COVID-19

Managing people and other stakeholders during COVID-19 pandemic

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Introduction
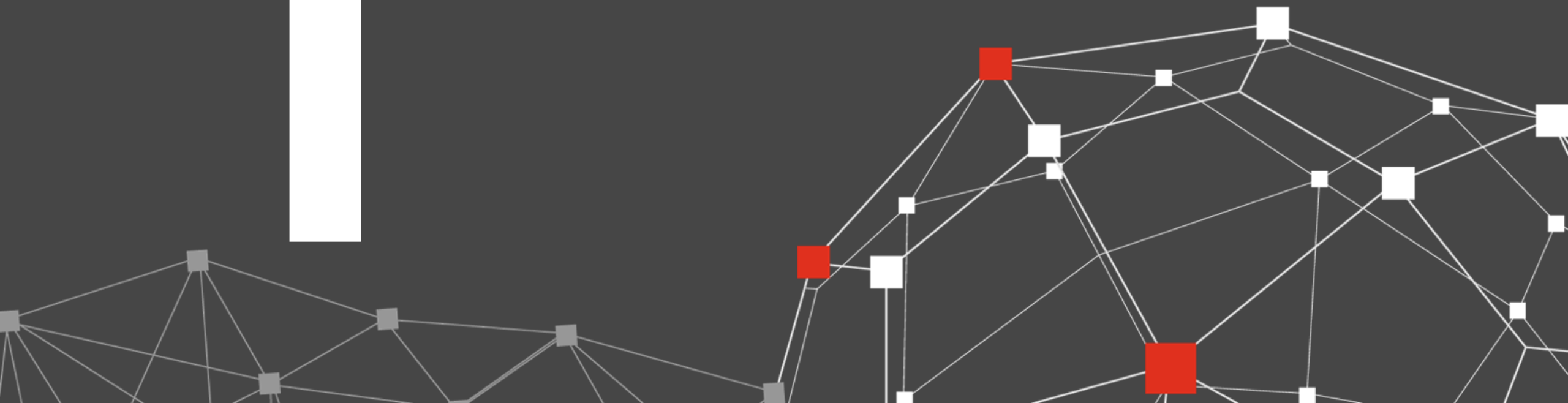
Executive Summary

The whole world is grappling with the challenges emanating from the COVID – 19 pandemic. Business leaders have the daunting task of navigating this uncharted territory..

Emerging as a key priority for action is the need to maintain high levels of productivity, especially with all employees required to work remotely. Success will depend largely on leadership's ability to engage remote workers and rapidly upskill their people.

A few tips leaders can adopt include:

- **Increase accountability**: Clarify and redefine key performance measures
- **Team engagement** – Establish regular check – ins and train employees in line with the new operating environment
- **Support employees working remotely**: Provide infrastructure and resources e.g. data, laptops, power;
- **Upskills employees to succeed in the new digital world**. Focus on assessing your people's digital IQ and plug gaps in the following areas.
  - **Skills** – The right digital skills set to exist across the organisation, people and leaders.
  - **Mindsets** – The values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions that fuel innovation
  - **Relationships** – The right connections, collaboration and relationships that foster digital innovation
  - **Behaviours** – The application of the new learnings to drive digital innovation

Challenges Facing Business Leaders...

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, business leaders are grappling with difficult challenges

Strategy

How do we quickly articulate/ execute our remote working strategy and policies?

Workforce

How do we enable our leaders to successfully manage a remote workforce?

Programmes

How do we advance critical programmes that have relied on in-person collaboration (client meetings, training, appraisals)?

Stakeholder Management

How do we manage the fears and anxiety of our stakeholders?

Tools

How will our people learn and adopt remote working tools?

Productivity

Now that our people are near 100% remote, are they engaged and productive?

Challenges Facing Business Leaders...

The conversation on the Future of work (now upon us) has been trending. However, COVID 19 has triggered organisations to adopt this new normal riding on digitalisation at an unprecedented pace.

Some organisations are further along on their digital roadmap than others. The world is now faced with the largest work from home experience. Business leaders have had to quickly and seamlessly adapt their business strategy to this "new normal" and rely on teams working collectively to navigate these challenges and identify opportunities.

