WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE?

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PAST PRESENT FUTURE

| HOW YOU USED TO WORK | HOW YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING | HOW YOU MAY BE WORKING |

RETURN TO OFFICE

When this crisis subsides, most of us won’t return to business as usual. In these uncertain times, companies are seeking solutions to prepare for when people return back to the office.

FIRST & FOREMOST: SAFE, HEALTHY, VALUED

Creating a safe work environment and making employees feel valued and that their health matters is paramount.
### Emerging Design Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor Check-in:</th>
<th>Health Screening:</th>
<th>Indoor Air Quality:</th>
<th>Automation and Voice Activation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited entry points for digital/paperless visitor check-in with physical separation between security desk or concierge and visitor/employee.</td>
<td>Biometrics or IFSS may play a role for screening building entrants; however, may not be effective for asymptomatic building visitors.</td>
<td>An EPA report found that installing a system designed to improve indoor air quality can lead to higher productivity, fewer lost work days, and savings in medical care costs.</td>
<td>Hands-free tools can facilitate solution-based design strategies for minimizing the need to directly touch door hardware, elevator call buttons, and building directories.</td>
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<th>Hygiene &amp; Cleaning Protocols:</th>
<th>Learning from Healthcare:</th>
<th>Touchless Areas:</th>
<th>Rethink Circulation:</th>
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<td>Organizations should implement professional cleaning protocols for workstations, conference rooms, reception, and social/common areas throughout the day.</td>
<td>Apply what we know about healthcare environments to materials, cleanability, and safeguard measures.</td>
<td>Pantries and restrooms have multiple touchpoints. Explore automated sensors &amp; services to create a touchless, healthier experience.</td>
<td>Evaluate corridor widths, and traffic flows for physical distancing. Add one-way signage if necessary. Limit the number of doors to touch where possible.</td>
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EMERGING DESIGN STRATEGIES

Remove excess chairs in conference rooms with more than 10 seats.

Spread out collaboration seating, so people are spaced further apart.

Encourage people to collaborate virtually when possible.

Waves/Staggers/Shifts. Instead of mandating that everyone returns at once, consider inviting employees to return in stages or staggering work times.

Consider adding partitions for sit/stand desks that are attached to the desktop and move up and down with the desktop.

Rethink dynamic/unassigned seating. Reassign formerly shared desks in individual use for a full day or a week. Make sure they are properly disinfected before next use.

METRICS-BASED APPROACH

WHAT WE KNOW

WHO says maintain at least 1 meter (3.2 feet) of distance between people.

CONJECTURE

A Chinese study of air samples new coronavirus can travel up to 4 meters (12+ feet)

CONSIDERATION

2 meters (6.4 feet) is perceived to be a safer distance

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
SOURCE: HTTPS://WWWNC.CDC.GOV/EID/ARTICLE/26/7/20-0885_ARTICLE
SOURCE: EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES, A JOURNAL OF THE U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
METRICS-BASED APPROACH

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

PARTIAL RE-OCCUPANCY

No major physical changes to the way workplaces were designed pre-COVID. Only temporary partial occupancy changes (utilizing every other desk, removing seats, etc.)

HOLISTIC CHANGES

Permanent changes in workplace design that take into account the likelihood of prolonged need to protect the workforce against this and other health events

FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE PLANNING

A flexible program and workplace design allowing a future return to more dense environments longer term perceived to be a safer distance

WE MUST RETHINK THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

This virus and our collective response is going to indelibly change our world and behaviors. And while the virus itself is scary, the opportunity to rethink and reinvent how we work—both together and apart—offers a catalyst for change.

