



# What The Future Looks Like:

**DATA & PERSPECTIVES ON  
THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**

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**JUNE 2020**

RESEARCH  
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## Welcome Letter from Planbox

**A**s a situation gets better, it also gets riskier. That's because in our ardent pursuit of profit and progress, we eventually succumb to a common pitfall in business that sees us become self-obsessed rather than customer-obsessed—all while underestimating competition, risks, and threats along the way. This is what unexpectedly happened in recent months, but it's also what we can now expect to happen to anyone, anywhere, and anytime from here on out. You've experienced it: Disruption, much like a virus, affects everyone and everything. But as always, every cloud has a silver lining, and business success lies not in our instructions to self-isolate, but rather in our capacity to collaboratively innovate, so we can get ahead of the competition, and the virus, without getting ahead of ourselves.

Ludwig Melik  
CEO, Planbox  
planbox.com





## No One Knows What the Future Will Hold, But There are Signals to Interpret

Uncertainty is one of the greatest challenges that individuals and organizations can face. As the COVID-19 crisis has upended our lives while continuing to pose more questions than answers, we are all becoming familiar with great uncertainty—with not knowing what might happen to us personally or professionally tomorrow, much less next week, next month, or when the fall arrives. We are certain that life has changed, however, and that there are likely to be pre-crisis activities we took for granted that may not resume for a while or ever.

At Innovation Leader, we were curious to understand how both our community and expert futurists think about our home and work lives pre- and post-crisis. As you read through the survey insights and expert viewpoints that follow, you'll see that the crisis is causing many individuals and organizations to reconsider what truly matters to them. Many have had to necessarily develop new behaviors that they now consider surprisingly rewarding. In some cases, the crisis is accelerating digital disruption already underway in how we work and how we play. In other cases, you'll see that many of us hope to soon resume activities that are important and valuable to us because of their physical or in-person dimensions.

Just how long we'll need to live with this level of uncertainty is uncertain itself. What we do know, however, is that we're all learning valuable lessons on how to be more resilient and agile. As change is a central theme within innovation, we're hopeful that many leaders and their organizations will emerge from the current crisis able to capitalize more confidently (and quickly) on new opportunities than ever before.

