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worldwide

**ADAPT TO THE  
NEW ERA OF WORK  
CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR TODAY &  
TOMORROW**

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# INTRODUCTION

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As we all adapt to a new era of working, we hope this guide will support your plans. The pace of change has accelerated far quicker than we could have ever imagined and as leaders we need to pivot our organisations, so they are best equipped to respond to the opportunities.

As your lifelong career partner, we remain committed to working together with you as the world of work evolves. We have compiled this guide to help employers navigate the current and future challenges. It is intended to prompt thoughtful discussion that will help guide your plans and allow you to devise solutions that will have a positive impact on your organisation.

The coronavirus has accelerated the adoption of a number of significant employment trends – and will continue to do so. All this change brings a number of challenges that leaders need to address, primarily what the new models of working will be, whether the right skills are in place and how you’ll recruit and retain top talent.

Workforce expectations have also shifted rapidly in a short space of time. Given this, you need to ensure your culture still speaks to your employees. Part of this involves evaluating your employer brand to ensure your proposition still resonates with the skilled professionals who can make a difference to your organisation. Those organisations that thrive will be those who respond to the changes most effectively and continue to be clear and transparent in their communication.

The focus of this guide is twofold: to firstly share insights and pose questions that will help get your workforce safely back into a co-located workspace and, secondly, to shape your longer-term thinking about how operating models and approaches to operations, people and workforce planning may need to shift. It is based on insight from the organisations we speak to every day and our Hays experts.

We hope you find these insights useful and welcome a further discussion about how the guide could be applied to your organisation and your resourcing requirements.

**Nick Deligiannis**  
**Managing Director**  
**Hays Australia & New Zealand**

“Those organisations that thrive will be those who respond to the changes most effectively and continue to be clear and transparent in their communication.”

# THE WORLD OF WORK POST-COVID 19

## NINE QUESTIONS I'M ASKING MYSELF



**Alistair Cox**  
Chief Executive, Hays plc

Our CEO shares the nine practical questions he and our leadership team are asking themselves as we all look to move into a new era of work.

Our lives will never be the same again. I don't think that's an exaggeration, it's a fact. COVID-19 has already, in a matter of just a few weeks, completely changed our world. If you take a step back and really think about the magnitude and speed of what's happening around us, it's remarkable - we probably won't experience anything like it again in our lifetimes. It feels like a line has been drawn in the sand between life before the crisis, and life now and next - the before and the after.

### As we prepare to enter a new era of work - what will change?

This is a very big question. It's one I'm sure many a business book and whitepaper will be written about, and many a lecture and webinar will cover for years to come. As I've said, I really think we will start to compartmentalise our lives in a 'before the crisis' and 'after the crisis' perspective, both from a personal and from a business perspective - the impact of that will be huge.

The scale of what is ahead of us is hard to imagine, although there are already tomes of slideware from experts prophesying the future. I'm not going to join that industry, saying that I can articulate how the world of work is likely to change. But what I can do is share with you some of the broader questions that are in my mind as I try to understand the true impact this pandemic will have on my own business, in the hope it might stimulate thinking as to how your own business might need to change.

So, here goes:

1. As a result of this crisis, our customers are changing - that means our organisations need to change too, and fast enough to remain relevant to our customer-base. We've already been shown by many forward-thinking organisations that a lightning-fast pivot is entirely possible. Take Formula 1, for example, who are sharing their expertise to help [design medical ventilators](#), Burberry turning their focus to [manufacturing gowns](#), teachers delivering lessons virtually, restaurants switching to provide home deliveries overnight, and, of course, the countless SME's who have flipped their businesses on their heads, to help serve their communities at this difficult time. Indeed, as [Dr Maggi Evans](#), says, "It has long been known that a crisis, or [sense of urgency](#) is a powerful catalyst for change and creativity." This crisis is no different. So, will we need to rethink our business model, or areas of strategic focus? How are the needs, wants and expectations of our customers going to change as result of this crisis? How will this impact the services we provide and the people we hire? Will the overriding purpose of our organisation still hold true in the new world? How will this impact our workforce planning? Will it create skills gaps that we'll need to address? Will existing jobs be disrupted or changed? Will new roles need to be created?
2. In a matter of a few short weeks, huge infrastructure has been put into place by almost every organisation on the planet, in super quick speed, to enable their employees around the world to work from home. This is an incredible feat, and one that is worth acknowledging. Who would have thought this would have even been possible pre-crisis? It's been incredible. So, will these sophisticated infrastructures remain in place (and be further developed) to allow for more

regular and consistent remote working going forward? If so, what does this mean for the hiring, onboarding, training, and performance management of our people? What does it mean for workspace planning if people's roles do not require 5 days a week in an office? Maybe most importantly, how will we maintain our strong company culture if a large proportion of our workforce is "away" at any point in time?

