



A COVID-19 Virtual Ideation Experience

Workplace Wellbeing

Chapter Name: _____

Team Members:

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Workplace Wellbeing: The here and now



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The world is in the grip of an unprecedented Pandemic. Many countries have enforced lockdown measures restricting the movement of people. This has moved the location of work from shared offices to the homes of employees. The COVID-19 pandemic will have long-lasting psychological effects. Wellbeing of staff is critical in the present time and will be reframed under the new 'normal'.

What we know

Traditional wellbeing elements related to the workplace environment are not within the control of employers at this time. Air, Nutrition, Light, Water, Fitness, Comfort – physical provisions.

Mind is the remaining channel accessed via communication.

Current state of pandemic has taken people out of the workplace. Decentralised wellbeing.

Staff are concerned about loss of community, physical amenities, normality.

Uncertainty about the path back to 'normality'. Fearful for their futures? Trying to balance lockdown with work patterns and home.

Detrimental to mental health.

Business Continuity Plans are being tested to the extreme.

Employers are responding to Government advice with evolving plans.

The timescale for remobilisation is unknown. Possibility of second wave lockdown impact.

What we need to ask

How has the Business Continuity Plan worked in terms of wellbeing?

Do the provisions extend to maintaining wellbeing to an extended remote working scenario?

How do we get back to normal?

What is the new normal?

What lessons can we learn to inform our current actions and future strategy?

How do we create our strategy to deal with return to work whilst keeping safe?

What impacts will this have on the wellbeing provisions we have made up until now?

Workplace Wellbeing: Phased return to Workplace/Transition Stage



IDEA

CONNECT



SOLVE

PRESENT



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Background: National Governments will dictate the Return-To-Work as lockdowns are eased – or possibly reinstated. Social distancing guidelines will dictate workplace and commuting decisions for employers and employees. The COVID-19 pandemic will have long-lasting psychological effects.

Forecasts

The global pandemic is a major health phenomenon – physically and mentally. It will be ongoing to the end of 2020 at the very earliest, and the mental impacts will outlast the risks to health for much longer.

There will be at least a 2-stage return to work. It will be segmented by sector, or other rational discriminatory factors applicable to a pandemic, especially age.

Manufacturing and retail sectors will want to re-mobilise physically to get business back to normal.

Working From Home; learn from the remote experience by staff surveys. What worked, what didn't?

COVID-19 testing will be in demand to identify those who have and haven't had the virus.
There will be enormous demand for a local vaccination programmes – including in the workplace.

Recommendations

1. Recognise and share the trauma of the pandemic.
2. Allow time for people to re-adjust.
3. Tell people the truth about the future
4. Address individual experiences and the collective issues we face.
5. Ideally a Wellbeing ambassador or leader can champion and operate the Return To Work programme. This includes recommissioning rusty people.

1. Expect the unexpected.
2. People returning from furlough may be lacking in motivation and alignment with the brand values of their company.
3. Free issue of PPE (gloves, masks) may be expected by staff

1. Use this to re-appraise business contingency plans and future risk considerations as well as what changes could be implemented on a day to day basis.
2. Ensure that frustrations are captured & addressed, as well as the positives.
3. Examine new behaviours that have worked during lockdown, and encourage them to be regular ways of working

1. Prepare for a second wave of infection in Business Continuity Plans.
2. Build supply chains for COVID-19 tests and vaccinations & identify bona fide suppliers for authentic products and services.

Workplace Wellbeing: Transition Measures



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Background: Staff will be immensely health aware. They will expect workplaces to manage the potential spread of COVID-19 in accordance with other HSSE-type risks, i.e. reducing infection risk to As Low as Reasonably Practicable.

