

# The Insigniam **POST-PANDEMIC SURVEY 2021**

A survey reveals sweeping changes, likely permanent ones, in how employees **perceive themselves**, how they **perceive their lives**, and, as a result, how they **perceive their work environments**—all of which indicates a different calculus for how they behave. **The implications are tremendous**, as understanding and addressing these changes will be essential for leading in the post-pandemic era. ▶▶▶

# The **COVID-19** pandemic fundamentally changed how we view the world.

**One day** early in 2020, employees left their offices and were told to work from home. Almost everyone thought it was a temporary shift. Except that weeks stretched into months, which stretched into more than a year. Work lives suddenly included balancing home schooling children, barking dogs, cramped spaces, and managing multiple at-home workers and students. Some found themselves with a new descriptor—“essential”—and continued to work on-site, under new safety protocols. And others faced the reality of being furloughed or unemployed. Now we see the sun emerging from the clouds as the crisis begins to subside, and one thing has become eminently clear: **We aren't the same.**

Maybe we look the same, or speak the same way, or are returning to our same office, but the way we view the world has changed fundamentally—and perhaps permanently. The beliefs, assumptions and rules that form our frame of reference are no longer those of the early-2020, pre-pandemic world. We think differently now about nearly everything. And how we think completely determines the actions we take, the results we produce and what we see as possible for the future.

The implications of these changes for leaders and organizations are enormous. While much has been written about the logistics of the post-pandemic workplace (e.g., travel, remote work, physical proximity), little has addressed the shifted attitudes, perspectives and worldview that workers have about themselves and their lives—and what these changes mean for organizations. Post-pandemic, workers will not engage with their work environments or their organizations in the same context as they did before the pandemic. Leaders also cannot lead the same way. They must take into account how their people have changed, or they risk losing competitive advantage and talent. No matter how successful an organization has been, it cannot sustain its success if it is operating in a paradigm that no longer reflects its people.



**We believe that leaders and organizations have an opportunity.** By understanding how their people have changed, they can create new environments that will allow people to bring their best to work. This report reveals changes in how employees view the world—and, importantly, what these changes mean for leading post-pandemic. From these insights, leaders can create the future of their organizations.

In our **survey of more than 1,110 people** who work for companies worldwide—from individual contributors to the C-suite—respondents shared how the pandemic has changed them. Three questions formed the basis of the survey. We chose open-ended questions to allow for the full range of answers and to not shape respondents' answers with preconceived notions. The responses were evaluated, and central recurring themes were identified. While they came in different flavors, these shifts were consistent across all levels, from the bottom of the organization to the C-suite. Our results uncovered five critical shifts in individuals' perspectives and five implications that leaders and organizations should keep in mind if they want to create the best post-pandemic working conditions for their people. ►►

**1,110+**  
Number of  
worldwide  
individual  
and C-suite  
respondents

# We asked three questions.

1. **How have you changed?**
  - a. **In what ways have you changed during the pandemic?**  
(e.g., your perspective on life, work, personal values)
  - b. **Additional question for leaders:**  
**In what ways have you changed as a leader during the pandemic?**  
(e.g., what you believe you need to provide as a leader,  
how you relate to the people you lead, expectations for yourself and others)
2. **During the course of the pandemic, in what ways have you changed your expectations of the people leading your organization?**
3. **How will your organization need to change to adapt to the post-pandemic you?**

# The results? 5 critical shifts & 5 implications.

How Employees' Worldview Changed

# The Shifts

## ► I will never let work displace my life again.

**Shift One** | Early in the pandemic, nearly half of the global population—almost 4 billion people—found themselves in lockdown. Busy travel schedules and daily commuting gave way to working while home schooling children, three meals a day at home and evenings with family. In that time, many people came to a startling realization: **Before the pandemic, they had let their work displace their families and personal lives.** It didn't matter whether they were administrative assistants or C-suite executives. They had missed their children's first steps; they hadn't made time to exercise or eat properly; they weren't present for the daily routines of home. One executive captured the sentiment: "About two months into the lockdown, I realized I had never spent two consecutive months with my spouse or my children. Ever! What was I thinking?"

