Return to Service

WORKPLACE RE-OCCUPANCY

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In order to return people to the workplace, clients from across various industries are assessing which steps should be taken to create a safer work environment. These steps are based on examples of practices that could be implemented in relation to the spread of coronavirus based on CDC and WHO guidelines. While the priority focus is on decontamination and disinfection, a successful return will also rely on addressing individual and group behaviors as well as workplace culture.
It has long been said “nothing is constant but change” although in most instances, workplace change has been incremental or iterative and not all at once in a manner that challenges the very foundation of the workplace ecosystem. In the urgent need to reopen the economy, swift and collective action is needed to identify immediately implementable solutions without compromising long term fiscal and economic well-being.

With new information on the novel coronavirus emerging every day, the sheer scale of the behavioral and spatial implications across all scales and building typologies is overwhelming. Through methodical and collective action, it is possible to emerge from this crisis stronger with a new set of values and goals as well as a renewed emphasis on safety, wellbeing, and performance.
REVISING DISINFECTION + CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Recommendations for now include:

- Transition from cleaning to disinfection and decontamination
- Implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting contracts—multiple times a day
- Implement periodic decontamination cycles through the air handling systems
- Identify and integrate antimicrobial materials and industrial decontamination products into a holistic procurement process
- Leverage smart building infrastructure to display disinfectant cycles and other pertinent HSE info
- Identify decontamination spots
- Communicate revised workplace protocols to all building occupants

Long term include:

- Provide additional training and ongoing monitoring practices for all building operations
- Use antimicrobial products where possible

It will no longer be enough that cleaning crews and custodial staff do a high-level sweep over the office, empty garbage cans, and wipe down common surfaces two or three times a week. Real estate and facility leaders will need to invest in far more comprehensive cleaning and disinfection services. It is clear that occupants will need to see a demonstratable effort from employers to protect the health and safety of their workforce prior to returning, at a minimum.
RECALIBRATING BUILDING SYSTEMS

**Recommendations for now include:**
- Revise elevator queuing algorithms to minimize wait times and stop at fewer floors
- Audit existing HVAC systems and rebalance to maximize outdoor air intake, to increase the supply of fresh air to occupied spaces, particularly when common systems service multiple tenant spaces
- Upgrade existing filters and where possible install new UV-C filters to each supply air stream to eradicate viruses or pathogens from the air stream
- Install wall- or ceiling-mounted air purification units at occupied spaces such as conference rooms, collaboration areas and workstation clusters to provide increased air change rates and enhance contaminant removal
- Reseal waste-water pipes and reroute (where possible) to reduce the risk of pathogen transfer to adjacent air streams when routed through the same space

**Long term include:**
- Deploy sensors to detect occupant density and air quality, and make results visible to occupants
- Redesign ventilation systems to maximize outdoor air, reducing the risk of recirculating pathogens. Adjust building cores and air handling units accordingly
- Utilize underfloor displacement ventilation systems to introduce clean fresh air at the occupant level. Air particulates will follow thermal gradients, and therefore will be drawn away from occupants and their neighbors
- Deploy enhanced filtration systems that combine both physical and UV-C filtration at centralized HVAC systems
- Explore the potential to utilize local ceiling-mounted air purification systems in conference rooms and open airs to boost air changes, and provide localized UV-C filtration
- Separate plumbing and HVAC risers to reduce risk of pathogen transmission

Almost 90% of buildings aren’t designed to maximize fresh air, limiting the ability to purge airborne contaminants.
RESETTING BEHAVIOR

Some of the most fundamental cultural norms have shifted overnight. Given this new world condition, cultural norms will continue to evolve along with an understanding of coronavirus. Wearing masks became socially acceptable overnight, just as shaking hands in greeting became socially unacceptable. It’s reasonable to expect a continued shift in even the most basic of ingrained behaviors in order to increase protection for individuals and those around them.

