

COVID-19: CHRO Lens







Work, Workforce and Workplace Key Considerations

May 2020



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IMPACT THAT
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COVID-19 – A Lens on HR

Resilient leadership will be at the heart of moving into the Recover and Thrive phase

The first priority during the COVID-19 pandemic has been crisis response and emphasising health and safety, essential services, and the virtualisation of work and education, as noted in the Deloitte publication, [Workforce strategies for post-COVID-19 recovery](#).

We see three phases that all resilient leaders must face amid the COVID-19 outbreak:

- 1 **Respond** – dealing with the present situation and managing continuity
- 2 **Recover** – learning and emerging stronger
- 3 **Thrive** – preparing for and shaping the “new normal”

Much remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: customers, workers, suppliers and other partners are watching. How organisations handle the recovery will define their brands with both their workforce and their customers, establish their reputations for years to come, and determine their future competitiveness.

HR leaders, in particular, have been at the centre of their organisation’s rapid response to this crisis, and have been playing a central role in keeping the workforce engaged, productive and resilient. Understandably, recent priorities have been focused almost exclusively on the respond phase.

As progress is made against respond efforts, another reality is forming quickly. Now is the time for HR leaders to turn their attention toward recover, to ensure their organisations are prepared to thrive. This will require extraordinary focus and coordination, during what may be a protracted period.

Scenario planning

This will not be a typical recovery: COVID-19 is unlikely to end suddenly given the lack of effective and available therapeutics and the uncertain prospects and timing of a vaccine. Organisations must plan for multiple scenarios and time horizons, as they shift from crisis response to recovery. They should also plan for the possibility of multiple waves of the pandemic and its continuing global—and uneven—footprint. For workforce strategies, organisations need to establish critical priorities for the next 12 to 24 months as they position themselves for new realities.

COVID-19: Work, Workforce and Workplace

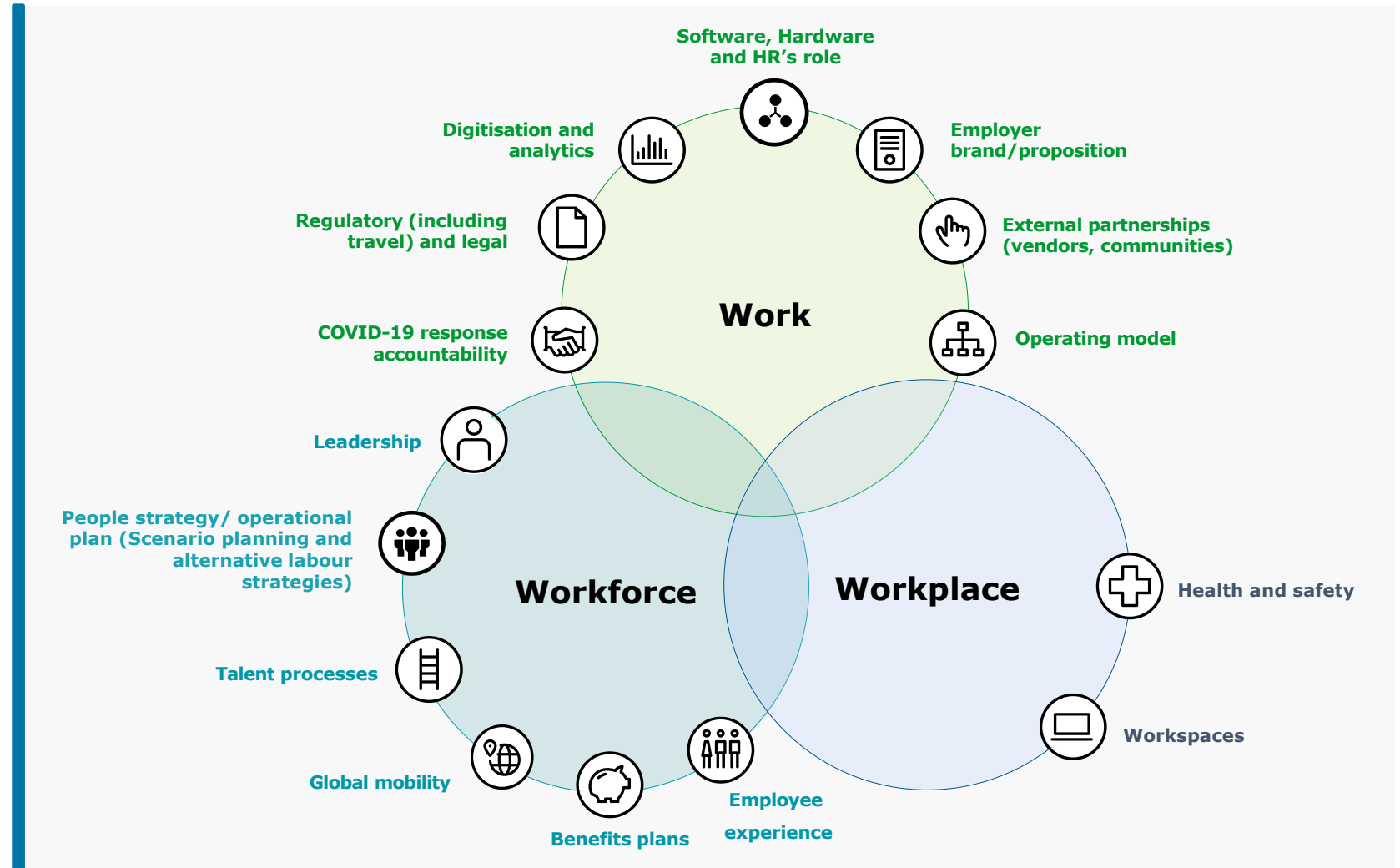
The response to COVID-19 will require many questions to be addressed across the work, workforce and workplace ecosystem

COVID-19 has served as a **catalyst** in changing the ways an enterprise **organises, operates** and **behaves**.

Many changes that organisations have implemented will be **short term** in nature and a direct requirement of continuing operations during the peak of the pandemic.

As restrictions are lifted, businesses will have to **evolve** their current plans, whilst also considering what the **longer term impact** is on the construct of their respective **ecosystems**, and the key choices they will make to operate going forward.

Determining what this means for Work, the Workforce and the Workplace will be critical; and the following serves as a **mechanism** to address many of these key questions.

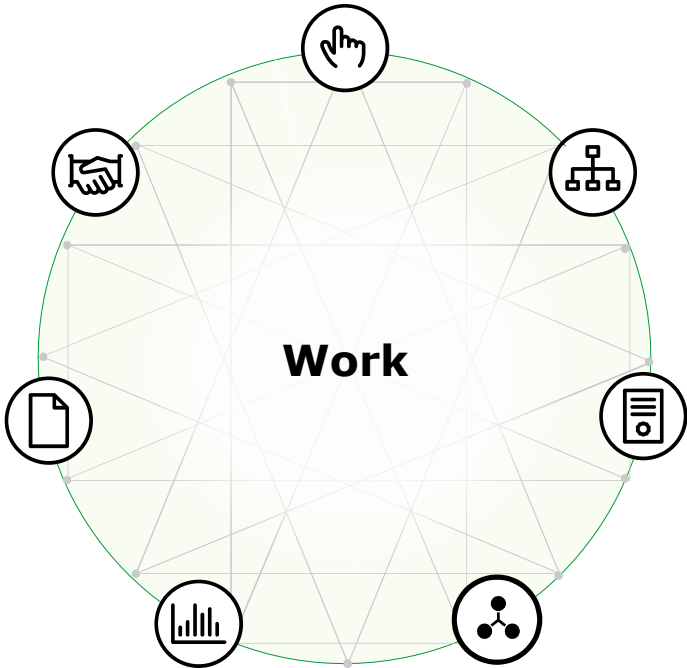




Work

Work: Overview of key areas to be assessed

Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?