# About the Survey

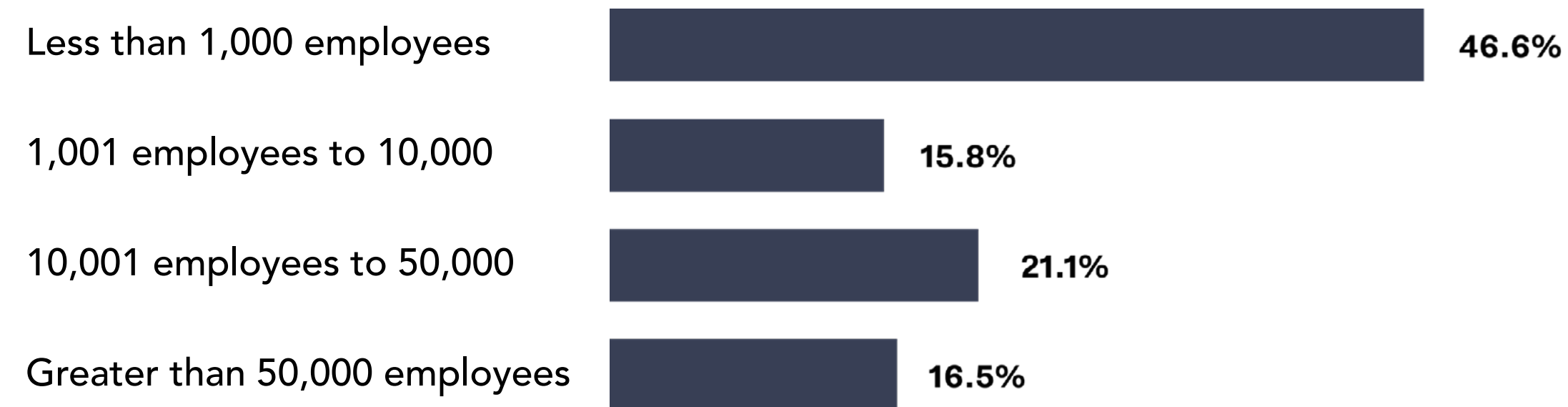
Fielded May 12—June 2, 2020

Designed by Innovation Leader and Planbox

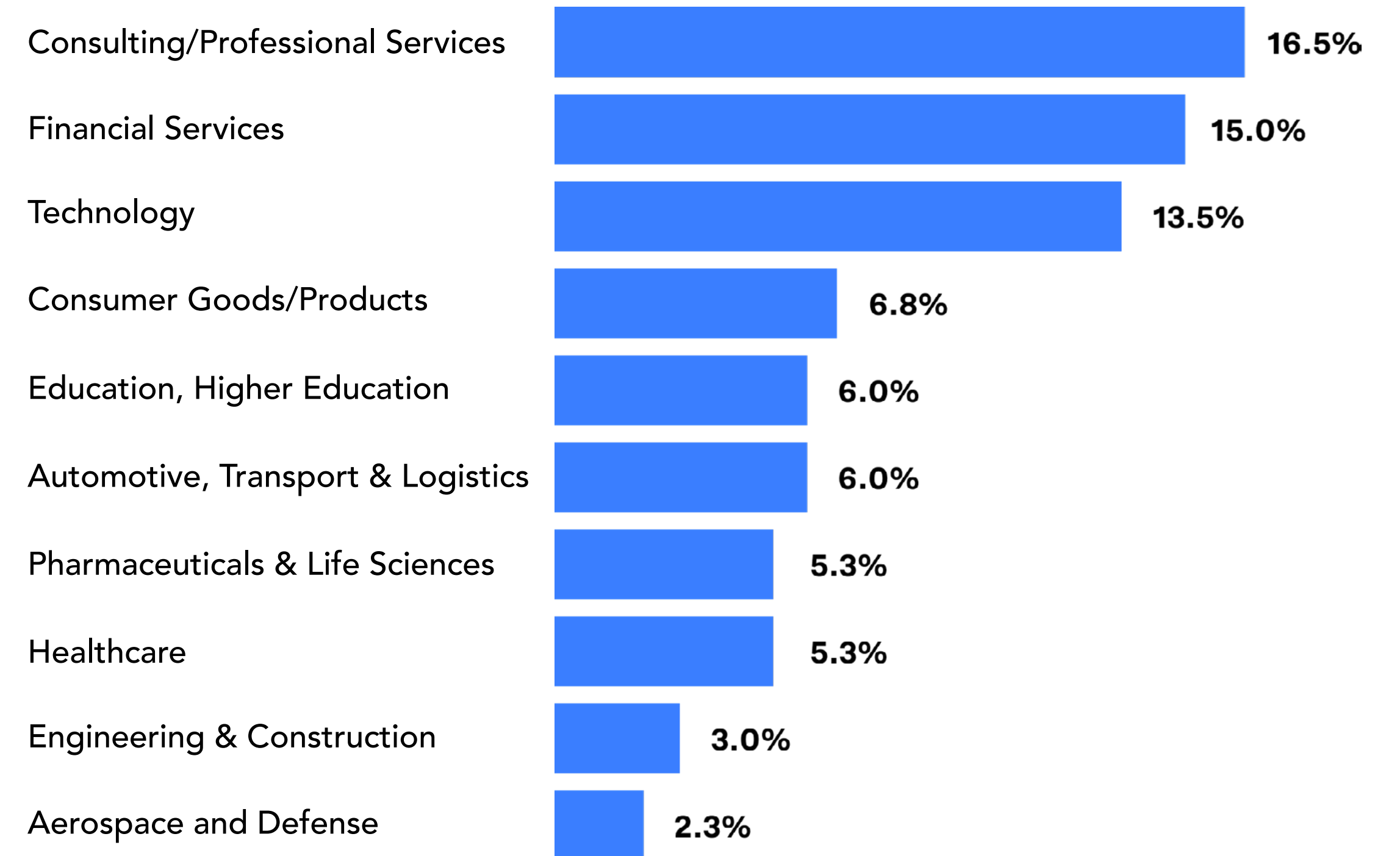
12 questions seeking qualitative and quantitative responses

133 respondents

## ORGANIZATIONAL SIZE REPRESENTATION



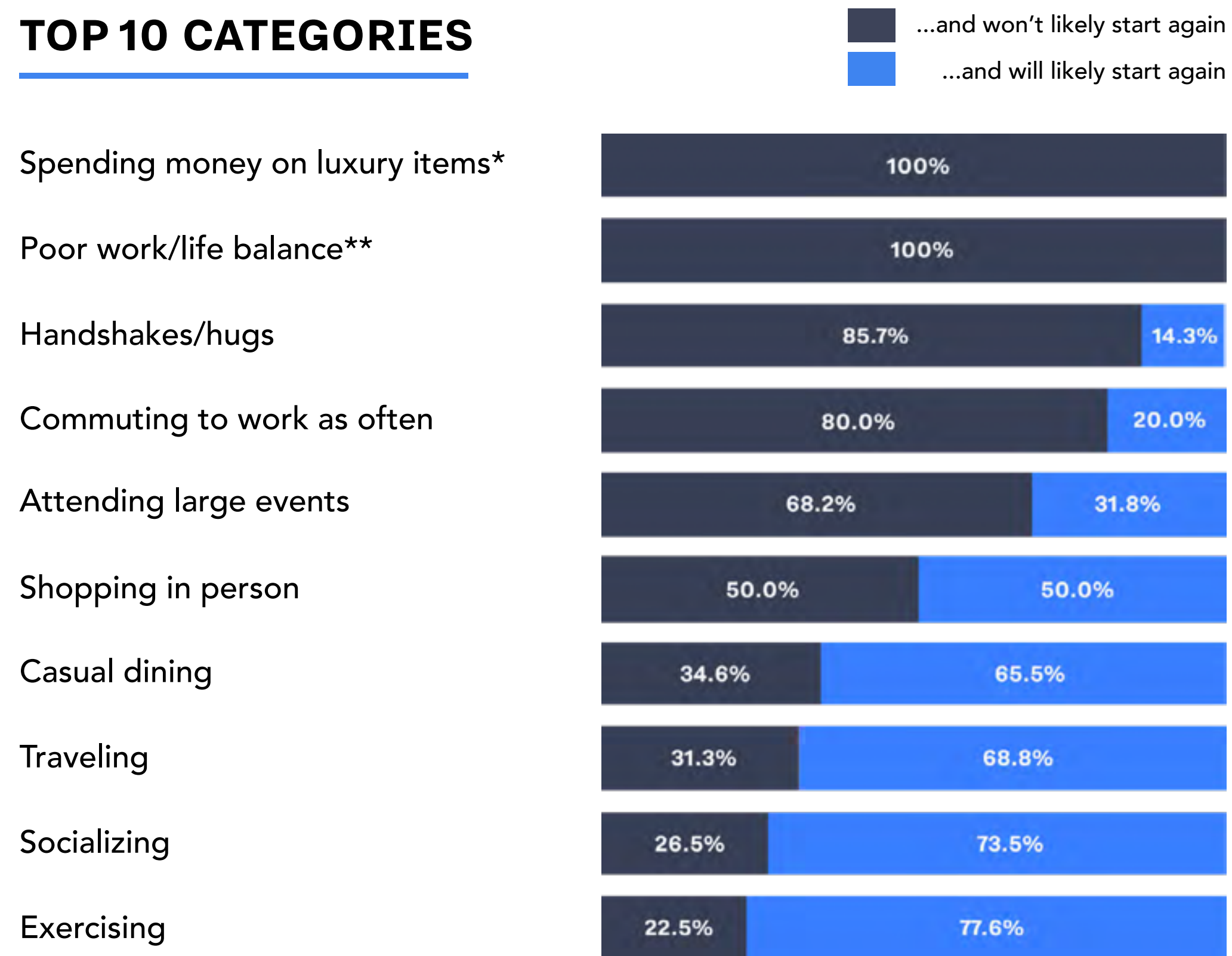
## TOP 10 INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION



# Personal Life: The Rise of Home Streaming, and the Death of the Gym?

**Q. What are some of the things you have stopped doing in your personal life because of the crisis...**

## TOP 10 CATEGORIES



\*N = 5

\*\*N = 6

## WHAT WE LEARNED...

- More than 50 percent of respondents said they were less likely to attend large events, commute to work, or connect through handshakes or hugs than they were before the crisis
- More than 65 percent of respondents plan to resume casual dining, traveling, meeting with friends, and exercising

## WHAT IT MEANS...

- Crisis causing many to rethink what truly matters; many respondents are seeking to spend more time with family
- Limited interest in resuming commuting, going out for entertainment, and shopping in person also reflects the growing value of disruptive solutions (though half do expect to resume shopping in the "real world")
- Reinforces the challenge facing aspiring digital disruptors, as they attempt to replicate human-centric experiences



## Viewpoint: How Videogames Create a Sense of Safety

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**Lauren Xandra**

Xandra is the Vice President of National Research Group, a global insights and strategy firm. National Research Group's clients include Google, Facebook, and Verizon.

### What have been the most successful platforms during the crisis and why?

Everyone talks about Zoom's 200 million users worldwide in April. Meanwhile, there's so much to be said about Fortnite's 350 million users, and over three billion hours of play time. It's the perfect backlash to the social media era, and how your identity is fixed there. [In Fortnite,] you can change who you want to be moment to moment. That gives people the freedom to experiment with identity.

When we ask people about their needs right now, they're very different from what they looked like pre-corona. We're in crisis mode... [The idea] that you need to feel productive and to feel safe is front-of-mind for everyone. More higher order needs, like to escape through entertainment, are lower.

But the most compelling experiences, like [the videogame] Animal Crossing, provide both, right? They're safe worlds you can return to, but they also offer a sense of productivity. You're achieving goals, you're building things, you're connecting with people you care about. [That's part of a] trend away from binge-watching and just wasting time.

## Personal Life: In Respondents' Own Words...

### I'M NOT LIKELY TO RESUME...

"Spending time with friends I did not really care for."

"[In the medium term, it] will be a while before I do mass events like concerts and sporting events."

"Randomly touching people, removing a hair, fuzz, etc..."

"Hugging those who are not close family/friends."

"Going to the office. I have the ability to work from home but always felt guilty about it. Now I feel no guilt, and I'm not going back."

"Ignoring coughing or sick symptoms from others in public."

"Going into the office when I have a common cold; it's now easier to work from home."

"Too much time spent on work."

"Going to the gym daily."

"Haircuts at barber (my spouse turns out to be awesome at it!)"

### I WILL LIKELY RESUME...

"Eating at restaurants—but not until there's better treatment, a vaccine, or herd immunity ."

"Expanding my network over coffee and lunch."

"Hanging out with the people who mean the most to me."

"Seeing [my closest] friends."

"Traveling for leisure (not sure yet about for work)."

"[Taking] vacations/trips away—maybe road trips initially."

"Visiting museums or other events that allow for smaller crowds."





## Viewpoint: On Travel and Living Downtown

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### Stephan Chase

Chase is a futurist and the founder of Chase Intel. Prior to starting his own consultancy, Chase spent 20 years at Marriott International.

### Which industries will be most impacted?

Travel is going to be impacted for quite a while, more on the business side than on the personal travel side. I've been through a number of different downturns when I worked for Marriott International. It could very well be that business travel stays away for longer than it has in the past, because earnings are going to be compromised [and] chief financial officers are going to be looking at travel budgets. If [COVID-19 disappears from] the headlines and people don't know a lot of other people getting sick, I suspect people will get back to their prior patterns faster than a lot of people think.

