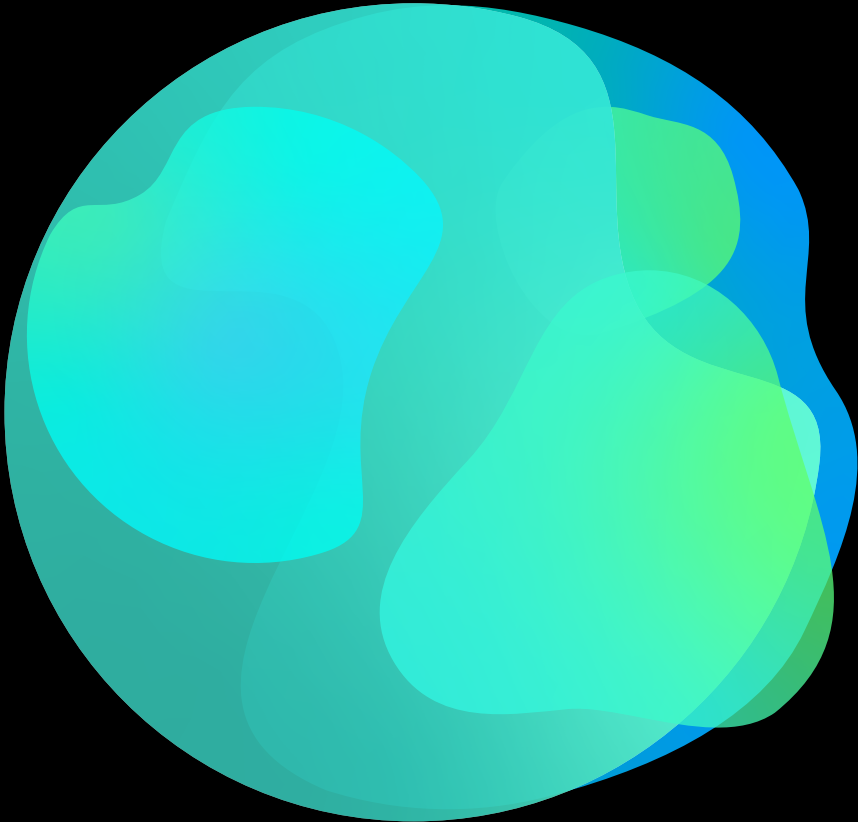


Deloitte.



**From Great Resignation
to Great Reimagination**

Introduction

Understanding how organizations can capitalize on the current labor challenges to rearchitect, recharge, and reinvent how work gets done.



With employees more willing than ever to leave for fresh opportunities, and companies struggling to resume prepandemic operations with fewer people, leaders have an opportunity to reimagine the workforce, the workplace, and work itself. This article is latest in our compendium of articles on the Great resignation, where we explore why workers are leaving—and how to rearchitect work, recharge the workforce, and reimagine the workplace. These insights can help organizations to better harness and leverage technology, empower people, and create a better experience for all employees while delivering superior outcomes for customers and stakeholders.





Time for a great reset?

The upheavals of the last two-plus years may be subsiding: In the most recent Fortune/Deloitte CEO survey, 60% of CEOs anticipate putting the COVID-19 pandemic in the rearview mirror by year's end. But leaders are far less optimistic about resolving their labor challenges. Nearly three-quarters of CEOs surveyed rank labor and skills shortages as the biggest disruptor of business strategy over the next 12 months.¹

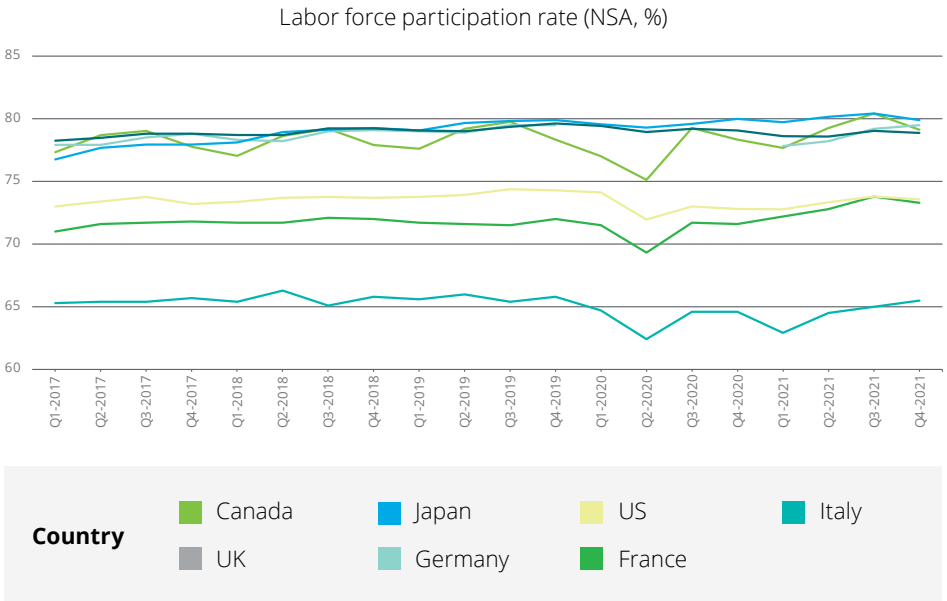
These leaders have reason to be concerned, as the great resignation expands. Further, studies across 31 global markets at the beginning of 2021 suggested that more than 40% of workers were considering leaving their jobs,² and indeed, workers quit in unprecedented numbers. In the US alone, while 75.3 million workers were hired in 2021, 68.9 million left their jobs. Of these, 47.4 million quit voluntarily.³

