

Organizational and Employee Resilience

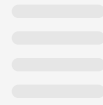
Research Report



Gap
International



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Executive Summary



Resilience¹ is a strategic imperative for effective coping when faced with adversities and can be essential for long-term effectiveness.² We can learn from past experiences dealing with adversity—such as the COVID-19 pandemic (hereafter referred to as “the pandemic”)—to build resilience for handling future adversities. Thus, the question for organizational leaders becomes: What contributed to organizational and employee resilience during the pandemic? Taking a multi-level (organization and individual) perspective, Gap International and SHRM sought to answer that question.



What is “organizational resilience”?

“[A] means to effectively respond to adverse events, not only after adverse events, but before, during, and after as well” (Duchek, 2020, p. 9).

Organization-Level Resilience. At the organizational level, we identified organizations’ resilience trajectories using data from 620 senior leaders’ characterizations of their organizations’ functioning pre-pandemic to now. Based on organization performance and employee well-being factors, organizations were categorized into three resilience trajectories: a) **Thriver** (doing better now than pre-pandemic), b) **Persister** (no change pre-pandemic to now), and c) **Survivor** (“bounced-back” to pre-pandemic states after some decline). We contrasted these with organizations that were unable to fully demonstrate resilience—by being in a worse performance state, worse well-being state or both. We called this non-resilience trajectory **Decliner**.

In Gap International’s study and experience working with resilient organizations, the competency of building Alignment—“the state of being one”—emerged as a key characteristic among those able to produce results beyond expectations, given challenging circumstances.



¹ Resilience definitions in callouts are from the following sources: Duchek, S. (2020). Organizational resilience: a capability-based conceptualization. *Business Research*, 13, 215–246. Zhu, Y., Zhang, S., & Shen, Y. (2019). Humble leadership and employee resilience: Exploring the mediating mechanism of work-related promotion focus and perceived insider identity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 673.

² Reeves, M. O’Dea, A., & Carlsson-Szlezak, P. (2022). Make Resilience your company’s strategic advantage. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/make-resilience-your-companys-strategic-advantage>



For this study, we isolated three Factors of Alignment to examine how they may have helped organizations stay resilient during the pandemic: a) **Purpose**: The power and connection between any individual and the largest expression of the organization’s reason for being in existence, b) **Ownership**: The degree to which individuals hold themselves personally accountable for the performance of their organization, c) **Risk**: The freedom to challenge the status quo, communicate unconventional ideas and take bold actions.

We then sought to identify additional factors that related to each trajectory. Specifically, we looked at **what organizations did** and **what organizations have** that contributed to their categorization into one of the resilience trajectories or the non-resilient trajectory.

Individual-Level Resilience. At the individual level, we examined employee resilience using data from 1,007 full-time employees at the individual contributor level. We then identified **individual factors** (e.g., job, identity, and caregiver status), **immediate work environment factors** (workgroup and supervisor behaviors) and **organizational factors** (resources and culture norms) that contributed to employee resilience.³

Our findings show several actionable learnings for facilitating organizational and employee resilience.



What is “employee resilience”?

The “capacity of employees that is supported and facilitated by organizations to positively cope, adapt, and even thrive in response to dynamic and challenging environments” (Zhu et al., 2019, p. 1).

Here are two key learnings from characterizing resilient organizations:

1 The path to resilience is varied and not always a straight line.
Of the organizations represented by senior leaders, 28% were Thrivers, 16% were Persisters, 21% were Survivors and 35% were Decliners. Of the Thrivers, about 2 out of 3 had experienced decreases in performance prior to increases.

2 Resilient organizations hold up to the competition and hold back turnover rates.
Compared to Decliners, resilient organizations (Thrivers, Persisters and Survivors) were more likely to be doing better now (versus pre-pandemic) in relation to their competitors. In fact, organizations categorized as *Thrivers* were about 2.7 times more likely than *Decliners* to indicate they are currently doing better than their competitors. Further, compared to the resilience trajectories (about 4 to 5 out of 10), those in the Decliner trajectory (almost 8 out of 10) were more likely to indicate their turnover rates are higher now compared to pre-pandemic rates.

³ All differences noted in this executive summary are statistically significant at $p < .05$. Numeric bases for these differences can be found in the body of the report.

Here is the key learning regarding organizational alignment for resilient organizations:



Organizational alignment: Purpose and Ownership are critical; the pandemic may not have been a time for “Innovation” as we know it.

Senior leaders in the resilience trajectories (Thrivers, Persister and Survivor) seem to drive the purpose and direction of their organizations in the face of adversity, and to step up and “own” their organizations’ resilience. Interestingly, an inverse relationship was found regarding Risk. With their backs against the wall, senior leaders in non-resilient organizations may be more willing to rock the boat, but the pandemic was a unique time, and creativity may have been used more for problem-solving than finding the “next big thing.”

Here are six key learnings for what resilient organizations did:

- 1 Proper prior listening and practice prevents poor performance.**
Compared to Decliners, resilient organizations were more likely to agree that, prior to the pandemic, senior leaders actively listened for problems in their organization and plans for unexpected situations were practiced for effectiveness. These behaviors are consistent with senior leaders’ ownership of situations, a key component of organizational alignment. Interestingly, no differences were found when it came to monitoring external environments or having simply created plans for unexpected situations (further highlighting the practice of plans as being essential).
- 2 Denial is bad for business.**
When there were early signs of the pandemic coming to the U.S., senior leaders at resilient organizations were attuned to the potential threat to fulfilling their organizations’ objectives. This was especially true for those in organizations categorized as Thrivers (about 7 to 8 out of 10 senior leaders agreed).
- 3 Leaders get by with a little help from their friends.**
In response to the threat of the pandemic, resilient organizations were more likely than Decliners to discuss and make plans both internally (with key staff) and externally (with other organizations in their sector).





4 Leaders must continuously engage in information seeking and sharing.

In response to the pandemic, resilient organizations were more likely than Decliners to engage in continuous sense-making by keeping current on information, making information and expertise accessible to employees and decision-makers, and seeking feedback regarding the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the pandemic. Leaders actively worked to ensure the people around them were clear about the implications such that they can take ownership of their roles.

5 Trailblazers need to be supported and rewarded.

In response to the pandemic, resilient organizations—especially Thrivers (about 9 out of 10 senior leaders agreed)—were more likely than Decliners to empower their employees to use their knowledge in new ways and recognize outside-the-box thinking. These practices are likely to create a sense of ownership and freedom to introduce unconventional ways of approaching challenges and developing solutions.

6 During turbulent times, leaders must clear a path for changes.

In response to the pandemic, resilient organizations—especially Thrivers (8 to 9 out of 10 senior leaders agreed)—were more likely than Decliners to break down bureaucratic barriers, coordinate effectively and bring employees on board to enact changes. People's willingness to take actions outside their lines of responsibility is critical for successful implementation of solutions to challenges brought on by an adversity.



Here are four key learnings for what resilient organizations have:

1 Slack and social resources are in short supply for Decliners.

Decliners were less likely than resilient organizations to agree that their organizations had personnel resources available to devote to ebbs and flows of work even prior to the pandemic. They were also less likely to have employees in critical roles related to navigating adversity (e.g., risk management). Compared to Thrivers, Decliners were less likely to agree that employees have social connections and camaraderie to rely on for information and support.

2 Routines are necessary for handling the non-routine.

Predictably, adaptability norms of organizational change, ownership through power and responsibility, and organizational learning were more highly associated with resilient organizations than Decliners. These norms foster effective change by setting standards for how new learnings are identified, adopted, and institutionalized within organizations.

3 Inclusive culture is key.

Compared to Decliners, Survivors and Thrivers had greater norms associated with inclusion (i.e., fostering fairness, value for uniqueness and inclusion in decision-making). Inclusive norms are expected to leverage diverse experiences and ways of thinking, which is especially useful for identifying solutions to challenges brought on by adversity. These norms are also expected to facilitate a sense of belonging for employees of varying backgrounds, which may have helped employees feel supported and ultimately contribute to well-being-related attitudes. Further, fairness norms likely help perceptions of equity, which may be critical for retention especially during the Great Resignation.

4 Thrivers have resilient senior leaders.

Compared to Decliners, senior leaders in organizations categorized as Thrivers had greater endorsements of items reflecting individual resilience capabilities (e.g., managing high workloads, re-evaluating one's own performance for continuous improvement and asking for support). Leaders can go "above and beyond" and will adjust when they are clear about the purpose toward which they are working. By exhibiting these behaviors, senior leaders can likely better adapt to adversity while also modeling useful behaviors that can be adopted by their employees in the face of adversity.

Here are six key learnings for employee resilience:

1 To retain employees, leaders should support their resilience.

Compared to employees with high and average resilience, those with lower resilience (below average for this sample) were 1.2 to 2.8 times more likely to indicate their job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion levels had worsened compared with pre-pandemic levels. They were also 1.5 to 3 times more likely to have more frequently engaged in thoughts of quitting and exploration of other jobs.

2 Leader empathy is a must-have.

Employees with greater resilience (average and high) had greater perceptions of their supervisor's displays of empathy compared to those with lower resilience. More specifically, supervisor empathy scores were over 1.4 times higher for those with high (versus low) resilience. Empathy is expected to help employees cope with adversity and is a vital skill for leaders in today's workforce. High-ownership leaders encourage employees to speak up and be heard, thus creating space for employees to express their feelings and receive empathy from their leaders.

3 Inclusion leadership and workgroups create space and support for resilience.

Compared to employees with average and low resilience, employees with high resilience had greater perceptions of their supervisor's inclusive behavior and their workgroup's inclusivity compared to those with average and low resilience. Those with inclusive supervisors and in inclusive workgroups may feel more supported by those with whom they work regularly, fostering their coping capabilities. Further, they may be more likely to voice their unique ideas and contributions, which may lead to better adaptations or responses to adversity.





4 Personnel and social resources must be present to be leveraged for resilience.

Employees with greater resilience were more likely to agree that their organizations had personnel and social resources (6 to 9 out of 10 employees agreed) in place compared to those with lower resilience (4 to 5 out of 10 employees agreed). As employee resilience involves acting proactively to leverage resources important for adaptation and coping (e.g., personnel to help manage workloads, social networks that facilitate information sharing/support), these resources must first exist for resilience to be possible. Further, fostering high-ownership organizations will encourage sharing of each other's workloads to achieve group outcomes.

5 Adaptability norms set standards for employee resilience behaviors.

Compared to employees with average and low resilience, those with high resilience had greater perceptions of adaptability norms present in their organization. These norms set standards for individual-level behavior related to being adaptable to change, a sense of ownership through being empowered and accountable to take actions, and the engagement in continuous learning may help specify the employee-level behaviors (e.g., proactivity, learning and growing from mistakes) that are key to building and maintaining resilience.

6 Inclusive culture is key—again.

Employees with greater resilience had greater perceptions of inclusive culture norms present in their organization compared to those with lower resilience. When these inclusive norms exist, employees at all levels may be more likely to support the unique experiences of other employees, which may have helped individual employees cope during the pandemic. Further, these norms may signal to employees that they *can* seek support they need from their organization and that their ideas for how to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic are welcome, further fostering their coping and adaptation.

Through these learnings from two distinct samples, we see tangible processes and practices that leaders across industries can enact and institutionalize. Further, there is no “secret sauce” for enacting the practices represented in these findings, nor are there any insurmountable obstacles. With the right guidance and information, these practices are available to everyone at very little cost to the organization (with perhaps the exception of having slack resources). For instance, with the right leader development (e.g., inclusion, empathy and methods for employee empowerment) at all levels and policies (e.g., equity, recognition/rewards and coordination mechanisms) in place, senior leaders can build organizational resilience capabilities and foster resilience in their most critical asset: their employees.

Part 1: Organizational Resilience



Study Background



In recent years, there has been no greater and more ubiquitous adversity than the pandemic. Organizational resilience, which depicts organizations' capability of achieving positive outcomes *despite* being faced with adverse challenges,⁴ is considered a must-have for organizations to survive and potentially even flourish when faced with adversity. But, just how resilient were organizations when it came to the pandemic?

To answer this question, data were collected from 620 senior leaders (220 executives, 86 vice presidents and 314 directors) in organizations with at least 50 employees from all regions of the U.S. All senior leaders had been working at their organizations for at least three years, so their knowledge of their organization prior to the pandemic to now could be captured.

Based on these data, four trajectories were created to represent three types of organizational resilience and one type of lack of resilience. These trajectories were developed from various combinations of organizational performance levels (productivity and finances) and employee well-being levels (employee attitudes). The trajectories are listed below and are explored further in relation to various factors (e.g., industry, size and turnover) in **Section A**.

A. Thriver

The resilience trajectory representing better functioning compared with pre-pandemic levels.

B. Persister

The resilience trajectory representing resistance to adversity, with little to no change due to the pandemic.

C. Survivor

The resilience trajectory representing recovery or the “bounce back” to pre-pandemic levels.

D. Decliner

The non-resilience trajectory representing worse functioning compared with pre-pandemic levels.

Given the importance of organizational resilience, a core follow-up question is this: What made organizations resilient? To answer this question, we first focused on senior leaders' organizational alignment (**Section B**), which is expected to be a critical competency for resilient organizations. Next, we asked senior leaders about their organizations' processes, resources, culture norms and leadership characteristics. In other words, we asked about what organizations did (**Section C**) and what they have (**Section D**). When investigating answers, resilience trajectories, including the non-resilient trajectory (Decliner), are compared.

⁴ Rietze, S., Duchek, S., Maynard, M. T., & Wohlgemuth, M. (2021, November 11). Resilience in organization-related research: An integrative conceptual review across disciplines and levels of analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication.

Section A: How Resilient Were Organizations Through the Pandemic?



Organizational resilience involves adversity (e.g., the pandemic) and positive functioning. To investigate the latter, senior leaders were asked about their organizations' standings on three core domains: a) organizational productivity, b) financial performance and c) employee attitudes.

