

Photo via Italy Magazine

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN A COVID World

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING RESILIENT EXPERIENCES
IN A WORLD CHANGED BY COVID-19

Cognizant

**idea
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COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN A COVID WORLD

Principles for Designing Resilient Experiences in a World Changed by COVID-19

The future, now more than ever, belongs to those who think and act differently. The recommendations that follow will help you do just that by asking you to embrace the challenges and opportunities COVID-19 has presented across employee experience and customer experience.

Rather than predicting what a post-COVID-19 world will look like, we draw on the anthropology of social transformation to provide a set of practical guidelines for navigating change as it occurs.

In this report, we outline a set of human-centered experience principles to help foster community resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also provide early industry examples of emerging change, or “micro-cases,” that are intended to serve as inspiration for the organizational design needs that have resulted from this crisis.

The idea of community resilience is more pertinent than ever. It reflects notions of unity and solidarity that help us persist through times of crisis, moments of ambiguity, and uncertain futures. COVID-19 is challenging organizations across the private, public, and third sectors to rethink the fundamentals of their enterprise: how they work and empower associates, who they service and support, and what they stand for and believe in. The experience principles and activations outlined here will enable organizations to adapt their employee and customer experiences to embrace a new reality.

RESILIENCE

ri'zilyens

Photo by Edmond Dantes



Photo by Carlos de Toro

A NOTE ON SOCIAL CHANGE & ANTIFRAGILITY

The anthropology of social transformation—rooted in Victor Turner’s theory of *communitas*—tells us that change occurs in cycles via universal catalysts. It emerges out of the perpetual and inevitable oscillation between structure and anti-structure, normalcy and crisis. When structures break down, people tend to prioritize the social over the self; they can no longer rely on the institutionalized systems that enable individualism to flourish during ordinary times. Crises often incite hypersocial networks and a new sense of community bound by shared experiences and an extended collective consciousness. People coalesce around shared tragedies, common goals, external threats, and existential risks in order to gain a sense of stability.

The global health crisis caused by COVID-19 has resulted in a time of profound disruption, one that has irrevocably broken down the established cultural and operational principles that shape our social, professional, and individual experiences. This unusual, unexpected cycle of change represents a generational rite of passage. Together, the global community is embarking on a sort of pilgrimage—a shared journey toward an uncertain end.

Each moment of social change is a challenge of resilience; it is a question of fortitude and the extent to which we can thrive in crisis.

To be resilient is not to avoid catastrophic moments, but to embrace them and thrive in the face of adversarial conditions and collapsing conventions.

As Nassim Nicholas Taleb alludes to in his work, human ecology is antifragile: The more resistance we face, the stronger we become. The COVID-19 pandemic is as much a period of unknowns as it is one of creative reflection and retooling. Human thought has been liberated, at least for a time, from predetermined ideas of how to organize a society and live well as individuals.

This crumbling of norms, while disruptive, also presents a unique opportunity: It leaves us free to rethink some of the most fundamental aspects of society—including the experience of work and the nature of commercial exchange—and ultimately design new solutions to old problems.



Photo by Cotton Bro

ABOUT Experience Principles



EXPERIENCE PRINCIPLES

Fundamental sociocultural norms, behaviors, attitudes, and values are transforming rapidly, some beyond recognition.

Emerging trends already seem to suggest a maturing of social values—particularly around trust, intimacy, and materialism—as well as an evolution in positions on policy, specifically in labor economics, social security, and healthcare. These new perspectives will shape civil discourse and create unexpected needs and desires that must be fulfilled in order to deliver a sense of confidence about the future.

As you read this report, we ask you to consider the ways in which you can leverage these experience principles to address the emergent needs of your employees and customers.

EXPERIENCE PRINCIPLES & ACTIVATIONS

The following principles and considerations are rooted in social theory about how humans tend to move through transformational change. They are intended to be applied as guidelines for fostering community resilience during this time of transition and reprioritization.



Design for Uncertain Futures

Build community resilience with greater foresight, shared values, and a common purpose in order to inspire confidence individually, professionally, and socially.

ACTIVATIONS

- / Provide Purpose
- / Demonstrate Empathy
- / Cultivate Trust
- / Create a Future Memory



Design for Organizational Symbiosis

Build community resilience with increased collaboration, new networks, and extended ecosystems that transcend conventional boundaries.

ACTIVATIONS

- / Normalize Cooperation
- / Decentralize Operations
- / Go Open Source
- / Create New Spaces



Design for New Rituals

Build community resilience with new symbolic values, reimagined expectations, and experiences that cut across work, consumerism, self-care, and leisure.

ACTIVATIONS

- / Prioritize Hygiene
- / Embrace Embodied Engagement
- / Celebrate Micro-Moments
- / Simulate Everyday Experiences



Design for Progressive Performance

Build community resilience with redefined notions of success, new metrics, and alternative indicators that align with shifting roles across individuals and organizations.

ACTIVATIONS

- / Redefine Corporate Performance
- / Focus on Social Impact
- / Rethink Individual Metrics
- / Emphasize Living Well

2.1// **DESIGN FOR UNCERTAIN FUTURES**

Build community resilience with greater foresight, shared values, and a common purpose in order to inspire confidence individually, professionally, and socially.

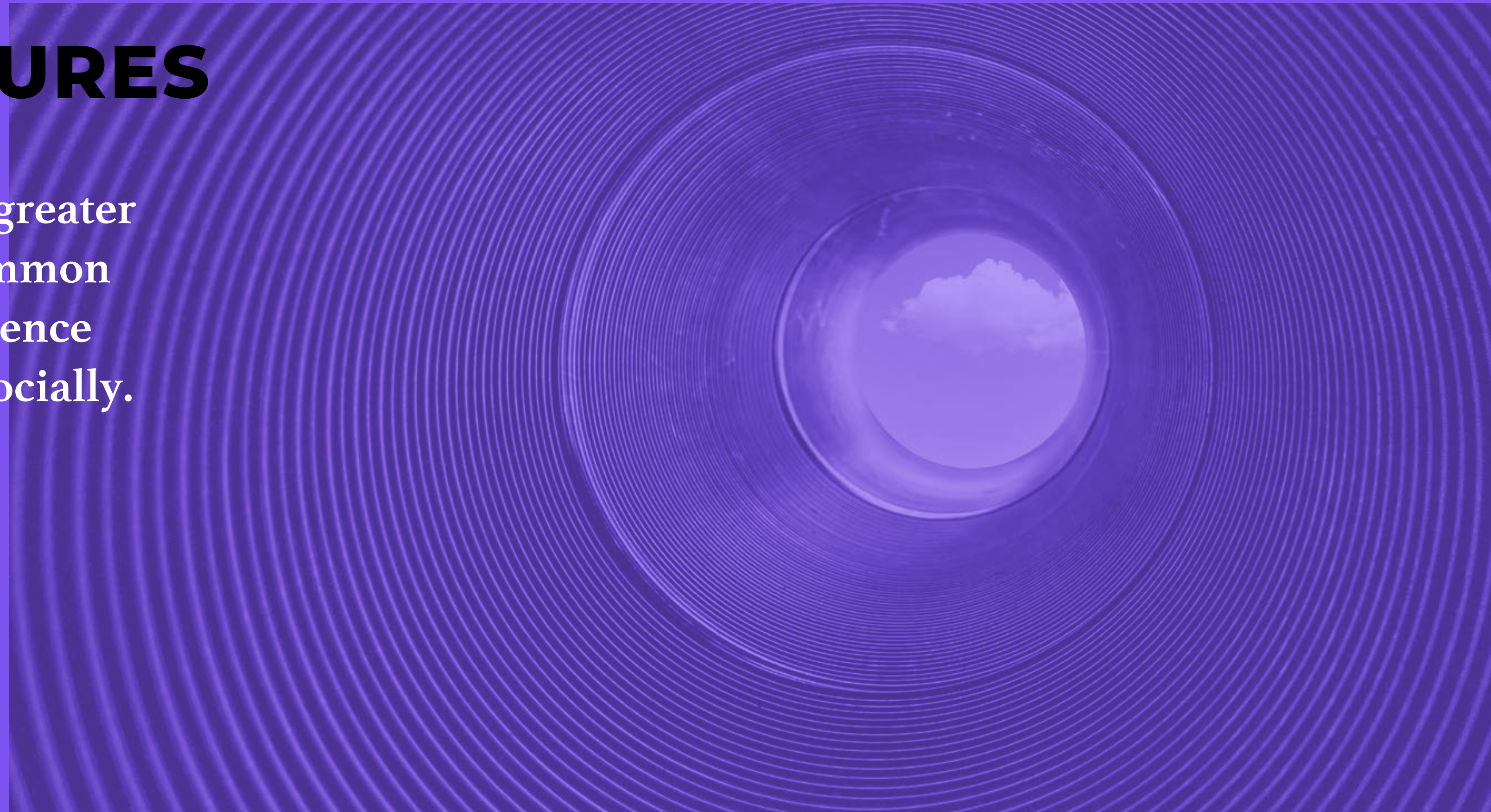


Photo by Sharosh Rajasekher

2.1// DESIGN FOR UNCERTAIN FUTURES

COVID-19 has resulted in a state of almost universal liminality, a term referring to the sense of ambiguity, disruption, and volatility that often accompanies the middle stages of social transformation. Characterized by anxiety and precarity, this state of change is forcing us to rethink the foundational principles upon which our modern society and global economy were built. Slowly, we are learning to embrace uncertainty while simultaneously striving toward an altered but stabilized future.

