



CORENET GLOBAL

VIRTUAL POP UP

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Pop-Up Webinar: Key Takeaways

21 May 2020

When are you planning to reopen your business? If you are opening sooner rather than later, do you have policies in place to get your employees back in the office?

- It is all over the board right now in terms of what companies are doing and their strategies. Amazon and Google, for instance, are not even looking at bringing back big numbers of people anytime soon.
- Companies are taking different approaches. We have opened some operations, with safety precautions. Everyone going into our space enters through the warehouse and is given a temperature check. There are sanitation stations throughout the building along with distancing signs. When we do go back corporate wide, it will be a soft opening.

What about state guidelines?

- We are following state-by-state guidelines depending on where we are. Some offices are opening sooner than others. We are following state guidelines for masks and all other safety precautions.
- Our headquarters is based in Dallas. We have offices throughout the United States and globally, and we are looking at the geographical guidance from the countries, states, and even local county governments, taking everything into consideration. Our legal people are probably drowning in all these orders. We are planning to start in shifts, with a soft opening. If someone does not feel comfortable returning in the first phase, it is OK. We will have three shifts. By the second round, we hope people will be comfortable coming in for their shift.
- We are also going with phases. Ten percent of our workforce will be going back next week. We are not doing temperature checks, because according to the state government here, they are not required. We will be requiring masks, cleaning, and social distancing. All entrances to our buildings will be open; we will not have a centralized entry point.
- Our approach is a little different. From our standpoint, the office needs to be a place as an option, and not a mandate. A global work from home recommendation has been in place for a couple of months now, and we just extended it until the end of the year. We have told our people 'your primary workplace is at your home, but if you cannot do your best work at your home, our offices are open for you to use.' We have told people to work from home and be effective there for the foreseeable future. We want to provide choice for them.

Can anyone share their experience with returning to work in a mid- or high-rise building?

- We reopened our office in Beijing on Monday. It is on the 56th floor of the tallest building in Beijing. There is a very detailed protocol in place. Regarding elevator usage, one thing we have the benefit of there is a large amount of labor – people pushing buttons for you, sanitizing things and so on. Vertical transportation is the biggest concern for me and our employees there. Using the stairs to the 56th floor is just not an option. Culturally, everyone there uses masks, and they are all used to queuing up for things. I understand the opening was orderly. We have only a small percentage of our population there going back so far.
- We have an office in a downtown high-rise in Chicago. The building management is taking the initiative to contact tenants and tell them what to do. They sent out very detailed maps as to which way to walk and which escalators to take. I questioned them yesterday as to how many people are returning on June 1st here in Illinois. They said most of the companies in the building are still looking at a work-from-home scenario, but they do have a few companies that will require their people to come back June 1st. Those companies are saying that 75 to 80 percent of their people will be back.

Has anyone made changes in their open-plan workspaces to cope with COVID-19? If so, are they temporary, or permanent?

- I found out yesterday that our office in Shanghai is installing clear shields between benching. They put up a high shield between two stations that face each other, but nothing to the side. The screens look like what you might see in a grocery store. They did this without really consulting anybody or asking permission to install those screens. We just put that office together. It is quite tight at 118 square feet per person.
- We are only installing shields in our reception areas and at our transaction counters.
- We have no plans to do that for all our general workstations. I think it would be expensive, and reactionary too.

Are you requiring masks in the workplace?

- We are requiring masks in the public spaces, but in your office space you do not need to wear one. We are providing them, but people are encouraged to bring their own.
- We are providing masks to all our employees. In your own personal space, if you can maintain social distancing, you do not have to wear them. Of course, if the local jurisdiction requires masks, we will use them.
- We are providing PPE for employees, and we are requiring them for common areas. But if you are at your desk, you do not have to wear PPE.

Is anyone allowing visitors to the office? If so, what protocols are you establishing?

- Only employees for now – no visitors, no third-party contractors.
- We are at the opposite end of the spectrum. We had a good conversation with our team last night. Originally, we were going to limit visitors to what we have as our client center area, on the ground floor, and not allow them up into our space. But we decided not to segregate visitors to a limited part of the building. Visitors must read our requirements and attest that they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms. Then they will be escorted into the space by an employee.
- I had a site visit last week, and those are basically the same protocols I followed: sign in, agree that you are not sick, wear a mask and observe social distancing while in the space.
- The New York City Chapter of CoreNet Global held an event yesterday, and it featured some interesting comments about high-rise access and control. One of the things that stuck out for me was negotiation with trade unions and landlords about extending starting and closing hours to avoid work-shift differentials or overtime pay. Another big issue seemed to be when you have a

construction project underway in Manhattan, you must figure out how to keep construction workers from going up and down the elevators all day to take breaks. Perhaps use the freight elevators for the construction crew and leave the other elevators for employees. The consensus seemed to be that you can force construction workers to wear masks while on the job, but if they leave the building and they're out on the sidewalk not wearing masks, that is really their issue, and it's not the place of the tenant or the landlord to police that.

When you have people in the common areas, who is managing the policing of masks and so on? Is that for the tenants, or the landlord?

- If it is the common areas, I would think it falls under the landlord's responsibility. This sounds like a legal issue that will be coming up.
- That is my gut too. We just asked that of our people, and we are not sure yet who will be responsible for policing behavior and kicking people out of the common areas if they are not following protocols. It is kind of a wildcard right now.

Will companies require training for social distancing in the workplace?

- Yes. I am in the middle of that right now. We will not allow employees to come back into our building if they have not taken the training. If they come in without having done the training, they must take the training that day. Until your training is completed, your building access is removed, and you cannot come back. We have an 11-minute video that goes through the educational components and the change management components. At the end, there is an acknowledgement that must be accepted.
- It is similar with us. We have a learning system, and it sends a report out to every single employee with an assignment to review our standard document from HR for how to properly put on a mask. It is part of our return-to-work training.

CoreNet Global

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