

# Reinventing work

How leading organisations are connecting teams, tools and partners in a work-from-anywhere world



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# Navigating the digital HQ era



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## Navigating the digital HQ era

We're coming off one of the most challenging years in business history. The pandemic forced every company to accelerate transformations that typically take years or even decades. Chief among them? The transition to a digital HQ.

Prior to the pandemic, an organisation's physical headquarters served as the nucleus of collaboration and productivity. Digital tools supplemented in-person, synchronous work. But that approach no longer squares with business needs and employee expectations. Today's work-from-anywhere world requires a digital HQ—a place that connects teams, tools, customers and partners across time zones and physical spaces.

Over the past year, we've spoken with forward-thinking business leaders from all industries, company sizes and disciplines about their transition to a digital HQ. And we've organised their input into five imperatives:

- **Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover**
- **Alignment matters now more than ever**
- **The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook**
- **Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence**
- **The winners are accelerating work through automation**

These aren't about simple answers that apply to every company. Rather, they're about emerging themes and innovative methods for proactively meeting the new challenges of work.

## Navigating the digital HQ era

### **This is a unique opportunity**

Leaders aren't tested during quiet times. They're tested in times of dramatic, discontinuous change—times like these. The only answer we can be sure is wrong is to pretend nothing has changed and to keep doing what you've always done.

With that in mind, it's time to think deeply about the things that matter most to your business: your employees, customers and partners, and the strategic alignment and efficiency of work itself. It's time to let go of the assumptions that shaped old ways of working, and to emerge stronger than ever and find your own better way.

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Moving forward, in order to be a brave leader in this culture, especially now when everyone is scared ... we need curious leaders.”

**Brené Brown**, researcher and best-selling author



1.

**Employee  
engagement needs  
a digital-first  
makeover**



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## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

Employee experience (EX) was already a hot topic for many businesses and organisations before the pandemic. After all, what's more important than attracting and keeping top talent? During lockdown, EX challenges became a C-suite priority—led by the HR team but far from confined to it.

In the next one to two years, as companies transition from physical offices to a digital HQ, business and HR leaders are being forced to rethink the employee experience from the ground up, to find the new, better way that's right for them.

One thing is clear: The 'rules' of work that arose in the Industrial Revolution are simply not fit for the purpose anymore.

Let's start with **Jacob Morgan's** three-factor definition of EX:

**EX is creating an organisation where employees want, not need, to show up to work—by focusing on culture, technology and physical space.**



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In the post-pandemic world, business leaders are re-engineering all three of these factors to meet the moment. Here's a collection of changes we're seeing on the front lines of EX:

### People

For some, the goal is to preserve the pre-pandemic culture in a distributed work world. For others, the current climate presents an opportunity to reimagine workplace culture for the digital HQ.

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Workers who have the option to work a flexible schedule score more favourably on stress and anxiety levels, satisfaction with working arrangements, and productivity.”

**The Future Forum**

## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

### Increasing work flexibility

Flexible hours and policies started as a necessary response to lockdown. Now they're becoming default settings—and people like it. Less time wasted in rush-hour commutes means more time to spend on things that really add value. The 9-to-5 template doesn't suit all anymore. Flexible work also helps retain employees who need to shape work around life in different ways.

“

As we enter a new year, we must continue to go forward with agility, creativity and a beginner's mind—and that includes how we cultivate our culture. An immersive workspace is no longer limited to a desk in our Towers; the 9-to-5 workday is dead.”

**Brent Hyder**, President and Chief People Officer, Salesforce

### Taking the pulse more often

While working from home, we lost opportunities for chance encounters in the office, and hundreds of brief connections were gone. So managers are now checking in with direct reports and wider teams much more frequently. They're scheduling more one-on-one calls, holding more informal team meetings and stand-ups, and using automated tools to create new connections between employees and simulate serendipity.

Looking ahead, these frequent, informal check-ins won't be face-to-face all the time. New audio-only meeting tools, such as Slack Huddles, allow teams to recreate quick, informal office discussions or spontaneous brainstorming and problem-solving sessions.





## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

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We used Culture Amp to send out pulse checks to see how everyone was feeling, which helped us make an informed decision on what employees wanted and which leadership style was best for the organisation.”

