



2021 CEO Outlook Pulse Survey

April 2021



KPMG's Global CEO Outlook Pulse Survey

The Pulse Survey asks CEOs from the world's most influential companies to provide their 3-year outlook on the economic and business landscape, as well as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



This Pulse looks at how their views have evolved since KPMG's annual CEO Outlook, conducted 6 months prior.



Five hundred CEOs from 11 key markets (Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, UK and US) were surveyed from 29 January — 4 March 2021.



All respondents have annual revenues greater than US\$500M and one third of the companies surveyed have more than US\$10B in annual revenue.



Home > Insights > KPMG 2021 CEO Outlook Pulse Survey

No return to normal in the near-term

According to the 2021 CEO Outlook Pulse Survey, CEOs of the world's most influential companies are planning what a return to 'normal' will look like, mindful that their workforces' potential lack of access to a COVID-19 vaccine could force them to rethink their strategies.

Our 2020 CEO Outlook COVID-19 Pulse Survey revealed that executives were focused on stabilizing their business amid immediate unknowns, while our 2021 Pulse Survey, conducted in February and March, indicates that CEOs have a clearer, near to mid-term strategy. In particular, close to half (45 percent) articulated that a return to 'normal' will not occur this year.

Based on a survey of 500 CEOs in 11 key markets, our 2021 Pulse Survey provides a timely snapshot of CEOs' views on business growth resumption, their views on vaccine distribution, their top-of-mind organizational risks, and business transformation priorities going forward.

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Before any major decisions are made, CEOs want to be confident that their workforce is protected against this virus. The COVID-19 vaccine rollout is providing leaders with a dose of optimism as they prepare for a new reality. CEOs are scenario planning for certain key markets that may experience vaccine shortages that could impact their operations, supply chains and people, leading to uneven economic recovery.

Bill Thomas
Global Chairman and CEO
KPMG



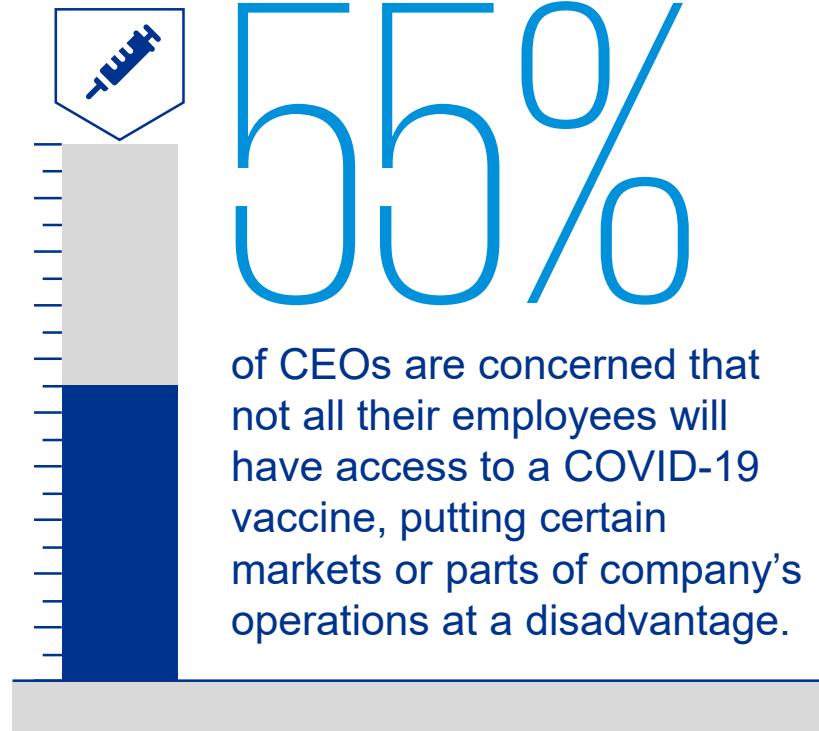
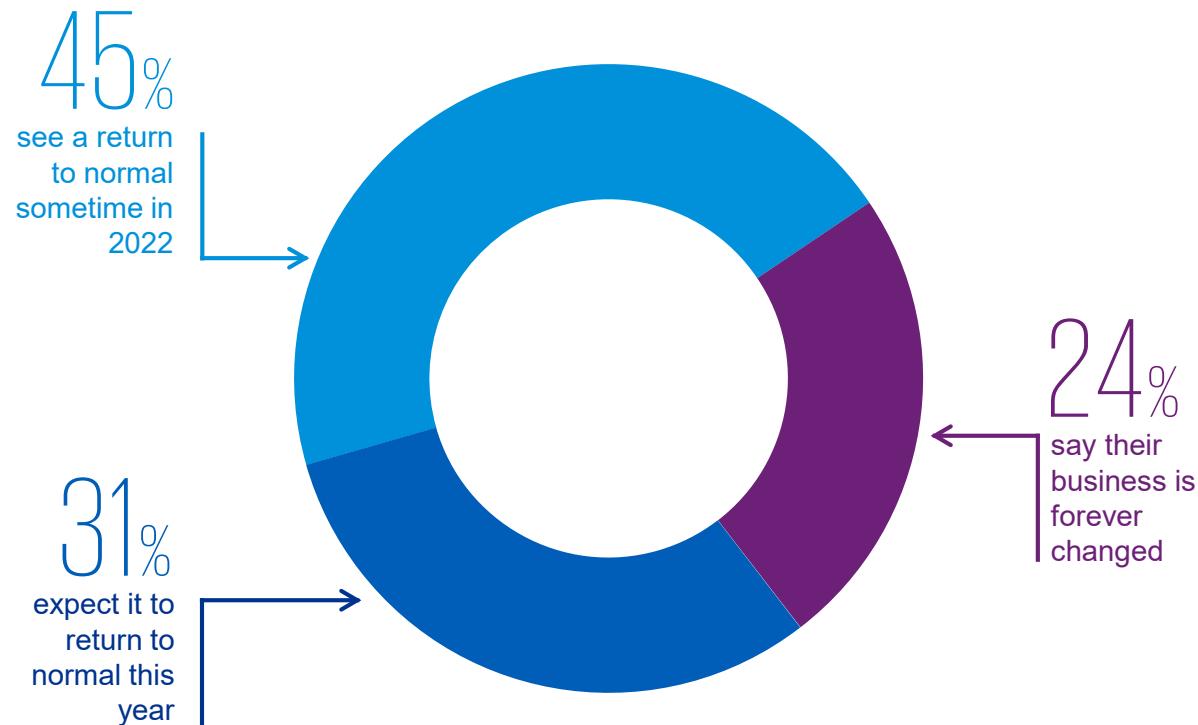
Return to 'normal' in 2022

