



# Connection and Community in a Distributed Workforce

**EY**

Building a better  
working world

# Megatrends video

PLACEHOLDER – VIDEO TO BE SENT OVER AS SEPARATE FILE TO  
HCI/FREUDS

# Key future based themes driven by COVID-19

Societal, customer and employee behaviors and expectations have shifted

Transformation is now about revolution, not evolution

Leadership has never been more needed or so remote

The role of HR is broader, more important and more digital

Work, as both a *place* and an *activity*, has changed

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In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, employees remain **positive** about their work.

## POLLING QUESTION

Do you think that statement (*In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, employees remain **positive** about their work*) is true of your organization?

- Yes, to a large extent
- To some extent
- No





Help your people and your organization *survive*, *connect*, *contribute* and *thrive* in these challenging and uncharted times.

Organizational performance research, the science of human motivation and in-the-trenches experience can help provide actionable ideas and solutions for both organizations and their people to thrive in the age of COVID-19.



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Firms should prepare for a workforce that will be looking for more **empathy, authenticity and transparency from their leaders**, a skill set that leaders need to be able to execute virtually.

# Organizations with leaders prepared to lead in this transformative time have been outpacing everyone else

## Pre-COVID



of CEOs are focused on driving the digital transformation of their business

Source: CEB/Gartner, Gartner 2018 CEO and Senior Business Executive Survey, 2018



of leaders feel prepared to operate in a highly digital environment

Source: EY, DDI, The Conference Board, Global Leadership Forecast, 2018



say they have a healthy pipeline of leaders ready to lead the future of the business

Source: EY, DDI, The Conference Board, Global Leadership Forecast, 2018

## Post-COVID

Leadership has never been more needed or has been so virtual

How do you satisfy our deep human need for connection and community in a virtual environment?

How do you lead with empathy in a digital world?

What new mindsets and capabilities do our leaders need?

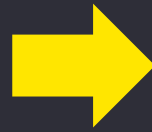
How do you identify, cultivate and develop new leaders in this environment?

What data can you access or, create for your leaders to understand what your workforce needs from its leaders?



# Leaders are using lessons learned to deliberately reshape & evolve their culture for the future

A shock to the system has created an opportunity for behaviour change



Necessity for new ways of working has proven we can shift quickly



It is time to capitalize by deliberately prioritizing and planning specific sustained behavior changes



Change happens when a **shock to the system** occurs as it opens us up to doing things differently... making now the time to make deliberate behavioral shifts that we need and will last.

- Continued to delight our customers
- Preserved the quality of our products and services
- Kept a focus on being efficient as challenge after challenge came our way
- Continued to collaborate, but in new ways



- Put the physical and psychological safety needs of our people at the center of our business decisions
- Understood and responded with real empathy, with authentic vulnerability
- Adjusted to flexible working times

- Took steps and time out of the decision making process
- Let go of distrust that people would stay productive on their own time/ micro-management
- Dispelled the need for every meeting to be in-person

## Keep

Double down on the values and cultural behaviors that distinguish who you are

## Start

Start the behaviors you've known you need to both deliver on your strategy and fulfil your people, and that this time of change affords you to try

## Stop

Stop the behaviors that have present unnecessary risk and that have been holding you back from realizing your collective potential

Meanwhile we're in a protracted virtual world - creating new challenges in living our values and modeling behaviors – making certain practices more critical

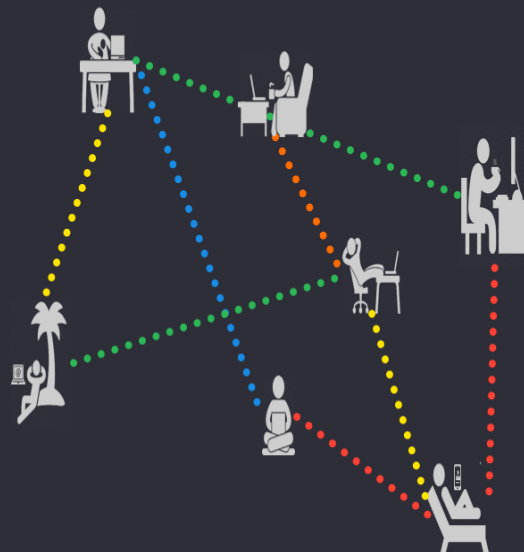
## THE WAY IT WAS

Co-located working and physical interactivity grounded the development of our social norms



