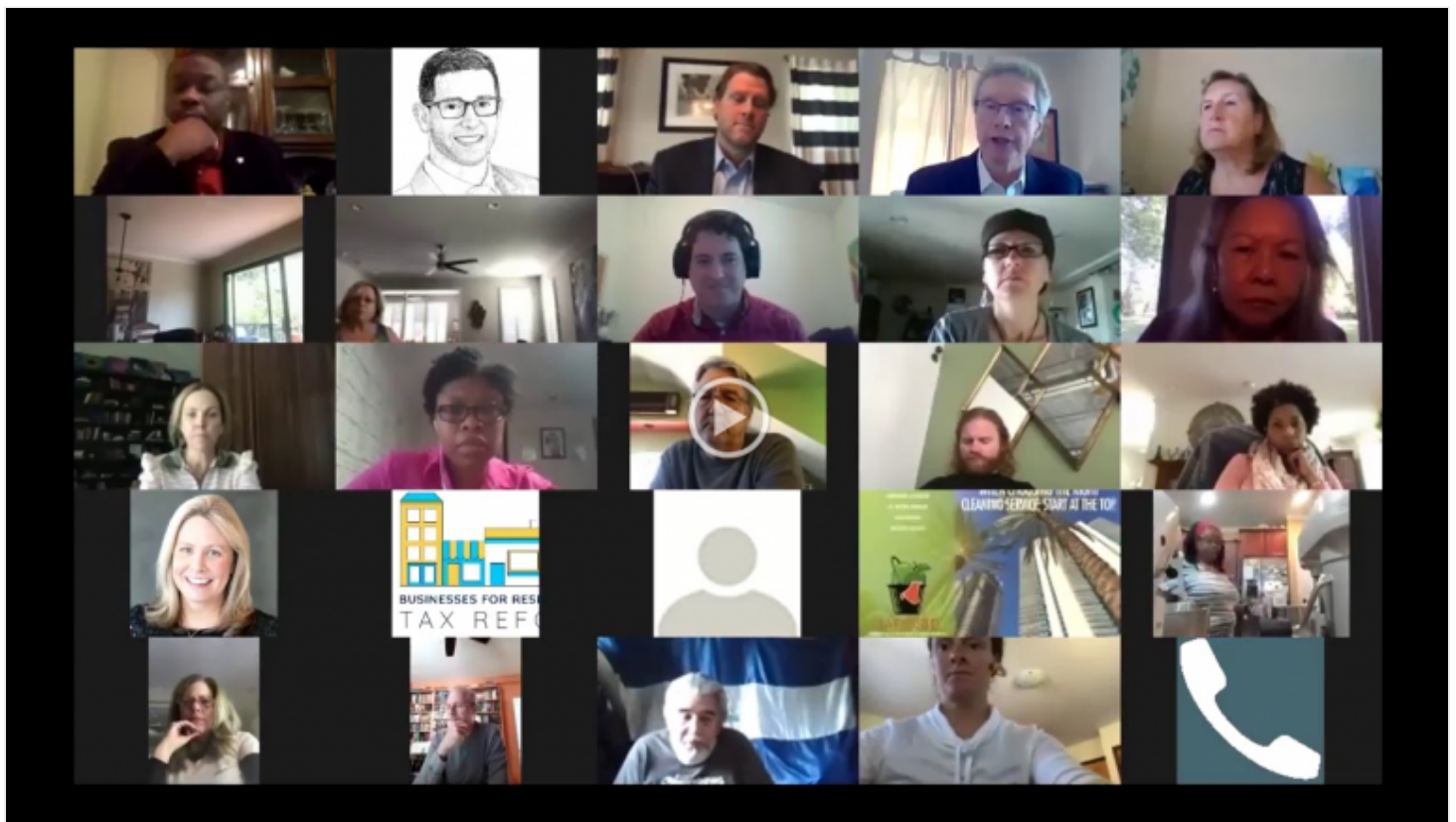


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12 months are safety of employees and customers (33 percent), uncertainty over stay-at-home restrictions (29 percent) and customer demand/ability to...

Sep. 24, 2020



Companies are planning on retaining remote work options to a greater degree than they did pre-pandemic once workplace restrictions ease, the third-quarter AICPA Economic Outlook Survey found. The survey polls chief executive officers, chief financial officers, controllers and other certified public accountants in U.S. companies who hold executive and senior management accounting roles.

**Topline results** of the survey were released Sept. 3 but business executives were also asked supplemental questions about their workplace plans for the next 12 months. Half said they plan to return principally or entirely to traditional onsite operations,

provided restrictions are eased or not in place. (Another 15 percent said remote work

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executives (77 percent) said they expected no change to their brick-and-mortar office footprint over the next 12 months. Some 18 percent said they expected some consolidation, with five percent saying they planned to give up 50 percent or more of their space. Five percent said their companies plan to increase space.

“Many companies were forced abruptly into remote work situations by the pandemic and performed surprisingly well,” said Ash Noah, CPA, CGMA, managing director of CGMA learning, education and development for the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants. “The crisis accelerated the virtual teams and remote trends already underway. We will see businesses being more flexible in their approach and adopting a hybrid operating model that will become more commonplace over the next few years.”

The greatest pandemic-related concerns that business executives cited for the next 12 months are safety of employees and customers (33 percent), uncertainty over stay-at-home restrictions (29 percent) and customer demand/ability to pay (22 percent), the survey found. Only two percent listed liability concerns as their greatest worry.

To address safety, most companies plan to mandate masks in the workplace (74 percent), provide socially distanced workspaces (71 percent), provide personal protection equipment (64 percent) and screen workers (52 percent). (NOTE: See attached chart for full list)

“Other” responses for this question included:

- Split our employees into pods that do not physically interact
- Significant signage to promote safety and distancing
- Restricting access to outside vendors/customers to essential interactions
- Discontinued vending services/coffee and water fountains
- Implement paperless transactions

- [More virtual sales tools](#)

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