



To BCG's network around the world,

I remember a year ago when people looked forward (longingly) to the end of COVID-19 and we all fantasized about the day when we would walk out of our homes and get back to life as usual.

Now we know that there will be no such moment. Instead, vaccines will drive the shift from pandemic to endemic—which means that while the disease won't disappear, we can severely curtail its spread and, at the same time, remove most of the measures that have so disrupted society and businesses.

Our new article, [Leading Through the Big Transition to the New Reality](#), gets at the heart of the unique role business leaders can play in guiding us through this upcoming period of both promise and uncertainty, and I want to share some of the ideas from it here.

It's our job to help people feel safe and be productive in the workplace. But we also have to start planning for what will come next, thinking hard about what we've learned from this disruptive time and experimenting with how to reimagine work.

The transition will be a long haul, lasting six to nine months, depending on the context of a business and its region. During this time, employers can be a powerful force for good by doing the following:

- Working to overcome vaccine hesitancy with empathy and insight for the people who make up their employee base and communities
- Developing a phased plan for how the company will operate over time, including testing, on-site vaccinations, and safety protocols that may vary by region

- Monitoring key public health measures wherever the company operates and adjusting the phased plan depending on the scenarios that unfold

Beyond this, we also have an incredible opportunity to help address some of the urgent needs around the world—particularly in Brazil and India—where the virus is raging and there aren't enough vaccines. By advocating for the redistribution of excess vaccines from the richest countries, we can make a huge difference. Over the next 90 days, the extra doses from the US alone could save half a million lives elsewhere in the world.

As we look ahead to the future of work, we can't know exactly where we will end up—but we know for sure we don't want to be reliving 2020, or even 2019. There are three important principles to remember as we develop a new reality of work:

- Involve employees, customers, and suppliers in the process in order to understand what matters most to them.
- Be wary of deciding on new work models too soon, inadvertently setting precedents that you may later regret. Instead, try out new work model pilots, and explicitly communicate that these are experiments. That way, you can learn from what works and what doesn't, and you'll have license to evolve.
- As you set up new pilots, make sure to find ways to capture data that can help you measure effectiveness, engagement, and sustainability.

We have to wear both hats in this period: managing through the complexities and unknowns of the transition and preparing our organizations for the new reality. Getting this right can make a huge difference, allowing us to emerge not as we once were but well positioned for the future, with a more productive workforce, more loyal customers, and a stronger bottom line.

If you want to [write back](#), I'm interested to hear how your organization has been getting ready for the new reality. I really appreciated the thoughtful ideas many of you sent in response to my [note on meetings](#) a few weeks ago. Clearly the top-of-mind topic is how to make hybrid meetings work, so we'll come back to that again sometime soon.

Until next week,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rich". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "R" and a cursive "ich".

Rich Lesser
Chief Executive Officer



Leading Through the Big Transition to the New Reality

Emergence from the pandemic will depend on human behavior, people feeling safe in the world and in the workplace, and workers becoming healthier and more productive. This is largely a project for the private sector.

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A Vaccination Strategy to Save Lives and Livelihoods



Progress in a Year of Adversity

Protecting the health-vulnerable population first can shave months off a country's reopening.

We are putting the power of BCG to work in order to make a difference in the world.