More specifically, senior leaders were asked about their organizations' current levels on each of these domains compared to their organizations' levels prior to the pandemic. These standings are summarized below.

TABLE 1. ORGANIZATIONAL STANDINGS (NOW COMPARED TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS)

Domains	Sample Size	Worse now	Recovered	No changes	Better now
Productivity	618	16.7%	42.4%	23.3%	17.6%
Revenue (for profit)	553	18.4%	37.3%	22.2%	22.1%
Earnings (nonprofit)	58	36.2%	32.8%	25.9%	5.2%
Employee Attitudes	612	24.8%	30.9%	19.8%	24.5%

Note: n = 604. Participants who reported "don't know" on any of the three domains *without* experiencing any declines on other domains were removed from the analysis (n = 16). If they experienced a decline on any other domain, they were categorized as Decliner.

The path to "better now" is not always straight. Senior leaders who indicated their organizations are doing better now compared to pre-pandemic levels on the productivity and finances (revenue or earnings) domains were asked follow-up questions to further clarify changes to their pre-pandemic levels.⁵ Most indicated that they experienced decreases in levels due to the pandemic before eventually increasing to better than pre-pandemic levels.



Of the 108 senior leaders who indicated their organization is doing better now regarding **productivity**, 64.2% indicated their organization experienced decreases in productivity levels prior to increasing.



Of the 125 senior leaders who indicated their organization is doing better now regarding **finances**, 65.6% indicated their organization experienced decreases in finance levels prior to increasing.

Recovery speeds varied. Senior leaders who indicated their organizations experienced decreases in productivity or finances due to the pandemic before recovering were asked how long it took them to recover. Senior leaders indicated recovery took anywhere between less than one month to 22 months, with averages across the productivity and finance domains in the range of 6 to 10 months.

⁵ Attitudes were not examined for this follow-up because this employee data is often not tracked as frequently as performance data and is thus harder to infer.

Organizational Resilience Trajectories



Although the individual standings on each of the three domains represent trajectories of how organizations fared (pre-pandemic to now), they do not depict the entire picture of organizational resilience trajectories. Critically, both performance (indicated by productivity and finances) and well-being (indicated by employee attitudes) are vital to consider for organizational resilience because both are needed for organizational sustainability and long-term success. In other words, to be considered resilient, an organization's standing on one domain should not come at the cost, or more precisely the decline, of other domains (e.g., sacrificing employee well-being to enhance productivity). Therefore, the organizations' standings on all three domains were used to categorize their resilience trajectories.

The organizations' standings on the combination of the three domains (productivity, finances and employee attitudes) were used to categorize the organizations into one of four trajectories: a) Thriver, b) Persister, c) Survivor or d) Decliner. Of these four trajectories, only Survivor, Persister and Thriver represent organizational resilience and represent forms of positive functioning in that these organizations are not worse off on any domain now compared to prior to the pandemic. Organizations were categorized as follows:

A. Thriver

The resilience trajectory representing better functioning compared with pre-pandemic levels. At least one of the three domains reported as being better now compared with pre-pandemic levels. The other domains reported as either recovered, no changes or better now compared with pre-pandemic levels ($n = 166$).

B. Persister

The resilience trajectory representing resistance to adversity with little to no change due to the pandemic. At least two of the three domains reported as having no changes due to the pandemic. The third domain reported as either recovered or no change compared with pre-pandemic levels ($n = 98$).

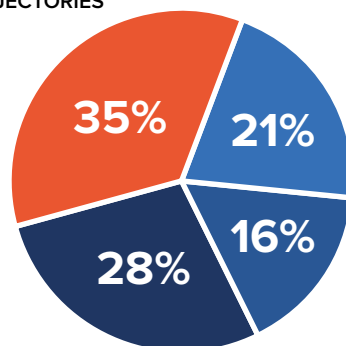
C. Survivor

The resilience trajectory representing recovery or the "bounce back" to pre-pandemic levels. At least two of the three domains reported as having recovered to pre-pandemic levels after a period of decline. The third domain reported as either recovered or no change compared with pre-pandemic levels ($n = 126$).

D. Decliner

The non-resilience trajectory representing worse functioning compared to pre-pandemic levels. At least one of the three domains reported as worse now compared with prior to the pandemic ($n = 214$).

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TRAJECTORIES



Note: $n = 604$. Participants who reported "don't know" on any of the three domains *without* experiencing any declines on other domains were removed from analyses ($n = 16$). If they experienced a decline on any other domain, they were categorized as Decliner.

- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner

Organizational Resilience Trajectories by Organizational Factors

The resilience trajectories are broken down further by industry, organizational size and region in tables 2-4. Trajectories varied across industry, organizational size and regions. These differences in trajectories suggest that other factors beyond industry, organizational size and region played a role in influencing organizational resilience trajectories.



TABLE 2. ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TRAJECTORY BY INDUSTRY.

Industry	Sample Size	Decliner	Survivor	Persister	Thriver
Administrative support and services	10	30.0%	10.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Construction	49	22.4%	30.6%	16.3%	30.6%
Education	34	52.9%	23.5%	11.8%	11.8%
Finance, banking, or insurance	72	25%	19.4%	27.8%	27.8%
Government, public administration, or military	13	53.8%	7.7%	30.8%	7.7%
Health care	55	49.1%	23.6%	10.9%	16.4%
Hospitality	12	66.7%	8.3%	0.0%	25.0%
Information technology/data processing services	77	31.2%	24.7%	10.4%	33.8%
Manufacturing	67	32.8%	22.4%	10.4%	34.3%
Professional, technical, & scientific services	52	19.2%	25.0%	15.4%	40.4%
Real estate	16	31.3%	12.5%	18.8%	37.5%
Retail trade	43	39.5%	18.6%	14.0%	27.9%
Software development	24	37.5%	25.0%	16.7%	20.8%

Note: Only results for industries with ≥ 10 participants are displayed.

TABLE 3. ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TRAJECTORY BY ORGANIZATIONAL SIZE.

Number of Employees	Sample Size	Decliner	Survivor	Persister	Thriver
50 - 99	78	35.9%	21.8%	19.2%	23.1%
100 - 249	80	42.5%	20.0%	11.3%	26.3%
250 - 499	77	28.6%	24.7%	23.4%	23.4%
500 - 999	122	36.9%	21.3%	16.4%	25.4%
1,000 - 2,499	82	34.1%	20.7%	7.3%	37.8%
2,500 - 4,999	64	26.6%	20.3%	15.6%	37.5%
5,000 - 9,999	45	33.3%	20.0%	15.6%	31.1%
10,000 - 24,999	22	40.9%	22.7%	27.3%	9.1%
25,000 or greater	34	47.1%	11.8%	20.6%	20.6%

Note: Data were collected from participants in organizations with ≥ 50 employees.

TABLE 4. ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TRAJECTORY BY U.S. REGION.

U.S. Region	Sample Size	Decliner	Survivor	Persister	Thriver
Northeast	159	35.2%	18.9%	18.2%	27.7%
Midwest	109	41.3%	20.2%	16.5%	22.0%
South	218	31.7%	22.5%	15.6%	30.3%
West	117	37.6%	21.4%	14.5%	26.5%

Note: Data were collected from participants in organizations with ≥ 50 employees.

Organizational Resilience Trajectories and Remote-Work Status



Another important question to investigate for resilience trajectories is the impact of having a remote or partially remote (hybrid) workforce versus an in-person workforce. Organizations that had a remote or hybrid workforce prior to the pandemic may have faced less of a burden when it came to adjusting policies and operations based on the pandemic.

Although those in the Persister trajectory had a greater percentage of fully remote workers pre-pandemic compared with the other trajectories, it was only significantly greater⁶ than the percentage in the Survivor trajectory. Similarly, although those in the Decliner trajectory had a greater percentage of fully in-person workers pre-pandemic compared with the other trajectories, it was only significantly greater than the percentage in the Thriver trajectory (see Table 5).

Across the board for all trajectories, the greatest shift from pre-pandemic to current workforce status happened from in-person to hybrid work. Taken together, the results reveal more similarities than differences in trajectories, suggesting that other factors beyond remote-workforce status played a role in influencing organizational resilience trajectories.

TABLE 5. ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE TRAJECTORY BY REMOTE-WORK STATUS, PRE-PANDEMIC TO CURRENT.

	Pre-Pandemic				Current			
	Decliner	Survivor	Persister	Thriver	Decliner	Survivor	Persister	Thriver
Fully Remote	8.4%	4.0%	16%	10.8%	8.9%	8.7%	19.4%	10.8%
Fully In-Person	72.4%	69.8%	60.2%	57.8%	32.2%	40.5%	42.9%	26.5%
Hybrid - some employees work remotely, and others work in office	16.8%	23.8%	17.3%	24.1%	49.5%	41.3%	27.6%	45.2%
Hybrid - most/all employees work remotely and in office	1.9%	2.4%	6.1%	6.6%	9.3%	9.5%	10.2%	16.3%

Note: One participant in the Thriver trajectory and one participant in the Decliner trajectory selected “other” and thus are not represented in the percentages for “Pre-Pandemic.” Two participants in the Thriver trajectory selected “other” and thus are not represented in the percentages for “Current.”

Organizational Resilience Trajectories and Changes to Products/Services

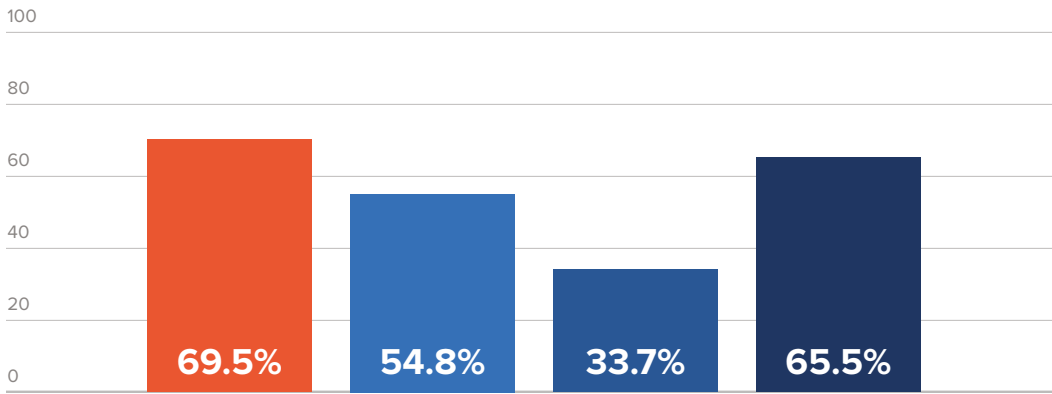
Another interesting area for exploration was whether organizations within specific resilience trajectories were more likely to change their products or services as a result of the pandemic. When asked whether their organizations changed products or services to meet pandemic-related needs, a slight majority of those in the Decliner, Survivor and Thriver trajectories indicated “Yes.” Only 33.7% of those in the Persister trajectory indicated “Yes.”⁷ This lower response for the Persister trajectory is unsurprising given the propensity of organizations in this trajectory to maintain stability through adversity. Of those who indicated “Yes” across all trajectories, a great majority also indicated that the changes are sustainable for their organization post-pandemic (87.1% to 98.5%).⁸ Taken together, this suggests that although there were expected differences in trajectories when it came to changing products/services, this was not necessarily a driver of resilience.

⁶ Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

⁷ Significant differences were found between a) the Decliner, Survivor and Persister trajectories and b) the Thriver and Persister trajectories.

⁸ No significant differences were found among trajectories.

HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION CHANGED PRODUCTS OR SERVICES TO MEET PANDEMIC-RELATED NEEDS?

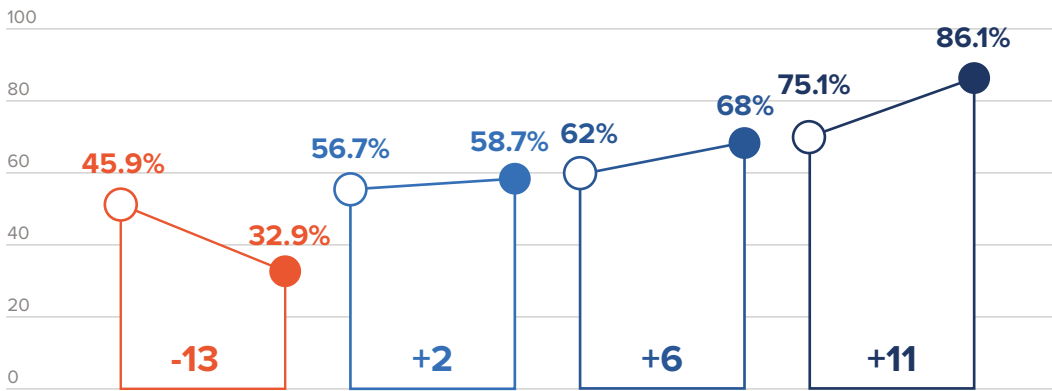


- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner

Organizational Resilience Trajectories and Competitors

An important question for organizations as they waded through the challenges of the pandemic is how they are faring against other companies like them or, perhaps more importantly, their competition. Compared with those in the Decliner (32.9%) trajectory, those in the Survivor (58.7%), Persister (68%) and Thriver (86.1%) trajectories were more likely to indicate that their organization is currently doing better than most of their competitors. Further, for those in the Survivor (+2), Persister (+6) and Thriver (+11) groups, these percentages were higher relative to how senior leaders reported their organizations were doing compared with competitors prior to the pandemic. For those in the Decliner group, the percentages were lower currently than prior to the pandemic (-13). This suggests that organizations in the trajectories considered resilient may have an extra advantage over their competition based on how they fared during the pandemic.

