

The Never Normal

New ways of working
beyond the crisis



Outmanoeuvre uncertainty



The COVID-19 pandemic is first a health and humanitarian crisis, and businesses are rapidly adjusting. While the crisis unfolds, leaders should also prepare for what is coming next. But not the next “normal.” Normal isn’t available to us anymore, and “business as usual” even less.

The new reality taking shape is made of complexity, uncertainty, and opportunities. To adapt and thrive, organisations must accelerate and become resilient and agile.

Accenture can help leaders and organisations address the deep changes needed in this new environment, from a people, operations, and technology perspective, at speed and at scale.



OUTMANOEUVRE UNCERTAINTY

As the health and humanitarian impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic evolve, so do the business and economic challenges. Organisations looking to balance their immediate needs with longer-term opportunities will see the trade-offs play out across three waves of impact: **the Now, the Next and the Never Normal.**

The Now includes an emphasis on supporting people, customers and suppliers. The Next will see the business refocus to withstand new threats and seize new opportunities. And the Never Normal will require navigating rapid shifts in cultural norms, values and behaviours.

This is the moment to reinvent business models and reintegrate the value organisations provide into a new societal landscape. The time to shape a mindset of bold business transformation powered by new approaches to technology and responsible leadership is underway.

In the early weeks of the COVID-19 crisis your organisation evolved its ways of working with impressive speed and responsiveness

Within a few days, most of your staff had moved to remote working arrangements—including customer-facing staff. You launched virtual service delivery models. You turned to human-machine collaboration. This was all done to safely continue to deliver vital services to businesses and customers, at an extraordinary pace in an extraordinary time.

As we enter this Never Normal, NOW is the time to reflect and to decide:

How can we make this new reality work for us?



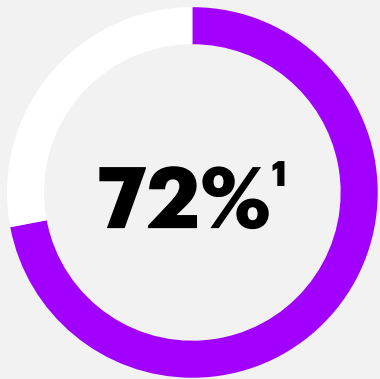
Remote working at the current scale was never a choice, but a necessity

And, for the most part it has worked.

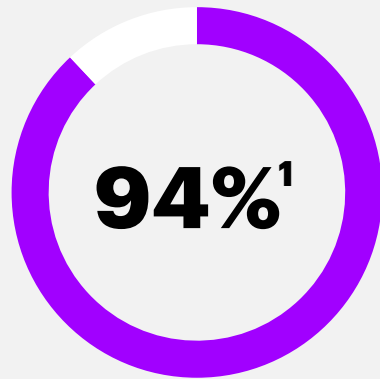
It's desirable: people want it.

It's feasible: the crisis has shown it can work at scale.

It's viable: commercially the numbers add up.



of the global workforce would like to work remotely, mostly part of the time.



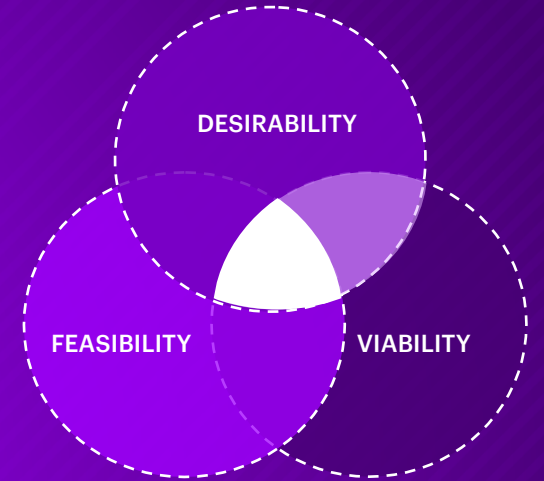
global office workers were working remotely more than 50% of the time during the Pandemic.