**Matt Loop**, Head of APAC, Slack

### Creating a more diverse workforce

Moving to a digital HQ allows an organisation to recruit beyond a defined geographic area. This gives leadership the opportunity to leverage remote/hybrid work as a way to attract more candidates, including from underrepresented groups. After all, diverse teams **consistently outperform** their homogeneous counterparts.

The Future Forum’s **Remote Employee Experience Index** shows that, in the U.S. at least, historically underrepresented workers might prefer remote work, reporting higher overall index scores—essentially, satisfaction—in regard to remote work than their white counterparts. Of course, the task of building a diverse workforce doesn’t stop at hiring. In the same data set, underrepresented workers shared a lower sense of belonging, something leaders must address.

“

Companies that thrive in the new era of work will fix these imbalances. They will embrace the opportunity to hire the best talent from more distributed, more diverse backgrounds, and they’ll understand that retaining that talent requires changing historical habits and routines.”

**Brian Elliott**, VP, The Future Forum

## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

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Through 2022, 75% of organisations with frontline decision-making teams reflecting a diverse and inclusive culture will exceed their financial targets.”

**Gartner Consulting**

### Actively fighting burnout

As stress and uncertainty have increased, leaders have understandably gotten proactive about the mental health and wellness of their people. Apps like Calm and Headspace are the new employee benefit of choice. And CEOs are getting out in front of the issue by helping their teams set boundaries.

“

Creating a mindful workplace culture is so important! In my experience working at high-growth companies, I know that most people move fast and wear many hats. Without an attention to mindfulness, it can be easy to lose sight of the bigger picture.”

**Ashley Waxman, Head of Employer Brand, Asana**

In a far cry from old-school principles of management, today's leaders are asked to support the individuals on their teams with an **empathetic approach**. Companies are now providing additional emergency time off, mental health benefits, companywide days off and other employee-centric options to help combat stress and burnout.

## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

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When people feel that somebody actually cares about them as a human being, they will be inspired.”

**Simon Sinek**, Leadership Expert

### Rethinking core talent-related processes

Hiring managers are looking with fresh eyes at how they recruit and hire for the digital HQ of the future. It's time to rethink the candidate experience throughout their entire journey, from learning about the job opening to starting the job and beyond.

Forward-thinking HR and hiring leaders are using dedicated channels in their collaboration platforms to recruit, hire, onboard, develop, motivate and retain talent. We're seeing hiring and onboarding teams adopt digital-first processes, such as conducting remote interviews via video call and using automated workflows to standardise the onboarding process.

### Technology

The rise of video conferencing in every part of the employee experience is only the start. Never before have messaging, collaboration platforms and app integrations been so central to managing people, guiding teams and getting work done. Clearly, technology has a major role to play in how connected and included everyone feels.

### The collaboration platform is the new digital HQ

Now that physical offices are so much less a part of the employee experience, having a digital HQ—a central place that connects your people, tools, customers and partners—has become critical. It's not just a reflection of flexible, asynchronous work; it's what enables it.

Think about your digital HQ in new ways. Are you using channel-based messaging to cultivate non-work interests too? Are executive leaders holding 'Ask Me Anything' sessions? Are core work processes moving into channels instead of staying locked in email silos? What tools and training do you need to fully realise your digital HQ?

## Employee engagement needs a digital-first makeover

### The digital watercooler

Specialist apps and integrations are helping bring spontaneity back into our work lives. Up, the Australian digital bank, uses Barista, a colleague-matching app that integrates with Slack, so people stay connected without having to make a big effort or schedule time.

“

Barista and Slack make it easy to get to know each other and have conversations not just about work but other things that matter to us as people too.”

**Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up**

Find opportunities to celebrate wins, both big and small, no matter where your teams are located. For instance, you can share projects completed, deals won or features released in dedicated channels. You can also give and receive feedback with apps such as Lattice or Workday.

“

One company did virtual tours of their home offices. That gave them the chance to talk about some of the mementos that they keep nearby. They were showing off pictures that their kids drew for them. And it was a great moment of personal connection in a way that never would have happened if everyone was in the office.”

