IDC | ANALYZE THE FUTURE

FUTURE-OF-WORK STRATEGY: HOW TO NAVIGATE THE NEXT NORMAL

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Future-of-Work Strategy: How to Navigate the Next Normal

Introduction

The world of work will never be the same — we're at a turning point, and we can choose how we want to build our future.

Leading organizations are waking up to the urgent need for change. They are already reassessing which working culture, business models, and technologies will enable sustained recovery and growth for tomorrow. The same leadership teams that responded to the crisis, the "Digital Dream Teams" — comprising the CEOs, CIOs, CISOs, CFOs, COOs, and CHROs — are now jointly defining a new chapter for their companies, addressing new business imperatives:

- How can we keep employees safe, happy, and engaged, regardless of their location?
- How can we be operationally agile and productive?
- How can we delight customers with new services and revenue streams?
- What technology investments will bring about transformation and innovation?
- How can we build a culture of trust and purpose?
- Most importantly, how can we move forward? What are the lessons learnt that we can constructively apply to thrive in the "next normal"?

This IDC White Paper discusses the challenges associated with the way we work and the main barriers to digital transformation, highlighting five **"future-of-work" initiatives** that will help organizations, big or small, navigate the next normal.

Situation Overview

The digital economy is moving at a relentless pace, with high rates of technology investment leading to increased disruptive innovation. Digital transformation is an imperative for every company regardless of size or industry, with investments expected to grow 17.5% to approach $7.4 trillion between 2020 and 2023.

Digital success is not linked to financial strength or size but to the ability to change — to react quickly to market changes and be agile enough to seize new opportunities. But it is a challenge for many organizations. According to IDC, 75% of European companies will be fully digitally transformed by 2029 — and the rest risk going out of business.

According to McKinsey[1], the average corporate life span has rapidly declined in the past half a century. Using Standard & Poor's data, it showed that the average life span was 61 years in 1958, 25 years in 1980, and 8 years in 2011. At the present rate, it forecast, 75% of S&P 500 incumbents will be gone by 2027.
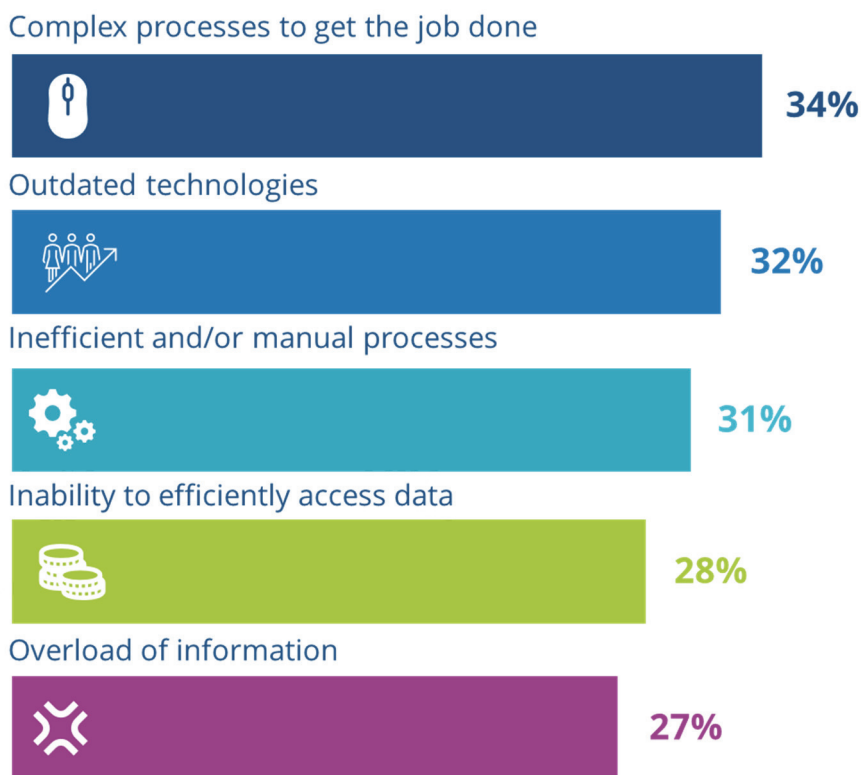
If that is not enough doom and gloom, 2020 took a nasty turn with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, sending the most developed economies into the deepest recession since World War II.

This has severely impacted many organizations across industries and has resulted in many long-established firms going out of business.

But the pandemic has also taught us some important lessons. We are at a turning point, and now is the time for action. The need to accelerate digital transformation strategies has moved from high on the agenda to being the only item on the agenda.

Easier said than done. Accelerating digital strategies will also involve radical internal changes. According to IDC surveys, anachronistic working practices — from employee resistance to change, to their inability to keep pace with market changes and their struggles with legacy technology — are holding back European companies from thriving in the digital economy. In other words, the "way we work" needs to be revisited for digital success. This is a *sine qua non* condition, as the **traditional model of work is broken**.

