

New Cisco Report Reveals Key Insights on How the Pandemic Has Changed the Future of Work

Report uncovers forward-looking lessons for leaders navigating return to office strategies

News Summary:

- Report identifies six business, technology, and cultural lessons for IT leaders.
- Findings show that, despite multiple challenges facing organizations globally, 74% said their business will emerge stronger.
- Read the full [report](#), watch the [video news release](#), and access the [infographic](#) for full detail.

India, July 23, 2020 — New Cisco-commissioned research issued today reveals forward-looking lessons for IT and business leaders as they navigate their return to office strategies. The findings are covered in a report, “A New Perspective on the Modern Workplace”.

The research upon which the report is based was designed and executed by IT industry analyst firm Freeform Dynamics. Input was gathered via three separate, but linked, studies spanning the pre-pandemic to mid-pandemic period (late 2019 to May/June 2020).

While much has been written about the immediate pandemic-related challenges, it’s important to apply the lessons learned as many begin rolling out return to work strategies. With this in mind, the report covers six specific lessons that have emerged from the data gathered from COVID-19 experiences. The lessons highlight particular changes in **mindset, attitude, direction, and behavior** that will be particularly important.

Key Findings:

- **74% said their business will in some ways emerge stronger from the crisis.**

While the first half of 2020 was among one of the most tumultuous times in modern history, nearly three-quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *Despite the challenges, our business will emerge stronger in some areas from the current crisis*. This optimism is indicative of the ingenuity and innovation organizations have shown. It has been incredible to see how many initiatives around digital transformation and other forms of modernization scheduled for the medium to long-term, or deferred because of other competing priorities, have been accelerated.

- **Respondents say flexibility is here to stay, and it will benefit organizations as well as employees.** Almost half (49%) of respondents indicated that flexible working hours are here to stay. And when it comes to hiring, 50% of our survey respondents said increased remote work would lead to a more inclusive and extended talent pool. Businesses are realizing that work can happen anywhere, productivity isn’t lost, and an expanded talent pool will enable stronger and more capable work teams.

- **The vast majority of managers said they have increased their emphasis on employee wellbeing and work-life balance.**

Nearly 9 out of 10 managers (87%) who responded to the survey said that as a result of the pandemic they increased emphasis on employee wellbeing and work-life balance. Of those managers reporting the increased emphasis, nearly half (47%) said they see this being maintained over the long term.

Study participants said they viewed the pandemic as a catalyst for major change. This newfound focus and priority on health and wellbeing is a silver-lining during what is otherwise a sobering period of time. The obvious question remains as to whether this mindset shift can withstand the test of time, but participants were optimistic that workplace culture is transforming in the right direction.

Participants said:

- *Empathy is so important, and you definitely see this more now.*
- *Some of my team have been working cross-legged on their bed for weeks now. It's hard to balance getting results with their comfort, but we need kindness and understanding during this time.*
- *We are being human first now. I think there's going to be more emphasis on individual health and mindfulness.*

"From a business agility and resiliency perspective, it's important that we learn and adapt quickly from this experience," said Aruna Ravichandran, VP of Marketing, Cisco's Collaboration Group. "You never know when you'll need to pivot, and we've seen that technology like Webex is playing a key role."

Additional Resources:

- Blog: "[The Future of Work: Optimism as Companies Move Forward](#)", by Aruna Ravichandran, VP of Marketing, Cisco Collaboration.
- Video: [The Future of Work: A New Perspective on the Modern Workplace](#)
- Infographic: "[The Future of Work in the World of COVID-19](#)"
- Full report: "[A New Perspective on the Modern Workplace](#)"
- [Workplace Maturity Assessment Tool](#): As you resume your own workplace transformation activities, you might want to assess your current situation in relation to this model. In order to help with this, we have developed this online workplace maturity assessment tool.

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About the Research

The research referred to in this news alert and the related report was designed and executed as three separate but linked studies. The first was a global research study (13 countries, 8 industries) in which 1,500 senior managers were interviewed on the topic of workplace transformation. Additionally, this research (completed February 2020), has been published separately in the form of a report entitled "Safe and Effective Home Working", and an online maturity assessment tool available at <https://futureofwork.webex.com/maturity-calculator/>. In May/June 2020, 100 of the participants taking part in the original study were called back to survey them on their experiences and lessons learned from their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel with this, 10 deep-dive qualitative interviews were conducted with senior managers on the same topic, allowing them to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words. The 'participant quotes' presented in the news alert and report stem from these discussions.

About Cisco

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