

Reinventing work

New imperatives for the future of working



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Reinvent work to emerge better

Finding a better way



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Finding a better way

We're coming off one of the most challenging years in business history. The pandemic forced every company to accelerate its most important transformations: to do in a few months what it was on course to do in a few years (we explored this idea recently in [“Navigating the Disruption of Work”](#)).

But now that the light at the end of the tunnel seems to be in sight, most businesses are unsure of the best way forward and trying to strike a balance between two ideas:

“Let’s hurry back to the way things were before.”

The dominant motive here is the urge to return—to recover everything lost to the pandemic; to get back to normal.

“Let’s make this the new way moving forward.”

The primary motive here is to embrace the new—to think of the new ways we’ve all been working during the pandemic as better.



This piece is about finding your own better way—and it may be the single most important decision facing every business leader:

- **An opportunity to rethink what’s now possible in the workplace.**
- **To reconsider what’s core to your business and your customers.**
- **To combine the best of what you had before the pandemic with all that you’ve learned during it—and to reinvent the future of work.**

Finding a better way

Over the past year, we've spoken with forward-thinking business leaders from all industries, company sizes and disciplines about what their new ways of working look like. And we've organized what we heard into five main themes; five big imperatives for the way we'll need to work now:

- **Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset**
- **Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage**
- **The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook**
- **Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence**
- **The winners are accelerating and automating work**

These aren't about simple answers that apply to every company. Rather, they're about emerging themes and innovative methods for proactively meeting the new challenges of work.

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Moving forward, in order to be a brave leader in this culture, especially now when everyone is scared ... we need curious leaders.”

Brené Brown

This is exciting

Leaders aren't tested during quiet times. They're tested in times of dramatic, discontinuous change—times like these. The only answer we can be sure is wrong is to pretend nothing has changed and to keep doing what you've always done.

With that in mind, it's time to think deeply about the things that matter most to your business: your employees, customers, partners and strategic alignment and the efficiency of work itself. It's time to let go of the assumptions that shaped old ways of working, to emerge stronger than ever and to find your own better way.

1.

**Employee
engagement breaks
free from the
9-to-5 mindset**



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Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

Employee experience (EX) was already a hot topic for many businesses and organizations before the pandemic. After all, what's more important than attracting and keeping top talent? During lockdown, EX challenges became a C-suite priority—led by the HR team but far from confined to it.

In the next one to two years, as workplaces become not just virtual and not just physical but a hybrid of both, every company is being forced to rethink the employee experience from the ground up, to find the new, better way that's right for them.

One thing is clear: The “rules” of work that arose in the industrial revolution are simply not fit for the purpose anymore.

Let's start with **Jacob Morgan's** three-factor definition of EX:

EX is creating an organization where employees want, not need, to show up to work—by focusing on culture, technology, and physical space.



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In the post-pandemic world, business leaders are re-engineering all three of these factors to meet the moment. Here's a collection of changes we're seeing on the front lines of EX.

People

Some want to preserve the pre-pandemic culture in a distributed work world. For others, it's an opportunity to re-imagine it to get the best from a hybrid workforce.

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Workers who have the option to work a flexible schedule score more favorably on stress and anxiety levels, satisfaction with working arrangements, and productivity.

The Future Forum

Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

Increasing work flexibility

Flexible hours and policies started as a necessary response to lockdown. Now they're becoming default settings—and people like it. Less time wasted in rush-hour commutes means more time to spend on things that really add value. The 9-to-5 template doesn't suit all anymore. Flexible work also helps retain employees who need to shape work around life in different ways.

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As we enter a new year, we must continue to go forward with agility, creativity and a beginner's mind—and that includes how we cultivate our culture. An immersive workspace is no longer limited to a desk in our Towers; the 9-to-5 workday is dead.

Brent Hyder, President and Chief People Officer, Salesforce

Taking the pulse more often

While working from home, we lost opportunities for chance encounters in the office, and hundreds of little, one-minute connections were gone. So managers are now checking in with direct reports and wider teams much more frequently. They're scheduling more one-on-one calls; holding more informal team meetings and stand-ups; and even using automated tools to create new connections between employees and simulate serendipity.

