Your post-pandemic business won’t look like your past—or your present.

What to do now and in the future to help keep your business moving and emerge stronger

As COVID-19 vaccines roll out across the globe, businesses are eager to move forward in a post-pandemic world. But so much has changed in the past year that businesses can’t just return to the way things once were. Whether the goal is to restore revenues, ramp up employee productivity or grow the business in 2021, leaders in many sectors need to reimagine work and the workforce.

What that vision looks like will be different for every company depending on how the pandemic has affected their organization. There’s no one-size-fits-all approach for how to move a business forward. Every company’s plans should be based on their particular challenges and goals.

Regardless of where your business stands, making smart moves in four key areas can help position your organization to rebuild revenue and emerge stronger:

- **Short Term – Now through July**

  President Joe Biden is hopeful America can “mark independence” from Covid-19 on July 4th if people get vaccinated, along with making all adults eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine no later than May 1st. This could boost consumer confidence, fuel demand for services and experiences and spark new business models, according to a record share of CEOs (76%) who believe global economic growth will improve in 2021.

  A surge in retraining is also likely as the workforce shifts away from sectors deeply impacted by the pandemic toward in-demand industries that are likely to require new skills. Combine people and the right technologies to help drive business outcomes. As offices reopen, evaluate what workforce mix makes the most sense for your company: on-site, remote, or hybrid, and develop policies to clarify expectations. Engage employees by asking for their input and be prepared to adjust policies as needed.

  **As confidence and optimism continues to improve, ask:**

  How can we meet the changed needs of customers and employees in a new environment in the short-term?

  **Your strategy**

  - Lean harder into what’s driving revenue now.
  - Go all-in on digital transformation now, not later.
  - Consider how contingent workers can bring agility to your people strategy.
  - Reassess and correct for security, IT and cyber infrastructure risks.
  - Determine how to efficiently execute payroll, forecasting, reporting, and documentation based on COVID-19 relief bill employee retention credits.

  **Your people**

  - Remain mindful of employee burnout, increase mental health offerings and lead with purpose.
  - Invest more in collaboration and productivity tools; detail where your people are working.
  - Focus on employee trust to create a safe environment for people.
  - Build a culture of belonging through diversity and inclusion.

  **Your customers**

  - Model for new demand scenarios as customers shift back to buying essential products.

  **Your workplaces**

  - Strengthen safety protocols onsite, including automatic contact tracing.
  - Support secure and effective remote work capabilities.
  - Reduce or expand leases as you perform scenario planning for your mid-term and longer-term real estate needs.
Medium term – August through December

As the pandemic subsides, it’s likely to fuel a sharp demand for in-person experiences, which may include a full-blown return to campuses and offices, a rush on travel and more. But even as “regular” life resumes, it’s crucial to understand what has changed permanently. Data insights can help you identify where it makes sense for pandemic adjustments to become permanent: reduced worksite capacities, streamlined product offerings or more modes of delivery for customers. These changes may reduce costs and free up resources that could help accelerate your recovery or fuel growth.

Look across your business to pinpoint what’s most likely to be in demand soonest and plan to shift resources, people and spending to these areas. More than three-quarters (79%) of CHROs surveyed expect to change resource allocations for workforce investments in 2021, and nearly the same number expect to offer reskilling and upskilling to the workforce later in the year.

As you look ahead to the second half of 2021, ask: What’s the company’s plan for our physical footprint, upskilling our people and ramping up business as demand increases?

Your strategy
• Accelerate the integration of legacy and new business models.
• Reduce customization temporarily, in favor of speed and consistency.
• Examine previously high-touch operations for a return-to-normal status.

Your people
• Map the skills you need against your workforce and create more inclusive opportunities to upskill.
• Digitally upskill employees to work in new ways and with new digital tools.
• Evolve workplace safety protocols to build confidence among employees who return to work on site.

Your customers
• Shift investment and resources to areas of strengthening customer demand early on.
• Invest in end-to-end process improvement and digitization.

Your workplaces
• Determine whether you have the right spaces for the right tasks – And they’re set up safely.
• Adopt cost-effective core operations improvements, like managed services.

Longer term – Looking ahead to 2022 and beyond

Nearly half (47%) of CEOs are very confident about revenue growth prospects looking ahead three years. As you enter the phase of long-term decision-making, consider how you can use lessons from the pandemic to be prepared for future disruptions and growth.

Double-down on digital acceleration and invest in customer service digitization to help refocus on new offerings. Make upskilling a priority for employees, including training focused on building agility and resilience.

Consider, too, the makeup of your workforce and workplace as you look ahead. Over the next year, more than half of executives are planning to consolidate premier office space, expand into the suburbs or create satellite offices. As you enter the phase of long-term decision-making, be sure to lean into your company’s culture and values.

As you enter a post-pandemic world, how can we prepare our organization for future disruptions?

Your strategy
• Fill your capability gaps with opportunistic M&A to boost competitiveness.
• Evaluate your supply chain ecosystem; support viable vendors and find alternatives.

Your people
• Use the trust you’ve earned to help your people adapt quickly and confidently to anticipated changes.
• Drive your broader business strategy by tapping into your cultural strengths to use behaviors to evolve your culture.
• Assess your progress toward deliberate inclusion efforts – Especially if caretakers or others within your organization were disproportionately impacted during pandemic.

Your customers
• Evaluate market changes and rebalance your products and services accordingly.
• Consider differentiated pricing based on how the market is settling into new business models.

Your workplaces
• Give up long-term leases and invest in tools for permanent hybrid or remote work.
• Invest in collaboration tools that encourage inclusivity and better experiences, such as virtual reality headsets.

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