

rise with *sodexo*

thriving in the worklife evolution

Insights for Adaptive Leaders



table of contents

4

Setting the Stage for Change

8

Prioritizing Employee Wellbeing for Improved Productivity

13

Working From Home and a Word of Caution

19

Returning to the Office: An Exercise in Safety and Trust

25

Strategising with Sustainable Business Practices

32

Summary



The Choluteca Bridge in Honduras continues to be one of the best metaphors for disruption even today.

The state-of-the-art, engineering marvel was rebuilt in 1996 and withstood Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

While the Choluteca Bridge stood firm and strong in its place, the river it crossed over had changed course due to the hurricane and roads connecting the bridge were destroyed. Now, it's a bridge to nowhere.

It's a great lesson in adaptability. It shows us adaptability goes beyond having foresight, planning and taking pre-emptive action. When disruption comes calling, every 'fact' and 'assumption' is questioned.

**Are we
prepared to
be flexible?
That is the
true test
of survival.**



setting the stage for change

The pandemic has interrupted our daily routines and disrupted the quality of our lives at home, work and everywhere in between.

In this unprecedented reality, the seeds of a fundamental restructuring of the world's social and economic order are being planted and we are seeing the emergence of a new era - the "next normal." In the past months, we have seen governments, businesses, employers and employees struggling, changing and adapting in different ways to rise beyond this disruption.

A recent research report online, the words of Gideon Lichfield, editor in chief of MIT Technology Review stood out as particularly poignant.

"The real abnormality is how uncertain things are. The pandemic has undercut the predictability of normal life, the sheer number of things we always assume we will still be able to do tomorrow."

GIDEON LICHFIELD
Editor in Chief of MIT Technology Review

Because Sodexo's mission is about improving people's daily lives, we're constantly curious about how COVID-19 is influencing the entire work-life continuum. We wanted to take a closer look at this snapshot in time, when much of the workforce has been working from home and some are beginning to return to their workplaces and see what was top-of-mind for employees.

In order to effectively lead our teams into the next normal, it is essential to know where your employees stand now. How has COVID-19 and the lockdown affected employees' worklife and how do they feel about returning to the workplace? And what can we, as businesses and employers do to be flexible and adapt to the new world requirements?



To explore these questions, Sodexo commissioned 20 questions within a larger public, global survey conducted by Harris Interactive. We'll review four main areas that revealed useful information and actionable insights for leaders:

1 | Employee state of mind in lockdown

During this challenging time, employees reported lower mental wellbeing that negatively affected productivity.

Over the past few months, we've seen mental health & wellbeing begin to improve, and going forward employees expect support from their employer in this area.

2 | Employee work from home experience

Employees have found working from home (WFH) to be a positive experience and many hope to continue having a WFH option.

Employers will need to address the lack of social interaction among employees and foster a sense of community in the months to come.

Continued...

3 | Employee perspective on back to work

The outlook about returning to work is overwhelmingly positive, but the vast majority are still concerned about their health and safety.

Fortunately, research reveals that employees put a significant amount of trust in their employers to protect them, so businesses must be prepared to deliver a safe environment.

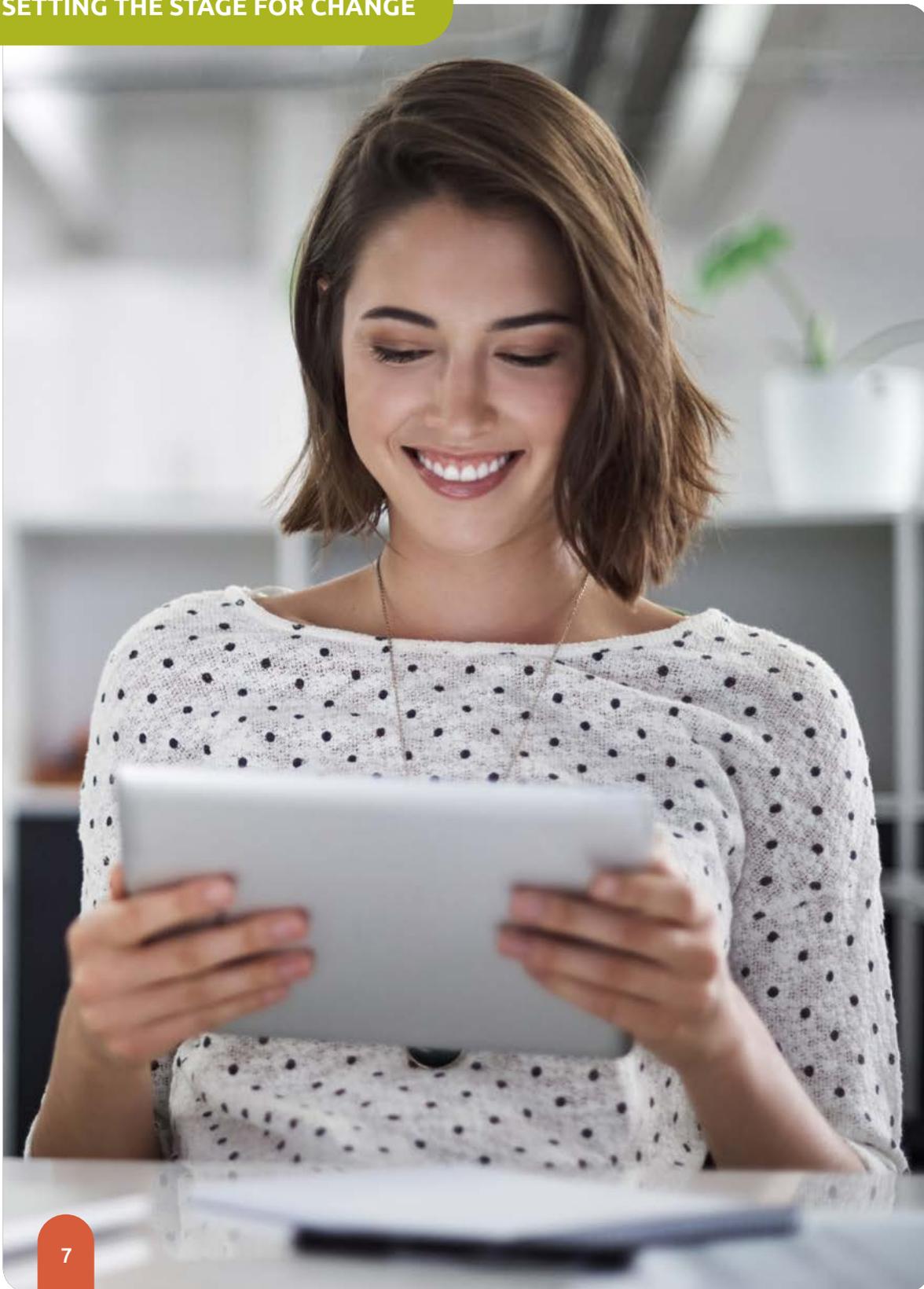
4 | Sustainable practices

Re-strategising with a focus on sustainable business practices will allow organisations to build in the resilience needed in these unpredictable times. Employees' expectations from employers are higher in the area of sustainability so businesses should prepare to meet these changing needs.

These insights are intended to help leaders find answers and shape solutions to navigate the crisis in their own environments. It encourages thinking across the multiple time horizons over which we see the crisis manifesting itself. In a time of unpredictability, we hope to be able to help you navigate new challenges in an agile and adaptable way.

In response to the changing needs of our clients, we developed [Rise with Sodexo](#), a holistic approach to wellbeing readiness for organizations preparing to reopen. You'll find examples of how organisations applied this approach throughout the ebook, and we hope they spark ideas for your own team or serve as inspiration.





The worklife data referenced in this ebook is mainly based on the results of a series of surveys conducted by Harris Interactive, including questions commissioned by Sodexo.

Sodexo and Harris Interactive have tracked the sentiment of employees from both the private and public sectors during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, asking about a range of issues including physical and mental wellbeing, productivity and the perceived pros and cons of remote working.

