



visier®

HR 2021 Trends

# People Strategies for an Uncertain Future

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# Executive Summary

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shook the entire world, leading to rapid changes in our personal lives, our economies, and our businesses. These challenges were met with rapid response, accelerating the move to large-scale remote workforces and thrusting organizations edging towards digital transformation fully into the online trenches.

As the pandemic ebbed and flowed, Black Lives Matter reignited the call for increased workplace equity and fairness. The movement forced a rethink of how organization's approach diversity and inclusion and produced a single rallying cry from consumers: Change needs to be made and it must be made immediately. Recent Edelman research show that 60% of people will boycott a brand if they're not aligned to their values.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic has shuttered some businesses, while causing others (such as online meeting and collaboration software companies) to thrive. If there's anything this year has taught us, it's that "survival of the fittest" no longer means the strongest will survive—but rather those who can adapt fastest to change.



# The Trends to Adopt in 2021

Fundamental shifts are taking place everywhere: from jobs to in-the-moment skills; from a focus on D&I as an HR program to D&I as a core business competency; from supporting collaboration through in-person proximity to supporting collaboration through digitally-enabled teamwork.

Through interviews with HR and Future of Work thought leaders, third party research, and insights gained from Visier's experts and benchmarking data, we have uncovered three critical areas where leaders must rethink their talent approaches, along with data considerations for each.



1

## Problem solving through uncertainty becomes the new norm

The unpredictability of the pandemic requires organizations to pivot from long-term strategic planning to operational planning that looks out weeks and months, rather than years. Agility will become a core business competency. While many leaders have no choice but to focus on immediate threats, there are actions you can take to also plan ahead. The aim of strategic foresight, according to prediction expert J. Peter Scoblic<sup>2</sup>, is to “not predict the future but rather to make it possible to imagine multiple futures.”

Furthermore, workforce planning must no longer happen in a silo. Those HR leaders who were already having regular data-driven planning conversations with business leaders, especially Finance, are in a better position to think strategically while responding quickly to the pandemic—all while considering the human impact of decisions.

2

## D&I action must happen now

In 2021, organizations that fail to make real and meaningful changes towards fair, equitable workplaces risk fines, bad press, and class action lawsuits. Additionally, new SEC rules and ISO metrics around human capital will push for greater accountability and better reporting.

There’s a criticism of corporate culture using keystone moments to pledge increased diversity efforts—and lacking a follow through—that isn’t unwarranted; very little movement has been made in the past few decades, despite the vocal nature of these D&I promises. Embedding D&I into your company’s DNA is the way forward to a more inclusive and successful business.

3

## The new expectations around employee experience

2020 saw the increase in digital and distributed teams, more reliance on automation, the largest and most rapid re-deployment of employees since World War II<sup>3</sup>— all while workers dealt with increased childcare responsibilities due to school and daycare closures, increased health risks, social distancing, and a severe recession.

The employee experience is no longer confined to the four walls of the office and employers must find ways to balance employee well-being and safety with business continuity. B Corporations (BCorps) are for-profit businesses that have been certified for meeting the highest standards of social and environmental performance. During the 2008 financial crisis, these types of organizations were 64% more likely than other businesses to survive the downturn.<sup>4</sup> 2021 will be about finding ways to alter business and human capital management models that serve multiple stakeholders—in addition to shareholders.



## Ready or not, the future is here

Thanks to lessons learned from previous recessions, we already know that organizations that avoid a purely clinical approach to talent decisions will emerge from this crisis stronger than their competitors<sup>5</sup>. People analytics enables you to answer questions across the entire employee lifecycle of attract, develop, and retain, while also fueling more accurate and agile workforce planning.

This report shows you how to meet the future with the confidence only data can provide.

Trend 1

# Problem Solving Through Uncertainty Becomes New Norm





### The rethink

## Agility must become a core business competency

Based on previous recessions, we already know that organizations that avoid a purely clinical approach to talent decisions will emerge from this crisis stronger than their competitors.<sup>9</sup> With thoughtful risk-taking strategies, saving livelihoods and controlling costs need not be mutually exclusive. For example, while many businesses were forced to cut staff, others were ramping up hiring efforts, which led to collaborations that were previously unthinkable.<sup>10</sup> Organizations that once competed for talent teamed up to redeploy displaced workers to where they were needed most.

An agile process that supports planning—whether it's three months ahead or one day ahead—requires rethinking the tech landscape and regular workforce planning conversations with business leaders, especially Finance. This is not a temporary requirement.

“There will be more remote workers and more part-time remote workers when we return to normal. We need more advanced analytics, pushed down to line managers, to manage those types of workers effectively,” says Russell Klosk, Strategy Principal Director, Talent & Organization, Accenture Strategy, of Accenture.

### The challenge

## How can we respond to ever-changing talent needs?

Matching talent to fluctuating demands has become a weekly and day-to-day challenge. Reopening the US economy resulted in more hirings, but the resurgence in COVID-19 cases led to a slowdown as employers grew cautious once more.<sup>6</sup> Plans have also been disrupted through change in employee behavior either through absence, resistance to certain working conditions, and turnover.

Facing an uncertain recovery in the months ahead, many organizations will continue to focus on here-and-now operational workforce planning.<sup>7</sup> Due to the unpredictability and volatility around short-term profitability, cost containment will continue to take center stage<sup>8</sup>—even for those organizations seeing increases in demand.

