



unity

kjær
GLOBAL

FUTURE OF THE WORKPLACE 2030+

GUIDE | [unity.com](https://www.unity.com)

INTRODUCTION

As a company committed to delivering excellence in the digital workplace and innovation at the edge of digital frontiers, Unily, creators of digital workplace platforms have joined forces with the futurists Kjaer Global to explore how the future of work & workplaces will unfold over the coming decade.

The future of work will be defined by personalised solutions, wellbeing and a focus on culture and inclusivity. Workplace learning will be as essential, and potentially also as natural, as breathing. Technology will augment people and organisations alike to open up pathways to improve employee experience and engagement – leading to greater productivity, creativity and innovation. Work is already being untied from space and time and, while this freedom is liberating and empowering, the future challenge

is to create social cohesion and engagement for an increasingly liquid and distributed workforce. New organisational models require autonomy and flat management structures underpinned by purpose- and values-driven leadership. There will be lessons to learn and barriers to overcome in order to achieve the meaningful workplace of the future we want to see – one that delivers value for organisations, individuals and society alike.

Introduction	02
Contributors	04
Executive summary	06
Chapter 1: The Emotional Workplace	08
Snapshot of the future	08
The Emotional dimension of work	10
Chapter 2: The Physical Workplace	14
Snapshot of the future	14
The physical workplace	16
Chapter 3: The Technological Workplace	18
Snapshot of the future	18
Technology revolutions shaping our modern world	20
Chapter 4: The Purposeful Workplace	24
Snapshot of the future	24
Businesses driving tomorrowsagenda of change	26
Chapter 5: Job Titles of the Future	30
This Changes Everything – Work in a Post-Pandemic World	32

The methodology

In determining the future of the workplace, we chose the horizon towards 2030 – stretching the imagination, but not so distant that it would be impossible to arrive at plausible future scenarios. Bench-marking current knowledge enables us to spot potential new directions, and our findings are a synthesis of extensive analysis of media, white papers and reports. We also opened up the conversation to a diverse group of visionaries, experts and industry leaders to deep dive on specific subjects throughout 2019 – these interviews provided ideas, insights and context.

Unily founders Will Saville and Richard Paterson, Sam Hassani, Chief Technology Officer and Jo Skilton, Chief Commercial Officer at Unily provided an insider’s perspective on ground-breaking digital transformations we will see in the workplace in the coming decade.

Other key contributors include: Seth Godin, Author, Entrepreneur and Marketing business expert; Stephane Charbonnier, Chief Human Resources Officer, L’Oréal; Tony Sanchez, Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars; Tushar Mhaske, Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell; Araceli Camargo, Cognitive neuroscientist and David Bent, Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT) and Timo Mashiyi-Veikkola, Futurist and Anthropologist.

About Unily

Founded in 2005, Unily creates award-winning digital workplaces designed to improve collaboration, engage a geographically spread workforce and increase productivity – transforming the way companies communicate and engage with their employees. Its solution combines the best social channels, apps, communication tools and software packages in one place. The Company services a portfolio of FTSE 250 and Fortune 500 clients, spanning a diverse range of sectors (e.g. financial services, aviation and FMCG), including McDonald’s, British Airways, Mars, Shell, Cathay Pacific, Microsoft and L’Oréal. Unily currently employs 120 people across the UK, America and the Far East.

About Kjaer Global

Kjaer Global was established in 1988. Our founder Anne Lise Kjaer began her career in design, living and working in Paris and her native Denmark before relocating to Hamburg. During this time design trends and forecasting became the core expertise. In 1992, already well established internationally, Kjaer Global opened its London studio, evolving its Trend Management system over the succeeding decades to help companies with their leadership and innovation strategies. We have developed a set of practical trend toolkits to understand trends and navigate the future. Our methodology is recognised globally for its contribution to successful trend mapping and scenario planning. Today, our multidisciplinary consultancy consists of a diverse team and network of international practitioners. They all draw on the principles from our ground-breaking book *The Trend Management Toolkit: A Practical Guide to the Future* published by Palgrave Macmillan. Our trend intelligence and insights stems from our data-driven and evidence-based research. To identify core drivers of change we draw on our local experts and informants, ensuring deep regional and ‘insider’ knowledge in a meaningful trend ecosystem. All our projects are led by senior team members and supported by our specialist team, both in-house and around the world. Over time we have built a dynamic and extended network, carefully selected team across regions.

How to read the report

The **Future Snapshots** are scenarios of plausible future developments, but we have structured the report to put the future into context. Under each snapshot section are **Status Quo** and **New Era** sections – outlining current conversations and future concerns. Using the Kjaer Global trend management methodology for research and analysis allows us to structure the report on four distinct pillars. **The Emotional Workplace** is concerned with the emotional aspects of work: culture, wellbeing, social capital, trust. **The Physical Workplace** examines the future of physical offices – evolving roles and purpose, and even if we will need offices in the future. **The Technological Workplace** is where we explore how technology will foster new business models, ways to work and employee experiences. Finally, we consider the **Purposeful Workplace**, including evolving ideas of leadership, organisational models, value(s) and employee engagement. To round off the four dimensions, we have suggested **Future Job Titles** – a synthesis of our research with some directly suggested through our expert interviews.

CONTRIBUTORS



Anne Lise Kjaer
 Founder, Kjaer Global

Anne Lise is a renowned futurist and entrepreneur. In 1988 she founded Kjaer Global, a trend management & ideas consultancy providing organisations with insights to understand the future, drive innovation and guide strategy work.

Over the years she has worked with clients that include Amazon, BBC, Dell, E&Y, Huawei, IKEA, KMPG, UNICEF, Volvo and Wired. As well as contributing to numerous academic papers and publications, Anne Lise Kjaer is a regular media commentator on trends and has featured on BBC, CNN and Aljazeera. Kjaer was in the 2012 Ericsson documentary: The Networked Society. In 2015 she was one of seven top futurists the Huffington Post featured with their predictions for the next decade in technology.



Richard Paterson
 Co-Founder, Unily

Rich joined forces with Will Saville to launch Unily in 2005. Having started as a SharePoint consultancy, Unily is now a serious challenger brand in the fast-growth global digital workplaces sector. Prior to this, Rich was a software architect for Saville Consulting and SHL Group.



Will Saville
 Co-Founder, Unily

Will founded Unily with Richard Paterson in 2005 to help organisations get the most from collaboration technologies like SharePoint and Yammer. He has since turned it into a global business that makes the next generation of digital workplaces for an enviable client list of FTSE 250 and Fortune 500 companies.



Seth Godin
 Author, entrepreneur and marketing business expert

Seth is a business visionary and author of 19 bestselling books. He's also the founder of the altMBA and The Marketing Seminar, online workshops that have transformed the work of thousands of people. His radical approach to business and marketing has earned him a coveted spot in the Marketing Hall of Fame.



Stephane Charbonnier
 Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

Stephane Charbonnier joined the L'Oréal USA team in 2013. As the Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer he is responsible for driving leadership and cultural transformation, developing talent and building an HR team with an "employee centric" approach. He serves on the L'Oréal USA Strategic Committee and Global Human Resources Management Committee.



David bent
 Executive lead Transforming Tomorrow, institute for global prosperity, UCL

David is Executive Lead at 'Transforming Tomorrow: from climate emergency to prosperity', an initiative at UCL. He is chair of the EIRIS Foundation and an Edmund Hilary Fellow. He has advised UNDP on making markets work for the SDGs, the Cabinet Office on inclusive economies, and the Coalition for Urban Transition.



Araceli Camargo
 Cognitive Neuroscientist, Co-Founder & Director Centric Lab

Araceli is the co-founder of The Centric lab, designed to understand how the built environment impacts issues including depression, anxiety, and obesity. Araceli holds an MSc in Cognitive Neuroscience from King's College, where she focused on Autism. She strives to make healthy habitats that provide people with a high quality of life.



Timo Mashiyi-Veikkola
 Futurist, Anthropologist, Innovation Lead And Strategist

Timo started his career as a Senior Futures Specialist at Nokia and was later a futurist at Dell. His work has been focused on listening and translating human insights into technological, digital and design innovations. He is currently an Amsterdam-based freelance consultant, working with global brands across multiple sectors.



Tushar Mhaske
 Global Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell

Tushar is an experienced integrated energy professional and has worked in various energy sectors such as Trading, Retail and Corporate Functions. In his current position as Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, HR & Corporate Functions, Tushkar focuses on solving business problems with a technology lens.



Anthony Sanchez
 Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars

Tony has been with Mars for 8 years. In his role as Business Partner, Tony works closely with his functional area senior leaders to build a strategy for growth through digital tools. With robust road mapping and by incorporating industry-leading technologies, Tony is able to support business growth and innovation.



Sam Hassani
 Chief Technology Officer, Unily

Sam began his career as a Microsoft keynote speaker, representing the company at conferences including Tech-ed and Ignite. In 2013 he joined Unily as a Principal Consultant, moving to the position of Chief Technology Officer in 2018. Today, Sam is responsible for Unily's technology strategy to support product growth.