The survey included 4,824 online interviews with working adults in the USA, the UK, China, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Australia, collected in June 2020.





prioritizing employee wellbeing for improved productivity

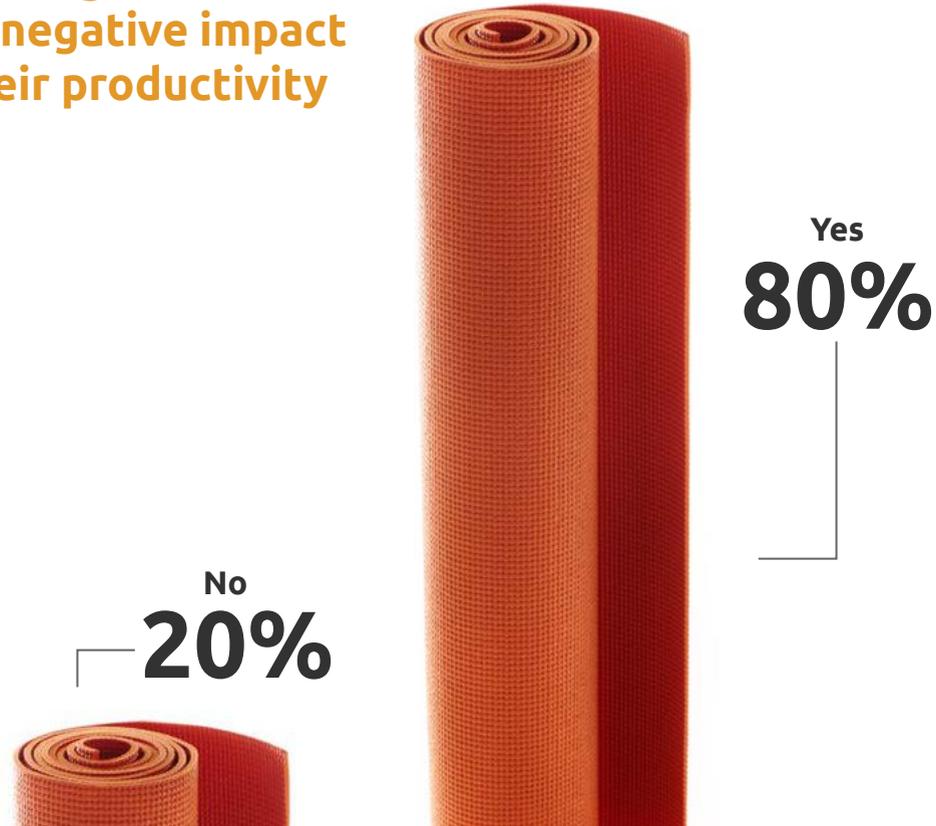
Mental wellbeing undoubtedly affects our quality of life and work. In fact, research shows that people with no history of mental health issues are developing serious psychological problems for the first time as a result of the lockdown, according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists (Source: [The Guardian](#)).

“

The anxiety, stress, financial strife, grief, and general uncertainty of this time will undoubtedly lead to behavioural health crises. It is therefore important that communities seeking a “next normal” can draw from their inherent strength and compassion to recognize, treat, and support those experiencing this human toll of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SOURCE: [MCKINSEY](#)

80% of managers with lower mental well-being state it has a negative impact on their productivity



Productivity at work is also negatively impacted by lower mental well-being. The [World Health Organization](#) has noted that depression and anxiety have an estimated cost to the global economy of \$1 trillion per year in lost productivity.

So how are employees handling the stress on their mental health and what are employers expected to do to help?

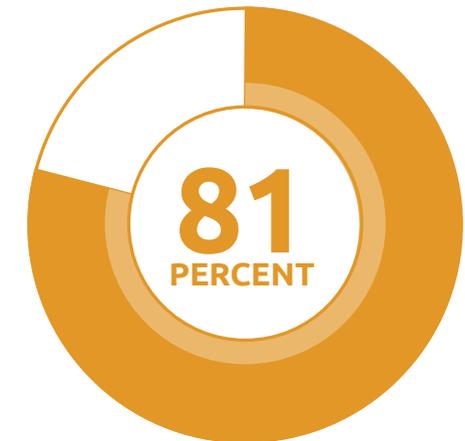
The good news is fewer employees reported lower mental wellbeing in June compared to the beginning of the lockdown in April, which indicates a level of recovery. However, according to the most recent survey, 4 out of 10 with lower mental wellbeing admit they are still not taking any action to improve their mental wellbeing.

4 out of 10

have taken no action to improve mental wellbeing



A significant proportion of employees reported both their workload and productivity are higher than before the pandemic. It is essential for employees to take care of their mental wellbeing to remain successful and productive. However, they don't expect to do it alone.



of respondents think it is the employer's responsibility or are fine with their employer to provide solutions to take care of mental wellbeing

Although individuals are ultimately responsible for their own mental health, it doesn't mean employers are off the hook. Most employees (81%) report that it is either their employer's responsibility to provide solutions to improve their mental wellbeing or that it is a good idea.

Protecting the mental well-being of our workforce is essential for a healthy, productive organization. Mental wellbeing could be naturally incorporated into managers' processes for checking in with employees on a regular basis during one-on-one meetings or weekly check-ins. Employers should consider surveying their own teams to gauge their interest in specific benefits or support measures.

Of those we surveyed, health/wellness benefits and food and beverage benefits were among the **top 5 most desired benefits**.

1 Short-term rewards
(e.g. annual bonus, service reward)



2 The possibility to work from home
(e.g. from one to a few days a week)



3 Financial benefits
(e.g. pension, life insurance)



4 Health and wellness benefits
(e.g. discounted gym membership, counseling services)



5 Free on-site dining/food and beverage
(e.g. canteen, free coffee, etc.)

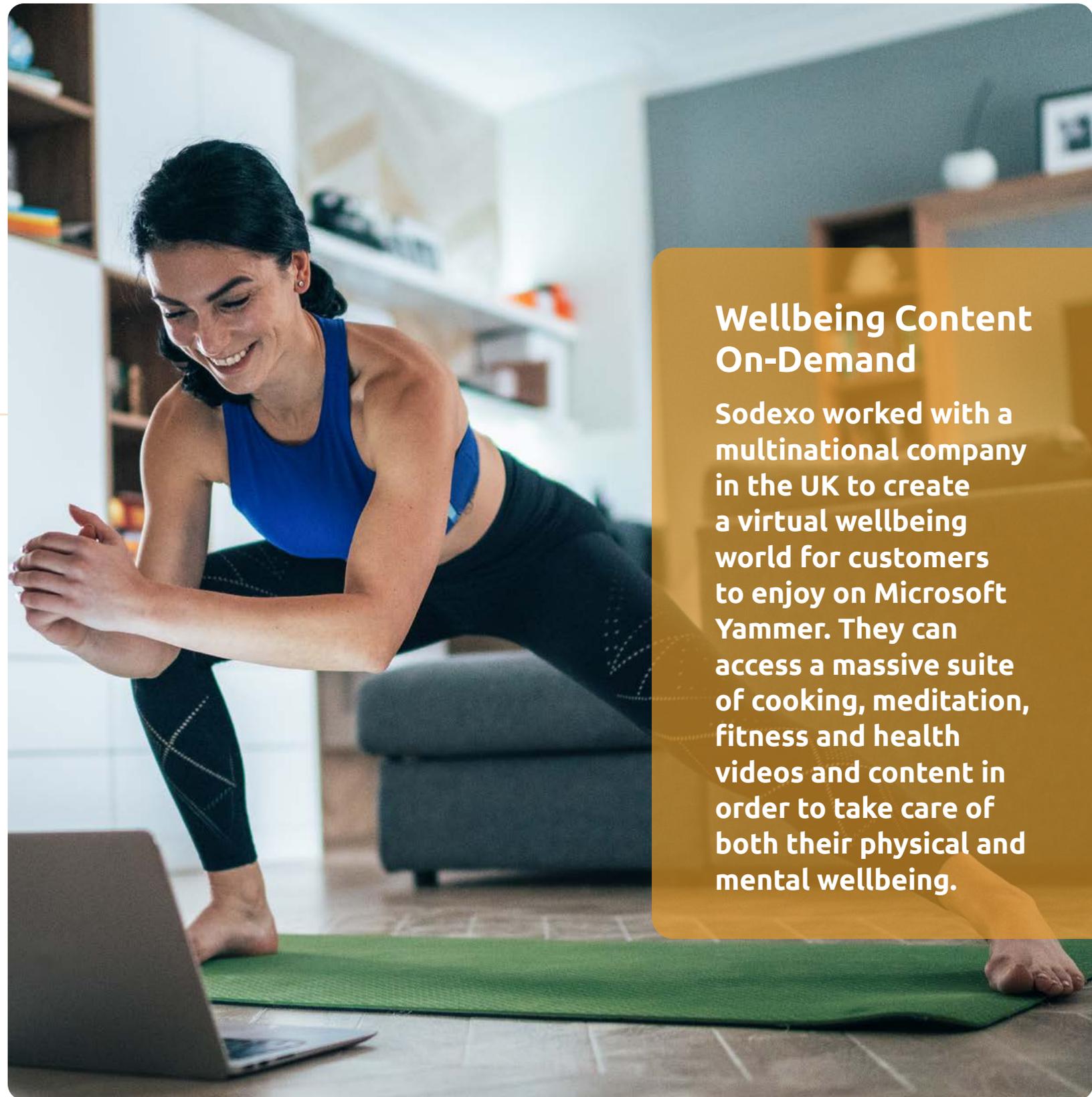


Businesses can also offer support by introducing new tools and technology to employees. For example, digital tools powered by artificial intelligence have been found to successfully diagnose and help treat mental illnesses ([Harvard Business Review](#)). This can be particularly useful for remote workers or those who live in areas where access to mental health professionals is limited.



