

COVID-19 MITIGATIVE INITIATIVES BY MEMBER

Omantel COVID-19 Initiatives

JUNE 2020

www.samenacouncil.org

Mitigating COVID-19 impact through innovation, dedication and agility



Difficult times bring with them different challenges - challenges that test, but also make us dive into our adaptability, resources, technological prowess, innovative thinking and drive to not just surpass them, but emerge bigger, better and more resilient. Omantel, the Sultanate of Oman's first and integrated telecommunications services provider, has continued to push the boundaries of ICT innovations and making them more adaptive during these times of the coronavirus pandemic, which is testing the resilience of individuals and businesses alike.

The company has been enabling Oman's digital society to flourish, allowing new ways of doing business and delivering a world of information, business solutions, news and entertainment.

Omantel, which sees itself as a people's company, has been leveraging its

**With you,
for you &
for Oman**



humane trait, future vision, robust state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure and an inclusive and caring attitude to provide the administrative, commercial, healthcare, educational, economic, and social apparatuses of Oman's national machinery with its evolutionary solutions. These services have touched lives and functions at every level of these apparatuses and of the people of Oman, and ensured continuity in connectivity, operations, business and education. Omantel has emerged as a true business partner and enabler, an innovative market leader and a compassionate comrade, who has led by example in delivering its overall national role during these challenging circumstances brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic.

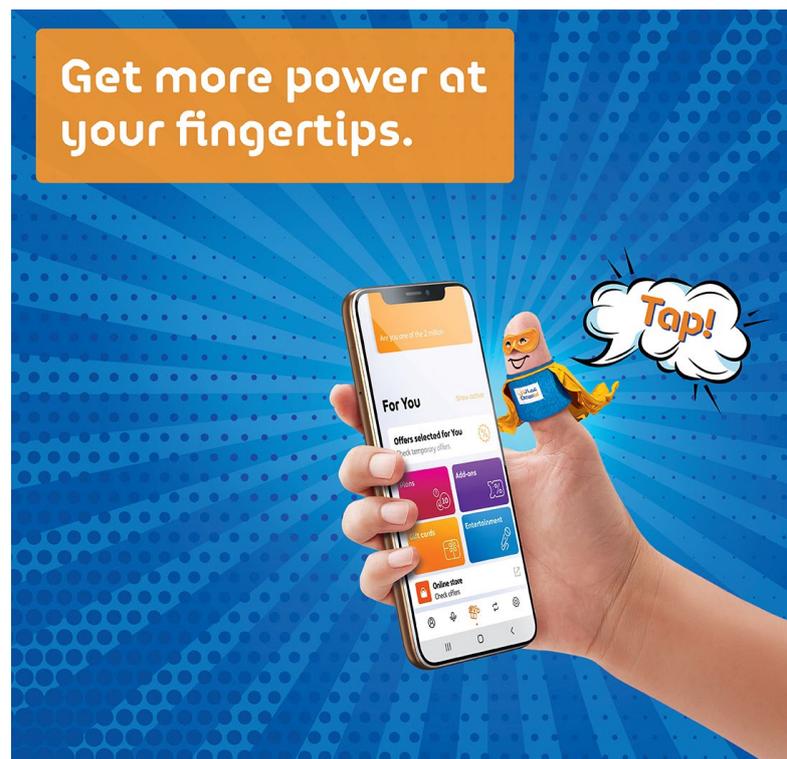
Omantel has innovatively continued on the path it has forged with visionary planning, infrastructure and emotional as well as dutybound investment in keeping the people of Oman connected, enhancing the digital experience of millions of its customers and business partners in Oman and in the region.

How nations - as economies and as peoples - envisioned digital transformation before the pandemic has changed. The future of digital transformation has already arrived, calling for immediate changes in the way nations - as economies and as individuals - function. Omantel has been helping all sectors ease into the newer, faster, more technologically advanced and user-friendly solutions with its services.

TACKLING COVID-19 CHALLENGES WITH STRATEGY, INNOVATION AND AGILITY

In the times of COVID-19, digital services have become the lifeline across sectors. Thinking ahead has helped Omantel meet challenges from COVID-19 in a smooth manner, while adding new features and platforms to its wide services that touch every sector of the economy. These measures have been playing a vital part in maintaining the equilibrium for growth by contributing solutions for healthcare, business, education, banking etc.