Designing for this future means working to build resilient communities and paying close attention to the critical needs, values, and expectations of the many different stakeholders coping with ambiguity.

To navigate uncertainty, businesses will need to prioritize design logic, organizational values, and proactive responses while adjusting their offerings in accordance with shifting perspectives around trust, security, purpose, and adaptability.

Activations

- / PROVIDE PURPOSE
- / DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY
- / CULTIVATE TRUST
- / CREATE A FUTURE MEMORY

/ PROVIDE PURPOSE

In times of liminality caused by social disruption, people often endure by finding purpose in the crisis, both individually and as a community. A sense of purpose can provide direction, stability, and a clear path of action during an otherwise uncertain time. Consider, for example, the creation of the AIDS Memorial Quilt during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 1987, or the cultivation of “Victory Gardens” to supplement food rations during the World Wars. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a desire for a sense of purpose for many.

In the context of work, employees want their work and productivity goals to reflect more purposeful and connected values.

Organizations should take this as an opportunity to deliver tools and resources that provide more meaningful, connected work experiences.



Photo by Edward Jenner

MICRO-CASES
& IMPLICATIONS

PROVIDE PURPOSE



Photo by Natalie Broda

There is a growing movement toward concept selling, in which brands focus on selling a vision or purpose rather than a product or service. This represents a shift away from intellectual property and competitive advantage and toward ideology; customers are increasingly buying into products, technologies, and services because of what they stand for.

This change is equally important and influential for work culture and employee experience, as current and potential employees seek to align with the ideological direction of the organizations they choose to work for. One example is multinational healthcare company Roche, which has empowered its employees to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by actively supporting frontline workers in need and establishing deeper connections across its workplace community.

In Singapore, Roche employees distributed 10,000 fruit baskets to frontline workers in need of nutritious food. In Italy, 250 Roche employees volunteered their time to support COVID-19 call centers, while others sewed masks and produced face shields from home with their 3D printers. Similarly, Unilever—which launched a Sustainable Living Plan in 2010 aimed at improving the health of one billion people by 2020—recently donated \$155M worth of soap and food to communities around the globe.



Photo via Welcome to the Jungle

/ DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY

To navigate uncertainty, businesses will need to connect with employees, customers, users, and partners in a way that is empathetic and transparent. Designing with empathy in mind means aligning design logic in meaningful and sustainable ways with the ethic of compassion that has surfaced across populations.

Organizations need to consider how to cultivate comfort among users and to establish systems that are agile, dynamic, and flexible in the face of change, yet also reliable, trusted, and secure.



Photo Via Valley News

MICRO-CASES
& IMPLICATIONS

DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY



Photo Via Getty Images

Many people who now find themselves working remotely are contending with the mental health implications of social isolation measures, which are compounded by physical disconnection from their professional communities.

The current crisis has also provoked a surge in downloads of mental health apps, as well as increased user engagement with mental health platforms. Several brands and agencies have sought to encourage feelings of unity and reassurance in individuals who are struggling by shifting away from promotional marketing and toward response ads and public service announcements.

In response to these widespread feelings of precarity, some employers are demonstrating empathy toward an unsettled workforce.

Apparel brand Aritzia recently initiated the Aritzia Community Relief Fund, with 100% of proceeds going to staff affected by the closure of 80 Aritzia stores. Further, Traction on Demand, a software company, recently partnered with Salesforce and the Government of British Columbia to design and deploy a healthcare app called Traction Thrive. The app, which has been distributed to 40 hospitals and is now available globally, allows users to track the availability of healthcare personnel, protective equipment, and ventilators in real time.



Photo Via Nathan Dumlao

/ CULTIVATE TRUST

The disruption of systems and structures has led people to question how, where, and with whom to invest our trust. Predictably, there is a growing expectation for organizations to demonstrate transparency, ethical diligence, and an anticipatory mindset in their strategic leadership. Moving forward, the value and integrity of products and services will be weighed against the degree of assurance they can deliver, as uncertainty often comes with feelings of fear and distrust.

To cultivate trust, organizations should consider embedding clear indicators of stability and credibility in messaging, products, services, and organizational policies; participating in different social contexts in meaningful ways; and tapping into new forms of digital and physical interactions.



Photo by Anna Shvets

MICRO-CASES
& IMPLICATIONS

CULTIVATE TRUST

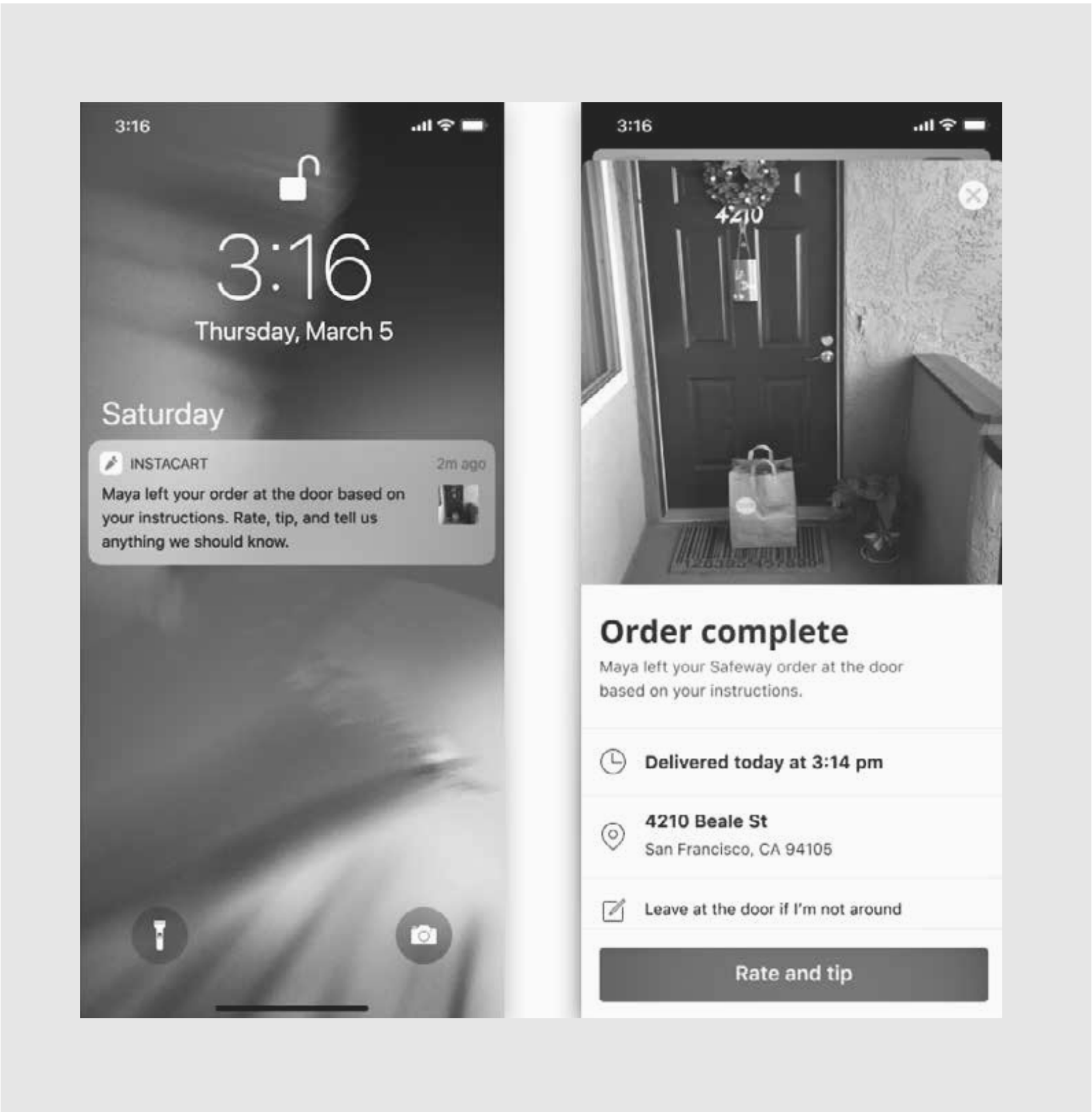


Photo Via Tech Crunch

Organizations will be required to practice transparency, demonstrate authenticity, and build trust from the bottom up in order to gain credibility and authority in a more dynamic, uncertain world. This will entail anticipating the needs of their customers, employees, and communities as they navigate altered and precarious everyday experiences.

For example, Apple recently began evaluating COVID-19-related apps to ensure that they were sourcing data from reputable entities such as government organizations and medical or educational institutions. They are also expediting the approvals process for reliable, critical apps.

Further, Rebel Foods, a delivery platform, recently introduced a live body temperature tracker on its app to provide customers with a live feed of the body temperatures of anyone handling their orders. Similarly, the food delivery platforms Swiggy and Zomato both launched an outreach program designed to inform customers about the safety of their online food orders.



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto

/ CREATE A FUTURE MEMORY

The capacity to think strategically about the future is becoming more important than ever. Foresight and its related methodologies—such as scenario planning, wildcards, and blindspots—represent a systematic way of organizing uncertain information and considering the impact of different changes.

Decision-makers should consider how to apply these exercises in a way that helps them “pre-perform” their planning for plausible hypothetical versions of the future that are beyond their control or outside their influence.



