



## **The How and When of Returning to the Office, Post-COVID-19:**

### **Key Findings from a Worldwide Member Survey**

**13 April 2020**

#### **Executive Summary**

From 8-13 April, CoreNet Global conducted a survey of its 11,000 members to gain insight on a key question confronting corporate real estate (CRE) professionals: how, when and under what circumstances will employees begin to return to their typical workplace – the office – when the health and safety concerns posed by COVID-19 have diminished. One hundred sixty-three members responded to the survey.

Key findings include:

- Thirty-five percent of respondents anticipate that employees will begin returning to the office in May 2020, while 30 percent think it will be June 2020 or later. Some 33 percent say that it's simply too early to say.
- Sixty-five percent of survey respondents report that they will consider it safe to return to the office when government stay-at-home orders expire. Meanwhile, about one in four respondents indicate that certain country, state or local thresholds must be met first, such as when there are no confirmed new cases for 14 days.
- Ninety-two percent of respondents stated that C-Suite or other senior executives are in their decision tree in terms of when it will be safe to return to the office, followed by state or local health officials (78 percent) and federal health officials (52 percent).
- Some 78 percent of survey respondents reported that they look to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for guidance in terms of when it will be safe to return to the office, followed by state health officials (73 percent) and the World Health Organization (59 percent).
- Eighty-four percent of survey respondents indicated that they plan to bring employees back in waves; only 16 percent reported plans to bring all employees back at the same time. A sampling of approaches for bringing employees back in waves includes:
  - Those with the greatest need to be in the office will be the first to return
  - Expanded work hours and shifts to allow for thinner numbers to be in the office
  - We will bring 20 percent of our staff back two weeks after the stay-at-home order is lifted, then an additional 20 percent every two weeks
  - We are likely to use alternating weeks; social distancing must be respected
  - We will utilize only every other seat to maintain six feet of social distancing
  - Anyone high risk will be encouraged to continue working from home
  - We will encourage many to continue working from home
- Forty-nine percent of survey respondents stated that the option to continue working remotely will be offered to associates who might be uncomfortable returning to the office.
- Seventy-one percent of respondents stated that their companies are making accommodations for employees who have day-care challenges as a result of school being cancelled.
- For employees who must report to an office now for a necessary business need, the most cited strategy to ensure employee safety is continuing social distancing in the office, cited by 92 percent of respondents. Following were expanded cleaning protocols (86 percent), expanded hand-washing requirements (77 percent), limiting in-person group meetings (60 percent), keeping

associates separated by having only a portion in the office at a time (55 percent) and temperature checks (36 percent).

- Sixty-six percent of survey respondents report having a more positive view of remote working than previously. Only one percent of respondents say they have a more negative view of remote working than previously.
- Some 72 percent of survey respondents think that additional cleaning protocols will still be in place six months after employees return to the office, followed by continued emphasis on hand-washing (68 percent), limits on in-person group meetings (36 percent), continuing social distancing rules with six feet of separation (30 percent) and expanded work hours and other strategies to limit the number of people in the office at one time (25 percent).
- HR is the corporate function most often represented in companies' COVID-19 task forces, cited by 84 percent of respondents. Following were CRE (77 percent), Operations (67 percent), Communications (66 percent), IT (64 percent), Security (56 percent) and Health and Safety (55 percent).
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported that all or part of their company's operations are considered essential. Of those respondents, about one-third offer hazard pay, while two-thirds do not.

### **About CoreNet Global**

CoreNet Global is the world's leading professional association for corporate real estate (CRE) and workplace executives, service providers, and economic developers. CoreNet Global's more than 11,000 members, who include 70% of the top 100 U.S. companies and nearly half of the Global 2000, meet locally, globally and virtually to develop networks, share knowledge, learn and thrive professionally. For more information, please visit [www.corenetglobal.org](http://www.corenetglobal.org) or follow @CoreNetGlobal on Twitter.