Manage a safe and efficient workplace

Boost employee productivity and engagement with ServiceNow

Best practice steps, plus apps and solutions ready to use now.
Table of Contents

Where we once were and will never return. .......................................................................................... 3

The hybrid digital workplace is here to stay. ........................................................................................ 4

What’s the best a company can do for its people, regardless of their role or comfort level? ......................................................................................................................... 5

What does employee happiness look like in the “new normal?” .................................................................................. 6

Steps for an effective return to the workplace. .................................................................................... 9

Manage a safe and efficient workplace. .................................................................................................. 10

In conclusion. ........................................................................................................................................ 11
Where we once were and will never return.

Hard to believe now, but a late 2019 study\(^1\) found that only 45% of US companies allowed remote work. Globally, the number was 41%. Progressive companies were strategizing ways to slowly increase that percentage in order to stay competitive in a tight job market. But those “careful” plans were thrown out the window with COVID-19 with the sudden need to shut down entire offices in a matter of days. The situation continues to evolve, but it is clear that entire work complexes can’t conduct business from their kitchen tables forever, especially for organizations relying on in-person operations and management, such as manufacturing or retail.

Will workforces ever want to return to work as normal?

These stats reveal the odds. According to a Washington Post survey of professionals ages 18-74, more than half of those forced to work from home because of the pandemic say it has actually had a positive effect on their productivity.\(^2\) The reasons they give make sense: saving time not commuting, less office distractions, and fewer meetings. Additionally, a recent joint CNBC/Change Research report showed that 24% of those surveyed want to work either entirely or more from home than before the shut-down, while 55% plan to head back to the office.\(^3\) This can be further parsed up into three personas:

1. Those eager to get back to the office environment, regardless of how essential their roles
2. Those who’d prefer to continue working from home as much as possible
3. Those new to the workforce, longing for better guidance and assurances
The hybrid digital workplace is here to stay.

We’re quickly understanding what the next normal will look like for enterprise organizations. Gone are the days of packed cubicles and parking lots, where collaboration could only be done on-site and working from home was a rare occurrence.

Even when the pandemic restrictions fade, the hybrid digital workplace will remain. That means leaders should stop asking how many people can fit on a floor, and rather try to understand what the experience and culture will be like on that floor in this new environment. Workplace service delivery solutions exist to remove barriers and make things simple. Some organizations have already started to digitize their workplace experiences to allow for a blend of working from home and working from the office out of necessity. Soon, this will be a preference, and the need for a dedicated workspace will begin to fade. Instead of going to a designated area, employees and teams that head into the office should have access to the most efficient areas, be able to sit and work together in undefined, flexible neighborhoods so they can succeed on the best terms.

“Every company we’ve talked to is going from a set office space to a hoteling situation,” said Kevin Nanney, Senior Director of Product Management at ServiceNow, “so being able to reserve a desk on a mobile phone, assign workspaces, and consult an interactive map to book locations in proximity to your team is invaluable.” Are you ready for this level of flexibility?

Evolve your return to the workplace into an enduring hybrid digital workplace

There is a difference between the two. Return to the workplace is a singular event, where your employees need to be brought back into a collective environment safely. A hybrid digital workplace is a long-term plan to take advantage of technology, maximize worker experience, and promote productivity.

The pandemic has forced many organizations to close their doors and rapidly shift to a digital work environment. Bringing about a successful return to the physical office will not be a simple task, especially for enterprises with multiple locations adhering to unique local, state, and regional regulatory requirements. The ServiceNow® Safe Workplace suite provides tools you need to help bring your employees back to work safely, but they are just the first step toward an all-encompassing workplace experience.

For more information about these apps, check out Ramping up for the new work reality
What’s the best a company can do for its people, regardless of their role or comfort level?

Employees appreciate company concern for their safety and well-being. It adds to overall satisfaction. To that end, companies must have proactive and reactive plans to support employee safety and access to benefits, systems, and care in the face of natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes, but also biological threats like the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The cost of illness—the regular kind.

Even before the pandemic, the impact of employee illness on productivity is estimated to be $530B a year. Additionally, the danger of sick workers showing up at the office, called Presenteeism, had an estimated $150B knock to the bottom line. Today, we are in uncharted territory. The ultimate effect on productivity, good or bad, is yet to be calculated.⁴

$530B

$150B

COVID-19 Pandemic

changing it all

A safe and successful ‘Return to Workplace’ requires a compassionate, flexible, and cross functional approach that prioritizes employee safety above all else, and lays out clear expectations, protocols, and practices.

Robert Teed, VP Corporate Services, ServiceNow

What does employee happiness look like in the “new normal?”

Research shows that happy employees are 20% more productive than their unhappy counterparts. But what does “happy” look like now? A quick internet search yields numerous results and lists. But, interestingly, no matter what industry or geography these articles focus on, they all share some significant commonalities:

**Concern 1: Communication.**
*To feel protected, employees need to be heard AND listened to.* This is more than the usual “open door” policies and regular team meetings, it’s even more than hotlines and HR suggestion boxes.

**You should provide:**

- Up-to-the-moment company information that must be noticed immediately and easily findable on any device, desktop to mobile.
- A ready way for employees to offer real-time feedback and share insights and information.
- Clear information on who is essential staff required to report to the office, and if a rotating schedule is enforced, who comes in when.
- Easy-to-find information on procedures for social distancing, mask wearing, and reporting cleaning needs.
- When a positive case is discovered, proactively reach out to all potentially impacted employees to gather health information and ultimately help reduce potential exposure to others.
Concern 2: Burnout.
To feel supported, work-life balance must be respected and enabled. Obviously, working from home has further blurred the lines between when the working day starts and ends.

