

PROPHET

Catalysts: A Global Research Report

Fit for Change: Driving Growth and Transformation in the New Future of Work

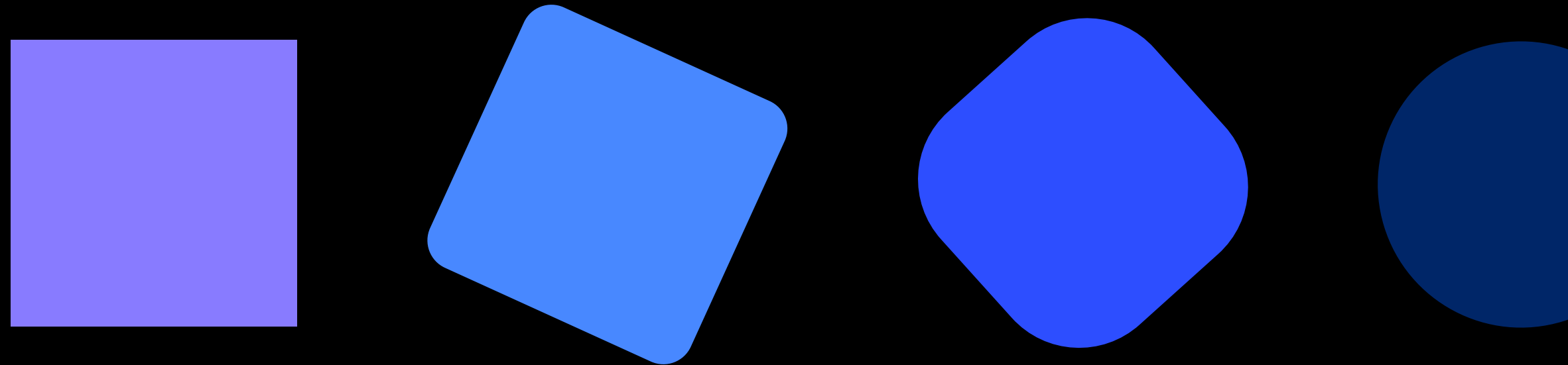


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Executive Summary



History isn't written in the tumult of events. But the year that has elapsed since the peak of the pandemic gives us the perspective to assess the impact of 2020 on transformation in the Digital Age.

The forces that drove near universal organizational change last year are well-documented; their relative impact is not. Nor is it clear, until now, which of these forces will grow in importance for leaders driving transformation in their organizations in the coming months.

This paper looks beyond the self-evident insights of 2020 to propose a way forward for leaders driving transformation. It introduces a new change fitness model to assess progress more holistically in real-time. And it offers a path towards change maturity that supports uncommon growth.

As the tsunami recedes, the trees that remain standing tall have lessons for us all. Our analysis and proposals are designed to pay the lessons of 2020 forward. We want to ensure organizations transform successfully, by looking beyond the new normal to the next reality, fit for change.

Report Highlights

01

SEISMIC CHANGE — WITH FUTURE AFTERSHOCKS

Many of the external forces that required organizational cultures to adapt in 2020 had been gaining traction over the last decade. A close reading of events reveals which forces of change will continue to grow in importance, shaping transformation for years to come.

02

A NEW PERSPECTIVE: CHANGE FITNESS

We are introducing a new model of change fitness that tracks an organization's capacity to transform across multiple measures. This emerged from our finding that successfully driving culture change in the current era is about absorbing multiple significant forces rather than responding well to a single powerful one.

03

EVOLVING OUR CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Improving organizational fitness for change is not a light undertaking. Why commit to it? Because using the levers of Prophet's Human-Centered Transformation Model™, we see that organizations which are fit for change are financially healthier, too.

Introduction

TRANSFORMATION. AS WE KNEW IT.

Before 2020, transformation for companies lived somewhere between “on the radar” and “on the agenda.” The urgency and focus of change across the globe varied by industry and company. However, most businesses recognized the need to make sizable shifts in response to differing digital, technological, cultural and social factors. These ranged from digital acceleration and flexible workforces to employee wellbeing and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

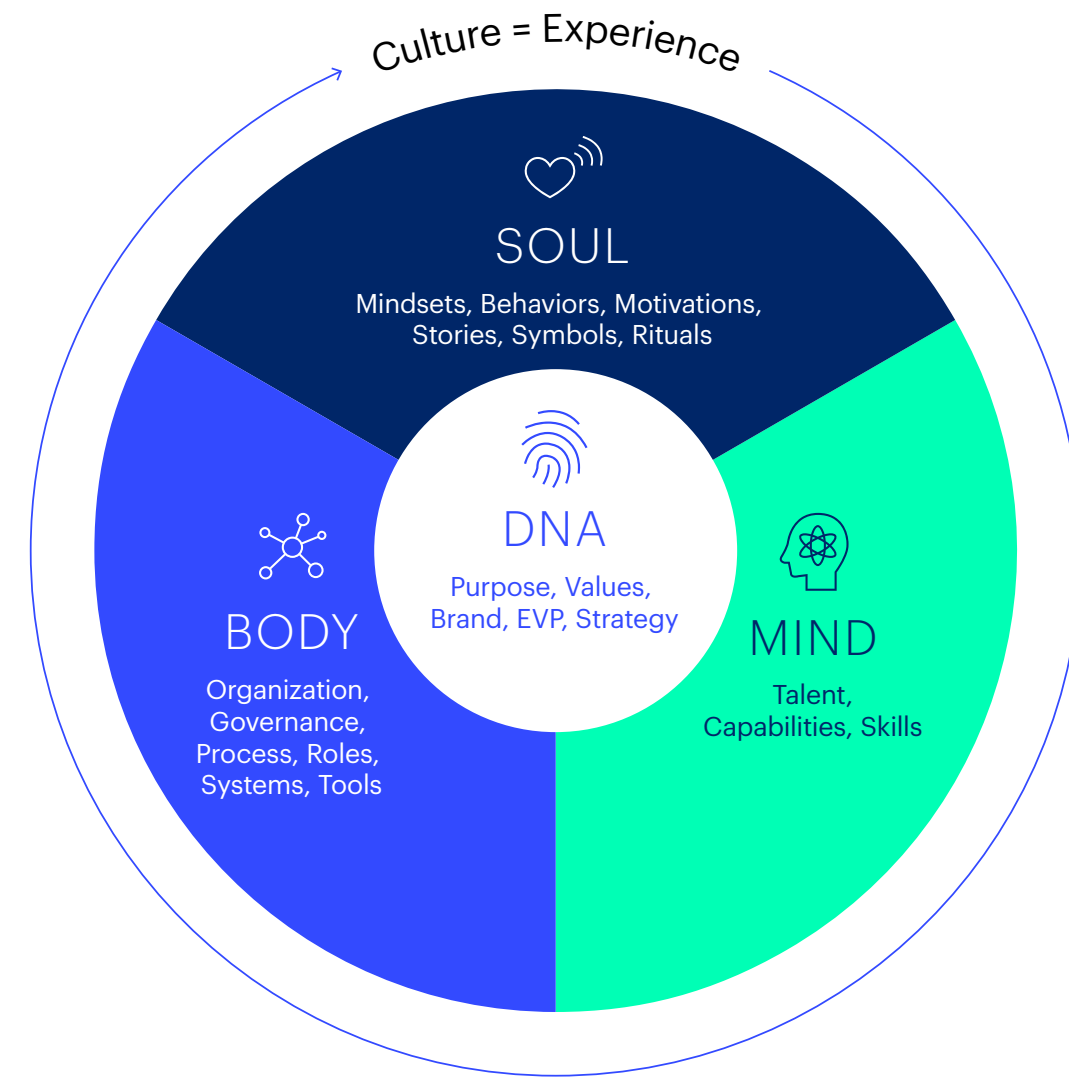
Before the pandemic, change tended to be a reaction to a specific event or need. Whether the spur was digital transformation, a new product launch or organizational restructuring, it was often viewed as something to minimize and manage. For some, change was more acutely experienced in isolated parts of the organization — within headquarters or an innovation hub. And where the impetus was being proactive rather than answering an imminent need, the change process was likely to be a gradual, uphill battle.