A truth has emerged: People won't let it happen again. As a result of the pandemic, their priorities have been reshaped and their perspectives have shifted. For many, what was once acceptable is no longer seen as desirable or even tolerable. Now, life comes before work—health over deadlines, family over commuting, seeing friends over staying late in the office.

### How respondents commented . . .

# 42%

said life and family would come first in the future.

# 41%

said they would no longer choose an inflexible workplace.

- *"The pandemic reminded me that work is finite: My family comes first."*
- *"Work does not seem as important and is just a job now. Time with family is the most important thing in my life."*
- *"I try to spend more time with my family. I realize work is not really as important as I thought it was."*
- *"I enjoy spending time at home and not rushing so much. Work is not as important to me. Family and friends are most important."*
- *"I [am] making a point of being very present when I am with my child."*
- *"[My leaders need to know] that I won't be able to do more work and overtime because I'll want to be out living life." — Individual/Sole Contributor, Europe*
- *"I don't want to commute long distances to work again."*
- *"My desire for more personal time has increased while my focus on work continues to shift. I've worked nights and weekends throughout much of my career, but it's no longer satisfying." — C-suite, North America*



## ► I used to have “two selves”—work and home. Now, I just have my one whole self.

**Shift Two** | Before the pandemic, people tried to keep “work” and “life” separate. They were parents, roommates and spouses at home, and managers, employees and colleagues in the office. Commutes helped demarcate the transition from work to home, and the two realms of life were considered separate. Of course, even before the pandemic, this separation was an illusion. We answered emails after hours, scheduled evening phone calls with colleagues across the world and “played catch-up” on the weekends. Work and life were so intertwined that keeping them separate was often a fool’s errand.

The pandemic has shattered that “two selves” illusion. Working from home physically brought work and life together. Children and pets wandered into Zoom frames; team members worked from small apartments with shared, limited bandwidth; coffee in the break room became time for laundry and household chores. Some were forced to take meetings from bathrooms or cars just to get privacy. Boundaries blurred.

One VP put it this way: “I no longer compartmentalize my life (home, work, home). I do things as a leader, a mom, a manager of the house throughout the day.” Ultimately, people no longer view their different identities—parent, friend, boss, colleague—as categorized. They each see themselves as **a singular, integrated person.**

### How respondents commented . . .

# 28%

said they could no longer keep life and work separate.

► *“We need to take time away from work for mental health and battery recharging. Children and family should matter as much as work. We shouldn’t have to apologize for having family obligations.”*

► *“There are far more variables in people’s personal lives than we’re used to. Someone will say, ‘I have to call the daycare because it’s closed.’ All the issues people have are now in front of me on camera.”*

► *“Working from home is the norm versus the exception. I take time when I can to have lunch with my husband, and I use what used to be commuting time to exercise.” — Director, Asia*

# 57%

expect leaders to understand that “being real” and caring matter.

► *“I have more appreciation for the ability to blend/mix business and personal lives—changing working hours and locations and handling personal issues during the workday are helpful and convenient. I’ve spent more time with my daughter who is schooling from home, which I am sure will have long-term impacts on our relationship and connection.” — Director, North America*

► *“I appreciate a better balance with life and work. Working from home has provided additional time to prepare for the day and make better health decisions (in exercise or diet) and has still allowed for connections at work via videoconferencing. Working from home has allowed for additional time to enter my schedule, where previously I would be using that time in the commute to and from work, packing a lunch, prepping clothes for a pre-work workout/shower at the gym, and dressing for work. I’ve found more time to breathe and focus.” — Manager, North America*



## ► I can no longer assume that tomorrow will be the same as today.

**Shift Three** | The exact moment differed for everyone, but we can all remember the day in 2020 when we felt the world turn on its head. Everything from next week's dinner date to the Summer Olympics was canceled. The economy tanked in a matter of weeks; school was canceled indefinitely; the borders closed. Our entire sense of planning and continuity crumbled. Before 2020, life had a feeling of predictability. Of course, emergencies and surprises happened before the pandemic. But they happened within the context of what felt "normal."

