

Prepare your business for the new lifestyles of the future

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Modern societies are at a turning point where powerful lifestyle shifts are reshaping the ways in which we move, consume, work, learn, socialise and protect ourselves. In the next version of society, new lifestyles that combine technology in novel ways across the digital, physical and biological realms will become more prevalent.



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Covid-19 has accelerated these lifestyle shifts, putting the role of businesses into the spotlight. But how can businesses use the present moment as an opportunity to create a thriving future for our societies?

Accenture has conducted a study across 14 countries, that seeks to inspire business leaders to prepare for a future where individual lifestyle choices are shaped by new and potentially long-lasting shifts in attitudes and technologies. These shifts are as follows:

1. The state of health influences where we can travel

While the “great travel depression” is dominating the headlines, restrictions will not curb the desire for adventure and exploration in the years to come. They will however change the experience of travelling. An increased focus on public health will likely give rise to digital health passports, but before such a solution becomes a reality in our societies, significant investment is required to accelerate the implementation of digital health records, and to resolve cybersecurity and personal data protection issues. Technology companies will continue to play an important role in helping government agencies to resolve these challenges.

Organisations must get ready to put care-centric innovation at the heart of their future offerings. Improved and broad

access to health services will be expected, which will require the development of more affordable, easily accessible and digitally secure health management products and services. Funding into new areas such as disease diagnosis, healthcare plans, medical facilities services, medical information and alternative medicine has already grown at a CAGR of 69% between 2014 and 2019. With proactive “wellness care” in the spotlight, businesses outside of the traditional healthcare sector have an opportunity to create new self-care services using technology.

2. Environmental concerns drive new modes of transport

In the early stages of the 2020 pandemic, air pollution in every major city dropped dramatically as traffic subsided. Many witnessed for the first time the direct impact our collective transportation choices had on the environment. The rise of micromobility is accelerating and expected to help alleviate traffic congestion.

In the next decade, low touch micro-vehicles, such as rentable bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters, will become increasingly attractive for urban commuters, as they are cheaper and time-saving alternatives to other modes of transport. We envisage a future where daily commuters will switch to new, more environmentally friendly personal transportation options.

There are already positive signs that businesses and governments are coming together to design a future that encourages different modes of personal transportation, while also looking after the environment.

For example, hyperlocal urban designs such as the “15-minute city²⁰” are on the rise, including in major global cities such as Paris and Melbourne, where the key needs of every resident can be met within 15-minutes of their home. Businesses need to play a prominent role by making new personal mobility solutions more accessible beyond large cities, inclusive and cybersecure in the future. Leaders will be those that push the imaginative boundaries of what mobility will look like decades from now, and make progressive investments in environmentally-friendly solutions.

3. Affordable tech increases economic self-sufficiency

Our findings highlighted that youth unemployment remains high in most countries – 35.5 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 were seeking jobs unsuccessfully in 2019. Even for young people who are employed, personal income is declining. Many young people are living precarious existences, and their prospects have only been worsened by the crisis. Thus, new employment and income generating alternatives for young people will be sought after in the coming years.

Over the last two decades, the gig economy has created many opportunities. As younger, digital-savvy micro-entrepreneurs become more active in the workforce and the economy, how can large, established companies help them to get ahead? To appeal to the future workforce of microentrepreneurs, established companies will need to offer more varied work and create a stickier organisational identification and fundamentally rethink their talent strategy to gain access to a more dynamic and diverse talent pool.

This will also require a new social contract that enables flexible working arrangements, and one that benefits both businesses and workers. Leading companies are going even further, by rethinking their role and measuring their impact on indirect job creation in the society at large.

4. Smarter habitats inspire more connected living

High density urban areas demand for “smarter habitats”. These technology-enabled residential neighbourhoods are designed to offer more vibrant, versatile and sustainable living spaces. Workforce migration is expected to intensify demand for more connected living, both within megacities and in smaller cities. Smarter habitats can take different forms. They could be physical communal spaces that can be flexibly configured to meet their occupants’ needs, such as on-demand working, or wellness spaces within apartment buildings, or even vertical urban farm spaces.

Beyond the responsible handling of data, key enablers of smarter habitats such as a hyper-connected 5G network, internet of things and renewable energy infrastructure, will be integral to the commercial and residential estate designs of the future. There are many opportunities for businesses to not only inspire the imagination, but also encourage urban residents to experience the future benefits of living in smarter habitats. Smart city visionaries must find the right model for use and protection of people’s personal information.

5. Responsible denizens fuel stronger local economies

Closed borders and country lockdowns during the 2020 crisis caused mass disruptions to global supply chains. Food security became a concern for citizens around the world. The reality, however, is that not everybody can grow their own fruits and vegetables. We envisage that future denizens will pay closer attention to resource scarcity and the impacts that their spending habits have on local communities. They will demand greater transparency from suppliers, especially when it comes to the origin of goods.

While many responsible denizens will prefer to spend on goods from local suppliers over imported goods, this is not the end of global supply chains. Rather, it is the beginning of a new balance. Businesses need to respond by significantly improving supply chain transparency and resilience, and by doubling down on business models that are responsible by design. As a result, many companies will need to reassess their brands, to ensure they can meet the new transparency and responsibility demands.

At Accenture, we believe that a thriving future for our society will be one where human progress and environmental sustainability are prioritised alongside economic growth. The role of business will be in creating the right conditions by harnessing human ingenuity and today’s technologies – from Artificial Intelligence, to Internet of Things to Blockchain – so that more people across our societies can gain access to and enjoy the emerging lifestyles. Converting such technology-enabled lifestyles into the new norm will be up to the early adopters, as well as visionary businesses who act early.

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