Making employees happier, more productive, and reassured

The 7 key components to managing a safe and efficient workplace
The future is hybrid

We already have a good idea of 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 should be like on that floor in a new hybrid working environment. Instead of going to a designated area, employees and teams can access the most efficient areas and sit and work together in flexible neighborhoods. Solutions for the workplace exist to remove barriers and streamline otherwise manual, and inefficient processes.

We all have a responsibility to keep our employees safe. So, it's vital that we maintain secure, functional workspaces that enable both our people and our organizations. Here are seven key components to managing a safe and efficient workplace.
Deliver a unified employee experience

One of the hallmark impacts for organizations in recent years is the digitization of the workplace. A 2021 report conducted by Okta shows that the average number of apps that organizations deploy has increased by over 22% the past four years to 88 applications per customer. More tools may solve an immediate need, but the sprawl can create a problem of its own.

So, in preparation for employees’ return to the office, it’s important to streamline the digital experience and provide employees with a central, connected place to find information.

“Providing information anytime and on any device has improved our employee experience.”

ROBERT MARTIRE, MANAGER OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT, LCBO

Provide easy self-service to employees through a unified portal. Prepare for a safe return to the workplace across departments by streamlining information and communications.

By consolidating enterprise search, knowledge, and access to all the apps your employees use in a single place, they can easily find accurate news, knowledge articles, and policies, to act quickly. The new ServiceNow® Employee Center aims to solve this challenge for organizations, and serves as the single-entry point for employees, connecting them across the entire enterprise, no matter the department. What’s more, cross-functional teams can configure ServiceNow to meet employees where they are at, in the technology and apps they are already using while guiding them where they need to go with hundreds of prebuilt integrations.

And for a smoother return to the office, employees can access a central hub for the organization’s vaccination policies, health check tasks, and reservation requests. Happier and healthier employees, with the means to self-serve, lead to a more productive business.
Gain insight into employee readiness

Part of a safe, efficient, and compassionate return to the workplace is learning how employees feel about making their way back to the office and considering their needs. Information should be a two-way street. Without that conversation, how do business leaders make informed decisions that are considerate of the workforce?

“In this new normal, employees have to book everything before use—conference rooms, fitness equipment, etc. The app’s simplicity removes the frustrations and uncertainty around this.”

NICO ORIE, VP OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE, COCA-COLA EUROPEAN PARTNERS

Gather employee feedback to understand their concerns and keep them informed on return-to-work policies.

Through Employee Readiness Surveys, an application included in ServiceNow® Workplace Service Delivery, you can evaluate the readiness of your employees through highly visible, easy-to-navigate interfaces. Ask the questions that matter and crunch the data. At the end of the day, your business needs to decide on next steps—so you may as well ensure it’s a well-informed decision that reflects the workforce’s concerns and general sentiment regarding returning to the workplace.

Once you have a better understanding of how employees want to approach returning to the workplace, you can set about structuring a plan with their sentiment in mind. As they say, knowing is half the battle. If you know what employees are concerned about, you can put measures in place to better put their minds at ease, leading to a safer, happier, and more productive workforce.
Prepare the workplace

We’ve all become interior designers, trying to envision what our workplace should look like once employees have returned to the office. Gone are the days of static workspaces and manual configuration—to give employees the flexibility and freedom to perform at their best, organizations need to provide workspaces that actually work for employees.

In an increasingly distributed work environment, simple and flexible solutions to find services, workspaces, and amenities, as well as easier navigations around workplace locations, will help employees and workplace teams focus their time on what they do best, not where or how work gets done.

PepsiCo developed an employee portal with more than 10 self-service options to support the needs of their workforce—enabling better workplace safety, business continuity, and contingency planning.

Configure socially distanced workspaces and optimize layouts for the hybrid workforce.

ServiceNow® Workplace Space Mapping enables employees and visitors to get directions and navigate through workplace locations using an interactive floor map. The solution offers organizations an efficient digital tool for planning a safe return to work strategy, establishing safe distancing floor plans, providing safely guided mapping experiences for employees and visitors, and locating employees on the floor map.

With the ability to edit floor plans digitally and publish changes to mapping experiences in real-time, workplace managers are no longer burdened with manual and time-consuming tasks. Additionally, employees can also report workplace issues for specific spaces and notify the facilities team—ensuring the workplace is always fit for purpose, providing employees with the means to remain happy, safe, and productive throughout their time in the office.
Provide self-service space reservations

In today’s new, hybrid world of distributed work, the shift in workplace and employee needs has encouraged departments across the enterprise to find new ways to digitize processes, manage employee safety, and unify experiences. This new reality means it will be important for organizations to provide easy, intuitive self-service reservations for workspaces and workplace services to employees. By providing avenues for employees to quickly reserve workstations, conference rooms, equipment, and add requests such as catering, the business can boost productivity, manage workplace safety, and increase efficiencies while delivering meaningful employee experiences.

Using ServiceNow’s Workplace Service Delivery solution, ENMAX Corporation successfully launched workplace reservations and health screenings for 2,200 employees and contractors, providing 14.5K health screenings for upcoming workplace reservations.

