

the future-fit organisation

why companies
should focus
on career mobility
to help achieve
career wellness.



nurturing career wellness.

How do you help employees flourish and become the best versions of themselves so that your organisation can remain future-fit? By promoting internal career mobility through resources, expert guidance and access to opportunities, you have the opportunity to drive career wellness, in turn creating a thriving workforce that supports the overall well-being of your business.

Like physical wellness, career wellness is achieved when individuals have a positive state of mind about their work. This stems from an awareness of how one feels about their current situation, being intentional in one's career and having the opportunity to achieve one's aspirations.

Empowering your employees to achieve career wellness starts with giving them the ability to pursue meaningful careers by fostering their passions and growing their skills, capabilities and knowledge. Career wellness is critical to organisational success and sustainability in a world where work is evolving faster than ever before. By promoting continual career development and enabling employees to move easily throughout your organisation to opportunities that are best-suited to them, you can champion a thriving, employee-first culture of career mobility that gives you the ability to respond with agility in a rapidly changing business environment.







work reshaped.

The pandemic has forever reshaped us. In our personal lives. In how we see the world. In what we value. In how we work. Hybrid versus remote? Roles versus skills? Full-time versus gig? Human colleagues or robotic ones?

The global health crisis came atop myriad changes already taking place due to AI, automation and the digitalisation of work. It came atop an ever-expanding mountain of data and information that we have available at our fingertips, but which must be analysed to make the right decisions in a fraction of the time once spent. And changes in the way we work will continue to be driven by the Fifth Industrial Revolution in which people and machines will interact to promote new levels of creativity, humanity, inclusivity and progress. How do employees keep up? How do they maintain balance, adapt, stay resilient and find joy and meaning in the work they do? How do they navigate a world where knowledge and skills will become more ephemeral, where what's unknown may become far greater than what's understood, where some of the skills needed next year are not even on anyone's radar today?

In an article in the MIT Sloan Management Review, University of Southern California Professor Emeritus John Boudreau and business consultant Jonathan Donner explain that we are moving toward a 'new work operating system' where work is deconstructed into 'tasks and projects that may be assigned to employees, machines and contingent workers in talent marketplaces. Workers will increasingly be identified not as holding a specific job but as possessing a set of skills and talents that can be applied wherever the organisation may need them.'¹ This has monumental implications not only for how leaders and managers operate, but how employees traverse this new and unfamiliar structure. Workers will 'travel a career path of fast-changing tasks/projects and roles' in a 'system of work without jobs' according to Boudreau and Donner. [Randstad Sourceright's 2021 Talent Trends Report](#) found that a new focus on workforce agility by 77% of human capital leaders means that many will focus on skills, not jobs, to create value.

'Careers' may be defined differently in the future than they are now, but whatever the definition, an individual employee's ability to move, grow and find satisfaction in their work directly affects the shape and health of a business.

career mobility is at the heart of organisational agility.

The pandemic both accelerated the forces of change already underway and laid bare workforce inequalities and gaps. Challenges organisations face today require that they adopt practices, attitudes and structures that enable employees to be ready for the future – or at least able to adapt quickly to it.

Why focus on internal career mobility?

developing a sustainable workforce

Companies have realised the need to build properly skilled workforces internally rather than always looking over the fence for qualified talent. Businesses that promote ongoing career development, provide direction about needed skill sets and offer opportunities for employees to continuously acquire and use those skills – whether in their own teams or other areas of the business – create robust internal talent pipelines.

In Randstad RiseSmart's [Q2 2021 Career Mobility Trends Report](#), 35% of companies surveyed (in the United States) plan to tap into employees for at least 25% to 50% of open roles, while 87% of employers surveyed believe that at least 10% of open jobs at their organisation can be filled through internal mobility. Yet, despite the renewed interest in hiring from within – 73% of talent acquisition professionals globally say internal

mobility is on the upswing – more than half (56%) of talent professionals cite a lack of internally qualified candidates as a barrier to internal recruiting.²

In Deloitte's 2020 Global Human Capital Trends Report, 53% of executives globally said they expected that between 50% and 100% of their workforce would need to reskill by 2023.³ The magnitude of the skills gap and the current skills mismatch have only widened due to the pandemic, leaving businesses with little choice but to focus on building talent through skills development rather than buying talent.