Guided by the 3.0 transformation strategy, Omantel has continued to innovate, streamline, and revolutionize its digital smart home and business services. Positioned as the digital partner of choice in the consumer arena as well as for public and private sector businesses.



Its ICT infrastructure backed by strong international connectivity has helped Omantel effectively manage the operations in these unprecedented times when newer challenges bring forth newer demands that require fusing market understanding with infrastructural resources, technical manpower and seamless solutions.

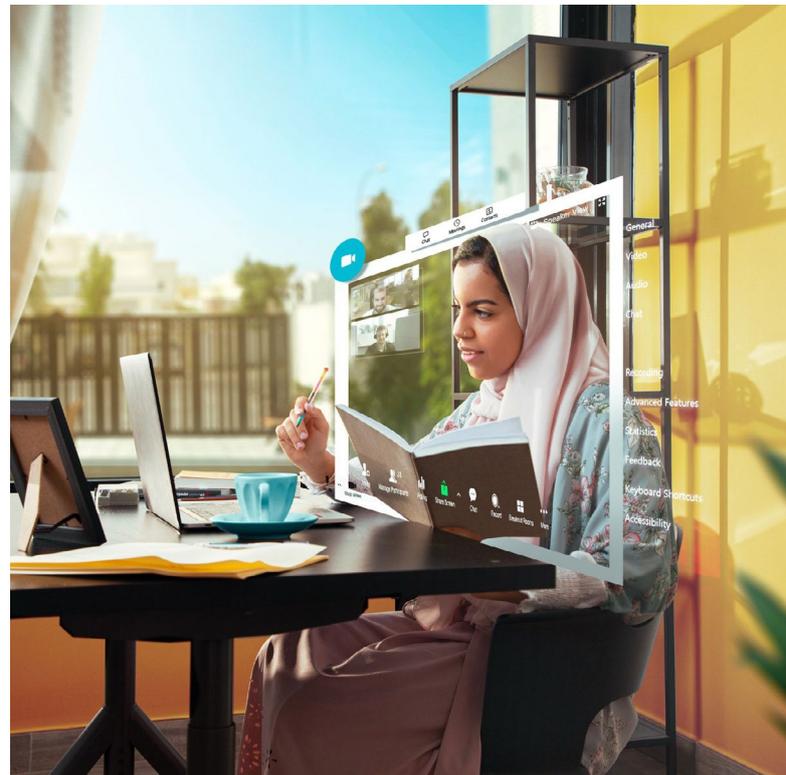
The slew of productivity enhancing measures include its new and updated App, being just a call away for customers 24 x7, use of digital services, assistance in daily delivery needs, healthcare, education and more importantly, a deeper, more personal engagement with stakeholders.

A PERSONAL CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Omantel’s power is the people it caters to. Every community, every subscriber is like a member of one very extended family. Hence, when difficult times emerged, Omantel felt the need to reach out each and every customer to share awareness on the pandemic while also making sure they remained connected with loved ones during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Subtle reinforcing of the Stay at Home message using icons on the network ID, advisory notes for dial tones, SMSs etc. have acted as constant reminders to the COVID-19 risk, with the number of awareness SMS exceeding 58 million messages.

Ramadan 2020 was a different one. As Oman adjusted to this new and

ever-shifting situation, Omantel’s commitment stayed with the people - with the campaign “With You, For You and For Oman”. The message was simple yet strong: This too shall pass. Though people were not able to gather with loved ones to celebrate the Holy Month, they could still come together virtually to make this month a truly blessed one, because together we share the same fate. #تشاركنا_المصير. Omantel’s campaign aimed to spread hope and positivity across the country and the entire region, reassuring people that even the most challenging times will come to pass. The song reminds every Omani that we have the power to unite, comfort and support each other, to break our fast together, laugh, love and live together, despite the distance between us. It has been viewed over 1,647,374 times on YouTube.