Given the heightened levels of uncertainty and the adjustment to new virtual ways of working, business leaders and teams need to have a stronger focus on three things to surmount the challenges.

1
Head – *Direction setting and transparency*
Defining what success looks like and the ways to get there with a greater emphasis on rapidly removing barriers and clear decision-making.

2
Heart - *Engage the whole*
Strengthening emotional commitment to the team, continual learning and creating a safe, inclusive environment.

3
Hands - *Get enabled*
Enabling teams to connect, communicate and collaborate with the right digital tools, skills and data. There is no turning back now.

2

COVID-19 Implications for Managing People
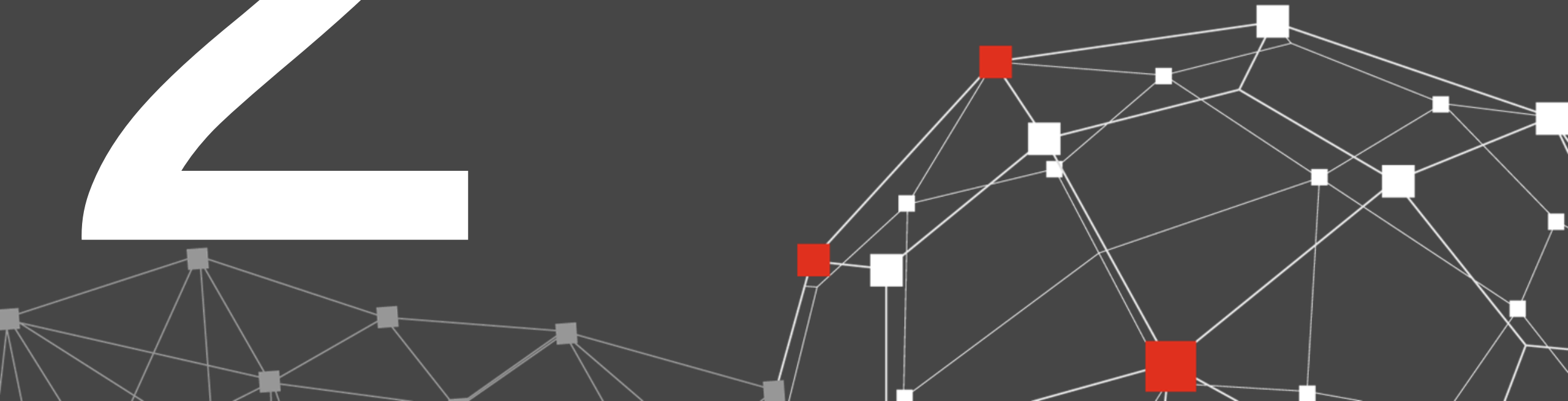
COVID-19 Implications for Managing People

This whole new world has implications on how we manage our people. In the last few months, we've suddenly learnt that more people than we imagined can work remotely. Our workplace has been redefined.

For many employees, the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the way they work and even where they work. What is critical however is that the work still gets done. Business leaders are understandably concerned about the effect of COVID 19 on employee productivity.

Organizations that will thrive must start by embracing the fact that the new normal is here to stay. This new world of work depends largely on the advent of a digital revolution. A digital revolution requires a skills revolution. A skills revolution is about helping people build their digital awareness, understanding and skills to fully participate in the digital world — and it needs to start now.

