

*An Unprecedented Opportunity for
Corporate Social Innovation:*

The Future of Work and COVID-19



November 2020

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The Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI) launched a project in the summer of 2020 to conduct research on COVID-19 and the Future of Work (FoW). The report, led by a task force of RICSI's Student Advisory Board (SAB), placed special emphasis on how actions taken in response to the pandemic can leverage the tools of Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) to mitigate challenges and help us “build back better.”

The original impetus behind “build back better,” as defined by the UN General Assembly in 2016, was within the context of disaster relief and recovery. The UN defined build back better as, “The use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies, and the environment” (UNISDR, 2017). Over time, application of the phrase “build back better” has broadened, and become integrated with other UN initiatives, including the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Global Compact.¹

Research conducted by the RICSI Student Advisory Board included primary research through interviews with corporate executives, and secondary research through a review of literature. The RICSI wishes to acknowledge the executives who generously gave of their time to be interviewed for this report alongside the students who dedicated significant time during their summer break to participate in this initiative.

¹ Further information is available on the UN website regarding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals> and the UN Global Compact <https://www.unglobalcompact.org>. See also Rutgers' Fifth Annual PRME Northeast Virtual Conference: Sustainable Development Goals: Transforming Business Education and Practice” <https://www.business.rutgers.edu/events/fifth-prme-northeast-conference>.

Executive Summary

This year, the world is dealing with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. For many in the workforce, the pandemic has prompted new changes in how work gets done. Globally, governments have issued sporadic local, regional and national stay-at-home orders since March 2020. Many companies are implementing (or relaxing) their telecommuting policies, while an economic decline, the closures of small-businesses, and the recognition of the need for essential workers have each had additional impact. The unforeseen impact on the future of work has accelerated significant changes we believed would not happen for decades.

Positive change is possible both in the short and long term. By practicing Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) – intentionally integrating business strategy with Corporate Social Responsibility, Advocacy, Shared Value Creation, and Philanthropy - we can “build back better”. Early efforts are promising: we see large firms supporting small business; progress in housing and economic stability; expanded impact for Human Resource functions in companies; and pivotal healthcare initiatives. In each of these areas we are, to date, only seeing the tip of the iceberg.

In the near term, we see potential in these areas:

- Supporting employee mental health
- Reskilling the workforce
- Education for the future
- Sustainability and the Environment
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The pandemic gives us an unprecedented opportunity for positive change, and through CSI the joint efforts of corporations, academia, NGOs, government and other stakeholders can fuel

our progress in addressing the issues and challenges facing our society and world today. The future starts now—let's work together to make progress possible and sustainable.



Introduction

This year, society was faced with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries and all 50 U.S. states responded to the threat, in part, by issuing stay-at-home orders in Spring, 2020 — most of which were lifted as transmission of the virus slowed. However, as parts of the world face a second wave of the spread of the virus, some stay-at-home orders have reappeared (Lee, et al 2020). The pandemic has had a significant impact on public health, everyday life, and especially on employment and the nature of where and how work gets done, accelerating the onset of a disruptive Future of Work (FoW). The exponential change and related disruption anticipated from the combined forces of advances in automation, artificial intelligence, and technology were described by World Economic Forum Chair Klaus Schwab as so pervasive, they amounted to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) (World Economic Forum, 4IR, 2016).

The level of disruption anticipated to be brought about by the 4IR, originally expected to span years if not decades, was collapsed, in some cases, into months or even days — e.g. as relates to remote work — as a result of the pandemic. However, the shift to remote work did not support business-as-usual for all businesses. McKinsey estimates that a third of U.S. jobs are vulnerable in the near-term due to the pandemic (e.g. via furloughs, layoffs, or elimination of jobs), with 80% of those jobs held by low-income workers (Lund, 2020). Moreover, the FoW is not just about how many jobs could be lost and gained. The occupational mix of the economy is changing and the demand for skills is changing along with it (Lund, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the FoW by accelerating remote work, increasing rates of joblessness, and putting a focus on the stratification between blue and white-collar workers. According to a 2018 report released by research firm Global Workplace Analytics, 4.3 million U.S. employees worked from home, representing 3.2% of the country's total workforce.

Contrast this with the post-pandemic environment: in March 2020, over two-thirds of 375 executives polled reported that more than 80% of their workforce was now working remotely (MIT Technology Review, 2020). Additionally, the unemployment rate shot up from 3.8% in February to 13.0% in the span of three months' time (Pew Research Center, 2020). According to McKinsey, hospitality, food services and retail services account for 42% of vulnerable jobs, while white-collar industries such as professional services, finance, and insurance, accounted for only 5% of job cuts during the first wave of the pandemic (Lund, 2020). As such, there is a disproportionate impact on low-income workers.

Society needs to better understand these issues, and mitigate the challenges posed by COVID-19 regarding the FoW. As we re-imagine the economy in the short and long-term, we need to take concrete, actionable steps to ensure we “build back better,” creating a more equitable and sustainable society. Businesses have and will continue to play a key role in the post-COVID-19 world.

“We must use this unprecedented moment in time to make things better, addressing both the challenges we knew about as well as those that COVID-19 exposed. This crisis must serve as a catalyst for action.”

-Noa Gafni, Executive Director, RICS

Business and society are interlinked. CSI is vital to the discussion of the FoW during and after the COVID-19 pandemic as it will lay the groundwork for employers and employees to build back better working conditions and policies. CSI, as defined by RICS, is, “the integration of a company’s full range of capabilities and assets within innovative business models to achieve positive societal impact while advancing the success and sustainability of the company.” As such, CSI is not just a one-way transfer of resources as part of a philosophy of

“doing good,” but also an integrated and strategic linkage of the company’s capabilities with the larger community of stakeholders.

Companies are being called upon to have positive societal impacts. These calls to action variously come from governments, customers, employees, board members and investors. Significantly — and this trend is expected to continue — there is evidence that companies that aim to achieve positive societal impact and do their part in addressing society’s most pressing challenges outperform their peers.² RICS believes that the best approach for business to address society’s challenges and, at the same time, benefit the bottom line — or more broadly, what has been described as the triple bottom line consisting of people, profit and planet (Elkington 2018) — is by implementing the four pillars of CSI: Shared Value Creation (SVC), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Strategic Philanthropy, and Advocacy and Policy Change. Each of these is an important way for businesses to have a positive impact on society.³

Figure 1 illustrates the integrated nature of RICS’s CSI model, which is further detailed on the following pages.