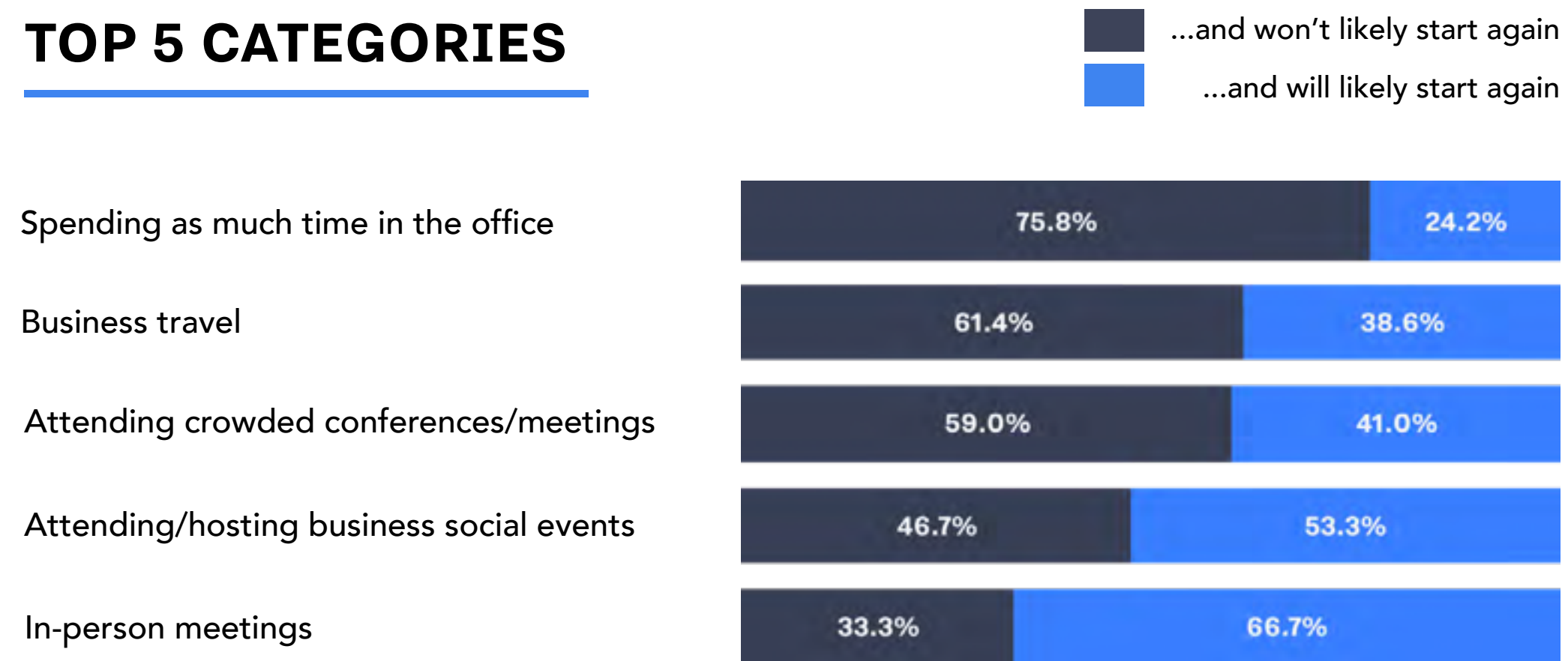
Another potential downturn is living downtown. The downtown was already in danger, because you have a lot of people moving out and a much smaller generation taking its place. But now you've got a fear of disease. The worker [also] has the option of working from home. Unless corporations are seeing some drop in productivity, it's really going to be hard to resist a desire on the part of the workforce to spend less time on the road and more time working from home. The owners of downtown office properties could be in for a tough ride for the next three years or so.



# Work Life: The Enduring Importance of Face-to-Face Interaction

**Q. What are some of the things you have stopped doing in your professional life because of the crisis...**

## TOP 5 CATEGORIES



## WHAT WE LEARNED...

- More than 50 percent of respondents are less likely to spend as much time in the office, traveling for business, or attending large events than they were before the crisis
- Most respondents do plan to resume business social event participation and in-person meetings

## WHAT IT MEANS...

- Shifting work/life priorities and the now well-recognized quality of digital solutions are the main drivers behind a decreased desire to spend time in the office or traveling
- While some respondents continue to see value in attending large conferences for networking and physical access to products, virus concerns are top of mind for most
- Individual or small group face-to-face contact for relationship and trust-building is still preferred by most, and likely to resume over time

## Work Life: In Respondents' Own Words...

### I WON'T LIKELY RESUME...

"Attending large-scale conferences."

"Setting up meetings for everything; often email/text is better."

"Holding physical meetings in small meeting rooms for longer than 30 minutes."

"Pursuing solutions to undefined (or non-existent) problems."

"Catching a flight for a single meeting."

"Heavy business travel; will move to essential only."

"Going into the office for optics."

"We stopped an assumption that you need to be in the office to be collaborative."

"Requirement that people always work from the office."

### I WILL LIKELY RESUME...

"Going to key conferences/shows where physically seeing stuff is important."

"Having coffee or lunch with colleagues to informally exchange ideas."

"Insisting on well-defined problems and clear priorities."

"Assuming there is a vaccine, [everything]."

"In-person meetings for important and ambiguous work."

"Carving out time for learning (reading, webinars)."

"Putting agendas together with action steps on Zoom."

"Everything—we will go back to normal."

"Working out of coffee shops and co-working spaces for a change of scenery."





# Viewpoint: The Emergence of the Chief Health Officer?

**What are some of the ways you think our work lives will change?**

## **Commute Time/Cognitive Dividend**

There will be a permanent decline in the number of middle-aged folks who regularly [work in the office] 9-to-5, 5 days a week. This has benefits. No commute cost (~\$10k per year), no commute time (~120 minutes per day), no “dress up” time (~30 minutes per day).

## **Collaborative Pods**

The pandemic has not changed human nature. Six million years of evolution can't be rewired in two months. People need to be [physically] together to co-create, to build deep relationships and trust, to fully understand one another. There will continue to be magic [in the in-person] interactions of certain individuals.