Recommendations for now include:

- Establish a culture of cleanliness where it is commonplace to sanitize shared surfaces after use
- Identify protocols and availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Develop a system of Personnel Monitoring (temperature checks and/or testing) prior to reentry
- Establish a committee of “Re-occupancy Ambassadors” or “return to work readiness” team to serve as liaisons to the leadership and act as the voice of the occupants
- Engage! It’s important employees know they are being heard and prioritized in the decision making

Long term include:

- Educating the employee population leads to empowerment of action and participation in collective solutions
- Continuous engagement, improvement, and refinement as technology and understanding advances
- Raising awareness of the importance of air quality to human health is important beyond the current focus on coronavirus. Empowering people to be part of this conversation will change priorities and expectations of the design and operation of buildings.
RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE + MANAGEMENT

Recommendations for now include:
- Immediately stand up a return to work organizing team with clear decision making protocols
- Create return to work strategy integrated with a business change management strategy
- Prepare, assess and publish company-wide health, safety and density operational protocols
- Create a prioritization strategy for evaluating beneficial return pathways based on risk
- Establish data sources and key performance indicators that enable the monitoring of the phase by phase return with business objectives
- Create a transparent communications cascade pathway that devolves implementation to individual business units

Long term include:
- Determine the success or otherwise of what was accomplished during the response period
- Identify the business implications of how your market has shifted
- Create a prioritization strategy for investment in market response initiatives
- Determine medium and long term new business objectives

Leadership has been required to navigate dramatic, short term change, but emerging stronger from this crisis will require equally organized and decisive management. New organizational structures that with the capabilities and data to align will be required to prioritize and implement integrated business change in the return to work initiative.
REVISITING TELEWORK

Recommendations for now include:
- Ramp up technology infrastructure to support the integration of large scale remote working
- Develop a means of assessing critical on-site activities (not necessarily departments or specific individuals)
- Designate “in-office days” for these critical activities and teams

Long term include:
- Design meeting rooms to accommodate at least one remote participant
- Evolve the idea of structured flexibility, building upon the lessons learned from the initial split shift concept adopted at initial re-occupancy
- Recognize that different teams need different levels of in-person engagement, and it may change over time. Embrace the flexibility

Coronavirus has forced the world’s largest remote working pilot.

Remote or virtual work (telework) has long been part of a comprehensive workplace strategy. Volumes have been written and many success stories exist of the organizations who have embraced it. Once thought only plausible for some types of organizations, certain industries, and specific cultures—coronavirus has forced the world’s largest remote working pilot. And while it must be acknowledged that some industries are struggling, this global experiment has forced even the biggest detractors into realizing its plausibility, efficiency and effectiveness.
REASSESSING SITE SELECTION

Prior to coronavirus, real estate teams were tasked with finding sites that would help to retain and attract the best talent. Post-pandemic, this mission will not change, however dramatic shifts in criteria used to judge success, at least in the short- to medium-term can be expected. Centralized headquarters may give way to distributed sites, to provide staff coverage in emergency situations. Employees, wary of traveling on public transit, will require alternative commute options—biking, driving, walking to maintain their isolation. Multi-tenant buildings may require enhanced base-level criteria for all tenants to ensure safety for a wide population. Together with touchless building doorways, no-contact security checks, and dedicated air systems per tenant, corporate real estate now has a new “must-have” list.

Recommendations for now include:
- For multi-tenant properties, work with landlords to determine landlord vs. tenant responsibility for creating a healthy environment.
- Assess the viability of a distributed/decentralized model, identifying those teams that must be co-located.
- Survey current staff on preferred commute options and locations.
- Establish minimum base building cleaning and maintenance criteria.

