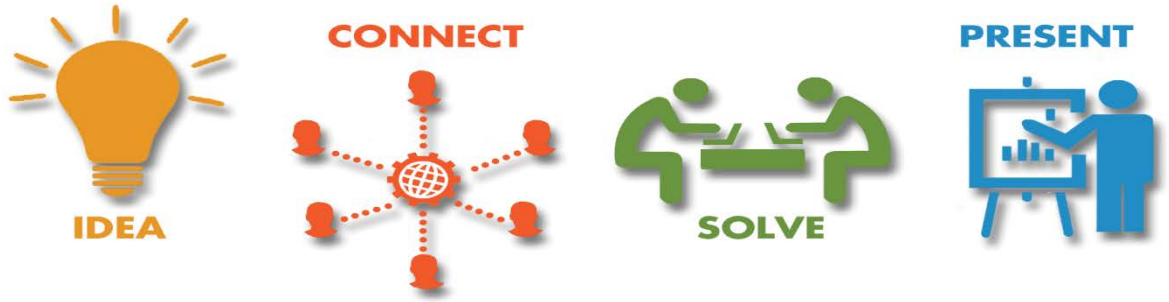
CoreNet Global | HACKATHON



A COVID-19 Virtual Ideation Experience

Team Topic and Number: The Autonomous Workplace

Team sponsor/chapter (if applicable): Mid-Atlantic Chapter

Team Lead: Mitch Dowd, BLUME

Team Members: Zareen Raza, GEICO

Margaret Maschal, T. Rowe Price

Cheryl Russ, JLL

Bruno Grinwis, HGA

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

Summary

The Autonomous Workplace is an elusive topic. From a market perspective, it's loosely defined and comprised of emerging technology companies, content, and venture capital dollars.

The Bottom Line

Can it help, particularly in response to the current health pandemic? Yes, most certainly. However, just as with any technology solution, the technology itself can't create value on it's own. Technology needs to be an enabler of the strategies and processes already in place and/or in development.

Our Approach

Central to our approach was empathizing with the corporate real estate leader. Contextually, we drew from the history of complex enterprise technology implementation and, most importantly, global

trends in corporate real estate. Our submission here is intends to achieve the following:
• Logical narrative for what the Autonomous Workplace is and its relevance now.
• A summary-level prescription for an Autonomous Workplace program
• Answer the questions of the Hackathon
This abstract is supported by a PowerPoint presentation file adhering to the guidelines of the Hackathon.

Accelerating the Inevitable?

It has many names: agile, dynamic, activity-based, flexible, and many more. Workplace transformation has been a premier topic for not just corporate real estate, but senior leadership at some of the most recognizable brands in the world today. Why? Because it's (at least perceived as) a strategic initiative which impacts both the top and bottom lines of a business. Though still a developing and certainly not practiced by the majority, workplace transformation is widely known by the corporate real estate community and has many ties to the Post-COVID-19 workplace and the autonomous workplace.

Why?

Workplace transformation is about changing the paradigm to achieve better outcomes across the board. By aligning the workplace with working styles today, corporate real estate is able to serve the fundamental objective of addressing cost while also addressing employee productivity & satisfaction.
COVID-19 has raised the criticality of workplace strategy, and the theme of requirements for the Post-COVID-19 workplace correspond with what was already taking place with workplace transformation: dynamic strategy, more frequent planning, ongoing monitoring, continuous improvement. Much of what the autonomous workplace intends to be can enable requirements we're seeing with COVID-19.

Requirements for Success

Initiatives such as the autonomous workplace require a substantive approach to be successful. There needs to be an extra effort in understanding organizational strategy and aligning it with technology, in that order. Here are three broad aspects we think are pertinent to success, chronologically:

Organizational Strategy: Embracing Change

Companies will first need to evaluate workplace strategy including re-alignment with corporate objectives & summary-level needs for the workplace.

Technology Strategy: Start with WHY

The autonomous workplace is an emerging technology market: there will need to be a degree of participation from users aligning objectives with capability.

Management: The Lean Startup Model

This should be a stepwise undertaking with a frequent evaluation process and go-no-go inflection points. It will require sophisticated program management.

Overlapping Trends in Corporate Real Estate

One of the highest priority items to note when considering an initiative like the autonomous workplace are overall trends in the marketplace. Here we take a view of national and global trends in corporate real estate which we believe drive the agenda and justify value for any investment or action:

Flexible Working	Agile Workplaces	Cross-Departmental Teams	Post-COVID Strategy
What is it? Work policy which allows employees to flexibly work outside of the office.	What is it? Workplace design, policies and org strategy which are dynamic in nature.	What is it? Corporate real estate teaming with other departments on initiatives.	What is it? The new nature of the workplace in response to health requirements.
Why is it important? COVID has forced every company still open for business to embrace flexible working.	Why is it important? Return-to-work programs have included elements of agile strategy including workspacing.	Why is it important? Undertakings like the Autonomous Workplace & Post-COVID strategy require substantial collaboration.	Why is it important? In order to effectively deploy an Autonomous Workplace solution, this must reasonably identified in context.

