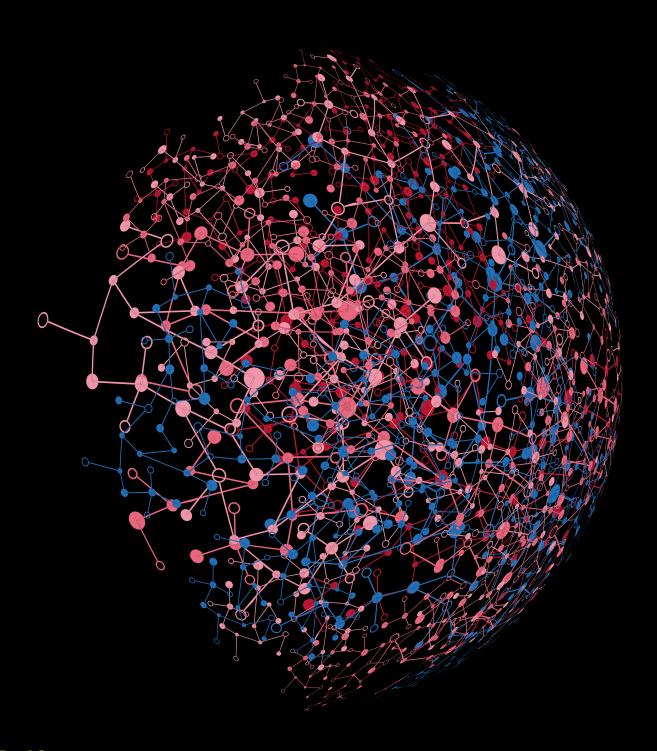
Deloitte.



COVID-19

The power of your people

A practical journey to recovery for the consumer industry

Contents



Six ways to jump start customer growth

- 1 Re
- Recommit to the well-being of your employees and customers
- 2

Recommit your employees and customers to your social impact



Re-engage in communication with employees and customers



Re-engage your employees with new skills and capabilities to service your customers



Rethink how you organize your teams to be laser-focused on the customer



Rethink how you can improve productivity and build business resiliency through digitization and automation (D&A)

Sector spotlights



Retail sector



Hospitality and service sector



Consumer goods, food and manufacturing sector



Gaming and entertainment sector



Transportation sector

While COVID-19 has taken so much away from society, it has also injected a big dose of humanity and an urge for genuine human connection.

If you're in a consumer-facing industry—retail, food, travel, hospitality, gaming, or transportation—how you engage, empower, and protect your employees will not only determine your speed to recovery and growth but also shape your future relationship with your customers. Winning the hearts and minds of consumers requires a human-first culture across your workforce. Here are some practical ways to enable your workers, prepare your workplace, and organize purposeful work.





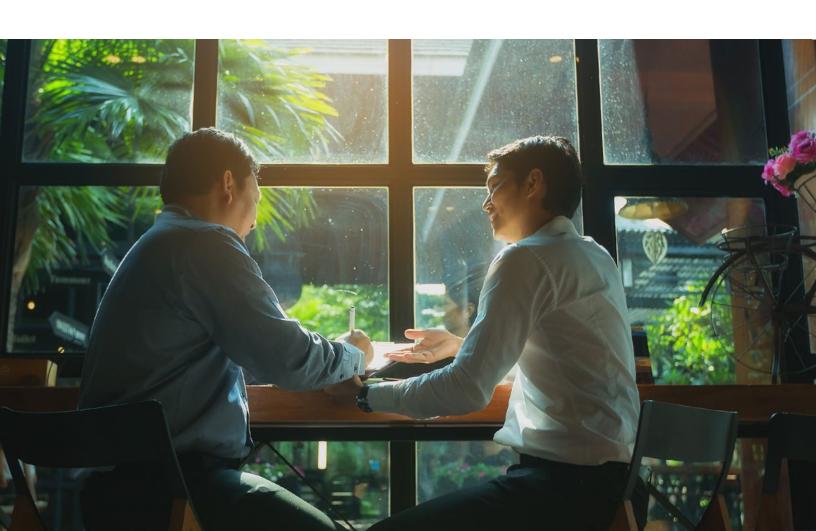
First, a little on your consumer

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened a window onto the future. This unprecedented push towards remote work and life means customer behaviours have changed, and these new values will now become the drivers of or barriers to unlocking growth for the future:

- Needs are basic family, food, learning, work, and money are priorities.
- Safety is paramount concerns about social distancing, access to personal protective equipment (PPE), and sanitation are now universal.
- Convenience is king comfort with accessing essentials from home is growing (e.g., grocery shopping, health services).

- **Shopping is online** once resistant consumers have moved online and are seeking curbside service.
- **Social impact is valued** businesses that are giving back to the community are highly regarded.
- Local is "in" local sourcing and supporting businesses where there is a close emotional connection is preferred.

In searching for moments of comfort and relief, consumers' attention has refocused on the basics: human connection, and community.¹ Everything consumers have experienced with this shift, your employees have experienced too. The turbulence in their own lives has also changed how they view work and the need to engage with customers. This means that how you engage your employees needs to change, too.



As you look at the road to recovery from COVID-19, it's time to go beyond the "employee experience" and "customer experience." Focus simply on the unified "human experience"— the personal touch—and remember how an interaction with a brand, product, or service makes people feel.

"You don't wake up as customers or employees, each day begins and ends as humans. The most significant differentiator in this era for any product or service will be how that interaction makes people feel. Great experiences build connections. Strong connections create loyalty. And loyalty drives business results."²



High-impact employee experience organizations are

1.6X more likely to achieve better customer outcomes.³

¹ Deloitte, <u>COVID-19: Voice of Canadians and impact to retailers,</u> 2020, p. 12

² Deloitte, How Can Travel Brands Remain Human in a Digital-First World, May 2020

³ Christina Rasieleski and Matthew Deruntz, "<u>High Impact Workforce Experience: In Brief</u>", *Deloitte Consulting LLP*, August 1, 2019

























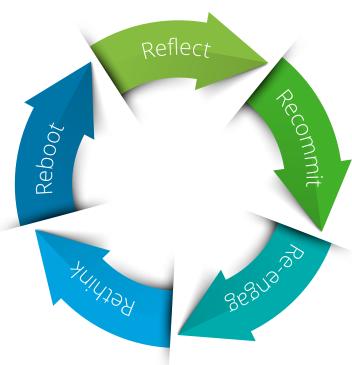
As you look at your employee strategies, focus on creating a more human experience by looking at five critical actions: reflect, recommit, re-engage, rethink, and reboot. These actions can help you reach the new normal by laying the foundation to drive customer growth in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Reflect

on what has worked, what has been learned, and what has been missed in the response—bringing in different perspectives and voices.

Reboot - HR and people operations priorities

and realign the HR function and people operations with the most pressing business and workforce priorities and pivoting towards exponential HR.



Rethink work, workforces, and workplaces

to leverage the experiences of the COVID-19 response and the opportunity to accelerate the future of work.

Recommit

to workforce wellbeing and purpose through a focus on physical, psychological and financial concerns at home and in the workplace.

