



5 Priorities to Help Reopen and Reinvent Your Business

MAY 2020



OUTMANEUVER UNCERTAINTY

NOW  **NEXT**



OUTMANEUVER UNCERTAINTY

The immediate response to COVID-19 is almost over. The challenge now is to reopen what COVID-19 shut down.

In an extended period of uncertainty, to reopen must be to reinvent the business. It calls for a restructuring of operations to continuously respond to the unpredictable. It means being designed for disruption.

We outline five key steps that help to navigate a range of scenarios as businesses reopen.

Why the (Re)opening requires reinvention

Only weeks ago we were shutting down business operations and mothballing core assets.

Now, at unprecedented speed, companies are being asked to restart their engines, to quickly bring national economies back online. The challenge is complicated by uncertainties about the progression of COVID-19 and the social, political and fiscal actions that it will drive.

Leaders need detailed plans of action now to return their businesses to at least partial if not full operation.

Reopening requires more than a return to normal, however. We call the unpredictable and long-lasting period that follows this pandemic the *Never Normal*. Not only will it feature fundamental changes to economic activity, but also fast-changing cultural norms, societal values and behaviors.

To reopen and to outmaneuver uncertainty requires a program of reinvention.

This presents an opportunity—and a need—for many companies to build the competences they wish they'd invested in before: to be more digital, data-driven, and in the cloud; to have more variable cost structures, agile operations and automation; to create stronger capabilities in e-commerce and security.

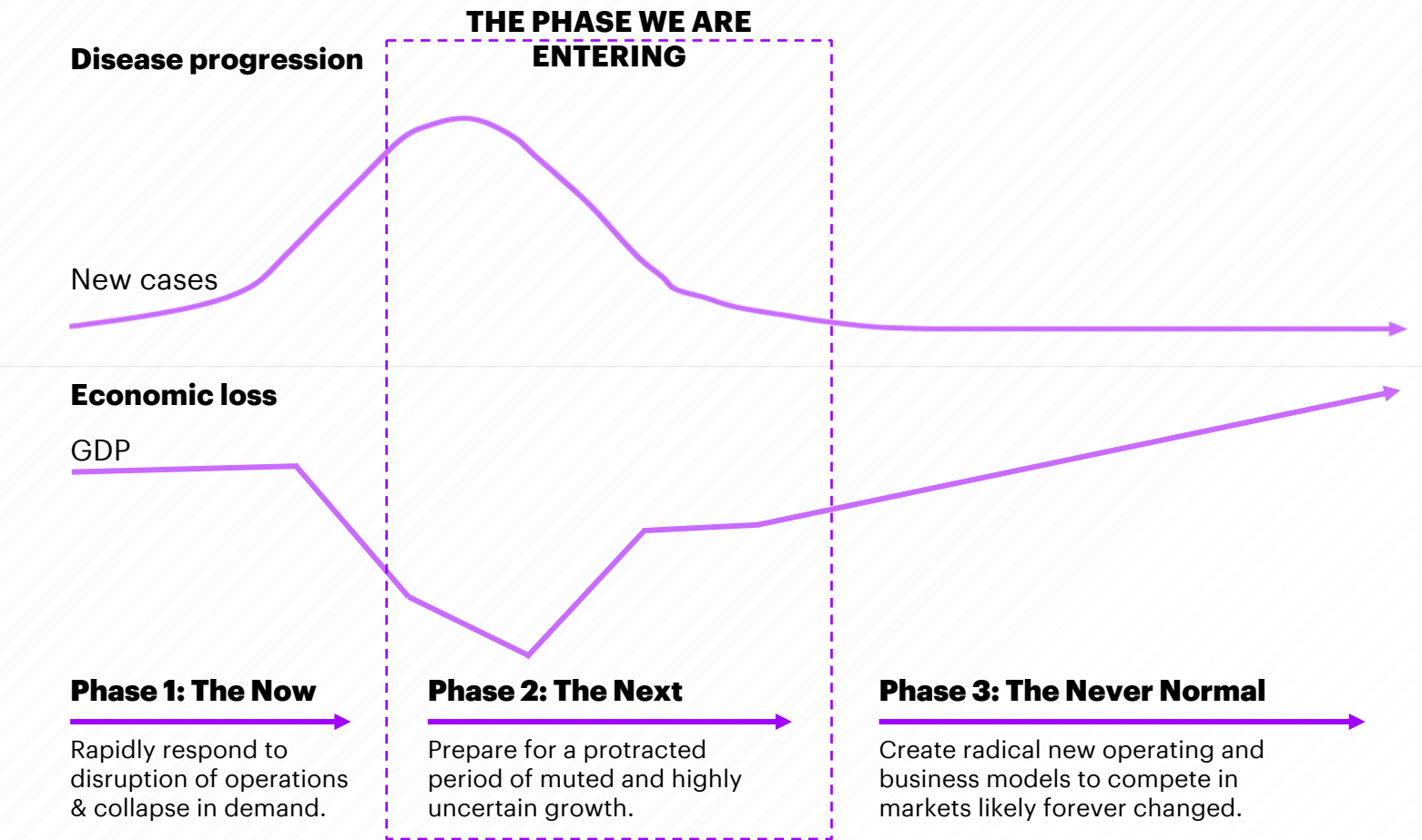
Crucially, their responses to immediate challenges—safe workplaces, well-being programs and business continuity—must be ready for moments of reversal and disruption.

This agility will be core to the long-term capabilities they build. Leaders should consider the steps they take to reopen as the first in a long journey of wider transformation.

Companies will need to take **five key steps** to commit to a program of reinvention now:

- 01 Put people first**—Place caring at the core.
- 02 Design spaces that work**—Ensure a safe, inclusive working environment.
- 03 Solve in phases**—Redesign for business as unusual.
- 04 Commit to an elastic cost structure**—Create the fuel for growth.
- 05 Get Future-Ready**—Create next-gen agility.

Despite ongoing uncertainty (Re)opening has begun



As evidence grows that we're coming into the end of the initial peak, economies and companies are beginning to shift focus to reopening.

