Employee Expectations
for the Future Workplace

LIMRA LOMA
Navigate With Confidence

Pandemic-accelerated trends are transforming work — from how, when, and where it gets done to the shifting attitudes and expectations of employees.

As a result, companies are defining the future of work, even as they navigate ever-increasing digitization, evolving customer needs, and the war for talent.

To explore the transformational workplace trends, changes in the workforce, and how insurance companies can adapt, industry experts from Boston Consulting Group shared their insights and perspectives with **Alison Salka,** LIMRA's Senior Vice President and Director of Research.

PANELISTS

- **Deborah Lovich,** Managing Director and Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group

- **Simone Schwemer,** Managing Director and Partner, Boston Consulting Group

THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY RESPONDED WELL TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS...

> " The insurance industry coped very well with COVID-19. The move from onsite to remote work went smoothly. Seventy-five percent worked fully or partially remotely in 2020 and part of 2021 when the COVID-19 crisis was at its height. And almost 70 percent of the workforce continued to work the same way as before while only about a quarter needed to reduce work time or lost their jobs, so it was a very secure industry compared to many others."

Simone Schwemer

69%
CONTINUED **WORKING** as before or even **INCREASED** their working time
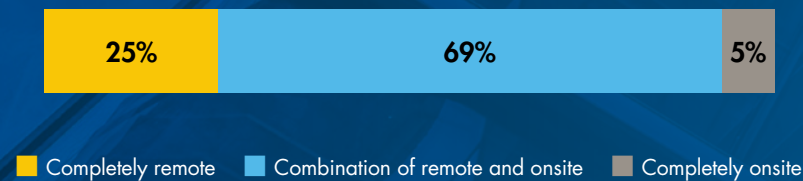
26%
were **LAID OFF** or had to **REDUCE** working hours
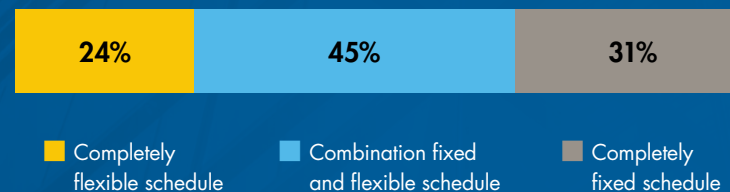
...BUT IT DID AFFECT EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES

INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' WORK PREFERENCES FOR THE FUTURE

WHERE people would work if given the choice

25%	69%	5%

- 🟨 Completely remote
- 🟦 Combination of remote and onsite
- ⬜ Completely onsite

WHEN people would work if given the choice

24%	45%	31%

- 🟨 Completely flexible schedule
- 🟦 Combination fixed and flexible schedule
- ⬜ Completely fixed schedule

> " When looking to the future, the talent in the insurance industry would like to take the learnings from the COVID-19 period and continue working at least partially remote. Almost 70 percent say they prefer a work situation where they are fully or partially remote. Another 69 percent want flexibility in when they work."

Simone Schwemer

PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE VALUES ALSO SHIFTED

55%
would exclude companies that do not match beliefs in environmental responsibility

51%
would exclude companies that do not match beliefs in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

For Employees UNDER 30

60%
would exclude companies that do not match beliefs in environmental responsibility

57%
would exclude companies that do not match beliefs in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

"
Seven out of 10 people said that topics like environmental responsibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion increased in importance for them. And **more than 50 percent** actually said they would decline attractive work or a job offer if the employer did not meet their own values on those topics. And if you look at the employees below the age of 30, the numbers are even higher."

Simone Schwemer

THE FUTURE OF WORK

FLEXIBILITY MEANS MORE THAN WHERE EMPLOYEES WORK

"One essential aspect of flexibility employees want is more mobile working. But flexibility also means more rotation of jobs, more diverse career paths, and continuing to learn and upskill. High-profile talent especially looks for learning and development opportunities."

Simone Schwemer

"Looking across industries, the points around flexibility are incredibly important. People are no longer living to work. They're working to live. COVID-19 helped put life and work into a new balance."