Looking ahead, these frequent, informal check-ins won't always be face-to-face. And they won't always be a video call or a private Slack conversation. They'll be all of the above.



Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

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We used Culture Amp to send out pulse checks to see how everyone was feeling, which helped us make an informed decision on what employees wanted and which leadership style was best for the organization.

Matt Loop, Head of APAC, Slack

Creating a more diverse workforce

Disconnecting from a physical office building allows an organization to recruit beyond a defined geographic area. This gives leadership the opportunity to leverage remote/hybrid work as a way to attract more candidates, including from underrepresented groups. After all, diverse teams **consistently outperform** their homogeneous counterparts.

The Future Forum's **Remote Employee Experience Index** shows that, in the U.S. at least, historically underrepresented workers might prefer remote work, reporting higher overall index scores—essentially, satisfaction—in regard to remote work than their white counterparts. Of course, the task of building a diverse workforce doesn't stop at hiring. In the same data set, underrepresented workers shared a lower sense of belonging, something leaders must address.

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Companies that thrive in the new era of work will fix these imbalances. They will embrace the opportunity to hire the best talent from more distributed, more diverse backgrounds, and they'll understand that retaining that talent requires changing historical habits and routines.

Brian Elliott, VP, The Future Forum

Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

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Through 2022, 75% of organizations with frontline decision-making teams reflecting a diverse and inclusive culture will exceed their financial targets.

Gartner Consulting

Actively fighting burnout

As stress and uncertainty have increased, leaders have understandably gotten proactive about the mental health and wellness of their people. Apps like Calm and Headspace are the new employee benefit of choice. And CEOs are getting out in front of the issue by helping their teams set boundaries.

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Creating a mindful workplace culture is so important! In my experience working at high-growth companies, I know that most people move fast and wear many hats. Without an attention to mindfulness, it can be easy to lose sight of the bigger picture.

Ashley Waxman, Head of employer brand, Asana

In a far cry from old-school principles of management, today's leaders are asked to support the individuals on their teams with an **empathetic approach**. Companies are now providing additional emergency time off, mental health benefits, extra companywide days off, and other employee-centric options to help combat stress and other issues impacting their people.

Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

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When people feel that somebody actually cares about them as a human being, they will be inspired.

Simon Sinek

Rethinking core talent-related processes

HR and hiring leaders are using dedicated channels in their collaboration platforms to recruit, hire, onboard, develop, motivate and retain talent. We're seeing companies begin to hire from far beyond their local area, and hiring teams are working in new ways, including things like Zoom interviews and virtual onboarding.

Hiring managers aren't just going back to the old workflows, but they're not simply staying with the work-from-home protocols either. They're looking with fresh eyes at how they recruit and hire in ways that combine in-person and virtual aspects. It's time to rethink the candidate experience throughout their entire journey, from learning about the job opening to starting the job and beyond.

Technology

The rise of video conferencing in every part of the employee experience is only the start. Never before have messaging, collaboration platforms and app integrations been so central to what it means to manage people, guide teams and get work done. Clearly, technology has a major role to play in how connected and included everyone feels.

The collaboration platform plays more roles

Now that physical offices are so much less a part of the employee experience, having a digital headquarters—a central place for work and social interactions—has become critical. It's where culture lives now. It's not just a reflection of flexible, asynchronous work; it's also an enabler of it.

Think about your digital HQ in new ways. Are you using channel-based messaging to cultivate non-work interests too? Are executive leaders holding “Ask Me Anything” sessions? Are core work processes moving into channels instead of staying locked in email silos? What does the best of in-person and virtual look like for your company?

Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

The virtual watercooler

Specialist apps and integrations are helping bring spontaneity back into our work lives. Up, the Australian digital bank, uses Barista, a colleague-matching app that integrates with Slack, so people stay connected without having to make a big effort or schedule time.

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Barista and Slack make it easy to get to know each other and have conversations not just about work but other things that matter to us as people, too.

Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up

When some people are again working in offices, it's important not to make second-class citizens of colleagues working remotely. What's your new way?

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One company did virtual tours of their home offices. That gave them the chance to talk about some of the mementos that they keep nearby. They were showing off pictures that their kids drew for them. And it was a great moment of personal connection in a way that never would have happened if everyone was in the office.

Adam Grant



Physical space

Executive offices, cube farms, open plan, hot-desking... What's next for corporate spaces as we begin to return to the office post-pandemic? The traditional HQ, where everyone comes into work every day, probably won't make a full return.

Redesigning the office around new needs

Smaller, more flexible satellite offices closer to people's homes are replacing expensive, showcase HQs, but it's not yet clear what the best office layouts will be. One thing is certain: It all starts with listening to what employees want. When the talent agency R/GA [redesigned its offices for post-pandemic work](#), it first held surveys and workshops with its 1,600 employees around the world.

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It's time to ask questions like: **“How much space do we really need?”** and **“What is this specific space best for?”**

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For certain kinds of work, the default will be working from home—and offices are going to be designed explicitly for the things that togetherness does best.

Daniel Pink

New health and safety considerations

Even if office work is only a small part of people's jobs going forward, they will be worried about the safety of returning to offices. Think about increased spacing, staggered attendance, zigzag seating, one-way hallways, fewer touchscreens, more distance markers, and anti-infection design. And make sure to communicate what you're doing so your people feel more comfortable when they do return to the office and can express any concerns ahead of time.

Employee engagement breaks free from the 9-to-5 mindset

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People need to feel healthy and safe, that the environment is clean, and that these are environmentally healthy and not just energy-efficient green buildings.

Dennis Perkins, Founder, Civitas

The professional home office

Working at the kitchen counter was fine for a few weeks. Today we're seeing employers take home office spaces seriously, investing in ergonomic chairs, sit-stand desks and proper lighting for their people. Companies like Shopify and Twitter give remote employees a budget to set up their home work spaces. The same care about ergonomics in your offices should follow your employees home to their home offices too.

Survey your employees about their home work situations. Ask for photos (within privacy constraints) if it makes sense. Identify people who need better support—whether that's advice, equipment or improved processes.

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Will the harsh realities of the post-Covid world alter time-hewn preferences and behaviors of the workforce? Absolutely, but only time will tell how drastic or enduring those changes will be.

Architizer

The new EX imperative

The shift to hybrid work allows for a more diverse talent pool, less proximity bias and fewer one-size-fits-all practices. Eric Yuan, the CEO of Zoom, **sums it up**: “We have to look at everything from our employees’ perspective.”

More of:

- A global talent pool
- Flexible hours and locations
- Quick, informal check-ins
- Optimized home workspaces
- Collaboration platforms as the new work hub
- Employee wellness as a management KPI

Less of:

- Proximity bias
- 9-to-5 for all
- Daily commutes
- Assigned desks and expensive, open-plan offices
- One-size-fits-all practices and policies

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Many companies are rapidly experimenting with distributed and asynchronous models, helping to write the playbook for how to thrive in the new world of work.

The Future Forum

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It’s more important that our employees are meeting their milestones than where they work from. Since we rolled Slack out across all devices, we’re not bound to one place anymore.

Matthias Schirmag, Head of Global IT Network and Communication,
Mast-Jägermeister SE

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Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage



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Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage

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During periods of growth, consistency and openness when it comes to internal processes will steady the corporate ship.

Steve Vamos, CEO, Xero

In the post-pandemic world, it's going to be harder than ever to keep even a single team aligned around goals and priorities. Scale that up to your whole company, and the challenges become exponentially more complex.

But the things you do to keep people aligned and engaged need to change to get the best out of the in-person, pre-pandemic era and the all-remote, work-from-home era. Here are some recent moves toward improving alignment and maintaining culture when everyone's working from home:

Openness as the default management style

Traditional, command-and-control management styles don't work well in distributed work contexts or in hybrid work scenarios. Instead of hoarding information and decision-making, the nimblest companies share knowledge openly as a default and push decision-making to the front lines. That's why it's so important to have a centralized place where work happens.