## THE WAY IT IS

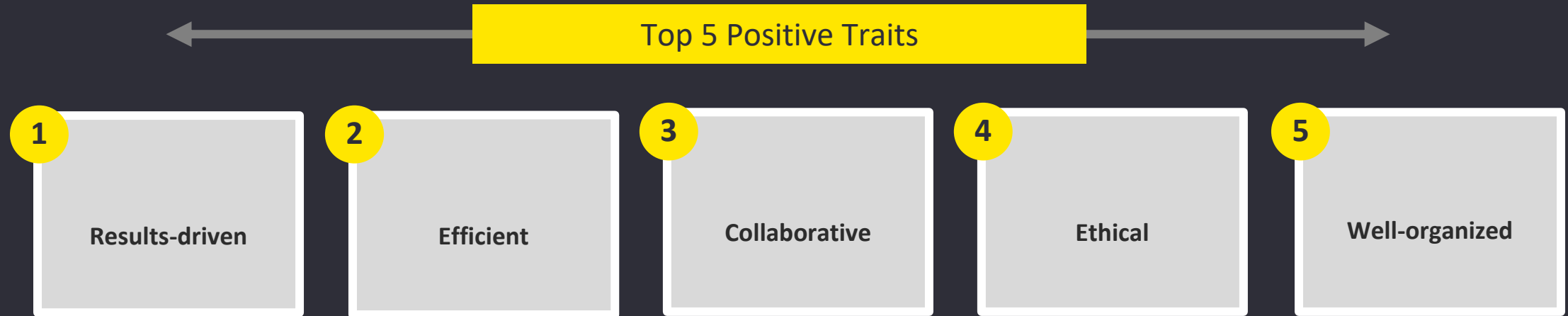
Diversity of working arrangements and people loosely connected to each other, through technology



## Critical practices

- Take **tone at the top** even more seriously as word choices in messaging really matter right now.
- Make **managers the central point** in sustaining and evolving values and behaviors.
- Know **your influencer network** and drive change through them.
- **Trust your people** to set their own boundaries for remote work and don't overload them.
- Be acutely aware of and quick to act on **ethical issues and behavioral risks**.
- **Focus on inclusion** in everyday behaviors not just programmatically.

# What are the *most* popular culture traits globally today?



Two behaviors that present the greatest integrity opportunities for companies today →

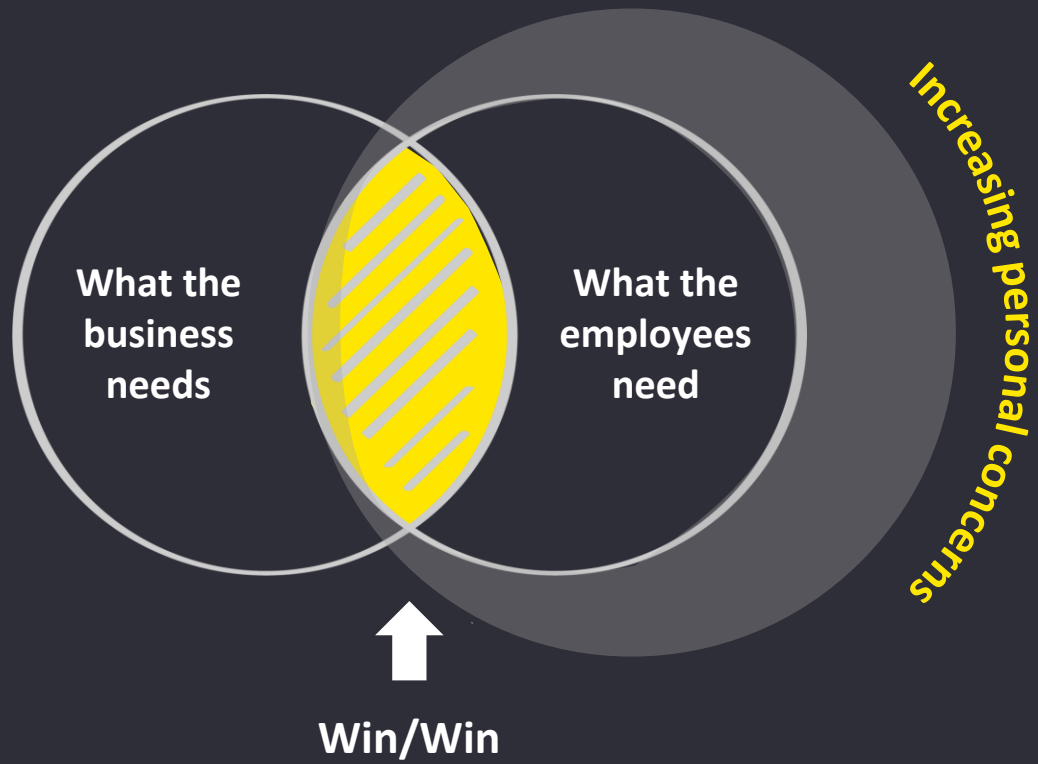
- Respond to mistakes as learning, not punitively
- Encourage every person to speak up, welcoming challenge and healthy dissent