² Valor, The Business Benefits of CSR, August 28, 2017, <http://www.valorcsr.com/blog/the-business-benefits-of-csr>

³ Further discussion of the four pillars of CSI can be found in the article, *Executive Insights: Leading the Way in Corporate Social Innovation – An Interview with Gary M. Cohen*, by Noa Gafni and Jeana Wirtenberg, Rutgers Business Review, (2020), Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.248-258. <https://rbr.business.rutgers.edu/article/executive-insights-leading-way-corporate-social-innovation-interview-gary-m-cohen>

Our Corporate Social Innovation Methodology



Figure 1: RICS's Corporate Social Innovation (CSI) Model

Detailing the four pillars of CSI shown in Figure 1, the first concept — which is not yet as widely known as the other three concepts — is **Shared Value Creation (SVC)**. This concept, penned by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer in 2011, recommends that corporations develop profitable new commercial products and services with an eye toward addressing an unmet societal need (Porter & Kramer 2011). SVC thus has a two-fold purpose: it drives business opportunities and is aimed at having a positive financial impact on the company, while providing a benefit to the larger community or society. The need to attach a tangible expected profit in tandem with meeting a social need can limit the scope of Shared Value Creation initiatives compared to other pillars of CSI. A fair amount of creativity and flexibility may also be required to achieve the level of innovation necessary to reach the goal of producing, selling and sourcing a product in a way that also helps achieve a societal goal.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) encourages businesses to use their resources, processes, and competencies to benefit society; however, these efforts are generally associated with cost centers or one-way transfers of resources and investments, versus being directly linked to the company's commercial activities or financial performance. As such, they

are not aimed at building and selling a product or service per se but are aimed at enhancing the community or investing in sustainability. CSR actions and investments can also lead to positive reputational benefits, which in turn may influence recruitment and retention of employees as well as investor and customer sentiment.

Strategic Philanthropy involves charitable giving, donations of cash or in-kind products and services, and corporate volunteerism, to support nonprofit organizations, causes, and communities. A limitation to philanthropy is that companies generally donate a small percentage of their earnings; as such, donations are largely considered one-way transfers of resources, reducing the bottom line (at least, the financial bottom line, within the triple bottom line model).

Advocacy and Public Policy empowers companies to utilize public affairs capabilities to support changes in laws, guidelines and regulations that strengthen society as a whole. Aligning a company's policies with national and international policies and working collaboratively to improve those policies can be beneficial in allowing the company to scale their initiatives by partnering with other sectors.

The approaches outlined in the four pillars have limitations – especially if implemented in a siloed manner – but when integrated and coordinated across a corporation's activities, build the basis for true Corporate Social Innovation. CSI provides opportunities to create value for society as well as for companies, even during a time of crisis, in ways that will transform the FoW. As Mark Kramer has said, “A great many large companies talk about having a social purpose and set of values, or about how much they care for their employees and other stakeholders. Now is the time for them to make good on that commitment” (Kramer, 2020). CSI

can strengthen the post-COVID FoW by providing a platform for companies to become more responsible, innovative and profitable.



Section 1: The Immediate Aftermath of COVID 19: Pivoting to the New Normal

In 2020, the United States and the world took a turn for the worse. On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a pandemic. The impact would be profound: from the tragic loss of life to employment disruption, supply chain shortages, and stock market and economic disruption rising to the level of a worldwide recession (Kose & Sugawara). Many had little hope, fearing an uncertain end to this deadly challenge.

As of November 20, 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases has risen exponentially, reaching over 56 million global cases, with over 20% of the cases in the U.S. alone. The death toll attributed to the disease is over 1.4 million deaths as of November 20, with over 250,000 in the U.S. alone (Johns Hopkins, 2020).

Macroeconomic Impact

On a macroeconomic level, shocks to the system arising from direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 threw the global economy into recession in the first quarter of 2020 (Kose & Sugawara). U.S. economy, measured in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is declining at a 5% annual rate — paralleling the decline seen in the Great Recession of 2008. The decline in GDP accelerated to 31.4% in the second quarter of 2020 (Bureau of Economic Analysis) — a level not seen since the Great Depression of 1929 as shown in Figure 2.⁴

⁴ Although GDP is commonly used for measures of economic well-being, it “puts many of the costs of uncaring businesses practices on the plus, rather than the minus, side of productivity calculations” (Eisler, 2007, p. 63). As we create a new normal, we should look toward metrics that take into account not just productive work, but also the contributions of life-sustaining activities of households, communities, and nature.

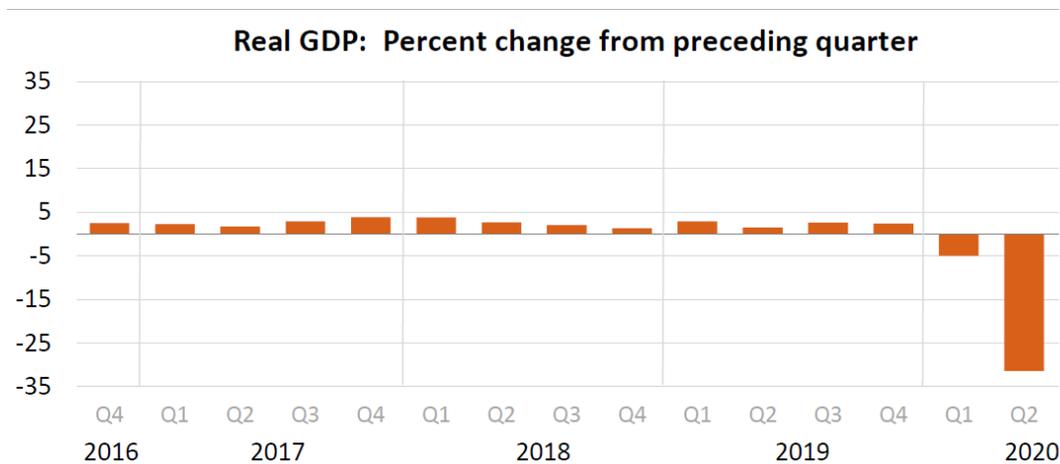


Figure 2: USA GDP Chart 2016-2020, Quarters 1-2

Prof. Michael J. Boskin, writing in a World Economic Forum publication, stated he currently expects a rebound in the global economy in “late 2022” (Boskin, 2020).