Even though this situation continues to evolve, we see three (3) workforce issues are emerging as key priorities:
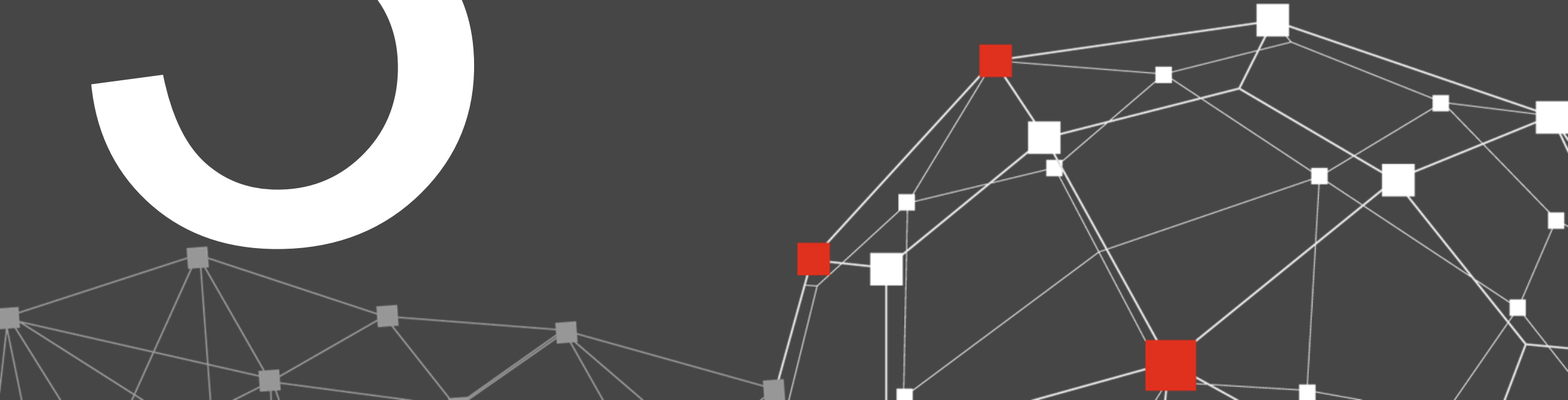
1 Managing Productivity

2 Remote Working

3 Upskilling for Digital

3

Managing Productivity in times of crisis

Managing Productivity in times of crisis

Amid COVID 19, tens of millions of workers are either on-site or in remote work environments. This is a challenging experience for organizations and employees who are subjected to major disruptions in their work and home lives. Few companies have ever undertaken remote working on such a scale prior to the pandemic. Never before have organisations and employees experienced change at this scale and pace.

To manage productivity, companies should consider tools to help gauge employees' needs and manage workloads. As this period requires a shift in skillsets, attitude and for businesses, expectations of productivity levels.

A few tips leaders can adopt to manage productivity in these times include:

Team engagement

- Identify behaviours that you want to celebrate
- Celebrate these behaviours when demonstrated by staff
- Communicate wins to all team members and share learnings

Performance reporting

- Define/ redefine key performance measures
- Build effective daily and weekly performance reports (if needed) to track achievement of set goals
- Highlight improvement opportunities

Regular Check - ins

- Establish regular and effective team huddles.
- Begin regular conversations around work delivery plans and learnings opportunities

Training and development

- Identify learning needs in response to the new operating environment
- Commence coaching programmes on leading in a digital world
- Use Virtual platforms to help address staff developmental challenges