## The response

### Agile workforce planning actions to take in 2021

#### Implement data-driven scenario planning immediately

Resilient organizations develop workforce plans for multiple situations, whether it involves divestitures, splits, no growth, slow growth, medium growth, or rapid growth. This will help you understand the range of possibilities for tackling cost challenges and pursuing new opportunities.

#### Unsilos your data

Oftentimes, information is spread across the organization in siloed systems within various departments, making it difficult to aggregate and reconcile. Look for workforce planning technology and tools that enable your team to create and compare different workforce planning scenarios (each with different workforce movement and cost assumptions) and build multiple contingency plans.

#### Focus on skills rather than jobs

In 2020, many individuals found themselves switching to completely different roles—with these changes taking days, not months. In the Finance sector, for example, leaders used analytics insights<sup>11</sup> to move people from processing claims to selling new policies. They can move people back and forth based on weekly—even daily—demand. To avoid doing this in a vacuum, make sure skills information—from systems that track time and attendance, customer

service, skills, and sales—is securely and quickly shared around the organization to multiple different work groups and people managers.

#### Take a fact-based approach to reskilling

Good people will stay and perform if they see a role for themselves that will move their career. Reskilling has helped soften the economic blow of the pandemic<sup>12</sup> and enabled organizations to increase career opportunities. Using people analytics, you can discover which employees are the best candidates for reskilling, and quantify who is likely to succeed at training and likely to stay with the organization long enough to get the training needed and use it to benefit the business.

#### Develop flexible budgets and processes

Unforeseen circumstances, like COVID-19, pose a challenge to HR teams that don't have the budget flexibility to adapt to the changing environment. With a shorter planning cycle in place, you need to quickly realign resources to different projects as they become more critical. Being able to take action on short-term planning cycles means HR teams need to be far more efficient at understanding and tracking their data; look to automation and analytics-based processes to replace inefficient manual data reporting.

## The analysis

### Answer these questions with data to prepare for 2021

- What is our internal supply likely to be for critical roles?
- What segments of our workforce will shrink or grow the most as business models change?
- How can we minimize the future needs for RIFs by planning for voluntary attrition, re-training and re-assignment to align with business demand?
- How can we recruit and grow needed skills over time rather than compete externally for talent on a reactive basis?
- How can we improve management/organizational efficiency by monitoring and increasing spans of control?