**Adam Grant, Organisational Psychologist**

## Physical space

In the past, physical proximity reigned supreme. Synchronous, in-person work was considered key to productivity. Business leaders viewed physical HQs as the place where work got done, and digital tools were seen as supplemental. But this old way of working has reached its breaking point. Proximity can't scale, and people increasingly want flexibility in where they work. The pandemic only exacerbated this phenomenon. Today's employees need a digital HQ that connects everyone across time zones and physical spaces, and even across companies.

### Redesigning the office around new needs

Smaller, more flexible satellite offices closer to people's homes are replacing expensive, showcase HQs, but the ideal mix of physical spaces is far from apparent. One thing is certain: It all starts with listening to what employees want. When the talent agency R/GA [redesigned its offices for post-pandemic work](#), it first held surveys and workshops with its 1,600 employees around the world. The result? A hybrid workspace with reservable desks and a policy that supports remote work.

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It's time to ask questions like: **Do we need a dedicated physical space for this? How do we integrate our physical offices with our digital HQ?**

“

For certain kinds of work, the default will be working from home—and offices are going to be designed explicitly for the things that togetherness does best.”

**Daniel Pin**, Motivation Expert

### New health and safety considerations

Even if office work is only a small part of people's jobs going forward, they will be worried about the safety of returning to offices. Think about increased spacing, staggered attendance, zigzag seating, one-way hallways, fewer touchscreens, more distance markers, and anti-infection design. And make sure to communicate what you're doing so your people feel more comfortable when they do return to the office and can express any concerns ahead of time.

“

People need to feel healthy and safe, that the environment is clean, and that these are environmentally healthy and not just energy-efficient green buildings.”

**Dennis Perkins**, Founder, Civitas

### The professional home office

Working at the kitchen counter was fine for a few weeks. Today we're seeing employers take home office spaces seriously, investing in ergonomic chairs, sit-stand desks and proper lighting for their employees. Companies like Shopify and Twitter give remote employees a budget to set up their home workspaces. Company policies and education around proper ergonomics should extend to home workspaces too.

Survey your employees about their workspace situations. Ask for photos (within privacy constraints) if it makes sense. Identify people who need better support—whether that's advice, equipment or improved processes.

“

Will the harsh realities of the post-Covid world alter time-hewn preferences and behaviours of the workforce? Absolutely, but only time will tell how drastic or enduring those changes will be.”

**Architizer**

## The new EX imperative

The shift to hybrid work allows for a more diverse talent pool, less proximity bias and fewer one-size-fits-all practices. Eric Yuan, the CEO of Zoom, **sums it up**: “We have to look at everything from our employees’ perspective.”

### More of:

- A global talent pool
- Flexible hours and locations
- Quick, informal check-ins
- Optimised home workspaces
- Collaboration platforms as the new digital HQ
- Employee wellness as a management KPI

### Less of:

- Proximity bias
- 9-to-5 for all
- Daily commutes
- Assigned desks and expensive, open-plan offices
- One-size-fits-all practices and policies

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Many companies are rapidly experimenting with distributed and asynchronous models, helping to write the playbook for how to thrive in the new world of work.”

**The Future Forum**

“

It’s more important that our employees are meeting their milestones than where they work from. Since we rolled Slack out across all devices, we’re not bound to one place anymore.”

**Matthias Schirmag**, Head of Global IT Network and Communication,  
Mast-Jägermeister SE

# 2.

**Alignment  
matters now  
more than ever**



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## Alignment matters now more than ever

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During periods of growth, consistency and openness when it comes to internal processes will steady the corporate ship.”

**Steve Vamos**, CEO, Xero

Even before the pandemic, aligning individuals and teams, much less entire companies, around the same goals proved challenging. The rapid shift to remote work made a complicated task even more complex, as companies scrambled to orient everyone in the same direction. Many business leaders assume that alignment works best when everyone is in the same location.

But there's an interesting twist: Proximity does not guarantee alignment. Closed-door meetings and emails keep information from reaching everyone who needs to see it. With a digital HQ, everyone has immediate access to the information, tools and people they need to get work done. Of course, alignment doesn't happen by chance, even with a digital HQ. Here are a few tips to guide your way.

### **Openness as the default management style**

Traditional, command-and-control management styles don't work well in distributed work contexts or hybrid work scenarios. Instead of hoarding information and decision-making, the nimblest companies share knowledge openly as a default and push decision-making to the front lines. That's why it's so important to have a digital HQ, a centralised place where work happens.

