

SPRING 2021



Workplace Insights

The Race to Return: Three Steps To A More Effective Post-Pandemic Workplace

Today, many companies continue to have employees working either partially or completely from home. With workplace occupancy down, now is a good time to review your existing footprint and plan for what it should look like once your employees return. This plan could be something as sweeping as a consolidation of your overall square footage. However, for many companies, more modest changes, such as modifying seating arrangements and/or expanding collaboration space types, may be a better fit.

At the moment, many organizations have space that now sits dormant or less occupied than normal. This vacant canvas may be the perfect testing ground for new ideas. We recommend undertaking the following steps:

1. Start with a survey. Ask your employees what features within the existing workplace best supports the work they are there to do. What does not? For example, are individual workstations located in the right places to allow for focused engagement with their work? Are conference rooms right-sized and functionally up-to-date to suit a wide range of meeting types, and to ensure highly productive

meetings? Is there enough variety in the size and type of available collaboration spaces throughout the facility? If surveys are not your forte, interactive Focus Groups can also provide a wealth of data.

2. Design and implement a pilot based on perceived opportunities and response data from the survey or focus groups. Use the testing area to create new types of workspaces and experiment with different modes of working tailored to your specific processes and work product. Replace existing furniture with temporary designs, then test their effectiveness with those who are currently working in the office: How well do the temporary spaces support that work that is being done? It's important to give these spaces

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a reasonable testing period to gather sufficient data on how they improve your work, and to identify further adjustments to be made.

- 3. Review the results and respond accordingly.** This is THE most important step in this process. Take the opportunity to tweak the design and test again. Perhaps the “wins” even build a “buzz” that encourages others to use the workplace differently and more effectively. Look for answers to your key questions. Does this workspace work well for the intended function? Does it work better than previous configurations? How can the new design be improved?

At Hixson, “we practice what we preach.” We completed a pilot program with several workplace configurations that support the work we do every day. Our associates who used the furniture were asked to complete short computer-based surveys after each use of the areas. We compiled that data quickly and easily once the pilot was complete and used that data to better assess future changes within the workplace.

While many organizations will likely support a distributed work model in the future, the need for an office will always exist. Employees will need a place to engage with their coworkers, contribute to company culture, recharge their creativity, etc. Now is a great time to determine what your employees need and begin testing solutions to provide them with the office layouts that will help achieve those desired results.



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