PERCENT DOING BETTER THAN COMPETITORS PRE-PANDEMIC TO NOW



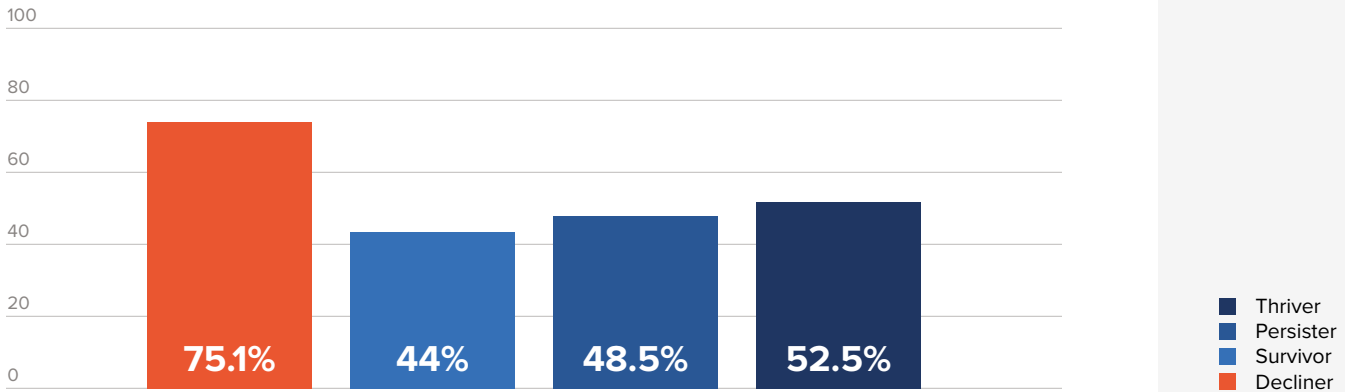
- Pre-pandemic
- Current
- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner



Organizational Resilience and Turnover Rates

Given the Great Resignation (also known as the Great Reshuffle), another important question concerns how organizational resilience trajectories relate to turnover metrics. When comparing pre-pandemic average annual turnover rates to current average annual turnover rates, those in the Decliner trajectory had the highest percentage of senior leaders indicating that turnover rates are higher currently than pre-pandemic levels (75.1%, $n = 179$) compared with those in the Survivor (44%, $n = 101$), Persister (48.5%, $n = 66$) and Thriver (52.5%, $n = 139$) trajectories.⁹ This suggests that organizations in the trajectories considered resilient may be faring better on employee retention compared with non-resilient organizations (Decliner), further highlighting the benefits of organizational resilience.

CURRENT TURNOVER RATES GREATER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC RATES



KEY TAKEAWAY

Resilient organizations hold up to the competition and hold back turnover rates. While organizational resilience trajectories did not differ meaningfully on industry or remote-work status, results revealed that resilient organizations were more likely to be doing better now (versus pre-pandemic) in relation to their competitors. Further, compared with the resilience trajectories, those in the Decliner trajectory were more likely to indicate their turnover rates are higher now compared to pre-pandemic.

⁹ Sample sizes may vary because only the participants who indicated they were aware of turnover metrics responded to the turnover items.



Section B: Organizational Alignment and Organizational Resilience

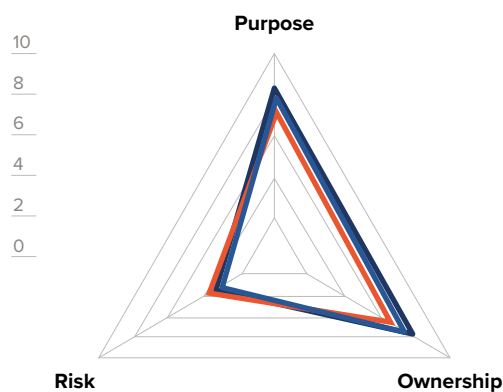


Organizational alignment depicts an “organization’s ability to act on the direction of leadership to deliver exceptional business results.”¹⁰ Put simply, it is the “state of being one on an issue, change, or controversy.” When employees act as one, heading in the same direction as the organization, the organization will likely be better able to adapt to new challenges.

Alignment is expected to be particularly critical for senior leaders to create during turbulent times. Senior leaders influence the perceptions and behaviors of organizational members; if senior leaders are not aligned with the organization, others will not be either. To examine organizational alignment, we asked senior leaders about their standings on three factors of alignment:

- A. Purpose:** The power and connection between any individual and the largest expression of the organization’s reason for being in existence.
- B. Ownership:** The degree to which individuals hold themselves personally accountable for the performance of their organization.
- C. Risk:** The freedom to challenge the status quo, communicate unconventional ideas and take bold actions.

SENIOR LEADER STANDINGS ON ALIGNMENT FACTORS BY TRAJECTORY



Key differences among resilience trajectories were found for senior leader organizational alignment. Compared to the Decliner trajectory, those in the resilience trajectories had significantly¹¹ greater endorsements of both Purpose and Ownership. Interestingly, those in the Decliner trajectory had significantly greater endorsements of Risk than those in the resilience trajectories.

- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner

¹⁰ Gap International (n.d.). Organizational Alignment Diagnostic: Measure the invisible dynamics of an enterprise. <https://www.gapinternational.com/products/organizational-alignment-diagnostic>

¹¹ Significance testing based on analysis of variance (ANOVA) post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$). Purpose means: Decliner = 7.19, Survivor = 8.13, Persister = 7.87 and Thriver = 8.42. Ownership means: Decliner = 6.64, Survivor = 7.41, Persister = 7.45 and Thriver = 7.79. Risk means: Decliner = 3.85, Survivor = 3.15, Persister = 3.02 and Thriver = 3.40.



Gap has found the following in their research about companies that are truly aligned and consistently deliver great results through **Purpose**:

- Teams with a strong sense of purpose are energized and eager to deliver results that positively affect the organization's future.
- People who are highly connected to purpose are more likely to take on greater and more important leadership responsibilities.
- People are also likely to perform outside of their job expectations and create new opportunities to fulfill the organization's vision.
- Working in service of a larger purpose gives people the energy and stamina to perform extraordinarily.
- Teams are resilient when facing challenges and when team members know they are contributing to the organization's success. They enjoy going to work and are fulfilled by what they do.

A company's purpose can serve as a north star during times of ambiguity. However, in most cases, this does not happen automatically. Having a real, thorough discussion of the power of purpose competes with other agenda items, and therefore often people just don't get around to it. What's more, organizations can be cynical today because of failed attempts in the past. It is likely that the more resilient organizations were having these conversations before and during the pandemic.

High **Ownership** is a key factor to reinforce organizational resilience. When ownership is high:

- People regard their work as integral to the success of the organization.
- They hold themselves accountable for the success of the organization.
- People are willing to express views outside the scope of their roles and responsibilities because they want to make an impact on the whole—and *they feel they can*.
- They are free to express unpopular views and to deliver bad news. They feel strong and supported enough to do that.
- They communicate their concerns and ideas about the organization's performance to people who are accountable to take action.

It is so natural for people to own their part, thinking that is primarily how they can contribute to their organization's success. But an organization that is resilient is an organization where people go beyond their part and are willing to own the whole. They understand that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It appears that during the pandemic, resilient organizations were indeed creating a sense of mutual ownership.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

In resilient organizations, senior leaders align others on direction and encourage collective ownership but may be unwilling to rock the boat. With high scores on Purpose and Ownership, senior leaders in the resilience trajectories (Thriver, Persister and Survivor) seem to drive the direction of their organizations and will step up to the plate to contribute to their organizations' success. However, these senior leaders were low on Risk, or their willingness to challenge the status quo and put forth new ideas. There could be several reasons for this. First, it could reflect senior leaders' perceived lack of need to change or push the status quo if their organizations seem to be doing well. Second, senior leaders themselves may have been involved in establishing the current direction/status quo and therefore may be more committed to it or see no reason to put forth new ideas at this time. Third, it could be a reaction to the turbulence of the last several years, where leaders may not feel like their organizations can withstand much more change in the throes of the pandemic. Finally, a common obstacle to alignment is the inability to say no, or the "going along with" factor,¹² and these lower scores may be indicative of that troublesome pattern that various organizations face. Regardless of the reason, this is an area of potential concern for organizations because Risk is often vital for creativity, innovation and potentially overcoming future adversities.

With their backs against the wall, senior leaders in non-resilient organizations may be more willing to rock the boat but may be less reliable when it comes to following through on initiatives. With higher scores than those in the resilience trajectory on Risk, senior leaders in the non-resilient trajectory may be more likely to speak up with new ideas or challenges to the way things are. Perhaps, given their trajectory, these leaders feel like risks are more necessary now or that they have less to lose by speaking up. Whatever the reason, these higher scores on Risk may be good to see as changes may be needed to move these organizations out of the Decliner trajectory. One area of concern, however, is the lower scores these leaders have on Purpose and Ownership, because these factors are needed for leaders to stick with new directions and take meaningful action to propel new ideas into reality.

¹² Gap International. (2020). Executive team alignment: The key to executive alignment may not be what you think. <https://www.gapinternational.com/key-challenges/executive-team-alignment>

Section C: What Did Resilient Organizations Do?



Taking a process approach to organizational resilience,¹³ senior leaders were asked about what their organizations did a) before the pandemic (Stage 1), b) once the threat of the pandemic was recognized (Stage 2) and c) during the pandemic (Stage 3).

Stage 1: Prior Preparedness

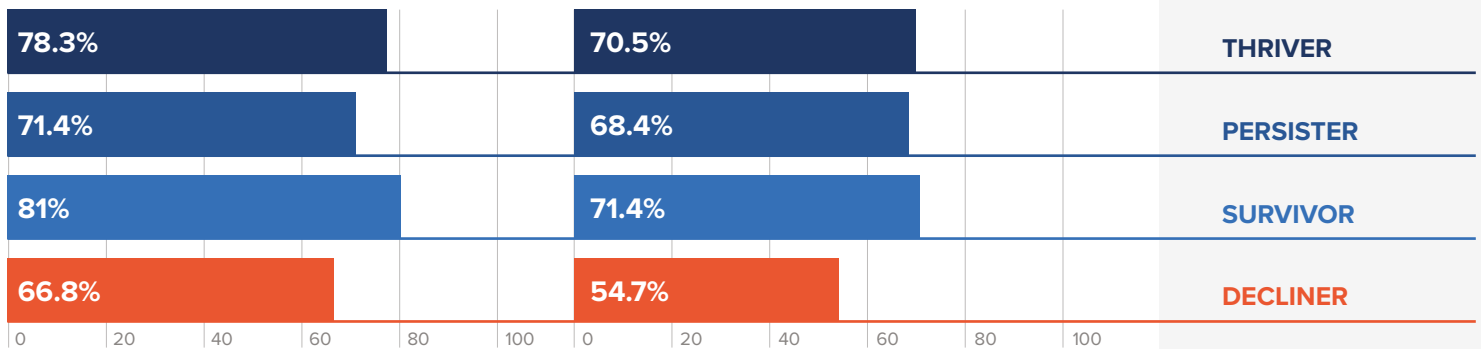
Emergency Preparedness Practices Before the Pandemic

Emergency preparedness was assessed to examine important actions that occurred prior to knowledge about the pandemic. Senior leaders were asked about internal and external monitoring and emergency response planning. Key differences among resilience trajectories were found for organizational activities centered around companies' internal monitoring habits and activities for practicing emergency plans.

Compared to the Decliner trajectory, those in the resilience trajectories had significantly¹⁴ greater endorsements of the following statements:

Prior to the pandemic, senior leaders actively listened for problems in our organization to have an early warning of emerging issues.

Prior to the pandemic, plans for unexpected situations were practiced/tested for effectiveness.



Interestingly, differences were not found among organizational resilience trajectories when it came to monitoring external environments or creating plans for unexpected situations—senior leaders tended to highly endorse these activities across the board (>70% agreed these activities occurred at their organization).

¹³ The conceptual framework of Duchek (2020) was drawn from in examining processes for resilient organizations.

¹⁴ Significance testing based on analysis of variance (ANOVA) post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Whether senior leaders listen to employees is highly important for organizational resilience.

Although it is unclear exactly how this practice helped, keeping a pulse on what employees are experiencing prior to the pandemic may be indicative of more general employee listening habits. These habits likely help leaders adapt to changing circumstances and better meet employee needs.

Beyond having plans, practicing plans is important for organizational resilience. This practice likely helps ensure plans are effective and could help establish collective ways of thinking and behaving when faced with adversity of any nature.

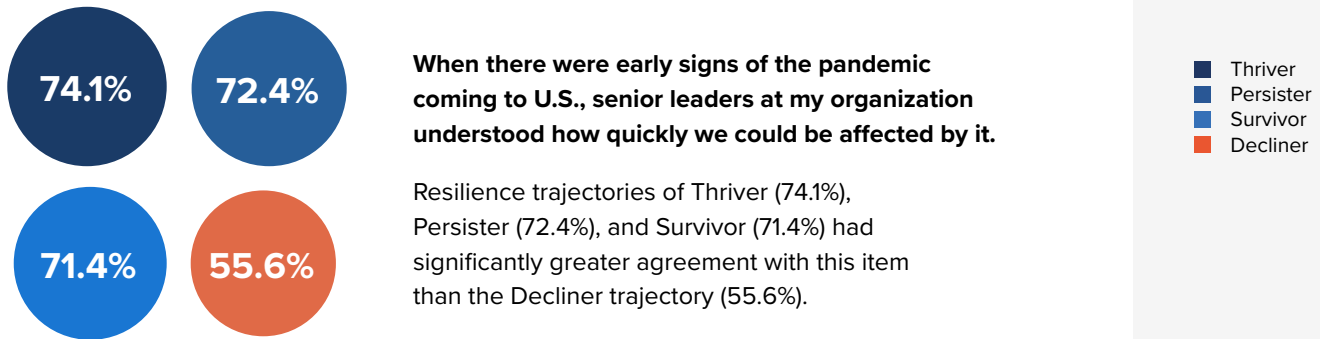


Stage 2: Calm Before the Storm

Acceptance of and Response to the Pandemic Threat

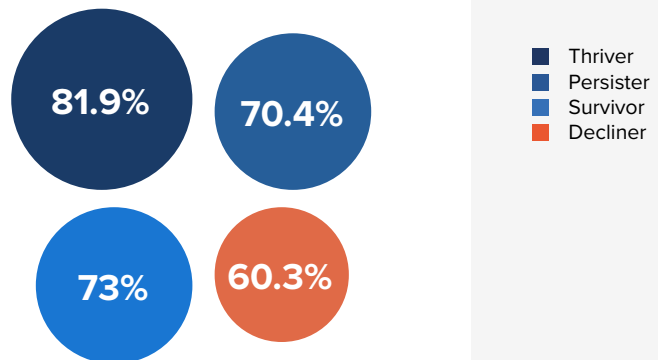
Next, organizations' acceptance of and threat response to the pandemic was assessed. Specifically, senior leaders were asked about what occurred in early 2020, when the pandemic first became widely publicized in the U.S. as a possible adverse event.

