Personalisation for your people

How COVID-19 is reshaping the race for talent

Boston Consulting Group partners with leaders in business and society to tackle their most important challenges and capture their greatest opportunities. BCG was the pioneer in business strategy when it was founded in 1963. Today, we help clients with total transformation—inspiring complex change, enabling organizations to grow, building competitive advantage, and driving bottom-line impact.

To succeed, organizations must blend digital and human capabilities. Our diverse, global teams bring deep industry and functional expertise and a range of perspectives to spark change. BCG delivers solutions through leading-edge management consulting along with technology and design, corporate and digital ventures—and business purpose. We work in a uniquely collaborative model across the firm and throughout all levels of the client organization, generating results that allow our clients to thrive.

Personalisation for your people

How COVID-19 is reshaping the race for talent

Chris Mattey, Christoph Hilberath, Nicole Sibilio, Jasmine Aurora, Hermann Ruiz

June 2020

AT A GLANCE

The COVID-19 crisis has activated a modern industrial revolution. It has forced a rapid shift in where and how most Australians work, and broken through longstanding barriers to change in just three months. To understand this shift, BCG conducted an online workforce sentiment survey of 1,002 people to uncover experiences and attitudes to working during COVID-19. The survey findings provide a snapshot of how employees feel about work.

Some findings are intuitive, such as three-quarters of employees faced barriers to working during COVID-19, but nearly the same number also experienced positive impacts on their work. Other findings counter past preconceptions. Employees who can work remotely want to keep doing so, but not every day, confirming that the office still has a role – albeit a changing one. Employees who work remotely also believe their productivity has increased.

But underneath the surface-level analysis and average responses there are a wide variety of personal situations, and employee needs, each one often very different to the last. What some people crave is completely irrelevant to others. So as we transition to the new reality, the question for employers is, 'What are these needs and how can understanding this be a source of competitive advantage?'

To understand this BCG clustered the survey data and identified eight employee segments. The people within each segment have similar attributes and needs, but are very different to the other segments. Knowing how your organisation's employees break down across these segments, means you can design custom-fit Employee Value Propositions that address specific needs and aspirations. The organisations that get this right will have a clear advantage in the race for talent.

COVID-19 has triggered a seismic, structural shift in how we work

2020 has set the scene for a unique workforce experiment. The COVID-19 crisis has activated a modern industrial revolution. It has forced a rapid shift in where and how most Australians work, and broken through longstanding barriers to change in just three months. While the original industrial revolution saw a massive migration of people towards factories in the cities, COVID-19 has catalysed a reverse migration, with people vacating city centres to work from their homes. Employee attitudes and behaviours are changing too, as we reassess what a fulfilling work/life balance looks like.

As more Australians work remotely, organisations are rethinking the role of the office. Originally designed to provide a work environment that doesn't exist at home, the office used to be a place for literal connection (e.g., phone, internet) but, as technology allows us to do more from home, the purpose of the office is changing to personal connection and collaboration.

As a result, employers are faced with taking the results of this forced, fast experiment and trying to understand which changes are temporary and which ones are sustainable and will support employees in a holistic way, in this new reality.

Employers can tailor EVPs for competitive advantage. COVID-19 has affected nearly every organisation in some way and highlighted the need to build competitiveness into the new reality. Businesses that emerge stronger from the crisis will build their status as an 'employer of choice' to attract, retain and grow their talent. The imperative is clear: highly engaged workplaces have 67% less employee turnover (Gallup), and highly engaged teams bring in 21% greater profitability (Forbes).

Organisations can become an Employer of Choice in this new reality with a more holistic Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that matches their employees' needs and aspirations. A talented, happy and consistent workforce adds to an organisation's overall competitive advantage.

