

## Insights on CEO priorities and predictions

Fall 2020 Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey on how CEOs are leading through the pandemic

The Fall 2020 release of the Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey reveals several significant developments around CEO priorities and performance predictions. Though pandemic-related uncertainty looms, our survey indicates CEOs remain committed to propelling their companies forward while staying agile as their role continues to evolve.

### CEO survey reflects cautious optimism

With all that has happened since our last survey in June 2020, it's easy to assume CEO priorities and performance objectives would have undergone dramatic shifts. But despite these challenges, CEOs remain seemingly undeterred.

In the latest Fortune/Deloitte CEO Survey, leading CEOs representing more than 15 industries weighed in on how the COVID-19 pandemic is redefining the role of top executive. Nearly two out of three CEOs believe that their revenues will return to pre-crisis levels by June 2021. Almost half of CEOs say their employee levels never declined or have already returned to pre-pandemic levels. Most expect revenue rebounds to outpace those of employment.

The shift to a remote work environment also did little to hinder CEO optimism. The survey found that CEOs are surprised at the speed with which their businesses adapted to a virtual environment, and a majority of respondents say employee productivity and innovation haven't dropped off. In some cases, they've increased. CEOs expect a third of their workforce to be remote even in January 2022, and 76% expect their companies to need less office space in the future—a trend signaling a new look at how and where people do their work.

CEOs see other opportunities as well. The pandemic likely fast-tracked digital initiatives that were set to begin or already underway, with 85% of CEOs agreeing that the pandemic has significantly accelerated digital transformation—up from 77% in June 2020. 70% of CEOs agree that the pandemic is fostering the formation of new partnerships and alliances.

When asked to rank a number of potential variables, CEOs pin their hopes for full economic recovery onto science and public health—specifically, a vaccine and advancements in therapeutics.

### CEO priorities shift toward mental health

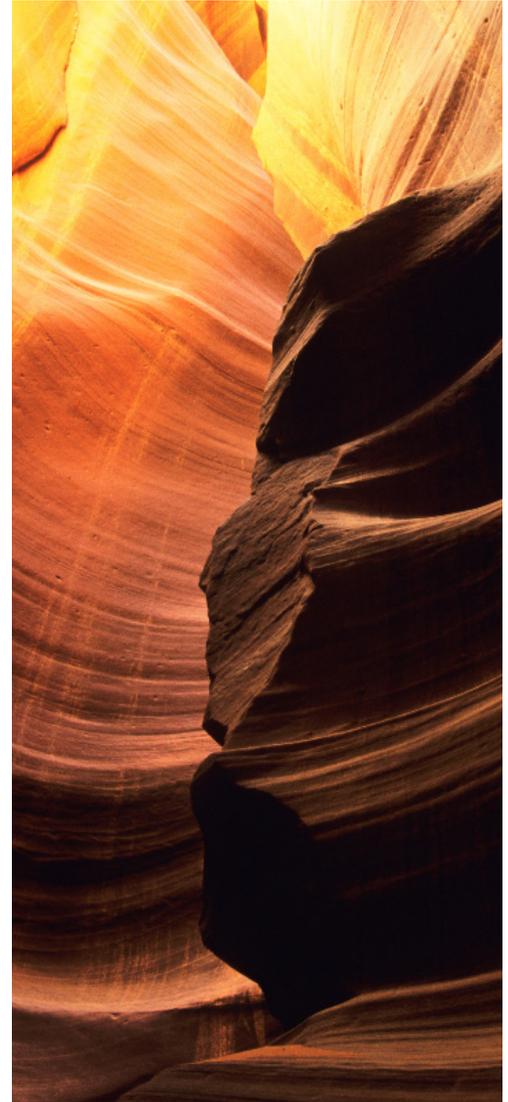
CEOs aren't blind to the mental health challenges of the pandemic. An overwhelming majority of CEOs report they've taken action to support the mental health and well-being of their employees over the past six months. What remains to be seen is whether these actions were effective, sufficient, and how they'll evolve.

### Momentum builds on DEI initiatives

DEI initiatives appear to be a personal priority for CEOs. 96% assert that DEI is a personal strategic priority for them, in their role as CEO, and they report prioritizing or investing in DEI initiatives in nearly area of business, including: talent recruitment, development, advancement, and retention; DEI data and metrics transparency; community engagement; executive leadership composition; and board composition.

### The path forward

Our CEO survey indicates a degree of uncertainty, complemented by steadfast optimism and decisive action as CEOs perceive the outlines of the organizational, eco-systemic, and societal shifts to come.



View key highlights from the [survey](#)

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