Business Process Requirements

The autonomous workplace would have numerous business process dependencies ranging from strategic down to administrative. The following table looks at this in summary.

	Corporate	Workplace	Cross-Function	Resource	Procurement
Need	Overarching agenda with context to the line of business	Workplace goals reflecting company & CRE agenda	Stakeholder departments are engaged	Subject matter expertise to manage new assets	Clarity and dedicated support for purchasing process
Lead	Senior CRE exec to retrieve from corporate leadership	Senior managers in corporate real estate to synthesize	Senior managers in corporate real estate to organize	Senior managers in corporate real estate to identify needs	Purchasing managers for corporate real estate to develop
Outcome	Clarified & concise b i l f	Summary-level metrics to defining goal achievement	Cross-departmental task force created for strategic initiatives	Continuous agenda for identifying & sourcing talent	Time efficiency & purchasing effectiveness

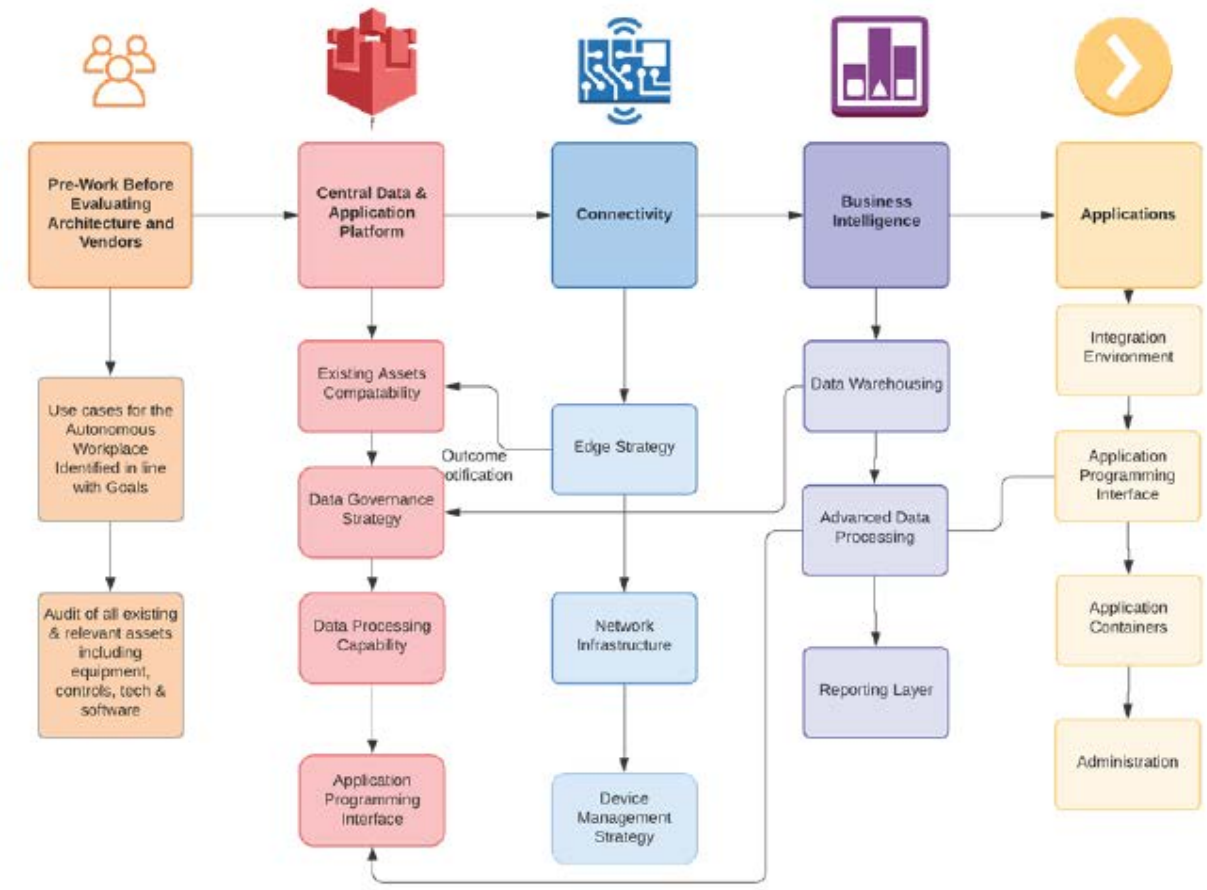
People Requirements

In order to capture value from an initiative such as the autonomous workplace, organizations need to acquire the appropriate talent and retrain/repurpose teams.