FIGURE 1
Main Work Obstacles to Drive Business Value

Complex processes to get the job done

34%

Outdated technologies

32%

Inefficient and/or manual processes

31%

Inability to efficiently access data

28%

Overload of information

27%

According to IDC surveys, work friction (complexity to get the job done), inefficient processes, and outdated technologies are the main obstacles for employees seeking to drive business value.

However, a paradigm shift had already started that redefines how, where, and by whom work gets done. Many leading organizations are embracing the future of work.

Source: *IDC European Future of Work Survey*, March 2020, n = 415

How to Thrive in the Next Normal: Top Future-of-Work Initiatives

Getting work done in the next normal will be radically different to how we know it.

The future of work — or work transformation — is a disruptive force that addresses the core of corporate culture, the concept of workplace, and the nature of the workforce.

IDC Future-of-Work Framework

- The **future workspace** refers to a blended physical, digital, and virtual working environment. The lockdown has been testimony to the success of the first experiments at scale of this new paradigm.
- The **future work culture** is agile, purpose-driven, and fundamentally people-centric. High-performance cultures deliver superior work experiences to an engaged and healthy workforce.
- The **future of workforce** refers to the makeup of the workforce, and particularly to employee and machine collaboration, whereby intelligent technologies and robotics make work easier and faster.

These three dimensions need to coexist harmoniously to drive work transformation. Experience has shown that organizations with an intelligent workspace can fail to engage and facilitate a collaborative work culture. In many other cases, an agile work culture was missing the robotics and AI elements, and how they can augment the workforce. An integrated, holistic approach across all three dimensions is the holy grail for a future-of-work strategy.

The future of work is not easy to implement, however. Where to start? Which future-of-work initiatives can support digital success in the next normal? IDC proposes the following:

1. Automation and digitization for value generation
2. New revenue growth streams for business resilience
3. A reconfigurable workforce at the leading edge of change
4. Employee engagement to navigate an uncertain future
5. A culture of trust and purpose for longevity

FIGURE 2

IDC Future-of-Work Framework
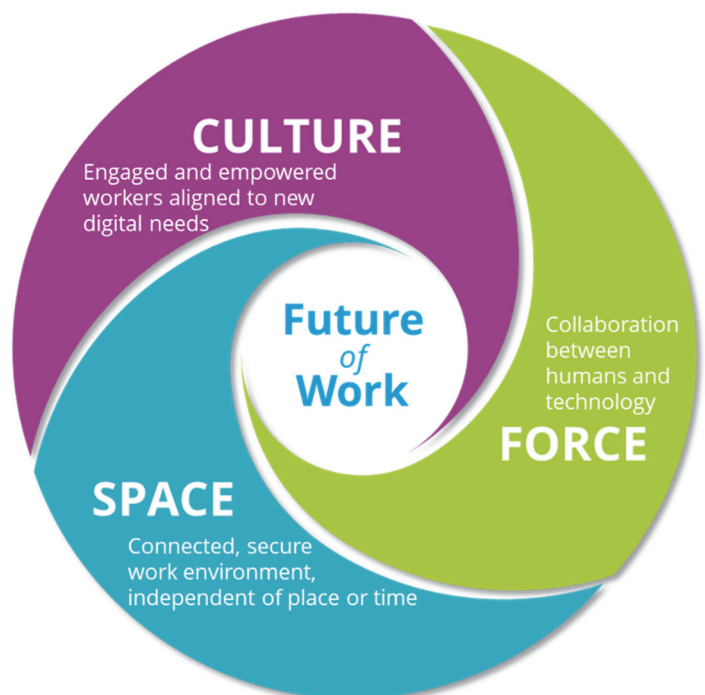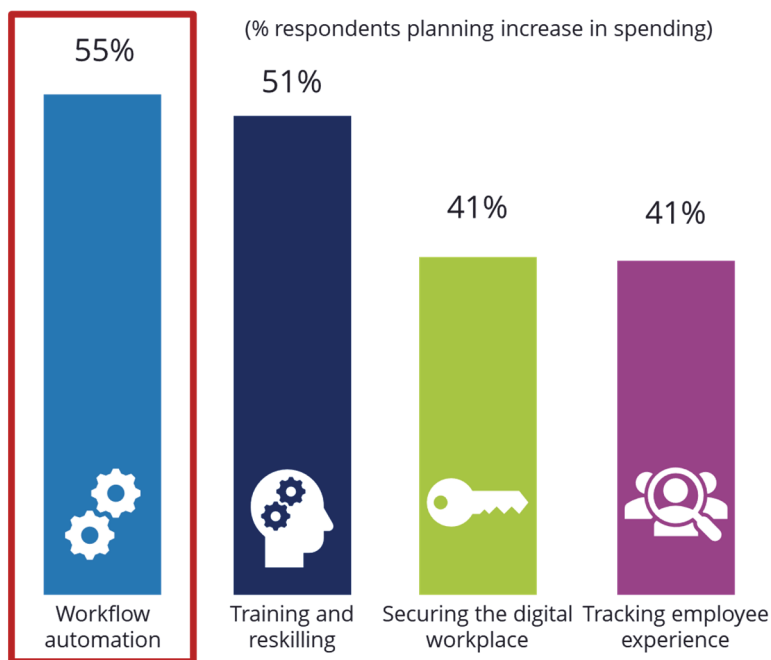

Source: *IDC,* 2020

1. Automation and Digitization for Value Generation

Automation addresses the core challenges to getting work done — friction, inefficient and manual processes, and fragmented and siloed data, for example.