OMANTEL'S NETWORK UPGRADES HELP MEET INCREASED DEMANDS DURING PANDEMIC

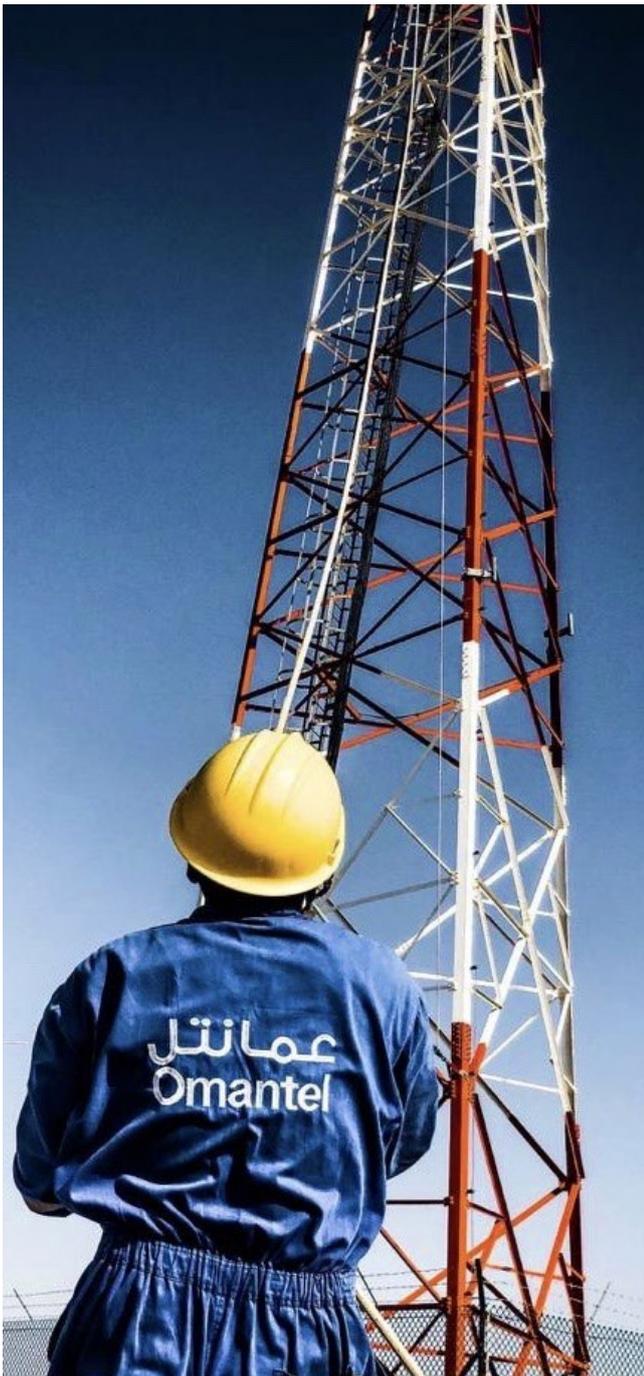
The demand for various telecom services has seen an exponential increase since the pandemic as individuals and enterprises – government and private – switched to a more flexible yet productive way of functioning. Remote working facilities

needed added network upgrades and Omantel rose to the occasion like a true digital partner.

In response to these shifts in demand, Omantel has proactively upgraded its networks, increased the capacities of its Internet facilities, and employed modern digital technologies to provide the best services to customers. These measures by Omantel have resulted in a remarkable increase in the use of its various telecom services and in turn, empowered its customers, from government agencies and major companies, to adapt to the requirements of the new situation of work from home. This has complemented the overall global public health motto: Stay Home, Stay Safe.

Significant increase in service demand met through exceptional network performance, upgrades and innovative solutions

Omantel's response in dealing with challenges resulting from precautionary measures included expansion of fixed-line and mobile networks (3G, 4G and 5G) by increasing the capacity of existing sites, adding new sites and increasing Internet capacities. During the period from last February until date, Omantel added 77 new 5G sites, upgraded 42 sites from 3G to 4G in addition to adding 26 new sites to its 3G and 4G networks. Omantel also increased the capacity of 23 4G sites in various governorates of the Sultanate.



OMANTEL - AS A RELIABLE BUSINESS PARTNER

Omantel has been backed by its preparedness on technical and operational fronts to mitigate these new challenges. The company had in 2018 and 2019 implemented a pilot project to assess the viability and productivity

infrastructure, while the telecom giant has also been supporting Muscat Municipality by enabling their Call Centre employees to work from home from the first weeks of the pandemic outbreak. Other than this, it has lent its technical and infrastructural resources for distance learning needs of the Ministry of Education.

Our commitment to support your business is non-stop.



of working from home. This experience has helped it design solutions for public and private entities and at the same time, not compromise on the productive output of its own manpower. Omantel’s technical efficacy and immediate action to meet high traffic has shown a nationwide increase in usage, round-the clock availability of all services as well as network enhancements and capacity boost.

