



What is Your Return to Work Strategy?

During this time of uncertainty, many people are left wondering about the changes to the workplace after COVID-19. It's important to note that there are no certainties on what the future holds post-pandemic; however, you can turn to Office Furniture Center's team of design and space planning experts for guidance.

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Welcome to the New Normal

Employee Safety, Wellness and Productivity is Key

Office Furniture Center has extensive experience with office design and office reconfigurations.

One of the most crucial elements regarding the changes to the workplace after COVID-19 involves how the traditional office space itself will function. After the overwhelming trend of workplaces incorporating open floorplans, a lot of offices will need to redesign, retrofit and reconfigure to promote safety, wellness and productivity in the workspace.

Changes to the Workplace After COVID-19

Although there will also be some unexpected changes to the workplaces after COVID-19, organizations can take a more active approach by implementing these positive changes.

We want to make sure that our client's offices are well-equipped to handle the changes to the workplace after COVID-19. We believe that there are three changes that organizations can utilize to properly reshape their workplace: Redesign, Retrofit and Reconfigure.

The Three R's

Redesign

Redesigning is going to be one of the biggest changes to the workplace after COVID-19. Offices that are extremely open with employees in close quarters with one another will need to be redesigned to provide workers with enough space and distance to stay safe and prevent the spread of germs.

Retrofit

Retrofitting involves adding purposeful pieces or accessories to existing furniture. Innovative accessories for the post-COVID office can include screens and panels added to desk spaces to provide extra protection and distance as well storage space for sanitation supplies.

Reconfigure

Reconfiguring an office is no easy task, but it is one of the most important changes to the workplace after COVID-19 that organizations can embrace. By reconfiguring the workspace, offices can ensure that social distancing measures are met with the relocation of furniture and installation of new protective pieces.

Ways to Implement Necessary Change

Short-term Changes



Frequent Cleaning

To limit the spread of germs of viruses in the office, spaces and surfaces will need to be cleaned and sterilized much more frequently than before



Employee Screening

Certain offices may need to implement screening stations for employees to check their temperature to create a sense of safety in the workplace



Traffic Patterns

Enforcing traffic patterns in open areas is a simple way to minimize personal interactions. These patterns can be enforced with directional signage



Increased Remote Work

It is important to remember that this may be a short-term effect that could change at any minute



Sanitation Materials

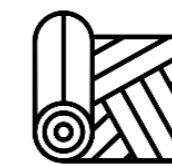
By implementing touch free sanitation devices, disinfectant wipes and masks, employees will be comforted

Long-term Changes



Remodeling

A significant amount of businesses will choose to change the architectural design of their workspace in order to providing employees with protection



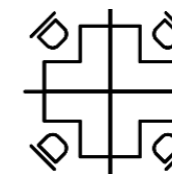
Changing Preferred Finishes

Shift to materials and finishes that can be easily sanitized like solid surfaces, bleach-cleanable fabrics, antimicrobial wall finishes and non-porous materials



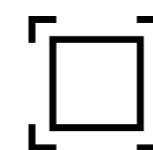
Innovative Technology

Include pieces such as touch free fixtures, lighting that kills bacteria, acoustic sound panels for virtual meeting, motion sensors, and more



Scaling Back Open

It is quite possible that the workplace may return to favor cubicles and private offices in order to provide safety and privacy to concerned employees

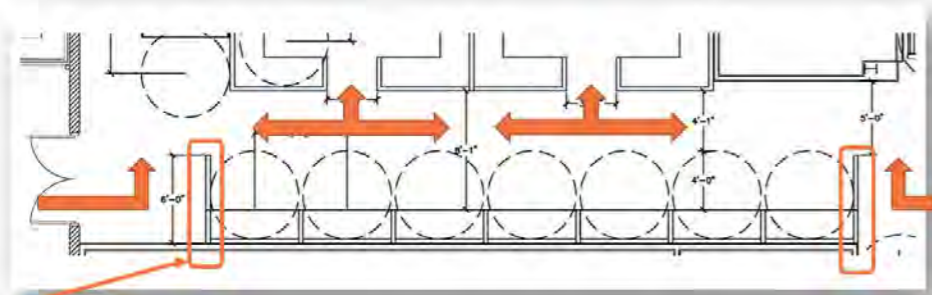


More Space Per Worker

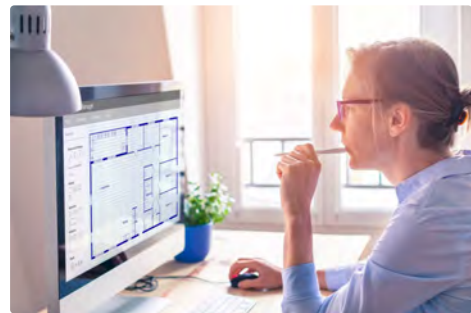
After COVID-19, it is suggested that each worker have at least 225 to 250 square feet allotted for their individual space in order to keep workers at a safe distance