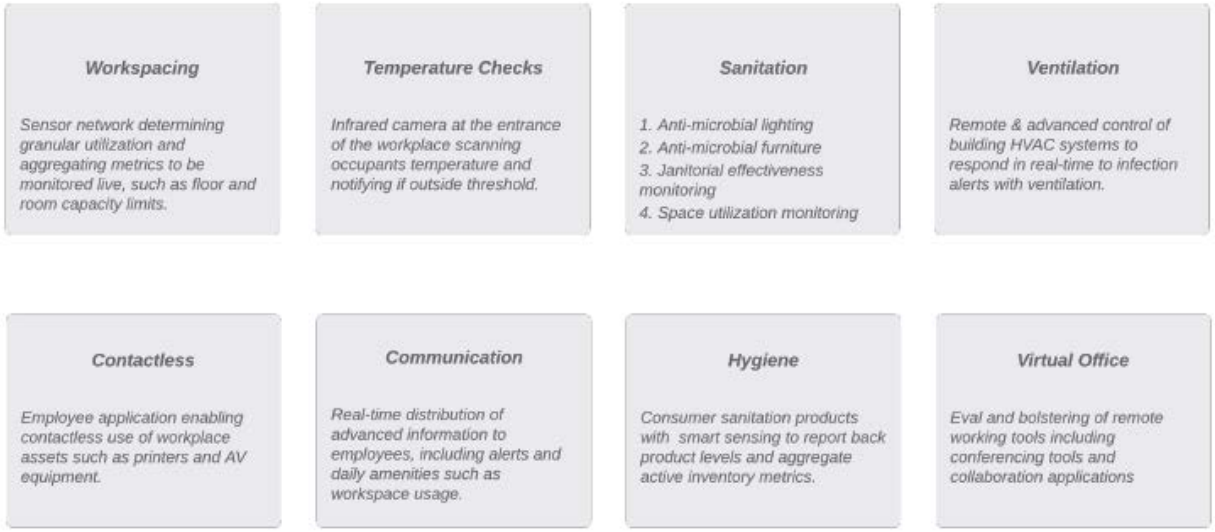
	Data Analyst	Technology	Initiative Leader	Facilities	Purchasing
Why	Gap in ability to translate data into insights	Gap in ability to manage technology assets	Intricate program with multiple projects needing direction	New equipment requiring service & maintenance	New purchasing aspects of tech & urgency of program
What	Analytics expert proficient in creating/ maintaining BI assets	Organize, maintain technology assets & vendors	A senior manager on the strategy side of corporate real estate	Facility managers trained to manage new equipment	Purchasing managers trained and dedicated for real estate tech
Function	Create & maintain KPIs which address business challenges	Ensure cost efficiency and performance of technology stack	Develop and steward executive direction of the initiative	Service & maintain new workplace devices & controls	Ensure due diligence on purchases in streamlined manner

Technology Requirements

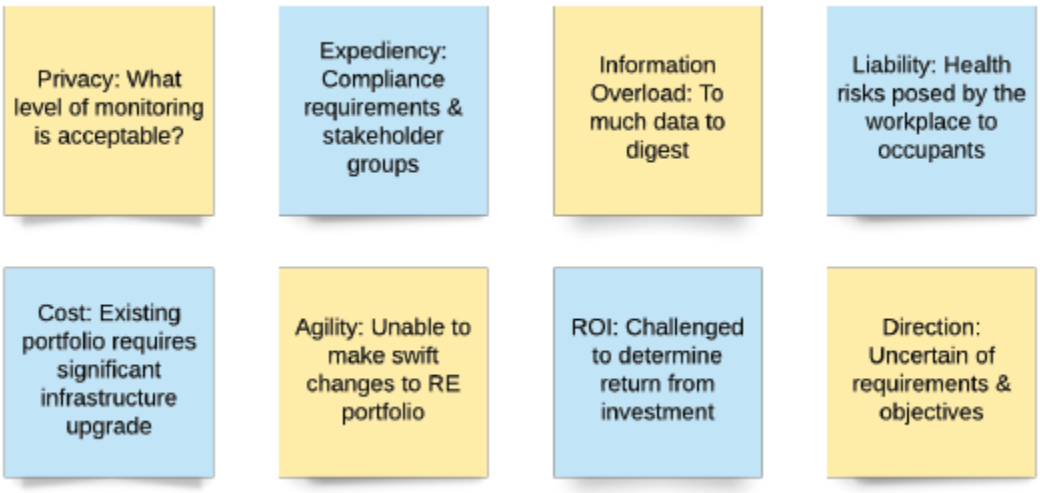
A platform such as the autonomous workplace would require a variety of technology categories as well as a multitude of vendor solutions to be tied together. The logic below ranks proper data & device management as the highest priority.



Use Cases



Challenges



Answers to the Hackathon Questions

How can technology – specifically, automation – address health & safety in the workplace? It can increase effectiveness of policies with new information & capability as well as increase the capacity to administrate policies.

What could be the impact of an autonomous workplace on jobs? In this case, we see a potential for an increase in employment – both new talent and retrained-existing employees will be required to manage the technology.

Will COVID-19 be a catalyst for development and deployment of technologies related to the

Autonomous Workplace? We think so: The business case for workplace technologies is elevated by the heightened criticality of the workplace strategy in terms of health risk mitigation.