4

Remote working essentials amid COVID-19
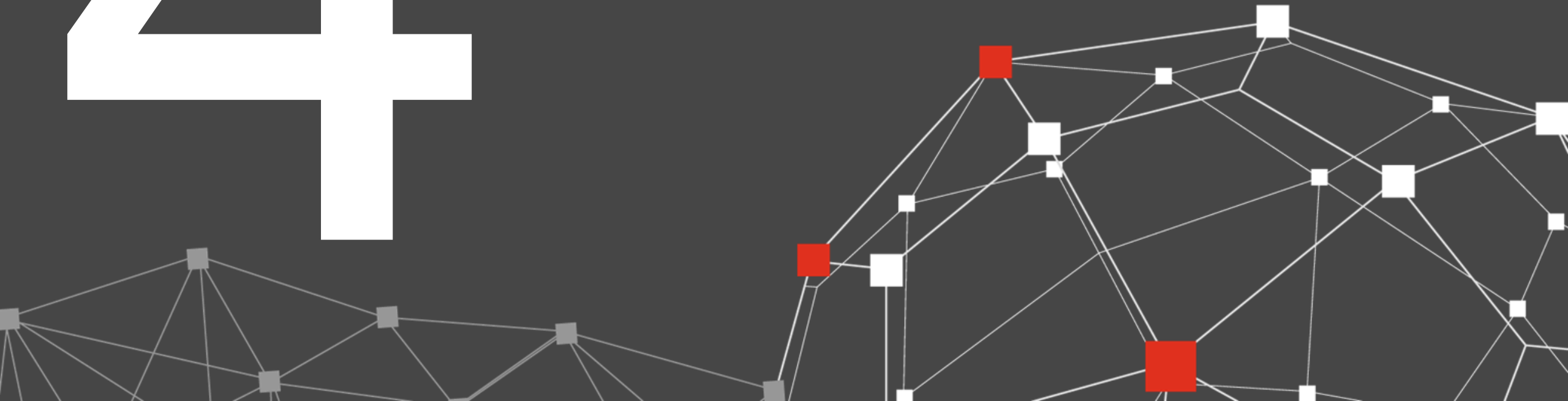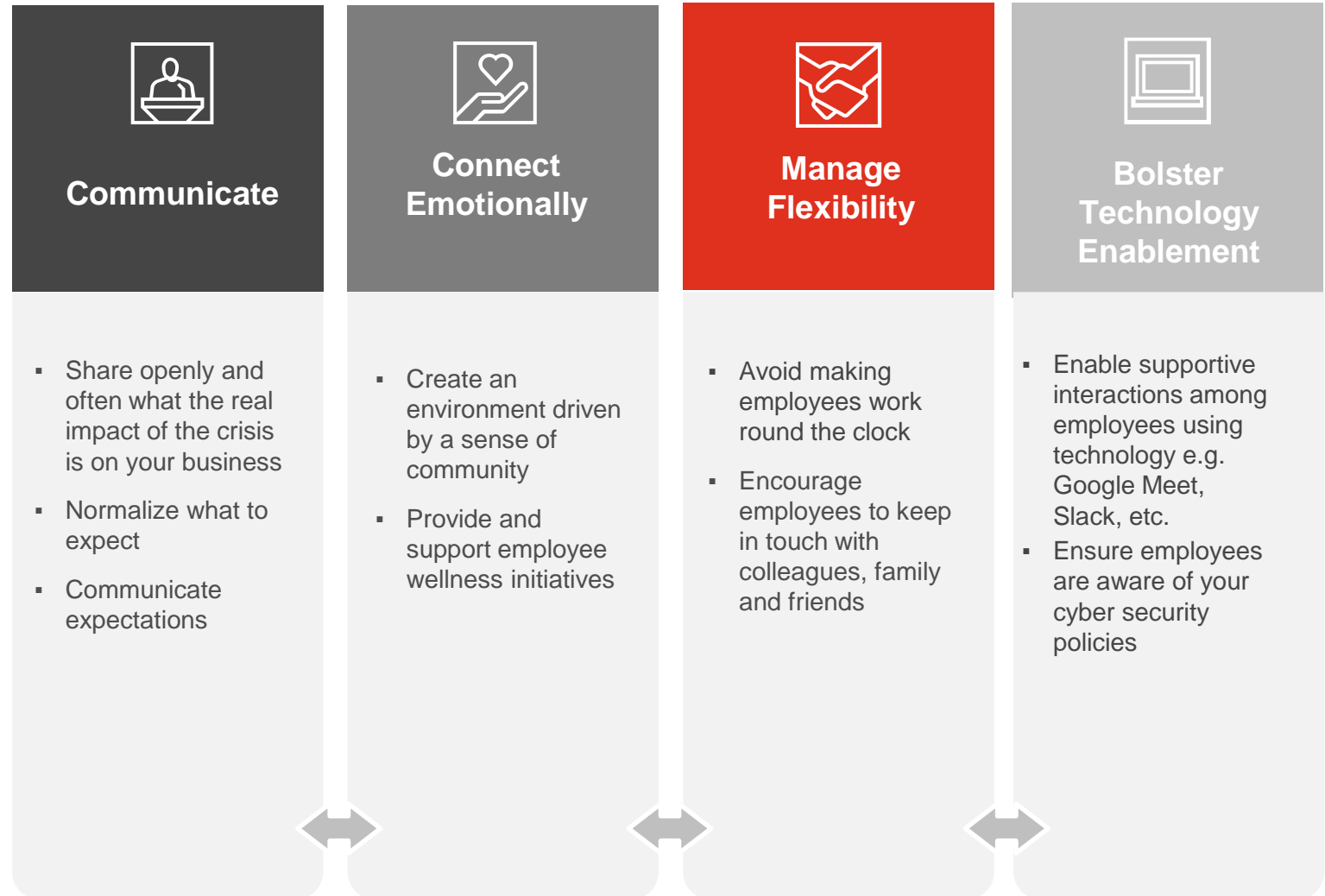
Remote working essentials amid COVID-19

