needs are better understood. The model is customized as per the client's needs and they offer various variants.

And of course, the candidates/ employees themselves who were flexible, patient and wanted to be a part of Zoom.

This article is compiled as an excerpt from SSON's webinar: [How Zoom's Shared Services Teams in Manila adapted to the company's meteoric rise.](#)