There are currently six technologies propelling automation: workflow automation, robotic process automation (RPA), process intelligence and planning software, capture software, smart virtual assistants, and AI-enabled software.

Workflow automation, in particular, is the top growth investment in work transformation for more than half of European companies in 2020.

FIGURE 3
What Are the Top Growth Investments in Workplace Transformation?

(% respondents planning increase in spending)

| 55% | 51% | 41% | 41% |
| Workflow automation | Training and reskilling | Securing the digital workplace | Tracking employee experience |

Source: *IDC European Future of Work Survey*, March 2020

Lessons Learnt During the Crisis

Automation has been vital to support business continuity in areas where human intervention was limited or non-existent.

The grocery industry has managed a sudden spike in demand by automating business processes.

Utility companies have used automation software for remote operation and system monitoring, protecting the well-being of their employees[4].

Remote working has been quickly enabled by IT departments with the help of intelligent helpdesks, powered with automated workflows and self-service capabilities.

Companies have invested in automation to address disruption in their supply chain.

Call centers have handled an increased volume of inbound calls with the use of automation and NLP-based chatbots[5].

Automation at scale can deliver key business benefits in the next normal. Though a lot of attention is centered around cost savings and operational efficiencies, **automation can generate additional business value**:

- Employees can shift to new and higher-value tasks with more impactful business outcomes.
- Self-service capabilities can reduce bottlenecks in support teams.

- Capturing and analyzing data across systems and applications can provide insightful information for decision making.
- Faster and more accurate business processes can enhance end-user experience, impacting employee engagement and talent retention.
- Automation can scale up or down and be operational as needed for business agility.

Improving Operational Efficiencies Through Automated Workflows

Thames Water is a private utility company responsible for the public water supply and waste-water treatment in Greater London and other areas of the U.K., serving 15 million customers in 900 locations.

Thames Water wanted to transform its operational model and provide a better customer experience. The company had no real control, insight, or understanding of its IT infrastructure and applications because it was fully outsourced to third parties.

The Now Platform was implemented for a service integration and management (SIAM) model, to give them full ownership of its tools, data, governance, and processes. As part of this solution, a new master dashboard consolidates incident, project, and machine insights from 650 business applications, and an AI helpdesk supports 6,000 employees.

The Now Platform has contributed to £6 million–£10 million in annual cost savings derived from virtual machine and platform builds, software asset management, and decommissioning.

Real-time software discovery and a reduction in outages has improved employee experience and customer trust.

Automation will be pervasive across industries. Structured, predictable, repeatable tasks will be prioritized for automation, and IDC predicts that 50% of those tasks will be automated by 2024. Its potential, however, is expected to be broader. A study by McKinsey Global Institute[2] estimates that almost half the activities employees perform — which account for nearly $16 trillion in wages — could be automated using existing proven technologies.

The current economic environment, similar to the three recessions in the past 30 years[3], will accelerate the deployment of automation. However, unlike previous waves of automation, this one will create new opportunities that go beyond job replacement and drive business innovation and competitive differentiation. New job categories will also emerge, including management of large data sources, training, and machine supervision, for example. There will even be a new type of employee — the augmented worker — on the shop floor, performing higher-value tasks with the aid of intelligent technologies.

2. New Revenue Growth Streams for Business Resilience

While business continuity has been the primary goal during the crisis, companies thriving in the next normal will generate **new revenue growth streams for business resilience**. According to IDC, 30% of G2000 companies will derive at least 20% of their revenue from outside their core industries by 2023.

Around the world, leading organizations are rethinking their business models and the sectors they operate in. They are reevaluating their partner ecosystems and looking at M&As with start-

ups or other companies that can help reinvent their core and diversify their revenues for resilience and long-term survival.

As they seek to innovate, organizations will increase investments in automation and intelligent technologies. This will have a significant impact on employees, who will be empowered with new skills as they face complex challenges to incrementally add new value to the business.

Their legacy technologies will not hamper business value creation. Outdated tools will be revamped or written off to create a lean and agile digital-native architecture that provides new insights for value creation.

New tools with superior work experience will empower employees to think the "art of the impossible," for at least two reasons. Firstly, new technology can free up staff to innovate by removing friction and automating tasks, using team collaboration and work management tools, for example. Secondly, good innovation software can help teams to develop a concept from design to implementation.

A **learning culture** will be vital for innovation[6]. By making learning a part of everyday work, employees become more digital-savvy, curious, and likely to experiment. Teams can get together to explore new concepts and jointly develop new solutions to complex problems, driving cohesion and a sense of purpose. Leaders foster curiosity, adventure, and innovation. According to IDC, investment in training will increase in more than half of European organizations in 2020.