To cite an example, the Ministry of Health’s crucial COVID-19 response is being backed by Omantel’s call centre

OMANTEL - AS A BUSINESS ENABLER

As COVID-19 has plunged the world into a bear market and slipped oil into negative territory, many businesses around the globe are struggling to navigate through the pandemic which has left governments with the stark choice between easing the lockdown or bear the brunt of the economic downturn. Omantel has supported multiple public organizations in enabling their e-services.

Through all this Omantel has ensured the availability of online subscription and delivery of all services. It has enhanced

Cisco Webex FREE for 3 months!



operations of 24x7 Call Centers by injecting extra resources and has bolstered its own Omantel App with additional features that bring its ICT and digital strength as a vital tool to businesses.

Omantel has fully integrated its services to deliver a seamless, end-to-end digital experience for the enterprise customers, and it is looking at multiple smart solutions to help organizations digitize and optimize their operations.

Understanding how important it is for corporations as well as small businesses to stay operational and tide over the limits enforced by the pandemic, Omantel extended free Webex service for three months in cooperation with Cisco; the Microsoft Teams Free Trial has been offered for six months as part of Omantel partnership with Microsoft while the Free Trial for IGTIMAATI, an Omani startup with an in-country hosted collaboration and conferencing platform has been offered for four months. All of

these offerings, along with many others like audio conference, mobile IVR, Contact Center as services (CCaS) were deployed and extended to enable the public and private organizations to work seamlessly from home and build on their operational excellence.

In addition to this, Omantel was able to help Muscat Depository & Clearance Company (MCD) and Blockchain Solutions and Services (BSS) in hosting the listed companies AGMs electronically for the first time in the Sultanate.

Free Microsoft Teams Subscription to facilitate work from home



OMANTEL: A MARKET LEADER AND INNOVATOR

Omantel’s agility in taking the right measures to deliver quick, but highly efficient out-of-the-box solutions while following the health norms of social distancing and Stay at Home advisory have been a boon for individuals and businesses alike. To individuals, having services at their fingertips is not merely about comfort or convenience during the pandemic, but a way of life to protect themselves and their loved ones. Omantel understood this absolute need to serve customers and partners remotely and deliver services at their doorstep during these exceptional circumstances.

This approach towards service delivery has enabled Omantel customers to receive New Baqati Post-paid SIM, Home Internet Services, New Hayyak and SIM Replacement among other essential services at their doorstep. Additionally, Omantel recently launched its official WhatsApp service that is fully integrated with its digital assistant, Noor, an Artificial Intelligence-powered chatbot that

attends to various customer requests.

To encourage and allow subscribers to get essential supplies without exposing themselves to the risk of COVID-19 infection, Omantel has offered exclusive Grocery Delivery service to members of Makasib Loyalty Programme. The service provides free delivery for online purchases of all family needs, from groceries and home care items to electronic devices.

Meanwhile, the ‘eFloos’ digital wallet, launched in March 2019, has emerged as a pioneering technological innovation in financial transactions industry during the pandemic, having enabled thousands of people make easy local transactions and also make remittances to India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Nepal, UK, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and the Philippines. Throughout the pandemic times eFloos has seen continuous upgrades such as improved application, better user interface and addition of new features, countries and languages. User numbers have crossed 12,000 while 547 trademarks now accept payment through eFloos.

Now send money abroad securely from eFloos app at your convenience.



OMANTEL: A RESPONSIBLE CORPORATE CITIZEN

Omantel has been doing its bit for the community through its CSR initiatives during this time of the pandemic. Although not on the frontlines like our brave warriors in hospitals, the police force and workers of the essential services sector, Omantel has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to meet the demands and also show its gratitude for the sacrifices these people are making for their call of duty.

Conducting business with a humane touch, Omantel has offered to provide free minutes and data to medical teams working on the frontlines, provide free calls to all customers and upgrade of some services, free unlimited calls for postpaid, prepaid consumer customers as well corporate customers. Besides, it has allowed SMEs companies three months' deferment in bill payments.

As precautions, testing and screening assume great importance in the curb of the disease, Omantel was among the first



corporates to procure 24,000 COVID-19 testing kits in addition to its support to provide locally 3D printed masks and ventilator splitters to the Ministry of Health.

In April 2020, Omantel joined hands with The Royal Hospital to launch Virtual Clinics in the Sultanate that enable patients to communicate with doctors who can virtually assess the patients' condition and develop his/ her treatment plan.

