



Are You Ready for Workplace Changes Coming In 2021?

NOBODY NEEDS A RESEARCH AND CONSULTING FIRM TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORKPLACE IN 2021 WILL DIFFER FROM THE PRE-PANDEMIC WORKPLACE. BUT HOW?



Phil Chambers, CEO and co-founder of employee motivation company [Peakon](#), has some thoughts on that. Writing on the Nasdaq stock market's blog, Chambers says this year has provided lessons on how trouble can exert positive influences to shape a better future.

The five primary changes Chambers sees for 2021 are businesses being held accountable for their actions around diversity, equity, and inclusion; burnout becoming a significant attrition risk; the continued use of remote working; changes in office politics; and the need for professional development.

One primary risk for 2021, according to Chambers, is that professional development will be ignored as businesses focus on their Covid-19 recovery plans or their new working models. The result will be frustrated employees and a resulting drop in engagement and productivity. "Up-skilling and retraining will be crucial to reinvigorate employee

growth. Businesses will also need to quickly get to grips with training people digitally, so they can ensure all their people get the skills and knowledge they need, regardless of where they are working."



leaders expect to see a return to pre-Covid norms.

At Peakon, Chambers says managers need to be prepared to deal with burnout: "We've seen healthcare workers and other frontline staff be profoundly impacted by the pandemic and reaching new levels of burnout. Parents have struggled to juggle work and childcare, with women being more impacted than men, and Black and Latina mothers shouldering heavier burdens than White mothers. And then we've seen managers suffer across the board as they carried their teams through the crisis."

Chambers says that workers who pushed through 2020 will "pay the price for it" in 2021 because the toll taken on employee wellbeing will linger. The result will be absence, reduced motivation, and underperforming employees who end up seeking new employment. "To avoid losing a slew of talent, and facing the high costs of recruitment, businesses need to put proactive and bespoke policies in place now."

Trends for 2021

RESEARCH AND CONSULTING FIRM DELOITTE HAS IDENTIFIED FIVE HUMAN-RESOURCES TRENDS THAT WILL BE IMPORTANT IN 2021.

These include designing work for well-being, unleashing worker potential, building super teams, setting new directions for work and the workforce, and re-architecting work.

Deloitte surveyed 3600 executives in 96 countries to prepare the report, which found that learning to live with uncertainty is becoming the new normal even though executives hope for an eventual return to "normal". Only about one fifth of the surveyed business