“

Given the pace of the content creation for all of our different brands, being secretive does not benefit anyone. Slack has really allowed us to encourage openness and transparency.”

**Aya Kanai**, Former Editor in Chief of Marie Claire, Hearst Magazines

## Alignment matters now more than ever

### Tools of transparency

Open, transparent cultures—where everyone feels a part of the mission—need transparent collaboration tools. Channel-based platforms keep everyone in the loops that matter to them. Employees can use customisable notification settings to ensure that open communication doesn't lead to information overload.

“

Having a way to communicate freely and to openly share our vision, our goals and long-term objectives is the fundamental way we're successfully scaling the company worldwide.”

**Jack Zhang**, CEO, Airwallex

“

Slack is asynchronous: People pop into channels and know that they might not hear back from someone for five hours, which is OK. It's really useful to make sure we don't miss anything.”

**James Coxon**, Chief Product Officer, Stax

### Fighting proximity bias

Before the pandemic, in-person meetings were often considered the very best way to interact, and anything else was a compromise. That created proximity bias, a phenomenon whereby people in the office were inherently favoured over those who worked remotely. Leaders now see that encouraging asynchronous work is fundamental to strengthening collaboration across teams, time zones and physical spaces.

“

With asynchronous work, the work shines. That’s what I’m most excited about, because I can’t imagine a more interesting or challenging time to lead through this change.”

**Amy Farrow, CIO, Lyft**

## The digital all-hands meeting

The monthly CEO email is a relic of the past for the digital HQ-driven enterprise. Rather than one-way communication, companies are increasingly turning to digital all-hands meetings, combining the power of video with live Q&As in-channel. This format allows leaders to actively engage with employees and address questions or concerns in real time.



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## The new alignment imperative

Progressive leaders are focusing more and more on team alignment as a driver of success, especially with remote teams. If everyone’s pulling in the same direction, things happen faster and decisions are made with more context. Companies that can drive alignment quickly enjoy a competitive advantage over those that can’t.

### More of:

- Making leadership more available more often
- Transparent discussions and decisions
- An equal voice no matter where you work
- A digital HQ to transparently share company knowledge

### Less of:

- One-way email broadcasts and intranet announcements
- Fiefdoms where information is hoarded
- Proximity bias
- Duplication of efforts because of poor communication

## Alignment matters now more than ever

Case in point: Twitter hosted its first digital all-hands when lockdown started. The company used channels such as #oneteamQs and #wfh to solicit and answer employee questions. **Jennifer Christie**, Twitter's VP of people, says the two-way format was so successful that the company intends to keep using it.

“

It was very transparent. I think it'll be hard for us to ever think about doing it a different way.”

**Jennifer Christie**, VP of People, Twitter



# 3.

**The ecosystem  
economy demands  
a new partner  
playbook**

## The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

We're entering the ecosystem economy, where value isn't created within just one enterprise. That means the partners and suppliers you choose to work with—and the way you work with them—will be key to thriving in the next phase.

Before the pandemic, partnerships tended to be long-term and contract-driven. After, they'll be more fluid, more collaborative and more integrated. They'll also depend less on face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails and more on collaboration platforms. Here are some of the new moves we're seeing:

### Expanding capabilities with a best-of-breed approach

Being good at lots of things isn't good enough anymore. In many markets—from SaaS to financial services, the future is about bringing together specialist partners to create high-value customer experiences.

Think about how to bring best-of-breed capabilities into your products and services instead of always building that capability in-house. That means working more closely with specialist partners and vendors, often using software APIs that call on new capabilities as needed.

The new direction is all about creating value with other players in the ecosystem—and doing it in an open, fluid way.

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In ecosystem competition, success is as much about helping other firms innovate as it is about being innovative yourself.”

**Harvard Business Review**

### Auditing partners for supply-chain risk

Disruptions to supply chains during the pandemic have sensitised business leaders to risks they had taken for granted. In response, we're seeing more supplier risk mapping and supplier relationship audits to increase business resilience. Understanding your supply-chain risk is critical to managing it, because, let's face it, the pandemic won't be the last crisis your company faces.

“

The pandemic presents opportunities for establishing new relationships with partners/suppliers who are better equipped to help the company address urgent short-term needs and to capitalise on significant long-term opportunities.”