3. The pace of automation and digitalisation has increased in many industries during the crisis, with many planning to ramp up activity in the future. In fact, a survey by [EY](#) found that 41% of respondents "said they were investing in accelerating automation as businesses prepared for a post-crisis world." How will this trend manifest itself, and how will it impact the existing roles and skills within our business and those of our customers? Will the way we deliver our services look the same? It's clear to see that the pandemic has changed consumer behaviour in this respect, with many examples of people preferring digitalised services rather than face-to-face interaction.
4. It's been truly heart-warming to see the outpourings of gratitude around the world for the key workers, who, just a few weeks ago, were often taken for granted, operating under the radar and under-appreciated. This crisis has really emphasised their true value to our societies. After all, they have contributed the most important job imaginable - saving lives but in doing so exposing themselves to dangerous situations. I'm of course talking about health and social care workers, but also the refuse collectors, cleaners, supermarket workers, lorry and bus drivers, the list goes on. So, will this pandemic lead us to question our internal definition of exactly what the most 'valuable roles' really are within our societies?

5. This crisis is changing the long-standing values, attitudes and perspectives of many. In fact, according to [Reuters](#), a study in China found that the “Coronavirus outbreak has led to a shift in attitudes...with less tolerance of individualistic behaviour and a greater tendency to recognise the contributions of others.” How will this impact their perception of work? Will people be more inclined to work for purpose-driven organisations and seek more meaning in their work?

6. According to the [World Economic Forum](#), as of March 2020, over a billion students were currently unable to go to school or university. Depending on how long this crisis goes on for, could the potential disruption to the education sector cause long-term skills shortages for our organisation in the future? What can we do to mitigate that? The world faced a skills and lifelong learning crisis before COVID-19. With the rise of mass unemployment in many countries and a further shift in skills required by organisations, how will we tackle the need to enable people to access the skills training they will need to adapt their own careers to the new world?

7. How will we acknowledge the many shining stars who have come to the fore during this crisis and delivered real value? These people may have gone somewhat ‘under the radar’ pre-crisis, so how can you acknowledge their input and accelerate their development going forward? Has the crisis made us re-evaluate traditional measures of value within our organisations?

8. The crisis has shown us that huge, seemingly unimaginable events are possible (and they are likely to happen again, just in different forms, for example cyber-attacks, environmental disaster), so how do we future-proof both our products and services, and our people with that in mind? What can we do as leaders, to ensure our people work in an agile, adaptive, collaborative and resilient way? How do we think about the capital structure of our business and what should be the balance of emphasis across all stakeholders, whether they be owners, employees, customers, suppliers or the communities we work in?

9. During this time, many of our employees will have experienced more autonomy in their roles, being given permission to craft their routines in a meaningful way that works for them. How do we facilitate this positive trend going forward to ensure their potential is being reached? As this [Harvard Business Review](#) article states: “With jobs at the heart of how work gets done, leaders have an unprecedented opportunity to re-imagine them by rearranging work and having employees take on different responsibilities to better respond to the evolving needs of their organisations, customers and employees.”

Of course, the impact of this crisis on each individual organisation will be different, with much of that impact hard to predict. It is a volatile and varied world out there, with some industries experiencing a backlog of demand including for example, the beauty industry, dentists, parts of retail. Sadly, the same prospects might not exist for other industries, as [Erik Gordon, a Professor at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business](#) states.

“What can we do as leaders, to ensure our people work in an agile, adaptive, collaborative and resilient way?”

But, while nothing is certain right now, what we do know for sure is that there will be a tomorrow, and that tomorrow will provide each of our organisations with opportunity, if we look hard enough for it, and ask ourselves the right questions, difficult though they may be. The winners will be those who do a proper and thoughtful job at that deep analysis of what, why, how and who. The losers will be those that simply wait for everything to come back as before.

So, what questions are you as a leader asking yourself right now? As I said, I think now is the time we must all come together as a global business community to ensure we can get the world of work back up and running in the safest and most effective way possible, balancing short term health concerns with the longer term need to have a vibrant economy that provides livelihoods and pays the taxes that support the public services we so obviously need. In more ways than one, this has been a global social experiment, so let’s all share what we’ve learnt along the way, to help us better prepare for whatever is around the corner next.

**Alistair Cox**  
Chief Executive  
Hays plc

# OPERATIONS

How might business operations need to change if new models of working emerge?

In this section we cover:

- What you need to consider when planning for a return to the workplace
- How you can start to plan for the future world of work

How we respond to the pandemic is a test of company resilience. Now, as we begin to transition back into the workplace, we realise that some of our former working practices will need to change. Determining how we respond is not just the HR department's responsibility. It must be a joint effort across operations, technology, health and safety and of course be underpinned by strong leadership. Here at Hays, we've set up both global and local teams that meet weekly to coordinate our efforts to effectively manage this ever-changing crisis.



# OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS FOR NOW

Planning for, or beginning to instigate, a phased return to co-located workplaces requires careful consideration.

## Preparing the workplace

No doubt you've already begun to think about how to return to the workplace - and perhaps you've even begun to transition your people back. Either way, continue to adhere to government guidelines and refer to our checklist for some areas you may want to consider.