Forecasts	Recommendations
<p>Workplaces must amend their Facility Management practices in the short and long-term. FM changes must make things better for the largest percentage of the workforce</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider health testing and temperature scanning in the workplace, to drive early detection, infection control, and reassurance. 2. Allocate space for healthcare and more cycle parking. 3. Provide Sanitising stations in high touch / high traffic areas 4. Monitoring density of people in the building 5. Increase cleaning and make it more visible. Pay particular attention to shared spaces, e.g. break-out space and benches. 6. Clean building air handling systems more frequently, and include anti-viral measures.
<p>Workplaces must be configured differently for the foreseeable future. These include physical and behavioural changes.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One-way systems 2. Use of stairs rather than lifts (where possible) 3. Consider policy on gym and exercise classes, and showering. 4. Catering: having access to a food outlet in a high-rise building could reduce the need for people to walk down a huge flight of stairs and go outside (where every new space or interaction has the potential for coming in contact with infection). 5. It is expected that access to restaurant spaces will be highly controlled and takeaway only. 6. Move away from dynamic desk and equipment sharing without interim cleaning. Enforce clean desk policies to enable sanitisation measures.
<p>Office Attendance and working patterns: policies must be reviewed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider segmenting staff into A/B teams, and have each team work different weeks in/weeks out of the office 2. Consider space requirements in the light of the above.

Workplace Wellbeing: Employers' Perspective



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Background: There is a new context to managing employee performance and wellbeing during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Forecasts	Recommendations
<p>More employees will remotely and be seen physical less often. Neuro diversity in staff will become less apparent but more important.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Companies must realise that it is important to convene and have a sense of support and connection. There are regional and global differences by culture and expectation. 2. Examine the potential to switch to pro-active mental health intervention rather than relying self-reporting. Examples include Mental health coordinators, Mental first aid training, and Buddy systems. 3. Drive a series of scheduled physical interactions if people are away from colleagues for long durations, say more than 30 days. 4. Consider whether existing performance management and appraisal is sufficiently reactive and objective for remote workers.
<p>Staff will want physical and emotional assurance that workplaces are safe.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facility Management changes to sanitation and operating practices must be clearly communicated and demonstrable to staff. People should understand the whole spectrum of changes made to control COVID-19 infection. 2. Health and attendance monitoring/outcomes should be openly communicated alongside other corporate performance data.
<p>Leverage all communication platforms.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual communication platforms have proved their value. Reduce the need for physical meeting spaces in offices, by holding Townhall meetings etc., via video link/broadcast. Use instant feedback tools (e.g. Menti.com).
<p>Many employers will have an excess of space in their Office Portfolio. Demand will fall and supply is often inflexible.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be a future decision point on whether working habits have been transformed permanently. Existing trends for remote working may accelerate, meaning planning assumptions for workplaces should be reviewed and likely reset.



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Workplace Wellbeing: Staff Perspective

Background: Staff continuing to work and returning to work will have health and wellbeing concerns. They will have had experience shaped by remote working and have a valid perspective on the work/life balance and its mental implications. They may have a view on how they work and perform best which may influence future operational practices.

Forecasts

Recommendations

People will have fear factors – stability, physical health, mental health, personal safety.

1. Re-establish communities, engage and hear the shared and individual experiences.
2. Accept staff will have concerns and may need reassurance.

There will be concerns over workplace sanitary factors in shared amenity areas.

1. Review existing cleaning regimes: ensure shared areas are sanitised between users.

The pandemic may be a catalyst for new work life balance with staff questioning how they want to work.

1. Consider staff forums and surveys for information gathering.
2. Establish consultation groups
3. Use to inform and implement operational practices

Staff perception of risk 'v' actual scientific risk will be influenced by the media.

1. Ensure that communications are focused on best practice and government advice as a minimum. Explain workplace decision making.

More responsibility/engagement with personal wellbeing.

1. Create or update the wellbeing awareness programme, its benefits and support available

More staff are likely to travel independently, avoiding public transport.

1. Consider existing provisions and pressure on showers, cycle parking and staff working outside of rush hours

Expectation for employer to provide home-working stations.

1. Consider best practice and duty of care
2. Video-link user advice and help desk

Need to understand the phased return to work plan.

1. Establish and share the company plan with all staff with regular updates

Workplace Wellbeing: Landlords perspective



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Background: There will be a desire to understand what changes will make buildings more appealing to future occupiers, and to ensure a seamless response to any future pandemics.