A **knowledge-sharing culture** will be instilled, not just within the organization but with the broader ecosystem and partners. This is crucial for organizational performance and innovation, and scientifically proved in numerous academic papers[7].

Lessons Learnt During the Crisis

Necessity is the mother of invention.

As organizations let their employees work from home, many had to reinvent team collaboration, productivity, and customer service, and adapt to a new reality severely limited by the lockdown.

The fight against COVID-19 has led to technology innovations across many industries:

- Digital Aerolus developed the first indoor drone with C-band ultraviolet (UVC) lights to combat the spread of COVID-19, with a 99% disinfection rate[9].
- Tesla, Ford, and General Motors retooled their factories to produce ventilators from car parts after plummeting car sales[10].

FIGURE 4

Impact of Intelligent Technologies on Employees

48% Employees focus on higher-value tasks

48% Employees are reskilled and/or retrained

34% Employees transfer to another role/function

24% Positions are eliminated

Source: *IDC European Future of Work Survey*, March 2020

According to Deloitte's *2020 Global Human Capital Trends Report*[8], 75% of organizations say creating and preserving knowledge across evolving workforces is important for their success over the next 12 to 18 months.

An innovative culture will also require a **change-management** program. Two areas will need special attention: first, there must be strong business ownership, with clear prioritization of how and when work can deliver new value outcomes; second, a new set of business metrics and KPIs needs to be defined that recognizes and rewards innovation.

Delighting Customers with New Support Services

basware
Simplify Operations, Spend Smarter.

Basware Corporation is a Finnish software company selling enterprise software for financial processes, purchase to pay, and financial management. It has operations in more than 50 countries on six continents.

Basware had poor customer satisfaction because of the complexity derived from multiple customer support tools. The company had no single, consistent view of all its customer data, so tracking performance was difficult without involving the help of IT operations.

The ServiceNow platform was implemented to drive Basware's new "customer service engine," consisting of a customer service portal, an integrated knowledge base, and intelligent incident management workflows.

After only six months, the ServiceNow platform contributed to an 8.5% increase in customer satisfaction scores. While the speed of support services has notably improved, agents have increased proactive services by more than 30%. Over 60% of staff feel more productive and able to build stronger customer trust with a more personal engagement.

3. A Reconfigurable Workforce at the Leading Edge of Change

Reinventing the next normal will require a **cross-functional team**. A team comprising employees with varying expertise, skills, and interests is likely to be more innovative and creative than homogenous, siloed teams. This has been widely proved in numerous studies[11] and customer cases (at NASA[12], for example).

To thrive in the next normal, companies need reconfigurable teams (dynamically evolving) to be at the leading edge of change. This organizational flexibility and adaptability to market changes provides business resilience.

Reconfigurable teams follow the key principles of agile working and Darwinism, whereby teams behave like living organisms in constant evolution for survival and growth. A reconfigurable workforce involves shifting talent to where and when it is most needed in real time. Teams, or squads, are led by product owners and organized in tribes (business areas) outside their existing bureaucratic structures.

Many companies, such as Allianz Global Investors and Cisco[13], have internal project marketplaces that match tasks and projects with people with relevant skills and availability from anywhere in the organization. In the next normal, reconfigurable teams will generate an increasing share of new revenue streams.

FIGURE 5
Typical Structure in an Agile Organization
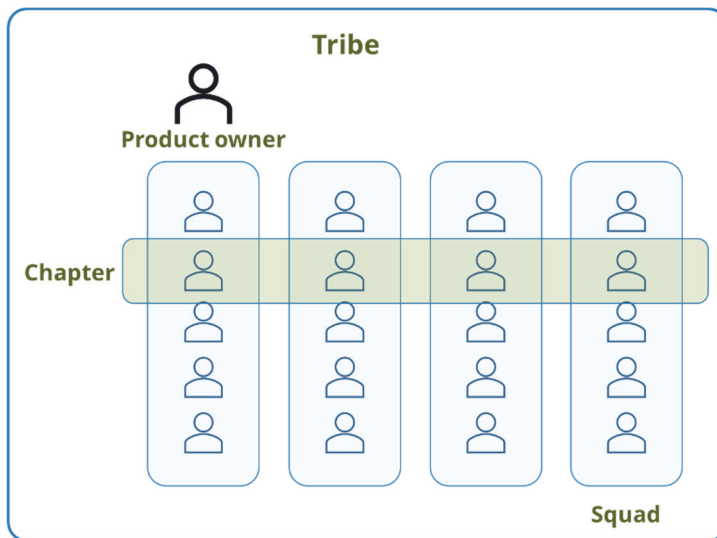
Source: IDC, 2020

A reconfigurable workforce is business-driven. In fact, business outcomes are always defined first — only then is the relevant cross-functional team appointed. Business outcomes are measurable, and evolving KPIs are utilized to positively drive team performance.

Bringing together the right people in the right teams and at the right time — no matter where they are based — can be challenging, particularly around organizational commitment and employee engagement. While there is no special formula to make it work, choosing the right technology and work culture can make a difference.