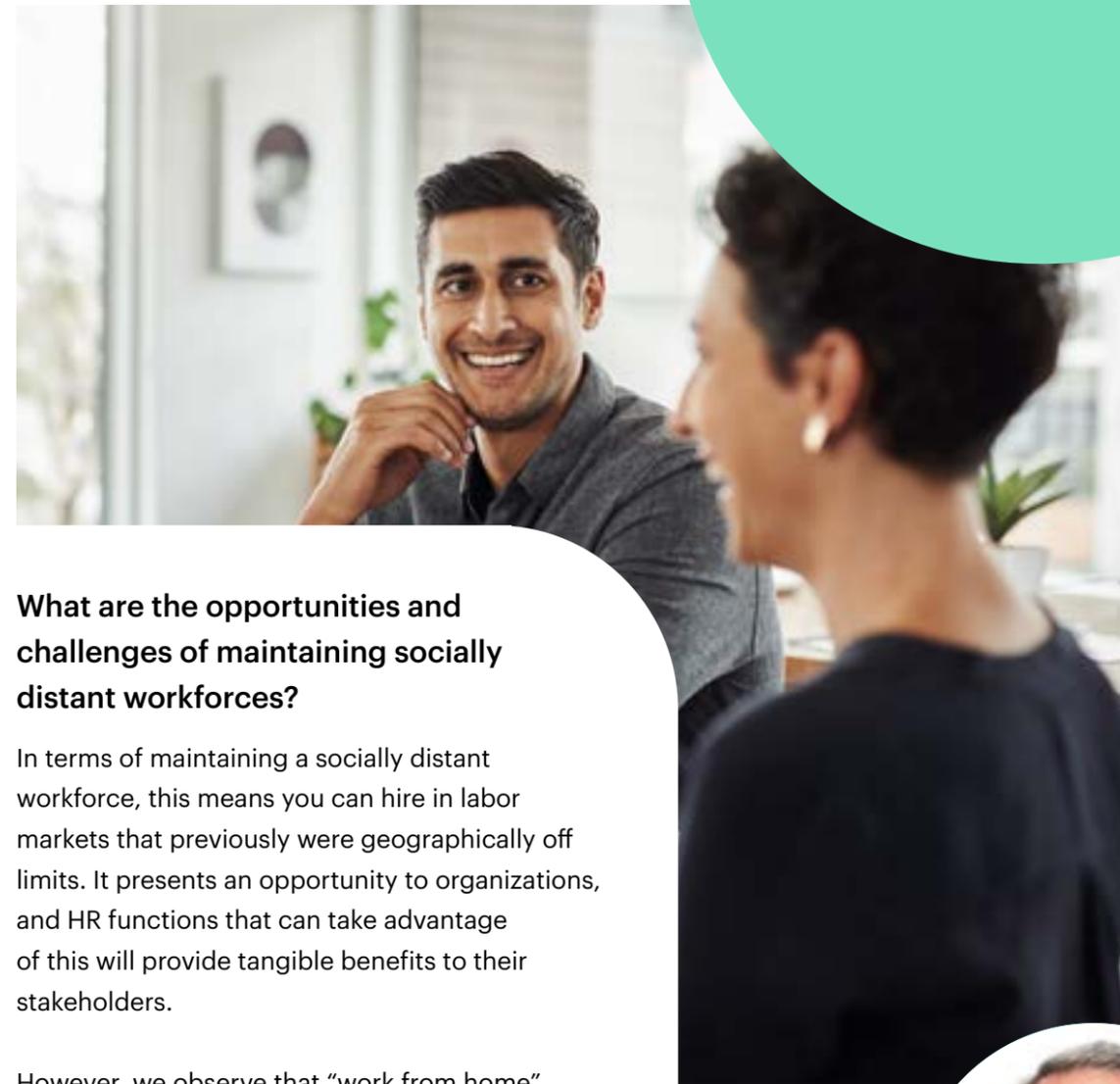
Partner  
Q&A



**Matt Stevenson**  
Partner and Leader,  
Workforce Strategy &  
Analytics Practice

### How will monitoring productivity be different this year?

The risk most companies run with monitoring is confusing “activity” with “productivity.” In the past, most productivity measures were direct (how much did you sell?) or indirect (engagement, time spent in the office, task completion). Since the traditional measure of productivity for knowledge work and service work was time in the office, this has been upended, and risks being overwhelmed by “activity-based” measures as opposed to “output-based” measures. My guess is that there will be a new science to looking at productivity, but what that will look like is still being developed—so it is too early to tell.



### What are the opportunities and challenges of maintaining socially distant workforces?

In terms of maintaining a socially distant workforce, this means you can hire in labor markets that previously were geographically off limits. It presents an opportunity to organizations, and HR functions that can take advantage of this will provide tangible benefits to their stakeholders.

However, we observe that “work from home” works better for people without kids and large houses. Broadly, it is tougher for people in crowded conditions who have lost access to childcare. If your workforce leans one way or another, you either have an advantage or a risk. The risk can be managed, but it has to be done purposefully to help employees remain productive.

Careers and career progression will also be different for people who stay remote. The organization risks creating a two-tiered career structure that has different rewards and career progress for folks who are in the office and those that are remote (i.e. out of sight and out of mind). Thus, HR should use people analytics to figure out how these two career paths are different, and add that to the design of the employee experience.

Partner  
Q&A



**Russell Klosk**  
Strategy Principal Director  
Talent Organization

### What workforce planning improvements are needed to weather uncertainty in 2021?

The trends that were once pushing companies toward Strategic Workforce Planning as a business differentiator (demographics, globalization, the power and democratization of analytics, Future Workforce, etc.) all accelerated during the COVID-19 crisis. This forced a shift to more transactional and near-term activities such as defining what are essential roles vs. critical roles.

To up their game, HR needs to infuse analytic skills in every job in the workforce and build the processes, capabilities, and tools to not only be data-driven, but also forecast future work effectively and build the workforce plans to meet those business needs. HR is going to need to be very agile over the next 12 months, as we figure out how to flex and respond to COVID-19 and its impacts on workers and the business. Until we get past this crisis, it is going to define what HR does.

### Where is the biggest workforce planning opportunity?

We are starting to have true AI, where advanced analysis and decision making can be done by a machine. But we need better analytics to enable the machine to make decisions the way that humans do—and that’s going to accelerate. This technology will change every job in the next five years. Identifying the new skills and skill proximity, and how people can be more fluid in how they work and how organizations utilize them, is all dependent on good visibility and analytics.

**“Ramping up can take multiple forms such as partnerships with educational institutions and public sector or with startups, forming coalitions with other organizations, lessening the credentials requirements or a combination of all.”**



**ReframeWork**  
Stela Lupushor  
Founder

Partner  
Q&A

**What is the biggest opportunity with a digital workforce?**

A new driver and enabler of innovation is emerging: inclusive design. Through inclusive design, technologies can be used to create more accessible environments (both physical and digital). This will enable everyone—not just those who represent the averages of general demographic segments—to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. It also creates new distribution channels and markets (more revenue for companies), and new entrants into the workforce (more taxpayers and more balance in the labor market).

Given that many of us can (and do) work from our devices and are untethered to a physical space, the interesting question is how organizations can provide digital infrastructure and tooling “as a workspace” that is just as important as the physical one. This can bring both the Real Estate/Space planning and the IT organizations together to jointly plan how to design a workplace experience, and integrate the physical and digital worlds.

**What are the top strategies for filling workforce skills gaps in 2021?**

Over the past decade, in pursuit of satisfying shareholders, companies focused on cost reductions, which typically include a workforce reduction under the guise of skills obsolescence. Despite the current labor markets, there are fewer digitally-savvy candidates in the market. Companies now have to rethink their workforce and hiring strategies and instead invest in upskilling their workforce. HR has an opportunity to shape these strategies.

Ramping up can take multiple forms such as partnerships with educational institutions and public sector or with startups, forming coalitions with other organizations, lessening the credentials requirements or a combination of all. Most of these efforts will still be about investing in technical skills. Opportunities will lie in supplementing those with soft skills such as design thinking, accessibility, communications, collaboration, and foundational skills.