CEOs of the world's most influential companies are planning what a return to 'normal' will look like, but their workforces' lack of access to a COVID-19 vaccine is forcing them to rethink their strategies. With only one-third (31 percent) anticipating a return to normal in 2021, nearly half (45 percent) expect normally to resume in 2022. Significantly, 24 percent of leaders say that their business has changed forever.



No return to normal in the near-term

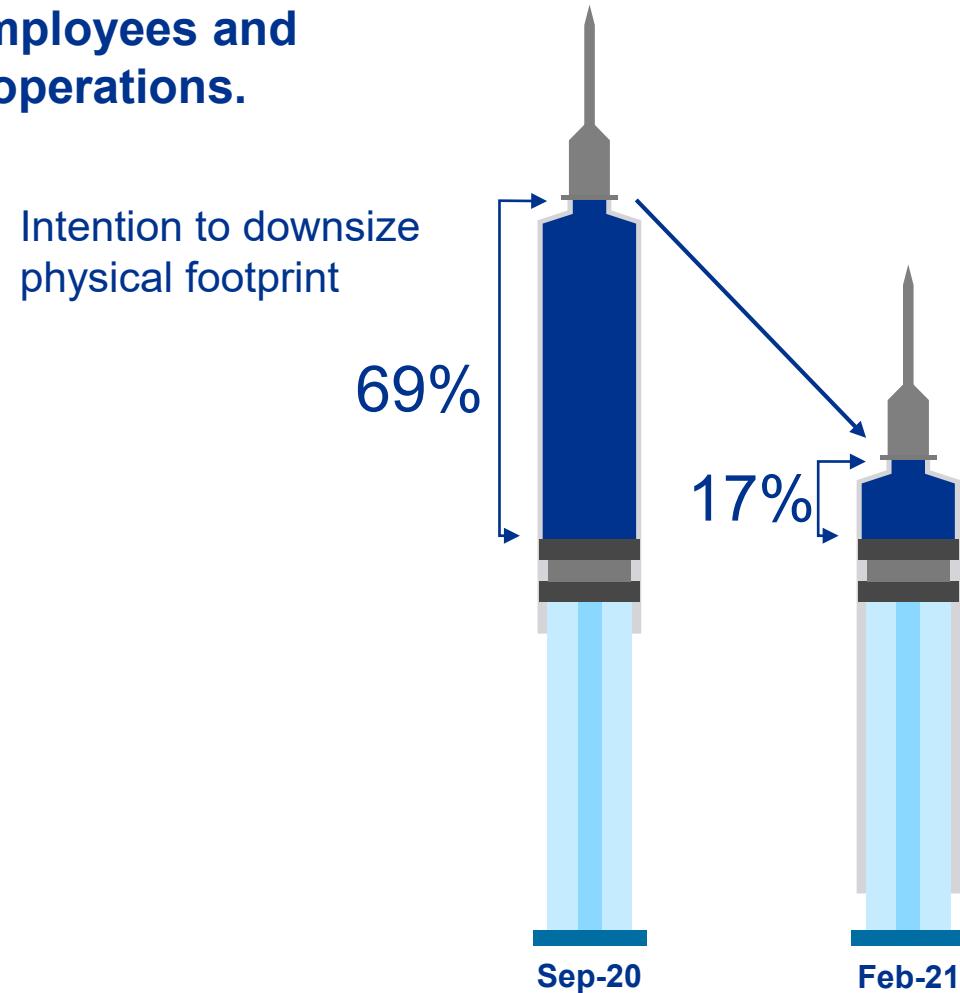
Global CEOs don't see a return to a normal course of business this year and think their businesses have transformed forever by the pandemic.