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Given the pace of the content creation for all of our different brands, being secretive does not benefit anyone. Slack has really allowed us to encourage openness and transparency.

Aya Kanai, Former Editor in Chief of Marie Claire, Hearst Magazines

Systems of transparency

Open, transparent cultures—where everyone feels a part of the mission—need transparent collaboration tools. Channel-based platforms keep everyone in the loops that matter to them. That way, openness doesn't have to lead to information overload.

Culture and alignment are the next source of advantage

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Having a way to communicate freely and to openly share our vision, our goals and long-term objectives is the fundamental way we're successfully scaling the company worldwide.

Jack Zhang, CEO, Airwallex

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Slack is asynchronous: People pop into channels and know that they might not hear back from someone for five hours, which is OK. It's really useful to make sure we don't miss anything.

James Coxon, Chief Product Officer, Stax

Fighting proximity bias

Before the pandemic, in-person meetings were often considered the very best way to interact, and anything else was a compromise. That created proximity bias, a phenomenon whereby people in the office were inherently favored over those who worked remotely. Leaders now see that empowering asynchronous work—in which people don't have to be collaborating at the same time—is fundamental to creating a diverse and inclusive office.

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With asynchronous work, the work shines. That's what I'm most excited about, because I can't imagine a more interesting or challenging time to lead through this change.

Amy Farrow, CIO, Lyft

The virtual all-hands meeting

The monthly CEO email is too one-way. We've been seeing the rise of virtual all-hands meetings that use the power of live video combined with live feedback channels for questions or responses. Twitter had its first one when lockdown started, supporting the video conference with Slack channels like #oneteamQs and #wfh.

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It was very transparent. I think it'll be hard for us to ever think about doing it a different way.

Jennifer Christie, VP of People, Twitter

In our [global survey of knowledge workers](#), employees in Japan rated the statement “Everyone agrees on goals or outcomes” higher than in any other country surveyed.



The new alignment imperative

Progressive leaders are focusing more and more on team alignment as a driver of success, especially with remote teams. If everyone's pulling in the same direction, things happen faster and decisions are smarter. If not, everything slows down.

More of:

- Making leadership more available more often
- Transparent discussions and decisions
- An equal voice no matter where you work
- A system to organize company knowledge

Less of:

- One-way email broadcasts and intranet announcements
- Fiefdoms where information is hoarded
- Proximity bias
- Duplication of efforts because of poor communication

3.

**The ecosystem
economy demands
a new partner
playbook**

The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

We're entering the ecosystem economy, where value isn't created within just one enterprise. That means the partners and suppliers you choose to work with—and the way you work with them—will be key to thriving in the next phase.

Before the pandemic, partnerships tended to be long-term and contract-driven. After, they'll be more fluid, more collaborative and more integrated. They'll also depend less on face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails. Here are some of the new moves we're seeing:

Value orchestration beats vertical integration

Being good at lots of things isn't good enough anymore. In many markets—from SaaS to financial services, the future is about bringing together specialist partners into high-value customer experiences.

Think about how to bring best-of-breed capabilities into your products and services instead of always building that capability in-house. That means working more closely with specialist partners and vendors, often using software APIs that call on new capabilities as needed.

The new direction is all about creating value with other players in the ecosystem—but doing it in an open, fluid way.

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In ecosystem competition, success is as much about helping other firms innovate as it is about being innovative yourself.

Harvard Business Review

Auditing partners for supply-chain risk

Disruptions to supply chains during the pandemic have sensitized business leaders to risks they had taken for granted. In response, we're seeing more supplier risk mapping and supplier relationship audits to increase business resilience. Understanding your supply-chain risk is critical to managing it, because, let's face it, the pandemic won't be the last crisis your company faces.

The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

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The pandemic presents opportunities for establishing new relationships with partners/suppliers who are better equipped to help the company address urgent short-term needs and to capitalize on significant long-term opportunities.