THE YEAR OF EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE

The events of 2020 saw a near universal push for organizations to respond quickly to a number of powerful external forces which struck them in quick succession, setting off chain reactions internally. As a result, the focus on organizational culture has never been more intense.

When dealing with challenges related to culture, it's important to frame what's meant by the term. At Prophet, we view all organizations as a macrocosm of the individual. Each one has a collective DNA, Body, Mind and Soul. An organization's culture, therefore, needs to be understood as a holistic ecosystem.

For transformation to be successful today, leaders need to think about every aspect of this ecosystem. Our Human-Centered Transformation Model™ makes this simpler and more insightful. Indeed, there's no better lens for unpacking the complexities of organizational and cultural dynamics into specific components that can be easily explored and understood.



PROPHET'S HUMAN-CENTERED TRANSFORMATION MODEL™



DNA – DEFINE
What is our destination and direction of travel?



MIND – ENABLE
What new skills are required to drive the change?



BODY – DIRECT
What might need to change in our operating model?



SOUL – MOTIVATE
How might we ignite belief in the change needed?

As has been widely reported, the last year has accelerated a re-examination of historical ways of working and cultural norms, while introducing profound new forces of organizational change. New working arrangements, faltering economies and reinvented business models and practices have transformed the employee experience.

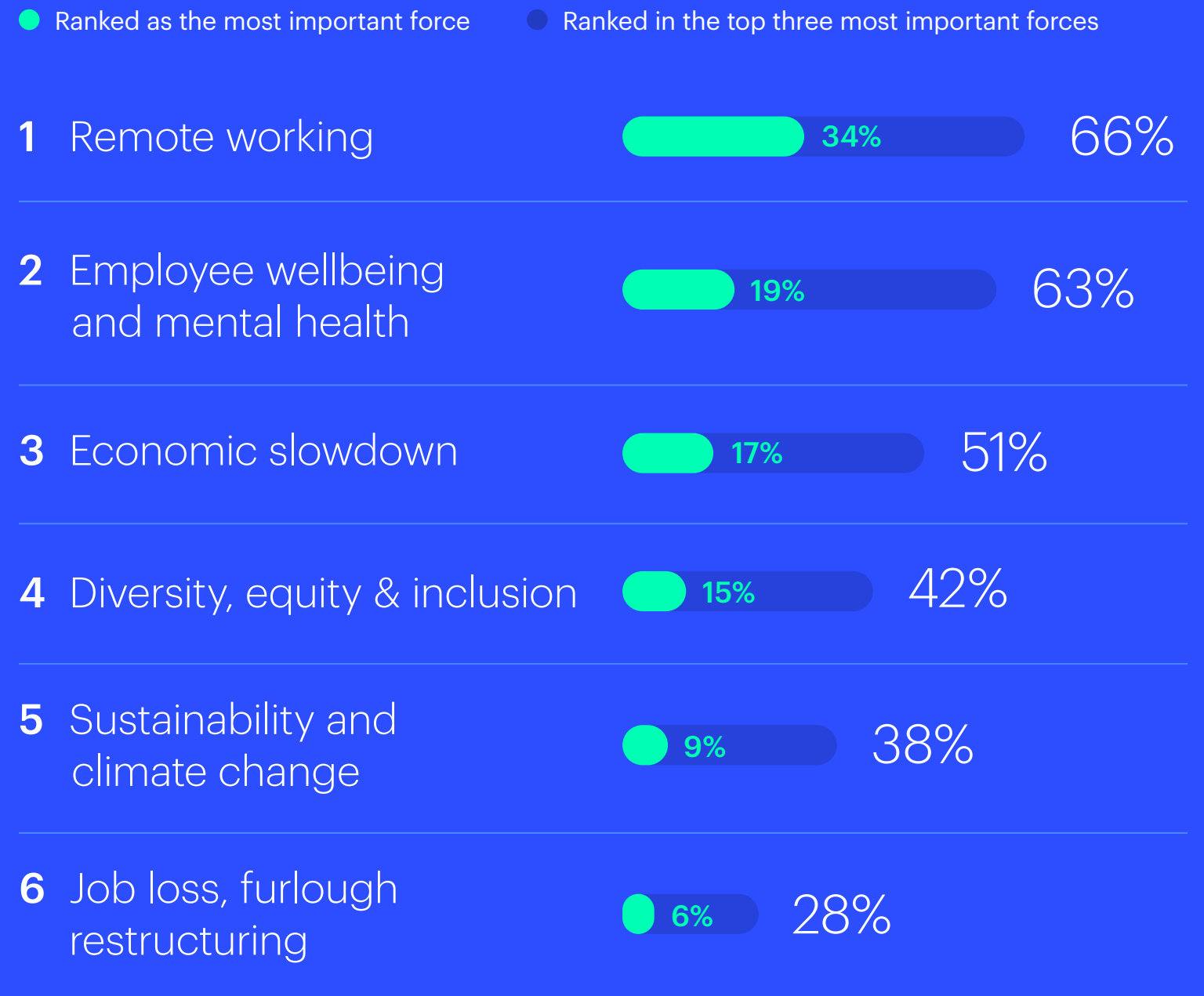
However, our findings confirmed the most impactful forces weren't necessarily the newest ones. Many of these external forces had, in fact, already been on the rise. What made 2020 remarkable was that organizations faced a 'perfect storm': a confluence of powerful forces that demanded swift, decisive responses.

More specifically, we found that "Remote working" unsurprisingly ranked as the most important change, but other factors that had existed long before 2020 also came to the fore. These included "Employee wellbeing and mental health" and "Diversity, equity & inclusion." In fact, leaders we interviewed often linked "Remote working" directly with the need to address "Employee wellbeing and mental health." This highlighted the pivotal pressures employees felt during 2020 and continue to feel into 2021: disruption to working environments (whether remote or hybrid), work impinging relentlessly on personal lives compounded by mixed levels of support, and teams separated to a degree many organizations had never experienced before.

As well as tracking the growing influence of some forces, our research identified the macro shifts that emerged in 2020 that are impacting and will continue to impact organizational culture. What's more, it highlighted the heightened urgency to address existing forces as organizational culture and resilience were put to the test.

EXTERNAL FORCES MOST IMPORTANT IN DRIVING CULTURAL CHANGE IN 2020

QUESTION: Which of these have been most important in driving cultural change in your organization during 2020?





FOCUSING ON FITNESS

In a year where nearly every company was forced into significant organizational change, we found that the ability to adapt quickly wasn't about the response to any one force. Rather, organizational agility and successful adaptation were about fitness for change.


We found that the cultural levers of transformation identified and reinforced in our 2019 and 2020 Catalysts research continue to be critical in enabling companies to adapt and thrive in times of uncertainty. This research revealed these organizational catalysts fall into two categories:


Fundamentals are essential for change and include cultural elements such as a clear roadmap and leader role modeling.


Accelerators are hidden drivers that can make a significant difference to change. These include aligned incentives and shared successes amongst others.