42% of CFOs are worried about the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on employee productivity – *COVID 19, Global CFO Pulse Survey*

Many organisations have asked employees to work remotely raising new challenges for employees, managers and leaders.
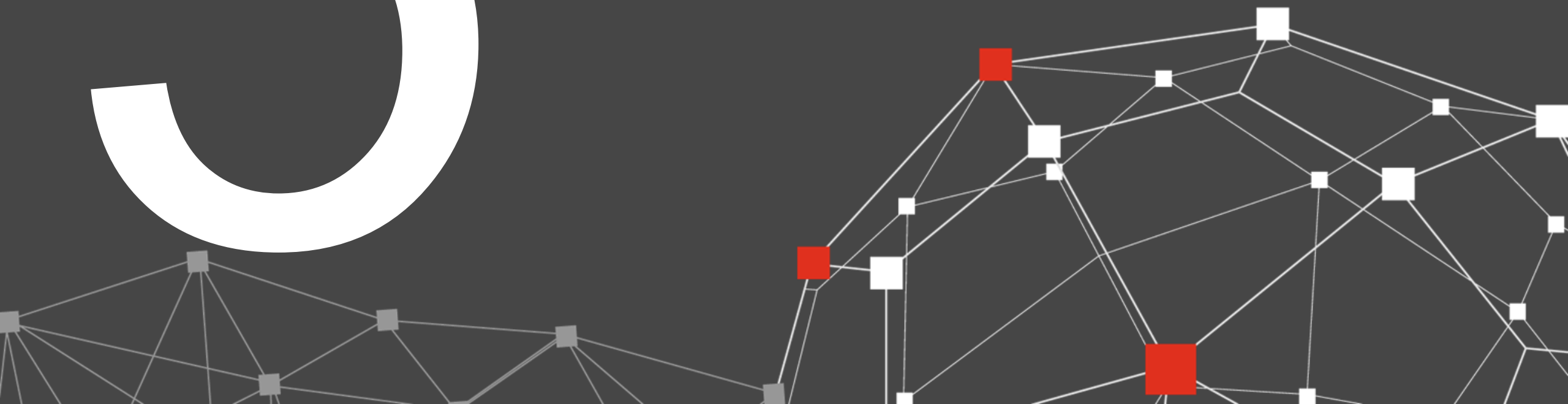
These could include challenges related to:

- Slow Internet connections and low bandwidth

- Data security management and possible difficulty in the documentation of decisions - particularly for regulated authorities

- Possible criticism or brand impact due to differing work-from-home policies from competitors

- The risk of burnout and the need to address unmanageable workloads

- Misrepresentation of information arising from poor communication

Listed below are a few tips that can support leaders manage productivity during this pandemic:

Communicate

- Share openly and often what the real impact of the crisis is on your business
- Normalize what to expect
- Communicate expectations

Connect Emotionally

- Create an environment driven by a sense of community
- Provide and support employee wellness initiatives

Manage Flexibility

- Avoid making employees work round the clock
- Encourage employees to keep in touch with colleagues, family and friends

Bolster Technology Enablement

- Enable supportive interactions among employees using technology e.g. Google Meet, Slack, etc.
- Ensure employees are aware of your cyber security policies

5

Upskilling for the Digital World

Upskilling for the Digital World

We're in the new world of work -- one brimming with possibilities. In this new normal, organisations who fail to adapt will fail to survive. Therefore, organisations should be considering business - wide upskilling.

The foundational element of the upskilling movement is the expansion of people's capabilities and employability to fulfill the talent needs of this rapidly changing digital economy.

