



PRESENT



A COVID-19 Virtual Ideation Experience

TEAM-16

Team Topic and Number: Workplace Wellbeing_16

Develop forecasts and key recommendations for corporate real estate professionals that address these challenges and respond to wellbeing in the workplace going forward

Team sponsor/chapter (if applicable):N/A

Team Lead: Sujatha Ganapathy, Vice President, Knight Frank India

Team Members:

Ashwini Kuvalekar, Architect- Sustainable Solutions, Space Matrix Design Consultants Pvt Ltd,India

Charisse Gail Bantiling,Workplace Strategist and VP, Design & Construction,Trends and Concepts Inc.

Norberto.Figueroa, Associate Director, Cognizant Technology Solutions, Philippines, Inc.

Sandhya Hegde, Lead- Sustainable Solutions, Space Matrix Design Consultants Pvt Ltd,India

Input your submission below. Please remember that you have 1500 words to share your insights.

While a majority of the global population were predicting possibilities of the next world war or terrorist attack and frequent natural calamities due to the ever-changing climate; we were hit yet again by an unforeseen pandemic. This is making us rethink, see and act on situations differently - from how we live, to work, to communicate and to transact. All requiring a major retrospection at this juncture, to be able to live in a harmonious and healthier environment.

1. Workplace Wellbeing

Cambridge Dictionary. n.d. describes “Wellbeing” as the state of feeling healthy and happy. Given the fact that we spend almost 90% of our day in a workplace setting, the physical space is an environment that can create a huge impact on an individual’s wellbeing.

Various aspects contribute to creating a healthy workplace; from designing with care to building with consciousness and operational facilities, all towards a holistic approach.

In this document, we are examining the potential risks of physical space, particularly the workplace ecosystem. Identifying various interventions to address workplace environment issues and how to integrate them back into the organization's unique system without creating disruptions within their operations.

2. Environmental, Occupational and Behavioural Risks

Not only does a workplace identify to be a vulnerable setting to communicable diseases, but is also an environment that can trigger other health issues such as respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, muscular disorders, and more. It is not fully understood how the new coronavirus was transmitted, but evidence suggests that the spread was because of sneeze droplets from an infected patient in an enclosed setting.

As the typical workplace is built in an enclosed setting, individuals in these spaces are much more susceptible to get exposed to different types of risks - risks that may have either long term or short term impacts on their overall wellbeing.

Environmental Risks- Unsafe water source, Hygiene and Sanitation, Infiltration of Air Pollution, Proximity to Brownfields

Occupational risks- such as long term exposure to loud Noise, Toxic Materials, Infections & lack of active connection to the natural environment, Discomfort due to ergonomic provisions, Stress, Anxiety, Congested spaces to perform the tasks, Diverse uses-Hospitals, Convenient grocery store, Pharmacy, Fitness Centres etc

Behavioural Risks-Alcohol Consumption, Tobacco Smoking & Drug use, Dietary habits, Low Physical Activity, Lack of awareness, Mental & Emotional Stress, Sleep hygiene

3. Identifying Interventions for Workplace Wellbeing

After identifying and understanding risks associated within the workplace; we have arrived at various design and facility interventions to enhance the employee experience, therefore creating a symbiotic relationship between business continuity and employee wellbeing.

As Categorised:

a. **Infrastructure** to prevent any type of disease or ill conditions due to Occupational & Environmental factors

b. **Programs** for employees to encourage a healthier lifestyle

c. **Educational Resources** for users and stakeholders to recognize the impacts of behaviour, therefore, creating a conscious community

d. **Facility Management Protocols** to maintain a healthy and safe workplace

4. Integration of Healthy Solutions in Workplaces

4.1 Infrastructure to prevent any type of disease or ill-conditions due to Occupational & Environmental factors

Some of the measures can be taken while planning for a new workplace or to retrofit an existing office. To ensure that the Occupational and Environmental risk mitigations are covered it is necessary to be mindful on the selection of an office site,

not only considering the efficiency of the building but also taking into consideration the surrounding environment and its available resources.

4.1.a Limit exposure to Air Pollution & Infection Risks, External Factors

- Assess the sources of Air Pollution and the potential pathogen carriers - Fine particles, Pathogens, Gaseous Pollutants etc
- Easy Access to Public Transportation and Diverse Uses
- Restrict the entry of pollutants into the workplaces by having Filtration Mechanisms
- UVC based disinfection proven technology at the Central AC units or at desk level
- Ventilation rates, Optimum Temperature (as per ASHRAE 55) & Relative Humidity (40% - 60%) levels to improve the Indoor Environmental conditions
- Use of Low Emitting and least hazardous materials in the Building

4.1.b Access to Resources

- Sufficient number of **Water Dispensers** across visible points to motivate employees to drink plenty of water
- Water Purifiers/Dispensers to provide **safe drinking water as per WHO**
- Adequate sized Sinks/Basins to **promote frequent hand washing**

