

## POLICY WATCH – December 2020

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Happy Holidays! This December seems to be especially darker than what I remember. It has brought me great comfort to have all of the holiday decorations up, but most wonderful are the lights on the tree and on other decorations lighting up the house. Seeing the colors, warm glow, and sparkle of the ornaments has brightened the gloomy days of winter. As we stay at home to protect others and ourselves, we can make it better by finding ways to appreciate how fortunate we are to have a home, and to be a light in our community by helping others.

Coretta Scott King said, “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” We have at least two reasons to be compassionate so our community can be great. The first is to take responsibility for our role in stopping the pandemic, to show we care about each other by wearing a mask, social distancing, staying home and following the other guidelines provided to save lives.

The second reason for compassion is that our community needs us. The pandemic and the economic shutdown have pushed people out of jobs, out of unemployment, out of their homes and out of hope. If we are a strong community, we need to show we care by donating to the charities that are the safety net for the people who are suffering. Especially at the holidays, we should open our hearts and checkbooks (if we are able) and give a hand up to those who need it. Let’s shop local, check on a neighbor, and stay connected to our community.

We will get through these dark days by being there for each other. We need to come together as a community and prize its worth. Being a part of a caring community is how we see our way to the light that is coming in 2021. Henrik Ibsen said, “A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.” I hope you are ready to take the helm and step up when needed. We are stronger together!

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia Murray".

Cynthia

## Outlook for 2021 – What’s Coming?

Since we had no idea at the beginning of 2020 what was coming, I feel brash even trying to imagine what’s in store for us in 2021. But every December, LinkedIn editors ask their community of Influencers, Top Voices and frequent contributors to share the Big Ideas they believe will define the year ahead. This year, in the shadow of a once-in-a-century pandemic, they offer a selection of predictions and thoughts on where we go from here — at work, at home and everywhere in between. Below are some of those Big Ideas, and here’s the link to the full list: [Link](#)

### **The office will fight to win you back**

After a year of working from home, power dynamics have shifted. Companies will need to give employees a reason to return to the office. On offer? Spaces designed for what we’ve been missing all along: Human connection, and maybe a bit of rest and relaxation, too.

“People miss people the most. There’s a credible value to real life in-person contact,” says [Liz Burow](#), the former WeWork vice president of workplace strategy. Burow says offices will function in two key ways: As spaces where people gather for leadership, personal development and culture; and as clubhouses where they come together to collaborate and congregate. Either way, we won’t be gathering in them five days each week anymore.

This transformation won’t simply be philosophical; it’ll be physical, too.

Assigned seating is gone, says [Brittney Van Matre](#), Nike’s director of workplace strategy and operations. Surveys from Nike show employees want to work in an office, but only twice a week. And when they do come in, they want it to be collaborative. Office design needs to accommodate this “activity-based working,” she says — the term for flexible spaces that suit a variety of needs.

But collaborative spaces alone may not be enough to draw people back, warns Van Matre. She believes companies would be wise to entice people with either “a kickass headquarters with a lot of amenities and a super slick experience” or “a really unique experience that you can’t get anywhere else.” Van Matre suggests companies may want to consider setting up outposts in unconventional locales, like rural, scenic areas more associated with leisure, creating “a reprieve” employees can gravitate towards. — [Susy Jackson](#)

### **For many workers, the 9-to-5 will become a 3-2-2**

Business leaders are being forced to rethink how their companies will work in a post-pandemic world. One of the biggest questions they will face? Where — and when — employees can work.

By the time it’s safe to return to the office, many workers will have spent a year or more working from home. And many are enjoying the extra time and flexibility. Companies may let employees work from home two or more days per week, with some opting for three days in office, two days remote and then two days off — a 3-2-2 work week, if you will — according to [Ashley Whillans](#), a professor at Harvard Business School. Some employers may even cut down to a four-day work week altogether.