One respondent summed it up concisely: "I am more aware of the fragility of our global ecosystem." The pandemic brought the realization that in an instant, **anything can change**. We have become aware of the fragility of life in a way that was perhaps impossible to fathom before the pandemic. As a result, we are no longer able to view the world as stable or predictable. The pandemic revealed the fallacy of certainty about the future. And even as the world begins to reopen, we will never see it as quite the same again.

**A Tale of Two Worlds** | This shift occurred differently for individuals depending on their role in an organization. For sole contributors and those with lower incomes, attention was shifted to basic needs such as paying for food and shelter. What once felt secure was no longer guaranteed.

Conversely, for individuals with financial and career security, the pandemic presented an unforeseen opportunity to take greater control over one's destiny. It was a chance to focus on personal well-being, to pivot careers and businesses. It was precisely because nothing was certain that these individuals were able to reimagine the future.

Put another way, we saw a reflection of the classic research by Abraham Maslow on an individual's hierarchy of needs. In our survey, we found that only when basic needs—food, shelter, security—were satisfied could individuals begin to think about self-actualization and seizing opportunity.

### How respondents commented . . .

# 17%

said an increased awareness of uncertainty changed them and that their organizations must adapt to increased uncertainty.

- *"I realized how fragile life is—and how short. Family is more important than anything, and work-life balance is now more valuable."*
- *"I realized how poor our ability to forecast is. And I was blown away by how resilient our team has proven to be." — C-suite, North America*
- *"Things can change and sometimes go wrong very quickly, so we need to find ways to enjoy life and good moments as much as possible." — Director, South America*
- *"Financial security is more of a priority. If my pay doesn't increase to an amount closer to the market rate for my role, I will be looking elsewhere." — Individual/Sole Contributor, Pacific U.S.*

## 4

## ► I found leadership in myself.

**Shift Four** | In the midst of adversity, many found a quality within themselves that they were perhaps unaware of: leadership. The urgency of the crisis caused people to don the mantle of leadership—whether it was leading other people or leading themselves. It shifted their perspective on what they were capable of and what they had to offer others. In other words, **people began to view themselves as leaders.**

More than ever before, expressing leadership took the form of being related, checking in and caring for people. This was especially true for those already in manager and supervisor roles. As one supervisor put it, “I relate to people in a different way. I have to make more of an effort to check in with those that I supervise. I also have become more aware and sensitive to the complexities of my employees’ lives—how their home lives can either be a barrier to or a facilitator of their work.”

For others, particularly those who are not in formal leadership roles, this shift took the form of self-leadership. Some took it upon themselves to check in on colleagues, organize weekly video calls with family, and support those around them. For others, it was a daily practice of gratitude, prioritizing their needs or reflecting on “the little things.” On-site workers took initiative to make their workplaces safer. The crisis led people to realize that action—not official roles or titles—is what makes a leader.

In some cases, newfound leadership arose as a result of feeling failed by traditional institutions, such as the government or one’s own organization. Indeed, when leaders and organizations failed to demonstrate caring, people took note and expressed disappointment. This holds real potential consequences for organizations. As one person said, “The situation [pandemic] was not handled well, and I have lost quite a bit of faith in leadership. As a result, I am looking to leave the company.”

### How respondents commented . . .

# 70%

of leaders said they found a greater sense of empathy and awareness.