Photo Via Unsplash

MICRO-CASES
& IMPLICATIONS

CREATE A FUTURE MEMORY

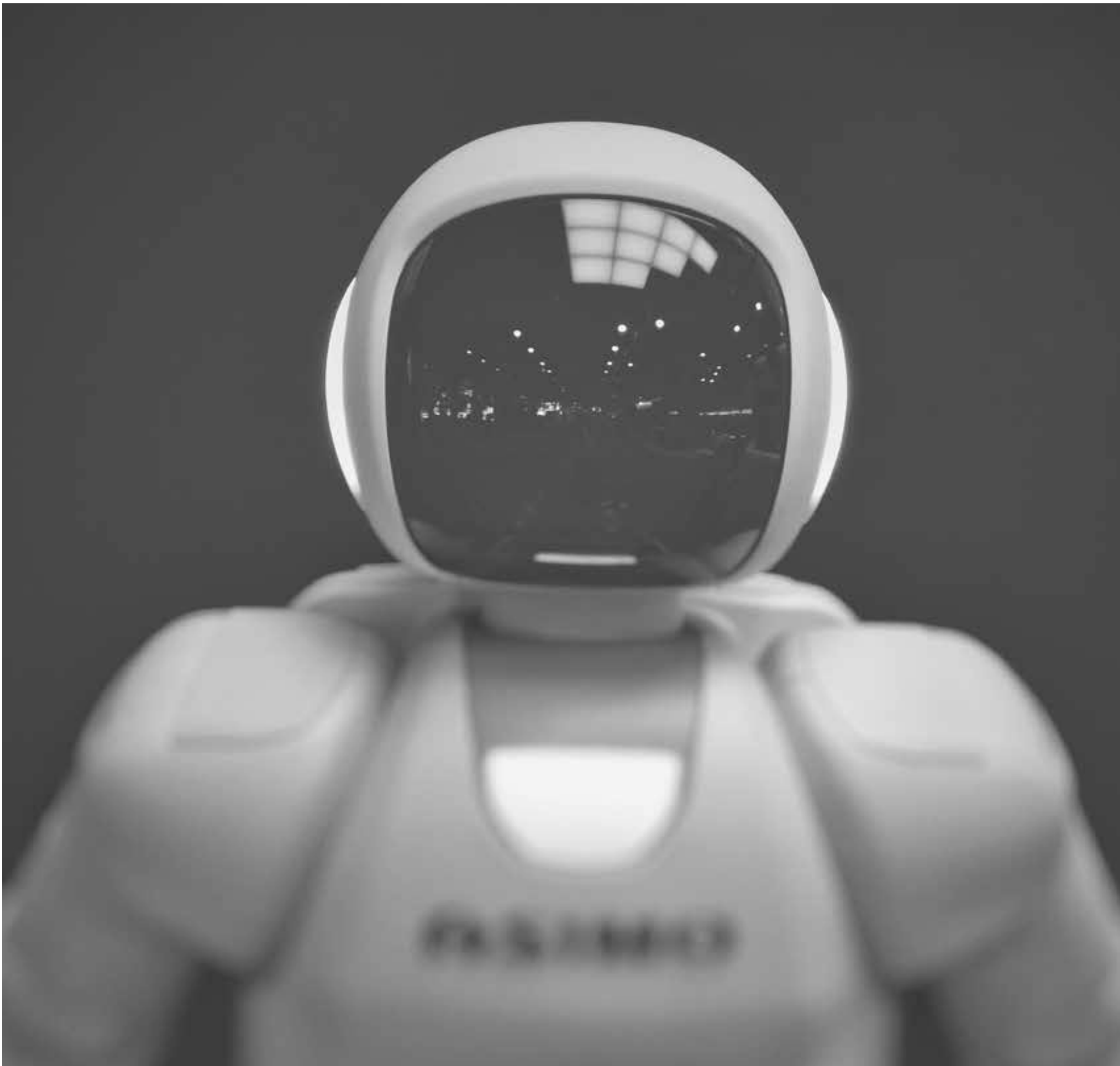


Photo by Franck V

The idea of pre-performance is what futurist Peter Schwartz calls “creating the future memory,” a phrase referring to the competitive advantage created by considering the possibility of alternative futures. The ability to withstand disruption and absorb shocks comes down to an organization’s agility, resilience, and preparedness.

Much like past shared experiences and common histories shape future decisions and behaviors, so too can scenarios be used to establish an institutionalized, shared outlook on the future.

One example of pre-performance is Bill Gates’s application of war gaming methodologies to the domain of public health, in what he calls “germ games.” Additionally, leaders in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics, such as

MIT, are redirecting their capabilities to address immediate COVID-19 needs and explore future scenarios. For example, the White House Office of Science and Technology has formed the COVID-19 Open Research Dataset, which holds a regularly updated database of over 24,000 papers. Further, the C3.ai Digital Transformation Institute—which was formed as a new consortium of research universities, C3.ai (a top AI company), and Microsoft—aims to use AI in order to fight pandemics.

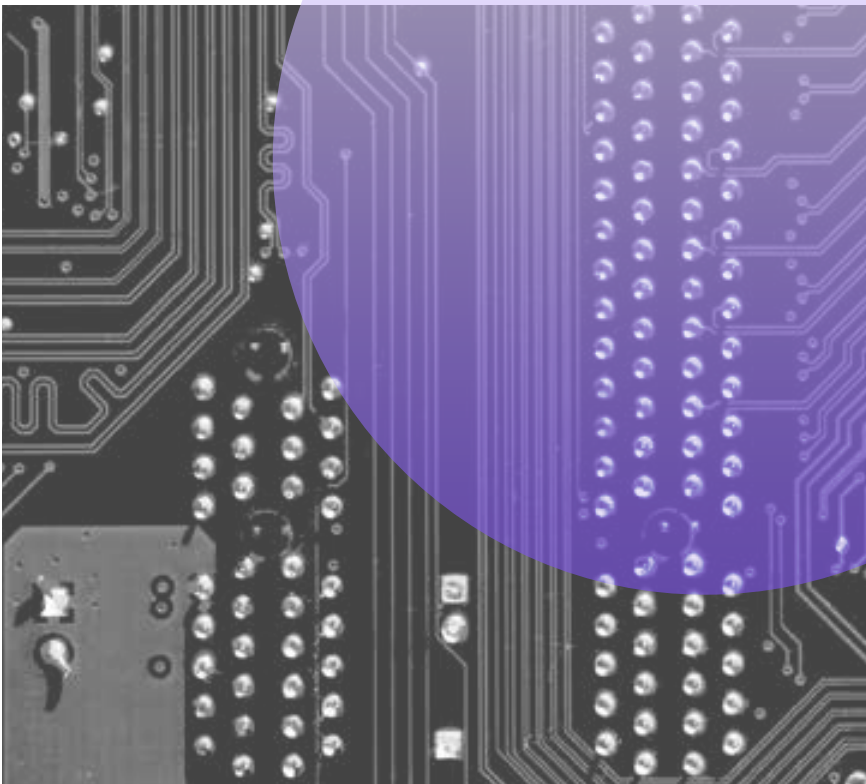


Photo by Michael Dziedzic

2.2// **DESIGN FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SYMBIOSIS**

Build community resilience with increased collaboration, new networks, and extended ecosystems that transcend conventional boundaries.