Lockdowns have affected the majority of the global workforce. Most countries have begun to take a phased approach to reopening, beginning with essential sectors. In India, for example, restrictions were first eased on manufacturing and farming in rural areas.

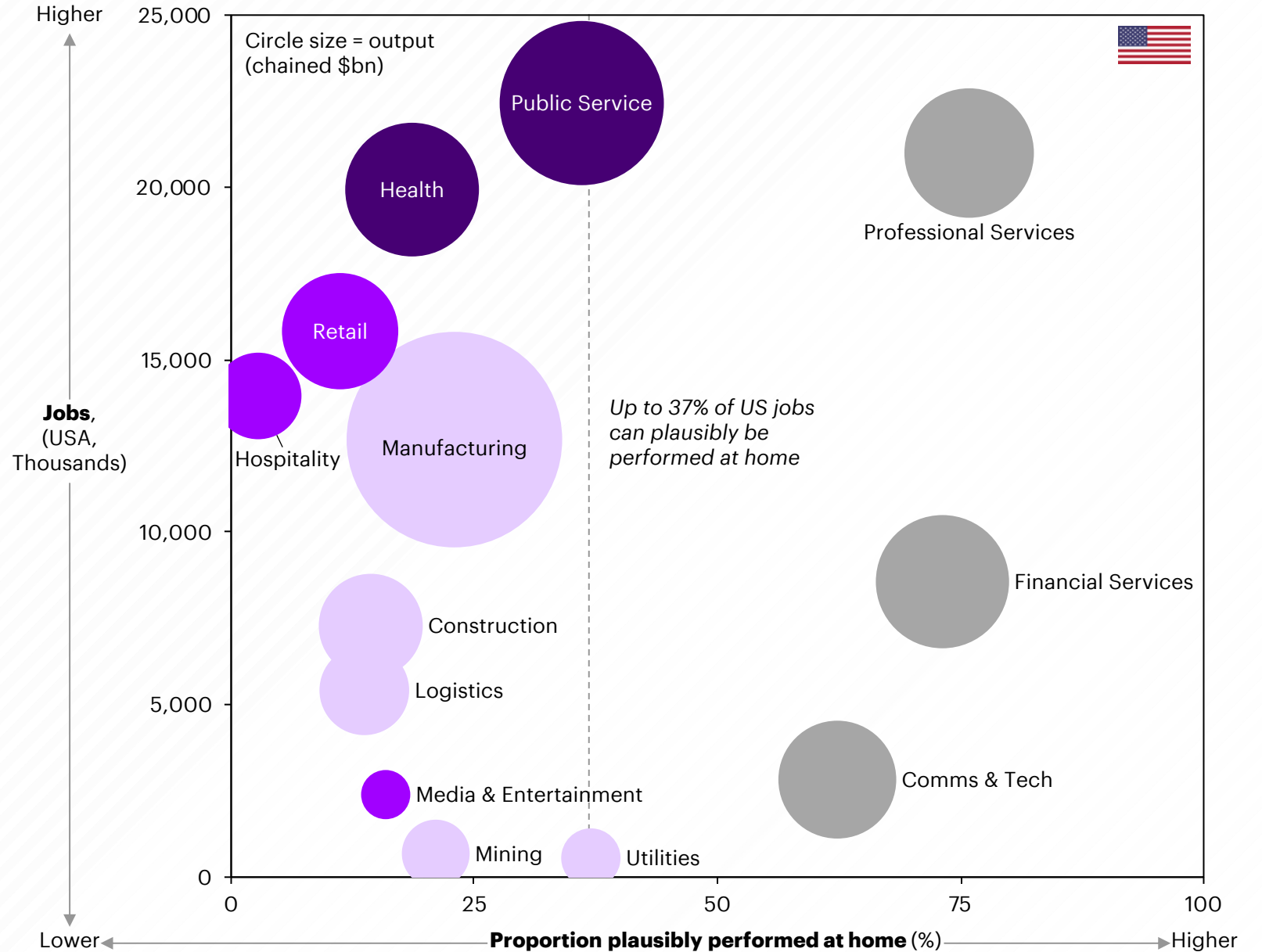
In deciding how best to phase the reopening of sectors, national and business leaders will need to consider the extent to which jobs in a sector can be performed at home, the economic implications if it does not reopen in terms of lost jobs and output, and the risk of workforce exposure to COVID-19.

Source: Accenture Research analysis.

The challenges in reopening are greater in some industries than others

Phasing the reopening of industries requires an understanding of the number of jobs in each industry, the proportion of those that can plausibly be performed from home, and the potential occupational risk from exposure to COVID-19 balanced against how essential it is to society.

- **Very high occupational risk—but vital**
- **High occupational risk—non-essential**
- **Lower occupational risk—Essential**
- **Essential—can be performed from home**



Sources: Jobs data from [US BLS](#); percentage plausibly working from home based on [Dingel & Neiman](#); C-19 occupational risk based on [Visual Capitalist](#).

Prospects for the (Re)opening

The easing of restrictions is no guarantee of a quick return to normal. There are a range of potential scenarios for the evolution of the crisis.

- We could see the quick rebound of **Rapid Remission**.
- But with the virus still circulating, the possibility of recurrence will remain high with **Cyclical Outbreaks** requiring lockdowns to be rapidly reinstated.
- Alternatively, **Flattened Curve** envisions a measured approach, with reopening taking place over months not days.
- But companies shouldn't count on a smooth return. **Prolonged Chaos** warns that business may be swamped by people eager to get back to work despite continued risks. In short, the prospects for reopening are far from certain.