## **Health Surveillance**

When workers are required to actually “go to work” physically, their health [e.g., temperature] and health practices [e.g., how far away they stay from one another and whether they wear a mask or not] will be monitored... Large organizations will create a CHO/CSO [Chief Health Officer/Chief Safety Officer].



**Thornton May**

May is the founder of the Digital Value Institute, a think tank that focuses on business transformation and innovation. He is also executive director of the IT Leadership Academy.

## Work Life: What are Some of the Things Keeping You Up at Night?

"My strategic plan included the hiring of three people on my team during Q1/Q2. These positions have been cut, as have other positions at the company, putting greater strain on everyone." —Automotive, Transport & Logistics

"The very real and sensible focus on 100 percent core business operations and the further marginalization of innovation." —Consulting/ Professional Services

"Diminished level of team dynamics due to the emergence of disruptive individuals in the team. The team is now even further from becoming a high-performing team." —Consumer Goods/Consumer Product

"Being able to safely transition people back to the work environment without adequate testing/tracing and/or a vaccine. The recovery period for the economy." —Financial Services

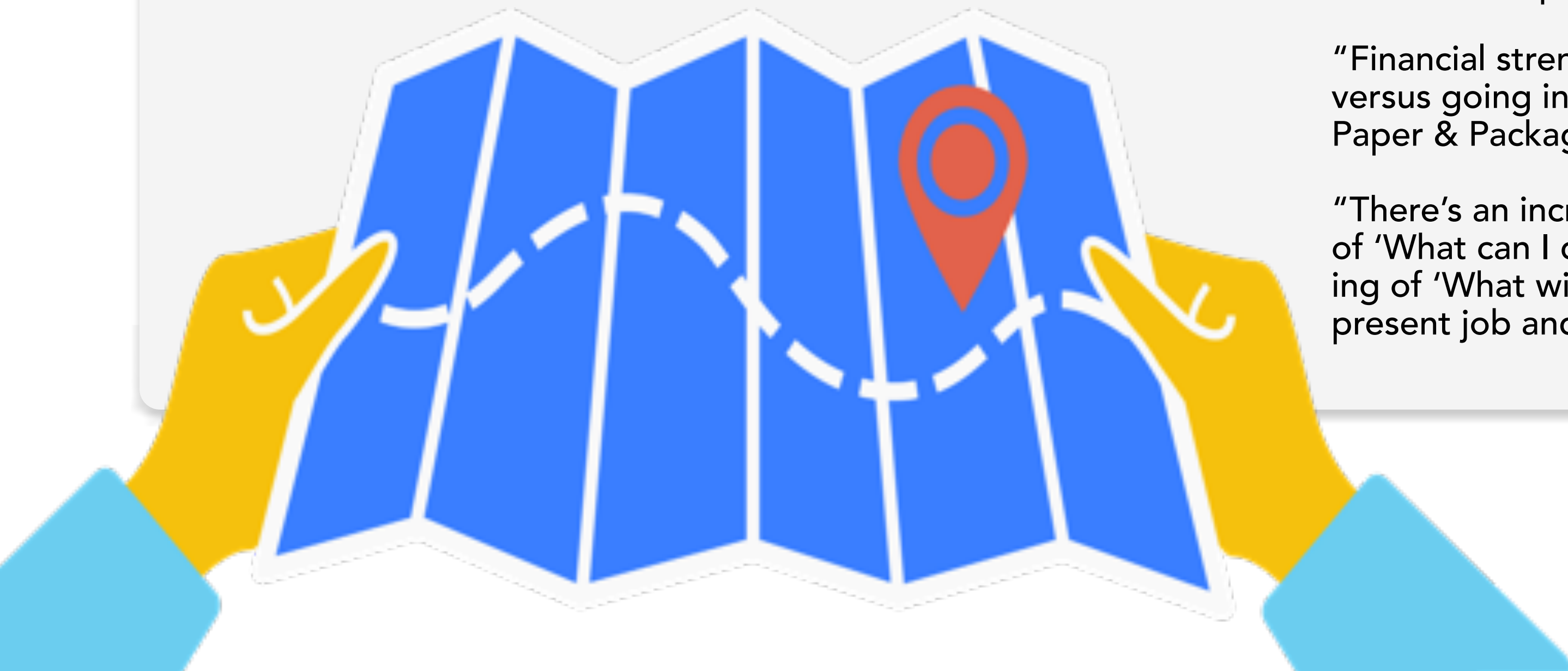
"Managing life and work balance. It's much more challenging due to increased family demands with kids at home. Also less motivated at work, due to great anxiety about the future. My job seems less relevant in the grand scheme of things." —Financial Services

"Career advancement when in-person networking and engagement are so critical to achieve this in our culture." —Healthcare

"Where is the future trend that will disrupt my current product roadmap? Can I see it, can I plan for it?" —Engineering & Construction

"Financial strength of the company to keep moving ahead with innovation, versus going into our shell and waiting for the future to get better." —Forest, Paper & Packaging

"There's an increased uncertainty of what should I do to keep my job...Ideas of 'What can I do to sustain myself as an entrepreneur (if necessary)?' Thinking of 'What will I do with my son once I need to (physically) go back to my present job and there's no kindergarten available?'" —Technology





## Viewpoint: If You Were Bored During This Pandemic...

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**Juan Enriquez**

Enriquez is the Managing Director of the venture capital fund Excel Venture Management, which invests in entrepreneurial life science companies and big data platforms.