Today's needs are different from three months ago, let alone three years ago. And deeper than that, each organisation has employees with unique needs. EVPs must be tailored to each organisation's context – an important competitive step beyond the more traditional 'one size fits all' approach.
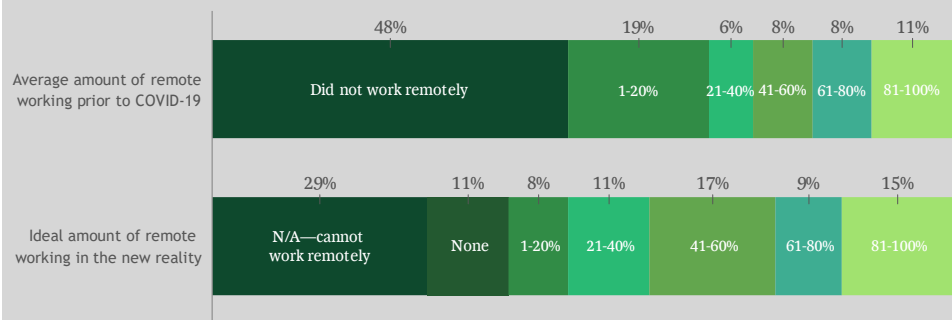
Hybrid (remote + office) models balance needs, productivity and engagement

To explore Australians' attitudes to their work during the COVID-19 pandemic, BCG conducted an online workforce sentiment survey with the support of Lucid, from 22–25 May 2020. One thousand and two people responded, uncovering trends, experiences and attitudes related to working during COVID-19 restrictions, related to both personal and professional factors. The findings show a variety of trends and behaviours emerging in the general population, and some interesting nuances when we break them down further.

FINDING #1: 85% OF PEOPLE WHO CAN WORK REMOTELY WANT TO... BUT NOT EVERY DAY

Before COVID-19, there was an almost even split between people who worked exclusively on-site (48%) and people who incorporated some degree of remote working into their routines (52%). However, after having a better taste of remote life during COVID-19 restrictions, those who are able to work remotely, want to do more of this in the future.

EXHIBIT 1 | Working models pre- and post- COVID-19

Average amount of remote working prior to COVID-19	48% — Did not work remotely	19% — 1-20%	6% — 21-40%	8% — 41-60%	8% — 61-80%	11% — 81-100%
Ideal amount of remote working in the new reality	29% — N/A—cannot work remotely	11% — None	8% — 1-20%	11% — 21-40%	17% — 41-60%	9% — 61-80%	15% — 81-100%

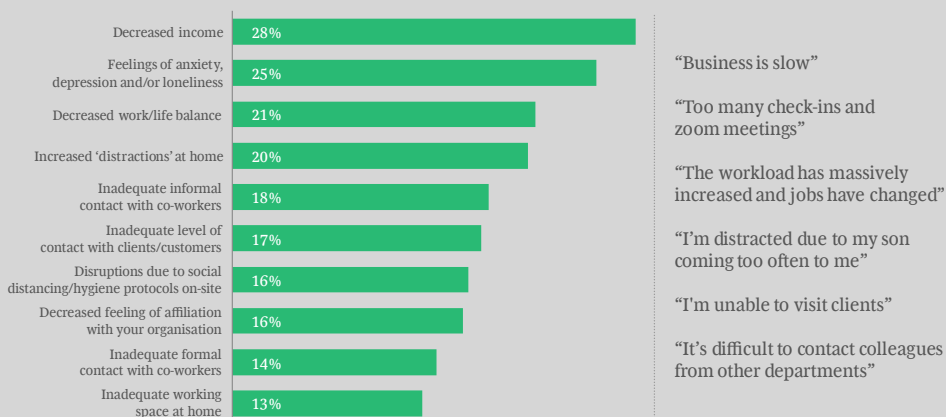**Source:** BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, May 22-25 2020 (n=1002, Australia only).

What's more interesting, and counters past preconceptions, is that people don't want to work at home all the time. For people who can perform their duties from home, the most popular model is a hybrid, working 2-3 days a week from home across a 5-day week (41-60%). Even though this model was the most popular there were many differences of opinion on the optimal split of time between home and office. Interestingly, people aged 60+ who can work remotely had the strongest preference for a model with 81-100% of time spent on remote work.

This is backed up by a recent LinkedIn post by Susanna Frazier which attracted over 150,000 votes and asked, "What environment would you prefer to work in going forward?". 55% said a combination of home and office, 38% said work from home only and 8% said work from the office only.

FINDING #2: 76% OF AUSTRALIANS FACED BARRIERS TO WORKING DURING COVID-19, WITH THE MOST AFFECTED BEING THE YOUNGER AGE GROUPS, AND (UNSURPRISINGLY) THOSE WITH CHILDREN AT HOME

2020 has been a year of rapid change and, as people have navigated new ways of working, many barriers have emerged. Just over three-quarters (76%) of people indicated that they had experienced at least one negative impact since COVID-19 restrictions came in. Noting that some of these impacts are temporary, the main barriers faced by employees as a whole were decreased income, feelings of anxiety, depression and/or loneliness, decreased work life balance and increased distractions when working from home.