Maintaining the health and safety of your employees should continue to be your top priority, so you'll need to think about how you will maintain social distancing guidelines.

## Managing a hybrid team?

In all likelihood, you'll find yourself managing a hybrid team in which a number of your employees continue to work from home while others return to a co-located workspace. In fact, a degree of home or remote work will likely remain a longer-term part of our daily working lives. If so, here is our advice on how to lead a hybrid team in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#).

“ You will also need to ensure that any changes to working practices and health and safety protocols are well understood by your employees. ”

## Communications

Communication to your staff during this period should remain frequent and clear to ensure transparency amongst the workforce, regardless of whether they are still working remotely or are back in a co-located workplace. It should be the role of your leadership team and managers to cascade and reinforce critical information and key updates.

You will also need to ensure that any changes to working practices and health and safety protocols are well understood by your employees.

## Useful resources

[Three step framework for a COVIDSafe Australia](#) ▶

[COVID-19 safe workplace principles](#) ▶

[New Zealand's Ministry of Health COVID-19: Advice for workplaces](#) ▶

[WorkSafe New Zealand's health and safety advice](#) ▶

# CHECKLIST

## Hygiene, health and safety

- Set clear policies for social distancing in the workplace
  - Consider limiting use of lifts and shared areas
- Establish daily cleaning procedures as required
  - Provide adequate cleaning supplies
- Promote mandatory health and hygiene protocols (e.g. hand washing, mask use, glove use) for employees (PPE use)
- Discontinue use of shared items (e.g. phones, computers and mugs)
- Provide supplies, such as hand sanitisers, masks and gloves
- Set clear policies for workplace or site access, working with facilities management to agree these
- Track and document all building entries and exits
- Consider updating risk assessments to include COVID-19 in the workplace; this will reassure employees, suppliers and customers
- Consider taking a body temperature reading at building or site entry
- Set guidelines for employee quarantine when any COVID-19 symptoms are apparent in line with government guidance
- Evolve occupational health support for remote workers
- Set clear guidelines when commuting to and from work, particularly with regards to public transport use
- Consider continued remote working for employees who feel that travelling to work poses an imminent risk to their health
- Review your travel policies

## Working arrangements

- Create differentiated shift plans or working arrangements as necessary to ease congestion on work premises
- Consider workplace design and office layout to ensure minimum advised social distances are adhered to

- Identify and isolate vulnerable employee groups
- Consider encouraging continued remote working for all roles that do not require a physical presence
- Provide webinars and insightful resources on remote working and leadership best practices, such as wellbeing support

## Business continuity plans (BCP)

- Evolve BCP with lessons learned from COVID-19
- Define contingency plans for further workplace closures
- Ensure cyber-security/data compliance of all IT systems
- Assess technology training needs for staff

## HR policies

- Refer to government and national public health protocols and guidelines for the latest advice
- Review and update relevant HR policies, including:
  - Flexible working
  - Employee assistance
  - Leave and sickness
  - Contractual hours
  - Health and safety - social distancing addendum
  - Technology policy - Bring Your Own Device etc

## Communications

- Communicate regularly with employees
- Provide a mechanism for feedback, either directly or indirectly
- Ensure national public health protocols and guidelines inform employee communication
- Educate employees on COVID-19 symptoms and preventative measures
- Communicate regularly about why any changes are being made

Please note: this is a guide checklist and should be tailored to the specific needs of your organisation.

# OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Employers should start assessing how they might redesign their operating models to best suit the needs of their employees and customers in this new world.

The agility that has emerged in response to this pandemic should be preserved and nurtured for the future, so how does this map out across your infrastructure changes? What else should you invest in to keep up momentum?

Once social distancing measures begin to relax, your customers and employees are likely to continue to have concerns around face-to-face interaction.

Perhaps you have already taken some of your business operations online – how much further do you need to evolve customer engagement to make way for a digital experience with a personal touch?

“Once social distancing measures begin to relax, your customers and employees are likely to continue to have concerns around face-to-face interaction.”

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN EVOLVING YOUR STAFF AND CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

1. Are your working arrangements agile enough to cope with any future changes?
2. What flexible working arrangements do you have in place and what will your workforce want?
3. How will occupational health support need to evolve to facilitate the health and safety of workers?
4. Can your digital and technology infrastructure sustain any changes to the number of virtual and onsite teams?
5. How will you adjust your infrastructure and technology to support the new norms of engagement, collaboration and communication?
6. How will you communicate effectively – will there be more investment required in the use of digital tools and platforms?
7. How will you need to evolve your engagement models with key stakeholders to make way for a digital experience with a personal touch?
8. How will you decide what engagements warrant face-to-face physical interaction and which don't?
9. How will you harness feedback from your customers and users to enable product development or service enhancements?
10. How will your organisation update its BCP with lessons learned from COVID-19?
11. Will your organisation's supply chain need further changes? For example, is it too inflexible or dependent on too few suppliers or regions?
12. What will your workforce look like in the future? What skills will you need to hire or can you re-skill existing employees? For more on this, turn to page 13.