### **Industrial Marketing Management**

Take a look at your long-term business partnerships. Are they still relevant for the new ways you're serving customers? We're seeing partnership and supply-chain leaders running partnership audits to determine which relationships are most relevant now.

“

It's vital to ascertain how long your company could ride out a supply shock without shutting down.”

### **Harvard Business Review**

## **Securing your digital HQ**

The new world of open collaboration and remote work brings with it new cybersecurity risks. Pre-pandemic security strategies were often all about securing a perimeter with some version of a firewall. That's still important, but the new digital HQ will demand more comprehensive thinking about security.

Remote workers—your own and your partners'—are far more likely to use their home Wi-Fi and personal devices to access their company's digital HQ. Consumer-grade messaging apps are unlikely to provide the kind of security and regulatory compliance that an enterprise needs.

Instead, think virtual private networks (VPNs), device management platforms for remote workers, and enterprise-grade collaboration solutions. You'll want to make sure that any solution you choose for your digital HQ meets your company's compliance needs and regulatory requirements. Those same programs and policies should extend to external partners, customers and vendors too.

“

We expect to see remote workers using VPNs and additional security measures to protect company data while they work from home. In fact, since the pandemic began, one of the top policy changes made in organisations has been to increase VPN capacity for remote workers.”

**IFSEC Global**



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## A new way to connect

Email chains keep knowledge locked in silos. With Slack Connect, organisations can bring the transparency and speed of working in channels to customers, partners and vendors. By managing these relationships in channels, stakeholders have access to context and history, leading to faster, more informed responses.

“

We use Slack Connect to communicate externally with partners like Afterpay, Bendigo Bank and TransferWise. It gives us a history and audit log of transactions of all the communications. It means that all companies are able to communicate with each other really easily.”

**Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up**



## The ecosystem economy demands a new partner playbook

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Having all of the information about a specific partner available at once is super-important. We have a direct line of communication to our counterparts at the companies that we work with most frequently.”

**Mike Yakovlev**, Senior Manager of Technology Alliances, Zendesk

### The new partner imperative

How you work with partners is as important as who you work with.

#### More of:

- Strategic partnerships and ecosystems
- APIs to automate and integrate
- Secure channel-based collaboration
- A shared source of truth across company boundaries

#### Less of:

- Going it alone and ignoring integration opportunities
- Inflexible partner relationships
- Unmapped supply-chain risk
- Email to manage external relationships

“

Having the ability to message an external vendor via Slack provides next-level support. The runaround you usually have to go through via email does not exist when you use channels.”

**Marisa Guarino**, IT Technical Program Manager, Snowflake

4.

**Customer-  
led disruption  
forces the CX  
convergence**



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## Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

If EX is about keeping your employees engaged, then CX (customer experience) is all about keeping customers and prospects happy.

Today customers are in the driver's seat. Their experiences with some of the world's best brands and most sophisticated services have raised standards in every market. They want to feel like they're dealing with one company whether they're interacting with sales, marketing or customer service. And they expect each of these disciplines to know who they are and treat them accordingly.

This means changing the way customer teams collaborate together. The walls between sales, marketing and service are starting to dissolve, so everyone's in the customer experience business. Today, the owners of CX, sales, marketing and customer service are all in rapid innovation mode.

### The last gasp for email

For collaborating on complex campaigns, customer issues and new business deals, email chains just don't cut it anymore. Channel-based collaboration platforms like Slack are replacing email for everything from campaign planning and tracking to configure-price-quote processes and the handover to customer success teams. And Slack Connect bridges company boundaries so that salespeople can collaborate actively and securely with prospects and marketers can work more effectively with agencies.

If your sales, marketing and customer service processes are still email-dependent, you risk losing out to faster, nimbler competitors who have freed themselves from email and brought customers into their digital HQ.

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With Slack, we're able to respond and have a conversation in real time with our customers.”

**Dominic Pym, Co-Founder, Up**

## Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

### Hybrid customer journeys

Sales, marketing and service teams are digitising their processes to better support increasingly digital customer journeys. In consumer markets, customers may not be returning to stores for every need. In B2B sales, reps may not be visiting customers nearly as often. Across all sectors, digital interactions are replacing in-person experiences. Digital channels matter more than ever, a trend that will only grow.