Source: KPMG 2021 CEO outlook Pulse

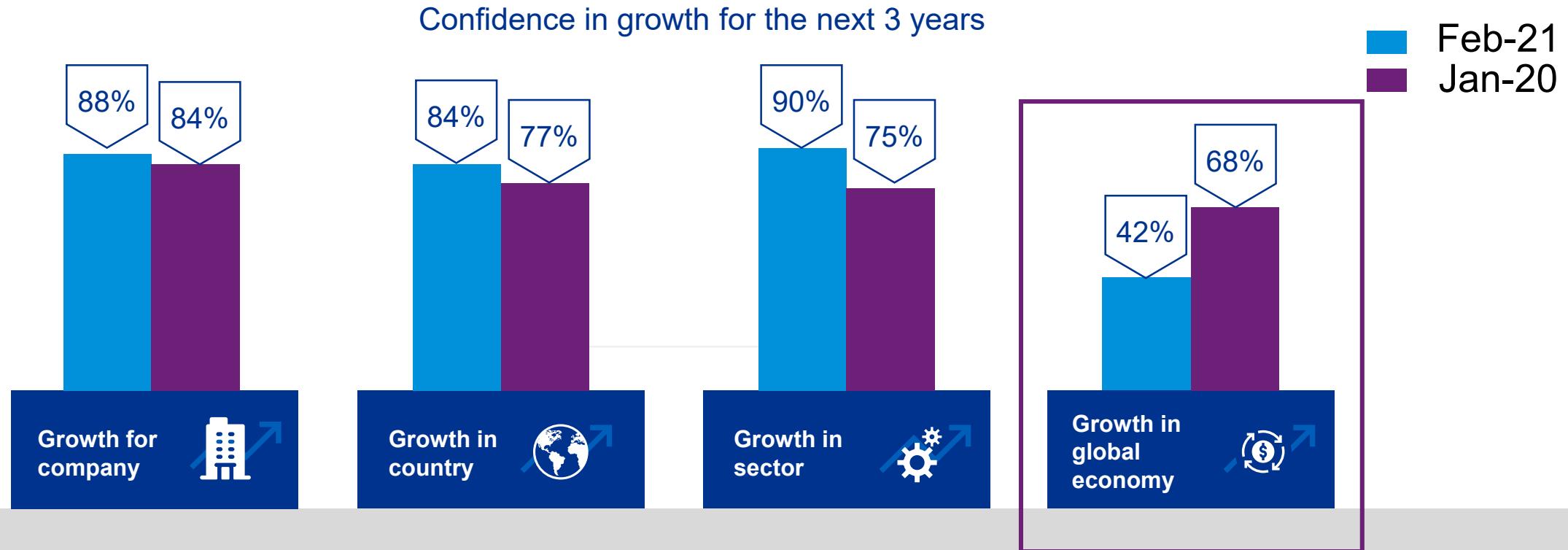
Defining rules in the 'new reality'

Leaders are keen to ensure the safety of their employees and customers. Vaccination rates will have impacts operations.