Trend 2

# D&I Action Must Happen Now

### The challenge

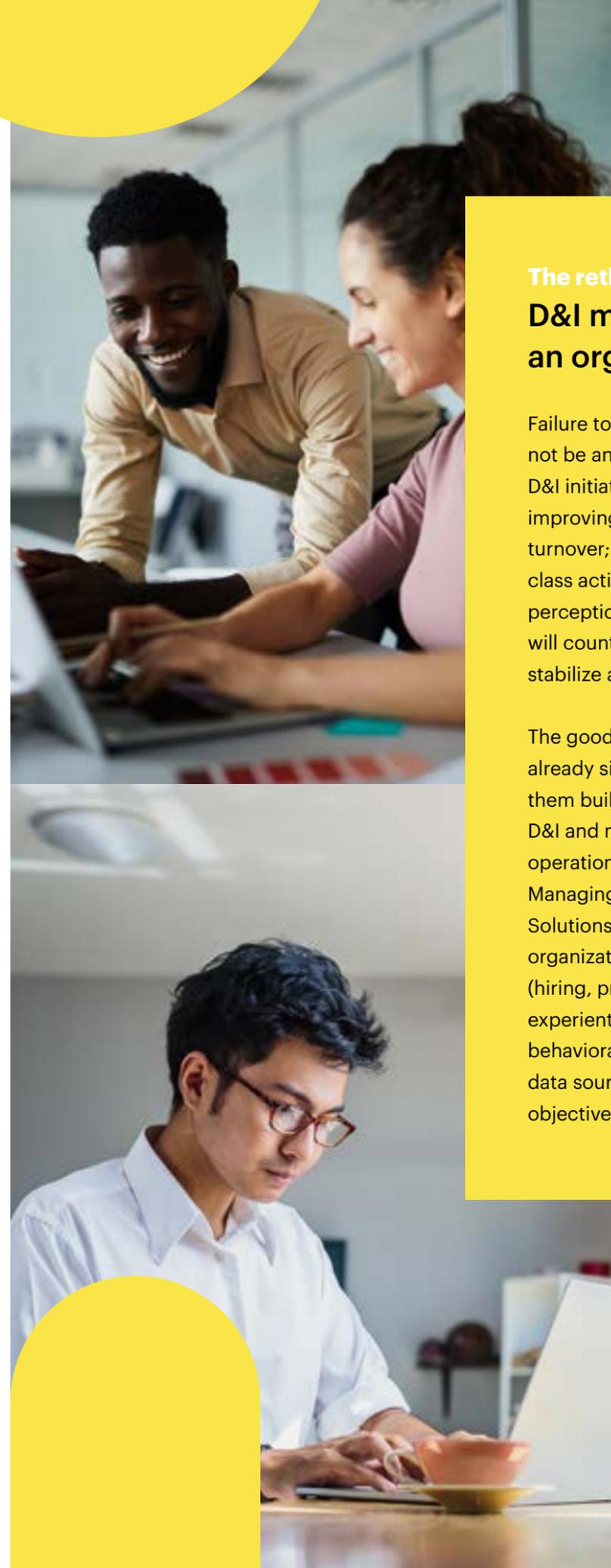
## How can we demonstrate a commitment to D&I?

A confluence of factors—the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter, and negative economic impacts on women and minorities—has brought diversity and inclusion to the forefront with a heightened sense of urgency.

But a wariness of empty promises remains. “Corporate America is ready to take action...or something” states a June 2020 article published in *The Atlantic*.<sup>13</sup> Through 2021 and beyond, employees and the general public will increasingly demand that leaders face reality and address core issues within their own corporations.

This won't be easy. Traditional diversity programs—mandatory training to address bias, job candidate testing, and grievance systems—have been proven to actually make firms less diverse.<sup>14</sup> In spite of being cited as a talent management priority for years, a Gartner survey found that “only 36% of D&I leaders report that their organization has been effective at building a diverse workforce.”<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, organizations are being held accountable to report on the diversity of their organization as a metric for their overall business health. In 2019, the ISO laid out 23 core metrics for reporting on human capital management,<sup>16</sup> and in August of 2020, the SEC adopted a new disclosure rule on how public companies manage their workforce. Both of these instances show a trend towards increased transparency about people metrics, and a financial risk of not showing improvement in creating and maintaining a diverse workforce.<sup>17</sup>



### The rethink

## D&I must be embedded in an organization's DNA

Failure to take action and make real progress will not be an option in the tumultuous months ahead. D&I initiatives aren't just about being virtuous, improving business performance,<sup>18</sup> or reducing turnover; they are about avoiding bad press and class action lawsuits. Furthermore, the employee perceptions of decisions made during this crisis will count double as the economy starts to stabilize and recover.

The good news is that many organizations are already sitting on a wealth of data that can help them build meaningful strategies to action on D&I and make it a core part of every business operation, process, and policy. Kelly Reed, Managing Director, Global People & Culture Solutions of Lockton Companies advises organizations to tap into layered operational (hiring, promotion, and pay equity analytics), experiential (employee pulse surveys), and behavioral (organizational network analytics) data sources to understand and advance D&I objectives.