Key differences¹⁵ among resilience trajectories were found for senior leaders' acceptance of the pandemic as an adverse event:



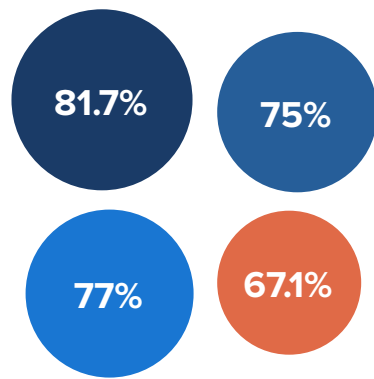
When there were early signs of the pandemic coming to U.S., senior leaders at my organization quickly acknowledged that the pandemic was going to impact our organization.

The Thriver trajectory (81.9%) had significantly greater endorsement than the Decliner trajectory (60.3%) for this item (significant differences were not found for Persister [70.4%] or Survivor [73%] trajectories compared to the others).



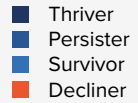
¹⁵ Differences reported are significant ($p < .05$). Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments.

Further, key differences among resilience trajectories were found for the organizations' responses to the impending threat of the pandemic:



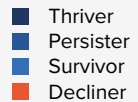
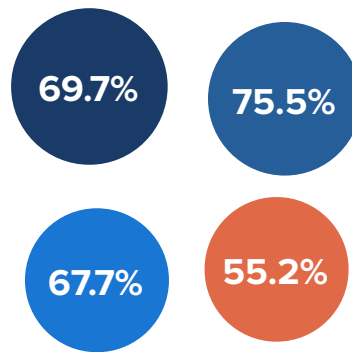
In response to the threat of a pandemic, my organization had discussed how a pandemic response would be managed with key staff.

The Thriver trajectory (81.7%) had significantly greater endorsement (“Yes” as opposed to “No”) for this item than the Decliner trajectory (67.1%) for this item (significant differences were not found for Persister [75%] or Survivor [77%] trajectories compared to the others).



In response to the threat of a pandemic, my organization had engaged in formal planning with other organizations to manage the impact of a pandemic on our sector.

Resilient trajectories of Thriver (69.7%) and Persister (75.5%) had significantly greater endorsement (“Yes” as opposed to “No”) for this item than the Decliner trajectory (55.2%). Significant differences were not found for the Survivor (67.7%) trajectory compared to the others.



No significant differences were found among the organizational resilience trajectories when it came to putting formal plans in place to manage a pandemic response based on the threat of the pandemic (the average of the endorsements was 66.1%, $SD = 0.06$).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Senior leaders must quickly come to terms with the implications of adverse events as opposed to remaining in denial. The faster senior leaders accept that there is an adversity, the faster they can react. This may be particularly true for organizations in the Thriver trajectory, because the pattern of results shows that those in this trajectory were most often in the higher agreement or endorsement comparison group.

Senior leaders should not “go it alone.” Fast reactions may have helped resilient organizations be more likely to involve others both within and outside their organizations to help prepare for the impending threat. These actions also highlight the importance of senior leaders engaging with their key staff and leveraging their networks.



Stage 3: Into the Thick of It Actions in Response to the Pandemic

Actions in response to the pandemic were assessed to examine what organizations did to adapt. Senior leaders were asked about how their organizations developed and subsequently implemented solutions. Key differences among resilience trajectories were found for these actions.

Solution Development

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the resilience trajectories had significantly¹⁶ greater endorsements of the following statements answered “*In response to the pandemic ...*”

- *We have been able to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our actions at my organization.*
- *Expert assistance has been easy to obtain at my organization when something comes up that we don't know how to handle.*
- *Employees have been empowered to use their knowledge in new ways to overcome challenges.*

Additionally, compared with all other trajectories, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly greater endorsements of the following statement answered “*In response to the pandemic ...*”

- *Employees have been recognized or rewarded for thinking outside of the box.*

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Survivor and Thriver trajectories had significantly greater endorsements of the following statements answered “*In response to the pandemic ...*”

- *My organization has kept current on the latest information to make informed decisions.*
- *It has been a priority that employees have the information and knowledge they need.*

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly greater endorsements of the following statement answered “*In response to the pandemic ...*”

- *My organization has been able to make tough decisions quickly when needed.*

¹⁶ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

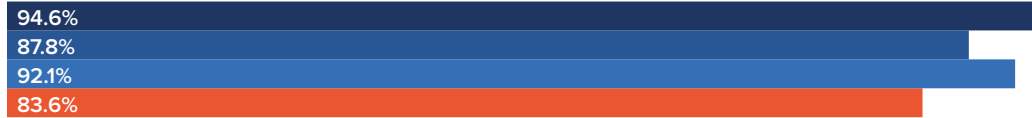
Solution Development

In response to the pandemic ...

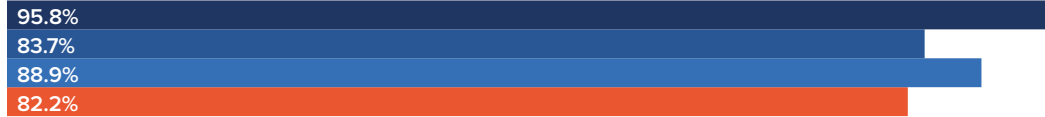
My organization has kept current on the latest information to make informed decisions.



We have been able to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our actions at my organization.



My organization has been able to make tough decisions quickly when needed.



Expert assistance has been easy to obtain at my organization when something comes up that we don't know how to handle.



It has been a priority that employees have the information and knowledge they need.



Employees have been empowered to use their knowledge in new ways to overcome challenges.



Employees have been recognized or rewarded for thinking outside of the box.



Solution Implementation

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the resilience trajectories had significantly¹⁷ greater endorsements of the following statements answered "In response to the pandemic ..."

- *My organization has been able to shift rapidly from business-as-usual mode to adjust to changing situations.*
- *Internal organizational resources have become more easily available at short notice/there is less red tape to deal with.*



Percent Agreement
(Somewhat and
Strongly Agree)

- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner

¹⁷ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).



— *Employees quickly accepted decisions made by management about how our organization should manage the pandemic response, even if the decisions were developed with little consultation with employees.*

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly greater endorsements of the following statements answered “In response to the pandemic ...”

- *Employees have worked with whomever they needed to work with to get the job done well, regardless of departmental or organizational boundaries.*
- *Someone with the authority to act has always been accessible to employees on the front lines.*

Additionally, compared with all other trajectories, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly greater endorsements of the following statement answered “In response to the pandemic ...”

— *The actions my organization has taken have been well coordinated.*

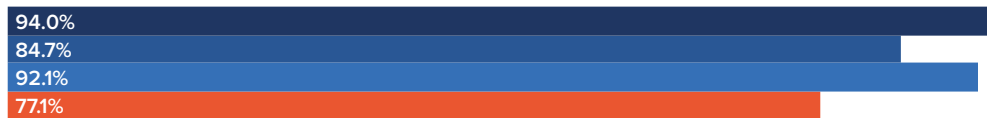
Compared with the Persister trajectory, those in all other trajectories (Decliner, Survivor and Thriver) had significantly greater endorsements of the following statement answered “In response to the pandemic ...”

— *My organization has made concrete changes to policies/procedures.*

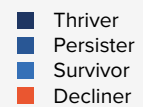
Solution Implementation

In response to the pandemic ...

My organization has been able to shift rapidly from business-as-usual mode to adjust to changing situations.



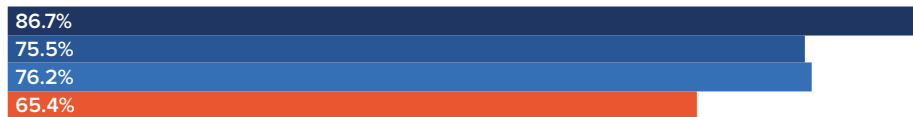
Percent Agreement
(Somewhat and
Strongly Agree)



My organization has made concrete changes to policies/procedures.



Internal organizational resources have become more easily available at short notice/there is less red tape to deal with.



Employees have worked with whomever they needed to work with to get the job done well, regardless of departmental or organizational boundaries.



Someone with the authority to act has always been accessible to employees on the front lines.





Employees quickly accepted decisions made by management about how our organization should manage the pandemic response, even if the decisions were developed with little consultation with employees.



Percent Agreement
(Somewhat and
Strongly Agree)

- Thriver
- Persister
- Survivor
- Decliner

The actions my organization has taken have been well coordinated.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Leaders must continuously engage in information seeking and sharing. Resilient organizations did this through making information and expertise accessible to employees and decision-makers and seeking feedback regarding the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the pandemic. In essence, this continuous sense-making of the situation likely helped organizations know when and what to change.

Trailblazers need to be supported and rewarded. In response to the pandemic, resilient organizations—especially Thrivers—were more likely than Decliners to empower their employees to use their knowledge in new ways and recognize out-of-the-box thinking. Essentially, organizations should not assume employees will just find and execute helpful ideas. Environments must be shaped to foster these behaviors.

During turbulent times, leaders must clear a path for changes. When it came to implementing solutions, results suggest organizations that were resilient were more likely to break down bureaucratic barriers, coordinate effectively and bring employees on board to enact changes. This was particularly true of those in the Thriver category.

Section D: What Did Resilient Organizations Have?



To examine the question of what organizations had to aid their resilience, senior leaders were asked about their organizations' a) resources, b) their organizational culture norms and c) their own leadership characteristics.

Resources

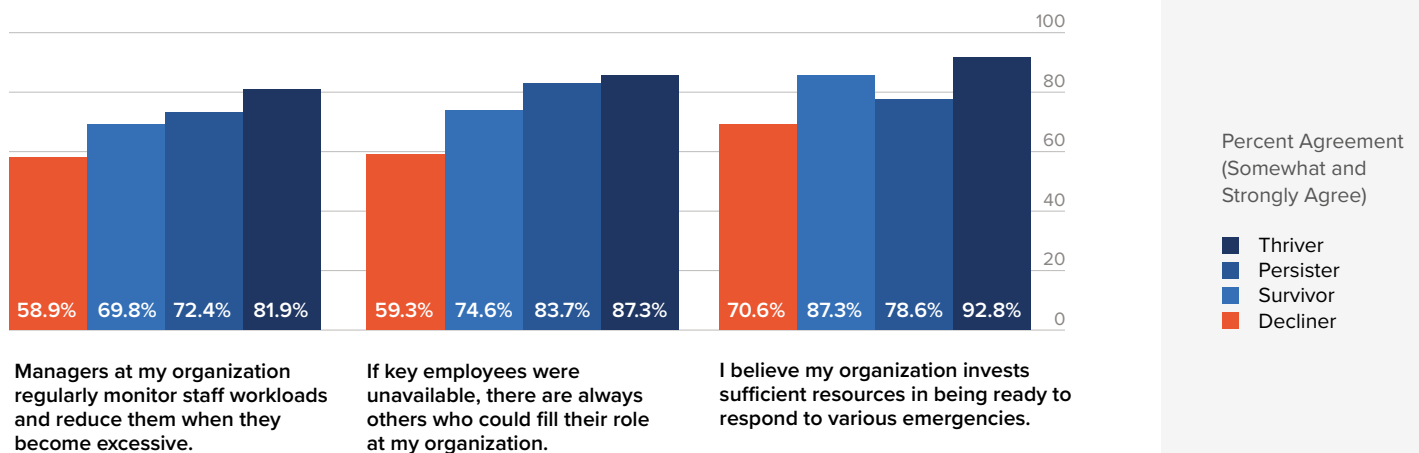
Whether organizations have the resources available to meet the changing demands of adverse events will likely play an important role in organizational resilience. These resources were assessed to examine what organizations had at their disposal. Specifically, senior leaders were asked about personnel-related resources and social resources. Key differences among resilience trajectories were found.