Re-engage

and redeploy the workforce to maximize their contribution and potential for rapidly evolving organizational priorities.



To jumpstart your efforts on growth and customer experience, prioritize the three actions of **recommit, re-engage,** and **rethink**. Below we will explore some practical advice on how to think through creating a more human experience overall.

























The leadership of one essential business told us that a quarter of its workforce did not feel safe and well enough to come to work, despite having access to PPE and the strictest of sanitation conditions. This is a lesson for all businesses: establishing psychological as well as physical safety will be paramount to building a resilient, engaged and motivated workforce.

A. Focus on the mental well-being of your workforce

The consumer industry has been uniquely affected by the health crisis, with a large portion of the workforce becoming essential workers overnight or being furloughed. How you show up to support your employees during recovery—and the leaders that support them—will be critical.

A few practical suggestions:

- Reinforce your focus on mental health and take a
 proactive approach. Your options can vary from enhancing
 leadership training and return-to-work training programs
 to updating benefits spend and building awareness
 campaigns to address the stigma related to mental health.
- For convenience, offer free or discounted subscriptions to mental health services or apps that employees can use whenever they need to. The results will be higher retention rates, stronger talent attraction, greater engagement, and overall higher productivity.
- Change the norm—explore new ways to limit fatigue from virtual ways of working. For example, one company has meetings only in the mornings to protect afternoons for working and thinking time. Another company has limited email zones for evenings and weekends to give employees a mental break and another has a "no meeting over lunch hours" rule, to provide some guardrails and breathing space in this new working environment that bleeds so fluidly between work and home.

B. Prioritize a safe workplace for both employees and customers

It is important to make your employees—and by extension your customers—feel comfortable and safe in their working environment. Airlines, restaurants, and retailers have started to lay out new procedures for serving customers that involve more screening, digitally enabled contactless procedures, voice-activated commands, and even decontamination chambers.

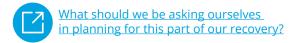
A few practical suggestions:

- Educate your employees about the realities they will continue to face and what measures you are taking to protect them and create a safe environment for your customers. Increasingly, virtual technology, apps, and augmented reality (AR) are being used to provide ondemand training to keep employees updated with the latest safety protocols for the new environment.
- Use the digital tools and technology available to speed up reporting and contact tracing. Businesses are using thermal scanners and tracing apps through which employees can self-declare their health by taking a survey and then making their location known throughout the workday to identify anyone they may have come in contact with.
- Employees are asking customers to take all the precautions they can before they engage with them, asking health questions over the phone in advance, or arranging more appointment-based interactions.

Providing the security and support of both physical and mental well-being measures is an important first step in empowering your workforce to better serve your customers.

Examples

- Officeworks, Australia's largest supplier of office and stationary products, prioritized employee safety and well-being through three communication channels. By doing so, they equipped employees to care for themselves and as a result, care for customers, too:
 - a. COVID-19 information hub with targeted written and video communications with information, policy changes, FAQs and new initiatives to keep everyone safe and a COVID-19 hotline (staffed by nurses)
 - b. "Work-from-home" hub with a library of tailored activities and resources to help support team members working remotely.
 - c. "My experiences" hub with well-being resources for mental and physical health.
- 2. Large hotels and casinos have a safety playbook on protocols and self-protection to enable front-line managers to communicate key safety messages to their front-line staff. These organizations are built on white glove service, and as an example when customers return to casinos, they will receive a package of masks and sanitizer, and casino floors will be arranged to accommodate physical distancing by limiting slot machines and the number of players at tables, thus giving both employees and customers a safe place to interact.
- 3. One mattress retailer adopted a sanitation regime that customers and sales associates complete together, to ensure both parties feel safe in the shopping experience. Both the sales associate and customer confirm how they are feeling health-wise before starting a store visit. They visit a cleaning station together, and the customer picks up and carries his or her own protective shields to use in testing furniture. By doing this, the retailer is ensuring full transparency between employees and customers, ensuring both have a safe interaction.

































Emerging from the COVID-19 crisis, there is a higher expectation of businesses to support the community and social causes. During the pandemic, you may have been an essential service, opened your doors to front-line medical workers, or re-purposed your facilities to make protective equipment. You also may have provided extra support to employees, like bonuses for essential workers, increased mental health benefits, or flexible working conditions.



NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

"RV COMPANY HELPED HEALTH-CARE WORKERS ISOLATE FROM FAMILIES"

Apparel manufacturers reopened facilities to make COVID-19 supplies

HOTELS OPEN AS 'COMFORTING REFUGE' FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

GROCERY STORES HIKE EMPLOYEE PAY AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

How your organization shouldered its responsibility to be a good citizen during the pandemic will influence how you will be perceived after it. How you transition to and manage through recovery will leave a lasting impression with your employees. Customers will ask, "How did you manage through this tough time?" and how employees respond will matter more than ever.

A. Share the story of your impact

Every business has a COVID-19 story, and every employee is part of that story. Customers will remember what life was like during the peak of the crisis, and what your business did to take care of your people, your customers, and your community. Your employees will need to be prepared to retell that story in a way that resonates with them. Have your employees be part of crafting that story and then telling it in their own voices. Empathy and the shared human experience will become the bond between customers and employees.

B. Treat employees as your number-one customer and brand ambassador

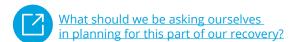
Your front-line employees have the most meaningful interactions with your customers, and can act as ambassadors for your brand and products.

A few practical suggestions:

- Harness the power of your employees as influencers positive words can spread fast and build real demand. Beware: the potential reach of an employee's bad experience is magnified through family, friends, and across wider networks, which can be damaging because employees are perceived as the trusted authority for that company.
- Give your employees a seat at the table in planning the "next normal," to give those at all levels of your organization ownership in the recovery. Test drive your new customer experience on your employees first and collect their feedback. And listen to them—they will be the ones who have the ideas with the most immediate impact. If they are part of the process, they will support it and help bring it to life in an authentic way that will resonate with customers.

Examples

- 1. Starbucks has lived its values amid the pandemic disruption by being "performance driven, through the lens of humanity" in its actions regarding its workforce. To foster employee loyalty, Starbucks maintained full salary and benefits when stores closed. They also increased mental health benefits, providing 20 professional mental-health appointments for each employee annually. The results of these efforts? Employees are sharing their gratitude and telling the story, which is drawing a lot of "way to go, Starbucks!" from consumers.
- 2. Employees and unions exerted deep influence over a large grocery retailer in the United States that planned to pull back the so-called "hero pay" it had been giving its essential employees. When the reduction in compensation was announced, the company and its brand faced a major public backlash. The retailer later announced a one-time thank-you bonus and extended COVID-19 emergency leave to reward and safeguard associates, and ultimately customers. It became an important lesson in showing employees how they are valued, in order to foster a greater sense of belonging.
- 3. When the shutdowns began, an international beauty retailer redeployed many in-store beauty advisors to become online influencers, using digital tools to engage consumers virtually. This resulted in a 200-percent increase in consumer engagement compared to the same time in the previous year. In addition to maintaining customer sales despite store closures, transitioning the customer relationship online also allowed the retailer to establish a channel that can help drive its recovery.





