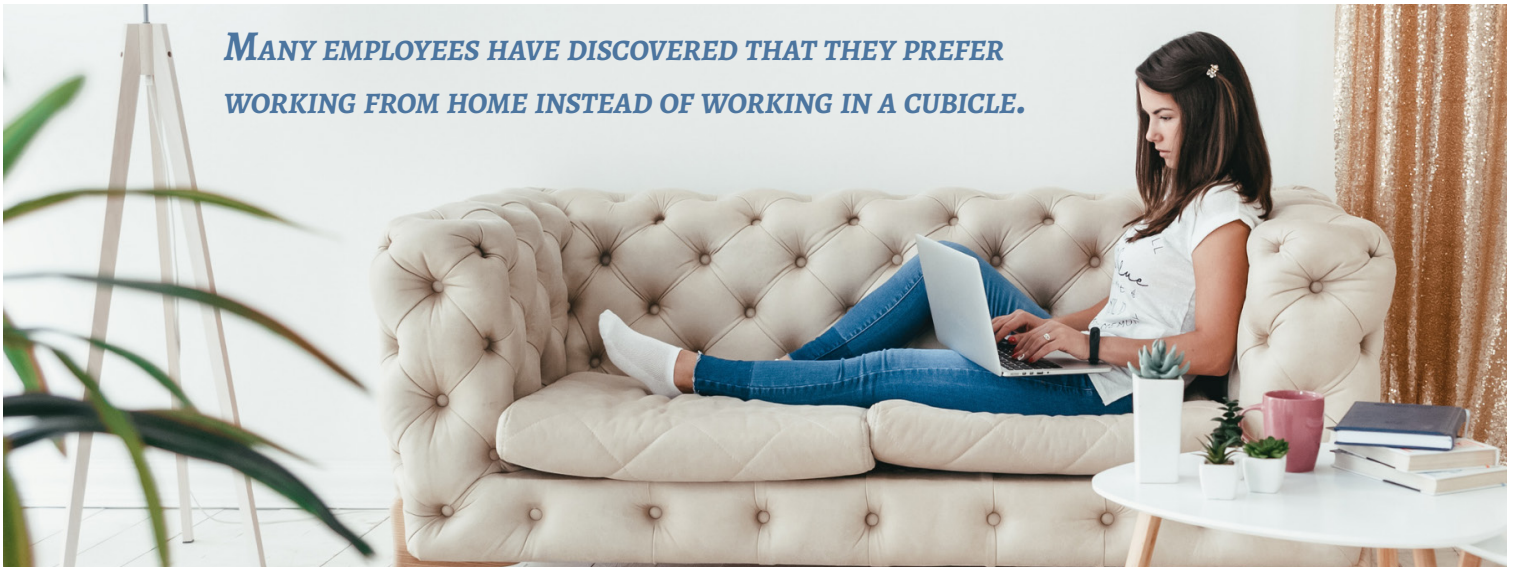
Questions for 2021

DELOITTE'S REPORT SAYS COMPANIES NEED TO BE ABLE TO QUICKLY PIVOT AND SET NEW DIRECTIONS.

Managers can do this only when they understand the capabilities and preferences of their employees. There are four critical questions to ask:

1. How often are jobs changing and to what degree?
2. How ready is our workforce to perform the work of the future?

MANY EMPLOYEES HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THEY PREFER WORKING FROM HOME INSTEAD OF WORKING IN A CUBICLE.



3. Are workers and leaders able to quickly and effectively adapt to constant change?
4. What new trends, challenges, and scenarios are leaders being prepared for?

Deloitte also suggests answering four more questions to understand the health and capacity of the company's overall talent pool:

1. How many workers provide direct or indirect services to the organization?
2. How healthy is our internal talent market?
3. How much capability can we access across our broader ecosystem?
4. Which of our workers are at risk of leaving and why?

And Deloitte has four final questions intended to give managers some insight into developing action plans:

1. How does our organization treat its employees, contractors, and service providers of every type?
2. Are workers from diverse communities in a position to wield influence in the company?
3. How is our culture, workforce, and leadership being portrayed externally?
4. What signals are we seeing that point to outliers in worker behaviors and norms?

Covid-19 has shown many employees that they enjoy working from home. They enjoy not having to spend time driving to and from the office. They enjoy not being crammed into cubicles. Chambers says "2021 is not going to bring an end to remote working. The genie is well and truly out of the bottle, and there's no 'going back to normal' once the pandemic is finally over."

He suggests there will be more hybrid working, with employees working from home much of the time and coming to the office only occasionally.

Societal Issues Gain

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION OFTEN SEE MORE DISCUSSION THAN ACTION AROUND THE OFFICE, AND CHAMBERS SAYS THAT MUST CHANGE.



Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement "have triggered a renewed public awareness around inequality and discrimination. For years we've seen growing demand among employees for more diverse and inclusive workplaces. This trend has now been accelerated, with customers, investors and boards increasingly demanding action, too."

And what about office politics? One might think that remote working will reduce office

politics, but Chambers is doubtful. "The danger is that social lines won't be dissolved by workplace instant messaging apps," he says, "but that they will become stronger."

Platforms like Slack provide the opportunity for voices to be heard equally, but they also can allow voices to go unheard. This will be a huge challenge for managers. 🗣️

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited is based in the United Kingdom and has offices worldwide. The company provides audit and tax consulting services, merger and acquisition assistance, risk analysis, and other business services.

Peakon has offices in the United States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. The company's goal is to "transform the world of work."

Read the full article by Phil Chambers on the [Nasdaq website](#) and see an expanded version of the recommendations by Deloitte on [Tech Republic](#).

Goodbye 2020!

It's a decidedly un-fond farewell for this past year, one of the more difficult in our history. May 2021 be better for us all!

