

# LEADERSHIP DIGEST

## INTRODUCTION

In the May 2020 edition of Leadership Digest, as a number of the region's markets were beginning to consider relaxing social distancing and lock-down restrictions, we shared some predictions to support businesses as they began to contemplate the post-lock down environment.

A year later in this edition of Leadership Digest we revisit those predictions.

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LEADERSHIP DEMAND FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & TRANSFORMATION



**NOVEMBER 2020**

CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND REALITY



**AUGUST 2020**

CHANGING TRENDS AS THE WORLD APPROCHES A 'NEW-NORMAL'

# LEADERSHIP DIGEST: CONTINUED...

## Executive Hiring

While we didn't predict that social distancing and lock-down restrictions would remain in force in many of the region's markets twelve months later, we did accurately predict that both hiring managers and candidates would become increasingly comfortable with 'virtual' hiring processes. We also predicted that leadership hiring activity would be heavily centred around the pivot towards digital and technology business models. From August 2020 we witnessed a steady increase in technology, innovation, transformation and digital leadership searches being commissioned. This activity continued through the end of 2020 and into the first half of 2021 with a noticeable uptick in the pace of deployment and execution against innovation and transformation agendas from January 2021 onwards.

Leadership hiring has not been limited to Chief Technology, Transformation, Data, Digital, Marketing or Product Officers. As digital and corporate strategy merge so demand for more commercially orientated enablement and infrastructure leadership has grown, particularly

from organisations that are considering external partnerships and ecosystems as part of their evolving business strategy and models. Our Chief Operating, Finance, Legal & Compliance, Communications and Government Affairs leadership practices have been notably busy over the last six months.

## Agility is Possible

The vast majority of organisations quickly adapted to remote working and concerns around lost productivity and connectivity have not come to fruition. In many cases we hear anecdotal feedback that productivity and output have improved. It remains too early to determine whether our prediction that flexible and remote working practices will not become the norm in Asia, given cultural preferences for face-to-face interactions, although we are encouraged with the level of on-going debate across the region. What is certain is that culture and flexible working practices are increasingly important considerations for candidates. The wider debate around remote working has given impetus to consideration of location strategy and we expect to see a greater acceptance that senior leadership

teams don't necessarily need to be co-located. Part of this is in response to continued challenges of international mobility which is unlikely to ease in the short to medium term.

## Moving Forward

The expectation is that current hiring activity levels will remain through to the end of the year. Some of this is non business critical hires coming back online having been paused at the outset of the pandemic but the vast majority is in response to future strategic requirements and up-grading leadership roles. Increasingly organisations are seeking candidates with proven innovation leadership experience – track records of driving innovative solutions into actionable business outcomes as well as driving innovation within respective functional areas – and culture transformation experience – individuals who can create a positive cultural legacy. We previously predicted the need to expand candidate pools to include diversity of experience and broader capability. As business models continue to evolve we are seeing a greater commitment to and action towards hiring outside of immediate peer groups and industry sector which is encouraging.



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