

## Q3

# How can organisations adapt and emerge stronger than before with the help of Design & Technology?

In our teams and our work in APAC, we endeavour to support organisations in becoming more adaptable. To be prepared for an unpredictable future. Organisations need to be adaptive, innovative, and technologically savvy to sustain and grow their businesses. Design and Technology are key elements to support the adaptability of an organisation. However, there is a crucial third element in this equation: Culture (and the diversity of national and corporate cultures).

The recent experience of working remotely due to COVID-19 has provided us with an experiment to pilot new ways of working. While it did not work for everybody or in all instances and activities (e.g. local living conditions, WIFI network stability showed large differences among APAC countries), for most people it provided a learning experience and trust that work can be done without the visible proximity of your team or manager 8 hours per day/5 days per week.

## From a Design Point of View

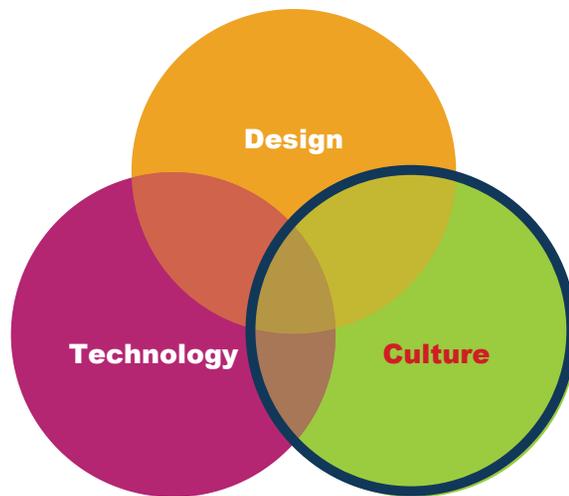
It is our view that remote and distributed working are here to stay. In a study undertaken by Gallup in January 2020<sup>2</sup> (before wide-scale lockdowns), which assessed the efficacy of remote workers, the data was clear: "Remote work not only improves outcomes and employee branding but is a policy that the most talented employees desire." Employee engagement was highest amongst those who worked remotely at least three to four days per week, with 54% of office workers stating that they would leave their job in pursuit of one that offered them more flexibility of work time.

Amidst the pandemic, the appetite for remote working has sustained. In the Singapore Workforce Survey<sup>3</sup> conducted as part of the People Continuity Package, 80% of employees indicated a preference to continue working from home half their time or more post-June 1, with only 10% not wishing to continue working from home at all.

We take the perspective that post-pandemic there will be an even greater desire for employees to have access to various ways of working since many more employees will have experienced a 'taster' of different working arrangements from the old normal.

Therefore, it becomes increasingly important to understand for which experiences people will come to the office, which activities will they do while in the office and how the design of the workplace will effectively support these.

The relevance of the standard office design (open plan for everyone) was already running out. In light of the learnings from COVID-19, we believe this has accelerated the process as employee needs will be very different. As a result, design solutions which are fit for purpose and adaptable at the same time will be required.



The crucial third element in this equation: Culture (and the diversity of national and corporate cultures).



*“An activity-based way of working and sitting arrangement since Sennheiser adopted this concept has accustomed the team to be comfortable with change because it’s a new environment and group of people around you daily. It has taught us to be adaptable and mindful, and that work can be done in different configurations. As most of us are working from home now, while the physical environment has changed, we are still equally ready to embrace change, and adjust ourselves.”*

Martin Low - Managing Director,  
[Sennheiser Asia](#)



*“With ABW.....we have been implementing a variety of initiatives aimed at working with flexibility and higher freedom of choice, so we were able to immediately respond to the telecommuting instructions that were issued to all employees at once.”*

Hiroaki Fujita, Manager of Marketing,  
Strategy Planning Group

## From a Technology Point of View

Embracing new technologies will become crucial. In the near future, most of our meetings will take place with a mix of participants attending from the office and from remote locations (including homes) which will require collaborative tools. This means better technology not only for accessing documents and systems but also to support real team connection and creative problem-solving.

Embracing new technologies will require employees to become more tech-savvy. This is not to say that companies will become tech-centric (at **Veldhoen + Company**, we believe that now more than ever companies will become more human-centric), but it will require a shift in employee capabilities to access and use technology in a much more integrated way with day to day activities.

Big data will also play an important role in the form of working patterns and insights, not to control and command, but to empower people to make smarter decisions themselves about how, when, and with whom to collaborate.



## From a Culture Point of View

To continue to leverage working in a distributed (and partially remote) way, people need to feel connected to others within their team, to other teams, the organisation, and to what their organisation stands for.

An organisation's ability to effectively instill its culture and the feeling of strong bonds across distributed teams is paramount. Consider: Is there a real threat of employees slowly losing their emotional connection and pride they feel for the organisation? Is your organisation spending enough time to adapt and be deliberate about shaping its value propositions to your employees? The ability to address these on an immediate and ongoing basis will form emerging best practices.

Cultural conditions such as Psychological Safety, Trust, Clarity, Managing by Outcomes, Compassion, and Self-direction will be the necessary ingredients for successful leaders in this new climate; and enable a way of working that supports the adaptability of organisations of the future.