The Impact on Industries

With a majority of people forced to ‘shelter in place’ during periods of shutdown aimed at slowing the spread of the virus, many industries took a hit to their bottom lines. The top five industries impacted by COVID-19 were: airlines, gaming, leisure facilities, auto parts & equipment, and oil & gas drilling (Kumar & Hadon, 2020).⁵

The full impact crossed virtually every industry: food service, education (from daycare to K-12 schools to colleges), athletic clubs, sports teams, social organizations, and everyday businesses such as dry cleaners, retailers, manufacturers and others. Local mom-and-pop stores depending on foot traffic were especially hard hit, particularly those that were unable to provide contactless delivery and pickup.

⁵ Oxford Economics estimates the impact on the airline and travel industry alone to be an estimated \$1.2 trillion loss to the economy. In addition, with planes not running frequently, the entire supply chain is turned upside down. Companies are left to figure out the distribution of their supplies amid increases in consumer demand for many of them.

Impact on the Individual: Remote work

Unemployment has been a major component of the economic downturn arising from the pandemic and was impacted significantly during the worldwide shutdown. Such job losses caused a shock to economies including in the U.S., which had reached record low rates of unemployment preceding the pandemic.⁶

At the same time, individuals and families were also trying to stay stocked on goods that people rushed to hoard, including paper goods, soap and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). An ever-present pressure was trying to avoid COVID-19 and stay as healthy as possible, particularly since many doctors' office temporarily stopped seeing patients in person (some switching to virtual visits), and hospitals strained beyond capacity pushed back surgeries and diagnostic testing, in order to focus on the acute needs of treating COVID-19 patients. On top of all this change, another new challenge for many was working from home - if indeed, they were not laid off or furloughed. Many also had to manage remote schooling for children, most all of whom were now in one form or another being "homeschooled" to varying degrees, interacting with teachers and classmates virtually.

With mandatory social distancing and shutdown orders in place to slow the spread of the virus, office life changed drastically for employees. The companies we interviewed — paralleling the employment market generally — shifted most of their workforce to remote work to comply with shutdown orders. Historically, remote working was reserved for only a few, but the new normal brought on by COVID-19 pushed companies to present a new work culture with flexibility in work location and hours, instead of the traditional nine-to-five, in-the-office work parameters. Well-known employers including Google preemptively extended work-from-

⁶ Although there was a small rebound in employment in the U.S. in July (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Aug. 7, 2020), some of the job losses are thought to be permanent (Cassella, 2020).

home policies into 2021, while Facebook and Twitter are allowing employees to work from home indefinitely or "forever" (Denny, 2020). Long-term telework, however, isn't a one-size-fits-all fix for all companies, particularly for those people without reliable access to the internet, or in living conditions that are not conducive to long-term telework, including those who have extensive caregiving responsibilities due to shutdowns and suspensions of daycare centers and schools.

While there have been some benefits, including the ability of some to arrange their work schedules around their home responsibilities, other issues with work-life balance are arising, with increased expectations from employers causing some employees to work more hours than ever before. Ubiquitous mobile phones have not only brought about some efficiencies in life, but have had what some may view as the opposite effect on work-life balance, by creating pressure for employees to always be reachable, in return for the "perk" of letting them work from home. Some employees report that it is increasingly challenging to remain focused on an organization's financial goals and overarching purpose when not around other colleagues.

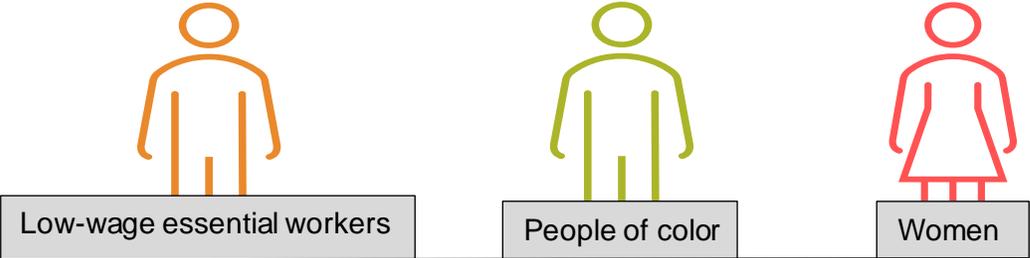
The Need to Solve "First-order" and "Second-order" Impacts

The toll wrought on humanity by the COVID-19 pandemic has caused what Samsung's Executive Vice President and Head of Corporate Affairs David Steel refers to as "first-order" and "second-order" impacts. Steel explains that first-order or "immediate" impacts are issues such as the rise of domestic violence, food insecurity, and economic issues that community organizations and NGOs typically assist with. These issues were exacerbated by the pandemic.

The second-order impact or "ripple effect," says Steel, was that donors that typically funded nonprofits and private charitable organizations faced challenges of their own, causing income

streams for NGO and community organizations to disappear. Samsung leveraged their relationships with these organizations to keep them afloat at a time when the people they served needed them most. Ann Woo, Samsung’s Senior Director, Corporate Citizenship, coordinated actions on the CSI pillars of Strategic Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility, in donating \$4.3 million to various communities in which they operate and expected to have the most impact. These urban areas included Dallas, Austin, Newark, and Silicon Valley. The funds were split among organizations at the front lines, such as food banks.

Who May be Left Behind?



Low-wage, Essential Workers

One important caveat to the impact of remote work: The workforce that contributes heavily to our economy today relies on essential workers, including many low-wage service workers, of whom many are minorities. As seen after the pandemic hit, essential workers are a “critical engine of our economy” (Poo & Shah, 2020).

Low-wage essential workers, such as home health aides, put their own health at risk since they cannot necessarily “socially distance” from their clients, who may rely on them for basic physical care. As we move from adapting to the immediate challenges of the pandemic, to mitigating underlying issues and building back better over the long-term, it is important to keep essential workers in mind, including their needs for health and safety protections, a livable wage, paid sick and family leave, support for family care, and access to health care.

Although many low-wage essential workers have no organized voice to advocate for them, some belong to unions which provide Advocacy and Public Policy support, one of the key pillars of CSI. In many cases, the conditions and struggles of low-wage essential workers such as home health aides, environmental services workers, and some food service workers, were below the line of sight of most Americans: out of sight, out of mind.