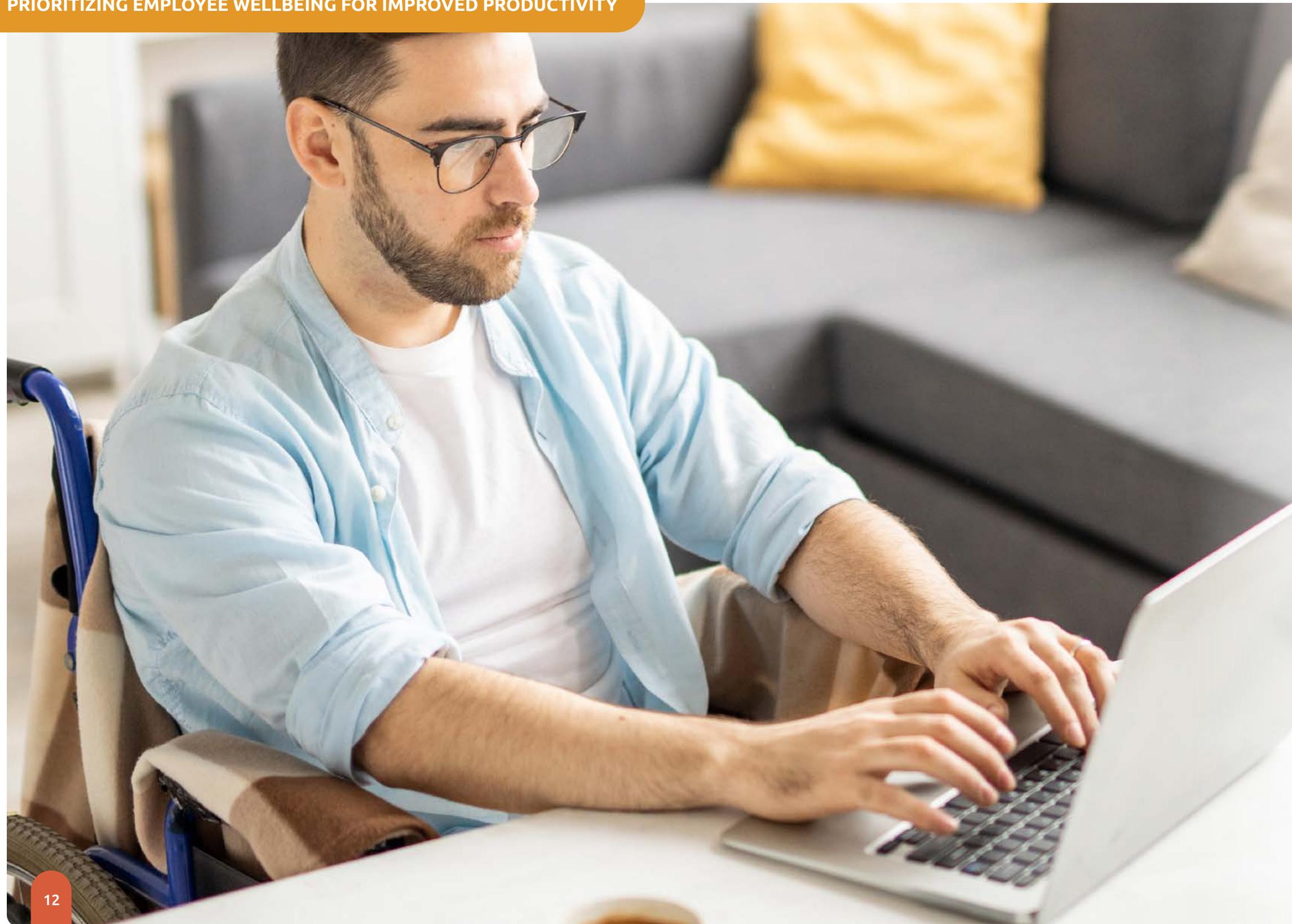
Employees continue to be concerned about their wellbeing as we enter the next normal. As leaders, this means we must prepare to create workspaces that improve quality of life, putting people and safety first. At Sodexo we've been safeguarding, promoting and enhancing quality of life for over 50 years. We're working with our clients to implement measures and services that build confidence and engagement, going beyond a supportive mindset, to deliver things that people can feel at every touchpoint. We are crafting healthy and productive environments for employees to thrive, grow and contribute to the success of organizations.

SUNIL NAYAK
CEO Corporate Services Worldwide, Sodexo



Wellbeing Content On-Demand

Sodexo worked with a multinational company in the UK to create a virtual wellbeing world for customers to enjoy on Microsoft Yammer. They can access a massive suite of cooking, meditation, fitness and health videos and content in order to take care of both their physical and mental wellbeing.



Remote Working: Culture Evolution

The post-pandemic workforce is a hybrid, virtual model in which the distinction between those who work from home and those who work from offices is not black and white.

Despite the success of remote working during the pandemic, the evolving state of hybrid working will bring up many challenges as the lab-like conditions lift and employees return to a more “regular” life. To preserve a healthy, productive culture, businesses must find a way to balance and blend the varying cultures that emerge.

Taking lessons from early adopters of remote working in pre-pandemic times such as HP, IBM and Yahoo, we could preempt some of the divergence and disenfranchisement that commonly arises when different cultures merge. Workplace flexibility and a change in leadership or managerial style will be required as organizational culture evolves.

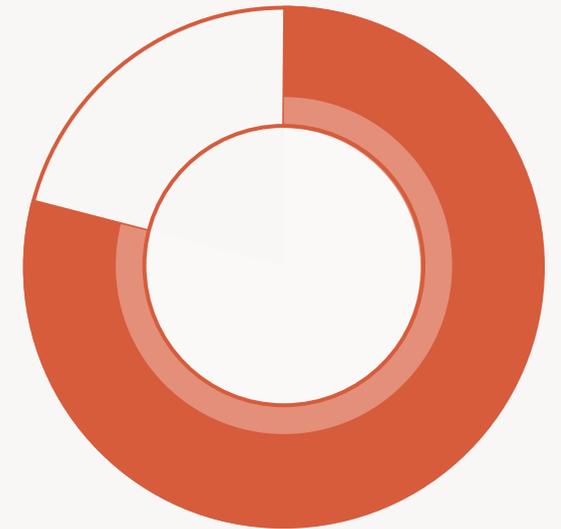
working from home and a word of caution

There is no doubt that working from home, or remote working, will forever be seen in a different light after COVID-19 swiftly forced millions of people to set up semi-permanent offices in their homes. How did the workforce adapt to this drastic change in work environment?

Overall, the work from home experience during lockdown has been overwhelmingly positive for most employees. The benefits of working from home—like time and money saved by no longer having a commute—were quickly realized. This has led to 79% of employees who experienced work from home because of the pandemic seeking the option to continue working remotely.

It isn't just time and money that employees are saving by working from home. They also report higher mental wellbeing (due to being less stressed and less tired) and said they could get their job done at an even higher standard while working from home.