- **Technology:** Employees need to be connected to a common platform that provides full transparency of roles, accountability, and connection to purpose.
  - o Collaboration and workflow management solutions (in a low- or no-code environment for agility) can be effective to support a fluid, adaptable environment. According to IDC surveys, only 36% of European companies claim to have adopted modern team collaboration tools.
  - o Insightful dashboards with real-time data enable teams to track progress against KPIs and make informed business decisions.

This new organizational model will require both top-down and bottom-up buy-in:

- **Top-down.** Strong leadership and cross-functional governance are needed for sponsorship and organizational change.
- **Bottom-up.** Product owners have to engage, empower, and trust their teams. Their performance is data-driven and infused with end-to-end accountability and shared leadership.

Lessons Learnt During the Crisis

Companies shifted teams, production, and services to ensure business resilience.

- Bank of America temporarily shifted more than 3,000 employees to call center positions to meet the spike in calls from consumer and small business customers[14].
- Employees of distilleries and breweries such as BrewDog, Leith Gin, Verdant Spirits, and Pernod Ricard produced hand sanitizer[15].
- Supermarket chain Kroger temporarily borrowed furloughed employees from Sysco Corporation, a wholesale food distributor to restaurants — an example of a partnership with industry peers for cross-industry talent exchange[16].

- **Work culture:** According to IDC surveys, 39% of European companies claim to have introduced new metrics to evaluate skills such as collaboration, creativity, and innovation.
    - Regular and transparent communication is crucial to drive employee engagement. Transparency drives accountability. Employees know the exact goal they are working toward, and consequently feel they have a purpose and are engaged.
    - A culture of psychological safety makes everyone feel empowered to be themselves.

4. Employee Engagement to Navigate an Uncertain Future

Employee engagement — employees' connection and sense of belonging with their company's strategy and purpose — is vital in a fast-changing digital economy.

In the next normal, organizations will be closely monitoring their **employee engagement index (EEI)** as an indicator of talent retention and cultural readiness to embrace change and digital transformation.

Employee engagement is strategic. Numerous studies point to the correlation between employee engagement and a company's bottom line. SAP's *Integrated Report 2016*[17], for example, showed that a one-percentage-point change in its EEI translated into a $50 million to $62 million change in the company's operating profit.
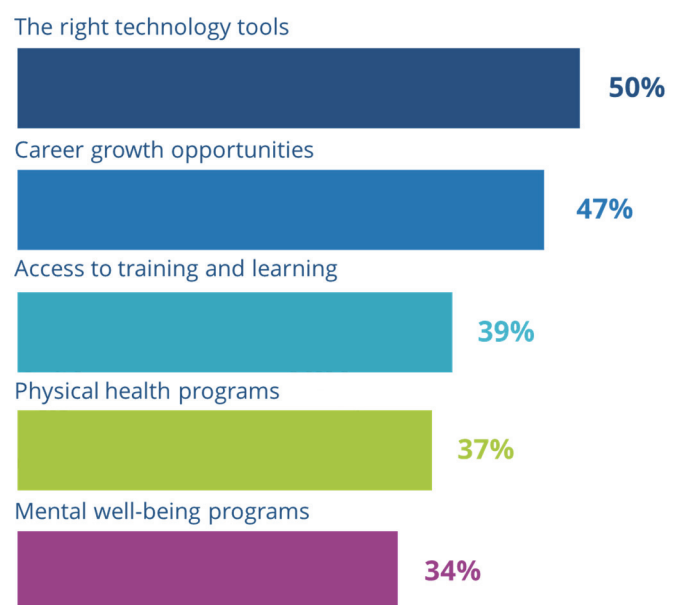
IDC surveys show that an engaged workforce has an impact on employee productivity (cited by 54% of companies), business revenue (49%), employee retention (49%), and customer satisfaction (45%).

A good work experience is pivotal to drive employee engagement. While many factors contribute to a good work experience, equipping employees with the right tools and technology is what makes them happiest. Around half of European companies believe this, according to IDC surveys.

The right technology needs to deliver superior end-user experience with at least the following capabilities:

- **Enterprise grade but with a consumer (or frictionless) experience:** Employees want fast and convenient access to data, apps, and services, when and how they need them.
- **Limited or no down time:** Employees do not want to wait hours for a helpdesk agent. Intelligent helpdesks with proactive resolution, self-service, and self-healing can quickly resolve problems or employee requests.

Figure 6

Most Impactful Drivers for Employee Experience

The right technology tools — 50%

Career growth opportunities — 47%

Access to training and learning — 39%

Physical health programs — 37%

Mental well-being programs — 34%

Source: *IDC European Future of Work Survey*, March 2020, n = 415

- **Context-aware environments** (powered by AI/ML and other cognitive computing capabilities): Employees get the information and support they need instantly and securely.
- **Employee support in the "moments that matter"** (first day at work, return to work, leave of absence or moving house, for example): The technology has been designed for that purpose, connecting end-to-end workflows that pull data from different functions for a seamless experience.

According to IDC surveys, 41% of companies are planning to increase investments to **track end-user experience**. Most efforts are currently concentrated on collecting hard data analytics from endpoints (used currently by 38% of organizations), but we expect tracking employee sentiment to become more prevalent in the next normal.