Joanne Skilton
 Chief Commercial Officer, Unily

Jo joined Unily in 2018 with over 20 years' experience in senior commercial, customer facing roles for FTSE100 companies. She brings a strategic perspective to the business and as Chief Commercial Officer is responsible for its commercial growth. Jo has held senior positions with BAA Plc, McArthur Glen, INTU, Battersea Power Station and BNP Paribas.

A special thanks to Kjaer Global's:

- Louise Loecke Foverskov (research & writing)
- Harald Brekke (expert interviews)
- Libby Norman (editing)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We live in an era of exponential change, so what will the jobs and workplaces of tomorrow be like? When, where and how will we work? Then there's the even bigger question: why we will work at all? For this report, created by Unily and Kjaer Global, a ten-year horizon was chosen. This is challenging, when technology and AI are moving so fast, but the road to the future is being mapped out today. Our vision of work and workplaces in 2030+ is underpinned by knowledge culled from analysis of white papers, media and reports – alongside 'deep dive' interviews with a diverse group of visionaries, experts and industry leaders. Findings are considered through the frame of the emotional, physical, technological and purposeful dimensions of tomorrow's workplaces.



1. The Emotional Workplace

We have a much clearer idea of how to achieve work-life balance. AI helps us work to our strengths and gives practical support with admin, reducing 'noise' and enhancing innovation and productivity. Suggesting breaks, tailoring nutritional boosts and offering guided workouts or meditation are all part of the physical and digital working landscape.

People want to work for organisations that lead on positive change, also expecting to be given a voice. For this reason, culture is now top leadership priority, allowed to develop from bottom up but requiring consistent vision and behaviours to communicate company values and traditions. Emotional intelligence, self-regulation and self-awareness are prized attributes now that more people are working remotely or are hired by project or contract. Variable work patterns – including shorter working hours for some – benefit wellbeing, inclusivity and productivity, so workplaces are adapted to suit variable schedules. Organisations contribute to employee wellbeing; this includes their financial stability, since unstable finances are a major source of stress.

2. The Physical Workplace

Head office has moved from statement of corporate power to social hub for cultural cohesion and values sharing. Workplace design is optimised – desks are self-cleaning and smart textiles change colour to match mood or task. Biophilic offices mimic natural environments, while outdoor workspaces help redress the nature deficit. Walkshops and standing meetings are still popular, but AR and VR are the new ideation tools – a team brainstorm on Mars, the floor of the Pacific or the plains of Patagonia never fails to inspire.

Neuro-diversity is recognised, and welcoming people on the autistic spectrum and those with other special needs broadens the talent pool. As a result, silence rooms and quiet times have become as vital as meeting spaces – and benefit everyone. Employees use them to nurture creative skills or as a space to think, catch up with family or take a nap.

3. The Technological Workplace

The smart workplace is a human/tech partnership where the sum is greater than its parts. Organisations are borrowing the best approaches from business schools and start-up incubators to focus on autonomy in the innovation process. Employees lead on 'think and do'. And forget 20% time – a winning pitch is supported for as long as it takes to make it fly. Now that workplaces are more

fluid, human resources operate rather like the circular economy of material resources. Boomerang employees have become a valuable part of the mix – leaving for a while to explore different avenues then returning to share knowledge and re-energise their colleagues.

It has been recognised that imagination, relationship skills and creativity – as well as willingness to take risks – underpin innovation and this is fuelled by smart tech. Continual learning is vital, but the focus is on 'learning to learn'. Knowledge is delivered in intuitive, bite-sized and tailored portions. Employees are supported by AI, with PDAs (personal digital assistants) mentoring and coaching them for new roles – even facilitating 'brain dates' between employees.

4. The Purposeful Workplace

Companies now fulfil roles traditionally managed by policymakers (health, learning, sustainability) and are forging cross-industry alliances. Betterness is good business, so impact investments – designed to bring measurable societal benefits alongside financial return – have gone mainstream. Gen Z – now an influential part of the workforce – demand that organisations 'walk the talk'. As digital natives, they love the novelty of IRL (in real life) experiences, meaning they favour organisations with great cultures, spaces and locations.

Rigid and complex hierarchies have been swept away, with leadership redefined as a more relational role. Key functions are to drive purpose, inspire employees and keep strategy agile. Management is flatter, with power devolved to teams and networks. This autonomy is underpinned with clear and transparent rules and expectations that link back directly to the organisation's purpose and vision. In other words, people know what their company expects without having to look it up in a manual.

Conclusion

By 2030, workplaces will be defined by personalised solutions, wellbeing and a focus on culture, autonomy and inclusivity. Work is already being untied from space and time and, while this freedom is liberating and empowering, there are challenges ahead. In particular, how do organisations respond when walls have come tumbling down between physical and digital, the workforce is more disparate and demanding than ever and the new rule is to expect change and keep on learning? The answer is to keep the core principle of purposeful leadership at the heart of everything. Future workplaces require visionary leaders, and they will be those people who want to be not only 'best in the world' but 'best for the world'.

CHAPTER 1: THE EMOTIONAL WORKPLACE

Inclusivity, diversity, trust and wellbeing define current conversations about work. Innovative culture flourishes when people connect and collaborate, while being allowed to challenge workplace norms. Emotional intelligence and creative thinking are crucial soft skills in tomorrow's workplace.

Snapshot from the future

The personalised workplace

By 2030 we have a much better understanding of how to maintain work-life balance. People have personal profiles powered by AI and based on data harvested through devices, wearables and IoT objects at home and work. Deep-data profiles empower people by helping them understand when and how they work best. This includes practical support – from managing administration and routine communications to auditing work undertaken and offering positive suggestions. Time 'wasted' on emails, meetings and other interruptions of the workflow is minimised by clever composition of physical spaces and digital solutions.

Work less – work smarter

Work days will be shorter for those who choose this route, and organisations will commit to reskilling and lifelong learning to ensure staff keep pace with new jobs as they emerge. Both physical and digital workplaces will offer real-time feedback on wellness and healthy work practices – suggesting breaks, tailoring nutritional boosts to job role and offering guided workouts or meditation. Participation in healthy workplace choices will count as part of productivity and as a gateway for more demanding senior roles.

Clear processes and collaborative tools

The key to positive results is intelligent reduction, making sharing of information and communication timely and empowering, not intrusive and overwhelming. Clear processes and collaborative tools will enhance both innovation capacity and productivity, making information and resource available. AI will link up employees who want / can give help or collaboration on projects, making innovation initiatives more autonomous (and more likely to succeed).



STEPHANE CHARBONNIER

Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

"We'll continue to be uber-connected with what I would call the 'consumer-grade digital experiences' that people have in their personal life; they will have the same expectation in their professional environment, something which very few companies have today."

THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURE

THEN

Culture of utility

We provide you with the tools to do your job.

Culture of productivity

Optimisation and lean processes.

NOW

Culture of engagement

What makes our employees happy at work.

Chief Happiness Officer

Employees are more productive.

NEXT

Culture of meaning

- Asking why do we go to work?
- How can this provide us with meaning?
- Leading to a deeper level of happiness, higher productivity and deeper engagement.
- We care, so we want this organisation to thrive.

THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION OF WORK – THE FUTURE IS PERSONALISATION

Status quo

Workplace culture is the thing everybody talks about

When you ask leaders or employees what defines their success, they tell you: 'our culture'. It's the most important contributor to both failure and success, but society drivers are now aligning to shift work culture significantly. Demographics, diversity and inclusion, skills and talent shortages, automation and evolving technologies are all converging to drive this change.



SETH GODIN

Author, Entrepreneur and Marketing & business expert

"The hard work is to build culture by making non-economic decisions [...] Who do you celebrate, what do you reference when you talk about things? What is it like around here, and too often old-school companies forget that they need to invest in culture, they don't just get to take it."

Gen Z will define cultural shifts in the next decade. While all demographic groups are influencers, younger cohorts challenge employers to evolve, asking: when, how, why and where?



STEPHANE CHARBONNIER

Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

"[Gen Z] will put value on experience [...] and they will probably be the most inclusive generation in history, that we've seen so far. They will have grown up witnessing things in the world and will have very little patience with a world that doesn't accept, and also reflect, diversity. In this sense, they will push and challenge the organisations and raise the bar."

New era

The more things change, the more culture matters

Culture must be at the forefront of leadership priorities in a fast-changing workplace. This requires consistent vision and behaviours, along with clear communication of the values and traditions that underpin the organisation. Social skills and emotional intelligence will be an advantage for workers – the ability to be empathic, to self-regulate and be self-aware will shape a resilient, sustainable work culture.

“ ”

JO SKILTON

Chief Commercial Officer, Unily

“[The workplace] has to be somewhere people want to go, it can’t be false, it’s enabling people to be the best version of themselves.”

“ ”

ANTHONY SANCHEZ

Corporate Systems Business
Partnership Manager, Mars

“Professional tools will be developed to cater for culture, enabling people to be their authentic selves both at home and at work in a comfortable manner.”

Maintaining a positive and inclusive culture will become a challenge

As the workforce becomes increasingly liquid – with more people hired on a project, contractor or freelance basis – culture needs redefining. Communication technology plays an ever-greater role when the physical work space is no longer the norm, so organisations must work harder to enable community-building and collaboration by providing the right platforms for sharing, interaction and innovating.

