In general, we have a positive first impression on the team motivation and solidarity in these exceptional times. Our employees understand the importance of adhering to the quarantine regulations and it really paid off that we switched all office staff to laptops last year. As such, we have the technical infrastructure in place to allow for working from home, and everyone shows the right discipline and attitude when participating in conference calls and responding to emails. The largest issue in our retail industry at the moment is that even for the most disciplined wholesale employee, after one week of home office, there are not enough value added tasks/projects left for the employee to be working on. Our retail outlets are closed for customers, our counterparts in HQ in Germany are in home office or on leave, all marketing events and sales campaigns have been cancelled, we closed our Training Centre, and we imposed a business travel ban on our staff. Therefore, we decided to use the opportunity and we sent most of our staff that accumulated a lot of old vacation days from previous years into paid vacation leave. This is mutually beneficial: given the variable, performance-based salary component, our employees receive more vacation salary than they would get paid out as regular salary in this month, and we as a company can reduce our vacation days, as we will need all hands on deck when the COVID-19 crisis is over. At the moment, it is enough to keep the basic operations alive with the few team members who have no vacation days left from previous years, who manage these tasks successfully from home.

Starting March 16, 2020, we implemented home-office mode for more than 80% of our office team. At the same time, we defined the key functions that should be at the office on a regular or shift basis, such as IT, accounting, and supply chain. For representatives of these functions we provide corporate taxi, which are regularly disinfected and safe for the employees, one employee in the car only.

We have also cancelled all face-to-face meetings and customer interaction activities and switched our communication with the team and customers to telephone or online regime. Personal meetings are allowed only in the most critical cases and each of them should be approved by line managers. Even our field team – and we have here about 70 people, who mainly support Agricultural business – are limited in travelling and keep contact with the customers by phone and video chat so as to support Ukrainian farmers with the upcoming agricultural season.

While implementing home-office in our company we maintain a strong virtual contact with our customers and continue to monitor all business vital processes, such as shipments, orders, payments, technical support, etc. Today, the key task of any BASF Ukraine employee – being it a Sales manager, a Marketing assistant or a Managing director – is to ensure social distancing while securing business continuity. A week ago, with 80% of our team working from home, we thought that this may be rather challenging. Still, after one week from home office we see almost regular business activity – orders are coming, deliveries are done, money are collected – things are running on a relatively good level. Nevertheless, social distancing will become very challenging if continued for a long time, with very negative impact for the economy.

And the main lesson learned – stay safe, focus on things that you can control and change, take personal responsibility for the business result, communicate clearly, timely and openly.

Erik Berning
CEO, AWT Bavaria Ukraine

Vitalii Bulda
CEO, Bosch Ukraine

Tiberiu Dima
Managing Director BASF Ukraine
As of today most of SEB Ukraine’s employees work remote from alternative location or from home. A bank has a lot of requirements, especially related to IT, security, and communication that needs to be taken care of when shifting to remote work.

Since our office is located close to Maidan we gained some experience of working partly remote during the revolution 2014, so this time it went relatively smooth to transfer our office into a remote mode.

Remote work – business as usual!
We have officially switched to remote work already on the 12.03.2020, being one of the first (if not the first) major law firm in Ukraine declaring the corporate quarantine and introducing the office ban. Given however the nature of our business (international clients and global deals, time difference, business trips across the globe, conference calls on the way with multiple jurisdictions, complex multi-jurisdictional litigations & litigations etc.) we have been traditionally building up our infrastructure in a way to allow us to be 24/7 accessible by our clients in a secure mode. Having said this, while switching to home-mode we actually haven’t really felt any difference from the infrastructure angle and business seems to be as usual these days.

The remote regime has become a real challenge for conservative clients, who normally do not rely on internet and always wanted to have face-to-face meetings. 1 week of quarantine has made a huge progress here and I was amazed to encounter a lot of my “old-timer” clients greatly using the contemporary technologies.

The situation is much worse with state, law-enforcement authorities and courts, which for several reasons (including but not limited to sensitivity of information) are still not so advanced to totally switch to the new reality, which has brought a lot of unexpected hardships and dramatically stopped related activities. As for now the courts start postponing the hearings for indefinite period of time, which seems to become a real snowball, trigger huge overload of the courts in the future and create serious issues with justice, – we do hope, that this issue will be solved in the nearest future to enable remote hearings.

Distributed work is not new to NiX. We have partners around the globe so we’ve worked remotely for years. Before the quarantine we prepared our tech infrastructure and all communication and collaboration tools for the new setup, ran load tests, increased security measures, asked our people what they needed to work from home effectively. Therefore, we were fully prepared and all our teams smoothly switched to remote work.

Also, we have a business continuity plan in place and a strategy group that continuously monitors the situation and takes the necessary steps to ensure we work as efficiently as ever and provide quality service to our clients.

To stay as connected and productive as ever, we run a series of internal online meetups where we share best practices for a well-structured remote work, maintaining a good emotional state, etc.

Our main priority is to keep our employees safe so we had an idea of supplying them with COVID-19 test kits. Moreover, we wanted to join the fight against the virus and started a fundraising campaign where NiX employees can buy test kits for themselves and at the same time donate tests to the local hospitals.

These are challenging times for everyone and we need to act fast, adapt to the changes and stay optimistic.

Andrew Pavliv
NiX Founder and CEO