

Global Report: Changing Expectations and the Future of Work

Insights from the pandemic to create a better work experience



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The extended duration and reach of the global pandemic has changed fundamental patterns in our lives, accelerating existing trends and revealing new unmet needs.

How we shop, entertain, travel and learn are different, and the same is true for the way people work. As the pandemic began, people who could work from home suddenly found themselves in the middle of a massive global experiment, uncovering new insights about what people need — and will expect — to do their best work. Whether they are still at home or have returned to the office, people have learned from what they've been through and are looking to their organizations to create a substantially better work experience than what they had before the pandemic.

Working from home during the pandemic enabled many organizations to sustain business operations — some prospering and others struggling — which led to early speculation that it might become the new default position and that office real estate would be significantly reduced, or even eliminated.

As the pandemic stretched on, it became apparent that working from home is not a one-size-fits-all experience for people, nor is there a single ideal solution for each organization.

There are, however, key themes and patterns that have emerged from which organizations can learn and develop new workplace strategies that meet the changing needs and demands of their employees.

Organizations around the world face dramatically different circumstances depending on the state of the pandemic, their locations, industries, cultures and many other variables. Resilience is critical to all of them, and leading organizations are looking to this moment as an opportunity to challenge assumptions and reset the way they work so they can emerge from the crisis stronger, with employees who are energized and engaged.

About the Study

Steelcase Global Reports study work, workers and the workplace. They explore important issues facing leading organizations today to uncover key insights that can help improve the work experience.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Steelcase has conducted ongoing research to help organizations understand its impact on their people and business. A science-based and data-driven approach uncovers new perspectives about how and where people want to work going forward.

This issue shares the synthesis of eight primary studies conducted between April and September, 2020 and was designed to measure how the COVID-19 pandemic will change the future of work. The quantitative and qualitative studies deployed methodologies based in the social sciences and were conducted in multiple countries, including over 32,000 cumulative participants.

Steelcase is committed to continuing research to understand what's next and share what we're learning to help make work better.

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Benefits and Challenges





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