Long term include:
- Ensure digital infrastructure is adequate for the enhanced connectivity required in the new distributed work model.
- Set up site redundancy to allow critical staff a secure workspace in the event of contamination.
- Emphasize fluid lease terms in future negotiations and overall occupancy costs to provide increased flexibility for varying occupancy.
- Reduce the value placed on the common amenity model.
- Reassess site selection criteria—ensuring employee health as top priority for future lease renewals.
REEVALUATING SPACE/DISTANCE

Historically, workplaces have existed as places that give people the tools to complete their work. In the past few decades, technology has enabled a third of the workforce to perform work from any location, yet almost all employees still use company offices. Workplaces now hold an enhanced role of creating community, establishing culture, and driving collaboration. Given the density of urban centers, building accessibility, and office throughways, maintaining social distancing protocols for an entire employee population onsite is implausible as well as impractical. Moving forward in this transitional time, offices need to balance the mix of social and work functions as a driver of space use.

Recommendations for now include:
- Develop a means of assessing the “critical onsite” employees
- Understand perception and expectations of the employee population in order to address what is important
- Prepare communications and messaging strategy
- Model spatial scenarios to assess the “maximum capacity” in a given floor plate during this initial re-occupancy phase

Long term include:
- Develop planning scenarios and cost modeling
- Avoid any long term decisions with regards to physical redesign. A solution may be simply current design thinking.
REPLANNING
THE POST-PANDEMIC OFFICE

We are social creatures and great ideas do not emerge in isolation. Now more than ever, collaboration is needed to drive growth and innovation, but what will it take to bring people together physically in the workplace? Short term modifications will be required: Operational (measurable safety measure), Behavioral (believable cultural shifts), Spatial (understandable design changes). These three modifications must be aligned in order to instill employee confidence in returning to physical work environments when in-person collaboration is necessary. Working remotely and leveraging technology will continue to be important components of work schedules. Pre-pandemic work environments facilitated a sense of community through physical interaction, and the shift is now to protect and create a sense of community across new modes of working.
REEVALUATING REOCCUPANCY CONSIDERATIONS

Operational
The functional processes put in place by the organization to ensure that the proper health and safety measures are developed, communicated and deployed must be visible so that employees ACKNOWLEDGE that the workplace is safe for re-occupancy of employees such as; protocols around disinfection, social distancing, maximum occupancy, space usage.

Behavioral
The perceptual modifications required by the organization or employees to shift cultural beliefs in a way that allows employees to BELIEVE that the operational measures are maintained and successful such as; employee safety is most important, visual conveyance that disinfecting is happening (personal and spatial), importance and limitations of social distancing.

Spatial
The design modifications required by the organization that convey the intentional shift in space usage requires TRUST to reinforce the operational and behavioral shift required to help employees understand what has been done and how a space should be used to allow them to safely reoccupy the workplace.
OPERATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Entry Protocols
Install entry signage that outlines the overall protocols for the arrival sequence of employees and visitors as well as the safety precautions throughout the office.

Waiting Queue
Develop entry and queue protocols for receiving visitors, guests, and daily users alike. For shared service areas (i.e. coffee, copy) develop queue protocols, touch & disinfecting protocols.

Check In / Check Out
Designate an area where users can let others know they have arrived and designates available workspaces. This can allow users to quickly find available workspace.

Delivery + Staging
An area or room(s) close to the entry is required to allow for isolation and staging of deliveries and to manage who and what is coming into the office.

Professional Disinfecting
Institutional disinfecting protocols will require additional levels of end of day disinfecting as well as continuous disinfecting of frequently touched areas.

Workspace Usage
Day-to-day function will require different seating strategies. Unassigned seating may require alternate day staffing were as dedicated seating may safely occupy every seat through social distancing.
BEHAVIORAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Maintain Distance
Maintain a 6-foot separation in any areas where waiting or queuing for shared equipment use occurs.

Awareness of Others
Sneeze or cough into your elbow – while you might not be sick many may be hyper-aware of any indication of potential transfer.

Clean Desk Policy
Instituting a clean desk policy at the end of the day will prep the surfaces for enhanced disinfecting preparing it for the next user.

Consider a Mask
Wearing a mask at the office may relieve anxiety and help alleviate the spread of disease while easing the 6-foot distancing concerns.