\$11,000² per year

is what a typical employer can save for any person that works remotely for 50% of their time

1. Accenture Research 2. Global Workplace Analytics



Early adopters are pivoting...

"We are going to be the most forward-leaning organisation on remote work at our scale."

- Mark Zuckerberg

Twitter's employees would be allowed to work "where[ever] they feel most creative and productive...even once offices begin to reopen."

- Jack Dorsey

Remote working brings benefits for both organisations and employees

More organisations are finding benefit in allowing their people to work from home going forward, either part time or full time.



47%¹

of organisations intend to allow employees to work remotely full time going forward

1. Gartner July 2020

YOUR ORGANISATION



Cost benefits



Productivity



Talent access

YOUR PEOPLE



Less travel



Flexibility



Increased satisfaction

However, remote working might not be for everyone (just yet)—organisations vary, roles vary, and individuals vary

* *Net better off*: When employee needs and aspirations are met across six key dimensions.

Individual resilience varies and not all individuals may be *net better off** working remotely

Digital adoption varies and digital natives may enjoy the experience more

Remote working aspirations vary across different employees

Managers are unable to get the trust equation right



Employees are looking to employers for support

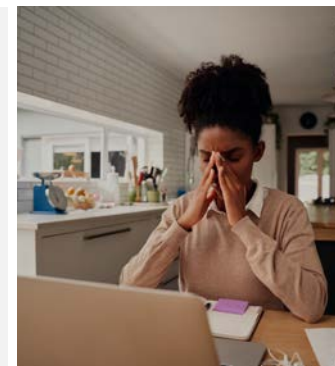
Not all individuals enjoy remote working

Mental health efforts are falling short

Not all jobs can be performed “remotely”

Roles vary and not all can be enabled for remote working immediately

Technology maturity and level of enablement varies



Employees are looking at employers for support

There is a dual need for both a greater connection, and separation from work.

Seemingly overnight, all human-to-human connections have paused. The normal day-to-day experiences that create a culture, from whiteboard sessions to coffee breaks and lunch table get-togethers, have disappeared.

Without the physical separation between the home and the office or the casual office run-ins with colleagues, workers no longer have natural mental breaks built into their workdays.

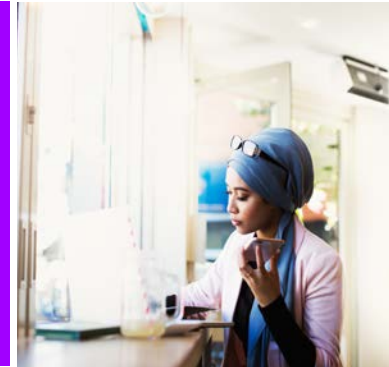
With limited guidelines on how to make it work and who to turn to, gaps in basic physical, mental and relational needs are beginning to emerge and employees are looking at employers for support.

How might we enable a seamless remote working experience, one that's omnichannel and supports employees to balance work and life?

65%

employees working from home rank new technology hardware as the number one area of support that would make remote working easier

Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Research July 2020



Having a dedicated home office may allow you to claim a tax deduction from SARS, under specific conditions

Business Insider

“The idea of being locked in a room at home without contact with people and without the kind of interaction that Investec naturally is prone to **has been a difficult experience.**”

“To smooth the transition to working remotely, Investec introduced virtual Friday night get-togethers. Still, **the change has come with challenges.**” Fani Titi- Investec CEO

Those working from home are finding it harder to take breaks whilst feeling the pressure to be “always on”

MENTAL HEALTH We've built on our existing mental health and wellbeing resources to make sure we can all access the tools and reassurance to help us cope with stress and uncertainty.

- The Managing Your Mind toolkit includes eLearning, advice, and access to counseling and remote meditation to help everyone stay positive, protected and connected
- Our Wellbeing Survey is enabling us to listen to our colleagues' concerns and respond in a way that keeps them well.
- We're stamping out stigma for anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 through our Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation policy
- We're working with leaders to promote compassion and empathy

AngloAmerican **WeCare**
Prioritising our wellbeing during Covid-19

There is a dual need for both a **greater connection, and separation from work.**

Not all jobs can be performed remotely

Working from home is not an option for every job, but where it is enabled correctly, it has clear advantages for the individual and your organisation.