“Employees will demand greater flexibility and organizations will require it,” Whillans said. “What this flexibility will look like will vary depending on the sector and geographic location. But, hopefully, if we do this right, gridlock morning commutes will be a thing of the past.”

Recent data from LinkedIn's Workforce Confidence Index shows roughly half (47%) of U.S. professionals believe their companies will allow them to be — at least partially — remote after the coronavirus pandemic wanes. That percentage is even higher among certain industries which see flex work as the future, including tech (73%), finance (67%) and media (59%). — [Andrew Seaman](#)

### **Next year's must-have tech? Anything that makes us feel safer**

Forget faster, better, newer and different. Next year's technology and innovation wish list will focus on products and services that make us feel safer. Like the pulse oximeter. I hadn't even heard of it until last March, when my wife insisted we order one. That way, if either of us contracted COVID-19, we could check our blood oxygen levels to determine how serious our illness was. Now Apple's latest Smart Watch advertises the fact that [it can detect blood oxygen levels](#). We will want to travel on planes that have been cleaned [with an electrostatic sprayer](#). Those of us in fire-prone regions like Australia or the West Coast of the United States will ask Santa for [an air purifier](#) to address heavy smoke pollution. Our employers will invest in [voice-activated smartphones](#) that let first responders communicate without removing their personal protective equipment and security cameras that can [map whether people are social distancing](#).

This demand for safety will also extend to methods large tech companies use to protect their members from harassment. We have grown increasingly worried by the risks that data misuse and misinformation pose to the people who use these services—and society at large. With widespread commercialization of everything from facial recognition to voice technology, we will lean on both government regulators and commercial advertisers to pressure these companies to handle our data responsibly. — [Jessi Hempel](#)

### **Yes, we'll have a vaccine. No, it won't let us out of social distancing**

Everyone is hoping that 2021 will bring relief from the COVID-19 crisis, and public health experts believe there's a reason to be optimistic. "The potential to have a major impact on this pandemic is very real," said Michael Osterholm, an epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease and Research Policy. "And it's all focused on a vaccine."

But there are some caveats. While the first vaccine candidates are already moving through the approval process, it's likely we'll see two or three generations of vaccines over the next few years. A vaccine needs to not only be effective, but also durable — meaning the protection lasts for an extended period of time. And people must be willing to take it.

Osterholm, an advisor to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden, stressed the importance of making sure that low- and middle-income countries have access to it as well; otherwise, the virus will continue to cross borders. Treatments and diagnostics are also likely to improve, meaning that mortality rates should continue to edge downward. But next year is also likely to bring a fair bit of frustration. "The rollout of the vaccine will take longer than expected," said [Greg Martin](#), a Dublin-based public health specialist at Health Service Executive, who estimated that it will likely take six to nine months after approval for the general public to have access to it. With little political appetite for more lockdowns, and a collective stir craziness, cases may spike even after a vaccine is available. "We have to make sure we don't take our foot off the pedal," Martin said. — [Beth Kutscher](#)

### **For leaders, character will be everything**

As we strive to overcome a global pandemic and an economic recession, the character of leaders will matter as much as their competence. In 2021, servant leadership will be a competitive advantage.

Psychologists find that in the face of threats to our jobs and our lives, we become more concerned about precarity and purpose. We're looking for a sense of confidence that our jobs are secure and a sense of contribution to a cause larger than ourselves. This will give servant leaders an edge in recruiting, motivating and retaining talented people.

Servant leaders are givers, not takers—we can count on them to put our interests above their own. They recognize that people aren't the most important resource in a company; they *are* the company. They won't lay us off at the drop of a hat; they'll do whatever they can do to save our jobs. They won't keep us tethered to an office or a schedule, they'll give us the freedom and flexibility to work wherever and whenever works for us. They won't become micromanagers; they'll be "macromanagers" who rally people around a meaningful mission. They won't keep us stuck in dead-end jobs; they'll create opportunities for growth and advancement. And if there isn't a path up, they'll care enough to support us in finding a safe path out. — [Adam Grant](#), organizational psychologist at Wharton, host of the TED podcast *WorkLife* and author of *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*, available on February 2.