EXHIBIT 2 | Top factors contributing to negative work experiences during COVID-19
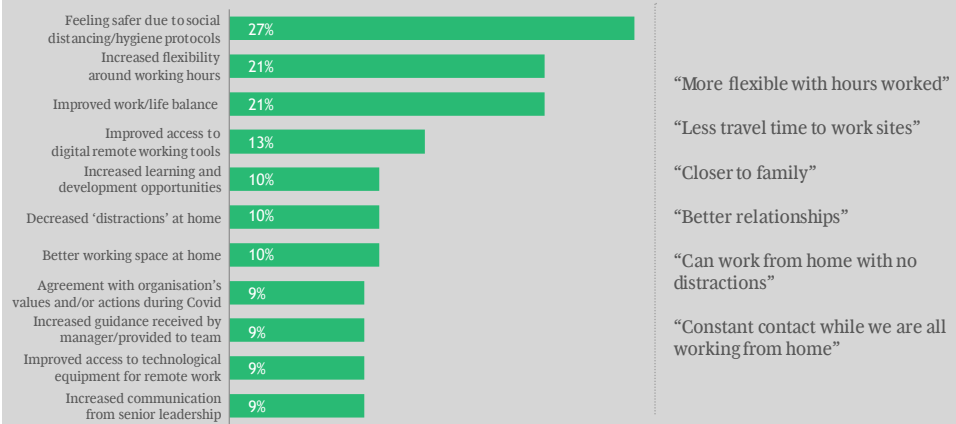
Factor	%
Decreased income	28%
Feelings of anxiety, depression and/or loneliness	25%
Decreased work/life balance	21%
Increased 'distractions' at home	20%
Inadequate informal contact with co-workers	18%
Inadequate level of contact with clients/customers	17%
Disruptions due to social distancing/hygiene protocols on-site	16%
Decreased feeling of affiliation with your organisation	16%
Inadequate formal contact with co-workers	14%
Inadequate working space at home	13%

"Business is slow"

"Too many check-ins and zoom meetings"

"The workload has massively increased and jobs have changed"

"I'm distracted due to my son coming too often to me"

"I'm unable to visit clients"

"It's difficult to contact colleagues from other departments"

Source: BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, 2020 (n=1002, Australia only)

While some factors came out on top, there was a broad spread in what employees cited in the survey, which uncovers a variety of different experiences and needs across the working population. Intuitively, more employees with children at home faced barriers to working than those without children at home (80% versus 73%). These barriers were mainly distractions at home and inadequate working space. People aged 30 and under also faced barriers disproportionately (86% vs 53% for those over 60), mainly around increased feelings of anxiety, depression and/or loneliness and worse work/life balance.

FINDING #3: 69% OF AUSTRALIANS ALSO EXPERIENCED POSITIVE IMPACTS ON THEIR WORK, HIGHLIGHTING GOOD PRACTICES TO RETAIN POST-COVID-19

While we have seen that most Australians experienced at least one barrier, the news is not all bad: 69% also found these new ways of working to be a positive experience. The main positive impacts experienced by employees were improved safety, increased work/life balance, and better flexibility in working arrangements and hours.

EXHIBIT 3 | Top factors contributing to positive work experiences during COVID-19

Factor	Percentage
Feeling safer due to social distancing/hygiene protocols	27%
Increased flexibility around working hours	21%
Improved work/life balance	21%
Improved access to digital remote working tools	13%
Increased learning and development opportunities	10%
Decreased 'distractions' at home	10%
Better working space at home	10%
Agreement with organisation's values and/or actions during Covid	9%
Increased guidance received by manager/provided to team	9%
Improved access to technological equipment for remote work	9%
Increased communication from senior leadership	9%

"More flexible with hours worked"

"Less travel time to work sites"

"Closer to family"

"Better relationships"

"Can work from home with no distractions"

"Constant contact while we are all working from home"

Source: BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, 2020 (n=1002, Australia only)

We need to acknowledge these positive outcomes and identify how to sustain them as business transitions back to a new reality, so that the benefits are not lost.