“

Procedures on lead generation, how to do a demo, negotiate and close a deal, and customer success are all critical to systematise and digitise to make a remote sales team successful.”

**Liam Martin**, Founder and CEO, Time Doctor

The way forward will require business leaders to determine which stages of the customer journey necessitate in-person interactions and which can be managed digitally. Teams will need to explore new ways of connecting with customers, such as collaboration platforms or digital conferences. In-person interactions aren't going away, but they're likely to be less frequent, with digital touchpoints used in between.

In all scenarios, distributed customer-facing teams need new ways to collaborate, whether swarming on big sales deals, launching marketing campaigns or triaging customer service issues.

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More than 90% of B2Bs have transitioned to a virtual sales model during Covid-19.”

**McKinsey & Company**



## Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

### The rise of ops: the great integrators

Software proliferation in sales, marketing and service has increased fragmentation. This means that even within a single department, data and communication silos lead to disjointed, inefficient processes. Add in the need to collaborate across teams, and the complexity becomes quickly unmanageable.

“

Sales operations leaders ... must develop strategies to build virtual communities and promote active engagement among sales operations team members and their stakeholders.”

**Dave Egloff, Gartner**

In response, we're seeing the rapid rise of operations roles on all three teams. Ops leaders, in turn, are turning to collaboration platforms to connect teams, systems and tools to create a cohesive digital HQ. The value to the company (and to customer experiences) is enormous.

“

There's a key productivity gain for us thanks to Slack integrations with PagerDuty, Jira, Pingdom, Zoom and ServiceNow. It's a great way to make sure customers receive the response and service they're paying for.”

**Dean Robinson, General Manager, Versent**

Whatever the new, better way looks like for your company, it will most likely involve ops and a digital HQ that brings everyone together around common goals and projects.

## Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

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The information that's normally scattered across applications gets concentrated in the right place in Slack. The integrations become essential to how we work every day.”

**James Coxon**, Chief Product Officer, Stax

### Listening better and responding faster

Modern customer teams are listening and engaging in a wide range of channels, both digital and offline. But it's still a struggle to integrate and capture all these touchpoints in a centralised hub so everyone has visibility into common pain points, wins, and product feedback.

“

By harnessing real-time insights from our staff on the ground for campaigns, then sharing that info on Slack, we now reach more than 1 million people each month through Instagram to promote our free service to users.”

**Annie Meharg**, Former Chief Commercial Officer, Kooth

Operations leaders are moving to channel-based platforms that integrate with their company's critical tools. By piping information such as support ticket details, account correspondence and NPS scores into channels, teams have access to the information they need to improve the customer experience.

## Customer-led disruption forces the CX convergence

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Marketers have had to quickly pivot to understand rapidly changing market landscapes, consumer behaviour and business challenges. And we've all had to find new ways to work with different parts of our organisations, as well as external partners, to collaborate, create and execute work.”

**Erin Clift**, Former CMO, Waze

### **New support channels**

A [report by Zendesk](#) showed that 64% of customers used a new support channel in 2020 and 73% plan to keep using it. Companies are responding with investments in web chat, SMS, community forums, self-service and service channels embedded in apps and products.

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Instead of staring at an issue by yourself, you've instantly got 50 to 60 engineers looking at it with you in the Slack channel. That translates into really quality customer outcomes because you're leveraging the whole team's knowledge.”

**Dean Robinson**, Managing Director, Versent

But this proliferation of channels will only work if there's a central hub connecting customer service with the rest of the business. Slack channels are proving to be an increasingly important way to triage customer service requests and enlist the right cross-functional experts to help swarm big issues.

## The new CX imperative

The walls between sales, marketing and customer service are dissolving as companies re-engineer to support new customer journeys.

### More of:

- Integration—of apps, data and insights
- The acceleration of digital
- Live chat and chatbots
- Channel-based collaboration
- Hiring operations experts

### Less of:

- Front-office fragmentation
- Email chains and reply-all
- ‘Call back during office hours’
- Data silos and customer feedback silos



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# 5.

**The winners  
are accelerating  
work through  
automation**



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## The winners are accelerating work through automation

If there's a silver lining to disruption, it's the opportunity to take a fresh look at the way we all work. Leaders across departments and disciplines are examining their business processes under the microscope. They're using this time of disruption to swiftly implement changes that would have taken years to roll out prior to 2020.