This phenomenon extends far beyond US borders⁴—as our regional series explores.⁵ Globally, 36% of millennials and 53% of Gen Z respondents planned to leave their employers within two years, according to Deloitte Global's 2021 Millennial study.⁶ Additionally, 53% of workers in France and 55% in Germany and Japan claim to be open to looking for new jobs in the next year. These figures are even higher in Australia (64%) and the United Kingdom (60%).

More broadly, a LinkedIn survey of approximately 9,000 workers found that 58% of Europeans say they're considering changing jobs in 2022.⁷



Figure 1: Labor force participation rates by G-7 Country



Source: National statistical agencies, accessed via Haver Analytics.

Even if, as many economists suggest, the workforce shift is less a revolution than a predictable byproduct of rapid economic recovery,⁸ organizations around the globe need to prepare for—and then deal with—its impacts.

Figure 1 depicts the labor force participation rates across few countries. To help companies navigate the road ahead, this article

explores the reasons why workers are leaving their employers, along with strategies companies can consider to not merely attract new workers (or even lure back ex-employees) but use the workforce shift as an opportunity for a reset. Leaders need to step back and holistically reflect on operations to ensure that the work being done is tied directly to desired outcomes.

We aim to help leaders create new opportunities and aspirations to rearchitect work, recharge the workforce, and reinvent the workplace. A great reset can give organizations a chance to move forward, leveraging, and harnessing technology to not only create a better workforce experience for all workers but also deliver superior customer, stakeholder, and client value.

Labor challenges

The issues are global but vary by region, industry, and demographic segments.

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The global labor force participation rate fell by close to 2 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 and is projected to recover only half of that in 2022. Economists forecast the global unemployment rate, and the total number of unemployed workers, to remain above 2019 levels until at least 2023.⁹

Every nation and region faces different labor trends and challenges. But workers everywhere are interested in exploring alternatives,¹⁰ under differing circumstances (Figure 2).¹¹

For example, one survey reported that 42% of US employees would quit if they weren't given long-term remote-work options.¹²

Figure 3 shows the quitting rate of American workers by months and by industries. Also, 68% of surveyed Indian workers have been considering switching industries (Figure 2).¹³ While in Europe, many workers appear to be waiting for long-expected pay increases before seriously considering a move.¹⁴ This is further evidenced by a UK/Ireland survey, which found that 38% of employees were planning to leave their jobs in the next six months to a year.¹⁵