	COVID-19 Response accountability	The continuing fluidity of change that organisations are faced with will require fundamental questions to be continually addressed and reviewed
	Operating model	As organisations move from respond to thrive, there will be a need and opportunity to examine how work is designed, structures are organised, and teams collaborate
	Employer brand/proposition	Having a solid plan to manage employer brand and proposition, and measure employee sentiment will be vital.
	Software, Hardware and HR's role	Evaluating the performance of current virtual-enabling software platforms and considering where to launch new ones will be critical for meeting evolving workforce demands. There may be adjustments needed to existing hardware to enable more virtual work
	Digitisation and analytics	While automation, robotics, cloud and cognitive have been evolving for some time, the recent crisis may have accelerated interest in these alternatives. With a more dispersed workforce, drawing data-driven insights will be important to maintain oversight of employees' performance, engagement and well-being.
	Regulatory (including travel) and legal	Understanding legal obligations and implications of new government regulations will be critical to workforce recovery efforts. Addressing new requirements and realities for travel will be necessary.
	External partnerships (vendors, communities)	Moving through recovery and beyond will mean re-evaluating the vendor landscape and how needs have changed. Executed thoughtfully, community partnerships can do tremendous good, while simultaneously strengthening reputation and attracting new talent pools.

Work: Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?



COVID-19 response accountability

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

Planning and communications

- What steps are required to restart our operations? How do we frame those in a 30-60-90 day horizon? How will we communicate these plans to the business?
- Who are the critical leaders and teams who will continue to play an active role?
- What are we doing and what is the effort required to manage the critical internal and external stakeholder groups that we need to engage through the recovery period?
- Are we adequately "plugged in" to all sources of external resources for updated news (e.g., government, public relations)?

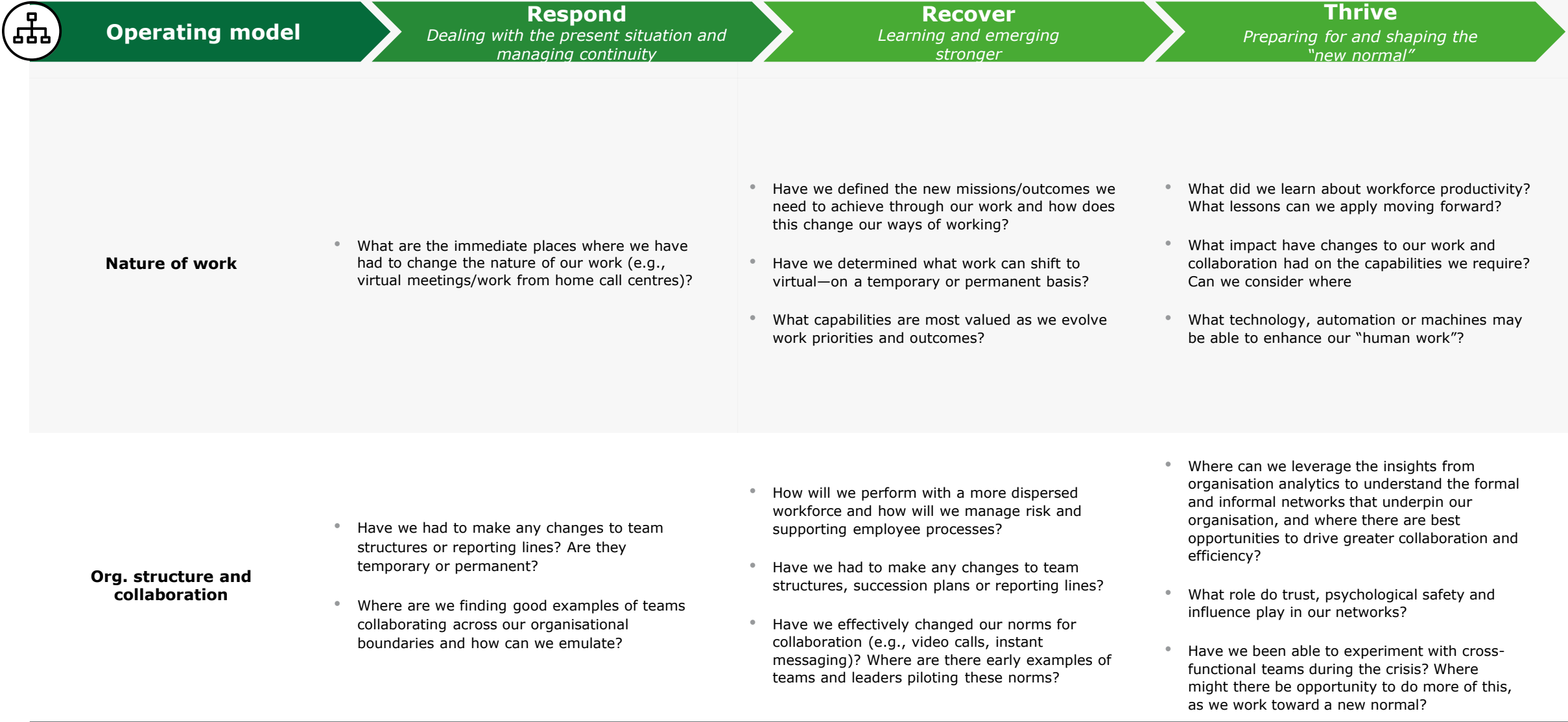
- Are people getting the information they need as they return to the workplace?
- Do we need new tools or technology to enable more effective information flow?
- Have we constructively engaged with employees when carrying out a risk assessment? Are the results of the assessment visible and clearly communicated to employees?
- Have we ensured that actions that are part of the assessment do not disproportionately impact those with disabilities?
- Are we using simple, clear and consistent language and images to communicate key messages, taking into account those groups for which English might not be their first language?

- Do we have agreed-upon scenarios that we will use to frame our decisions?
- What have we learned from our response to this crisis, and how are we updating our emergency response protocols for the future?
- How are we using data and technology to sense what might be coming next?