During lockdown, most roles were enabled for remote working. The exception was front line staff in critical or essential occupations. Now, as we move forward, we have to ask: which roles are suited for remote working? Will we corrode customer satisfaction or innovation? Are there particular roles or levels that took greater strain in this work-from-home experiment? Will our current technology foster the collaboration we would like?

Our research shows that not all roles may be suitable for remote working. Some levels may be impacted more than others, and data and analytics are key to understanding where the pain points lie—there may not be a one-size-fits-all answer.

How might we enable the right remote working strategy that unlocks value for our organisation and people?

Across industries financial services, professional services and IT firms rank high for remote working enablement.

MIT Technology Review
(US Job data)



Out of 36 core roles we identified for a healthcare client, we found only 7 could go 100% remote. Enabling technology such as cloud tools, could extend remote working for other roles

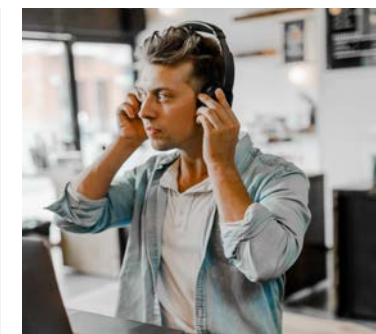


Impact also varies by level—senior levels are carrying the load of buffering employees during the pandemic. Senior managers are collaborating eight-plus more hours per week

Microsoft Study

Across roles, accountants, customer service reps, sales reps and several customer-facing roles rank high for remote work enablement.

MIT Technology Review (US Job data)



Trust is one of the top issues we are finding when it comes to working well remotely. Your culture needs to promote trust for successful virtual work

Not all individuals enjoy working remotely

Individual resilience varies, as do the practicalities for different individuals working from home.

Some individuals are thriving in remote working conditions, whereas others are not. Are people who work remotely more than others better off or worse off?

1. Do your people have the financial means to set up and sustain a home office?
2. Is there ability/affordability to set up a dedicated space?
3. Is your workforce digitally fluent?
4. Do your people feel valued and included as a part of your culture?
5. Do/did people enjoy the remote working experience? Is/was there adequate support?
6. Do employees have routines in place to manage their day?
7. Is there trust in leadership?

Employees are looking at employers for support.

How might we support our employees build resilience in new ways of working?

57%
of workers say it is difficult to switch off.

Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Research July 2020



The growing population of working caregivers' value their remote working options.

Guardian Life Workplace Benefits Study



Adoption varies for different employees

~70% of digital transformations fail when employees are not engaged

45%
of workers working from home want coaching or support to use new digital tools.

Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Research July 2020



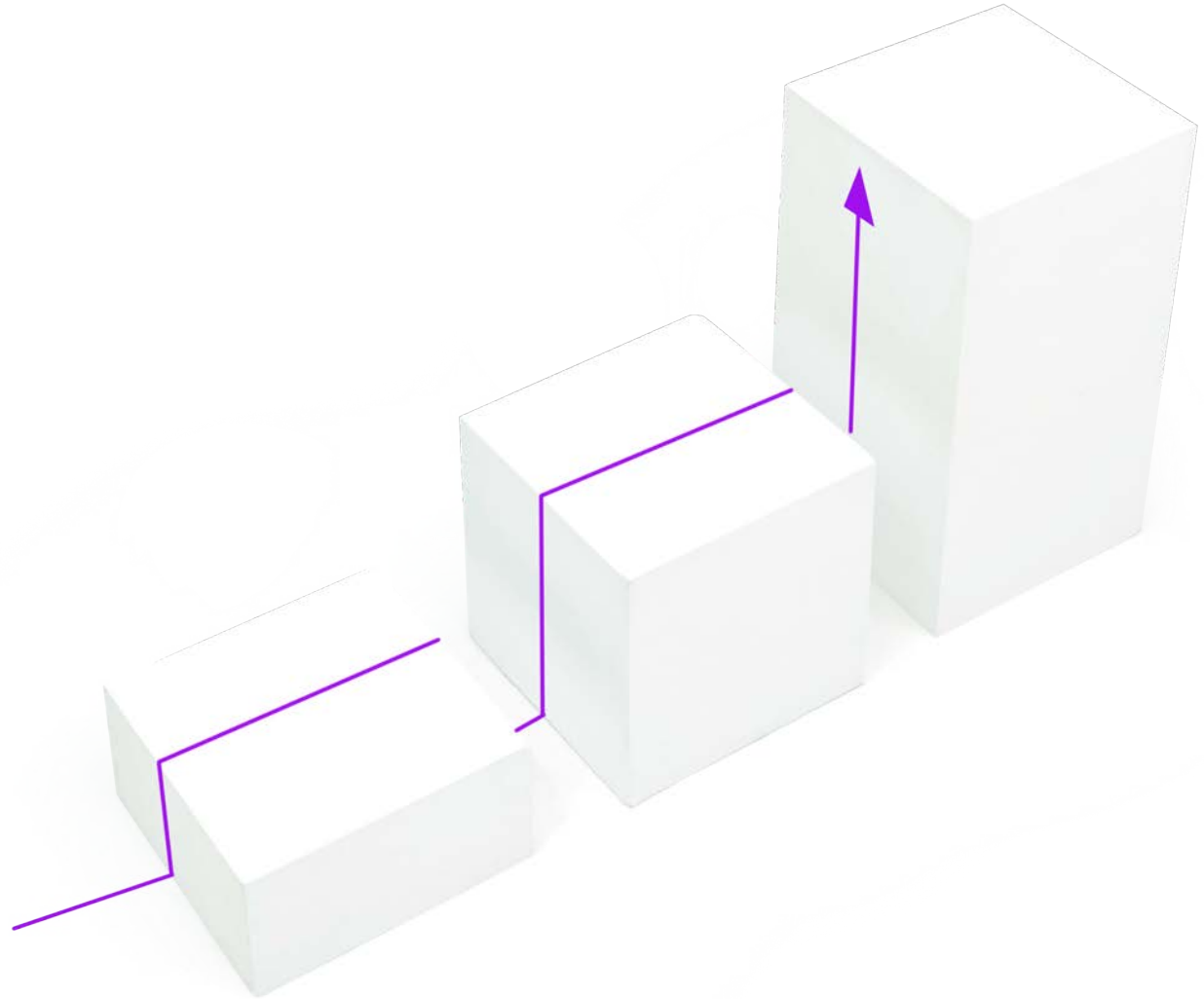
Just a fraction of employees are receiving support from their employers—remote working guidelines, tools, etc.

Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Research July 2020

So, what now?

Avoid the pitfalls in shifting to remote.

Reconnect with your people, re-imagine their experience and fundamentally disrupt your institutional culture for new ways of working... Now and beyond.



Make this never normal work for you

Five interconnected areas to focus on when thinking about taking the plunge.

These are grounded in data, analytics and behavioural science, and should be executed in a “human-centred” focus—with the individual employee, and your culture, at the centre.

- 1 Create a fact base of what is going on with your people:**
What has worked, what hasn't and what do your teams need?
- 2 Define your remote working strategy and operating model:**
You can't simply extend the emergency—be deliberate!
- 3 Align key processes and policies to support your model:**
Performance, motivation and culture need to be re-defined.
- 4 Make it easy for your people and protect your organisation:**
Design your “work-from-home-in-a-box” solution.
- 5 Evolve your culture and experience to make remote working thrive:**
Treat this like you would every other large change—improve over time!

Create a fact base of what is going on with your people:

What has worked, what hasn't and what do your teams need?

Do you believe that your management team has hard facts about the effectiveness of your current remote working experiment? Which job roles are more productive when remote vs. office-based? Which employees are unhappy, have health issues, are at risk of “burn out” and/or looking for a new job?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” take a few steps back to build a fact base of information that will inform your transformation to remote ways of working.

