WORK. LEAD. SPACE.

Co-creating our Preferred Future.

accenture

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"The future can't surprise us, if we surprise the future."

— Shirley Sheffer, Managing Director Talent & Organization/
Human Potential, Lead Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Russia

CO-CREATING OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

Work, leadership, and office spaces have been slowly evolving over time. But then the pandemic hit. As a catalyst, this crisis has abruptly changed the way we work, lead, and use (virtual) space. We have to take advantage of this momentum and think further into the future. Where do we want to be in 10 to 15 years? What will be essential for us? In other words, what is our preferred future (#preferredfuture)?

Tomorrow is not shaped by a single hero. It is a collaborative effort, so we at Accenture teamed up with Vitra and other partners with expertise in the field of New Work to embark on a co-creation journey. Together we invited participants from 15 companies to consider the future of working, leadership, and space. Over the course of 10 weeks our diverse team, from a variety of industries and with different functional backgrounds such as HR, IT, and real estate, dared to dream. Together, we co-created, researched, and strategized to imagine how we wish to work together, execute leadership, and use our office spaces in the future.

What did we co-create in these 10 weeks? First, the manifesto in this report outlines the best hopes and possibilities of our #preferredfuture. Second, the deep dives into the topics of work, leadership, and spaces highlight the key trends of each area. Finally, four scenarios provide a vivid explanation of how we imagine our #preferredfuture.

With this co-creation journey, a new cross-company community was brought to life. We want to spread the word by generating even more followers in organizations. The time to build our #preferredfuture together is now.

↓ Interested in how our visions come to life? Download the full report.

PROCESS OF FUTURIZING

Forging a future takes guts. How did we achieve our goal and live up to the challenge? We started by researching methodologies from science fiction, visioning, and strategic foresight. Then we brainstormed, added our transformation experience, shaped a process, collected methods, and hoped for a matching mindset. We found one key theme: Tomorrow will not be shaped by a single hero. The search for futurists began.

We found people with visionary mindsets and the desire to create. But we also wanted people involved in the day-to-day of their respective fields so that the outcomes would be tangible. Accenture and Vitra joined forces and brought heads and hands together. A timeframe, or what we termed as a co-creation journey, needed to be mapped out. It turns out that even futurizing is limited by time constraints. In the end, we planned 10 short weeks to envision the future we want, our #preferredfuture.

To make this co-creation journey a success, we used innovative and creative methods borrowed from art, therapy, and coaching. Why? Because we all are rooted in our day-to-day patterns. We needed a pause to futurize and then re-connect with them to start building our #preferredfuture. Similar to how artists try to see the world with new eyes or like therapists helping others to escape from old patterns. We arranged all methods to facilitate collaboration, freedom of imagination, and to create tangible outcomes.

Accenture developed a process to guide participants along the way. It consisted of five phases: provoking, exploring, futuring, designing, and building. All participating companies sent sponsors and best minds. Sponsors were active supporters of the study – sharing their view on corporate future(s), some also participated as challengers or topic gurus. Best minds from each company became part of our working groups, sharing insights, experience, and jointly working their way from managing the present to creating a future.

Provoking

Before the first meetings with board members and leadership, all participants received a starter pack with inspiring questions. We wanted to trigger thinking and dreaming. The kick-off workshop took place on site at Accenture's Campus Kronberg and for many participants virtually – hybrid is the new normal. There were inspiring lectures and both cross-company and cross-industry exchanges of ideas. A virtual work and exchange platform

was introduced. Working groups were established and the first building blocks of our #preferredfuture were laid: We used our hands and gut feelings to start shaping visions of what work, leadership, and space would be like in that future.

Exploring

During this phase, the groups focused on the way we want to work, lead and use future office spaces. One journey guide and one producer joined the best minds, challengers, and a topic guru who dropped by to inspire or disrupt. Each journey guide led a working group and coordinated the collaboration between the workshops. Producers helped make ideas and results concrete and presentable. And all the best minds joined forces. The ideation included telephone calls, video conferences, individual research and thinking, and a group-wide virtual workshop to consolidate the findings and select future scenarios.