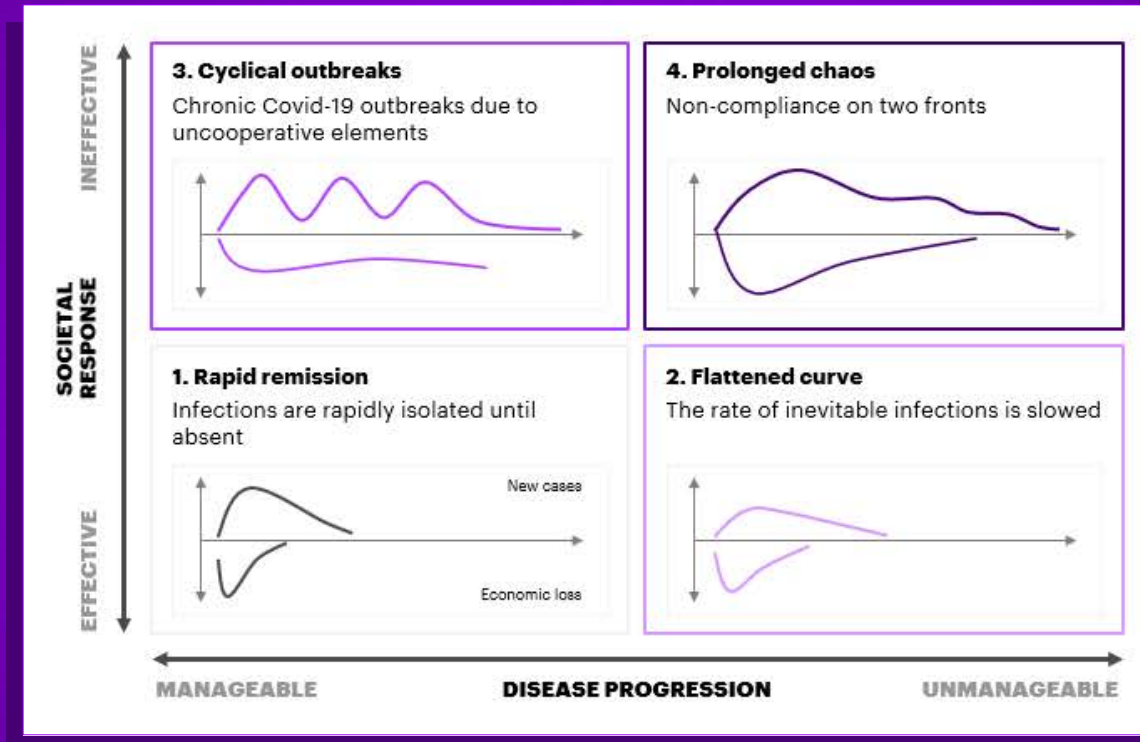
Four potential scenarios

Cyclical Outbreaks

Infections are controlled in past locations but spread to new hot spots and rebound in old. Patience wears thin with social distancing, opening societal fissures.

Rapid Remission

The disease is contained, and life returns to normal swiftly. Government measures work quickly to stabilize the economy.



Source: Accenture Research analysis.

Prolonged Chaos

Effects to control the virus seem useless. Governments and societies are strained to the point of breaking. The economy is limited to necessities only and inflation soars.

Flattened Curve

The rate of infections is slowed but does not go into remission. The economy shrinks in near permanent ways. Society bends but does not break, pulling together to sustain government measures.

Each scenario presents risks for the reopening

SCENARIO	MAJOR RISK	POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS
Rapid Remission	A too fast restart leads to catastrophic success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unfulfilled demand / labour shortages• Social unrest in the demand for fast openings• Customer and employee disregard for social distancing and other restrictions/testing
Flattened Curve	Fast-moving competitors steal market share from incumbents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow return to previous levels of demand• Opportunities for customers to switch to alternative suppliers/substitutes• Pressure to not disappoint loyal customers
Cyclical Outbreaks	Supply chain whiplash, coupled with managerial chaos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unprecedented supply and demand volatility• Inability to plan inventories, labor scheduling• Deep employee and customer discouragement• Business planning chaos
Prolonged Chaos	Revenue and profit failures lead to debt crunch and business collapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of revenues and high costs hinder investment in reopening• Opening efforts distract from longer term planning needed for a long lasting financial/business crisis• Entire categories/industries remain collapsed and unlikely to return to business in their old form• Mental health toll on workers holds back employee engagement

Given these circumstances, companies need to



Navigate scenario uncertainties...

Given the range of potential scenarios for the evolution of the crisis, companies will need to be prepared to change course on a dime. Any steps that are taken to reopen should therefore be easily reversible and scalable.



...while they mitigate immediate challenges...

Employees are likely to be concerned about the prospect of physical interaction while the virus is still circulating. Companies will therefore need to ensure that they provide a safe and secure work environment, communicating with their workforce transparently to build trust.