Interestingly, and in line with negative impacts, the results identify what may be a generational difference in that younger employees are more sensitive to how external factors affect their work – 79% of 18 to 30-year-olds experienced positive impacts, while only 40% of their counterparts over 60 did.

Employees with children at home experienced fewer positive impacts than the general population (25% vs 37%), but they benefitted from more flexible working hours, which allowed them to prioritise work and the needs of their children. Low-income earners ($40k and under) were the most likely to experience no positive impact during this time, as they tend to work in hard-hit industries such as arts and hospitality and have seen their income fall.

FINDING #4: COUNTER TO HISTORIC CONCERNS, DESPITE THE SHIFT FOR MANY TOWARDS REMOTE WORKING, WORKERS BELIEVE THEY HAVE INCREASED THEIR PRODUCTIVITY, ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
Many people have been thrown into a working model that wasn't an option for them before COVID-19, and have been pleasantly surprised by the results, proving that remote and hybrid models do work. On the whole, employees have worked out how to balance the barriers with the positive impacts to thrive in the new reality, and the benefits of this increased productivity, engagement and effectiveness flows directly to employers.

Despite the long-standing fear of many employers that remote working could have negative effects, those fears seem to be unfounded: over half the employees surveyed (excluding those on JobKeeper) did not feel their productivity and engagement had declined during COVID-19 restrictions.

EXHIBIT 4 | Increases in productivity, engagement and achievement during COVID-19 restrictions

General population

	Net disagree	Neutral	Net agree
Productivity has increased — I am achieving my job objectives and outputs as expected by a manager	21%	34%	45%
Engagement has increased — I am actively involved in work activities beyond formal expectations	21%	36%	43%
Achievement has increased — I am fulfilling my career goals, and feeling a sense of work-related success	22%	41%	37%

All employees with children at home

	Net disagree	Neutral	Net agree
Productivity has increased	18%	30%	52%
Engagement has increased	21%	32%	47%
Achievement has increased	20%	39%	41%

All older employees (over 50 years)

	Net disagree	Neutral	Net agree
Productivity has increased	23%	43%	34%
Engagement has increased	23%	48%	29%
Achievement has increased	26%	50%	24%

■ Net disagree ■ Neutral ■ Net agree

Source: BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, 2020 (n=1002, Australia only)

It's important to note that these findings are based on an employee survey, without the input of employers. It's also important to remind ourselves that this was a forced social experiment that took place over just a few months, and in response to unusual global circumstances. There is a risk that these perceived upsides could drop off if remote working and isolation from the broader work community continues for the longer term – unless we act in a sustainable way.

What's really interesting is that all three dimensions increased more for employees with children at home (e.g., 52% agreed that productivity increased vs 45% on average). Despite this group juggling home schooling, childcare and other commitments, it seems the challenges were outweighed by the benefits of reduced commuting, spending more time with family, and better understanding of digital tools.

Employees over 50 showed comparatively smaller increases in productivity and success. The survey showed this cohort experienced less overall benefit from the use of technology and digital tools. They are more established in their careers, and often already have productive and successful work routines that work for them on an individual level.

FINDING #5: MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS IS VITAL FOR A STRONG WORKING RELATIONSHIP
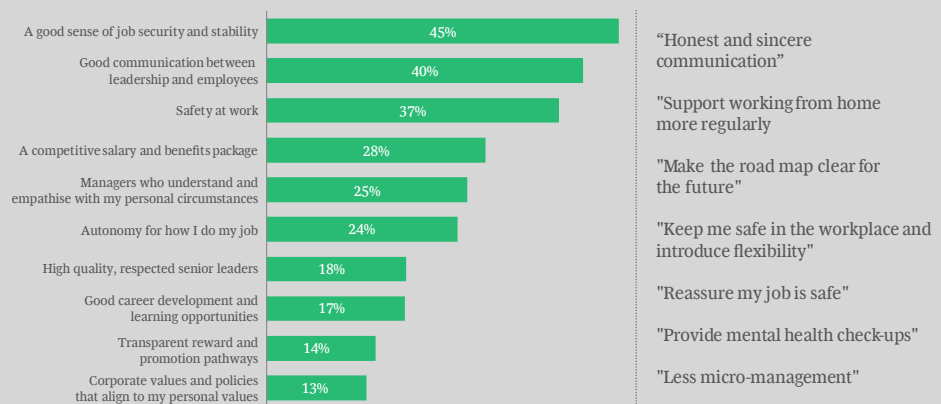
Given COVID-19 is a public health crisis, and the most common positive impact felt by people during this period was 'feeling safe', trust is increasingly important in times of uncertainty. This is backed by 83% of employees stating that trust in their employer is important. While trust during COVID-19 restrictions is often linked to physical safety (e.g., hygiene protocols), it is also related to psychological factors such as job stability and security, as well as autonomy to get work done.

