

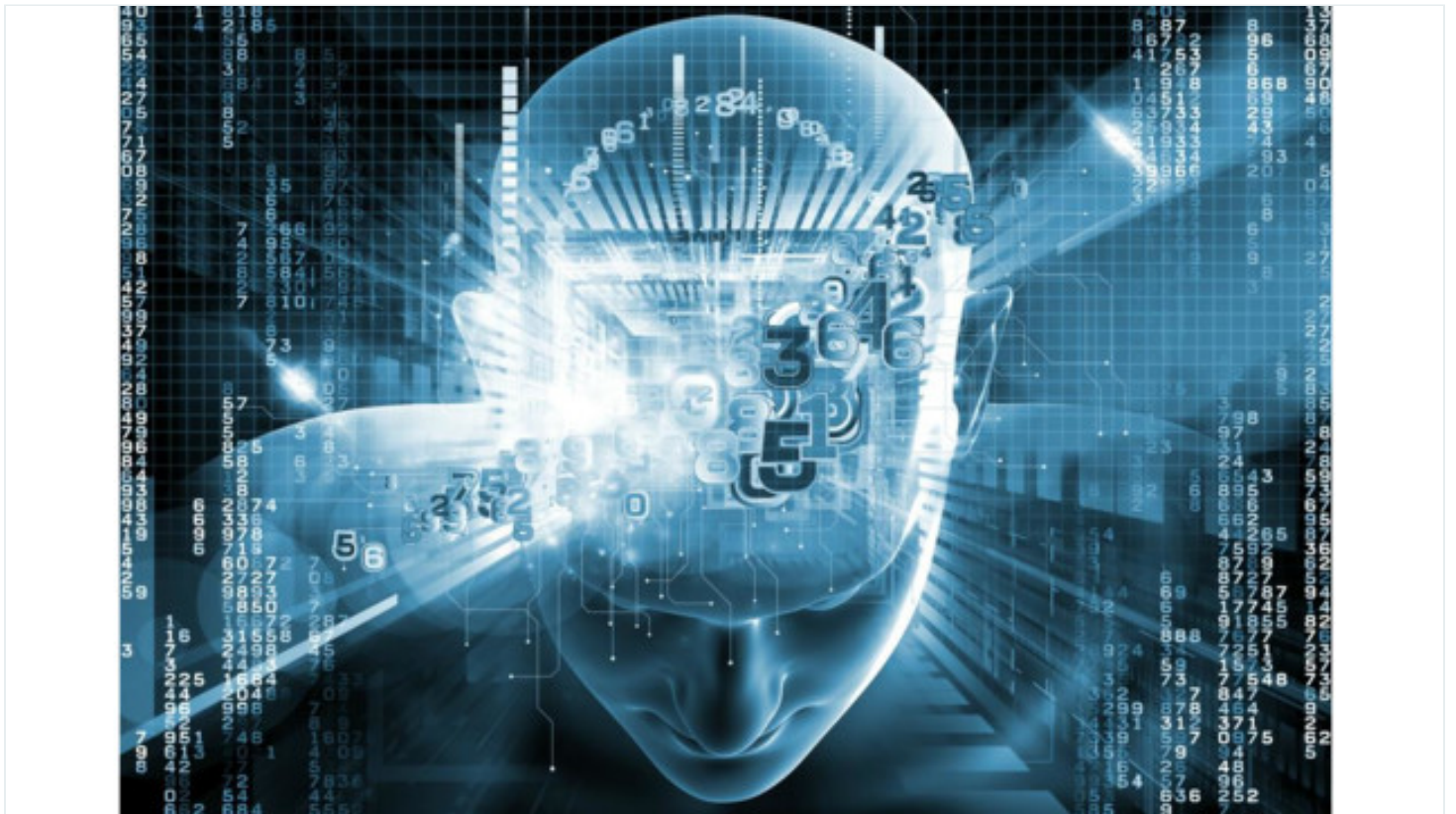
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Amy Vetter • Feb. 02, 2021



If 2020 taught us anything, it's to expect the unexpected. At the start of last year, nobody would've predicted that a pandemic would transform our jobs and lives in ways both big and small. Yet here we are, at the start of another year, one which we all hope will include a break from mask wearing and social distancing. While 2021 will doubtless include some surprises of its own, that doesn't mean we shouldn't take a moment to predict what might be in store over the next 12 months.

Many of the trends that will be on the rise this year are a direct result of the

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Trend #1: Remote work, but with options

For most of 2020, remote work wasn't a choice. Due to mandates throughout most of the country, many firms didn't have in-office employees for months on end. Even when these mandates are gone, however, companies allowing employees freedom with regards to when and how often they come to the office will remain. Companies like Twitter and Dropbox are moving to a “**virtual first**” workforce, proving that the need to go remote has demonstrated benefits for employers and team members alike.

It seems a safe bet to assume that most firms will offer some level of **hybridity** in 2021 and for the foreseeable future. Deciding what that hybrid model will look like for you should be of chief concern in 2021. Which positions can remain remote forever? Which of your team members are itching to get back to the office? These are the sorts of questions that will allow you to build a policy that meets the needs of your team, your clients, and your company. Start asking them now.

Trend #2: Tech to keep us connected

The need to move people out of office forced firms to reckon with **tech** in new ways. You've likely experienced a case of Zoom fatigue this year but as much as you may be hoping otherwise, don't bank on videoconferencing becoming a thing of the past anytime soon. Cloud-based apps like Zoom and Teams were many firm's lifeblood during the pandemic. The value of those apps, and cloud-based platforms in general, won't decrease in the coming years.

When people move to the cloud, they don't move back. The ability to work (and work effectively) from anywhere is a door that won't shut once it's opened. Now is the time to take a look at your suite of tech solutions and decide which are stopgap fixes and which are there to stay. Invest time in testing and learning the platforms that will power your company, as getting the most from them will have a huge

impact on your success. With companies like Zoom enjoying huge profits as a result

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harmony for the people at your firm, take the time to consider wellness as part of your firm values.

There are countless ways to be mindful of your team members' inner lives. From enforcing no-meeting days to providing subscriptions to apps like Headspace and Calm, it's wise to offer services and create policies that allow team members freedom, flexibility, and the sense that they're cared for. No matter what viruses are in the air, after all, taking care of your employees will always be a wise investment.

Who knows what else 2021 will have in store for us but after what we've been through, we should all be more than capable of rolling with the punches.

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