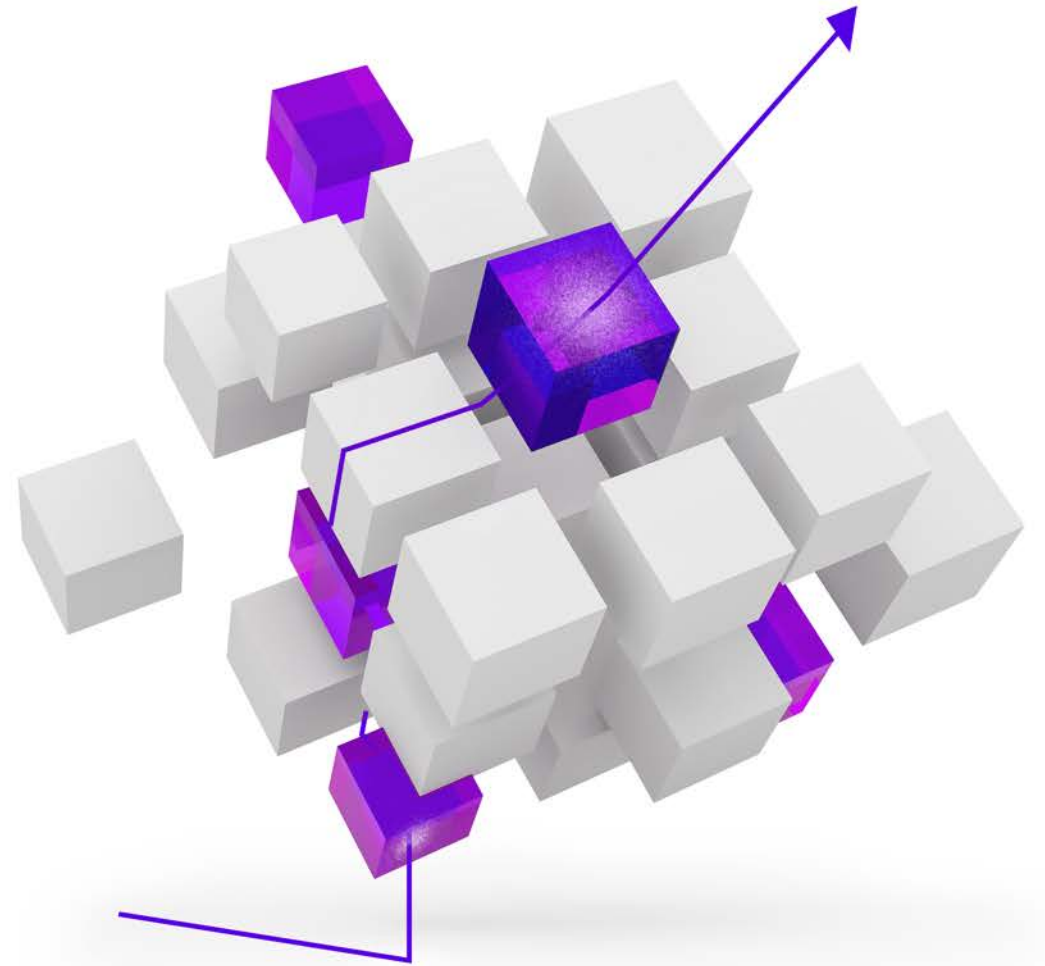


...and build a better future

Companies should not reopen by reverting to old ways. Employees have adapted to new ways of working—some of which they may prefer. New processes and capabilities are a stepping stone to longer-term business transformation. The reopening is an opportunity to create a better future for employees and customers.

**Therefore,
companies
should commit
to a program
of active
reinvention,
right now**

Not just Re(opening): A New Beginning



What needs to happen

A program of active reinvention that outmaneuvers uncertainty starts with these five areas

01

Put people first

Knowing what is really going on in the lives of employees is essential to creating the next generation successful business.

Technology, processes and employees will need to become even more truly human in how they interact with people.

It starts with responsible leadership.

02

Design spaces that work

Companies must create a safe working environment that gives people confidence to return to work premises and to adjust to the new virtual / physical hybrid way of working.

Support for employee well-being and mental health is a priority. The future workplace will also need new approaches to security.

03

Solve in phases

The reopening is just the start. Companies should plan for a phased return that responds to unforeseen events, slippage, and reversals.

Companies should see this not as a time to return to “normal”, but an opportunity to rethink, reengineer and improve future operations.

04

Commit to an Elastic Cost Structure

Having secured short-term liquidity, companies will need to focus on the longer-term financial health and affordability of the business.

That means moving from rapid cost reductions to building a resilient cost management mindset, and from balance sheet protection to long-term investment.

05

Get Future-Ready

The secret to the long-term success of reopening lies in building new capabilities: fresh approaches to innovation, supported by more holistic technology strategies that support innovation at scale.

Purpose, empathy and agility must be at the center of new customer growth opportunities.

01 Put people first Place caring at the core

For all the importance given to empathy and inclusion in recent years, many companies have prioritized efficient interaction. Today, we see that true shared humanity at work can make all the difference. Companies need to go beyond the transactional to truly know and understand their employees if they want to create productive, inclusive and rewarding working environments for the long haul.

COMPANIES NEED TO:

Communicate with compassion and confidence

- Our COVID-19 consumer research found that over 64% of the global workforce is facing high anxiety over their personal job security.¹ The return to work will throw up new uncertainties as traditional social spaces and moments are no longer possible.
- Communicate early, often, and with compassion.
- Put in place inclusive processes to proactively seek feedback from employees. Giving them a voice is crucial to maintaining morale.
- Find the right 'glocal' mix of leadership, delegating where appropriate but providing central guidance and coordination. Take into account cultural differences and local reopening policies.

Build trust with your people through your purpose

- A recent study showed that 62% of people trust their employer to respond responsibly to COVID-19.² Living your purpose motivates people to persevere with a challenging journey of change.
- When a single person could put the health of others at risk, a collective sense of purpose and conscience encourages all to commit to the safety and wellbeing of colleagues.
- Trust, in turn, enables the use of new health-oriented processes and technology without concerning employees on data privacy issues.

Address the deeper needs of insecure workers

- Nearly 70% of workers are missing the social interaction they obtained from their workplaces. Of furloughed workers, 67% report a decline in their mental health since the outbreak began, compared to 48% of laid off employees.³
- Turn furloughed workers into flexible workers, retraining them in skills that will enable them to refocus on areas of higher demand. Offer learning programs and career pathways to affected people.

Care about more than your employees' work problems

- Too many companies still practice industrial revolution principles of workforce management. Employees appreciate being valued for their uniqueness.
- Deepen your understanding of people's circumstances and feelings to truly tailor work environments and experiences to their needs. This will require new levels of confidentiality, privacy and security in your interactions.
- Offer life coaches, mental health support and wellbeing programs to help grieving employees or those managing stress, such as those caring for elderly patients and partners of key workers. Honor losses. And ensure leaders share their own COVID-19 experiences.

Support households, not just employees

- Work may open, but schools and elderly care may not. 67% of American children under six have all available parents participating in the workforce.⁴
- Revisit policies, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, such as temporary workers, people with disabilities, single parents or those who lack adequate health benefits.
- Leverage the many technology platforms that help match workers with safe childcare options during the crisis.

Keeping people employed

A group of leading companies from multiple industries has formed [People + Work Connect](#), an employer-to-employer initiative that brings together companies laying off or furloughing people with those companies in urgent need of workers.

The business-to-business platform enables companies that are best positioned to rapidly share the experience and skills of their laid-off or furloughed workforces to connect at no cost with other companies that are seeking workers.

People + Work Connect was designed by CHROs from Accenture, Lincoln Financial Group®, ServiceNow® and Verizon®. The initiative is powered by Accenture's analytics-driven platform.