Industrial Marketing Management

Take a look at your long-term business partnerships. Are they still relevant for the new ways you're serving customers? We're seeing partnership and supply-chain leaders running partnership audits to determine which relationships are most relevant to now.

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It's vital to ascertain how long your company could ride out a supply shock without shutting down.

Harvard Business Review

Securing the extended enterprise

The new world of open collaboration and remote work brings with it new cybersecurity risks. Pre-pandemic security strategies were often all about securing a perimeter with some version of a firewall. That's still important, but the new work will demand more comprehensive thinking about security.

Remote workers—your own and your partners'—are far more likely to use their home Wi-Fi and personal devices to access company platforms. Consumer-grade messaging apps are unlikely to provide the kind of security and regulatory compliance that an enterprise needs. Think virtual private networks (VPNs), device management platforms for remote workers, and enterprise-grade collaboration solutions.

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We expect to see remote workers using VPNs and additional security measures to protect company data while they work from home. In fact, since the pandemic began, one of the top policy changes made in organizations has been to increase VPN capacity for remote workers.

IFSEC Global



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A new way to connect

Email chains keep knowledge locked in silos. Companies that depend on external partners are turning to Slack Connect to securely manage these critical relationships and unsilo important conversations. So no one has to worry that everyone has been cc'd on an email, each message in Slack Connect becomes a part of the single source of truth on that relationship—open for everyone on the team to see. That means better relationships, faster responses and happier customers.

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We use Slack Connect to communicate externally with partners like Afterpay, Bendigo Bank and TransferWise. It gives us a history and audit log of transactions of all the communications. It means that all companies are able to communicate with each other really easily.

Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up

The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

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Having all of the information about a specific partner available at once is super-important. We have a direct line of communication to our counterparts at the companies that we work with most frequently.

Mike Yakovlev, Senior Manager of Technology Alliances, Zendesk

The new partner imperative

How you work with partners is as important as who you work with.

More of:

- Orchestration and ecosystems
- APIs to automate and integrate
- Secure channel-based collaboration
- A shared source of truth across company boundaries

Less of:

- Information asymmetry and supplier power plays
- Inflexible partner relationships
- Unmapped supply-chain risk
- Email to manage supplier relationships

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Having the ability to message an external vendor via Slack provides next-level support. The runaround you usually have to go through via email does not exist when you use channels.

Marisa Guarino, Senior IT Systems Engineer, Snowflake

4.

**Customer-
led disruption
forces the CX
convergence**



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Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

If EX is about keeping your employees engaged, then CX (customer experience) is all about keeping customers and prospects happy.

Here, customers themselves are in the driver's seat. Their experiences with some of the world's best brands and most sophisticated services have raised standards in every market. They want to feel like they're dealing with one company whether they're interacting with sales, marketing or customer service. And they expect each of these disciplines to know who they are and treat them accordingly.

This means changing the way customer teams collaborate together. The walls between sales, marketing and service are starting to dissolve, so everyone's in the customer experience business. Today, the owners of CX, sales, marketing and customer service are all in rapid innovation mode.

The last gasp for email

For collaborating on complex campaigns, customer issues and simultaneous deals, email chains just don't cut it anymore. Channel-based collaboration platforms like Slack are replacing email for everything from campaign planning and tracking to configure-price-quote processes and the handover to customer success teams. And Slack Connect is helping to cross company boundaries so salespeople can collaborate actively and securely with prospects and marketers work more effectively with agencies.

If your sales, marketing and customer service processes are still email-dependent, you risk losing out to faster, nimbler competitors who have freed themselves from email.

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With Slack, we're able to respond and have a conversation in real time with our customers.

Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up

Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

Hybrid customer journeys

Sales, marketing and service teams are digitizing their processes to better support increasingly digital customer journeys. In consumer markets, customers may not be returning to stores for every need—and B2B salespeople may not be visiting customer offices nearly as much—so opportunities for face-to-face interactions are dwindling. Digital channels matter more than ever, a trend that will only grow.