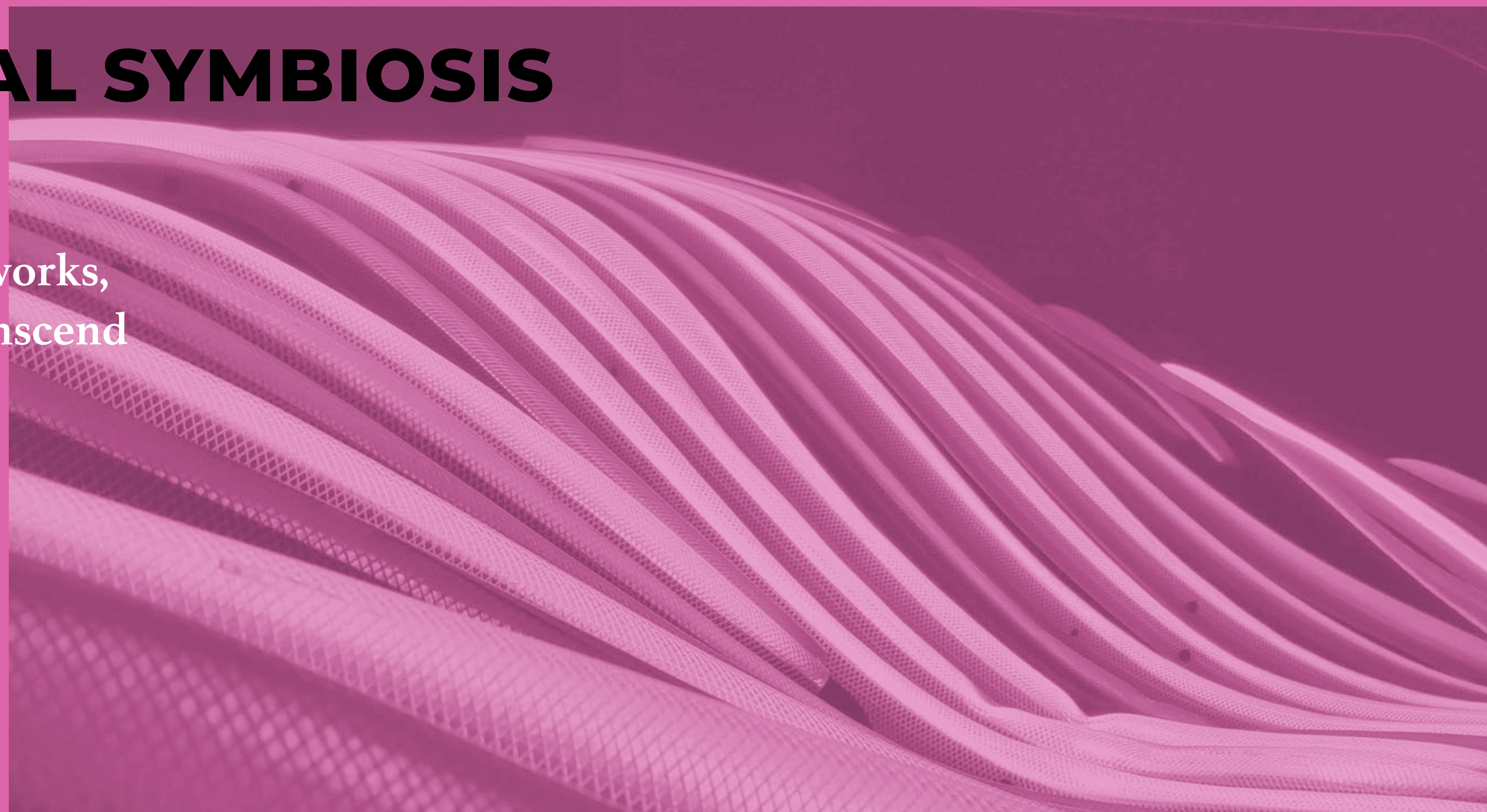


Photo by Isaac Griffin

2.2 // DESIGN FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SYMBIOSIS

COVID-19 has resulted in a suspension of hierarchy and norms, including the disappearance of structured, predetermined modes of professional, social, and individual interactions. In an organizational context, the lines between business units are fading away, competitors are becoming collaborators, and decisions are being made outside of the typical chain of command. This erosion of boundaries has resulted in new opportunities for community resilience; as normalcy is disrupted, there is a greater need to design and deliver a sense of stability.

Designing for organizational symbiosis means exploring new modes of collaboration and establishing integrated ecosystems defined by shared interests and resources. It is about building sustainable, local, and resilient systems with no single points of failure, in which other nodes of the network flex to fill gaps when they do arise.

To build community resilience, organizations must think and act outside of conventional industry boundaries, sacrifice a degree of individualism, and engage in new forms of social arrangements.

Activations

/ NORMALIZE COOPERATION

/ DECENTRALIZE OPERATIONS

/ GO OPEN SOURCE

/ CREATE NEW SPACES

/ NORMALIZE COOPERATION

The established structures and hierarchies of competitive markets are being reshaped by new cooperative frameworks centered on shared common goals. Rather than driving toward competitive differentiation, organizations will need to work together to address the basic needs of employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

Organizations must consider how to break down barriers to form responsive, outcome-oriented partnerships and networks—specifically concerning operational processes, measures of effectiveness, and the ownership of intellectual property developed through co-creation.



Photo Via Information Age

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

NORMALIZE COOPERATION



Photo Via Studio & Talia

Several companies have already started altering their business priorities and partnering with others to act on a renewed sense of community spirit and social responsibility. Organizations are not only suspending normal operations and redirecting resources to high-value areas—they are also rethinking processes entirely by engaging new suppliers, crossing competitive lines, and venturing into new industries.

Two alcoholic beverage manufacturers, Pernod Ricard and Minhas Distillery, are among several companies in the space that are shifting production to hand sanitizer and

cleaning products, while fashion houses and garment makers are producing protective equipment alongside companies like Tesla, Apple, 3M, and Ford Motor Company. Similarly, GSK and Sanofi have announced a collaborative framework for developing new pharmaceuticals, therapeutics, and vaccines alongside regulators who are adapting processes to meet current needs.



Photo by Matilda Wormwood

/ DECENTRALIZE OPERATIONS

As organizations are increasingly expected to deliver the perception of normalcy in times of crisis, so too will they need to engineer adaptable processes that can endure interruptions. Indeed, there is value in leveraging distributed labor, engaging with multiple vendors and partners, localizing critical functions, and increasing transparency.

Organizations should consider how to design and price intentional redundancy—that is, overlapping functions in supply chains for improved resiliency—to enable greater flexibility and prevent significant service disruptions.



Photo by Anna Shvets

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

DECENTRALIZE OPERATIONS



Photo by Norma Mortenson

Commodity supply chains and product- and service-value networks are being reshaped to improve self-reliance, efficiency, and cost savings. Organizations have the opportunity to take more control over their own operations and reset broader trade and investment systems by creating smart, agile supply chains that can withstand future shocks.

This is particularly salient in the sectors that are most exposed to global value chains: autos and transport equipment, electronics, chemicals, metal products, and textiles.

For example, supply-chain experts anticipate a decentralization of manufacturing capacity, with companies looking to not only bring production home, but also to engage with multiple suppliers, digitize the buyer-supplier relationship, focus on small batch production, and leverage automation technologies to

insulate their operations against disruption. Already, Airbus, Hyundai, and Tesla have started to pursue these measures; all three companies have stopped or altered their production given the centralization of and resulting dependence on Chinese production and suppliers. German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier has also stated his desire to support pharmaceutical companies looking to rebuild their production sites in Europe in a more resilient way.



Photo Via New York Times

/ GO OPEN SOURCE

The need for rapid responsiveness and cooperation is creating a demand for alternative modes of engagement that prioritize transparency and shared resources. New ways of working characterized by open innovation, sharing, collaboration, value networks, and crowdsourcing are coming to dominate business models and value propositions worldwide.

Organizations should consider how to harness the collective intelligence and ingenuity of the community through open-source science in order to find the “innovation sweet spot,” keeping in mind that larger value networks are more effective and conducive to open innovation.



Photo Via Cotton N Bro

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

GO OPEN SOURCE



Photo Via Google Images

Many emerging initiatives are being characterized by the sharing of ideas and resources, resulting in the dissemination of ownership and opening up of entirely new realms of possibility for creation and collaboration. Accordingly, new ownership structures will emerge that require users, manufacturers, and employees to redesign work processes and spaces accordingly.

Many tech companies have fully embraced the spirit of open-source innovation in order to address challenges related to COVID-19. For example, Kaggle's COVID-19 Open Research Dataset Challenge aims to improve forecasting of the virus's spread by tapping

into Kaggle's community of over four million data scientists. Further, the Decentralized Artificial Intelligence Alliance is putting together COVIDathon, an AI hackathon to fight the pandemic coordinated by SingularityNET and Ocean Protocol, while MIT has established the Global Health Security & Pandemics Challenge. Others still, such as NVIDIA, DataRobot, Run:AI, and DarwinAI, are improving access to their technology, with many offering free access to professionals and amateur enthusiasts alike.



Photo by Franck V

/ CREATE NEW SPACES

Creating and advancing new collaborative frameworks means designing physical, digital, and hybrid spaces that not only enable a higher degree of cooperation, but also facilitate new forms of exchange personally, professionally, and socially. New design considerations are emerging as the boundaries between physical and virtual space, as well as personal and professional obligations, continue to blur.

To accommodate the needs of their employees, customers, and other stakeholders, organizations should consider how to create harmony between these dynamic spaces in a scalable and adaptable way that accounts for changing needs while maintaining a sense of continuity and connection.



Photo Via Information Age

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

CREATE NEW SPACES



Photo Patrick Schneide

There are several new apps and technologies designed to establish new spaces for community and commerce. COVID-19 is challenging us to improve the cohesion between the physical and virtual worlds, particularly in terms of our transactions and interactions.

Verses is a company designing for the Spatial Web, often referred to as Web 3.0, which builds digital layers into physical spaces and creates physical attributes for digital environments. The initiative attempts to make “real places become virtual, and virtual places become real with their own programmable rights rules.”

Additionally, Sococco is a remote workplace app that tries to capture the experience of physical proximity in workplaces. By bringing distributed teams “together,” developers argue that they combine the familiarity and value of in-person work with the “improved productivity” afforded by online digital offices.