Workforce sustainability requires a healthy internal talent marketplace, of which career mobility is a foundational pillar. Through the promotion of continuous career development, coaching and learning, employers can better improve retention and with it the cultural knowledge essential for getting work done efficiently. In addition to building a more sustainable workforce, related benefits include lower recruitment and onboarding costs associated with external hiring, reduced time to fill open positions, higher engagement and stronger employer brand reputation.

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modelling corporate citizenship

The pandemic caught many organisations off guard in the area of corporate social responsibility, but investing in one's own people is not only the right thing to do, it's just good business – at every stage of the employee life cycle.

Faced with the prospect of laying off valued employees or finding ways to protect livelihoods when swaths of the economy shuttered or slowed down precipitously in 2020, some companies quickly pivoted, seeking creative ways to keep their people employed. According to [Randstad RiseSmart's 2021 Guide to Severance & Workforce Transition](#), 77% of respondents globally said their organisations have redeployment programs to help employees find new roles internally, a 28% increase from 2019. Through rapid retraining and redeployment – either internally or by temporarily sharing employees with other companies – these businesses reinforced the value of being good corporate citizens.

Redeploying employees successfully often first requires providing workers with career transition assistance such as coaching, CV writing and skilling resources so that they have optimal opportunity to make the best impression and succeed in new internal roles. It may even require additional coaching or other internal guidance to help individuals get up to speed quickly and avoid common pitfalls in taking on new roles.

Enabling career mobility should ideally take place along the continuum of the employee life cycle, including at the point of redundancy. Doing right by employees at sensitive times such as these can yield long-lasting benefits to employment brand and alumni sentiment, in turn making companies attractive to top talent. During a workforce restructuring in 2020, Airbnb, for example, strengthened its brand reputation by being transparent with employees and providing compassionate outplacement to help them find new roles.

managing talent acquisition costs

It is often more cost effective for companies to 'build rather than buy.' According to analyst Josh Bersin, high-performing organisations tend to take this approach for critical talent and see a better payoff in cost savings and intangibles such as culture. Bersin found that it can cost up to six times as much to hire externally rather than build talent from within when one accounts for recruiting and onboarding costs and the higher turnover rates of new employees.⁴ According to Gallup, the cost of replacing an employee can be 1½ to two times their salary or more.⁵ Given the current seller's market when it comes to employment, the cost of acquiring properly skilled talent may be even higher.





reinvigorating the employee-first experience

The pandemic has both strained workforces and laid bare shortcomings and underlying inequalities in the employee experience – in onboarding, training opportunities, performance evaluations, technology access, and pay and incentives. Providing employees with the right resources to continuously develop their careers, learn and remain engaged can go a long way toward making an employee-first experience a reality.

