


100% HUMAN
AT WORK 

EXPERIMENTS COLLECTION

SHAPING THE NEW WORLD OF WORK – LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

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AT WORK =**

100% HUMAN AT WORK EXPERIMENTS COLLECTION

SHAPING THE NEW WORLD OF WORK - LESSONS FROM LOCKDOWN

The 100% Human at Work initiative was founded on the belief that the time has come for business to start thinking of people as human beings and not as resources, moving away from maximising profits and profitability to focus on how we can help people achieve their highest potential and purpose – which will naturally positively impact the bottom line.

We aim to lead the conversation, encourage collaboration and innovation, set the benchmark and facilitate learning, guided by our 100% Human at Work values of:



The world of work is transforming at a faster rate than ever before and is the subject of intense debate around the likely impacts on jobs, workers, wages, and society. With the arrival of coronavirus in 2020 we have seen the scale and speed of that change rise exponentially, fundamentally disrupting the world of work as we know it.

This will affect everything from gender parity to social mobility and global inequality, to the fundamental nature of a job. It is impacting all economies and societies.

Organisations around the world have had to make enormous shifts, overnight, to manage the impacts of coronavirus, support their people and keep their businesses

running. In response we have seen extraordinary levels of adaptability, innovation, resilience and compassion.

Over the past few months we have been in conversation with 100% Human at Work network members and seen their journey as they've grappled with the challenges that coronavirus has brought. We have pulled together this collection of experiments to celebrate the amazing work that is being done by organisations who have put their people at the heart of their decisions.

As we move forward, we have an opportunity to rethink the future of work, our roles as leaders and the old systems in which we functioned. We hope this collection will inspire you to join us on the journey to create a 100% human future of work that serves humanity and the planet.

We would like to thank all our contributors for sharing examples and thought pieces, and also ChapmanCG and Kim Seeling Smith, from Ignite Global, for their support connecting us with organisations doing good work.

We would also like to thank our cornerstone partners EY, Unilever and Virgin for the ongoing support of the 100% Human at Work initiative.

Please email 100%human@virginunite.co.uk if you have any questions about this publication or the work of the network.



Jean Oelwang
President, Virgin Unite



Anna Gowdridge
Director, 100% Human at Work

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PEOPLE FIRST

CHANEL

CHANEL

The CHANEL
approach to
COVID-19:
Responsible and
“Solidaire”

CHANEL is a global company including three distinct business lines spanning five geographical regions. The organization includes employees across retail, manufacturing, distribution, and of course office/corporate functions. Our matrixed culture places a large importance on relationships in the company, and our Organization and People function aims to serve the many differentiated needs of the businesses and regions whilst also creating a One House human and responsible employee experience.

Our COVID/pandemic response was a demonstration of this culture to bring a cohesive approach consistent with our principles and solidarity mindset, reinforcing that our people matter, while at the same time remaining local, agile, and decentralised to meet the rapidly changing needs of the business. In short, we:

- **Put business and people first** – making decisions hand-in-hand to ensure business viability and also working to ensure continuity, safety and wellbeing of all employees
- **Created emotional and psychological engagement** to ensure everyone maintained a sense of connection to one another and CHANEL
- **Provided tools, support, and information** to fuel the right decisions in the right moments

Our multifaceted approach was much more than a singular program. It was a collection of initiatives and responses that were all connected together by our principles of remaining a responsible employer and of bringing a strong sense of solidarity across the organization to weather the unpredictability of the situation.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

Talent Matching

In the early days of the pandemic, our organization (like so many others) was thrust into a strange alternative reality in which boutiques were closed, manufacturing sites were shut down, distribution was disrupted, and office employees were almost universally working from home. To accommodate the crisis response and anticipate the potential effects on the business, many priorities were cut or shifted to ensure we had the right focus on business continuity. As a result, we had many employees who were overwhelmed by crisis response, and others whose projects were wholly shelved in the short term, finding themselves unable to contribute in their regular missions.

To address the unevenness of people resources (shortages and “gluts” across the organization), we organized a talent matching initiative to first identify individuals who had capacity to contribute and, second, identify areas of the organization with clear needs for staffing, facilitating an exercise to match talents to the needs of the organization. The teams across CHANEL aligned on a lightweight process and format to ensure easy consideration of talents and opportunities across businesses and entities. Some groups were able to match talents quickly within the same organization, and other talents were placed into new missions in entirely different groups on either a short-term or longer-term basis.

As a result of the initiative, we were able to maximize the skills and talent of the organization, placing underutilized talents into roles, contributing to the broad needs of the company in the spirit of solidarity and giving individuals a sense of impact and contribution. For example, tailors from our boutiques were able to contribute to the creation of the new collection. A boutique

manager is contributing on a Client Experience mission for 6 months. And some sales staff supported the Operations team during a period of peak activities.

The talent matching exercise has opened up a new model of flexibility in staffing for the future. It has demonstrated the value in more broadly leveraging our collective knowledge of the brand, products, and critical skills, whilst simultaneously creating development opportunities for individuals taking on short term missions or projects. This new staffing model will continue to provide us with agility and flexibility for the business and create the conditions to bolster the employability of our people, an important principle for CHANEL.

Supporting Managers through HIITs – High Impact Ideas and Tips

Even prior to the pandemic, we have been obsessed in finding ways to really support people managers as a primary catalyst for people engagement. They are expected to transmit the essence of our culture, introduce new initiatives, manage work allocation, ensure all levels of compliance, and create conditions for the psychological engagement and wellbeing of each unique team member. Once COVID piled on, they then had to shift their team approach to a fully remote work environment.

Recognising very early on that our managers were most at risk of feeling intense work pressure and emotional disarray, we needed a way to create

psychological safety for them and provide a continuous thread of connection and support. We assembled a multidisciplinary editorial team whose (part time) responsibility was to wade through the masses of free resources available, to pick the most resonant ones on a weekly basis. What came into shape was a simple Sharepoint site with links to digests of the most useful articles, podcasts, videos, and other tools distilled into a few sharp ideas and tips, as a timely way to reach managers. Three to five digests each week from a diversity of sources were compiled to address the “spirit of the moment”—whether the initial shock of the lockdown, tips for managing work in a virtual environment, addressing the lagging motivation of teams weeks and weeks into the periods of isolation—and an email every Friday recapping the theme and inviting them to the site.

By the third month of lockdown, two-thirds of our managers have visited the site, and a significant portion of our managers have returned for an average of 11 visits each since the beginning of April when it was launched. Our managers have expressed appreciation for both the timely content, but also the sense of empathy and care for their unique and important role.

Manager HIITs is now firmly embedded into our strategy for management engagement, an important channel for lightweight and continuous “drip” of ideas, content, and information that is curated to resonate with the challenges in each moment of the year.

CHANEL MANAGER HIITS High Impact Ideas & Tips

Dear Managers,

This week is all about concrete and actionable levers we can use to coach our teams in this global and virtual world.

These ideas and tips are available now on [HIITs](#) - all in bite size.

- [4 tips for managing global teams](#)
- [What type of leader are you?](#)
- [Coaching tips from our own CHANEL Managers](#)

Keep well,
The Managers HIITs Team

What is Managers HIITs?

A humble site with one mission: curate and highlight the most useful content through short summaries in various formats giving managers quick access to high impact ideas and tips.

Did you know that everyone can access HIITs? Simply share this link with your team if you'd like them to have access to the content: [Go to HIITs](#)

Access it on your mobile in just one click: [Go to HIITs](#)
Add it as a favorite on your browser: click the square and arrow symbol and add the link as a favorite on your browser's home page.

Want to contribute? You will find a dedicated section on the site where you can share questions you are asking yourself, or content that helps you cope with the situation. [Contribute here.](#)

Live Connections

As a relationship-based company, the shift to working entirely remotely created new challenges for staying connected. We needed to create a sense of unity, and we knew that the more remote we were, the bigger the need for connection to counteract the sense of disconnection, fragmentation, and isolation.

We launched a range of communications strategies—including new townhall formats, learning paths, pulse surveys, and the Manager HIIIs series (as described above). The idea was to target all populations in one way or another with geography-based channels, but also channels by metier (i.e., job/profession). The result was a patchwork of virtual communication points ensuring that every individual felt connected via their multiple communities.

The communication channels were intended to create frequent and open two-way communication with everyone to understand how they were feeling, what they needed and what was top of mind. Each region and business found ways to create pulse surveys as a mechanism to give voice to the biggest concerns of our people, whether to gauge how they were managing in a remote working environment or probe on sentiment related to returning to work and opportunities for flex work in the future. In addition, our leaders proactively communicated on the business impact and safety measures with as much candor, transparency and clarity as possible at any given phase, ensuring people felt informed as adults around the difficulties of the business and what we were doing in response.

These new "connection" channels have now created the conditions for greater flexibility in the future by incorporating different ways of working by location and metier. Because we have found ways to retain a sense of humanity, no matter where people are in a given moment, we will be better equipped to balance the needs of both business and people so they can be at their best.

Solidarity Whilst Remote

Prior to the pandemic, we had launched various social commitment initiatives to enable employees to give of their time and money to support philanthropic causes. We learned that during this time of crisis, people wanted to contribute back to society even more, but doing so in lockdown was a challenge. Through our social commitment efforts and partnerships we were able to offer virtual volunteer opportunities for people to support social organisations or direct beneficiaries - from home. During COVID specifically, more than 300 employees globally have contributed virtually through volunteering opportunities. This model will allow us to more flexibly scale our social commitments programs in the future, through virtual partnership and commitment.



SAGE

Forging a virtual community through our values

Sage's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was grounded in its values of doing the right thing, starting with the customer, together we succeed, and innovating to win. The company prioritised two things – the safety and wellbeing of colleagues and doing the right thing for customers and communities – and moved swiftly to execute them.

Sage tested its business continuity plans through global and regional taskforces. When it came to colleagues and recognising the effect the pandemic could have on them, the company rapidly mobilised the workforce to work from home/remotely to ensure business continuity and to minimise disruption to their lives. In the same way, Sage ensured continued support for charity partners and communities through Sage Foundation, and started to work on creating a virtual community of colleagues, partners and communities.

Start with the customer

While we were busy supporting our customers from day one, much of our colleague communication was focused on colleague care. Transparent and clear leadership delivered through frequent communication was important, to reassure colleagues and focus on how to best support customers.

CEO Steve Hare has been praised by colleagues on the transparent and authentic nature of his communications in response to the pandemic, and was recognised by Glassdoor as having the highest approval rating for leadership of any UK CEO during COVID based on feedback from colleagues and former colleagues during the height of the crisis. He appeared five times over 10 weeks on global broadcast channel, Sage TV Live (average viewing figures 4,166 per episode), to answer colleagues' questions. Constantly prioritising colleague safety and customer care in his messaging, colleagues responded well with consistent

feedback that they felt "proud to be a Sage employee during this time". He also attended one of each of the seven regional all-colleague broadcasts between March and May, showing support and alignment with regional Managing Directors.

Innovative Engagement through Always Listening

Core to Sage's colleague engagement strategy is listening to colleagues as frequently as possible, to understand their priorities and concerns, and to work with them to create a supportive and inclusive work environment. Plans to launch an innovative survey to help Sage understand this were accelerated and by the end of May it served as a support tool and platform. The 'Always Listening' survey was designed for colleagues to talk as often as they liked and say where they needed more support. Changing the questions every few weeks meant Sage could always ask questions relevant to the current situation and mood.

With over 5,000 responses from the end of March until the end of July, colleagues gave the survey an impressive score of 93/100 when asked 'how satisfied are you with Sage's response to Coronavirus?'. This was closely followed by a bi-annual pulse survey with results showing Sage was getting many things right for colleagues. Our eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score) grew by 23 points to +32 since the last survey in November 2019, and a new measure—eSat, which tells us about colleague engagement—gave us a score of 81 out of 100.

The main benefit of Always Listening was the ability to respond to colleague feedback in real time. For example, colleagues said they wanted to have more opportunities for social interaction while they worked from home so Sage hosted two colleague-led virtual concerts in America and ran an isolation disco in the UK and Ireland.



Succeeding together through wellbeing & belonging

Harnessing another of Sage's values - together we succeed – it was important to enable this throughout the pandemic by prioritising the health and wellbeing of colleagues. Giving colleagues access to a support network focused on sharing resources, experiences, and insights, it helped colleagues stay mentally healthy. By launching Family@Sage, a new Colleague Success Network, it showed colleagues that the company understood the needs of those who provide care for family members whilst also working from home.

As part of the diversity and inclusion programme, Sage Belong, a speaker series was introduced to include short videos of colleagues and external experts sharing advice and best practice on how people can stay mentally healthy and aligned to Sage's inclusion strategy. This

was complemented by a global roll-out of the app Headspace and in the UKI by the growth of Healthy Mind Coaches - a team of volunteers who have received external training from Mental Health First Aid England, to provide support to colleagues through non-judgemental listening and signposting to internal or external support. During our COVID-19 response, we expanded the programme into Spain.

Doing the right thing in our communities

In the same way that Sage forged a virtual community of colleagues, Sage Foundation's operations transformed to support charity partners, communities and the most vulnerable affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

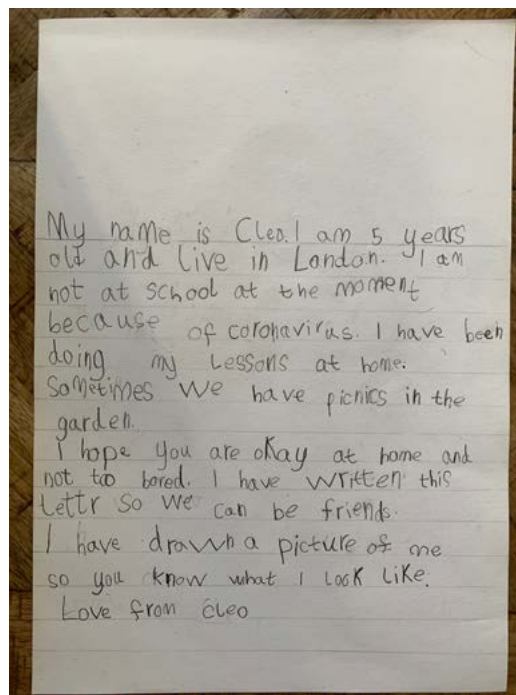
Within two weeks the global volunteering programme had a new focus on virtual, remote and skills-based volunteering, allowing colleagues to use their five

volunteering days per year to give back, through activities such as cataloging animal activity on Zooniverse, writing letters to the elderly or using their skills to support a charity in need.

How-to guides and videos demonstrated how easy it was to participate in these new activities. Building Microsoft Teams collaboration pages also ensured the buzz and banter of face-to-face activities was maintained through sharing photos, messages and videos.

Colleagues showed huge willingness to get involved, with 1,019 colleagues at the first UK virtual event and 3,000 colleagues at the global event. Through the Sage Foundation Partner Program, business partners were also able to volunteer and fundraise.

These activities made volunteering more accessible and safe, by taking place at home and for any length of



time, and allowed Sage to meet our \$1million milestone early, as part of goal to raise \$2million by 2020. We also brought forward our 2022 grant fund by seven months to ensure we delivered financial relief to our charity partners as soon as possible.

A recent pulse survey of 1300 colleagues revealed that Sage Foundation is important to Sage Colleague's overall happiness at Sage (86/100). It also showed that the work Sage colleagues did for Sage Foundation was meaningful to them (87/100) and supported our local communities well (85/100).

Maintaining momentum

With so much change in an unprecedented time, it was important to maintain some normality and reinforce business-as-usual. One of the main reasons this was possible was due to all the measures put in place to support colleague engagement and wellbeing.

The last thing customers wanted to worry about is whether their technology will continue to support them – so that's where Sage focused efforts. By listening to customers, and responding to their needs through a Sage-run Coronavirus Hub, Sage strengthened relationships and built greater trust.

Sage recognised that leading remote teams in a pandemic was new to many managers, so creating a toolkit to guide them through this was a priority. Bringing forward relevant content such as webinars on productivity, staying connected with your teams and publishing personal colleague stories on working from home, meant the right advice was available at the right time.

Moving forward, colleague communication and dialogue will continue to be always on using our Always Listening survey. Sage also will take a more global approach to colleague wellbeing, sharing knowledge and best practice across markets and focusing on three core areas that create a healthy you: healthy mind, healthy body, and healthy finances. Finally, as the company continues to support customers, particularly as businesses recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, colleague communication from leaders will remain frequent, transparent and clear, and colleague feedback will continue to be actively sought to maintain care, focus and momentum.



VIRGIN PURE

Supporting our
people and culture
during COVID-19

Over the last few months we have been consistently listening to and supporting our employees, to enable people to manage their wellbeing and the challenges these crazy times have presented. Our key focus has been trying to ensure that our values and culture lived on in a virtual world.

Some examples of what we've done and how we've continued growing as an organisation are below:

Approaching remote working flexibly – Our office-based staff worked entirely from home between March and July, at which point we re-calibrated our office to be compliant with social distancing, and created a return to work plan based on feedback from staff. We were lucky to have a fantastic IT and support team who were able to move our entire call centre staff onto 'soft phones' from their laptops, enabling them to work from home in under a week. Previously we thought they would be unable to successfully run the call centre from a remote environment, and we were very happy to be proven wrong!

Staff are able to work 100% remotely until the end of the year, however where this is not the ideal situation, we have introduced office-based working groups on a rotating basis, which has been received positively. New starters have the option for flexible working and we have started to consider what the future of work will look like for us as a company. All decisions have been made based on feedback from all staff, not just our management team, with significant group contribution.

Communication and engagement – our internal communication adapted to the changes in our focus and workplace environment. Whilst we stopped selling and installing Virgin Pure products, we focused more on resilience, mental and physical health, teamwork and staying connected. Instead of sending out weekly statistics, we created a work from home newsletter that

included podcasts, Ted talks, workout videos, recipes, and wellbeing tips amongst many other things that were submitted by the team.

We started a staff spotlight focusing on a different member each week, ran weekly challenges – including things like 'fitness bingo', 'wellbeing bingo' and the Virgin Pure cookbook where everyone submitted a recipe they had created or was important to their family or culture – and also hosted regular social events on Zoom.



We are lucky to have a small, close knit-team. Although zoom calls do not quite compare to being able to host team-building events in real life, the shift in our focus of our weekly communications have allowed us to connect and get to know each other in ways that previously would not have been an option. Our current weekly comms are now a fun combination of company updates and fun staff tidbits, as we strive to hold on to that personal touch we established over the last few months.

Wellbeing and mental health – we took a multi-pronged approach to ensure we knew that our people were coping with the mental health and wellbeing challenges caused by lockdown and the virus. This included weekly mental health check-ins with

the people team and office-based staff and engineers, managers hosting weekly 121s with a focus on wellbeing and mental health BEFORE performance, and a clear 'open door' policy for all staff to discuss anything that was going on inside and outside of work. At the peak of lockdown we also hosted weekly sessions on helpful topics like resilience and mental wellbeing, often relaying some of the great Virgin Way ideas to our team who hadn't been able to join the sessions.



Continuing with work we'd started

We were also very conscious of not pressing pause on all the people and culture work we were doing before COVID-19, and we continued implementing projects like these below, which have helped us significantly during this time.

Decision making:

We took feedback from our last roundtable and engagement survey of 2019, where staff asked for more transparency between management and other staff,

and have since then been running voluntary surveys on any decisions due to be made that will concern the team (i.e. moving offices, flexible working) before taking the decision to a management meeting. This has been a great change to how we make decisions, giving us a wider scope of things to consider and ensuring we are meeting everyone's needs better – particularly important in the last few months!

Learning and Development:

Also based on feedback from our last roundtable, during lockdown we relaunched our yearly objectives process, to reduce confusion about tracking and monitoring progress and streamline the method for goal setting and performance management for our junior and executive level staff across the organisation.

The new process, titled 'the anchor programme', encourages these staff to create their own development path, through pitching to their manager, at the outset of the year, three to five goals or accomplishments they would like to achieve over the next 12 months. Together with their manager they then create a plan based on the 70/20/10 model, with smaller goals set for each quarterly 'anchor' meeting. We were inspired to adopt this method after a development session lead by Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Holidays at the end of last year. This requires both employees to dedicate the time and resources they agree upon in the initial meeting to these goals, and encourages the growth and development of every team member. We are very proud of this programme and it has created a sense of security and stability within our younger team members as they feel supported in their learning and development and can see a

tangible pathway to their next career goals. The added responsibility is a great learning experience for them as they are the drivers of their own future and goals.

Another casual approach to staff development is a our monthly 'Lunch & Learn' sessions, which we introduced prior to lockdown and which are completely managed by our team. A member of staff will present an hour-long presentation on a topic of either their choice or by popular demand. The contributions so far have been excellent, ranging from topics such as mental health, to budgeting and managing personal finances.

Overall learnings / going forwards:

2020 has certainly been a challenge to any sense of 'normalcy' both inside and out of the office. In true Virgin fashion, we have embraced these challenges and in turn the traditional structure of working in an office from 9-5 Monday-Friday. Our staff have shown resilience in the face of an unprecedented pandemic and the mutual trust, support and respect between all levels of staff has been incredibly touching. We have been shown by everyone that it is possible to work productively and effectively from home when necessary, but also the unmatched value of coming together as a team in an office environment. We have taken this time to reflect and 'return to our roots', using feedback from staff to really dig deep and review our values, behaviours, and what we value as a company, both internally to our employees, but also to our customers and the outside world. We will continue to strive to support our staff and customers as best we can during this unique period and look forward to the future knowing that we can persevere as a united team.



B LAB

Shaping the future
- B Corps stepping
up during the
COVID-19 pandemic

B Lab is transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet. A leader in economic systems change, our global network creates standards, policies, and tools for business, and we certify companies—known as B Corps—who are leading the way. There are over 3500 certified B Corps around the world, from small, community businesses to brands such as Allbirds, Danone, Ben & Jerry's, The Body Shop, The Guardian and Cook Food, all working to ensure business supports an inclusive, equitable and regenerative economic system for all people and the planet. The last few months have shown the vital importance of this work.

How did B Lab support the B Corp community?

When coronavirus hit we knew our member organisations would step up to support their employees and communities around them. However, we also wanted to ensure they (along with those outside the B Corp community) were supported through what could be a very challenging time for their businesses.

We quickly launched online resource hubs tailored to different global regions, signposting to tools, information and guidance on a wide range of topical issues for businesses. We set up a new global [B Interdependent](#) site which hosts these hubs, as well as case studies and B Lab COVID-19 Best Practice Guides. Near the start of the pandemic we also provided guidance on government support schemes and advice for leaders and employees through a series of articles and webinars, and offered opportunities for B Corp organisations to connect with each other to share challenges and learning through a range of subject-specific working groups in their regions.

We are really pleased that in spite of COVID lockdown we were still been able to certify almost 500 new B Corps globally during 2020.

A snapshot of the B Corp community response to COVID-19

B Corps across the world have led by example in ensuring employees, frontline workers and the vulnerable in communities around the world have been supported. Throughout the pandemic we have been publishing their stories across a number of platforms, including our [B Interdependent Stories page](#), to celebrate the good work they have been doing in spite of the challenging times and to inspire others to take the same human-led approach.

Below is a small snapshot of things B Corps have been doing to put their people above profits, and support frontline workers and communities:

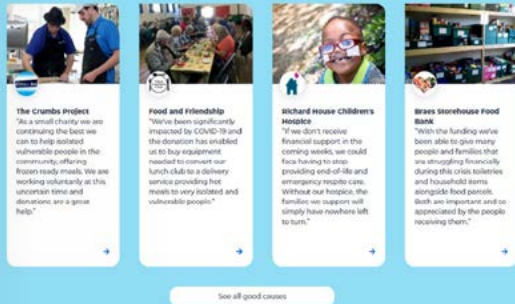
B Corps putting their people above profits

- [North Coast Organics](#), an American-based personal care product company, enacted an extra three to six week paid leave package for every staff member. If a staff member remains healthy or does not have to take care of a loved one, this extra time can be used for holiday or be paid out at the end of the year.
- [Allagash Brewery](#), a beer maker headquartered in the United States, has ensured their team members have been paid at minimum 75% of their typical hourly wages, even if the amount of hours they are working is less than that.

- [The Consorcio Group](#) in Spain implemented various measures to support their employees, including a 20% bonus to help people during lockdown. They have also launched a befriending campaign called “[With Our Elders](#)”, matching up volunteers with lonely elderly people for phone calls, and made significant donations of food and PPE to organisations and authorities to distribute.
- [KeHE](#), a food distribution company headquartered in Pennsylvania, is providing a temporary essential services bonus to the company’s front-line employees across all 13 US and three Canadian North American distribution centers, to ensure the company is fulfilling employees’ needs and providing reassurance during these uncertain times.
- In the face of booming demand for online orders, [Magic Tomato](#) from Geneva had to adapt its business to meet demand for its home-delivered ethical and fresh groceries. They overcame the challenge through developing new partnerships with local producers, but also with a number of taxi drivers in Geneva who, faced with a sharp drop in activity, were able to support deliveries and remain employed.
- [Natura & Co](#), a global cosmetics company headquartered in Brazil, was among 40 Brazilian companies urging other companies to pledge to keep on all of their workers during the first two months of the coronavirus crisis in order to prevent, or at least minimize, a possible economic and social meltdown.
- [Danone](#) provided financial support of 250 million euros for the 15,000 small businesses in their global ecosystem (farmers, suppliers, service providers) as well as other measures to protect their workforce, like securing all employment contracts and guaranteeing all wages for Danone employees until June 30th, and paying a bonus for all employees working on-site during the pandemic.



Thousands of good causes supported during the Covid-19 crisis...



B Corps being there for the community

- [Sleep'n Atocha](#) hotel in Spain offered its hotel to public institutions through the Hoteles En Acción initiative, a project that seeks the cooperation of hotels, hostels and / or tourist apartments to minimize the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [COOK](#), a producer of homemade-like frozen food, started the Kindness Fund to provide meals to frontline NHS workers and vulnerable community members across the UK, receiving nominations for individuals and organisations who would benefit from members of the public. Having met their goal of 100,000 meals by mid-June, they continued to give meals at a smaller scale throughout the summer.
- [Tree Planet](#), a Korean B Corp, recognised the feelings of alienation quarantine can bring, and launched a one for one program where for every companion plant purchased, another one was sent to a friend or family member of the customer.
- [Swink](#), a team of experienced online specialists with autism, supported the Erasmus MC – one of the largest hospitals in The Netherlands – in creating a learning portal to help train staff so they could be deployed in Intensive Care, which was in need of more human capacity.
- [Neighbourly](#), a giving platform that helps businesses make a positive impact in their communities, set-up a COVID-19 Community Fund, backed by partner businesses, to offer micro-grants of up to £400 to support good causes that are helping communities most affected by the pandemic.