Figure 2: Work trends across Asia-Pacific

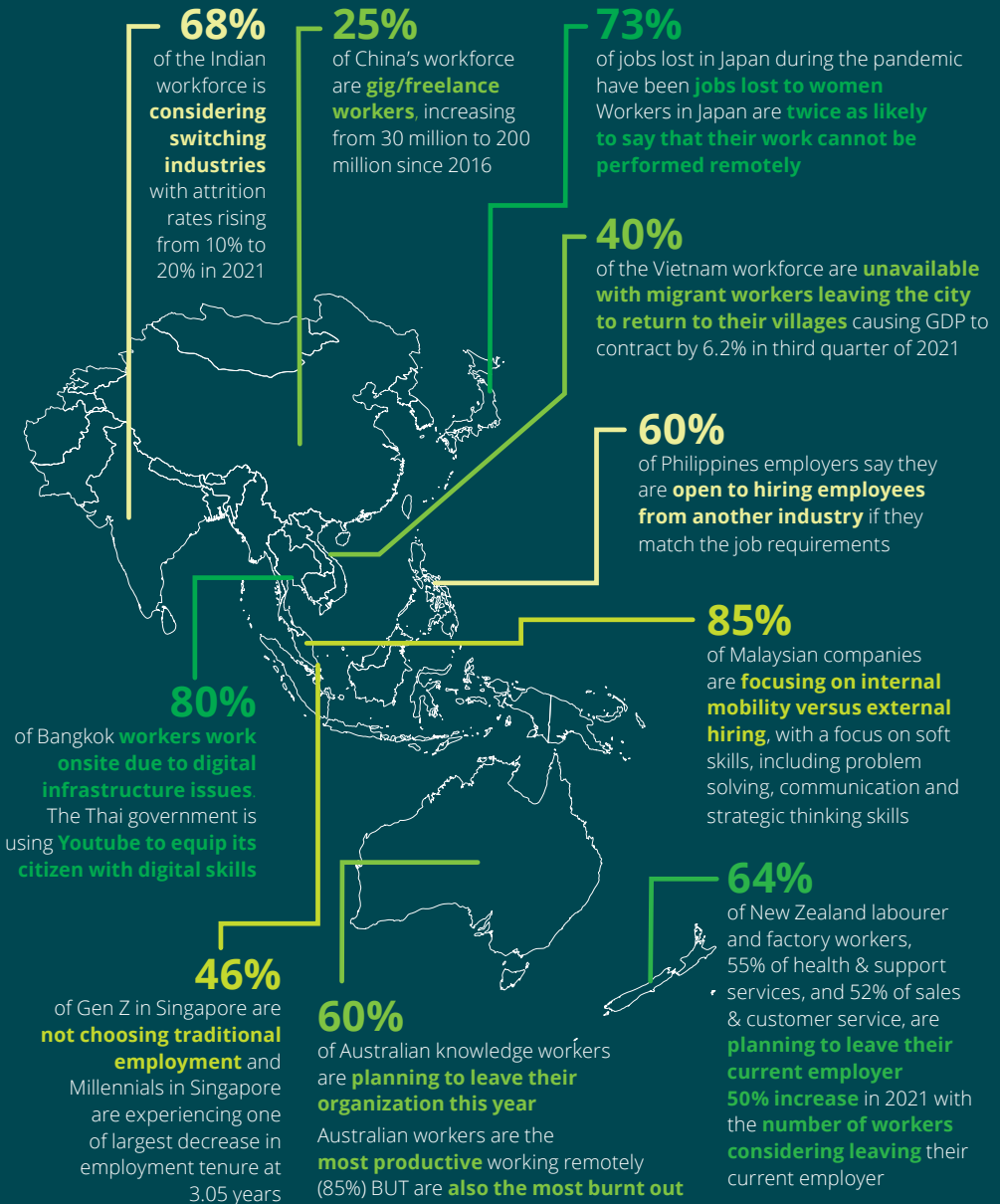
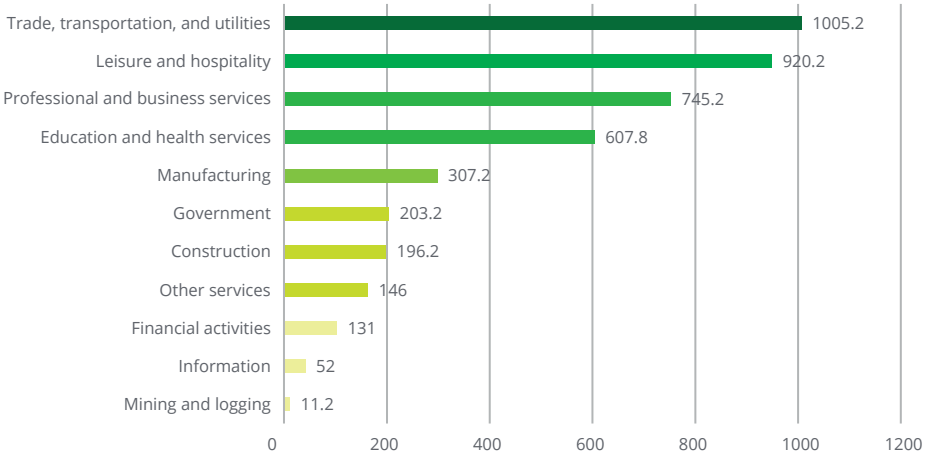
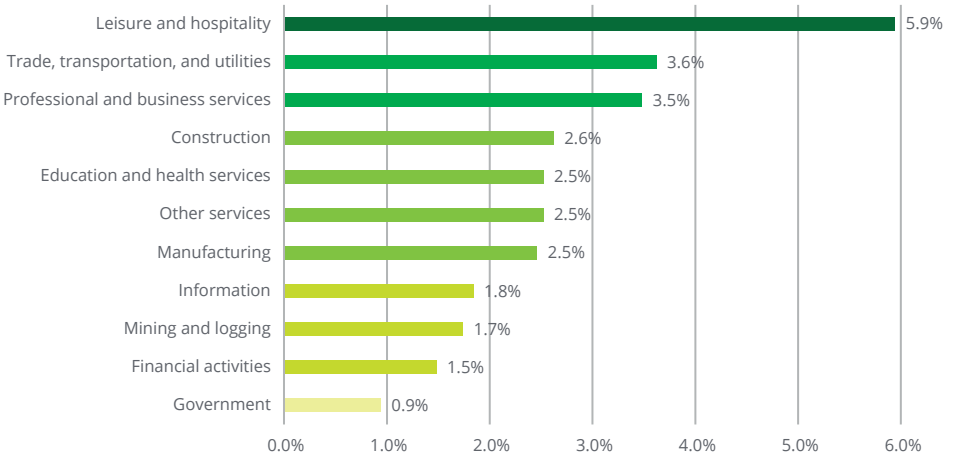


