



To BCG's network around the world,

How will work get done in the emerging post-COVID world? It's a question that's top of mind for business leaders everywhere, and it's something I've been thinking about a lot. I highly recommend our most recent BCG COVID-19 Perspectives publication, which highlights this topic (starting on page 11) and, I hope, can help leaders set priorities to rapidly adapt their organizations.

With different parts of the world restarting their economies right now—and many others just weeks away—the top priority for businesses is figuring out not only how to bring people safely back to work in the short term but also—even more fundamentally—how to build new models for work in the medium term.

The crisis has sparked change in record time. Organizations have been forced to make quick shifts in ways of working during the “flattening” phase of the pandemic, including most noticeably a rapid acceleration of smart work policies, such as remote working and stringent safety measures where remote working has not been possible. Business leaders have had to make quick decisions about workforce flexibility in a highly dynamic situation. And clear communication has been paramount, with regular messages and updates coming from the C-suite to keep staff informed and build a sense of togetherness and loyalty.

In this next phase, the “fight,” as more people return to work, we can learn from and enhance the changes that have already taken place. Smart work has to become standard, with the right balance of remote and onsite work as well as the introduction of technology to support collaboration and agility—and, in factories, to free workers from the most manual tasks.

The physical health of workers is, of course, extremely important, and we'll have to continue to enforce high standards of hygiene and safety to prevent future infections. This

will include implementing new models of testing, tracking, and tracing, as well as digital tools to increase effectiveness and reduce the administrative burden.

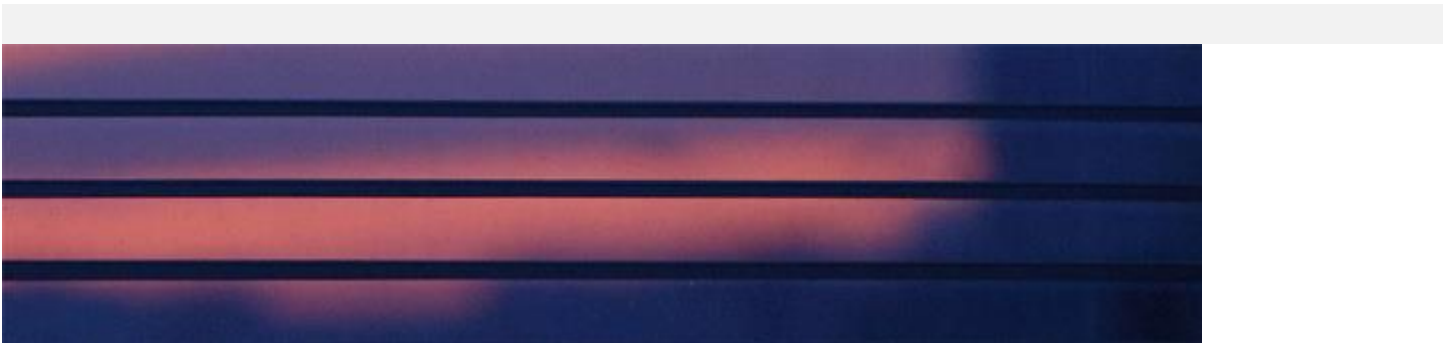
But mental health is also essential in building a resilient, innovative, and productive workforce. Increased levels of stress will linger, and we have to make every effort to help people cope—through mental health and wellness programs and with techniques that enable better work-life balance.

At the core of all the new people priorities is an idea we have been talking about at BCG for some time: the necessity of becoming a bionic organization, in which human and technological capabilities enhance one another to make organizations more flexible, data-driven, and resilient. Digital transformation was already on every business leader's agenda, but the crisis has accelerated the path toward our digital future—giving business the chance to speed up the transformation and simplify operating models now.

Despite the uncertainty we're all feeling, one thing is clear: we will not be returning to normal anytime soon. It's time to prepare for a new reality by integrating these and other people priorities in order to accelerate competitive advantage. None of this is easy. Finding new ways to keep workers safe and become more productive will inevitably cause some pain. But as we make tough choices, we can also lead effectively—with empathy and clarity—and come out of this period stronger and more prepared for the future than before.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rich", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rich Lesser
President & Chief Executive Officer



How to Protect Your Workforce During the COVID-19 Pandemic

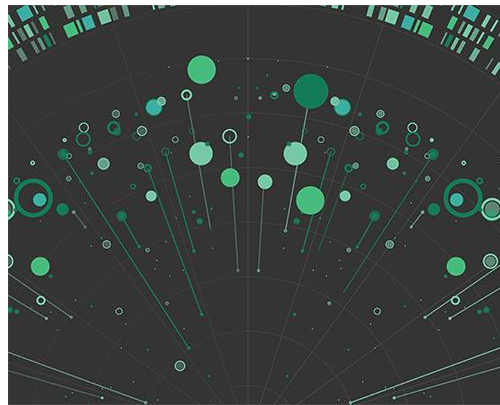
Business leaders are rightly focused on keeping their people safe. They also need to help them feel supported, stay connected, and discover new ways to work productively together.

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People Priorities in Response to COVID-19

Effective people-centric solutions—in areas such as workforce flexibility, corporate purpose, and digital readiness—can play a big role in helping companies find their way through the crisis.



Navigating the COVID-19 Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis is threatening the lives and well-being of the global community. Health, political, societal, and business leaders must drive an integrated response to navigate, manage, and lead through it.