- [Banquer](#), a financial education platform, offered New Zealand secondary schools their program at no cost until the end of May 2020.

Looking ahead

There is much talk about 'building back better' as we move beyond the coronavirus crisis, and the increasing need for businesses to [do good in order to survive and succeed](#).

We believe this will not just require small changes to be made but an [upgrade of our whole economic operating system](#), to take into account the needs of more stakeholders and create a fairer way of working for people and the planet.

Findings from a [recent survey](#) we commissioned of the UK public supports this, suggesting that:

- **72% of the UK public** think business should have a legal responsibility to the planet and people, alongside maximising profits.
- **76% of the UK public** believe that capitalism either isn't working properly or is harmful.
- **The majority of the UK public** would favour brands that are doing good in the world.

We have always advocated for business as a force for good, and our hope is that the increased urgency around business taking responsibility beyond shareholders, and this opportunity to reset, will lead to fairer economic systems for all people and the planet.



UNILEVER

Virtual caregiving programme in Malaysia

After coronavirus sent us all home from work and school earlier this year, it quickly became apparent that juggling work and family commitments was a real challenge, particularly for working mothers.

In Malaysia 70% of our workforce are between 33-35 and so we have lots of mothers with young children, many of whom had also taken on caring duties for older family members or relatives.

We knew that it was important to find a way to support people, and that we could make a difference to a significant portion of our workforce. However, we needed to find a solution that was cost efficient, to keep in line with the cost saving programme also in operation across the business, aiming to preserve jobs.

Our solution:

We realised that although many people were very busy, others had a lot of extra capacity because they could no longer perform all of their duties. We also knew lots of students who weren't able to study at the moment.

We thought we would use the opportunity presented by some of this capacity to offer support to those who needed help, through a **virtual caregiving programme**.

This was a zero-cost solution that not only solved this problem but also presented a great culture opportunity.

Getting the scheme off the ground:

As we worked to get the scheme off the ground we had to navigate some challenges. It was only possible to ask people to help on a voluntary basis rather than as a formal part of their job for example, and people were busy adapting to the changes imposed by the pandemic. Also, at a time of globally shrinking economies and unease about job security, we needed to

convince people that it was ok to come forwards and admit to having capacity.

We started rallying behind the concept 'Unilever4Unilever', encouraging people to help each other out. We also spent time talking 1:1 and assuring people that participation would not affect their job security, but rather that it presented an opportunity to learn new skills.

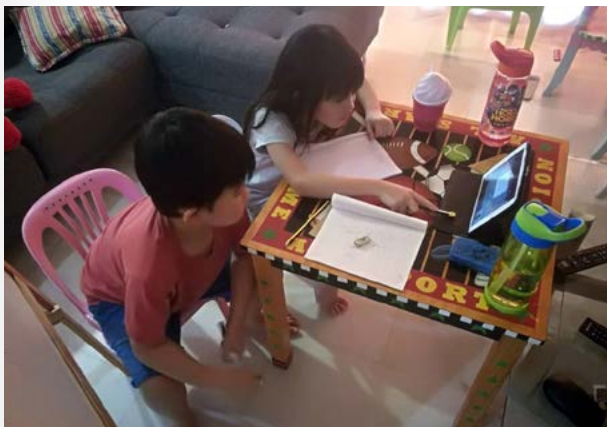
This was successful and it was a quick turnaround: a core group of mothers and caregivers (staff and students, the older children of our own employees, volunteering their time) piloted the model to test how it worked and see the benefits, and the full scheme was launched via a virtual Town Hall a few days later, encouraging wider participation by both caregivers and working parents.

The scheme:

We offered the support to parents with children from 6-12 years, so the children could be left independently. The scheme was successful because it was tailored to what each parent needed, offering one or two hours of virtual childcare support, via Skype, at a time that suited them, engaging children in productive and fun activities that allowed parents to work in peace.

Our staff and student caregivers helped with school work, played educational games and also just offered a listening ear – everyone was inside unable to see their friends much and we found that often the children just wanted someone to talk to! The caregivers developed such a good rapport that many of the students sent presents and have kept in contact.

The caregivers supported each other, sharing resources and exchanging ideas about different technologies and activities that had worked well in their sessions. Everyone involved learnt new skills, including technology and teaching skills, as well as being



reverse mentored by the children! It was satisfying for volunteers to know they were helping their colleagues, and parents felt valued and supported.

Over the three months that the scheme ran it grew to offer 30 hours of care per week, and it worked so well that we hope to link to childcare training institutions in the future to offer work experience opportunities to training students, through a similar model.

What did we learn?

The virtual caregiver programme came from a problem but became a great opportunity for us to demonstrate our culture and live out things that are really important to us in how we work, in particular:

- **The Unilever4Unilever mindset:** the scheme demonstrated our supportive culture, and we are proud that people stepped forward to help each other. We are keen to continue to collaborate and foster a culture of One Unilever in the coming months, increasing the role of the employer as a social safety net in these times, and supporting whole family wellbeing.
- **Learning and skill development:** Unilever is a true ambassador of lifelong learning, and we want to offer lots of opportunities for people to keep their skills relevant. The virtual caregiver programme offered just that, and

those involved learnt things that have helped them across their work and given them highly relevant skills for the future.

- **Trust and psychological safety:** trusting and experimenting were a big part of the virtual caregiver programme, and that relies on a culture where people feel safe to try new things. We are pleased that people felt able to take the step, and parents felt able to ask for help.
- **Curious mindsets:** we know we must all adopt curious mindsets in order to succeed in this new environment – there's no tried-and-true method for dealing with a global pandemic and we don't know what we don't know, hence we must 'build the plane while we are flying'!
- **Speed and agility:** we are so proud to have launched this scheme in a matter of days. We have certainly learnt the 'muscle' of speed and agility in a new way over the last few months, and we are keen to hold on to this.

We want to use successes like the virtual caregiver programme to give staff confidence about what is possible in the future. We are really pleased that Unilever businesses in other countries have consulted us on implementing this programme, and we look forward to navigating the next few months through similar initiatives.



Volunteer Caregivers

DEVELOPMENT BEYOND LEARNING

Proactively supporting
our people through
communication,
technology and
giving back

Human - the future, and a core value in everything we do.

The spread of this global pandemic is transforming organisations, their culture and the way we work. Many companies are understandably still navigating the uncertainty of the future, some are sustaining the status quo and others are capitalising and thriving through the disruption. Whichever category your organisation is in, there is one area that continues to remain in our control; and that is how we communicate, engage and interact with our employees.

At Development Beyond Learning (DBL), our business is to create experiences and change lives by supporting organisations and their people to develop soft and human skills. We do this by applying behavioural science methodologies. DBL is all about making real change in organisations, and this is measured by the positive impact we have on individuals' lives and where they can go in their careers.

After all, the future is human.

At the start of 2020, organisations located in South East Asia had already started to feel the impact of COVID-19. DBL immediately had to adjust the way we worked with these stakeholders, which included virtualising 100% of our product. The leadership team felt it was inevitable that the now pandemic was going to disrupt the rest of the world and in ways that we could not yet determine or fully comprehend.

We quickly realised we had to think critically and act now to ensure we properly supported our people.

The opportunity: With the level of uncertainty that the pandemic was creating, what we could be certain of, and what was in our control, was how DBL would respond.

Being Human is a core value of DBL and we placed this at the heart of our approach towards our people. We established quickly that whatever business decisions were needed, we first wanted to ensure this terrible situation didn't negatively impact our culture. We wanted to continue to strengthen how our teams supported each other and reinforce our value of caring for each other and our own wellbeing. This was placed front and centre of everything.

Our approach: At the time we took insights from our stakeholders in South East Asia who were in the midst of experiencing their 'first wave' of the pandemic. In addition, we engaged with our internal and external networks in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and India to identify and understand the very real psychological and human challenges that they were facing. We used this information to map out a comprehensive 'Business Contingency Plan' clearly outlining our priorities as People, Customer Service / Product, Delivery and Financial.

The aim was to prepare ourselves and our teams prior to enforcing any contingency plans.

Our advantage:

We Acted Early. With offices in United Kingdom and Australia, along with employees based all over the world, we listened to our people and maintained focus on what we could control, and the health and wellbeing of our people.

Our first move was to enforce work from home (WFH) early - at least a week prior to when both the Australia and the UK government enforced mandatory lock down.

In addition, we supported the move to WFH by providing every employee with an allowance to spend on whatever office equipment and furnishings they needed to support a safe and comfortable work from home environment.

We Connected. With the move to work from home, and wellbeing remaining our top priority, our leadership team took a strong position to strengthen internal communication and to facilitate psychologically safe working environments.

Adjusting from our more traditional form of connecting face to face in the office and at quarterly global virtual sessions, we used this as an opportunity to positively drive our culture and explore ways that our employees can engage, feel safe and openly communicate using various methods and new techniques.

Through this adjustment, we wanted to promote positive habit formation and utilised the following approach to support this:

- **Team Interactions** – From the first week of WFH, managers set up daily 30 min virtual check-ins with teams and individuals to ensure that everyone had the appropriate systems and were able to virtually connect. We encouraged an environment where everyone felt comfortable to have their videos on, no matter where they were, and to feel free to share the joys and challenges with WFH.
- **Engagement** – we made a deliberate move to increase the amount of company communications and interactions to support the social and psychological needs of our people now working in isolated environments. One initiative was the frequency and variation of our communications channels; from pre-recorded videos, live virtual sessions and email communications delivered from both the founder and CEO to the business. This was initially launched with an average of one per week and then gradually moved to every two weeks.

In addition, as CEO I also recognised the importance of informal connections and the ‘water cooler’ type of conversation that were no longer available. I therefore scheduled informal ‘Catch up and Chat’ sessions with every employee globally, with no agenda but an opportunity to hear how individuals were coping and to share any personal challenges and /or wins.

- **Communication channels** – During month three of working from home and once we had developed positive habits of team meetings and communicating, our next priority was to support how individuals could support each other further and by considering communication channels that welcomed informal and formal dialogue. Within a 30 day period, we worked with internal change champions in each region and rolled out the communication and collaboration tool Microsoft Teams to support the social and psychological needs of our people.

We Gave Back:

Our company purpose is to create experiences and change lives and this drives our internal culture. As time went on, we became aware of the impact this pandemic was having on our external network.

Using our internal resources, we supported our network. Our niche and specialist expertise is supporting the transition of young professionals (interns, graduates, apprentices) into their first career. Research shows that the transition from education to employment is one of the most difficult that we face in our lifetime, and this was being exacerbated by the pandemic.

We quickly identified a need for us to support this young talent and launched two campaigns:

- **Live and free sessions** – Utilising our internal resources of trainers and product we ran live virtual sessions on how to have an impact in your career during COVID 19. These were delivered in the UK, Asia and Australia for any student and young professional.
- **Work-readiness virtual learning program** – in partnership with industry partners, we designed and launched a work-readiness program completely virtually and exclusively for young professionals.

Our learnings so far:

By placing our company value of being Human at the heart of our response, plus our focus on communication, engagement and use of technology, we were able to address the social and psychological needs of our people. Reviewing the last 100 days, we achieved our biggest quarter in the history of the business. We are also very proud that through our efforts, we supported 1283 young professionals across 4 regions from 212 employers and universities in live and available sessions. And today we continue to positively impact over 6000 students from 384 global universities to complete the work-readiness virtual program.

We know that when we have uncertainty in the market, we can drive certainty through our culture. We have learnt that with an agile and inclusive approach to communication and engagement, this resulted in increased agility in our business. We also learnt that by empowering and supporting the psychological needs of our people as a top priority, we achieved an even greater output to our operations and business success than we ever thought possible.

The future really is human.

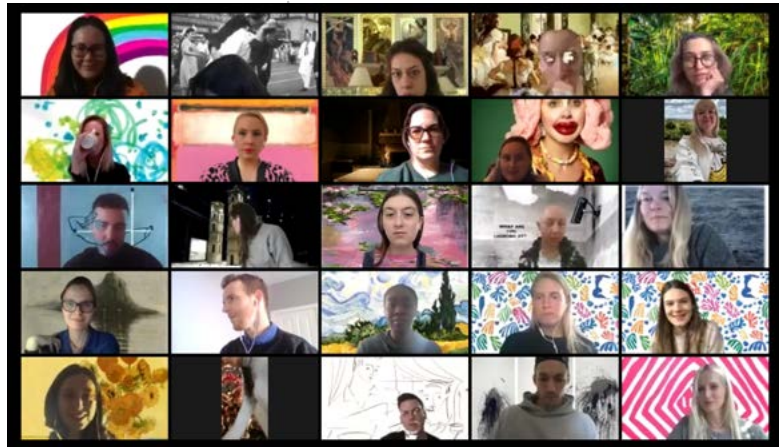
STELLA MCCARTNEY

Initiatives to help
us be 100% Human
in the workplace

Culture Board

Reflecting on recent global events, Stella McCartney knew our next step towards achieving a better – and more equal – tomorrow, was to the amplify voices within our global community, urgently. When speaking about Black Lives Matter, Stella amply said; “We have so much work to do. We must dismantle the oppressive social systems in place. We must learn, listen, educate and we must take action.”

We know that diversity of thought, experience and our voices are the best way to empower creativity and enable us to truly fulfil our purpose, but we also know we have a responsibility to do more than that.



By appointing our internal Culture Board, we will learn from the range of voices from different corners of the world and use their personal experiences to help us build a holistic and actionable Diversity and Inclusion strategy. A strategy that will eradicate discrimination of any kind within our organisation and enable us to lead by example for the wider industry.

Self Space

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our normal routines in a profound way. We have been pulled into a completely new way of being. This means looking after our wellbeing, particularly our mental health, is now more important than ever.

At the beginning of 2020, we partnered with Self Space to offer a contemporary approach to maintaining good mental health at work through one to one therapy sessions and regular group workshops. During the pandemic, we've introduced these sessions in a virtual way.

We launched the initiative to promote a positive mindset around everyday mental maintenance, and how it can be an active engagement in wellness.

Everyday mental maintenance is an essential part of our values at Stella McCartney and we will continue to commit to giving our people the tools they need to thrive.

Stella Connection Series

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we also moved all of our internal 'Stella Connection Series' online. These are a collection of fun and engaging live webinars that aim to deepen understanding across a range of topics, including Brand, Product, Customer Experience, Total Wellbeing, Department Updates, Personal & Professional Development, Ways of Working, Our Team Experts and Sustainability. All webinars are recorded and uploaded to our learning platform for people to access at anytime, anywhere in the world. These sessions are just one of the ways we are ensuring our Stella McCartney community remains connected throughout the pandemic, while reminding them that we are committed to their professional development, no matter the circumstance.





MENLO INNOVATIONS

Joy, transparency
and COVID-19

At Menlo Innovations we design and develop custom software and consult on organisational ways of working, operating through a unique and proven process that is underpinned by the single goal of 'joy'. Our mission is to 'end human suffering in the world as it relates to technology®', and we are [very intentional](#) in how we ensure a culture of joy is created for ourselves, our clients and our users. Until the last few months, around 3000 people a year were visiting us to see what this looks like.

Transparency at Menlo pre-COVID

Transparency is a critical component of a joyful culture and processes, and as such it is one of our core values.

This is very evident in our physical working space – our 'factory floor'. We have very few walls in our working area, and the most we do have are glass. Our tables are light and designed to be moved around so people can easily collaborate. All roles working on the same project sit together in 'project pods' –we embrace the noise, enjoying the ambient buzz of focused conversation,

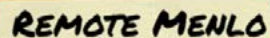
and we like being in close enough proximity to overhear and meaningfully interrupt each other with advice and questions that will save each other time.

One of the hallmark features of The Menlo Way™ is 'pairing', with all roles in the organisation working in pairs at a single machine and collaborating every day throughout a project. Pairs switch for each project on a weekly basis, and this highly transparent way of working is beneficial for true co-creation, business continuity (with knowledge shared continuously around the organisation), and for quickly immersing new employees. And everyone at Menlo knows that aside from getting good work done, the most important goal is 'to make your partner look good'.

We are truly a flat organisation and we are all empowered to make decisions – it is therefore very important that everyone has access to information. Our office is full of visual displays of task lists, work schedules and much more, so we can all find out exactly who is working on what, the task status, and support accordingly. Crucially, the entire project team has ownership for



...but we are still all together



REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

REMOTE MENLO

WE WENT FROM...

A big, open "factory" full of noise and activity	->	Remote, connected, productive teams
Visual management using physical artifacts	->	Electronic tools representing our physical artifacts
Pairing side by side, sharing a keyboard and mouse	->	Pairing at a distance, sharing a keyboard and mouse
Running experiments to solve problems	->	Still running experiments to solve problems!
On-site experiments exploring Menlo's culture	->	Global access so anyone can experience Menlo's culture

MENLO EXPERIMENTS

We have a long tradition of experimenting to innovate how we work. The principles and practices that Menlo was founded on were born through a set of experiments in a traditional cube-based software company. Most of those initial experiments have stuck to form The Menlo Way™, including how we manage, plan and assign work.

What does this look like in practice? The word 'Experiments' is a normal part of our vocabulary and it's the way we approach problem solving. Experiments can be designed and run by anyone, and while there are opportunities to share the outcomes and what has been learned, there is no bureaucratic process attached to setting them up. We have a strong culture of trying things that are not designed to be successful but to be learned from, and not being wedded to the outcome unless it supports us to work well together.

What we were missing was transparency across the team, and the ability to find people and ask them questions. Some of our experiments to solve this include:

- **The creation of a spreadsheet for virtually locating everyone** – the document lists the lines pairs are using, as well as lines for team meetings and optional gatherings like lunch and learns, so we can continue to easily join meet-ups, drop-in on one another, share knowledge and ask our quick questions without needing to schedule formal meetings.
- **Replicating our daily all-hand stand-ups** – our daily stand-up is a key 15 minutes of the day as it's the only time we have 100% of the team together.

To keep this efficient virtually, we have replaced the passing of the Viking helmet we were all used to with nominating the next speaker in the chat when we arrive on the call.

- **Creating online versions of our paper-based processes**, including the story cards we use to describe tasks, the project work authorization board and the planning game.
- **Switching our in person Menlo Factory Tours to online tours**, and moving our workshops online too, allowing anyone to be able to join and find out how we work, regardless of where they are in the world.

The future

Our close working style, open culture and open office – already including babies and dogs – meant we already knew a fair amount about each other prior to lockdown, however the last few months have definitely taken this to the next level and opened the floodgates for empathy for one another's circumstances.

We don't know what the future holds in terms of returning to our factory floor and we don't want to make a premature decision. What we are doing is experimenting and adapting, so we are working as optimally and joyfully as possible now and ensuring that we are prepared for whatever lies ahead.



Premier
& Cabinet

NSW GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET

Flexible working
and an engaged,
healthy workforce

Flexible working is part of the DNA at the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC). This has enabled us to be resilient to change, pivot to maintain productivity and continue to deliver for the people of NSW during this time. Our agility allowed us to move quickly to reprioritise work and direct resources towards delivering on issues stemming from the extraordinary economic and social disruption caused by COVID-19.

What we did

DPC developed a range of initiatives to meet Health and Safe Work guidelines with a focus on wellness, alignment around a common cause, and accessible and visible leadership.

HR Business Partners worked with our executive leaders to identify critical roles and functions, implementing business continuity plans. While some areas continued to deliver on pre-existing priorities or essential work, other areas were mobilised to support critical functions within the Department and across the sector.

Employees were encouraged to work from home or attend work if their role required them to do so, and individual flexible working arrangements continue to be based on ongoing conversations between managers and employees.

As work, family and social lives continued to be disrupted, DPC recognised the need to prioritise mental and physical health, with a dedicated COVID-19 intranet page with updated information and resources, and the continued promotion of our employee assistance program.

Our communication was considered, timely and relevant, with an increase in Senior Executive communication including regular Chief People Officer messages and updates as well as the inclusion of weekly Executive Webcasts.

DPC has temporarily amended some conditions contained in the DPC Flex Agreement to allow for greater flexibility and work patterns, as well as encouraging staggered start and finish times for employees in the office and allowing travel out of peak times.

The workplace has been set up to ensure social distancing is maintained with signage on workstations and measures in place which include additional cleaning and hygiene, installation of hand sanitiser stations, and maximum numbers implemented for meeting rooms and lifts.

DPC already had in place the IT systems for remote working which have allowed employees to continue to operate, connect and collaborate. Employees have utilised digital tools to maintain efficiencies, holding regular team huddles around workloads, priorities and competing demands.



Our results

The department conducted a COVID-19 Pulse Survey which had a 95% response rate.

Our key insights include:

- Nine-point increase in engagement, which indicates staff are putting in more discretionary effort.
- DPC staff have remained productive with 87% continuing to deliver on agreed outcomes and confident they are contributing their best work
- The mental wellbeing of DPC staff remained ‘healthy’ through this period of COVID -19. An analysis of the DPC results were measured against the international Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) and showed that despite COVID-19, the wellbeing satisfaction for DPC staff has remained healthy.

Moving forward

To ensure DPC continues to manage a productive, flexible and coordinated staged return to the workplace. We have developed a COVID-19 Return to the Office Guide with a focus on four key pillars:

- Leading Remotely
- Keeping Connected
- Health and Wellbeing
- Maintaining focus and impact

Given the constantly changing nature of COVID-19, regular monitoring and review of the data in line with any health updates will ensure we can track progress made; guaranteeing a smooth transition for all employees and helping manage the impact of any unforeseen developments as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.





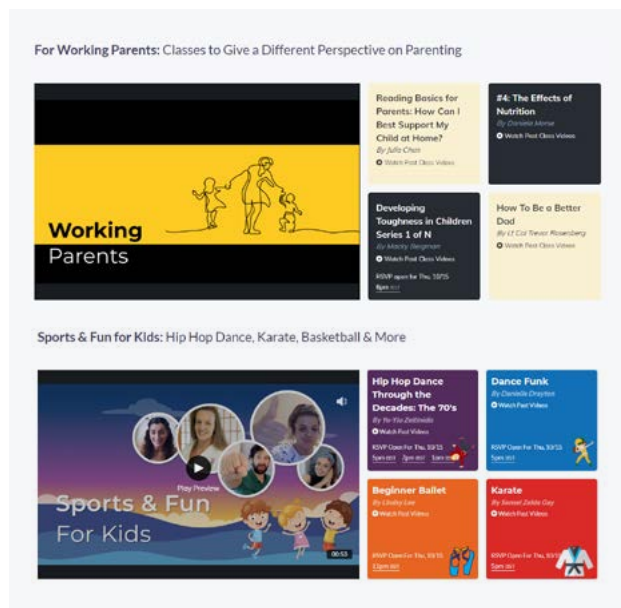
Our mission is to change the world by changing company culture. Over the last 10 years we have helped leaders across thousands of organizations — including entrepreneurs, sports, military, corporations, education and non-profits — with practical applications to build their own deliberate learning team through our Leadership Academies. In the last 6 months the COVID crisis has been a turning point for our business, a time of innovation, and provided a new opportunity to strategically support new employee needs and scale our culture.

Times of crisis are an opportunity to innovate, move fast whilst others are in paralysis. Our aim in the first 6 weeks of March and April was to experiment with speed. Everyone in the company was aligned behind this, getting our oars in the water and rowing in the same direction: trying new things, iterating and testing to see what resonates with our customers and importantly informing across the business.

of remote working, we launched the Community Online Academy (COA), a series of virtual wellbeing and learning and development classes which would run every Thursday.

Our initial aim was to learn how to translate our in-person Leadership Academies to a virtual environment whilst help meet the new needs of our own employees. We wanted a safe space to practise, make mistakes and learn, so started with running 10 live classes for our own employees and family via zoom. We saw visceral excitement, gratitude and change in the mindset of our employees and realised how big the need for this was, so we decided that rather than having each family at each company

2



having to navigate how to do this on their own, we would leverage what has already been setup in our community and share it virtually. The next week we started scaling to our clients, providing these resources to all their employees via Perks at Work. Six months on, COA has now become a standalone product which anyone around the world can enjoy. We have run over 2,000 classes in physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and learning and development for adults and children, with over 1,300 hours of recorded content and 250,000 attendees across 1,300 organisations. We're further expanding this with a mobile application (making

it more accessible on the go) and developing a 5-day a week after school curriculum for children focusing on developing their leadership skills and resilience.

Getting our oars in the water and moving fast at the start of the crisis brought about innovation - allowing us to scale our pro-bono leadership work from invite only C-suite execs at in person events and our in-office wellbeing and working parents resources for our employees, to all employees at any level in our Perks at Work network.

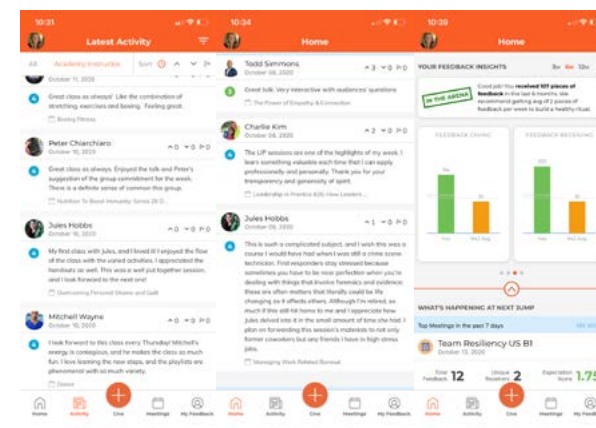
Leverage feedback

The rate of learning in an organisation is the highest predictor of success. Even more so during uncertain times like these. The biggest impediment to learning is organizational silence: a widespread withholding of information and feedback about potential problems or issues across a company.

Candid feedback brings awareness of our strengths and shortcomings. It challenges you to learn, improve and grow as an individual, team and organization. At Next Jump we believe that consistent, timely feedback is an important aspect of personal growth. We use our Feedback App to break organisational silence by enabling real-time, anonymous feedback within Next Jump with the intention to help colleagues grow and develop.