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Employees and HR have different views of the **employee experience**. For long-term success, organizations will need to close this gap.

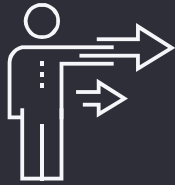
Seeking the win/win in normal times is hard enough and the COVID-19 crisis exponentially elevates the challenges.

Given the market and human impact, HR's role requires thoughtful response to both business and employee needs.





# Common HR and talent actions



## Survive

Support the basic needs

**Organization.** Financial capital, a market for products and services and resources to operate: human, physical and technical

**People.** Safety and security for you and others; basic resources needed to operate



## Connect

Stay meaningfully connected

**Organization.** The information, actions and resources that build and sustain connections to inform, align and connect to what's important

**People.** A sense of belonging, mutual support, care, love, attention and validation from others



## Contribute

Deliver on what matters

**Organization.** The influence and impact we bring to others within and outside our organizational walls

**People.** Impact that we, individually or collectively, make toward a greater purpose and common good



## Thrive

Flourish in the face of adversity

**Organization.** Learn, innovate and evolve in response to threats and challenges

**People.** Growth and learning we experience in responding to challenges and pursuing opportunities



# Now – Why it matters

## Survive

Support the basic needs

Individual

Only when people feel safe and secure can they pay attention to much else. Our human alarm systems block out higher order activity until our basic survival needs are met.

We need to ensure everyone is able to function at this time — do we have the technology and information resources to continue to operate?

Organization

The continuity and the longevity of an organization is essential. The enterprise has a duty to uphold its implicit contract with shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and the communities in which it operates. Survival requires strong action to ensure safety, provide the tools and resources to operate, and ensure long-term viability.

Resilient, transformational, empathic and courageous leadership is essential to survival.

## Connect

Stay meaningfully connected

Individual

We are social beings. In fact, having close, meaningful relationships is the No. 1 driver of wellness and longevity. Connections help us alleviate stress and be in a state of productive well-being.

We are always stronger together, and in these times staying connected is vital. Connection is the prerequisite for contributing and thriving.

Organization

The health and sustainability of the organization is directly related to the strength, quality and efficiency of critical connections. A connected organization will consider critical linkages including:

- Value chain connections, including those to customers, markets, partners and suppliers
- Organization to employees
- Leaders/managers to employees
- Team to team, organization to organization and employee to employee
- BOD/governance to leadership



## Next – Why it matters

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### Contribute

Deliver on what matters

Individual

Contributing to a purpose bigger than ourselves is a powerful force in our overall productivity and well-being. It is in our collective contributions that we fulfill our individual and collective missions.

Flow and engagement are maximized when we feel like we have agency in pursuit of a meaningful purpose.