Those who have invested in people analytics can answer D&I questions across the entire employee lifecycle, revealing insights to help them better attract, develop, and retain diverse employees. For example, an industrial manufacturer used people analytics to discover that as women moved through the hiring process, many were dropped during the interview process.<sup>19</sup> Armed with this insight, they were then able to develop targeted programs to address this specific issue.

Inclusion is also an important area of focus: Common definitions of this focus on feelings of inclusion. Indeed, opening up listening channels and engaging in two-way dialogue with employees is key. However, a broader definition of workplace inclusion also focuses on the ability of individuals to participate where key decisions are being made and the opportunity to make an impact and add value within the organization—no matter your background or identity.

## The response

### D&I actions to take in 2021

#### Account for everyone

Knowing where the organization sits overall in terms of diversity is a good place to start, but averages obscure pockets of risk. For example, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020 reveals that workforce participation for women is not improving when the analysis incorporates women of color.<sup>20</sup> Effective leaders go beyond blanket numbers and examine the multi-dimensionality and intersectionality of diverse workforce groups.

#### Determine the full impact of innovations like automation

The pandemic is accelerating automation across multiple industries,<sup>21</sup> as robots, after all, don't get sick. As new innovations are adopted, make sure specific groups of people don't get left behind. For example, McKinsey reports that "African Americans could experience the disruptive forces of automation from a distinctly disadvantaged position."<sup>22</sup> Leverage your workforce data to determine who will most likely be affected by automation and how these individuals could benefit from reskilling efforts. "Reskill and Restart," for example, is an online platform launched by Infosys that enables organizations to hire people who are undergoing job-specific training and explore reskilling opportunities for their current workforce.<sup>23</sup>

#### Examine your processes

Analytics helps you uncover D&I issues across all your employee lifecycle processes. If you don't see positive trends in every process, there may be opportunities to improve. For example, a 2020 Visier report<sup>24</sup> shows that, in spite of years of incredible media attention, women are less likely to succeed a male in an upper management role than men are to succeed a female—although we are seeing some leading indication of change happening in lower levels of management. By quickly determining where you should make changes, and the impact of those changes, you stay ahead of risks that can cost the business in fines, lawsuits, and reputation.