By **upskilling**, we mean giving employees the opportunity to gain the knowledge, tools and ability they need, to use advanced and ever-changing technologies in the workplace and their daily lives.

The call to action

Upskilling is no longer optional - all organisations will require some kind of upskilling initiative to maintain a relevant workforce

Organisations require quick and frequent strategic workforce planning, guiding them on what upskilling initiatives they need to invest in
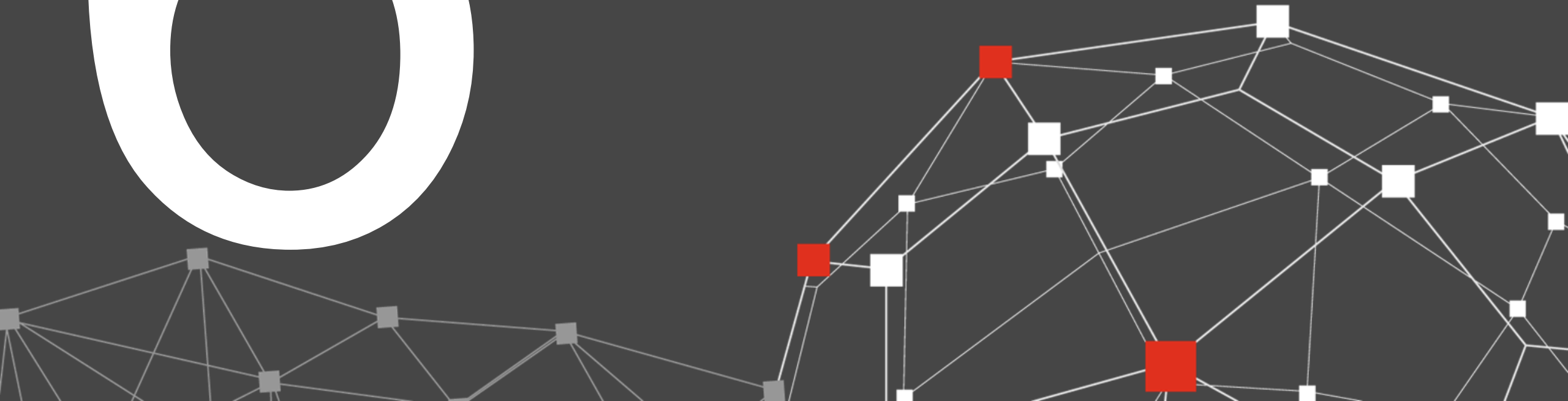
The need for upskilling applies to all kinds of employees at all levels in the organisation, including leadership roles

