

Redesigning Your Office For Hybrid Office Success

Guide For The Future Of The Office



 **FOCUS**

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It's time, time to rethink how you reshape your office to improve your business.

Over the last year, the office for most has been empty, it has the traditional lines and banks of desks, it has the kitchen in the middle of the office and numerous meeting rooms with the management offices at the top of the office overlooking the empty banks of desks.



The Opportunity For Positive Change, It's Not A Threat

This traditional model has to change, the banks of desks will have to be remodelled, more distance between the desks and people will have to be put in place, many meeting rooms will have to be reshaped, rethought and will require more space and fewer chairs.

The concept of it being all in the office has now gone, it will be a book in and book out, banks of desks per department is now going to be hotdesks and many departments will have to come to agreements on when it might be the tech day or could be the marketing day or the sales team on-site.

The office will have to be [hybrid first](#), fully considered, the office will likely have to be shaped into [an arena](#) to cater to in person and on-screen performances for your teams to watch and participate via floating heads, audio, video, typed out Q&A.

Intentionality Is Key

The case for deliberate action has never been so clear, from owning communications channels, internal connections being built via specialist [culture community management](#) and crafted principles that are followed company-wide.

At focus, while our miss is to [fix the broken world of work](#), we help companies with [office and environment design](#) and we have created a checklist to help guide you through reshaping your office.

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No More ‘My Desks’

Less personal desks – the end of having a desk per person for the midterm future has to be removed, this will mean:

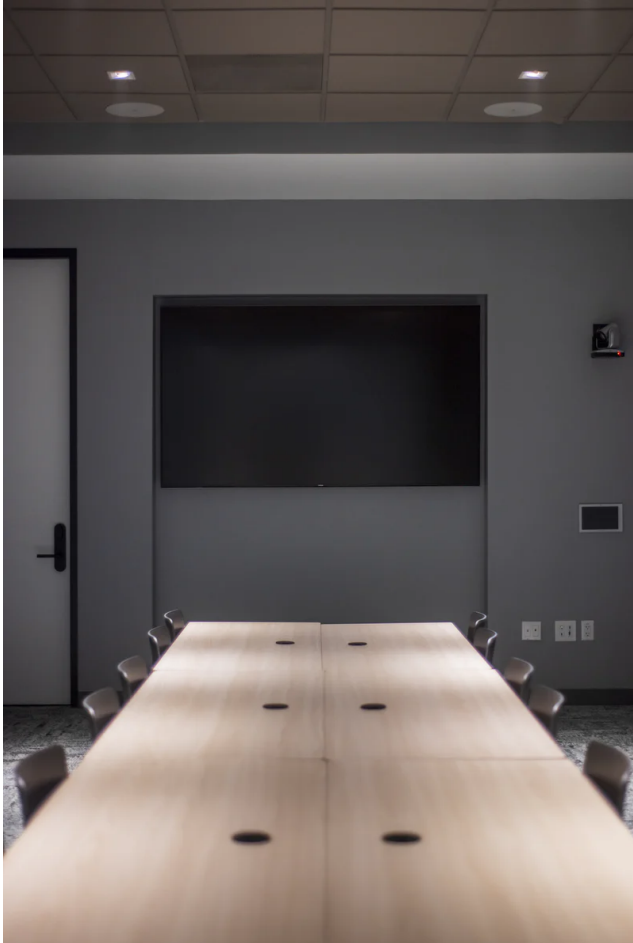
- fewer departmental banks of desks,
- it will reduce the requirement for cabinets
- Reducing clutter within the office

Booking in system

People are creatures of habit, booking in systems will have to be rolled out and spaces or specific desks will be reserved

All defaults to hot desks

That is right this means colleagues will be mixing more and required to hot desk, this will see many departmental changes and businesses deliberately looking at how they can mix different teams who struggle to interact cross-functionally



New Rooms

Zoom rooms – all rooms will have to be equipped with the best connections, microphones and acoustics clearly considered. Laptops will become the canonical source of communication with investments into headsets and headphones with microphones a basic requirement. There will be a place for telephone conferencing however we have to

consider how we enable hard of hearing and deaf colleagues to be able to interact and be on the same playing field as everyone else.