For many businesses, this great reckoning has led to a flurry of automation. Teams are transforming routine, low-value processes into efficient workflows. This transition not only speeds up work and saves time, it also frees employees to focus on high-value work.

### Speed up the manual processes that slow you down

Automation is popping up everywhere there's repetitive or manual work. Software development companies have led the way on automating workflows, and now other industries are catching on. For example, banks have developed apps to report and triage website incidents in Slack. Major media publications have introduced bots that auto-pull and share reports on content performance, and retail brands have created custom workflows that alert teams when something is out of stock.

“

It helps us a lot in efficiently dealing with incidents. Our teams know to look in the corresponding incident channel when we have a problem.”

**Dennis Winter**, VP of Technical Operations, Solarisbank

### The importance of documentation

A big part of keeping everyone on the same page is having a place where best practices are captured and shared for all to see. Clearly defined processes and documentation help teams get up to speed fast and leverage proven best practices.

If your work depends on unwritten procedures and 'common knowledge,' it's time to capture the critical steps and share that information in an accessible forum, such as a Slack channel.

## The winners are accelerating work through automation

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We already had this habit of trying to document things in a way that was visible to other people and to build an archive. So when people join teams, they have a little bit of history and there's continuity.”

**Stewart Butterfield**, Co-Founder and CEO, Slack

### Bring the power of automation to everyone

Not long ago, automated workflows were the domain of a company's workplace technology team and a handful of savvy coders. Today, new tools allow just about anyone, from sales reps to customer service agents, to introduce their own solutions. With Slack's Workflow Builder, teams can use no-code building blocks in Slack to turn routine tasks, such as deal approvals and time-off requests, into automated actions in minutes.

“

Right from the start, you have everyone you need because it's pulling in the right people—from who's on call from the development team to who's on operations during that time of the day.”

**Robert Greville**, Head of Web Engineering, Vodafone

## The new automation imperative

Manual work slows everything down and invites errors. Today's leaders are actively integrating their tools to create a single digital HQ and automating workflows to realise new productivity gains.

### More of:

- Tool integration
- Transparent documentation
- Democratisation of automation
- Focus time for high-value work

### Less of:

- Tool sprawl
- Undefined processes and procedures
- Limited access to automation
- Repetitive, low-value tasks

# Reinvent work to emerge better



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## Reinvent work to emerge better

In 2020, the entire world came to terms with working during a pandemic. As we look ahead, the next few years will be about seizing opportunities to improve the way we work so that we can all emerge better. It's not about calling everyone back to the office or going fully remote forever. It's about the best of both—a better way.

As daunting as these new challenges may seem, they offer a rare chance to build a digital HQ that breaks down silos; gives employees the flexibility to do their best work where, when and how they prefer; and empowers everyone to automate routine work so they can focus on what they do best.

The world has made a permanent shift to digital-first work. But it's up to each business leader to decide where to go from here.

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This isn't some far-off future; this is now, and next year, and the year after that, if we only embrace the opportunity to reimagine and the responsibility to reinvent.”

**Stewart Butterfield**, Co-Founder and CEO, Slack

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### Discover new workplace trends

Slack is tracking the emerging world of work. Follow us on [Twitter](#), or [check out our blog](#) to learn more.

Looking to make Slack your new digital HQ? [Connect with our team.](#)

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### Additional resources

#### **The Future Forum**

A consortium launched by Slack to help companies reimagine work in the new digital-first workplace.

[futureforum.com](https://futureforum.com)

#### **Slack Resources Library**

All sorts of training guides customised to specific industries, as well as tips on how to improve your organisation's use of Slack.

[slack.com/resources](https://slack.com/resources)

#### **Slack blog**

Our blog, *Several People Are Typing*, covers stories and insights on collaboration, productivity and transformation.

[slack.com/blog](https://slack.com/blog)

## About Slack

Slack has transformed business communication. It's the leading channel-based messaging platform, used by millions to align their teams, unify their systems, and drive their businesses forward. Only Slack offers a secure, enterprise-grade environment that can scale with the largest companies in the world. It is a new layer of the business technology stack where people can work together more effectively, connect all their other software tools and services, and find the information they need to do their best work. Slack is your Digital HQ.



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