Some relatively simple changes to workspaces can minimise the transmission of the virus, such as health & safety audits on work premises, and the right levels of PPE and sanitation available to all staff. Medium-term planning may include things like workplace design and policy changes to govern flexible and remote working practices, as many organisations will be assessing just how much of their workforce they need 'onsite' at any single point.

# PEOPLE

In this section, we look at the impact of the new era of work on your people, both now and into the future.

Topics include:

- Employee health and wellbeing
- Employee retention and maintaining morale
- The need for effective internal communication
- The importance of learning and development
- An increased focus on diversity & inclusion
- The impact of technology on people & culture

During this pandemic, work solutions that are conducive to supporting the diversity and inclusion agenda have been actioned under accelerated circumstances. Instead of rushing to return to 'former practices', employers now have an opportunity to take the time to reflect and decide what to continue with and how best to integrate them into new working practices.





# PEOPLE CONSIDERATIONS FOR NOW

The sudden shift in working arrangements as a result of COVID-19 has inevitably impacted your workforce. Wellbeing has never been more important and it has placed far greater emphasis on the role of a clear and transparent communications strategy in ensuring your workforce remains healthy, engaged and motivated.

## Culture, health and wellbeing

Your employees will have varied experiences of COVID-19 that you'll need to be sympathetic to, including:

- Concerns about the health and wellbeing of themselves and loved ones
- Anxiety that may result from social isolation or concerns over job security, finances or general business uncertainty
- Harrowing experiences from working on the front lines, or providing care for a loved one
- The difficulties of juggling childcare and work

Provide support by:

- Acknowledging their fears and reassuring them about the measures being implemented to protect them
- Signposting access to mental health support and employee assistance programmes available
- Clear, transparent and regular communication

Refer to our checklist on the following page for some ideas.

## Working arrangements

Continue to support your employees, as you always would, to ensure they remain positive and productive, regardless of whether they are working from home or back in a co-located workspace.

Take the time to gather feedback from your employees about their remote working experience, including what has and hasn't worked well. This will help inform best-practice moving forward, particularly for staff who continue to work remotely.

“Some members of your management teams may be equally concerned about returning to the workplace, so you'll need to work closely with them to agree a suitable approach.”

## Leadership and management

Your leaders and managers may have stepped up almost overnight as the pandemic took hold, but once staff begin to move back into co-located workplaces they'll need to be equipped to continue to lead through this period of further change.

Identify what you need from your leaders in this next phase and provide them with the training required. This should include topics such as hybrid team management and effective communications. You should also provide them with resources, including your updated HR and working policies, as soon as possible to help them facilitate a safe return to the workplace.

If any skills shortages have come to the fore during the lockdown period, evaluate your hiring plans for the coming months to ensure you and your team will be in a strong position to transition back to growth.

## Communications

Ensure that your communication with employees demonstrates trust and assurance that you have their best interests (health, safety and wellbeing) at heart, while setting clear expectations on roles, responsibilities and protocols during times of change.

Any major change in working practices that you choose to implement should be supported by a strategic internal communications plan. This allows you to clearly demonstrate to staff why the change/s have been made.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE CHANGE

No matter who they are, when faced with change people go through a cycle of emotions before accepting a new normal. How you communicate and support your team during the early stages of a change will set the tone for how successful it will be in the longer term. When introducing a change to your wider workforce, remember to:

- Listen, then listen some more – acknowledge people's anxieties whilst also gently supplying them with the information they need to put their immediate fears into context and dispel unhelpful rumours and myths.
- Only say what you know to be true, but do it as speedily as possible – supply your team with as much information as you can, making use of all channels you have – for example, distribute videos internally to provide business updates and send emails clearly explaining your reasoning.
- Make clear what support is available – make use of any employee assistance programmes to allow your team to come to terms with the change and reach out for help in their own time.

Would you like further advice on how to help your team become more adaptable to change? If so, here's our advice for employers in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#).

# CHECKLIST

## Culture, health and wellbeing

- Focus on building a culture based on trust and transparency by encouraging leaders to follow a people first approach
- Provide leaders with the tools and training to lead in times of change
- Consider mental health/employee assistance support for employees in key scenarios
- Download our advice on maintaining your team's wellbeing in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#) - this advice is as applicable for remote teams as it is for hybrid teams

## Working arrangements

- Encourage managers to schedule informal meetings without a fixed agenda to check in with team members
- Consider training needs or resources required for managers to effectively manage hybrid teams
- Evaluate the benefits and challenges of remote working in your organisation and how to factor this into your plans and policies
- Review and reassess your employee mobility strategy
- Evaluate whether you need to make any amendments to contracts as a result of changes to working arrangements
- Ensure your team members are equipped with the skills and tools they need to work in these new hybrid teams effectively – visit [Hays Thrive Australia](#) or [Hays Thrive New Zealand](#) for free online training

## Communications

- Ensure public health protocols and guidelines inform employee communication
- Ensure that employees are aware of any changes to HR policies and are engaged with the overall business approach