1. Continuously collect and analyse data on individual needs and preferences—surveys, workplace analytics, digital and AI tools.
2. Create a platform from which you can make decisions.
3. Create options that fulfil people and organisational objectives—recognising that people are different .

Uncovering what has changed in the way they worked:

- Workdays were lengthening - people worked four more hours a week but meetings got shorter.
- New norms were forming - with people carving personal time into their calendars.
- Managers were carrying the brunt - working longer hours to collaborate and nurture employees.
- Human connection matters, people were finding ways to reconnect using technology.

Spotlight: Microsoft analysed data on its remote workforce to learn about collaboration, agility, and improve employee wellbeing.

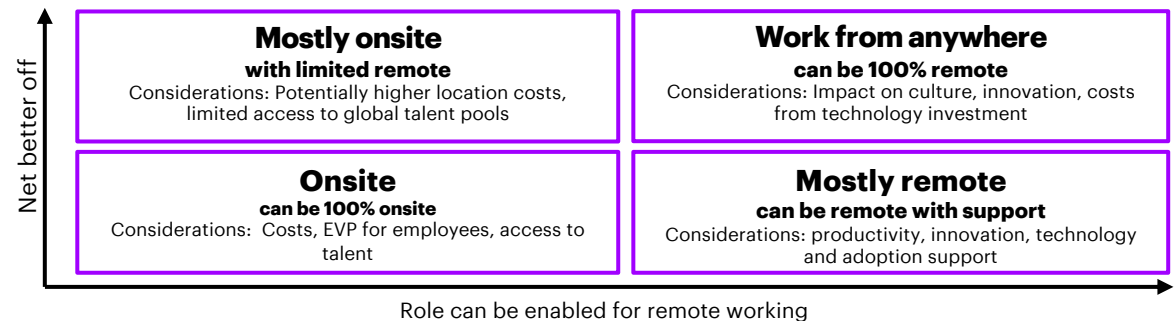


Define your remote working strategy and operating model:

You can't simply extend the emergency—be deliberate!

Your remote working model has the potential to unlock value for your organisation, but that value needs to be defined upfront. What percentage of remote working is feasible, viable, and desirable for your organisation?

1. What are you trying to achieve with your shift to remote working? Increased productivity, cost reduction or a better value proposition & access to talent? What's the business case?
2. What do your employees want?
3. What is feasible based on your current work from home learnings and technology infrastructure?
4. How will you foster adoption of new ways of working?



Choose your “work-from-anywhere” model across the continuum of options that fits your organisation

Align key processes and policies to support your model:

Performance, motivation and culture need to be re-defined

Most organisations have put immediate measures in place to get through the crisis. For some, this included enhancing healthcare benefits while for others it meant broadening their existing wellbeing programmes and reviewing changes to paid time off or leave/vacation programmes.

From mental awareness to counselling sessions, virtual workouts and review of policies around sick-leave, a lot has been done.

Now is the time to think long term and optimise key processes and policies to enable your remote working model.

1. Apply a customer lens to your employee process redesign—what are the key moments-that-matter and how will you enable them for a synchronous and asynchronous way of working?
2. Use behavioural learnings from the pandemic —how did changing behaviours impact your current policies?
3. Rethink wellbeing policies for different remote working models—how will you create parity in benefits? And pay?
4. Consider additional risks to take into account from cyber security, health and wellbeing perspectives, and the employee, employer or insurer liabilities.
5. Consider inclusion—do your new policies cater for all types of employees?

Enable your new ways of working: Rethink rewards, performance, wellbeing, and engagement—build trust.



Make it easy for your people and protect your organisation:

Design your “work-from-home-in-a-box” solution

The COVID-19 pandemic required employees to shift from offices to work from home. Some had the benefit of a home office, but many are working from kitchens, dens and other workspaces.

It's time to fine-tune your employees' home offices.

Where remote working is viable, start with getting the basics right—with a “work-from-home-in-a-box” solution that enables remote working effectively and safely to ensure remote offices are risk-free when it comes to data and cyber security threats.