“ ”

TIMO MASHIYI-VEIKKOLA

Anthropologist,
futurist and strategist

“There will be a lot of new innovations about how to have this face-to-face connection, or just the social side. What we see as remote, as being very autonomous. But what we need in that autonomy is also the inclusion.”

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER,

Chief Human Resources Officer, L’Oréal USA

“How do we keep the workplace as the place for collaboration and networking? For me there’s no replacement – and I don’t think there will be one in the future – for getting physically together to collaborate and create that sort of unique experience that will continue to hook you up and connect employees emotionally.”

“ ”

SAM HASSANI

Chief Technology Officer, Unily

“[It’s] going to become a lot more prevalent to actually engage those employees that may not have a physical location or office – to really engage culture, collaborate and engage the entire workforce regardless of their role and regardless of their location.”

Top-down vision, bottom-up culture

It’s vital to enable passion and engagement with workplace culture to develop from bottom up. While culture cannot be engineered, it is essential for organisations to provide the framework, the ground rules and, most importantly, their vision – a purpose beyond just that of profit and productivity. That framework must include both digital and physical platforms for people to share knowledge and ideas.

“ ”

WILL SAVILLE

Co-Founder, Unily

“It’s not people in the HQ that need to understand the culture so much, if you can push that down into the people on the shop floor, then ultimately your business is going to be so much better because it is all about culture.”

“ ”

TIMO MASHIYI-VEIKKOLA

Anthropologist,
futurist and strategist

“AI will also be ‘Cultural Intelligence’ [and ‘Emotive Intelligence’] where we have translation algorithms and cultural ‘meaning’ software for when we work in different environments.”



“ ”

AI will also be ‘Cultural Intelligence’ [and ‘Emotive Intelligence’] where we have translation algorithms and cultural ‘meaning’ software for when we work in different environments.

”

Timo Mashiyi-Veikkola
Anthropologist, futurist and strategist

Trust is key to a sustainable culture

When trust is high, people are more engaged, happy and productive – factors that help an organisation thrive. The digital and the physical workplaces must be aligned and transparent, so that communications are clear and consistent and both employee and employer see the benefits.



STEPHANE CHARBONNIER,
Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

"The future workplace is going to be even more transparent for a very simple reason: transparency drives trust. And if you think about trust, it also drives engagement in the workplace. Therefore, the more transparent your organisation will be, the more attractive they will become, and the more people will want to work for them."

"Tech provides transparency. People have the right skills but what will derail them is the culture fit – AI will provide a true insight of the company's culture [allowing] virtual visits to the company to see how people are organised. Tech will force companies to be more aligned with their policies, with the way they want to bring people on board."

Increasingly trust will also be linked to how a company engages with society. Recent surveys (e.g. Edelman's Trust Barometer 2019) show that a company's contribution to the betterment of society is a defining factor. For younger generations this is vital – to them there is no distinction between their own values and wider engagement with the world and the organisations they work for. Tomorrow's employees want to work for organisations that lead on positive change, also expecting to be given a voice inside organisations they choose.



WILL SAVILLE,
Co-Founder, Unily

"People are going to speak pretty easily and freely if you give them the right platform – it's actually being able to analyse those conversations and drawing a sentiment out of those, as well as knowledge. You can really glean some interesting ideas and knowledge when open conversations happen."

Work-life will be a series of sprints rather than a marathon

Work-related stress is at an all-time high in the US and UK, so individuals and organisations are trying to redefine the structure and metrics of work to achieve better work-life balance. Just as intermittent fasting can improve health, so variable work patterns may benefit wellbeing and productivity. The suggestion is to break the pattern of working nine to five, instead following a system based around individual tasks, family demands and personal energy levels. With this approach working life will be a series of sprints rather than a marathon, and buildings and workplaces will adapt for unconventional schedules. Existing models addressing work-life balance are the freelance culture and the rise of the gig economy. But while these people have greater autonomy in choosing their work hours and patterns, they can also mean job insecurity. The four-day work-week is also under trial, with many reporting positive results in both productivity and work-life balance. The common theme is that in the future we need to work smarter and personalise work to the individual and their situation.



TIMO MASHIYI-VEIKKOLA,
Anthropologist, futurist and strategist

"We still have a factory mindset that really comes from the Industrial Revolution – we still have a 9-to-5 attitude to work and what we need to accomplish."



"Principles of health and wellbeing is first and foremost about the individual person and with daily support of flexible schedules, sharing of goals, engagement and inspiration we can achieve wellbeing."



Anthony Sanchez,
Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars



Building well(being) capital and lifestyle balance is an investment in the future

As people live and work longer, health becomes our most important capital and workplaces form a vital link in that chain. Inhouse medical clinics, mindfulness suites and running tracks may soon become as big a draw for skilled workers as generous holiday and pension. Offering support for body and mind is a way to help people manage greater work-life integration at their own pace – some will demand clear boundaries while others thrive on being 'always on'.

Intelligent reduction is critical to cutting through distractions and digital noise. 'Curate and Connect' are watchwords for tomorrow's organisations. AI will be an enabler of delivering the right knowledge and information in a timely way, but this means discerning between quality and quantity. Data is just another raw material and critical insight is essential to extract the information that informs good business decisions on operations and employee wellbeing.



STEPHANE CHARBONNIER
Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

"It's Smart Data, it's not about Big Data. How do you make sure you provide your organisation and your people with Smart Data? This is certainly part of the evolution when we think about the jobs of the future."



SAM HASSANI,
Chief Technology Officer, Unily

"[Often] people don't know what they don't know so being able to actually target and automate knowledge that's relevant to specific individuals and the organisation is more important than ever."

Mindful organisations give people time to think

A recent McKinsey report found that employees only spend about 40% of their time on role-specific tasks – the things they were employed to do. Other studies show that pointless emails, meetings and lack of good processes are the main reason why productivity is low. Mindful organisations focus on giving people more freedom, since they know that time to think and greater autonomy fuel innovation. Bracketing the Being in Well(being) means focus on being present at both work and in our personal lives. We are at our best – our most creative and innovative – when we are freed from information overload.



ARACELI CAMARGO
Cognitive neuroscientist and
Co-Founder, Centric Lab

"Companies are going to have to look at wellbeing bi-directionally. First, the wellbeing that companies are providing for their workers whilst they are in their care at work, but equally paying attention to the well-being of employees in their general life."

The workplace will play a greater role in delivering on wellbeing

Organisations will be expected to contribute to the wellbeing of employees, including their financial stability. The caring organisation supports people in balancing their priorities, in their private as well as in their professional lives. This means recognising the diverse lifestyles and family responsibilities of a multi-generational workforce and offering practical and flexible solutions.



STEPHANE CHARBONNIER
Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

"The workplace of the future will be inclusive of all of those groups that are forming wider society today. When we talk about health, financial wellbeing is a key topic [including, for] the sandwich generation, who will have to take care of kids as well as their parents; if you're not financially well, you won't be able to achieve that."



ANTHONY SANCHEZ
Corporate Systems Business Partnership
Manager, Mars

"Principles of health and wellbeing is first and foremost about the individual person and with daily support of flexible schedules, sharing of goals, engagement and inspiration we can achieve wellbeing."

CHAPTER 2: THE PHYSICAL WORKPLACE

Tomorrow's physical offices will foster organic interactions, cross-disciplinary collaboration and personal wellbeing. Head office will change from a statement of corporate power to a social hub for unique employee experiences, cultural cohesion and values sharing.

Snapshot from the future

Take it outside

Walkshops and standing meetings are well known as a way to promote wellbeing and fresh ideas. It has even been shown that ideas flow most freely in the countryside. Most organisations lack easy access to vast wilderness spaces and work teams are more widely distributed, so AR and VR could help. They are already being used successfully in museum and gallery settings to inspire ideation, so how about a team brainstorm on Mars, the floor of the Pacific or the plains of Patagonia?

Smart and personalised

The future smart office creates spaces that are optimised for wellbeing, sustainability and productivity. IoT, beacons and sensors automate the regulation and efficiency of everything from parking spaces to energy use. Your chair will tell you it is time to work standing up or go for a walk. Noise-blocking technology will make headphones obsolete, and you can work to the sound of birdsong or reggae without disturbing co-workers. Sensors in public areas will tell you it is time to stop at the water fountain and bathroom mirrors will give you a mini health assessment. Your desk is self-cleaning and smart textiles double as air fresheners, also changing colour to match your mood or task.

The new 'model village' – tomorrow's work campuses

The original 'Model Village' was pioneered by early industrialists in order to provide decent housing and quality of life as a reward for staff labours, although usually it also had oversight and control of behaviour and morals. Today we have tech-giant campuses, but the future model village may be less about cocooning employees and more about a genuine means to integrate life and work, promote creativity and build alliances. The best will be inclusive and forge strong links with surrounding communities, raising skills and knowledge to build a broad talent base drawn from non-traditional catchment areas.