02

Design spaces that work

Ensure a safe working environment

The pandemic has forced the fastest reallocation of labor since World War II. Returning to work will not be as easy. It will not be determined by market demand alone, but by readiness and confidence of employees. The organizational need to reopen will be just one factor.

COMPANIES NEED TO:

Sustain new digital workers

- Remote work has become the new norm for many and is likely to be so for the foreseeable future.
- Our COVID-19 research shows people are willing to work remotely: 75% of workers felt they had an appropriate home space to do their job; 49% of people who never worked from home now plan to do so more frequently in the future. But more than 50% still have not yet established a good work from home routine.⁵
- Redesign work so that it can be completed more effectively from home. Train managers to manage hybrid virtual / physical teams.

Rethink physical space and reframe needs

- Create not just a safe environment, but a comfortable and stress-managed one as well.
- Limit physical contact and enable more flexible use of space (e.g., operate shift hours). Segment key workers who must be physically present on the frontlines from those who can work remotely.
- Train staff on new processes and protocols, as well as how to use personal protective equipment properly.

Help to secure the workplace of partners

- I'm safe, your safe, we're safe – most companies now have an obligation to think beyond their employees. Many industries require physical interactions with supply chain partners. Think grocery supplier deliveries and sales calls.
- Seek to quickly understand and meet your legal obligations as well as supply chain partner expectations.
- Consider the role of chief medical officer to manage health protocols for the organization and its interaction with the wider ecosystem.

Put security at the heart of workplace design

- As the nature of the workplace is redefined, the ability to secure them will be a key test of success.
- Extend protocols for data, network and systems security to manage use of personal devices and new collaboration tools.

Create a new employee contract based on mutual trust

- Increased levels of employee monitoring and new security measures will demand explicit and implicit contracts with employees.
- Demonstrate your trustworthiness with clear commitments to privacy and data security, as well as clear messaging about the intended employee benefits of the new restrictions, monitoring, etc.
- Cultural elements of trust must be cultivated so that employees can be confident that the person next to them is equally committed to every employee's wellbeing and safety as well as their own.

Preparing work premises

Leading organizations are putting in place operations to protect people as they return to work premises. Key actions cover three areas:

Health & safety protocols

- Controlled access and separation
- Temperature screening
- Staggered start and shift arrangements
- Catering and kitchen protocols
- Deep cleaning
- Protocols for visitors and deliveries

Social Distancing Guidelines

- Managing flow at entry and exit
- Distance markers in offices, lobbies and elevators
- One-way corridors and marked lanes in high traffic areas
- Disabling common touch screen surfaces
- Minimum space between desks

Office and employee supplies

- Disposable and reusable masks and gloves
- Sanitizer dispensers
- Disposal bins
- Thermal temperature readers

03

Solve in phases Redesign for business as unusual

Returning to full operations will not happen overnight. Companies must plan for a staged return, with room for slippage and unforeseen events. They need an agile operating model that provides flexibility to rapidly pivot to a remote-enabled workforce in response to dynamic market conditions. They must also be prepared to improve the long-term operations of the business, not just return to “normal.” That requires rethinking old processes and reengineering future-ready ones.

The key is an intelligent operating model—one that’s accelerated by automation, makes data and insights available in an instant and is delivered by an agile workforce.

We believe intelligent operations is a multi-staged journey—underpinned by a set of technologies that drive efficiency and insights—with increasing levels of capability required at each stage to realize outcomes.

COMPANIES NEED TO:

Start with the business strategy

- Align critical processes with the business strategy and strengthen their resiliency.
- Success depends on applying innovative solutions to create an evolved working environment.
- With governments revising policies each day, local leadership and decision-making with central coordination is key.

Employ an agile, elastic workplace model

- Create diverse teams that focus on key priorities across business functions, such as finance and human resources, to resolve new or unexpected issues.
- Quickly identify cross-skilling opportunities.

Shift to a human-machine workforce

- Make transactional processes more digital and focus on value-led, proactive operations—driven by data and analytics—to reduce stress on operations.
- Free up talented people for more critical thinking.

Adopt a distributed global services model

- Use a mixture of service models (office, home, countries and time zones) to de-risk the organization.
- Bring together highly skilled, distributed teams that can log in anytime, anywhere and deliver on customer commitments.

Establish a virtual command center

- Monitor and distribute work across the network in real time using a command center to measure quality, productivity, compliance, insights and intelligence, people engagement and workforce well-being.

Prioritize activities that create fuel for additional growth

- Look to reopen the business components that generate cash/and or profits fastest to fuel new growth streams.
-

Secure the business at every stage of reopening

- Companies should not allow their restart to get ahead of their ability to maintain and secure systems and physical environment.
-

Re-constitute leadership teams for re-invention

- New leadership skills will be needed in the reopening and beyond, requiring a different set of skills and leadership styles.
- Key to the new leadership will be the passion and energy for change and capturing new opportunities. Identify and empower your most entrepreneurial and inclusive leaders.

04

Commit to an Elastic Cost Structure Create the fuel for growth

The priority today is ensuring liquidity to stay in business. But cost management must also be pursued to strengthen long-term growth. As opportunities for inorganic or organic growth are identified, cost structures must be able to flex.

The aim is not to arrive at a final cost level destination, but to create an elastic cost structure that can meet changing needs. Variable costs may therefore be more important than the level of costs. At the heart of this is a culture and the data intelligence needed to manage liquidity and reallocate savings to new opportunities, creating self-healing organizations.

Divestiture may form part of cost reduction strategies, but this may also be a time for targeted M&A to open new opportunities.

COMPANIES NEED TO:

Lock down short-term cost reductions

- Consider second wave cost reductions. Restructure short-term debt to long-term agreements. Reduce SKU complexity to streamline cash management. Variabilize costs, including technology (e.g., software-as-a-service and the cloud), outsourcing and contractors.

Establish elastic cost transformation culture

- Enable elastic cost structures by creating a culture of cost control ownership and a mindset of continual cost assessment. Clearly communicate how cost reduction measures will fuel investment.
- Invest in greater data intelligence to better adjust cost structures and manage liquidity.