Make Wipes Available
While spaces are being professionally disinfected, provide users with surface disinfecting wipes and option to contribute to disinfecting immediately prior to use.

If Sick Stay Home
If sick, stay home. It is critical that individuals take care of themselves and realize others may be anxious or exposed if illness is present in the office.

Bring it, Take it.
It is important that users clean up and remove things brought along – spaces should be left as found.

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SPATIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Room Density
Chairs in enclosed rooms should be removed to modify occupancy to allow for the required social distancing.

Protocols Signage
‘Branded’ temporary signage should be visible and modifiable to reflect the current protocols around space usage to keep employees informed.

Open Space Modularity
Rework existing furniture to easily accommodate a new number of occupants or to reinforce social distancing strategies.

Workplace Screen
Consider providing temporary screening to shield users from walkways and other areas where social distancing cannot be provided.

Sick Isolation
Provide a room close to the exit that is solely for the use of a seriously ill employee to be isolated until they can be transported from the site.

Personal Screen
Consider temporary desk and table divider screens that are portable for employees to use throughout the space to ease anxiety and reinforce social distancing.
REEVALUATING MIXED OFFICE LAYOUT

Original Occupancy Strategy
Assigned workspace that accommodates all headcount.

Total Capacity: 96
Workstation | Office Ratio: 50 | 50

Reoccupancy Strategy
Assigned workspace with social distancing provides 70% of total headcount. Creating two separate work groups A & B, independent from each other, ensures that all users are given the opportunity to work from the office at varying times throughout the week with increased social distance.

Group A Total Capacity: 16/33
Group B Total Capacity: 16/30
Workstation | Office Ratio: 50 | 50

PLANNING STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIXED OFFICE LAYOUT</th>
<th>ORIGINAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Usable Square Footage (USF)</td>
<td>21,000 USF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enclosed Office seats/Workstation seats</td>
<td>32/63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration seats (enclosed + open)</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group A – Enclosed Office/Workstation Seats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B – Enclosed Office/Workstation Seats</td>
<td>16/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per/seat</td>
<td>216 USF</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Workplace Reoccupancy**

**Return to Service: Workplace**

**Replanning Mixed Office Layout**

- Reception: Check-in/Check-out location for employees to report if they are in the office or working from home. Rework furniture layouts to provide multiple separated queue locations for visitors outside the flow of corridor traffic. Separate seating areas to maximize social distancing of various groups waiting in reception area.

- Informal Collaborative Zone: Modularity of furniture should be reworked to conform to social distancing. Disinfecting protocols should be visible and happen on schedule. Consider masks to allow for safer face-to-face collaboration. Take everything you brought to reset for next user. Workstations can be assigned to employees A & B on alternate days in the office.

- Assigned Workstations: Workstation usage can be assigned A & B on alternate days. Provide disinfecting wipes in adjacent locations to allow employees to wipe down surfaces. Clean Desk Policy should be instituted to allow for disinfections of all work surfaces.

- Corridors: Workplace screens can provide barrier to corridor traffic in situations where long corridors exist.

- Pantry: Rework furniture to conform to social distancing. Disinfecting protocols should be visible and happen on schedule. Signage should be posted that outlines usage protocols. Queue space should be provided for those waiting to use a space. Take away everything that you brought to reset for next user.

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**Planning Considerations**

- Operational
- Behavioral
- Spatial

**Planning Statistics**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mixed Office Layout</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Reoccupancy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Usable Square Footage (USF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enclosed Office/Workstation seats</td>
<td>324/3</td>
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<td>Collaboration seats (enclosed + open)</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group A – Enclosed Office/Workstation Seats</td>
<td>16/33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B – Enclosed Office/Workstation Seats</td>
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<td>TOTAL USF per seat</td>
<td>216 USF</td>
<td>461 USF</td>
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REEVALUATING TRADITIONAL OFFICE LAYOUT

TRADITIONAL OFFICE LAYOUT

Original Occupancy Strategy
Assigned workspace that accommodates all headcount.