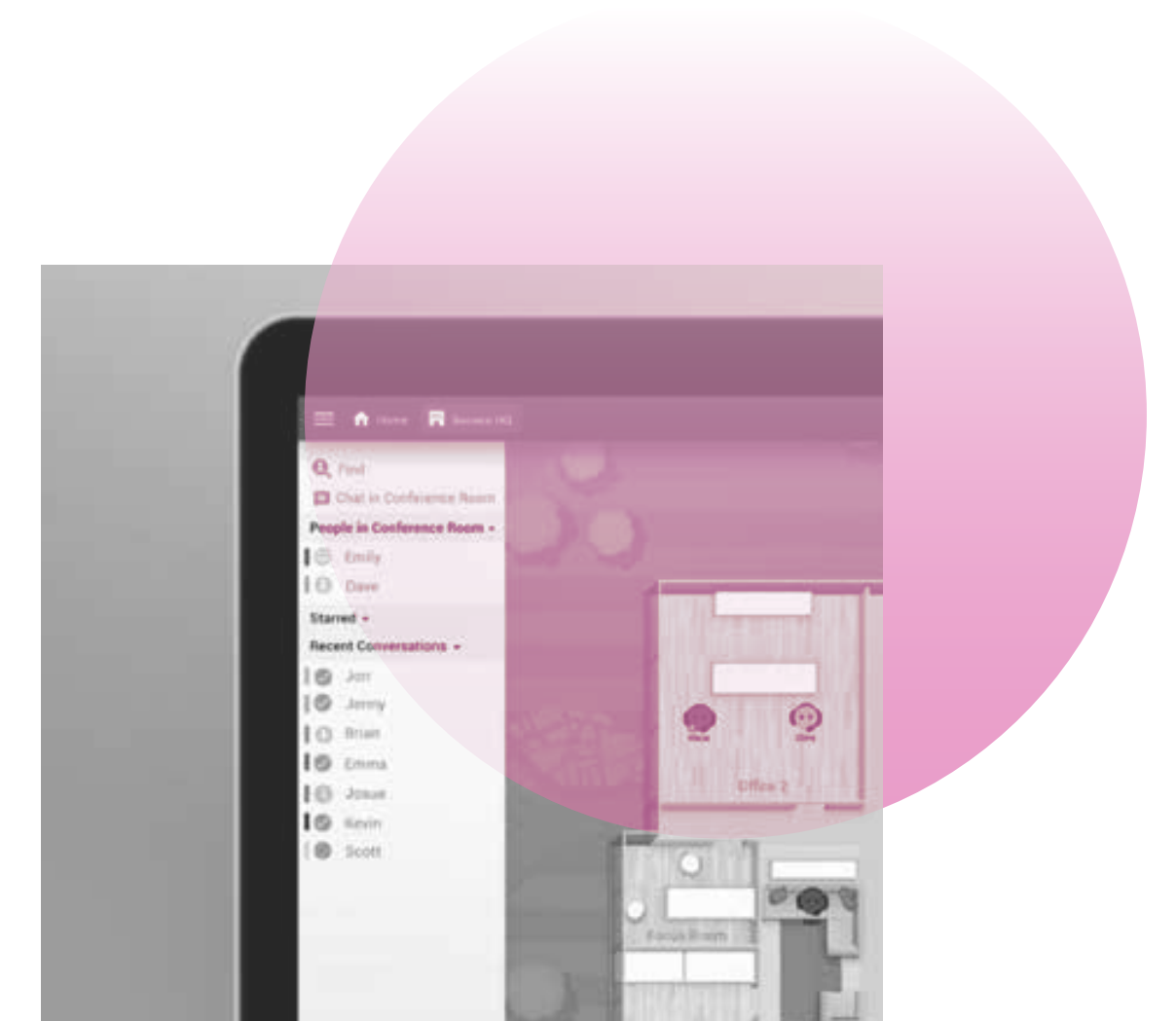


Photo Via Sococco

2.3// **DESIGN FOR NEW RITUALS**

Build community resilience with new symbolic values, reimagined expectations, and experiences that cut across work, consumerism, self-care, and leisure.



Photo by Ryoji Iwata

2.3// DESIGN FOR NEW RITUALS

Ritual is inherent in human interaction. Understood in the most elemental sense, rituals are acts that serve the social, spiritual, and emotional needs of individuals and communities. From the mundane to the exalted, rituals form the habits and patterns of behavior that define culture across different domains of society, including not only the home and public spheres, but also the workplace. As expressions of the individual and collective, these practices are essential to identity.

COVID-19's disruption of ritual represents a significant threat to the wellbeing of various communities. In response, many individuals are creating new or modified rituals around work, consumerism, self-care, and leisure.

Organizations will need to consider design paradigms that can enable new and altered rituals around, for example, how organizational values are expressed, how people engage in wellness and self-care, how employees adapt old rituals around new practices, and how consumers interact with brands, products, and services.

Activations

/ PRIORITIZE HYGIENE

/ EMBRACE EMBODIED ENGAGEMENT

/ CELEBRATE MICRO-MOMENTS

/ SIMULATE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES

/ PRIORITIZE HYGIENE

New rituals around hygiene and sanitation reflect our collective aim to ensure safe, uncontaminated interactions, as well as our desire to establish a sense of control and resilience. Designing for hygiene means prioritizing it over other considerations that dominate conventional business logic, such as productivity, efficiency, convenience, and fashion.

Organizations are being compelled to consider how they can guarantee hygiene with the design and delivery of their products, processes, systems, and services in a way that prioritizes public health above all else.