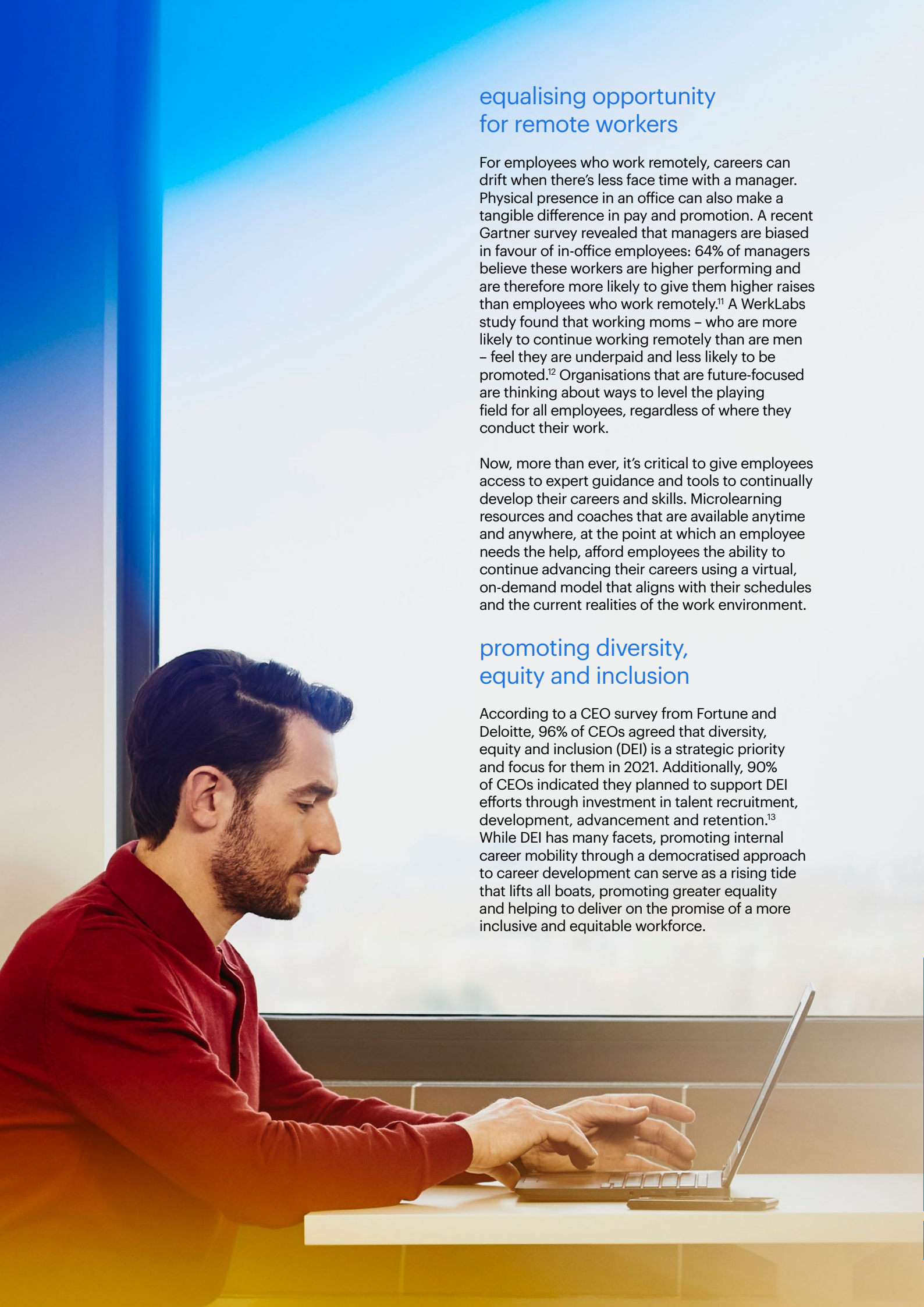
maintaining engagement and retention

Distributed workforces are becoming commonplace. Even within a single team, members may be working asynchronously – across multiple locations and time zones, and remotely or in a hybrid working environment. While several studies reported a bump in employee productivity during 2020 due to remote work and flexible schedules, there are countervailing stressors such as retaining culture and connection while working remotely, a decline in work-life balance and concern about one's career progression. These stressors have led to burnout and 'The Great Resignation' in the short term and, in the longer term, could accelerate disengagement and continued turnover.

Many employees also feel their career progression has been stymied as their employers have been focused on how to adapt to new ways of working.⁶ Recent [surveys by Monster](#) revealed that 86% of US workers feel their careers stalled during the pandemic, with up to 95% considering a job change in 2021. Globally, this number is about 41% according to a Microsoft survey.⁷ In a Prudential Financial survey, a quarter of employees plan to look for work elsewhere as the economy improves.⁸ And, four out of five who are looking to jump ship cited a concern over career growth with their current employer as a reason for leaving.