Take a long-term, ecosystem view of M&A

- Balance short-term protection of liquidity with long-term investment and M&A need. Determine what M&A opportunities should be seized while distressed assets become available.
- Establish scenario planning of the supplier, customer and competitor landscape to determine M&A and divestiture opportunities.
- Identify how M&A can improve cross-industry ecosystem capabilities that improve agility and resilience.

Manage government programs

- Assess government support programs and possible obligations that could impact long-term liquidity or competitive agility.

05

Get Future-Ready Create next-gen agility

Outmaneuvering uncertainty as you reopen operations requires staying close to the evolving needs of your customers. Rethinking the process of innovation will be at the heart of reinvention.

As important will be the flexible operational and technical capabilities to respond to customer needs. That will require new levels of platform participation, software-as-a-service and cloud technology.

COMPANIES NEED TO:

Listen to your Customers... and respond quickly

- The pandemic has made predicting consumer behavior more difficult. Some of the changes in people's behavior will pass, and others will have a lasting impact.
- Seek to understand and empathize with customers, putting them at the heart of how you design—and constantly evolve—your business and your customer experiences. Build more personal and less transactional experiences.
- Invest in artificial intelligence and other tools to manage customer interaction and to analyze customer behaviors. Provide frontline staff with the data insights they need to personalize experiences and add value.

Reimagining customer experience

Accenture helped [Telefónica](#)® reimagine its experience by optimizing its digital marketing and online sales capabilities. We designed a secure digital environment that helps the company anticipate customer expectations, resulting in highly personalized products and experiences.

End-to-end digital analytics have helped to increase insight, allowing Telefónica to convert leads into sales more efficiently. Through use of digital assistant platforms and call center support, Telefónica is able to unlock sustainable growth for years to come.

The transformation has reduced acquisition costs; increased website visits—particularly from new customers; and driven brand growth, generating more than one million digital purchases.

Establish technology scalability with the cloud

- Before COVID-19, the growing volume of data and the need to manage applications drove migration to the cloud. But efficiencies are just one benefit.
- Now the demands of a larger remote workforce, and the volatile demand for technology increases the need.
- Migrate applications to the cloud at scale. And then embark on new ways—within the cloud environment—to drive innovation in the use of data and applications.

Reinvent security for agile operations

- Manage the risk of large-scale workforce fluctuations. Systems must be more broadly accessible but still secure. Look for supply chain weaknesses, counterfeiting and new cyberthreats in a less secure industry environment.

Build agile autonomy

- Underpin all areas of agility and experimentation with clearer empowerment of individuals and teams.
- Be explicit in permitting greater autonomy, while aligning all people to a common goal.
- Guide leaders on delegation, and procedural changes e.g., to performance management metrics.

Migrating to the cloud

[Del Monte Foods](#)® saw their growth slowing in a highly competitive packaged foods market.

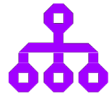
To stand out and prepare for its next phase of growth, Del Monte decided to transform its IT infrastructure and transition to public cloud. They migrated 200 servers to the cloud with minimal business disruption in less than four months.

By embedding new IT and data science capabilities, they have reduced provisioning time from four weeks to less than 60 minutes. Del Monte made capital savings that can be reallocated in the company's growth strategy.

Reinventing for Agility and Resilience: Enabling Capabilities



01 Put people first



Shared workforce resilience

Be transparent with your people about changing work opportunities. As roles are disrupted, focus on skills not jobs.

- Build AI-based processes to help predict skills demand in immediate and adjacent markets.
- Connect workers with job opportunities at scale, either internally or across your ecosystem and multiple industries, using platforms.
- Accelerate learning by curating updated program choices. Maximize adoption with AI-enabled personalized learning. Innovate with new experiential techniques (such as VR) to drive engagement. Support people with career pathway advice and career planning.

Read more about [Creating Shared Workforce Resilience](#).



Leadership for the human experience

Implement a leadership program to give people confidence and support as they experience the new working environment.

- Address your people's mental, physical and relational needs.
- Elevate consciously compassionate leaders to lead the charge and use them to coach others in empathy and communications skills.
- Give greater prominence to the organization's purpose and values, particularly its commitments to its people.

Read more about [how leaders can build human resilience](#).

02 Design spaces that work



Physical location reset

Implement a comprehensive strategy to protect your people while ensuring stability of services. The reset must be dynamic, flexing to the ebb and flow of the pandemic. Key elements include:

- Central guidelines to ensure consistency and governance, while premises align with local laws. In time, shift to a more decentralized approach.
- Core deliverables: health & safety protocols and supplies, social distancing, shift patterns, management of space, and medical support.
- Protocols must cover the interaction of your people with third party premises, staff and customers. Training and communication plans are vital to execution.
- New protocols for social interaction directed at improving morale, whether through expanded seating areas, or virtual celebrations.

Read more about [Pressing the Reset Button on Location Strategy](#).



Physical/virtual workplace enablement

Create a highly extendable workplace environment with digital technology and processes that empower your people to maintain business continuity as they transition between working at home and in the office.

- Ensure networks and collaboration technologies can adjust to rapidly changing work patterns.
- Be transparent and communicative with your people
- Encourage cultural change and adoption through change champions and self-serve training.

Read more about creating an [Elastic Digital Workplace](#).

02 Design spaces that work



Physical and data security

Relying on pre—or post—COVID remote working protocols won't be sufficient as the initial lockdown ends, given unpredictable work patterns.

Key steps:

- A Zero-Trust model to ensure secure access to multiple-cloud solutions and individually owned devices.
- Continuously monitor security abnormalities using automation and analytics.
- Increase staff awareness of new cyberthreats.
- Put in place new protocols for securing locations and people to help prevent bad actors exploiting unfamiliar work patterns and employee traffic.

Read more about [achieving cyber resilience](#).



Trusted Track and Trace

Organizations need to build on existing security processes by tracking the wider movement of their people. This will help protect employees and those of partner organizations. In future, adding health status information may be necessary. The systems could complement public sector schemes or help protect companies in terms of their liabilities.

- Consider blockchain-based systems to maintain individual privacy and security of health status data.
- Set trusted and transparent policies for the use of the data.
- Set thresholds for the level of acceptable risk and the implications for entry and movement.