Upskilling is often required both in terms of hard skills as well as to nurture a culture of adaptability and a flexible talent mix
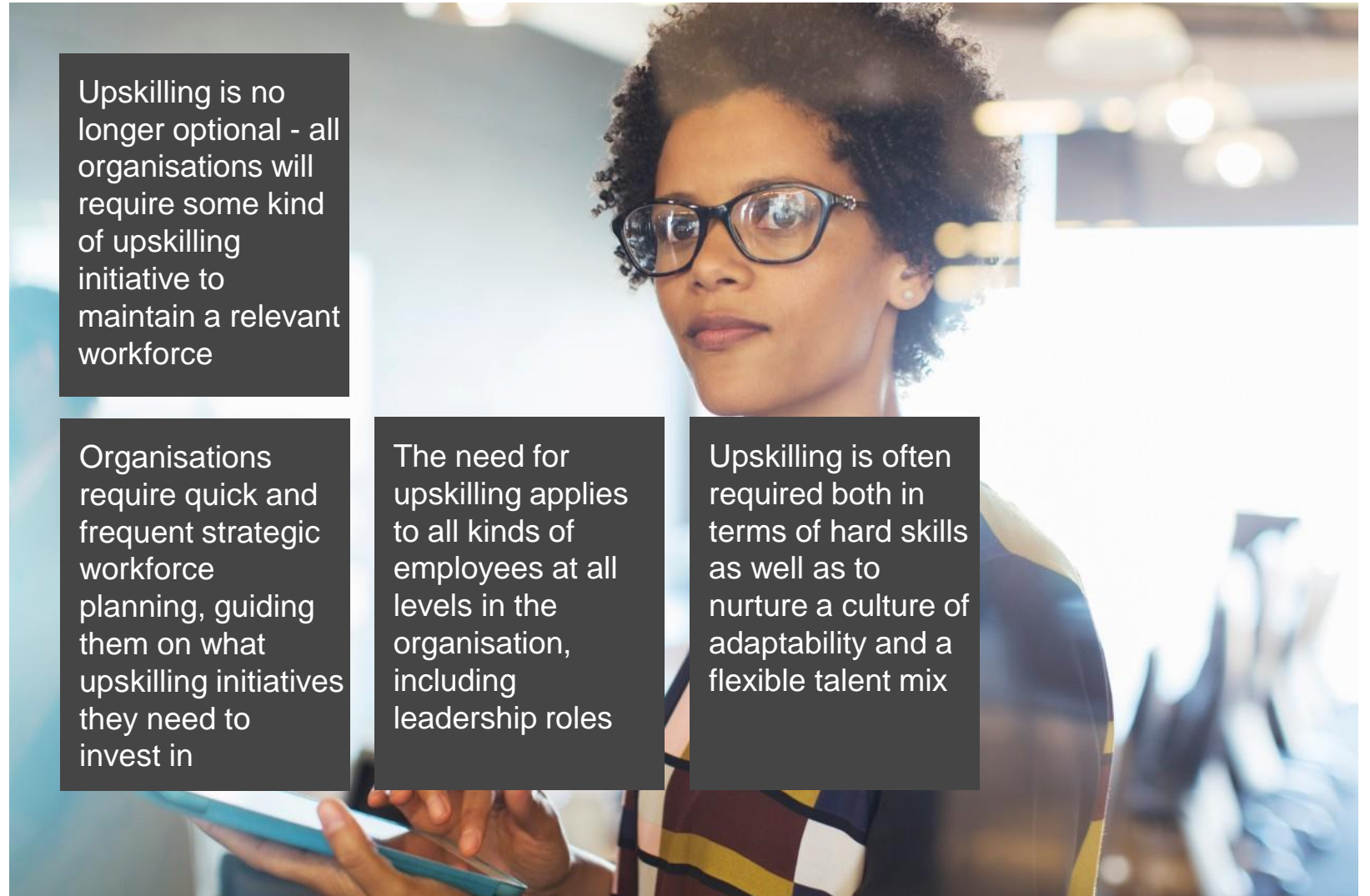
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Recommendation and Conclusion

Recommendation and Conclusion

Why invest in a more digital workforce and culture?

Enhancing the digital fitness of your people and shifting toward a more digital culture brings tangible benefits across your organization

Sustainable innovation and growth culture

Sparking the curiosity and interest in continued learning to stay competitive in the marketplace

Increased adoption of learning tools

Increasing consumption of content from Learning management systems drive real improvement towards an upskilled workforce

Increased adoption of learning tools

Creating a mindset of how to find quicker, better, easier ways to "do work" directly impacts the bottom line

Focus Areas to Start your Upskilling journey

Research from the PwC's Katzenbach Center shows that focus areas should centre around the following:

A   B

Skills
The right digital skill sets and capabilities exist across an organization – people and leaders – to be successful in a digital age.
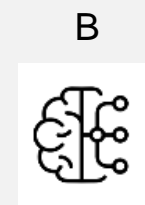
Mindset
The values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, biases, and ways of thinking about digital to fuel innovation.
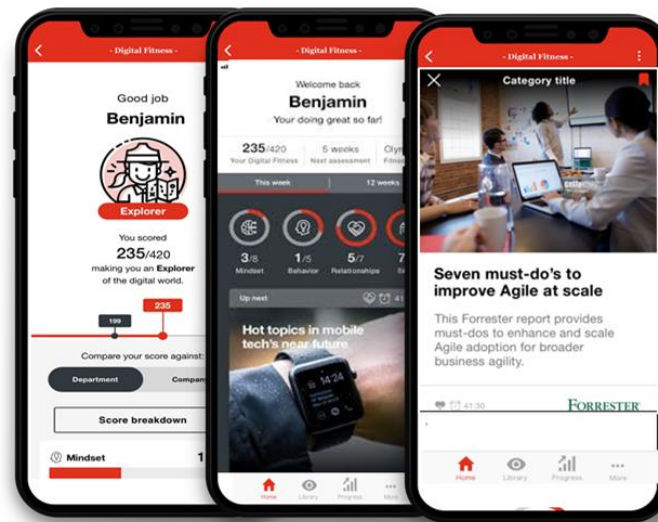
Relationships
The right connections, collaboration, relationships, and influence within an organization to foster digital innovation.