On the upside for employers, this same study found that 'mobility opportunities' are a top factor that would encourage employees to stay with their current company. LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends 2020 report found that, on average, employees stay 41% longer at companies with lots of internal hiring compared to those with very little.⁹ Similarly, 81% of talent professionals said internal recruiting improves retention and that employees were far more likely to stay with their employers when they were able to move within the company.¹⁰

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A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a white desk. He is looking down at a laptop in front of him, with his hands on the keyboard. The background is a bright window with a view of a city, and the lighting is warm and natural. The overall scene suggests a professional working remotely in a comfortable, well-lit environment.

equalising opportunity for remote workers

For employees who work remotely, careers can drift when there's less face time with a manager. Physical presence in an office can also make a tangible difference in pay and promotion. A recent Gartner survey revealed that managers are biased in favour of in-office employees: 64% of managers believe these workers are higher performing and are therefore more likely to give them higher raises than employees who work remotely.¹¹ A WerkLabs study found that working moms – who are more likely to continue working remotely than are men – feel they are underpaid and less likely to be promoted.¹² Organisations that are future-focused are thinking about ways to level the playing field for all employees, regardless of where they conduct their work.

Now, more than ever, it's critical to give employees access to expert guidance and tools to continually develop their careers and skills. Microlearning resources and coaches that are available anytime and anywhere, at the point at which an employee needs the help, afford employees the ability to continue advancing their careers using a virtual, on-demand model that aligns with their schedules and the current realities of the work environment.

promoting diversity, equity and inclusion

According to a CEO survey from Fortune and Deloitte, 96% of CEOs agreed that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a strategic priority and focus for them in 2021. Additionally, 90% of CEOs indicated they planned to support DEI efforts through investment in talent recruitment, development, advancement and retention.¹³ While DEI has many facets, promoting internal career mobility through a democratised approach to career development can serve as a rising tide that lifts all boats, promoting greater equality and helping to deliver on the promise of a more inclusive and equitable workforce.

matching skills with work to be done

Business change is on steroids due to the pandemic. Companies have accelerated digitalisation of operations by as much as four years and digitally enabled products by seven years, according to a survey by McKinsey & Company.¹⁴ Corporate survival will be based on employees' ability to continually learn and build skills, which is more and more becoming the essence of career mobility. Work will become focused on matching skills with work to be done, rather than on job title, responsibilities and experience. As Bersin notes in 'HR Technology 2021,' one of the ten leading practices for high-performing companies is the focus on skills as the currency of success.¹⁵

Employees' ability to cope with change will undoubtedly be tested as they continually reevaluate their careers and skills in light of evolving business imperatives. In this environment, data insights and guidance from HR, a supportive manager, a mentor or coaches who are experts in careers will help employees distil and focus on what's important and make strategic career choices that are optimal for them – and their employers. Such decisions are likely to involve an array of factors: job location and flexibility; personal values and interests; family needs; deciding whether to make a career move that is an upward, a lateral or even a downward shift, or to another field; and more traditional considerations such as pay, benefits and opportunity for advancement.

In a complex decision-making environment, employees will need not only career guidance, but also data about the market outlook for their current roles or roles of interest and the skills that are required for in-demand roles. They will also need access to courses and other experiential learning opportunities to build those skills, along with human guidance to help them home in on the optimal skilling paths.

Employees who are armed with such information and opportunities will be much more likely to make data-driven decisions that will help them find satisfaction and meaning in their careers.

'What if our company invests in employees only to see them pick up and take that knowledge and training to another company, perhaps a competitor?' This concern is best answered by another question: What if you don't provide the resources and time for continual career development and mobility – and they stay? What are the costs to your business due to untapped potential and missed opportunities?

developing visibility around skill sets

The pandemic spotlighted the critical need for companies to have transparency into employees' skill sets – the ones they typically use in their roles, the hidden ones and the ones they develop through internal project work, gigs and redeployment. As the future of work evolves to one focused on matching skills with work to be done, employees will require visibility into open internal roles with the necessary skills clearly identified. Internal hiring managers will likewise need a view of employees' skill sets and interests – and the ability to match employees to open roles as needed and vice versa – to enable internal career mobility.

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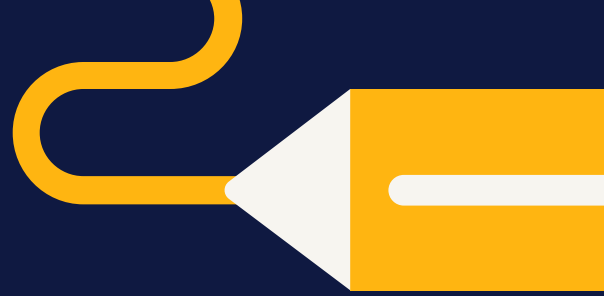


adjusting to the new world of work.

