

Despite the Covid-19 Global Pandemic and the Perception of a Fragmented Economy, US Businesses Report Becoming Closer to Employees, Customers and Suppliers

HSBC's resilience survey reveals collaboration is becoming increasingly evident and important to businesses' survival

NEW YORK – [July 21, 2020] – Despite the current worldwide pandemic putting greater distance between businesses and their employees, customers, and supply chain partners, a significant majority of US businesses reported becoming closer to each of the three stakeholder groups, according to [HSBC's new 2020 survey](#) focused on resilience. More than four out of five (84%) US companies felt closer to their employees, nearly the same felt closer to their customers (80%), and more than three quarters (77%) reported closer relationships with their strategic and supply chain partners.

The new report polled more than 2,600 companies across 14 countries and territories and aims to measure the pulse of businesses as they adapt to the present challenges of COVID-19 and showcases their ability to survive and thrive through the pandemic

“The global COVID-19 pandemic has driven US businesses to redefine what it means to be resilient,” said Wyatt Crowell, US Head of Commercial Banking at HSBC. “Becoming closer with their employees and more collaborative across the industry with their partners will help corporate leaders prepare for the ‘next normal’ operating environment.”

COVID-19 also created an environment where collaboration is becoming increasingly evident and important to businesses' survival. About nine out of 10 businesses (88%) surveyed in US said that they have extended support to other businesses in the last six months and a similar proportion (91%) said that they received support from others. Half (51%) have shared information, premises or expertise with smaller businesses, while a third (33%) collaborated with other businesses to enable them to get their products to customers. Additionally, more than a third (35%) have relaxed payment terms for their smaller partners while 39% received better payment terms from their partners.

“As the world continues to grapple with the fallout from the pandemic, supporting customers, employees and their partners will become increasingly important for firms to survive,” added Crowell.

When businesses were asked about their longer term resiliency plans, key findings show:

- **Investing in technology will be critical:** More than half (53%) of the respondents say investing in technology is the biggest step they plan to take in the next five years. In addition, two-thirds (66%) of US businesses foresee virtual collaboration and conferencing tools becoming absorbed into standard ways of working.
- **The workforce is key:** Businesses see employee morale as the biggest barrier (41%) to building resilience over the next six months. Focusing on the workforce tied with investing in technology as a top priority for businesses over the next five years as they expect substantial changes in the ways of working.
- **Sustainability to power the recovery:** More than nine out of 10 (93%) businesses agreed that the need to reassess their operations will enable them to rebuild their business on firmer environmental foundations.

“With adoption of technology and changes in the ways of working, new norms will be established requiring innovative thinking and greater agility,” concluded Crowell. “In light of the large level of change and the impact this pandemic has had on employees, US businesses understand and identify improving employee morale as one of the top priorities to prepare for uncertainties in the next five years.”

Media enquiries to:

Oksana Poltavets

+1 212 525 8226

oksana.poltavets@us.hsbc.com

Note to editors:

HSBC Navigator

The Navigator survey is conducted on behalf of HSBC by Kantar. It is compiled from responses by decision-makers at 2,604 businesses, ranging from small and mid-market firms to large corporations, across a broad range of sectors. The respondents hold influence over their company’s strategic direction and represent a broad range of roles: including c-suite, finance, procurement, supply chain, sales and marketing. A total of 14 markets were surveyed between 28 April and 12 May 2020.

- Americas: Canada, Mexico, USA
- Asia Pacific: Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mainland China, Malaysia, Singapore
- Europe: France, Germany, UK
- MENA: UAE

Results have been weighted to be representative of each market’s international trade volume (World Trade Organization data for 2017-2018).

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