- *“I allow time to talk about unrelated topics, and I see the importance of building relationships before building a business or project. Empowerment is an even more important managerial capability.” — VP, Europe*
- *“I often check myself when thinking about missed deadlines or work that is different from what I expected. I think first about the person working for me and then the opportunity as it relates to what’s going on at work, and development opportunities, to ensure I’m understanding the whole picture. I have more empathy, given the world today.” — Director, North America*
- *“I have decided to take better care of myself, both physically as well as mentally. It is not as easy as I thought.” — Respondent, North America*
- *“I’m more attentive to others, and I try to cheer up my colleagues.” — Respondent, Europe*
- *“I feel more relaxed—not as much anxiety or rigidity. I trust more. I am more aware of the example I am setting. I feel stronger in my values, which grounds me and reminds me that I have everything I need.” — Director, North America*

## 5

## ► The way the virus spread showed me how we're all connected.

**Shift Five** | Before the pandemic, people viewed their actions as relatively isolated from those outside of their immediate circle. It was difficult to believe that a personal choice to go to a restaurant, board a plane or attend a conference could change a stranger's life a thousand miles away.

The spread of the virus revealed the extent to which globalization, commerce and the way we socialize link us all. An action we take can impact the life of a neighbor, a colleague or even a stranger in another country. As one respondent put it, "I have realized that what I do does have an impact on more people than I ever thought it did. If I'm irresponsible, I could be spreading COVID and be part of the problem."

On a global scale, we no longer situate ourselves as individuals. **Rather, we see ourselves as inextricably interconnected with others—part of a complex, adaptive system.** Our decisions have ripple effects on others, effects we were unaware of before, and many of us take them seriously.

### How respondents commented . . .

# 10%

said they feel an increased sense of connectedness.

► "I'm more aware of the needs of others, the price of freedom and liberty of movement." — VP, Europe

► "I have a deeper appreciation for frontline workers." — Director, North America

► "Behaviors regarding contact, protection (e.g., masks), distancing, etc., are always present and dominate, or rather accompany, my private or business life. This also applies to my team and my customers." — VP, Europe

# 9%

said their organizations must adapt to global interconnectedness.

► "I have a greater appreciation for the work of 'ordinary' people—cleaners, salespeople, etc." — Sole Proprietor, Asia



“By understanding how their people have changed, leaders and organizations can create new environments that will allow people to bring their best to work.”



What Readers Need To Know

# The Implications

**As the five shifts make clear**, the way in which people think about work and life has changed significantly. These changes translate into behaviors, mindsets and actions at work. How can executives and leaders respond to the new ways that work occurs for their employees? What are the implications of the shifts for organizations and leaders?

The challenge for management is to understand these shifts and seize them as an opportunity to provide environments that allow people to bring the best of themselves to work. The optimal environment is not what it was just 12 months ago, and what motivates people has likely shifted as well. If managers can understand how people have changed, they can create conditions that allow people to thrive at work and bring their best to this new world.

Here are the five implications that leaders and organizations should take seriously as they lead their people into the future.

## ► **People no longer feel they have to put up with inflexible work environments.**

### Implication One

**According to Pew Research Center**, only 1 in 5 individuals worked from home before the pandemic. By the end of last year, 71% were doing their job remotely, and more than half want it to stay that way after the pandemic ends. Our research aligns with these findings and expands on them. Half of respondents mentioned a desire for more flexible working conditions in response to the question “How will your organization need to change to adapt to the post-pandemic you?”

Put simply: **People expect flexibility in their work.** In part, this translates into a desire for remote work options. Individuals want the choice to work from anywhere, at least part of the time, even after the pandemic. For employers, remote options allow them to cast a wider net in seeking talent. No longer limited to potential employees who live near an office, organizations will find themselves with a deeper and more diverse talent pool. (Indeed, some companies realized this before the pandemic and benefited from that flexibility.)

Ostensibly, organizations now need to consider the implications of hybrid models in which individuals have the choice to return to the office or continue remotely. If not implemented intentionally, these models may create disconnect and inequality between remote and on-site workers. The solution will differ for each organization’s unique circumstances. For example, some may find it beneficial to use technology (e.g., 360-degree cameras) that allow remote individuals to feel as if they are “in the room.” Others may institute days of the week when everyone reports the office. Whatever the case, the approach must be intentional.