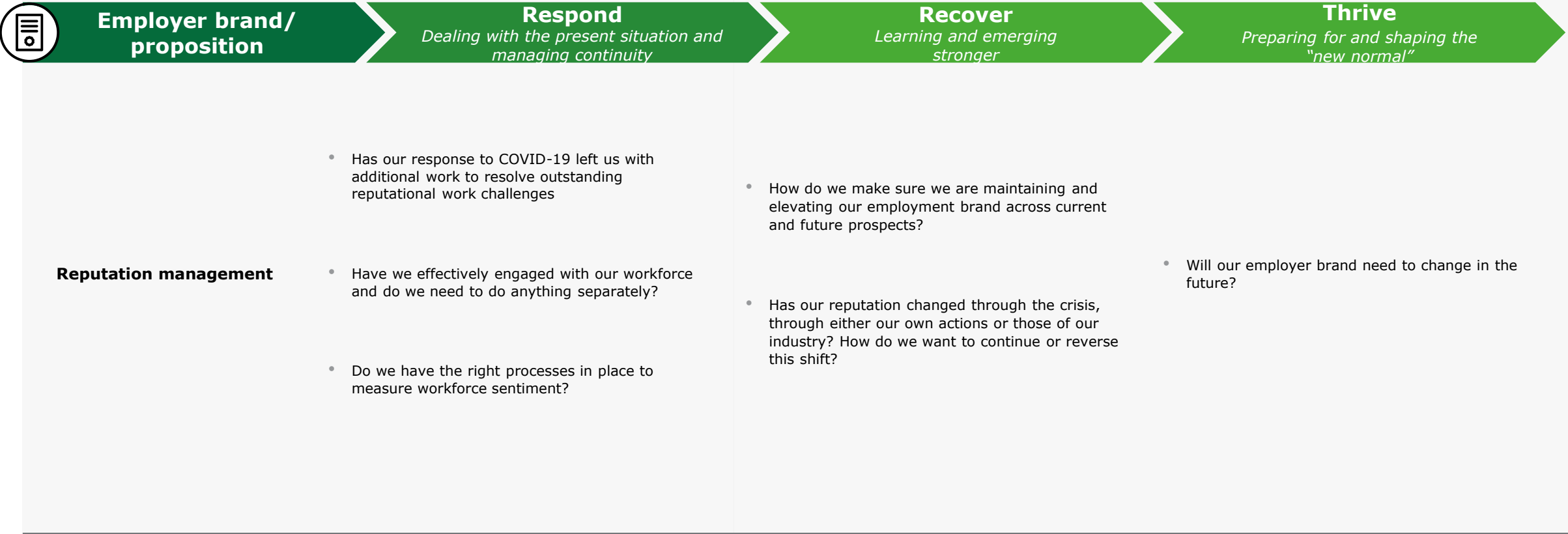
Measurement

- What data do we require to make sure we are making effective decisions about the COVID-19 impact (e.g., the deployment of resources, reskilling staff)?
- How do we make sure we continue to get the best and most up-to-date information on the health and safety of our business and our people?
- Are we using analytics and dashboards effectively to inform decision-making? If not, where can we start?
- How will we detect how many COVID-19 related issues we have in our workforce and where they are?
- What KPIs can we set to understand the effectiveness of our response at various stages (e.g., anticipating a crisis, T-24 hours)?
- What processes are we implementing to ensure the command centre team is regularly reflecting on lessons learned to change as needed?

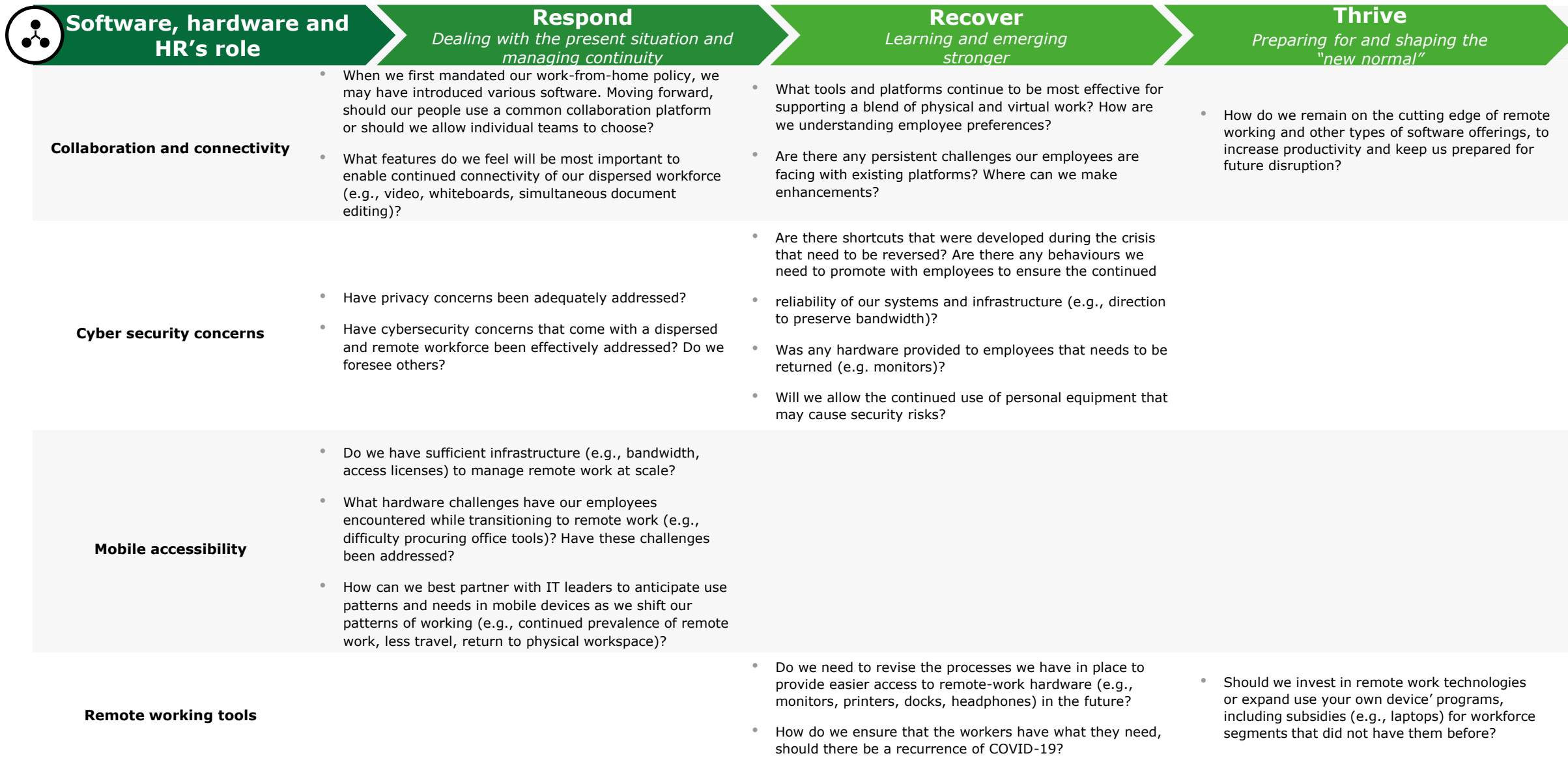
Work: Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?




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 Digitisation and analytics	Respond <i>Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity</i>	Recover <i>Learning and emerging stronger</i>	Thrive <i>Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"</i>
Digitisation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were there HR processes that were difficult for our team to complete during the crisis that could be automated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What work can still not be completed because information or resources have not been fully digitised, and how can these challenges be remedied quickly?• What processes and practices are anchoring our employees to the physical workspace? Can these be changed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How might we leverage artificial intelligence as a first line of response for employee questions (e.g., chatbots)?• What services can we offer employees by leveraging AI and robotics (e.g., travel booking)?• Which of our employee processes are ripe for greater digitisation (e.g., recruitment, onboarding)?	
Reporting and dashboards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What employee data was missing during the crisis? Can we remedy this prior to our workforce returning to work?• What new or enhanced reporting do we need to support the return of our workforce?			
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are we monitoring the use of HR technologies and platforms, and adjusting our offerings accordingly to best support employees?• What unstructured data do we already collect that we can analyse to yield deeper insights?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How might we ethically leverage technology to monitor the engagement, productivity and well-being of our workforce (e.g., wearables)?	

Work: Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?



Regulatory (including travel and legal)

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

Legal and regulatory requirements

- What new legal considerations do we need to be prepared for as people return to work (e.g., occupational health requirements)?
- Are we adequately leveraging government programs (e.g., wage subsidies) to support our workers while we stabilise? Are there any new programs that we should be exploring?
- How will we manage and communicate policies related to infectious disease and leaves of absence due to medical directives?
- What will regulators want to understand in their post-crisis review? Are we collecting sufficient data to measure and document our behaviours?

- What support are we providing to employees in understanding any relevant policy changes that may impact them (e.g., return to work, government programs)?
- How are we managing recalls from temporary layoffs?
- How are we staying on top of regulatory changes in other jurisdictions that may have implications for us globally?
- How are we managing ongoing communications with public health authorities?

- How can we effectively incorporate regulatory changes into our regular cycle of employee relations policy reviews?

Work refusals

- During the initial outbreak, what were the key learnings around protocols to investigate work refusals?
- How will we proactively manage safety concerns moving forward?
- Are we currently dealing with any active or pending work refusals that require a response?

- How do we make sure we are anticipating work refusals before they happen?
- How are we recording work refusals and ensuring proper remedial actions are taken to protect our workers?
- How are we ensuring workplace practices continue to align with public health directives?

Business and personal travel

- How will we ensure we have the most accurate information to inform real-time travel and mobility restrictions? How will we reliably communicate changes and alerts to our people?
- What type of business travel will we now deem essential?
- What will our travel approval process now need to look like to ensure a balance of safety and cost-containment?