Organization

An organization is stable and healthy when its energy is focused on contributions aligned to its strategic goals and ultimate purpose. Contribution happens when we bring the strength of our organization to bear to positively impact customers, employees and others to solve problems and to be a positive force in a time of crisis.

# Beyond – Why it matters

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## Thrive

Flourish in the face of adversity

Individual

When we face adversity with a positive, opportunistic response, we propel ourselves out of a victim orientation and into a space of innovation and productivity.

Organization

Organizations can put a bad crisis to good use, offering new possibilities for creative insights and novel solutions to internal challenges and external market and customer opportunities.

A challenge, threat or crisis can unite (or destroy) an organization like nothing else. Thriving organizations courageously lead with their values to build trust and create safe environments for teams and people to innovate, experiment, flourish and be ready for the next challenge.



# Common HR and talent actions



Definitions

## Survive

Support the basic needs

### Organization

- Assess and take immediate talent actions to address business impacts
- Respond to remote working needs
- Understand and act on government relief

### People

- Ensure safety and security of workforce
- Enable leaders to successfully lead in crisis
- Elevate capabilities for remote work and collaboration

## Connect

Stay meaningfully connected

### Organization

- Deploy in-house communication actions
- Conduct remote pulse surveys to gauge employee sentiment
- Clarify leader alignment to vital responses and actions

### People

- Create opportunities that connect employees and your stakeholders
- Ensure employee access to internal and external resources to support personal needs
- Build resilience — provide resources and support

## Contribute

Deliver on what matters

### Organization

- Model and tune capacity, capability and ways of working to optimize execution
- Redirect organizational assets to what matters now
- Clearly communicate organizational priorities and focus

### People

- Leaders reset goals and expectations with employees
- Realign/restructure teams and people to today's needs
- Frequent employee check-ins to align focus and ensure progress on priorities

## Thrive

Flourish in the face of adversity

### Organization

- Design the workforce and capabilities you need for the future
- Reimagine your HR services model
- Reset and modernize talent processes

### People

- Upskill and reskill your employees and teams
- Engage people and teams in future solutioning and innovation efforts
- Ready your people to return to work



