Panacea's Systematic Approach for Operating in a Safe and Productive Manner During COVID-19 Response Measures

Introduction

COVID-19 and the resulting stay at home restrictions have drastically changed the way projects are executed and have brought virtual work environments to the forefront of productivity tools. Onsite project execution provides a certain degree of assurance that objectives and milestones are being met; but state by state restrictions, corporate policies, and self-quarantine orders can make onsite projects difficult, limited in scope, and sporadic. Activities like testing can also prove problematic especially in situations where the service provider, panel builder, general contractor, and end-user may all be in different locations.

In this current landscape, it is important to partner with companies that are prepared for these scenarios in every aspect of their business. It is not enough to work with a company that has online productivity tools and remote meeting capabilities. In order to remain productive during these times, partnering with top tier System Integrators that have remote capabilities in place for every aspect of their business operations is crucial for project success.

In this whitepaper we will explore the systems Panacea has in place for remote operations with regards to both internal processes and external project activities. Our company has been building systems and processes for remote work since the installation of our hybrid-cloud project architecture almost a decade ago. As we expanded our offices in other regions over the past three years a large focus was placed on incorporating all our systems and processes into this virtualized space, updating our Quality System to account for remote work, and creating standardized processes for remote activities. This includes an emphasis on cyber-security, data backups, and practices for connecting to client systems remotely.

Infrastructure

The success of any structure depends largely on the strength of its foundation. In this case, the main factor of remote operational success hinges on a robust virtualized infrastructure. Panacea has a private hybrid-cloud architecture that connects each one of our offices together. It acts as a central storage location for critical project documents with tiered access based on project relevance. It also acts as a repository for our project

virtual images, plant simulations, and testing images allowing on-demand access and image retrieval of historical virtual machine snapshots.

We have several redundancy and backup mechanisms in place to keep project operations running smoothly through any potential downtime event.

Productivity Tools
Productivity tools are essential to remote collaboration and communication. Panacea implemented robust productivity tools several years ago. These tools increased our ability to communicate and work on projects remotely as a team. We have frequent remote team meetings that allow our team members to connect and share ideas in the absence of in-person meetings. Additionally, Panacea has extensive time and expense tracking tools with requisite oversight measures and push notifications to verify accurate project time and expense reporting prior to invoicing.

Personnel Training
Personnel training is essential for company success. Whether this is training of new resources or crucial ongoing training for experienced resources, training helps keep technical prowess sharp and ensures our team operates utilizing the same set of standards and Quality expectations that led to Panacea being named System Integrator of the Year by Control Engineering and Plant Engineering Magazines.

Over the past three years, we have worked to place the entirety of our new hire training program within our virtual infrastructure. During this process we virtualized our recurring and ongoing training as well. It has allowed us to execute training remotely and utilize our productivity tools for personal training sessions whenever they are required.

These systems and processes have helped empower our engineers to maintain project execution on a similar set of standards, stay up to date on technical training, and expand their knowledge of platforms under a remote setting. We have taken this a step further by implementing internal systems that allow us to track resource skillsets as well as direct and manage targeted training based on current individual skillset and project roadmaps.

Projects
In addition to the use of virtual images and controlled file storage, our projects have standards that dictate their onboarding, kickoff, execution, reporting, and closeout. Our productivity tools are employed during execution of the project, and detailed weekly and monthly reporting templates are utilized to provide clients with ongoing status updates, resource assignments, and issues lists. These reports help provide insights into the health of projects, and chronicle progress and issue resolution as we move towards project closeout.

Upon project completion and final invoicing, the project is archived in our secure virtual infrastructure according to industry accepted data handling procedures and client specific record retention policies. These processes have allowed us to complete projects of all

sizes remotely and have been used to onboard new clients, even during the current stay at home mandates.

Testing
Testing is a critical portion of every project. Whether it is an SFAT, FAT, SAT, etc., testing helps ensure successful startups and long-term project success. Testing to strict quality requirements has always been a project priority for Panacea, but we have had to take extra steps to ensure a safe and healthy testing process while maintaining social distancing.

Our partner panel shop has implemented a rigorous screening protocol that includes daily questionnaires and health assessments before anyone is allowed in the building. These protocols apply not only to their employees, but any individual entering their building. In addition to this, they have designated areas for each test that are controlled as to who can enter or interact in that area. They require masks and other relevant PPE to be worn, and ensure social distancing is maintained.

In addition to our panel shop's regulations we have put technology in place to facilitate remote FATs for clients that are unable or prefer not to travel for testing. This includes remote viewing of both hardware and software. Even before the pandemic many Panacea software FATs were conducted remotely eliminating the need to travel.

Personnel Safety
We have implemented a companywide office procedure to allow for specific resources to work in the office when state and federal regulations allow such operations. Some of our projects necessitate project teams working together for short periods of time, and our office safety procedure is meant to facilitate this while minimizing personnel contact.

This office policy includes:
- Designated work areas that are distanced from each other and cleaned after every use.
- Closure of communal spaces, such as the lunchroom, until state and federal regulations are lifted.
- Social Distancing guidelines.
- A rotational schedule for resources requesting office access to limit the number of personnel on premises.
- Use of PPE.
- Temporary suspension of all teaming, social, and volunteer activities until state and federal regulations are updated.

In addition to office personnel safety policies, we have implemented external safety policies meant to protect our clients and comply with client company specific regulations.

The external policy includes:
- Postponement of non-critical travel and social gatherings.
- A central location for communication of up to date federal regulations, and individual state regulations where we conduct business.
- Communication of updates for client specific regulations to relevant personnel.

In addition to the above policies, we maintain recommended quarantine procedures for any exposed individuals, and alert clients when there may be potential project impacts. We have directed our project teams to develop contingency plans in advance to try and eliminate or minimize these impacts.

Long Term Support Options
Though we have taken extensive steps to facilitate productive remote work, we recognize that there are certain situations where site support is necessary. We have local resources that can assist with onsite activities that comply with state, federal, and company specific guidelines out of our Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland and Massachusetts locations. We continue to hire for all four locations as we transition our Boston and Maryland offices to long term physical locations.

COVID-19 Response Efforts
Many of our clients are experiencing a short-term resource shortage or need consultation on projects as resources are spread thin. To speak with one of our Customer Success Managers to get the help you need quickly please email assist@panaceatech.com or talk directly to our Customer Success Team at 267-421-5300 extension 105. Our Customer Success Team has been authorized to provide immediate engineering assistance to clients in need. Resources required for COVID-19 related projects will automatically be prioritized.

Conclusion
Panacea has had robust systems and procedures in place for many years that have fostered growth of our offices and have provided certainty around productive project execution while remote. With the addition of COVID-19 specific procedures and alteration of existing standards, we are successfully executing projects for our clients during a time shaped by stay at home orders. Our systems and procedures coupled with Panacea's award-winning culture of hard work and innovation provide our clients with the assurance their projects can be executed in a timely, productive, and safe manner. If you have specific questions on our operations, procedures, or systems please contact our President Abhijit Jog directly at joga@panaceatech.com. Our team is trained, prepared, and ready to continue executing projects as the COVID-19 situation develops and the need for a remote work force continues.