### **In 2020, companies promised racial equity. In 2021, they will be held accountable.**

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death in May, executives across corporate America came out en masse with pledges to rid their organizations of systemic racism. Next year, customers and employees will demand they live up to the promises they made. Some 60% of Americans say they expect brands to take a stand on racism and nine out of ten employees globally believe companies should engage in diversity and inclusion initiatives.

"With a turning tide nationally on racial equity, Corporate America will begin to match diversity, equity and inclusion commitments with a comprehensive approach that holds themselves accountable for progress like they do in every other aspect of their business," said [John Rice](#), who is CEO of the nonprofit Management Leadership for Tomorrow. "We will redefine what 'good' looks like for racial equity in the workplace."

Next year, we will find out which corporations are taking the issue seriously — versus just issuing statements. One thing will be true for everyone: Businesses will continue to feel pressure from stakeholders to not only make their organizations more diverse, but to also make clear, measurable progress toward equity. Even companies like Coinbase — which took a stance against addressing politics and broader societal issues at work — are being held accountable by employees to create inclusive teams. Meanwhile, NASDAQ is proposing a rule that would require the more than 3,000 companies listed on the exchange to have at least one female board member and one who self-identifies as either an underrepresented minority or LGBTQ. — [Caroline Fairchild](#)

### **The remote classroom will get a much-needed upgrade**

One of 2020's biggest frustrations involved the upheavals associated with abruptly halting in-person K-12 and college education, in favor of moving everything to remote learning. Instructors struggled to master video tools built for adults in business settings. Class attendance dwindled. Even students who did show up often felt disconnected.

There must be a better way, say Stanford computer science professor [Daphne Koller](#) and her husband, tech entrepreneur [Dan Avida](#). Both helped build Coursera, a giant, college-level online learning platform. Now they're back with another ed-tech startup, [Engageli](#), which is building an interactive teaching system that's designed to meet schools' unique needs.

One key idea: making it easy for students to “sit” together at tables of two to eight learners, while an instructor’s lesson unfolds. Students can confer with table-mates without being heard by the larger group. Meanwhile, the instructor can explain things to all the tables at once, while still being able to visit specific tables to make sure everything is on track. Avida says educators prefer this model to the rigid constraints of other vendors’ breakout rooms, which were built to suit corporate needs.

Meanwhile, leading business-video players such as Zoom, Cisco’s WebEx, and Microsoft Teams are likely to move quickly to address the needs of the education market in 2021, too. (Microsoft also owns LinkedIn.) But Avida says Engageli has been filing lots of patents to protect its ideas, adding that its single-minded focus on education may help it move faster than other rivals for whom education is only a niche market.  
— [George Anders](#)

### **Pandemic prevention will stretch far beyond medicine**

The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that our health is inextricably tied to larger environmental issues. Increased population density, global travel, deforestation, large-scale farming and melting of the permafrost has disrupted animal habitats, bringing them in closer contact to humans. This has raised the risk of more frequent zoonotic disease outbreaks, and therefore a higher potential for another pandemic.

Last century, there were only a handful of diseases linked to animals. But those numbers have accelerated in the last decade. Now, they’re averaging every two years, said [Greg Martin](#), a public health specialist at Health Service Executive, listing Ebola, Zika, SARS, MERS and swine flu as recent examples. Not all zoonotic outbreaks lead to pandemics. But “if we are rolling the dice that often, you’re going to get a set of double sixes,” Martin said. “We’re playing the odds.”

"A vaccine will help to end the pandemic, but it won't address the vulnerabilities that lie at its root," said [Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus](#), director-general of the World Health Organization. "There's no vaccine for poverty, hunger, climate change or inequality."

The pandemic has also shown that health is a matter of racial justice and inequality as well, with the crisis posing a disproportionate impact on communities that are Black, indigenous and people of color. This has pushed health care providers and governments to tackle the socio-economic factors that influence who gets sick and who recovers.