The new way is about figuring out what your offline and in-person channels are best for and how to best support them with digital experiences. Often this will mean spending more time with customers (and less time traveling); it just won't always be in person.

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Procedures on lead generation, how to do a demo, negotiate, and close a deal and customer success are all critical to systematize and digitize to make a remote sales team successful.

Liam Martin, Founder and CEO, Time Doctor

In all scenarios, distributed customer-facing teams need new ways to collaborate, whether swarming on big sales deals, launching marketing campaigns or triaging customer service issues.

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More than 90% of B2Bs have transitioned to a virtual sales model during Covid-19.

McKinsey & Company



Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

The rise of ops: the great integrators

Software proliferation in sales, marketing and service has increased fragmentation. This means that even within a single department, there can be too many data silos and disjointed, inefficient processes. Add in the need to collaborate across teams, and the complexity becomes quickly unmanageable.

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Sales operations leaders ... must develop strategies to build virtual communities and promote active engagement among sales operations team members and their stakeholders

Dave Egloff, Gartner

In response, we're seeing the rapid rise of operations roles on all three teams. Ops leaders are integrating tech stacks and aligning stakeholders at the same time—and the value to the company (and to customer experiences) is enormous.

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There's a key productivity gain for us thanks to Slack integrations with PagerDuty, Jira, Pingdom, Zoom and ServiceNow. It's a great way to make sure customers receive the response and service they're paying for.

Dean Robinson, General Manager, Versent

Whatever the new, better way looks like for your company, it will most likely be ops-enabled.

Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

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The information that's normally scattered across applications gets concentrated in the right place in Slack. The integrations become essential to how we work every day.

James Coxon, Chief Product Officer, Stax

Listening better and responding faster

Modern customer teams are listening and engaging in a wide range of channels, both digital and offline. But it's still a struggle to integrate and capture all these touchpoints into a centralized hub so you can learn about a customer in one channel that's available to all your teams.

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By harnessing real-time insights from our staff on the ground for campaigns, then sharing that info on Slack, we now reach more than 1 million people each month through Instagram to promote our free service to users.

Annie Meharg, Chief Commercial Officer, Kooth

Operations leaders are integrating more and more platforms to solve this, but with distributed sales, marketing and service teams, leaders are investing in better collaboration so these new opportunities aren't wasted. For many, it all comes together in the collaboration hub.

Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

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Marketers have had to quickly pivot to understand rapidly changing market landscapes, consumer behavior and business challenges. And we've all had to find new ways to work with different parts of our organizations, as well as external partners, to collaborate, create, and execute work.

Erin Clift, CMO, Waze

New support channels

A recent [report by Zendesk](#) showed that 64% of customers used a new support channel in 2020 and 73% plan to keep using it. Companies are responding with investments in web chat, SMS, community forums, self-service and service channels embedded in apps and products.

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Instead of staring at an issue by yourself, you've instantly got 50 to 60 engineers looking at it with you in the Slack channel. That translates into really quality customer outcomes because you're leveraging the whole team's knowledge.

Dean Robinson, General Manager, Versent

But the only way this proliferation of channels can work is if there's a central place connecting customer service with the rest of the business. Slack channels are proving an increasingly important way to triage customer service requests and enlist the right cross-functional experts to help swarm the big issues.

The new CX imperative

The walls between sales, marketing and customer service are dissolving as companies re-engineer to support new customer journeys.

More of:

- Integration—of apps, data and insights
- The acceleration of digital
- Live chat and chat bots
- Channel-based collaboration
- Hiring operations experts

Less of:

- Front-office fragmentation
- Email chains and “reply all”
- “Call back during office hours”
- Data silos



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5.

**The winners are
accelerating and
automating work**



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The winners are accelerating and automating work

If there's a silver lining to disruption, it's having an opportunity to take a fresh look at the way we all work. We're seeing business processes being put under the microscope in every department and discipline, and the evolving results are leveling up companies large and small.

But efficiency is not the only value. In many businesses, automation is used to enhance and personalize the customer experience by streamlining the processes behind it.