Mary Kay Henry, President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) pointed out, “The pernicious structural, racial, and economic inequality that our union has been trying to define for the past 10 years—there are 64 million people who cannot feed themselves, even though they are working more hours than most people in the country—that is now in everybody’s face” (Mohan & Shi, 2020). If left unattended, some of the long-standing struggles of the low-wage employees, including lack of paid sick leave, can have a serious public health impact, particularly during a pandemic — when it is critical that people experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 stay home and self-quarantine. Henry continued, “I think people are shocked that a fast-food worker does not have two weeks of paid sick [leave]. The [inequality] that the pandemic has laid bare creates an amazing opportunity for change because we have more public support and understanding that this poverty-wage work is unacceptable and puts everybody else at risk. It is not just a moral issue anymore. It is an economic issue and a public health concern” (Mohan & Shi, 2020). As such, the Advocacy and Public Policy lever, activated not only by unions but by corporations and other organizations as well, will be key in bringing about a more positive FoW, and to ensure our most essential workers - many of whom are at the low-wage end of the spectrum — are not left behind.

People of Color: Racial Inequity

People of color have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 as they make up the majority of essential workers and assume the majority of the risk (Powell, 2020). Additionally, the CDC has found that, “there is increasing evidence that some racial and ethnic minority groups are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19” (CDC, 2020).

Mobility Capital Finance, better known as MoCaFi, is a Black-owned and -led financial technology company. CEO Wole Coaxum, formerly a Senior Vice President at JP Morgan Chase, founded MoCaFi, a digital banking platform, to address the unmet needs of the more than 50 million unbanked and underbanked people in the U.S. Racial minorities make up a significant portion of the underbanked population. “When broken down by ethnicity, the FDIC's data shows that in 2017, 17% of Black households and 14% of Hispanic households were underbanked, compared to just 3% of White households, highlighting the racial gap associated with a lack of access to financial services” (Hruska, 2020).

Coaxum’s main focus is to save Black- and Brown-owned businesses, in particular because minority-owned businesses may not have been aware of or had the bandwidth to apply for the federal governmental relief fund — the Payment Protection Program (PPP) — launched as part of the CARES Act. MoCaFi is working on raising money to offer a loan fund totaling \$100 million for such businesses. Another example of significant problems for people without access to bank accounts is that they had difficulty accessing their \$600 one-time stimulus payments offered by the federal government under the CARES Act. MoCaFi aims to level the playing field across ethnic groups by offering banking services through its digital platform. Coaxum says, “all people should have access to high-quality banking, regardless of zip code.”

Women: Childcare

Increased childcare needs arising from the pandemic — given the shift to schools going remote — has affected parents across the board, but has impacted women more than men.⁷ Women perform the bulk of unpaid and invisible care work in the home, and although there is great value in that work, the value is not reflected in traditional measures of the economy such as GDP (Eisler 2017). Perhaps for that reason, there is insufficient attention to supporting women who perform this important yet ‘invisible’ contribution to the health of the community. Women also perform the bulk of care jobs in the formal economy (including child care, elder care and home health care); the responsibility for this work is entrenched in gendered norms and inequalities (Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women, 2020, p.3).

A study by Boston Consulting Group surveying working parents in the U.S., UK, France, Germany, and Italy taken between March 20 and April 6, showed that 60% of respondents had no outside help available for childcare or educating their children during this time. Although both parents stepped up to fill increased childcare needs when schools and childcare centers closed, amounting to 27 hours per week, women on average spent 15 more hours than men on domestic tasks. Additionally, half of all respondents felt more stress in trying to maintain performance on their jobs and keep up with increased responsibilities at home.

Some companies are recognizing the burden on parents and women in particular during the pandemic and stepping up with solutions. Representatives from Facebook, Unilever, Bristol Myers Squibb and Rutgers University spoke on a panel on this topic at Rutgers on September 11, 2020.⁸ A number of companies have stepped up to offer new or expanded on-site childcare

⁷ The impact has been particularly severe for single mothers who outnumber single fathers by about 8.5 million (Alon et al., 2020, p. 12). Even among families with two parents, one parent often provides the majority of childcare and an increase in childcare needs will fall disproportionately on that parent (Alon et al., 2020, p. 14-15).

⁸ *The archived webcast of the program, Staying in the Game: How Companies Can Support Women & Parents During Covid-19 & the Childcare Crisis will be made available on the program webpage:*
<https://www.business.rutgers.edu/events/staying-game>

Section 2: Early CSI Impacts

(Agovino, Sept. 2020). However, will these initiatives continue once the urgency of the pandemic passes and we settle into the long-term FoW? These are important considerations in efforts to move forward to benefit all members of the community, across multiple dimensions of economic and physical health, such as outlined by the UN SDGs, and potentially implemented through a more focused approach to CSI.

The pandemic raised a number of urgent and unforeseen issues. These issues included the shortage of PPE, the need for technological access and food insecurity issues — including for families whose children relied on receiving lunch and/or breakfast provided by the school,

which were no longer available when schools went remote. It also made evident the need for partnerships.

Samsung's Steel, expanding on his earlier definition of first-order and second-order COVID-19 effects emphasized, "The pandemic has shown how companies can and should be more involved. Companies have the ability to address problems beyond their product or service, and it is not just the job of the nonprofit sector to tackle these issues."

1. Shifting Production Lines

To address lack of shortages, some companies shifted their production lines to meet new types or levels of demand, such as PPEs. For example, Eddie Bauer produced, donated and delivered at least 15,000 N95 and surgical masks in April to Washington State's Department of Enterprise Services. GAP Inc. also used their global supply chain to channel supplies (Reagan, 2020). These companies were able to serve the community and make money as well, helping offset the downturn in retail sales due to stay-at-home orders and restrictions on retail stores other than "essential goods and services" (e.g. grocery stores, hardware stores).

Automakers Ford and General Motors accepted contracts from the federal government to produce 50,000 ventilators (Korosec, 2020). The car companies altered their production line equipment, and trained select employees to build ventilators, rather than the traditional inventory items they would normally build in those plants (e.g., pickup trucks). There was some heavy persuasion by the U.S. President to accept these federal contracts, but nonetheless, shifting their core production lines and partnering with companies that specialized in the industry allowed them to earn revenue (through the government contracts) and serve the nation with these new products.

2. Pivoting to Meet Societal Needs

Sheila Gallucci-Davis, VP-General Counsel, Philanthropy & Corporate Responsibility at Subaru of America notes, “We asked our communities where the greatest needs were, rather than assuming we knew. That’s how we decided to provide more than 50 million meals nationally through Feeding America and Cathedral Kitchen, to offer scholarships and laptops for students in Camden, to donate a vehicle for use by health care workers, and to donate masks and thank you notes to frontline workers and schools.”