One C-suite executive captured this concern: “The hybrid model scares me. With a 50/50 ‘who comes back to the office?’ there will be productivity loss. With all of us working from home, that’s one thing. ►►

## 1

**Implication**  
**One**  
 continued

But [hybrid] will be different. We have tough decisions to make on this, especially in our small offices, which will likely stay closed since we have learned where we don't need a physical presence. Single people have a social network that is often through work, and that's being tested. In the U.K., they're in full lockdown. I don't have that [here]. We're not all under the same rules, so how do we do this?"

**More importantly, flexibility isn't solely about working from home.** The pandemic necessitated a more fluid approach to work. Managing a crisis, leaders could no longer centralize all decisions or supervise work as closely as they did before. As long as they continued to deliver, people were given more freedom in how they completed their work and in making decisions. Many found they enjoyed newfound flexibility and autonomy—on both sides. Individuals now expect their employers to trust them to get things done, micromanage less and allow them independence.

Another way organizations can achieve flexibility is by applying design-thinking principles to the new employee experience. Previously, people may have accepted rigid or inconvenient work conditions, but they now expect more from the "user experience of work." Leaders and organizations might engage in intentionally using human-centered design to ask, "What can we do so people feel their work 'works' for them, and not the other way around?" In some cases, this will come down to culture. The practices, norms and values that make for a better employee experience will differ for each company. Ultimately, organizations that want to maintain high engagement and productivity must create an experience of work that aligns with people's newfound priorities.

### How respondents commented . . .

# 50%

said organizations  
needed to adapt by  
providing more-flexible  
post-pandemic  
working conditions.

- ▶ *"The future of work = flexible work hours and environment. Organizations will need to understand that I intend to work from home whenever possible and that showing up to the office just for face time should be a thing of the past." — South Atlantic U.S.*
- ▶ *"[My leaders] need to provide and actively support a more flexible work environment. They need to shift their mindset on how work can be accomplished and learn to trust their workforce more at all levels, but most significantly at the middle management level and below. Explicit conversations will become increasingly important as expectations shift and employees' expectations change. Increased flexibility for non-office working time. They are going to need to be prepared for less rigid structure to accomplish tasks (this comes more from being in emergency response mode than from working from home.)" — C-suite, North America*
- ▶ *"I've found that working from home is far more effective than I would have thought. It works because we are all in the same situation. Once offices reopen, I worry that a 'hybrid' model may be considerably less effective when some are in the office and others at home. It will be important to establish a new 'normal' post-pandemic." — C-suite, North America*
- ▶ *"I feel like I have a lot more flexibility to start earlier and work later (meetings too) and take breaks during the day as appropriate. It has created autonomy in that way." — Director, North America*
- ▶ *"We will need to do things differently—be more open to a hybrid way of working and delivering our services." — Manager, Europe*

# 2

## ► People want managers, leaders and organizations that genuinely care about them.

### Implication Two

**The pandemic brought** our humanity to the forefront. Very quickly, it became apparent when leaders and organizations cared about their people and when they didn't. Some checked in, gave time off when needed, and offered necessary support and resources. Others made it clear that the organization's needs mattered more than well-being. Previously, people may have tolerated indifferent leaders. But the pandemic created a new variable in assessing one's organization. People who now see themselves as "one whole person" and not two (albeit artificially) bracketed selves want to be treated like human beings at work, rather than worker machines. It is notable that individuals who continued to report in person throughout the pandemic were especially emphatic about the importance of feeling cared for. Caring leaders are no longer "nice to have"—they're an expectation.

The implications for organizations are tangible, ranging from talent retention to productivity. For instance, between two job offers, individuals will consider more than salary, title and advancement opportunities. They'll pay attention to which employer shows greater caring, who recognizes their whole self including their needs and demands outside of work. And once they're on the job, individuals who work for caring leaders will be more engaged. They will bring the best of themselves to their work, their colleagues and their teams—and ultimately, they will produce better results.