Re-engage in communication with employees and customers

The rapidly changing circumstances brought by COVID-19 reinforced the importance of clear and frequent communication, grounded in empathy, with both employees and customers. When choosing your communication methods as you look to the future, focus on reinforcing the human experience you're creating for your employees—put health, safety, and well-being first.

A. Paint a picture of the future ahead

As your business adapts to permanent shifts in the market, be open and clear in your message about what change you are preparing for (e.g., increased e-commerce, reduced physical footprint) and how it could affect your employees and customers. Your employees will, undoubtedly, convey that message to customers, and reinforce your organization's recovery story.

Don't shy away from the reason behind any difficult decisions you had to make. Consistent messaging throughout the organization will equip your employees to tell that story if asked, and will help connect them to how they contributed to your company's narrative during this crisis period.

B. Pick your communication channels and spokespeople strategically

While communication styles, methods, and spokespeople will differ, depending on the nature of your business, the most important thing is to adapt to what will resonate most with your employees. Leaders are releasing videos, posting on internal social networking channels, and hosting fire-side video chat sessions to stay connected.

A few practical suggestions:

- Plan to reach everyone—your full-time, part-time, contract workers, and vendors—through the most appropriate medium, to be inclusive and deliver the same message holistically.
- Use real-time channels (e.g., live video) when communicating to make a connection, and static channels to create a single source of truth for critical messages, such as safety protocols, that need to be easily accessed for reference. Each method will receive different levels of engagement, so consider whether—and how—you hope to receive feedback when choosing your channel.
- People will feel more comfortable providing honest feedback in a small focus group, or individually and anonymously, than in a large town hall. Take feedback to heart and use it to adjust your approach and inform future communications.

Equally important in communications is the decision about who will deliver the message. Consider individuals who employees will trust to both deliver the message and relay or act on their feedback. Sometimes company-wide messages need to come from a recognizable people leader. Other times, informal influencers at various levels can champion special initiatives. Consider the mix who will be most effective in engaging your employees, and remember that important information should be shared multiple times, in multiple ways, meaning there will never be only one way to communicate.

Examples

- 1. The CEO of Dunkin' Donuts reflected on its pandemic response, saying, "We've chosen to do what was timely over what was flawless." The company emphasized swift and frequent communications, and used instructional videos for rolling out new safety standards. The CEO also held conference calls twice a week with more than 1,200 franchisees, to discuss their plan of action for the next five days and to gather feedback (such as needing to update the mobile app to make it easier for locations to modify their opening hours). The trust organizations built during their response to the pandemic is their key to garnering employee engagement in forging the path forward.
- 2. A manufacturing executive has a special mailbox just for his team on the factory floor. He asks them to submit their suggestions and then recognizes ideas weekly (with the contributor's name, if approved) during either a town hall or a smaller huddle on the floor. Having a channel that is strictly for feedback, voluntary, and can be anonymous empowers employees to share their ideas and concerns, and engages them in helping to plan for recovery.































We've never seen a time where an employee's skills and capability requirements have shifted so rapidly and so drastically. Your employees are doing, and will be doing, things to get their job done that they did not do a few months ago. As a result, it's critical to understand what new skills your employees will need, and how you will most effectively train them to build capabilities to provide the best experience for your customer.

A. Reimagine the skills/capabilities they will need.

In the past, business success relied mainly on deploying precisely calibrated skills to efficiently construct products or deliver services at scale. Today, success increasingly depends on innovation, entrepreneurship, and other forms of creativity that rely not just on skills, but also on less quantifiable capabilities such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and collaboration. Reinforce the following with your employees:



Curiosity

Asking key questions about customer motivation and what they're trying to do, what else could help, and what's new out there.



Emotional intelligence

Remaining empathetic and asking how much trust is being built and assessing levels of credibility in relationships.



Social intelligence

Being continuously aware of who can help, who's needed, and who else is doing the same thing.



Imagination

Approaching problem-solving without an existing point of reference and instead creating something new.



Creativity

Approaching problem solving with a point of reference but originating new ideas and thoughts.



Adaptability

Bringing an ability to adjust to an ever-changing world, and not just to short-term changes, but to a continuous customer shift.

Treat your learning and development strategy as a way to build organizational resilience—equipping employees to adapt to a range of uncertain futures to reskill them for near-term needs.

B. Deliver in-the-moment training that resonates and empowers employees to deliver the best customer experience

In addition to what employees should be learning, switch gears on how they should be learning to transition to the "new normal" of virtual work to create a positive experience.

A few practical suggestions:

Learning in the flow of work

Learning through experience yields better results than traditional classroom instruction. Help employees learn through experiences and scenarios that are real and applicable. Companies are embracing virtual reality tools and simulations to provide realistic experiences of working in a hotel, kitchen or retail environment.

Knowledge-sharing communities

In a world where knowledge equals power, many workers feel that holding on to their specialized knowledge allows them to safeguard their worth. Combat this to create an ethos that helps people recognize that sharing their knowledge to serve their customers makes them more relevant, not less. Set up the right platforms and communities to get sharing.

Go outside for learning and get the best

Explore your vendor ecosystem for learning curricula to optimize opportunities to learn. Some organizations are publishing online master classes and boot camps to quickly ramp up new technologies and approaches, without designing new learning materials in-house.

Disrupt the channel

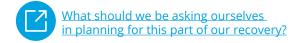
New modes of delivery will become increasingly important, including boot camps, virtual conferences, video learning and real-time job aids leveraging augmented and virtual realities. Each modality will have a target audience and timing, but each one must include:

- Digital-learning tactics that are tailored to new workplace realities and employee expectations.
- Speed and purpose, for faster and "in the moment" learning.
- Alignment to the audience, their learning styles, and their degree of mastery.

Given the importance of continuously learning, adapting and improving, look at how you are rewarding employees (both individually and teams) to deliver outstanding customer experiences.

Examples

- 1. A2 Milk Company, a fresh and solid milk consumer products organization operating in China, the US, Australia and New Zealand, launched an entirely virtual 'a2 University Hub' during the pandemic to reinforce their values and behaviours and provide dedicated development support. This underscored their unwavering commitment to demonstrating the right values and behaviours and to supporting their global employees with "on-demand" learning and development support in a virtual format.
- 2. Sodexo worked to build an organizational culture that recognizes the value of knowledge-sharing. It launched a digital campaign to encourage its nearly 500,000 employees to join active knowledge-sharing communities and encouraged participation by marketing the importance of the communities, measuring usage, and recognizing active users. These efforts are already paying off. Sodexo is already seeing "more and more adoption of new behaviours, like sharing, collaborating, and consuming knowledge", a leader said. "I do believe that we are in the right direction to break silos, work more collaboratively, and perform better as [our employees] understand that knowledge-sharing is power."



























5) Rethink how you organize your teams to be laser-focused on the customer

For most consumer businesses, there has been extreme pressure to rapidly respond in this crisis. There have been many news headlines about organizations achieving, in a matter of days, what would have normally taken months (e.g., starting curbside pick-up, building digital sales capabilities). The crisis has quickly exposed inadequacies in how organizations are structured, including functional silos, rigidity of decision making, and hierarchies that hinder people's ability to collaborate and respond quickly. COVID-19 has accelerated the need for a new way to organize teams, one that is adaptable, nimble and allows employees to collaborate, innovate and focus on the customer.