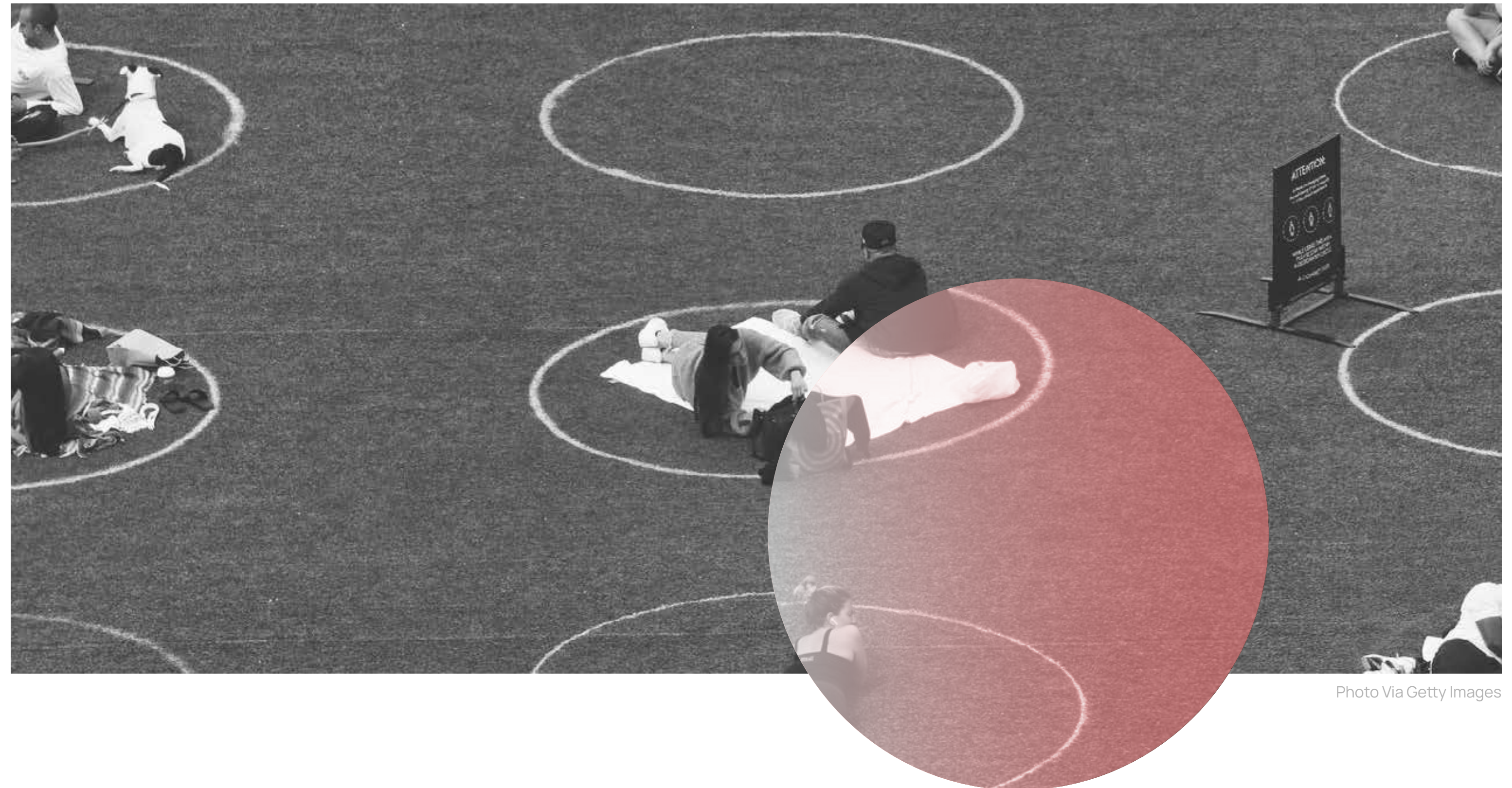


Photo Via Getty Images

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

PRIORITIZE HYGIENE

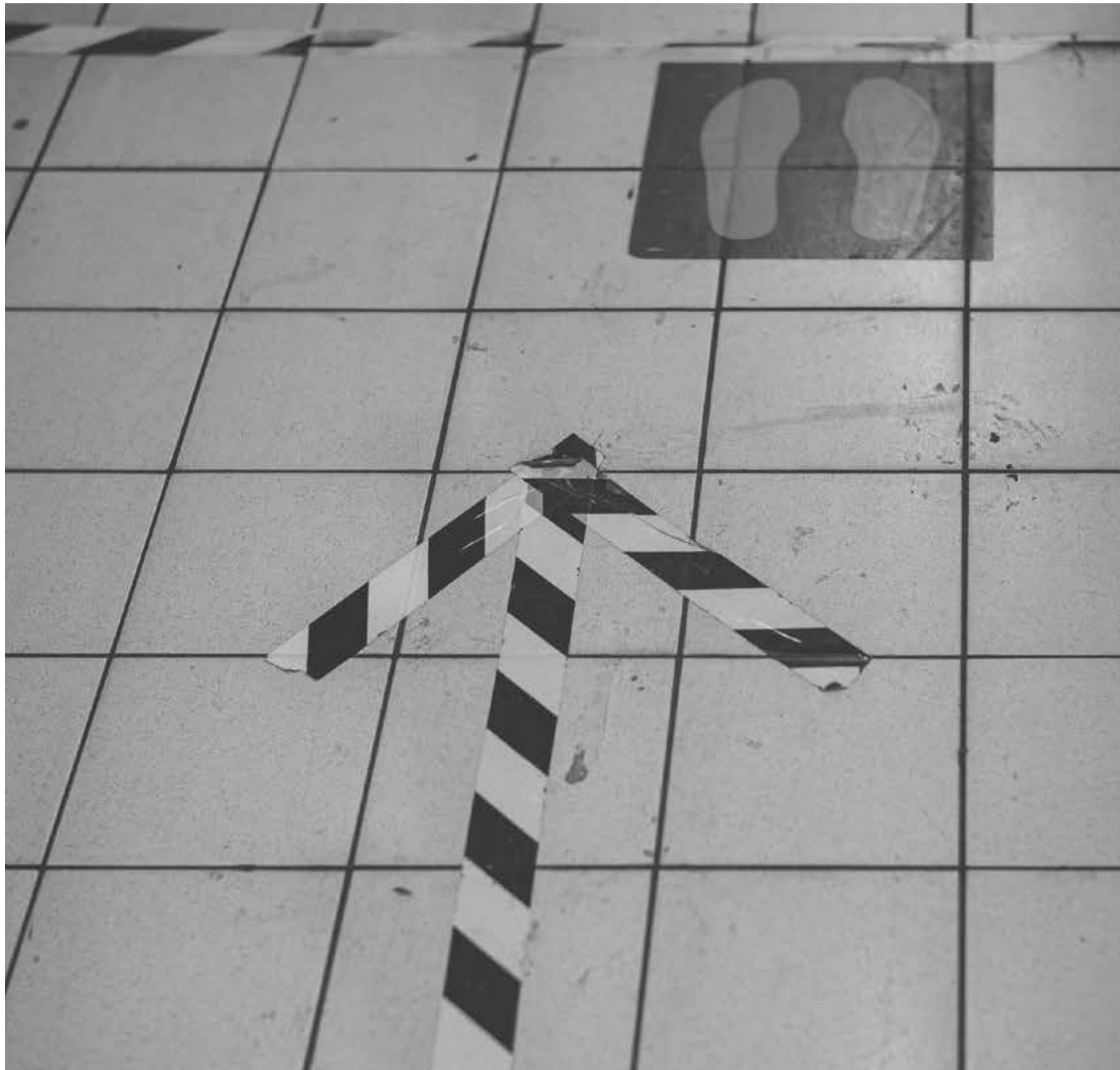


Photo by Alek Marinkovic

Organizations are navigating the tensions between the in-person interactions they once relied upon and the contactless ones they have been compelled to adopt. Redesigned interactions must balance expectations around which interactions should be fast or slow, frictionless or mindful, distant or close.

A rapid, makeshift redesign of public space has already surfaced in the form of stores and public buildings using distance markers, implementing reduced capacity allowances, and employing shields to protect workers and the public. Companies are beginning to re-think the physical design of workspaces, keeping in mind how open exposure to the public and others now poses a health risk to employees.

For example, food services have quickly developed protocols to ensure minimal contact during preparation and delivery. Further, design company

Steelcase recently published a free design guide entitled “Navigating What’s Next: The Post-COVID Workplace” to help organizations safely redesign high-density physical workspaces. The guide suggests, for example, introducing hard barriers and hands-free technologies. Ford Motor Company recently tested a wearable social-distancing device designed to keep factory employees within a safe distance of one another. The watch-like device alerts workers if they stand within less than six feet of another employee. The company also plans to use thermal imaging scans on all employees entering company facilities.

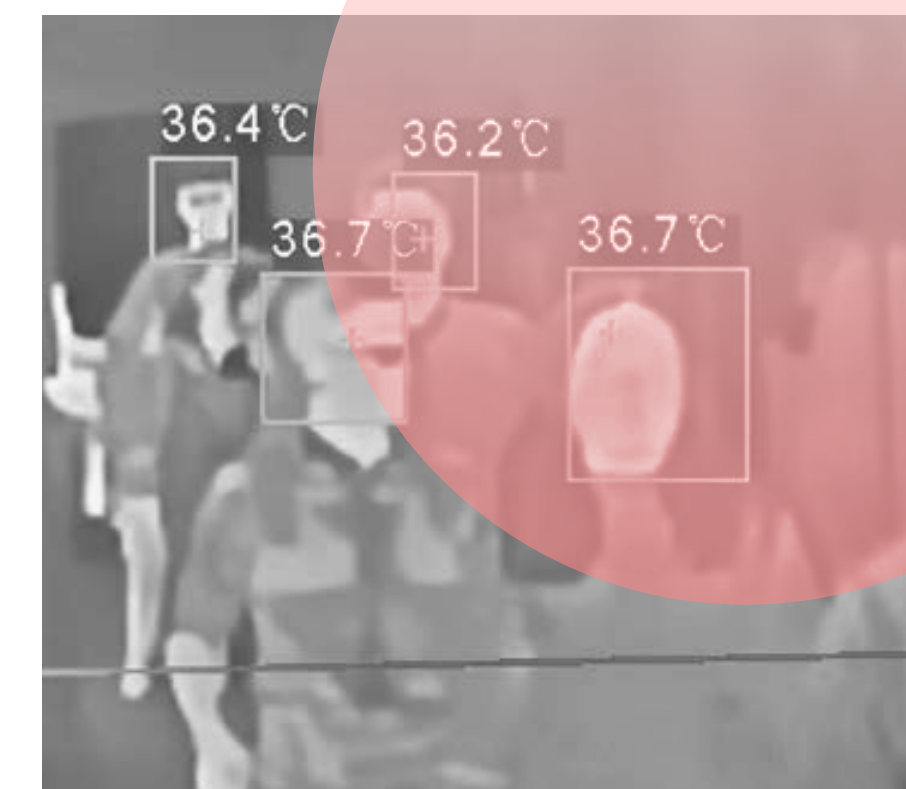


Photo Via Google Images

/ EMBRACE EMBODIED ENGAGEMENT

With a rapid shift in how products, services, and experiences are now marketed and distributed, organizations across industries are being challenged to consider the implications for employee and customer engagement. Professional duties and consumer behavior—from the ways people work and shop to the projects they tackle and purchases they make—are significant expressions of personal identity. The widespread economic impact of COVID-19 has led people to modify their customary engagement with employers and brands, partially in response to changed or diminished employee and customer experiences.

Organizations have the opportunity to prioritize solutions that inspire novel forms of engagement and creatively restore people's emotional investment in, and rituals around, work and consumption. They should start by considering solutions that might redress the disruptions in experiences around personalization, immersion, and identity.



