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THE FUTURE OF **REMOTE WORK** AND **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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BUSINESSES WORLDWIDE have been severely impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, forcing them to rethink how employees can perform their everyday duties without coming into a physical office. The forced shift from onsite to remote work required organizations to act quickly and do business through online meetings, digital collaboration tools and cloud applications, as well as put in place infrastructure and services to support workers at their home offices. New patterns of communication, collaboration and staff and team management had to be established almost overnight.

Under less than optimal conditions, organizations nevertheless rose to the challenge, making numerous decisions on the fly, building out infrastructure, creating processes and setting policies around remote work to help employees quickly be productive and keeping business running. Of course, they had no other choice — no one knew how long the mandatory lockdowns and social distancing requirements would last, and when or if employees would return to the office. Months later, many organizations anticipate much of their workforce will continue working remotely rather than returning to the office.

In normal situations, organizations would not have made these kinds of remote-work decisions so hastily. Ordinarily, companies would have devoted significant time and resources to plan carefully before making decisions about shifting to a remote workforce. They might have looked elsewhere in the organization to learn from teams and job functions that already had a demonstrated track record of remote work success, like software developers. Many individual developers and entire software teams have successfully worked remotely for a number of years, and their insights and experience would normally provide valuable lessons for organizational leadership.

To better understand the long-term impact of a decentralized workforce on software development and delivery, Accelerated Strategies Group conducted research into how organizations and software teams are adapting to remote work. Between August 24th and September 4th, 2020, Accelerated Strategies Group collected data from 347 participants in organizations from less than 1,000 employees to large enterprises of over 5,000 employees. Roles were split between leadership and individual contributor roles. Further, respondents were located in a total of 23 countries and regions. Finally, they also represented 20 different industry verticals.

This research set out to answer three important questions:
1. Were software teams in the organization working remotely prior to COVID-19 restrictions?

2. Have the use and importance of remote work tools and applications changed since COVID-19 restrictions were implemented?

3. In what ways has COVID-19 informed and changed organizations' ability to create software?

Accelerated Strategies Group's research revealed several interesting trends.

The most striking is the shift in business and IT priorities and how that shift will potentially impact business, software development and other IT priorities. The majority of respondents (63.3%) noted that digital transformation objectives have significantly or somewhat increased in priority. Other priorities, including business automation (61.6%) and the need for investment in creating contactless services (60.1%) have significantly or somewhat increased.

COVID-19 conditions also have raised a sense of importance on other priorities: 51.75% of respondents say they increased their focus on DevOps initiatives and 52.25% increased their progress on migration to cloud service providers (AWS, Azure, Google Cloud Platform). Also worth noting is growth in companies' DevOps and Agile adoption, with 46.24% of respondents stating they are using cross-functional teams, 55.64% practicing daily stand-up meetings and 43.23% automating tasks.

The research also revealed some other important trends brought about by the pandemic; most notably the pandemic's impact on software team productivity. A majority of respondents, 59.49%, said their software teams are significantly or somewhat more productive than pre-pandemic. And 42.6% of respondents said it has become somewhat easier to complete their work tasks in a timely fashion. However, feedback concerning respondents' ability to manage unproductive distractions was mixed: 39.7% said managing these distractions was somewhat or much easier, 36.36% said it was somewhat or much harder and 23.48% said they'd had no change in their ability to manage these distractions. In general, the data showed that software teams are working more closely with product management, project management, operations and security.

We saw unexpected results when it came to how the pandemic impacted some of the most common challenges software teams face. For example, 61.37% of respondents found it easier to work across time zones, with 39.71% indicating it is easier to work with staffers on different continents and 37.18% of respondents noted that it was easier to leverage "gig" or flexible part-time staffers to accomplish goals.

Respondents also provided insight into the potential negative impact of the newly-minted remote workforce on productivity. More than one-third (38.6%) of respondents said there was no change, 27.58% of respondents indicated that teams were slowed down significantly or somewhat and 33.83% said things moved along significantly or somewhat faster.

While COVID-19 has had a traumatic impact on the well-being and health of respondents' and those around them, including individual loss of life, and unprecedented financial impact on businesses and economies globally, the shift to remote work gives us some insights into how business may look as they continue to adapt and recover. Software teams and other business functions have benefited from the shift to remote work in the short term, though it remains to be seen if these benefits are sustainable.

This research can serve as a valuable resource to companies as they adapt and adjust their future business strategies and plan for a post-COVID-19 future. Whatever the "new normal" looks like, these massive shifts in priorities, business strategies, software strategies and global and local economic recovery conditions make clear that the new normal is likely to be anything but normal, at least as we knew it prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Download the full report here.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is based on extensive research conducted by Accelerated Strategies Group to assess the current state of remote work and software development in a COVID-19 world. Accelerated Strategies Group fielded a survey and conducted one-on-one interviews with key industry leaders and experts to gather and further refine the data on which this report is based. This research was commissioned by *CloudBees*.

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ACCELERATED STRATEGIES GROUP is out to democratize access to industry expertise and knowledge. Our expert analysts leverage their experience-based knowledge to deliver insightful, intelligent and actionable information about digital transformation, DevOps, cloud-native and cybersecurity to IT and product organizations. Like open source software, we widely share our work products for free because we believe **Knowledge Wants To Be Free.**

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