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER

Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

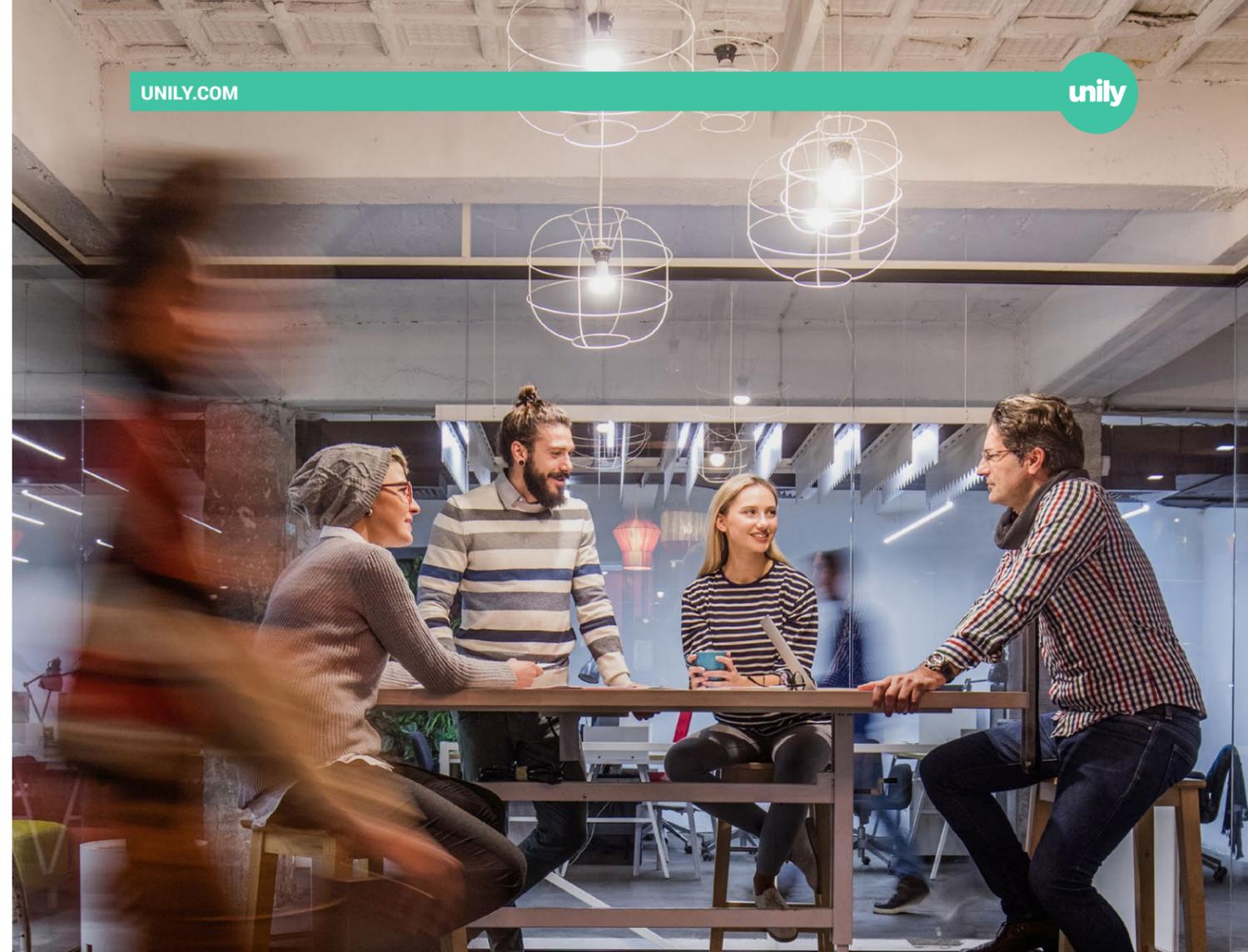
"I believe there will be more campuses and the new norm will be places where people get together and live together to experience something unique. Tribes will come together, and workplaces will become villages. You need to create experiences that bring people together. This whole new workplace is built on trust – without it you can't build anything sustainable."

“ ”

ANTHONY SANCHEZ

Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars

"The head office and physical workplaces will not go away. The headquarters will always be there, like a family home, a place to meet and share value and experiences."



THE EVOLUTION OF THE OFFICE

THEN

Office of Utility

- We provide you with the tools to do your job
- Assembly lines and open space with cubicles
- Minimum interaction.

NOW

The Playful Office

- Hotdesking, play areas and wellness rooms
- Creating playful conditions conducive of innovative, creative thinking

NEXT

The Liquid Office

- Agile spaces for a distributed workforce
- The workplace is a centaur, a hybrid of a physical and digital workspace
- HQ becomes a physical representation of organisational values
- Human-centric design.

WORKPLACE: THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Liquid Office offers the best of digital and physical workspaces. These are agile spaces, being where we are and enabling people to be part of the work community across time and space.

Status quo

Work culture is affected by where we work

The office is continually evolving and tech start-ups have driven a wave of workspace designs that promote collaboration, innovation and healthy living. Around the world, organisations are boosting engagement and motivation using incentives such as breakout zones and play areas. While the current focus is largely stimulation, noisy offices can add to stress, so we will see more companies introducing quiet places to nurture creative skills – languages, music, painting, drawing – as well as providing space to think, catch up with family or take a nap.

Nature deficit and the biophilic office

Most people sit for between 7 and 15 hours a day, leading to a host of physical problems. At the same time, we spend around 90% of our time indoors. Being outside makes people happier, with Stanford researchers also finding that creative output increases by up to 60% while walking. The biophilic office uses plants, texture, water, sound and natural light as central design elements to mimic natural environments. Outdoor office spaces – plus meeting rooms in treehouses and pop-up workplaces in parks and gardens – are other workspace design responses to redress the nature deficit and inspire people.

New era

Anything can be done anytime, anywhere

There has been much talk about the liquid workforce, a workforce that flows to wherever we need it. In response we need liquid offices. But liquid means much more than flexible, it means hybridising the best that digital and physical settings offer. In the digital era, anything can be done anytime, anywhere. But fluidity also means respecting locality – understanding local cultures and traditions while also promoting the organisation's own culture and goals.



DAVID BENT

Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT)

"The possibility that we don't need to tie tribal or status behaviour to things is before us, it doesn't have to be physical."



RICHARD PATERSON

Co-founder, Unily

"[The office] is more than a place where you come to work; it's a place where you come to meet your colleagues, socialise, form connections and strengthen team bonds."



DAVID BENT

Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT)

"If you're a very large institution you want a way of incubating and transmitting your culture. What will become more important is that you have a string in globally significant cities, and you want a global culture with local flavours."



The best jobs are going to people who are creating a pattern of working which is making them worth hiring.



Seth Godin
Author, entrepreneur and marketing & business expert

Global headquarters and diversity

Tomorrow's organisations recognise the importance of neuro-diverse talent. Welcoming people on the autistic spectrum and those with other special needs into the workforce means consideration for noise and distractions while maintaining collaborative environments. Soon, silence rooms and quiet times could be just as central as meeting spaces. There are bright ideas we can learn from already successfully pioneered by some leading museums and shops. These ideas have been found to benefit a wider group than their original target, perhaps delivering on as yet unspoken desires or needs shared by a far wider cross-section of society.



ARACELI CAMARGO

Cognitive neuroscientist and Co-Founder, Centric Lab

"By including people that are neuro-diverse and people within the autistic spectrum to the workplace, we can start to look at how the workplace allows us to be more inclusive, and that means assistive technology. The great thing is that once you elevate your workspace for the people that might be the most vulnerable, you're also increasing the comfort level for everybody else."



DAVID BENT

Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT)

"The workspace will look and feel like a diversity of areas – some for concentrated work, where you find deliberated Wi-Fi dead spots, as well as spaces for mixing up and promoting diversity."

Creative hubs to boost innovation

Successful future workspaces will enable disciplines to intersect and diversity of ideas flourish. This will be true regardless of industry and size of organisation – it includes businesses that do away with physical offices altogether



TIMO MASHIYI-VEIKKOLA

Anthropologist, futurist and strategist:

"I foresee in the future that hubs of multi-creativity – or multi-skilled, hyper-specialised hubs, will be connected to each other in trusted ways that will boost productivity."

"You see different people from different industries with different skills and backgrounds working in the same space and [they] share their knowledge and skills together to create something better."

Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing

Taking advantage of all assets – both physical and digital – inspires networking and enables peer-to-peer learning sessions. Recognising that not everyone finds it easy to introduce themselves to unknown co-workers, user-organised platforms will be developed where employees offer ideas and expertise. Think of this as a market place for peers to buy or trade learning or take on the execution of an idea building on the collective wealth of knowledge and skills.



WILL SAVILLE,
Co-Founder, Unily

"We have – in terms of the data in the platforms – to actually start identifying if people do have skills gaps. Then [it's about] identifying other people in organisations that are well skilled in that area and actually trying to match them together using AI and machine learning."

CHAPTER 3: THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORKPLACE

Technology is enabling new business models, ways to work and employee experiences. The technological workplace is an empowering partnership between people and tech, bringing out the best of both, where the sum is greater than its parts.