### **Is there anything that you think will snap back?**

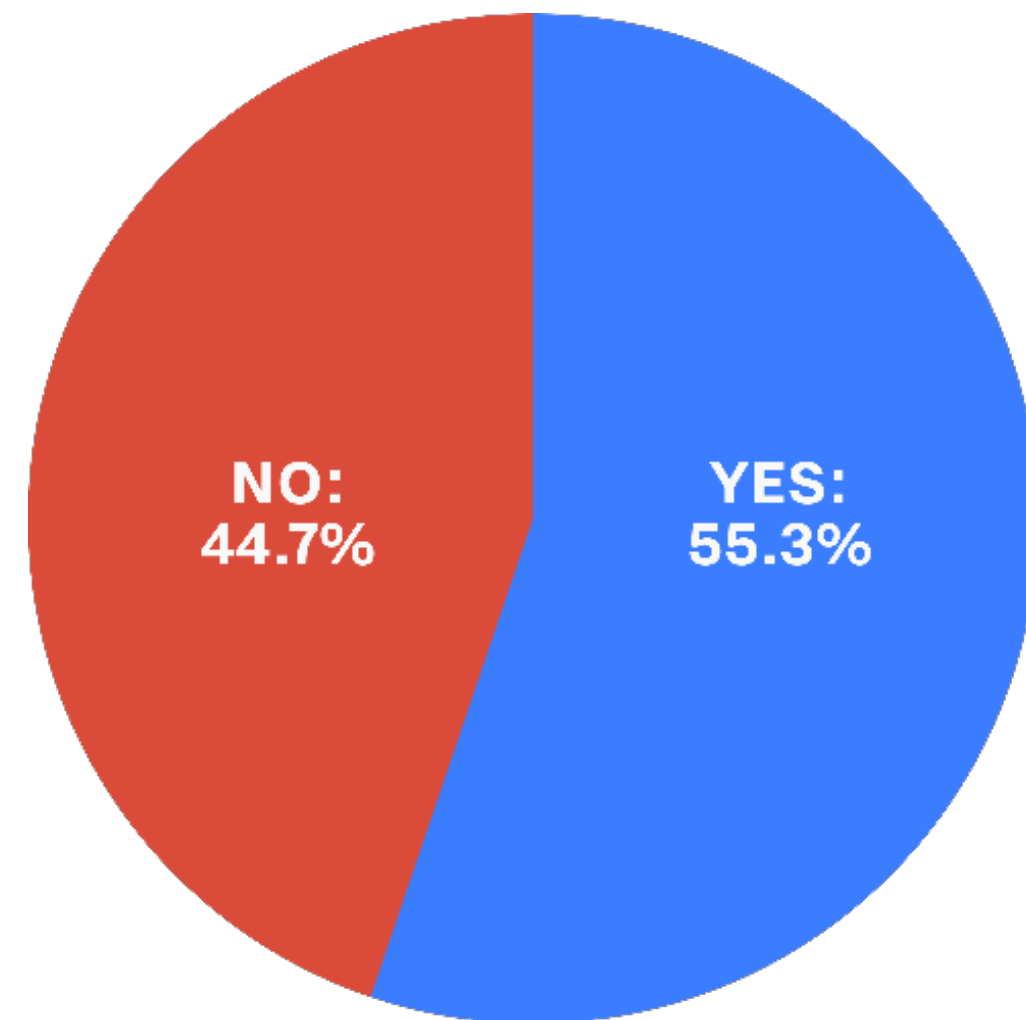
It would be really harmful to the United States' long-term competitiveness if we come out of this and say, "We'll go back to the way it was." When you look at... the average salary of hospital CEOs [and] of pharma CEOs, it was a system that was making a lot of people a lot of money, and not delivering the value to the consumer.

### **What advice do you have for innovators?**

I think it is incredibly important that you focus on where people have been more productive. There's a whole sector of people who have never worked as hard in their lives... [They have become] hyper-productive and hyper-focused, because everybody showed up to meetings, and everybody showed up on time. You didn't have meetings that you didn't need to do, and you didn't spend a lot of time on niceties. It was just focus. Any person who says they were bored during this pandemic is not part of the innovation economy. Anybody who tells you, "I've been working as hard as I've ever worked"—that's where the innovation economy is happening.

# Many Companies Feel Scenario Planning—and Quick Action—Paid Off

**Q. Did your organization adequately plan for this crisis?**



Note: Some respondents who were satisfied that their organization had planned well seemed to be primarily referencing a nimble response to the crisis.

## INADEQUATE PLANNING...

“Too busy dealing with the day-to-day. It’s very hard to set aside time for this kind of just-in-case planning.” —Consulting/Professional Services

“We thought climate change was going to be the black swan in five years.” —Consulting/Professional Services

“It was unexpected. Since it hit, planning has been strong, but planning [for] it to happen at all was poor.” —Consumer Goods/Consumer Products

“Planning for almost everything has been a long-term struggle. We are very reactive.” —Energy & Utilities

“While we had business continuity plans in place that needed to be just slightly altered for the specifics of COVID, the plans weren’t necessarily the most effective to combat the current circumstances.” —Not-for-profit

## ADEQUATE PLANNING...

“We did scenario planning a few years ago, and one of the scenarios we activated against was a global pandemic. That has come in handy!” —Consumer Goods/Consumer Products

“[We] were paying attention to travel plans early in February; we took quick action on the technology front.” —Consulting/Professional Services

“[We] designed [our] product for multiple scenarios—omni-channel, easy delivery/installation, multimodal, inventory.” —Consumer Goods/Consumer Products

“We are all [already] able to work remotely.” —Healthcare



## Viewpoint: Making Core Bets and Side Bets

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**Matt Ranen**

Ranen is a scenario planning and strategy consultant. He has 11 years of experience in product management and new product development in technology and media companies.