Camera first rooms

The majority of rooms will need to have cameras added and easily sync with your internal network to enable more interactive sessions, there will be more arguments and fights over large meetings rooms and the conference room.

Conference Room Amendments

Multiple screens vs one screen

Typically most meetings rooms only have one screen, in the hybrid world this potentially will have to increase to multi-screen rooms or multiple inputs into multiple screens, this will enable more interaction, more interactive presentations and more collaborative efforts

Interactive panels and boards

Despite the raise of whiteboard features and tools like Muro, there will need to be more interactive panels, more boards and better surfaces to have more open problem solving and sketching sessions. Product and Marketing teams will be requesting this currently

Holographic presentations

Yes holograms will become a staple in in-office presentations and stand-ups.

Being able to present as if you were in person is going to be incredibly important and something businesses of all sizes will have to plan for. AR will be the best way of researching and offering holograms currently.

360-degree cameras

There are many products on the market that offer voice tracking and speaker tracking, being able to track someone walking or pacing and presenting is going to be essential, considering investing in a number of these for large conferences or for all hands, town halls and product demos.

Best in class microphones

A hugely important takeaway since working remote-first is:

Audio is vitally important for attention, being heard and getting the message across.

Businesses should invest in high-quality microphones, audio continues to be vitally important alongside video and connectivity quality.

New Tech

More Tablets – Tablets will likely see another resurgence in popularity, this is down to the better quality camera, headphone jack and the portability of tablets, alongside being able to use iPads as a second screen or a dedicated conferencing tool. Consider how you leverage tablets and how you can create better interactions between colleagues when on video calls and presenting.

Self-cleaning Tech

We have seen large leaps in self-cleaning tech over the last twelve months, with the importance of clean and sanitised workspaces there will be a requirement to ensure areas are cleaner, sanitised more often and some emphasis should be placed back on the employees to clean as they go. Employee cleanliness and hygiene have never been so important to the health of the organisation.

Reducing Crowding

Dedicated systems to remove crowding

Bringing awareness of the density of people and groups forming safely is of the highest importance for safety and awareness. Investing in dedicated systems to remove crowding and built-up areas of staff is critical to your staff's health but also their wellness and welfare. This will also reduce anxiety levels and fear around returning to the office safely.

Shift patterns

This is an area many leaders have not fully considered and is an area where there is opportunity. With improved asynchronous communications, there should be less reliance on every staff member having to work at the same time. We have seen more flexibility can work and shift patterns allow more flexibility in travelling, in completing work and being a parent. If someone is a morning person enable these colleagues to start earlier and finish earlier, if others perform better in the afternoon or evenings, offer a way for more flexible patterns.

Teams will have to be responsible to own this by team or by

department however guidance from the leadership functions will add weight and importance to offering more flexible work patterns.

Team and department areas

There are going to be important sessions where teams will want to be in the same location at the same time, we will see that this instantly increases footfall into the office for on-sites, this also sees footfall increase for off-sites. This will have to be managed and organised by the booking system and be discussed for specific days for x or y department. This is not an easy negotiation however a vital one to plan for.



Connectivity

Mobile apps purpose-built for brainstorming and ideation – There are many elements of work that are traditionally in person, brainstorming and ideation has a buzz and feeling connected to it, connecting the

hybrid workforce is going to be essential particularly with apps and software enabling better brainstorming and ideation.

Connected whiteboards

Whiteboards are typically dumb, they are written on and wipe off, requiring to take a picture, upload and often redesign or type up will not be optimal in the hybrid workplace, investing in connected whiteboards will help improve teamwork and reduce friction between projects.

Best connecting WiFi and 5G

The office is going to have far more devices connected to the network than before, despite an estimated 40% returning to the office, there will be more devices connecting and taking up more bandwidth and sharing more video and audio, it is important to improve your connectivity and consider if 5G is an option where WiFi can be challenging to install.



Kitchen Remodelled

The kitchen is a key component to the success of an office, the kitchen is a meeting area, a quick catch up and connection area and often important discussion stations. With fewer people in the office, this will mean you will be ordering less milk, fewer caffeinated beverages and reducing waste, this all has an impact on the way the office environment feels and will require better management.

