



# LESSONS THE PANDEMIC TAUGHT US



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
19M9-T6XF-AFRE

## 1

### Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. How did your way of working change during the pandemic?
2. What changes did your company make in reaction to the pandemic?
3. Which new ways of working did you find challenging?
4. Which new ways of working did you enjoy?
5. What do you think will happen to ways of working in your company once the pandemic is entirely over?





## 2

**Focus on vocabulary**

**Part A: Add the following extracts to the gaps in the definitions.**

**allowed to happen**    **being extremely good**    **hard to understand**    **measuring something**  
**quality or accuracy**    **remembering the past**    **the ordinary employees**    **the same way**

1. dumb down (phr. verb) - to make something simpler and easier to understand by lowering its \_\_\_\_\_
2. metric (n) - a system used for \_\_\_\_\_
3. complexity (n) - a situation when something has a number of different parts and may be \_\_\_\_\_
4. excellence (n) - the quality of \_\_\_\_\_ at a particular activity
5. consistent (adj.) - when something always acts in \_\_\_\_\_
6. shop floor (n) - \_\_\_\_\_, not the managers, of a business or the place where they work
7. nostalgia (n) - the act of \_\_\_\_\_ in a happy way but with a little sadness
8. approval (n) - the official agreement that something is \_\_\_\_\_



**Part B: Now complete the sentences with appropriate words from the same family as the words in Part A.**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of our marketing campaign to appeal to more people has now led to concern that our adverts lack sophistication. (dumb down)
2. Human Resources completely \_\_\_\_\_ of his choice of clothing for the office, and he was asked to go home and change. (approval)
3. Maria really \_\_\_\_\_ at her sales job and was promoted within a year of starting with the company. (excellence)
4. Our systems for approval of new projects are far too \_\_\_\_\_, and I think they need to be simplified. (complexity)
5. I'm concerned our new products are \_\_\_\_\_ with the needs of the customers and aren't going to sell well. (consistent)
6. When the Wi-Fi is down and you can't get anything done, it's easy to feel \_\_\_\_\_ for the days before the Internet. Simpler times! (nostalgia)



Now in pairs, answer the following questions.

1. Within your job, in what situations do you need to get **approval** for something? For example, purchasing office equipment?
2. How would you **dumb down** tasks at your job if you had to explain them to someone new in the field?
3. How would you define **excellence**? How do you know when you're doing an extremely good job?
4. Do the managers at your company communicate well with those on the **shop floor**? How could their communication improve?
5. What performance **metrics** are most important at your company? Cost-effectiveness, productivity, customer satisfaction?
6. What part of your job has the most **complexity**? Why?

### 3 Understanding the main idea

Read these sentences from the video script of a TED Talk, in which Patty McCord argues that the ways we have started working during the pandemic have been an improvement. See if you can guess the missing words. You are given the definition in brackets.

1. I've been trying really hard to \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> (**encourage people to think the same way as you or to agree with you**) people that we can change the way we work.
2. "You know, I'm so inspired by what you say. It's so great, it makes so much sense. But we can't." "We can't because we're \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> ." (**controlled with specific rules, often by the government**)
3. "We can't because we're a \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> industry." (**a business the does something valuable for a customer, rather than sell a physical product**)
4. "We can't because we're a \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup> ." (**a type of business that is primarily focused on doing something useful rather than making money**)
5. All that muscle around \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup> (**the creation of new ideas, new objects, or new ways of doing something**) and flexibility and \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> (**the use of imaginative ideas and skills to make something new**) that we didn't think we had, we had all along.

Watch the first part of the video (00:00 – 01:20) to check your answers.



Now write a summary of this part of the video using no more than two sentences.

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## 4

**Comprehension**

Now watch the rest of the video (01:20 - 07:35) and answer the following questions.