Sixty-five percent of employees believe their employer will only bring them back into offices and worksites when it is safe to do so, and 26% feel neutral on the subject. Overall, 58% say that trust in their employer has increased during COVID-19, and this figure was higher for those who have been able to work remotely (63%).

In the new reality, organisations must focus on retaining employee trust. Employees say it is important for their employer to trust them to complete remote work autonomously. For 85% of people who have autonomy, their productivity, engagement and achievement increased. Building trust can also attract a greater pool of talent and reduce turnover rates. Employees with longer commute times placed increased importance on trust in their employer, showing employees will endure more travel to work for an employer that is trusted.

The results show the main ways that employers can increase trust are by providing job security and stability, communicating well, and ensuring safety at work.

EXHIBIT 5 | Top 10 ways employers can gain their employees' trust

A good sense of job security and stability	45%
Good communication between leadership and employees	40%
Safety at work	37%
A competitive salary and benefits package	28%
Managers who understand and empathise with my personal circumstances	25%
Autonomy for how I do my job	24%
High quality, respected senior leaders	18%
Good career development and learning opportunities	17%
Transparent reward and promotion pathways	14%
Corporate values and policies that align to my personal values	13%

"Honest and sincere communication"

"Support working from home more regularly

"Make the road map clear for the future"

"Keep me safe in the workplace and introduce flexibility"

"Reassure my job is safe"

"Provide mental health check-ups"

"Less micro-management"

Source: BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, 2020 (n=1002, Australia only)

Interestingly, parents with children at home experienced a bigger increase in trust during this period, which could reflect being more aware of safety and more appreciative of being able to work flexibly with children at home.

FINDING #6: MOST AUSTRALIANS STILL SEE A ROLE FOR THE OFFICE, BUT THE NEED IT FULFILS ISN'T THE SAME FOR EVERYONE

The traditional working model for many people has been 'office by default, remote by exception'. Now that COVID-19 has changed this, organisations are starting to question whether an office is still necessary.

From the research, it's clear the office still has a role, with 77% of employees missing some elements of being in an office during this period. What employees seem to desire from an office is: 1) informal/social interaction with coworkers; 2) the ability to formally collaborate or meet with colleagues; and 3) having a distraction-free environment with the right technology and ergonomic set-up.

EXHIBIT 6 | Top reasons employees miss having a physical office space

Informal and social interactions with colleagues	28%
In-person collaboration/brainstorming sessions with colleagues	23%
In-person formal meetings with colleagues	23%
Better work set-up	21%
Dedicated work environment without distractions	19%
Feeling connected to your company and its values through in-office activities	19%
In-person learning opportunities and training sessions	17%
In-person technical help	15%

Source: BCG Workforce Sentiment Survey, 2020 (n=1002, Australia only)

Overall, 57% of people are excited to go back to their workplace when restrictions ease. People with children at home feel this excitement more (64% versus 50% for those that don't have children), with a particular enthusiasm to get back to a distraction-free environment with a better work set-up.

Interestingly, men are more enthusiastic about returning to offices than their female colleagues (62% versus 53%), having most missed the distraction-free work environment and in-person formal collaboration with team mates.

Younger employees are also more ready to return to offices, with 66% of 18 to 30-year-olds feeling enthusiastic about going back, versus only 47% of 51 to 60-year-olds. This can be tied to the fact that younger people place greater value on social interactions with colleagues, and feeling affiliation with their organisation.

## Digging beneath the data to understand employee needs and how to meet them

Understanding workforce macro-trends in the COVID-19 environment is an important start. But what became evident from the research is that there was typically a wide spread of different responses to each question. Clearly everyone's circumstances are different. Everyone wants and needs different things. We are all weathering the same COVID-19 storm, but we are navigating it in different boats.