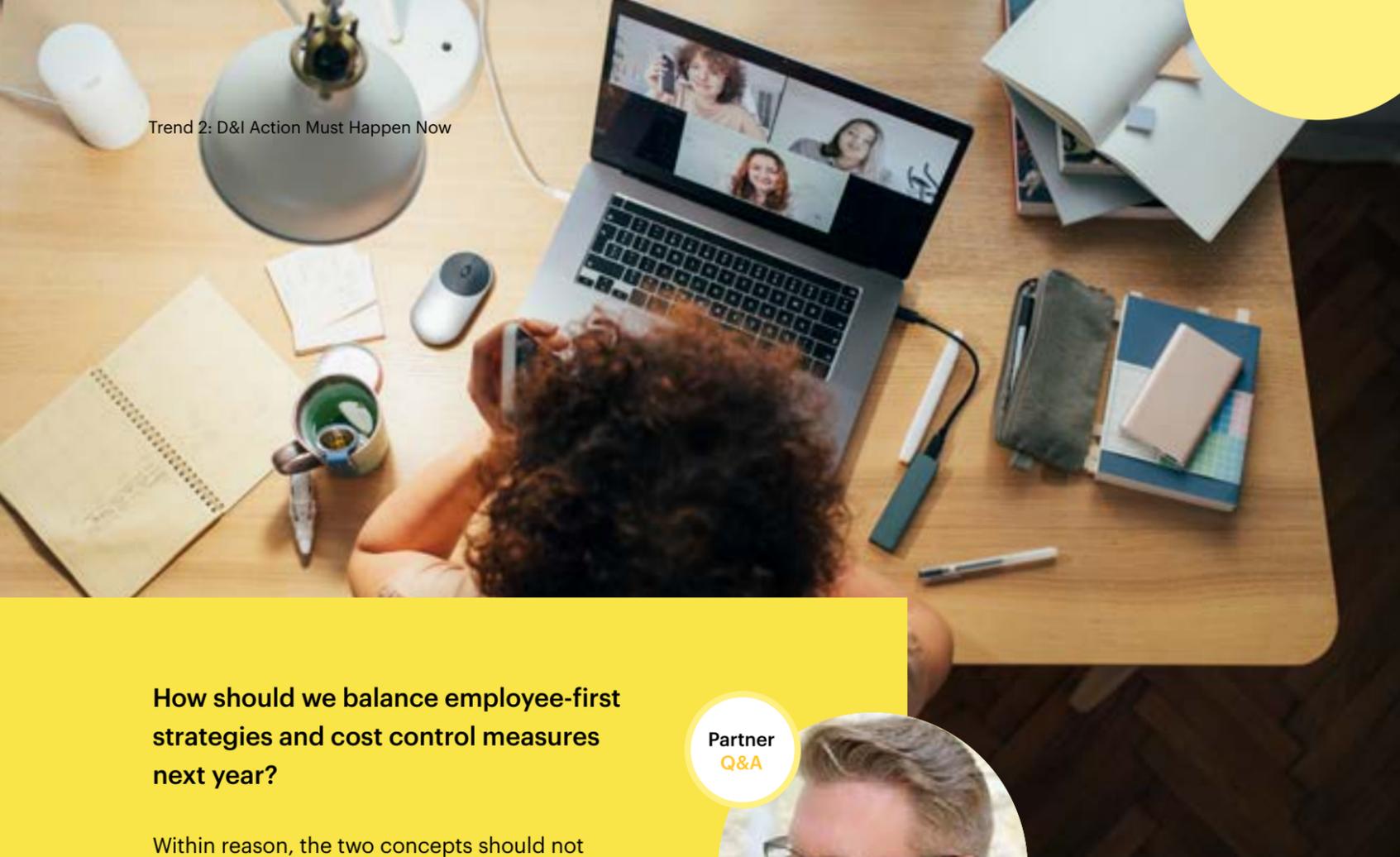
#### Keep leaders accountable

By tying D&I to—not just an HR initiative—but business health and sustainability, organizations will help mobilize entire workforces and create real change as a result. One way to do this is by recognizing leaders who prioritize diversity and tie compensation and advancement to D&I action.

#### The analysis

### Answer these questions with data to prepare for 2021

- How diverse are our leaders and feeder roles for leaders?
- What skills do we need to transform our business and how can women and diverse employees be trained to acquire those skills?
- Where are diverse candidates opting out during the recruiting cycle?
- Are our high performing minority employees choosing to exit the organization faster than non-minority employees in the same roles?
- How does the diversity of the interviewer impact diverse and non diverse applicants?
- Which diverse employees are most at risk of resigning?
- Which diverse employees should be considered for promotion?



### How should we balance employee-first strategies and cost control measures next year?

Within reason, the two concepts should not be at odds. There is extensive research that demonstrates a direct correlation between employee experience and financial results. Contrary to stereotypes about lavish corporate campuses and a talent war won by the highest bidder, the evidence reveals that exceptional employee experience is vastly more rooted in culture, leadership, shared mission, and a sense of individual purpose and worth.

With the workforce likely being the single largest cost-center in your organization, effective cost control should start with hyper-focus on nurturing engaged employees, who are statistically more productive, provide discretionary effort, and have lower turnover. HR should study the many credible resources available around modern Employee Experience (EX) design and implement and champion a cultural strategy built on the cornerstones of high-performing EX.

Partner  
Q&A



**Matt Petersen**  
Managing Director of  
Technology Experience



Partner  
Q&A



**Rebecca Stewart**  
District Sales Manager

### What does the future of work and people analytics look like over the next 12 months?

The COVID-19 environment has thrown a wrench in most companies' 12-month plans. Hopefully, companies that use analytics have been able to make quick financial adjustments. The concern I have is how accurate people analytics is with an unknown variable being added to the situation—specifically predictive analytic models. Unfortunately, most executives do not have the ability to adjust models with an unknown variable like the impact of an epidemic.

Take for example a top producing employee classified as "not likely to leave" the company. Now we need to throw in the impacts of the employee's new work environment (for example, working from home with three small children). The question is how the new environment impacts production, job satisfaction, and the employee's ability to continue work. If possible, adding family demographics, length of commute, and technology infrastructure to current people analytics models will give valuable new insight on your workforce.

**"There is extensive research that demonstrates a direct correlation between employee experience and financial results."**



**Manish Goel**  
CEO

Partner  
Q&A

### If HR leaders leveraged ONA for one thing to succeed in 2021, what should it be and why?

ONA is a critical tool in using data to understand patterns of collaboration and innovation within these evolving distributed workplace models. Existing embedded structural constraints, barriers and bottlenecks will not disappear in a digital and remote workplace. In fact, ONA highlights that these are often further amplified. ONA data allows

HR leaders to look beyond standalone changes in activity to understand how underlying networks are being impacted.

To succeed in 2021, HR leaders should leverage ONA to make prioritized decisions about focusing on those most disproportionately impacted by remote work, decisions about distributed models based on which teams and functions are optimized by working in-person, and decisions about how to nurture cultures which promote inclusion, diversity and creativity within digital and remote work models.

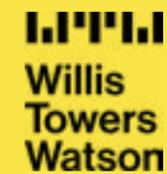
### Why and how should organizations leverage ONA to create more diverse and inclusive workplaces?

Organizations need to understand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) outcomes within the context of different underrepresented groups, as well as across the intersection of complex, overlapping identities. A key determinant of DEI outcomes is how the relationship networks for underrepresented groups influence their access to different opportunity structures such as promotable work opportunities, high status sponsors, and early access to information.

Because relationship networks always evolve, organizations can leverage ONA data to explore these in a nuanced way and dynamically measure the impact of interventions. Such an evidence-based approach strengthens C-level sponsorship. Using ONA data in a participative and transparent way also ensures empowerment of all individuals as active participants in building more diverse and inclusive workplaces.



Partner  
Q&A



**Ravin Jesuthasan**  
Managing Director &  
Global Practice Leader

### Has the health crisis changed the trajectory of automation?

We're seeing automation accelerate pretty significantly. The thing that we know is that we come out of each recession with more automation than when we went in. And during this pandemic, we have two triggers for accelerating automation. In addition to the typical cost drivers associated with a typical recession, you've also got the social distancing and physical spacing issues associated with getting work done.