Personnel Resources

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the resilience trajectories had significantly¹⁸ greater endorsements of the following statements:

- *Managers at my organization regularly monitor staff workloads and reduce them when they become excessive.*
- *If key employees were unavailable, there are always others who could fill their role at my organization.*
- *I believe my organization invests sufficient resources in being ready to respond to various emergencies.*

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

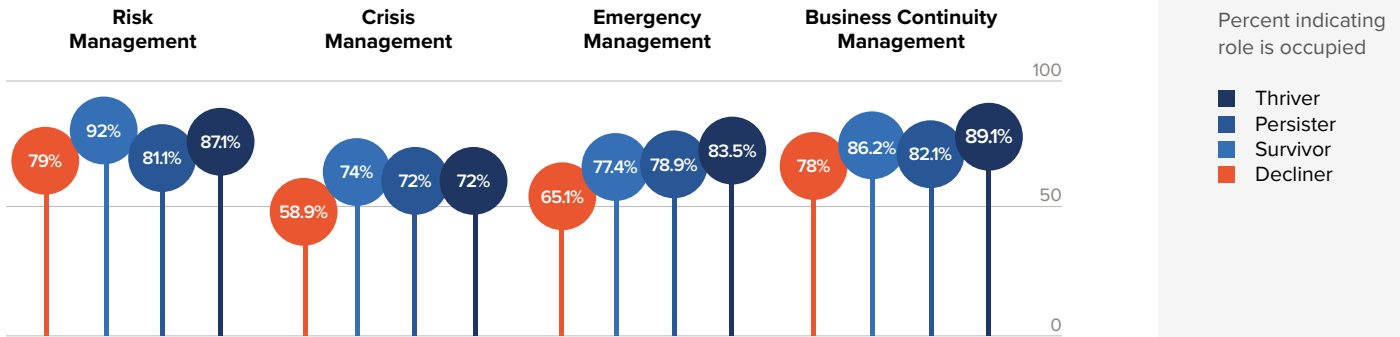


¹⁸ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

Additionally, the organizational resilience trajectories had a greater percentage of senior leaders indicate their organizations employ people in critical managerial roles compared with the percentage of those in the Decliner trajectory. Significant¹⁹ differences are depicted as follows:



ROLES IN WHICH ORGANIZATIONS EMPLOY PERSONNEL



Those in the Survivor trajectory were significantly more likely than those in the Decliner trajectory to indicate they employ people in **risk management**.

Those in the Survivor trajectory were significantly more likely than those in the Decliner trajectory to indicate they employ people in **crisis management**.

Those in the Thrivers trajectory were significantly more likely than those in the Decliner trajectory to indicate they employ people in **emergency management**.

Those in the Thrivers trajectory were significantly more likely than those in the Decliner trajectory to indicate they employ people in **business continuity management**.



¹⁹ Differences reported are significant ($p < .05$). Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments.

Social Resources

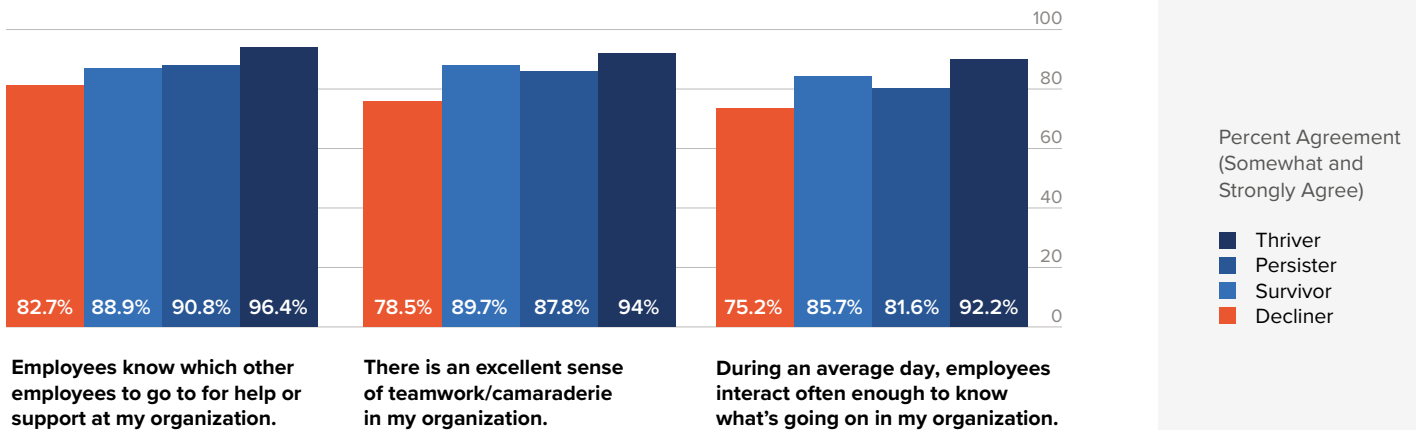
Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Thriver and Survivor trajectories had significantly²⁰ greater endorsements of the following statements:

- *During an average day, employees interact often enough to know what's going on in my organization.*
- *There is an excellent sense of teamwork/camaraderie in my organization.*

Additionally, compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly²¹ greater endorsements of the following statement:

- *Employees know which other employees to go to for help or support at my organization.*

SOCIAL RESOURCES



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Having personnel in place and in the right places helps aid resilience. Results show having personnel resources available to devote to the ebbs and flows of work and having employees in critical roles related to navigating adversity were important for resilient organizations.

Social resources are the grease to make the organizational resilience wheels turn.

Having established social resources that help employees feel comfortable interacting with and giving/receiving support from others is vital to resilient organizations. This likely facilitates information sharing and the leveraging of knowledge.

²⁰ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

²¹ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).



Organizational Culture Norms



Organizational culture norms arise from organizations' values and set standards for appropriate workplace behaviors (e.g., how employees should interact).²² Organizational culture norms are relatively stable and enduring within organizations, and certain types of norms have been associated with positive organizational outcomes. In the context of organizational resilience, which involves overcoming adverse challenges, two overarching organizational culture norms were expected to be particularly useful: adaptability and inclusion.

Adaptability norms²³ involve adjusting to changing environments. These norms consist of three subcategories:

A. Organizational Change

Involving change leadership practices (strategizing and overcoming resistance to change), agility and continuous development.

B. Power and Responsibility

Involving employee empowerment and feelings of accountability for solving problems and organizational effectiveness.

C. Organizational Learning

Involving analyzing successes and mistakes for new insights and challenging past assumptions to improve processes.

Inclusion norms²⁴ involve ensuring organizational members of all backgrounds feel like they belong and are valued for their uniqueness. These norms consist of three subcategories:

A. Fairness

Involving unbiased and fairly implemented employment practices.

B. Value for Uniqueness

Involving appreciating employee differences and fostering employees acting consistently with their core identities.

C. Inclusion in Decision-Making

Involving seeking and integrating diverse perspectives.

²² O'Reilly, C. A., & Chatman, J. A. (1996). Culture as social control: Corporations, cults, and commitment. In B. M. Staw, L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 18, pp. 157–200). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

²³ Adapted from Duchek (2020).

²⁴ Adapted from Nishii, L. (2013). The benefits of climate for inclusion for gender-diverse groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56, 1754-1774.

Senior leaders were asked several questions about each of these norms and their subcategories. Key differences²⁵ among resilience trajectories were found.



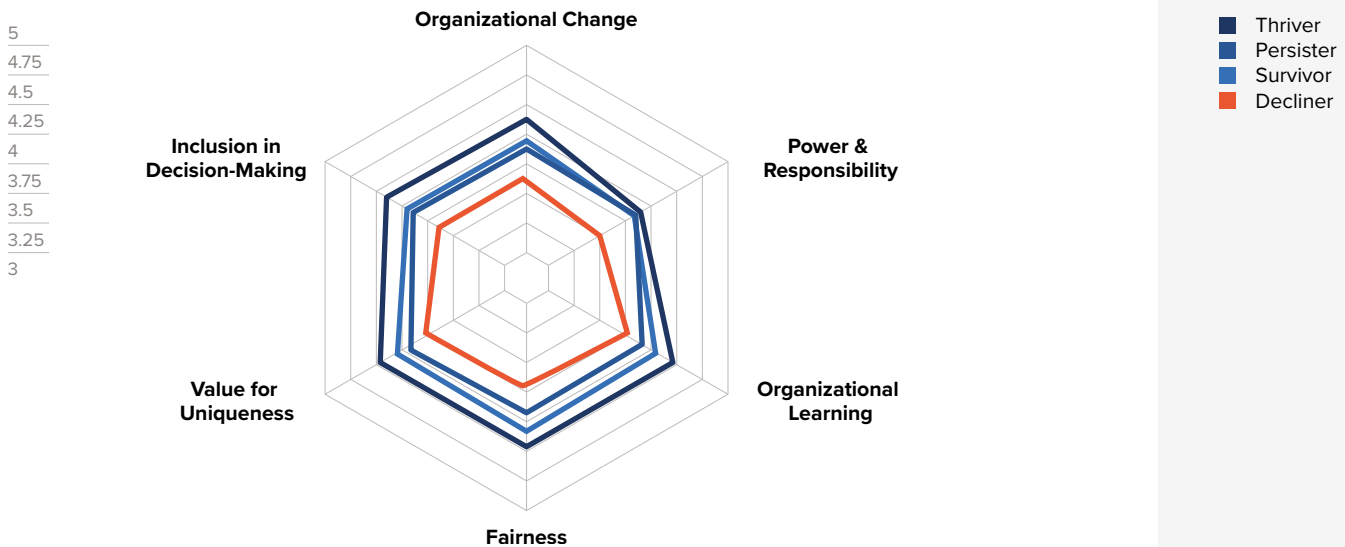
Adaptability Norms

- A. Organizational Change** – Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the organizational resilience trajectories had significantly higher standings on Organizational Change. Further, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly higher standings on Organizational Change than those in all other trajectories.
- B. Power and Responsibility** – Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the organizational resilience trajectories (Survivor, Persister and Thriver) had significantly higher standings on Power and Responsibility.
- C. Organizational Learning** – Those in the Survivor and Thriver trajectories had significantly higher standings on Organizational Learning than those in the Decliner trajectory. Those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly higher standings on Organizational Learning than those in the Persister trajectory.

Inclusion Norms

- A. Fairness** – Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Survivor and Thriver trajectories had significantly higher standings on Fairness. Further, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly higher standings on Fairness than those in the Persister trajectory.
- B. Value for Uniqueness** – Those in the Survivor and Thriver trajectories had significantly higher standings on Value for Uniqueness than those in the Decliner trajectory.
- C. Inclusion in Decision-Making** – Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the organizational resilience trajectories had significantly higher standings on Inclusion in Decision-Making.

ORGANIZATION CULTURAL NORMS BY RESILIENCE TRAJECTORY



²⁵ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$). Organizational Change means: Decliner = 3.89, Survivor = 4.19, Persister = 4.14 and Thriver = 4.41. Power and Responsibility means: Decliner = 3.75, Survivor = 4.08, Persister = 4.08 and Thriver = 4.14. Organizational Learning means: Decliner = 4.00, Survivor = 4.29, Persister = 4.14 and Thriver = 4.45. Fairness means: Decliner = 3.95, Survivor = 4.30, Persister = 4.16 and Thriver = 4.46. Value for Uniqueness means: Decliner = 3.99, Survivor = 4.27, Persister = 4.21 and Thriver = 4.45. Inclusion in Decision-Making means: Decliner = 3.89, Survivor = 4.20, Persister = 4.18 and Thriver = 4.41.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Predictably, adaptability helps resilience during unpredictable times. Norms associated with adaptability are associated with continuous learning, facilitating positive development at both the employee and organizational levels, and employee empowerment, all of which are likely key to appropriately bracing for or overcoming adversity.

Inclusion is key. Norms associated with inclusion can leverage diverse experiences and ways of thinking, which is especially useful for problem-solving. Further, these inclusion norms are expected to facilitate a sense of belonging for employees of all backgrounds, which may help employees support one another and be more likely to stick with the organization during times of greater turbulence and uncertainty. Fairness norms that are expected to foster perceptions of equity may be critical to this end, especially when it comes to compensation.²⁶

²⁶ Society for Human Resource Management. (2021). *Surviving the Great Resignation*. https://shrm-res.cloudinary.com/image/upload/v1641850736/Cause%20the%20Effect/CPR-212272_GRT-Report_v15.pdf

Senior Leader Characteristics



As key decision-makers and influencers of employee behaviors, senior leaders likely play critical roles in organizational resilience. The characteristics of senior leaders were assessed to examine whether they impact organizational resilience trajectories. Specifically, senior leaders were asked about their own propensity to be resilient.²⁷ Key differences among resilience trajectories were found.

Senior Leader Resilience

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Thriver trajectory had significantly²⁸ greater endorsements of the following statements:

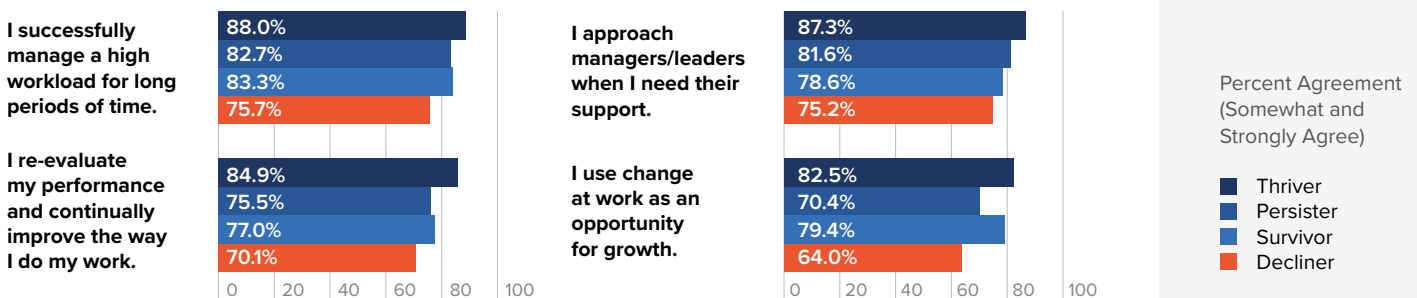
- *I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time.*
- *I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work.*
- *I approach managers/leaders when I need their support.*

Compared with the Decliner trajectory, those in the Survivor and Thrive trajectories had significantly²⁹ greater endorsements of the following statement:

- *I use change at work as an opportunity for growth.*

No other significant differences were found.

SENIOR LEADER RESILIENCE



KEY TAKEAWAY

Thriving organizations have resilient senior leaders. Compared to Decliners, senior leaders in organizations categorized as Thrivers had greater endorsements of items reflecting individual resilience capabilities (e.g., managing high workloads, re-evaluating one’s own performance for continuous improvement and asking for support). By exhibiting these behaviors, senior leaders can likely better adapt to adversity while also modeling useful behaviors that can be adopted by their employees in the face of adversity.