In digging beneath the averages, we were able to see clusters of people–groups that whilst not identical had similar identifiable attributes (age, profession, income, family etc.) and similar needs. Using BCG's advanced analytics division, BCG Gamma, we were able to cluster the survey data into statistically significant and coherent segments that revealed how different contexts trigger different needs and aspirations. It should be noted that although the survey participants have an overall demographic profile representative of the Australian population as a whole, the online nature of the survey saw a skew of respondents away from industries such as manufacturing and roles such as labourers.

This process yielded eight employee segments described in Exhibit 7. Each segment is experiencing the COVID-19 crisis differently, with different needs to different degrees. And each segment also has specific expectations of their employers and their workplaces.

To make it easier to understand the different experiences and expectations of each segment, we created a persona for each one. While the persona descriptors aren't designed to be 100% accurate for everyone, most employees should be able to identify more with one of the segments.

EXHIBIT 7 | Eight employee personas all have different needs
Based on statistical segmentation

Persona	Profile
Matt Battling Gen Z'er (11%)	Basic education, young, low income, retail, health-care service and trades worker
Jasmine Concerned young professional (17%)	Single, younger professional with advanced education, works in healthcare, education and professional services
Robert Family-focused professional (13%)	Educated, new or planning kids, new to job, works in financial or other professional services
Tony Collaborative industrial manager (10%)	Family oriented, good income, works as a manager in manufacturing, construction and transport
Anita Overstretched parent (11%)	Large family, lower income, service oriented worker in retail and hospitality
Olivia Connection-seeking executive (16%)	High income, family oriented, advanced education, professional/manager in financial or other professional services
Mary Safety-first front-liner (14%)	Older, high tenure, on-site service focused workers, mostly in retail and healthcare
Sanjay Struggling remote worker (7%)	Older, lower income, high tenure, remote working worker in financial or professional services

% Survey Respondents

To illustrate, let us introduce you to a few of them and tell you a bit about what is (and isn't) important to each of them. Just to be clear, these are fictional stories to bring this to life, although they are based on real observations from the clustered survey responses for each segment.

Jasmine – the concerned young professional

Profile: Single, younger professional with an advanced degree, works in healthcare, education and professional services

Her story: Jasmine had been working in her new job for only 18 months when COVID-19 forced her to work from home. She lives in a shared house and, while she's been productive working from home, she's finding it hard to unwind and take proper breaks. She is missing the easy interaction with her work colleagues and the odd Friday drink with her workmates. She's actually excited to go back to the office as soon as it is safe. She has, however, mastered remote work tools and processes, and is using her spare time to pursue her career goals through online learning. She would appreciate proactive communication from her leadership about the implications of this situation for her career, but feels like she has autonomy from the firm to get the job done.

Robert – the family-focused professional

Profile: Educated, new or planning kids, new to job, works in financial or other professional services

His story: Before COVID-19, Robert worked in the city and was a high-performer in a junior role. However, his normal routine is useless in the crisis. He and his family have adapted quickly to working while looking after the kids all day, and hosting his aging parents. There is no space or time to do it all. Robert's employer understands his need for flexible work hours and encourages him to continue performing with promotion opportunities in mind. Working from home means more disposable income and higher productivity from less commuting and fewer outings. He now prefers to work from home, but would not mind escaping to the office once or twice a week. He's not worried about job security nor does he need an inspirational leader.

Mary – the safety-first front-liner

Profile: Older, high tenure, on-site service focused workers, mostly in retail and healthcare.

Her story: Mary has been working for the same company for 20 years. Her work is essential and can only be done on-the-ground, so she has been on-site throughout COVID-19 restrictions. Most of her everyday routines remain the same, and she has not experienced a dramatic change in her personal situation or work performance. However, with broader restrictions in place, she enjoys the friendly daily interactions with her colleagues. The crisis does concern her, as economic downturn could challenge her hard-won job stability. Right now, she values the efforts her employer is taking to keep her safe at work and employed. As she weathers the worst of the crisis, she is not thinking about career advancement.

The research has provided an incredibly rich data set to really understand each of these segments. A small selection of the information available to us in the course of this study is shown here in Exhibit 8.