In one of our surveys, we talked to about 800 companies around the world, and 23% said they were increasing the amount of automation that they were using. It raises some concerns given the potential for a jobless recovery, as we look at how we come out of this pandemic. In terms of budgets, it's really fascinating because Morgan Stanley did a survey of CIOs and CTOs and virtually all of them said that they were going to continue increasing their technology budgets.

### Will demand for gig work decrease or increase?

The gig side of the equation is fascinating because there is growing recognition of how pivotal gig talent is to the way work is done. We're seeing a spike in demand during this pandemic, particularly in certain industries that don't want to take on FTEs but are seeing increasing demand. So they engage with gig workers because it gives them the flexibility to adjust their operations as demand shifts.

Trend 3

# The New Expectations Around Employee Experience



### The challenge

## How can we ensure people stay engaged through multiple disruptions?

Remote working has been a business continuity lifeline through lockdowns and stay-at-home orders,<sup>25</sup> but its broader, permanent changes are still unknown. After a study revealed that remote working had impacted overall productivity and “creative combustion” within the company, JPMorgan urged their staff to return to the office.<sup>26</sup> But Twitter took the opposite stance and announced staff could permanently work from home.<sup>27</sup>

There are also compelling workforce cost implications to consider. While a shift to home offices could mean more employees in low cost locations, it could also create more job opportunities for key people who work remotely.<sup>28</sup> Organizations will be moving into recovery facing different supply-and-demand dynamics for talent.

Digital and distributed teams are leading businesses to new ways to keep track of employees. Makers of employee monitoring tools have seen an uptick in demand for their software, for example.<sup>29</sup> However, taking a surveillance approach may open up employee concerns over how their data is being used and impact productivity overall. Furthermore, monitoring activity is not the same as monitoring productivity.

### The rethink

## Employee experience must be optimized beyond the office walls

Studies have shown that a strong employee experience is a predictor for financial performance.<sup>30</sup> While the employee experience was at the top of HR’s priority list pre-pandemic, there will be “cultural evolutions to the new normal,” states Matt Peterson, Managing Director of Technology Experience at Insperity.

“By committing to a ‘culture-by-design’ methodology versus an organic, habit-based culture, you can identify strategies to retain the best pieces of your culture in a hybrid work environment, while proactively identifying and rectifying the components of your culture that get lost in a virtual setting,” adds Peterson.

Furthermore, it’s critical to examine productivity from within the broader perspective of creating a more positive employee experience. With the right approach, insights gleaned from digital tools will provide organizations with an opportunity to better understand their workers, strengthen trust,<sup>31</sup> and better position their organizations for recovery.



### The response

## Employee experience actions to take in 2021

### Employee well-being must come first

With increasing numbers of employees at risk for depression,<sup>32</sup> poor well-being is proving to be a major productivity concern. There is no shortage of apps that can help (which cover everything from mental and physical health, social concerns, and financial security), but these alone can't move the needle on wellbeing outcomes like increased vacation time, improved employee sentiment, and reduced unplanned absenteeism. This requires the ability to combine data from multiple disparate sources—connecting data from the HCM, wellbeing platforms, and engagement survey results together to produce rich insights.

### Consider low technology options

Addressing the personal stressors for employees (women in particular) who are facing additional childcare responsibilities<sup>33</sup> will involve sound HR policies like job sharing arrangements and scheduling flexibility. The effectiveness of these programs can be measured to determine how they can be adapted in a post-pandemic world, for example, to retain high-performing women.

Seek new ways to stay connected to employees  
A key component of productivity is continuous, two-way dialogue: managers must be able to both share and receive information from their teams. This type of dialogue doesn't come easily in remote work, especially when long periods of isolation have impacted people's social

**“Connecting data from the HCM, wellbeing platforms, and engagement survey results together [produces] rich insights.”**

### The analysis

## Answer these questions with data to prepare for 2021

- What kind of support do people need to collaborate with their colleagues effectively while working remotely?
- How should we be adjusting our performance goals to reflect current realities?
- Do leaders and managers have the tools they need to drive a culture of performance on their teams?
- How can we inspire employees with development opportunities that can help them make and impact on our organization?
- Are we seeing a change in overall performance between in-office and remote workers, and if so, what is driving that disconnect?

skills.<sup>34</sup> Survey tools like Qualtrics—along with employee feedback platforms like CultureAmp and employee engagement platforms such as Glint—have enabled organizations to get a pulse on employee sentiment.

### Understand how team dynamics are changing

Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) provides a realistic view of how people really communicate, are included, and build networks—which is very different from what is depicted on the traditional org chart. This is helpful for a manager to get a sense of whether certain employees are too isolated, are not being included, or whether people are working as a team.

### Take data governance seriously

Transparency, and clear objectives, about the purposes of data collection is paramount: If employees understand that there is a payoff for

them in the form of a better experience, and that this is not a Big Brother approach to workplace monitoring, then they will be more willing to have this information collected and analyzed.

### Revisit the organization's core purpose

89% of executives believe a strong collective purpose drives employee satisfaction.<sup>35</sup> The events of 2020 have left many employees with the desire to do more, not just for their personal growth, but for the greater good. To realign organizational priorities on a structural level, leaders should engage in a full assessment of where they are headed from a purpose perspective. Serving multiple stakeholders (customers, employees, shareholders, and the environment) requires monitoring different types of business outcomes and managing multiple tradeoffs. This will require a new set of metrics to define business success, along with more sophisticated analytics to manage the complexity of people decisions.