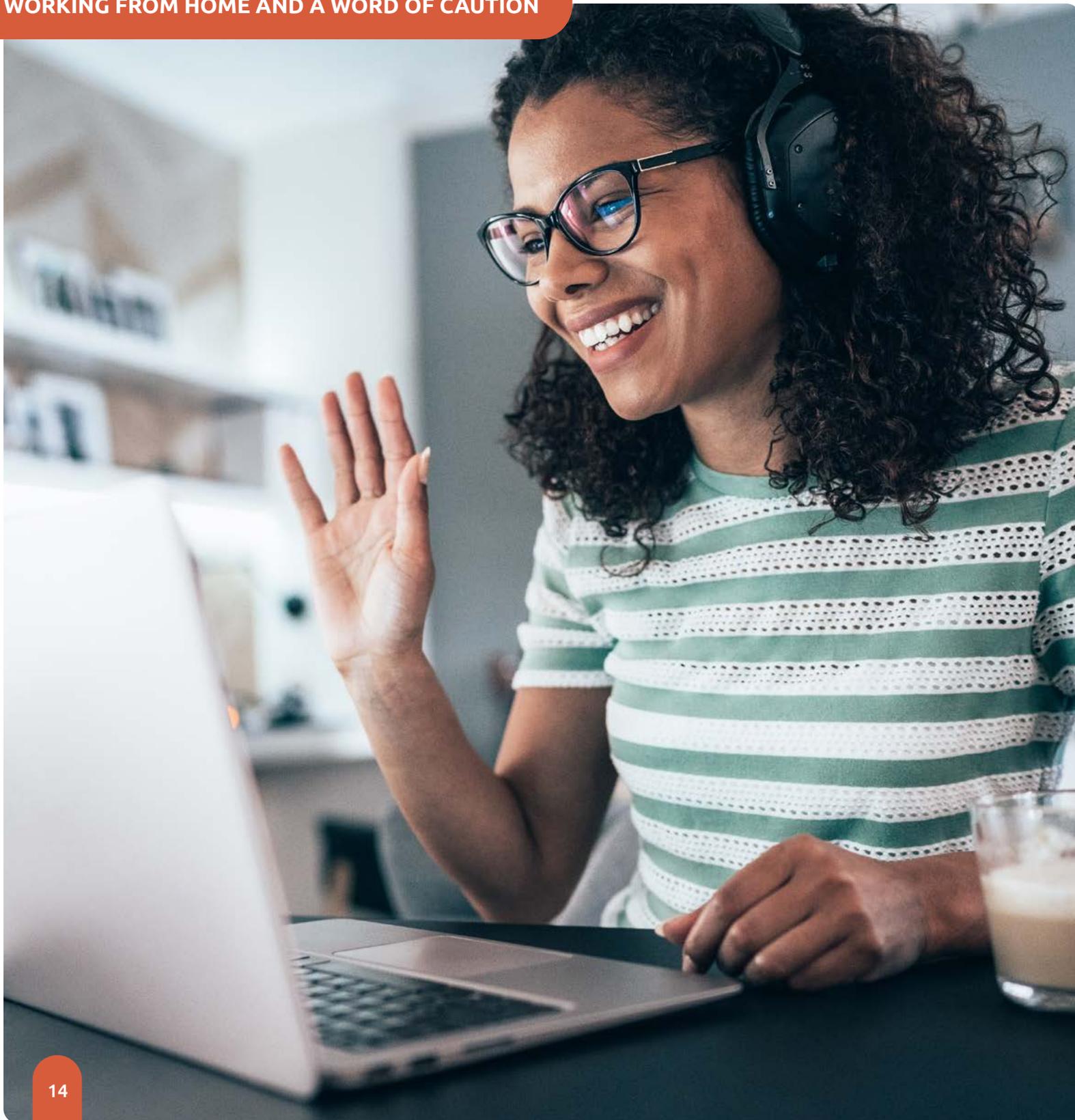
79%
of employees who
worked from home
during lockdown want
the option to continue
working remotely



“

Our best estimate is that 25–30% of the workforce will be working from home multiple days a week by the end of 2021.

KATE LISTER
President of Global Workplace Analytics



Despite the positive work from home experience, there are significant drawbacks of virtual work that can have a negative impact on businesses at-large. **In our research, the top drawback cited was lack of social interaction with colleagues.** The second-most cited drawback was difficulty collaborating as a team. These disadvantages can lead to feelings of isolation and employees feeling less connected to their workplace community, which can lead to the eroding of company culture and success.

How can company culture be kept alive? Employers should prepare to continue supporting remote employees and consider providing new benefits to reinforce a sense of employee value and belonging. For starters, benefits that would be received in an office environment should be made available to employees working remotely to show consistency and continuity.

“

I say this to anyone who will listen, personal engagement face-to-face remains a critical part of success. And we should all be careful to not tilt too much: Don't fall in love with the savings on real estate. While it was an incredible insight that you can innovate remotely, it is not a long-term answer. Personal engagement remains essential for long-term success.

JULIE SWEET

CEO of Accenture (Source: [TIME](#))



Evolution of the Workspace 2030

The four worlds of work in 2030 will be defined by choices we make – individualism versus collectivism, fragmentation versus integration. Economic, social, political and technological megatrends provide the context for future worlds, but they don't dictate their shape or features at a specific point in time. How humans respond to the challenges and opportunities that the megatrends bring will determine the worlds in which the future of work plays out.

Source: Workforce of the future: The competing forces shaping 2030, PWC

For example, because the major drawbacks of remote working were lack of social interaction and ability to collaborate, the future of the office may take on the role of a meeting or conference center to more heavily emphasize socialisation.

Healthy at Home Programme

To keep its teams engaged and focused on wellbeing and nutrition while working from home, our Sodexo catering team developed a 'Healthy at Home' wellness and connectivity programme for a UK financial services client. The programme included virtual cooking lessons and nutritional talks, as well as a 'Modern Recipe Healthy at Home' recipe book for employees to use to create their favourite workplace restaurant meals at home.



76%

of those who are working from home or worked from home during the lockdown say food delivery services would keep them engaged and motivated



Some of the most highly desired measures for sustained employee engagement are food delivery services for virtual employee meetups, ergonomic workstations, and office supplies delivery.

Benefits can also be provided on an individual level to increase employee self-value. For example, **one of the most highly rated options in our study was a reward scheme such as gift cards to celebrate birthdays or success.**

Employees working from home will need minimum equipment to work effectively for the long run. To ensure the continuum of work at home, resources like an ergonomic workstation, office supplies delivery or healthy food and beverages delivery will enhance the experience of working from home.

Beyond making sure the individual feels valued, how can a sense of community be created when our workforce is spread across a region or throughout the world?

Leaders must take on the challenge of fostering community and combating the schism caused by remote work. Encouraging virtual gatherings, team rituals, friendly competitions and service projects can reinforce a sense of employee belonging and community.



Services for Staff at Home & In the Office

Sodexo worked with the Pfizer Hangzhou Site to deploy a new food model in three days. The no-touch food delivery covered not only the office building, but also the residential apartments where quarantined staff could access the service.



“

At Sodexo, our approach to health and wellbeing focused on evoking a sense of togetherness, care and unity. Sodexo employees were invited to participate in virtual meetups, where we shared mindful and physical wellbeing topics and ways to cope with our new reality. We continue to offer access to reliable resources, including COVID-19 related information through our Employee Assistance Programme called 'Sodexo Supports Me' and launched our approach to Re-entering the Workplace to reassure and work with our teams for a safe return to work as offices and sites reopen.

RAJ VERMA,
Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Sodexo

Talent Acquisition & Retention

How a company conducts itself in the face of a crisis is quite telling about their work culture, values and employer brand.

Mercer reported in its 2020 Global Talent Trends Study, 49% of employees “prefer an organisation that protects employees’ health and financial well-being.” The employer brand should be carefully managed during the talent acquisition process. To attract and promote talent retention, organizations must find a way to harness the collective engagement and productivity of the workforce.

