



PRESENT



A **COVID-19** Virtual Ideation Experience

**Team Topic and Number:** Workplace Wellbeing

**Team sponsor/chapter (if applicable):** Singapore Chapter Committee

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

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Corenet Hackathon – Team Response - Singapore Chapter Committee (1441 Words)

Thriving In A State of Flux:

- Workplace wellbeing is closely associated with various personal and organisational factors that are interlinked. A workplace that enhances or promotes wellbeing is one which is aligned on the following parameters: Purpose, Social, Financial, Community and Physical needs.
- In the current scenario with physical distancing measures and lockdowns, all these have been shaken at their foundation.
- We address how people can still come together and remain well in the future workplace through measures associated with planning, technology, hygiene and innovation.
- The way of life and work will remain in flux and we should embrace this while constantly striving for innovative solutions and answers for a better tomorrow.

**1. Given the catastrophic loss of life from COVID-19, will wellbeing no longer be a 'nice-to-have' and instead become a 'must-have'?**

**FORECAST**

- Wellness as an investment to achieve a competitive advantage for an organisation to both attract and retain valuable team members.
- Focus on the quality of wellbeing measures wherein these need to be perceived to be genuine, authentic and meaningful by the employees and the end-users.
- Instill confidence in an organisation's ability to protect their employees in light of potential future pandemics by increasing transparency and accountability of measures adopted.
- Wellness will be commercialised and become part of bundled products and services to end-users with other commercial services and products.
- Requirement for buildings and organisations to be certified as green / clean certified buildings.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Access to nutritionists, community and company sponsored team activities, free health check-ups and yearly vaccinations.
- Implementation of 'Hierarchy of Controls'<sup>1</sup> (see slide 2).
- Buildings to gain green building accreditation as soon as possible.

**2. What new protocols around wellbeing, mindfulness and enhancing health and safety should be introduced into the workplace?**

**FORECAST**

- Managing a new level of anxiety between the balance of re-entering a high physical proximity workplace with the human desire for connection and physical interaction.
- Shift in perception with regards to the necessity of having to be in the office to complete any task.
- Heightened awareness surrounding hygiene, cleanliness and the transmission of diseases.

- Proximity to co-workers in an office environment and the way in which we interact.
- Reduced stigma around mental illness, staying home when sick, or when others in the home are unwell.
- Recognising the connection between personal wellbeing vis-à-vis impact on performance.
- Greater emphasis on ergonomics and how we can use technology more effectively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- PHYSICAL (individual and the environment)
  - Touch-free systems and appliances to reduce bacterial spread.
  - Increased proximity between employees – less dense seating configurations and single flow pedestrian traffic patterns.
  - Cafeteria spaces offering nutritional food and healthy snacks and nutritional counselling.
  - Ergonomic furniture packs for working from home set up to be deployed as part of the on boarding process.
  - Add-on desk accessories to convert benches to private enclosures.
  - Staggered/ Flexible office-home work schedule.
- MENTAL
  - Conversations surrounding mental health; encouragement to use company-provided therapists and emotional coaches.
  - Encourage staff to take adequate rest / breaks to reduce stress (key contributor to a weakened immune system). Promote a culture of health.
  - Open forum conversation about how to best work from home and to manage the work-life balance, and how this pandemic has shifted the way we think and work.
  - Encouragement from management to find ways of connecting their teams on a social level virtually.
- TECHNOLOGY
  - Investment in infrastructure to allow for seamless work from home option
  - Temperature check stations when entering workplaces for both staff and visitors.
  - Improve air quality in the office.