#### How respondents commented . . .

- *"Greater empathy for difficult decisions that need to be made [more grace], less tolerance for 'playing politics' and higher expectations that leaders be grounded in values."*
- *"My company doesn't care about me and will only change to benefit their shareholders and CEO." — Individual/Sole Contributor, U.S.*
- *"I've expected that there would be more compassion, and I want senior management to realize that all employees need to have the same precautions to allow for working remotely. But unfortunately, that never happened. I kind of lost a little respect at that higher level." — Individual, South Central U.S.*
- *"I expect management to take care of employees and our members to a greater degree and exhibit concern for our well-being." — Individual, Pacific U.S.*

# 3

## ► Uncertainty about the future creates anxiety and possibility.

**Implication Three** | The realization that anything can change (the third perspective shift detailed earlier in this report) has precipitated two implications.

First, leaders and organizations should know that their people are braced for the “next pandemic.” There is an undercurrent of anxiety about what will turn our lives upside down next. And just as the generation who lived through the Great Depression kept cash in their mattresses, we too have developed anxious mindsets and behaviors after living through uncertainty. Some of these mindsets and behaviors are superficial—stocks of sanitizer, masks or canned goods, for example—but others run deeper. Fundamentally, people feel less secure in their jobs and careers. And when people feel their most basic needs aren’t secure, it is impossible for them to be fully present at work.

Leaders must recognize this anxiety, which may remain mostly unspoken, and do what they can to allay it. For some, this may necessitate greater transparency—updates “even when there’s no news”—and for others, this may mean increased contingency planning and sharing these plans with employees. Others might deploy surveys to uncover specific concerns. The right response will be different for every organization; what is most important is that leaders don’t pretend anxiety isn’t there or try to sweep uncertainty under the rug.

The second implication is more positive. For some, the loss of certainty has created an appetite for possibility. It means that the status quo is no longer realistic or valid. In other words, tomorrow doesn’t have to be the same as today—and that can be a good thing.

Leaders can leverage this as an opportunity to drive change and innovation. By framing uncertainty as an opportunity for positive growth, rather than something scary to be avoided, they can help people embrace change and the new future ahead. Leaders should pay attention to the words they use when they communicate about change and model a mindset that embraces possibility.

### How respondents commented . . .

- ▶ *“There are some things over which we have no control. In these circumstances, consider strategies or actions you never would have considered previously. Work: Manage the crisis; then lead in the crisis.”*
- ▶ *“What I have thought about is that someone needs to write down what we are doing now, because this is going to happen again. We do have a disaster plan, but we also need to make sure we have good records of what we did, how we had to do it and why we did it.”*
- ▶ *“Old certainties have been at least challenged and often overturned in these uncertain times. So recognizing that the best ideas may come from unexpected places is really important.”*  
— Board Member, Europe
- ▶ *“[My organization] will need to have a contingency plan in place to cope with a similar occurrence. It will also need to have some emergency reserve capital on hand.”* — Manager, North America

## 4

## ► “Faraway” events are not going to feel that far away—and people care about their own impact on the world.

### Implication

#### Four

In years past, we might have scrolled past news that we felt didn't concern us—say, for example, a novel virus in Wuhan, China. This is no longer the case. From the global scope of the pandemic to events such as the murder of George Floyd, the past year has made the world feel smaller. People feel they cannot ignore what's going on around them. And they have looked inward, too, and reflected on their own and their organizations' impact on society. Leaders must clarify their organizations' values and purpose—and determine how to align them with those of their people. By getting clear on what is important to their organizations and employees, leaders can act with greater commitment and intentionality. And when people feel that their values align with those of their organizations, they are more engaged, which in turn produces greater business outcomes for shareholders.

#### How respondents commented . . .

- ▶ *“We've largely lived life immune to huge crises, or by watching things on TV happen in other places to other people.”*
- ▶ *“I expect more humility and inclusion. The pandemic period has been about a surge of awareness around the challenges of hearing the voices less often heard and ensuring we rebalance our approach to diversity—so this has to be high on the agenda.” — Board Member, Europe*
- ▶ *“The pandemic has emphasized the importance of family and friends, highlighted the fragility of life and exposed/aggravated societal fault lines.” — C-suite, North America*
- ▶ *“I've reflected deeply on my privilege—how I benefited from it and how I can use it to promote social equality.” — Manager*
- ▶ *“[The pandemic] brought perspective on what's important in life and what type of business I want to work for, specifically one that has products/services with a positive impact on society.” — Manager, North America*
- ▶ *“I ask myself, ‘Does what I do have meaning?’” — VP, Europe*