²⁷ Employee resilience measure adapted from Näswall, K., Malinen, S., Kuntz, J., & Hodliffe, M. (2019). Employee resilience: Development and validation of a measure. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34, 353-367.

²⁸ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

²⁹ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

Part 2: **Employee Resilience Study**



Study Background



Organizational resilience and employee resilience are inseparable. In today's knowledge-based economy, human resources are widely considered organizations' most valuable resources. Therefore, if employees are unable to weather a storm of adversity, such as the pandemic, it is unlikely that organizations will be able to do so effectively, either. At the employee level, resilience is the "capacity of employees that is supported and facilitated by organizations to positively cope, adapt, and even thrive in response to dynamic and challenging environments."³⁰ But what organizational factors helped foster employee resilience when it came to the pandemic?

To answer this question, data were collected from 1,007 full-time employees (at the individual contributor level) in organizations of at least 50 employees from all regions of the U.S. All employees had been working at their organizations for at least three years so their knowledge of their organization prior to the pandemic to now could be captured.

A multi-level lens was used to examine important factors that influence employee resilience at the individual, group, supervisor and organization levels. First, employees were asked about their own jobs and personal characteristics that could be influencing their resilience capacities (**Section A**). Then, they were asked about the characteristics of their immediate work environments, including their workgroups and immediate supervisors' behaviors (**Section B**). Finally, employees were asked about their overall organizations' actions and norms (**Section C**). The impact of these factors on employee resilience levels (low, average, high) are examined.

³⁰ Zhu et al. (2019).



Section A:

Individual-Level Factors and Employee Resilience



Like organizational resilience, employee resilience involves adversity (e.g., the pandemic) and positive functioning. Positive functioning, in this case, represents employees being able to continuously adapt and excel at work and is expected to involve behaviors like proactivity, adaptation, and leveraging networks and resources.³¹ Employees were asked to rate their behaviors on several items to this end on a scale from 1 to 5 (higher numbers indicate higher resilience). The average employee resilience score was 3.86³² out of 5 ($SD = 0.725$).

Employees were then categorized into low (below average; 17.58%), average (65.95%), and high (above average; 16.48%) resilience based on their resilience scale scores.³³

Should Employers Care About Employee Resilience? Examining the Relationship Between Employee Resilience and Workplace Attitudes and Intentions

In response to the pandemic, the Great Resignation³⁴ triggered both turnover contagion³⁵ and a subsequent rise in workload for employees who stayed³⁶ as they took on the responsibilities of those who left. Further, beyond the virtual or brick-and-mortar walls of their organizations, most—if not all—employees were subjected to some level of stress or even trauma³⁷ from the pandemic in their personal lives. Given these compounding issues, work-related attitudes can act as the canary in the coal mine for predicting retention and well-being. To this end, work-related attitudes of job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion (a common indicator of burnout) and intentions related to turnover are particularly important.

³¹ Kuntz, J. R. C., Malinen, S., & Näswall, K. (2017). Employee resilience: Directions for resilience development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 69(3), 223–242.

³² Notably, this average may be greater than that of the normal population due to the sample requirements. For instance, employees who were able to stay with their current organization during the pandemic (at least three years) may have access to support systems and networks important for fostering resilience.

³³ The low and high categorizations were based on +/- one standard deviation from the mean.

³⁴ Maurer, R., & Mirza, B. (2021, September 12). *Deconstructing the great resignation*. Society for Human Resource Management. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-news/pages/deconstructing-the-great-resignation.aspx>

³⁵ Ford, A. (2019, August 13). *Turnover contagion: Are your employees vulnerable?* Society for Human Resource Management. <https://blog.shrm.org/blog/turnover-contagion-are-your-employees-vulnerable>

³⁶ Society for Human Resource Management. (2021, October 20). *SHRM research highlights lasting impact of the 'Great Resignation' on workers who choose to stay*. <https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/press-room/press-releases/pages/shrm-research-highlights-lasting-impact-of-the-%E2%80%98resignation-tsunami%E2%80%99-on-workers-who-choose-to-stay.aspx>

³⁷ Lonsdorf, K. (2022, April 7). *People are developing trauma-like symptoms as the pandemic wears on*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/07/1087195915/covid-pandemic-trauma-mentalhealth#:~:text=People%20are%20developing%20trauma%2Dlike,the%20pandemic%20wears%20on%20%3A%20NPR&text=Press-,People%20are%20developing%20trauma%2Dlike%20symptoms%20as%20the%20pandemic%20wears,common%20experiences%20in%20the%20pandemic>



Research suggests employee resilience should predict work-related attitudes and intentions. To confirm this in our sample, employees were asked about their current attitudes compared with their pre-pandemic attitudes, which formed attitude trajectories:

- **Improved:** Better attitudes now compared to pre-pandemic.
- **Maintained:** The same attitudes compared to pre-pandemic, with little to no change.
- **Recovered:** The same attitudes compared to pre-pandemic, after temporarily worsening.
- **Worsened:** Worse attitudes now compared to pre-pandemic.

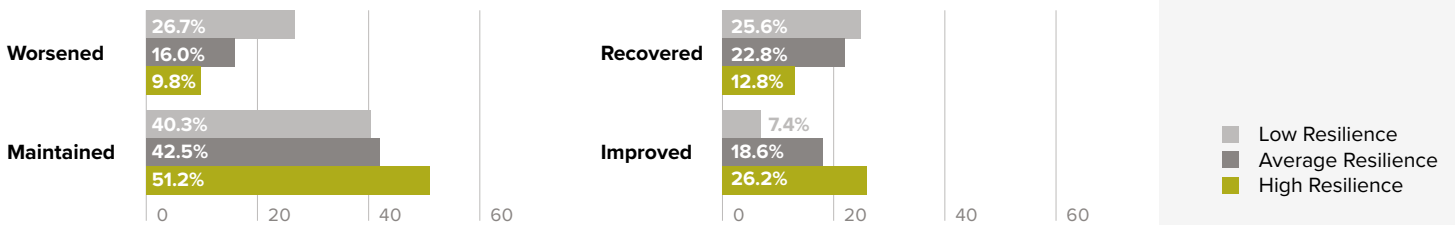
These attitude trajectories were then examined in relation to employee resilience categories to reveal whether employee resilience is related to desirable outcomes for this employee population. Key differences³⁸ among resilience categories were found.

Employee resilience and attitudes now compared to before the pandemic.

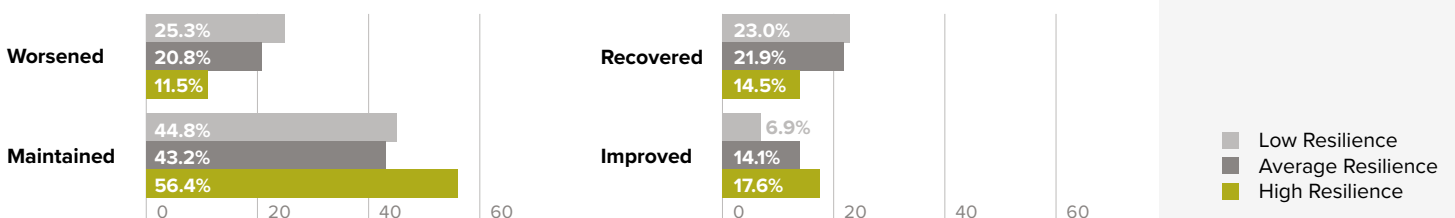
Compared with those in the low resilience category, those in the average and high resilience categories were more likely to indicate that their job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion levels had improved (higher job satisfaction and less emotionally exhausted currently as compared with prior to the pandemic).

Compared with the high and average resilience categories, those in the low resilience category were more likely to indicate their job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion levels had worsened (lower job satisfaction and more emotionally exhausted currently as compared to prior to the pandemic).

JOB SATISFACTION TRAJECTORIES BY EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE



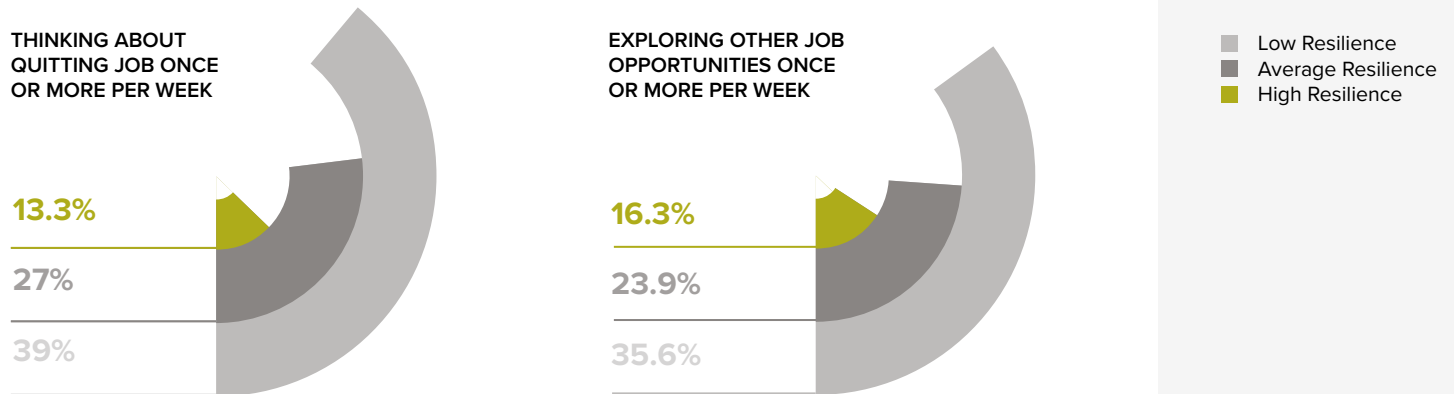
EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION TRAJECTORIES BY EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE



³⁸ Differences reported are significant ($p < .05$). Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments.

Employee resilience and turnover intentions.

Although turnover intentions were somewhat low across the board for all of the employee resilience categories, they were significantly more frequent for those in the low resilience category, compared with those in the average and high resilience categories.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Employee resilience is good for well-being and retention. Ultimately, these results support the role of resilience in fostering positive employee attitudes (job satisfaction) and reducing negative attitudes and intentions (emotional exhaustion and turnover intention). These attitudes are indeed important for employee well-being (e.g., emotional exhaustion is an important component of burnout³⁹) and retention.⁴⁰ Therefore, employers should indeed care about fostering employee resilience in turbulent times.⁴¹

³⁹ Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397–422.

⁴⁰ Hom, P., Caranikas-Walker, F., Prussia, G. E., & Griffeth, R. W. (1992). A meta-analytical structural equations analysis of a model of employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77(6), 890-909.

⁴¹ Although causal claims cannot be made with this data, employee resilience predicting attitudes and intentions is evidenced in other research. Given the likely higher levels of resilience in this sample (because they were able to remain with their organizations for at least three years), we may expect these effects to be more pronounced in a more general employee population.



■ Low Resilience
■ Average Resilience
■ High Resilience

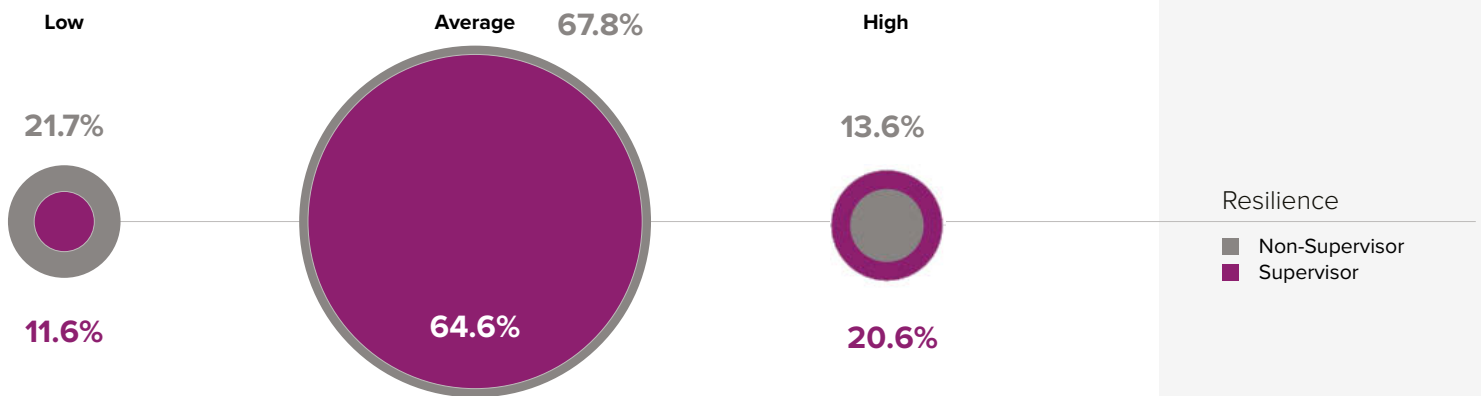
Employee Resilience by Individual Job and Personal Characteristics



Individual and personal characteristics were explored next to determine what impact, if any, these had on employee resilience. Specifically, employee resilience categories were examined in relation to job function, remote-work status,⁴² supervision of other employees, caregiver responsibilities, gender, race and age. While no significant differences were found for employee resilience in relation to remote-work status, gender, race and age, significant differences were found for supervision of other employees and caregiver responsibilities.