4.1.c Provide Comforting Needs - Space Placement, Interior Design, Engineering and Operational Facilities

- Humans have the need to be close to nature as possible; provide employees with their own “Grow your fresh air” plant, we want the employees to feel that keeping these plants alive is one of their responsibilities in creating a healthier community. Therefore, providing an increase in natural air resources at the same time creating a change in an individual’s behaviour.
- Provision of directive routes through footpath decals; create a one-way traffic system
 - Apart from controlling the traffic; how we design decals may create a statement of encouragement depending on the intent of the design. e.g. a design that looks like a jogging path
- Allow users the ability to control facilities according to their comfort preference
 - Usage of an app activated system
 - Or, visible control panel units
- Ergonomically designed workstations, chairs, adjustable computer monitors to suit the needs of employees to provide physical comfort
- Develop a space placement in accordance with activity and its traffic zones (Occupancy restrictions and the ratio of seats)
- Design all furniture and fixtures to be hands-free; cabinets to be opened using step pedals (think “piano keys”, refer to images from the ppt)
- Provision of Isolation rooms, recharge spaces and access to basic health needs (clinics and nursing rooms)
- Workspaces to receive optimum natural light, at the same time avoidance of glare
- Distraction-free workplaces through a well designed acoustical framework
- Incorporate Biophilic features, such as an abundance of natural landscapes, shapes and forms, light & volume, colours, art and expression boards in the workplace design
- Access to healthy, nutritional food and eating places, reusable cutleries
- Address various age group and user needs in the design -Trends, technology, universal and sensible design

- Invest in spaces to reflect, meditate, contemplate, exercise, quick naps, etc. with respect to an individual's needs
- Self-cleaning technologies-Nano-coated surfaces, non-porous and easy to clean material selection
- Provision of **contactless trash cans**
- Access Control System - Face-Scanning Biometric Solution/Application based systems for attendance log-in to avoid touching the surfaces
- QR Code Scanner for Lift usage
 - Provision of Handwashing facilities on vantage points
 - High technology facilities
 - Auto-cleaning machines
 - Automated Doors,
 - Touch-free operable Sanitary fixtures

4.2 Programs for employees to encourage a Healthier lifestyle

Happier employees speak volumes towards the **Organization's culture and values**. Emphasis has to be given on policies to retain the employees and enable them to perform productively.

- Promotion of Healthy Work Culture through **Resilient Policies**
- Culture of **Kindness & Social Equity** to foster **Human Values, Happiness** among the workforces
- Clear Communication Channels to keep employees informed on a regular basis on the applicable Policies
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
- **Flexible work schedules**, health breaks, Leaves etc
- Travel Policies to put the employees to minimize risks of any infectious diseases
- Access to various needs of Employee Health - sufficient Insurance coverage, Mental Health Promotion programs to facilitate a stress-free environment, Physical Activity Opportunities such as Yoga, Exercises etc
- Policies to measure **Employee satisfaction and health indicators**
- Regular Physical and Mental **Health screening**, check-ups, Periodic Vaccination, Immunization schedules
- Provision for Healthy Food selection

4.3 Educational Resources for users and stakeholders to recognize the impacts of behaviour, therefore, creating a conscious community.

- Develop an Infectious Disease **Preparedness and Response Plan**
- Placement of Hand Sanitizers at strategic locations
- **Wellness education** to create awareness on the State of Health, Mindfulness, Indoor Air Quality, Nutrition, Personal Hygiene
- Post 'handwashing signs' in restrooms
- **Relaxation Guidance** to deal with Sleep disorders, Endocrine disruption
- Display of **Environmental parameters** within the office spaces to ingest sensitivity (IAQ, Water Parameters)
- Teleconferencing devices to avoid Physical Meetings wherever feasible

4.4 Facility Management Protocols

- Assign a dedicated person/ form a team dedicated to employees' workplace wellbeing
 - The person/team assigned receives appropriate wellness and wellbeing training
 - Require monthly assessments
 - Create a defence checklist
- Robust Cleaning Protocols with regular inspections, monitoring and maintenance activities- certified Green cleaning products, Innovative products such as UV based disinfection protocols
- Assign a dedicated Cleaning and Sanitizing supply per employee, in this way we make it part of their responsibility to look after their workstations
- Enforce Temperature checking to all individuals coming in the workplace
 - To enforce the provision of Temperature Scanners in the reception area
- Use "hierarchy of controls" to select ways of controlling workplace hazards while handling any infectious disease situation
- Provide Shoe covers/Footwear bath to all individuals stepping in the office
- Mold Inspection and Remediation, Bio Fogging
- Developing emergency communications plans, including a forum for answering workers' concerns and internet-based communications
- Develop a data-driven approach, needs changes and these data sets would allow for an informed approach
- Instruct employees to bring their own cutlery sets and reusable cups