This pandemic forced companies to respond quickly in order to address societal needs as well as the needs of the company. Some companies were able to respond quickly because they had relationships with government and nonprofit agencies already in place—which allowed them to develop partnerships that quickly benefited not only their partners but the company and communities as well.

Kevin O’Hanlon, Director of Government Relations in Samsung’s Washington DC office explained, “In the COVID-19 era, legislation is being drafted, reviewed and passed in record time. This requires our team to provide real-time feedback and guidance on proposals that will map out our country’s path forward – it is fast paced, but also rewarding” (Samsung, 2020).

To increase awareness of this pandemic, various news organizations made the decision to waive paid subscription requirements to access their resources relating to the pandemic. Global research publisher John Wiley and Sons created a dedicated [website](#) to grant completely free access to all of its research articles on the coronavirus family.

Global pharmaceutical company Merck provided 800,000 surgical face masks in the U.S. to address the early outbreak in New York and New Jersey. They were able to access the PPE from internal supplies typically used in conjunction with their manufacturing and research.

3. Big Companies Supporting Smaller Companies, Local Businesses

A key strategy in the private sector to shore up the overall economy has been the outreach by big businesses in support of smaller companies and local businesses.

Newark-based Audible takes an active role in supporting the local community. Its CSI stance is stated in its “People Principles,” which include, “We work to improve the lives of those without privilege in the cities and countries in which we operate ... We believe in giving people a chance, and we work to make this so, particularly in the urban core.”

Kelly DelRosso, Senior Director of Design-People & Places, Audible, Inc. observes, “The vitality of communities is critical. One of the most important things born out of this crisis from a business point of view, is the need for big businesses to support small businesses. That is one of the most exciting things we have witnessed not only in our own work but others.” Putting their People Principles into action, Audible has continued their support of local businesses by pivoting their Lunch Out Wednesday program — which had provided employees \$15 vouchers to use at participating local restaurants in Newark on Wednesdays — to Newark Working Kitchens, activating local restaurants to prepare and deliver meals to residents in need – to continue supporting the local community and sustain hundreds of restaurant jobs, even after their workforce largely shifted to remote work. This partnership with the community creates shared value by directing use of an employee benefit in a way that also strengthens the surrounding local community.

Sam Caucci, CEO of 1Huddle, a workforce training platform that uses gamification to upskill workers, explains that his company’s response during the pandemic reflects their mantra, “In a moment of fight or flight, we have chosen to fight forward.” Caucci says a question he faces is, “Do we turn off our platform to those customers that are struggling due to the pandemic? We decided the answer is no — if the customer is willing to invest in its people,

and is otherwise doing its fair share in the community — we will forget the billing for now or be flexible with payments; it is most important that we are here for your employees.” 1Huddle is also a major proponent of equity across racial and socio-economic divides. He adds, “It is good business to allow the security guard to have the same opportunity for job training that the CFO has.”

4. Human Resources: Playing a Key Role

The human resources function plays a key role as a driver of change. The companies we interviewed are taking action to mitigate workforce issues by supporting corporate reskilling efforts to respond to and address mental health issues imposed by isolation of individual workers and additional pressures they face in the current environment.

“The (pandemic has) taught us less about remote work — versus collaboration, social connection, and the desire for people to be together and drive innovation,” Johnson & Johnson Chief Human Resources Officer Peter M. Fasolo noted on a Conference Board webcast earlier this year (Conference Board, 2020). As such, the disruptive elements of technology vis-a-vis natural human interaction fell upon the Human Resources function to address. The CSI pillar of Shared Value Creation plays a role, because the need to invest in supporting employee mental health, and the broader community’s mental health, can also benefit employee productivity along with purchasing power of the larger community of stakeholders.

With technology threatening to disrupt and displace employees — and with companies needing workers skilled in the latest automated and in some cases AI-enabled technologies — employers are trying to fill the gap. Some companies are well-positioned to provide continuous learning opportunities and skill development to help those at risk for displacement — whether due to COVID-19 or broader technological change. Reskilling and upskilling employees not only benefits the individual company but also has a longer term and wider effect on the

community, as community members will have the necessary skills to seek out different employers.

Microsoft's Corporate Vice President, Talent, Learning, and Insights, Joe Whittinghill, speaking on a Conference Board webcast in June, noted that managers of the 19,000 teams within his company were asked to do regular check-ins with their teams during the pandemic, to help assess any physical or mental health issues, and provide support as needed. "It is the golden age of HR," said Whittinghill, reflecting on the importance of the role and needed emphasis on employee welfare. He noted that caring for employees was embedded in Microsoft's manager model, strengthening the relationship between corporate strategy and employee engagement (Conference Board, 2020).

The Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) devoted its Summer 2020 issue to how companies were responding to the pandemic. In fact, Executive Editor David Reimer noted that it was Microsoft's Whittinghill, slated to be Guest Editor of the Summer edition — who was the primary force convincing SHRM to pivot the planned theme of the Summer edition to the pandemic (SHRM, 2020).

5. Housing and Economic Stability

Issues arising from the pandemic have thrown some people into economic instability, due to job losses or lost income of business owners. This has follow-on effects in exacerbating food insecurity issues and housing instability for individuals and families.

The financial and banking industry has stepped in to offer aid to those impacted by the pandemic through a number of differently packaged support programs. While some of these payment deferment periods were mandated under the CARES Act, some financial institutions took further measures to help their customers maintain as much stability as possible during the pandemic.

MoCaFi is working in Atlanta with not-for-profit companies and landlords to offer a grant/loan program for rent assistance during the COVID-19 crisis. This is a new type of initiative for MoCaFi, spurred on to help mitigate challenges that came to the forefront as a result of the pandemic. They are also actively engaged in public policy work, having talked to dozens of Members of Congress about the shortage of bank accounts among minority populations. MoCaFi exemplifies using CSI's Advocacy and Public Policy lever, and Shared Value Creation, strengthening struggling communities to build their economic wealth, to help solve the issue of financial inclusion.

6. Healthcare Initiatives

COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of life and all business and services sectors in some way, but perhaps none as much as the healthcare sector. The challenge has been in caring for patients, including during a time when hospitals were so stretched beyond capacity, temporary hospital facilities had to be built by the Army Corps of Engineers in places like the Javits Convention Center in New York City, and hospital boats arrived to care for additional patients.