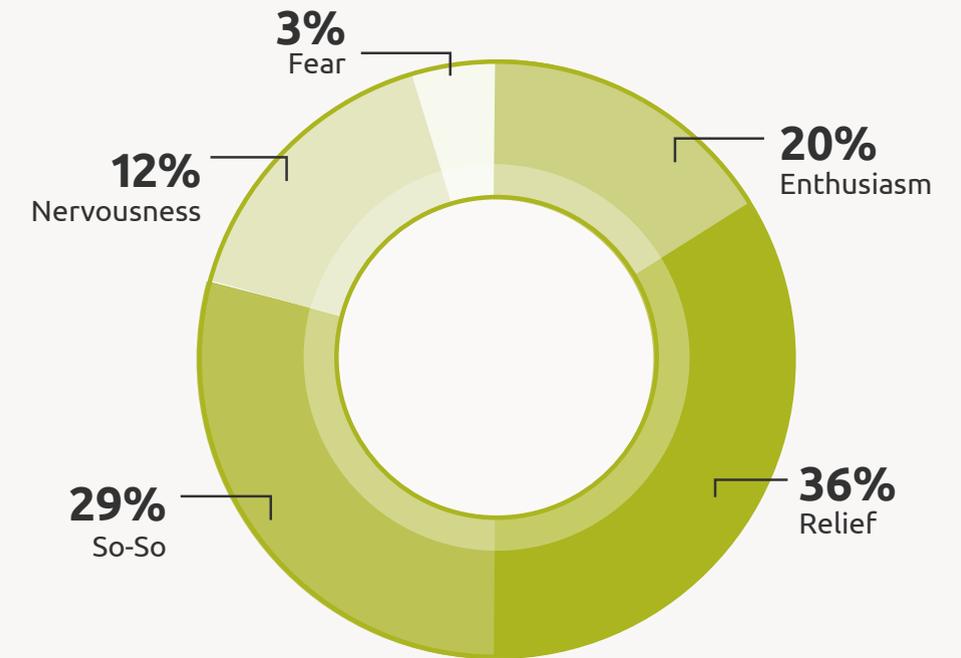
returning to the office: an exercise in safety and trust

Designed to codify the elements of human motivation, Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes the relationship between all the things people need to self-actualise and be all they can be. Physiological needs like food and water become the foundation for safety, which in turn provides a foundation for a sense of belonging, and so on. It's in the interest of every employer to promote self-actualisation – not just morally, but for people to do their best work. But the challenges of our new normal mean that these complex needs all need to be addressed in new ways.

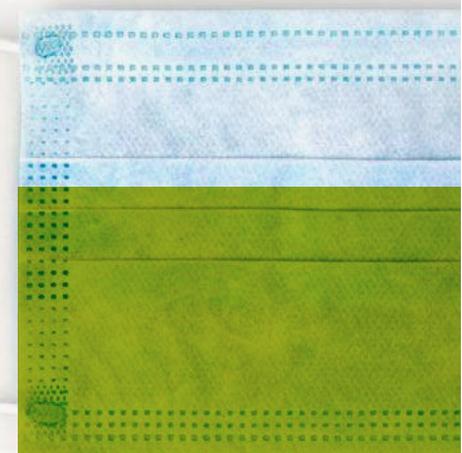
So what concerns do employees have about returning to work and how leaders be prepared?

After the A+ ratings employees gave to working from home, it may surprise you that employees are also feeling positive about returning to work—36% feel relieved and 20% report enthusiasm. This is welcome news for organisations preparing restart strategies and getting ready to reopen their offices. However, the relief and enthusiasm doesn't come without worry.

How Employees Feel about Returning to Work



59
PERCENT
of employees are concerned about their own health and safety



Building Trust In Brazil

Our Sodexo team in Brazil worked with a multinational chemical company to implement preventative safety measures in their restaurants. First, they took them to client sites to see the how the measures worked in real-time. From that moment, Sodexo was trusted as a reliable partner in navigating this new normal.



The top two worries reported by employees are related to personal health risks (41%) and health risks to family brought back from the workplace (38%).

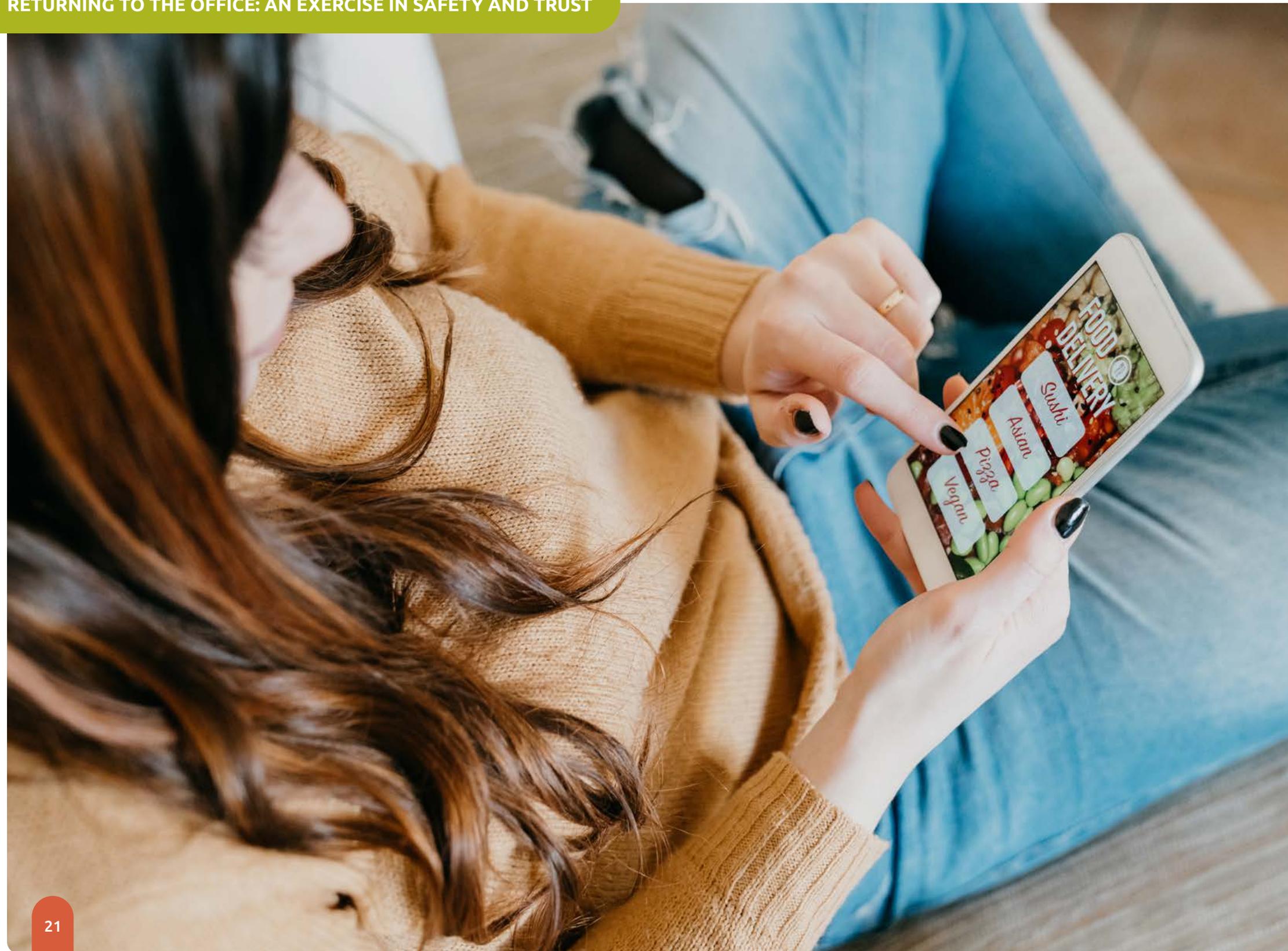
Our research showed despite these concerns, employees are confident their organisations will create a safe environment upon their return to work.

81

PERCENT

of employees trust their employer to ensure their health and safety.





Trust is the New Corporate Currency

Trust is an important catalyst of recovery. There are at least 3 dimensions to trust – physical, emotional and financial. How an organization safeguards and communicates with employees on the multiple facets of these dimensions will establish that trust.

If employees are being asked to return to physical premises, do they feel safe and comfortable about doing that? If they are asking or being encouraged to continue working from home, are adequate long-term measures in place to make this a positive, inclusive option – emotionally, as well as practically?

A continuous employee listening strategy and frequent pulse surveys, supported by processes for absorbing and acting on feedback quickly and effectively are important. Two-way trust and open dialogue between employee and employer will only increase in importance as we enter the next normal, where we'll find new challenges and opportunities.

Nearly all employees said basic safety measures are important to have in place, such as:

- **Antibacterial gel readily available throughout the office (94%)**
- **Frequent cleaning and sanitation of common areas (93%)**
- **Physical distancing measures (92%)**

In addition, 87% said regular audits of various safety and cleaning processes in your company (and publication of the audit reports) would make them feel even safer.