On another front, Omantel used its large subscriber base to call for donation for the fight against COVID-19. Oman has been spending large sums on testing and treatment of every suspected case, irrespective of nationality or status. Any financial aid towards this health drive is aimed at strengthening the healthcare apparatus and ensure that every suspected case gets screened and treated. Omantel also offered short code service to facilitate public donations for COVID-19 Fund.

OMANTEL'S SPECIAL FOCUS ON EDUCATION

To ensure that Oman's future human resource - its children and youth - are not deprived of the opportunity to continue gaining knowledge due to closure of schools and colleges, Omantel has allowed free access to educational websites of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education. Laptops provided to the Ministry of Education has enabled teachers to continue their e-classes remotely.

Under a new partnership with the Ministry of Education to introduce G Suite for Education to all schools of Oman, G Suite for Education, which targeted over 45,000 students across Oman, served as a practical option and is a breakthrough in the educational system. It is a suite of free Google apps tailored specifically for schools, including the ability to create documents, attend classes remotely, receive and submit assignments, and even collaborate on an interactive canvas.

Users can login from any computer or mobile device to access class assignment, course materials and feedback. By using this new platform, education in the Sultanate is envisaged to enter a new era of distance learning opportunities.

G Suites banks on Omantel's 95% country-wide broadband coverage being provided in Oman through different technologies (fixed, mobile and recently 5G networks).

HEALTHCARE AT THE FOREFRONT: OMANTEL DOES ITS BIT

In recognition of the efforts of frontline healthcare works, Omantel has empowered them with 3,000 local minutes and 30GB internet data free of charge. Continuing its support to government and trying to fill any gap in services towards healthcare, the company used its 3D printing capabilities at the Omantel Innovation Centre and under its campaign 'With You, For You and For Oman', launched the "3D Ambulance" initiative.





Under the 3D Ambulance drive, Omantel Innovation Centre, in partnership with the Ministry of Health 3D-produced medical equipment such as medical masks and surgical mask clips as per approved specifications. This came as a vital contribution when sourcing opportunities have become limited due to the increased global demand and suspension of air travel.

Putting its shoulder to the wheel, Omantel yet again leveraged its technological resources to develop an artificial intelligence chatbot for the Ministry of Health for Call Centre collaboration.

OMANTEL'S SUPPORT TO ENABLE "WORK FROM HOME"

As COVID-19 continues to weigh on industries and societies globally, Omantel has extended the support to its customers by offering a wide range of ICT products and services in order to encourage government and private organizations to adopt 'Work from Home' principles, improve their operational

activities, and expedite the combating of the pandemic while ensuring the safety of their employees.

A SERVICE BACKBONE THAT IS THE OMANTEL CALL CENTRE

Call centers play a pivotal role in serving customers in normal circumstances. Their importance is even doubled in exceptional circumstances like what the world is currently facing.

Omantel Call Center, the first support line for customers and one of the largest call centers in the Sultanate, receives ten million calls every year enquiring about the company's various services and products - an average of more than 20,000 calls a day.

Considering the importance of maintaining the expected level of service by customers and since the beginning of the spread of COVID-19, Omantel considered alternative solutions that can help the company deal with the new challenges posed by the disease, especially those

related to social distancing and reducing the number of employees in various sites of the company as per the directives issued by the Supreme Committee. As a result, Omantel's Call Center has been receiving an increasing number of calls since COVID-19 started to impact the country, which exceeded 35,000 calls a day.

Omantel empowered the largest number of its employees to work remotely from home, ensuring their safety while maintaining the services rendered to customers. The new approach included call centre employees whose nature of work requires immediate response to customers' enquiries and requests, a key function especially after the closure of Omantel outlets. Omantel Call Center has been provided with state-of-the-art facilities and devices including computers, mobile phones and required software enabling the Call Centre team to work remotely from home without compromise on the quality of the service

provided to customers.

The number of hours worked from home exceeded 9,684 hours per week. Moreover, within the framework of its social responsibility, Omantel has endeavored to benefit from its accumulated experience and technical capabilities in providing support to a number of government institutions working in the front lines to confront the pandemic, the most important of which are the Ministry of Health and Muscat Municipality. Omantel Call Center has been equipped to serve as a parallel call centre for the Ministry of Health's main call centre working hand by hand with the main call centre. In addition, Omantel state-of-the-art solutions enabled Muscat Municipality staff to work remotely from home.

Omantel will continue serving people, keeping them connected, helping businesses tackle the unprecedented challenge through innovation, dedication and agility. ■