Confidence is up in most areas

CEO's confidence in their company, sector and country is up, however, their outlook for the global economy is lower.



Shifting focus on risks

Cyber security, tax and regulatory risk has climbed to the top risks to growth.



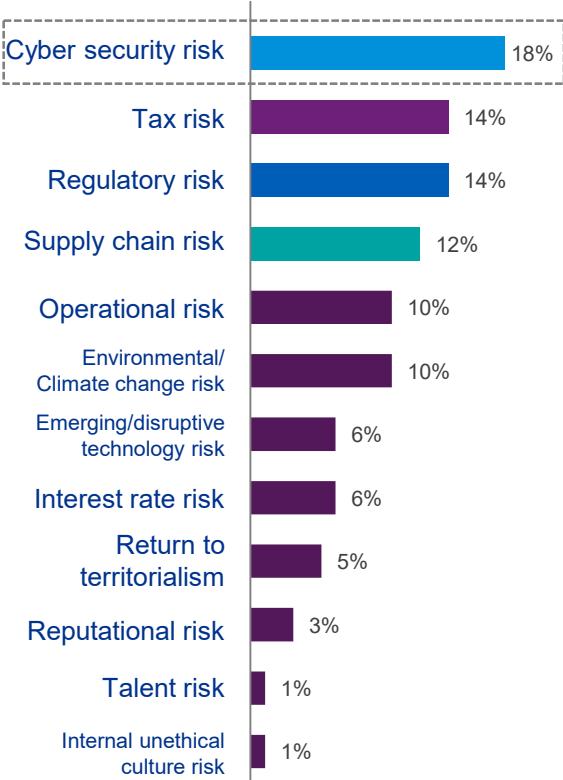
Talent risk has normalized from high in September 2020.



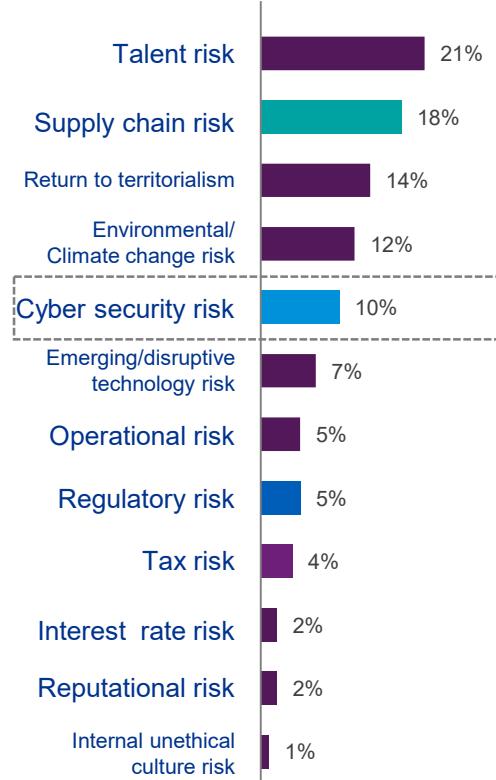
Supply chain has moved from #2 to #4, as leaders come to grips with new reality.

Which of the following risks poses the greatest threat to your organization's growth over the next 3 years?