- Build trust in the decisions that are being made, by being transparent and clear about the reasons behind them
- HR and Marketing should work closely together at this time to create a strong, company-wide narrative

## Learning & development

Identify the short-term training needed for your leaders, managers and employees. For example, empower them to work in hybrid teams. Direct them to useful resources, such as [Hays Thrive Australia](#) or [Hays Thrive New Zealand](#) to support learning and development

Start planning for your longer-term learning and development requirements:

- Identify areas where employees need upskilling, both now and for the future, such as technology and digital skills
- What training platforms do you need to invest in (such as e-learning) and what modules need to be created?
- Incorporate agile and digital talent upskilling and reskilling into your learning strategy
- Create training to upskill employees in soft skills like resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset to strengthen your organisation's DNA

For more upskilling advice, see our report [Upskilling Matters Australia](#) or [Upskilling Matters New Zealand](#).

Inclusion is more important than ever. Many employees are facing anxiety, stress and uncertainty and are looking to their leaders to provide support and guidance. How employers respond today and in the weeks ahead will have a profound impact on how they are perceived post-crisis. Employers' responsibility should extend into offering the mental health and wellbeing support that many employees are seeking.

Leaders and managers should ensure that communication to employees is purposefully inclusive, regular and transparent. Employees who have family and care-giving commitments or long commutes, which severely impact on their desire for work-life balance, may not be inclined to work for employers that do not offer flexibility. Many will now have increasing evidence that they can perform their roles effectively while working remotely. The way employers respond to remote and flexible working requests will therefore impact talent acquisition and retention.

We now have the opportunity to purposefully build a culture of inclusion, trust and assurance. The workforce will want to feel supported and trusted to do the right thing, and employers must be prepared to integrate this into their future policies and ways of working.



Please note: this is a guide checklist and should be tailored to the specific needs of your organisation.

# PEOPLE CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Organisations have an opportunity to build a culture where new working regimes and flexible working patterns are the norm and not the exception. As the digital and physical world of work collide, how will you manage, motivate, and retain your workforce in the new era?

For many organisations, your culture, employer brand and value proposition used to be based on the advantages of pleasant working environments, location and the way your people worked collaboratively face-to-face. However, in the new era of work where some employees can continue to work remotely and hybrid teams exist, these will be different.

The lines between an employer's duty of care and employees' wellbeing will also become ever more blurred and workers may start to expect more support from you. For example, more regular

wellbeing programs and support.

Remuneration and reward approaches may also need to evolve.

The questions on the right may help you consider how to evolve your people and culture strategies if you decide to adopt new working styles.

## Remote work after COVID-19

You may also want to consider a longer-term shift towards remote working. If so, here are six questions to consider in [Australia](#) or [New Zealand](#).

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING YOUR PEOPLE & CULTURE

1. How will you continue to build a culture against a backdrop of social distancing?
2. How can you drive an 'agile' mindset amongst your teams so they remain adaptable to change?
3. How will you manage a hybrid workforce that is more dispersed, partly remote and partly on-site?
4. What initiatives can you put in place to build a more engaged workforce?
5. What investments in technology and training will you have to make to enable your workforce to thrive in the new era of work?
6. How do your internal communications channels need to evolve? Will you need to invest in more digital engagement and collaboration tools to promote inclusion within your workforce?
7. How will the longer-term decisions you make relating to your workforce now impact your employee value proposition, if the workplace environment was once a unique selling point?
8. What technical and soft skills will your workforce need in the future? Are there any skills gaps that will require you to expand your workforce?
9. How will you train and upskill a dispersed workforce? Will you need to invest further in technologies to support this?
10. How do your wellbeing programmes need to evolve?

“ The lines between an employer's duty of care and employees' wellbeing will become ever more blurred and workers may start to expect more support from you. ”

### Useful resources

[How to prioritise employee upskilling during COVID-19 and beyond in Australia ▶](#)

[How to prioritise employee upskilling during COVID-19 and beyond in New Zealand ▶](#)

[What is a hybrid team and how do I lead one? in Australia ▶](#)

[What is a hybrid team and how do I lead one? in New Zealand ▶](#)

[How to motivate employees after headcount reductions in Australia ▶](#)

[How to motivate employees after headcount reductions in New Zealand ▶](#)

# PEOPLE

## THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON PEOPLE & CULTURE

COVID-19 forced organisations to rapidly accelerate infrastructure enhancements to enable workforces to work remotely on a large scale. At the same time, many managers were forced to shift their mindset and trust that their staff could work productively from home rather than in the one co-located workplace. As a result, there is now less emphasis on which hours are being worked and a greater focus on output delivered.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

The mass adoption of remote working also required employees to quickly become familiar with a range of digital tools to communicate and collaborate virtually.