Digitize the process for returning, including shift selection and workspace reservations.

ServiceNow® Workplace Reservation Management allows employees to search, reserve, modify and check-in for any workspace they need to be productive, all from an omni-channel self-service interface. Employees can sync workplace items, requests, and reservation details with common enterprise calendar providers—such as Microsoft Outlook and Google Calendar—set up recurring events, and schedule multi-location reservations. Employees can also request room configurations and add service requests such as catering to a reservation using ServiceNow® Workplace Case Management, also available in the Workplace Service Delivery suite of applications.

Implementing solutions to successfully create socially distanced floor plans, assign neighborhoods, and automate cleaning tasks will contribute to defining the workplace of the future.
Verify health and vaccination status

Ensuring your workforce remains healthy by avoiding potential exposure to illness is paramount. For many, this has taken on the form of health screening checks at the front door, a manual and time-consuming task. Organizations today have introduced more intuitive and efficient digital solutions that can enforce site specific entry conditions, assess and track employee readiness to enter the workplace, and guide employee or worksite follow-up with real-time reports and metrics.

With a digital solution, employees can be screened before entering the workplace to ensure compliance with an organization’s entry requirements, such as daily health checks. Additionally, you can also require that employees agree to comply with health and safety policies from the Employee Center before they return to the workplace—all with the convenience that comes with an omnichannel rollout.

The NBA and WNBA used ServiceNow to help facilitate screening for more than 2,600 league staff, vendors, and guests in creating a secure campus to conclude the men’s season, as well as run the entire WNBA season.

Screen employees, provide required PPE, and monitor vaccination status for safe workplace entry.

With ServiceNow® Employee Health Screening and ServiceNow® Vaccination Status, organizations can configure their own requirements and have employees agree to them before entering a workplace: from as simple as checking how employees are feeling, right up to detailed self-reporting of health and vaccination status—whatever the business needs. You have the flexibility of providing a single screener with access to the application or enabling all employees to interact with it. Employee Health Screening is an intuitive application that requires minimal training to use and enables the organization to manage the health data through a reporting dashboard—enabling it to view trends by sites and record the return of users into their facilities.
**Mitigate risk and employee exposure**

Even when implementing additional measures like health screening, you want to ensure you have a solution in place to minimize the potential spread of sickness in the workplace.

Contact tracing enables employers to reduce workplace transmission by identifying any on-site employees or visitors who might have been in contact with an affected employee. This solution can also keep employers in the loop, provide updates about the number of reported cases or symptoms in a location, use various data sources to develop a list of potentially exposed employees, and create outreach cases and tasks for follow-up interviews with at-risk members of the workforce.

**Key benefits of contact tracing**

- Identify on-site employees who may have been in contact with a potentially infected coworker
- Aggregate contact tracing information across workplace locations, work shifts and reservations, badge scans, Wi-Fi access points, and self-reporting logs to enhance search criteria
- Create outreach cases and tasks for follow-up interviews with potentially impacted employees
- Maintain the data privacy of employees, in the context of contact tracing by obtaining their consent

**Rapidly trace and communicate with employees to minimize potential spread across the workplace.**

The ServiceNow® Contact Tracing application offers all these features in a configurable manner, giving organizations the ability to flex contact tracing as much (or as little) as is required. The app also enables your organization to maintain the data privacy of all employees given the high sensitivity of the data collected throughout the contact tracing process.

Should an employee return to the workplace and be classified as positive for a condition, a case can be created to identify and reach out to potentially exposed contacts. This ensures the necessary steps can be taken to provide information and guidance to anyone who may have been exposed, while providing leaders with data to make informed, and proactive, business decisions.
Get a comprehensive view of the workforce and workplace readiness for returning to the workplace.

With ServiceNow’s reporting features, you can:

• Get fast access to data
• Increase awareness and actionability
• Reduce manual effort
• Boost data security and integrity

What ties all of this together is the Now Platform® and its reporting dashboards.

By combining everything through a single interface, it’s easier for leaders and management to see the bigger picture. Department leaders, for example, can see in real time how the workplace is being used from day to day, and make informed decisions based on trends and insights gleaned from application data. Based on pre-determined KPIs, teams can tweak and further refine processes until they find the right configuration for realizing optimum workplace safety and efficiency.
Manage a safe and efficient workplace

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. Deliver a great employee experience by keeping employees informed, gathering feedback, automating steps for returning to the workplace, and providing a safe employee-ready working environment.
For a deeper exploration of ServiceNow Workplace Service Delivery and HR Service Delivery, we recommend reading the following documents:

**Workplace Service Delivery**  
Increase efficiency by delivering modern digital services for employees to interact with the services offered by their workplace.

**HR Service Delivery**  
Improve productivity by streamlining the employee service experience with intelligent workflows.

**Making Workplace Services Work for Employees**  
This white paper offers four steps for creating digital workplace services that address the needs of employees, increase satisfaction, and make work easier.

**Sources**  