Deborah Lovich

BUILDING CONNECTIONS IS CRITICAL

"I think it's a no-brainer for every company to triple down on investing to build the muscle of their leaders at every level to connect with, inspire, motivate, coach, and care for their employees, especially as more and more have moved to be remote. Through our research, we saw the number one driver of productivity during COVID-19 was how socially connected employees felt to colleagues. When we correlate productivity with how satisfied people are with social connection, there's a 30 percent multiplier on productivity for those who feel socially connected to their peers and superiors versus those who don't."
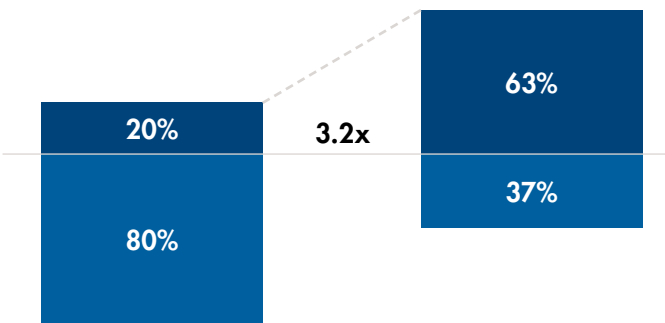
Deborah Lovich

Employees Satisfied With Social Connectivity Are More Likely to Maintain or Improve Productivity on Collaborative Tasks

Not satisfied with social connectivity

Satisfied with social connectivity

20%

3.2x

63%

80%

37%

■ As productive as or more productive than before COVID-19
■ Less productive than before COVID-19

THE FUTURE
OF WORK

COMPANY CULTURE DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN

"

It's a misapprehension to say that culture is set only when we're together live, because cultures are being set every day with every communication and every decision. So, what you need to do is be intentional about it.

The first part of culture is articulating it — what is the culture we want our organization to have? Not in lofty, high-level words, but really specifically, what do we want it to feel like when we think about our future strategy, and what are we most worried about?

The second part of culture is activating it. How do you start making decisions differently? How do you conduct meetings differently? How do you assign responsibilities differently? Whom do you reward differently? How do you communicate and show up as a leader? If you do both intentionally — articulation and activation — you can set a stronger culture than if you rely on the osmosis of being co-located."

Deborah Lovich

THE FUTURE
OF WORK

"From an employee perspective, automation might look like a threat, but it's also a large opportunity because it can free up time and reinvest it in more customer-centric activities. Working with more digital tools requires different skillsets and sometimes a completely different job description. It's important to map the road and take people along by providing the learning programs to upskill your existing workforce.

Automation does not mean that you need to replace large parts of your workforce. If you have enough time to train and upskill, you can develop the digital skills you need. Seventy-one percent of insurance employees said they are willing to retrain. That's a very good indication that it works well in insurance.

And if you proactively promote the upskilling and the development that you provide as an employer, it will also help in attracting new talent."

Simone Schwemer

48%

of insurance employees **FEAR** the **THREAT OF AUTOMATION**

71%

are willing to **RETRAIN** and **LEARN NEW SKILLS**

LEADERS NEED TO BE INTENTIONAL WHEN DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF WORK

> **When defining the future of work, broaden the thinking out from flexibility around work time and place."**

Embrace disruption

Reimagine customer relationships, employee work models, and productivity and value.

> For example, early in the crisis, I worked with a large insurer where their B2B salespeople were dying to get back in front of customers, but the customers no longer wanted to see them. And it wasn't just because of COVID-19 safety. It was because they enjoyed the flexibility, convenience, and lack of friction through the online, multi-channel interactions. So, how can we reimagine what our products are, what our services are, and how we engage with customers?

Empower and inspire

Focus on generative leadership, purpose-driven culture, and societal leadership.

> Leaders have been extractive in the past, using people and employees as a means to an end. Instead, how do you move to generative leadership, which is every single thing and person we touch is made better off as a result of that interaction. For example, generative leadership flips what meetings are. A meeting is no longer for the junior people to present and the senior people to say, 'Good job.' It's for the junior people to ask for help, the senior people to give it, and the junior people to say, 'Yes, I'm happy.'

Be responsive yet resilient

Explore new ways of working, adaptive organizations, and new talent models.

> At the beginning of COVID-19, everyone forgot about their jobs and worked together across silos on the most important and urgent things. Not only did it use talent most efficiently, but people learned, they grew, they built their networks, and they broke down silos. Now, there's an opportunity for experimentation — changes for the operating model, adaptive platforms, agile-at-scale organizations, and new talent models."

Create smart environments

Rethink space design and location, tools and technology, and learning.

> We need to think about how we create working space for people even if we're being completely flexible. There are so many jobs you think have to be done at a specific location that really don't. So, if physical space becomes an onsite location, what does that need to look like? But we also need to recognize that not everyone has a home they can or want to work from.

> The future of work is more than where work happens. All of these things are connected. What we encourage organizations to do is to pick two or three to start with, but then find your way to the others as a way to enable them. In the industry, those who move fastest have the opportunity to differentiate themselves from those who move more slowly."

Deborah Lovich