03 Solve in phases



Data-driven design

Leverage data-driven design thinking in the boardroom to outline possible futures, no-regret moves and tactics. Revisit your scenarios regularly. Consider inviting customers, regulators, partners and others to the table.

Read more about Accenture's [Customer Innovation Network](#).



Living supply chains

Create intelligent and holistic value chains by integrating marketing, sales and support functions with new data streams to sense and adapt to less predictable market dynamics.

- Broaden data sources to include social media, application usage and location data to better track market signals and make insights readily available through enterprise analytics.

Read more about [Supply Chain Management and Operations](#).

03 Solve in phases



Agile, flexible operations

Adopt and adapt distributed global services models to respond at scale to the pandemic's evolution. Accenture has enabled itself to support its own virtual teams, despite the organization not having a headquarters.

- Use distributed global services models and advanced data solutions to automate routine process tasks and allocate talent across regions or time zones. We helped a multinational food and beverage company generate nearly \$30m in savings by automating their procurement processes, and our work with a global hotel chain reduced the time it takes to process an invoice from 15 days to one.

Read more about [advanced business process solutions](#).

Capabilities in action

With surging unemployment filings, we helped the **Texas Workforce Commission** build and implement an AI-powered virtual assistant in just five days. The virtual assistant is making a big impact in Texas, handling 380,000 sessions and more than a million questions from citizens in its first week of operation.

A major benefits and insurance provider is developing a real-time response system, supported by AI, which will continuously scan job boards, credit reporting services and social media for insights on more than 25 million SMB customers.

American Express® recently invested in default and collections data-driven decision-making, which will enable it to make targeted, proactive offers to cut prices and recoup payment from struggling cardholders, avoid third-party collections and maintain hard-won loyalty.⁷



Safeguarding liquidity

Having identified immediate cost savings, now is the time to reset the cost baseline for the new reality.

- Apply analytics and behavioral modeling to help predict the impact of business decisions on liquidity.
- Variabilize costs e.g., by shifting technology to the cloud or outsourcing non-core activities.
- To make zero-based cost strategies more effective, implement and sustain a broader culture of cost ownership.

Read more on [zero-based mindset](#) to manage liquidity.



Fuel growth with new investments

Take advantage of market disruption and distress by considering how to apply cost savings to new growth opportunities. Evaluate adjacent markets.

- During the 2008 recession, US retailer Target focused on strengthening its position in food and increased the number of own-brand products. During the recession, Market Pantry sales increased by 30% and today food retail accounts for one-fifth of Target's sales.⁷



First mover M&A advantage

While large-scale M&A may be off the table due to financial constraints, other opportunities exist.

Identify small-scale, opportunistic M&A to acquire discrete / niche capabilities or talent that will generate long term value.

- Take a value-chain view to M&A to consider how securing cross-industry ecosystem capabilities could improve longer-term competitive agility and resilience.

Read more about [Rebalancing for Resilience with M&A](#).

05 Get Future-Ready



Next generation systems scalability

Most companies have moved to the cloud. But being in the cloud is insufficient. Having reduced costs in some parts of the business, now is the time to scale cloud adoption across the enterprise.

Migrate at scale to the cloud, starting with your IT landscape as is.

- Then manage the IT landscape in the cloud environment to make improvements and efficiencies. Initial benefits should focus on the ability to flex applications and technology in response to surges or reductions in demand during the post-COVID recovery.
- Invest in and govern the technology, skillsets and process change required to underpin cloud strategy.

Read more about [getting full value from the cloud](#).



Future systems

As companies seek cost efficiencies and greater performance, leaders are beginning to execute enterprise-wide technology transformations that replace fragmented initiatives of the past.

- Shift to Future Systems applying technologies across traditional silos to improve multiple processes at a time.
- Decouple data, infrastructure and applications to achieve greater flexibility.
- Accelerate the shift to the cloud.

Read more about building [Future Systems](#).

05 Get Future-Ready



Empathetic customer experience

There are three steps to becoming customer empathic:

- **Understand how your customers have changed.** Pull together existing data sources and those of partners. Use online research methods to understand new behaviors and trends that inspire them. Work with SMEs to explore and understand together.
- **Reassess your purpose.** Reflect on and renew your purpose as an organization – including what you have permission to do in times of crisis (“crisis purpose”). Embody your purpose in your actions and your words.
- **Develop an organization with EQ.** Develop experience teams’ emotional intelligence (EQ) to better understand people’s changing behaviors, drawing on all three sources of data: big data, thick data (deep insights on people), and broad data (contextual and market trends). Constantly update sources and put into action across the board.

Read more about [building the brand with purpose](#).



Build your innovation muscle

There's never been a better time to grow value-focussed Innovation capability close at the front-line of the business. Use this capability to rapidly experiment with solutions to improve the core business while rapidly testing new products and services. Invite customers, suppliers, partners and start-ups to join you.

Read more about Accenture’s [Customer Innovation Network](#).

Goodbye reopening, hello reinvention

Reopening will be more than a restart. It will be the beginning of a new era of business. The rules have changed. Employee and customer behaviors have changed.

But this creates new opportunities for organizations with the courage and foresight to change more than immediate needs demand. For example, many companies have moved partly to the cloud. But, having reduced costs in some parts of the business, now is the time to reinvent and scale cloud adoption across the enterprise, creating variable costs and increasing resilience. Those that can reinvent themselves—their processes, customer experiences, employee and social contracts, and do so in ways that further their purpose—will win.

Outmaneuvering uncertainty—by mitigating immediate challenges while building a better future—will create organizations that one day look back on the crisis as the darkness before the dawn.