Individuals and families also were stressed in meeting unexpected healthcare costs, worsening the situation for those who lost jobs or lost income from businesses they owned. Those who traditionally relied on charitable or private sector organizations for assistance, which in turn were strapped or shuttered — at least temporarily — were doubly impacted (the “first-order” and “second-order” impacts defined by Samsung's Steel earlier.)

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, pharmaceutical company Merck offers the “Merck Patient Assistance Program” to help unemployed Americans receive free and low-cost medication. There are plans to expand this program by “assessing patients' real-time financial situations, providing assistance with expiring enrollments, and offering new options to

collect signatures on the enrollment form.” Merck also stepped up its targeted philanthropy during the pandemic, targeting an additional \$3 million aimed at maternal healthcare.

“Our health systems and heroic health care providers are fully focused on COVID-19, but childbirth will not wait for the pandemic to ease,” said Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, Chief Patient Officer at Merck. “We are eager to partner with our many collaborators working to help end maternal mortality to provide enhanced care to pregnant women and new mothers at this crucial time for them, and this crucial time for us as a society.” This initiative illustrates how Merck puts into practice the CSI pillars of Shared Value Creation and Strategic Philanthropy, in relation to maternal health specifically, and within their broader public health initiatives generally.

In the race to create a vaccine for COVID-19, Merck continues to further demonstrate its collaborative approach, including work on various collaborative projects with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), the Institute for Systems Biology, the NIH-led Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV consortium), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

During the peak of the pandemic, hospitals did not allow visitors, leading to extreme isolation and loneliness for hospital patients and family members. Samsung’s Woo led an effort to address this need by coordinating the distribution of tablets, Chromebooks, and chargers to tri-state (NY-NJ-CT) area hospitals to facilitate patients’ ability to video chat with family and friends, helping them cope with the impact of the crisis. Moreover, as hospitals reached capacity, and stay-at-home orders were put into place, doctors closed their practices temporarily, and telehealth became the new normal, powered in part by Samsung’s technology.

7. Volunteering

Mateus Baptista, Deputy Director, Strategy and External Affairs at Panasonic Corporation of North America, says given the challenge imposed by the pandemic, together with the current, fractured climate of the country, there is an opportunity for leaders and companies to recommit and double down on Corporate Social Innovation. He is seeing more employees looking for opportunities to volunteer. Pre-COVID-19, most volunteer activities were focused around the company's major locations, such as its Newark, NJ, U.S. headquarters, but with people volunteering virtually, additional volunteer activities can be shared and replicated across the network.⁹

“Many leading companies practice these types of social impact disciplines but the greatest impact is found in the companies where these pillars are integrated into core business strategies. And those companies that prioritize social impact have been seen to outperform their peers, particularly during this turbulent time.”

-Noa Gafni, Executive Director, RICS

The Future Starts Now

Before COVID-19 suddenly and critically disrupted the world, the FoW was already on course to be disrupted, primarily due to new wave automation. Beyond the immediate responses companies made in the early months of the pandemic (discussed in the previous section), there is an opportunity for companies to incorporate a holistic approach to CSI on a longer-term basis, to identify root causes of problems plaguing society, and develop strategies and partnerships to mitigate those problems.

Subaru's Gallucci-Davis says, “COVID-19 highlighted for us just how important business sustainability is — because if the business cannot survive, the business can no longer assist in

⁹ A number of organizations offering large-scale remote volunteer activities include We Hero <https://www.wehero.co/>, Impact 4 Good <https://impact4good.com>, and Together We Rise, <https://www.togetherwerise.org>.

the support of others.” Subaru sees it as a symbiotic relationship. “Companies can, and do, thrive while having positive social impact, and society can, and does, thrive when those companies have sustainable business operations.”

Building successful work practices for the future may seem like a challenging task, but executives can begin to drive change incrementally by keeping key societal issues in mind.

Panasonic's Baptista notes that the future of the workforce is a people of color workforce. This is consistent with studies by William Frey of the Brookings Institute, based on US Census data, predicting the tipping point of the US population becoming a “majority minority” population (i.e., with non-Hispanic whites making up less than 50% of the US population) beginning in the year 2045. The under-18-year-old cohort is projected to become majority-minority this year, and successive generations will follow (Frey, 2017). However, as noted by Fast Company writer Pavitra Mohan, “Despite this demographic shift, we’re nowhere close to a utopian post-racial society in which racial discrimination is a thing of the past” (Mohan, January 2020).

Baptista believes that creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce is not only the right thing to do but will help build better and more competitive companies. He adds that younger segments of the workforce in particular are highly observant of corporate responses to social issues; companies that do not demonstrate their commitment to respond to social issues will struggle with recruitment.

“Building a better FoW for all is challenging in that it seems very overwhelming and macro,” observes Baptista. “However, while no individual company can change or solve the situation, they can start somewhere.” He adds, “In an unprecedented time, corporations have the opportunity and responsibility to be leaders.” Effective leadership, says Baptista, leverages the

Section 3: The Future of Work: 5 Ways to Build Back Better

expertise of the workforce and prioritizes skill acquisition as well as innovation, emphasizing the importance of an agile workforce that can respond and adapt to rapid innovation and radical shifts of thinking. Additionally, he believes the way that companies think about education and on-the-job training will change dramatically as companies consider further how they can be more supportive of their workforce.

Samsung's Steel noted that their employees push for the company to be more active in CSI, and to be part of the solution. Frustrated with the ability of the government to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic, employees have asked for their companies to step in, e.g., by producing PPE, hand sanitizers, and more. He emphasized that this culture fostered by employers following through on their employees' passions is the key to building successful practices for the future.

Similarly, 1Huddle has followed the same approach by listening to their customers, waiving yearly fees for smaller organizations and gifting their platform to non-profits including the All Stars Project, Covenant House, and School Justice Project. Caucci says they take these actions primarily because they "believe in the work those organizations are doing." An important secondary benefit is in strengthening the larger community to grow the future base of customers and employees, in addition to building goodwill.

The four pillars of CSI — Strategic Philanthropy, Corporate Social Responsibility, Shared Value Creation, and Advocacy and Policy Change — have all come together to help the US and global population face the accelerated pace of change in the FoW in the era of COVID-19.