EXHIBIT 8 | Example Visual Persona For Mary
Safety-first front-liner

Profile
Older, high tenure, on-site service focused workers, mostly in retail and healthcare

About Mary
Mary has been working for the same company for 20 years. Her work is essential and can only be done on-the-ground, so she has been on-site throughout COVID-19 restrictions. Most of her everyday routines remain the same, and she has not experienced a dramatic change in her personal situation and or work performance. However, with broader restrictions in place, she enjoys the friendly daily interactions with her colleagues. The crisis does concern her, as economic downturn could challenge her hard-won job stability. Right now, she values the efforts her employer is taking to keep her safe at work and employed. As she weathers the worst of the crisis, she is not bothered by pursuing any career advancement.

Achievement

Engagement

Productivity

Decreased — Neutral — Increased
Average for all segments

Role must be performed on-site — **52%** — 27%avg

Remote workplace preference
Average for all segments
On-site only | 1-20% | 21-40% | 41-60% | 61-80% | 81-100%
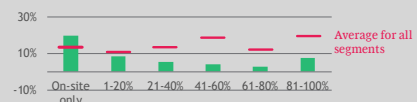
Negative impact
- Decreased income
- Feelings of anxiety, depression and loneliness
- Low work life balance

Positive impact
- Increased contact with co-workers

Win my trust
- A good sense of job security and stability
- Safety at work

Build a targeted, sustainable EVP that keeps the best talent inside and attracts the best talent from outside

Organisations need to know their workforce to tailor their Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and focus on what matters. Knowing your people will maximise policy direction, investment and processes, and support your leaders to have effective conversations. The insight generated by applying the segments works at the whole-of-business level and can be tailored to individual departments – a warehouse team is likely to have different needs to a finance team, even if they work for the same business. Knowing what's likely to be on their minds is a great starting point.

Once an organisation knows their employee personas, they will be able to design custom-fit EVPs that address the specific needs and aspirations of their employees. When current and potential employees look at your EVP, they expect to see that you understand broader workforce trends, such as the flexibility to work where and when they need. At the same time, they will feel more connected to, and interested in, your organisation if the EVP reflects their specific needs.

When designing EVPs, there are six dimensions to what you offer your candidates and employees and these are described in Exhibit 9.

EXHIBIT 9 | EVP attributes organised by six overarching dimensions

Organisation offerings
- Principles and values (excluding: trust)
- Purpose
- Well-known Brand
- Company reputation
- Industry leadership
- Company growth rate
- Financial strength
- Product portfolio
- Global organisation
- Environmental action
- Social impact initiatives
- Transparency and Ethics

Work offerings
- Innovative work
- Autonomy to make decisions
- Work-life balance
- Home office (remote work)
- Flexible work hours
- Job impact on business results
- Job impact on the society
- Use of new technologies
- Quality of workspace

Rewards
- Monthly base salary
- Variable bonuses - short term
- Long-term incentives
- Appreciation for your work
- Financial stability
- Benefits

Opportunities offerings
- Personal challenge/growth
- Career advancement opportunities
- Training and development
- Global career opportunities
- Social impact opportunities
- Opportunities to work in other area

People offerings
- How leaders act or behave
- Senior leadership reputation
- How team members act or behave
- Diversity of team members

Culture offerings
- Meritocracy
- Focus on results
- Collaborative environment
- Entrepreneurial environment (delegation and autonomy)
- Quality of internal relationships
- Respect for diversity

To tailor an EVP to its workforce, every organisation needs to think about the variety of ways in which they can make a tangible difference in the post-COVID-19 world, and then prioritise what is best for their employees' professional and personal needs. Some examples of this are shown in Exhibit 10. An EVP will generally focus on
ongoing needs, but organisations need to keep in mind that employees will have some tangible short-term needs from COVID-19 that they need to support during this period of uncertainty. Some of these needs will resolve naturally as the world transitions after COVID-19, while others will endure into the future as they are long-term pre-COVID-19 trends that the crisis has only accelerated.