Total Office/WS count: 60
Workstation | Office Ratio: 5 | 95

Reoccupancy Strategy
Assigned workspace with social distancing provides 78% of total headcount.

Highly enclosed workspace (like this one) may inherit the opportunity to utilize and adapt existing ancillary spaces such as meeting rooms and open collaboration to provide additional seat count.

Total Office/WS count: 47
Workstation | Office Ratio: 5 | 95

PLANNING STATISTICS

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<th>TRADITIONAL OFFICE LAYOUT</th>
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<td>Enclosed Office seats/Workstation seats</td>
<td>33/27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration seats (enclosed + open)</td>
<td>136</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per seat</td>
<td>307 USF</td>
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REPLANNING

TRADITIONAL OFFICE LAYOUT

**Assigned Private Office**
Remove guest chairs from private offices to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

**Exterior Entry + Reception**
Entry protocols signage should be located outside the door to inform visitors of the space usage. Queuing areas should be visible to help visitors understand where to wait prior to check in.

**Outdoor Space**
Modularity of furniture should be reworked conform to social distancing. Disinfecting protocols should be visible and happen on schedule. Consider masks to allow for safer face-to-face collaboration. Take everything you brought to reset for next user.

**Interconnecting Stairs**
Path of Travel should be directed so that employees who are going down have the right of way. Handrails should be disinfected throughout the day.

**Operational Behavioral Spatial Planning Considerations**

**Operational**

<table>
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**Behavioral**

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**Spatial**

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**Operational Behavioral Spatial Planning Statistics**

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REEVALUATING AGILE/OPEN OFFICE LAYOUT

Original Occupancy Strategy
Unassigned workstations that accommodate a percentage of headcount assigned to office location.

Total Capacity: 143
Workstation | Office Ratio: 100 | 00

Reoccupancy Strategy
Due to the existing layout densities, 50% of workstations will have to be taken offline to meet social distancing requirements. This will require new occupancy strategies to ensure workplace needs are being met. Seating would remain unassigned to accommodate various occupancy strategies, two examples are outlined below, supplementing the ability to "work from home". Seating would not be shared over a single day and would require proper disinfecting overnight to prepare for a new user the next day.

- **Team Strategy** – Users occupy by their teams or business groups and share the workspace throughout the week. Example: Teams A, C, & F Monday / Wednesday, teams B & D Tuesday / Thursday, and E on Friday.

- **Reduced Count Strategy** – Users occupy by groups allowing for less than the maximum occupancy to be achieved each day. This assumes office users are one "team" and that they can rotate in and out based on project work needs.

Occupancy in the Agile/Open Plan environment must be a highly organized effort to ensure user needs are being met while still accommodating maximum occupancy requirements.

Total Capacity: 72
Workstation | Office Ratio: 100 | 00

**PLANNING STATISTICS**

AGILE/OPEN OFFICE LAYOUT

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Usable Square Footage (USF)</td>
<td>24,840 USF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workstation seats</td>
<td>143</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration seats (enclosed + open)</td>
<td>188</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per seat</td>
<td>173 USF</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per person</td>
<td>150 USF</td>
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Delivery + Staging Area
Isolated room near the freight elevator to receive, sanitize and store packages and deliveries for employees. Queuing areas should be visible to help delivery staff and employees understand where to wait. Provide wipes to allow for spot disinfecting and hand hygiene. Alert employees when packages arrive so that they can schedule a retrieval time.

Primary Circulation
Path of travel should be designed and regulated to ‘one way’ in order to minimize cross traffic in dense floor plans with narrow corridors. Screening devices should be considered to provide distance between those walking and those seated at workstations along the main path of circulation.

Unassigned Workstations
Workplace usage should be designated so that unassigned users know which workstations are ready for use. Remove chairs from desks that should not be used to allow for a clear understanding of required social distancing. Provide wipes in adjacent locations to allow for spot disinfecting by employees. Clean Desk Policy should be instituted to allow for disinfections of all work surfaces.