### How should the crisis inform corporate scenario planning going forward?

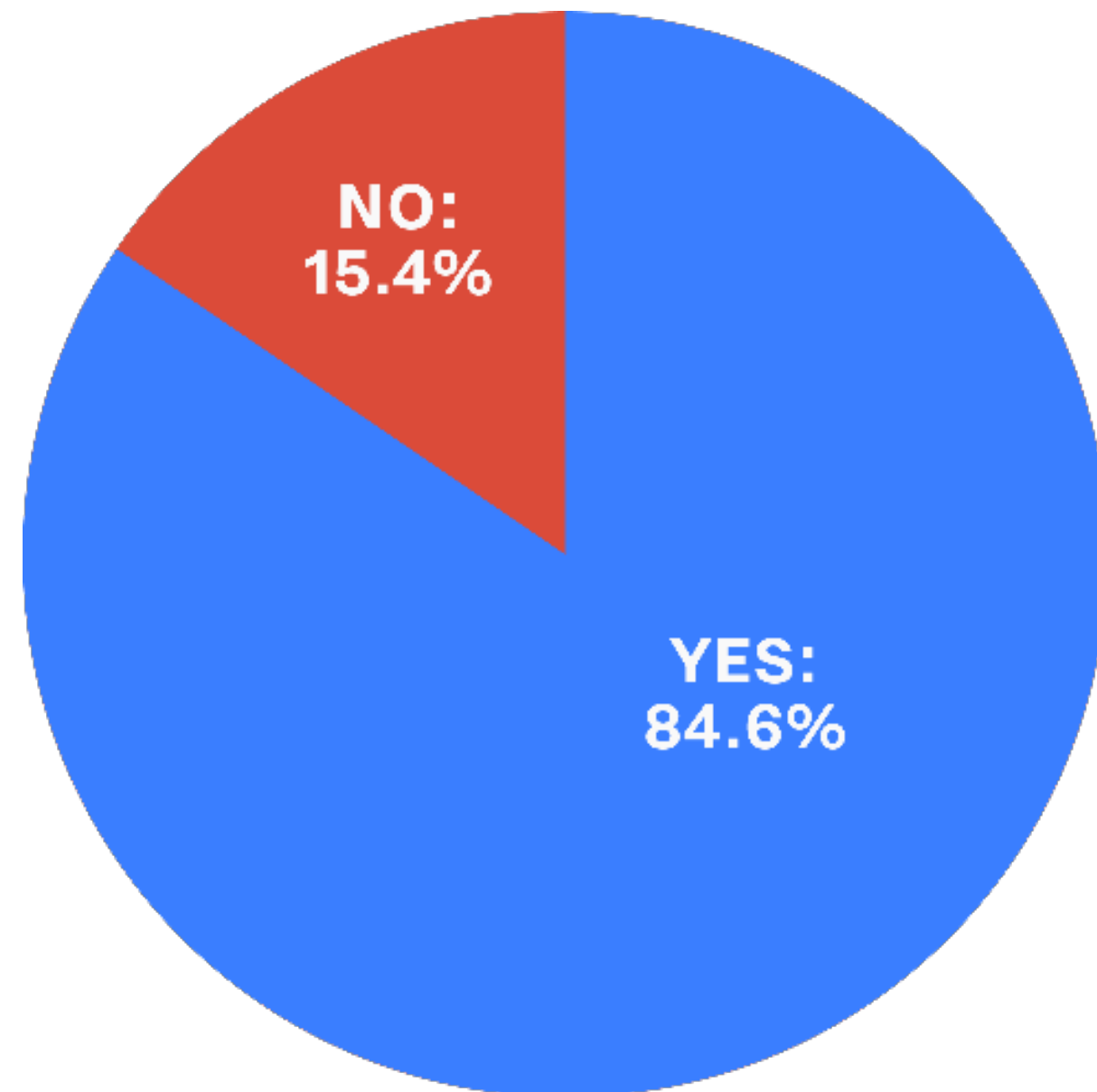
Strategy and innovation is a portfolio of bets about the future. If you're a big company, you should always have multiple bets going on at once. A startup has to bet the farm that there's going to be a particular future. Most big companies take a core and a side bet mentality that then helps determine their innovation strategy.

For example, side bets could be, "We need to be doing a little bit more in security," or "We should be thinking about multi-nationals, not global company structures, so let's start contingency planning around that." Another could be a risk-averse side bet, such as "Maybe we could find a joint venture partner to spread the risk and still play..." instead of completely pulling the plug on something.

Over time, you need to have a regular process to monitor and adjust those bets. There should never be a permanence to those bets. They should be constantly fluid and adjusted every few months.

## Positive Impacts on Future Scenario Planning

**Q. Will the lessons learned from the current crisis positively reshape your organization's scenario planning activities going forward?**



### YES...

"Made us more aware of virtual tool capabilities and good practices." —Consulting/Professional Services

"The changes we make today to respond to this crisis are applicable to other sources of change. Overall, we will come out of this with more resiliency and flexibility." —Consulting/Professional Services

"I hope so, however it all depends on the politics in upper management and their appetite for unprecedented change." —Consumer Goods/Consumer Products

"It is important to be divergent in the scenarios, then double down on the ones that are probable AND impactful. Having a process and applying it is critical." —Consumer Goods/Consumer Products

### NO...

"We are not a learning organization." —Energy & Utilities

"This feels like a once-in-a-century event; it's hard to plan for those." —Technology



## Viewpoint: Don't Bounce Back, Bounce Forward

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### Dennis Smith

Smith is an Innovation Integration Manager at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. In his role, he leads the lab-wide Innovation Academy.