Forecasts	Recommendations
<p>Short term 'interim' protocols will be implemented to help offices open in the near term, while we're still awaiting a vaccine. With increased cleaning rotas and policing of behaviours, expect additional FM and security costs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following government guidance (including extensive cleaning, maintenance of HVAC systems, one way systems, reduced building and lift capacity, etc.) 2. Introduce behavioural policies for use of communal space (i.e. social distancing) 3. Consideration as to whether it is financially viable for 'franchises' to operate. If so, enforce booking time-slots to use shared facilities (for example café, gym, etc.) 4. Where possible: Health testing and temperature scanning in the workplace for early detection and prevention.
<p>There will be an increased user awareness of public buildings (not just office spaces but shopping centres, event venues, etc.) Landlords will need to implement changes that gain the trust of users. This could increase the facilities management and operating costs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased sanitising across Landlord controlled spaces. Air-filters, WC's, tea points, cafes. Vending machines. Gym, showers, privacy pods. 2. Clause in tenancy agreements for tenants to take the same hygiene precautions across their tenancies. 3. Share hygiene and cleanliness status openly with users in real-time to nurture a sense of safety (e.g. air quality and cleaning rotas)
<p>Preparing for future pandemics: The design value proposition will shift towards healthy 'places' rather than just the building. 'Smart' and flexible buildings may allow tenants to re-occupy earlier than those with limitations. This may also shift the balance of rental costs towards flexible and perceived 'healthy' places.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexibility of the building infrastructure to respond to future pandemics and the impact they may have on occupier design changes 2. Technology solutions such as 'no-touch' controls, and real-time access to occupancy monitoring and building health status 3. Allocating space for healthcare and more cycle parking 4. Embracing a more holistic view of 'workplace' to incorporate the 'place'. I.e. contribution that outdoor workspace, parks, etc. provide.
<p>In the event that there may be a reduction in future demand / requirements for desk space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Landlords may need to rethink the balance between tenant and shared space, re-evaluating the value of community spaces.

Workplace Wellbeing: The individual perspective



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Background: Most people have a unique opportunity to explore their own version of what good work-life balance looks like – and what it doesn't look like.

Forecasts	Recommendations
<p>There is an awareness that a second wave is out there we don't know when it will hit. Individuals will be looking for assurance that all measures are being taken to ensure individual safety moving forward.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware of information available to manage your own health and risk exposure 2. When testing is available: make Covid-19 testing available to identify those who have and haven't had it.
<p>Near-term: During lockdown there is a heightened awareness of individual performance. When offices re-open people are likely to want to be 'seen' and re-connect with colleagues in person to show they are productive and adding value to the organisation (as well as the desire for human connection and friendship).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When it is safe, consider rotas so that everyone has equal access to being in the office, not just key workers.
<p>Long-term: There will be an increased appetite for flexibility in the future. People will have more choice and control over when and where to work in future and decide that they are more productive working in new ways.</p>	<p>Educate / create awareness on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. managing work-life balance in a flexible world 2. how to recognise high and low performance times of day, 3. where activities are best executed, 4. how to manage time and expectations when collaborating with colleagues, partners and customers in a flexible world.
<p>Long-term: With an expected reduction in people coming to the office just 'for the sake of it', the office is likely to become a place that people will go to with the purpose of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating / connecting to people and brands effectively, through an immersive experience that can only be curated within a 'place' - Connecting with others (from a human-needs perspective) - Finding space to focus away from home life 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A desire for connection / the loneliness epidemic will encourage design and policy solutions that bring people together in meaningful ways. 2. Opportunity to work with colleagues without travelling far from home could see individuals opting to work for organisations with a hub and spoke or 'membership to multiple co-working sites' model. 3. A suitable homeworking set-up could see the homes / rental market shift towards access to a 'spare room' / 'home office'. They may also look to work for organisations who provide support in setting a home office up.