- Will we set restrictions for employees while they are travelling to optimise their safety (e.g., limit number of people in meetings)? How often will we review these restrictions?
- Do we need restrictions on who travels and how often?
- What protocols do we need in place to have contact with employees when they are traveling?
- Do we need to develop guidance for personal travel (e.g., requirement to flag travel to high-risk locations)?

- Is there an opportunity to re-think our overall travel philosophy to reduce cost and environmental impact?

Work: Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?



External partnerships

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

Vendor relationships

- What vendor services will be most critical to our recovery?
- Have new needs arisen that require us to procure new vendors?
- Do any of our vendor terms need to be further adjusted prior to bringing the workforce back?
- Do we need to adjust any of our vendor management systems in the immediate term?

- Are any of our strategic vendors now facing serious challenges that threaten our business? In what ways could we support them?
- How has the vendor landscape changed? How do we need to further adjust our vendor strategy?
- How will our physical interaction with vendors work moving forward? What protocol changes have they made?

- Will changes to usage patterns trigger any rebates or cost negotiations with external vendors?

Partnerships

- What recovery and post-recovery challenges faced by our customers, employees and communities is our organisation now uniquely equipped to solve (e.g., increasing employment opportunities)? Can we think of creative and unexpected ways to help?
- Do we have areas where our business is actually now growing, and where we could use community connections to tap into new talent pools?

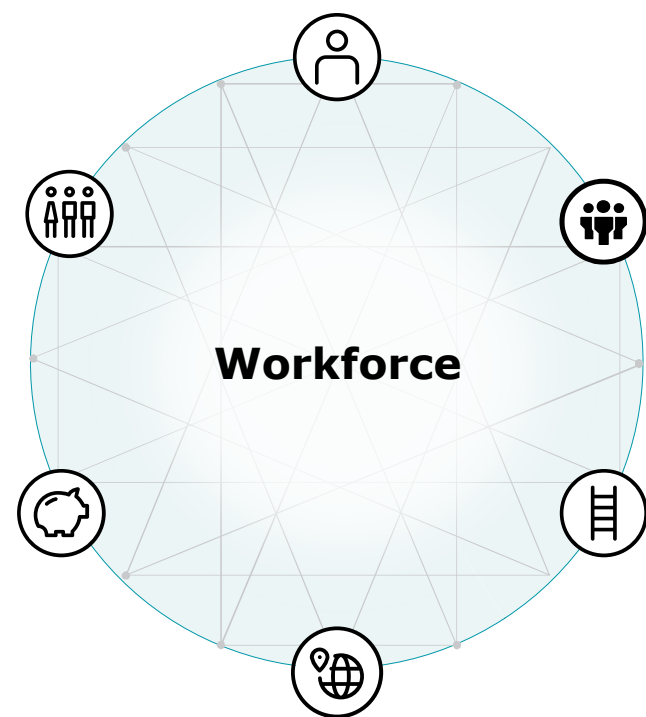
- Are there community groups that reflect our purpose that we could partner with to support their recovery efforts?

- Are there opportunities for us to collaborate and share experiences with other organisations to find solutions for those who have lost their jobs (e.g., how do we re-purpose/transfer skills to build collective bridges for employees)?
- Can we drive this effort to support skills cross-training in our communities on a continuing basis so that our workforce is better equipped for the future?



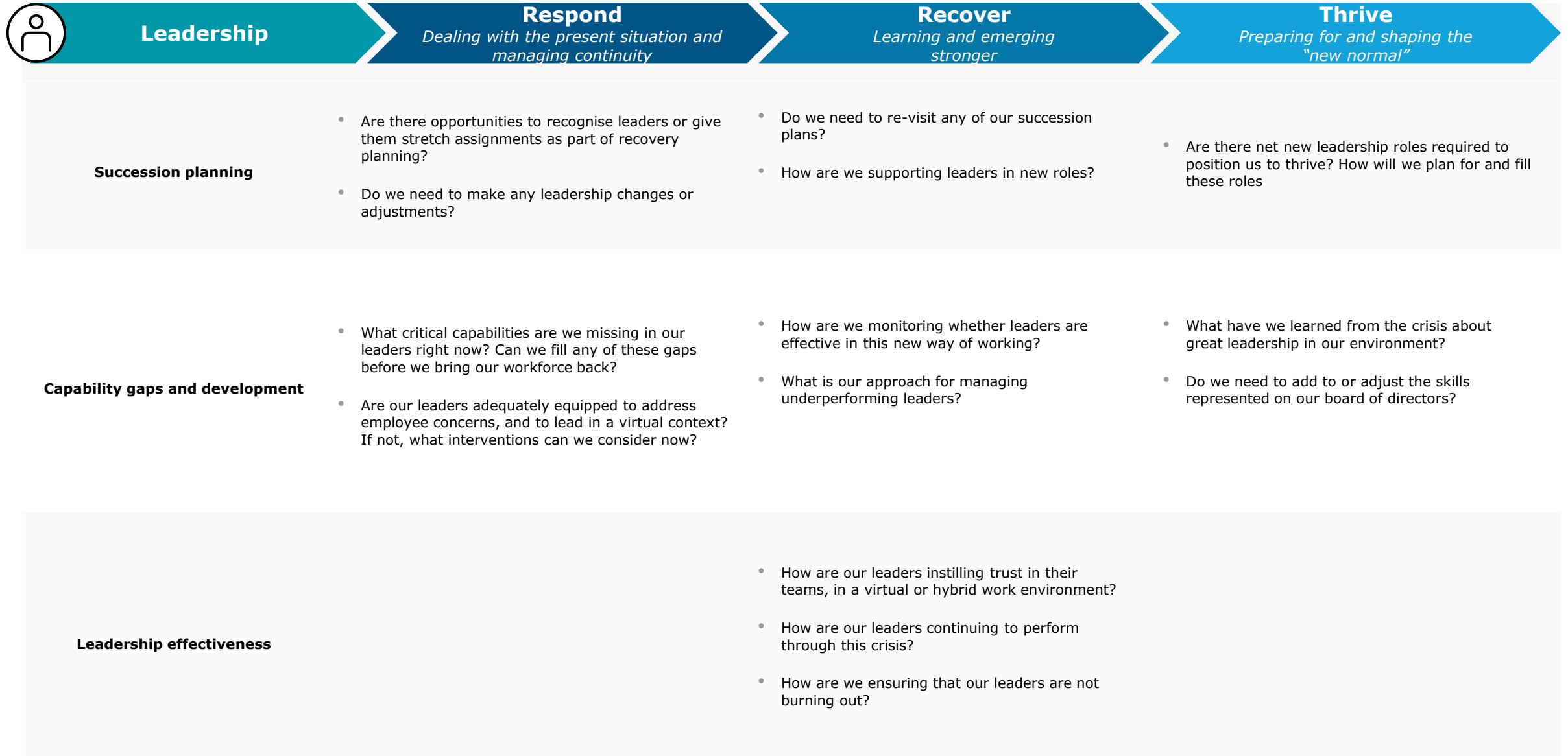
Workforce: Overview of key areas to be assessed

How does capacity, capability, and affordability affect workforce design after the crisis?