2021 Pulse (Feb–Mar 2021)



2020 COVID-19 Pulse (Jul–Aug 2020)

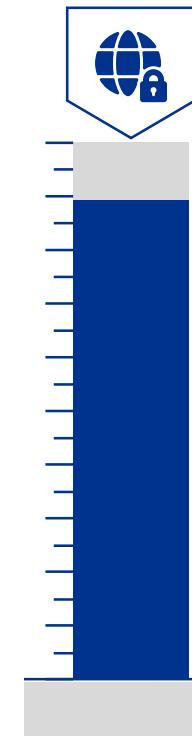
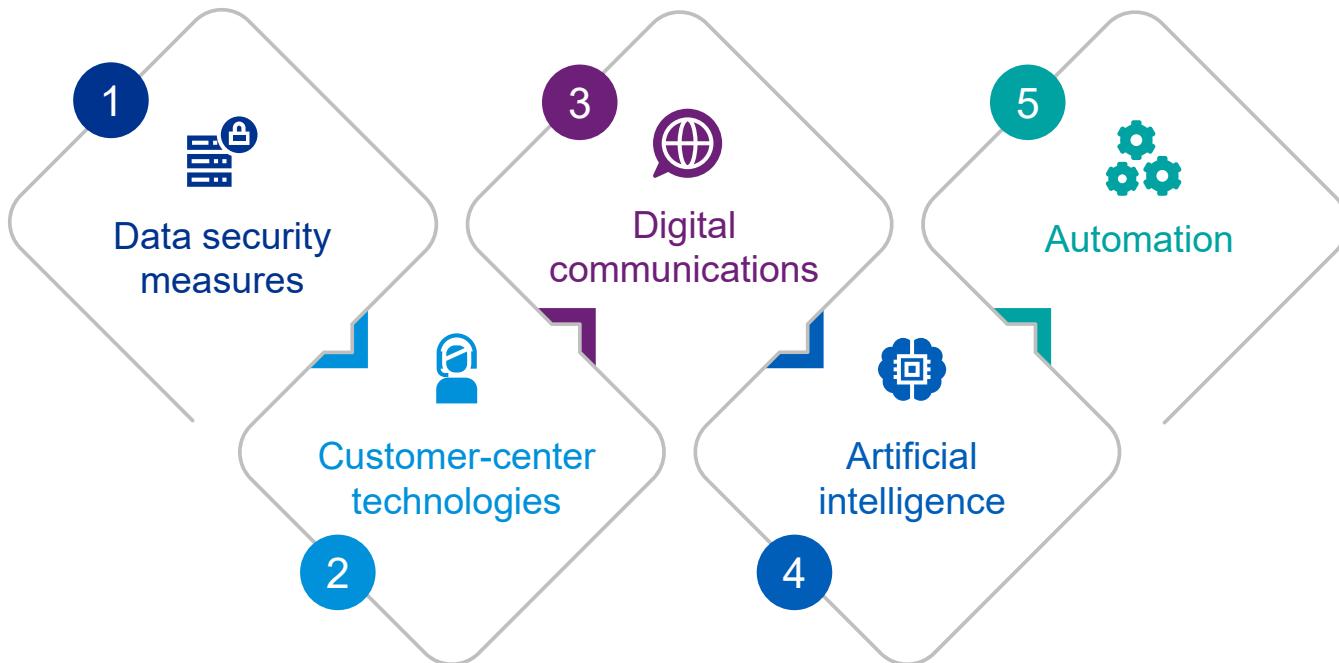


Source: KPMG 2021 CEO outlook Pulse

Doubling down on digital

The global pandemic has prompted CEOs to intensify their commitment to digitalization.

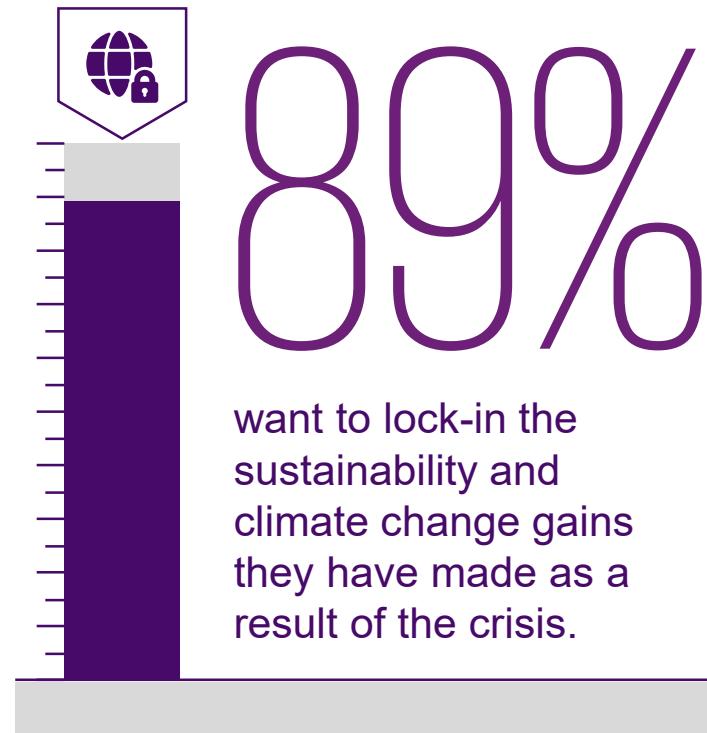
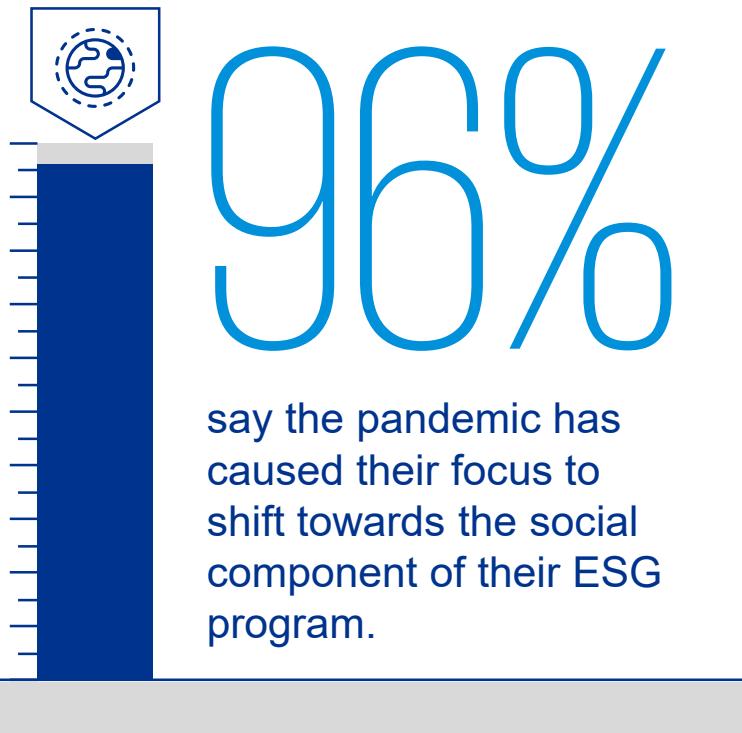
Top areas of investment