Snapshot from the future

The idea is king

The future organisation will be part business school part start-up incubator. The focus will be on creating autonomy in the innovation process by enabling employees to both 'Think' and 'Do'. Winning concepts will be supported by in-house 'venture capital' teams and in-house business modellers. Networks of flash teams will develop quick prototypes of ideas to test – then develop and scale if they work. Rather than the 20% time idea pioneered by Google (where employees can dedicate 20% of their time to self-initiated projects), tomorrow's organisations will enable employees to pitch projects and, when approved, follow up full time for as long as it takes to make them fly.

Boomerang employees

A boomerang employee leaves a company for a while and then comes back. People may leave to experience life at a start-up, try a new industry or go back to school. Many organisations and HR professionals used to have policies against rehiring, but boomeranging makes sense in tomorrow's workplace. Bringing new experiences into the fold, while already being familiar with the organisation's culture, injects fresh thinking and keeps the business energised. Employee loyalty is an evolving concept – while people will change jobs more frequently in the future, social media and professional networks help maintain bonds and relationships. Rather like the future circular economy of material resources, human resources will revolve to the benefit of all.

“ ”

WILL SAVILLE,
Co-founder, Unily

“In the future [the relationship] doesn't stop when people leave the organisation. You'd like to think that they would have an ongoing relationship, or there is a way to facilitate that ongoing relationship where alumni can still feed back into the organization.”

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER
Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

“Organisations will need to change the way they see the development of their employees. The boomerang employees who come back, this will in the future be much more common. An organisation will have to be much more fluid to enable this.”

“ ”

WILL SAVILLE
Co-founder, Unily

“If they can stay connected [...] they might go away and learn lots of new skills and then maybe come back as well at some point in the Future”

Lifelong learning and digital mentors

Tomorrow's organisations need to be dedicated to mentoring and lifelong learning. Personal digital assistants powered by AI will help employees understand their own learning process and coach to fit individual needs and preferences. People will build relationships with their digital mentors and some mentors will follow an individual throughout career changes – following individuals not organisations but serving employee and employer. The digital mentor will not only direct learning but suggest new areas to nurture a What If? mindset. They will facilitate brain-dates between users for knowledge exchange, and may even suggest connections outside the organisation. The most successful digital mentors will have been created by diverse teams to ensure some of the biases that plagued earlier models have been rooted out.

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER,
Chief Human Resources Officer,
L'Oréal USA

“Everyone has their own personal AI manager – a personal Alexa – which will also pre-empt the sorts of questions you need answering. A virtual coach powered by technology – your own Avatar that becomes your coach, AI assistant and teacher.”

“ ”

SETH GODIN,
Author, entrepreneur and
marketing & business expert

“I think we need to be really clear about streams of education and learning. We don't need more education, as the song goes, because education is about power and control and tests. What we need is learning, and learning is about incompetence and failure. The only way to learn something is to embrace that you are incompetent the moment before you get better.”



THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORKPLACE

The technological workplace means augmenting people to perform better and be more innovative in human/tech partnerships. AI and AR technologies can offer pathways to blend physical and digital experiences in meaningful ways.

Status quo

Technological revolutions have shaped our modern world

The Industrial Revolution redefined human and material resources. The Information Revolution democratised information and opportunity. Future value will be added by focusing on the human experience, and on thinking, creativity and problem-solving. Today, advanced technologies – notably robotics, machine learning and AI – are rewriting the rules of work and skills. However, evidence points to the fact that human imagination, relationship skills and creativity will create more jobs than are being lost. Change can cause unease, so the future-workplace narrative must focus on opportunities presented by this human-tech partnership.

“ ”

SETH GODIN

Author, Entrepreneur and Marketing & business expert

“Any job where we can write down exactly what you get done all day, will get done by a computer instead. And so, what we are going to be left with are jobs where people are going to solve existing problems and lead, make connections and be human. I think that it points to a brighter future, because that’s the work humans should be doing, but I think the road there is going to be super bumpy.”

“ ”

ANTHONY SANCHEZ

Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars

“Humans will become more interactive in the workplace and upskilled to be truly valuable for the business while having the ‘bot’ take care of mundane tasks.”

Lifelong learning will be essential in a world where change is the norm. Current hierarchies between roles will also disappear – being a blue- or white-collar worker becomes meaningless when we compete on how well we adapt, learn and collaborate. Technology is also an opportunity to change when and how much we work. Whether we translate automation into greater personal freedom outside work – as envisioned by the economist Keynes in 1930 – or use it to push for economic growth, this will shape the conversations about work in the coming decades.

“ ”

AI manager – a personal Alexa – which will also pre-empt the sorts of questions you need answering. A virtual coach powered by technology – your own Avatar that becomes your coach, AI assistant and teacher.”

” ”

Stephane Charbonnier,
Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal

New era

A changing narrative around workplace automation and AI

The narrative of workplace automation and AI is changing from one of fear – pitting machines against individuals – to opportunity. Humans empowered and augmented by the best in smart technology are key to new value creation for all.

“ ”

DAVID BENT

Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT)

“Melvin Kranzberg famously said: ‘Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral’. A lot will depend on beliefs, mindsets and intentions of the employer and how they put tech into practice.”

We need to create a compelling vision of the digitally enhanced future, fostering dialogue so that people understand what it means for them. Digital transformation is the opportunity for leaders and employees to identify new ways to harness change for the better.

The jobs of tomorrow do not yet exist

Gartner predicts that by 2025 some 2 million new job roles will be created in relation to workplace AI. So how do we prepare for a future where an estimated 60-85% of jobs don't yet exist? The answer is to keep prioritising new skills. As noted in a recent McKinsey discussion paper, continuous learning options and instilling a culture of lifelong learning are the cultural changes ranked as most needed by companies across all sectors for developing the workforce of tomorrow.

“ ”

SETH GODIN

Author, Entrepreneur and Marketing & business expert

“The best jobs are going to people who are creating a pattern of working which is making them worth hiring.”

Learning to learn

The future discussion will not be about reskilling or upskilling but 'learning to learn'. Being comfortable acquiring new knowledge is a skill in its own right. We are wired to hate change, and this affects our ability to learn, but intuitive, bite-sized and tailored learning to suit need and personal preferences takes away this discomfort. The other cultural shift organisations need is instilling a willingness to experiment, take risks and adapt a beginner's mindset. These are traits associated with entrepreneurial thinking and the best workplaces will be like business schools – mentoring, coaching and guiding, but also encouraging staff to challenge and disrupt existing ways of doing things.

“ ”

WILL SAVILLE

Co-Founder, Unily

“The concept of mentoring people going forward: so, it's not like a formal organisational relationship, it's more of an informal one – a natural relationship. Where you recognise you know you don't necessarily have some specific skills our platform identifies people who can actually help you with a specific skill shortage.”

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER,

Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

“Organisations will in the future have a responsibility to make sure their employees are learning new skills. L'Oréal have partnered with General Assembly – offering employees access to interactive learning from other companies.”

“ ”

TUSHAR MHASKE,

Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell

“AI comes with the potential to improve learning, but people and their ability to learn fast will be the key differentiator. To some extent, success in business in the context of continuous change means continuous learning, and learning from different sources.”



Expert Generalists and Hyper Specialists

The future workplace will be defined by two typologies: expert generalists and hyper-specialists. Expert generalists transfer skills and see the bigger picture necessary to drive the ideas economy. The hyper specialist is more operational, dives deep for solutions and is equipped to understand details and specifics.

Current school focus on STEM-based learning may not be preparing children adequately and we need to build collaboration, creativity and critical thinking into the curriculum – STE(A)M will be tomorrow's new norm. Higher education may also need to evolve and a mission-based learning model has been suggested. Here, students declare their major as a 'mission' – problem or challenge they want to solve – and then structure a personalised learning programme around it.

“ ”

TUSHAR MHASKE

Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell

“Businesses must acknowledge the need for different capabilities and mindsets and tap into a user-centric way of solving problems. Agile ways to work combined with the ability to compose and leverage the right teams for solving the right problem will be instrumental.”

“

Humans will become more interactive in the workplace and upskilled to be truly valuable for the business while having the 'bot' take care of mundane tasks.

”

Anthony Sanchez

Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars

The ideas economy and entrepreneurship

Technology and connectivity have democratised opportunity, and there is consensus that a defining aspect of the future is that both organisations and individuals will compete on their ability to innovate and be entrepreneurial. Globally, companies pour roughly \$1 trillion yearly into innovation. It is suggested that a considerable amount is wasted because organisations fail to understand the principles of innovation.

“ ”

RICHARD PATERSON

Co-founder, Unily

“Everybody is capable of being creative in one way or another. It's not just the people who draw the pretty pictures, it's the people who work in finance and it's allowing them to be creative and allowing their ideas to flow out and be implemented.”

In an ideas economy, organisations have to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in their people and provide the process and infrastructure for ideas to flow. A good place to look for inspiration is the structure of start-up campuses. Station F in France is currently the world's biggest, accommodating more than 1,000 start-ups and acting as a connection hub between entrepreneurs, mentors and founding partners. This provides a soft infrastructure around community, learning and culture and a hard infrastructure dedicated to making things happen.

“ ”

SETH GODIN

Author, Entrepreneur and Marketing & business expert

“Worldwide, there are fewer entrepreneurs than there have been in years. There are more freelancers, but freelancers and entrepreneurs are different. We need more entrepreneurs, but that takes a different mindset and risk-set.”