Photo Via The Daily Star

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

EMBRACE EMBODIED ENGAGEMENT

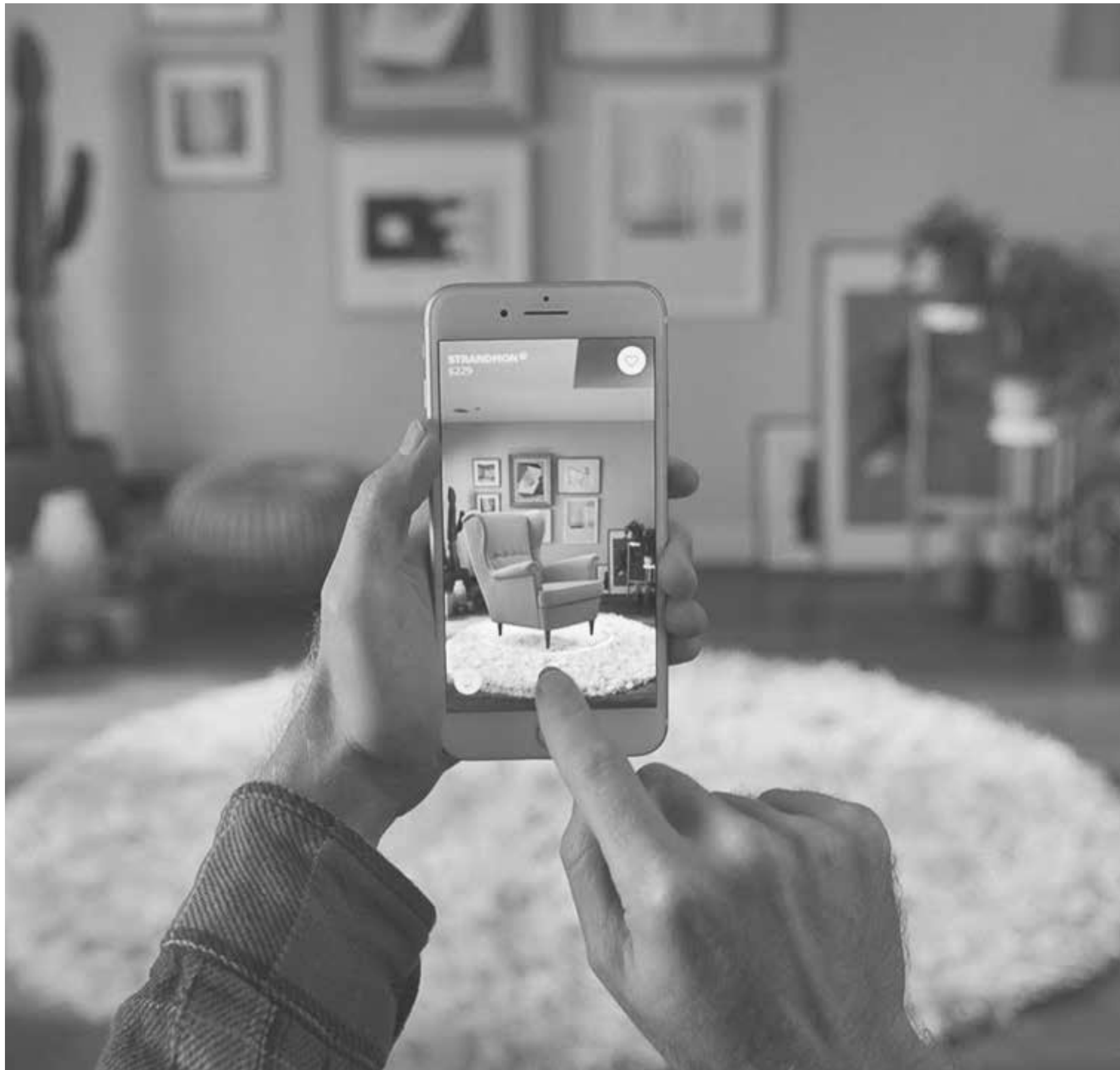


Photo Via Ikea

The widespread impact of COVID-19 on the retail and hospitality industry means that people are missing out on the physical, sensory experiences that they value as consumers. Some businesses are offering innovative new options for consumers to safely taste and touch their products, while others are embracing augmented reality (AR) as a tool for simulation.

For example, Three Wishes Cereal recently launched drive-through stations that allow customers to sample in-store products, while London's Bimber Distillery now delivers whiskey tasting kits to replace distillery tours.

Brands such as Pixi Beauty, Converse, and Lacoste offer AR try-ons for customers, and IKEA's mobile app allows users to virtually position pieces of furniture in their home. Salesfloor, a retail service platform that provides personalized omnichannel experiences for customers, is currently offering free licenses that enable retailers to deliver an impactful, personalized consumer experience in a virtual space.



Photo Via Three Wishes Cereal

/ CELEBRATE MICRO-MOMENTS

Rituals and celebrations are intrinsic to social, popular, and organizational culture. As an individual and collective practice, celebrations big and small serve to engender solidarity; foster belonging; affirm a sense of one's value to a given community; and reinforce norms, values, and ethics. Organizational rituals as well as micro-moments of achievement—from stand-up meetings to office socials, performance reviews to project kick-off meetings—define and enrich the broader values of workplace communities, much like cultural celebrations do. Just as broad social systems and structures have been disrupted by the global health crisis, so too have organizations encountered an acute shift in their business and work practices.

Organizations will need to consider creative, motivational practices around celebration, initiation, the recognition of milestones and performance, and meaningful human interactions—both within the organizations themselves and across the lives of their employees and customers.



Photo by Anna Shvetz

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

CELEBRATE MICRO-MOMENTS



Photo by Getty Images

Social-distancing requirements have disrupted many of the cultural traditions, practices, celebrations, and routines that reinforce an individual's social connection to their communities, as well as the daily patterns that define individual modes of identity.

We are seeing emerging trends that reflect people's need to experience a sense of stability by reinventing or creatively reenacting the personal and professional routines, cultural celebrations, and rituals that have been lost in the current shutdown. Emerging technologies are being designed to enable individuals living and working remotely to maintain social connections, celebrate accomplishments, and enhance feelings of inclusion.

From drive-by birthday celebrations, to virtual funeral proceedings, to other platforms that facilitate micro-moments of celebration and reflection, rituals are being reinvented.

Social distancing and remote work experiences have both precipitated a surge in downloads of social video apps as people seek ways to preserve or reimagine celebratory personal and workplace customs. Houseparty is a popular app that allows users to host virtual "happy hours," and Molson Canadian recently launched a Virtual Happy Hour that supports small businesses by giving users gift cards for their local bar. Another platform geared for employees called HeyTaco! allows users to send "tacos" to teammates and collect rewards that can be redeemed for events such as team celebrations or personal days. Disco is a similar app for Microsoft Teams that celebrates and rewards employee achievements.

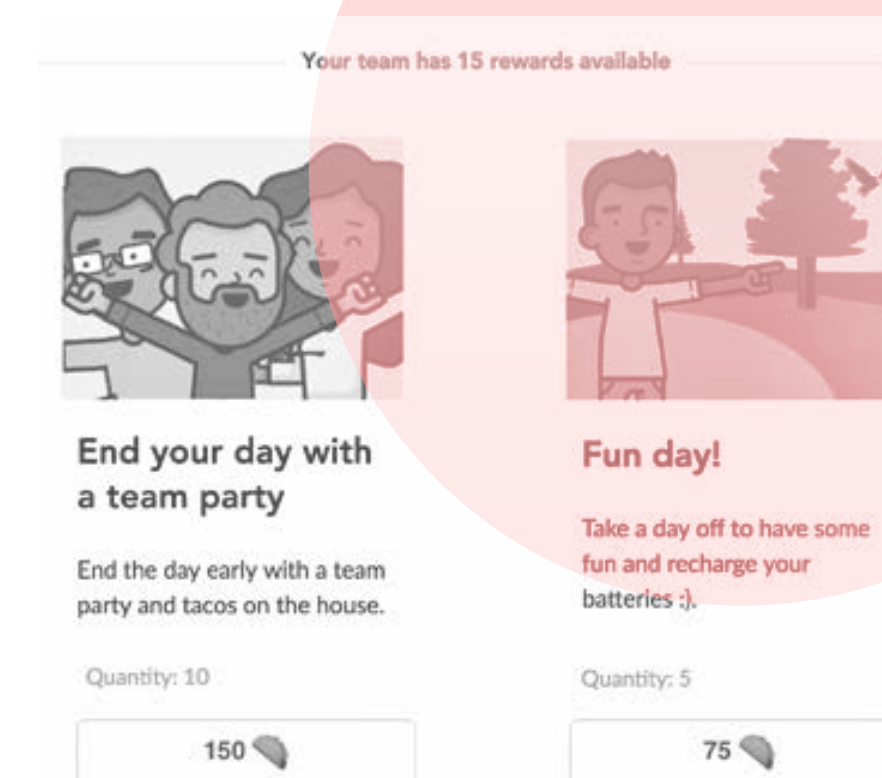


Photo Via Hey Taco!

/ SIMULATE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES

People texture their daily lives with routinized acts which, while seemingly mundane, embody considerable symbolic weight. Social theorists have long argued that the repetitive, everyday micro-rituals in which we engage—like early morning meditation, afternoon coffee runs, and evening walks—are purposive acts that reinforce a sense of agency, meaning, and control. In the midst of this global pandemic, many of the micro-ritualistic acts that shape our sense of purpose, self-discipline, and wellbeing have been compromised.

As people continue to endure constraints on their movement, interaction, and consumption, organizations should consider opportunities that will enable their employees and customers to reconfigure their symbolic daily habits around wellbeing, balance, and productivity.



Photo Via Pixabay

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

SIMULATE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES



Photo Via Blog Zoom Us

Organizations across industries have an opportunity to support people's need for sustaining personal routines while also attending to their shifting priorities around wellness, goal-setting, and self-improvement in a post-COVID-19 world. New wellness-tracking behaviors that have emerged from the pandemic will likely become ritualized long after the health crisis has subsided.

Similarly, in light of the widespread economic impact of the crisis, people may adopt new goal-setting habits around financial wellness and self-improvement.

Many employees are seeking a sense of normalcy by reinventing "micro" work-related social routines or finding ways to recapture a "work mode" identity. Remote workers are sharing social media posts of their simulated "commutes" to work, dressing for the

"office," and engaging in simulated "water cooler" interactions. Further, several popular technologies have been designed to inspire users to cultivate new positive habits or create daily personal goals through gamified interactions. For example, Habitica and Streaks are two productivity apps that reward users for sticking to daily habits and goals around work, personal wellness, and self-improvement. Similarly, language learning apps such as Duolingo and Babbel have recently seen a surge in downloads as more people choose to make learning one of their daily routines.



Photo Via Tranmautritam

2.4 // **DESIGN FOR PROGRESSIVE PERFORMANCE**

Build community resilience with redefined notions of success, new metrics, and alternative indicators that align with shifting roles across individuals and organizations.



Photo by Max Ostrozhinskiy

2.4// DESIGN FOR PROGRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

The social transformations generated by COVID-19 present an incredible challenge to how individuals, families, and businesses understand and measure success, growth, and wellbeing. The near total suspension of longstanding norms and the invention of new rituals and habits are forcing people to rethink their existing obligations. Indeed, as personal, professional, and organizational duties and responsibilities converge, the strain of conflicting expectations and measures of performance are becoming abundantly clear. Existing measures around how we work and live well fail to adequately account for extreme or unusual circumstances that are brought forth in times of crisis. COVID-19 has presented us with a unique opportunity to reassess our understanding around how risk, safety, security, and social responsibility can impact or alter professional and personal performance.

Designing for performance means looking at performance through new lenses, including where and how it unfolds, and also how it can be measured, recognized, and rewarded. Organizations across industries will need to consider how the blurred boundaries between the domains of self, home, work, and social institutions have broken down individual and organizational priorities, effectively altering the ways success is defined across communities.