Contacts



Simon Eaves
Chief Strategy Officer



Annette Rippert
Group Chief Executive,
Strategy and Consulting



Eva Sage-Gavin
Senior Managing Director, Global Lead –
Talent & Organizational / Human Potential



Keith Lippiatt
Senior Managing Director,
Accenture Technology



Rachael Bartels
Senior Managing Director, Global Lead –
Enterprise Function Networks & Programs



Trevor Gruzin
Senior Managing Director, AAPAC Lead,
Accenture Strategy, and Growth & Strategy
Lead for Growth Markets



Paul Nunes
Managing Director, Thought Leadership,
Accenture Research



Margaret Smith
Managing Director,
Global Geographic Services and
Business Operations

If you would to discuss your plans to reopen your operations, please contact returntowork@accenture.com

Contributors

The authors would like to thank Tawfik Jarjour, Matthew McGuinness and Mike Moore for their contribution to the publication.

References

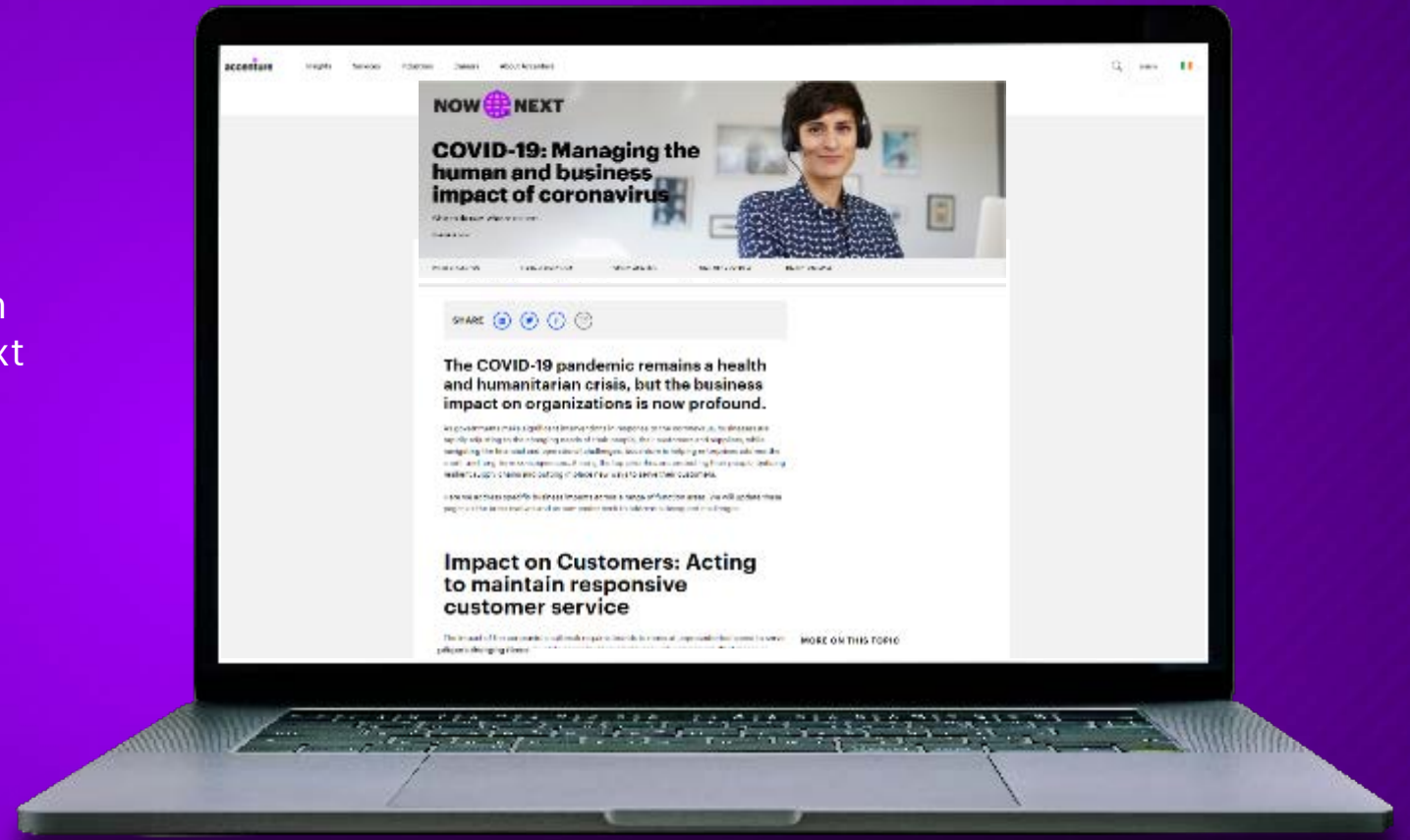
1. Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Pulse, conducted 19th – 25th March, 2020
2. Edelman, [“Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report on COVID-19 Demonstrates Essential Role of the Private Sector,”](#)
3. [Cassie Weber, Furloughed workers are less happy than those laid off during the coronavirus, Quartz, April 17, 2020](#)
4. [Childcare should be top priority for first wave of reopening, The Early Care and Education Consortium, April 16, 2020](#)
5. Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Pulse, conducted 19th – 25th March, 2020
6. Sarah Silbert, [“In Response to the Coronavirus, Credit Card Issuers like Amex and Capital One are Letting Customers Skip Payments Without Interest and More,” Business Insider, April 2, 2020.](#)
7. Luisa Beltran, [“‘Cash is King Again.’ What Coronavirus Means for Mergers and Acquisitions,” Barron’s, March 23, 2020.](#)

To help our clients navigate both the human and business impact of COVID-19, we've created a hub of all of our latest thinking on a variety of topics.

Each topic highlights specific actions which can be taken now, and what to consider next as industries move towards a new normal.

From leadership essentials to ensuring productivity for your employees and customer service groups to building supply chain resilience and much more, our hub will be constantly updated. Check back regularly for more insights.

[VISIT OUR HUB HERE](#)



About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 509,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

Visit us at www.accenture.com

DISCLAIMER: This document is intended for general informational purposes only and does not take into account the reader’s specific circumstances, and may not reflect the most current developments. Accenture disclaims, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, any and all liability for the accuracy and completeness of the information in this presentation and for any acts or omissions made based on such information. Accenture does not provide legal, regulatory, audit, or tax advice. Readers are responsible for obtaining such advice from their own legal counsel or other licensed professionals.

Copyright © 2020 Accenture All rights reserved.

Accenture, its logo, and New Applied Now are trademarks of Accenture.