say the creation of their next-generation operating model with digitized operations has accelerated by a matter months.

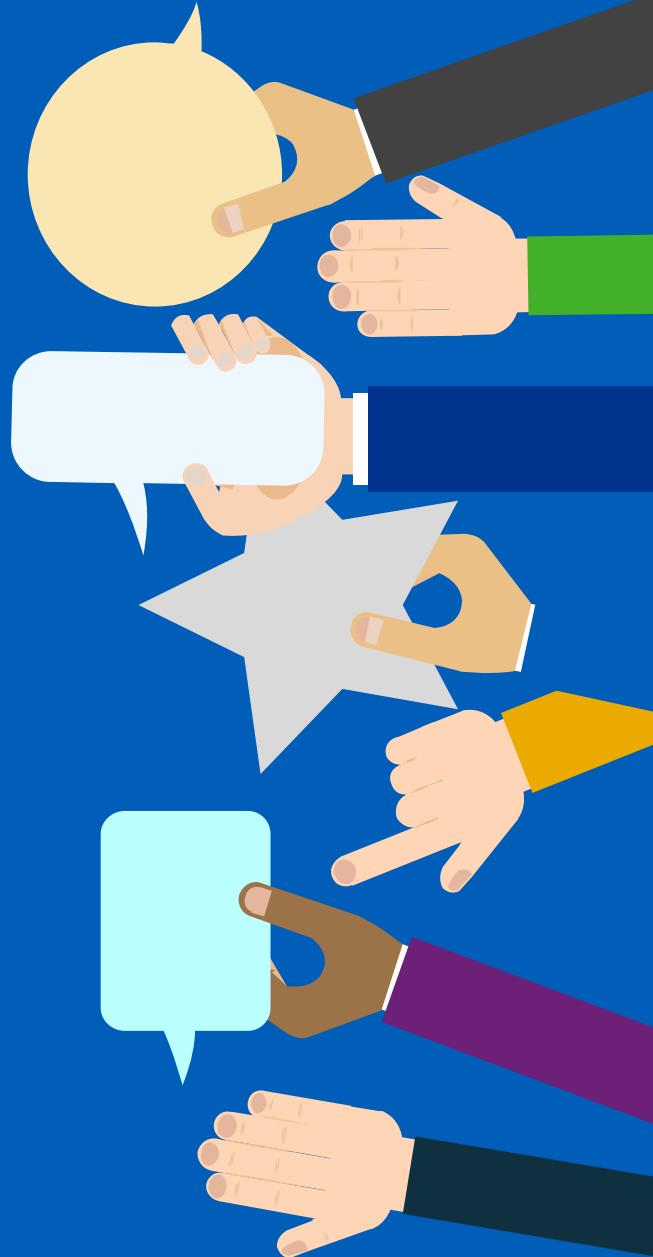
ESG and sustainability remains a priority

CEOs look to lock-in gains on sustainability they made during the global pandemic.





Questions





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