Lunchtime, an important office ritual, may also look quite different in the next normal. Similar safety measures are expected during lunchtime – antibacterial gel, extra sanitation, physical distancing, and masks for catering staff. Businesses should take care to provide thoughtful options that allow employees to enjoy lunchtime in a similar way to pre-pandemic.

90
PERCENT
of employees
say grab &
go or food
delivery
options are
important



of employees
say contactless
payment is
important



Given the data, we know that employees are cautiously optimistic about returning to work and trust that their employers will keep them safe. Workplace safety must be a top priority to support employee health and maintain this trust.

At a minimum, employers should have all of the safety measures

recommended by state and local authorities in place and clearly communicate these measures to employees. For those who are willing to go above and beyond, safety audits and publication of audit results, such as those that are a part of Sodexo's [Rise SAFE hygiene verification label](#), can significantly increase employees' feelings of safety and trust.

“

The workplaces that we left are not going to be the workplaces that we go back to. We're going to have to learn a new way of interacting with each other that was not the way we were interacting a few months ago.

JOANNA DALY

Vice President of Compensation, benefits and HR business development at International Business Machines Corp.

(Source: [Bloomberg](#))





Resilience is a State of Being

An adaptive leadership mindset is crucial in the post pandemic avatar of the organization. As Henry Kissinger famously said, “The historic challenge for leaders is to manage the crisis while building the future.” In the next normal, companies have the opportunity to re-evaluate their business models to build resilience.

According to Harvard Business Review’s guide, there are six principles to focus on when structuring your organization and decision-making processes in order to become more resilient: redundancy, diversity, modularity, adaptability, prudence and embeddedness. Collaboration with other partners can also increase resilience by gaining access to shared resources and assets without taking on the full cost and risk of entry into new business ecosystems.

The benefits of being a resilient business play out throughout the entire cycle when a threat occurs—from being more likely to anticipate the risk, better withstand the impact and more quickly recover.

Source: [A Guide to Building a More Resilient Business, Harvard Business Review](#)

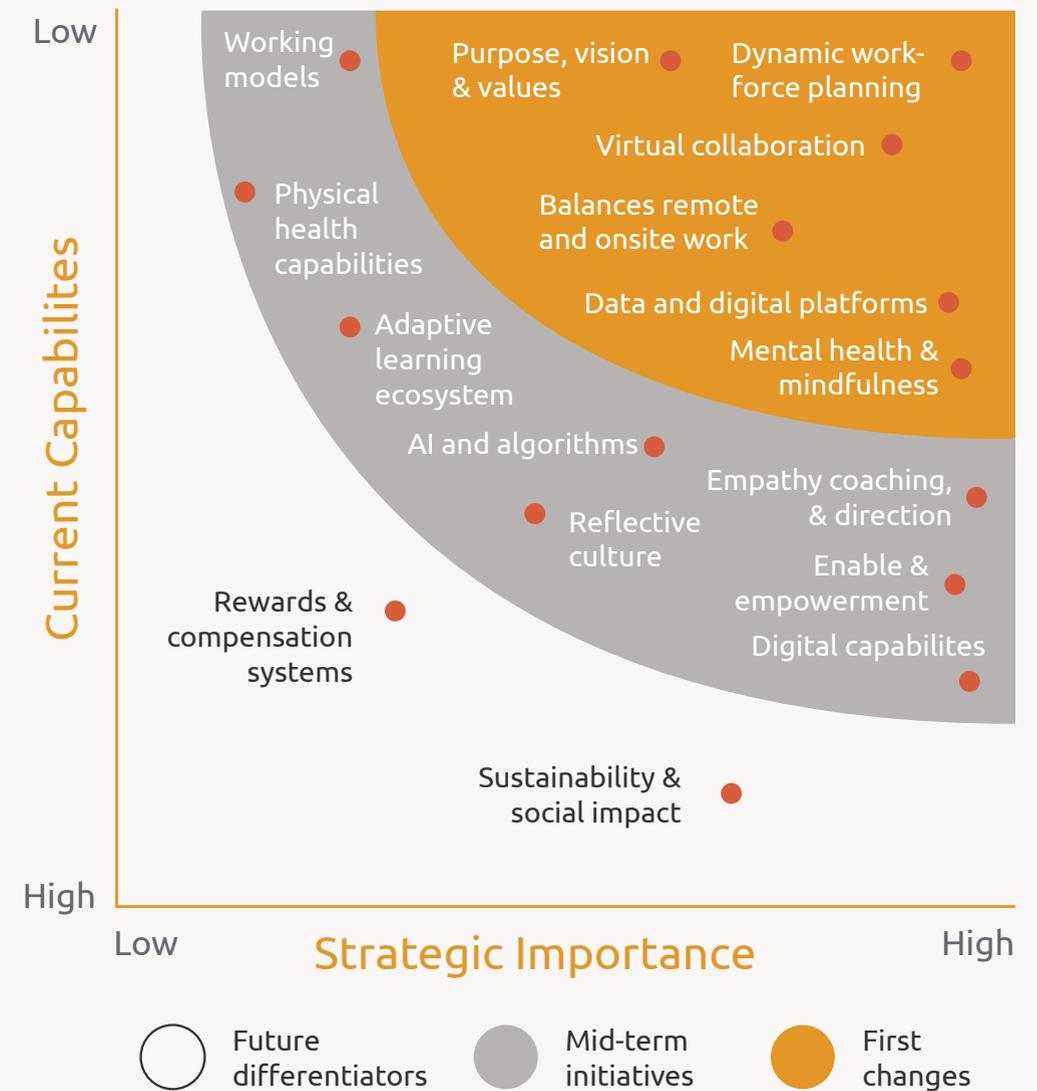
strategising with sustainable business practices

Our business practices and structures must be able to change and evolve in response to global events like the pandemic—and to the changing needs and views of consumers that come as a result.

Because business leaders are already re-strategising for restart plans, it is an ideal time to explore, introduce or reintroduce environmentally sustainable practices. Economic priorities can be reevaluated with an eye towards environmental concerns so that sustainability is woven into every facet of the business' operations.

Boston Consulting Group has an illustrative chart for identification and prioritization of key initiatives and next steps.

Identification and prioritization of key initiatives and next steps



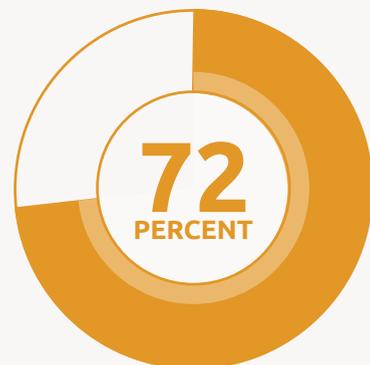
Source: Covid 19 BCG Perspectives, Publication 5, Version 08 May, 2020

Sustainability efforts and climate change were already top-of-mind for business leaders and their teams before COVID-19 changed our world. In fact, the two youngest generations of the workforce—Millennials and Gen Z—both cited climate change and protecting the environment as their number one concern in 2019 (Source: [Deloitte](#)). The most recent research shows that these environmental concerns have only increased for employees and consumers alike in the wake of the global pandemic.