## ► Being real matters.

### Implication Five

**When crisis struck**, leaders were thrust into positions of greater visibility. Their people turned to them for guidance through uncertain and destabilizing times. Personal facades were stripped away—individuals could tell when leaders were being real and when they were sugarcoating things, hiding the truth or otherwise acting without authenticity. Those who rose to the occasion made a difference for those they led.

As one director put it, “In times of adversity, true character shows through.”

People have come to expect authenticity, a quality that is distinct from empathy, from their leaders. Empathy is about understanding what others are feeling—authenticity is acting on that knowledge. People want leaders who tell them the truth, even if it’s hard to swallow. They want leaders who are real, who say, “I feel this uncertainty, too. I acknowledge that this is really hard. I will share information with you as soon as I have it, and I will do everything I can to make sure we get through this together.” In doing so, leaders give people a sense of stability, resilience and faith in an uncertain world.

#### How respondents commented . . .

- *“More transparency, more honesty about what they know or don’t know. Empathy for employees’ emotional state—and support. Better listening for what is in the way for employees and finding solutions for them.”*
- *“We each have our own personal battles we face at home and work too hard to live up to corporate expectations. We need to support each other and recognize that work can get done from anywhere at any time on any schedule that fits. We need to take time away from work for mental health and battery recharging. Children and family should matter as much as work. We shouldn’t have to apologize for having family obligations. I’m more productive when I take care of my needs (physical, mental and emotional) first. Mental illness is the world’s hardest secret to keep inside and is more isolating than anything.” — Director, North America*



Insigniam's Post-Pandemic Survey

# Summary

**The “new” future is here.** And the actions people take in it are the perfect actions for how they view the world. Leaders and organizations must recognize that the pandemic has irrevocably changed the way their people see things. If they want to maintain a competitive advantage and retain talent, they must act accordingly.

**We identified five shifts in the way people view the world:**

- 1. My life takes precedence over my work**—the latter will not displace the former again.
- The illusion of “two selves”—work and home—has been shattered.  
**I am a single, whole, integrated person.**
- I see that in an instant **anything can change**.
- I know now that **leadership can be found anywhere** and in anyone, including myself.
- I am inextricably connected** to others around the globe.

**And five implications that leaders must recognize and respond to:**

- Inflexible work environments are **a thing of the past** . . .
- . . . and so are leaders, managers and organizations that **don't show care for their people**.
- Uncertainty has given rise to anxiety**—and to an appetite for positive change.
- The world feels smaller**, and people care about their own impact on it.
- Authenticity** matters.

**As the crisis recedes**, an opportunity has arrived. Actions today should be taken with the future in mind. Exactly how leaders and organizations respond to this new future will depend on their circumstances. But it's clear—if they act swiftly and decisively, they can leverage this moment of liminality. Armed with insight, leaders and organizations can address unseen influences and create new environments, processes, practices and structures that will allow their people to bring the best of themselves to work.  
**In doing so, they will create the future of their organizations.**

# We Never Stop Transforming

And neither should you

In the face of complex problems and rapid change, business as usual is not enough. To succeed, leaders must breathe life into big ideas and bold commitments. As an international consulting firm, **we partner with senior executives at the world's largest organizations to generate breakthrough performance, high-value innovation and speed to transformation.**

More than 30 years ago, **Insigniam pioneered the field of organizational transformation and is a trusted partner** of senior executives at the world's best-run companies for whom speed to transformation, breakthrough and innovation are imperatives. With a dedication to service, we are with you at all points:

- **Building** a bond and collaboration among your people
- **Seeing** what has not been seen before
- **Designing** novel approaches
- **Executing** effectively and sustainably
- **Installing** powerful organizational cultures

We promise that your people will think newly, act differently and deliver unprecedented results.®

  
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