



## Forrester Predictions 2021: Digitally Advanced Firms Will Have A Sustained Advantage Over Their Competitors

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### Firms will accelerate investments in technology to both enable their workforce and provide differentiated experiences

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Oct. 15, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- [Forrester](#) (FORR: NASDAQ) predicts that 2021 will be the year that every company — not just the 15% of firms that were already digitally savvy — will double down on technology-fueled experiences, operations, products, and ecosystems. According to [Forrester's 2021 Predictions](#), released today, the success of organizations will depend on how quickly and how well they harness technology to both enable their workforce in the new normal and build platforms that differentiate them. Investing in new technology, realizing the full value of the existing technology stack, and retiring technical debt will be critical to gaining a sustained business advantage.

Forrester's Predictions reports analyze the dynamics impacting different industries and disciplines, including changing consumer behaviors, customer experience (CX), employee experience, marketing, privacy, and technology. The reports help global business and technology leaders craft a clear vision and gain a competitive edge to thrive in the year ahead. Key highlights from Forrester's 2021 Predictions include:

- **CIOs will embrace cloud-first and platform strategies for speed and adaptiveness.** In 2021, 30% of firms will continue to accelerate their spend on cloud, security and risk, networks, and mobility — including struggling firms looking to leapfrog and gain advantage coming out of the pandemic. CIOs who are slow to adapt will have massive attrition and will get mired in short-term fixes that achieve only digital sameness through peer comparison strategies.
- **CMOs will drive customer obsession at their firms.** CMOs will put the customer at the center of everything they do: leadership, strategy, and operations. If they haven't already, CMOs will integrate marketing and customer experience in the coming months. Spend on loyalty and retention marketing will increase by 30% as these CMOs assert control over the full customer lifecycle in 2021.
- **Firms will cut CX technology spend in 2021 but will improve CX.** As organizations tune their CX efforts for bigger impact, one voice-of-the-customer program (and not multiple) will come to fruition, leading to consolidation of CX tools and technologies. This move will save organizations hundreds of thousands (or millions) of dollars — but it will also help them realize the value of the technologies that remain. As a result, 25% of brands will achieve statistically significant advances in CX quality in 2021.
- **Remote work will rise to 300% of pre-COVID-19 levels.** Most companies will employ a hybrid work model, with fewer people in the office and more full-time, remote employees. As a major portion of the workforce develops the skills and preference for effective remote work, they will come to expect a work-from-anywhere strategy from their company rather than an exception-driven remote-work policy.
- **Regulatory and legal activity related to employee privacy infringements will double.** The pandemic is igniting employers' desire to collect, analyze, and share employee personal data. While European regulators are already enforcing privacy rules to protect employees' personal data, countries such as Brazil, India, and Thailand will soon do the same. And in the US, given the corporate practices and policies that often limit or deny employees a right to privacy, the battle to determine what is a reasonable expectation of workplace privacy will be fought in the courts.

"The silver lining from the pandemic is that firms accomplished tasks that once seemed impossible or were not even on their roadmap — sometimes overnight," said Sharyn Leaver, SVP of research at Forrester. "Shifting to remote work, standing up e-commerce platforms to sell online, and organizing events virtually to stay connected to their communities are just some examples of pivots that organizations had to make quickly. The pandemic affirmed the need for digital transformation — only digitally advanced organizations were able to adapt and transform their businesses quickly. The current economic climate has only increased the urgency for every enterprise, not just digital experts, to embrace technology as a strategic asset. Our 2021 Predictions clearly indicate a trend toward technology acceleration."

#### Resources:

- [Download](#) Forrester's Predictions e-book.
- [Register](#) for Technology & Innovation Global on November 4–6, 2020.

#### About Forrester

Forrester (NASDAQ: FORR) is one of the most influential research and advisory firms in the world. We help organizations grow through customer obsession. Forrester's unique insights are grounded in annual surveys of more than 690,000 consumers and business leaders worldwide, rigorous and objective methodologies, and the shared wisdom of our most innovative clients. Through proprietary research, data and analytics, custom consulting, exclusive peer groups, certifications, and events, we are revolutionizing how businesses grow in the age of the customer; learn more at [forrester.com](#).

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