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Activations

- / REDEFINE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE
- / FOCUS ON SOCIAL IMPACT
- / RETHINK INDIVIDUAL METRICS
- / EMPHASIZE LIVING WELL

/ REDEFINE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis are widespread. Restrictions on business operations, the limited movement of people, and the reduction in the exchange of goods and services have created a need for new measures to track performance beyond financial metrics.

Each organization should consider indicators of its resilience and that of its consumers and associates, such as cash flow and liquidity, while focusing on employee outcomes rather than inputs. Such evaluation is less about measuring how well a company is performing and more about determining how well it can survive the disruption, especially given the interdependent nature of business today.



Photo by Scott Graham

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

REDEFINE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE



Photo by Anastasiia Chepinska

The disruptions brought forth by COVID-19 are forcing businesses to get creative with the solutions they develop to mitigate both financial and human impacts.

Major financial institutions and professional services organizations such as EY, BDO, and the Association of Chartered Professional Accountants are advising businesses to thoroughly track fixed and variable expenses against actual revenues while rethinking the viability of their business models. Alternative ways to approach the market will be critical, particularly for those in high-impact sectors. New risks are also emerging as business as usual is suspended, enticing companies to carefully evaluate contracts and be transparent in their communications with customers, suppliers, lenders, investors, and others that comprise their value network.

One example of taking an alternative approach can be seen with Chinese cosmetics company Lin Qingxuan. When the company closed 40% of its stores, sales plummeted by 90%. Still, Lin Qingxuan redeployed its beauty advisers as online influencers. Following a large-scale, livestream shopping event featuring more than 100 beauty advisers, the sales of one adviser equaled that of four retail stores in just two hours. Ultimately, the company's February sales rose 120% over the previous year.

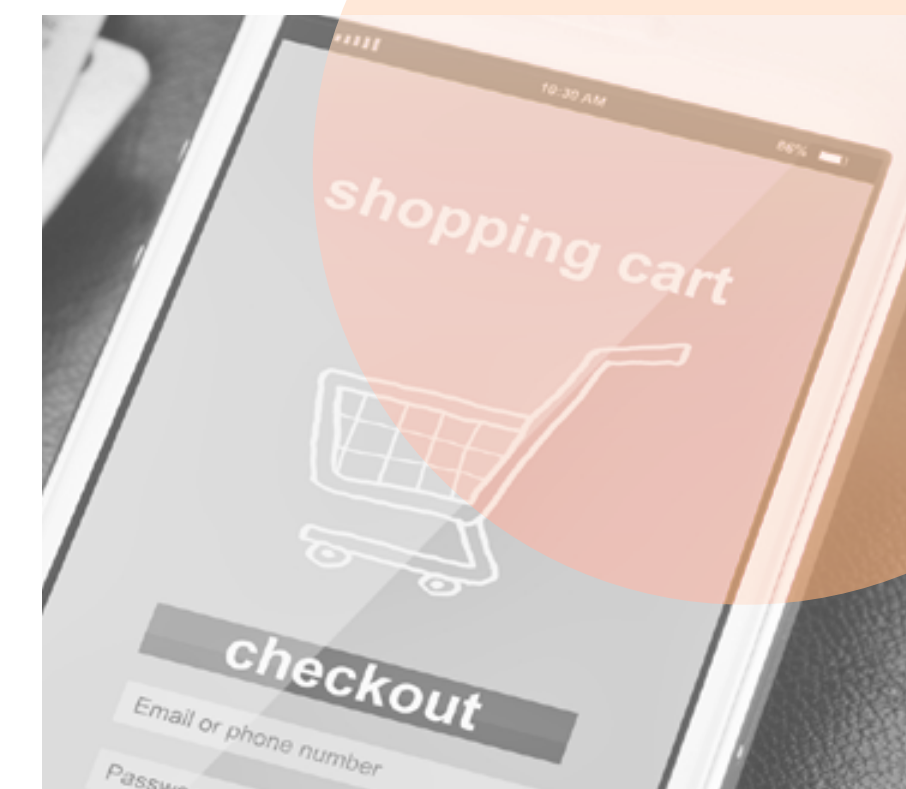


Photo Via Google Images

/ FOCUS ON SOCIAL IMPACT

Corporate social responsibility has historically been viewed as a superficial public relations necessity; however, it is increasingly becoming a real and critical business metric. The global public health crisis is having unexpected consequences—and even some benefits—for individuals, society, and the environment.

Organizations should consider the ways in which their impact and performance will be assessed according to the social, environmental, and health-related outcomes of their efforts—not just the financial bottom line.



Photo Via Getty Images

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

FOCUS ON SOCIAL IMPACT



Photo Via Airbnb

During this time of crisis, no industry or sector is exempt from the responsibility to foster and support social innovation. Historically, companies have responded to social crises in ways that offer inspiration with the development of impactful, sustainable, and socially conscious initiatives.

For example, following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Johnson & Johnson deployed trainloads of gauze, sutures, and bandages to supplement much-needed medical supplies. During the Great Depression, the company gave workers a 5% wage increase and refused to lay off its workforce. Given the scope and scale of today's modern multinationals, consumers expect these companies to contribute to public health and public services in response to COVID-19.

Corporate response efforts to our current health crisis have been innovative and widespread. For example, Airbnb recently launched a global initiative to waive lodging fees for 100,000 health professionals and first responders. Verizon launched "Pay It Forward Live," a streaming entertainment series that delivers community support by donating funds to small businesses affected by COVID-19. Additionally, Microsoft is currently paying employees in their retail stores their regular pay regardless of hours worked.



Photo Via UNICEF

/ RETHINK INDIVIDUAL METRICS

As conventional boundaries blur and norms are suspended, employees are being required to flex beyond established roles and responsibilities while potentially taking on new risks. As a result, businesses across industries will need to find new ways of measuring and evaluating performance, especially as much of the workforce moves to remote work while juggling other everyday tasks, like childcare.

In order to incorporate digital tools to create a more seamless remote work experience, organizations will first need to reimagine what high performance truly means for workers striving to balance overlapping responsibilities across their increasingly intertwined work and home lives. This will include considering the implications of this new lifestyle for employee incentives and rewards.



Photo by Julia M Cameron

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

RETHINK INDIVIDUAL METRICS



Photo by Taryn Elliott

With so many people moving to remote work, existing measures of employee value and performance are proving inadequate. New individual metrics of success are necessary, particularly ones that are more adaptable to change.

Given the disruptions that have occurred across childcare, education, transportation, and beyond, flexibility in workflow is needed. Recognition of this need is leading to a greater emphasis on employee outcomes rather than inputs. As individuals flex across different roles to fill unexpected gaps at work, team performance is increasingly gaining relevance over individual evaluation. Finally, leaders are focusing on employee engagement more than ever before, with many employers demonstrating concern for employee wellbeing beyond the context of their work experience.

Disney, for example, has stated that they are radically rethinking their leadership development

programs to focus on empathy, resilience, caring, and safety. Other companies, including several Canadian banks, are recognizing the impact that changing customer needs are having on expectations of associates. Several states, provinces, and lawmakers are mandating new bonuses and hazard pay for certain workers in recognition of their flexibility and the added risks of performing their job duties. A new era of performance is emerging, which some of the world's biggest insurance companies have referred to as a management culture of "excessive transparency."



Photo by Gustavo Fring

/ EMPHASIZE LIVING WELL

COVID-19 has forced people to rapidly rethink their priorities, especially when it comes to balancing professional and family obligations with physical health and the social, psychological, and emotional dimensions of living well in isolation. There is a growing need to take measure of how we are doing as individuals, as families, and as communities—and there may also be a role for different organizations to play in fulfilling this need. It is time to develop new metrics not only for professional productivity and performance, but also for what it means to achieve holistic wellbeing from a health perspective.

Organizations should consider how they can support and empower employees and customers in their personal care and self-care practices while rethinking the ways in which wellbeing is measured.



Photo by Tatiana Syrikova

MICRO-CASES & IMPLICATIONS

EMPHASIZE LIVING WELL



Photo Via Stocksy

In an effort to maintain business continuity, organizations will be required to not only account for the personal, familial, and social needs of both employees and customers, but also to deliver on these needs.

Beyond flexible work arrangements, organizations will need to adjust metrics in a way that reflects the employee or consumer experience of health and wellness, particularly as COVID-19 reshapes the extent to which people can remain resilient and operate productively.

Companies like Vox Media are responding to the current challenges of balancing work and family by hosting a daily “story time” for parents with children. *The New York Times* supports the need for a reprieve from the stresses of COVID-19 by hosting an online “pet parade” for employees.

Jellyfish, a marketing company, has provided their IT services for parents in need of support installing software for their children’s online classrooms. Similarly, Vancouver-based Digital Media Academy responded to the makeshift “home-schooling” situation by offering 30 free online courses and making its paid Teacher Plan free to educators.



Photo by Aw Creative via Unsplash



THINKING Forward

Individuals, organizations, and communities have responded to the global pandemic with tremendous resilience. From companies converting their operations to deliver COVID-19-responsive products, to individuals creatively adapting their work and personal lives around social distancing measures, people everywhere have demonstrated a strong capacity for versatility, empathy, and ingenuity in the face of crisis.

As we move toward a changed world, organizations will need to build on the ideals, priorities, and needs that continue to emerge from this experience. The experience principles and activations presented in this brief have been designed to inspire leaders to reimagine how their own organizational practices, business logic, and value systems can continue to foster resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo by Cassiano Psomas

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