CHAPTER 4: THE PURPOSEFUL WORKPLACE

'The future is not somewhere we go, we create the future' according to Kjaer Global. The purpose-driven workplace recognises the need to understand future drivers in order to anticipate tomorrow's needs, behaviours and opportunities and then shape business activities accordingly.

Snapshot from the future

Future-focused organisations are driving change at a quicker pace than traditional routes of policymaking. They have realised that it is good business to focus on betterness – turning the lens on their own industries and asking: how can we be better, more sustainable and fairer? Progressive tech industries even imposed self-regulation, since policy failed to regulate their industry to prevent negative outcomes from tech. Cross-industry alliances are on the rise, in the knowledge that we are better together when we tackle challenges.

Gen Z says 'walk the talk'

By 2030 Gen Z will be an influential part of the workforce and their defining behaviour is the search for meaning. They demand that organisations 'walk the talk', living up to promises and demonstrably leading on social and environmental causes. They favour meaningful work over higher pay and give their loyalty where their values are reflected. This generation has grown up with a digital

'mirror' of their physical world and expect transparency and coherence across all channels. Technology is considered a natural extension of themselves and others. Despite, or perhaps because, of this, they favour workplaces that offer great IRL (in real life) communities, workplaces and employee experiences.

Post-urban society

Individuals and organisations no longer need to be tied to a specific location to make a living. We are moving information and ideas, rather than people and goods. People increasingly choose where to live based on life-stage. Weather, landscape or social and cultural scene are important factors for some. For others, there's a happy trade-off between working less and living more simply. Post-urban society also sees the continued rise of nomad tribes, who travel to live and work in different locations. Nomads freely construct identities around their quest to be different versions of themselves both in life and work.



Status quo

Businesses will drive tomorrow's agenda of change

Organisations recognise that they must participate in shaping a better future. This is a move into what used to be government domains – sustainability, health, education (learning) and social responsibility. Impact investments – designed to bring measurable societal or environmental benefits alongside a financial return – are going mainstream. This is even evident in the B2B sector, with organisations scrutinising their business partners more closely. Patagonia in the US recently announced that its corporate-sales programme would only establish new accounts with companies that are in tune with its own environmental and social values.

“ ”

TIMO MASHIYI-VEIKKOLA

Anthropologist, futurist and strategist

“We will still go to work to benefit economic growth, for stability and to maintain our living standards. I believe that those are the essentials of work – but on top of that it is about meaningful work in the future.”

“ ”

ANTHONY SANCHEZ

Corporate Systems Business Partnership Manager, Mars

“The world we want tomorrow starts with how we do business today.”

Rising to tomorrow's challenges

People are making explicit demands that organisations they work for make a positive difference and reflect their own values – with Gen Z entering the workforce this pressure will only increase. A further challenge is that, despite focus on engagement and culture, numerous reports point towards a disengaged workforce that fails to find meaning in work, translating into low productivity. Management and leadership must be reimagined – successful future leaders are not only ‘best in the world’, but also ‘best for the world’.

New era

Purpose-driven leadership – the soft power of strong organisations

A growing body of research shows that purpose-driven organisations perform better and have more engaged and passionate employees. They have higher levels of innovation and considerably higher levels of staff retention. Individual employees report feeling more successful and supported by leadership, and people who have purpose in their lives even have a 15% lower risk of death. It is easy to see why purpose will continue to be prioritised over coming decades.

“ ”

ANNE LISE KJAER

Futurist, author / speaker and entrepreneur

“Tomorrow's leaders will place meaningful engagement on top of their agenda and dare to say: ‘I don't just want to be best in the world, I also want to be the best for the world’”

“ ”

TUSHAR MHASKE

Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell

“People are the best asset in companies across industries with or without AI and robots – invest in people and keep them engaged, it will always be the humans that make the difference.”



Towards new measures of success

A research document What Percentage of Your Life Will You Spend at Work? by Revise Sociology (2016) showed that the average person works 1,842 hours a year, or 92,100 hours over a 50-year career. And during those hours, sometimes it is easy to forget why we do what we do. The big question we will ask ourselves in the future is: why do we go to work? It has been suggested that one reason for people's disengagement is that jobs are increasingly fragmented and abstract, making us lose sight of the impact and purpose of what we working to achieve. Technology can enable reconnection because, when automation frees us to engage in more human and relational tasks, we have an opportunity to focus on the meaningful aspects of our jobs.

“ ”

ARACELI CAMARGO

Cognitive neuroscientist and Co-Founder, Centric Lab:

“What [automation] allows us to do is to have more time. But then the question is: have more time for what? What we're seeing is patterns of more time for human-to-human interaction.”

“ ”

SETH GODIN

Author, entrepreneur and marketing & business expert

“The mistake that is made all the time is that we measure things that are easy to measure, rather than things that are important to measure.”

“ ”

DAVID BENT

Strategist & Honorary Senior Research Associate UCL (AOT)

“In my dream scenario, we will find a way of having security through renewal, and have a managed decline of old industries and a fast growth of new ones; that we can find ways to have a digitally enabled access economy where we can have the experiences we need to live our life, demonstrate our identity, to have fun and do that in ways that co-evolve with nature.”

Embed purpose in everything you do

Purpose is developing a shared understanding of what we are here to achieve – the vision and values that underpin the organisation. In purpose-driven companies organisational, team, and individual purpose are explicit and aligned. Leaders will require a more relational role, with emphasis on emotional intelligence and creative leadership. While leaders must drive purpose, vision and an agile strategy, managers need to evolve to stay relevant within changing organisational models.

“ ”

STEPHANE CHARBONNIER

Chief Human Resources Officer, L'Oréal USA

“People will want to work for leaders who inspire their purpose – enabling them to be the best they can be.”

“ ”

TUSHAR MHASKE

Digital Employee Experience IT Manager, Shell

“A meaningful and authentic environment will allow people to ‘work out loud’, ‘think out loud’ and work with a clear purpose to bring value to both business and the wider society, while learning and evolving new skills to keep up with the change.”

“ ”

“Tomorrow's leaders will place meaningful engagement on top of their agenda and dare to say: ‘I don't just want to be best in the world, I also want to be the best for the world.’”

”

Anne Lise Kjaer

Futurist, author / speaker and entrepreneur

The orchestral manager aka the Conductor

'The key to management is to get rid of managers', says Ricardo Semler, CEO, author and champion of radical co-corporate democracy. He argues that if we simply ask why we do things and then devolve power to employees we are able to create wiser, more productive companies and an engaged workforce. While these ideas are not yet widely adopted, they point towards a redefinition of management.

A 'command and control' hierarchical style is no longer suited to the purpose-driven organisation. The real question is whether the idea of management we inherited from the industrial era has outlived its usefulness now that organisational models are moving towards individual autonomy, networks and teams.

“ ”

WILL SAVILLE
Co-Founder, Unily

"All the people that are involved in the organisation – not just employees, everybody, every stakeholder, every possible stakeholder – have the ability to add value if they have the right platform for it, and I don't mean just technological in this platform but generally."

The manager's role will evolve into that of a conductor. Their purpose will be to facilitate teams and individuals in performing together – as with an orchestral symphony. This means individuals have autonomy over interpretation and execution of tasks, while the 'conductor' keeps time, provides mentoring and guidance, and focuses on the bigger picture. The symphony model relies on a high degree of self-management, promoting responsibility among peers. With this model, key skills for managers are agility, navigating ambiguity, promoting teamworking and paving the way for people to be authentic and shine.

“ ”

All the people that are involved in the organisation – not just employees, everybody, every stakeholder, every possible stakeholder – have the ability to add value if they have the right platform for it, and I don't mean just technological in this platform but generally.

”

Will Saville,
Co-Founder, Unily

Set people free (to do their best work)

As organisations grow, individual passion and engagement tend to decline. To keep the agility of a start-up, companies must set people free from the constraints of rigid and complex hierarchies. This autonomy works best with an explicit set of rules – not copious ambiguous policies, but a handful of crisp and clear statements that guide interaction, values and expectations and link back directly to the organisation's purpose and vision. People should know what their company thinks without having to look it up.

“ ”

JO SKILTON
Chief Commercial Officer, Unily

"With this freedom-of-speech culture within organisations, the champions and the vigilantes behind those issues are going to be much more vocal. I do think it's an exciting era of change."

“ ”

SETH GODIN
Author, entrepreneur and
marketing & business expert

"An institution with a positive culture that is in sync with its vision will make better decisions, faster."

“ ”

JO SKILTON
Chief Commercial Officer, Unily

"It's an expectation that people can be honest at work. It's an expectation that they will be listened to. It's an expectation that their values can be shared."



CHAPTER 5: JOB TITLES FROM THE FUTURE

In the workplace of the future, changing landscapes will create a need for new skilled leaders. The job titles of the future shed light on new priorities that will see our workplaces become more human-centric and creative.

The Emotional Workplace

Head of Hoopla

The Head of Hoopla's job is to create the environment where energy is generated. It could be internal energy – it could be external energy. Energy connects people and the connections create value.