EXPECT MORE FLUIDITY BETWEEN ONSITE AND REMOTE WORK

- Productive and healthy work-from-home environment
- Physical vs digital work environments
- Balance between on-site and remote work
- Requesting physical presence or co-location

SOURCE: GENSER US WORK FROM HOME SURVEY 2020
**Workplace Culture May Be Expressed in New Ways That Go Beyond the Physical Space**

- Support, amplify and extend your unique culture
- Best use of time when physically together
- Inclusive workspace
- New rules and changing policies

**Meetings Expected Evolve to Enable New Ways to Collaborate**

- Virtual collaboration is expected to increase back at the office
- New ways to operate as a team for promoting effectiveness, transparency, and collective decision-making
- Amplify and enable creativity
- Space supports increase in virtual engagement

**Measures of Success Will Likely Shift Towards Outputs and Outcomes Over Facetime in the Office**

- Presence ≠ engagement
- Incentivize and support impactful engagement
- New performance measurements
- New workday cadence
THIS IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETHINK REAL ESTATE PORTFOLIO AND DIGITAL TOOLS

- Physical space requirements
- Safety and hygiene requirements
- New set of spaces
- New tools (digital and otherwise)

LESSONS FROM CHINA

Learning from Greater China

Maintaining Precautions. Caution is still being practiced (temps at door, masks in office, WHO posters in office, sanitizer stations).

No Significant Changes to Individual Workspace. Clients are not asking for it, employees don’t seem to feel a need as they quickly get back to a comfort around each other.

Real Estate Impact. As organizations consider more remote work, every conference room designed for improved video conferencing (as companies rethink amount of travel), improved air quality focus, rethinking shared snacks/beverages from a hygiene and service perspective. Everyone is still meeting virtually, even if they’re in the office. Expect things to take twice as long for virtual collaboration to manage technology difficulties and disparities.

Increased Inconveniences and Time for Arrival and Departure. As buildings and organizations require social distancing practices, we are seeing impact in elevator behaviors and potentially increased usage of stairs. Some implementation of temperature screening and limiting entry points as well as creating lobby quarantine areas all contribute to increased commuting times.
Learning from Greater China

**Gatekeeping Technology/ Health Apps.** Almost all public spaces (restaurants, gas stations, etc) are using an app to determine if you’re allowed in or not. The app indicates if you are healthy or not, or if you have traveled recently, and provides a green or red to allow you in or not. The app is optional, but without it’s use it can limit your entry to public places and buildings.

**Greater Focus On Virtual Culture.** Combination of HR, IT and Facilities supporting this evolution towards more ongoing remote / WFH approaches. Management of stagger/ shift and access. How to be flexible and communicate effectively across staff.

**Managing Collaborative Behaviors.** If everyone is wearing a mask, you can’t tell facial expressions. Not as easy to keep social distancing, while maintaining collaborative interactions (sharing pens and materials).

**Reducing/ Limited Travel.** Changing paradigms on necessary travel for short meetings that would require a flight or public transit. Increased interest and usage of AR, VR and MR tools.

**Value of Change Management.** Employees need reassurance, to feel like they’re safe and that there are plans in place to manage an effective return process.

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Advice from our friends in China

- Use this time to experiment with WFH technology and policies
- Follow common sense hygiene and protocols
- Don’t be lax with mask wearing
- Be considerate of others
ROAD MAP

ROADMAP TO REOPENING (THEORETICAL EXAMPLE)

NOW
WORKING FROM HOME
Study WFH, what’s working & what’s not
Plan for return to the office

NEAR TERM
RETURN TO OFFICE
Modify furniture utilization to provide distancing; continue partial WFH
Work with building management to implement cleaning, screening, ventilation
Plan for long term

LONG TERM
A NEW WORKPLACE
Rethink work processes
Establish WFH/WFO strategy
Develop workplace strategy to support new ways of working
Redesign space to embody organizational culture

Source: “National Corona Virus Response: A Road Map to Reopening”, American Enterprise Institute
BIG DECISIONS FOR RETURN STRATEGY

- WHO IS ESSENTIAL? HOW TO PHASE?
- USAGE OF COMMON AND SHARED AREAS
- PROTOCOLS, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES
- DEFINE OPERATIONAL CHANGES
- CLEANING AND DISINFECTION
- PPE AND ISOLATION

START HERE:

Ask about concerns & develop playbook to address
Evaluate physical distancing
Signage to encourage new healthy behaviors

TO LEARN MORE...

gensler.com/design-responds-to-a-changing-world

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