

# The Future of Work Arrives Early: How HR leaders are leveraging the lessons of disruption

Spain

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Oxford Economics and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) partnered with SAP SuccessFactors to understand the realities of a post-pandemic workplace for both employers and employees in 10 countries.<sup>1</sup> Our research offers a glimpse of the various workforce strategies adopted by organizations in response to COVID-19, including insight into hiring and layoffs, expectations for future employment changes, readiness for remote work, and investment plans around digital technologies.

This brief report highlights research results for **Spain** and suggests next steps for HR leaders as they plan for the years ahead. The findings show that Spanish respondents are making a range of changes to the workplace in response to COVID-19, but may need to ramp up investment in return-to-work technologies and support for employees who are able to work remotely but lack the technology or environments they need to do so.

## SPAIN'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Experiences with COVID-19 vary from country to country, based in some part on the scale of the virus spread, national responses to controlling the pandemic, and local economic realities.

Spain, which was among the hardest-hit European countries in the spring of 2020 and is now fighting a second wave, has attempted to contain the virus through lockdowns and curfews and protect the economy through its ERTE furlough scheme and tax exemptions for businesses relative to their size.

Understanding regional and local differences will be critical for HR leaders in Spain and across the world as they make plans for their global workforces.

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Spain, United Kingdom, United States. To learn more about the research, including a detailed overview of each country, visit: <http://www.sap.com/human-experience-shrm-oe>

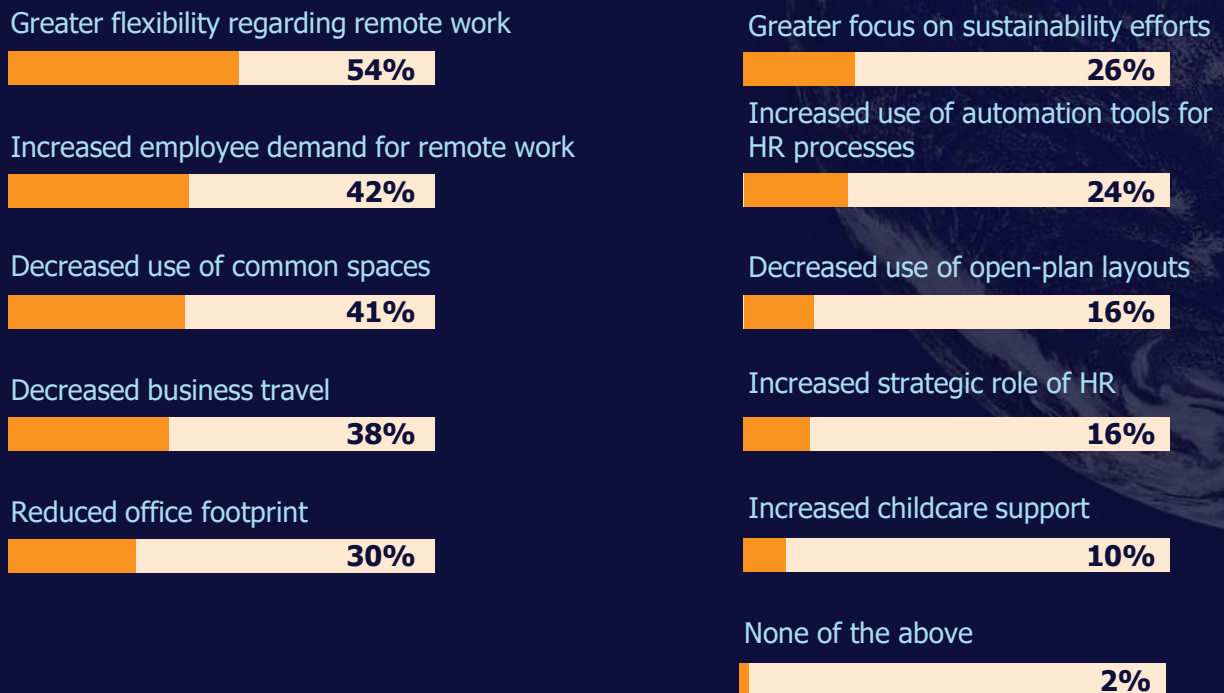
## REDEFINING THE WAY WE WORK

The pandemic has redefined work and altered workspaces for employees around the world, forcing leaders to adapt to unexpected disruptions, anticipate future challenges, and plan for strategic changes.

- A majority of Spanish respondents say their organization has effectively handled new ways of working in response to COVID-19 (86%) and is well prepared to address the changing work environment (85%).
- But with change comes challenges. Just over half (54%) expect to introduce greater flexibility for remote work over the next year as a result of COVID-19; unsurprisingly, maintaining productivity given new ways of working (61%) is expected to become a top challenge for businesses. However, HR leaders in Spain are less concerned than their peers in some other countries about the challenge of establishing a culture that supports remote workers (30%).
- Many respondents are increasing sanitation and cleaning (74%) as they bring employees back to work. However, far fewer are staggering the number of employees in the workplace at once (44%), implementing social distancing precautions such as plexiglass (38%), or conducting regular pulse surveys to gather employee feedback (12%), and just 19% plan to invest in return-to-work technologies (e.g., testing and tracing) over the next 12 months.

### FIG. 1: Spanish leaders expect greater flexibility for remote work

**Q: Which of the following long-term changes (12+ months) do you expect COVID-19 to have on the workplace? *Top-three ranked***



## THE POST-PANDEMIC TALENT CRISIS

Securing and retaining top talent remains a concern for leaders across sectors, and many acknowledge the need to strategize for the new work paradigm.

- Just over half (54%) believe COVID-19 will make flexible work more important to attracting and retaining talent—less than the global average, but still the top-ranked response in Spain. Spanish respondents also expect the overall health of the organization to be a differentiator, with finding new ways of delivering products (54%) and the organization's financial stability (50%) also top of mind.
- Reskilling must be viewed as a long-term talent investment. 40% of Spanish respondents expect to invest in learning programs for reskilling in the next year—ahead of some other countries in our sample, while leaving room for improvement.

### FIG. 2: Flexible work will not be the only talent differentiator

**Q: To what extent do you expect the following to become less or more important in an organization's ability to attract or retain talent, given the effect of COVID-19?**

*"Somewhat more important" and "Much more important" responses*



## MIXED MESSAGES ON TECHNOLOGY

A majority of Spanish respondents say they are satisfied with their organization's technology—but they also acknowledge a digital divide that threatens employees' abilities to do their jobs remotely.

- Well over three-quarters (82%) say their company has the technology it needs to navigate the changing work environment. This could explain why just 40% expect to invest in remote collaboration tools.
- Yet only 16% say most of their workers can work remotely *and* have the necessary technology and environment to do so effectively. Nearly one-fifth (19%) say that most of their workers could work anywhere, but do not have the technology to do so.

**Q: Which technologies do you plan to invest in the most over the next 12 months? Top three technologies**

**40%** Remote collaboration tools

**40%** Learning programs for reskilling and upskilling, as well as new procedures

**29%** Automation tools