Launching a new product during the complexity and ambiguity of COVID meant that increasing the rate of learning was vital to its success. We leveraged the

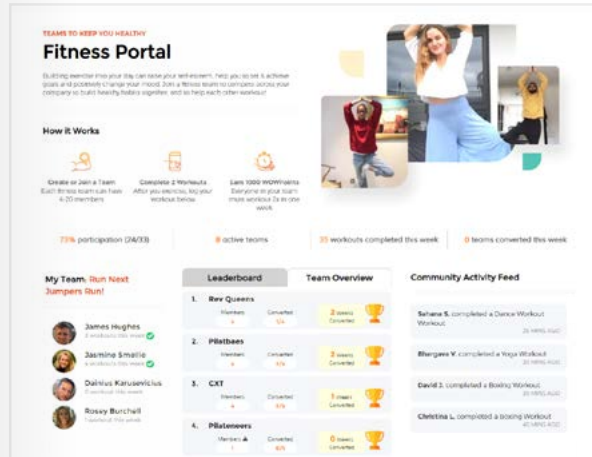
Feedback App and scaled to every attendee of the Community Online Academy (COA), so that after each class attendees could easily, quickly and anonymously give feedback. With these feedback loops, we scaled from 100 attendees to 50,000 within 2 months and moved from 10 live classes organised via outlook RSVPs and invites, to 100+ classes, with a dedicated website and mobile app, a video hub and of resources and live community feed.



Gathering datapoints at scale from across our network helped us to make decisions on how to iterate week on week, anticipate emerging employee needs and do so with speed. Feedback loops are essential when innovating in times of uncertainty.

Physical health as the foundation of wellbeing

As a company we've always had physical health as the foundation of how we help our employees succeed. In our offices, we invested in making the healthiest choice the easiest choice through onsite gyms with live classes, providing healthy food, and running weekly fitness competitions where we consistently saw 92% of employees working out at least twice a week. For this, we were named 1 of 9 Healthiest Workplaces by Johns Hopkins.



COVID disrupted this. Things we took for granted in the office were suddenly gone as we all shifted to remote work. We had assumed that it was “in our bones” as a company to have healthy habits, but found with the drastic change many of our employees were not taking the time to look after themselves. The distance between theory and application was like the Grand Canyon – despite employees being aware of the benefits of looking after their physical health, actually doing it is a different matter.

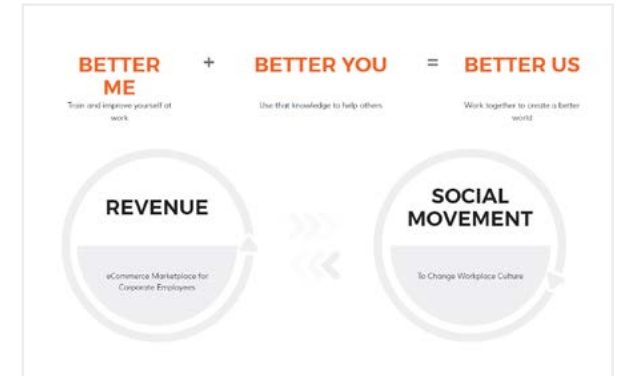
Often the biggest challenges with wellbeing habits are relying on our willpower alone to motivate ourselves, and a lack of consistency. To tackle this we created a fitness portal on Perks at Work where our employees create their own wellbeing teams based on shared interests, track their workouts week on week, motivate and support each other and also see via a community feed what others in the company are doing. If all employees in a team work out twice a week they win WOWPoints (our reward currency on Perks at Work), these prizes increase the longer the streak of wins, incentivising consistency.

We found that this helped to build connectivity between employees, through a shared purpose and experiences, which had been lacking since moving to remote working. The key lesson is to help employees help each other.

People as our no.1 Business strategy

Now and into the future, investing in our people and deliberately setting up a culture with rich feedback loops, decentralized decision making, and a focus on personal development is our number one business priority.

Covid-19 is not going away any time soon. In this time of uncertainty and change, teams need to continue to innovate and make decisions with urgency and speed. We don't know what the future will bring us, but by investing in our people, and helping them to better themselves, they can in turn help to better others, and make the world a better place.





MOOSE TOYS

Sticking to our values
and keeping our people
healthy and safe

From a People & Culture perspective, our primary focus at Moose since the COVID-19 pandemic began is to keep our people healthy and safe. Additionally, we are focused on keeping our people well informed and connected to the Moose values, which are the heart of our business. To achieve this, we quickly utilised available technology and embraced our already strong company culture wholeheartedly.

Increased focus on internal communications

- We focused on increasing the frequency of internal communication channels such as team huddles, to ensure staff felt well informed and to provide a more regular check-in on how staff were feeling.
- Our Staff meetings (all-hands) pivoted to be entirely online and are now conducted more frequently, changing from a monthly to weekly schedule throughout the pandemic. The staff meetings provide the opportunity for staff to come together, see one another and maintain a strong connection. The staff meetings have evolved to include not only business updates, but also health & wellbeing commentary, as well as activities to support our great culture, such as bringing fun and light-heartedness into play with face mask creation challenges or artwork re-creation competitions, etc.
- We created a new communication channel we call the 'Funlocka'. This is an online page for staff to share fun, ideas, creativity, recipes, messages of support or inspiration, drawings, recommend movies, television shows or books, funny memes, photos from their weekends, lockdown activity ideas, or anything that brings a smile to the faces of colleagues. It's a place where our people from all offices globally can stay connected and support each other. Funlocka offers a place for our people to share the cheekiness and banter that was present in the office environment.

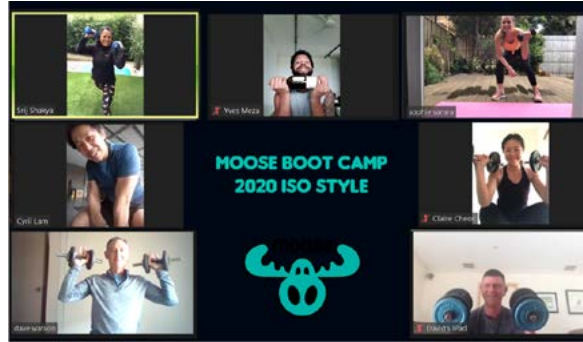


- Use of Zoom and Microsoft Teams video conferencing increased dramatically for regular business communication as we now predominantly work from home, with cameras turned on to support staff interaction and connection.
- Ensuring we have a good balance of global and targeted local communications. For example, we need to keep our global staff informed and engaged on work from home policies or technology changes, but also need to maintain regular local updates to ensure staff are aware how they would be impacted by new government restrictions being imposed in their city.

Increased focus on wellbeing and culture

- Throughout the pandemic we have maintained a strong focus on our company values – particularly 'we're a family'. This permeates through everything we do at Moose and is key to our people globally understanding that we're all in this together and we have each other's backs. We all have a role to play in actively taking steps to keep ourselves safe and get through this, so we can come out of the pandemic even stronger than before.

- Utilising Flexi hours was increasingly encouraged to assist Moose parents globally to manage home schooling responsibilities alongside work commitments.
- Moose Company Directors have become more ‘front and centre’ throughout the pandemic, offering their first-hand experience of coping through difficult times, building resilience, empathising with their people, being available and supportive, and giving hope and comfort that we’ll all get through this together and come out of it as a stronger group and business.
- Since the pandemic began, we have increased nurturing messaging, encouraging staff to prioritise their health and wellbeing. This included delivery of a care package to staff homes.



- We moved from hosting office-based yoga and boot camp training, to offering the same classes virtually. This ensured our people could maintain their physical and mental wellbeing from home during lockdown, as well as spend time with counterparts from varying departments across the business.
- We were mindful of the strain the pandemic causes to mental wellbeing. We offered our Melbourne staff a half-day off once we learned that tighter government restrictions would be implemented. This allowed our people the opportunity to either rest and prepare mentally, or visit family and friends, go out for a coffee or meal at a restaurant while they still could, visit shops or set up things at home so they felt less pressure going into the next stage of restrictions. An additional day was subsequently granted as the lockdown continued, to help ease the burden staff were feeling. Our team in LA were granted an extra day of leave over the 4th July holiday, to extend their break to support mental wellbeing following a continued increase in COVID cases in LA.

- We established teams of Cultural Champions in each Moose office, to ensure the Moose culture remained active even though we were not physically located together. Each ‘culture crew’ hosts activities in their region to keep staff morale up through trying times. This has included drawing activities and art challenges, planting seeds at home to watch them grow whilst in lockdown, family fort building challenges, sharing information about team members ‘hidden talents’ or home hobbies to inspire others, embracing and sharing the humour of working from home during lockdown with kids at home, or pets interrupting conference calls, etc.



- Our onsite permitted workers were not forgotten. As we continued our focus to ensure a safe and compliant work environment, we also created special celebrations to recognise the effort of our 'front line' staff and put on a special lunch for them.

Focus on utilising available technology

- When the pandemic hit, our IT team quickly enabled our global staff to be able to work from home, ensuring data security was effective and staff were fully trained and set up for success.
 - We created an emergency mass communication channel, using SMS technology to be able to reach all staff quickly and easily, either regionally or globally, in the event an emergency health or business message was required to be communicated. This has been utilised very effectively to date.
 - We successfully conducted our first ever virtual global leadership conference. Previously this had only been conducted in a face-to-face setting, so to effectively run this via remote dial-in across a multitude of different time zones, utilising virtual break out rooms for group discussion and to reach positive outcomes, was hugely successful.
- We have had to pivot, flex and be inventive about how we get our work done. Different international teams have had to pick up different elements of the toy creation lifecycle and how we bring it to market, when what we would usually do has been interrupted or not available, e.g. staff travel, postage, getting TV commercials made, sign off process for new toys, etc.
 - Our Moose values and our incredibly strong pre-COVID culture are both integral to how Moose is surviving this pandemic. This is also what will drive us to future success post-COVID. What we are learning, as we continue to guide our people and our business through COVID-19, is that we can sustain our unique Moose culture and have fun together even through the most challenging times. We have demonstrated that as a business we can be more flexible with our workforce, and that working remotely does not impact our ability to deliver to our customers and end users. As we look to the future, we have a firm belief that we will come out of this difficult period as a stronger Moose family.

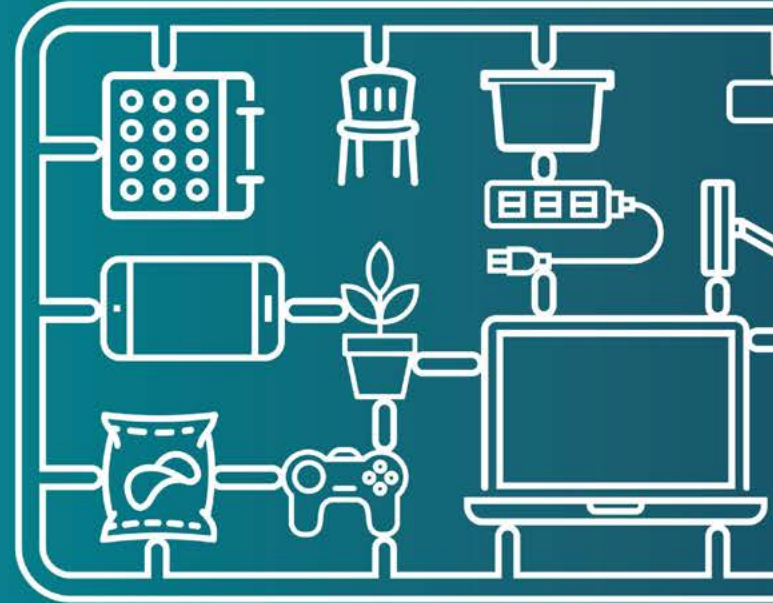
WORKING FROM HOME WELL

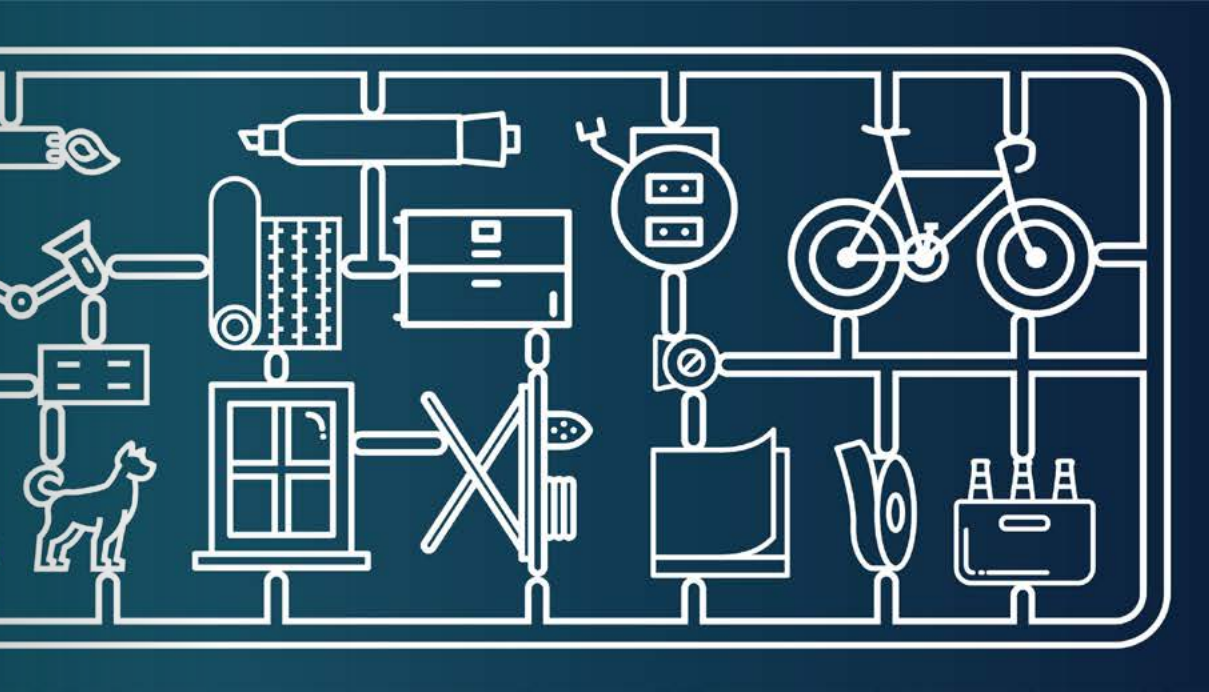


HOME OFFICE HACKS - TO SUPPORT REMOTE WORKING

by Elizabeth Hyde, Environmental Psychologist
and Kristin Mueller, Design Analyst

PLASTARC is a social science-based workplace consultancy. By blending qualitative and quantitative research with expertise in design and change leadership, PLASTARC provides clients with unique insights that promote healthier and higher-performing spaces.





You have the power to shape your work environment

Workplaces support wellbeing when we treat them like they're flexible and adaptable. Customizing spaces so they suit both our personalities and the tasks at hand can be empowering. With many organizations switching to work-from-home models out of necessity, the past several months have provided many challenges, but have also offered opportunities to remake the spaces we use.

Chances are that you've now refined your understanding of what's required to 'get things done' under these new conditions, but have you adapted your environment to match? We each differ in our requirements and preferences. Taking time to learn about what psychologists call *need-supply fit*—a match between the needs of individuals and the supplies available—may help.

Grab a pen and paper and set aside five minutes to jot down physical, emotional, or cognitive needs you have found are common to the work you engage in, no matter how idiosyncratic. Simply having a conscious awareness of these can help you to better curate your set-up and your schedule to meet your own needs.

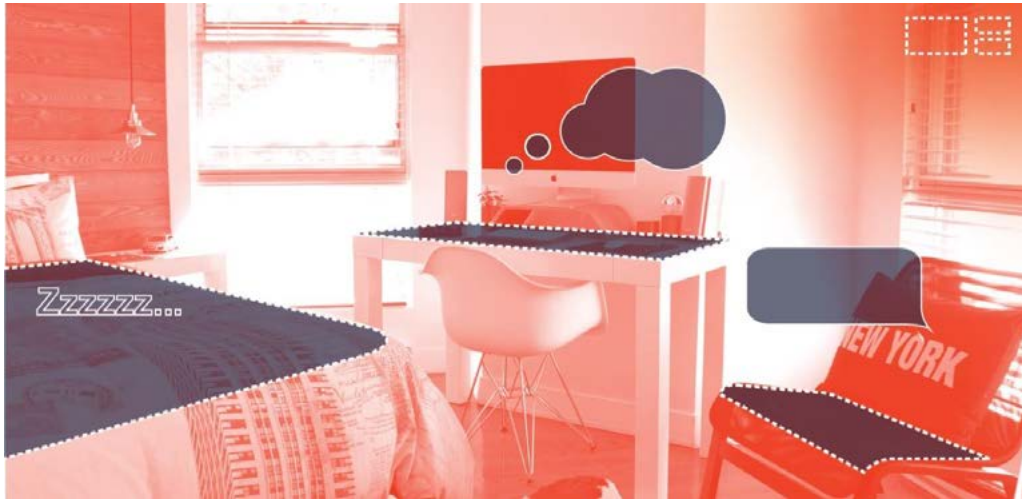
Now what? To help transform these personal insights into useful solutions, we've compiled some work-from-home 'hacks' in the pages ahead. Whether through new products or altering resources you may already have at your disposal, we offer ideas for experimenting with what likely *is* in your control during these unusual times. They touch upon factors that might be impacting your mental and physical wellness, productivity, creativity, or relationships.

Give these ideas a try to see what resonates with you. Modify them and share with colleagues. Or start brainstorming what form your own work-from-home work-arounds might take!

Set boundaries between work and home life

It takes active effort to maintain work-life balance these days, but it's essential. The first step in a more sustainable direction is to prepare for each workday—mind, body, and environment—as if you're going into the office. In other words, get dressed, make your breakfast beverage, and plug into routines that provide structure. How might you do that?

- Each morning, give thought to the sequencing of your day and anticipate what you'll need on hand (even if it's as basic as setting out a snack to grab between back-to-back calls).
- Ensure tech devices are fully charged and outlets accessible—investing in a retractable extension cord can allow for more preparedness here.
- Readopt the activities you once enjoyed while commuting—perhaps listening to a podcast or reading a book—as a form of self-care before diving into meetings and deadlines.
- Define your workspace—be it four walls, a zone within a room, or even just a chair. The sight of it should signal that it's time to enter heads-down mode. Your bedroom (or at least your bed), by contrast, should be designated areas for resting where work is banned.





Reimagine your workspace

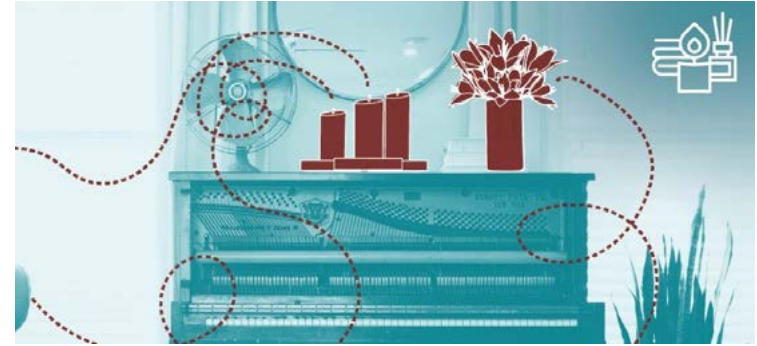
Chances are that you did not originally decorate the inside of your dwelling with your job specifications in mind. That's ok! With a little ingenuity, you can create functionality by crafting your own multi-purpose 'furniture' in cost-effective and mental energy-saving ways. If you have the ability to switch up your location throughout the day, we have some additional recommendations to consider. What might all this look like, you ask?

- Fashion a sitting or standing desk out of items you currently have at home—the key is to focus on arriving at the correct height for your frame, which may involve some stacking and rejiggering.
- Invite variety by finding spaces with a range of scales, enclosure levels, and seating types.
- Prepare for a mobile office: set up devices with a personal hotspot or locate free public Wi-Fi, take advantage of the ambient noise inherent to the locale, or bring along your own source of music, and identify any required amenities before settling in.
- Get outside—if you're staring down a string of 1:1's that can be navigated hands-free, stick your phone in your front shirt pocket on FaceTime and go for a walk, allowing your coworker to come along.

Attend to your basic needs

You're only human. Even if you're relatively confined these days, your body needs to move, your brain needs breaks, and your senses require the occasional refresh. Attending to your atmosphere—from the standpoint of ambiance and ergonomics—can boost mood in the short-term and buffer against burnout for the long haul. Eager for some pointers?

- Try employing invigorating scents like rosemary, citrus, and peppermint channeled through essential oils, candles, or fresh fruits and herbs to keep energy high. Opt for the soothing aromas of lavender and chamomile for restoration.
- Embrace the light that's right for your setting. Depending on how often you're reading and referencing paper materials, some new fixtures—whether that's a modern dimmable LED or a classic design—might be a worthwhile investment. For downtime, turn on a floor lamp with a warm color temperature like 2700K, or set your dimmer to mimic twilight or dusk.
- Tuck something behind your back or under your seat to provide extra lumbar support and avoid discomfort.
- Whenever possible, sneak in stretches, mini workouts, or even a solo dance party to mitigate the toll of sedentary positions.





Socialize at a distance

The proverbial water cooler chats may be temporarily on hold, but fostering social connection is more important than ever in this era of widespread distributed working. While it's natural to crave face-to-face interactions, much of what you appreciate and miss about gathering together can now be translated to a distanced setting thanks to support from technology. Wondering how to start?

- Organize online lunch hours or coffee breaks where coworkers can sign up for dedicated timeslots.
- Schedule laid-back, end-of-day check-ins with a drink of your choice. Bonus points if you get a group beer of the month subscription and sip the same drinks at happy hour!
- Establish a remote game night with teammates—use a service like Jackbox and a video conference platform such as Zoom to share your screen while playing. Collectively joining a “room” on the app Houseparty is another option.
- Host a virtual ‘kid & pet parade’ so everyone can show off their cute companions while celebrating the loved ones that are often behind closed doors during business hours.

CONTRACTORS & SUPPLIERS

TALENT

Redefining the contractor experience

The issue

COVID-19's impact on jobs was swift and brutal. As unemployment rates reached their highest in nearly 100 years, contract and contingent workers were often the first to go.

At Talent, our vision to redefine recruitment means we are committed to transforming the contractor experience. Already focused on contractors for many years through our Talent Engage community of over 10,000 tech contract workers, we quickly recognised the toll that the pandemic was taking on our members.

Feedback collected through our platform indicated that contractors were feeling disconnected and uncertain during this time of crisis, as many of them had lost their jobs and others did not have access to the same level of Government support offered to permanent employees. To respond to this need, we ramped up our efforts with a dedicated contractor care plan designed to support our members through this time.

The Experiment

We assembled an internal cross-functional team who worked together to build a comprehensive plan focused around every facet of our member's wellbeing. This covered:

- **Mental:** We offered complimentary premium access to the Headspace meditation app for all Talent Engage members and Talent contractors in the UK, APAC Europe and the US. This gave contractors access to over 1,000 hours of content designed to help manage stress, fall asleep, exercise mindfully and remain focused. We also extended our confidential counselling service LifeStreet to our contractors to help support them.
- **Professional:** We increased the frequency of our communication updates to our members, providing weekly updates about important matters affecting their working

arrangements. Each week we offered the ability to submit questions, which formed the content in subsequent updates. We also hosted virtual educational events about the job market, and partnered with our legal and financial contacts to provide advice and clarity regarding the changes that could impact them.

- **Developmental:** We partnered with Skillssoft to give members free access to Percipio's thousands of online training and development courses, offering them an opportunity to upskill in highly sought-after disciplines.
- **Social:** Our dedicated Contractor Care Managers organised online social events and increased their efforts to communicate with contractors. They checked in frequently, held virtual trivia competitions, and gained insights into ways Talent can provide greater care and assistance.
- **Physical:** We enlisted a personal trainer to create a custom workout that our members could do from home, and provided meal vouchers.

The results

Since the beginning of March, we have seen a 300% increase in Engage members signing up for online learning courses.

Through the Headspace app, Talent contractors have completed almost 90,000 hours of meditations since 1st June. On average they have been using the mediation app three times a week.

Our most recent survey amongst Engage contractor members rated their experience with Talent and the Engage platform at 8.9/10.

This is a long term project and we will continue to increase our support to our contractors. We are in the process of developing the next iteration of the Engage platform with additional features to support their wellbeing.

ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION





ACCELERATION PARTNERS

Leadership,
communication and
innovation during
COVID-19

When COVID-19 reached the United States, our leadership team knew we had to be ready to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, to lean into our core values, and to do as much as possible to help as many people as we could—employees, clients, partners and more. In the process, we created several new initiatives and processes that will become part of our business going forward.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and the following changes we've made have helped us weather the storm of the pandemic—and have given us new ideas to help us thrive in the future.

Daily Leadership Standup

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) realized in February that COVID-19 was going to have a massive impact on our business. Initially, the pandemic was a key topic on our weekly SLT meetings, but once the situation intensified, we realized we needed to meet more frequently to stay ahead of rapidly changing information.

In early March, we began holding a daily 15-minute call with our SLT each morning. Each department head would share the news from the previous day, or from that morning, with updates on sales and client services being a chief concern. We needed to consolidate a constant flow of information and determine what was necessary to communicate to the entire company.

This has helped us realize there's value in meeting slightly more frequently. While we don't meet each day, now that we have a better grip on the situation, we still have two standing meetings each week—double our previous cadence—and we will certainly keep daily meetings as a part of our crisis leadership playbook.

Core Values Rubric

Even in stable times, we've made our organizational core values—Own It, Embrace Relationships, Excel and Improve—the backbone of our short- and long-term decision-making. Shortly after COVID-19 hit, we realized that in the face of difficult decisions, it would help to have clear Guiding Principles to share with our team.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2020

- Adhere to our Core Values (Own It, Embrace Relationships, Excel & Improve)
- Survive the recession. Control what we can control and make sure we are here to fight another day
- Be transparent and treat people with respect
- Do the most good for the most people (employment, well-being)
- Move quickly and decisively
- Keep the long term in focus

Prioritize:

Company 🟡 Team 🟡 Clients 🟡 Partners 🟡 Vendors

Working as an SLT, we developed six hierarchical principles, supported by our values, which we used as a rubric to make our challenging decisions. We prioritized adhering to our core values, being transparent with our employees, doing the most good for the most people possible, and moving quickly and decisively, with a long-term focus.