Looking ahead, what will be the lasting impact of these changes on your organisation? To determine this, ask yourself such questions as:

1. Is your organisation prepared to manage a hybrid team?
2. Which communication, productivity or scheduling tools worked best during the crisis period? How will you continue to use them in a hybrid team?
3. What digital hiring, onboarding, training and performance management tools did you adopt during the crisis that you can continue to use?
4. Will you retain the new level of trust in employees and focus on output? How will this be reflected in your culture and EVP?
5. What communication tools can you use to minimise any sense of isolation and loneliness in employees who continue to work remotely?
6. How will you create a shared culture and build better employee experiences for a hybrid team across digital platforms?
7. How can you inspire your workforce to embrace new technology and remain agile in their approach?
8. What upskilling can you provide to ensure your team become advanced users of your approved technology suite?
9. Have you updated HR policies regarding the correct use of approved technology and software in hybrid teams?
10. What hardware could you provide to employees to improve their continued work from home experience?

# WORKFORCE PLANNING

How has COVID-19 impacted the skills you need in your organisation now and tomorrow? How will your recruitment plans need to change to handle this new era of work?

In this section we share insights to help you answer these vital questions.

The future is unknown but employers should make use of the data available to them. By assessing sales, productivity and output across business units, as well as broader industry-specific trends, employers should be able to make a judgement call around their short to mid-term workforce requirements.



# WORKFORCE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR NOW

Organisations have two main talent challenges – one is preserving their current workforce and the second is ensuring that they have the right skills and professionals in place for the longer-term.

## Workforce planning

Your first step is to assess the skills needed to bring your organisation out of the crisis and help it transition back to growth. This may include hiring for new permanent skill sets and making use of a contingent workforce as operating models shift.

- As organisations emerge from the crisis, you will need to be able to attract and hire key skills as quickly as possible, while adhering to compliance requirements.
- Alternatively, you may see peaks and troughs in your business that will continue to be hard to predict, which may require you to hire temporary or contract workers to meet these demands.
- Contingency plans should also be in place for staff who have been supporting other departments or have taken on duties outside their usual remit. Will you transition them back to their pre-COVID-19 role? If so, when?

“Your first step is to assess the skills needed to bring your organisation out of the crisis and help it transition back to growth. This may include hiring for new permanent skill sets and making use of a contingent workforce as operating models shift.”

Regardless of which stage your organisation is at in terms of recovery, demand for niche or emerging skills will remain high.

Beginning your skills assessment now will ensure that, once your organisation is ready, you'll have access to the talent you need to transition back to growth. Refer to the checklist on the following page to help build your plan.

## How to assess skills gaps and identify critical hires

The skills in demand are changing rapidly in response to shifting operating models and the economic and social pressures resulting from the pandemic. You should look urgently at your own circumstances to identify critical roles. As many organisations move to more online working models, either permanently or through the creation of hybrid teams, the demand for skills in areas such as IT is likely to exacerbate.

Other skills that are expected to be in high demand include:

- As retailers focus on e-commerce models, there is an increased requirement for digital skills across both marketing and technology. This includes software developers, data scientists, cloud infrastructure specialists, digital marketing and UX/UI specialists.
- IT security experts will be in high demand as more organisations set up and defend infrastructure to support continued remote working.

- With more pressure on our public services, social care and healthcare workers will be in high demand, as will back office and technical staff.
- As the country gets back to their places of work, those working in maintenance trades will be needed to ensure buildings that may have stood idle are safe, clean and operationally sound.
- The expected rise of new legislation and changes to operating procedures resulting from a new way of working will increase demand for legal professionals and also for change management experts to communicate the changes to the wider organisation.
- There will be demand for construction workers from a range of disciplines as projects that may have been delayed begin again, particularly in infrastructure.
- Demand for telephone and online customer service contact centre staff will be high across all industries. The reshoring of call centres back to Australia will further add to demand.
- To fulfil the nation's requirement for critical supplies, such as food and medical equipment, there is more pressure than ever on the manufacturing and supply chain industry.
- There is a surge in demand for HR professionals, particularly for SMEs who need expert support as they manage their workforces through the changes ahead.
- Mining remains an area of continued high demand in Australia.

Although we have had hundreds of candidates start new permanent roles in lockdown, some organisations are preferring to start recruitment now for a later start date. The main reason for this is to give HR departments time to get their existing workforce safely back to work.

Employers and candidates alike are embracing technology for online interviewing.

### Your recruitment process

Until social distancing measures ease, your recruitment processes and protocols will need to remain virtual.

If you've yet to establish a virtual recruitment process, our checklist on the right will help you to adjust your recruitment and attraction processes and protocols to suit your new operations.

Areas you may want to look at include:

#### Advertising roles

- Refer to working arrangements and shift patterns in all of your job descriptions, advertising and recruitment websites.
- Explicitly state what working equipment will be provided to candidates if they are expected to work remotely.

#### Dealing with applications

- Ensure that your organisation is set up to receive online applications, and review connectivity and compliance of your applicant tracking system to other new tools that you may have added to your recruitment method.
- Ensure that your hiring managers are enabled to review applications swiftly. This may include the ability to send and read CVs online and via smartphones.

