CORENET GLOBAL | HACKATHON

CONNECT

IDEA

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PRESENT

A COVID-19 Virtual Ideation Experience

Team Topic and Number: Wellbeing Team 10

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

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

(Word Count: 1493)

Context and Landscape

Perspectives on wellbeing are legion and typically include multiple elements. For the purposes of this project, we are focusing on wellbeing which includes elements that are personal (in terms of cognitive, physical and emotional) as well as elements that pertain to the team, the company and the community. The element of culture is embedded in these aspects of wellbeing and our team will focus on wellbeing as a pillar of corporate culture.

Going forward, we believe wellbeing should be a fundamental component of a constructive, productive culture which provides context and conditions within which companies succeed (or fail). In addition, we believe culture and wellbeing should be a primary focus of the CRE profession. Leadership in all functions, but especially in CRE, should keep wellbeing top-of-mind in making decisions related to strategy, objectives, priorities, employee experience and even community.

Companies who focus on wellbeing will be significantly more successful and will lead in their industries because of the talent they are able to attract, retain, develop and engage and because of the results they are able to create in their markets and for their customers.

Forecasts

Overall, our expectation is that culture—and wellbeing as an aspect of culture—will become critically important and more substantive as a part of the way companies move forward.

Culture and Overall Company Approaches
Companies will increasingly recognize and appreciate the importance of culture and will put intentional effort toward refreshing, renewing, managing and fostering it. This will include measuring and monitoring results tied to culture as a key performance indicator. We expect leaders to demonstrate increased empathy and companies to provide employees with expanded programs and processes to support them. Leadership will improve as mediocre leaders are weeded out and effective leaders come to the fore. In addition, innovation may decline with the reduction of random interactions. Companies will need to be intentional to drive, enhance, encourage and support innovation.

People, Choice and their Agency
Companies will provide more choices for employees in terms of where they work, when they work and how they work. Greater options will be available in terms of working from home, working from third or fourth places and working on campus in greater varieties of places. In addition, companies will place a greater emphasis on autonomy and will manage by objectives and outcomes to a greater extent than managing by presence. Trust will be a cornerstone for this autonomy. The way people connect, collaborate and build networks will also shift, and companies will need to be intentional in ensuring this takes place. Finally, companies will have new perspectives on diversity and inclusiveness—and expand support for each.

Processes and How the Work Gets Done
Team processes and an understanding of how teams work together will become a greater priority, so companies can ensure work is supported wherever people are working—for example, which team members come into the office and which don't. Technology will also be a critical enabler for company culture and wellbeing—in terms of how people connect, create, collaborate, innovate and the like. In addition, technology will be an enabler for safety and security, tracking utilization, availability and cleanliness.

Real Estate and The Workplace
Physical workplaces will change in the following ways:
- They will include greater options for people, more options for health and rejuvenation, greater physical distancing, more comforts of home and more use of technology to connect.
- The way offices are used will shift—with companies establishing "cooperative workplace" models in which spaces are shared among employees but with more cleaning, staggered schedules and sharing which is more systematic to ensure proper disinfecting and use according to company standards. Physical protocols for the office will need to closely support social norms and team processes.
- Building protocols will demonstrate safety and security in terms of entrance control, temperature checks upon entry, traffic flow, signage, furniture set ups that ensure physical distancing and the like.
- Companies will establish the use of more co-working space to manage density in their offices and reduce commute times for those who may be newly embracing a remote-working approach.
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Bold Statement

Despite the sweeping changes and fundamental reinvention of work that is currently occurring, we do not believe the office can or should go away. Just because we can all work exclusively from remote locations, doesn't mean we should. For our people and for businesses, connection is vital and coming together in person will continue to be important—not just to get things done efficiently and effectively, but because our humanity requires it. In addition, while our industry is largely focused on physical interventions for a return to work, we must be intentional about how we are supporting holistic wellbeing—physical, cognitive and emotional.

Recommendations / Solutions

In support of our bold statement about the critical nature of the office and the importance of sustaining it, we recommend the following:

Culture and Overall Company Approaches

- Overall vision, mission, strategy. Revisit and refresh overall vision, mission and workplace strategy based on the shifts. Ensure they are updated and aligned.
- Purpose. Complete a thorough assessment of the purpose of the office, considering key priorities for in-person work. Use the assessment to design/redesign the spaces that best support the business priorities, and in what proportion.
- Culture. Engage a holistic cultural assessment and develop and refresh designs to ensure the place will foster the desired culture, especially based on changes in social norms and behaviors caused by COVID-19 implications.
- Leverage relationships. Within the organization, formalize and enhance the relationships and integration between RE, IT and HR. Ensure collaboration and coordination is ongoing and proactive, not just reactive or project-based. Externally, seek relationships and form alliances with key partners such as telecom/infrastructure or other RE professionals.

People, Choice and their Agency

- Community. Actively consider how to ensure people have a sense of connection and community in spite of greater amounts of remote work and more distancing.
- Communication. Be liberal in communicating with employees about all kinds of information from contextual and personal to logistical, relational and future-oriented.
- Mental health and employee support. Led by HR and supported by the coordination across RE/HR/IT, actively support employee mental health and holistic wellbeing.

Processes and How the Work Gets Done

- Process. Conduct in-depth and comprehensive business process evaluation in order to determine how processes must shift based on more remote work and social distancing. Be intentional about how processes are designed going forward based on needs for physical proximity.
- Tools and technology. Identity tools and technology which are most important for moving forward—both through continued virtual connections or in-person connections.
- Ergonomic support. Actively provide and advocate for employees using the correct ergonomic furniture and practices. Push this information rather than providing it in a passive manner, providing direction and guidance.

Real Estate and The Workplace

- Real estate. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of real estate strategies—specific to the unique needs of each company and develop the business case to move forward.
  - Determine the implications of COVID-19 for real estate (more necessary, less necessary, about the same).
  - Explore lease options that are shorter-term to allow for more flexibility.

- o Quantification. Find ways to quantify wellbeing in order to ensure longer term measuring, monitoring and continuous improvement of practices to sustain it.

- Workplace and design.
  - o Establish more customizable interiors based on very specific elements and scientific rigor (ex. communal elements, germ control). Ensure alignment with WELL standards. Ensure the space is also still inspiring, welcoming, functional and supportive of holistic wellbeing.
  - o Establish processes for managing utilization, cleaning and availability including finding ways to balance what is communal and what is shared.
  - o Implement practices that facilitate cleanliness and wellbeing. For example, establish clean desk policies, surface selection, healthy cleaning solutions and the like.
  - o Take steps to seek learning from healthcare about germ control, disease spread and the like.
  - o Refresh and redesign for all kinds of work using the lens of wellbeing in the new normal. Include consideration for focused work, collaboration, guest experience, food service, signage and more.
  - o Consider how workplace changes support not just physical wellbeing, but also cognitive and emotional wellbeing. Consider people's choice, control and agency among the options provided to them in the space.
  - o Tap into un-tapped or under-tapped talent pools by implementing principles and design solutions for inclusive design, ensuring a comprehensive view of the accommodation and support necessary for all kinds of employee needs from neurodiversity to physical ability and more.
  - o Develop behavioral protocols supported by informal social norms and the extent to which leaders will model the way for new ways of behaving and being in community together.
  - o Offer change management support inclusive of education, orientation and coaching for individuals, teams and leaders.

- Home office. Establish comprehensive approaches for employees to work from home including provisioning the office, educating on ergonomics, developing leaders to lead effectively from a distance. Invest money saved on real estate into home office programs and provisioning.