You should provide:
- Power for employees to set their own “on-the-clock” hours that will be respected. Even before the pandemic, workers were weary of feeling obligated to respond to colleagues at all times. In fact, a Forbes study found on average employees check their email 36 times an hour.6
- A way for employees to easily express concerns and report issues.
- A plan for managing the return to the workplace across functions including assigning and tracking tasks related to workplace and employee readiness.

Concern 3: Safety.
To feel confident, there must be freedom from fear in the office and in the field. Safety was once something employees took for granted, assuming they were protected from risk and grudgingly participating in fire drills, earthquake training, and the like. The pandemic has created a new hyperawareness around what it means to “feel safe” at work.

You should provide:
- Workspace COVID-proofing—Employees want to feel confident that their workspaces are more than just clean. They want them virus free, and they want proof.
- Maximum occupancy management and enforcement—Employees want to be confident that their building is always within the allowed percentage of inhabitants and social distancing can be maintained. This is especially important for organizations adopting staggered workdays to limit employee density.
- Exposure management and health check-ins—Employees want dependable ways to know if they have been exposed to anything and easy self-reporting if they become ill.
- Contractor and visitor control—Screen any visitor entering offices or buildings by capturing information about recent travel or exposure before gathering personal information to maintain privacy standards, evaluate visitor health risk levels, highlight required safety rules, and provide visitors with personal protective equipment (PPE), if necessary.
Global workplace leaders agree on these must-do’s to manage a safe and efficient workplace

1) Engage with employees to inform and listen to feedback
   - Proactively inform employees with targeted campaigns about returning to the workplace
   - Gather employee feedback, manage employee relation issues and communicate processes and policies
   - Provide easy at-a-glance information on individual health and safety when and where employees need it

2) Increase workplace efficiency and provide self-service flexibility
   - Digitize processes for returning including shift selection, workspace reservations, schedule catering and more
   - Optimize floor space, meeting room usage, and ongoing real estate costs based on utilization trends
   - Easily register and manage visitors joining you on premises with details and instructions for their arrival

3) Provide a safe, employee-ready working environment
   - Monitor employee health status, and track entry results across all sites from a central dashboard
   - Rapidly trace and communicate with potentially exposed workers to mitigate the risk of further transmission
   - Screen employees, provide required PPE, and monitor vaccination statuses for safe employee entry

Whether employees are working from home, on site, or on the road, keeping them engaged and productive has never been more important. ServiceNow Employee Workflows drive digital transformation by boosting employee productivity and engagement, managing a safe and efficient workplace, and reinventing new ways to work across the enterprise.
It will take more than just implementing regular cleaning schedules, temperature checks, contact tracing, and social distancing policies. Employee sentiment must be brought to a point of trust and confidence.

Steps for an effective return to the workplace.

A recent ad-hoc discussion with workplace leaders at a dozen global enterprises revealed common concerns and needs. All agreed that bringing about a successful return to the physical office will not be a simple task, especially for enterprises with multiple locations adhering to unique local, state, and regional regulatory requirements. Timelines and approaches must be established now to ensure physical readiness as distancing and density restrictions change. This is critical, as the COVID-19 related health risks will most likely continue well into 2021.
Manage a safe and efficient workplace.

Deliver a great employee experience by keeping employees informed, gathering feedback, automating steps for returning to work, and providing a safe employee-ready working environment.

- **Prepare the workplace**
  Configure socially distanced workspaces and automate daily cleaning tasks.

- **Gain insight into employee readiness**
  Gather employee feedback to understand their concerns and keep them informed on return-to-work policies.

- **Provide self-service space reservations**
  Digitize processes for returning including shift selection and workspace reservations.

- **Deliver a unified Employee Experience**
  Proactively plan and prepare for a safe return to workplace across departments through campaigns and communications.

- **Continuously monitor and improve**
  Get a comprehensive view of workforce and workplace readiness for the return to workplace process.

- **Mitigate risk and exposure**
  Rapidly trace and communicate to minimize the potential spread across the workplace.

- **Verify health and vaccination status**
  Screen employees, provide required PPE, and monitor vaccination status for safe workplace entry.
In conclusion.

Organizations may not have been prepared for the sweeping impact of COVID-19. Leaders now have a short window where they can not only set the structure of what returning to the workplace looks like, but also define the culture of the company for years to come.

The ServiceNow Safe Workplace Apps provide everything you need to bring your employees back to work safely, and the impact has already been felt by companies that adopted early. Estimated benefits include:

- **20,000 hours saved** annually on additional manual administration of readiness and workplace data
- **Up to $1 million in additional labor costs** avoided per year for every 10,000 employees.

These apps, coupled with the larger ServiceNow suite of solutions, can help leaders maintain business continuity and drive workforce productivity. Digital workflows provide flexibility in a world where working remotely is the new normal. They break down siloes and provide a resilient infrastructure, allowing you to pivot quickly as business conditions change or pandemics spread.

Visit store.servicenow.com to find out more.
For a deeper exploration of ServiceNow Employee Experience Solutions, we recommend reading the following documents:

**Whitepaper: Employee Experience Imperative**
This whitepaper outlines 4 steps to creating a workplace that supports a great work life

**Arrival of the Hybrid Digital Workplace**

**Making Workplace Services Work for Employees**

**Workplace Service Delivery**

**SOURCES**

2. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/06/01/interruptions-at-work-can-cost-you-up-to-6-hours-a-day-heres-how-to-avoid-them/

© 2021 ServiceNow, Inc. All rights reserved. ServiceNow, the ServiceNow logo, Now, Now Platform, and other ServiceNow marks are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of ServiceNow, Inc. in the United States and/or other countries. Other company names, product names, and logos may be trademarks of the respective companies with which they are associated.