A. Create cross-functional teams to tackle big, strategic, customer problems

Your ability to adapt to changing customer preferences, technology disruption, and digital priorities can be greatly enhanced by creating teams and networks of teams to tackle your business priorities. Large traditional organizations are looking for ways to be nimbler and flex like a start-up. Adopting a more team-based model forces greater collaboration across areas. More than ever, teams can brainstorm fast, quickly test, pivot and scale implementation to not only remain competitive but signal to your customer that you see how they have changed and you are going to meet them where they are now.

Enhance this focus on customer engagement and connection—from the strategy you build in head office to how it comes to life. To do this successfully you will have to break conventional ways of doing things.

A few practical suggestions:

- Pull employees out of their functional silos and assemble them into "mission teams" that focus on a specific customer outcome, challenge or need. Bring together a diverse set of team members by level and department.
- Set 100% laser-focus on the customer and their needs (not the interests of your departments), building a solution to the problem by innovating, ideating quickly, failing-fast and learning.

- Try different collaboration styles based on what works in your context (e.g., daily stand-ups, or retrospectives that offer a safe place to discuss problems, improvements, and other topics).
- Forget the red-tape and navigating hierarchies or silos break out of matrix models, bring together the right people, and empower them to get the work done.
- Select a leader who can steer, but give your people the power to make decisions, in order to meet customer needs with agility.

You'd be surprised how much of this has naturally started happening during COVID-19 response—now it's about making it part of your organization's DNA moving forward. When teams are formed with the right culture, it puts your employees in a close-knit, psychologically safe environment founded on a culture of trust, accountability and transparency. Taken together, these provide your employees the perfect context for collaboration, experimentation, and innovation so they can deliver breakthrough results for your customers.

B. Embrace more frequent connection and agile ways of working to create a culture shift in how your employees interact with customers

While not all of your employees will formally shift into new cross-functional team configurations, you should be helping everyone adopt a way of working that allows them to be connected and respond rapidly to your customers. Through the first stages of the pandemic, pockets of your employees probably started to experiment with new ways of working that helped them meet customer needs in the new environment.

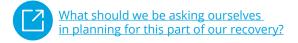
A few practical suggestions:

• Work to collect a repository of practices around virtual work (through an employee survey, for example), then reflect on which practices worked best and how you might help bring them to scale. Employees that already adopted the new habits can also serve as change champions to help the rest of your talent make the shift.

- Arm your employees to deliver micro-customer messaging on business
 decisions and responses that impact them. Give your employees the ability
 to communicate in different ways with customers with collaboration tools
 and platforms to support dynamic work across locations, offices and sites.
- Create a culture of agility, with the mindset among employees of putting
 the customer at the centre of every conversation, and thinking about "how
 will they feel". Value adaptability and challenging the status quo when the
 business value of procedures is unclear.

Examples

- 1. A grocery e-commerce company re-organized their digital team to move away from distinct trading, product management, marketing, and technology functions and instead adopted cross-functional "pods" focused on improving the key steps of their customers' journey. Each pod represented an aspect of the customer journey (e.g., online shopping, check-out, receiving groceries) and worked collaboratively to improve customer outcomes. They also pivoted central teams focused on operations and technology to provide support to all pods. As a result, new customers flocked to the site, fulfillment rates were higher, and they innovated new modes of delivery and achieved higher NPS scores.
- 2. 7-Eleven Australia created a small cross-functional pod to design and roll out a home delivery service for their stores in Melbourne within an incredible two week period. By pulling capabilities from across their convenience store business and adding team members from a parallel alcohol delivery business (Tipple, in which they had a majority stake), 7-Eleven was able to rapidly innovate to deliver essential products to consumers—accelerating speed to value through adaptable team structures.





























COVID-19 has rapidly uncovered opportunities to be more strategic and efficient in the way employees and teams work, by reorganizing tasks and leaning more heavily on automation options. It's the age of liberating the employee to be in a customer-focused headspace all the time!

A. Make your employees life easier

There are two dominant drivers pushing the D&A agenda through COVID-19.

First, a large-scale move to a distributed workforce has created a vast amount of new processes. Some of these processes improved productivity, but some undermined it. Reflect on how your employees can deliver on a "customer-focused" recovery strategy by:

- Understanding which processes are reducing productivity, and which are critical to being able to quickly act on strategic priorities needed to maintain, or gain, a competitive advantage in the market.
- · Reviewing and prioritizing these critical processes, identifying their shortfalls, and evaluating whether you can improve them through D&A. This will reduce the burden of sourcing information to inform decision-making, and allow your employees to truly focus on the areas where they drive the highest-value contribution. This will energize them!

The second driver of the D&A agenda is the need to build workforce resiliency and protect against large-scale workforce events (e.g., a large portion getting sick, or a need for temporary layoffs). Building more efficient processes over time will allow you to maintain a productive, distributed workforce, develop more agile teams that can be leaner and more strategic, and minimize the impact of disruption from future unplanned workforce events.

D&A is a powerful lever in your toolkit that will bring more purposeful work to your employees, help them be more efficient, and ultimately help them connect in a way that matters with your customers.

B. Make your customers' lives easier

Customers have seen an evolution of the ways through which they can—or must—engage with their favorite businesses. To go even further, consider how you can incorporate artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and augmented or virtual reality (AR/VR) to make life easier for your customers.

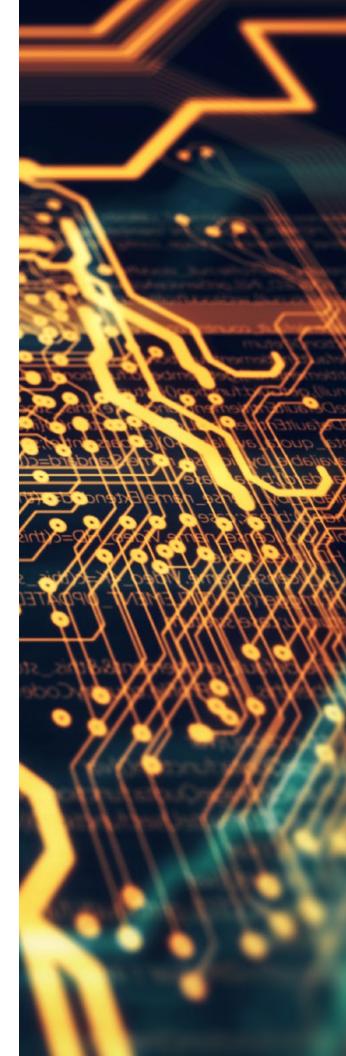
A few practical suggestions:

- Use technology to help your customers adapt to physical distancing changes by adopting live chat online, video capability and chatbots to interact with customers. For example, IKEA is using AR to make it possible for customers to visualize (using their app) how a piece of furniture would look in their living room, and Burberry is doing the same for luxury accessories.
- Use AI to help craft better product recommendations using customer purchase history and online browsing data, which your virtual sales associates can use to create a more personalized experience. You know your customer segments best. Ask yourself how they prefer to interact with your business and there is most likely an AI or AR solution that can help you to make life easier for them in this new environment.