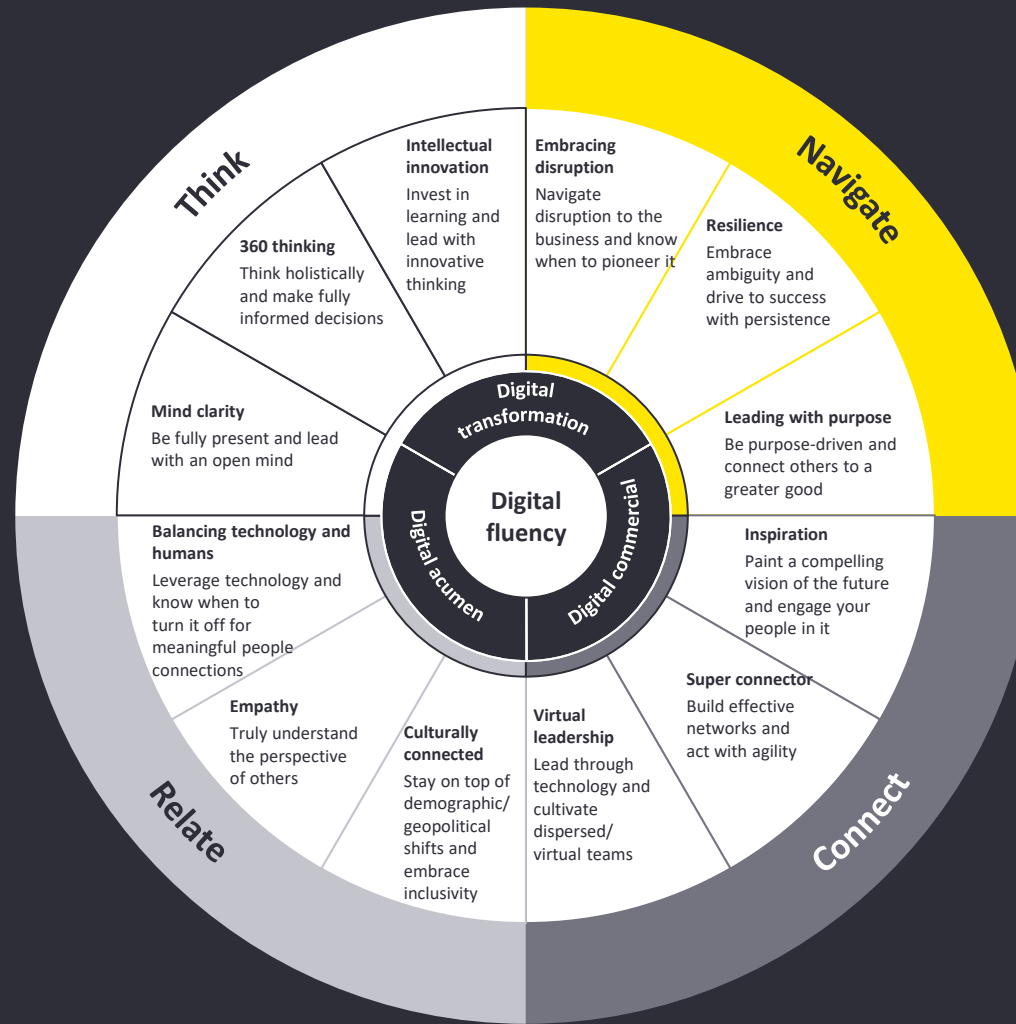
# What good looks like

**Think**  
differently with clarity of mind

**Relate**  
to others on a very human level

**Navigate**  
a complex, digital, disrupted  
working world

**Connect**  
people and possibilities in virtual,  
complex systems



# Understanding your workforce personas

The following personas represent distinct employee groups who have specific drivers, needs, barriers and preferences, in relation to their post-pandemic future of work model.

## Professional

### Team builder

*This persona is based on someone with more professional experience and managerial responsibilities.*

### Career builder

*This persona is characterised by someone with less professional experience and no managerial responsibilities.*

### Joiner

*This persona is based on an internal or external joiner – who is new to the team.*

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## Personal

### Carer

*This persona is based on those who have caring responsibilities, such as childcare or eldercare.*

### Sharer

*This persona encompasses employees living with friends or family in shared accommodation.*

# Three 'no regret' actions to reset and revitalise

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A close-up photograph of a hand with dark skin touching a chalk drawing on a textured orange wall. The drawing is a simple outline of a hand, with the fingers spread. The hand is positioned as if it is about to touch or has just touched the drawing.

Revitalise check-  
ins

Fix Feedback

Reset from  
broadcast to  
'dialogue'

“

Imagine the results when our shared energy is directed toward creating work environments fuelled by **positive connections**.



# 1. Reset check-ins

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## Stay connected:

During this period of uncertainty, physical separation and constant change, it's important to establish regular check-ins to help people feel connected, informed and engaged. The frequency and consistency of connections are a vital part of making check-in conversations successful.

## Maintain focus:

Regular and conversational check-ins among employees, managers, mentors and others keep us in touch, aligned on priorities, focused on development and connected with purpose —all vital ingredients in feeling mentally well.

## Retire old-school methods:

It's time to end ineffective and outdated performance management practices, namely the annual or semi-annual review.

Check-ins provide a better alternative with proven benefits for all involved: your people, your managers and the performance of your team.



# Why the need to reset now?

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## Align

More conversations occurring more frequently means stronger alignment, clarity and understanding for your people. Every person knows how they are contributing and where they can deliver more impact year-round.

## Motivate

Future-focused conversations provide more opportunity to explore careers and consider how each person wants to grow, what experiences they are seeking and how they can be supported in building their desired skills and capabilities.

## Trust

Connecting on a regular basis helps build a trusting relationship between managers and their teams. Trust encourages open communication, honest feedback and effective collaboration.



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Feedback should be a good thing. If we want to improve, grow and advance, we need insights that can help us move in the right direction. If we close ourselves off from understanding how others experience us, then we close ourselves off to a life of learning and growth.