“ Work closely with your IT department to ensure that it is possible to virtually (and quickly) onboard your new starters. This will help you provide a seamless and consistent employee experience. ”

#### Interviewing candidates

- Ensure that all hiring managers receive the right support and training to run effective virtual interviews. You can refer to our checklist on the right for some useful training and resources.

#### Onboarding new starters

- Work closely with your IT department to ensure that it is possible to virtually (and quickly) onboard your new starters. This will help you provide a seamless and consistent employee experience. You may need to consider investing in or upgrading technology platforms to facilitate this.
- You should also put together a robust digital induction programme for new starters to ensure they receive the same level of support.

#### Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Consider how your EVP will need to evolve for the new era of work. Get feedback from your staff about what aspects matter most to them, as well as what they've enjoyed and what's worked well. Ask about their wellbeing and personal development needs. This won't give you all the answers but will help to form your thinking on how your EVP may need to adapt.

## CHECKLIST

### Workforce planning

Assess your short- to mid-term workforce requirements for the future, including:

- The skills you will need post lockdown
- Contingency plans for staff who have temporarily transitioned into other roles or departments and may or may not want to transition back
- Identify important skill sets and critical hires now
- Seek approval for critical hires now and start the hiring process

Work with your expert Hays recruiter in [Australia](#) or [New Zealand](#) to understand the latest market updates for your sector/industry

Look at which areas of your organisation may see a surge or dip in demand and output, and plan your resources effectively

### Recruitment process

Decide the changes you need to make to your current recruitment process to enable you to attract and hire the best talent quickly, including:

- Decide which roles can be done remotely and consider this when advertising for new roles
- Ensure your hiring managers have the tools to review online applications
- Confirm that all your tools and technology used for recruitment connect to your ATS and any other required systems
- Ensure your hiring managers have the right training and technology to perform virtual interviews
- Confirm your ability to onboard and induct new starters
- Review other digital tools for your hiring processes to improve efficiencies

### Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Consider how longer-term changes to working arrangements and business operations will impact your EVP

### Useful resources

If you need to hire while remote working, download our guide on conducting remote interviews in Australia ▶

If you need to hire while remote working, download our guide on conducting remote interviews in New Zealand ▶

If you need to onboard team members remotely, read our best practice advice in Australia ▶

If you need to onboard team members remotely, read our best practice advice in New Zealand ▶

Please note: this is a guide checklist and should be tailored to the specific needs of your organisation.

# WORKFORCE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Employers should start to look holistically at how their operating model may continue to evolve in the new era and what the knock-on effect of this will be on the workforce and skills they require.

Plan ahead and decide what working arrangements you will offer your staff in the future. There are many benefits to be gained from continuing to allow employees to work flexibly, not least of which is the ability to access talent from a wider geographical area than was previously possible. Given this, you need to evolve your recruitment messaging accordingly.

In addition, the rate of digitisation has rapidly increased, but how else will this impact your business operations? You'll need additional technology and IT skills to support this ongoing investment. How will your organisation access and hire for the technology skills required?

How will the way you interview and assess candidates need to evolve? Will the future outlook mean investment in more sophisticated technologies such as VR to improve the candidate experience?

Meanwhile, you should also think about the adaptability and other soft skills that your workforce will require in order to operate effectively in the future. Does this mean a shift in candidate assessment for evaluation of soft skills, such as resilience, adaptability, problem-solving and team-working?

Looking into the mid-term, have you considered the impact of skill shortages for your organisation? These are present in so many industries and addressing these sooner rather than later might help you to fill these gaps while talent is more readily available.

This crisis may have shaped your future needs in unexpected ways, but it doesn't have to define your business. As you consider your staffing and hiring position, the questions below may help.

1. Does your organisation want to offer more or less flexibility to employees in the future?
2. If yes, can you now recruit from a much wider geographical area than was previously possible?
3. How does your employer value proposition and employer branding material need to evolve to maintain competitiveness if workplace arrangements are permanently changed? Similarly, how will they need to evolve if you don't make permanent changes but your competitors do?
4. What skills will you need in your workforce?
5. What areas need a strategic talent roadmap, for example, IT?
6. What soft skills will you need to assess candidates against when hiring?



Think about what has worked well during the COVID-19 response, and identify offerings that will resonate in the future. To do this, informally interview workers and talk candidly with managers to identify changing wants and expectations. Then look holistically at how the company's operating model will evolve in the future and put in place a talent strategy that supports these changes.

Talent pools may become less geographically bound, opening up opportunities to both workers and employers. For many years work-life balance and flexible working arrangements were key differentiators for skilled professionals when they looked for a new job. Given how widely adopted flexible working now is, jobseekers now expect these as a given. Instead, when looking for their next role candidates now have more of a focus on personal development, career progression and a commitment to social purpose.

Employers that can think ahead and address these issues will be able to maintain a competitive advantage and be best equipped to create a compelling Employee Value Proposition, so they can be seen as an employer of choice.