Figure 3: American workers quitting

Average number of workers quitting / month
(Aug 2021 - Dec 2021) US BLS (in 1,000's)



Average (US) quit rates by industry (April - Dec 2021) (bls data)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed via Haver Analytics

INDUSTRY CONSIDERATIONS

As our regional *Great resignation* series highlights, the pandemic affected certain industries—travel, hospitality, and leisure—most dramatically, with restrictions shutting down travel, indoor dining, and entertainment globally, resulting in mass layoffs.¹⁶ When companies brought people back to work, those same industries experienced the highest quit rates.¹⁷

The pandemic affected certain industries—travel, hospitality, and leisure—most dramatically, resulting in mass layoffs.



DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS: THE PANDEMIC HAS DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED WOMEN

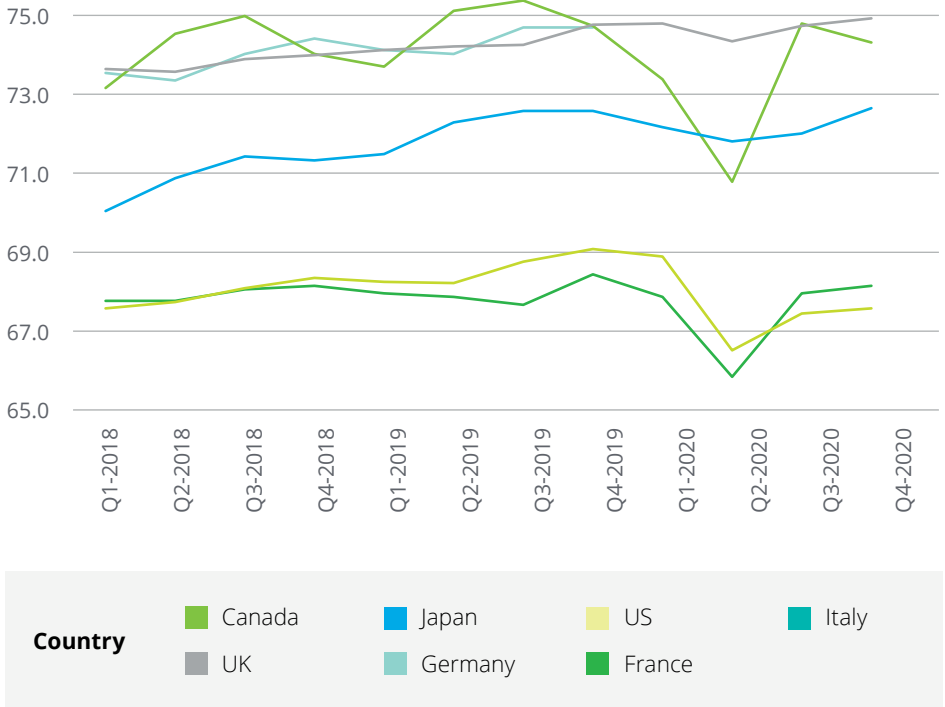
Recent research also suggests that women, non-white employees, and those in lower-wage jobs are the workers most likely to consider making job changes.¹⁸ Both Deloitte Global's Women at Work study¹⁹ and more recently, our Economics team study²⁰ findings support this, indicating that globally, the pandemic had a disproportionate adverse effect on women. The labor force participation rate of women in G-7 economies fell dramatically in 2020 (Figure 4).²¹

Before the pandemic, women made up more than 50% of the US workforce, but 3 million women have since dropped out of the workforce—1.6 million of whom have not returned.²²

More than half of Gen Z and millennials, financially less secure than older generations, may consider changing employers in 2022, up 3% year-over-year.²³ Labor participation rates are also driven by external factors, such as migrant workers, urban exodus trends or lack of digital infrastructure or remote working opportunities.



Figure 4: Labor Force Participation Rate for Female in G-7 economies



Source: National statistical agencies, accessed via Haver Analytics.

Why are employees leaving?

Whether driven by a wave of restlessness, fresh opportunities, or ordinary employment churn,²⁴ workers everywhere are leaving—or considering leaving their current position—or the workforce altogether. Some reasons:



SHOW ME THE MONEY.

