

Trends driving transformation are not new, but newly urgent

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The Covid-19 pandemic and acceleration of digital transformation have brought profound transformation to the global workplace. This is not the first time that work has transformed, however, the landscape is different from those we have seen in the past and requires a new look at the world of work, a realisation of what companies need to do to attract and retain relevant skills post-pandemic, while people are looking for more from their employers to thrive at work.



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In short, the key trends emerging from the pandemic include:

- A recovery that is unlike any we have ever seen over the past 70+ years as demand for skills is at record highs in many markets while talent shortages escalate, and workforce participation stagnates
- Uneven economic growth continues with some countries surging ahead while Covid variants and uneven vaccination rates drive uncertainty elsewhere
- Supply chain challenges continue to impact the availability of goods, services, and skills, but we expect these to be transitory and are optimistic that companies all over the world need access to skilled human capital to meet their business objectives and fully participate in the economic global recovery
- Employers continue to seek flexible and strategic workforce solutions and services to meet the strong demand for their goods and services today and into the future

While the timing of business as usual is uncertain, companies need to start putting measures in place now to prepare for the workplace of the future and survive beyond the pandemic. To achieve this, there are four key areas of focus. These are discussed below.

What workers want

People are looking for individual choice. They want flexibility, fair remuneration and more autonomy. This is supported by the [ManpowerGroup What Makes Workers Thrive Survey](#), which found that 45% of employees want to choose their own start and end times, while 36% want more vacation days and 35% are looking for flexible workplace options.

Further, there is a heightened focus on a values-driven agenda, with employees seeking empathetic leaders and a culture of trust, which are key requirements to attracting and retaining talent and engaging the remote team. This is driving the employee value proposition. In an era of talent scarcity, the best employers are the ones that invest in the evolving company culture to stay relevant and retain talent.

Talent scarcity

According to the [ManpowerGroup Talent Shortage Survey 2021](#), shifting demographics, including shrinking birth rates, reduced mobility across borders and a rise in early retirees means talent is scarce. Based on this, companies are getting creative in attracting, upskilling, reskilling and retaining workers.

However, in addition to companies looking to attract and retain employees, employees are looking for ways to become more attractive employees and this is driving the skills revolution. Reskilling and upskilling are non-negotiable for individuals and organisations as we see a shift in the workforce which has driven the demand for both technology and human capabilities. This is supported by [Gartner](#), which states that 58% of all employees today will need new skills to get their jobs done.

Tech accelerates

Every aspect of life has become more technology-enabled as the pandemic accelerated investment in digitalisation, and consumer and employees rely heavily on technology to meet various needs from online shopping to working from home. As one-third of companies expect to invest more in AI technology and machine learning over the [next year](#), workforce data will enable the prediction of potential performance and match individuals to ideal opportunities.

Advanced technologies are increasingly impacting how companies transform business models, enhance customer and employee experiences, and become more data-driven. However, before this can happen, there is an immediate need for companies to upskill their people so that they can translate data into insights, make data-driven decisions and combine the best of human and machine learning for new value creation.

Companies reset

New, nimble operating models and people practices are emerging in response to transformations in the market – from digital technologies to changing consumer preferences. Companies are also looking for more resilient supply chains, greener and more consolidated partners, and solutions in response to increased competition, unpredictability and greater transparency.

At the same time, business leaders are becoming the most trusted source of information, above government and the media. As such, companies need to embrace a values-driven agenda to attract and retain the best talent and have a role to play in advocating and championing social rights.

The world has changed significantly over the last two years and businesses need to adapt to the new needs of workers and consumers, while taking their place as trusted leaders that are setting the agenda for the world of the future. In doing this, companies will attract and retain the best talent from across the globe.

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