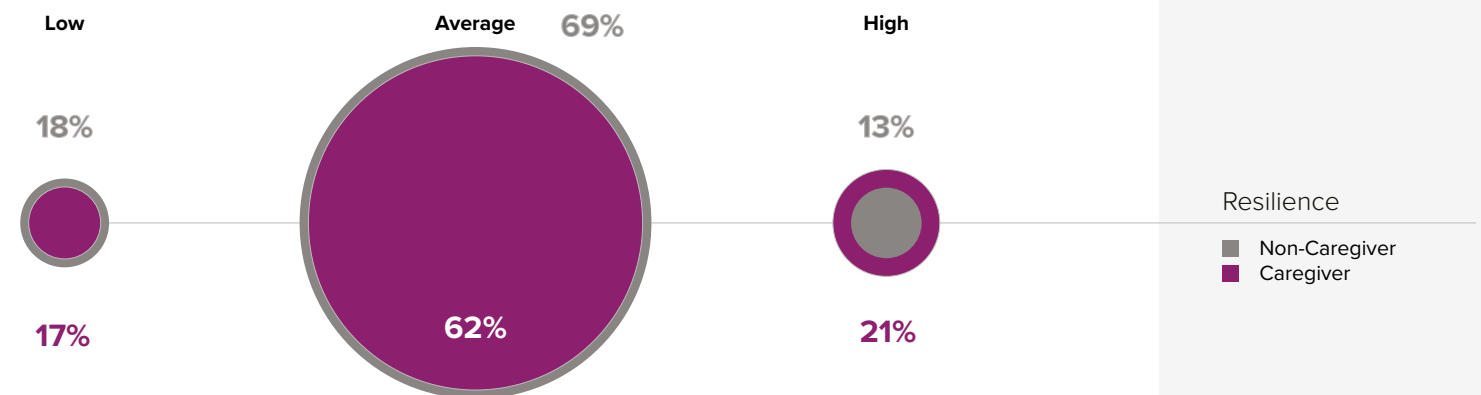
Supervision of Other Employees. Those with supervisory responsibilities were significantly more likely than those without supervisory responsibilities to be in the high resilience category and significantly less likely than those without supervisory responsibilities to be in the low resilience category. No significant differences were found for the average resilience category.

EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND SUPERVISION OF OTHERS



Caregiver Responsibilities. Those with dependent-care responsibilities were significantly more likely than those without dependent-care responsibilities to be in the high resilience category and significantly less likely than those without dependent-care responsibilities to be in the average resilience category. No significant differences were found for the low resilience category.

EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES



⁴² Remote-work status was coded as fully onsite, mostly onsite, fully remote, mostly remote or a fairly equal mix of remote and onsite.



Interestingly, when examining the types of caregiver responsibilities, caregivers of a child or children between 12 and 18 years old may be driving this relationship between dependent care and high resilience. Among those in the high resilience category, 26.2% answered “yes” to being a caregiver for children 12 to 18 years old versus 14.2% who answered “no.” No other notable differences were found among those who indicated they are caregivers to children under 12 years old; an elderly parent, relative or loved one; or a family member or loved one with a disability.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Resilience is not relegated to a select few. The lack of differences in employee resilience in relation to factors like job function, remote-work status, gender, race and age can be taken as a generally good sign. Specifically, if these often-uncontrollable factors are not influential for resilience, organizational leaders can look to other, more controllable factors to influence resilience, such as organizational resources and leader behaviors.

Certain responsibilities may beget resilience. Interestingly, those with caregiver—notably of older children—and supervisor responsibilities were more likely to be higher in employee resilience compared with those without those responsibilities. Although the reasons for this are not quite clear, it may be that these individuals have honed a greater skill set in being resilient based on their responsibilities. Or it could be that older children and the employees supervised provide social support and resources that can be relied on and leveraged by caregivers and supervisors, respectively.



Section B: Workgroup and Supervisor Factors and Employee Resilience



Factors of employees' immediate work environment were explored next to determine what impact, if any, these had on employee resilience. Specifically, employee resilience categories were examined in relation to the inclusivity of their workgroup and the behaviors of their immediate supervisors.

Supervisor Behaviors

Supervisor Empathy: Supervisors are often sources of meaning and support in the work environment, which may help employees cope when facing adversity. More specifically, supervisor displays of empathy are expected to signal that those supervisors understand and care about their employees, which can be viewed as a form of social support that employees can leverage to help cope with or even buffer the effects of adversity.^{43,44}

Supervisor Inclusion: Additionally, inclusive supervisor behaviors of facilitating employee belongingness and demonstrating value for employee uniqueness⁴⁵ likely provide additional support that may help employees cope with adversity while also helping to remove obstacles to full contribution in employees' paths (e.g., removing adherence to standard business hours to give working parents much-needed flexibility to care for young children when schools/day cares closed). Further, these inclusive behaviors are also expected to help employees share unique ideas and contributions, such as more effective ways to adapt their work during the pandemic.

Workgroup Inclusion

Workgroup inclusion reflects whether employees feel they are treated as if they belong to the group and are valued for their uniqueness by members of their workgroup.⁴⁶ Similar to the expected impact of inclusive supervisor behavior, those in inclusive workgroups may feel more supported by those with whom they work regularly. Further, they may be more likely to voice their unique ideas and contributions regarding better ways their workgroup may adapt during the pandemic.

⁴³ Richard, E. M. (2020). Developing employee resilience: The role of leader-facilitated emotion management. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 22(4), 387–403.

⁴⁴ Richard, E. M., Phillips, C., & Alzaidalsharief, R. (2016). Supervisor empathy moderates the negative effects of customer injustice. In N. M. Ashkanasy, W. J. Zerbe, & C. E. J. Hartel (Eds.), *Research on Emotion in Organizations* (Vol. 12). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

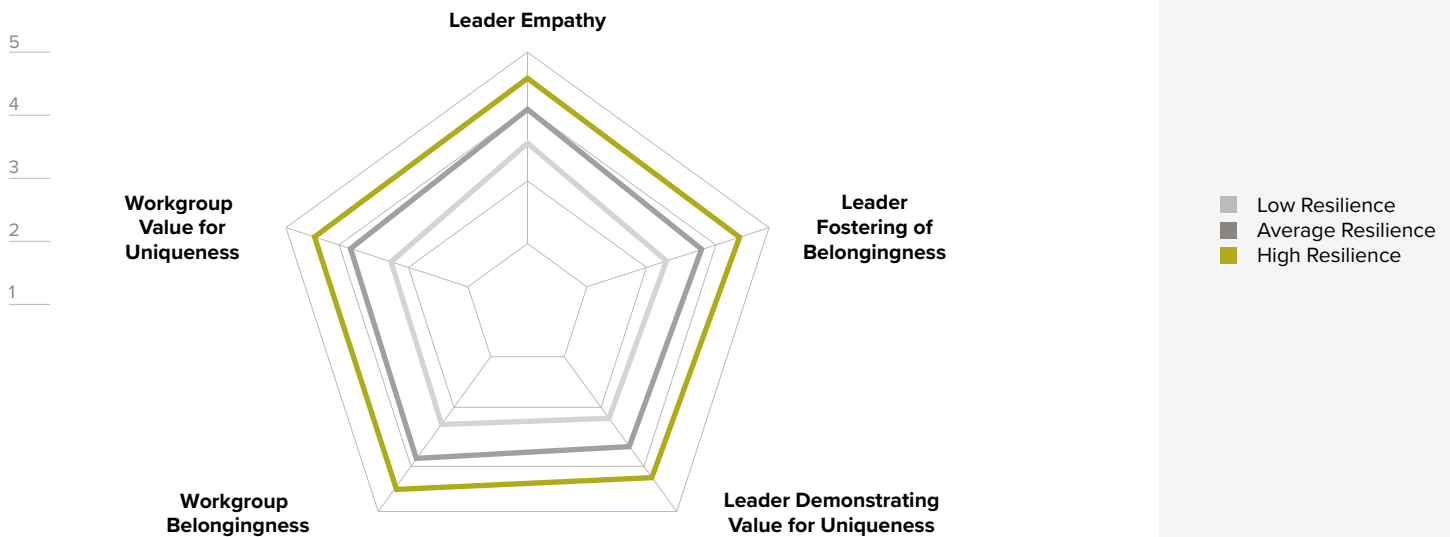
⁴⁵ Randel, A. E., Galvin, B. M., Shore, L. M., Ehrhart, K. H., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., & Kedharnath, U. (2018). Inclusive leadership: Realizing positive outcomes through belongingness and being valued for uniqueness. *Human Resource Management Review*, 28(2), 190–203.

⁴⁶ Chung, B. G., Ehrhart, K. H., Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Dean, M. A., & Kedharnath, U. (2020). Work group inclusion: Test of a scale and model. *Group & Organization Management*, 45(1), 75–102.



These supervisor and workgroup perceptions were then examined in relation to employee resilience categories. Key differences⁴⁷ among resilience categories were found. Specifically, compared with the average and low employee resilience categories, those in the high resilience category had significantly greater perceptions of their supervisors' displays of empathy and inclusive behaviors related to fostering belonging and demonstrating value for uniqueness, as well as their workgroup belongingness and value for uniqueness. Those in the average employee resilience category had significantly greater perceptions of these same supervisor and workgroup factors than those in the low employee resilience category.

EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND SUPERVISOR AND WORKGROUP BEHAVIORS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Leader empathy is a strength. Results clearly show that leader empathy is associated with high levels of employee resilience. In fact, supervisor empathy scores were over 1.4 times higher for those with high (versus low) resilience. So, contrary to outdated but yet-to-be out-the-door leader beliefs, acknowledging emotions at work is not a weakness—it seems to be a leader strength. Indeed, empathy is expected to help employees cope with adversity and may be a vital leader emotion management technique to master.

Immediate work environments that foster inclusion also foster resilience. Results also show that leader and workgroup inclusion are both associated with high levels of employee resilience. Those with inclusive supervisors and in inclusive workgroups may feel more supported by those with whom they work regularly, fostering their coping capabilities. Further, they may be more likely to voice their unique ideas and contributions regarding better ways to adapt while also possibly learning better ways to adapt from the ideas of others. As leaders play a role in setting norms and behavioral standards for workgroups, it may be especially vital for leaders to engage in inclusive behaviors to foster inclusion in the workplace.

⁴⁷ Differences reported are significant ($p < .05$). Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments. Leader Empathy means: low resilience = 3.23, average resilience = 3.95 and high resilience = 4.57. Leader Fostering of Belongingness means: low resilience = 2.83, average resilience = 3.60 and high resilience = 4.43. Leader Demonstrating Value for Uniqueness means: low resilience = 2.82, average resilience = 3.52 and high resilience = 4.33. Workgroup Belongingness means: low resilience = 3.06, average resilience = 3.91 and high resilience = 4.65. Workgroup Value for Uniqueness means: low resilience = 2.97, average resilience = 3.81 and high resilience = 4.62.



Section C: Organizational Factors and Employee Resilience

Beyond immediate work environments, employee resilience behaviors can be influenced (constrained or facilitated) by factors in the greater organizational environment. For instance, if support systems and resources don't exist in one's environment, an employee won't be able to leverage them. Additionally, if organizations reinforce strict policies and authority, proactive behaviors vital for resiliency may be viewed as insubordination or out of line and therefore constrained.

To examine organizational factors that relate to employee resilience, employees were asked about their organizations' resources and organizational culture norms.

Resources

Whether organizations have the resources available to meet the changing demands of adverse events will likely play an important role in employee resilience. Employee resilience involves leveraging resources and networks,⁴⁸ so the extent to which personnel-related resources (e.g., additional employees) exist and social resources (e.g., networks and collaboration) are fostered in organizations affects whether resilient behaviors may be possible. Therefore, these organizational resources were assessed to examine if they impacted employee resilience. Key differences among employee resilience categories were found.

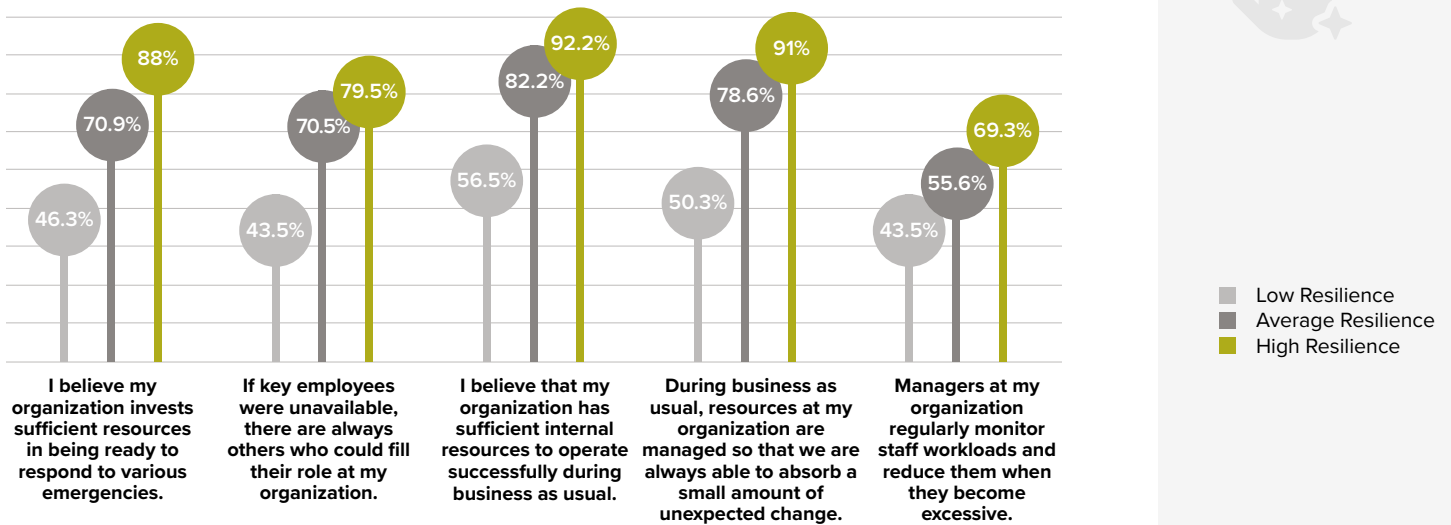
Personnel Resources

The employee resilience categories had significantly⁴⁹ different endorsements of organizations' personnel-related resources. Only the high and average resilience categories were not significantly different from each other for the item: "If key employees were unavailable, there are always others who could fill their role at my organization."