“COVID-19 has laid bare our public health system,” said [Rich Roth](#), chief strategic innovation officer at CommonSpirit Health, one of the largest health care providers in the U.S. “It’s put a spotlight on the frailties within the system.” — [Beth Kutscher](#)

### **Expect a Big Tech regulatory reckoning**

After years of going in circles, Washington is poised to come together as a united force — or at least a not-entirely-divided force — to get tough on tech. One prime target for U.S. officials? Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which gives tech companies broad authority to decide how to moderate content on their platforms and shields them from liability for what users post.

Republicans are concerned tech companies have too much power over which voices are featured. Democrats worry 230 allows misinformation to run rampant on platforms without consequence. In technology advisor Bruce Reed, U.S. president-elect Joe Biden has chosen a fierce 230 opponent to guide his administration’s thinking on tech regulation. Reed helped draw up strict privacy legislation for

California and has spoken out publicly against 230, writing that it is “an enemy of children” and encourages hate and abuse. Any change to the 26-word statute will alter the internet as we know it.

Meanwhile, activists in the U.S. are calling for a National Commission on Technology and Democracy to make concrete recommendations to Congress and regulators for other ways to rein in Big Tech. These discussions will guide change made through agencies like the Federal Trade Commission, which could propose an antitrust lawsuit against Facebook, and the Department of Justice, which has filed an antitrust lawsuit against Google. They are joined by state attorneys general across the U.S., who are investigating at least one of the Big Tech companies. With the global reach of every one of the Big Tech firms, all of this is being watched carefully abroad, from Singapore to the European Union, which is moving even more aggressively to regulate tech on its own. — Jessi Hempel

## North Bay Leadership Council Welcomes the LIME Foundation as a New Member



North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) is pleased to announce its newest member, the LIME Foundation. The mission of the LIME Foundation is to serve the specific needs of the disadvantaged community across all ages and income levels by collaborating with key community leaders to provide new skills to students and adults looking to reskill or upskill. Steve

Page, Chair of NBLC’s Board and President and General Manager, Sonoma Raceway, said “NBLC is aligned with the mission of the LIME Foundation because it is fundamental to having the workforce we need in the North Bay. We are impressed at how the Foundation’s work has been very successful in addressing inequities by helping their graduates gain access to new jobs at higher wages.”

The LIME Foundation was founded by Letitia Hanke, who is also the CEO of ARS Roofing in Santa Rosa. Hanke has a wealth of experience in breaking barriers as a businesswoman and person of color and long list of accomplishments. NBLC is proud to have honored Hanke as a Leader of the North Bay with an award for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Hanke said, “Joining NBLC is a good way to further connect the work of the LIME Foundation with the employers of the North Bay so that we can work together to create the workforce needed today and tomorrow. Those served by the LIME Foundation learn vital skills to harness individual potential in music, performing arts, construction careers, technology, and health.”

Some of the programs offered by the LIME Foundation include the Nextgen Trades Academy, which is a roofing and construction vocational program that trains youth in construction fields like roofing, solar, general contracting and more. The program also offers home repair services, specifically roofing, to the under-served. This allows seniors, veterans, the disabled and low-income families to remain in their own homes, independent and safe.

Another program is the Turner Arts Initiative which brings positive, structured activities to disadvantaged youth, giving them the opportunity to learn technology or play a musical instrument – great alternatives to substance abuse, teen pregnancy, truancy, loneliness, obesity, bullying, exclusion, etc. Most importantly, this initiative uses music and dance as a positive, constructive means of expression. It features an activity center and a summer and after-school mentoring and tutoring program.