1. The first point that Patty McCord makes is ...
  - a. it's much easier to work when you can separate your work life and your family life.
  - b. working from home around your family has been much easier than people expected.
  - c. mixing family time with team time has brought a lot of unexpected benefits.
  - d. Zoom calls into each other's homes have helped us to see each other as more human.
2. The second point Patty McCord makes is that ...
  - a. many of us have more important things to deal with outside of work.
  - b. without being closely watched, many people's work will become unfocused. So there needs to be strong management.
  - c. we now measure progress by focusing more on the results of people's work than on if they look busy.
  - d. the smartest adults in a company aren't necessarily just those in management positions.
3. The third point Patty McCord makes is that ...
  - a. there are no companies that have been working effectively during the pandemic.
  - b. it's been important to watch what other companies are doing to improve your own ways of working during this time.
  - c. people have had to work a lot harder to deliver the right results.
  - d. we have all had to make our own definition of what success means to us during this time.
4. According to Patty McCord, it's really important to teach teams within the company ...
  - a. how to understand financial information, such as profit and loss statements.
  - b. what everyone is trying to achieve and allow them to figure out how the team can best do that.
  - c. what the challenges are that other teams in the company have to face.
  - d. how to succeed as a company, based on best practices.
5. The fourth point that Patty McCord makes is ...
  - a. there needs to be a clear line of communication from management downwards.
  - b. everyone in the company is responsible for improving their communication.
  - c. there needs to be an increase in communication from people at the lowest levels up to management.
  - d. communication needs to happen in the same way at the same time so people know when to expect it.
6. To add to her fourth point, she says that ...
  - a. communication will have to be planned for and disciplined in the future.
  - b. good workers will automatically communicate well with one another.
  - c. communication is much easier these days, so there are few excuses for not doing it.
  - d. a weekly online meeting should be scheduled so that everyone can communicate.



7. She also adds that it is important ...
  - a. that everyone contributes to the conversation when on a Zoom call.
  - b. to record the outcome of meetings in an email that everyone receives.
  - c. to reinvent the work that we do to keep up with changes.
  - d. to rethink the way in which we approach our work.
8. Patty McCord concludes by saying ...
  - a. a lot of good ways of working have been lost that we can return to after the pandemic.
  - b. a performance review is still an essential way of helping employees to change and improve.
  - c. that we should continue to move forward with the better ways of working that we have discovered during the pandemic.
  - d. a lot of how we used to do business can still make a real difference to our results in the future.

**5****Collocations**

Match the following words to make collocations.

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. balancing   | a. act       |
| 2. in-person   | b. behavior  |
| 3. adult       | c. forward   |
| 4. going       | d. meeting   |
| 5. best        | e. practices |
| 6. deliver     | f. results   |
| 7. performance | g. review    |

Now write the collocations in the correct gaps in the following sentences.

1. I need to go into the office tomorrow for an \_\_\_\_\_ with my manager. We need to discuss my goals for the year ahead.
2. For us, the production process is a real \_\_\_\_\_ between making sure there's a high level of quality and getting products out on time.
3. I know there will be a lot to learn with the new IT systems, but I think we will see greatly increased productivity as a result \_\_\_\_\_.
4. As important as the design is, it's really essential that our products can \_\_\_\_\_ and not just look attractive.
5. I find it really hard to talk about my accomplishments during my \_\_\_\_\_. I feel like I'm boasting, and it's really uncomfortable.
6. I was shocked at the way she was shouting at everyone in the office. I didn't think it was very \_\_\_\_\_ at all.
7. Is following \_\_\_\_\_ really the best way to make sure that we are all achieving excellence?



In pairs, answer the following questions.

1. What are considered **best practices** in your job?
2. Do you think it's important to be able to have an **in-person** meeting with someone, or can you achieve the same results with a phone call or video call?
3. What is the fastest way to **deliver results** in your job?
4. Do you find your professional life and your personal life to be a **balancing act**? Or do you have enough time for both?
5. Do you find it useful to have a **performance review**? What do you enjoy/dislike about them?

## 6

### Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What ways of working that you had before the pandemic do you think you would like to go back to? Why?
2. What ways of working that you have started during the pandemic do you think you would like to continue?
3. Have the changes during the pandemic changed your way of thinking about work? Why or why not?
4. What changes in ways of working do you think there will be for companies around the world?