Futuring

Infused by a beta version of our manifesto, scenarios for the future gained shape during a workshop hosted and broadcasted from Accenture's Campus Kronberg – virtual reality included. Known trends and data were identified, but from there the unknown was aimed at and discussed. All together we formed hypotheses. The groups were challenged to find biases and blind spots while resisting the urge to under- or overpredict. The description of the #preferredfuture emerged. The very first draft of four concrete scenarios was described. Sponsors joined later that day and shared their thoughts and feed-forward to enhance the scenarios.

Designing

Each participant picked one scenario to co-create a more concrete version and story of our #preferredfuture. Experts in visualization and storytelling collaborated with each working group via phone calls and video conferences. Topic gurus and

challengers did their jobs. At the closing event at Vitra in Weil am Rhein a glimpse of that future was felt when the manifesto was read out loud and all scenarios were presented in their individual way. The sponsors of all participating clients as well as Vitra's and Accenture's senior management joined on site or virtually – further Work.Lead.Space. enthusiasts were able to dial in to watch the final pitch of our #preferredfuture scenarios.
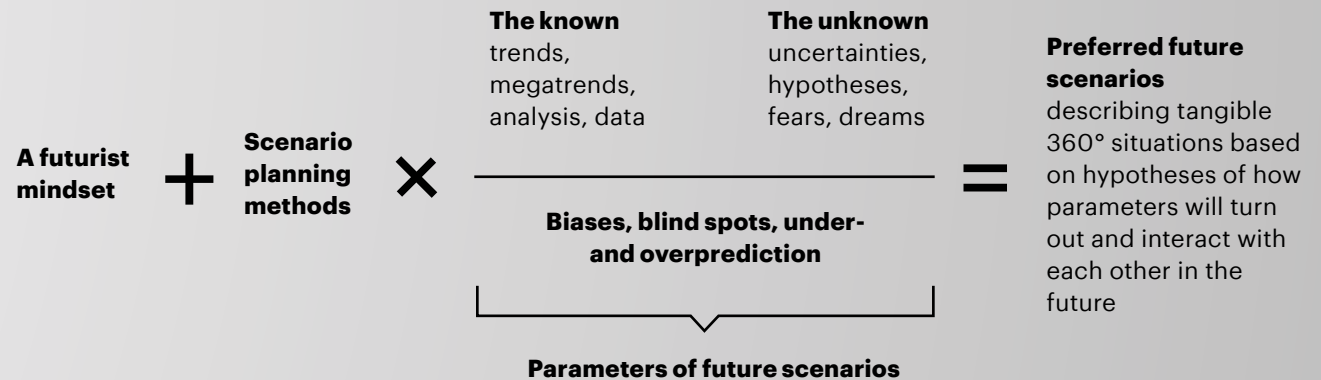
Building

And shaping scenarios is not the end of the process, to cross the finish line we have to make these visions a reality. In this final phase, all participants will stay connected as part of one community. We discuss how we want to interact with each other in the future to bring the #preferredfuture to life as we move on building parts of it in our organizations – and perhaps beyond as well. Encouraging implementation means something different in every organization, so we will be learning from each other. One thing we know for sure: We want to build your #preferredfuture together.

Design Principles for a Preferred Future

- Imagination is key. It is the starting point, not just the facade of the final scenarios.

- Diversity of perspectives creates future(s). Diverse minds and many perspectives create complex visions for the future.

- Brainwork brings about tangible scenarios. Research, testing, and analytic work bring tomorrow's scenarios within reach.

- Structure and methodology help. Guidelines, structure and actual journey guides unleash the power of our group.

- A compelling story motivates us to act. Scenarios help spread our #preferredfuture and win followers.

- Concrete scenarios allow for action planning. High-quality, well-thought-out concepts transfer over to business reality.