THE CULTURAL LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION


Fundamentals


-  Clarify **which leaders would** lead and / or align top **leaders to role model** changes

-  Develop a clear **roadmap**


-  Push **decision rights** downward


-  Develop **KPIs**


-  Identify the **skills, capabilities, and roles** needed, and develop **training to re-skill** existing talent


-  Develop meaningful mechanisms to **enable employees to adapt** to the change


Accelerators

-  Set a powerful, actionable **ambition**

-  Align **incentives to drive cross-functional work**

-  Align **talent systems** in service of the transformation

-  Rapidly share **successes and lessons learned**

-  Recognize and reward **progress**, not just outcomes

Our aims in the report are to:

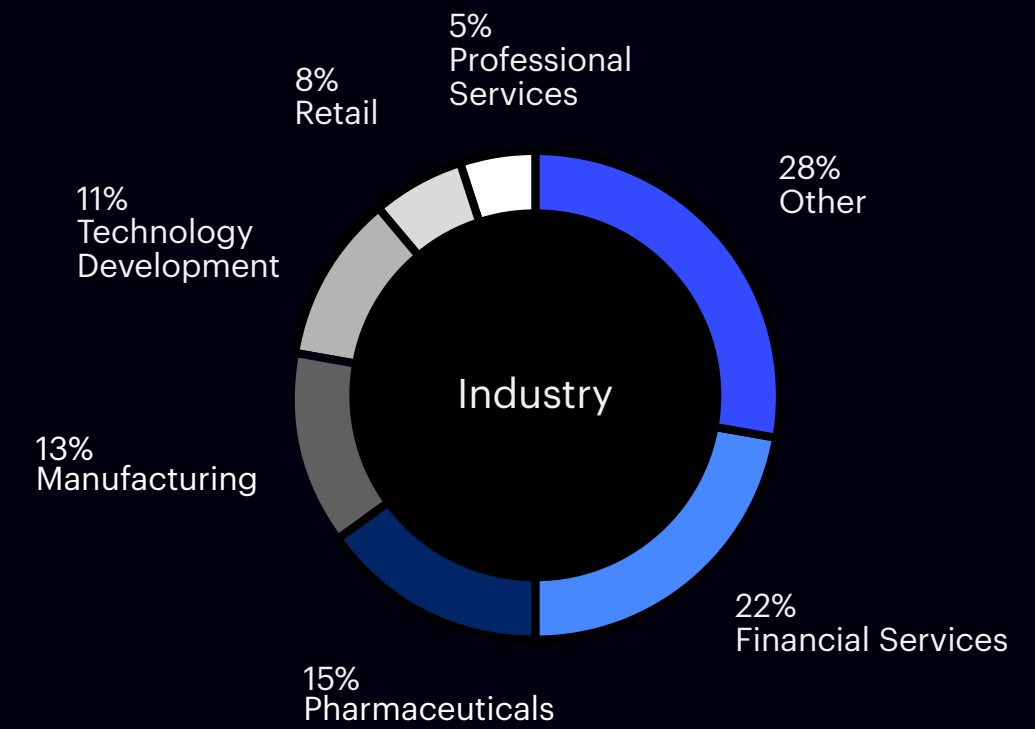
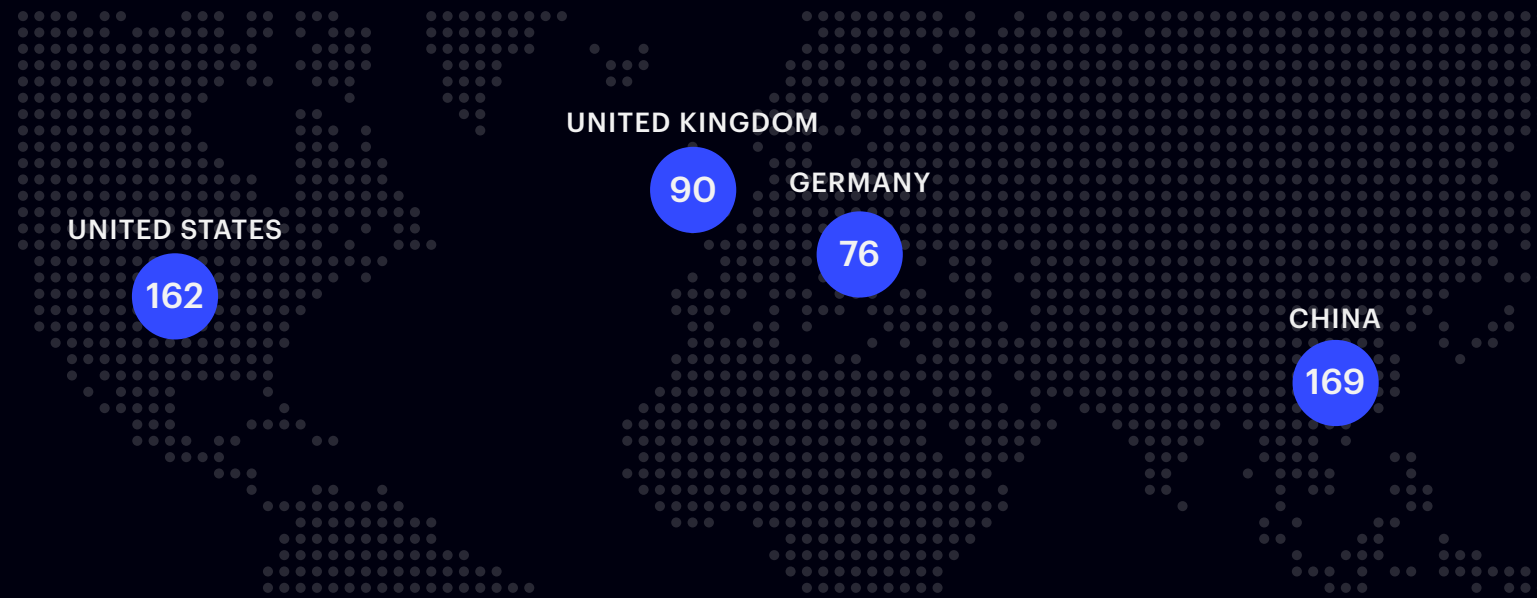
Identify which external forces from 2020 are expected to create enduring changes in organizational culture

Introduce a model for understanding organizations along a new dimension: change fitness

Provide a forward path around change fitness that enables organizations to drive successful and lasting transformation

Methodology

AND PARTICIPANTS



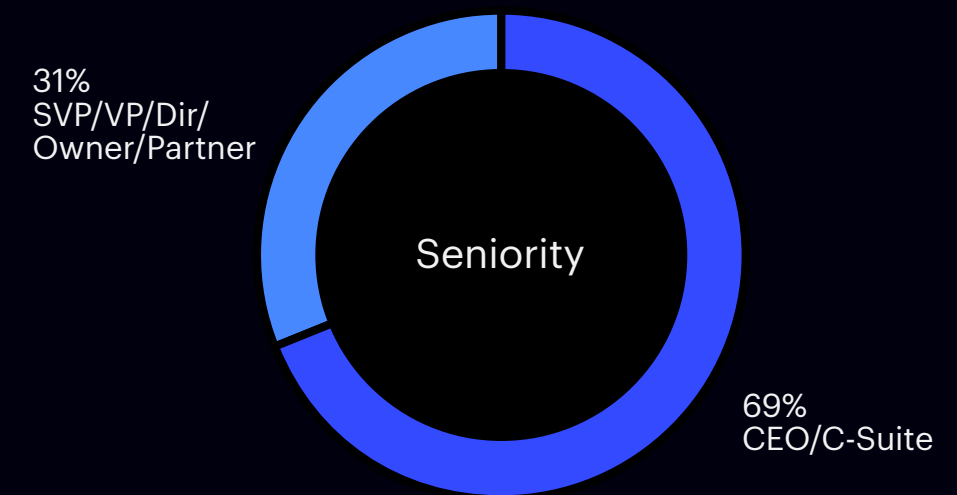
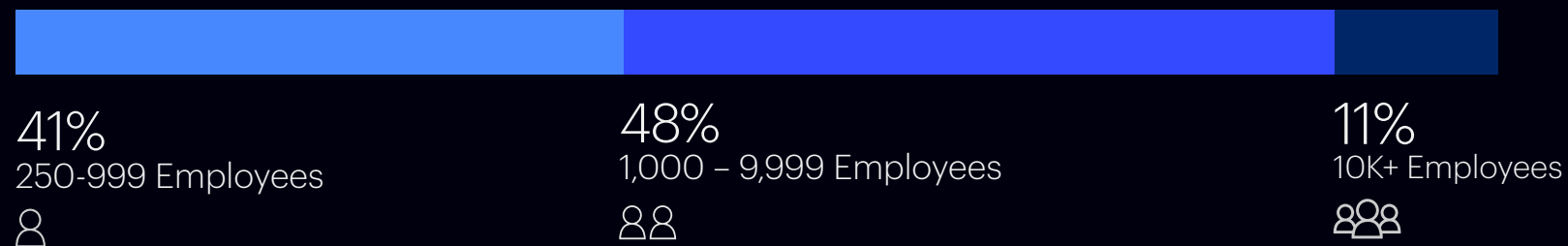
Executive Interviews