Examples

- 1. A buyer can use Al to analyze and conduct pattern recognition in data such as foot traffic, sales, or credit card transactions, to support predictive inventory management. At the same time, a front-line supervisor or store manager can use a similar dataset to support workforce planning or scheduling for hourly employees. The possibilities are endless, and customers are already catching on. Grocery shoppers around the world have been using an open-source online tool (https://covid19-waiting-time.thejoin.tech/) that tracks the waiting time for line-ups at grocery stores in their area, using Google Maps technology. It can help them pick a less busy location or time to shop, and promote safety for store staff and shoppers alike.
- 2. Some retailers have implemented Al-enabled robots to process returns for customers, thus reducing the amount of in-person contact required and ensuring speed and efficiency of the transaction.
- 3. Coles, a leading Australian retailer with over 2,500 retail outlets nationally, was able to rapidly recruit to meet increased demand in their grocery business by redeploying their graduate cohorts to support their internal recruitment team during the peak of the pandemic in Australia. This agility in workforce redeployment, along with other targeted recruitment efforts, enabled the business to rapidly scale-up to deliver essentials to consumers—recruiting over 10,000 people in four weeks including 400 Indigenous Australians and 5,000 people who experienced job loss due to COVID-19 in other industries (e.g., airline crew and hospitality workers). Coles led with resiliency in alleviating their load in the internal team with some quick thinking and outstanding results.







Embracing the future, today

During the pandemic, customers invited companies into their homes in an unprecedented way, through direct shipping, subscriptions, and virtual consultations. Together, customers and companies learned new ways of engagement, and employees were at the forefront of bringing these changes to life. As organizations around the world plan for recovery, now is the time to recommit, re-engage, and rethink the modes of engagement between your organization, employee, and customer. Empowering, engaging, and protecting your workers so that they can bring their talent to the table in new ways could make the difference for how your employees, and in turn your customers, fuel your business's recovery journey. As you ride on this time machine into the future, seize the opportunity to make a real change now.



Sector spotlights

Retail sector

Hospitality and service sector

Consumer goods, food and manufacturing sector

Gaming and entertainment sector

Transportation sector







Hello retail sector!

Essential retailers such as grocers are hiring to meet increasing demand. Discretionary retail businesses, such as apparel, are affected by lower demand and will be reopening in a very different customer context. Support your front-line employees to navigate changes to their work and workplace and build a stronger connection with customers.























For essential businesses...this is the time to learn and emerge stronger!

Consumers will continue to leverage the digital behaviors they forged during the crisis to browse products and find necessities. This sector is poised for innovation, disruption and new entrants. Reflect on what's next and think about what has worked and what you learned. Reshape your desired store experience and your digital business to meet demand. Recommit, re-engage and rethink your strongest asset—your employees—and the work and workplace.

For discretionary businesses... this is your grand reopening!

As businesses are opening and welcoming customers, new behaviours are in play. People are spending less timing browsing and are laser-focused in their search, seeking to minimize contact with both products and people. There is greater use of appointments and more personalized 1:1 interaction. Recommit, re-engage and rethink your strongest asset—your employees—to win your customers back.

Recommit

Your employees have been so focused on meeting customer needs that they will be looking for moments of relief, escape, and joy—anything to take their minds off the stress and anxiety of life under a pandemic:

- Continue to reinforce how your employees are serving a greater purpose by working to meet basic consumer needs and share your stories of doing good (e.g., a US grocery chain bought milk and fruits from local farmers and donated it to the local food banks).
- Commit to the well-being of employees through a focus on physical and psychological support. While it's now common practice to provide PPE, take health surveys and check temperatures, give some extra time to take mental breaks.
- Create a safe place in the store (e.g., lunch room, employee lounge) where employees can access information/watch videos on mindfulness and support each other.

Recommit

As you rehire or welcome back employees, reassure them you are prioritizing their health and well-being. Your stores will need new operational processes and policies to prioritize their safety and that of customers:

- **Define new protocols** for stores in the best interest of employees and customers (e.g., mandated sanitation stations, number of customers allowed in the store at one time, adapting store layouts to follow social-distancing regulations).
- Support store managers to ensure they are connected to your purpose and goals and give them the ability to make critical decisions and act with speed—remove the red tape.
- Communicate and create commitment: Reinforce the organization's mission and communicate with employees (e.g., through newsletters, intranet postings, webcasts, and high-touch two-way communication) about the steps the organization is taking to ensure a safe return to work.

Re-engage

As demand is unpredictable, re-engage employees to maximize their potential and contribution:

- Cross-train employees to operate in multiple roles to increase flexibility in how resources are deployed (e.g., grocery clerk, customer service, curbside order pick up).
- Engage with the regional and store managers frequently (e.g., two-way communication) via digital modes that allow you to gather more real-time feedback on what is energizing employees and customers and what is missing—action quickly.
- Recalibrate the total rewards package for employees who have collected "hero-pay" to continue to recognize their risk exposure and impact. Offer other perks that help employees feel valued such as more flexibility in scheduling, stipends, and increased product discounts. Consider partnering with other retailers to offer each others' employees discounts to help across their total household spend portfolio.
- Meet employees where they are—employees who are part-time, contract, or students may value different types of perks. Inject flexibility and explore offering tutoring, children learning perks, or wellness programs, or partner with other retailers to share special discounts for their products.

Re-engage

As business picks up, give store managers some degree of freedom to make local decisions while still adhering to overall company policies:

- **Retrain employees** on new ways of working and new processes (e.g., supporting digital sales, new return procedures).
- Establish a forum for employees to provide feedback on how the experience is going—virtual huddles, regular, quick pulse surveys can be used to gather real-time insights.
- Consider how to deploy employees when there is idle time due to low or inconsistent store traffic (e.g., can you provide service to customers virtually or via chat?).





















Rethink

Based on new business priorities, rethink the changes you need to make to create a better work environment for employees:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call center and complimentary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share worker stories, and serve as a repository for important documents and forms.
- Refresh the organization structure, particularly in areas such as e-commerce, digital marketing, private-label product development, merchandising and IT, to create more adaptability, break down silos, and create cross-functional teaming to tackle specific problems/barriers to making the customer experience better.
- Give category managers and merchandising teams greater flexibility to cut through red-tape quickly, to list products and change assortments, to give customers what they want, faster.
- Streamline coordination of digital flyers and promotions between the merchandising and supply chain teams.
- Implement store technology that could be used to support store and warehouse staff (e.g., tools for scheduling and inventory, Al that can interact virtually with shoppers).
- Consider leveraging robotics for high-touch positions such as deliveries or inventory management.



A special note if you are unionized:

Bring the union to the table early to share how you plan to keep the workforce safe and support their well-being. Work together to preserve a cooperative culture in the best interest of the employee so you can have flexibility in staffing and meet customer needs.









Hello hospitality and service sector!