Driving out the manual processes that slow you down

Automation isn't just for manufacturing. It's popping up everywhere there's repetitive or manual work. Software development teams have always been great at automating workflows, and now the world is catching on. For example, the German-based Solarisbank created a custom app in Slack for incident management. This means all future incidents automatically create a ticket and an associated incident response channel, speeding up time to resolution.

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It helps us a lot in efficiently dealing with incidents. Our teams know to look in the corresponding incident channel when we have a problem.

Dennis Winter, VP of TechOps, Solarisbank

The importance of documentation

A big part of keeping everyone on the same page is having a page at all—a place where best practices are captured and shared for all to see. Great processes and tech documentation help teams get up to speed fast and benefit from proven practices.

If your work depends on unwritten procedures and “common knowledge,” it's time to capture that.

The winners are accelerating and automating work

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We already had this habit of trying to document things in a way that was visible to other people and to build an archive. So when people join teams, they have a little bit of history and there's continuity.

Stewart Butterfield, CEO, Slack

Designing workflows

Not long ago, workflows simply evolved over time, becoming less and less efficient and effective as new procedures and apps came into the picture. Today, workflows are something you design proactively. Slack's Workflow Builder gives users a no-code tool to design processes supported by automation and app integration. The telecommunications company Vodafone uses it for software release request workflows.

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Right from the start, you have everyone you need because it's pulling in the right people—from who's on call from the development team to who's on operations during that time of the day.

Robert Greville, Head of Web Engineering, Vodafone

Australian workers estimated they are spending on average 22 minutes a day navigating between the workplace apps they use each day. That's almost 2 hours a week and 95 hours a year—or 12 working days—of lost productivity. [“The Remote Work Tech Effect,” Slack, December 2020](#)

The new automation imperative

Manual work slows everything down and invites errors. Today's leaders are actively integrating and automating to make work smarter and more accurate, freeing people to do what people do best.

More of:

- Designed workflows
- Automation and integration
- The developer mindset: design, document, improve
- Documentation

Less of:

- Manual, repetitive tasks
- Extra processes just to find the human errors
- Chasing approvals
- Guesswork and bottlenecks

Reinvent work to emerge better



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Reinvent work to emerge better

In 2020, the entire world came to terms with working during a pandemic. As we look ahead in 2021, the next few years will be about seizing the many opportunities to improve the way we work, so we can all emerge better.

As daunting as these new challenges may seem at first glance, we're seeing new strategies among forward-thinking leaders who recognize the importance of staying nimble, a willingness to experiment, and a commitment to listening closely to both customers and employees.

It's not about going back to the way we did things before, and it's not about sticking with the all-remote style of the lockdown period. It's about the best of both—a better way.

How we collaborate is central to how we meet the new challenges of work in a post-pandemic world. The next step is to translate the ideas you find most relevant into your specific discipline. Clearly, the opportunities are enormous.

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This isn't some far-off future; this is now, and next year, and the year after that, if we only embrace the opportunity to reimagine and the responsibility to reinvent.

Stewart Butterfield, CEO, Slack

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How is your work changing?

Slack is tracking the emerging world of work on social media and our [blog](#), where you can sign up to receive our newsletter, “Channels.” We'd love to hear about your thoughts and experiences with work now. You can always find us on the [Slack Twitter feed](#).

Curious how Slack can power a better way of working for your company?
[Connect with our team.](#)

Reinvent work to emerge better

Further reading

The Remote Work Tech Effect, December 2020: A survey of 1,000 Australian knowledge workers

Hybrid rules: The emerging playbook for flexible work: A snapshot of employee perceptions of work. From the Future Forum's Remote Employee Experience Index, based on data from knowledge workers in the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany, Japan and Australia.

About Slack

Slack has transformed business communication. It's the leading channel-based messaging platform, used by millions to align their teams, unify their systems, and drive their businesses forward. Only Slack offers a secure, enterprise-grade environment that can scale with the largest companies in the world. It is a new layer of the business technology stack where people can work together more effectively, connect all their other software tools and services, and find the information they need to do their best work. Slack is where work happens.



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