A good end-user experience will not be the exclusive responsibility of IT departments, however. It needs cross-functional ownership from different stakeholders, chiefly HR and business leads, and they should seek alignment by finding a common language and goals.

Besides end-user experience, **well-being** (both physical and mental) will be a top board-level concern in the next normal. It is widely acknowledged, and is no secret, that employees perform at their best when they're healthy, driving business outcomes. Well-being will be closely monitored through intelligent analytics, targeting both physical environment conditions (humidity and temperature, for example) and mental health (working hours, multitasking, etc.). Self-assessment apps will be made available to employees to check their health status.

According to Deloitte's *2020 Global Human Capital Trends Report*[19], 80% of organizations say worker well-being is important or very important for their success over the next 12–18 months.


Lessons Learnt During the Crisis

Employee engagement has been vital during the crisis, keeping organizations together in difficult times. Companies have learnt that when they care and empower their people, their people take care of their company. Other lessons learnt:

- Remote working has forced companies to adopt technologies (collaboration, productivity, IT service management, etc.) with superior end-user experience for minimum disruption and productivity.
- The pandemic has helped to view people in a more human and holistic way and reduce the stigma associated with mental health and well-being. Work-related stress, depression, and anxiety accounted for 44% of work-related ill health and 54% of working days lost in 2018/2019 in the U.K. (HSE, 2019)[18].

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5. A Culture of Trust and Purpose for Longevity

The Business Roundtable, an association of CEOs from the top 181 U.S. companies, published a statement in August 2019[20] that changed the definition of the "**purpose of a corporation**." In it, the CEOs pledged to "lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders — customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders." This was something of a surprise as, for the first time in the history of capitalism, shareholder supremacy was giving way to caring about employees, societies, and the environment, and with dealing more ethically.
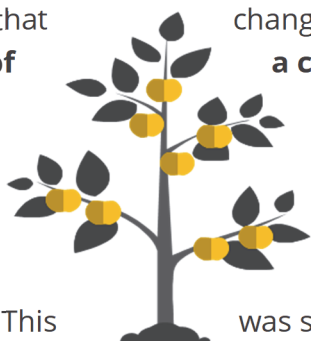
Their statement was much needed. Nobel Laureate in economics Amartya Sen said the invisible hand of the market needs to be balanced by the visible hand of good governance[21].

In the next normal, many companies will be championing ethical ways of doing business. They will be driving social, humanitarian, and ecological change with and through their business. As part of this, they will create a new set of KPIs — including human, environment, and intellectual — to measure long-term business value for all stakeholders.

Lessons Learnt During the Crisis

Nobel prize winner Wangari Maathai said that, in the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called on to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. As the WEF indicated, that time has now arrived for C-suites everywhere[28].

The way companies have responded to the pandemic will define their reputation for the next decade. The crisis has shown the powerful effect of collective action and support for good causes. Solidarity is not wishful thinking — it is real[29]:

- Johnson & Johnson donated 1 million surgical masks to Chinese health workers.
- IKEA helped to kit out hospitals in affected areas.

But a company's sense of purpose will not be enough to ensure longevity. Trust, or rather a **culture of trust**, needs to be ingrained in all aspects of the business too. The 2020 World Economic Forum (WEF) emphasized that trust is essential in relationships with all stakeholders throughout the recovery phase[22].

Good leaders will guide and inspire their teams as they navigate an uncertain future, and that will be nurtured by trust. A recent PwC analysis shows that in 2018 more CEOs were fired for ethical lapses than for poor financials[23]. It is not surprising that the average tenure of a CEO in a large capital company is now around five years, down from 10 years in 1995[24].

Trust impacts business performance. An OECD study[25] demonstrates that trust provides results in terms of economic growth and shareholder value, while research by Paul J. Zak, a professor at Claremont University, in the U.S., quantified the impact of corporate trust on employee performance and well-being[26]. The opposite holds true for lack of trust. PwC's 2016 *Global CEO Survey* revealed that 50% of CEOs worldwide consider lack of trust to be a major threat to their organizational growth[27].

Thriving in the Next Normal with ServiceNow

Organizations have to be smart about their investment in new technologies to thrive in the next normal.

ServiceNow is a global software company whose cloud computing platform helps companies manage **digital workflows** for enterprise operations. Its main objective is to "reduce the complexity in our jobs and make work, work better for people" by transforming old and manual processes into modern digital workflows.

ServiceNow was founded in 2004. It has more than 11,000 employees worldwide, and generated $3.46 billion in revenue in 2019. Bill McDermott, former CEO of SAP SE, took the reins at the end of 2019. As of June 2, 2020, its year-to-date total return stood at 35.8%, making it one of the top 10 performers in the S&P 500 Index[30].

Now Platform Overview

The Now Platform, built with native intelligence, delivers a system of action by creating contextual workflows and automated processes across all enterprise functions (IT, HR, legal, operations, customer service, etc.).

The platform democratizes development across its three product lines — **IT, employee, and customer workflows**. In its latest (March 2020) update — the ServiceNow Orlando release — the platform featured Now Intelligence, a set of purpose-built AI and analytics enhancements that helps streamline business decisions via insights and recommendations.