In a crisis such as this one, there are two types of organizational decisions—hard choices, and harder choices. Having a clear, consistent decision-making rubric, dictated by your personal or professional core values, is the best way to take decisive action that your team will be able to stand behind in the future.

Frequent, Video Communications

As we grappled with the COVID-19 crisis as a leadership team, we realized that, in the face of unprecedented uncertainty, our team members were frightened, and craved trusted, consistent communication. We wanted to ensure employees weren't left to speculate on the state of the company, or to fill in leadership silence with their own fearful narratives.

We did this by sending many asynchronous video messages in the early months of the pandemic. For a while, our CEO recorded and sent a video to the entire company each week, sharing with our employees everything they needed to know about the state of the company; what challenges we were facing, the actions we were taking to avoid risk to the business, and a reassurance that we were all pushing through the crisis together.

The feedback to this was extremely positive—hearing a calm, consistent message from leadership gave our employees confidence that the company was on the sturdiest possible ground. The feedback also prompted us to consider how we can better use this type of video messaging in the future to communicate things to the entire company, rather than trying to gather our 170 person team on a virtual meeting or painstakingly writing out a long email where things like tone can be lost.

In a crisis, consistent, clear communication is vital. But it's important even in the best of times—organizations can always benefit from a clear, collectively understood message of where the business stands.

Innovation Group

It became clear early in the COVID-19 that conventional thinking wouldn't get us where we needed to go, so we decided to put serious time and resources into ideating and developing new products and real time solutions for changes in the market.

We turned to our employees, creating an “Innovation Group” with the purpose of brainstorming, developing and evaluating new ideas to drive leads and revenue for our business. We challenged this small group of employees, over a handful of calls, to think beyond our current company offerings and consider what creative ideas could help our business grow to the next level.

Our Innovation Group continues to meet and we have seen more creative thinking in a span of months than in the past few years. We may very well look back on the extraordinary circumstances of this time as the conditions we needed to grow further as a business, to foster new and unconventional ideas, and to build our company to the next level. The greatest untapped potential in an organization comes from its people—if you give employees the freedom and incentive to generate new ideas, you'll be amazed by the results.





HIPAGES

Navigating COVID-19 through strong employee engagement

hipages is the online platform that connects Australia with trusted tradies, to simplify home improvement. We are an Australian technology company, and prior to coronavirus we were a team of around 260 members based in Sydney, Manila and China.

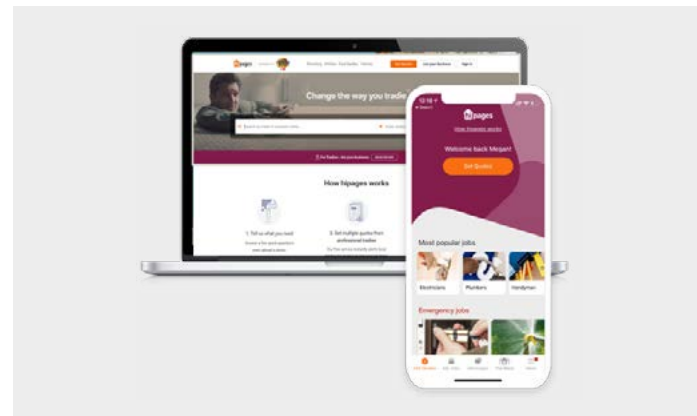
The impact of coronavirus

Initially, COVID-19 severely impacted us, with the demand for tradespeople and the use of our platform plummeting at the start of the lockdown. This has now stabilised, but dealing with this challenge required changes, significant collaboration and team spirit.

We are different to many other companies who use offshore workers in that from the outset we considered and treated our Manila call centre team as full members of hipages, even though they are employed through a BPO company. This approach has really helped us with keeping engagement levels high in Manila through mass disruption and uncertainty. Forced remote work from COVID-19 has really highlighted the different needs of the sub-cultures that make up our organisation.

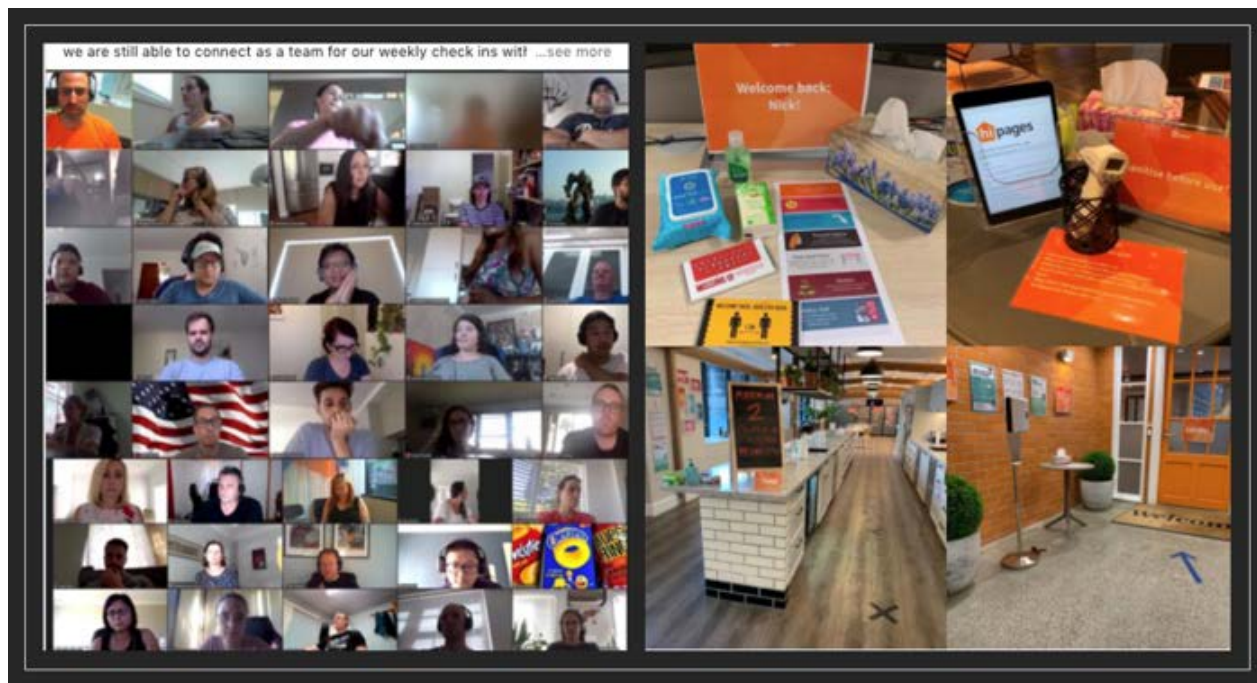
Initially our priority was to set everyone up working from home, which for us included purchasing equipment, providing remote working training support for individuals and leaders, and redesigning many of our processes. Not all teams had previously worked remotely (our sales, service and Manila teams) and this was a tough transition for some people. Due to a Manila government mandate around lockdown and banning travel, we lost huge capacity in our Manila operations overnight and our engineering teams had to work very fast to automate as many processes as soon possible, to fill the gaps from these staff not being in operation.

We also had to undertake a cost-reduction exercise to sustain the business, which included a downsizing operation (especially in our Manila team), identifying other cost saving measures and temporary pay reductions. We asked our Sydney team to take a 20% pay cut but to work harder than ever to help us through these challenges. It is testament to our culture and team spirit that 100% of our employees agreed to this sacrifice and helped us turn things around earlier than hoped.



Maintaining engagement

In the face of such challenges, we realised that communication and engagement were key to creating a productive remote workforce. Our communication included weekly company wide zoom 'town halls', daily team stand-ups, and regular personal calls from the people and culture team and leaders. Prior to COVID we used collaboration tools like Zoom, Confluence and Slack but not consistently across all teams, so we needed to focus on upskilling all team members in using this enabling technology. From the outset, with global fears of the unknown, we knew we had to have a significant focus on mental health.



We did this by identifying team members who were skilled in things such as meditation and personal training to hold Zoom sessions for the whole company. We also implemented an externally facilitated six-week positivity at work programme, amongst other initiatives. We found team charity challenges very helpful for unifying people and thinking beyond our own organisation and ourselves to others doing it even more tough. We strongly encouraged the celebration of big and small successes

and peer recognition, with weekly shout-outs and team and company 'social safe spaces' to connect on non-work things.

Our high touch approach to communication and employee wellbeing meant that six weeks into lockdown, despite all the challenges in and outside the business, our engagement pulse check survey showed that we had our highest engagement levels ever (95%).

How are we moving forwards?

Every person in hipages stepped up to help get us through the challenges to our business, and we wanted to ensure their hard work and loyalty was rewarded. All staff received shares in the company to thank them for their commitment to the organisation through such a challenging time. We also organised personally delivered gift hampers to everyone with hipages swag and personalised messages and treats in lieu of our traditional end-of-financial year company party – these were very well received.



Returning to the office and future ways of working

Many companies chose to delay a return to the office, however we had team members who had expressed that they wanted to return as they could not work productively at home or really were missing the social aspects of office-based work. It took a lot of effort and time to prepare the office for a safe return and we chose to obtain official certification from the NSW Government that our office was COVID-safe, to help any team members who were less confident feel ready to come back to work. We have



kept returning to the office optional, and about 50% people have returned either full time or part-time to the office.

As we move beyond the initial lockdown and make longer term plans, we are taking a collaborative approach to how we plan our new ways of working. We have a New Ways of Working Taskforce, which has representation from all teams and levels of seniority – they are initially conducting team level retrospectives and research and then will feed recommendations to the senior leadership team.

Crucially, we are taking an experimental approach where we test, learn and adapt new ideas to our specific team members and business – always being mindful of our colleagues' engagement and productivity and being open to continual change. We believe this will ensure we maintain the high levels of engagement and productivity we saw during initial full lockdown.





AURECON

Adapting the employee experience during COVID-19

Aurecon is an engineering, design and advisory consultancy with staff across Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Middle East. Being a geographically diverse company, we couldn't take a one size fits all approach to managing the impacts of COVID-19 and we had to tailor our response according to different global challenges, timelines and also cultures.

For us it was therefore important for as many decisions as possible to be taken at a local level. We could also see that good communication and engaging employees across the organisation was key.

Internal communication

With so much happening at pace, we knew we needed to communicate well to ensure employees felt supported, informed and remained engaged. The findings in the [Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report](#) on coronavirus increased our sense of responsibility as communicators and responders. Notably for us, the report suggested that:

- Employers were being believed most readily, with 63% people trusting the content of employer communications – a higher percentage than all other major sources of information.
- 62% of people trusted employers to respond effectively to the outbreak – which indicated higher levels of trust in any establishment after health institutions, including governments.

Taking our role seriously, we took the view that we couldn't over-communicate and therefore provided information and opportunities to connect on a wide range of topic areas relating to the virus, and company activity and performance.

This included a schedule of company-wide internal communication from various leaders, and the development of an information hub on working from home well with tips, health

and wellbeing information, domestic violence support and government updates.

We also hosted 15 C-suite roadshows across all our geographies in June, offering people the chance to put their questions directly to senior leaders. We learnt that people really valued this opportunity – we received far more questions than we expected and had to follow-up with some people after the sessions, and as a result we repeated the roadshow in August and will continue to do so, even after COVID-19 has ended.

It was also important to us that the Aurecon Principles and Attributes were embodied throughout this time, and that people were celebrated. Aurecon's Attributes and Principles fundamentally comprise our culture and there have been many stories where our people have demonstrated resourcefulness, playfulness with serious intent and unconventional thinking, while working remotely.

We asked people to share their positive stories of how the Principles and Attributes have been lived out via a short video, which we have shared back with staff in the form of a 'secret sauce' campaign. This has produced great examples of how people have helped each other and adapted to help their clients, and made us really proud of our colleagues.

Onboarding virtually

Many aspects of operations had to be adapted in the wake of the pandemic, and as we were continuing to recruit during the period of lockdown this included onboarding.

We quickly reimaged the onboarding experience for new recruits who couldn't visit our office, redesigning the processes and creating a virtual delivery model that included recruiters building strong connections with new hires, and producing extra materials and videos to support our managers and leaders.



There are three key rituals for new employees starting at Aurecon, which we were keen those starting remotely wouldn't miss out on. These are:

- **Basecamp** – where employees get to know their local team and business.
- **Fireside Chat** – where they get to know their local senior leaders.
- **Blue Sky Summit** – which is run quarterly, with the CEO and other senior leaders, to connect new employees with our strategy.

We were able to replace the face to face Basecamp and Fireside Chat with virtual sessions instead, using virtual

whiteboards and Microsoft Teams, and it was great that employees could still broaden their network and ask their questions early on during what could have been an isolating time, while also getting familiar with the technology we were using to work virtually.

We switched the Blue Sky Summit for a 'CEO on the couch' event, which received great feedback, and we are now planning to run the Blue Sky Summit virtually for all staff every quarter because staff get so much from it.

Overall, some people had a better experience onboarding online, so there is lots to take forward.

Being proactive about the future

Thinking longer term, we want to be proactively considering how we work, listening to employees and building on the experience of the last few months.

We traditionally have three staff engagement surveys every year, and in the most recent survey we removed some questions and instead asked what people want to stop, start and continue based on our ways of working during COVID-19. This will feed into our post-COVID strategy, and the numbers of responses to date indicate that employees value being part of these conversations.

We also have a project the Digital and People teams are working on with a Futurist to bring insight into digital innovation and how this will impact the skills of our workforce and many other lenses of the future of work too. In dealing with COVID-19 we have needed to consider and implement things we thought were years away. The benefits we have gained from COVID-19 means that our way of working will never go back to the way it was. We have a real opportunity to take the lessons we have learnt from working remotely, new digital tools and additional time secured by a lack of travel into how we permanently operate in the future. One of the strengths we have at Aurecon is our expertise in human led design. As we continue to make this transition to operating differently, we have the chance to consider what the future of how we want to work will look like.



TALENT

The people first plan

The issue

Like many sectors, Covid-19 hit the recruitment industry like a tonne of bricks. Sure, we had experienced financial downturns before – but a global pandemic? There was no roadmap for that.

As we began to see the impact on our industry and hiring freezes around the world, a strong feeling of uncertainty quickly emerged. Many recruitment companies responded by swiftly cutting back large proportions of their workforce, and our team began to feel uncertain about their jobs and the future.

The experiment

At Talent, we responded to this uncertainty by creating a new five step plan, drawing upon the fundamentals in our Talent culture matrix (pictured). Rather than focus on typical austerity measures, our strategy focused on putting people before profits, ensuring the essential components of what makes people happy and productive at work remained most important. Our approach was designed to retain our business' most valuable assets – our people, which would position us for long-term success and create an environment for innovative thinking to develop. The five steps were:

1. Make a plan and follow through

Quickly assembling a Covid-19 taskforce made up of representatives from each core area of the business, we created a comprehensive financial plan. The plan was benchmarked against pre-Covid results and factored in multiple scenarios with potential impacts to our financial performance. This was supported by a communications plan for each of our key audiences – our team, our clients and our contractors. Central to the financial plan was the decision to go against the trend of our industry and ensure jobs were safe.

2. Keep it real and be honest

Our CEO Mark Nielsen hosted local Zoom sessions with each of our offices, and openly shared the details of our financial plan. In these sessions, Mark provided total clarity on exactly what the business needed to earn every month to ensure we stayed profitable. In many organisations, this level of financial detail would typically be tightly held amongst the board and executive team only. It was hugely important to us that everyone had the same level of knowledge about what was happening. In Mark's sessions, he explained everyone's role in the plan and how they could help to make sure we got through this together.



3. Over communicate... then communicate again

We know that in times of uncertainty, it is almost impossible to over communicate. To ensure our team felt informed and connected, we accelerated a planned roll-out of Blink, an employee comms app which functions as an internal social media channel. Using Blink, we built team chat threads, created forums where people could celebrate wins and milestones, and developed areas to collaborate on cross-border business opportunities. We were also able to share live updates from our CEO and utilise a push notification trigger to make sure no one missed out. Importantly, Blink allowed for two-way communication, giving everyone the ability to respond to updates. This tool was invaluable as our teams moved to work from home.

We also ran live open forums called “#OneTeam Huddles”. Held every week via Zoom, the Huddles gave people the opportunity to hear directly from the leadership team about how we were tracking to our financial plan as well as the chance to ask absolutely any question they wanted. Nothing was out of bounds. The weekly Huddles and regular updates via Blink ensured a constant level of communication.

4. Make it fun

Our business loves to have fun, and we have typically done so through face-to-face events. Like many other organisations, we found virtual ways to keep morale high. In addition to virtual drinks, we launched Team Talent Trivia – a weekly trivia competition hosted by

our CEO which centred around a particular theme and offered prizes for best dressed. Throughout the trivia battles, we saw celebrities, sports stars and musicians emerge amongst our ranks, with our New Zealand offices seeming to win best dressed every time. During Easter, we sent DIY hot cross bun kits to our teams, inspiring everyone to get their baking hats on, and when Melbourne entered stage 4 lockdown, we sent care packages with toilet paper and wine. Being a competitive bunch, we also ran a lockdown herb growing competition. Though small gestures, they all helped retain our sense of fun during this difficult time.

5. Stay focused on what matters

Our people are our most valuable assets. In addition to ensuring jobs would stay safe, we ramped up our focus on our team’s health and wellbeing, and also increased investment in learning and development. Through our partnership with LifeStreet, we provided sessions on resilience and stress management. We also ran a guided workshop for managers which explained how to support team members who might be struggling. At the same time, while many of our competitors were cutting costs, we increased our investment in learning and development. We utilised an external facilitator to build a custom learning course for our consultants which gave them the tools to pivot their sales approach for the new world.

The results

At the time of publishing, approximately 25% of recruiters have lost their jobs across the sector. By choosing to not take the path of mass redundancies

and by putting our people and their jobs first, we have a connected team and an adaptive business in a strong financial position.

Mark’s total transparency around the financial plan created an astonishing response. Rather than fear taking over and every “man” fighting for themselves, it completely unified our team and created a level of commitment to our business that we were blown away by. Multiple staff members stepped forward and offered to take pay cuts because they wanted to “do their part” to ensure our survival. Luckily, pay cuts were not required but these offers showed how much our team felt connected to our mission.

We regularly survey our team using the Gallup Q12 engagement tool. Remarkably, our engagement has remained in the world-class bracket throughout this period. Here are some key metrics from our most recent survey compared with our pre-Covid results:

- I trust the leadership of my company – **4.76/5 (up from 4.57/5)**
- My company cares about my overall wellbeing – **4.8/5 (up from 4.68/5)**
- There is open communication throughout all levels of the organisation – **4.75/5 (up from 4.27/5)**
- The Talent culture feels strong – **4.74/5 (up from 4.67/5)**
- I am being kept informed about important issues and changes as occur – **4.83/5 (up from 4.63/5)**



UPLEVEL

Keeping our culture
a huge focus
during lockdown

UPLevel supports business operations for companies across North America with a workplace culture that nurtures, trusts, respects, empowers and values each unique contribution to the company's overall success. Over the years we've earned awards for this, as well as the trust of clients across many industries. We're often asked to share our ideas – as a small company without huge budgets, we seem to find cheap and cheerful solutions to create the great culture we want. We've been featured in the earlier Experiments Collections – this time focused on the additional things we did during COVID...

Creating a trusted work family with a clear purpose and passion has been integral to how we work since we were founded. Lockdown has presented new challenges, and we have been creative in how we tackle them:

1. Hydrate & Heal

We want to keep ourselves well and connected during this time, and one simple thing we can do is stay hydrated. Back in the days when all were in the office, on the way to a meeting or on the way to a break you'd just naturally stop at the water cooler and fill up. Being the 'work family' we are, often we'd offer to fill up each other's water as well as a kind gesture. Now that we're all (100+) working from home, we found we were tied to zoom and our desks, forgetting to drink. And we missed the great chats at the watercooler too! The bonds from quick daily connections at the watercooler were healing before the ways COVID impacted our wellness. SO – we created a way to try to replicate the wellness aspects of both. We had our team download an app of their choice that reminds you to drink water. They are free – people chose from Drinkwater, Daily Water, Waterlogged etc. We wanted variety in the apps for a reason which I'll get to in a moment. Then we created a zoom room called the UPLLevel

Watercooler. And it just sits there waiting for people to join the 'meeting' when they want to connect over a quick sip of water. So, we agreed that on the third or fourth reminder to drink of the day – times varied by the different apps – we each would virtually 'swing by' the watercooler zoom room to say hi, stay connected in a spontaneous way, keep up on how people were doing, check in, and just hydrate and heal together.

2. Zoom Lunch Together

We loved the Watercooler Zoom Room drop-bys so much that we created a zoom lunch room as well – so people could drop in while they ate their lunch – no shop talk allowed – with breakout rooms available if anyone wanted a quiet chat – it is a fun way to stay connected. On What's New Wednesdays, we have a Lunch and Learn in that room where there's optional videos to watch together – Ted Talks, Recordings from Virtual Conferences etc. This way even introverts who don't really feel like talking can come and join others in learning something and sharing time.

3. Zoom Props

Since we felt like we were all on zoom a lot – each team has a daily huddle, and all the usual meetings are now virtual of course – we thought it would be fun to purchase and keep some props by our desks and pull them out for fun from time to time. We added extra bonus \$ to each person's pay to purchase props – and many ordered props from Amazon directly to their homes – or some got creative and made them – and going forward people had wigs, glasses, hats, thumbs up signs, YES signs, NO signs, or photo booth type props to create some fun and a bit more dimension from time to time. We created Theme Days and prizes were awarded for the best costume, best backdrop and best theme food brought to the zoom party.

4. Parking Lot Two-Line Visits

After a while we got tired of the zoom only meetings, and one of our team suggested that we should choreograph a line of cars going one way in the parking lot at the office and another line going the other way, in such a way to create short safe meetups. So we met at the office, stayed in our cars and formed two lines facing in opposite directions, with cars pulling up opposite each other (still about 10 feet apart!) for conversations with the windows down, and rotating every five minutes. It was kind of like speed dating but safely in your car, no chance for germs to be spread but we actually got the 3D visit with the people we were missing! The videos taken were hilarious and the interest was great to do it again. We've hired 24 new people totally remotely and they'd never been in the office so we made physically distanced tours of the office part of the next one. We sometimes forget how much we need to see real people. We've also done drive by retirement parties, drive by birthdays and baby showers for the team.

5. Time with Tracey

Because Tracey, our founder, has a social work background and people seek her out for support and guidance, they were missing that connection once we were all working from home. We decided to designate some shared time and created four slots each week that can just be booked anonymously by anyone in the company for 'Time with Tracey' – Tracey cares very much about the mental health of the team and their challenges with all the changes, so a 'Calendly' link gets them straight into Tracey's calendar in a one on one meeting, where for the duration of that time Tracey is not the President of the company but just a person

who cares, knows a few things about how to cope with change and isolation, and is a generous listener. People really love the option for an open door at her level. And they appreciate that the President of the company will be a generous listener that will gently guide when asked for help. Issues arising in this format have been very sincere, resulting from isolation, lack of clarity or ability to reach out to others, navigating the challenging parts of living in isolation. She doesn't want you to know this but these book fast and people really rave about the time to share and the understanding gained on both sides creates a foundation for a friendship.

6. Saturday Family Surprise

We realized that many of us were gaining weight during extended periods sitting at home, and not moving nearly as much as we could, so we engaged a company called Innovative Fitness to run group zoom workouts on Saturdays at 9:30. All you need is a bit of space, and a zoom call. The company funds the fitness class, everyone can bring their family and the pace is adjusted to who shows up. Our first poll only showed 14 people willing to try it, but now the numbers are up and people bring their kids, spouses, sometimes a neighbor, and we do it together. It feels like a release for some stress of the week and it feels like we are fighting the COVID bulge together. We've had a chance to 'meet' each others' family and the trainer has adjusted the pace to those of us who are closer to the starting line than the finish line.

7. Early Home Made Masks for All – sent with a personal note from the President.

A retired team member sewed reusable masks in fun patterns for us to send to all staff – we did this before

the science had decided that masks were helpful, but we wanted people to feel as comfortable as possible and thought it would be a nice gift to prove we cared about them. We mailed them out individually to over 100+ team members homes – along with a personal note from our President, cheering them on for being resilient, caring, and strong. So many notes poured in from people along with pictures of them in their masks – I think people truly felt touched that we would pay to have a mask made for them and then post it to their house.

8. Employee Survey and Returning to Work Collaborative Planning

We recently did an anonymous survey to ask people honestly how they felt about our handling of the virus, how we were protecting their safety and how they felt about the company overall at this time. The overall results were very positive, with lots of great ideas we will incorporate including ideas for how we return to the office that will form the basis of our plan. People feel heard and many have been invited to join the task force to safely design the return to work efforts, when it's safe to do so and after the going back to school plan has been under way for 3 months. Based on feedback we are going to wait until at least November 1 to make a decision on returning, for once choosing not to be the innovators but instead carefully watching, reviewing and planning for the next phase. In this we feel it's kind of nice not to go first, and to keep people focused on safety and productivity as we've learned so much about how to continue to be better navigating Covid-19 remotely the last few months.



GHD

Chatting about COVID



With global professional services company GHD rapidly shifting to remote working during Covid-19, GHD's People Team worked with Melbourne-based insights company The Evolved Group to train their engagement chatbot "Ollie" to understand the impact of COVID on GHD's workforce.

While chatting with GHD's 10,000-strong workforce each month about their experience, Ollie has learned to understand COVID-related responses, seek further information, report back to GHD's executive on how well the company is managing the impact of COVID-19 and highlight the key opportunities to improve GHD's COVID response.

For example, Ollie recognised early on in the COVID response that workload and work-life balance were key

themes impacting many employees. GHD responded by asking teams at all levels to hold conversations about how GHD could better support employee needs in these areas. With the support of the People team, the collated results of these discussions have helped GHD to rapidly improve its global operating policy on flexible working and informed GHD's design of its wellbeing program.

Ollie is helping managers understand the impact of COVID in more detail, for example by understanding the changing emotional response to COVID in different parts of the world. GHD is using this detail to ensure its wellbeing and engagement programs are best resourced to support GHD's diverse global workforce.



BRIDGEWAY CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Continuing Connectedness

Bridgeway Capital Management transitioned to all remote status on March 13 in response to the pandemic and has done several things to continue connectedness and take advantage of long standing practices.