Vice President of NO

The only person within an organisation allowed to say no to a new project. Everyone else is allowed to say yes, but if you need 'No' you need to go to the VP of NO.

Cultural Translator

A dedicated person to iron out issues caused by cultural translation differences in tomorrow's diverse and inclusive institution. This role can be partly automated or augmented by AI.

New Diversity Officer

Scrutinises organisational diversity to optimise innovation capacity and avoid 'group think'. Considers neuro-diversity, in addition to ethnicity, gender and age.

The Physical Workplace

Flash Team Designer

On-demand and task-based design / ideation role. Flash teams may be formed from core staff and networked teams of remote talent. This is an AI augmented role.

Data Sense-Maker

Assesses validity of raw data to understand what it means/how it can be used. People with a background in the humanities are suited to the role and collaborate closely with diversity officers and anti-bias engineers.

Sensorial Integration Designer

Creates sensory input and solutions for seamless blending of virtual and mixed realities.

BYOD (bring your own device) virtual assistant

Ensures that all employees' personal devices are up to date and connected to all the services, communication and information streams that are relevant.



Everybody is capable of being creative in one way or another. It's not just the people who draw the pretty pictures, it's the people who work in finance and it's allowing them to be creative and allowing their ideas to flow out and be implemented.



Richard Paterson
Co-founder, Unily

The Technological Workplace

AI Educational Programmer

Software and applications need to learn too, and the purpose of this role is to design intelligent education for AI-powered software and devices.

Intelligent Reduction Specialist

A professional summariser who works to extract the meaningful from the complex and ease the cognitive stress and demands for employees' attention and time.

Ideas Broker

Some people are great at having ideas, while others are brilliant at designing, testing or executing them. The broker connects people, organisations and ideas.

Creativity Coach

Tasked with monitoring and auditing the state of creativity within an organisation, also launching initiatives to find/harness individual and team creativity.

The Purposeful Workplace

Alliance Strategist

Planning role designed to build and maintain alliances with all stakeholders across society. Also responsible for monitoring validity/authenticity of existing relationships.

Professional Rebel

A corporate agent provocateur, here to challenge the status quo boost creativity and innovation and counter group think.

Purpose Agent

Counselling role to help individuals find and hone their purpose, also assisting with designing career and learning paths. Also connects talent with the right organisations.

Active Listener

Confidential sounding board for 'small data' revealed in workplace life. Success stories and pain points are equally important. Also undertakes regular anonymised organisation-wellbeing audits. Human-only role, although AI may assist with auditing analysis.

Soft Power Asset Evaluator

Responsible for finding organic and dynamic ways to assess and evaluate the efficacy of purpose, culture and other soft power assets.

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING – WORK IN A POST PANDEMIC WORLD

In the light of Covid-19 we decided to revisit some of the major trends highlighted in the original Future of the Workplace 2030+ report (2019), created in partnership by Unily and Kjaer Global. In the following we will reevaluate the previous conclusions with a post-pandemic lens to assert which trends have been accelerated and which are likely to stall. In addition, we have added a few emerging directions to watch in the wake of the pandemic.

There is rarely anything good to say about a crisis; such events invariably cause widespread suffering, particularly within declining and faltering economies and sectors. The immediate global reaction to Covid-19 was: 'This changes everything'.

While the pandemic will have serious long-term implications, it is also a burning platform that accelerates innovation, not just in healthcare and safety but across all aspects of life inside and outside the workplace. Uncertainty can be detrimental to innovation capacity and community spirit – making trust and confidence building, alongside collaboration and community, critical themes for the foreseeable future. But a 'new reality' as we get back to business will unfold quicker than anticipated – and this is our window to ensure it is benefiting us all.

No more status quo

Right now, we are all looking for inspiration. No doubt 2020 will go down in history as the year our fast-forward world was brought to an abrupt halt, forcing us to take stock and reassess the future. The pandemic's impact and after shock represent an enormous challenge because the very ideas and systems we base our work/live/play assumptions on are up for revision. Growing polarisation and fragmentation have sparked

global concerns about deep-seated values like freedom, trust, wellbeing and community alongside financial resilience. Many are asking fundamental questions like: how do we balance economic good with social good, and what will the post-pandemic reality of work look like? Rather than just keep firefighting in the present, it is time to start creating long-term maps of the future. This kind of work cannot be left to chance, we need new voices and new models.

One certainty is that technology plays a central role in (re-)creating thriving organisations and business models, facilitating wellbeing of employees, new-style workplaces and sustainable performance and growth. Businesses are being forced to rethink how they operate and cooperate, how they secure sustainable supply chains, and how a remote workforce operates. As the acuteness of the crisis abates, maintaining strong company culture and promoting best work practices to attract and retain talent will be key priorities. Thinkers have celebrated solitude, stillness, and taking time out to get to know oneself. Collaboration is often viewed as essential in an ideas culture, but making 'space for being alone in togetherness' means rethinking how we approach workplace creativity.



THE EMOTIONAL WORKPLACE

The more things change, the more culture matters.

In the Future of the Workplace 2030+ report we highlighted corporate culture, emotional intelligence and creative thinking as crucial soft assets in tomorrow's workplace. Through the post-pandemic lens, these are even more relevant. Organisations that are successful in leveraging emotional intelligence to re-build confidence and trust will enable creativity to flourish. Rather than ride out the storm of the crisis, companies with a strong company culture can harness the momentum of change to build windmills in an environment that is primed for experimentation for those who dare.

Rebuilding confidence through digital skill building

Dire forecasts of job losses, industry collapse and prolonged recession put financial security, health and family welfare in focus. To rebuild confidence, organisations need to empathise with people's concerns and give them the skills to thrive in this uncertain environment. Cultivating greater digital dexterity and transferable skills will open up new avenues for employees of every level, making individuals as well as businesses more resilient in the face of future crises. In addition, a recent study by YouGov and Unily points out that over half of those surveyed, said being tech savvy had helped them become more noticed in the workplace.

“

To rebuild confidence, organisations need to empathise with people's concerns and give them the skills to thrive in this uncertain environment.

”

Life and work in balance

Company culture mediated by technology will be transformed as it adapts to the evolving needs of a remote workforce. For some, working at home proves less stressful, for others it is harder to balance demands. At the height of the crisis, 'meditation' and 'self-care' peaked as a search trend according to Google. Meanwhile a recent study reported in the Harvard Business Review found that less than half of adults felt that mental health was sufficiently prioritised at their organisation. This indicates a real need for organisations to focus on providing guidance and mental health solutions, including addressing potential negative side-effects of remote-working. Real-time feedback, social networks, mentoring and gentle behavioural nudges will be essential tools to ensure positive engagement, health and wellbeing for a growing remote workforce.

Rise of the introvert

Covid-19 has led to universal self-distancing initiatives as we rethink the least infectious way to do things – to do everything. This is the time to practice slowing down and introducing a different set of work routines – a reality likely to be welcomed by introverts who gravitate towards reflective and solitary activities. Introverts embrace the freedom of their own company as way to recharge and feel better after spending time alone. Generations of philosophers and thinkers have celebrated solitude, stillness, and taking time out to get to know oneself. Collaboration is often viewed as essential in an ideas culture, but making 'space for being alone in togetherness' means rethinking how we approach workplace creativity.

THE PHYSICAL WORKPLACE

Not back, but forward!

The physical workplace was in rapid transformation even before Covid-19. The original Future of the Workplace 2030+ report found that head office will change from a statement of corporate power to a social hub for unique employee experiences, cultural cohesion and values sharing. This is being dramatically accelerated, as disruptive solutions become essential adjustments to the new world of work. It's fairly easy to predict the growth of remote working. Many of the global tech giants lead the way by letting anybody who wants to keep working from home do so forever. It is less easy to predict exactly how this trend will impact the physical workplace. Potentially, the future workplace will be a hub where people will come in a few times each week or month – avoiding the rush-hour crowds and after-hours gathering points. What is certain is that tech will provide a number of new business communications tools as we move forward into what will become the Hyper Liquid Office.

The Nomad Office

The liquid office flows anywhere and caters to emerging needs, but the future will bring more Pop-Up offices as a customised service. Prior to Covid-19, Pop-Up meant quirky and artful installations or office cubicles in public places in Japan. Tomorrow's Pop-Up must adapt to suit the transient workforce – startups, project teams, entrepreneurs – while offering the hygiene factors that will become the post-pandemic standard. We may also see corporate equivalents – mobile office facilities touring to accommodate a project or flexible meeting point. While remote work can suit existing tight teams, ideation and innovation often happen naturally in a physical space. Expect workspace labs and experiments for additional value.

“

Many of the global tech giants lead the way by letting anybody who wants to keep working from home do so forever. It is less easy to predict exactly how this trend will impact the physical workplace.

”

HQ no more

The original Future of the Workplace 2030+ addressed the changing role of the corporate headquarters. As with other trends, this evolution is accelerated as more businesses seek to ensure remote working with the right technology and infrastructure translates into greater productivity and resilience. There is potential for large savings on real estate overheads – Global Workplace Analytics estimates £9,000 annually for every part time, remote worker. For employees, remote working saves the equivalent of 11 days and £3,000+ annually. These two elements mean the rethinking of organisational HQs may be more radical than previously proposed. We could see the emergence of boutique headquarters and elaborate virtual corporate real-estate, powered by advanced AI. Some corporations may go all the way, abandoning the idea of a physical corporate headquarters altogether.