Organisations need to take the time to inventory minimum work-from-home requirements.

Essential equipment, training and support bundle

- Desk, chair, screens/printers
- Computer, connectivity
- Tools for collaboration and fostering innovation—e.g., MS Teams, Zoom, MURAL, etc.
- Cyber Security guidelines and enablement
- Support and training

Setting up the most productive workstation at home gives the employee the opportunity to separate their work life from their home life.



Evolve your culture and experience to make remote working thrive:

Treat this like you would every other large change—improve over time!

While a hybrid remote working model might sound like the best option for many, lessons learnt from COVID-19 remote working experiments show us that a shift to remote or hybrid isn't easy.

Even before COVID-19, research shows that being “always on” and accessible via technology while working remotely leads to the blurring of work and non-work boundaries.

The second biggest issues was “out of sight out of mind,” that is, those who worked from home were more likely to feel left out and mistreated.

Yet, we have both extremes—organisations that tried work from home but didn't succeed, and those working 100% remotely.

Underpinning some of the successful and not so successful experiments in remote working are lessons in leadership and culture.

Building one culture that allows both remote and onsite employees to thrive needs deliberate intervention.

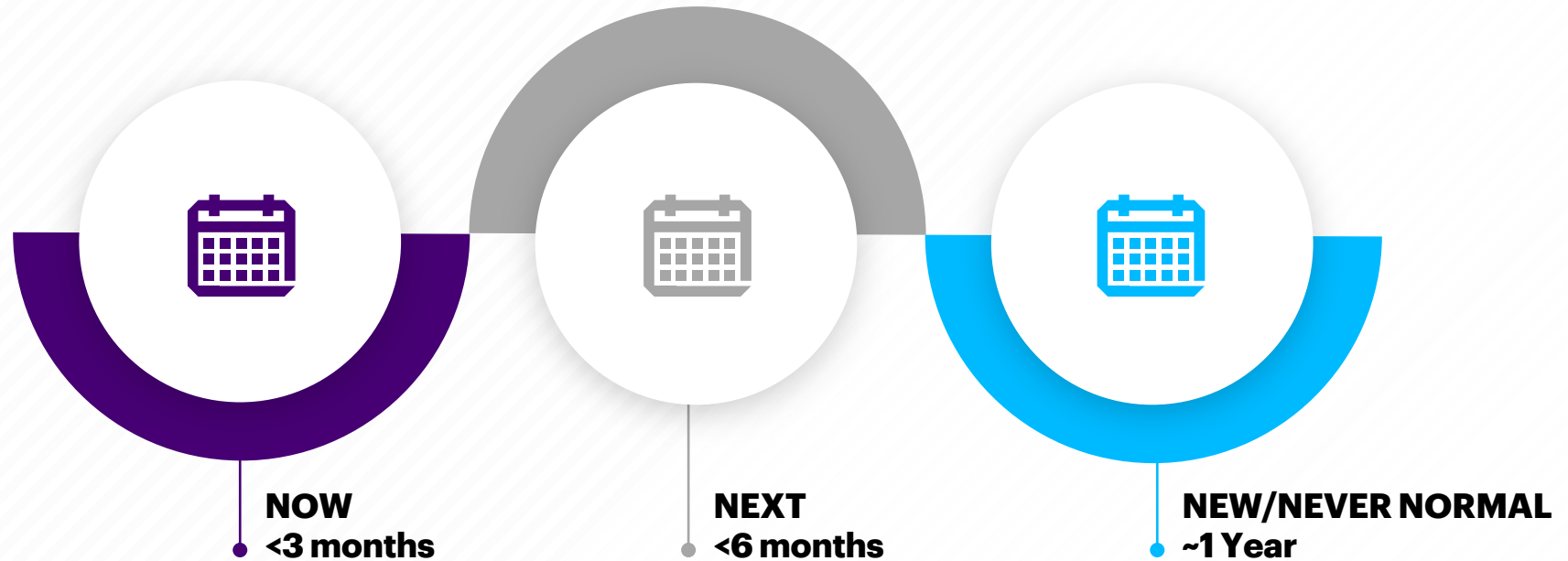
Building one culture that allows both remote and onsite employees to thrive needs deliberate intervention.