As the pandemic spread, reservations and occupancy evaporated overnight and now, with the reality of social distancing measures, this sector will have a long road to recovery. Consumers will continue to act cautiously after the pandemic subsides and it's expected that, to a degree, they will continue to maintain "close to home" habits. To capture customer trust and loyalty now, focus on delivering a human and fulfilling employee experience. Recommit, re-engage, and rethink your strongest asset—your employees—to win customers back.

























As you rehire or welcome employees back, place greater emphasis on the health and well-being of your employees. New operational processes and policies bring a longer list of daily responsibilities, and your employees on the front lines will face the scrutiny of customers who are paying more attention to health and safety measures than ever before. As a result, your employees may feel added pressure in their roles.

- Rekindle the sense of belonging—for local franchise businesses, restaurants, and hotels, you have a genuine relationship with your employees. Commit to keeping them safe and make them feel heard.
- Define new protocols for locations in line with best practices for physical health and safety (e.g., front-desk and seating procedures, capacity limitations, more frequent cleaning schedules), and provide your employees with the resources they need to maintain these standards. Restaurants already beginning to reopen are using signage and layout changes to reinforce social distancing, taking the burden off their employees to remind patrons of the safety regulations. Masks will be required until guests are seated or shown to their rooms.
- Stand behind your front line employees. Offer training in managing difficult customers, reinforce your mental health offerings, recognize employees that skillfully address complaints, and remind your customers that your employees are people too.
- Support hotel and restaurant general managers to ensure they, and their teams, are connected to your purpose and goals, and give them the ability to make critical decisions and act with speed (e.g., decisions on adopting touchless experiences, adapting to family needs, embracing technology and digital re-thinking).

Your priorities have undoubtedly shifted throughout the pandemic. Use this as an opportunity to re-engage and redeploy your workforce to maximize their contribution and potential, while preparing them with the skills and capabilities required for the future:

- Cross-train employees to operate in multiple roles to increase flexibility in how resources are deployed while demand is unpredictable.
- Deploy employees when there is idle time due to low or inconsistent patronage (e.g., can you connect virtually with customers, take on long-term improvement projects, or give back to the local community?). Hotels and resorts worldwide have been offering virtual versions of classes that would typically be offered to onsite guests—keeping both employees and loyal customers engaged.
- Retrain employees on new ways of working and new processes (e.g., contactless check-in, check-out, seating, payment). Invest in **employee skills** in the "new normal"—like tech savviness and empathy. For example, hotels are using VR goggles to train front desk and kitchen teams.
- · Engage with hotel and restaurant general managers frequently (e.g., two-way communication) via digital modes that allow you to gather more real-time feedback on what is energizing employees. Gather and process customer insights (from YELP, Google, other forums) to keep a pulse on the customer expectations too.
- Establish a forum for employee feedback, and encourage employees to provide input on how the recovery period is going or where improvements could be made.
- Change compensation and reward programs to reflect today's reality (e.g., 50 percent capacity drop). To make up for the shortfall from tips, employees can play a greater role in growing business online and bringing in new customers for a bonus. Thank your employees for the job they are doing and thank your customers for visiting or ordering (with a little personalized note).





















Based on new business priorities, rethink how you'll need to change to create a better work environment for employees and to reduce risk for your business. Optimize processes, procedures, and technology to achieve compliance while enhancing quality and reducing costs:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call center and complimentary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share worker stories, and serve as a repository of important documents and forms.
- As cash flow will be a priority, refresh the organization structure to be efficient, reduce hierarchy and embrace more teaming. Consider which roles are needed on site versus in corporate offices, and what future or "reimagined" roles might look like. Rethinking the role of the housekeeper, for example, likely means moving away from daily cleanings as a standard, and instead considering each guest's cleaning preferences and coordinating accordingly (e.g., entering rooms less frequently, on-demand cleanings).
- Explore digital innovation for customer-facing or behind-thescenes roles, by, for example, automating mundane tasks. We see this in the contactless ordering technologies for restaurants that are quickly emerging. Restaurants are also piloting digital menus and payment capabilities to address safety concerns by minimizing person-to-person contact.

This is a sector known for long hours, and late-night shifts. This is an opportunity to analyze the profitability of your business at certain times and modify the service hours to give employees a break.









Hello consumer products and manufacturing sector!

While many players in this sector have remained fully operational to meet increased demand, others have pivoted their businesses to contribute to society, and some shut down in the wake of COVID-19 challenges. The one clear message that has emerged is that the safety and well-being of employees will be paramount. To meet the needs of your customers, stakeholders and suppliers, recommit, re-engage and rethink your strongest asset—your employees.























Recommit

Your employees have been working to keep up with demand and mitigate supply-chain disruptions. This is the time to learn and emerge stronger. Reflect on what's next and reinforce your commitment to your employees' well-being:

- Put safety first! With the number of plants affected by COVID-19 outbreaks rising, employees and their families are nervous and uncertain. They need assurance from you that you value them:
 - Ensure safety is enforced at plants/manufacturing sites (e.g., via hand sanitizing stations, mask availability, onsite health checks), and adjust your KPIs and metrics to accommodate the time needed to adhere to social distancing and sanitization procedures.
 - Stagger hiring and vary shift schedules to meet fluctuating demand.
 - Develop **new scheduling tactics** that allow for the same employees to consistently work together on common shifts, to mitigate risk and prevent wider exposure.
 - In the office environment, explore the viability of some roles continuing to work virtually (e.g., the sales force).
 Connect within your ecosystem (retailers, growers, suppliers etc.) to share knowledge and insights on which roles will interact and how.
- Identify whether new roles will need to be created for the plant floor (e.g., health and safety shift captain, plant safety champion), or what responsibilities need to be added to existing roles.
- Reinforce the culture of well-being with employees and extend to their families to create lasting engagement and retention:
 - Host a pre-shift huddle to check-in on everyone, their families, and their circumstances. Use this time to also provide real-time business and health updates.
 - Modify the layout of highly frequented areas (e.g., lunch room, employee lounge) to create a relaxing experience, give access to new information/videos on mindfulness, and give employees extra time for mental breaks.
 - Be creative in how you **share wellness resources** at the sites and at home (e.g., via iPad, phone apps and for those that don't have access to the technology, think of having iPads they can "check out").

8

Re-engage

Your priorities have undoubtedly shifted throughout the course of the pandemic. Use this as an opportunity to re-engage and redeploy your workforce to maximize their contribution and potential, while preparing them with the skills and capabilities required for the future:

- Deliver and constantly refresh training on expected safety precautions, cleaning and security policies. Place written guidance in highly visible locations around plant floors and offices. Create certifications for compliance with health and safety rules and reward good behavior.
- Cross-train employees at manufacturing plants to operate in multiple roles to increase flexibility in how resources are deployed while demand is unpredictable, and to foster a sense of agility and resiliency.
- Engage with the plant general managers frequently (e.g., two-way communication) via digital modes that allow you to gather more real-time feedback on what is energizing employees and what is missing. Establish a forum for employees to provide feedback on their experience.
- Recalibrate the total rewards package for employees who
 have collected "hero-pay" to continue to recognize their risk
 and impact. Offer alternatives that help employees feel valued
 such as more flexibility in scheduling, meals/snacks during
 breaks, job-sharing programs, increased product discounts,
 or extra breaks.
- Gather and share real-time customer insights, to help product innovation, sales and manufacturing teams adapt quickly to meet changing customer needs. Introduce new communication forums (e.g., huddles) to rapidly share information about what is happening in the market and how the company should respond.





















