

# Building trust and clarity in uncertain times

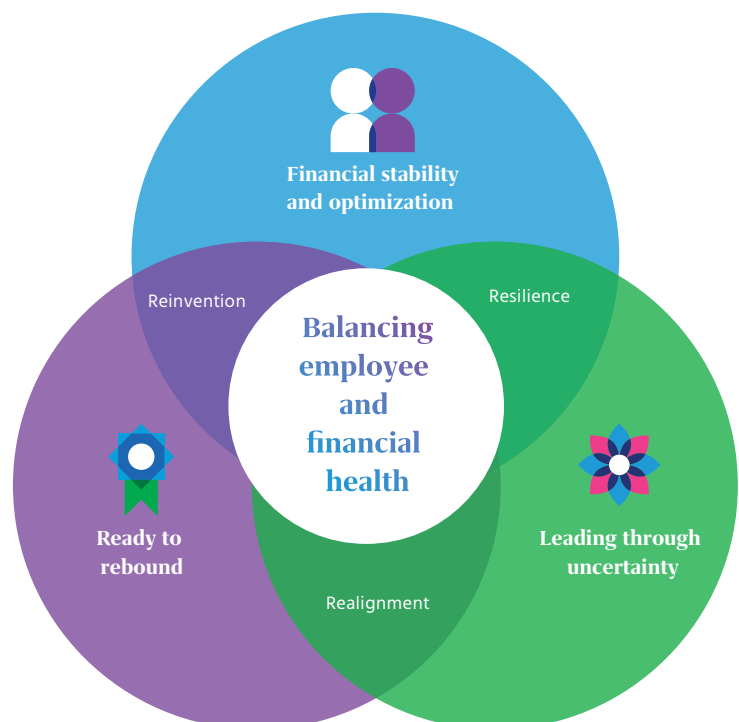
Many things in life are predictable — even when they're complicated. Science and innovation have been making the world a more predictable place for centuries. People *like* predictability, and we've invested a lot in it.

But despite all this focus on eliminating uncertainty, no one could have foreseen that 2020 would be the year a virus would create sweeping public health and economic crises. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that the world can still be an **unpredictable** place.

In the midst of this disruption, business leaders must set a course for the months and years ahead. Many industries have experienced the impact of public health measures on their workforce in the destruction of customer demand and declining revenue. Others have seen a surge in demand with changes in customer behavior. Whether these changes will be enduring is impossible to say, and the anxiety and caution that now drives decision-making for many organizations only heightens this uncertainty.

Leaders know that providing clarity about their future plans and the reasons behind their decisions builds stability. At the same time, they're responsible for managing both the health of their people and their organizations' financial health. Yet all of us share the same anxieties, reflected in our behavior and our ability to make decisions.

Mercer's [COVID-19 global pulse research](#) suggests that while nearly 75% of respondents are implementing global business continuity plans, many leaders are concerned about stakeholder trust. Around 56% have provided employees with guidance and increased communications, with 80% implementing a regular frequency for communications focused on practical actions. But with more than half of companies implementing hiring freezes and some 20% delaying increases or putting salary freezes in place, employees are understandably concerned.





## Where to begin: Three ways to build clarity and trust

Creating clarity plays a critical role in building trust. Leaders know that trust is hard-won. It's the currency of their business relationships. Working toward three crucial goals can help:

### Finding financial stability

When disruption builds outside the organization, leaders try to create as much internal stability as possible. This means focusing on essential products and services, driving efficiency projects, managing risk and carefully recalibrating spending. Since organizations are communities, their survival requires a balance of the smart use of resources with the careful management of social ties.

### Leading through uncertainty

To cope with the distracting and often stressful nature of unpredictability, people at all levels of an organization look to leaders and the wider company community for support. An adaptive culture is key. Adaptability requires a focus on operational details, quality communication and an increase in employee empowerment, productivity, well-being and engagement.

### Preparing to rebound

Dramatic change presents an opportunity for companies to reevaluate priorities, focus on what matters most and adopt new practices to help make them fitter, faster, leaner and more agile. According to our [Global Talent Trends report](#), 76% of respondents believe their companies allow them to grow personally and professionally. There is room for optimism — but only if organizations have the support they need to find the way forward.

## Are you ready to be resilient? To realign and reinvent your organization?

At Mercer, balancing insights into the economic reality with a deeper understanding of human needs and concerns has always been our primary focus. The success of your business tomorrow depends on what you do today. We can help. Whether we're providing the data and insights you need or offering an independent source of advice and guidance, we're here for you to help make things brighter in these dark times.

## Contact us

**Shireen Kwan**  
Growth Leader  
[shireen.kwan@mercer.com](mailto:shireen.kwan@mercer.com)

**Lewis Garrad**  
Partner, Solutions Leader  
[lewis.garrad@mercer.com](mailto:lewis.garrad@mercer.com)