# Navigating What's Next: The Post-COVID Workplace

About This Guide

As we navigate this crisis, Steelcase will draw on the knowledge of our diverse network of global clients, thought leaders and experts to explore and understand the implications to work, workers and the workplace.

Navigating What's Next: The Post-COVID Workplace is designed to share strategies that can help organizations navigate this crisis across three time horizons – now, near and far.

Our commitment to you is to share as quickly as we learn:

steelcase.com/postcovid
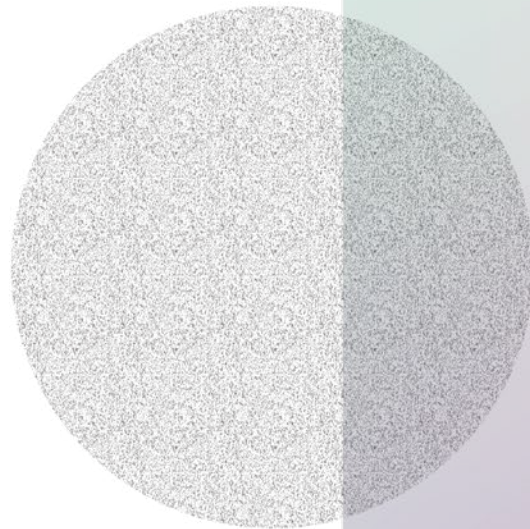
The Post-COVID Workplace

Returning to the workplace will be like reopening the economy. It will happen in waves and it will be stressful for both organizations and workers. It's impossible to predict what may happen next.

But we still need to prepare.

Navigating What's Next

Reopening the economy will challenge every company to quickly regain productivity and competitiveness, without compromising health and safety.

During the shutdown every company was forced to hunker down and keep things going. Established teams learned to use video conferencing to have meetings and individuals could use email and enterprise resource planning systems to sustain existing processes. That was the easy part. Similar to the yellow caution light in auto racing, during the shutdown competitors mostly stayed in their lanes and held their position. That's all about to change.

As the economy reopens, competition will be intense. The crisis has created new challenges and new opportunities in almost every industry. Every competitor will try to respond. The winners will be those who most clearly understand their customer's needs, collaborate to identify multiple solutions, prototype and iterate quickly, bring new ideas to market and make the risky decision to invest at scale. Digital transformation initiatives will need to accelerate to redefine every element in the value chain. Culture will never be more important as companies focus on innovation, speed and risk-taking. The winners will be those who can reactivate, redeploy and reengage talent most effectively. The losers will be those who stay hunkered down too long and miss the moment when the light turns green.

This experience has also impacted everyone's wellbeing at work – their physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. Some people easily made the transition to working from home and will want to have the option of working remotely in the future. Others struggled because of inadequate space, furniture, worktools, and bandwidth. Some faced challenges balancing work demands and family expectations, while others were affected by loneliness. Everyone experienced health-related anxiety as we wore masks to go grocery shopping, crossed the street to avoid crossing paths with neighbors, and worried about those who were not following the rules. **Everyone will return to a workplace changed in some way**, though expectations will be different from person to person, and could create new tensions across generations at work. These new sensibilities will affect how leading companies attract, retain, and inspire talent for many years.

Culture is rooted in community and the "social infrastructure" – places and protocols – that connect people and shape how we interact. **The modern workplace provides the infrastructure needed to foster relationships, build communities at work and allow people to achieve more.** Steelcase has worked with clients to provide employees more privacy, more choices and more control over how they work. We have helped design meeting rooms that support remote participants more inclusively. We have launched new products that offer more flexibility as work shifts from individual to team and from formal to informal throughout the day. All of this gets more important.

Infection control is a new priority. **Employees will not return to an office that doesn't feel safe**, and most of today's high-density workplaces, with extensive reliance on hotelling and shared ancillary spaces will need to be modified. Businesses understand that infection transmission within a workplace can not only shut them down again, but also damage their brand and their ability to attract new talent. As we add infection control as a new given, **we must not "fix" the office in a way that weakens community, creativity, productivity or the other keys to winning** as competitiveness intensifies – that's the whole reason to have an office. We also must remember the lessons from the past and respond to this crisis so that we may adapt over time as risks are mitigated in other ways. The opportunity for the workplace is to move forward, not backward.

As we navigate what's next, our solutions are holistic and consider not just furniture, but also materials, technology, planning paradigms and even behaviors and protocols. Our ideas are rooted in the science of infection control as we work with human health experts to define national and local guidelines for what makes a workplace safe. We also want to be practical, providing ideas companies can adopt now as the first wave of workers return to the office, but in a responsible way that also looks ahead to the near and far. **The office must immediately be made safe, but also more resilient and more adaptive** to the changes we can only imagine as competition intensifies in a post-COVID world.