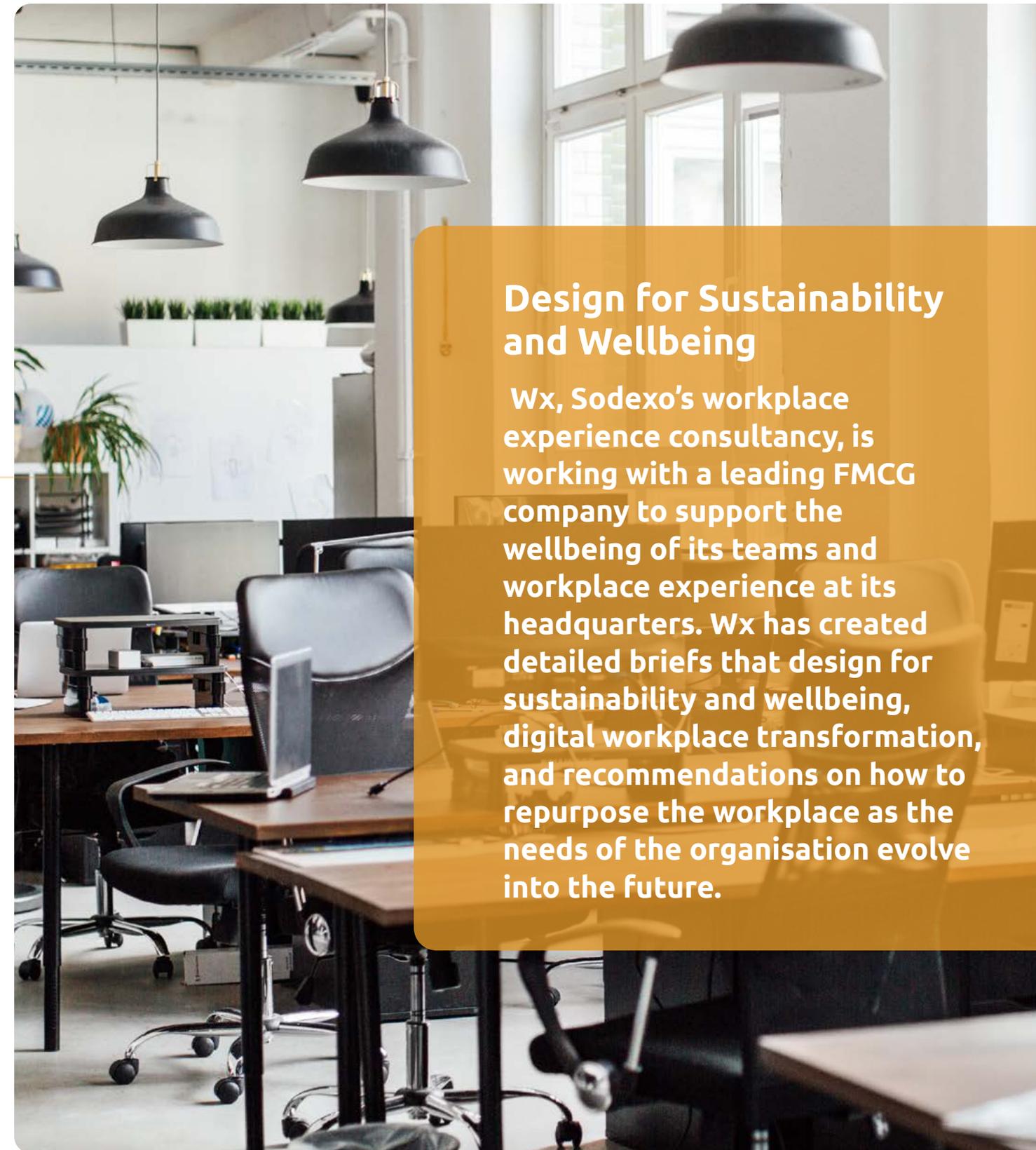
As companies make calls about how, where and when to cut costs and where to invest post-COVID-19, they need to start using a green lens to make sure that decisions on such items as capital investment or asset retirement also reflect their future needs to reduce their carbon footprint.

SOURCE: [OLIVER WYMAN](#)



globally agree that in the long term, climate change is as serious a crisis as COVID-19

(Source: [IPSOS](#))



Design for Sustainability and Wellbeing

Wx, Sodexo's workplace experience consultancy, is working with a leading FMCG company to support the wellbeing of its teams and workplace experience at its headquarters. Wx has created detailed briefs that design for sustainability and wellbeing, digital workplace transformation, and recommendations on how to repurpose the workplace as the needs of the organisation evolve into the future.

Pre-pandemic, there was already a growing sense of distrust of ethics and sustainability practices as **1 out of 3 people said they did not trust companies' authenticity in being ethical and sustainable**. And now, consumers will not accept the pandemic as an excuse for businesses to abandon sustainability efforts. According to research from GlobalData, how ethical/environment friendly /socially-responsible a product or service still influences 44% of consumers.

1 in 3

don't trust companies' authenticity in being ethical and sustainable



(Source: Sodexo Insights Report)

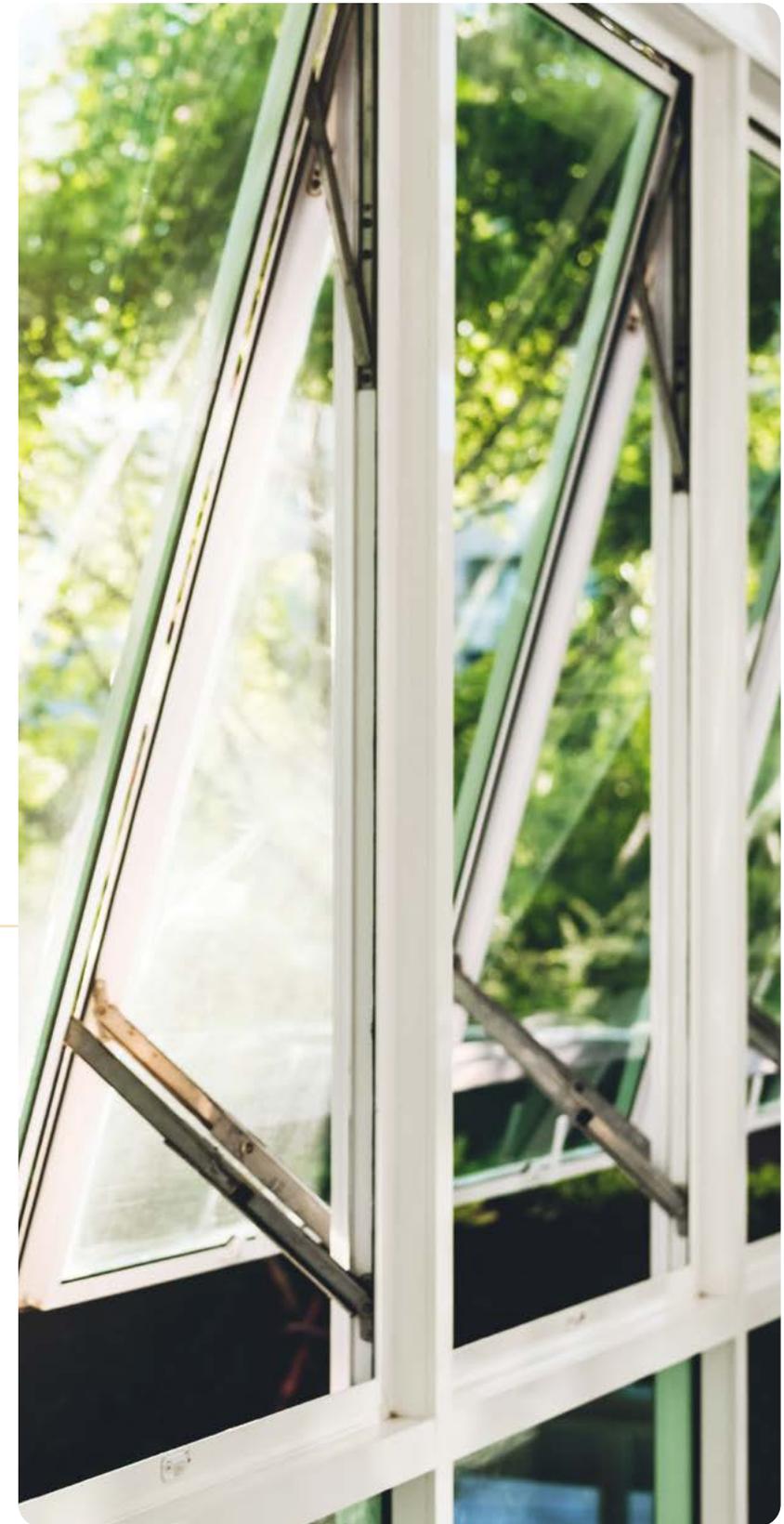
Our most recent research shows that employees are also expecting more from the organisation they work for in the area of sustainability. For example, **49% of employees report higher expectations for indoor air quality as an immediate need**. A separate study found air quality can also improve employee performance. Specifically, the experiment found that doubling the rate of outdoor air delivered into an office increases worker productivity across several tasks (Source: [Harvard Business Review](#)).

“

Locked in a global battle for talent, the business leaders we spoke with were eager to find new ways to attract, retain, and enhance the performance of their employees. Few of them realized that their buildings could play a vital role in the health of their business.”