Particularly for millennials, the primary motivation may be as simple as salary. Even before the pandemic, nearly half of millennials globally cited pay dissatisfaction as a reason for leaving their current employer.²⁵ Our 2022 Millennial Survey continues to show pay is the top reason millennials left their employers within the last two years.²⁶

The tight labor market has created opportunities for workers to move for higher-paying roles. Leaders should recognize that money comes in forms as well as salary—incentives and rewards like hybrid working stipends, commute reimbursement, and well-being incentives help retain or attract good people.



WORKPLACE CULTURE AND SOCIETAL IMPACT.

The Food & accommodation and the Transporting, warehousing, and utilities industries in US, were hit the hardest by worker attrition.

They responded with the greatest wage increases—to little effect.²⁷ Younger workers have long told pollsters that money is only one of several key factors in their employment decisions, and the tight job market offers the chance for them to follow through on their convictions. Deloitte's Global Millennial Survey suggests that dissatisfaction with workplace culture and an employer's social commitment are equally important reasons to consider leaving a job.²⁸



NEW DEVELOPMENTS DRIVE CHOICE.

An appealing culture and salary may not cure restlessness in employees with a high desire for variety. One size certainly does not fit all, especially in organizations that host a multi-generational workforce.

As such employers must adapt to address varying staffing requirements.²⁹ Employees want to learn and grow in their positions, and, more importantly, contribute to areas that are important to them. This would require organizations to broaden the variety of opportunities they offer.

This could not only create internal opportunity markets but encourage and celebrate internal mobility.

Offering flexibility in work scheduling can appeal to both workers looking to slow down and those yearning to be busier,³⁰ with some organizations offering workers additional workplace autonomy.³¹

To help improve the work environment, organizations are turning to opportunity marketplaces, which take advantage of organizational talent on a wider scale to help protect employment, build loyalty, and help companies manage change in priorities and the marketplace.³²

Even before the pandemic, nearly half of millennials globally cited pay dissatisfaction as a reason for leaving their current employer.





WORK-LIFE BALANCE.

The pandemic, and the accompanying periods of isolation, gave many people an opportunity to slow down and re-evaluate how they were spending their time. Last year's Deloitte Global's Millennial Survey asked respondents to choose the areas they think leaders should prioritize beyond generating revenue and profit. They selected ensuring better work-life balance, supporting physical and mental health of employees, and supporting development through training, mentors as top choices.³³ Research now suggests that in India more than half of employees are more likely to prioritize health and well-being over work than before the pandemic.³⁴

Different groups in different regions are shifting expectations: In the United States, high earners are more likely (52%) to want to reduce work hours and commitment than low-income workers (34%); in Singapore, millennials are job-hopping more frequently,³⁵ and 46% of Gen Z workers are choosing non-traditional employment paths.³⁶



A DESIRE FOR FLEXIBILITY.

Workers are rethinking not only how many hours they want to work but where, how, and with whom. Nearly six in 10 global workers would definitely seek new employment if they were no longer able to work remotely at their present jobs.³⁷ This sentiment is echoed in the US, where more than 70% said they want continued work flexibility and remote work options to remain in place.³⁸

As companies that have had to walk back announcements of in-person work have learned, the "workplace" has expanded dramatically; hybrid and remote strategies are here to stay. As we suggested in an earlier article, workers seek flexibility.³⁹

Taken together, these reasons suggest that workers desire more say and power in the shape and form of their work and workplace experiences, such as better alignment with their values, more flexibility, and more opportunity for new experiences. The worker-employer relationship has indeed changed, with workers wielding more influence.

The great Asia-Pacific work-life reevaluation

As seen in figure 2, across workers in Asia-Pacific region, the social, political, educational, and industrial fabric across different countries underpins the decisions that workers are making as they reevaluate what is important to them in their life and what that means, to what they need and expect from their work.

Australian workers may be the world's most productive remote workers in the world—and the most burned-out (Figure 2). In China, a boom in freelance work and the *tang ping* spiritual movement suggest that many young workers are exhausted by society's pressure to find jobs and perform well while working long hours with seemingly little reward.⁴⁰ In Vietnam, big-city lockdowns drove many migrant workers back to their rural homes, and they show few signs of returning, highlighting the social safety nets that home villages provide for many of Asia's working poor.

At the same time, in India, workers are seeking new career pathways and switching jobs to industries that they have little or no experience in. And in Japan, despite high numbers of workers considering leaving their jobs, a combination of factors—including the remnants of the traditional lifetime employment system, a deflationary mindset that keeps companies unwilling or unable to raise salaries, and a broad lack of wage growth—are contributing to a sense of risk aversion and a lack of incentive for workers to shift jobs.⁴¹

The great reimagination

Workers have undergone a significant introspective shift. And corporate leaders, too, should take a step back and consider how to move toward a reimagination of the workforce and workplace. The goal should not only be to rethink how to attract, retain, and empower workers but to reimagine work itself. Organizations can recover and thrive by reflecting, revisiting, and reinventing work to better leverage technology, harness the power of workforce, and reimagine the workplace.