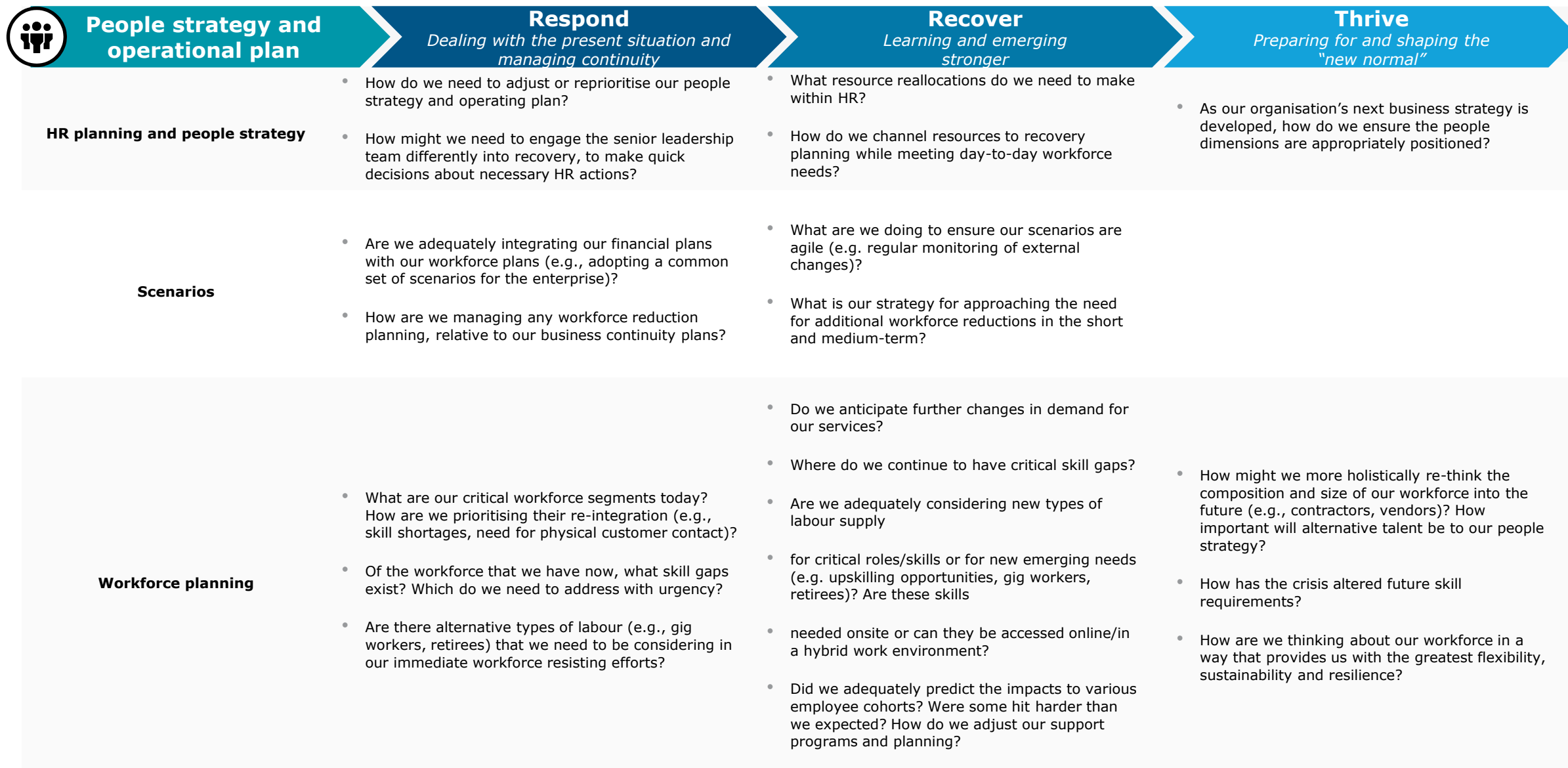


	Leadership	Our leaders will face a unique set of challenges as they navigate toward a new normal.
	People strategy/ operational plan (including scenario planning and alternative labour strategies)	The organisation's people strategy will serve as an important roadmap to guide the workforce re-integration. Scenario planning for the medium term and 'new normal' workforce options will be foundational to guiding recovery efforts.
	Talent processes	The structure and execution of talent processes will need to be re-thought and built around the realities of a likely protracted and uneven recovery, to continue achieving desired business outcomes, as well as inclusive employee experiences.
	Global Mobility	Developing a robust and agile global mobility programme will be critical as organisations contest with differing countries de-hibernation timeframes, through relaxing of lockdown regulations and easing of border restrictions
	Benefits plans	Post-crisis, the workforce will be facing new challenges in health and overall well-being. A strategically thought-out review of existing compensation and benefits programs may be required to ensure even greater flexibility.
	Employee experience	Employees will need to be highly engaged and informed during recovery, to build the trust and community necessary for effective re-integration.

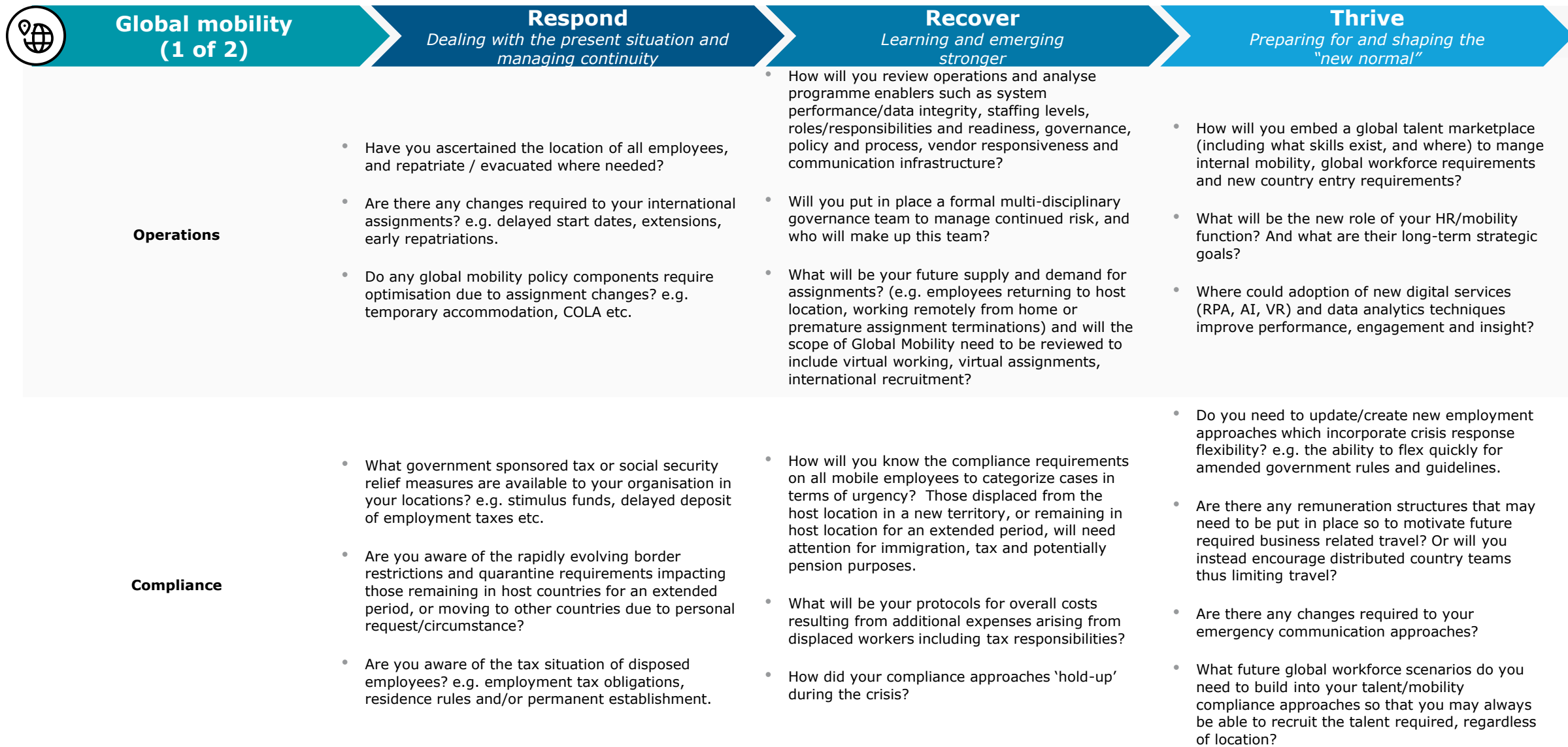
Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