32 Across industries, functional role, geographies and transformation 'maturity'

Survey Participants

497 Across the U.S., U.K., Germany and China

Number of Employees



What Happened in 2020 (Doesn't Stay in 2020)

Forced overnight into a global experiment in remote work and distributed teams, organizations needed to learn how to adapt their culture and absorb change over ever shorter time horizons.

“The horizons of change have narrowed. Prior to 2020, digital transformation focused more on fancy jargon and some futuristic vision. Now, as there is no more room for excuses or buzz words, leaders are taking a more pragmatic approach, thinking about how to leverage the available digital technologies to drive true business outcomes.”

Qing Wei, Chief Technology Officer, Microsoft (China)

For the first time for many employees, the pandemic made it impossible to clearly separate work and life. The ubiquitous availability of internet connections and smartphones had already made this challenging (France, for instance, had legally limited emails outside the traditional workday in 2017). But the pandemic broke down all barriers between the personal and the professional for those working remotely — and it did so at all levels of the organization.

VALUING THE WHOLE EMPLOYEE

Not surprisingly, remote work topped the league of forces exerting a cultural influence. And we know this was not purely in the sense of those moving to home offices, but also for those attempting to deliver “business as usual” in operational roles. It’s no surprise that employee wellbeing and mental health were almost equally strong forces — and increased in importance from the year before. Yet while the issue is recognized as a critical and growing force, the organizational response is perceived to still be falling short. Despite respondents believing its profile will increase the most over the next three years, less than half feel their organization has adapted well to its growing importance.

As well as the challenge of caring for the whole person, many organizations in different markets were grappling with how they might create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. Then 2020 shone a spotlight on inequities that could no longer be ignored. In particular, the endemic racial and social injustices in America, highlighted by a summer of global activism ignited by the death of George Floyd in the U.S., drove a worldwide increase in focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Although DEI may look slightly different in each region, and while it is a larger force for change in the U.S., all regions view it as an area of increasing importance.



Less than a year later, these forces have already shifted the landscape — and the impacts are expected to continue. Leaders believe most forces will increase in importance over the next three years. More permanent changes in organizational culture are anticipated.

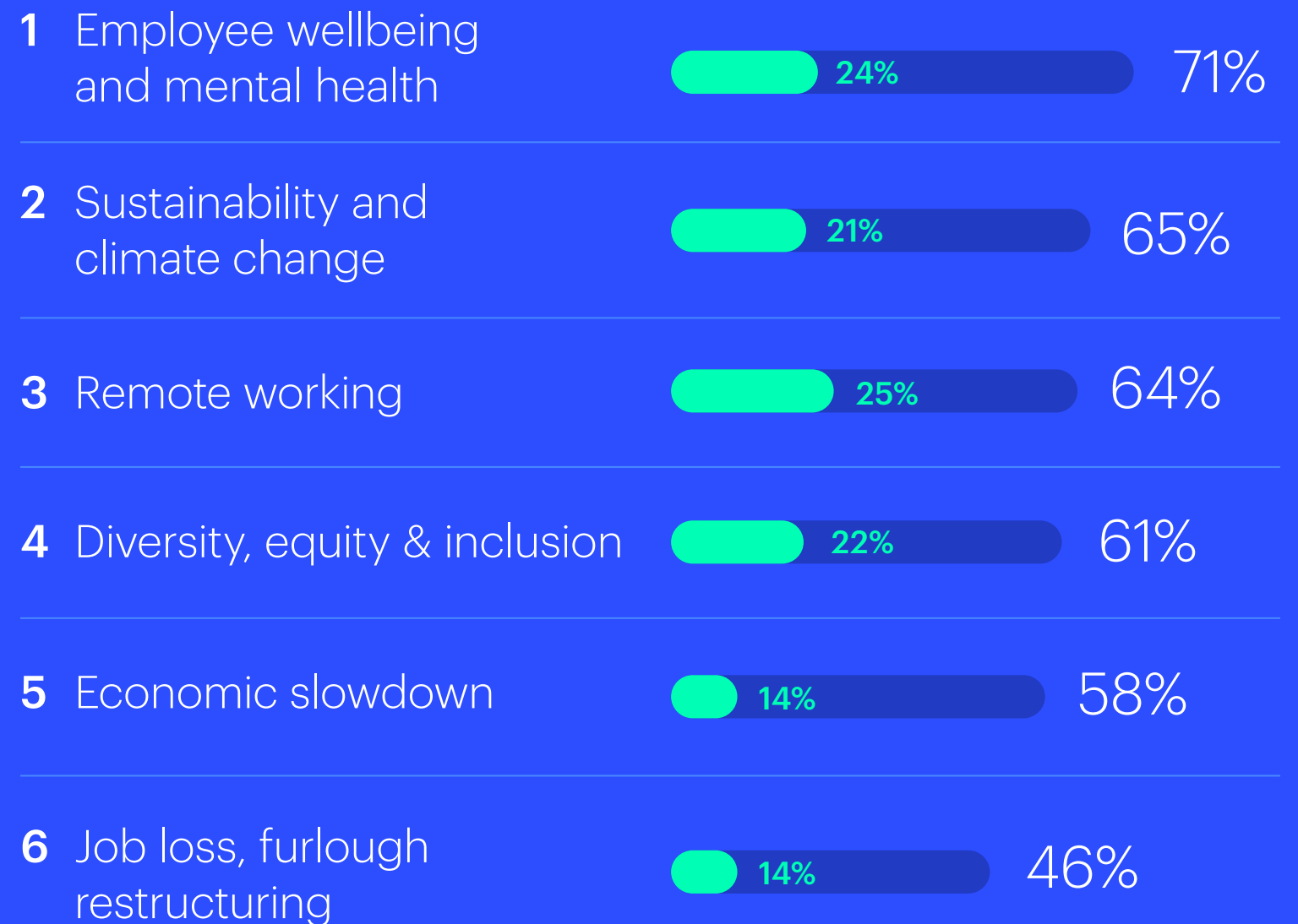
It's not just technological shifts that leaders need to prepare for. The forces of remote work, climate change, environmental sustainability, stakeholder capitalism and social justice activism will impact organizations for years to come.