Workplace Wellbeing: Reshaping operations & Long-term measures



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Background: The conclusion of the Return-To-Work phase is not the end of the COVID-19 impact. Work will change as a direct result of internal/external factors and learned behaviours.

Forecasts	Recommendations
Existing workplace design norms will change and many space efficiency measures will enter a regression phase.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the short-term, vacant desks will be designated to create social distancing. However office layouts should provide more generous density (m² per desk) and larger desks. Meeting rooms and similar spaces will have to be down-rated in capacity
Staff will seek alternative workplaces and work styles. They will value smaller groups, less commuting, flexible working, access to fresh air and reduction of enclosed spaces,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider de-centralising some offices where economic and productive. 2. Encourage people to use the outdoors as a break-out space. 3. Leverage canteens as places for communal experiences, while showing increased hygiene / servicing measures.
There will be new or accelerated societal changes, impacting businesses and their global supply chains. Changes include technological innovation, automation, shifts in lifestyle appetites, and long-term behavioural changes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a channel to anticipate, monitor, and react to these changes.
Companies may face a duty of care in providing testing and vaccination programmes with increased employee demand.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider how this could be delivered and may be perceived as an employee benefit.
Business continuity plan will extend to new risk scenarios.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regularly update and review the plan, allow for stress testing.



HACKATHON

Workplace Wellbeing: Future Considerations



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Background: The provision of wellbeing factors for staff will change in the future. The potential scope for change is huge and thinking needs to cover many different scenarios. The reframed workplace could affect wellbeing deliverables from duty of care to the provision of employee benefits. Will the changes be affordable?

Forecasts	Recommendations
As part of any future viral anti-transmission strategy, could staff be more segregated by working 'week in/week out' of the office?	1. Consider whether this approach would reduce the need for space in future based on 50% presenteeism?
Are physical changes needed in the workplace? Social distancing? Does this become irrelevant if people are using public transport to and from the office where this can't be achieved?	1. Consider how effective this will be inside your own organisation. Prioritise measures. 2. Consider staff travel plans and off-peak commuting.
Provision of physical safety measures in the workplace; screens, booths, limited use of catering and tea points, gym, showers, cycle parking. Use of lifts as shared confined spaces.	1. Consider how to implement essential short and long term measures. Develop change project.
Increase in physical issues due to unergonomic home working.	1. Plan for home provision of physical elements such as ergonomic work-station/seat and guidance on staying fit and healthy.
Management of staff perception of risk 'v' actual scientific risk.	1. Establish and maintain a 'hearts and minds' communication programme.
Change from large corporate office to smaller regional hubs.	1. Consider impact on communities, wellbeing deliverables, training and career progression.

Workplace Wellbeing: Implications & Future strategy



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Background: It is widely expected that the future definition of workplace will change. The future implications of providing safe and productive workplaces within the office and remote locations will be wide ranging. Ensuring wellbeing provisions are maintained and the duty of care is provided will require careful planning and execution.

Forecasts	Recommendations
It is not currently possible to predict a further outbreak of Covid-19 or future global pandemic.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Business Continuity Plan – provide centralised/decentralised wellbeing measures. Remote working ergonomics and healthy living advice.
The traditional parameters of wellbeing are likely to be reframed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritise wellbeing elements in the short and longer term – plan for the change to the new ‘normal’. Make budget provisions. 2. Consider new roles - Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health Support. 3. Consider hygiene elements in new and existing workplaces.
Employers/employee forums will redefine workplace wellbeing. HR communication strategy will be vital.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn from this experience, create inclusive communities to shape future thinking. 2. Develop effective communication plans to alleviate mental stress.
Future decline in RE space demands/requirements? Will there be a global recession after this pandemic or not?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to planning the new ‘normal’ including provision for reframed wellbeing measures.
Cost of workplace physical safety provisions could mean a reduction in other areas of wellbeing benefits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider using local business partners for outsourced wellness provisions i.e. gym, catering, etc.
Organisations will review change from large centralised offices to smaller localised hubs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider what elements of wellbeing can be provided universally and locally.