Leaders can aim to make work more rewarding and appealing by streamlining and focusing on overall goals.

As our foundational research suggests, the future of work lies in not merely improving processes but revisiting existing processes to determine whether they are necessary, lead to desired outcomes, represent the best paths, and leverage both machines and humans optimally.⁴²

REFOCUS THE WORK: OUTCOMES VS. OUTPUTS

Improving existing processes can go only so far in boosting the quality of core work—that is, the value delivered to customers. The key is reevaluating and rethinking existing tasks and systems to determine whether they are indeed the most effective means to get the desired outcome.⁴³ Organizations were able to rapidly move millions of employees from in-person to virtual, but time spent on emails and meetings has climbed since the beginning of the pandemic,⁴⁴ a sign of inefficiency—and another reason why people are feeling burned out.

Many workers cite inefficiencies in their technology tools, with 43% of those surveyed saying they spend too much time switching between them, which impacts their productivity. And 62% of those surveyed felt they were missing collaboration opportunities in the modern, distributed, and remote workplace.⁴⁵

Research shows that weekly meeting time has increased 148%, with the average meeting time growing from 35 to 45 minutes. The number of emails delivered in February 2021 increased by 40.6B versus February 2020. The amount of time spent in Microsoft Teams meetings has grown 2.5 times globally, and the average user sends 45% more chats each week and 42% more per person.⁴⁶



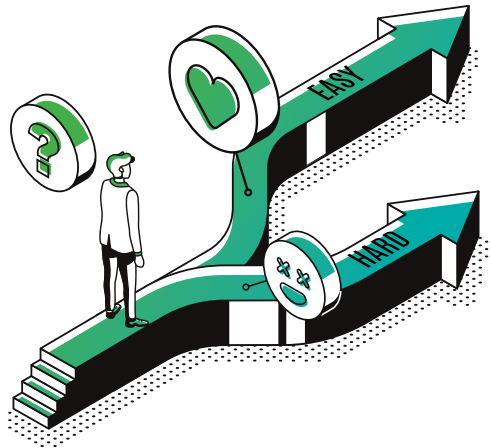
New Zealand’s Department of Corrections’ overall goal is to keep the nation safe, change lives, and put people on a better trajectory. Leaders have aimed to free up key people’s time, shifting them from low-value activities to allow more time interacting with people and doing the job of rehabilitation.⁴⁷



ING Netherlands engages employees by defining work around team outcomes rather than individual ones. Its organizational “building blocks” are multidisciplinary teams of marketing specialists, product and commercial specialists, user-experience designers, data analysts, and IT engineers, all focused on a shared outcome.⁴⁸

RETHINK THE WORK: ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY TASKS

As organizations lose workers, many will simply aim to carry on, asking the survivors to do more with less. But no one who has just endured eight successive videoconference calls will have much to say about either effectiveness or work quality. It may be that much of what companies routinely do is no longer truly necessary—or at least not critical. Leaders should revisit work activities, prioritize them, and look to eliminate the lowest-priority work.



Shifting workloads from routine to high value can keep employees more engaged. Organizations are ramping up use of AI and ML software and technology to make that happen. Already, according to our survey, more than a quarter of survey respondents have reached full-scale deployment of five or more types of AI applications within their organizations, especially within the last 18 months.⁴⁹



According to a 2021 study, 62% of financial services workers now use digital workers—software robots—for tasks such as sorting/classifying data, digital data entry, flagging issues, and administrative tasks.⁵⁰



The COVID-19 pandemic increased the urgency for companies to adapt. Eight in 10 adopters believe the pandemic has accelerated their organization's shift to "Everything-as-a-Service (XaaS)" from traditional IT.⁵¹



In early 2021, Deloitte and Fortune surveyed CEOs about their leadership through the pandemic, and 85% indicated that their organizations had significantly accelerated digital transformation during the crisis.⁵²



UPS has shortened its seasonal hiring process from two weeks to 30 minutes by having applicants submit all their paperwork online and forgoing interviews. Applicants could be working as soon as a day or two after submission. And over the last three years, about one-third of people hired for seasonal package-handler jobs were later hired for permanent positions.⁵³



Japan's largest bank, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, has installed robot scanners to digitize millions of documents to speedily verify its customers' identities. These machines even extract staples through their AI-controlled arms, removing an obstacle that foiled past efforts to copy the files.⁵⁴

REARCHITECT THE WORK: ELEVATE HUMANS AND HARNESS TECHNOLOGY DIFFERENTLY

Organizations have made great strides in leveraging technology to augment existing roles such as insurance underwriter⁵⁵ or claims adjuster.⁵⁶ Opportunities are only growing: Companies can further use technologies to do new things to add greater value to client relationships—and, ideally, help give more meaning to employees' own work. It means elevating what humans do and letting true human-machine collaboration enable people to unleash their potential.