Some of these forces have been gaining traction over the last decade. The events of 2020 simply precipitated change sooner — and quicker — than the world expected. By the summer, it became clear to the world that these changes were part of a “new normal” rather than temporary. Inevitably, though, new forces and unexpected shifts will propel the world forward, normalizing another new reality.

FORCES ANTICIPATED TO INCREASE IN IMPORTANCE IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

QUESTION: Over the next three years, do you expect [FORCE] to increase, stay the same, or decline in importance for your organization?

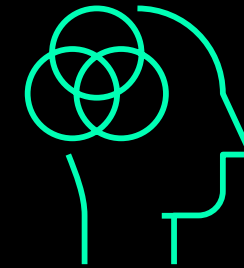
● Increase a lot ● Increase somewhat



Over the next few years, there are three primary areas where leaders must continue to invest to help their organizations become fit for this future working landscape:

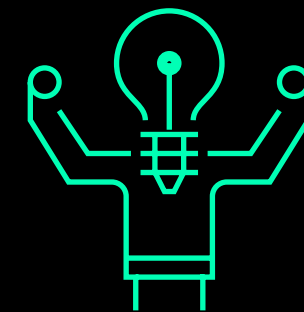
01

Conscious
Commitment



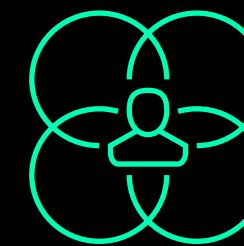
02

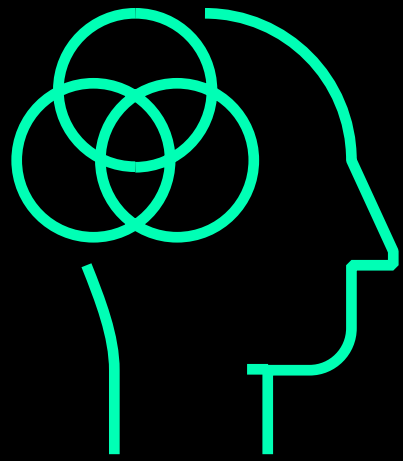
Empowering
Talent
Experiences



03

Dynamic Ways
of Working





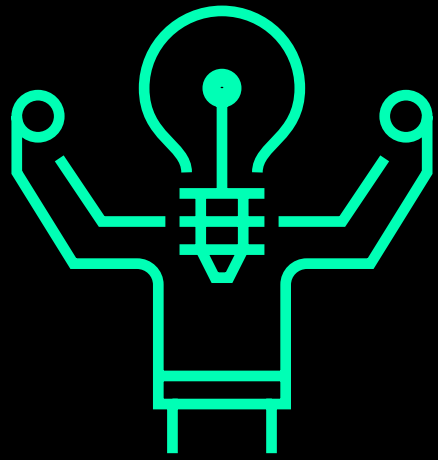
01

Conscious Commitment

“If inclusiveness is a mindset, belonging is an experience. That’s different than just being inclusive and that will be an ingredient in our success moving forward.”

Andy Lorenzen, Executive Director, Talent Planning, Chick-fil-A

Expand the organizational focus and accountability across multiple stakeholders beyond delivering profit. Diversity, equity & inclusion, employee wellbeing & mental health, and sustainability initiatives must all become central to how the company operates.



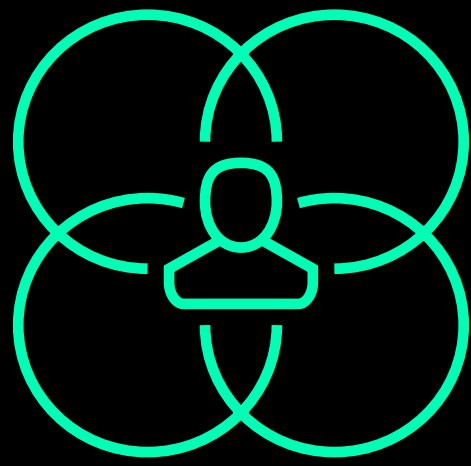
02

Empowering Talent Experiences

“Location was always a barrier to attract strong talent, because not all of our businesses are in the most desirable locations. There’s a huge opportunity for our talent acquisition and pipeline.”

Lucy Sackett, VP, Communications, Fortive

Create relevant and valuable employee experiences that evolve over time. Needed evolutions include increasing flexibility around where, how, and / or when work is completed; creating mechanisms to instill greater autonomy for teams and individual contributors; and investing in employee upskilling and reskilling for new working environments. Together, these employee-empowering moves promote greater employee wellbeing and productivity.



03

Dynamic Ways of Working

“Our new ways of working are rooted in three core mindsets and behaviors: patient-obsessed curiosity, courageous agility, and collaboration without boundaries. We aim to build the required skills and know-how broadly through a living ecosystem. This notion of balancing technology with culture and talent is core to our approach. We believe that our people, not technology alone, are what will make the difference in Takeda’s data and digital journey.”

Kevin Schramm, Head of IT Strategy and Operations, Takeda, U.S.

Identify ways to bring the benefits of a digital work environment to life. This involves reducing hierarchical behaviors, fostering interaction across levels, and preparing to pivot to new business models more quickly in future times of crisis. All of which will build resilience, as speed and agility reduce fragility and nullify future shocks.

For many organizations last year, their initial response was to find new ways to serve their customers as quickly as possible to maximize income. As this pressure has abated, this survivalist mindset has been superseded by a more sustainable approach to future-proofing. Now the focus is on transformation strategies that build resilience from the inside out.

These strategies could involve leaning in closer to stakeholder capitalism to align organizational ambitions with consumer, employee and societal expectations. Further, organizations may choose to invest in personal development and skills building at the individual and team level. Or the answer could be to address remote work burnout with an operating model geared towards an increasingly flexible workforce. What's clear, is that organizations will continue to face significant changes on myriad fronts.



A Human-Centered Model for Change

INTRODUCING CHANGE FITNESS

Leaders are coming to understand that there won't be a single, static new normal. As such, traditional change management, which tracks progress over an obstacle or towards a goal, will not be sufficient to help organizations truly thrive.

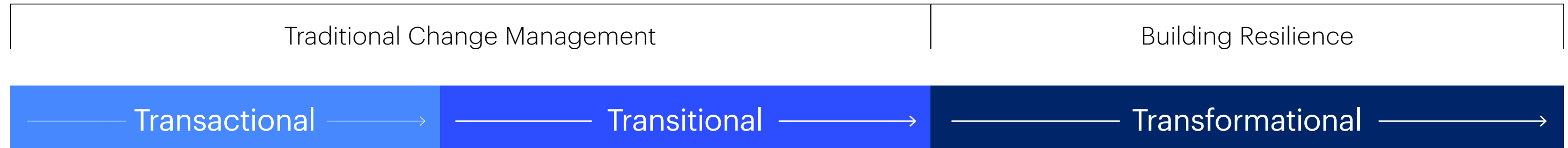
In our Human-Centered Transformation Model™, we use the individual as a metaphor for the organization. This extends to organizational behaviors, methods, tools and skills. Introducing the concept of change fitness alongside this model helps organizations unpack the challenge of embracing continuous change as a way of life.

Why change fitness? Because when we're not fit, we get fatigued, and today, the costs of change fatigue are too great for organizations that must keep ahead of this dynamic environment. Like physical fitness, change fitness requires mindset and behavioral changes — around discipline, persistence, and innovation — to build new muscles and get past organizational plateaus. And these changes can only occur with holistic alignment across Body, Mind and Soul.