1. Start with the why? Understand the impact of your remote working model on culture.
2. Lead with data—don't assume, listen to your people.
3. Rethink leadership imperatives for new ways of working.
4. Personalise your adoption approach.
5. Hardwire culture—break, adapt and recreate processes.
6. Overcommunicate with empathy at the heart of it.
7. Evolve your employee experience.



The right actions NOW

Can position your organisation to succeed NEXT and adapt in the NEW/NEVER NORMAL





NOW
<3 months

- Start with a fact base of where you are NOW, using readily available data and surveys.
- Understand what technologies, roles and people thrived in your current remote working experiment—understand where the pain points are.
- Choose your remote working model carefully.

- Evaluate the right remote mix and model for your organisation based on viability, desirability and feasibility drivers. Experiment, pilot and scale.
- Align key processes and policies with an expanded focus on wellbeing, performance and productivity, and compensation and benefits.

- Get the remote working basics right and provide the right enablement, learning and support for a safe and secure remote working environment.
- Evolve your culture and remote working experience. Enable deliberate engagements and communications for getting people together.

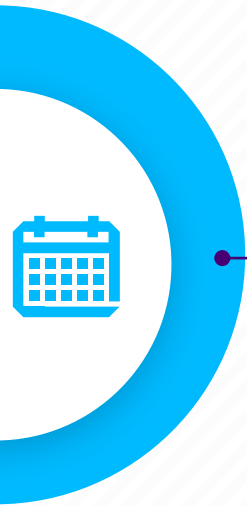


NEXT
<6 months

- Build in the right analytics capabilities to make data-led decisions about the future of work.
- Reassess your talent strategy including, expanding your recruitment efforts through the emerging talent market. Use advance AI and automation to unlock further value.

- Invest in new collaboration tools and cloud-based solutions to boost productivity, while continuing to evolve your culture.
- Digitally enable moments that matter like onboarding and recruitment.

- Reset your location strategy as you start your deliberate remote working journey. Consolidate office space where needed, and re-imagine the physical space to allow for synchronous and asynchronous ways of working.



**NEW/NEVER
NORMAL
~1 Year**

Develop dynamic sensing capabilities, combining forecasting, decision support and analytics.

Challenge myths and ways of working that inhibited speed, collaboration and innovation.

Sustain remote working to become a more human, intelligent, and liquid enterprise.



We'll leave you with this message

This is no ordinary crisis, the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is severe, rapid, and global in nature. However, crises often lead to innovation by suspending and shifting boundaries. Organisations that prove themselves adaptable will thrive. Your people are looking to you for direction.

Seize the opportunity to do the previously unthinkable. Actively build your new-ways-of-working solution, grounded in data analytics and behavioural science, and executed in a truly human way—in effect creating a new employee value proposition and transforming your culture.

The winners will be the ones who thrive in the new ways of working, not just in working remotely.

To help our clients navigate both the human and business impact of COVID-19, we've created a hub of all our latest thinking on a variety of topics.

Each topic highlights specific actions which can be taken now, and what to consider next as industries move towards a never normal—from leadership essentials to ensuring productivity for your employees and customer service groups, to building supply chain resilience and much more.

Check back regularly for more insights.

Our [hub](#) will be constantly updated.

Visit our Talent and organisation / human potential page [here](#).



5 priorities to help reopen and reinvent your business



Productivity in uncertain times—the elastic digital workforce



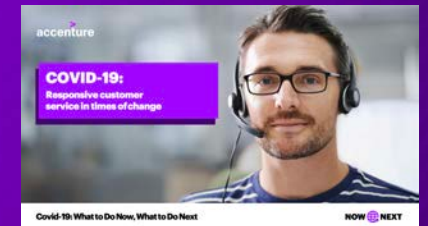
The role of leadership during COVID-19



Creating shared workforce resilience



5 new human truths that experiences need to address



Responsive customer service in times of change

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