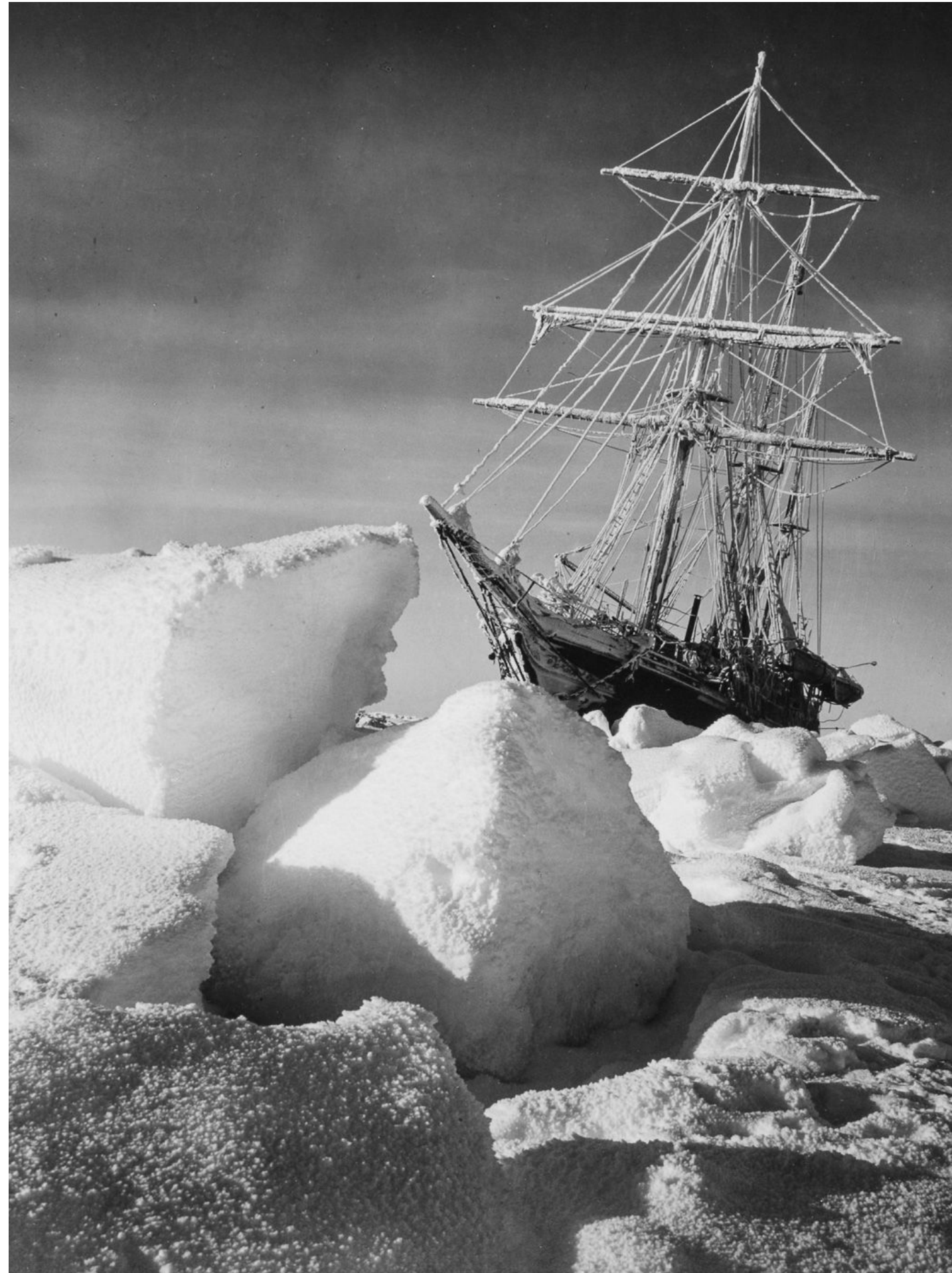
### What do you mean when you say that organizations shouldn't fall prey to 'bounce back' thinking?

There is a strong pull to “return to normalcy,” which is in line with “bounce back” thinking. This is expected behavior and a traditional mindset, as a natural inclination is to steer towards habituation—find the way things “are” and stay there. Innovative organizations should consider how they not only let go of the past—in hindsight, nostalgia can taint your view and memory—but how they see this as an opportunity to make a transformative leap forward, or “bounce forward.”

Become the organization, in practice, tactics, or strategy, that you aspire to be. [To use the] example of curbside pick-up—this may appear to be an incremental change to business. But it can also be considered as a way to leap past recent barriers, an entirely new way to engage customers. Meet them where they really live and desire to be—with the speed of online retail, but in accord with “living and shopping” in their community. Increased foot traffic in your store isn't the only way to build a profitable organization.



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The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, considered to be the last major expedition of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration in the early 20th century, came to a sudden end just two months after it began. The ship was icebound and what followed was a harrowing tale of survival. For many businesses, 2020 started the same way with the perfect conditions to reach great new heights. In our wildest imaginations, no one would have predicted such a scenario happening, and even less so the best environment to try new things and make ambitious and grandiose plans.

Innovators understand that changing market dynamics, customer needs, and technological transformation requires them to journey into the unknown, imagine different possible futures, and discover a different world by seeing around the corners and looking for what lies ahead.

**Read the full article from Planbox.**  
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