- We continue monthly all staff meetings, but do so virtually with time limits and make high use of the Zoom “break out rooms” for small group interaction.
- The video portion of Zoom is often optional, to help address video fatigue.
- The incident response team, which are primarily team leaders, meets weekly to discuss team well-being, pandemic, technology updates, internal and external communication, and other related items.
- Daily then transitioned to weekly all staff communication on pandemic related items, which include health and safety guidance, self-care, and vacation encouragement.
- Bridgeway implemented Flexible PTO in 2019 and has had flexible work guidelines since 2007, which have supported the firm well during this period.
- Any person can take work monitors and PCs home.
- We have enjoyed virtual happy hours.

All of these initiatives have supported Bridgeway with consistent communication, connectedness, and placing more autonomy in the hands of staff. We will be all remote for a while and will continue these practices. Even though we miss seeing one another in person, if you are intentional, you can stay connected and be very productive in this environment.





KLARNA AUSTRALIA

Building a team
and culture during
the pandemic



**A big Aussie welcome
to all our fellow
Klarnauts that have
joined us today!**



Klarna brings a unique and consumer centric experience to shopping and payments, and in February 2020 (in partnership with CBA), it launched in the Australian market. We have since built a local team of 40 smart, passionate and driven people that continue strengthening trust, bonds and culture while being impacted by the pandemic.

Helping 40 new people form as a team during the last six months has been no walk in the park. Some of the biggest hurdles have been delivering full-remote interviewing and onboarding, creating digital rituals that stick, and building trust and camaraderie with peers from a physical distance. However, some things have significantly helped to engage and communicate with people during that time, leading to great learnings on how we can continue to foster a positive team and culture post-pandemic.

Intentional and meaningful interactions

Our operating rhythm has played a structural role in bringing people together through a series of intentional and meaningful

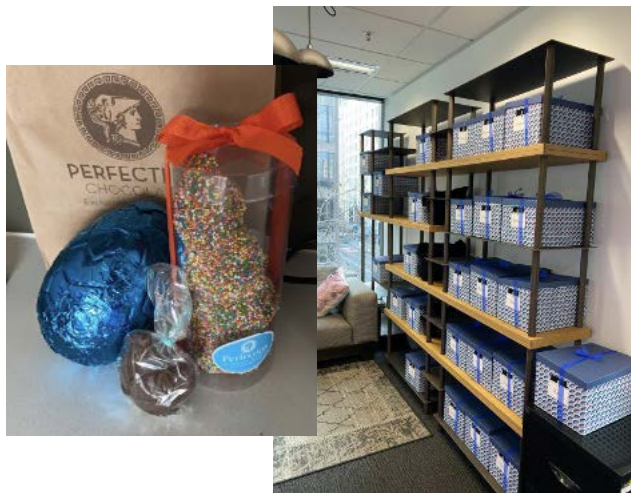
interactions. This structure has been the foundation for people coming together for the first time and has helped develop camaraderie, build trust, and given people a forum to provide encouragement and support.

The 9am Domain Daily Standup pulls people together virtually for some news, updates, morning Kahoots! (explained below), and light-hearted chat. It also allows people to recognise others for their achievements.

Team Daily Standups give people a forum to review with their immediate teams any commitments and open actions, and ask for help and/or offer it to their teammates.

Weekly planning and retro meetings give people time and space to update their team on their weekly ambitions, seek help when needed, and reflect on what's working or needs improvement to build momentum for the following week.

Our Monthly All-Hands has been the global forum to showcase Klarna Australia's progress, and receive support and



encouragement from our overseas colleagues. This has been a significant way we've communicated with the broader global team, and a great reminder of the global support Australia has.

Making work fun and meaningful

Morning Kahoots!

Starting team rituals and practices has required an open and creative mind, and a smart one! Early on, introducing a small quiz to the Daily Standup was trialled to boost interaction and fun. It was a hit! And since then, a different person hosts a quiz or game each morning. Aside from building a team of trivia experts, the tradition has become a great way for people to inject their personality and interests into quiz, and share that with their teammates.

Fika; Swedish traditions brought to Australia

Fika brings people together at the end of the week (Friday afternoon), through celebration and social gathering (and more quizzes)! Typically a face-to-face activity with catered food and drinks, re-creating a remote-Fika experience was key to helping people connect with teammates and bring a social element to working from home experience. This led to...the Fika Box. They were curated, built and sent to people's houses, so they'd have food and drinks to enjoy when Fika time came. Thought and effort were put into their contents, helping people feel included (including our small number of Melbourne based people) and cared for.

Breakfast in July

When restrictions lifted for the team of (then) 32 to come together, that's exactly what they did! Klarna put on a breakfast for the team at the time. For many, it



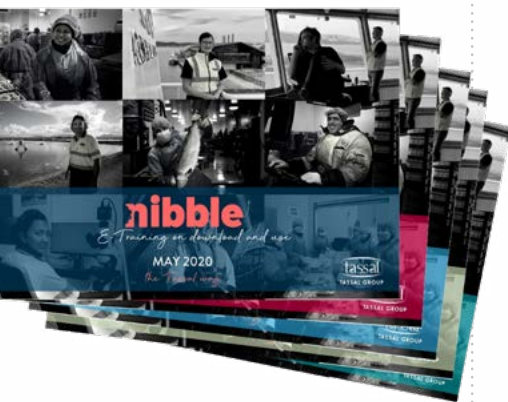
was the first time meeting all their colleagues in person. The atmosphere was buzzing and after a few months of virtual catch-ups, people loved and lavished the opportunity to connect in person.

Keeping a finger on the pulse

Without physical cues of tiredness or low-energy available, and the fact that trust and camaraderie is still building, keeping a finger on the engagement pulse is challenging. That's why Heelix was introduced. It serves as a pulse-check/engagement tool to give people a weekly feedback outlet, and leaders/managers the timely knowledge of how people are feeling, so they could take quick and decisive action. This data and feedback has led to some great learnings, team engagement and actions that have driven engagement over time. It also gives people a chance to shout-out their peers for their amazing work (through the recognition tool).

TASSAL GROUP

The “nibble” app



What we did

Tassal Group repurposed a new employee engagement platform to integrate employee communications, productivity tools and employee benefits into a critical tool in our COVID-19 communication toolbox.

In 2019, we had engaged the team at Mumba Cloud to create a platform that would work for our workforce, which is spread right across eastern Australia. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, we shifted the focus of the app's functionality to be a fully-fledged communications platform that included our COVID-19 situation reports, health and hygiene advice, a wellbeing and financial advice platform, stories and tips for working from home and the best tiktoks going around to keep a smile on our people's faces.

Our app is called “nibble” in recognition that everyone takes in information in different ways – so we have focused on bite-sized stories and information.

We wanted our people to stay informed and stay connected, whether they were working from home or on our farms or in our processing plants.

We also translated our hygiene and health advice into other languages in recognition of the diversity of our workforce.

The results/impacts

The content we offer on nibble is broad-ranging, from our daily COVID-19 Situation Report which provides our team with current Coronavirus statistics and any government developments our people need to be aware of, to articles that would normally be in our newsletters, to the best videos of cats around.



We use ‘push notifications’ to people’s phones so that if we need to inform our people of any urgent information, such as border closures or health alerts, we can do it in real-time.

Our nibble story is still being told and its impact continues to be measured. We use analytics to get data that shows what kind of content our workforce is most interested in and we are already seeing our app play a pivotal role as a major pillar in our communication, engagement and productivity strategies.

How we plan to take it forward

We are expanding our app to connect to our payroll and leave systems and increase access to our systems wherever our people are. We’re confident that in the future we will wonder how we survived without nibble.



PEDESTRIAN
SAFE ZONE
PEDESTRIANS MUST STAY
IN THIS AREA DURING
FORKLIFT OPERATION



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Mental health and the pandemic

Black Dog Institute investigates mental health across the lifespan, with the aim of creating a mentally healthier world for everyone. The Institute integrates research studies, education programs, digital tools, clinical services and public resources to discover new solutions, foster connection and create real world change. We have a specific team dedicated to researching mental health in the workplace and we are keen to help organisations manage the increased levels of stress and anxiety being experienced by many employees during the pandemic.

What have we seen the last few months?

Health anxiety is usually driven by irrational thoughts, but the anxiety generated by COVID has been quite rational and widely shared. Those of us leading organisations and teams have a vital role to play in minimising risk factors to mental health and maximising protective factors such as resilience and wellbeing.

Research tells us that three things that predict the onset of mental health problems, particularly for front line workers, are:

- Not getting adequate information
- Not being or feeling like there is adequate protection
- Being asked to do things that supervisors are not

With this in mind, we have implemented four strategies to support our staff during the crisis:

1. Authentic leadership

Leaders sharing their own anxieties and vulnerability can be a very impactful way for others to feel OK about sharing theirs as well. It's important to make it OK not to be OK.

Over 50% of people who suffer illness don't seek help, so listen out for the silent ones. Never be afraid of asking someone if they are OK, just do it with authenticity and kindness. We have a useful [guide](#) for having conversations about mental health.

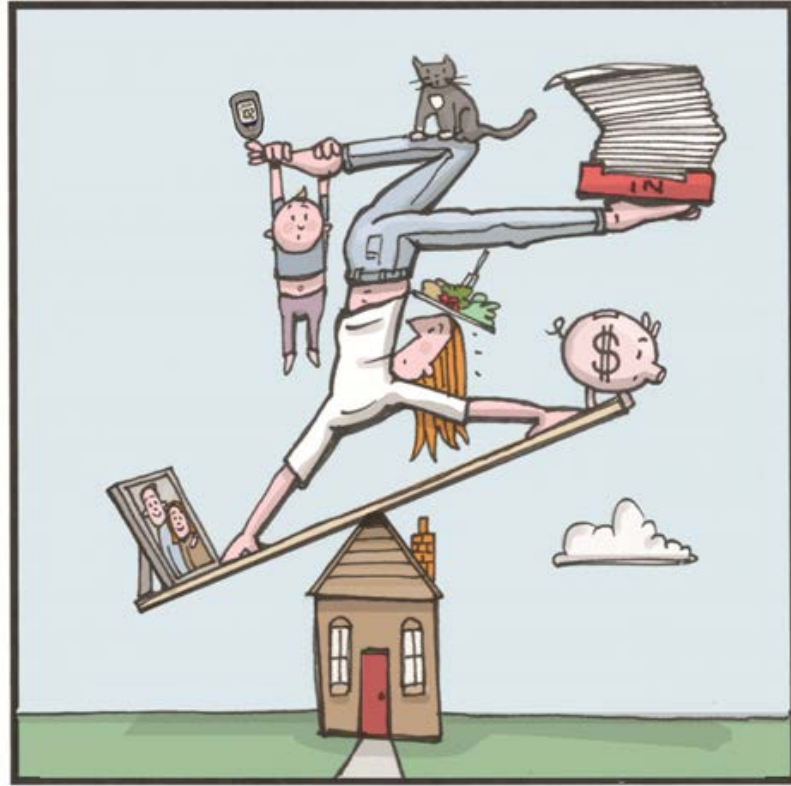
2. Clear, consistent communication

Internal communication needs to be honest and transparent in order to build trust and security. Trust is the foundation for building strong teams – employees who trust their colleagues and leaders are more likely to be open, empathetic, collaborative and constructive. Managers need to trust that teams are working effectively and employees need to feel secure and trusted. Be honest and share whatever you can about job and financial security. People hate to be in the dark and uncertainty increases anxiety. You may not always know the answers or have good news, but evidence shows that when people have whatever information is available they are empowered to deal with it better.

3. Safety

Helping people feel safe will continue to be important as more organisations return to workplaces.

- Ask people what their concerns are and implement strategies to deal with them
- Provide PPE, hand sanitizer and set-up good systems in workplaces
- Have and communicate contingency plans to deal with the 'what ifs'
- Provide infection control and COVID literacy training so staff are empowered with the best information



4. Encourage Well being and Self Care

Equip staff with the tools and time to support their own wellbeing, including emotional and physical wellbeing and self-care, and remain flexible. Provide opportunities for people to be socially connected. Laughter and some fun should not be underrated. There are a growing number of interactive, online platforms and tools that are great for keeping people connected and engaged.

For more ideas to support employee mental health and create good workplace culture, see our [mental health and wellbeing framework](#).

Mental health and the long haul

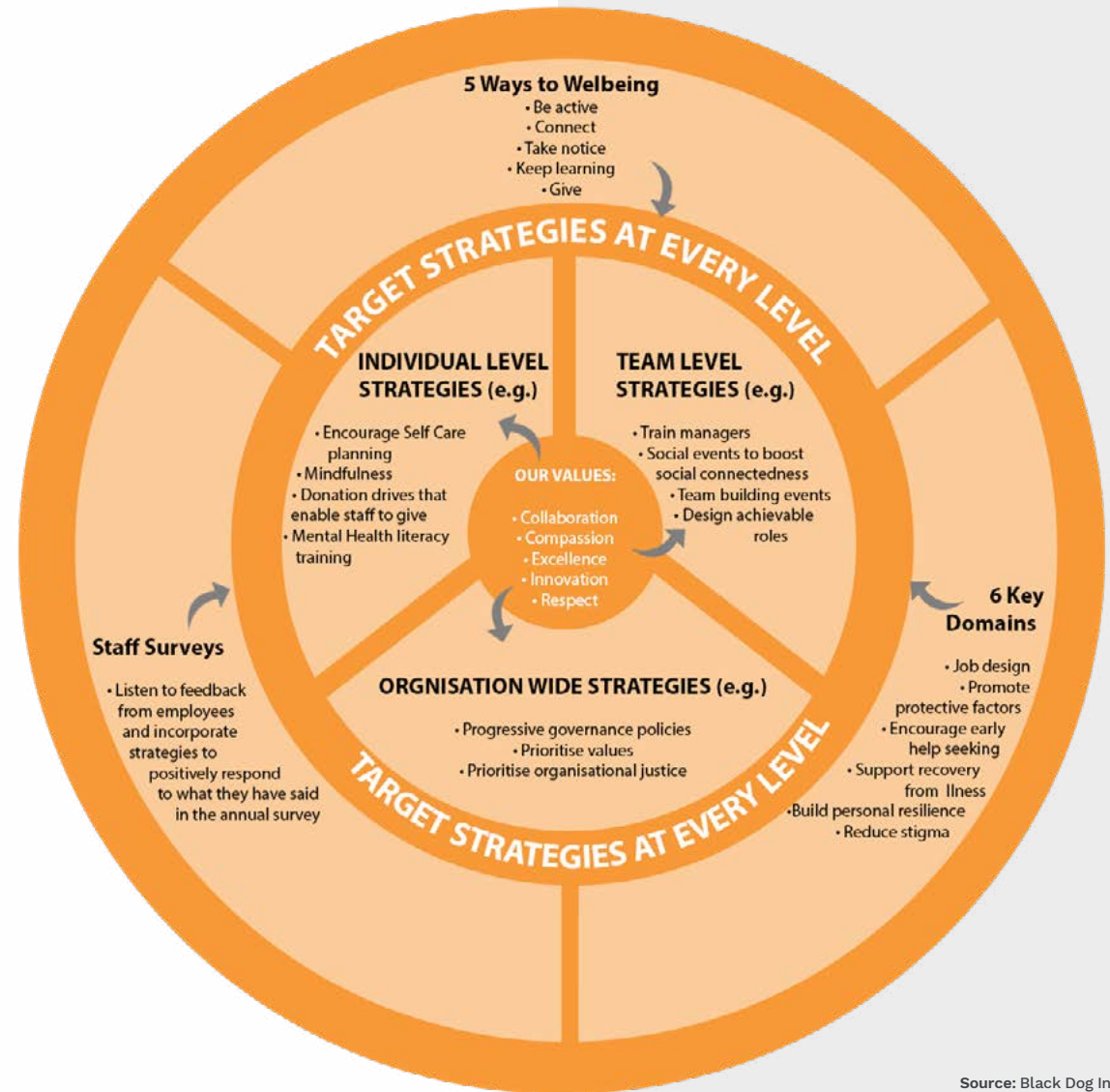
Over half a year into global disruption there still isn't a clear path ahead for navigating our way beyond the pandemic. Recently there seems to be a dip in morale – people are tired of the uncertainty, monotony, isolation and risk, which has been going on a long time. We need to keep a strong focus on resilience and for those who are at risk of illness we need to encourage help-seeking and early intervention. Address the stigma around mental health by acknowledging it, discussing it and encouraging your staff to be aware of their mood and seek help when they need it.

At Black Dog we encourage staff who are starting to feel low to do some self-assessment, to check-in on their mental health via our online clinic, which is free and publicly available*. The tool takes people through a range of clinical assessments for common mental health conditions, creating a personalised list of support services and free or low-cost resources to access. This is a completely anonymous tool which has seen an increase of over 2000 users per week since the pandemic began. There is no doubt that we are experiencing COVID fatigue but we must do what we can to remain resilient and support those who are struggling.

*We provide global access to the Online Clinic but please note some of the suggested resources are specific to Australia, where we are based.

Framework for mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

The framework puts people at the centre of the workplace, and uses evidence-based strategies to minimise the impact of known workplace risk factors and maximise the impact of protective factors in order to create a mentally healthy workplace.

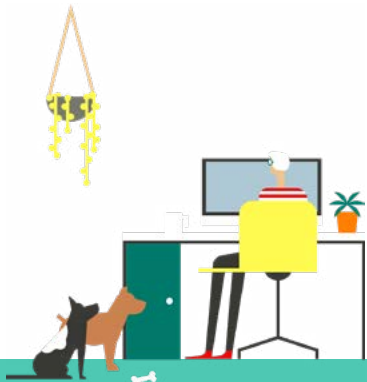


Source: Black Dog Institute



VIRGIN GROUP

The Virgin Way Wellbeing Sessions



The Virgin Way Sessions: an online events and content programme that supports and inspires members of The Virgin Family across the world.

At Virgin, our people are at the heart of everything we do. They are the very essence of the Virgin spirit and they are central to our purpose of changing business for good. Their wellness is paramount.

In 2020, there are over 60,000 members of the Virgin Family across the world, each of them facing new challenges at home and at work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. To support them during this uncertain time and beyond, we wanted to empower our people and provide them with tools and techniques that would help them to tackle these challenges and stay well.

To do this, we delivered an online wellbeing programme comprising monthly one-hour digital events with articles, podcasts and videos providing insights and practical tips from world leading experts and thought leaders, exclusively for Virgin.

Across the course of the series, we focused on six core wellness pillars: Occupational, Mental, Physical, Social, Financial and Environmental wellbeing. Hosted by Helen Tupper, CEO and Co-founder of Amazing If, we created a distinctly Virgin experience by pairing a 'Virgin Voice' (an expert from across the Virgin Group) with a global thought leader. Throughout the series we were joined by world famous Purpose Coach, Jay Shetty, Times Best Selling Author, Elizabeth Day, celebrity Chef, Melissa Hemsley, environmental activist and film maker, Jack Harries, and many more.

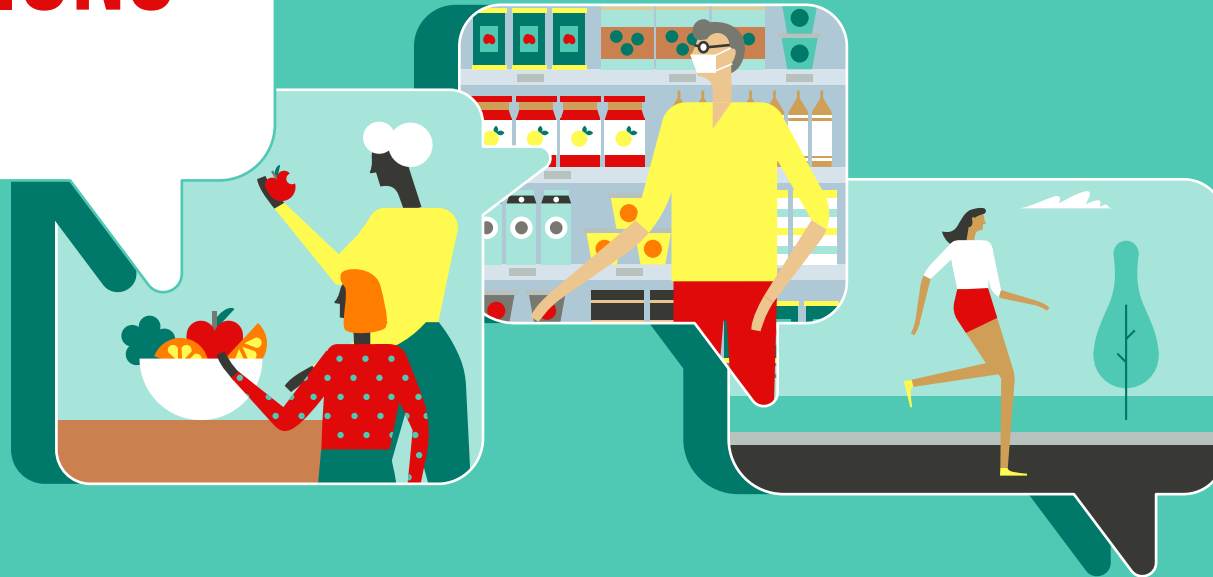
Over a six-month period, these sessions have seen over 30 Virgin businesses across the world attend, with many

thousands coming to the live sessions and watching/listening/reading the session content. Those that have attended the sessions have reported an increased sense of wellbeing as a result of the programme, and other Virgin businesses have been inspired to deliver their own wellbeing programmes locally.

Our vision for the future is to continue to embed wellbeing as a core part of our people promise and to further educate and equip our people around the world on the importance of wellbeing.



WELLBEING SESSIONS



PHYSICAL MENTAL SOCIAL OCCUPATIONAL FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL



BURGES SALMON LLP

Wellbeing during a pandemic

Wellbeing has been part of Borges Salmon's strategy for a number of years, aiming to create an environment where everyone can be happy, healthy and productive at work. The importance of positive wellbeing has been discussed openly at all levels of the firm and provided a strong foundation for the challenges and opportunities a global pandemic has brought.

The challenge

Everyone's experience of lockdown has been different and as a firm we needed to respond in an equally varied way, as a 'one box ticks all' approach would not have been as effective. We had to balance the need to support complex, evolving issues against the stretched resources of the business, everyone adapting to the new situation and a landscape that changed often.

Our focus was to get useful and accessible information out, for our people to feel supported and be open about when they were finding things hard.

What we did

At the start of lockdown we used our wellbeing model (mental, physical, financial and emotional) to rapidly structure a pandemic wellbeing communications strategy and to deliver a wide spectrum of advice and support.

Actions included:

- Streamlining firmwide communications so that people knew there was one place for both leadership updates and wellbeing communications.
- A weekly wellbeing resources pack covering relevant and topical articles/webinars/podcasts/videos.
- Remote working surveys and pulse surveys to understand how people were feeling and what support they might need.
- Working with our inclusion networks to understand what specific support their members may require, e.g. running a resilience session for our BAME group who were grappling with news reports of an increased COVID risk to the BAME community.
- Setting up buddy schemes to connect people for conversations specifically about life outside of work.
- Delivering weekly mindfulness sessions.
- Highlighting services and benefits already in place to help, such as our mental health first aiders and Employee Assistance Programmes.
- Running a family art competition on the theme 'something that makes you happy at home'.
- Providing guidance on remote supervision and encouraging all our people to have 'how are you really' conversations.
- Adapting our volunteering, sports and social clubs to the virtual environment.

The impact

The firm had an open and collaborative culture before the pandemic, what we have seen is conversations around wellbeing, in particular mental health, happening more naturally in everyday conversations. The importance of creating opportunities for people to connect was clear.

At times the amount of information out there was overwhelming. Sending curated, relevant information from trusted sources framed around our wellbeing model was key. Our people appreciated being engaged and we evolved the communications based on what resonated.

The surveys helped us understand people's living arrangements and changes in their physical and mental wellbeing. The results confirmed what we were doing was making a difference, but had to continue.

As time goes on, ambiguity factors more in our daily routines, and keeping up the good habits we all adopted at the start of lockdown is challenging. We have reiterated key messages in different format to encourage people to remain motivated in these areas.

The future

The pandemic has created an opportunity for us to keep wellbeing firmly on the strategic agenda and not lose the benefits we have seen. The challenges remain. It seems unlikely that there will be a clean transition from our current reality into the next so it will essential to establish and maintain boundaries between home and work lives.





AXA UK

Increased focus on wellbeing support

Insurance is an essential service, with millions of customers needing support on a daily basis. In response to coronavirus at AXA, we increased our teams' ability to work from home from 30% to over 95%, ensuring we were able to continue to meet the needs of our customers whilst keeping our employees safe.

Flexible working was already a growing component of our ways of working, but the pandemic accelerated our approach. Now, we're developing a long-term strategy to embrace new ways of working, informed by the experiences and changing needs of our employees.

AXA did not use government furloughing schemes. Any employee facing a wait for tools to work from home was paid their full salary and prioritised for the delivery of equipment. We also made provisions, including full pay, for the most vulnerable to self-isolate for 12 weeks. Our priority was ensuring all employees felt supported during this period.

To support the wellbeing of our employees, AXA put in place several measures utilising existing structures and new wellbeing innovations, including:

- **Flexible working arrangements:** To support those working around caring responsibilities, employees were able to take an additional 15 days of emergency leave, on top of the standard five days.
- **Volunteer leave:** To support the national effort against coronavirus, AXA offered 10 additional days of paid leave for employees who wanted to volunteer in response to the pandemic, and four weeks of paid leave for any clinically trained employees who wanted to respond to the NHS request for help from medical professionals.

- **Information and Wellbeing Hub:** The hub provided quick and easy access to all support available, which ranged from webinars on home working to online yoga sessions and vlogs from AXA PPP healthcare experts.
- **Virtual GP Service:** AXA UK employees and their close family received unlimited access to AXA PPP healthcare's virtual GP service, Doctor@Hand, throughout lockdown to support our employees and relieve pressure on the NHS during the peak of the crisis. Since April, the service has facilitated over 1,000 appointments.
- **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** Employees received continued access to AXA PPP's confidential and impartial EAP - providing life management, mental and physical health services.
- **Wellbeing Apps:** To help employees' mental and financial resilience, AXA has provided an app by 'Thrive', giving access to mindfulness techniques, and a personal finance solution, 'Nudge', to support employees in managing finances stress-free. Collectively these apps have been downloaded over 3,000 times.