### What are some ways leaders can keep D&I at the forefront when designing strategies for the future of work?

As organizations grapple with how to upskill their people on how to become more inclusive leaders, they must personalize the learning employees receive. Employees today are stretched thin. They have very little time to learn new skills. However, with the use of technology, companies can understand the learning needs of the individual employee and only serve them the content elements that are most relevant, thus saving the employee time and increasing the learning effectiveness. Moreover, these same tools can overcome the feeling of isolation that so many feel due to the pandemic and foster inclusion through active, collaborative learning.



Partner Q&A

**accenture**

**Johnathan Medina**  
Strategy Senior Manager

### How can leaders best take action on their promises and D&I goals over the next 12 months?

Bold commitments must be met with bold actions. One of those bold actions is being comfortable admitting that while your company is not racist, racism still exists within your walls in the form of processes, policies, and ways of working. Another such action is employing a systematic approach to eliminating the bias that taints the diverse employee experience. Using data to understand these pain points will paint a clear picture of what interventions must be set in place to achieve equality. Once companies apply the same rigor to fostering inclusion as they do to a product launch, results come easier.



Partner Q&A

**LOCKTON**

**Kelly Reed**  
Managing Director,  
Talent & Culture

### How will workforce planning priorities change next year?

Workforce planning is crucial to company success, and a primary concern should be reassessing and identifying the critical roles that the company needs to face business concerns now. One way to reduce costs associated with the hiring process is to instead look at current employees and see how their skillsets can be used outside their traditional roles. Another way that workforce planning can help is by identifying tasks and jobs that can be done completely remotely and hire temporary workers. Create temporary “transitional” remote work opportunities. In creating such roles, employers would have the ability to define the

duties, compensation level, and duration of the programs. Employers should clearly communicate all rights to modify or discontinue programs should they need to.

### How will people analytics help HR over the next 12 months?

People analytics will be able to help HR by improving performance and productivity, upskilling/reskilling to talent mobility, and helping optimize employee engagement and experience for workforce sustainability. For example, people analytics can be used to redefine and design better metrics for performance management. Additionally, during a time when employees are (and will continue to be) stressed out, exhausted, and at risk for burnout and mental health risks, employee engagement and experience data can help leaders understand how to adapt work policies and practices, deploy much needed resources, and create a work environment that leads not only to high performance, but also high engagement and workforce sustainability.





**“Companies should ‘map’ their high potentials according to their leadership styles and find decisive, firm, and action-driven leaders to head the company during the crisis.”**

**How can organizations leverage ONA to survive the ongoing health crisis?**

Companies must be agile and able to change direction quickly, and managers should be able to think on their feet and take risks. Likewise, the unpredictability of the current situation calls for a new type of leadership. Companies should ‘map’ their high potentials according to their leadership styles and find decisive, firm, and action-driven leaders to head the company during the crisis.

One of Yva.ai’s clients, a hospitality software development company, used ONA to identify the informal leaders who can guide the company in times of uncertainty and make quick, responsive choices. As a result, the company shortened time-to-market, launched a new product aimed at helping restaurants during the lockdown, and sales returned to pre-COVID levels.

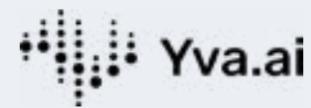
**How can companies use ONA and people analytics to mitigate employee burnout?**

In this changing work environment, companies must be very attentive to the wellbeing and productivity of their employees. ONA and collaboration analytics prove that some people become more distant and detached, while others are overwhelmed with remote digital work and quickly become stressed, frustrated, and burned out.

Collaboration analytics can mitigate this by detecting and predicting such patterns both individually and collectively by groups of employees filtered by territories, gender, role, and tenure. Combined with automatic active continuous employee listening (smart pulse surveys), integrated real-time employee experience platforms help to enact necessary measures to address problems before it’s too late.



Partner  
Q&A



**David Yang**  
CEO & Co-Founder

# Conclusion

Business leaders have been forced to acknowledge a fundamental truth head-on: traditional talent management models were not designed to keep pace with high levels of instability. Whereas it was once possible to predict future operating environments with relative certainty and remain committed to one plan of action for years, organizations must now continually revisit their modus operandi on a day-to-day basis.

In an environment that is characterized by extreme uncertainty, charting a path forward is not easy. But many leaders have risen to the challenge and focused on the connection between people and business agility. Now, more than ever, there are opportunities to:

- Explore reskilling options for the current workforce and hire people who are undergoing job-specific training
- Identify the informal leaders who can guide the company in times of uncertainty and make quick, responsive choices
- Move the needle on well-being outcomes like increased vacation time, improved employee sentiment, and reduced unplanned absenteeism
- Paint a clear picture of what interventions must be put in place to achieve equality

With an agile framework for decision-making that is guided by real-time data, leaders can quickly make the evidence-based people decisions that are needed through a crisis. The right mix of grit, empathy, and thoughtful risk-taking tactics can help organizations withstand the demands of today—and thrive tomorrow.



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# About Visier

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Visier was founded to focus on what matters to business people: answering the right questions, even the ones a person might not know to ask. Questions that shape business strategy, provide the impetus for taking action, and drive better business results.

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