REPLANNING
AGILE/OPEN OFFICE LAYOUT

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
Operational ◀ Behavioral ◀ Spatial

DELIVERY + STAGING AREA
Isolated room near the freight elevator to receive, sanitize and store packages and deliveries for employees. Queuing areas should be visible to help delivery staff and employees understand where to wait. Provide wipes to allow for spot disinfecting and hand hygiene. Alert employees when packages arrive so that they can schedule a retrieval time.

PRIMARY CIRCULATION
Path of travel should be designed and regulated to ‘one way’ in order to minimize cross traffic in dense floor plans with narrow corridors. Screening devices should be considered to provide distance between those walking and those seated at workstations along the main path of circulation.

UNASSIGNED WORKSTATIONS
Workplace usage should be designated so that unassigned users know which workstations are ready for use. Remove chairs from desks that should not be used to allow for a clear understanding of required social distancing. Provide wipes in adjacent locations to allow for spot disinfecting by employees. Clean Desk Policy should be instituted to allow for disinfections of all work surfaces.

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Tenant Floor

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AGILE/OPEN OFFICE LAYOUT

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<td>143</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration seats (enclosed + open)</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per seat</td>
<td>173 USF</td>
<td>345 USF</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL USF per person</td>
<td>150 USF*</td>
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*due to planning methodology of unassigned seat + desk sharing ratio of 0.8 seats per person
RECONSIDERING MATERIALITY

Recommendations for now include:
- Evaluate existing materials and surfaces for antimicrobial replacements
- Analyze current in-house building material standards program
- Review material “disinfecting and cleanability” checklists
- Consider, where possible, to remove high traffic/high touch materials
- Consider antimicrobial retrofit for high traffic/high touch areas

Long term include:
- Reevaluate of company building material standards and/or guideline development
- Develop selection process for materials in the built environment—almost anything can be coated
- Replace materials
- Analyze hard surface vs. soft surface materials
- Develop new product with inherent/organic antimicrobial properties

Disinfecting, cleanability and durability of the surfaces will be paramount in the design of spaces. Material selection can help promote a healthy, highly cleanable space without compromising aesthetics. Sanitation and disinfecting guidelines issued by the CDC and WHO are expected to begin to dictate material selection.
While the capabilities that are available through the deployment of “smart building” technologies has advanced significantly in recent years, it has remained very much in the “nice to have” box.

In a world where shared surfaces have become a primary concern, the idea of smart buildings is not longer a convenience, rather its quickly becoming a necessity in efforts to return to work.

Beyond the touchless interaction with the building’s elevators or meeting room booking system, the smart building systems also provide the reassurance needed by people on what they cant see—air quality and other workplace environmental factors—through a digital feedback loop.

Considerations include:
- Adopt next level “Bring your own Device” approach
- Non-touch engagement with building
- Digital feedback to building users on environmental quality
- Smart building security protocols
REVAMPING CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Recommendations for now include:
- Gather facility ownership, utilization, condition, efficiency and productivity data
- Create a scored elements prioritization methodology incorporating post coronavirus business drivers
- Undertake an accelerated scenario planning and risk assessment process to test targeted consolidation, new remote working policies and/or expansion strategies
- Create a phased reinvestment plan that covers short term operations enabling work as well as longer term acquisitions, disposals and shared uses

Long term include:
- Conduct more thorough financial analysis and prioritization of capital projects
- Conduct financial scenario modeling based on varied paths to return to service and long term shifts in work patterns

Rethinking the approach to capital planning is one of the most important short term initiatives that involves uncertainty and long term consequences. To help mitigate this risk, capital planning of the future will be a dynamic process, driven by real-time data inputs which simultaneously allow for an understanding of the viability of current assets, predict future needs on the basis of market trends and test the implications of capital investment decisions.
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