Jim Keane
President and CEO
Steelcase, Inc.

Planning for the unknown: safety first

As we plan to return to work, we need to make choices carefully and responsibly. Employee safety and wellbeing must be paramount — people need to *be* safe and *feel* safe.
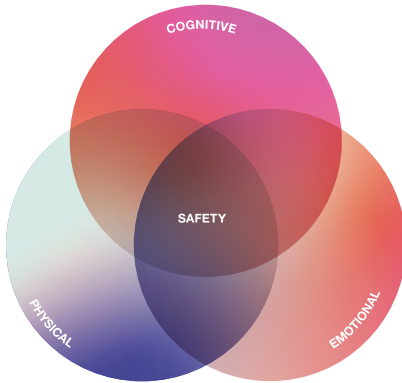
Wellbeing happens when there is an intersection between our physical, cognitive and emotional health — safety is foundational to all three. Organizations need to take action to ensure that:

- **Physically:** People can work in places where they are able to stay healthy overall and minimize exposure to pathogens that cause illness.

- **Mentally:** People are not in fear for their personal safety because that distracts them from being focused and productive.

- **Emotionally:** Everyone needs to feel safe at work. They need to be confident that their employers have done everything possible to create a safe environment — especially for those who may be at higher risk.

Today's workplace challenges

The dominant characteristics of the pre-COVID workplace were designed to support new ways of working and high levels of human interaction to fuel creativity, innovation, speed and agility. These attributes now pose challenges for the post-COVID workplace, as organizations strive to limit physical interactions.

They include:

- **Open plan:** The open plan is the dominant form of office design around the world. The degree of openness varies, but within these spaces air and pathogens can travel freely.

- **High density:** Over the past decade, the allocation of space per person substantially decreased, yet high density increases the likelihood of spreading infections.

- **Shared spaces:** Organizations recognized that people wanted choice and control over how and where they work. This has led to a broad range of spaces that are shared by people throughout the organization.

- **High mobility:** Mobile technologies and power solutions enable people to move freely around the workplace. Workplaces have now become highly dynamic environments, with lots of energy.

- **Communal spaces:** Cafés and social spaces have been intentionally designed to bring large groups of people together – increasing density and the likelihood of spreading infection.

- **Residential aesthetic:** Workplaces feel less "corporate" today and now include a wider range of sofas and lounge seating. The scale of these settings tends to be more intimate, bringing people together more closely.

These characteristics created a competitive advantage for organizations – a means to foster new work styles, build culture and attract talent. While many organizations prepared for employee safety in other ways, **the workplace was not designed to mitigate the spread of disease**. Companies around the world were not prepared to think about the workplace as an environment that needs to adapt quickly to health risks that can rise unexpectedly. Going forward, they cannot take the risk that rapid transmission of a virus could cause a facility or entire business to shut down.

The now, near and far

As we work with our global network of leading organizations and experts, we recognize the importance of looking at the return to work across the time horizons of now, near and far. For many organizations this will happen in waves and differ across geographies, as they bring segments of their workforce safely back into the office.

Now

This will be the first wave, with portions of the workforce continuing to work from home. Planning for now also means **retrofitting** the workplace, based on a common-sense approach that adheres to governmental and global health guidelines, including physical distancing, adding barriers, cleaning and safety measures.

Near

At this stage, organizations may be ready to bring back most or all of their workforce. Building on what we learn from our experiences and science, organizations can begin **reconfiguring** the workplace. This will involve new ways to lay out space and change work settings to offer longer-term solutions for enhanced safety.

Far

Work environments in the future will require **reinvention** as science-based evidence and emerging technologies offer new solutions. Planning paradigms of the past were driven by density and cost. Going forward they need to be based on the ability to adapt easily to possible economic, climate and health disruptions. The reinvented office must be designed with an even deeper commitment to the wellbeing of people, recognizing that their physical, cognitive and emotional states are inherently linked to their safety.

Key principles for these first two stages will be to focus on:

- Density of the workplace and its population
- Geometry of the furniture arrangements
- Division using screens, panels or other barriers

Now: **Retrofit**

To get their organizations running at partial capacity, most organizations will need to bring their employees back in waves. Many will want to bring back up to 50% of their workforce in the first wave of re-entry, and they will need to focus on retrofitting what they already have and take a common-sense approach based on current understanding of preventing disease transmission. We have learned from factories and global clients, who implemented early safety precautions as they responded to the needs of essential businesses.

These approaches include:

- **Reduce Density**
  To encourage physical distancing, consider removing chairs and spreading workspaces so people are at least 6ft/2m apart. For benches, consider a checkerboard pattern – removing spaces directly beside or in front of where employees might sit.