GHD

'Fit your own oxygen mask first': a wellbeing program targeting employee equilibrium

The concept of wellbeing had been discussed at GHD in various forums for more than 12 months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, including exploring mental health first aid accreditations, developing a wellbeing portal for employees, and thinking about our role as an organisation in supporting the communities in which we operate. However, we hadn't crystalized either the what or the how.

COVID-19 provided the impetus to quickly coalesce around what was most important. After all, safety is one of our core values, but we wanted to apply a much more humanistic lens to this. The next step was to bring this commitment to life.

Central to this was the notion of equilibrium; we wanted to educate and arm our people with the tools and techniques to build and manage their energy reserves in order to tackle the personal and workplace challenges associated with COVID. We repeatedly referenced the analogy of fitting our own oxygen mask first before assisting others; in this case, educating ourselves and nurturing our personal wellbeing to ensure we're ready to assist others in achieving equilibrium.

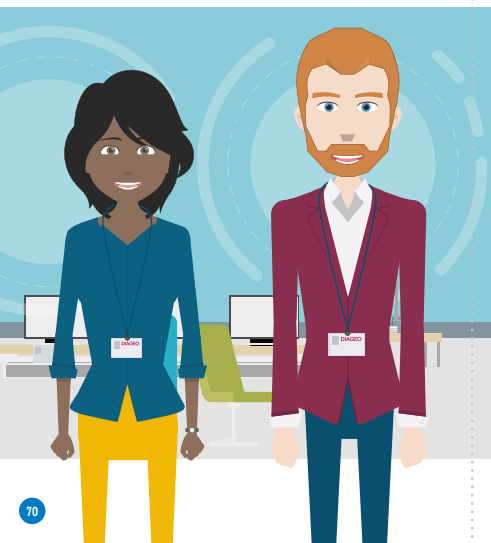
Other key components included the rollout of a 12 week education program, establishing a wellbeing champions' network, introducing wellbeing moments at the start of meetings, and sharing simple weekly activities as a framework for leaders to work through with their teams. All the core content for the program was housed in a new, interactive wellbeing portal on our employee intranet.

We have come a long way in a short period of time, and our vision is to further embed wellbeing as a core part of the way we do business. We need to make it real. What's evident already is an increase in healthy dialogue amongst our people and a much more open and respectful attitude towards individual wellbeing. We're seeing colleagues sharing wellbeing tips, and a broader curiosity about what the future of work looks like, a future where wellbeing is given greater consideration. The journey has only just begun, but at least we've taken a bold first step.

DIAGEO

DIAGEO

Wellness at the heart of Diageo's pandemic plan



Intended to support the massive change to working life that its field team were about to face, a wellness guide created by Diageo Australia has proven so popular that it's been embraced around the country and adapted internationally.

"All of a sudden, we had a team who were going to have a completely different working experience," says Gina Kothari, National Account Manager at Diageo, speaking of the field team.

"They are used to structure, to being on the move and to speaking with customers throughout their day. We wanted to create a guide that was simple, informative and direct, and maximise their wellbeing at home," she says.

A cross-functional team of ten, all of whom were passionate about providing care and support for their colleagues, came together to form the Wellness Project Team to author the guide:

Experience Wellness, Every Day, Everywhere.

Although Diageo were already well set up for flexible working and the transition was quite seamless, for close to the whole workforce to be working remotely is something no one had foreseen.

Hayden Stokes, Talent Engagement Manager, Diageo says, *"We could see early that this document was going to be relevant to people right across the business in different kinds of ways."*

"However, it's grown a lot more than I ever thought it would. It started out small but turned into a bigger thing quite quickly," says Hayden.

Experience Wellness has been adapted in the Asia Pacific region and as far afield as Panama.

The starting point for the Wellness Project Team was establishing the three pillars of wellness:

- **Working Well:** How to maintain productivity, remote working etiquette, and the added challenge if you're working at home with children
- **Feeling Well:** Virtual socialising and engagement to bring out the fun side when working from home and to maintain connection with each other
- **Living Well:** Mental and physical wellbeing

From here, the team identified clusters and buckets of information that sat beneath each pillar and were easily digestible.

"People do self-care differently, so what might be relevant or work for one person may not be true for someone else, so the guide changes constantly," says Gina.

The dynamic nature of the document is one of its main advantages. It keeps it relevant, educational, manageable and interesting. It includes ways to set up workspaces at home, tips for time management, and prompts for reflection and considering how one might improve as a remote worker.

"We've had such a positive response on how easy and useful it is," says Gina.

A recent employee 'pulse' survey has shown how well the focus on wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped our people. When asked about support, 87 per cent of respondents said they were receiving the support they needed from their manager, 86 per cent said the business was supporting their health and wellbeing, and 86 per cent said they felt able to work flexibly to accommodate their personal circumstances during the pandemic.

HARBOTTLE & LEWIS

Wellbeing and connectivity

Harbottle & Lewis has for a long time been recognised as a firm that supports the wellbeing of its employees, and moving into lockdown, with everyone working remotely, we wanted to continue to ensure our employees felt supported and connected.

Fortunately, a year prior to the pandemic we upgraded our IT systems which meant we were in a position to transition to working from home smoothly. To ensure people were well set-up, the office was open for a couple of weeks for people to collect belongings and equipment, and we purchased office chairs and desks for staff where needed. Throughout lockdown we also took a flexible approach to working hours, to support those juggling caring and working responsibilities.

Online classes

Before lockdown we had a well-established wellbeing programme and we were keen to continue this. A central element of the programme were daily fitness classes, which were great for supporting both physical and mental health and also a key opportunity for social connection, and so we looked to get these online as soon as possible. We were able to launch within a week, offering yoga at different levels, meditation, fitness classes, and high intensity and strength training. We made sure we scheduled the classes at inclusive times, enabling those with children to also attend, and we also moved from a five day to seven day programme, which we thought was particularly important when people couldn't go out.

In addition to the fitness and yoga classes we also moved our confidential one-to-one wellness sessions online, ensuring there was not a gap in the level of support our employees were accustomed to.

We were amazed by the results. Since moving online, the classes' attendance has quadrupled, with many people who were hesitant to attend in person joining online. There has been a strong sense of community, and we also invited our alumnae network to join the sessions, to further this.

Several months into lockdown the classes are still very popular, and longer term we are considering offering a seven-day schedule of classes with both online and onsite sessions, to reflect the fact that we will most probably be working differently and to keep involving as many people as possible.

What we have learnt the last few months, and how this will shape our future

The last few months have shown us that working remotely is possible, and having the right systems in place has been crucial in enabling us to thrive in these challenging times.

We don't exactly know what the future will look like, but we envisage long term changes to the way we work as a result of the last few months.

The value of regular communication has also become apparent – it has been a challenging time, and the importance of supporting colleagues, having regular conversations with managers and partners, and also frequent communication from our Managing Partner has been clear.

And last but not least, the last few months have shown us how much we value our colleagues. In a return to the office survey the majority of our employees requested an agile working arrangement going forwards, but also noted how much they've missed their colleagues. We are excited to see each other more face to face over the next few months, and create new ways of working.

THE ICONIC

The Wellbeing Wheel and R U Ok Day

The Wellbeing Wheel

The past months have amplified the need to be aware of mental and physical health. To support our people in our new ways of working, we established a cross-functional squad called 'The Learning & Wellbeing Squad', to focus on all aspects of the wellbeing wheel to help our [#ICONITES](#) through this time.

We love the concept of this Wellbeing Wheel, which we feature in our virtual livestream each week with our CEO and fellow Iconites. Wellbeing is about being in a state where you can realise your full potential and allowing us to truly thrive! An overall sense of wellbeing requires balance in these key areas: Physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, social, intellectual and economic health. The Wellbeing Wheel (aka the 'Perma Plus' model) shows us the foundational areas that support our wellbeing and the key elements that allow us to flourish. Energy is at the heart of everything we do – it helps to build our resilience and enables us to bounce back and achieve all we need and want to do in life. Having a visual like this has enabled us to have a more meaningful conversation, and be very open and authentic about our own wellbeing at all levels in the organisation.

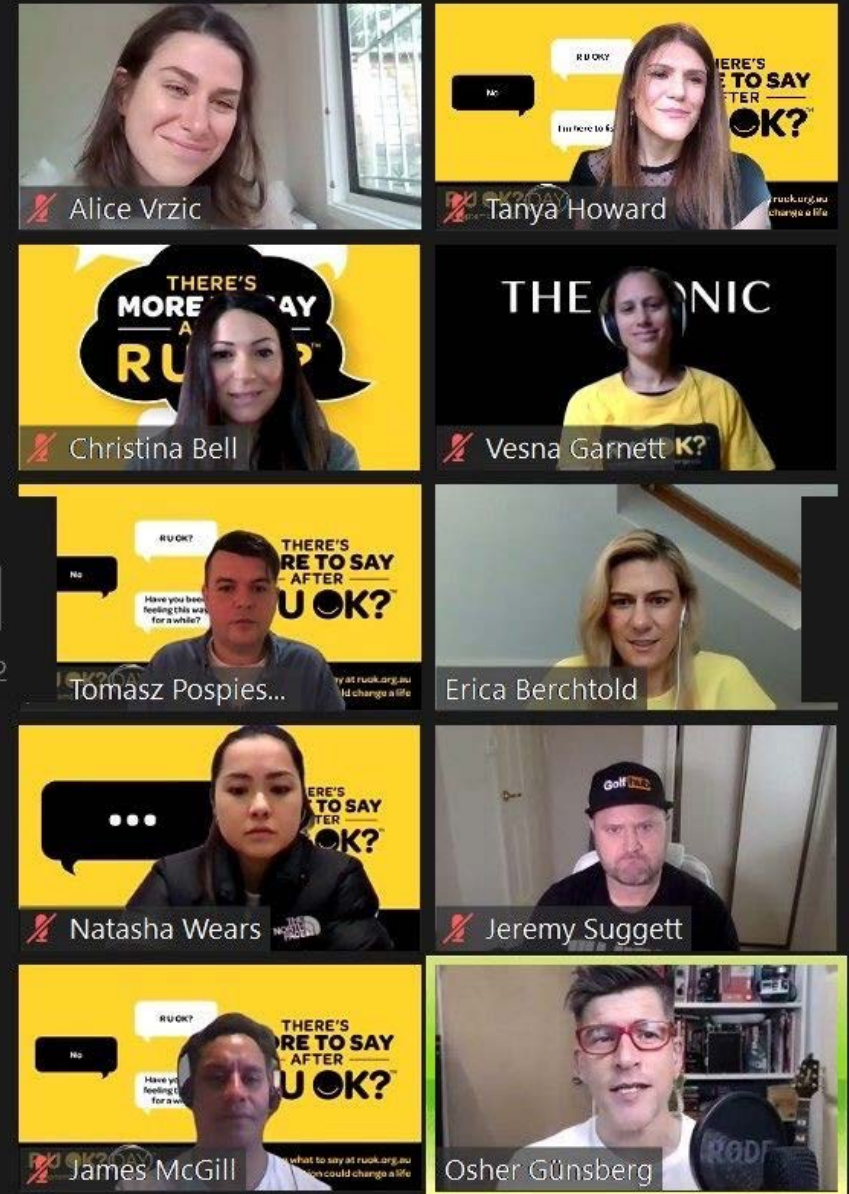
Another of our favourite initiatives the squad launched this year was the concept of [#wellbeingwednesday](#)! Each week we would shine a spotlight on wellbeing, creating content addressing one of the segments of the wheel. We encouraged all people across our business to share helpful and practical tips to improve wellbeing! So far, we've learnt about the importance of sleep, nutrition, stress management and exercise to maintain our performance. We have also learnt about financial wellbeing, remote working and relationship stress, which have been really important during COVID. We have enjoyed putting this into practice with things like the 'walk while you talk' meetings, launching our new learning platform Ed Cast and participating in the [#InThisTogether](#) campaign, led by the Australian Government's National Mental Health Commission, by watching, following and sharing the practical tips on mental health.



Credit: adapted by Salutogenics Psychology based on Seligman.M (2011) Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Wellbeing, New York, Free Press. You can see in the top section of the circle what is needed for optimal mental health, and in the bottom section of the circle are all the foundations that first need to be in place.

R U OK Day

R U OK Day is of paramount importance in The ICONIC calendar, as an opportunity to speak about mental health and wellbeing in an open way that had no barriers, sharing the raw and touching stories of our presenters and leaders. It was an energizing and inspiring morning that encouraged our people to be checking in with each other, the importance of their own self-care and asking for help and support. We are so proud to work for a Company that allows us to express ourselves in this way and feeds right into our purpose of Liberation...being the best version of ourselves! It was an open demonstration of how leaders at The ICONIC embody an authentic and inclusive culture, whilst embracing wellbeing for our People. It was also great to be joined by some special guests, Osher Gunsberg (SANE Australia) and Jeremy Suggett (BEYOND BLUE).





TASSAL GROUP

Travel registers and a health hotline

What we did

At the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tassal Group established three registers to support our teams. The first was a Travel Register so we could track everyone's movements for work and leisure to know if our people were potentially exposed to the virus. Secondly, we set up a High-Risk Register to manage our people at risk due to age or health conditions. And finally, we developed a Working from Home Register to keep a record of those working remotely. We also immediately set up a General COVID-19 Hotline to provide updates and information to team members with concerns about the virus, as well as providing an opportunity for staff to speak to someone about any travel queries.

To support our health & wellbeing ethos, we established a Health Hotline for our people to speak with a qualified nurse, 8am – 8pm, 7 days per week. This was also supported by a health provider to provide telehealth checks and monitor those with a high-risk status. Any of our 1,500 strong workforce were able to call the hotline in lieu of attending a doctor for a medical certificate. Where the nurse thought necessary, employees could be referred to the GP for a tele-consult. Nurses were able to refer team members for COVID-19 testing and notified Tassal designated contacts immediately when this occurred. Nurses reported back to Tassal's designated contacts immediately in urgent cases, and at the end of the day for non-urgent cases. If a manager or a member of the People & Culture team held any wellbeing concerns about a team member who had contacted the Health Hotline, the nurses were also able to conduct wellbeing follow up calls.

Furthermore, we implemented temperature checks at our Lidcombe Processing centre to ensure no team member presented for work with a temperature or put others at risk.

This was all supported by a strong awareness and information campaign that included publishing daily 'COVID-19 Situation Reports' for our team, so they can keep on top of any Government developments in any of the States we operate with relation to COVID-19 restrictions as well as status on case numbers.

The results / impact

To date, we have had approximately 500 calls to the Health Hotline. As a direct result of implementing the on-call nurse, sick leave has been reduced as staff can readily seek advice from the nurse. Our people have expressed a level of comfort and safety provided by the Health Hotline, especially for those living in COVID-19 hotspots. Tassal Group has been able to minimise risk to our team members by monitoring those who have been tested or are in contact with suspected cases.

Plan to take it forward

Due to the success of these registers and hotlines, we will be continuing these initiatives ongoing while COVID-19 is still present in the Australian community. In the event the Health Hotline service is no longer required, Tassal Group will investigate what the service could look like in the future to support our people in the health and wellbeing space. The health and wellbeing of our team is paramount. We will continue to live out our values, with the safety of our team members as our number one priority each and every day.



LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



Skills and learning at EY: How can what you learn transform who you become?

One of the key levers to making work 100% human is to create a positive and rewarding employee experience. EY's promise to its people is the ability to create and customize an exceptional experience that is truly transformative, regardless of whenever they join and however long they stay. It's why we say, "the exceptional EY experience. It's yours to build."

Central to such an exceptional experience is the opportunity to learn and cultivate new competencies, transformative leadership attributes and behaviors – and to do so in a way that's unique to the individual. Through EY Badges, the organization's 300,000+ people can pursue digital credentials in future-focused skills that help them better serve EY clients, while differentiating themselves in the market.

EY Badges span a broad range of topics, including AI, blockchain and data visualization – along with complementary soft-skills and leadership behaviors including curiosity, agility, teaming and inclusion & belonging. To date, EY people have earned 70,000 Badges, and 109,000 are currently in progress.

In July 2020, EY elevated its Badges program with the introduction of a first-ever fully virtual Tech MBA. This online qualification, awarded by Hult International Business School, is the first-ever fully accredited corporate MBA. This marks a 'first' not just for the EY organization (EY) but for any large organization. Hult, a triple-accredited university, is renowned for its skill-focused approach to education and commitment to practical learning and is regularly ranked as one of the top business schools in the world.

Encapsulating EY's commitment to providing its people opportunities to thrive today and tomorrow, the focus of EY Tech MBA curriculum is centered around building skills that are critical for the future. As such, EY Tech MBA candidates will earn their degree based on a combination of badges in Technology, Leadership and Business, as well as final learning papers and a capstone project. The degree is customizable to a student's desired learnings in those categories and may include such courses as AI, blockchain, purpose, business strategy and digital transformation.

"In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, companies are rethinking their operating models, customer relationships and value propositions," says Trent Henry, EY Global Vice Chair – Talent. "Through continuous learning programs such as EY Badges and The EY Tech MBA, EY people are equipped to enable the transformation efforts needed to thrive in the next-normal; both for clients, each other and EY."

It's no secret that a highly skilled and engaged workforce drives better business results. That's why EY is empowering its people to be intentional about their careers, seeking out the experiences that will help them bring out the best in themselves and others. The experiences they can have at EY – and the perspectives, skillsets and mindsets that these experiences deliver – are the keys to helping people become the leaders they want to be; the leaders that EY, its clients and society needs.

"We want to empower EY people with the mindset and skill set to navigate what's next, become the transformative leaders the world needs, pursue careers as unique as they are, and build their own exceptional EY experience," Henry says.

What began in 2017 as an initiative to give all EY people the opportunity to develop future-focused skills so that they could develop the technology skill set and the leadership mindset required for future success has, in a relatively short period of time, evolved into a program that's encouraging people to invest in not just short-term gains, but in their long-term career objectives. In the ever-changing environment we find ourselves, the innovation, creative problem-solving and transformative leadership skills being developed by our people will enable EY to continue to live its purpose of **building a better working world**.





VIRGIN MANAGEMENT

Learning and development during lockdown

At Virgin Management, our learning and development programme has typically been phased over the year, with dedicated periods covering personal development, business and communication skills, IT and technical training, and training for people managers. Individual courses within those phases are chosen in response to the needs highlighted in our people's annual learning and development plans, and the majority of those courses would usually have been run as face to face learning sessions in the office.

In March, just as we were about to launch phase two of our 2020 Learning and Development programme, our London and New York offices closed in line with government guidance. In keeping with many other businesses, we faced the challenge of continuing to support our people with their day to day roles and wellbeing, as well as ensuring we didn't lose focus on people's longer term learning goals and career development ambitions.

What did we do?

In the first few weeks of lockdown, we chose to strip back our L&D offering and focus more on sharing content that would help our people adapt and make the best of their work – and home – challenges at that time.

We paused our scheduled L&D programme and ran instead a series of virtual training sessions for team members and managers on wellbeing, remote working and resilience. Our most popular course was facilitated by an experienced business psychologist and focused on some of the simple steps (or marginal gains) to manage yourself and others through the pandemic. Our people fed back that they really valued the chance to come together and talk openly about the challenges they'd been experiencing, to know that what they were feeling

was normal in the circumstances and to learn some practical ways they could help themselves and their teams to cope through this period.

We chose to increase the frequency of our L&D newsletter from quarterly to fortnightly to allow us to share more timely and relevant content in a period of time when things were changing quickly from day to day and week to week. The newsletters included recommendations of webinars, podcasts, virtual training, e-learning and other external resources that we thought our people might find useful across a range of topics such as wellbeing, parental support and remote working. We also tried to share a range of fun things to do to help our people—and their families—stay entertained during lockdown.

We also took the opportunity to roll out some training for a cohort of parental buddies. This was something that we'd originally been planning to do later in the year. However, in light of the challenges that working parents were experiencing in early lock down, we chose to refresh our buddy network and bring forward the training to make sure we had a team of people across the business who were equipped to support their colleagues with the practical considerations around managing work and family responsibilities.

Getting creative

In early lockdown, many of our teams were experiencing their busiest ever time as they assessed the impact of and responded to the challenges of the pandemic. Given that, we wanted to try and find creative ways to help our people continue their learning and development without requiring them to spend even more time online, as virtual meeting fatigue started to set in.

We struck on the idea of launching Audible for Business and within a few weeks of sharing the sign-up details, over half of our people had subscribed and started downloading audio books and podcasts. This new tool has received great feedback from our people and provided a cost-effective way of creating additional learning opportunities that our people can manage in a way that suits them. Peer to peer recommendations of popular titles through our newsletters has also been really well received.

Peer to peer recommendation and knowledge sharing has been something that we've tried to encourage in recent months. With most people working remotely, the opportunity to share information and knowledge over the desk or at the water cooler has significantly diminished, so we've worked hard to try and maintain this through lockdown. We have actively sought people to get involved and run sessions on things that they might be particularly experienced in and as a result we've run a number of very successful peer to peer learning sessions on topics from project management to minute writing, which have been really well received.

Moving forwards

Over the last few months, we have been keen to stress the importance of people continuing the learning and development they originally had planned for 2020, and we have tried to make available a range of ways in which they can do this including through

virtual courses and webinars, so that they can still track well against their learning and development goals this year despite the unexpected disruption.

In recent weeks we have also scheduled a more traditional learning calendar to run over the autumn, with training courses planned across a range of personal and career development topics, as well as practical and IT skills. Although some team members are returning to the office, many will stay working remotely, and so any sessions we do run will continue to be done virtually but we'll also hold a quiet space in the office for anyone wanting to join from there.



What have we learnt?

We have learnt a lot during this time that we want to take forward:

- **Regular communication is effective**, as are reminders and prompts. Encouraging people to share their learning experiences and recommendations has also proven really effective.
- **Learning and development can be a great way to bring people together**. People have appreciated the chance to join with people from across the organisation through our sessions, and take-up of our peer-to-peer learning online sessions were very high.
- **Blended learning works** – we have always wanted to do more than face to face sessions, and we are really pleased with how our exploration of blended learning during lockdown has gone. Prior to lockdown we didn't think virtual training would have the same impact, but we've learnt that is not the case. We've definitely seen the value in offering lots of different ways for people to learn and develop, and will continue this variety.
- **We can be creative** – we have found lots of successful and creative ways to engage people and encourage them to keep learning, even during a crisis, looking for opportunities to share things that we spot as well as things we put on ourselves. We've come a long way in finding things that are fun and creative online, and we've also seen trainers getting creative too.
- **Listening to people** over this time and putting their needs first has helped us put on an engaging programme, and we will keep ensuring we are doing this as we go forwards.



LAMINEX

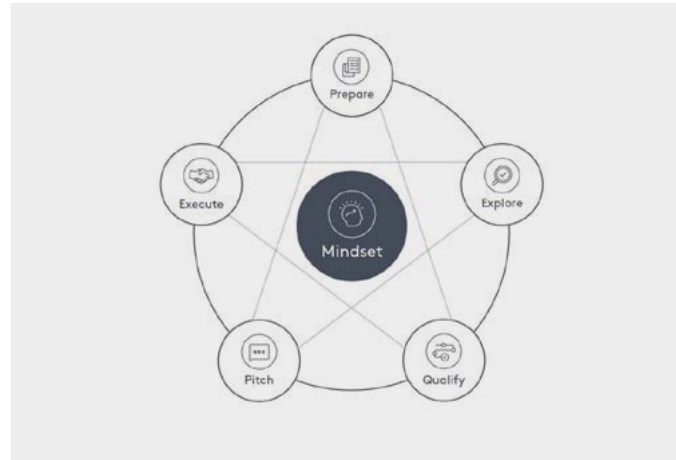
Curating a learning experience that accommodates all types of learners in the virtual world

The challenge:

Create a learning experience for a national sales team (250ppl) that embodies the principals of great learning design and accommodates all types of learners in the virtual world.

The solution:

A true learning in the flow of work concept, which builds sales capability through a curation of learning experiences designed to suit new ways of working.



Anchoring the learning experience

Through the ideation stage of the program development, we interviewed leaders, sales folks, customers and suppliers to truly understand the key steps involved in the sales process. We used this to anchor the program and benchmark capability, to measure ROI.

Understanding types of learners

Keeping in mind that learning isn't a 'one size fits all', we developed personas to represent the different types of learners. We called these our "learning superheroes" and made sure we created beautiful experiences to suit their diverse needs.



The Vision-ator:

This hero learns best by seeing graphical-based content such as images, diagrams, infographics, flow charts and videos rather than words.



The Talko-charge:

This hero has preference for information that is heard or spoken. Group discussions and talking things through are going to be great for this type of learner.



The Word-Wo/Man:

This hero learns best by absorbing information displayed as words. Have you ever found that just the action of writing something down helps you to remember it?



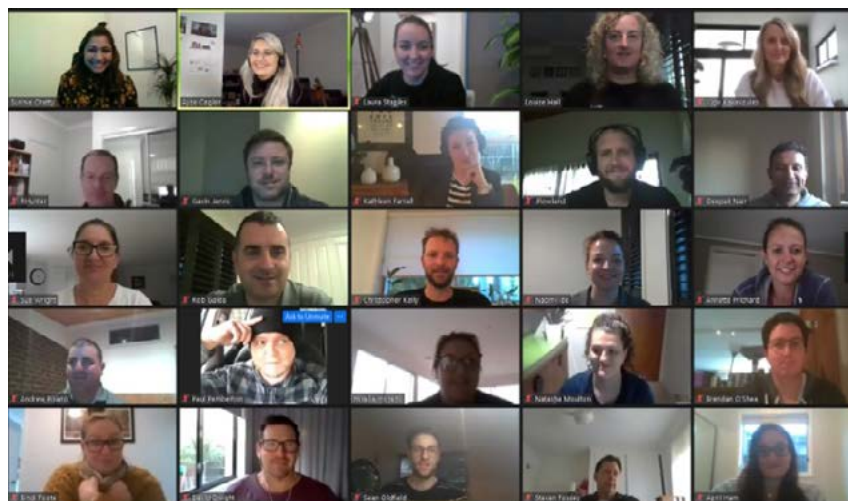
The Sim:

This hero learns by 'doing' or taking action. The key is that people who prefer this mode are connected to reality, either through concrete personal experiences, examples, practice or simulation.



Designing experiences that don't feel like "learning"

We designed and produced our very own Sales Strategy Board Game as an interactive learning experience. What better way to learn sales strategy than to create an experience that doesn't feel like learning!