RETHINKING CHANGE MODELS

So how might modern organizations navigate the many unpredictable forces they may face? Traditional change management approaches only sought to navigate passage past a single obstacle or milestone, e.g., adoption of a new enterprise technology. For more complex, multi-dimensional enterprise change efforts, such as digital transformation, we saw the emergence of a journey-driven approach, which established a compelling vision and forged multi-disciplinary workstreams to achieve its ends. We now see these methods as *transitional change management* as they are a critical evolutionary step towards what is needed in light of the events of 2020: transformational change management.

Transformational change management begins where transitional change management leaves off. It embraces all the elements of transitional change management and goes beyond to proactively shift the organization into a growth mindset, seeking to ensure that stakeholders truly thrive within the process of transformation itself.



Our change fitness model describes five ascending levels of individual, team, leader and organizational capability that enable successful transformations.

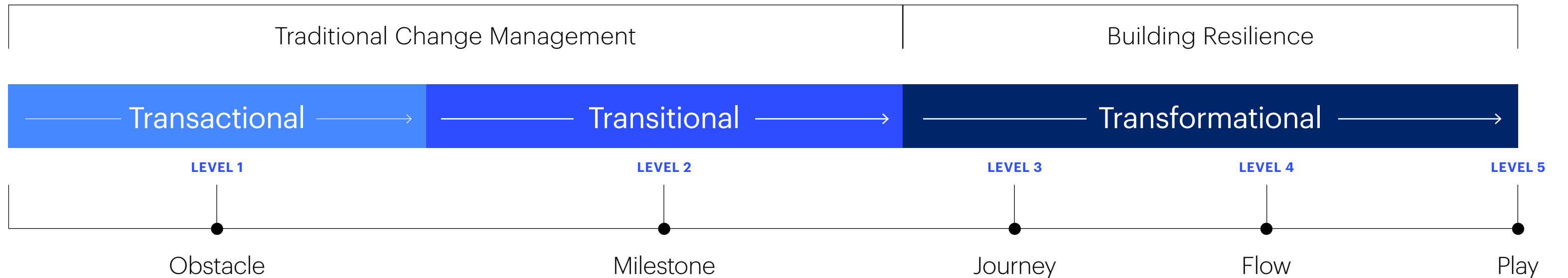
LEVEL 1 is where we view the world with a fixed mindset. Change is seen as an obstacle to be overcome.

LEVEL 2 shifts to a slightly more positive framing. Change is a milestone to be achieved and celebrated. However, our worldview still tends to favor a return to a steady state afterwards.

LEVEL 3 enters the world of transformational change. Here, our mindset, individually and collectively, truly shifts to one of growth and abundance. Organizations recognize the need for changes to their DNA. Therefore, all organizational components of Body, Mind and Soul must evolve as well.

LEVEL 4 is where the pace of change tilts as much of the organization as possible into a state of flow. This means moving different elements so that individuals feel energized by working at the edge of their capabilities. However, no one is pushed beyond a productive point where employees feel unprepared, exhausted, or burnt out.

LEVEL 5 organizations thrive on change and embrace a growth mindset. At this point, they achieve a state of play where transformation is a sport. Here, there are ongoing opportunities to excel, individually and collectively.



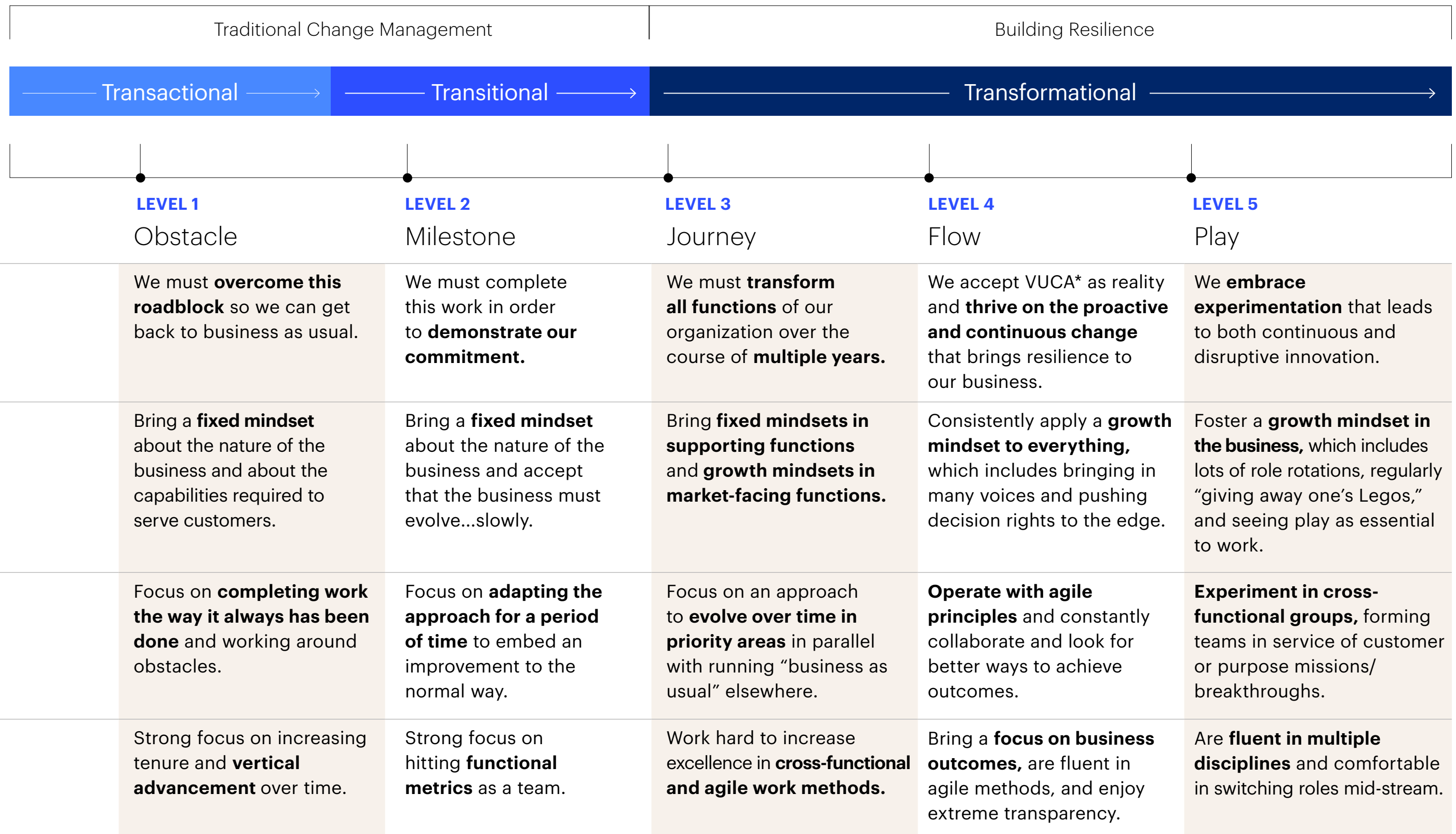
Each level of change fitness has associated imperatives for the organization, leaders, teams and individual contributors. These different layers of the organization might progress along the change fitness journey at different paces and can even help pull others forward. Ultimately, companies are only truly fit for change if they have holistically embraced the imperatives across all layers of the organization.

“One of the key traits I look for in leaders is the learning agility that will help them thrive within the ‘new next.’ Learning agility is modeled in leaders who are curious, who ask a lot of questions, and who actively reflect on their failures and their journeys coming out of these.”