Another standout program is the Senior Activities Program, which provides a venue for seniors to remain active and make new friends. This program promotes healthy eating, exercise through dance, bowling, hiking and many other activities in order to prevent or reverse heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Letitia Hanke will be the member representative. Hanke has received a many awards and recognition as head of the foundation and her roofing company. Some of her recognitions include a Champion for Children Award by the Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County, Nonprofit Leadership Award and Women in Business Award from the North Bay Business Journal, and a North Bay Spirit Award Winner. Hanke is also the former President, North Bay Black Chamber of Commerce.

The alternate will be Andrew Leonard, who is the Program Manager for the LIME Foundation. Community collaboration is a core tenet of Leonard's work, for the Foundation and as Sonoma County Office of Education Board Trustee. Leonard's past work with United Way of the Wine Country's and with First 5 Sonoma County connects him directly to schools, students, and their success.

NBLC looks forward to having the LIME Foundation contribute its knowledge and experience to its public policy work to make the North Bay a better place to live and work.

### California Releases Smartphone-Based Exposure Notification System



California released its smartphone-based exposure notification system “CA Notify.” The system—built into iOS devices and available as an application on Android devices—was developed using a framework jointly created by Council members Apple and Google. The framework is being made available globally and uses Bluetooth to determine contact between individuals without sharing any location or identity specific data. Early research shows that any level of participation by the community makes an impact, and significant reductions in infections and deaths begin with as little as 15% of individuals participating.

Join us in signing up for COVID-19 exposure notifications on your phone with CA Notify.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## NBLC Member Anniversaries

**Thank you to the for being NBLC members all these years!**

*Hospital Council of Northern & Central California ~ 7 year anniversary  
Vintners Inn/ John Ash & Co. ~ 2 year anniversary*

## Members in the News

### **Congratulations to the NBLC Members Recognized by North Bay Business Journal's Nonprofit Leadership Awards**

NBLC is so proud to have these members recognized and to live in a community with so many incredible nonprofits!

### **Buck Institute Names Malene Hansen as Chief Scientific Officer**

The Buck Institute for Research on Aging is pleased to announce the appointment of Malene Hansen PhD to the position of Professor and Chief Scientific Officer.

### **Dominican University of California Recognized for Age-Friendly Programs**

When Dominican University of California last month was designated an age-friendly university by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, it joined a network of more than 70 institutions around the world that have committed to becoming more age-friendly in their programs and policies.

### **Bank of America in Napa, Marin, Sonoma 2020 Impact**

Bank of America's impact in 2020 is astounding. Please read this year end report on all of the important work they do in our communities.

### **BioMarin, The Buck Institute for Research on Aging, and Dominican University Will All Provide Freezer Storage for Marin's COVID-19 Vaccines**

Marin County health officials expect to begin the first coronavirus vaccinations as soon as late December with a priority on immunizing frontline health care workers first.

### **Redwood Credit Union Kicks Off Holiday Giving Program**

Redwood Credit Union's (RCU's) annual holiday giving program looks a little different this year. Instead of asking members to bring food and gift items into the branches, the credit union is offering virtual options.

### **Bill Silver of CannaCraft Sees Cannabis Industry as Another Entrepreneurial Adventure**

CannaCraft's president of new markets has a passion for educating people on cannabis and expanding the industry.

### **CannaCraft is Turning Plastic Packaging in to Fuel**

Building on our successful effort of reducing plastic waste by certifying our vape carts inherently child resistant, CannaCraft turned its attention to reclaiming the regulated plastics we couldn't eliminate.

### **Sonoma State University Breaks Ground on Major Renovation of Stevenson Hall**



After more than 10 years of planning, Sonoma State University is proud to announce the groundbreaking of the Stevenson Hall Renovation Project, which is designed to refresh the building into a 21st century academic learning environment and will provide educational and meeting spaces.

### **Sonoma Raceway Kicks Off 18th Annual Holiday Toy Drive**

For the 18th consecutive year, race fans and community members can help spread some much-needed holiday spirit to Sonoma Valley kids by donating toys to Sonoma Raceway's High-Powered Toy Drive.



Over twenty five years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail [info@northbayleadership.org](mailto:info@northbayleadership.org)

[www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org)