The Time to Plan is Now

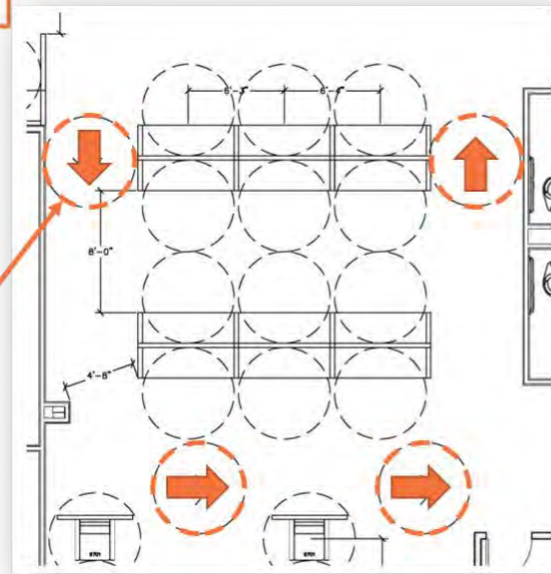
Design Element Ideas for the New Workspace



Traffic Barriers: Any kind of feature barriers to help instructing employees to walk in one direction into office area from hallways, breakrooms, or entrances to ensure an orderly flow to foot traffic.

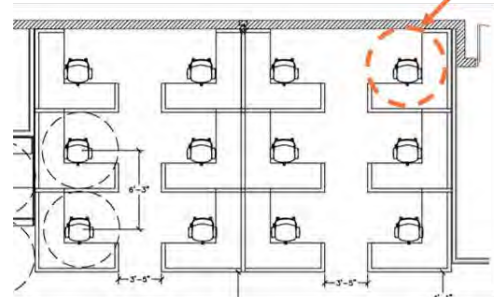


One Way Traffic: A unique routing for each office, making traffic flow completely safe.



6 Feet Workstation: An adapted and fully equipped workplace at which the user can work safely.

Workstation could include new layouts in the space to help physical distancing feel more comfortable such as adding new elements to workstations, like glass or higher screens and new Antimicrobial fabrics. This means that planning paradigms driven by density and need to think adaptability instead of permanence, fluid instead of fixed.



Employee Return — a 5-step plan

Help Employees Be Their Best When the Time Comes to Return to the Workplace:

1. Form a new Return to Workplace team

As we reenter the workplace, we need to educate our employees on health and safety. We can do so by creating a team comprised of HR and communications leadership, including voices from differing roles and locations. This will allow us to effectively communicate wants, needs and safety protocols.

2. Develop Communication Protocols

Your company must be able to communicate clearly to employees in various stages of reboarding across all geographies. Start by identifying your key communicators, the channels you can use, and how information will flow out and in. Managers will need both the education and the resources to distribute messages and successfully listen to and sympathize with employees.

3. Listen to your Employees

Consider sending out an employee survey to get a feel for how your employees feel about returning to work. Their responses might give you better insight into how and when you should reopen.

4. Prepare the Physical Workplace to be Welcoming, but Safe

Whether it's desk dividers, wellness screens, directional signage or a complete retrofit, utilize your resources to get your team back to the office safely.

5. Measure and Rebuild

Measure often and be prepared to adapt quickly. Foster a culture of curiosity and well-being. Track what does and does not work and be aware of what changes can be made to keep everyone safe.



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Office Furniture Center operates the largest showroom of premium pre-owned, renewed and value priced new office furniture in the Midwest. With in-house design, space planning, furniture procurement, delivery & installation options, we can take care of every detail of an office transition.

Learn more about Office Furniture Center on our website at OfficeFurnitureCenter.com, or give us a call to speak with a furniture expert today.

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