- **Change Geometry**
  Arrange and re-orient workstations away from a standard linear approach. Reconfigure freestanding desks to reduce sitting face-to-face without a barrier; rotate desks 90-degrees to face in different directions.

- **Add Division**
  Adding screens or panels is especially important when minimum 6ft/2m can't be achieved. Add screens in front, beside and behind people - the higher, wider and more easily cleaned, the better.

- **Hotelling**
  Shift from allowing desks to be shared by multiple people throughout the day, to a single use per day. Reinforce a "clean in, clean out" policy.

- **Ancillary Spaces**
  Furniture such as sofas should be marked for single usage unless it can allow physical distancing; lounge seating should be removed or placed at least 6ft/2m apart. Tables and lighting will need to be cleaned before and after each use by employees, not just cleaning staff.

- **Work from Home**
  Returning in waves or working in shifts reduces density and improves physical distancing – it also means some employees will work from home longer than expected. Employees will require ergonomic furniture, lighting and worktools to help them avoid injury from poor posture, repetitive movements, eye strain, etc.

- **Provide Visual Cues**
  Use tape or other visual cues to identify and suggest appropriate distance between employees. Arrows on the floor can be used to direct one-way traffic flow in narrow hallways and corridors.

- **Smaller Meetings**
  Establish protocols for the number of people who can occupy an enclosed space. Post that information so it is commonly understood. Adhere to local guidance about numbers of people allowed in a gathering and ensure the room supports physical distancing.

- **Clean Frequently and Visibly**
  Make cleaning highly visible so employees are assured that spaces are being cleaned multiple times a day. Make cleaning wipes and sanitizer accessible to everyone, everywhere and ask employees to clean before and after use of shared spaces; include hand-washing stations and promote personal hygiene. *(See safety guidelines, page 27)*

- **Make Masks the Norm**
  In many countries, it is a social norm to wear a mask during the cold and flu season. As scientists study how far small droplets emitted from people talking can travel, consider making it a new norm to wear masks during times when people need to interact in meetings, conversations or moving around the office. Provide masks for people as well as giving guidance for proper ways to wear them. *(See safety guidelines, page 27)*

Near: **Reconfigure**

As businesses are able to ramp back up, they may need to bring 75% to 100% of their employees back. Businesses will need to reconfigure their spaces to accommodate these increased numbers while still adhering to distancing guidelines. Solutions should be highly adaptable so spaces can change quickly in response to any unplanned future disruptions. These solutions should also be based on science – including what we've learned about pathogens and how they are transmitted and destroyed.

Reconfiguration considerations include:

- **Me Within We**
  Give people the choice of having a dedicated workspace if they feel more comfortable not sharing with others. They will also need ubiquitous access to cleaning tools; encourage them to clean their space before they begin work. If spaces must be shared, then they should be 'reservable' for longer durations, with the new practice of thoroughly cleaning between times of usage.

- **Design for Disinfecting**
  Select smooth surfaces that are easy to clean and fabrics that can be cleaned or washed. Consider materials that don't degrade with continuous cleaning. Utilize sensor systems to provide information about which rooms have the greatest occupancy and require more frequent cleaning.

- **Deflect the Virus**
  Introduce hard or fabric barriers that are scientifically proven to stop or deflect the virus.

- **Flexible Furniture and Power**
  Introduce furniture that can be easily moved and reconfigured. This allows employees to easily distance themselves from others as needed and organizations can increase density in the future when virus transmission is less of a concern. Mobile power lets employees work in areas where power is not readily available - such as cafés or other open areas that can be redeployed to support individual work.

- **Large-Scale Collaboration Devices**
  Since travel will still be minimized, global teams need ways to connect. Large scale collaboration devices, like the Microsoft Surface Hub are touched with a pen or hands, but they can also be easily cleaned. Innovation work often requires large-scale collaboration (whiteboards, etc.) and large-scale digital tools can help teams maintain that over distance.

- **Introduce Standing Meetings**
  Open areas can become the new conference room by moving the Microsoft Surface Hub 2S and Steelcase Roam Mobile Stand

and using Steelcase Flex screens with stools to create a space where people can naturally distance themselves and meet without being stuck in an enclosed space. The extra advantage is that standing and moving is proven to boost creativity by 60%, making it easier to get back to innovation work while maintaining an appropriate distance away from others.

- **Enterprise-Wide Agile Practices**
  Working from home has forced many workers to become more agile and they may want to adopt agile practices like "daily stand-ups" when they return to the office. Standing meetings can be helpful in reducing the overall square footage/meter demands.

- **Contact Tracing**
  Should you become ill, emerging smart phone technology can anonymously communicate this to anyone who's been near you and suggest to them that he/she may want to get tested and/or self-isolate.