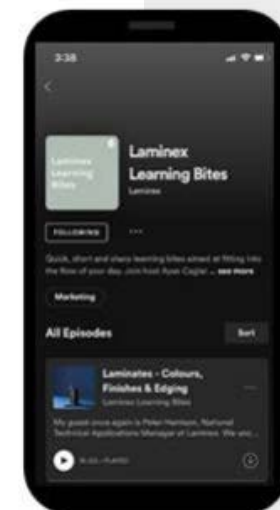
Pivoting to virtual overnight

Over 250 team members rapidly pivoted to virtual learning in the Sales Capability sessions. Teams put themselves in the shoes of their customers using profiling tools in virtual break out groups. This was the first time a lot of the sales team had ever met their interstate colleagues so was very well received.

Developing micro-learning through our very own podcast

Creating a channel for Sales people who are out on the road all day to learn in their cars was very easy with our very own podcast – Laminex Learning Bites.

This channel has enabled us to rapidly deploy knowledge sound bites and focus on specific capability areas targeted to the needs of our people.





INCLUSION & EQUALITY

THE VALUABLE 500

The power of
procurement: creating a
culture of activism

The issue:

COVID-19 has thrown up significant challenges for people with disabilities. However, one of the few benefits to come out of the pandemic has been that it has forced the world of events and thought-leadership to establish itself online. This is good news for disabled people who have previously struggled with physical barriers to access. The challenge is that many organisers and broadcasters are unaware of the need to make this new wave of digital events fully accessible, so in the majority of cases, the participation of people with disabilities is still unnecessarily restricted.

The approach:

The Valuable 500 team has used their 'walking power' to educate, influence and guide suppliers who have requested their participation and collaboration in online events. The team was briefed to only agree to events if it could be guaranteed that they would be captioned and supported with inclusive communications and to 'walk away' from those that couldn't. The result of creating this 'activist culture' has been that a number of events and seminars that might have previously been digitally inaccessible, are now barrier free; allowing greater participation and education for people with disabilities across the world.

The opportunity:

The Valuable 500 team will be using their learnings to encourage their 300 signatories to do two things: 1. Ensure that digital accessibility becomes standard practice for their events and reports and 2. Understand the power our signatories have to influence their suppliers by weaving accessibility standards through their procurement agreements. This will not only help businesses build trust, it will also enable them to tap into an under-served audience of 1.3 billion disabled people across the world - that's a market the size of China!

BUSINESS DISABILITY FORUM

What lockdown teaches us about inclusive working?

It is difficult to adequately describe the impact that COVID-19 has had on all of our lives. Many of us are still getting over the shock of how quickly life changed.

Organisations across the world responded at lightning speed, forced to create new ways of working and doing business in order to survive. Overnight (literally), going to work became 'hotdesking' in your own home – or perhaps fighting for space – with your new 'co-workers'; family, friends and pets. For many others, it meant having your job put on hold completely.

As business plans have been tested, torn-up, and rewritten over the last few months, how have employers set about supporting colleagues through such unusual and uncertain times? And as social distancing measures begin to ease, what learnings around inclusive working can we take into the new post-lockdown era? Business Disability Forum's 300+ members employ an estimated 20 per cent of the UK workforce and 8 million people worldwide. We asked them to share their responses to the pandemic with us, to help us answer these questions.

1. Mental health awareness

The feedback showed that looking after the mental wellbeing of colleagues was the primary concern for most organisations, with 73 per cent of respondents stating that they had introduced measures to help employees manage their anxieties about COVID-19. Areas of focus included providing mental health advice and support with coping strategies; managing staff's stress, anxiety and motivation; and supporting staff with existing disabilities and long-term conditions, some of which have been exacerbated by the crisis.

2. Workplace adjustments for all

Workplace adjustments, such as assistive technology, specialist office equipment and flexible working, are vital in making the workplace more accessible for many disabled people. We recently published 'The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey', which shows that adjustments help people stay in their jobs and can make them more productive.

Lockdown meant that many disabled employees suddenly found themselves having to work from home, without their usual adjustments in place. Our COVID-19 research showed that this presented individuals and organisations with particular challenges. Provision and portability, set up of equipment, and the effectiveness and availability of adjustments were all highlighted as key issues. Businesses quickly developed practical responses to try and overcome these barriers, with over 60 per cent reviewing routine working hours to enable effective home working; as well as supporting colleagues with assistive technology; helping colleagues install video conferencing applications and organising for specialist equipment to be transported to employees' homes.

At the same time, the conversation around workplace adjustments broadened to include everyone. Members told us (63 per cent) that there had been an increased demand in adjustments for all staff to enable them to work in a new way. 90 per cent felt positive that that this could lead to a lasting change in attitudes to flexible and home working.



90%

agreed that responses to Covid-19 will result in a long lasting change in attitudes about flexible and home working.



Source: 'Business as (un)usual: How employers have supported their workforces during the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown', Business Disability Forum, May 2020.



The Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey

Almost 80 per cent said that adjustments had helped them stay in their job and the same proportion said adjustments meant they were more productive

**#AdjustOurWorkplaces
@DisabilitySmart**



3. Leading from the top

In most organisations (83 per cent) decision making around the business response to COVID-19 was led by Chief Operating Officers (COOs) or Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) (83 per cent) This included arranging internal communications, home working and putting in place adjustments. Whilst the responsibility for supporting disabled colleagues to move to working from home was still primarily led by HR staff rather than the COO/CEO, it is encouraging to see senior leaders getting closer to the coal face when it comes to understanding the issues which directly affect disabled staff. We hope that a greater personal knowledge and awareness of adjustments at the top will be a driver in bringing about lasting change.

4. 100% human

When lockdown first began, the message put out was that “we are all in this together”. As time has gone on, however, it has become clear that actually our experiences are all very different.

Disabled people are expected to be one of the groups most at risk of economic and social disadvantage in the fallout from COVID-19. Previous recessions have seen disabled people disproportionately affected and more likely to fall out of work.

But disability is a very general term, and one which has often been misunderstood during this pandemic. Being ‘disabled’ and being ‘vulnerable to COVID-19’ are not the same thing. Not every disabled person is at greater risk from COVID-19, but some disabled people may be more ‘vulnerable in society’ because of the virus – for example people with a visual impairment who are unable to guarantee social distancing. As the easing of lockdown begins, there is a real risk that these two things become conflated and disabled people are seen as a general health and safety risk, thus undermining their future employment prospects.

As organisations plan return to work strategies, we would urge them against ‘labelling’ staff, and encourage them to view all colleagues as individuals. Ask colleagues if they need adjustments put in place to help them return to the workplace safely; don’t assume or make it a question about disability.

As our research has shown, we can all benefit from adjustments and the opportunity to work in a different way. Let’s ensure that the lessons learnt from lockdown working are not lost.



CISCO

The Multiplier Effect

INCREASING AN INCLUSIVE PIPELINE OF EXTRAORDINARY DIVERSE TALENT



With Possibility ...

*Cisco unveiled its new company purpose on June 16th 2020. Cisco CEO Chuck Robbins pledged that he and the organization will work **To power an inclusive future for all.** Despite all of the pain and anger endured this year, Robbins said he believes we can shift these setbacks into progress.*

... comes Opportunity

So, we started to look at changing the equation for diversity and inclusion, leveraging the power of sponsorship across every industry. Diversity defined as full spectrum – inclusive of gender, generation, race, ethnicity, orientation, ability, nationality, religion, veteran status, background, culture, experience, strengths, and perspectives. To bring »leaders across our industry together as a powerful first step in creating new opportunities for diverse talent.« (Chuck Robbins)

The Multiplier Effect

It begins with what we call The Multiplier Effect (TME): People with sponsors are 23% more likely to advance their careers than those without sponsors. But, there's a gap. While 1 in 5 White men have a sponsor, only 1 in 8 women, and 1 in 12 minorities have one. When leaders proactively sponsor across difference,

their company is 45% more likely to see improvement in market share and 70% are more likely to capture a new market.

The Research

To fully understand sponsor/sponsee needs Cisco conducted a Global Sponsorship Study, involving 900 professionals across 11 countries in 3 regions, across industries, in companies with at least 100 employees.

Here are the top findings and how they informed the TME development:

1. Sponsors want help getting proximate: »Meeting sponsorship candidates in a group« is their #1 feature of a sponsorship program.
2. Sponsors don't want matching: they were least interested in having the sponsee and the terms of the sponsorship arranged for them.
3. Facilitation of the relationship: 49% of sponsees were introduced by mutual connections.
4. #1 way of connecting: 30% of sponsees made the connection through social media.
5. The best sponsors seek out sponsees different than them.

Leveraging the findings: Platform and content proximity-ready

6. The focus of sponsorship varies: Americas → Career advancement, Asia/Pacific → Career goals & plans, Europe/Middle East/Africa → Networking.
7. Different sponsors bring different things to the table. The majority of sponsors have counseling and skill-building attributes.



8. Nearly half of the sponsorship relationship is spent building trust: 18 months to create a trusted relationship; relationship lasts 3 years.

Leveraging the findings: Playbooks to reflect multiple aspects of sponsorship

9. The top 3 sponsee priorities: Setting career goals and plans to achieve them; Developing new skills; Gaining exposure to senior leaders.
10. The goal doesn't have to be advancement to deliver impact: 9% of sponsees said their goal was career advancement, yet, 90% of sponsees have been promoted.

Leveraging the findings: Expand sponsorship impact beyond promotion

Getting Started

The Multiplier Effect (TME) is a pledge, a personal commitment that encourages leaders at all levels to sponsor at least one extraordinary

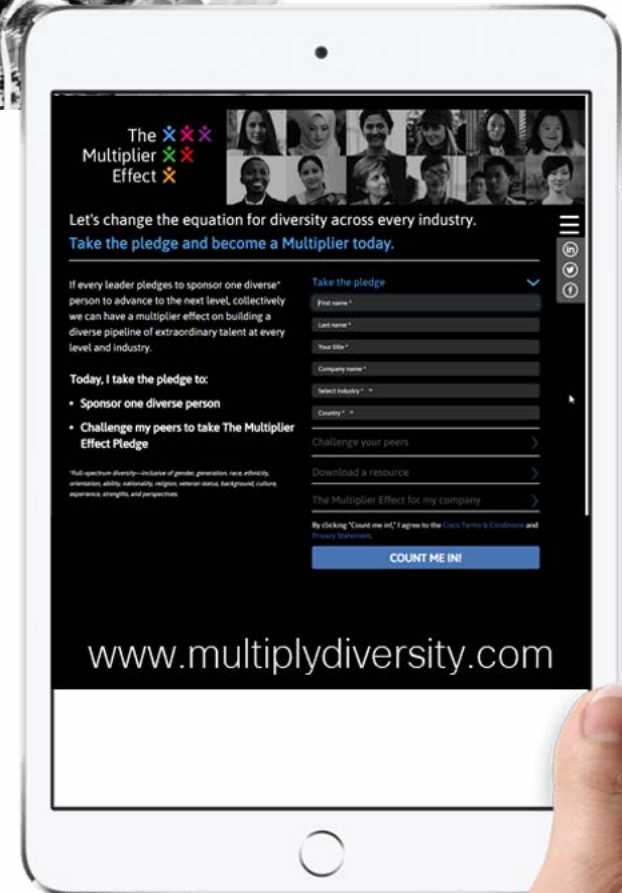
diverse candidate for career advancement and to challenge their peers to do the same.

Anyone can participate in taking action to help extraordinary diverse candidates advance.

How you can participate: Take the pledge at www.MultiplyDiversity.com. Review the Playbook. Identify a sponsee/sponsor inside or external to your organization. Challenge your peers to take the pledge. Enter info, click submit, and a running list is dynamically created. Easily manage sponsorship status for each sponsee.

Inclusive Future for All

We will challenge not only our Cisco peers to take the pledge. We will engage our partner and supplier organizations to grow cultures of sponsorship across industries. In the next 18 months, we are conducting a pilot with 10 of our largest suppliers and partners to achieve over 80% in pledge adoption within their executive teams.





MOVEMENT TO WORK

Young people
need help into work
more than ever

Emerging research has shown that young people are amongst the worst affected groups of people as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. According to the Resolution Foundation, one-third of 18-24-year-old employees (excluding students) have lost jobs or been furloughed, and 35% of non-full-time student 18-24-year-old employees are earning less than they did prior to the outbreak. In July 2020, 537,700 people aged 16-24 claimed unemployment related benefits, a staggering increase of 122% from March 2020, when the UK lockdown began.

With this in mind, [Movement to Work](#) is an organisation offering free support and resources to businesses, youth outreach organisations and training providers in order to curb numbers of young people falling into NEET status ("Not in Education, Employment, or Training"). With a supporting Steering Group comprising leaders from some of the UK's biggest employers – Accenture, Diageo, BAE Systems, Tesco, Barclays, M&S, and BT to name a few – this organisation is passionate about driving up standards and providing practical solutions to the rapidly increasing problem of youth unemployment.

What is Movement to Work?

Movement to Work is a not-for-profit coalition of UK employers, youth-outreach organisations, training providers and government allies – all aiming to level the playing field for young age people aged 16-30 facing barriers to work. As a robust delivery partner, we work with employers to design and implement brilliant work experience and vocational solutions for their organisation, either in-house or through one of our recommended training providers. With hundreds of organisational members, Movement to Work has a proven track record of driving social mobility, with over 95,000 work placements delivered to date, made possible by employers, charities and Government working together.

Collectively we have provided young people with diverse and empowering experiences ranging from hospitality to engineering, with regional hubs working in London, the Midlands, North East and North West.

Why is now the time to prioritise helping young people into work?

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest threat to young people and their career prospects that we've ever seen. The social case is pretty clear – there is already evidence that prolonged spells of unemployment, particularly while young, can cause long-lasting 'scars' on an individual's future earnings, employment prospects and health and well-being. Reports also suggest that lengthy periods of unemployment exacerbate disenfranchised youth, making them more likely to turn to delinquency and lifestyles of crime. Further, as businesses feel the effects of a global pandemic on their bottom line, younger workers have a higher chance of losing their job and will in turn face difficulties paying their bills, creating new levels of debt. Alongside this, the business case is also becoming clearer. COVID-19 is hitting business budgets hard – yet hiring young people can be cost effective. Movement to Work members report savings recruiting via employability programmes versus traditional recruitment channels. What's more, we have seen that in supporting and hiring disadvantaged young people you can boost team morale and they can become loyal employees and customers long after first hire. Finally, now that there is even more government investment in schemes like [Kickstart](#) (in the UK), there are so many reasons why employers could and should play their part. We should continue to help young people into work because it works for them, it works for business, and it works for society.

What can employers do to help young people during this time?

We know this is a difficult time for organisations the world over and tough decisions are happening in boardrooms (virtual or otherwise!) every day. That's why we are very much in support mode, helping organisations to figure out their next moves – especially now the government is re-investing in existing schemes such as Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP), Traineeships, Apprenticeships, and the exciting new Kickstart scheme, all set to boost youth employability.

Movement to Work has recently launched [three initiatives](#) to ensure we can all emerge stronger following the challenges posed by COVID-19. These are 'Young People First', 'Be accessible, go digital', and 'Support and Empower'. In short, firstly we are encouraging organisations to prioritise young people as they rebuild their teams and make good use of the government backed schemes to support this. Secondly, we are urging organisations to find creative ways to continue training, development and work experience for young people online. Movement to Work can offer advice and best practice on how to make this transition, including sharing tools that are already out there and initiatives to support accessibility. Thirdly, we need to help vulnerable young people recover from this trauma by boosting their confidence, providing meaningful support and ensuring their physical and mental wellbeing as they return to work.

We must help young people to feel a part of society by giving them new opportunities to improve their prospects, putting 'money in their pockets', and enabling a new wave of active consumers with bright futures ahead of them.



What have some of the Movement to Work partners been doing since lockdown to support young people?

Accenture – During lockdown Accenture launched their 'Virtual Tech Taster' pilot work experience, whereby 15 young unemployed people joined from three locations - London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. Sessions included coding, design thinking, presentation skills, virtual tour of the Innovation Centre and support with CVs and interviews. Since then, Accenture have partnered with Movement to Work to share a virtual work experience toolkit, to enable other organisations to set up their own online youth programmes.

BT – During lockdown, BT released a series of short, interactive webinars on four different topics, helping young people use their time to make sure that when the chance comes along, they will be ready to succeed. In addition, BT has removed any grade criteria associated with graduate roles, as long as the applicant completes their studies.

BAE Systems – BAE Systems is moving forward with the recruitment of a record number of apprentices, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. BAE Systems put in place measures, including virtual interviews, which have enabled them to restart their recruitment drive with almost 2,000 shortlisted candidates for their 800 available apprenticeship roles during February.

Diageo – Diageo's employability programme Learning for Life launched a new Virtual Hospitality Academy during lockdown, to ensure its hospitality training can continue during the COVID-19 pandemic. Created and delivered by The Springboard Charity, the 'Virtual Academy' is open to new applicants who are looking to develop key skills in hospitality and improve their future employability, as well as over 2,000 individuals who have previously taken part in the Diageo Learning for Life programme across the UK.



TALENT

Supporting young people affected by unemployment

MOBILISING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY UNEMPLOYMENT

The issue

The immediate impact of the Coronavirus economic downturn has been catastrophic and unequal, with young people hit the hardest.

In March 2020, the ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth report found that one young person out of every five aged between 15 and 24 (the international definition of youth) — were classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This means that a staggering 267 million out of 1.3 billion young people worldwide are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving income from work or enhancing their education and skills.

Early findings indicate that this problem has been exacerbated in the time since, with roles typically held by young people such as those in retail, hospitality and tourism, impacted hardest by coronavirus shutdowns. Rising unemployment coupled with feelings of disconnection, isolation and uncertainty compound to create a perfect storm of challenges for young people - the impact of which could lead to devastating consequences.

At Talent, this concern is woven into the fabric of our organisation. In 2014, we founded Talent RISE which offers education, training, work readiness programs, and job placement opportunities for young people who experience challenging barriers to employment. Since 2014, RISE has impacted the lives of over 3000 young people around the world and placed 300 into meaningful employment.

The experiment

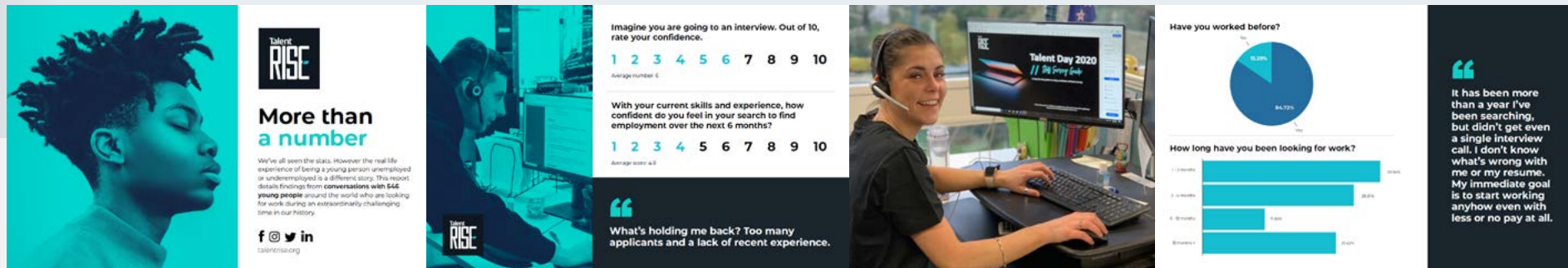
As we approached Talent's annual volunteering day in September 2020, we wanted to do more to assist RISE. Rather than one day, we mobilised our global workforce to reach out and provide support to young people impacted by unemployment for an entire week. We felt we had a duty, to the young people doing it tough in the communities we operate in around the world, to listen, offer support and give back.

We named this initiative "We're here to listen", which we promoted via SEEK, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and via the Talent community in August 2020. People aged 18-24 were invited to register to receive a phone call from a Talent team member during the week of September 4.

Our team contacted every single person who registered over the course of the week, with call times up to an hour in many cases. In total, **546 calls** were made to young people in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Germany.

In addition to a one-on-one coaching phone call:

- Participants were sent resources and guides to help with CV writing and job interview preparation. These were sent via email at the conclusion of the initiative.
- Many of our team members went beyond this, providing personalised action plans to callers, offering them further mentoring and connecting with them on LinkedIn.
- All young people have been added to the Talent RISE database, which provides access to employer workshops, events and job opportunities.
- Each caller was offered a Percipio online learning licence sponsored by Talent through our partnership with Skillsoft.



The results

Confronting and cathartic, the calls we made provided a powerful snapshot into the real state of youth unemployment and the challenges our young people are facing. We documented our findings in a report titled “More than a number”, which we released to help shed light on this issue. Here are some of the key findings from the report:

- 57% of the young people we spoke to felt that their employment prospects had been impacted by COVID-19.
- 62% of those who registered for our initiative had become unemployed in the past six months (coinciding with COVID-19).
- Of the many barriers to employment young people are facing, the economic impact of COVID-19 was the number one cited amongst callers, followed by a lack of prior experience and low confidence.
- 13.89% did not have a CV.
- Low confidence was a common theme amongst the conversations, with callers ranking their confidence in their job search an average of 4.8 out of 10.

- 98%+ were interested in further help and support from the Talent and Talent RISE team when offered assistance with CV writing, interview prep, upskilling and potential job opportunities.

This exercise had a profound impact on our team members, who were proud to be able to use their recruitment knowledge to give back. In an internal feedback survey 100% said they would participate in the initiative again.

Here are some of our team members' observations from the calls they made:

- “There was a common theme across all of the young people I spoke to, regardless of education level or background they all felt securing a new job was extremely difficult, dare I say impossible. I was shocked to learn that they all had applied for at least 100 jobs and received no response to almost every application they sent. This level of rejection at such an early stage of their lives is extremely worrying.”
– **Alan Dowdall, Sydney**
- “It was clear that these young people are applying for many roles without knowing if they are the right roles for them. They don't get calls back, and many have

limited guidance about what to apply for. It can be a very disillusioning process for them.”

– **Pascal de Reuck, Auckland**

- “It was really hard to hear how nerve-racking and debilitating it can be for these young people before formal interviews (although completely understandable!). Being consistently on the interviewer side, this initiative has made me stop and put myself in the shoes of these young people. Knowing that I can coach them into making that experience even the slightest bit more comfortable for them was a huge highlight for me.”

– **Petrina Hudson, Sydney**

This experiment was a first for us and based on these results, it is something that we will continue to offer in the future.

The people we spoke to represent our future workforce. We hope our findings help to put stories behind the statistics and bring attention to a problem we all have a collective responsibility to solve.

Other employers can join our work - please find out more about RISE and get in touch via talentrise.org.



LEADERSHIP

VAYNERX

Yes, I belong here

Chief Heart Officer at VaynerX, Claude Silver, looks at enabling openness and growth through leadership.

Everyone is meant to grow. People naturally gravitate to workplaces where they feel their ability to do so — irrespective of its speed — is supported and encouraged.

Growth often leads to openness as well. Learning to be vulnerable encourages us to embrace uncertainty. Leaning into that uncertainty, and allowing ourselves to explore it, is the very approach that allows us to grow.

One of the wonderful things about life, is not everyone will embrace openness at the same pace — it's what makes us all unique. Openness is relative. It's a threshold that can be personal for each of us. And as leaders, we need to understand these nuances and learn to calibrate to people's different approaches.

We know that people look for a few foundational things in their work: a sense of belonging, growth, purpose, possibilities, autonomy and opportunities, and they want to be challenged and inspired. They want to know that they matter, that you recognize them, that you see potential, you're willing to sit with them and share with them your observations and feedback so that they can become a better employee - really a better human. Every single person needs and deserves the opportunity to grow and transform!

In leadership, we stand at an important position to offer them that. Part of our job is to give people the space to grow, no matter the shape that takes, the way it looks, or the road they took to get there.

I want to create a place where people feel psychologically and physically safe to open up. A workplace where people feel like they belong. If they choose to slowly walk into that place of vulnerability, they know in their bones that it will be safe for them to do so.

Part of guiding people towards this understanding — and empathetic leadership in itself — is knowing how to give clear and actionable feedback. How do we do that?

We need to understand that everyone is going to be different; as will their thresholds for openness.

What does it mean to be courageous in the moment?

Feedback is a gift. When we withhold we are (unconsciously) stunting someone's growth and ability to learn.

It's our responsibility to help our people grow and excel and rise to challenges.

Can we as leaders rise to the challenge of being brave, compassionate and radically honest with our observations, comments and give our people the opportunity to grow through the help of our observations, teachings and feedback?