Lisa Rometty, President, CVS Kidney Care, CVS Health

	LEVEL 1 Obstacle	LEVEL 2 Milestone	LEVEL 3 Journey	LEVEL 4 Flow	LEVEL 5 Play
Organization	We must overcome this roadblock so we can get back to business as usual.	We must complete this work in order to demonstrate our commitment.	We must transform all functions of our organization over the course of multiple years.	We accept VUCA* as reality and thrive on the proactive and continuous change that brings resilience to our business.	We embrace experimentation that leads to both continuous and disruptive innovation.
Leaders	Bring a fixed mindset about the nature of the business and about the capabilities required to serve customers.	Bring a fixed mindset about the nature of the business and accept that the business must evolve...slowly.	Bring fixed mindsets in supporting functions and growth mindsets in market-facing functions.	Consistently apply a growth mindset to everything , which includes bringing in many voices and pushing decision rights to the edge.	Foster a growth mindset in the business , which includes lots of role rotations, regularly “giving away one’s Legos,” and seeing play as essential to work.
Teams	Focus on completing work the way it always has been done and working around obstacles.	Focus on adapting the approach for a period of time to embed an improvement to the normal way.	Focus on an approach to evolve over time in priority areas in parallel with running “business as usual” elsewhere.	Operate with agile principles and constantly collaborate and look for better ways to achieve outcomes.	Experiment in cross-functional groups , forming teams in service of customer or purpose missions/ breakthroughs.
Individual Contributors	Strong focus on increasing tenure and vertical advancement over time.	Strong focus on hitting functional metrics as a team.	Work hard to increase excellence in cross-functional and agile work methods.	Bring a focus on business outcomes , are fluent in agile methods, and enjoy extreme transparency.	Are fluent in multiple disciplines and comfortable in switching roles mid-stream.

A NEW MODEL FOR CHANGE FITNESS



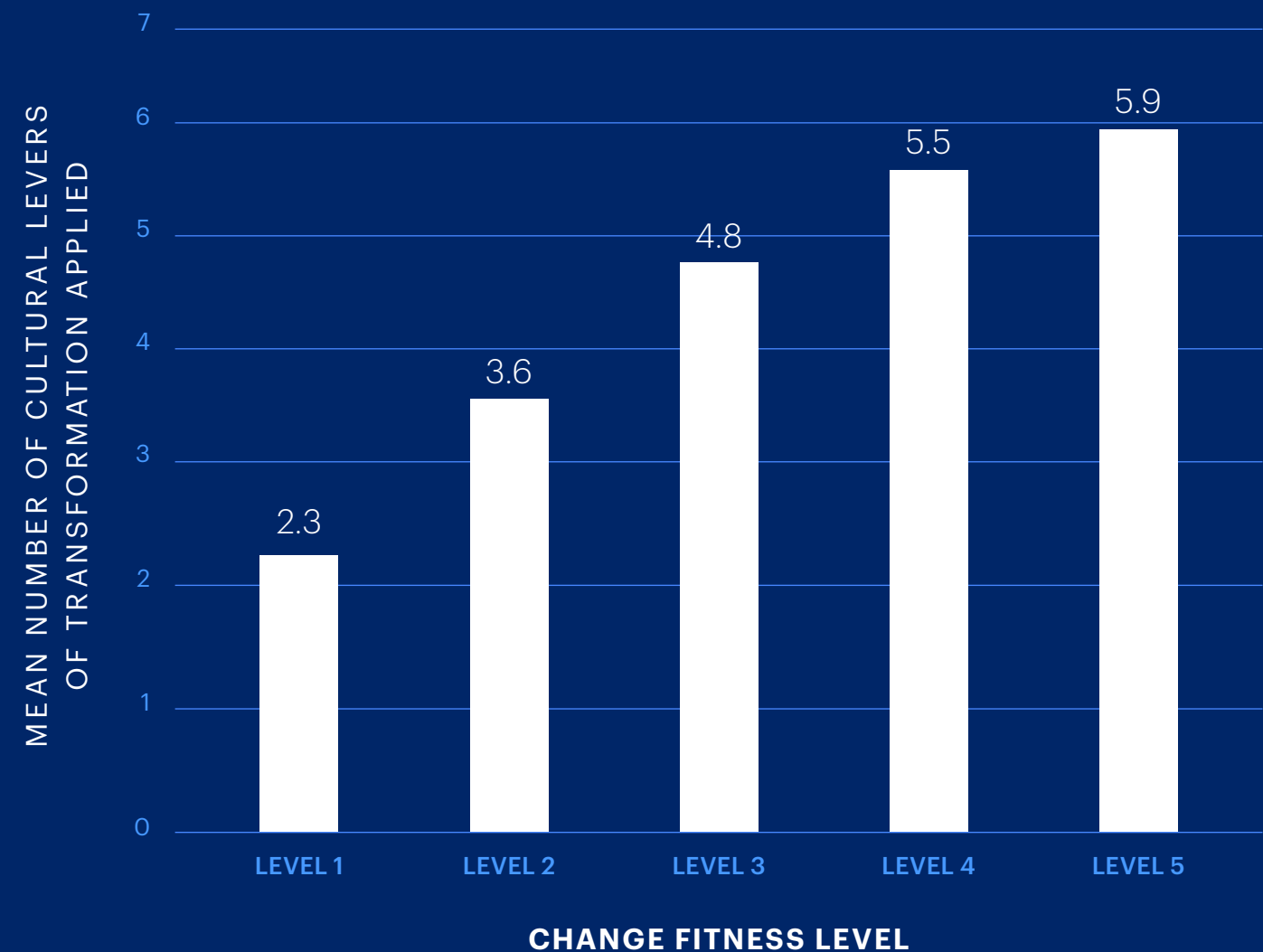
A Barometer for Transformation

FIT FOR CHANGE

Through our research, we see a clear connection between an organization's change fitness level and its ability to take on transformation and deliver impactful outcomes. Organizations with higher change fitness are better able to drive greater volumes of transformation activity.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGE FITNESS AND NUMBER OF CULTURAL LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION APPLIED

QUESTION: Did your organization do any of the following [cultural levers of transformation] to facilitate change within the organization in 2020?





Organizations with higher change fitness aren't just activating more cultural levers of change. They are also pulling levers that span our Human-Centered Transformation Model™. Conversely, we see that lower change fitness is linked to a narrower range of levers, with a focus primarily on Body and Soul. This suggests that organizations with higher change fitness take a more holistic and comprehensive approach to driving change. It confirms that leaders need to ensure all four organizational components — DNA, Body, Mind and Soul — evolve together.

Activities focused on employee motivation and enablement became more important this year. These included training to upskill and reskill existing talent, as well as mechanisms to help employees feel comfortable trying new behaviors and new ways of working. This suggests organizations with higher change fitness were focused on helping employees adapt to remote work while protecting their mental health and wellbeing.


CHANGE FITNESS: THE FUNDAMENTALS

We found that the levers of change most associated with higher change fitness are Fundamentals. This suggests that getting the Fundamentals right will help an organization progress on its journey to organizational resilience.


That said, the top driver of high change fitness — “setting a clear vision” — is an Accelerator. It appears in times of uncertainty having an actionable ambition gives direction to an organization. It brings purpose to all the other cultural levers of change that they might take on, reducing resistance to change across every component of the organization. In other words, setting a powerful, future-facing ambition is one of the most important steps a business can take to set it up for a successful transformation.