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"A 'good' company isn't just one that writes a check but is authentic in how it responds to a crisis, how it treats its employees, customers, and other partners when times are tough. It is authentic in its efforts to operate in a responsible manner and to have a positive impact on our world. This full picture of a company will not go away with COVID-19, but instead will stretch all 'good' companies to consider who they are and how they can be good corporate citizens...the work of having a positive social impact is never over, nor is our desire to do it."

-Sheila Gallucci-Davis, Subaru of America

root cause level impacting economic and environmental health and stability through integrated CSI practices.

“Despite the challenges the pandemic has presented to society at large, companies around the world have an opportunity to use their influence and power to build better alternative futures. Returning to the ‘old normal’ way of doing business will create significant problems and have negative economic implications.”

-Mateus Baptista, Panasonic

The New Workplace: Enabling Impact

Ensuring an infrastructure to promote employee health as well as employee engagement in a time of disconnect is key for a successful return to the office and the ongoing FoW. Facebook is experimenting with augmented reality and virtual reality as part of a new computing platform; likewise, Zaha Hadid Architects’ headquarters will be designed with motion sensors, facial recognition, and coffees that can be ordered using a phone so that the building is virtually contactless (Kretchmer, 2020).

From handshakes to hand sanitizers, offices will be transformed, shifting away from previous goals of promoting physically interconnected offices (Geller, 2020). Although open office spaces had been the trend in recent years — in many cases done to save money on constructing permanent office spaces, toward using more open space cubicles, and to encourage collaboration in more of an open environment — the current climate of social distancing may lead to a reversal of this trend, with the addition of more partitions (Kretchmer, 2020). While removing seating in conference rooms and keeping personal items at a minimum may seem too sterile, there are solutions to avoid employees feeling disconnected. While returning to the office is all about balancing safety with connectivity, the more ambitious firms are actually looking for ways to improve productivity as a result.

1. Supporting Employee Mental Health

Developing transformational infrastructure is paramount in a shift towards a more remote FoW. However, it is important to ensure a baseline of employee mental health in addition to enhancing personal and professional development. Cultures can also be improved through internal opportunity and communication, and a prime source of internal opportunity will come from corporate reskilling, discussed later in this section.

Samsung's Steel believes that remote work is not ideal for brainstorming, because you cannot read body language, and the rules of engaging digitally do not necessarily align with co-creation and ideation. There is a barrier, he says, in what individuals can and cannot achieve purely through "collaborative tools."

Steel envisions a future where employees go to work about three days a week, with the time spent in the office mainly for collaboration, and individualized work completed elsewhere. Returning to work will be a gradual process, he says, giving time for executives to continue reflecting on the positives and negatives of our current environment, and what really can and cannot be achieved through digital tools. This model would support mental health and collaboration.

MoCaFi CEO Coaxum says "The worst part of working remotely" — solely connecting via computer, in the world he calls "2-D" — "is that it is impossible to have a conversation and sit down with someone to understand their life." To help offset this, Coaxum and his team put together an HR goal-setting and praising tool as a way to take the place of interpersonal recognition that would normally have taken place, e.g., by taking someone out for coffee or for a drink to celebrate a job well done during pre-COVID times. The team members also have daily phone calls in place of informal conversations as a way of bringing back a sense of normalcy, as well as more frequent virtual town halls to maintain a sense of community.

2. Reskilling for the Long-term

Keeping the workforce current and future-oriented is an important role, given the disruptive impact of technology that is so pervasive — within the developments referred to earlier in this report as the Fourth Industrial Revolution or 4IR. Training will be necessary, and some long-held attitudes about how work is done may need to be disbanded. According to Luminary Labs, shifting demographics, along with the rise of technology and automation, are changing the way people work and learn (Holoubek, Hibbard, Ward, 2020). These shifts are putting more pressure on educational institutions to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow while simultaneously helping the current workforce reskill and retrain for the jobs of today. Baptista from Panasonic believes that the way companies think about education and on the job training will change dramatically as companies begin to think about how they can be supportive of their workforce.

Caucci of 1Huddle pointed out that “not so long ago, companies told us they were not interested in investing in mobile/remote training because of labor and union rules, and other beliefs; those were the same companies calling us in March, once the pandemic hit.” This example illustrates that companies are looking for ways to keep their employees connected while raising their skill or knowledge set through training. Caucci calls this Shared Responsibility, where everyone has “access to training to help people rise up or broaden laterally to follow their own dreams, while benefiting their employer by enhancing their skills and knowledge, positioning them to be even stronger team players.”

Some companies, such as Subaru, have already begun to think this way. Throughout this pandemic, they offered training and development opportunities for their employees to reassure them that while things were currently difficult, they were looking towards a positive future. They

also provided training around the use of computers with possible job creation as a result. Another example is Walmart who is using virtual reality headsets to train its U.S. employees in several areas including new technology, compliance, and soft skills such as empathy and customer service (Holoubek, Hibbard, Ward, 2020). Walmart is also investing \$100 million in its Retail Opportunity Initiative, awarding grants to nonprofits, government agencies, and educational institutions to help retail workers learn new skills (Holoubek, Hibbard, Ward, 2020).

In some companies, reskilling workers can lead to internal mobility. Providing such mobility can not only result in happier, more loyal employees, but also cut overhead, severance and recruitment costs that could be caused by layoffs and subsequent talent acquisition. Ultimately, actions taken by companies to help strengthen upward mobility is likely to lead to a more engaged and diverse management team that will trickle down to generations of employees.

In an ideal world people will be doing meaningful work that contributes back to society while getting paid a living wage in a way that is equitable. Compensating for impact instead of hours worked could transform the current model for compensation in many organizations.

3. Education for Tomorrow's Workforce

Recent trends find that companies deem interpersonal skills and teamwork as among the most critical curriculum areas for workplace readiness, with communication skills coming in as a close second (Jamrog, London, & Vickers, 2008). If the need for such soft skills is stated, yet the situation of the majority of students in the country finds them staring at their laptops under remote teaching as a result of COVID-19, what should be done? Companies can help by playing a larger role in the education system. A leadership role would go further than philanthropy alone, and even further than supplying laptops or tablets, although those are sorely needed in certain sectors.

Looking at all four pillars of CSI, including designing recruitment and training programs that provide shared impact, companies could provide more professional development opportunities such as externships and internships, so students can gain better insight into what working in an actual organization is like while developing soft and hard skills on the job. At the same time, businesses could embed “business experts in teacher-training teams, allowing teachers free access to professional development business courses” (Jamrog. et al., 2008).