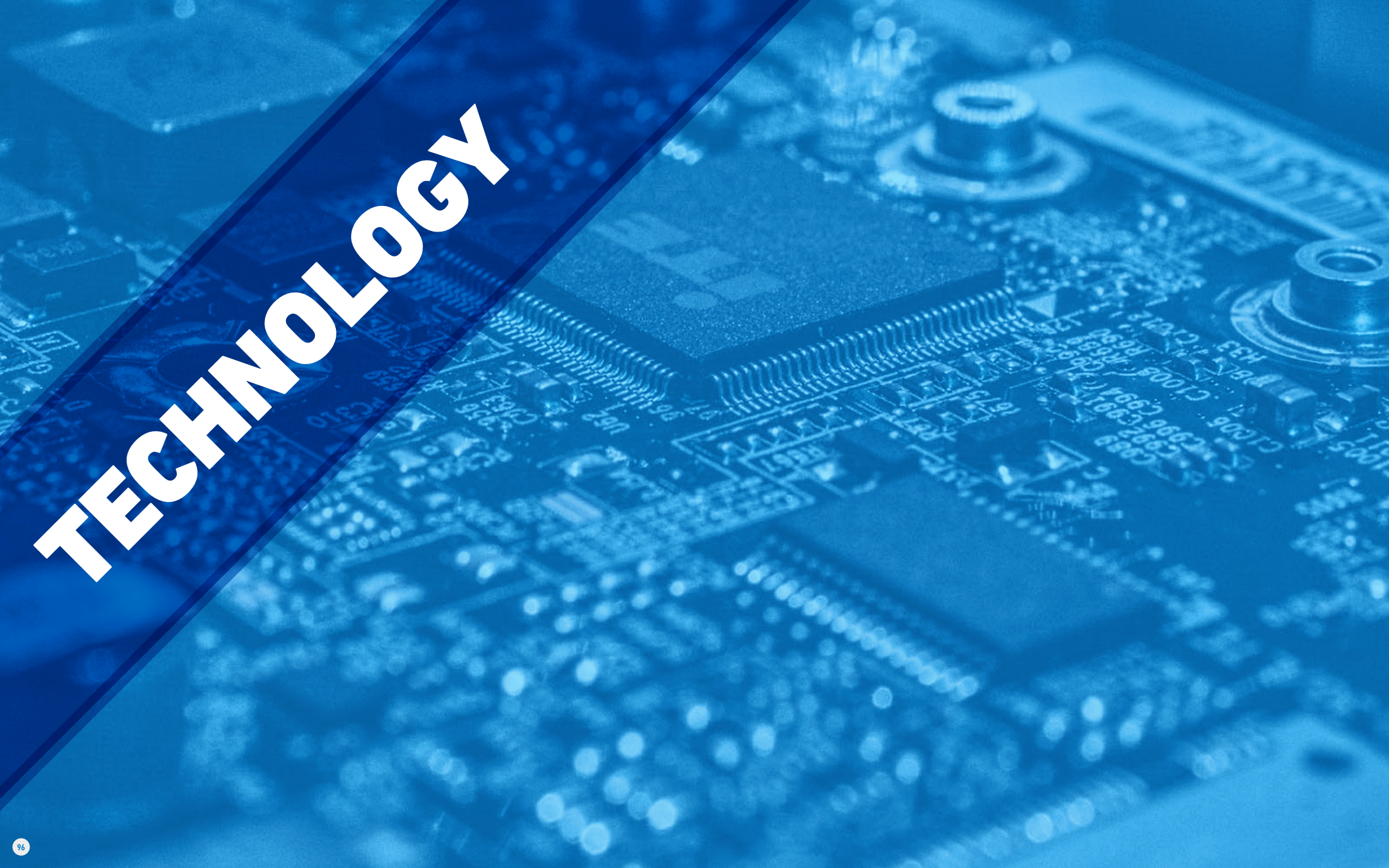
Are we able to acknowledge our own limiting beliefs (we all have them - fears, insecurities, smallness..) aside and get real with the purpose of being the best leaders we can be?

I think yes.

And that's a beautiful thing too. People come from different backgrounds, have different stories, have different convictions. They are going to receive and process information differently. They are going to bring fresh new perspectives every time, new challenges, and new ways of engaging with one another.

By acknowledging these differences, it allows us to adapt to how we can best lead.

As a leader at VaynerX, I choose to focus on the importance of leading by example.



TECHNOLOGY



FAETHM

Coronavirus, technology and the workforce

Coronavirus has required so much to be done differently in the workplace, and as workforces have adapted there is no doubting that the adoption of technology has accelerated in many sectors, which will have long-term consequences.

What did we do?

The [Faethm](#) analytics platform uses data to predict the impact of emerging technology on jobs, workforces, industries and locations. We work with businesses and governments around the world to look at the potential impacts of technology, identifying jobs that will need reskilling and upskilling, and providing guidance on how workforces can be prepared for the future of work.

Near the start of the pandemic we extended our platform, building a Business Resilience module that deconstructed thousands of jobs into their constituent tasks and gave each job a risk rating based on its remoteability, required level of face to face human interaction and how essential the job was during a pandemic. We used four risk categories: High risk and essential; High risk and non-essential; Low risk and non-remoteable; and Remoteable.

From this we could see the opportunities for technology – and the potential short and longer-term impacts on workforces. We wrote this up in an [MIT Review](#) of our research, and some of our findings are below.

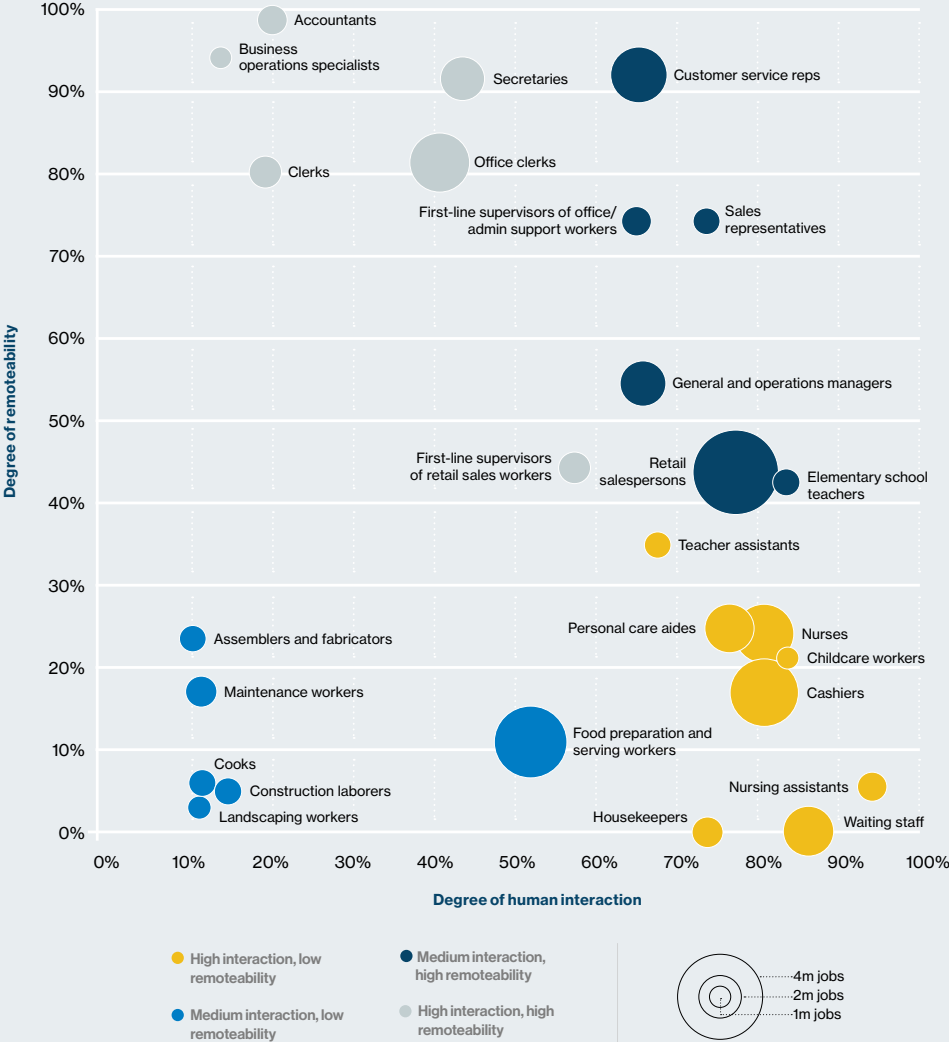
What have we seen over the last few months?

We have seen productivity in some roles being affected very little by working remotely – in many professional services and administrative functions, for example, tasks can still be carried out and most interaction just transferred online. Other jobs, like construction work, are not remoteable because they need to take place at a specific site, however there isn't a strong reliance on face to face human contact and this can make the work slightly safer. Some jobs cannot easily switch to remote working because they require a high level of face to face human interaction – for example care home assistants and early years teachers. Many of these are also essential roles that must be carried out, meaning these workers are in high risk situations.

Taking action - 'de-risking' through technology

Employers should be considering how technology can make workers both safer and more productive in the immediate and mid-term future. Where can technology reduce face to face interaction in 'high risk' roles, for example within healthcare? Where can organisations effectively deploy technology that will enable people to work well remotely, which may mean they don't need to come back to the office soon, if at all? Maximising the potential of remoteable jobs has already enabled many workers to work safely from home and could bring about significant changes to how we operate, with many organisations considering their real estate needs and reshaping facilities plans to comprise smaller and more flexible office spaces, as well as hiring more talent from outside their geographical area.

Figure 2: Task-level analysis of US job categories by degree of human interaction and remoteability, 2020



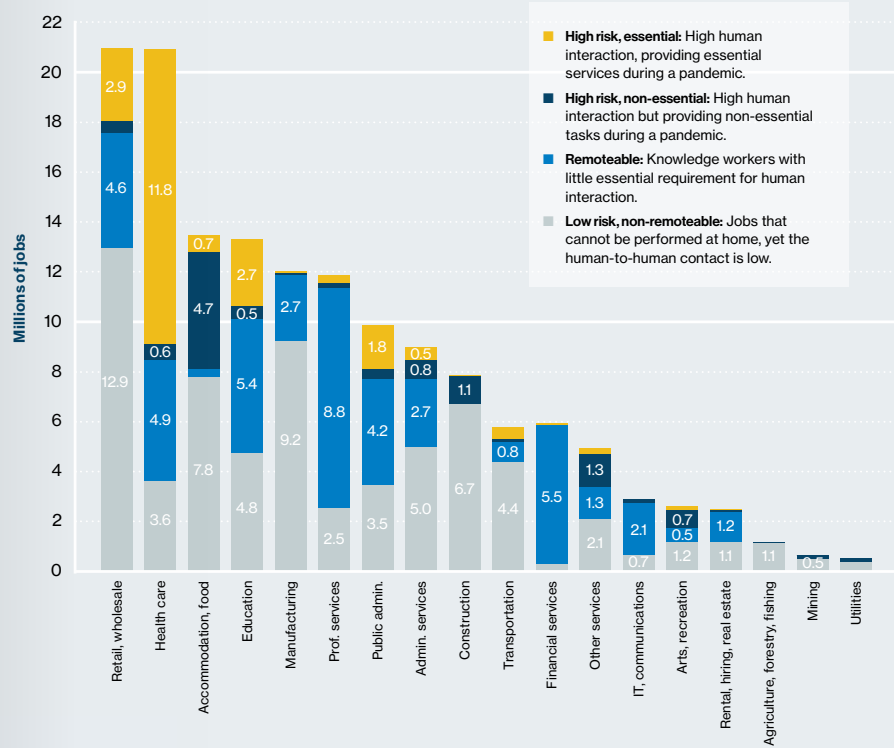
Longer-term we foresee businesses continuing to work to ensure they are ‘pandemic proof’, in order to protect themselves and their workers in the future. This will increase the focus on AI innovation in many ‘high risk’ roles – for example cashiers and servers, where the number of workers and level of face to face exposure could be greatly reduced through automation. We also predict that ‘non-essential’ jobs will be at greater risk of automation after the pandemic, as people realise the potential of technology.

Preparing workforces for the future

Technology has been increasing the efficiency of jobs and automating tasks for some time, but coronavirus has shown us how quickly we can innovate and adapt, and it’s likely that technological change will continue at pace.

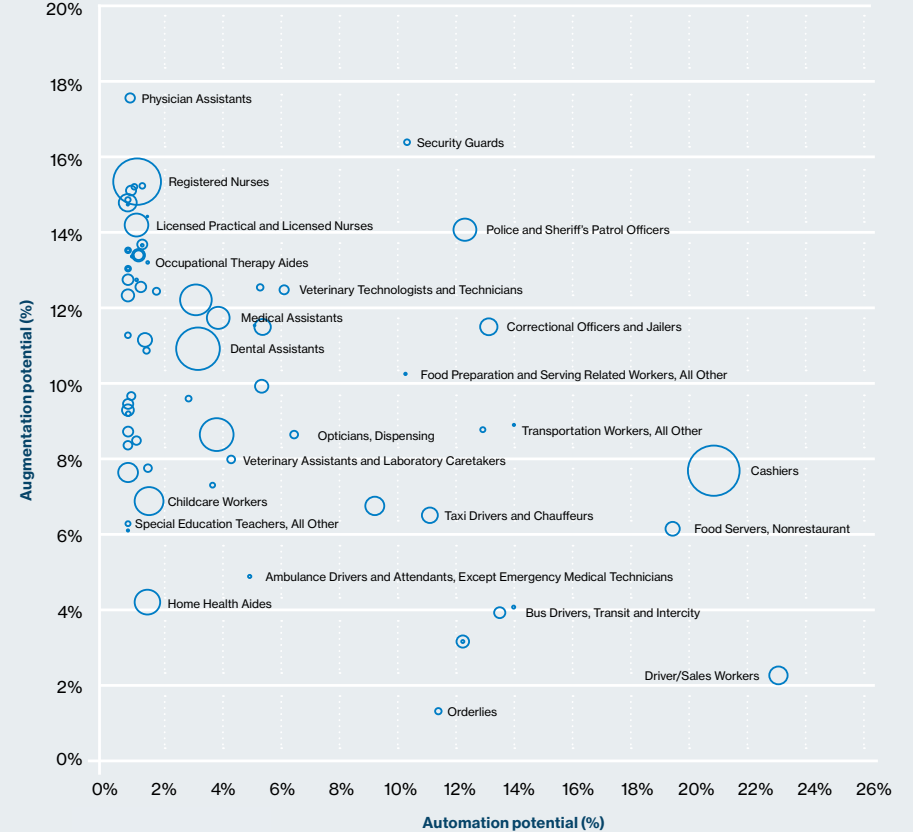
Companies must prepare their workforces for the future and be aware of the ‘job-positive’ and ‘job-negative’ effects of what they are introducing – particularly identifying those who need training or reskilling to adapt to new ways of working. Businesses and governments should not just be looking at where their workforces can be made safer, more resilient and productive through technology, but they must also ‘de-risk’ workers who may lose out without reskilling or redeployment.

Figure 3: Jobs in US industries, categorized by risk level (degree of human interaction), importance during a pandemic, and suitability for remote working, 2020



Source: Faethm & MIT Tech Review, 2020

Figure 4: Augmentation and automation potential for high-risk US job roles, 2020



Source: Faethm & MIT Tech Review, 2020



POST-COVID **WORKSPACES**

CENTRE FOR FUTURE WORK

A Natural Experiment: Working from Home in a Pandemic

The shutdown of large sections of the economy to protect public health has shocked business operations and the working lives of all Australians. The number of workers who shifted to performing most or all of their work from home dramatically increased from March 2020. Working from home provided an important cushion for working hours, incomes, and economic output as the pandemic unfolded. But those effects have been experienced very unevenly. The Centre for Future Work estimates that up to about 30% of all jobs in Australia could be performed from home, once adjustments have been made in work organisation and technology. Jobs suitable to work-from-home arrangements are more likely in professional and managerial roles, and are higher paid (24% higher than workers who cannot work from home – see our report, [Working From Home: Opportunities and Risks](#), for more details). Most workers cannot do their jobs from home – including essential workers in healthcare, cleaning, and transport – and hence are exposed to the full brunt of either job loss or infection risk.

Most analysts predict that the pandemic will lead to a permanent increase in work-from-home arrangements. While many workers enjoy not having to commute to work, and being able to stay in their pyjamas all day, there are clear drawbacks to home work for both workers and employers. Several important challenges related to home work that must be addressed by employers, governments, and employee representatives (including unions). First, employers have a duty of care to protect the health and safety of workers doing paid work from home, and rigorous procedures must be established to address safety risks (from ergonomics, to lighting and wiring, to elevated risks of domestic violence). Second, fair compensation norms should be established, including allowances for costs of home offices, and limits on working hours must be respected (despite the co-location of work with ‘life’). Third, there is evidence some employers misuse digital technologies for surveillance, monitoring and discipline (such as web cam monitors, GPS locators and keystroke counters); these practices should be prohibited in workers’ homes.

Many of us long to get back to regular workplaces; others would prefer to continue working from home as a permanent practice. Whatever camp you fall into, home work is here to stay – so we should make sure it is safe, sustainable and fair.



KNIGHT FRANK

Human Centred Re-Occupancy at Knight Frank Australia

With governments around the world easing restrictions, hoping to return the world slowly to some form of normalcy, organisation and business leaders have had to turn their attention to the new dilemma of how to bring people back to the workplace in a safe and considered way.

At Knight Frank in Australia we began planning a return to workspaces several months ago. We knew we needed to bring our people back to the workplace safely, but the obvious success of remote working since COVID-19 struck meant we wouldn't be using office spaces in the same way again.

Knight Frank was one of the first companies to publish a re-occupancy roadmap globally. However our Australian CEO, Rod Leaver, recognised the very human nature of what we were dealing with, and in the spirit of "putting people before place" asked our People and Culture team to lead the return to the workplace taskforce alongside our [internal consultancy experts](#).

We followed five steps to undertake this work, but most crucially maintained the ethos throughout the process that our people had to be at the centre of every decision.

To kick-off the process we conducted a survey with our people to gauge how they were feeling about returning to the workplace. We had an 80% response rate and the results, whilst not surprising, were interesting:

- 60% of people were not concerned about returning to the workplace, with or without restrictions
- 70% said they want to come into the office three days or less per week
- Only 15% were feeling disconnected from the office while working from home



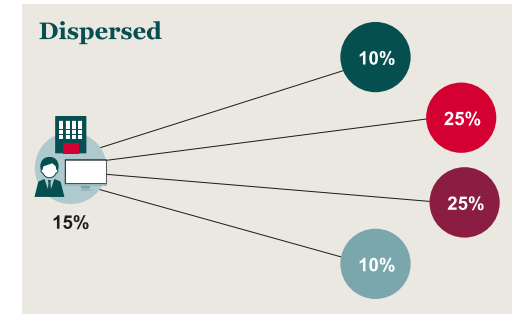
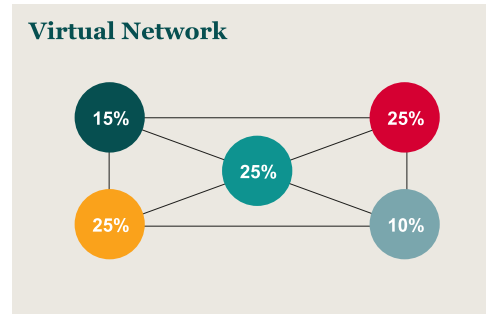
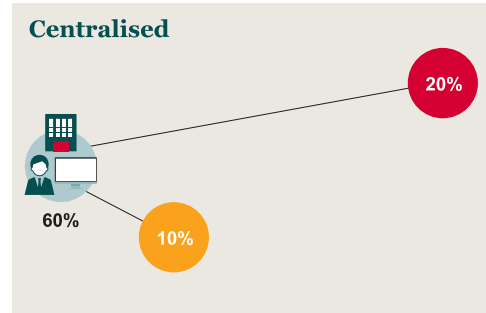
Five steps for planning a return to workspaces

- 99% said they were well-equipped from an IT perspective at home
- 91% believe they are productive working from home

There were multiple things for us to consider as we navigated the immediate return to workplace plan, as well as our planning for the longer-term future.

Short term

In the short term we developed a staggered approach which saw only 10 people initially in each office, gradually scaling up. From a very practical perspective we had to first deal with the immediate concerns around bringing those who needed to come back to CBD offices in a safe way. Our taskforce worked tirelessly



Emerging new models - Performance based Portfolio

to develop a set of comprehensive protocols, employee guidelines and very structured physical planning where we took floor plans and overlaid social distancing requirements.

However in a post-COVID world, the question for us has become not just who could work from home, but who should work from home, and not just home – where else does our best work happen?

Longer term considerations

In the past, we would have thought of workplace options only as the office or home, but our strategic advisory team has been exploring the concept of the “workplace as a service”, and the fact that each individual’s best work might actually occur somewhere completely different.

Workplace options could potentially be much more localised. We know our people are telling us they are keen to continue with home and local working

options and we know that for each person that can mean something completely different. We’ve seen the emergence of “walking meetings”, or local coffee shop meetings for those that live in close proximity to one another, which gives an indication of the “localisation” of the workplace, and we have therefore been considering options such as suburban hubs. Ultimately, we are realising that there is no “one size fits all” solution, so it becomes all about choice and about creating sustainable solutions for where our people do their best work.

PLASTARC

Workplace Transformation

WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION ACCELERATES TOWARD WELLNESS AND PURPOSEFUL OCCUPANCY IN THE COVID-19 ERA

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the lives and livelihoods of people around the world. While some places are on the road to recovery, others (such as the U.S.) are probably going to see ongoing public health and economic consequences, possibly for at least another year. As organizations figure out how to navigate this challenging period, they would benefit by re-examining some of their basic assumptions about the nature of work.

In many ways, there is no going back to the way things were; but that's not all bad news. [Disruption leads to questioning](#) of the status quo—in this case, presenting an opportunity to step back and reexamine the relationships between workplaces and the people who use them.

The modern economy inherited many elements of its structure, practices and culture from the Industrial Revolution. Perhaps chief among them is a factory-based model, in which people commute to a central location in which work is done. The mass shift to telework we have just witnessed may hasten the demise of this model. Even before COVID-19, [the cost of distance was decreasing rapidly](#). Some of the people who have switched to telework might not ever go back to the office. Others will return to a workplace that functions very differently from the one they left.

Telework and Purposeful Occupancy

The last few months have seen [a stunning shift in work habits among knowledge workers](#). Before the pandemic, the proportion of people working outside of the office had gradually ticked up each year, but surprisingly slowly given the ubiquity

of telework technology. There are many reasons for this, but inertia may have been the greatest. Managers have sometimes resisted a perceived loss of accountability, and employees who choose to work remotely have been left out of meetings, dismissed as uncommitted, or unable to participate in the office culture. That has all been challenged by the mass telework of the last few months.

At the same time, the need for physical spaces has not disappeared, and probably will not any time soon. Many people and employers still need places where they can commune and collaborate. Given that some level of physical distancing is going to be necessary for the foreseeable future, organizations are going to be practicing some version of blended accommodation. [How can work environments evolve](#) to better serve people in this new reality?

A more purposeful approach to occupancy, based on what people actually want, is the key to delivering the optimum blended office and telework experience. [This starts with workplace research](#). People expect their office to be more than just a desk and a few meeting rooms. This evolution in expectations was already in progress pre-COVID-19. The mass shift to telework just kicked it into high gear.

Workplace amenities have become even more important than they were before. A swanky new coffee bar probably means a lot less to someone who only comes in a couple of times per week. The same person might really appreciate having access to a fully-equipped gym so that they can make their in-office days their gym days as well. In the past, not enough research has gone into deciding what to provide, which is why so many places have defaulted to coffee and beer instead of childcare and grocery delivery.



Smarter Buildings for Blended Accommodation

The future workforce is not entirely distributed or entirely collocated—it's both. Managing the blend between the two can be eased considerably by building systems. In addition to [making the building more comfortable and usable](#), smart building technology can offer performance benefits for enabling blended accommodation.

Employees in many organizations are returning in tranches to offices that were not originally designed for shift-based work. There may be a markedly different seating plan and significantly altered access to the amenities that shaped their experience and the colleagues they rely upon. In addition, they may be concerned about their safety.

In the short term, smart building technology can mitigate some challenges of COVID-19. The records generated by room booking systems, climate control, lighting systems, building security, and destination elevators can make it substantially easier to perform contact tracing. Knowing which spaces have been occupied also helps maintenance staff to prioritize those areas for cleaning.

On a longer timeline, potential performance benefits abound. Room and desk booking make it easier to coordinate occupancy in a way that supports business objectives. Since the whole purpose of having an office is collaborative work, people need to be organized within space in a way that reflects their collaborative needs. This can change from day to day or hour to hour. Integrated building systems allow this to be done seamlessly and flexibly. As [we wrote in Quartz last spring](#), this is really just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to smart buildings.

As employers and employees continue to adjust to the new normal, there are opportunities to enact positive change. Through careful consideration of what people need from their environment, the future workplace can be made more flexible and higher-performing.

Increased Focus on Wellness

One welcome development is that companies are now being asked to make good on their promises to put workers first. Employers (the good ones, anyway) are embracing a more flexible approach to work and [a broader set of supporting benefits](#) in order to enable people to care for their children and family members and to protect themselves from illness. Broadly

speaking, organizations and individuals are learning to work in more flexible ways that support wellness.

Simultaneously, there is new urgency in the conversation about how to support workers who do not receive these benefits. In the U.S. there is a spotlight on the employer-based healthcare system, which is being challenged by sudden mass unemployment just as the need for care increases. There is also more focus on mental health, which is particularly important as people cope with the confluence of employment changes, new stressors at home, and general isolation caused by lockdowns and distancing.

This may be an ideal time to reset our shared frame of mind about work-life balance. The phrase carries an implication that work and life are somehow severable, and we're now seeing direct evidence that they are not. Thinkers like Stewart Friedman have long said that striving for balance is [the wrong approach](#)—the goal should be integration. This will mean different things to each organization and person because each of us is unique. One surefire suggestion is to [invest in telework skills](#), which improve an organization's ability to function while also granting employees the flexibility to arrange their lives as they see fit.

Social Sustainability

The last few months have made it abundantly clear that we are all in this together. The changes accelerated by COVID-19 can lead us toward a future of work that is more inclusive and better for society on the whole. There are some benefits that are easy to spot, like the reduction of carbon impact from commuting.

In terms of the workforce itself, there are several reasons to be glad that work is becoming more flexible. Organizations gain access to a more diverse workforce when they are more able to hire across geographic and social boundaries—and being more diverse [makes them more resilient](#). This enables small businesses to leverage the benefits of remote workers that have been available to multinational companies for years. For example, a fully-distributed workforce can take advantage of the latest

developments in the serviced office to set up a call center halfway around the world, or to trade products in a new market.

There is an opportunity to make good on the optimism that prevailed during the first dot-com era. Back then, there was a sense that the globe-shrinking effects of the internet would bring about freer societies through more equitable access to opportunity. When labor becomes as mobile as capital, this dream moves closer to reality.


Urbanization has been accelerating for years. While this has been good in many ways, it has also left rural communities and small towns struggling to retain educated workforces and grow their economies. Meanwhile, many urban areas are experiencing housing affordability crises, with [rent burdens increasing across the board](#). There may now be an opportunity to rebalance this dynamic.

Second- and third-tier cities [have already been drawing more millennials](#) by offering a lower cost of living while still providing the urban features and amenities preferred by millennial professionals. As this generation enters their prime working years, the increasingly digital workplace bolsters their ability to move to places like Rochester, NY and Burlington, VT—to move to smaller, walkable cities that still have dining and culture.

The workplaces and economies of recent decades shaped the cities many of us call home, and the shift in work habits currently underway will reverberate through our society for years. While there are certainly plenty of challenges to come, the last few months have shown that people can be amazingly adaptive, responsive and caring. We are optimistic that organizations can learn from this experience and offer workplaces that are more flexible and supportive of their people and their communities.

[PLASTARC](#) is a social science-based workplace consultancy. By blending qualitative and quantitative research with expertise in design and change leadership, PLASTARC provides clients with unique insights that promote healthier and higher-performing spaces.



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