The world of work is at an inflection point, where organisational 'next practices' will need to evolve to accommodate the requirements of distributed and digitally connected workforces and the mix of in-person, hybrid and remote work. Organisations will need to foster inclusive cultures that offer career mobility for everyone and deliver career wellness by taking a holistic view of employees – seeing them as individuals with varying needs, challenges and capabilities, and responding in kind. Doing so will build a better, healthier and more equitable working environment – one in which employees will feel valued and respected, and organisations will thrive.



endnotes.



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- ⁴ Josh Bersin, *Build Vs. Buy: The Days of Hiring Scarce Technical Skills are Over*, Oct. 24, 2019, <https://joshbersin.com/2019/10/build-vs-buy-the-days-of-hiring-scarce-technical-skills-are-over>
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- ⁷ The Work Trend Index, *The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work—Are We Ready?*, March 22, 2021, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>
- ⁸ Prudential, *Pulse of the American Worker Survey: Is This Working?*, <https://news.prudential.com/presskits/pulse-american-worker-survey-is-this-working.htm>
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- ¹¹ Brian Kropp, *9 Work Trends That HR Leaders Can't Ignore in 2021*, Gartner, Jan, 21, 2021, <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/9-work-trends-that-hr-leaders-cant-ignore-in-2021>
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- ¹³ Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey, Oct. 2020, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/CMO/fortune-deloitte-ceo-survey-october-2020-highlights.pdf>
- ¹⁴ McKinsey & Company, *How COVID-19 has pushed companies over the technology tipping point—and transformed business forever*, Oct. 5, 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>
- ¹⁵ Josh Bersin, *HR Technology Guide 2021: The Definitive Guide*, <https://joshbersin.com/hr-technology-2021-a-definitive-guide>, p15



get in touch.

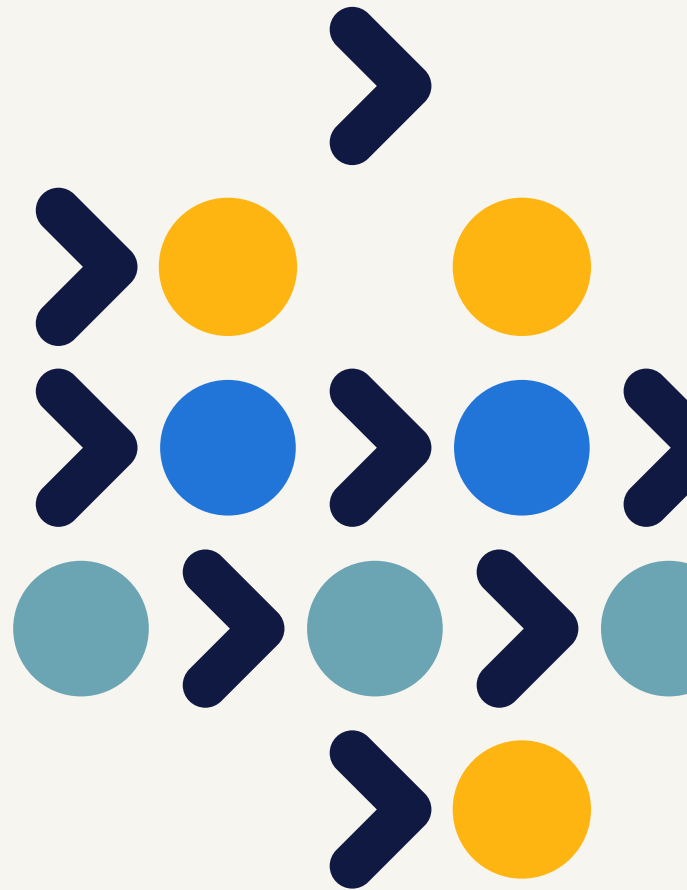
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