TOP CULTURAL LEVERS OF TRANSFORMATION DRIVING HIGHER CHANGE FITNESS


Accelerators

 Set a powerful, actionable **ambition**

Fundamentals

 Identify the **skills, capabilities, and roles** needed to drive the change, and develop **training to re-skill** existing talent

 Develop meaningful mechanisms to **enable employees to adapt** to the change

 Push **decision rights downward** to reduce hierarchical decision making and improve resource allocation

SEEING RESULTS

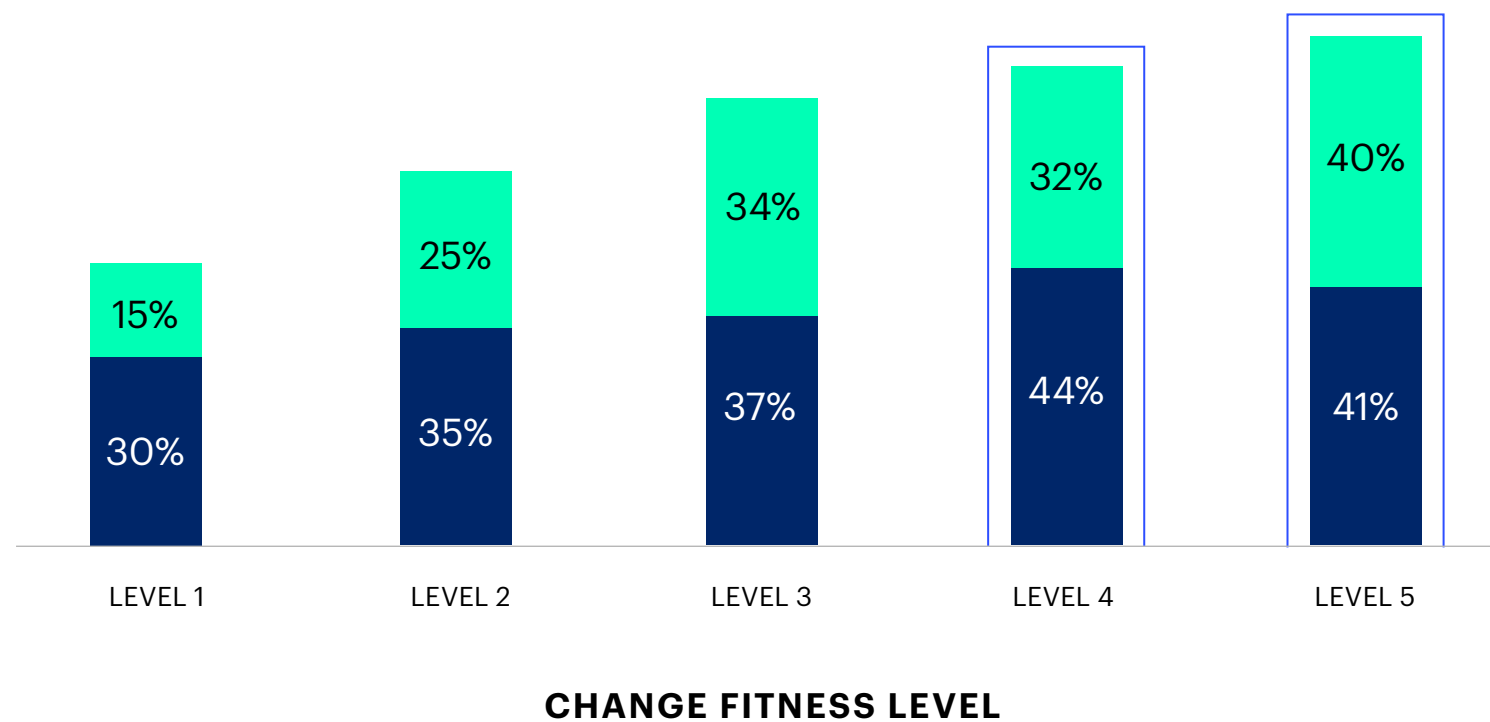
Finally, the benefits of change fitness go beyond agile ways of working. Companies that reported higher change fitness achieved better financial performance in 2020. We can conclude that change fitness has a role in helping organizations align with and perform against their key commercial goals.

“People will overcome the resistance to change if you get the ‘why’ behind it. If you get everyone motivated on the why and the purpose, you’re much more successful to implement change and have change stick.”

Darrell Johnson, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer, Cerner

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGE FITNESS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

■ My company’s financial performance was better than expected in 2020
 ■ My company’s financial performance was at expectation in 2020



ULTIMATELY, ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING TO INCREASE THEIR CHANGE FITNESS SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE:

01

Set a clear ambition to give purpose and meaning to change and transformation activities

Consider an ambition that is specific, timebound, measurable, and actionable, to clarify where the business intends to move. Visibly link your transformation roadmap to this ambition to help employees make the connection to their individual purpose and roles and to create coherence between otherwise-disparate activities.

02

Approach change holistically across your organization's DNA, Body, Mind, and Soul

No matter how digital they may be, all organizations are made up of people, and those people must evolve what they do in a sustained and consistent way for the organization to change. For an organization to be transformed — for it to be changed both radically and sustainably like a human — all these elements must be reimagined and realigned.

03

Lay the foundation for greater change maturity by ensuring Fundamentals of change are firmly in place

These are, as the name suggests, essential for change. Neglect them at your peril. In some parts of the world, we might call these “table stakes” or “minimum bets” — nonetheless, they are relevant globally.

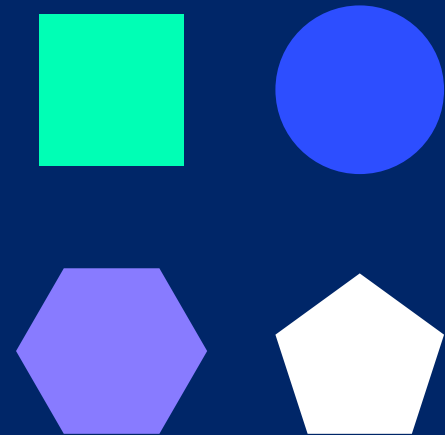
Conclusion

Historically, businesses have been able to respond to external forces on a case-by-case basis. But, as corporate resilience rises in importance, leaders must understand the value in focusing on organizational change fitness, rather than building the capability to negotiate any one force at a time.

Seeing the world through the lens of change fitness can help to quickly reveal where an organization stands today. Furthermore, this can highlight the kind of work that could be helpful to strengthen the organization for the transformation to come. Paired with Prophet’s Human-Centered Transformation Model™, this insight can enable organizations to achieve incredible outcomes in shorter time periods than ever before.

While 2020 showed leaders around the world that their organizations were more prepared for change than they previously expected, this is no cause for complacency. The journey toward organizational fitness will require a more sophisticated approach to change across all levels of an organization.

As you look ahead to the rest of 2021 and into 2022, a holistic and objective assessment of your organization’s change fitness will prove of immeasurable and lasting value. For a discussion about how and where to begin, please contact us at:



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- **Lucy Sackett**, VP, Communications, Fortive
- **Kevin Schramm**, Head of IT Strategy and Operations, Takeda, U.S.
- **Darrell Johnson**, SVP, Chief Marketing Officer, Cerner
- **Lisa Rometty**, President, CVS Kidney Care, CVS Health

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PROPHET

ABOUT PROPHET

Prophet is a digitally-powered, creatively-inspired consultancy that helps our clients unlock uncommon growth in the face of disruption. Unprecedented levels of change and disruption require new thinking and transformative approaches to growth. From purpose to product, brand to experience, customers to operations, we bring the insight, rigor, and expertise needed to help our clients realize transformative opportunities.

Our global team combines insight, creativity, data and technology to help our clients unlock growth that is human-centered, transformative, and durable. We are guided by a mission and set of values that are focused on a higher-order approach to growth. Our global footprint operates within a single P&L, enabling us to bring the right people with the right experience together to solve our clients' current business challenges from across our 12 global offices.

prophet.com

ORGANIZATION & CULTURE SERVICES:

Purpose & Values

Culture & Engagement

Talent & Capabilities

Organization Design & Operating Model

Atlanta
Austin
Berlin
Chicago
Hong Kong
London
New York
Richmond
San Francisco
Shanghai
Singapore
Zurich