The Zurich Insurance Group utilizes smart glasses to aid on-site field adjusters, providing capabilities such as real-time documenting of work progress, remote conferencing with experts, and site planning.⁵⁷



Nearly 80% of executives said their companies had implemented some form of robotic process automation.⁵⁸



Farmers Insurance plans to use a digitally controlled mobile robot to assist with in-field catastrophe claims handling and non-catastrophe property inspections, helping to improve the safety and efficiency of both.⁵⁹



Chevron plant workers use high-tech goggles as holographic computers, allowing them to participate in video calls and assess oil refinery problems in real time without needing to make site visits.⁶⁰



Recharge the workforce

Reenergizing existing workers should be near the top of every leader's agenda, a goal that may mean rethinking and reworking existing talent models to support new career configurations and pathways. And with the tight labor market, organizations may need to expand the talent pool by casting a wider net and focusing less on pedigree.



LOOK FOR TALENT IN UNLIKELY PLACES

If online applications aren't flooding in at the same pace as they once did, perhaps it's worth exploring other sources.



Three Hong Kong insurance agents hired former flight attendants and airline ground crew, given their experience working with customers. Sales of new life insurance policies increased 25%.⁶¹



Consider neurodiverse individuals. It is estimated that one in six people have some sort of neurodiverse status, yet unemployment rates for neurodiverse people are as high as 80%.⁶² A leading financial service global organization runs a "Autism at Work" program which has achieved 48 to 140% more work from neurodiverse individuals, than their typical colleagues, depending on their roles.⁶³



Boeing has partnered with Mesa Community College to teach students how to assemble and test equipment that creates airplanes' "central nervous system."⁶⁴



LEVERAGE WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEMS TO ENSURE THE RIGHT SKILLS AT THE RIGHT TIME

Rethinking work means reconsidering the ideal workforce composition—and the talent models to attract the right people.

It's important to leverage broader ecosystems—for instance, bringing in contract or temporary workers—as needed. Leaders should consider revisiting recruiting processes to leverage new recruiting tools such as AI screening or click-to-hire. Not all full-time roles need to be filled by full-time workers, and organizations should consider alternative workers for senior level and more strategic roles.



At Unilever, internal talent marketplaces unlocked more than 500,000 hours by the end of 2020.⁶⁵



The Body Shop adopted an open hiring process for its seasonal staff for its distribution centers which boosted retention and enabled the company to use one temp agency instead of three.⁶⁶

CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING WORKERS

As leaders look to attract new employees, they shouldn't neglect—or take for granted—those who have stuck around, pulling double duty to fill in for those who left. That means giving people the kind of time, resources, and support they need in a work landscape that continues to shift under their feet.

Organizations can aim to satisfy restless employees by expanding internal growth and mobility opportunities, or by offering new learning or rotational positions.



Hewlett Packard-owned MphasiS launched a programme called 'Homecoming' to hire former employees who had recently quit. The plan is to hire familiar hands for quicker onboarding and faster value delivery.⁶⁷



On average, a Hyatt employee in housekeeping stays with the company for more than 12 years. One of the reasons being company's hiring from within policy, by identifying potential leadership candidates from its existing workforce.⁶⁸



RESKILLING YOUR WORKFORCE

Organizations must fill in the gaps that remote and hybrid working create to address learning deficits among all types of employees. Companies should acknowledge that generation, location, and technology play a significant role in how employees learn. The key is to identify learning gaps and support dynamic solutions for reskilling the workforce as needed.

The value of learning should not be underestimated. In fact, Deloitte's Ways of Working survey found that 68% believe that the ability to learn on the job is a very important component for creating an optimal working environment.⁶⁹ But are organizations doing a good enough job at reskilling employees to succeed in a changing work environment?



Just 55% of individual contributors believe their organization has well-defined programs to develop and grow workers that translate to remote/hybrid work. Only 35% of C-level executives agree, which reveals a startling gap in effectiveness.⁷⁰



Mastercard leverages its talent marketplace to create mentor pairings based on capabilities and ambitions instead of making matches based solely on seniority. Thus creating successful collaborative platform to advance employee development.⁷¹



Google offers versatile educational opportunities for their internal staff and for external organizations, professionals. Their upskilling and reskilling initiatives is run by their "g2g" (Googler-to-Googler) volunteer community, where volunteers devise training courses and curriculums, mentor their peers, and supervise learners.⁷²



Starbucks's Starbucks College Achievement Plan provides 100% tuition coverage for its employees. They have devised proprietary curriculums and e-learning programs like Starbucks Experience and Shift Supervision to upskill its workforce and develop soft skills.⁷³

Reinvent the workplace

Workplace encompasses much more than where people work. It speaks to an organization's reporting and decision-making structure, and its culture and collaboration opportunities. Giving workers more decision-making power has proven to be a successful strategy for adopting new technologies—and for building trust and empowerment.

