

The future of shared services is touchless

The rising importance of digital GBS capabilities during COVID-19

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COVID-19 HAS BECOME a catalyst for digital automation in shared services. As shown in the figure, the percentage of shared services leaders who planned to accelerate digital capabilities in their global business services (GBS) organizations rose by 10 percentage points between April and July 2020. This increase suggests the growing importance of digital in GBS operations as the pandemic went on. While the pandemic has heightened focus on cost reduction and location diversification, it has accelerated the desire to strengthen digital capabilities the most.

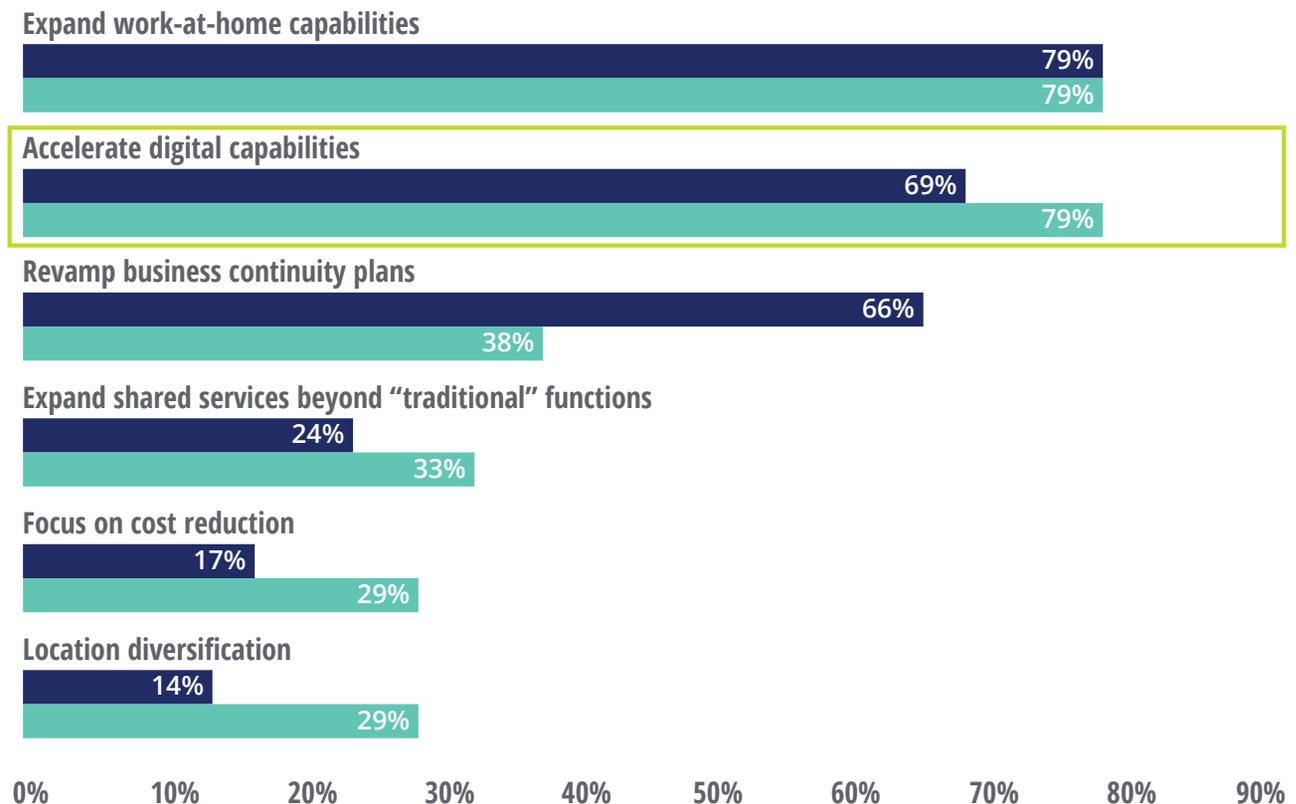
Responses from a 2020 Deloitte webcast survey indicate that order to cash/procure to pay was significantly affected by COVID-19 due to the prevalent use of manual check payments to vendors. Payments via physical checks led to delays and halted overall manual activities in certain circumstances. At one CPG company, suppliers and vendors had to either adopt a company's new automated system for payments or wait until offices opened to receive check payments.

According to a BPO service provider lead, the COVID-19 crisis "has heightened the need for accelerating digital transformation [in GBS],

Digital GBS capabilities took on more importance as the pandemic lengthened

Changes expected in the future due to COVID-19

■ April 2020 ■ July 2020



Sources: Deloitte webcast survey, "Adapting to new realities resulting from COVID-19," April 8/9, 2020; Deloitte webcast survey, "Shared services and outsourcing executive roundtable," July 23, 2020.

and many clients who were unwilling to engage in the conversation earlier are now realizing the need for it ... using the outbreak situation to jump-start digital initiatives to serve their customers.”¹ The good news is that plans to increase shared services’ use of digital were often in place even before the pandemic. Our 2019 [Global Shared Services Survey](#) found that more than 80% of shared services leaders surveyed expected to implement or increase their use of robotics and heighten their focus on digital experience

over the next three to five years.² We will continue to monitor the market through insights derived from the upcoming 2021 shared services survey.

[Read Global business services and shared services organizations moving forward: From pandemic to thriving for additional insights on how the COVID-19 pandemic challenged conventional wisdom and paved a path to the new normal.](#)

Endnotes

1. GBS client/vendor COVID-19 discussion, April 9, 2020.
2. Deloitte, *2019 Global Shared Services Survey*, 2019.

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