



# Business Reimagined: Driving Greater Efficiency and Resiliency

## Why midsize businesses are rethinking the concept of productivity to build resiliency

Economic volatility has always been followed by a drive for greater business efficiency. However, the pandemic unleashed unprecedented and multiple waves of volatility, making it critical for midsize companies to rebuild their operations for sustained resiliency.



**37%** of midsize businesses identify **“increasing productivity”** as their **top business priority**.



**33%** say that **“becoming more agile and flexible”** is a **top five business priority**, which was not true previously.



**28%** plan to **deploy artificial intelligence (AI)** within their **business applications** to automate processes.

Source: IDC Worldwide Small and Medium Business Survey, October 2020

### Why It Matters

In the past, maintaining productivity has been a top business priority for midsize companies as they managed the typical growing pains associated with increasing organizational complexity. Today, there is a new focus on recalibrating business operations to account for the “next normal” of remote work, the shift of business models, and the search for new customers.

Underneath all of that is the harsh reality that minor and major disruptions require frequent pivoting by the business to address new demand shifts and supply chain challenges. Midsize companies are also likely to have more chain links in the global supply chain than their enterprise counterparts, which tend to have more direct relationships with providers of raw materials because of the larger volumes involved. Each additional link introduces more potential points for supply chain disruption. Visibility into the whole supply chain has never been more critical to business agility and growth.

There are also a number of operations that need to be reimagined. The employee journey from onboarding to offboarding needs to shift dramatically to provide strong experiences to both new and existing workers, particularly as new tools are implemented to assist with everyday tasks. Employees don't want their work to take longer than necessary or to be cumbersome, and they get much more satisfaction from having the information needed to provide a good customer experience. Finance needs a complete picture of the business to steer it toward fiscal health, including insights into staffing, expenses, cash flow, and demand. Finance leaders must be able to provide sound advice to senior leadership so that the best possible decisions can be made. And IT teams need to quickly deploy new technology to help all parts of the business achieve greater productivity, which creates pressure when busy IT resources must be dedicated to supporting outdated systems that slow down users.

## Recommendations

Driving efficiency and building organizational resiliency are goals that are inextricably linked. Both require building a culture of data-driven decision making and having a strong, interconnected technology platform. Technology can assist in creating a resilient supply chain, which is an increasingly critical component of the business. When interconnected, supply chains increase efficiency and resiliency through visibility and early detection of interruptions in their supply network, giving businesses time to react before customers are impacted. They also help with new requirements, such as track and trace, health and safety, and new market entry.

HR applications have never been more important to help employees transition between roles, learn desirable skills, keep motivated and engaged, and manage the performance of remote workers. HR applications are interconnected with intelligent systems that can increase employee productivity and engagement by reducing application switching, automating data capture (e.g., expenses, invoices, etc.), and using process automation to streamline tasks, particularly those that are redundant or directly impact the customer. These systems are the key to surfacing insights that are difficult to uncover in disparate systems.

Furthermore, agility in decision making is only possible with truly interconnected data, or one version of the truth. Modern technology platforms can achieve this goal more easily and with fewer resources than legacy systems. Having data in one interconnected place is a key foundational step; otherwise, systems are nothing more than a repository of unused information. Connection also increases the number of users who engage with a platform and their use of its advanced features.



25%

of midsize businesses cite **increasing mobile worker support as a top five technical priority** as they seek to keep employees productive under new working norms.

### Message from the Sponsor

Listen to a follow-up conversation on this topic with IDC Analyst, Shari Lava, and SAP Global Innovation Evangelist, Timo Elliott.

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