Screens in the kitchen?

There is a school of thought that screens will have to be placed everywhere to enable spontaneous conversation, this could be true however more screens will mean trust will be lowered as surveillance will seem higher. Consider how you encourage and enable the kitchen to be reshaped to encourage safe conversation and bringing in other colleagues where applicable. The kitchen will be a vital open space where colleagues can reconnect, while we will be in phase one of returning to the office it is essential to manage flow in and around the kitchen with safe distancing. There is an opportunity to learn from companies such as Pixar who opened up and expanded their kitchen and dining areas to encourage more moments of connection and areas to break out in.

Interactive Spaces

Less private phone booths more video conferencing breakouts – dedicated private phone booths were installed in many businesses to enable private calls and head down work to happen, we are likely to have to rethink this space and add in more video-based conferencing into these booths. This is an additional investment however with many businesses going to have to rely on video-based chat this is an area to consider for space and for productivity.

Is there still room for in-house coffee baristas?

For many businesses, co-working spaces and agencies this will mean the barista will likely have to reduce hours or be on strict management of crowding and introduce an ordering system.

Despite the role and the importance of connecting over hot beverages, this is one of the organisation's perks that might have to sacrifice.

The Need For More

More mobile apps – Mobile apps are the ultimate convenience. Simple to learn, simple to use, simple to update will be key to win. It is likely businesses will need to be on more devices with better apps to enable quick interactions, quick requests, booking in and booking out of the office. WeWork and other co-working and building management did a good job with their apps, it will be good to map out all requests and the elements raised in this guide and hiring a developer to be able to connect into your main software to help to provide an employee view, a manager view, a department view and a company view.

More in-floor sensors

We should be clear the in-floor sensors are to improve knowledge around density, reduce crowding and understand if there are times or parts of the office that have more footfall than there should be. In-floor sensors should be clearly called out to staff to make them aware of this change and be clear for the reasons why.

Operated Turnstiles

If you have an office of over 15 people it can be difficult to manage flow in between the office and into the office, while apps and management software will help with understanding how many people are in the office if you have couriers, guests and small events

happening, an operated turnstile will help control this and reduce any risk of too many people in the office or in lifts etc.

Foot-controlled lifts / elevators

Buttons are over-rated, right? Foot controls are going to be important to reduce the surfaces touched by hands. Adding a foot control will likely be costly however many landlords will be making plans to roll these out. Be proactive and reduce the friction as early as possible.

Health Consciousness

Well-Being First – Whilst we have lived through the last twelve to fifteen months in many locations across the world, we have seen the common cold and seasonal flu reduce down. Density and people connecting spreads gems, it is essential to consider how you have a well-being first environment. This means anyone who is feeling unwell, from a cold to having a higher temperature to having other symptoms they have to work from home. Likewise, mental health days will be vitally important to be called out and actually used without any stigma.

Any sniffles or sneezes will be treated differently than before, it is important to address early on and talk through why it is important to use the hybrid model if you have anything that resembles a cold. Many may consider this a step too far, however, for everyone's peace of mind and to reduce any peer to peer friction there should be guidelines put in place.

More UV lights – UV lights have been used to combat numerous issues and bugs, there will be a demand for UV lightening and UV cleaning materials, it should be an area you research and then

potentially invest in. A number of cleaning firms have started to invest heavily in UV lights and specific UV lights for high duty cleaning.

Real Estate Demands

AKA Outdoor Space A Premium

More outdoor space – Many countries are taking different approaches. However, outdoor spaces and meeting areas will be prime real estate if your lease is coming to an end it will be important to look for an office or offices that include more open and outdoor spaces. One perk many offices may find is that the office is close to parks and will see the benefit of outdoor meetings, walk and talk meetings and a chance for more outdoor sessions. If you are in a position to consider a new office there are a number of new real estate demands to consider:

- Roof terraces
- Courtyards
- Gardens
- Large balconies
- Outside coffee and food carts

Good luck with remodelling your office and preparing your team.

An important follow-up read is [reducing anxiety returning to the office](#)

This guide will be updated over time to consider new guidelines and studies, however, it is important to note you should follow local and national legal guidelines as these vary from town to town, city to city, state to state.