**3. What becomes of our willingness to be in common spaces, and will people and companies be reluctant to use coworking spaces and shared office settings as part of their real estate and workplace needs?**

## FORECAST

- Adoption of new design guidelines by organizations and co-working spaces will ensure that spaces for collaboration continue to gain traction and momentum. Early and quick adaptation of these standards will become necessary and critical for the survival of collaborative practices.
- Increased use of technology will become critical for the use of common spaces and co-working, which will use the booking systems with greater frequency and sophistication.
- Use of antimicrobial fabrics and other materials that prevent the spread of infection and contagious diseases.
- Initial cautionary approach to interacting with these spaces; heightened awareness of 'best practice' and adjusting to a constantly evolving situation.
- Companies will be expected to conduct a thorough analysis of the current workplace arrangement to see how it can be adjusted most effectively to mitigate fears surrounding transmission and hygiene, especially through third party checks that are specialized in checking for cleanliness standards etc.
- Developing a new 'normal' that takes existing models of working and workplace arrangements and modifying them to be aligned with our new consciousness – greater appreciation for dedicated workspaces both in the workplace and at home and our understanding of how viruses are transmitted.
- More consideration will be had for the potential impacts of using coworking spaces and shared offices – looking at cost versus benefit for both individuals and the organisation with regards to wellbeing.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Changed approach to how we design workplaces; consideration for greater implementation of technology (i.e. how antimicrobial fabric can be used to mitigate bacterial spread – see slide for further information) as well as how necessary we now deem these spaces to be in the bigger picture.
- Appointing third parties to conduct 'safety checks' on air quality, frequency of cleaning in coworking spaces to build confidence and assure staff members.
- Assigning a post-pandemic point of contact to discuss how we can best use common spaces with regard for the collective whole and how our individual actions impact the team.
- Re-planning office spaces to cater to the demands of our 'new' way of working.
- Looking at high traffic areas, traffic flow, frequency of use and by whom.

## **4. Will this be the end of benching and other solutions without partitions (e.g., protection) from others around us?**

### **FORECASTS**

- Partitions, face masks and Perspex guards are being relied on in the short term to limit the spread of droplets however long term more collaborative and teamwork style activities will be impeded by the physical separation.

- The concept of ‘social distancing’ has drastically re-determined how bench-style work systems will be viewed and consequently used; up to 67% of a row of benches eliminated from use as they are deemed to fall within the 2m safe distancing range.
- Managing the mental and emotional concerns surrounding physical proximity (i.e. people are fearful or uncomfortable being “too close”); understanding how this will affect productivity short and long term.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Where possible, implement a staggered return to the workplace (short term or long term) to maintain split shifts; allows employees to continue using different working spaces in the office environment without concern of it being too crowded.
- When designing new workplaces, greater focus should be placed on more agile environments that give people greater flexibility in where they choose to work and how – accommodating a new sense of normal whilst respecting new ‘best practices’ with regards to social distancing and proper hygiene.
- Implementation of more frequent deep cleaning procedures to minimise the likelihood of bacterial transfer.
- Publicise clearly the measures being undertaken to provide a virus-free and safe workplace; encouraging all employees to contribute mindfully.
- Introducing additional air filters to air-conditioning systems to generate greater levels of fresh air.
- Ensure that solutions without partitions and benching systems still allow for an appropriate level of distance between employees.

## **5. What steps should be taken in the event of a COVID-19 recurrence?**

### **FORECAST**

- Adoption of a global mindset; greater consideration of the impact of our connected world.
- Higher likelihood of a recurrence if organisations and employees fail to adopt and adhere to health and safety mandates.
- Renewed BCP triggers will result in quicker reaction times.
- Implementation of rigorous measures credited to cumulative learnings of the virus’ socioeconomic impact.
- Workplace sizes are likely to fluctuate for the near and mid-term future.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Identify and prioritise support for those most susceptible to risk, for example those with existing high risk health conditions or single parent families with young children.
- Consider re-allocation of capex and opex funds toward technology investments that support wellbeing.

- Communicate timely, clearly, consistently, and regularly.
- Focus on inspirational and empathetic leadership styles that allow for greater emphasis to be placed on wellbeing and planning
- Embody technology to support rapid and efficient sharing of information such as government updates, to track and gather employee data.
- Create wellness advocates and champions to act as liaisons with government bodies and your organisation, and conduct team checkpoints and socialise information on a personal level.
- Workplace wellbeing e-newsletter.