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Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



Global mobility (2 of 2)

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

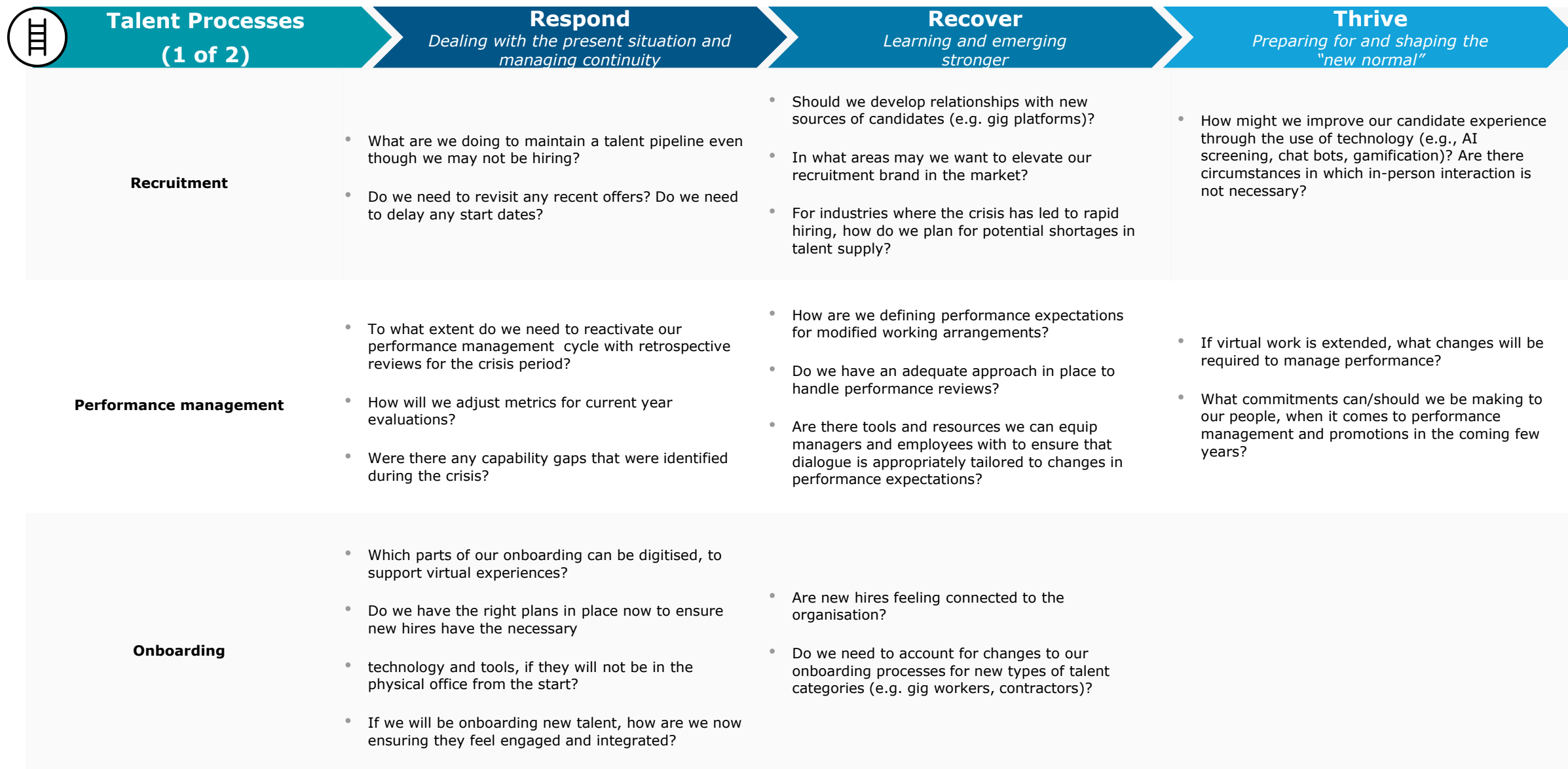
Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

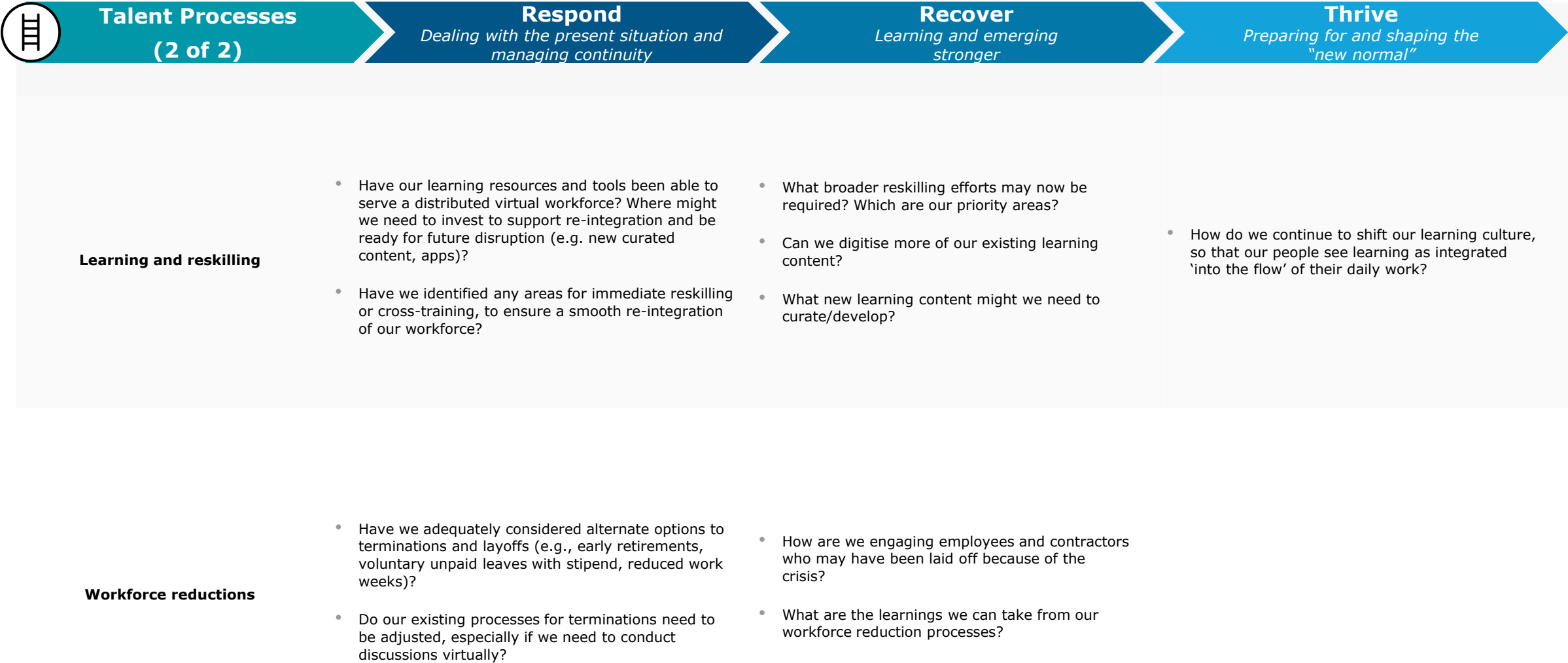
People

- Have you considered extending/promoting benefits to individuals most impacted by COVID-19? e.g. those unable to work due to being displaced in another location.
- What analysis have you conducted of your mobility data so that you can ensure communications and support are going to the right employees and at the right time?
- Do you need to implement formal employee well-being programmes or provide well-being advice to provide support and foster employee engagement? e.g. video calls, work from home tips, virtual teaming.
- How will you prepare for the return of global mobility and support displaced employees return to their place of work?
- What support will you put in place to limit the effect of 'reverse cultural shock' where employees have spent a considerable amount of time social distancing, and in some circumstances, in a country which is not their first language.
- How can you ensure clear and accessible two-way communication channels are in place to disseminate information, engage one-to-one and to allow continuous feedback?
- How will you reinforce commitment to well-being and purpose through a focus on physical, psychological and financial concerns for your internationally relocated employees?

Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



Benefits plans

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

Plan changes

- Do we need to adjust our plans to create more flexibility (e.g., extended sick leave)?
- Do we need to make further adjustments to our out-of-country benefits?

- Do any of our programs encourage unsafe behaviour (e.g., not reporting infection)? If so, how do we make the appropriate modifications?
- How are our benefit providers reacting to this crisis? How can we work with them to enhance our plans?
- Are we considering scaling back any benefit plan entitlements that we extended at the onset of the crisis?

- How can we leverage analytics to better tailor our benefit offerings to our employee needs and manage costs?
- How can we re-imagine our offerings to provide our employees with the greatest degree of flexibility?

Well-being and mental health

- Is our current mental health support comprehensive enough?
- Can employees access new government programs to support their mental health?
- Are we adequately equipping our leaders and managers with the resources they need to support the overall well-being of themselves and their teams?
- What support are we providing to people who have experienced deaths of family members, coworkers, or clients?

- Do we need to consider additional mental-health supports upon re-entry into the workplace?
- Do we need crisis response support in place for issues involving mental health concerns in our workforce?
- Do we need to enhance our absenteeism management processes/systems?
- How can we address rapid changes in work norms (e.g., email volume, long hours) to support mental health?

- Should we conduct a comprehensive review of our mental health policies, programs, and practices?

Work arrangements

- Do we want to consider implementing new work-from-home incentives to minimise risks associated with re-entry?
- Should we consider modifying benefit entitlements for those who opt into modified work arrangements?

- How are we supporting our workforce, in the event of additional school or care-giving disruptions?

Compensation

- What concerns have our employees raised about compensation programs? Have we sufficiently addressed these?
- Are temporary compensation adjustments needed for essential staff (e.g. danger pay)?

- What is the current total cost of our workforce (on/off balance sheet workers, direct costs, indirect costs)? What levers do we have to reduce costs over the short, medium and long-term?
- How and when will we make decisions to consider adjusting our bonus and equity-based programs metrics and payouts?
- Do our executive compensation program metrics need to be reviewed?
- Will we need to evaluate salary increases for the coming year?

- Do our compensation principles need to be re-imagined (e.g. flexible compensation models)?

Workforce: How does capacity, capability, & affordability affect workforce design?



Employee experience

Respond

Dealing with the present situation and managing continuity

Recover

Learning and emerging stronger

Thrive

Preparing for and shaping the "new normal"

Multi-channel/multi-directional communication

- Do we need to adjust our approach for managing employee questions and concerns (e.g. central mailboxes, leadership points of contact)?
- Do we have enough two-way communication channels in place?
- What messages are we sharing with regard to job security? How are we openly communicating workforce reductions, while simultaneously hiring in others?
- Are we effectively communicating regarding our employees' use of social media and privacy concerns?

- How are we ensuring employees continue to feel heard and safe as they re-enter the workplace (e.g., pulse surveys, open forums)?
- What is the appropriate cadence and channel for communications, to keep people engaged without being overwhelmed?
- Are we staying connected with our people who have been laid off? What is our process for re-engaging them?

- What have we learned from communication during the crisis that we need to continue and enhance? What measures need to be permanently adopted?

Recognition/retention

- Are there different types of behaviours we now want to recognise as part of our recovery efforts (e.g., finding new and effective ways to drive collaboration across virtual teams,
- supporting colleagues struggling with mental health concerns)?
- Are there examples of teams that have delivered high performance during the crisis? How do we celebrate behaviour and replicate it in other areas?

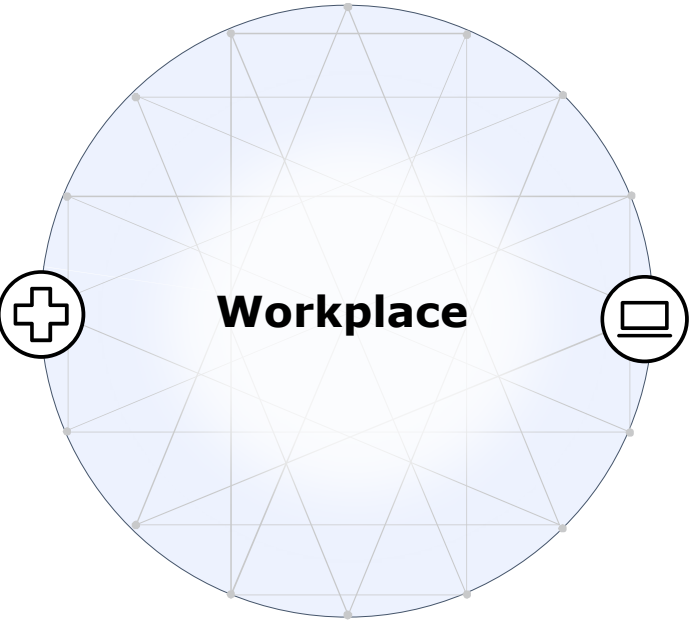
- Is there a need for special recognition of any of your workforce?
- Are there new opportunities to engage our top performers (e.g., stretch roles, team leadership, hack-a-thons)?
- Are we actively engaging our people in the appropriate career development conversations?





Workplace

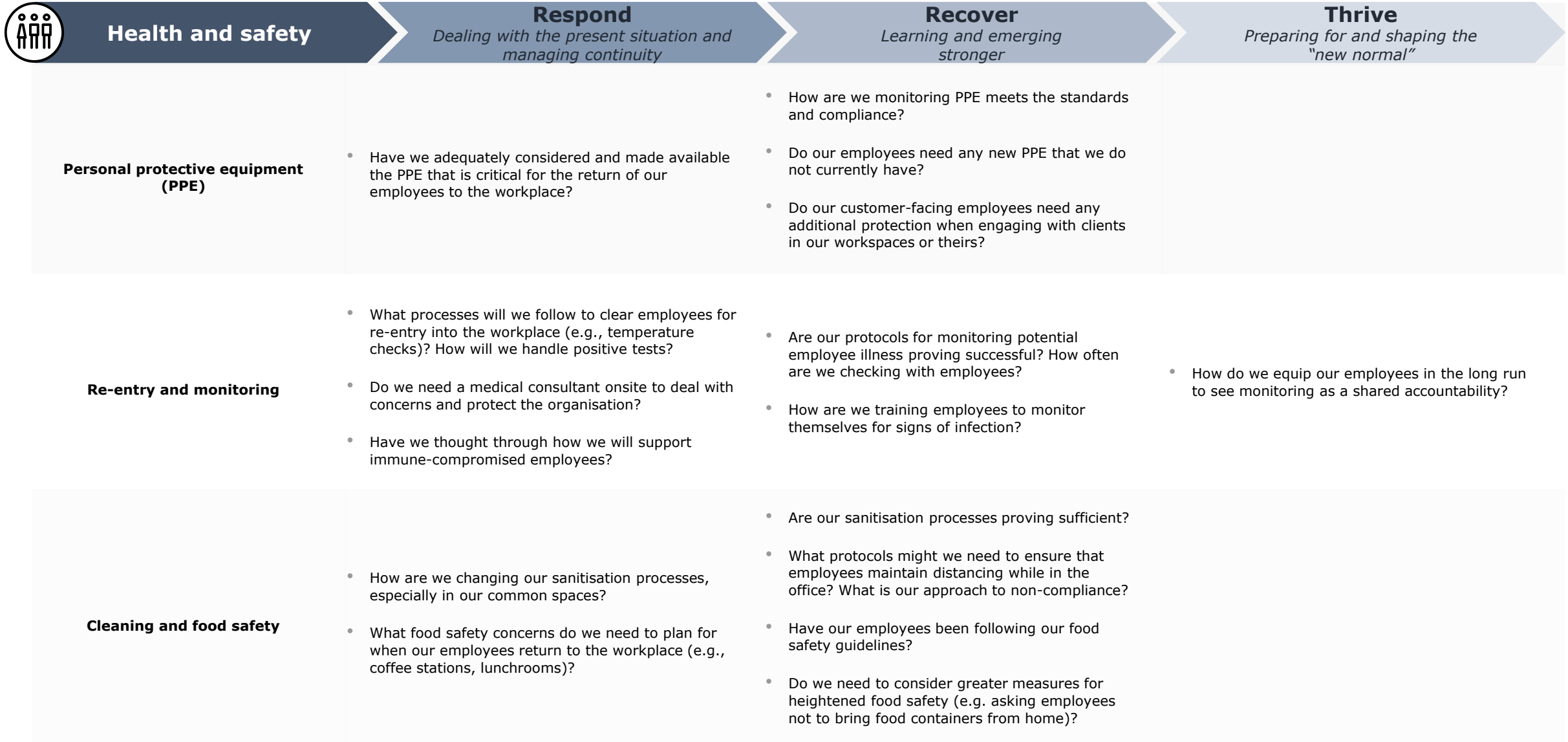
Workplace: Overview of key areas to be assessed

