

Beyond Corona: Workplace trends 2021



Stef Kaiser explores how the wider business world has responded to the pandemic to identify potential lessons for employers in the forestry sector.

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Business leaders across the globe have reflected on how fast-tracked crisis adaptations will affect the way we think of our workplaces in the long-term. Some believe that 2020 has taught us to be more open-minded to change in general, and to say “yes we can” to innovation and growth. Experts at tech company Konica Minolta predict that while 2020 was a year for finding solutions, 2021 will be the year for following these up with strategic approaches that address the new post-corona work reality.*

The forestry and timber industries are an essential supply chain and have only a moderate proportion of office workers; as a sector, it has therefore been significantly less affected by Covid-19 restrictions than industries that are still effectively shut down – tourism, entertainment or hospitality – or office-based industries that had to move their entire workforce to home-working. However, with even parts of our workforce in home-offices, intermittent childcare provision for non-key workers and social distancing requirements, many businesses in our industry will have made some adjustments to the way they work – whether it be dealing with home-working or vulnerable staff, fur-

loughed workers, or having to communicate with clients, suppliers and other stakeholders virtually, rather than in person.

Innovative muscle

Looking at the economy in general, 2020 has shown that businesses and individuals have the innovative muscle to adapt fast if an emergency requires it. But after a year of never-ending restrictions, it is unlikely that post-corona, life in all its aspects will go back to how it was before. Outside of the forestry and timber industries, business leaders and think tanks are analysing the lessons learned from the pandemic, and how they are shaping what is called a ‘new normal’ – in particular in the workplace. In many aspects of work life, a return to pre-corona normality is the most desirable path to take – the possibility of returning to the office, or face-to-face business meetings on site; but in other aspects, our adaptive response to 2020 might have shown a potential to re-evaluate our processes and find better, more efficient ways of doing things.

* <https://newsroom.konicaminolta.eu/what-will-shape-the-digital-workplace-in-2021/>

The reality of reduced

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Although it is jokingly said that people become foresters because trees are easier to deal with than humans, our sector still thrives on strong human relationships with the people we work with. Luckily, many of us are still able to continue our operations almost as usual, but everyone will have noticed a significant reduction in personal contact with team members, clients, suppliers – and wider family. Businesses with office-based staff will now have staff working from home, and all meetings, events or shows have been cancelled for almost a year now.

If restrictions come and go, companies and individuals may need to be prepared to understand and adapt to part-virtual working.

Virtual events?

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