Coined by the vendor as a "Platform of Platforms," its main business benefits can be summed up as follows:
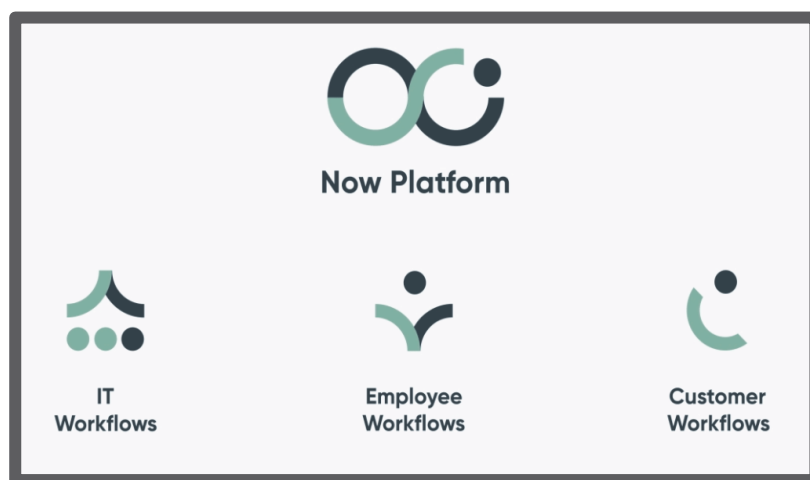
FIGURE 7

The Now Platform

Source: ServiceNow, 2020

1. **Operational efficiencies and business continuity:**
   - Self-service: Digital assistants provide immediate assistance, reducing waiting time or downtime.
   - Automation: Machines talking to machines, automating time-consuming tasks and remediating problems.
   - Proactive resolution: Issues are identified before they become problems.
2. **Insight and compliance:**
   - Single pane of glass for visibility, control, and risk management across different enterprise functions, applications, and systems. Service flows are extended to any

third-party service creating an end-to-end integration that is simplified with ServiceNow IntegrationHub.

- Compliance by providing an audit trail of who does what and what approval is needed before moving to the next step.
- Sensitive or regulated data is processed accordingly and with the right governance in place. Key stakeholders can track progress from their customized dashboard.

3. **Employee empowerment:**

- Communication is omni-channel, enabling employees to use their preferred channels (email, phone, and chat) and self-service options.
- No-code/low-code development enables employees to easily build business apps for developers of all levels.
- Content Delivery and Content Automation, or Campaigns, enable support departments (for example, IT or HR) to proactively inform targeted employees, previously profiled, with relevant and timely content.
- Employees get support in life and career "moments that matter," such as relocation or paternity leave, with frictionless workflows and a unified experience across different enterprise apps and departments (IT, HR, procurement, legal and compliance, for example).

FIGURE 8

The Employee Journey — Moments That Matter
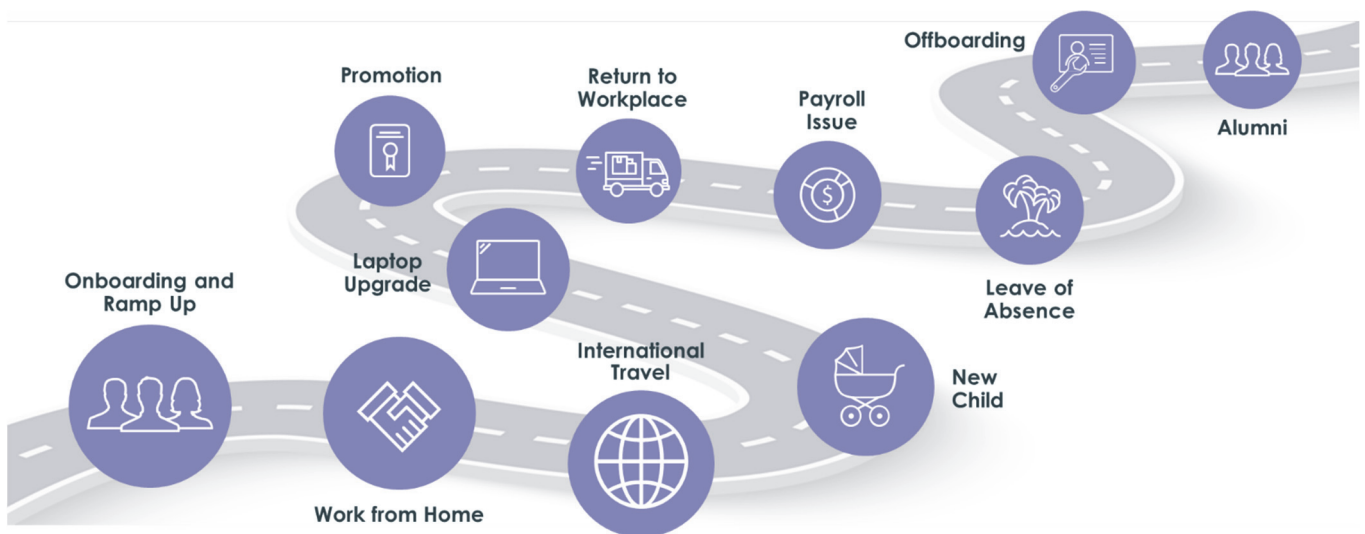
Source: ServiceNow, 2020

"When employees have flexible, agile modern workflows to do their jobs when, where, and how they need to, productivity doesn't stop — it increases."