Co-working, the next iteration

Co-working was born out of the 2008 financial crisis and grew rapidly. Now it's under stress, since anything that brings sizeable numbers of strangers together is up for reconsideration. Yet co-working spaces have the potential to provide vital business services and accommodate a growing remote workforce – especially as not all are able or want to work from home. One study from real-estate company JLL has predicted that the flexible workspace sector market share can grow to 30% by 2030 from the pre-pandemic 5% in the US. To fulfil this potential, co-working companies will have to be re-designed to address post-pandemic concerns over spacing and sanitation, according to Brent Capron, design director of interiors at architecture firm Perkins and Will in a CNBC interview. For marginalised cities, co-working can mean a chance for a renewed influx of people and capital. Tulsa, Oklahoma is one such city looking to leverage the concept. The Tulsa Remote initiative pays remote workers a grant to relocate, while helping people form community and civic connections.



THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORKPLACE

New innovation paths and solutions

The Covid-19 crisis has prompted deep and unexpected shifts. Systems, structures, norms and jobs are abruptly being redrawn and many sectors will remain permanently altered. Innovation can be a challenge when it is forced on us because of a crisis, but it will be essential for renewal and relevance. We argued in the Future of the Workplace 2030+ report that the future organisation will be part business school, part start-up incubator, with ideas as the new currency in this landscape. This still holds true, even if we are some way off from people being remunerated for ideas generated rather than hours worked.

Necessity is the mother of innovation; technology is the enabler

Technology has levelled the field of creativity and democratised innovation. This is not a new trend, but what is new is the sheer scale of inventiveness brought on by the crisis. From social distancing necklaces powered by radio technology to fashion brands asking models to shoot their campaigns at home, businesses are trying out new ideas on the go. Even business models that are not traditionally tech-centred have fought back, using technology and social media to keep trading. The key enabler of innovation is the quality of communication and access to learning resources and tools. In a Gartner survey, 54% of HR leaders indicated that poor technology and/or infrastructure was the biggest barrier to effective remote working. From this, it follows that there will be room for improvement before organisations can become successful remote platforms for innovation. The right tools can be the deal-breaker, while up-skilling for greater digital dexterity will give individuals and businesses greater confidence and thus a clear advantage.

“

The key enabler of innovation is the quality of communication and access to learning resources and tools. In a Gartner survey, 54% of HR leaders indicated that poor technology and/or infrastructure was the biggest barrier to effective remote working.

”

Adapting and learning to learn

In the original Future of the Workplace 2030+ report we introduced the idea of digital mentorship as essential to fostering a future learning culture. Post Covid-19 the need for adapting and learning fast will become ever more acute. Individual learning paths must focus on online collaboration skills and organisational learning paths require a 'soft' infrastructure of hardware and software (SaaS) to enable this. During a crisis, decision-making and learning are prompted by the fight for survival. As such, many organisations are becoming learning entities by default. Many that thought it impossible to have a remote workforce have now recognised the potential benefits to employer and employee. To optimise this potential, it's important to plan how remote working is embedded and developed. Gartner analysis suggests that 48% of employees are likely to continue working remotely at least part of the time after the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to 30% pre-pandemic. Further research suggests 74% of CFOs in the US will increase remote working at their organisation after the outbreak.

Software adoption and digital inclusion

In 2019 McKinsey found that AI wasn't a priority for many c-suites (globally) because of these 3 barriers: 1) lack of talent, 2) a clear AI strategy and 3) technological infrastructure. Early adopters have already formed internal Analytics Academies to foster fast learning and gain understanding of how AI could impact their business model. This trend will grow exponentially, driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, as we see a rise of software adoption. This includes increased interest in AI (Artificial Intelligence), AR (Augmented Reality) and VR (Virtual Reality) solutions, accelerating digital transformation. Named the world's happiest nation by the UN in 2018 and Europe's most digitally advanced country in 2019, Finland is a good place to look for inspiration. According to Good News from Finland, 76% of Finns have basic or above basic digital skills, well above the 57% EU average.

“

During a crisis, decision-making and learning are prompted by the fight for survival. As such, many organisations are becoming learning entities by default. Many that thought it impossible to have a remote workforce have now recognised the potential benefits to employer and employee.

”

THE PURPOSEFUL WORKPLACE

Economics for humans, the next generation

New and evolving ideas of leadership, organisational models, value(s) and employee engagement discussed in the previous report considered how tomorrow's successful leaders will be those who dare to say: 'I don't just want to be best in the world, I also want to be the best for the world.' How can organisations learn from this? Edelman, the global monitor of trust, put it this way: "The best way to ensure that one day there will again be the high levels of trust we see today is to start making the big, positive changes that could, within a few years, create a 'new reality' far better than the failing one we had before Covid-19." It is easy to imagine that what we all want is to 'get back to normal', but a study by the UK RSA think-tank found only 9% of people wanted a return to 'normal'. Professor Tom MacMillan, research lead for the study, has said: "This data shows there is a real appetite for change, and for the nation to learn from this crisis. People are trying new things and noticing differences – at home, in their work and in communities."

The power of reverse mentoring

In times of acute crisis, diversity and inclusivity are key to building thriving and resilient organisations. Working from home as a result of Covid-19 has made employees previously nervous about technology try new work and collaboration methods. To help even more people in an increasingly multi-generational workforce adapt, organisations need to create bridging partnerships and allow easy formation of communities, informal arenas and peer-to-peer learning. The learning organisation recognises that communities often form from shared interests and values rather than conforming

to demographic stereotypes. They will provide channels for employees to update skills and form new models of peer-learning partnerships as the need arises. These may well impact traditional hierarchical structures, with ideas like reverse mentoring moving into focus. Reverse mentoring is the practice of senior employees being mentored by juniors on topics such as technology, social media and current trends. A recent survey by Unily pointed out that as many as 70% of the surveyed employees believed that reverse mentoring would benefit their company. Reverse mentoring has the potential to become a powerful resource for improving productivity and operations, as well as for keeping a diverse workforce resilient and thriving.

The human story

Dialogue about key drivers of human flourishing is a top priority as leaders are reminded about Shakespeare's suggestion that, "readiness is all". Leadership expert and author Margaret Heffernan had a poignant point in a recent where she said: "When it comes to really great leadership, you'd better have more clever people, more freedom to invent and experiment than you think you'll ever need". The real leaders in the post-pandemic reality will be those with a holistic outlook balancing economic good with social good. One of the founding value propositions of Silicon Valley was that if we just have enough data we can know everything, but that's an illusion of numbers. The fact that something is hard to quantify doesn't make it any less important. On the contrary, we have to approach the future with an open mind. Human life and behaviour is not always predictable by algorithm or AI – meaning that navigating the future through human-interpreted data, letting emotional intelligence and common sense lead the way, will be crucial to success in a post-pandemic world.

CONCLUSION

Life in a post-pandemic reality

No one really knows what will happen next, but contemplating your future options is a good place to start. Right now, this means learning the art of surfing unknown waters, with far too many 'What If' waves – balancing our natural fears with a mindset of optimism. True vision is about looking at the bigger picture, imagining a more sustainable tomorrow for humanity, our communities and our business life. Time to think, alongside action-fuelled planning, must take precedence as we all take stock of the impact of the pandemic.

The next decade of transformation will be all about stepping outside our comfort zone. Arguably, Covid-19 is the greatest catalyst for rapid change in the workplace we've seen in the past century. To create a resilient, agile organisation, enterprise tech must be embraced as the number one operational tool. Building trust and confidence in this tech-enabled work environment is critical for a successful soft infrastructure – the key requisite for a strong company culture.

Most crucial is how well organisations respond in the now. The pandemic is a global wake-up call, a reality with several scenarios playing out simultaneously. Challenges will vary – never has geography and local context been more critical, but so too are culture, political and economic climate. All these elements underpin the preparation of your post-pandemic plan for tomorrow's workplace. An important lesson learned from this pandemic is people's tremendous capacity for change. Choose curiosity and creativity as guiding principles, to develop your roadmap. Have an open mind as you map out the solutions needed to future-proof your workplace and boost the emotional intelligence that is so crucial to fostering innovation capacity and sustainable high-performance.



“

Most crucial is how well organisations respond in the now. The pandemic is a global wake-up call, a reality with several scenarios playing out simultaneously. Challenges will vary – never has geography and local context been more critical, but so too are culture, political and economic climate.

”



Unily is the employee experience platform at the heart of your digital workplace that powers better work for everyone.

unily.com

United Kingdom

First Floor, The Granary
Abbey Mill Business Park,
Eashing, Guildford,
Surrey, GU7 2QW

United States

31 Bond St,
New York, NY 10012

Canada

340 King Street E,
Toronto, ON M5A 1K8

Australia

Level 20, Tower A, The Zenith,
821 Pacific Highway,
Chatswood 2067 NSW

Hong Kong

Level 6, 100 Queen's Road
Central, Hong Kong

unily unite your
enterprise