What did we learn about working in the flow of life? How did it impact work when the boundaries between work and life are blurred?

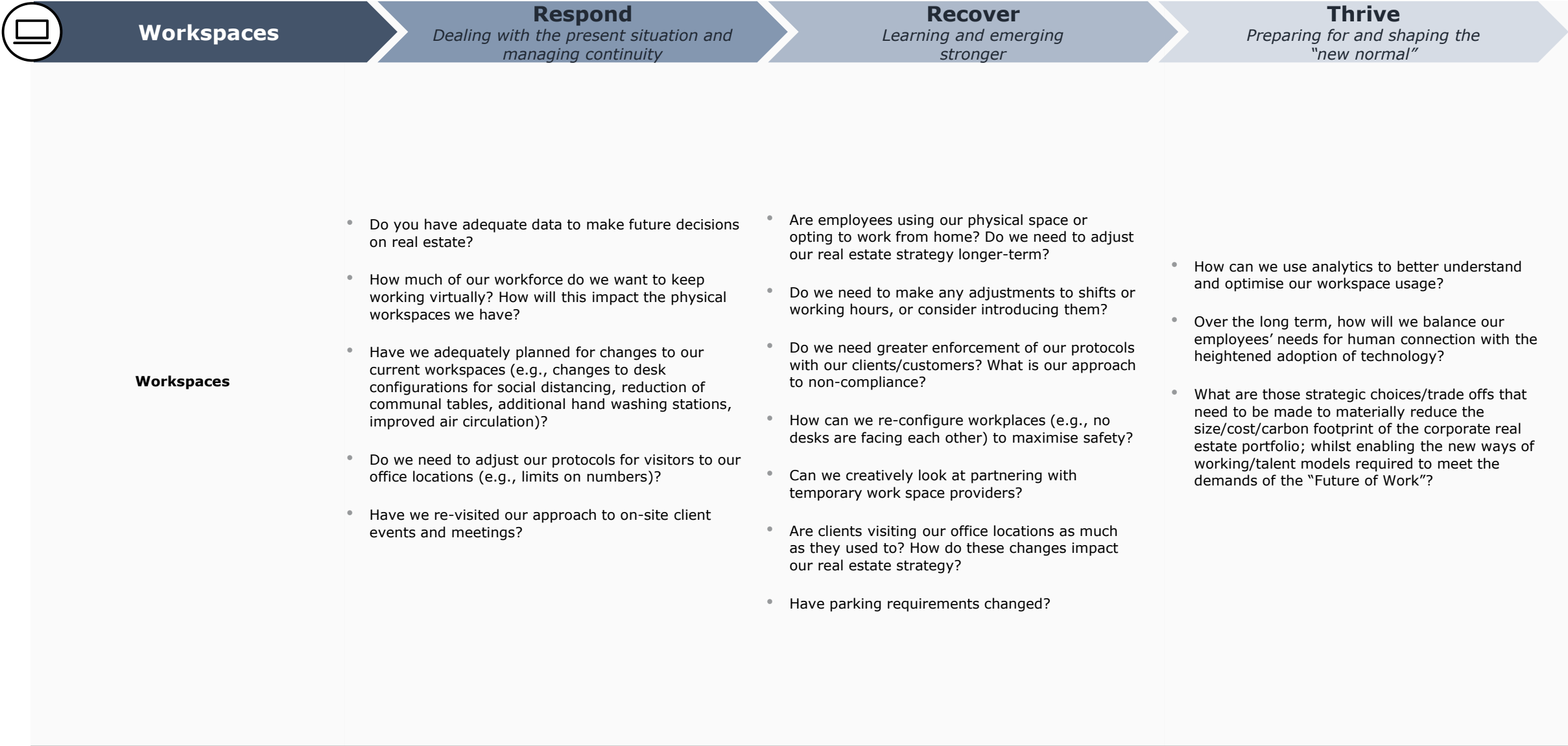


	Health and Safety	When the workforce re-enters the physical workplace, strong health and safety protocols will be crucial for prevention and containment of spikes.
	Workspaces	How organisations use their workspaces will undoubtedly need to change, to ensure heightened safety, and the right balance between virtual and non-virtual interactions.

Work: Are we returning to the way we worked before, or adopting new ways of working?



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Workforce and Talent Recover and Thrive Lab

Workforce and Talent Recover and Thrive Lab

The virtual lab experience sets the foundations in understanding the impact and implications of COVID-19 on your strategy and talent in order to proactively plan for the 'new normal', challenging your thinking with industry and subject matter experts to accelerate decision making



Remarkable times calls for remarkable leadership.

For an organisation to plan and execute well for the upcoming recovery, it will require unprecedented functional collaboration and clarity on the way forward



The **Recover & Thrive Lab** is a highly facilitated, half-day experience of 2 x 2-hour virtual sessions with your leadership team



It has been designed to accelerate your thinking and alignment around the actions you need to take now to set the strongest foundation to achieve sustained growth and performance



We understand that every organisation is different and is experiencing **different challenges and opportunities** as a result of COVID-19. Therefore the content of each lab will be **tailored** to your organisation's focus based on our understanding of your organisation and an initial video interview with the sponsor within your business



The session is structured in a way to drive **alignment, prioritisation and action** for your strategy and talent

HOW THE LAB IS STRUCTURED

01 | Reflect

- Reflect on your current position and strategy
- Explore and align on potential recovery scenarios
- Align on your revised ambition and strategic focus
- Identify strategic opportunities and accelerators

02 | Prioritise

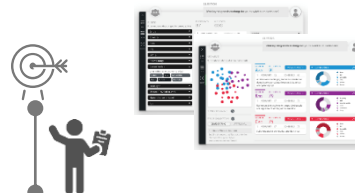
- Prioritise the strategic initiatives
- Agree strategic priorities and rank in terms of urgency vs. impact
- Identify blockers and enablers

03 | Plan

- Define what success looks like for your priorities
- Assess your level of confidence in achieving them
- Confirm accountability
- Agree immediate next steps

OUTPUTS

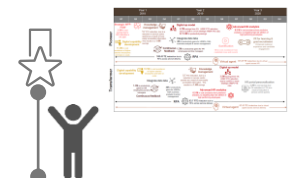
Current state assessed and strategic opportunities



Analysis of strategic initiatives, prioritised on urgency vs impact



Roadmap of how to get there





Key contacts

Key contacts



Human Capital Lead



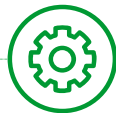
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