Behaviors
The application of new learnings to adapt habits and actions that drive digital innovation.

Digital Fitness for the World

At PwC, we've gained firsthand experience of the power of upskilling. Our starting point is a recognition of the opportunities rather than just the threats that come from digital disruption.

To help organizations kickstart there Upskilling Journey during the Covid-19 Pandemic, we recently launched our **Digital Fitness Application (DFA)** which helps to assess and raise your employees' digital acumen.

With the DFA, each employee answers a few questions and receives a digital fitness score- a personal baseline of digital acumen. Employees then select a specific digital fitness plan, from where they can access bite-sized learning content in podcasts, videos and article formats) through their mobile device. The more content they learn, the higher their digital acumen score over time.

Assess

Answer a few questions about your digital knowledge and behaviours to understand your strengths and weaknesses in the digital world, and see how you stack up against your peers.

Learn

Choose a fitness plan that works for you.
Learn through short, bite-sized content.
Explore content from trusted sources. Gain knowledge from over 60 topics and 300 artifacts.

Grow

Watch your digital fitness score rise. Stay on track with a customized plan every week and watch your digital skills improve.
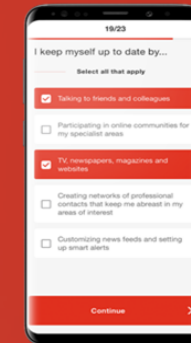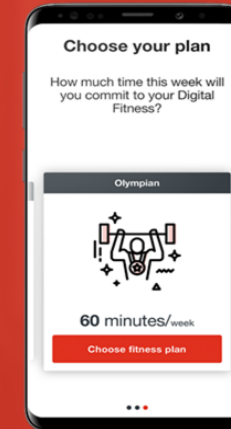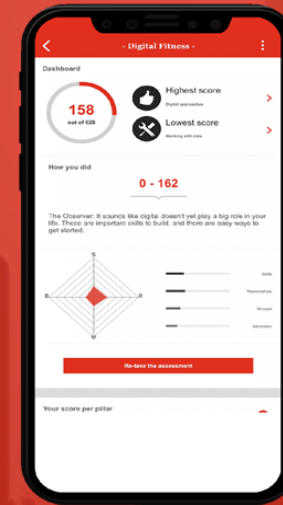

Introducing PwC's Digital Fitness for the World
or you can call it DFA
Includes a COVID-19 Resource Channel
Free till July 31, 2020
Visit the Apple App Store or Google Play and use the invite code "LRNALL."

pwc.com/us/digitalfitness

Now what?

Lean into the new bias for action and problem-solving through\ empowerment and trust.

Develop an overall workforce strategy and action plan that puts people first. It should also include a consistent data driven decision-making approach, and puts appropriate risk and controls in place.
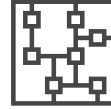
Determine who needs to return to the workplace.

In a recent survey conducted by PwC, nearly half of the companies indicated that they're planning to make remote work a permanent option for roles that allow it. Next steps will be to confirm the needs of individuals who will work on-site, or remotely on either a temporary or indefinite basis.

Develop a return to workplace playbook. .

Mobilize a transition plan focused on return to the workplace. The plan is to deliver on all aspects of the organisation: workforce, customers, workplace needs, health and safety, revenue, cost among other areas

As we move toward work that looks very different than it did a few months ago, it's important to be guided by data driven insights around your people, processes, financials and risks. This will give you the knowledge you need to act with confidence.

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