Based on new business priorities, rethink how you'll need to change to create a better work environment for employees and to reduce risk for your business. Optimize processes, procedures and technology that achieve compliance while enhancing quality and reducing costs:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call centre and complementary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share worker stories, and serve as a repository of important documents and forms.
- Refresh the organizational structure, particularly in areas such as marketing, sales, product innovation/research and development, and IT, to create more adaptability, break down silos, and create cross-functional teaming to tackle specific problems/barriers to making the customer experience better.
- Expand technology capabilities, such as robotic process automation (RPA) to reduce manual workforce needs.
- Leverage digital tools to optimize workforce planning and mitigate risks of high absenteeism during the worst of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Determine new processes/roles that **support digital sales** growth, such as Parle's partnership with IBM, that uses IBM's Watson Al solution to create an "intelligent supply chain", and better predict demand and required inventory.



A special note if you are unionized:

Bring the union to the table early to share how you plan to keep the workforce safe and support their well-being. Work together to preserve a cooperative culture in the best interest of employees.









Hello gaming and entertainment sector!

In the wake of COVID-19, customers may have shifted toward digital alternatives. It's expected that casino and entertainment venue patronage will be slow to recover. Venues will need to respect social distancing and ensure the safety and well-being of employees. Recommit, re-engage, and rethink your strongest asset—your employees—to win your customers back.

























Recommit

As you begin to resume operations and reopen doors to customers, place greater emphasis on the health and wellbeing of your employees. New operational processes and policies bring a longer list of daily responsibilities, and your employees on the front lines will face the scrutiny of customers who are paying more attention to health and safety measures than ever before. As a result, your employees may feel added pressure in their roles:

- · Share the story of your community impact during the pandemic to re-energize employees about returning to work, drawing them together with a greater purpose. Recognize employees for great contributions made during the difficult time. Commit to keep employees safe and make them feel heard.
- **Define new protocols** for venues in line with best practices for physical health and safety (e.g., reservation and seating procedures, social distancing, more frequent cleaning schedules), and provide your employees with the resources they need to maintain these standards. Businesses are using signage and layout changes to reinforce social distancing, taking the burden off their employees to remind patrons of the safety regulations.
- Make your customers feel like a "VIP". The way in which your employees interact with customers will change given greater reliance on reservations, fewer players at a table, and use of digital tools. Create a more specialized and personalized experience for your customers (e.g., send a vehicle, offer hotel and food discounts). Publicly share prize wins that protect social distancing and truly allow you to celebrate.
- Stand behind your front line employees. Offer training in managing difficult customers, reinforce your mental health offerings, recognize employees that skillfully address complaints, and remind your customers that your employees are people too.

Re-engage

As locations prepare to reopen, find ways to re-engage your workforce in advance of physically being back at work:

- Cross-train employees to operate in multiple roles to increase flexibility in how resources are deployed while demand is unpredictable (e.g., working at different gambling tables, different service-related roles).
- Deploy employees when there is idle time due to low or inconsistent patronage (e.g., can you connect virtually with customers, take on long-term improvement projects, or give back to the local community). Have employees host virtual parties or live-interaction games (where possible).
- Retrain employees on new ways of working and new processes (e.g., contactless processes for getting chips, cashing out, ordering drinks). Elevate employees' capabilities with digital tools and technology, such as contactless payments and digital menus.
- Engage with general managers frequently (e.g., two-way communication) via digital modes that allow you to gather more real-time feedback on how employees are feeling. Gather and process customer insights (from loyalty programs) to keep a pulse on the customer expectations too.



• Rethink

Based on new business priorities, rethink the changes you need to create a better work environment for employees and to reduce risk for your business. Optimize processes, procedures and technology that achieve compliance while enhancing quality and reducing costs:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call center and complimentary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share worker stories, and create a repository of important documents.
- Refresh the organizational structure to be efficient, reduce hierarchy and embrace more teaming to tackle specific problems/ barriers to make the customer experience better. Consider which roles are needed on site versus in corporate offices, and what future or "reimagined" roles might look like (e.g., the dealer role).
- Consider using new technology such as Al and robots to provide customer-facing interactions such as at wickets/counters and food and beverage service points. Employees can continue their work behind the scenes. Disney, for example, will be leveraging its virtual queuing technology to prevent large groups from congregating in lines.







Hello transportation sector!

It's anticipated that the travel sector will take up to two years to recover to pre-COVID-19 levels. This sector will see fluctuating changes in demand, changing consumption patterns, less business travel, more personal travel, and changes in sourcing and supply chain. Employees with critical skills and training will be required during recovery for business continuity. Support your employees to navigate changes to their work and workplace and recommit, re-engage and rethink to build a stronger connection with customers.





















For auto companies...this is time to differentiate your customer experience!

As you rehire or welcome back employees, place greater emphasis on their health and wellbeing and physical distancing from customers and colleagues alike. Your services will need new operational processes and policies to prioritize safety.

The car purchasing and repair process will be highly digitally enabled in the future to create as much of a contactless process as possible. Dealerships are exploring virtual salespeople, and zoom calls to discuss repair needs with car mechanics, home delivery, and flexible test-driving and return policies. Customers have responded positively to the sector meeting them where they are in terms of readiness for human interaction.

Consider what the new customer experience will mean for you and how personalization and public safety will impact your workforce, their roles, and the skills they'll need to differentiate your brand.

Recommit

- Continue to reinforce how your employees are serving a greater purpose by working to meet basic consumer needs, and share your stories of doing good (e.g., Tesla's commitment to creating ventilators).
- Commit to the well-being of employees through a focus on physical and psychological support. It's now common practice to provide PPE, take health surveys and check temperatures, and give extra time for taking mental breaks.

Re-engage

- Engage with the franchise owners and general managers frequently (e.g., two-way communication) via digital modes that allow you to gather more real-time feedback on what is energizing employees and customers, and what is missing.
- **Cross-train employees** to operate in multiple roles to increase flexibility in how resources are deployed while demand is unpredictable (e.g., reception, service, sales, parts).
- **Deploy employees** when there is idle time due to low or inconsistent patronage (e.g., connect virtually with customers, take on long-term improvement projects, or give back to the local community).
- Empower general managers to make decisions on the local customer experience and form stronger connections in the community (e.g., lend vehicles for special community deliveries).

Rethink

Based on new business priorities, rethink how you'll need to change to create a better work environment for employees and to reduce risk for your business. Optimize processes, procedures, and technology to achieve compliance while enhancing quality and reducing costs:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call center and complimentary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share worker stories, and serve as a repository of important documents and forms.
- Refresh the organization structure to be efficient, reduce hierarchy and embrace more teaming between corporate and dealerships to innovate and create differentiated customer experiences using digital capability.
- Embrace digital and technology innovations for customerfacing or behind-the-scenes roles, such as by automating mundane tasks, e.g., robo-calls to remind customers it is time for an oil change.