Formula for a Preferred Future Mindset

What it takes to dream and think beyond the obvious next strategic move

A futurist mindset + **Scenario planning methods** ×

The known trends, megatrends, analysis, data

The unknown uncertainties, hypotheses, fears, dreams

Biases, blind spots, under- and overprediction

Parameters of future scenarios

= **Preferred future scenarios** describing tangible 360° situations based on hypotheses of how parameters will turn out and interact with each other in the future

THE MANIFESTO

WORK

We focus work on outcome. We are free to work to our best skills wherever they are needed. Our impact is not measured in effort or time anymore. Pay is important, recognition is more. Our believe is we need to work less but with more purpose and depth. We co-create the goals and the results – investing what it takes to make collaboration fruitful. We don't pretend success whilst being breathless. We start with trust. We organize and configure how we work. We feel accountable for our achievements. We honestly give and listen to feedback. In our minds and hearts, everyone has inclusively a right to participate and contribute. We embrace machines and the neural link to Artificial Intelligence and we set boundaries and define rules of the game. We do not measure ourselves against benchmarks of the past, they don't tell our story. Sense, making sense and respond to the (t)ask through our work is essential for our purpose. We love our work because it evolves with us.

LEAD

We lead by orchestrating. We get the best out of all of us if we lead with empathy and serve the team. We don't need a lonesome top level to decide for us, but with us. We all commit to acting purposeful and honest. We don't follow if someone is not. We embrace hybrid working and are tech-savvy so we can connect people and spaces. We expect those who lead to turn the ship around with us when we struggle. Talking to role models and leaders reminds us why we do things, not necessarily how and what we do. We know and share our unique talents and believe in our potential. And we need leaders who facilitate this. History and position don't define a leader's value, actions do. We want – from all levels – to act the way to new thinking, don't think the way to new acting. We lead by sparking curiosity and helping others to learn every day so we can re-invent ourselves and become who we want to be. We are bold, wild, and wonderful to inspire and grow each other.

SPACE

We use space to connect. We want our office to stay forever. It just looks very different from the past. We need it to connect to each other also cross-company in ecosystems and with the purpose to improve our world. Space – virtual, real, hybrid – shaped with care helps us to collaborate and innovate. We are lost without the boundary spaces set. We use space(s) carefully. We work alone at home or collaboratively in joint spaces. Space helps us breathe the right air for the work to be done and the life we want to live. We distance from the brands (and their spaces) we work for to reconnect again in order to stay creative and connected. Space is nature or technology, strong or weak, full or empty depending on how we need it to be. We create and host spaces catering for the community. Healthy starts here. Experiencing spaces we like is key. Both drive our engagement. We believe: All shades of our blue count as a workspace.

Rethink the future of work, leadership, and office space
How do we start working with more purpose? How will leaders reorient their behaviors around a new way of thinking? How will our office spaces develop to become hives of collaboration? These are the pressing questions of right now. We've imagined how to solve them in our #preferredfuture.

WORK. LEAD. SPACE. CO-CREATING OUR PREFERRED FUTURE.

"What we couldn't do in the last 10 years has been achieved in four weeks." This is how Mark Reed, CEO of the English advertising holding company WPP, sums it up. And yes, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have fundamentally changed the way we work. Remote and collaborative work with the help of cloud tools are now standards for knowledge workers in the 21st century.

Against the background of digital and the rapid technological developments in various fields, the challenges ahead are much greater than a partial switch from office work to remote work. Added to this are the enormous problems associated with the ecological exploitation of our planet. People, organizations, and companies are certainly asking more and more questions such as: "What is my contribution to solving these questions? What role does my employer play in this? Or even more fundamentally: What do I want to stand for?" We need a new generation of people, or at least a new mindset, to bring the meaning of purpose across the board into the work context.

