COVID-19 briefing note
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From lab to jab: How will the world ship vaccine doses to those in need? Our latest logistics research takes a look.
More than 12 billion vaccine doses have been announced by manufacturers for release in 2021, subject to successful clinical trials. The earth’s population is 7.8 billion. Coverage for a first dose seems adequate, until you consider the logistics. Manufacturing is concentrated in a handful of countries; regions without manufacturing must import the vaccine (exhibit).

Our new research looks into the considerable obstacles blocking these flows, including the need for ultracold supply chains, lack of air-cargo capacity, and counterfeiting. What’s needed is collective action on an unprecedented scale among manufacturers, governments, customs authorities, and others.

Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, are equipped with adequate vaccine manufacturing to meet domestic needs. But the United Kingdom faces other problems, such as the plight of small and medium-size businesses, which we described in June 2020. Our update shows that on many measures, life is getting better for these companies. But many are still dependent on government support, and anxious about what comes next.

Companies everywhere are reckoning with the first-order effects of the pandemic and trying to anticipate those of the second order. In this week’s episode of the McKinsey Talks Talent podcast, our experts help you get out in front of the changes in middle management. Faster, flatter,

Exhibit

Our projections of intercontinental flows show that Asia (excluding India and China) and Africa will be the biggest recipients of COVID-19 vaccines.

Vaccine flows, millions of doses

Outflows

Inflows

China 10
Europe 30
United Kingdom 60
India 70
South America 70
Oceania 90
North America 90
Africa 600
Middle East and Asia (excluding India and China) 1,115

Source: Publicly announced information; press search; McKinsey analysis
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leaner: companies have been trying for decades to thin their ranks. But amid the challenges of the pandemic, middle managers can still make valuable contributions, in new ways.

Stock markets seem to have established their own form of herd immunity. This week, marking the 50th anniversary of Nasdaq, senior partner Vijay D’Silva and executive editor Roberta Fusaro spoke with Nasdaq CEO Adena Friedman about how markets are staying relevant, and partner Tim Koller weighed in on how markets should be more inclusive, share more information, inspire innovation, and bring the world together.

Also new this week, we explored the nine traits of future-ready companies, tracked down a winning formula for specialty chemical companies, and spoke with the new CEO of NXP Semiconductors.

Finally, we conclude Our New Future, a series of management discussions in partnership with CNBC; our final topic is the need for resiliency. Senior partner Katy George leads the discussion, joined by Arvind Krishna, CEO of IBM. One essential insight: resiliency isn’t a lever to be pulled; rather, it’s a combination of actions, technologies, and strategies that companies work on every day.

With vaccinations underway, executives everywhere are thinking about the critical next months of the pandemic. Start with the McKinsey Download Hub to find McKinsey’s latest research, perspectives, and insights on the management issues that matter most, from leading through the COVID-19 crisis to managing risk and digitizing operations. Also consider our special collection The Next Normal: The Recovery Will Be Digital. All five installments—a 172-page report on technology and data transformation, a 130-page report on the path to true transformation, a 206-page report on reimagining the postpandemic organization, a 157-page report on the challenge of climate change, and a 202-page report on reimagining operational resilience—are available now. All the reports are a product of Our New Future, a multimedia series we created with CNBC.

You can also see the full collection of our coronavirus-related content, visual insights from our “chart of the day,” a curated collection of our first 100 articles relating to the coronavirus, our suite of tools to help leaders respond to the pandemic, and how our editors choose images that help readers visualize the impact of an invisible threat.