Bill McDermott, CEO, ServiceNow

The Now Platform in the Next Normal

The Now Platform is well positioned to support "thrivers" in the next normal across the five future-of-work initiatives selected in this paper for digital success.

Automation and digitization for value generation

- It intelligently automates enterprise workflows for operational efficiencies and value generation.
- It is not task automation, but end-to-end process automation.
- Its ServiceNow IntegrationHub helps connect systems of record from multiple apps as a system of action.
- Its AI-based workflow engine helps rewire and streamline business processes for fast decision making and business agility.
- Its automated workflows ensure business continuity.

New revenue growth streams for business resilience

- It frees up workers from dealing with operational issues, so that they add value to the business.
- It breaks silos across different enterprise functions and transforms service experience, leading to innovation.
- According to customer testimonials, employees can innovate and think differently.
- It is easily and quickly configurable, driving business transformation.
- It is a single pane of glass, helping with decision making and new business opportunities.

A reconfigurable workforce at the leading edge of change

- It is adaptable to team and project needs for business continuity.
- Its workflows connect cross-functional teams, setting project ownership and accountability.
- Dashboards provide real-time analytics to measure team performance and progress against KPIs.
- It automatically assigns jobs to employees in real time, based on skills, availability, and location.
- Its App Engine enables teams to quickly bring a concept to market, minimizing time to value.

Employee engagement to navigate an uncertain future

- It connects a distributed workforce with end-to-end enterprise workflows.
- Its seamless workflows deliver a unified employee experience connecting apps across different enterprise functions.
- According to customer testimonials, employees feel empowered and more engaged.
- According to customer testimonials, employees can focus on more complex challenges that bring a sense of purpose and meaning to their jobs.
- Its App Engine provides the agility to quickly respond to new requirements.

Culture of trust and purpose

- Its brand identity and ethos is "We make the world of work, work better for people."
- It has a company culture of employee empowerment, with trust infused in its solutions.
- Its single pane of glass is a trusted data source for customers.
- Its CSR initiatives are closely aligned with its business model and purpose.
- Employee well-being has been central to its latest product releases.

Conclusion

Any company, big or small, that tries to solve old problems without adopting new ways of working, enabled with technology, will struggle to stay afloat in the next normal.

IDC recommends the following three-level approach when implementing a future-of-work strategy:

First, companies should put their employees at the heart of their transformation initiatives and target **employee experience** and engagement at the outset. These are some of the most pressing employee issues:

- How can my employees feel empowered, valued, and trusted?
- How can my employees feel more engaged?
- How can I ensure the well-being of my employees?

Second, companies should connect their employee-centric initiatives with **business outcomes** and prove how they impact their bottom line. For example, intelligent technologies that help remove work friction should provide operational efficiency gains. These are some of the key business imperatives:

- How can my company build resilience and be more operationally agile?
- How can my company deliver differentiated value to customers and innovate?

Third, organizations should make the **purpose of work** go beyond financial reasons and address the well-being of society and the planet. These are some core principles that companies should focus on:

- How can my organization generate long-term value for all stakeholders?
- How can my organization drive social, humanitarian, and ecological change?

Enterprise stakeholders should ensure their technology solutions and vendors can support them in their future-of-work strategies at those three levels: driving employee experience, proving the business case with quantifiable outcomes, and sharing a work culture that inspires others.

Sources

This paper has extensively used the following internal IDC sources:

- IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Future of Work 2019 Predictions
- IDC FutureScape: Worldwide Future of Work 2020 Predictions
- IDC European Future of Work Survey, March 2020

External sources are referenced as follows:

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MESSAGE FROM THE SPONSOR

Those who invested in building a purposeful, agile culture that encouraged and rewarded innovation underpinned by the right technology platforms and tools have weathered the storm far better. Many didn't, and there is still more to do to build the resilience and adaptability needed for the future of work.

Digital transformation was a high priority agenda item in recent years, but it's now truly seen as the enabler of delivering the employee experience needed to drive the right outcomes for the business. Technologies such as automation, low code/no code platforms, AI, and analytics are instrumental in delivering the frictionless and trusted experiences for employees.

ServiceNow's cloud-based platform and solutions deliver digital workflows that drive this transformation. Our employee, IT, and customer workflows and App Engine enable organizations to drive agility, transparency, and innovation, and make the world of work, work better for people.

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About the Analyst

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Angela Salmeron has over 10 years' experience in the ICT industry and is currently a research manager with IDC's European Future of Work Practice and Worldwide Future of Work Council. In this role, she provides coverage of key technology trends across the future of work, including the digital workspace, security and trust, collaborative platforms, and the augmented worker.