What is certain is that with the way most companies still interpret the issues of organizational structure and process organization today, we will not be able to solve the world's problems. It's about trust and the real and serious transfer of responsibility to the people in the company who have the necessary knowledge. The demands on all of us when it comes to handling technologies will continue to increase. The safe use of digital tools, a basic understanding of algorithms, and the willingness to use the new possibilities that machine learning offers us will be critical success factors. Buzzwords such as agile working and learning organizations are becoming principles of survival.

Purpose will be essential to guide organizations, teams, and individuals.

↓ **Find out more about how our vision of work is illustrated in tangible scenarios.**

WORK. LEAD. SPACE. CO-CREATING OUR PREFERRED FUTURE.

There is a dire need for new leaders who grasp the unknown, are curious about potential, and not afraid of the opportunities of the #preferredfuture. The co-created picture is not necessarily a completely new style but a unique combination of already existing qualities. Future leaders will be more instinctive, more purposeful, less dominant, and more intrinsically motivated to guide us. Gone are the current expectations of authority, institutions of power, or organizational hierarchies. It seems like the way we work today is going to change forever, and therefore empowered people need to spearhead the (r)evolution.

Employees want to follow people who authentically care about the organizational vision and mission and help shape and implement it in the world. This idealistic view of contribution for a "greater good" is linked to having a purpose defined, clearly articulated by company values, and present through all decision-making. Some argue that this is the only way the next generation of leaders will be accepted in our #preferredfuture.

Inclusive leadership requires seeing and treating each employee individually. This was true before, but as companies become much more heterogeneous this is even more important. So having a one-on-one with each direct report in your team regularly and really "getting" them is key. New leadership needs to be "loved by talent".

The future leader is a connector, a technology surfer, a hybrid orchestrator, and a tech futurizer. In the #preferredfuture, people heading teams can do all of that and also maintain local involvement, community connection, and voluntary engagement – the connectedness to the world which plays a key role on all life levels.

New leaders are more instinctive, more purposeful, less dominant, and more intrinsically motivated to guide us into a #preferredfuture.

↓ **Find out more about how future leaders connect, collaborate, and inspire.**

WORK. LEAD. SPACE. CO-CREATING OUR PREFERRED FUTURE.

The future of office space will be different. Spatially and organizationally it will be shaped by purpose and context. Tomorrow's spaces will go beyond a typical menu of guidelines. They will open completely unexpected freedoms for architecture and provide possibilities to inspire and to connect with ourselves, our work, and our ecosystem.

Since **co-creation** experiences have become an important basis for value creation, the objective becomes to establish an understanding of how workspace architecture can support connections. Futuristic working environments reflect and encourage dialogue, access, and transparency.

Buildings **adapt** best when they are relentlessly refined and reshaped by their inhabitants. More than any other human artefact, buildings can improve and work with time rather than against it.

In a **beta** environment, workers give feedback, allowing the employee to always wield influence over the 'not-quite-finished' workspace. The idea is to have a quality control in place which continuously responds to arising issues and improves layout of the space, furniture, tools, and more.

Planet-centric design architecture uses a conscious approach to energy and ecological conservation in the design of the built environment. It strives to ensure that our actions and decisions today do not inhibit the opportunities of future generations.

Biophilic design begins with a few simple questions: How does the built environment affect the natural environment? How will nature affect human experience and aspiration? Most of all, how can we achieve sustained and corresponding benefits between the two?

Office space can be much more than just a building; it's a rich and varied **spatial experience** made up of sequences that are carefully sculpted to complement and contrast with one another (Mercadante, 2010). High-quality interactions that enable individuals to co-create unique experiences with the company are key to unlocking new sources of competitive advantage.

We need to understand how workspace architecture can support connections and unique experiences of individuals or teams with the company, as a new source of competitive advantage.

The office spaces of tomorrow will be more than just a building. Find out more about what they will look and feel like.