For air, rail, and other passenger transport businesses... this is the time to learn and emerge stronger.

The future traveller will be more empowered, expecting an ondemand experience, predicated on safety and public concern. Consumers will continue to leverage the digital behaviors they forged during the crisis to tailor their purchases and experiences. Transportation is poised for innovation, disruption, and new entrants. For example, British Airways has published the *BA 2119: Flight of the Future report*, which highlights not only personalized meal selections, but seat materials, 3D-printed medical devices, and more.

Consider what the customer experience will be and how personalization and public safety will affect your workforce, their roles, and the skills they'll need to differentiate your organization. With the gradual return of travellers, new travel experiences that differentiate your organization will also win the trust and emotions of your customers.

Recommit

- Manage employees' own fears of getting back to work.
 After 9/11, employees were brought back to work first and assured of their safety to make them feel comfortable. This will ultimately help your customers feel comfortable too (e.g., giving employees tools for cleaning and PPE to be safe and make customers feel safe).
- Define new protocols for **pre-travel**, **travel** and **post-travel** moments that are in the best interest of employees and customers. These will include mandated sanitization stations, temperature checks, limiting the number of customers allowed in transit, mandatory masks, adapting boarding to follow social distancing regulations, and well-being follow ups with employees and customers. Then stay practical and flexible on how you follow the protocols to achieve the best customer experience. Listen to customer experience feedback to minimize the friction and contact, particularly for those travelling with families.
- Customers will have to wait in line and employees will bear
 that frustration. Think of ways to inject more human feeling
 throughout the customer journey (e.g., nametags for
 employees, picture or video reels of employees and their
 families describing how they made an impact during the
 pandemic, tweeting messages from customers recognizing
 an employee for a job well done, inviting crews to give more
 personal introductions and share stories about themselves).
- Given the sheer volume of layoffs/furloughs they have experienced, the amount of survivor guilt and lack of trust that employees will be feeling needs a special focus while bringing folks back to work and helping them acknowledge and support one another.

8

Re-engage

- When retraining employees on new protocols or new ways
 of working (e.g., new boarding procedures, in-transit spacing,
 luggage handling), reinvent your training philosophy. Rather
 than teaching from a list of protocols, connect your employees
 to your customers through videos or stories, so they understand
 what travelers are experiencing. This will better arm them to
 delight your customers when it's needed most.
- Use loyalty programs to empower employees create a better customer experience. Give employees the power to soften an inconvenience (like a seat change) or brighten a customer's difficult travel day by giving away loyalty points at their discretion.
- Travelling will be more stressful for everyone, your employees included. This means awareness of your employees' wellbeing is more important than ever. Give your people the space to recover between shifts, and provide resources to manage stress (e.g., training for managing difficult customers, subscriptions to mindfulness apps, access to mental health services, special employee lounge zones, etc.).

⁴ British Airways, *BA 2119: Flight of the Future*, 2019





















Rethink

Based on how the experience of travelling will be different when customers are permitted to resume their travel plans, rethink how you'll need to change to create a better work environment for employees and to reduce risk for your business (e.g., giving passengers a little welcome package with water, snacks, mask, and sanitizer). Optimize processes, procedures, and technology to achieve compliance while enhancing quality and reducing costs:

- Stand up a dedicated HR call center and complimentary microsite to answer specific questions about COVID-19, share employee stories, and serve as a repository of important documents and forms.
- Refresh the organizational structure, particularly in areas such as marketing, loyalty, e-commerce, and IT, to create more adaptability, break down silos, and create cross-functional teaming to tackle specific problems/barriers to making the customer experience better.
- Consider how to deploy employees digitally when there is minimal need for direct interaction (e.g., in-transit service requests and information served virtually via chatbots or in-seat screen units akin to that of China Eastern Air).⁵
- Turn customer service on its head. Don't stop at finding ways for your employees to create special moments for customers, but also reflect on how to provide customers with opportunities to thank your employees (e.g., thank you card stations, or customer gratitude social media accounts). People are looking for ways to express gratitude and share positivity, so this will be enjoyed by customers and employees alike.



⁵ Kai-Chin Shih, >talkairlines, "<u>China Eastern trials 'intelligent personal assistant' for in-flight service</u>", *Airline Trends*, February 2015

























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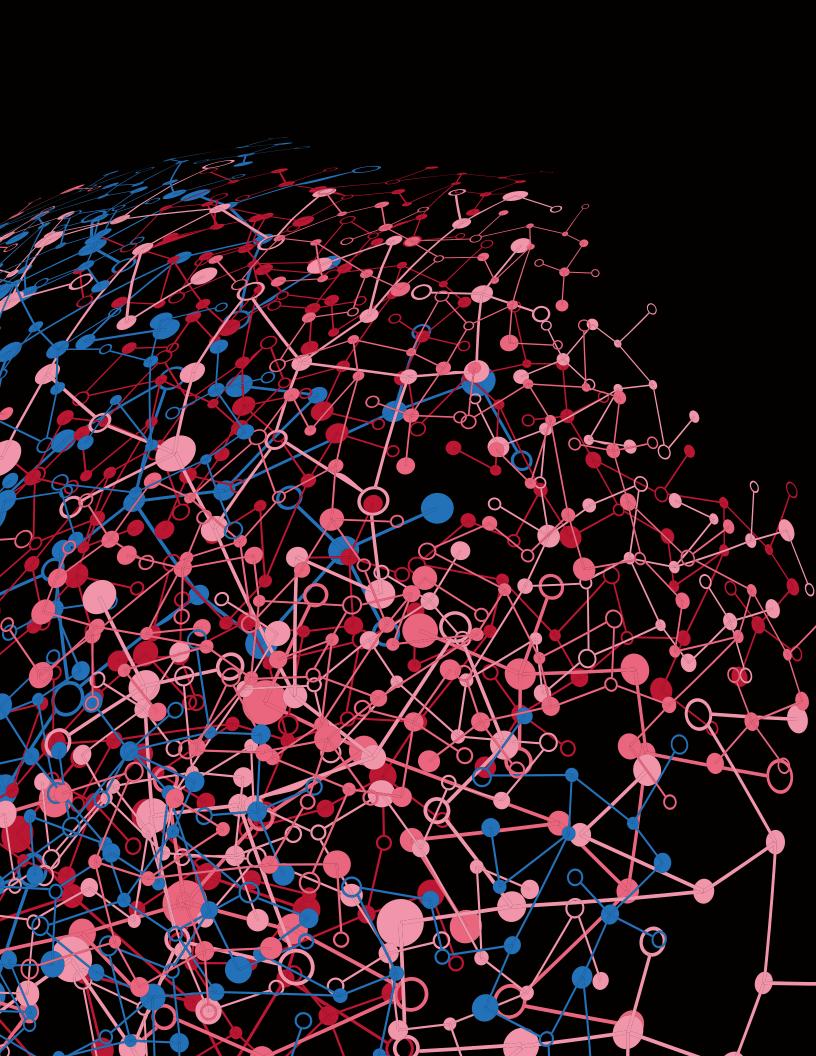
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