Education partnerships were discussed by Jennifer Shin, Director of Community Affairs, at Audible. Pivoting to a virtual model to continue engagement with teachers and children in area schools, Audible remained mindful of privacy concerns and other sensitivities. Additionally, they made hundreds of titles of Audible Stories available free of charge to bring down barriers to access to families dealing with the challenging times in the era of COVID-19.

4. Sustainability and Environment

When companies and employees are in crisis mode, it is difficult to maintain a focus on sustainability, but it is likely that future crises such as climate-related events, nature-related events, or even a pandemic may happen again (Balch, 2020). Companies should recognize that there are multiple futures possible in this time of uncertainty, and as a result, they must identify alternative directions and actions (Aronson, 2020). The priority should not only be on economic recovery but on building back stronger for a sustainable future.

As we saw air quality satellite maps improve dramatically during COVID-19 quarantines, we were presented again with evidence that change is possible, and quickly. We also know that 70% of emerging infectious diseases come from animals; by exposing workers to them through environmental activities (e.g., logging, mining) we increase the potential spread of viruses like COVID-19.

Playing an active role in rebuilding communities goes hand in hand with environmental action. Pragmatic solutions include investments in renewable power and engaging policymakers in adopting a sustainable mindset. The success of a global economy comes from resiliency, a solutions-oriented mindset, and the prioritization of health.

Sustainability involves more than guarding nature; it is about shifting societal norms and creating value in going beyond restoration to regeneration. Coordination among corporations at regional, national, and international levels as well as funding streams across sectors are essential to avoid silos (Mehta, 2020). Increasing funding and government advocacy efforts toward nature-based climate solutions, clean power, clean mobility, zero-carbon infrastructure, and zero-carbon technologies can help ensure resilience toward future events (*Build Back Better — We Mean Business Coalition*, 2020). These efforts can help build a regenerative economy, i.e., “capturing more carbon than we emit, restoring biodiversity, and generating quality of life through just and inclusive measures” (Reid, 2020).

5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As important as innovative approaches are, diversity also fuels the culture that is needed for the future of work (Cognizant, 2018). Having a diverse culture ensures that corporations, employees, and other stakeholders with a range of backgrounds and experiences are better equipped to understand the unmet needs of a current market or society as a whole (Cognizant, 2018). Corporations can use the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to overhaul what they do and how.

For instance, one way is to use the inequities showcased by COVID-19 as a catalyst for hiring a more diverse employee base. Baptista from Panasonic highlighted that the growing demographics in the US have implications for the workforce and that the future of work is a workforce comprised of people of color. He believes that creating more inclusive and diverse

workforces will allow companies to thrive and remain competitive (Panasonic, 2020). PepsiCo has also committed to focusing on increasing their representation by expanding their Black managerial population by 30% by 2025 through internal development and recruitment and by increasing and accelerating partnerships and recruitment efforts with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (PepsiCo, 2020).

Beyond hiring initiatives, companies can introduce new measures for assessing how they can improve diversity and inclusion efforts within the practice of the CSI pillars. Are their Advocacy resources focused appropriately on diversity issues? Are their Philanthropy resources directed accordingly? Once initiatives are created, a scorecard can help them keep track of how successful their efforts are, as well as identify what still needs to be done to become even more diverse and inclusive.

Further, a scorecard can aid corporations in seeing how they can improve the diversity of their suppliers, even assisting their customers in doing the same. Other functions could also benefit: Coaxum from MoCaFi believes that there is an opportunity to focus on underprivileged businesses and underserved communities by bringing these groups of people into mainstream business practices (Coaxum, 2020). Likewise, PepsiCo, as part of its Black and Hispanic Racial Equity Initiatives, will be increasing the representation of Black and Hispanic-owned businesses. They plan on doubling their spending with Black-owned suppliers, expanding their supplier pipeline, building their supplier capability across a variety of areas, using their buying power to create more jobs for Black creators at their marketing agencies, and investing \$50 million over the next five years to strengthen local Black-owned businesses (PepsiCo, 2020).

Conclusion

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on human life around the globe, and as of this writing, presents continued uncertainty around the management of educational institutions and workplaces, and many other aspects of daily life as we know it.

In a world in which we have been grappling with the impact of climate change and disruptions to the FoW brought on by technological change, the pandemic has served to accelerate certain aspects of the technology disruption by moving a large swath of the workforce to remote work. This was seen as an indirect benefit by some, who sought more ways for work-life balance or sought remote work arrangements for other reasons, such as reducing the carbon footprint and time devoted to commuting to work.

Often left out of such benefits, however, have been essential workers, such as medical professionals treating COVID-19 patients and other patients on the front lines, and low-wage essential workers including home health care workers, and others, for whom essential aspects of their jobs cannot be performed remotely. The impact of COVID-19 has extended beyond the tragic loss of life, to job loss and businesses being shuttered, causing a major economic downturn which threatens to continue until a vaccine is administered, and/or treatments are discovered, tested and put in place.

Some have asked whether and when things will return to 'normal' — or, more likely, a 'new normal'. Businesses can play a major role in helping us not only meet the challenges of COVID-19, but by leveraging the tools of CSI to build back better.

Appendix 1

RICSI wishes to extend its appreciation to the following companies and their executives for generously sharing their time with us in being interviewed for this report.

1. Mateus Baptista, Deputy Director, Strategy and External Affairs, Panasonic Corporation of North America, July 24, 2020.
2. Sam Caucci, CEO and Founder, 1Huddle, Personal interview, July 29, 2020.
3. Wole Coaxum, CEO and Founder, Mobility Capital Finance (MoCaFi), Personal interview, July 24, 2020.
4. Sheila Gallucci-Davis, Vice President-General Counsel, Philanthropy & Corporate Responsibility, and Shira Haaz, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Subaru of America, Inc., email correspondence, Aug. 11, 2020.
5. Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, Chief Patient Officer, and Ken Gustavsen, Executive Director, Corporate Responsibility, Merck & Co. Inc., email correspondence, Aug. 6, 2020.
6. Jennifer Shin, Director of Community Affairs, and Kelly DelRosso, Senior Director of Design-People & Places, Audible, Inc., Personal interview, July 30, 2020.
7. David Steel, Executive Vice President and Head of Corporate Affairs, and Ann Woo, Senior Director, Corporate Citizenship, Samsung, Personal Interview, July 7, 2020.

Appendix 2: Authors

This report has been published by the Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI).

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