THE SCENARIOS

FUTURE SPACE OF POSSIBILITIES

ONBOARD, EMPOWER, ENGAGE

**Digital companions, work-from-home kits, and the Synergy Campus**

Imagine an AI digital companion nudges you awake. It quickly runs down your schedule for today as your favorite song plays. After eating breakfast, your workday begins. But it doesn't start at home or even in the office. It starts when you put on your work-from-home kit. Your glasses immerse you into a virtual/augmented reality, allowing access to a boundaryless digital twin space from anywhere. Your AI assistant checks back in after analyzing the skillset of the company talent pool. And an appointment reminder pops up for your kick-off meeting later today at the Synergy Campus, the office space of tomorrow where the physical world finally meets the Cloud. Your workday ends on campus where features like spatial diversity, connectivity, collaboration spaces, and even a bar ensure your new team will make this next project successful.

**Companies apply to talents: The tables have turned**

What if flexibility not only described the office of tomorrow but the talent pool of the future as well? Not too far from today, people could work from their favorite city and accept offers from multiple companies that approach them. Algorithms will make suggestions and ensure there is a perfect match for the best talents. Businesses have focused on internal branding, and for those that stay at the cutting edge of innovation, they target employee engagement and empowerment. Work from any location, contracts become purpose manifestos, and people co-design their rewards. Onboarding and engagement goes digital to keep workers connected in the seamless employee experience of tomorrow.
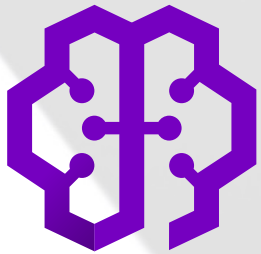
GROW E³

Your electric, emotional, and exponential coach

The eCoach runs an analysis of your skillset, past and current successes and failures, as well as the market and provides upskilling opportunities before the next economic downturn hits. A peer-to-peer coaching session pops up on your calendar with someone in the same field across the globe. They turned a similar challenge into an opportunity and will share with you strategies on how to do the same. Welcome to the future of eCoaching, emotional support algorithms that combine habits and environmental situations included.
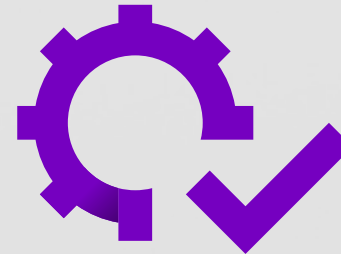
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AT 1,800 METERS

Put on your augmented reality glasses

How will an idea to link greenhouses to smart fridges and other smart appliances become a reality in 2030? Project work will flow differently than today. Teams will use virtual/augmented reality to ideate from anywhere and AI will push those ideas beyond what is considered possible today. The project flow of tomorrow is more iterative and steering is human and AI augmented. Leaders push their teams for purpose and sustainability of solutions as well as new ways of working. And as a result Greenhouse Connect is born. A social impact concept bridging the familiar greenhouses with modern connected appliances like smart fridges.

INSPIRED? LET'S START THE JOURNEY TO OUR PREFERRED FUTURE

The Work.Lead.Space. co-creation journey reminded us that tomorrow is not shaped by a single hero. Together, as we begin building the future we want, we find empowerment in purpose. The employee experience of tomorrow will be a symbiotic bond with technology. We will move beyond the forced home office age of today and become liberated to work from anywhere and with anyone, including AI. This new collaboration between people and technologies will make teams faster, leaner. Agile makes us less fragile. And as our physical workspaces travel through the digital wormhole, businesses will emerge on the other side with more connectivity and responsiveness to the unforeseen challenges ahead.

The next step on this co-creation journey is creating tangible changes and building a vivid community supporting each other in building our #preferredfuture. Ready to join us?

↓ **Read the complete scenarios from our #preferredfuture.**

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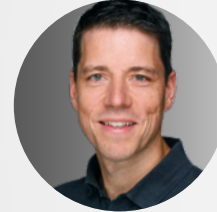moritz@4ed1.com

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Extract of participating clients.

ABOUT ACCENTURE

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services—all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 506,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners, and communities.

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