⁴⁸ Kuntz, J. R. C., Malinen, S., & Näswall, K. (2017). Employee resilience: Directions for resilience development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 69(3), 223–242.

⁴⁹ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).

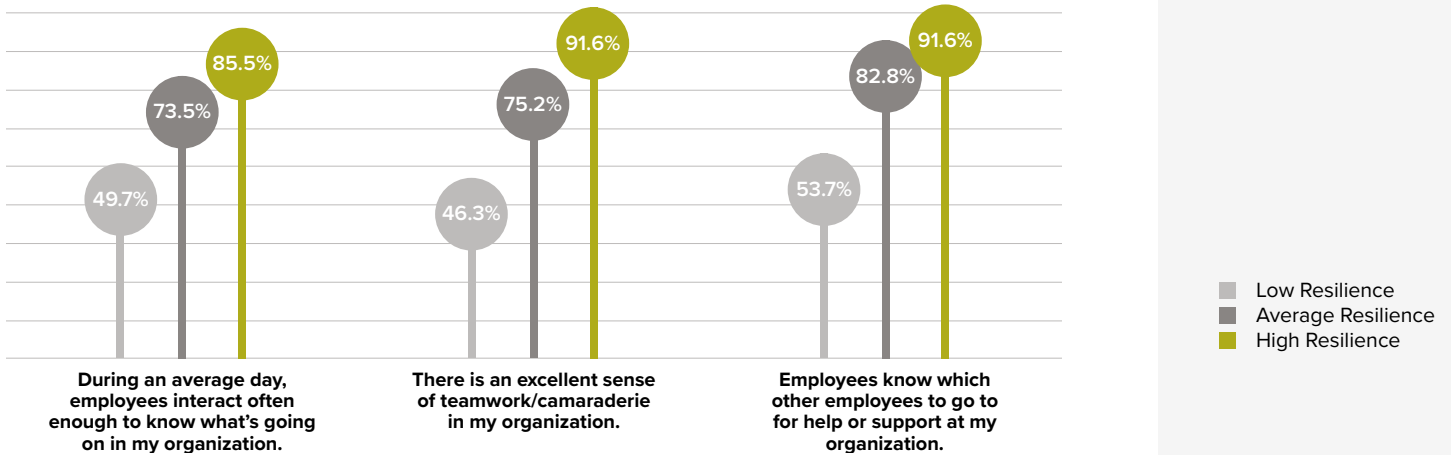
EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES



Social Resources

The employee resilience categories had significantly⁵⁰ different endorsements of organizational social resources. Specifically, all categories were significantly different from each other.

EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL RESOURCES



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Resources are required for resilience. Results support having personnel resources available to devote to the ebbs and flows of work and having established social resources (e.g., networks) in place to facilitate information sharing and leverage knowledge as important factors for employee-level resilience. Together, these resources may be the tangible assets that employees rely on to get through times of uncertainty and, as results suggest, enable employee resilience. Further, social resources may also provide additional means of sense-making and support that may help employees cope with the impact of adversity.

⁵⁰ Significance testing based on ANOVA post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments ($p < .05$).



Organizational Culture Norms

Organizational culture norms arise from organizations' values and standards for appropriate workplace behaviors. They set the stage for how employees should interact.⁵¹ Consistent with the organizational resilience norms examined in Part 1, the two overarching organizational culture norms of adaptability and inclusion were again expected to be impactful at the employee resilience level.



Adaptability norms⁵² involve adjusting to changing environments.

These norms consist of three subcategories of Organizational Change, Power and Responsibility, and Organizational Learning.



Inclusion norms⁵³ involve ensuring organizational members of all backgrounds feel like they belong and are valued for their uniqueness.

These norms consist of three subcategories of Fairness, Value for Uniqueness, and Inclusion in Decision-Making.

To the extent that these norms are present or perceived in employees' organizations, employee resilience should be supported. Because adaptive and proactive behaviors are vital components of employee resilience,⁵⁴ norms surrounding adaptation and inclusion (where diverse perspectives and approaches are sought and valued) should provide the social standard or expectation that employees can and even should engage in resilient behaviors (e.g., proactively proposing or initiating changes to adjust to turbulent times), thus fostering employee resilience. Further, norms surrounding inclusion may also signal to employees (via fostering a sense of belonging) that the organization cares about them as people, thus potentially fostering additional feelings of support that can help employees cope with adversity.

⁵¹ O'Reilly, C. A., & Chatman, J. A. (1996). Culture as social control: Corporations, cults, and commitment. In B. M. Staw, L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior* (Vol. 18, pp. 157–200). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

⁵² Adapted from Duchek (2020).

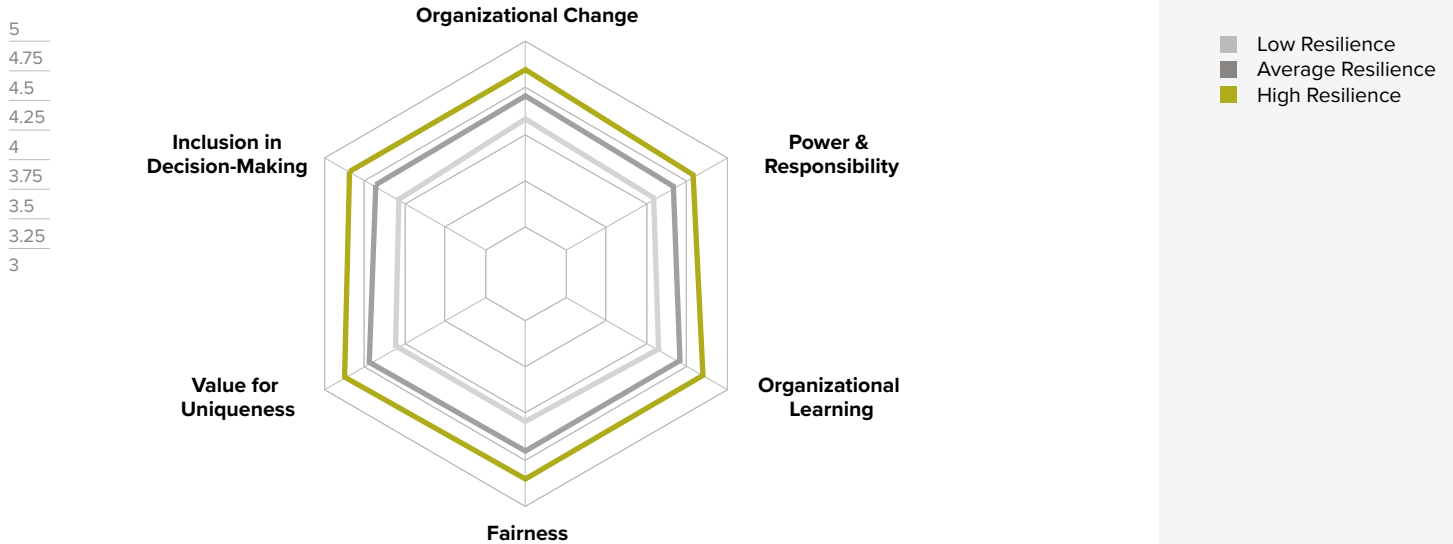
⁵³ Adapted from Nishii (2013).

⁵⁴ Kuntz et al. (2017).



These norms were examined in relation to employee resilience categories. Key differences⁵⁵ among resilience categories were found. Specifically, compared with the average and low employee resilience categories, those in the high resilience category had significantly greater perceptions of adaptability and inclusion norms. Those in the average employee resilience category also had significantly greater perceptions of these norms than those in the low employee resilience category.

EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE NORMS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Adaptability norms set standards for employee resilience behaviors. Results demonstrate that adaptability norms are associated with high employee resilience. These norms surrounding change, empowerment and accountability, and continuous learning may help specify the employee-level behaviors (e.g., proactivity and learning and growing from mistakes) that are key to building and maintaining resilience.

Inclusion is key—again. Results demonstrate that norms fostering inclusion are associated with high employee resilience. When these inclusive norms exist in organizations, employees at all levels may be more likely to support the unique experiences of other employees, which likely helped individual employees cope during the pandemic. Further, these norms may signal to employees that they can seek the support they need from their organizations and that their ideas for how to adapt to the changes brought on by the pandemic are welcome.

⁵⁵ Differences reported are significant ($p < .05$). Significance testing based on Chi-Square independence of observation analyses post-hoc multiple comparisons using Bonferroni adjustments. Organizational Change means: low resilience = 3.27, average resilience = 3.79 and high resilience = 4.35. Power and Responsibility means: low resilience = 3.20, average resilience = 3.68 and high resilience = 4.19. Organizational Learning means: low resilience = 3.31, average resilience = 3.85 and high resilience = 4.42. Fairness means: low resilience = 3.24, average resilience = 3.86 and high resilience = 4.45. Value for Uniqueness means: low resilience = 3.21, average resilience = 3.87 and high resilience = 4.50. Inclusion in Decision-Making means: low resilience = 3.14, average resilience = 3.72 and high resilience = 4.35.

Conclusion



“Examine the present and learn from the past to see how the future will unfold. Too often we just look at the present and base our actions solely on that.” — Shinjō Itō

We may not be able to predict with certainty the next major adverse event. However, this research exploring factors related to organizational and employee resilience throughout the pandemic reveals lessons that may help senior leaders brace for and overcome the impact of future adversity.

At the organizational resilience level, we found practices (e.g., employee listening) and resources (e.g., personnel) that can be in place and organizational culture norms that can be institutionalized presently. We also found actions that can separate the resilient from the non-resilient organizations upon the threat of adversity (e.g., quick acceptance and communication) and while adjusting to the impact of adversity (e.g., empowering employees and reducing bureaucracy).

Regarding organizational alignment as defined by Gap International, we found resilient organizations also cultivated high levels of Purpose and Ownership, while reporting lower levels of Risk (the willingness to challenge the status quo and take unconventional actions). There are many actions leaders can take to increase purpose and ownership in their organizations. It takes persistence, but some of the more common ways to cultivate purpose are: a) linking people’s daily activities to the organization’s purpose; b) acknowledging people for how they are contributing, and creating occasions for people to share how their work is delivering the purpose; c) talking to colleagues whose priorities appear to conflict with yours, discussing how what you both do connects to a shared purpose, and finding ways to support each other. Common ways of cultivating ownership are: a) actively thinking of something that you are not happy with and taking initiative to turn it around; b) thinking about the outcomes your day-to-day tasks serve, and shifting your focus from action to outcome—it will open up new avenues for delivery; c) considering ideas that you would like to communicate, identify the key stakeholders or leaders accountable, and sharing it with them in a way that takes their perspective into consideration.

At the employee resilience level, we found various behaviors (e.g., leader empathy and inclusion) and norms (e.g., adaptability) that likely facilitate employees’ capabilities to engage in resilient behavior. Leaders—at all levels—likely play an important role in employee resilience because they are often the ones who set and reinforce organizational norms and workgroup behaviors.

Through these learnings from two distinct samples, we see tangible processes and practices that leaders across industries can enact and institutionalize. With the right guidance and information, these practices are available to everyone at very little cost to the organization (with perhaps the exception of having slack resources). With the right leader development at all levels and policies in place, senior leaders can build organizational resilience capabilities and foster resilience in their individual employees to better prepare for the future.

Methodology



A sample of 620 senior leaders from the U.S. were surveyed using a third-party online panel. The survey was administered March 24 to March 31, 2022. For the purposes of this survey, we refer to “senior leaders” as those who are working for an organization with 50 or more employees and hold a director, vice president or executive role. All senior leaders worked for their organization for at least three years at the time of the survey. The senior leaders were 66% male, 34% female, and 0.2% non-binary/third gender. They were 73.2% white; 13.5% Black; 12.6% Spanish, Hispanic or Latino; 3.9% Asian; 1.3% Indigenous; 0.6% South Asian; and 0.2% Arab, West Asian, Middle Eastern or North African. The average age of the senior leaders was 42.45 years old.

A sample of 1,007 U.S. employees were surveyed using a third-party online panel. The survey was administered March 24 to April 7, 2022. For the purposes of this survey, we refer to “employees” as those who are working as a paid employee for an organization with 50 or more employees and hold a professional or non-manager role (and thus did not hold a director, vice president or executive role). All employees worked for their organization for at least three years at the time of the survey. The employees were 57.8% female, 41.8% male, 0.1% non-binary/third gender, and 0.3% preferred not to say or to self-describe. They were 76.9% white; 12% Black; 5.5% Spanish, Hispanic or Latino; 5% Asian; 2.3% Indigenous; 0.6% South Asian; and 0.3% Arab, West Asian, Middle Eastern or North African. The average age of the employees was 47.87 years old.

Both samples were screened using quantitative and qualitative data quality checks.



Report Authors



Katrina (“Katie”) P. Merlini, Ph.D., is a thought leadership researcher at SHRM. She holds a Ph.D. in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from Florida Tech and has over a decade of experience conducting organizational research. She teaches graduate organizational psychology courses at Florida Tech and George Mason University and has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and presentations in the field of industrial-organizational psychology.

Liya Williams, M.S., is a research specialist at SHRM. She is responsible for supporting research projects on all things work, worker, and workplace, including key research on workplace culture, mental health, and financial well-being. She earned her master’s degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from Missouri State University.

Alex Topakbashian, MBA, M.S., is a Vice President at Gap International. He responsible for the company’s Breakthrough Diagnostics products which provide visibility into organizational dynamics that foster exceptional performance. For over 20 years, Alex has consulted organizational leaders around the world in achieving breakthrough performance through data-driven insights and application of Gap International’s Breakthrough Thinking methodology. He holds an MBA and a master’s degree in Analytics from Villanova University.

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