# IN SUMMARY

COVID-19 meant many organisations were forced to adapt their ways of working at a speed that many of us perhaps didn't think was possible. There are still many unknowns in the weeks and months ahead, but what we can focus on is how to bring the knowledge we have gained in the last few weeks into the new era of work.

Within this guide, we have covered some of the key points leaders need to consider as they transition their teams back into the workplace. How will the operations of your organisation need to change? What technology will you need to invest in? Which skills will your team need and how can you raise their productivity? How can you ensure the wellbeing of your team is kept front and centre throughout the transition?

Across all these areas, leaders should reflect on what has worked well during this time of upheaval, and how they can make the best use of these opportunities going forward. For example, the crisis has shown that many organisations can sustain remote working for a large proportion, if not all, of their workforce. Working remotely has long been identified by professionals as something they value. Therefore, how can your organisation implement this into the 'new normal' way of working?

“As your lifelong career partner, we remain committed to supporting your organisation, large or small, as we navigate the new era of work together.”

“Leaders now need to use the time to reflect on which aspects of their old 'normal' way of working are no longer fit for purpose and can be removed, and which aspects may need to be adapted to best futureproof their organisation.”

Each organisation will have learned its own unique lessons from this unprecedented situation. Leaders now need to use the time to reflect on which aspects of their old 'normal' way of working are no longer fit for purpose and can be removed, and which aspects may need to be adapted to best futureproof their organisation.

As part of this reflection, leaders will no doubt identify skills gaps within their workforce. To overcome these skills deficits, you may need to either upskill your existing team or recruit new skills. As your lifelong career partner, we remain committed to supporting your organisation, large or small, as we navigate the new era of work together.

**If you have any further questions about hiring in the current climate, please contact your Hays consultant in [Australia](#) or [New Zealand](#), or visit our [Inspire Me in the New Era of Work Hub Australia](#) or [New Zealand](#) to access a collection of resources that will help you to manage your team through this time of change.**

## THE MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM EFFECT OF THIS CRISIS ON SKILLS

Rain Newton-Smith, Chief Economist, CBI

- The crisis will exacerbate some of the longer-term trends we saw in skills before it emerged. It will also exacerbate some of the demographics that were disproportionately affected by skills shortages.
- After this crisis, we are likely to see a focus on supply chain resilience, including data analysis and assessment skills you need within that.
- Digitally enabled remote working will be key going forward.
- We also expect to see a faster displacement of automation of in-person manual jobs, as well as a rise of e-commerce channels and virtual sales as opposed to in-person customer sales.
- We'll also likely see an increase in the need of leadership skills to navigate the challenges we will face.
- Before the crisis, we were seeing a disproportionate effect on occupations with lower wages. These were the occupations in general decline. We are now seeing an acceleration of this.
- This is an opportunity to grapple with the training and up-skilling challenge.

# WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES

With over 40 years of recruitment expertise, Hays is well placed to help you as the world of work evolves. We are committed to continuing to support you as your lifelong career partner through both the current challenges and your longer-term planning. We offer a range of services, each of which are designed to provide invaluable support to your organisation – both now and as we enter the new era. Follow the links below to find out more, or contact your expert Hays consultant in [Australia](#) or [New Zealand](#) if you have any questions.

### Permanent recruitment

We provide comprehensive support and offer expert consultancy to identify your unique requirements before creating your bespoke permanent recruitment campaign to attract any talented professionals you require going forward.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)

### Temporary recruitment

Whether you will be managing peaks in demand or running a change project that requires additional skills for a short period of time, we have the expertise to supply temps with the skills you need.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)

### Salary benchmarking

We deliver bespoke salary and reward reports to help you inform change and organisational restructuring, develop competitive attraction strategies and improve employee retention.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)

### Outsourced permanent recruitment

A tailored recruitment process outsourcing, or RPO, agreement with Hays means we take on the responsibility for your permanent recruitment, improving your candidate attraction processes and overall time-to-hire.

[Find out more ▶](#)

### Fully managed temporary recruitment

Hays Talent Solutions provides a dedicated Managed Service Programme, or MSP, to improve the way you procure temporary skills, saving your organisation time and money and increasing the quality of your hires.

[Find out more ▶](#)

### Career transitions

We offer comprehensive outplacement services that your exiting employees can access to help them through their career transition.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

### Assessment and development

Hays Assessment & Development delivers bespoke, high quality, cost effective candidate selection solutions to ensure the staff you hire have the skills you need.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

### Executive support

Hays Executive is a dedicated search and selection practice to find the right people to lead your organisation. We find high-calibre appointees who are embedded and achieving with your organisation from day one.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)

### Hays Thrive – our free online training portal

Hays Thrive is an online training platform available completely free to all organisations, big or small, to help get their workforce prepared and give them the tools they need to thrive in an ever-changing world of work.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)

### Inspire Me in the New Era of Work

As the world of work evolves, our Inspire Me in the New Era of Work hub provides practical guides and insights to support you through both the current challenges and your longer-term planning.

[Find out more AU ▶](#)

[Find out more NZ ▶](#)