AUTHORS OF HEALTHY BUILDINGS:

How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity
(Source: [Harvard Business Review](#))





Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion have been pushed further into the spotlight as businesses must grapple with how to continue fostering community and inclusive practices while employees are working from different spaces. On one hand, remote work options allow for companies to choose from a broader pool of applicants across geographic areas, which can significantly increase diversity.

However, for staff accustomed to working in an office together, there is a risk that exclusive behaviors, biases and feelings of isolation may return without the connectedness and clarity that comes with being in the same physical space.

Just as sustainable business practices make organisations more adaptable, companies who make diversity and inclusion a priority create more effective, adaptable and innovative teams. Drawing from their diverse experiences and backgrounds, these teams are better prepared to anticipate changing economic patterns and consumer needs.

Source: [Diversity still matters](#), McKinsey

Sustainable Growth

Purpose-driven businesses operating in a more sustainable economy is not a new idea. Profit without purpose was already being challenged before the pandemic. Now, as consumers and businesses see the rapid environment and climate effect due to lockdown, their focus on sustainable practices has accelerated. Businesses can have an oversized impact on positive change—through the products they produce, global infrastructure, supply chains and reach, and comparative industry know-how.

How can we take lessons learned from COVID-19 and apply them to post-recovery?



Given the heightened importance of sustainability, citizens still look towards government and businesses to lead the charge to against climate change. They are no more likely to change their environmental behavior than six years ago as two-fifths say they are already doing as much as they possibly can as individuals to address the issue (Source: [Ipsos](#)). This means sustainability must be a top priority for organizations and leaders should be prepared to show employees how they are taking an active role to improve our environment.

“

With the help of our Facility Management service provider, Sodexo, we have developed a “Sustainability Best Practice Guide” that collates all UN Sustainable Development Goals, converts them into practical initiatives, and presents them in a digital, interactive book. Our teams have an accessible tool to guide us through various sustainability initiatives and how to apply them, so we can continue to make our buildings part of the solution, not the problem.

MARY-LOUISE GRAY

Regional Director - RE&F EMEA at Microsoft

(Source: [LinkedIn](#))

SodexoLab: Created for Sustainability & the Employee Experience

Wx, Sodexo's workplace experience consultancy, is designing the workplace of the future using Sodexo's headquarters in Paris as a test lab. The goal of SodexoLab is to improve the quality of life in our workplace with a strong focus on social interaction, digital solutions and sustainability. Sensors accurately measure workplace utilisation and facilitate use of spaces based on the new and evolving ways we work together in a fast-paced and changing world.



Elevating the Employee Experience

- Flexible workspaces to support new ways of working
- Places for enhanced collaboration
- New and adapted services to improve health and wellbeing

Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

- Shift to 100% renewable energy
- Composting process for organic waste
- Furniture refurbished thanks to community rehabilitation project
- Eliminate single use coffee cups
- State-of-the-art screens to replace paper printing needs
- Increased bicycle parking space and electric car charging stations



Shift to 100
percent
renewable
energy

Sodexo's Commitments for a Better Tomorrow

Sodexo is working to improve the quality of life for those we serve and create positive change for individuals, communities and the environment through our Better Tomorrow 2025 commitments.



The pandemic crisis has further revealed the fragility of our planet and the need for economic models built on sustainable consumption patterns and solutions that preserve natural resources. These priorities are part of our pragmatic approach to work with our clients, suppliers and employees to rebuild confidence and seize the window of opportunity to make the recovery a turning point when it comes to sustainability.

MARIA OUTTERS

Senior Vice President
of Corporate Responsibility at Sodexo

A better tomorrow for everyone: 9 commitments

	Individuals	Communities	The environment
As Employer	1 Improve the Quality of Life of our employees, safely	2 Ensure a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that reflects and enriches communities we serve	3 Foster a culture of environmental responsibility within our workforce and workspaces
As Service Provider	4 Provide and encourage our consumers to access healthy lifestyle choices	5 Promote local development, fair, inclusive and sustainable business practices	6 Source responsibly and provide management services that reduce carbon emissions
As Corporate Citizen	7 Fight hunger and malnutrition	8 Drive diversity and inclusion as a catalyst for societal change	9 Champion sustainable resource usage



summary

Imagine a New Worklife Continuum

Overall, the workforce has shown tremendous resilience and adaptability in the changes brought by the global pandemic. Employees now have renewed expectations of employers to show similar agility in adjusting to their new needs and concerns, and leadership on global issues.

When companies place the quality of life of their employees at the center of their thinking, they create a more committed and more engaged workforce. As the average employee spends more than half of his waking hours on the job, the quality of his/her experiences at work – whether it is in an office, a factory, a laboratory, a co-working space or home – is inevitably reflected in the quality of his/her life.

This issue is compounded by the fact that the frontiers between work and home are blurring, making it difficult for office employees to disconnect from work outside of normal business hours and ultimately impacting their work-life balance. These trends point to the need to focus on employee wellbeing, both inside and outside the workplace, wherever it is. Traditionally, efforts to improve and reinvent the employee experience have been focused on the workplace. Now, it is the right time for a more holistic view.



Let's imagine a version of the new worklife continuum

Your employees might start by planning their day from home. They could work in your main office or choose a shorter commute to a more local base. They could be travelling globally or checking their email on the way to the gym. Every one of these moments is an opportunity to connect with your people, building their confidence and empowering them to thrive. In this way, our new normal is a continuation of a path that most organisations have been on for some time – the shift to a more people-centred, service-based approach.

1 | Employee state of mind in lockdown

The workforce is certainly feeling the mental toll of COVID-19 and they are looking to their employees to provide support and solutions to maintain or improve their mental wellbeing. Employers investing in employee wellbeing will not only be letting their team members know they are valued, but also be ensuring productivity does not suffer as a result of poor mental wellbeing.

2 | Employee work from home experience

Employees who are still working from home are enjoying the flexibility and benefits, but they are missing socialisation and collaboration. Leaders are tasked with finding a way to build community virtually and ensure a strong company culture follows employees back to the office. Those who manage culture now will also have the advantage when recruiting new talent.

3 | Employee perspective on back to work

There is an overall positive sentiment about returning to the office, but employees are concerned about their health and safety. Despite their concerns, employees trust that their employers will keep them safe, so safety measures and audits must be a top priority. Once back in the office, employees needs and concerns may change, which means resilient business strategies that can adapt will be most successful.

These insights and priorities are certainly useful as organisations transition into the next normal and beyond. However, the research here is a one moment in time during a global crisis that will have far-reaching effects for years to come. To continue improving the quality of life and work for our people, it is essential to keep asking questions, keep listening, keep innovating, and most importantly, keep the conversation going.

4 | Sustainable practices

Sustainable practices should be a part of the conversation as leaders rethink their business strategies. Employees should be made aware of how their organisation plans to reduce their environmental impact because they have heightened expectations for sustainability in the wake of the pandemic.



Rise with SODEXO

At Sodexo, we've been safeguarding, promoting and enhancing Quality of Life for over 50 years. Our expertise and services mean we can help lead you into the new normal with a systematic approach.

[Rise with Sodexo](#) is our program of support for our clients in this challenging time, covering five key areas:

Prepare: Preparing your site and employees for reopening

Protect: Implementing enhanced cleaning, health checks and contactless services

Enable: Supporting your employees with catering, digital services and more

Support: On-site health checks and wellness services

Optimize: Physical distancing, space management and environmental efficiency

In part, these stages represent a package of support that guides our clients from first steps to long-term agility and flexibility. However, they also offer an opportunity to truly embrace the new normal – not just to reinstate old ways of working, but to evolve in ways that influence employee confidence and promote greater productivity. Our aim is to optimize your workplace and empower your people – and your organisation – to rise to the challenges ahead.



**Workplace
Services
Offers**



PREPARE
Site and employee restart



PROTECT
*Enhanced cleaning,
temperature monitoring
and contactless provision of
services*



ENABLE
*Nutritious to-go/prepared
meals, food cards and
digital services*



SUPPORT
*Onsite health checks
and wellness services*



OPTIMIZE
*Physical distancing, space
management/planning and
efficiency services*



For over 50 years, Sodexo's foundation of valuing people first has continued to differentiate us. As a global employer of over 460,000 employees worldwide, we deliver an unrivaled array of more than 100 offerings, including onsite services, benefits & rewards services and personal & home services.

Get in touch with a Sodexo expert to start planning your worklife approach for the next normal

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