Feedback (and Other Dirty Words): Why We Fear It, How to Fix It

## 2. Fix feedback!

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- ✓ Understand how **your** collective experiences affect the team.
- ✓ Understand the **fear** of feedback, apply mini mindfulness hacks to create a more resilient response to feedback.
- ✓ Understand each other's feedback **styles**, needs and preferences.
- ✓ Identify critical **roles** every team member must play for feedback to be effective.
- ✓ Understand the critical relationship between feedback, **trust and performance**.
- ✓ Create a team feedback **agreement**.
- ✓ **Practice** conversational feedback skills.
- ✓ Try **peer coaching** through structured reflection between two or more team members.





# Why the need now, with all else going on?

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*'Good conversations, even in tough times, build trust'*

- ✓ **Trust** lowers fear, freeing our teams to perform at our potential.
- ✓ **Our physical distance** requires a more proactive approach to building trusted connections.
- ✓ Feedback, done right, is a top driver in **employee engagement**.
- ✓ **We're all in this together**, so improving our ability to connect in a trusted and frequent manner is vital for our continued productivity and growth.
- ✓ Teams that have good feedback practices are **healthier** and produce the highest rated leaders and highest engagement scores.
- ✓ Groups with cultures of growth-oriented feedback consistently **outperform** others.
- ✓ Frequent, fair and focused connections will help your team know what matters now, **lowering individual stress and anxiety**.





### 3. Reset technology, moving from broadcast to 'dialogue'

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- ✓ **Empower** local leaders and managers to make decisions – put humans at the centre of all decisions
- ✓ **Show empathy and understanding** in dialogues (and remember the pleasantries) – even more important when remote
- ✓ **Use technology** to 'bridge the gap' – video calls create much better connections, but can cause fatigue
- ✓ **Blend technologies** to ensure the right mix of engagement – email, surveys, meetings, webcasts all have a place
- ✓ **Create informal interaction opportunities** for employees and teams to connect, this may need to be managed – which is ok!
- ✓ **Build connections** between unconnected teams and individuals, this can drive collaboration and innovation



## POLLING QUESTION

To what extent do you agree with the statement, *“our organization has struck a good balance between tech enablement and softer skills in the virtual working world”*?

- A) Agree
- b) Not yet, but we are shifting focus to soft skills
- c) Disagree

# Benchmarking your performance

		People	Organization
Now	<b>Survive</b> Support the basic needs	1. Our employees feel safe and secure — for themselves and those in their close circle. Their basic needs are taken care of. 2. Our employees are able to think clearly about their situation (getting beyond fear and anxiety) to function as needed. 3. Our employees have the resources, information and tools needed to function adequately in their work and personal lives.	1. We have adequately gauged the health and viability of our organization, our customers, supply chain and employees to align our response. 2. Our leaders and managers are capable and ready to participate in crisis management. 3. We know which relationships and processes (linkages) need immediate attention and have clear ownership of who in our organization will provide it.
		<b>Connect</b> Stay meaningfully connected	4. Our employees feel meaningfully connected to their colleagues and believe our team is in this together. 5. Our employees are proactively making an effort to support others during this time. 6. Our employees are included in ways that are relevant and allow them to stay connected and informed.
Next	<b>Contribute</b> Deliver on what matters	7. Our employees are clear on their priorities and expectations right now. 8. The work our employees are doing contributes to the organization’s needs in this current situation. 9. Our employees are able to make regular, daily progress toward their goals and work priorities.	7. Our organization is marshalling our resources to most effectively address the challenges we and those around us are facing. 8. Our leadership has reevaluated and established priorities, objectives and key results (OKRs), goals, and/or results that adequately describe the organization now. 9. Our front-line managers are empowered to translate priorities across their teams and departments.
		<b>Thrive</b> Flourish in the face of adversity	10. Our employees feel inspired to use this time as a positive opportunity to learn and grow. 11. Our employees feel safe and trusted to do the right thing at this time. 12. Our people feel comfortable being authentic and expressing vulnerability with their co-workers during this unique circumstance.



# Moving towards a post-pandemic future of work

1

## Protect.

Continually review process and policy to ensure a coherent strategy across all risks.

2

## Engage.

Empower teams and employees.

3

## Reframe.

Build forward with purpose and agility.



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