Hybrid and remote work were on the upswing even before the pandemic. After two-plus years of adjustment, the physical workplace will never be what it once was. But it can still be an asset.

REVOLUTIONIZE AND COCREATE OFFICE SPACE

Organizations, in collaboration with workers, need to cocreate the new “phy-gital” workplace, to make it work logistically and culturally, and encourage positive workforce and client experiences. It is worth noting that 66% of business decision-makers are considering redesigning physical spaces to accommodate hybrid work environments more effectively.⁷⁴



Google's office redesign includes “Team Pods” instead of rows of desks, “campfire” meeting rooms, and an outdoor work area, dubbed “Charleston,” featuring grass and wooden decks.⁷⁵



British Petroleum's 25,000 global office-based workers have shifted to a hybrid working model, with a 60–40 split between office and home. The company will be “changing and reconfiguring” its offices over time, to support collaboration and create more flexible environments for meetings and sharing of ideas.⁷⁶



In 2022, Microsoft launched a mixed-reality solution titled “Mesh for Microsoft Teams,” to allow users in different physical locations to join collaborative and shared holographic experiences.⁷⁷

IMPROVE THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Remote work is here to stay, and leaders need to consider the tools and resources their workers need to be productive, engaged, and motivated while working digitally. The goal should be a unified, cohesive digital workspace, using a human-centered design approach and implementing enhancements iteratively.

Today, there is a tangible disconnect between the significant number of remote employees (43%) and hybrid employees (44%) who don't feel included in meetings. However, only 27% of organizations have developed any hybrid meeting protocols.⁷⁸ Leaders should define the purpose of in-person collaboration, develop guidelines about when to meet in person, define hybrid meeting etiquette, and consider how meeting space can help facilitate success.⁷⁹

Afterall, our research suggests a 25% difference in profitability between companies in the top and bottom quartiles of the digital workforce experience.⁸⁰



Research shows that 52% of employees are open to using digital immersive spaces in the Metaverse for meetings or team activities, and 47% of employees are open to representing themselves as an avatar in meetings in the next year.⁸¹



Meta plans to hire 10,000 people in Europe to build the MetaVerse.⁸²

Mining companies in Australia are turning to gamification by using AR/VR simulations to train students. In the next year, more than 57 Australian primary and secondary schools will pilot new games, striving to build awareness of the opportunities in the tech-driven Australian minerals industry.⁸³



DOUBLE DOWN ON CULTURE AND COLLABORATION

Much—even most—work can be done remotely. But employees still need opportunities to come together. According to our survey, 60% respondents (C-level leaders, directors, managers, and individual contributors) reported a decrease in strength of personal connections, and 62% of individual contributors reported a decrease in engagement with coworkers when working in a virtual/hybrid environment.⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, 43% of leaders say relationship-building is the greatest challenge in remote and hybrid work.⁸⁵ Organizations have made strides in recognizing, accommodating, and celebrating individual workers' unique qualities, preferences, and needs.

As everyone gets more comfortable with the hybrid work environment, there exists an opportunity to focus on bringing individuals back together—virtually or physically—to work together as teams. If done correctly, the cultural and physical workplace can give workers an opportunity to better collaborate with colleagues and clients.⁸⁶



Bank of America is the first financial services company to launch virtual reality training, allowing employees to practice a wide range of skills, from simulating client interactions to responding with empathy.⁸⁷ Thus using technology to engage and connect their workers.



ServiceNow is known for its 'culture of camaraderie', where inclusivity is consciously practiced. From onboarding new joiners over team outings like karaoke, bowling and baseball games to baking a cake when a new customer goes live, ServiceNow believes in creating a culture around individual interests of employees and customers.⁸⁸

Conclusion: Welcome home

If reimagined effectively, today's upheavals could generate real opportunities. This great resignation—or current labor challenge—may be, as some suggest, a passing fad or business cycle that could end shortly.⁸⁹ Organizations could try to wait it out and do more with less until things settle down. But the pandemic has given us all an opportunity to rethink and reflect, and each of us is returning at a different pace—and heading to a different place.

We believe there is an opportunity for leaders to make changes to the workforce and workplace—and to take a step back to revisit and rethink how, where, by whom (or what), and why work gets done. The organizations that capitalize on this time to reimagine the workforce, the workplace, and work will deliver better business outcomes in the long run.





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