EXHIBIT 10 | EVP attributes adapted to the Australian COVID-19 context

Organisation offerings

- Develop a customised Purpose that sets your organisation apart
- Become a listening organisation that employees can trust
- Invest in the measures your people need to help them deliver on the organisation's purpose

Work offerings

- Tailor office design to meet the new hybrid work needs (e.g., trade single desk space for team alignment rooms)
- Support large-scale remote workforce with agile cadence and digital tools
- Repurpose savings in real state to help employees set up a home office (e.g., Google $1000 grant)

Rewards offering

- Develop and consolidate your reputation as a stable employer
- Provide transparent career progression pathways with consistent and unbiased metrics and two-way feedback
- Offer a robust set of benefits that supports employees in a holistic way (e.g., Aetna proactively address issues such as employee isolation)

Opportunities offerings

- Offer a broad range of L&D opportunities catering to on-site and remote employees
- Upskill employees in new ways of working such as agile teams and decision-making

People offerings

- Train managers to lead from the heart and show empathy and understanding
- Stand behind a strong set of diversity and inclusion policies that make your organisation a welcoming and safe place for all employees

Culture offerings

- Foster innovation, collaboration and autonomy
- Hold social events that help employees feel affiliation and connection to the organisation and their colleagues

Organisations can use this insight to design tailored EVPs, with different elements targeted to the unique needs of the employee segments that make up their workforce. For example, when thinking about the three personas we mentioned earlier, we can see what is more important and critically what is less important to each of these individuals. Knowing this reduces 'waste' in the system and means you don't provide things to your people they simply don't care about or, worse, actively don't want.

EXHIBIT 11 | Example EVP attributes for 3 Personas

	Jasmine – the young and concerned professional		Robert – the family-focused professional		Mary – the safety-first frontliner	
	Very important	Less important	Very important	Less important	Very important	Less important
Work offerings	• Reliable digital remote work tools • Physical office for formal teamwork and casual networking • Personal and practical coaching to help her navigate uncertainty	• Permanent desk at the office	• Reliable and user-friendly digital remote work tools • Flexible hours and location • Adequate hardware to set up a home office • Physical office for focused work time	• Physical face-to-face meetings and collaboration	• COVID-safe work premises • Flexible work arrangements to help her be present at home more regularly • Personal and practical coaching to help her navigate uncertainty	• Home office set-up
Reward offerings	• Clear career progression path • Competitive salary • Symbolic appreciation for performance	• Stable long-term affiliation with the organisation	• Clear career progression path with proactive coaching to help him progress	• Symbolic appreciation for performance	• Prioritised job stability	• Fast career progression
Opportunity offerings	• L&D programs to increase her career mobility options	• Training in remote work tools	• Digital remote work training and coaching	• Mobility opportunities	• L&D opportunities to increase her career mobility options	• Training in remote work tools
People offerings	• Inspiring, encouraging and transparent senior leadership	• Bureaucratic leaders with little employee interaction	• Leadership promoting and sponsoring flexible work to support diverse personal needs	• Motivational leaders who could be perceived as vague	• Proactive and transparent communication from leadership on safety and job stability	• Motivational leaders who could be perceived as vague

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS HAVE brought forward a structural revolution in how we work. It has tested new ways of working on a scale and in a way that we would not have thought possible three months ago. As a result, the rate of change that employees expect and can adapt to has been accelerated by many years.

To make the positive impacts of this change sustainable and continue to reap the upsides of personal and working lives intersecting, we need to recognise that the barriers employees face to long-term success are personal. To overcome these barriers, leaders can use the insights from this survey to understand their people, how they prefer to work, and their greatest needs, for the benefit of their employees, their organisations, and for our economy and society.

While organisations can't do everything at once, they can understand which actions will have greatest value for their employees, and create tailored EVPs that fulfil career objectives and increase productivity, engagement and sense of achievement. What's clear is that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work. There will be too much wasted effort, too many meaningless policies, more mismatched expectations and fewer interactions between your employees.

But imagine a world where your enterprise policies resonated perfectly with the people in your business. Imagine if your team members understood each other and were able to work collaboratively and cohesively, teaming so that everyone (including the business) is happy and productive. Imagine if you could train your leaders to have empathetic 1:1 conversations with their team members, and be easily able to hone in quickly on what's important to that person at that moment in time.

This is the opportunity, to personalise for your people, and the organisations that get this right will have a clear advantage in the race for talent.

About the 2020 workforce sentiment survey

The 2020 Workforce Sentiment Survey interviewed a sample of 1002 respondents, over the period of 2020. The sample was representative of the Australian population over 18 years in age as dictated by age and gender. To run this survey BCG teamed with Lucid a global leader in survey deployment and analysis, with a footprint spanning five continents.

For Further Contact

If you would like to discuss this report, please contact one of the authors mattey.chris@bcg.com.