Far: **Reinvent**

There will be an urgency to not simply return to where we were, but to be resilient, move forward and thrive. Innovation, productivity and growth can be reignited and accelerated with a workplace that is designed to balance diverse ways of working while supporting people's wellbeing more than ever and respond quickly and easily when faced with disruption. The opportunity ahead is to reinvent a workplace that is inherently adaptable – able to change as needed, based on new conditions, whether it be the next epidemic or a new prospect for growth.

This means that planning paradigms of the past, driven by density and costs, need to shift -- think flexibility and fluidity instead of permanence. Creating "social infrastructure" – a range of diverse places and experiences that shape how people interact – will allow people to make connections and build trust that, in turn, fuels their level of engagement. The workplace needs to deeply support people's wellbeing, knowing that their safety is directly linked to their physical, cognitive and emotional states.

Science-based and data-driven solutions will need to integrate with technology tools to create environments that are safe for people to interact comfortably and embrace new ways of working.

Solutions might include:

- **Design for Adaptability**
  Space should no longer be designed for permanence, but to change easily, expand and contract, with work areas that can accommodate greater or less distancing.

- **Hands-free**
  More solutions will be available for gesture or voice-activated commands (i.e. raise desk-top, open door, save whiteboard notes).

- **New Materials**
  Pure or engineered materials that allow for cleaning and disinfection without degrading over time will become the new standard.

- **Sensors**
  Beyond utilization, sensors will measure different aspects of wellbeing, possibly including behaviors or actions that indicate illness.

- **Inclusive Design**
  The workplace needs to ensure that everyone has equal levels of safe participation regardless of age, abilities or health issues.

- **Living on Video**
  Travel will continue to be less frequent and the office will need to integrate enhanced virtual experiences so people can connect across distances. The use of large-scale video conferencing improves remote collaboration. Seeing facial reactions and body language lets you "read the room," plus people are less likely to multi-task, interrupt or speak over one another.

- **Remote Work Norms**
  For some companies, working from home is not new. They already have policies in place to provide options to their employees. This will likely become more normative for organizations, and employees will need support for home offices that will provide physical comfort and allow them to participate in work seamlessly when they're not in the physical office.

- **Create Community**
  Beyond the financial recession, people are weary from the social recession and the lack
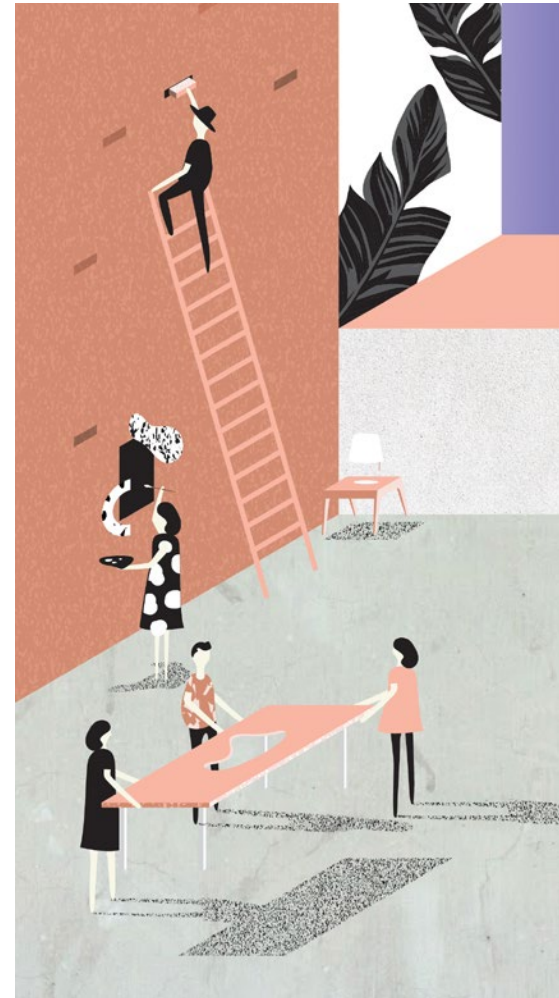
of connection with others. Nurture a sense of belonging and purpose. Reiterate the organization's strategies and long-term vision. Use virtual gatherings to help people maintain that connection to others.

We need time to understand how people are feeling, what science is learning and the technologies that are emerging to fully comprehend the future workplace.

Design Considerations + Thought Starters

One thing is certain: We will design and plan spaces differently in the future.

Design Considerations
Density. Geometry. Division.

Companies want to bring people back to the office because they know it's the best place for people to come together, align on priorities and get things done. People have grown weary of isolation and look forward to being able to speak directly to their colleagues and solve problems. As organizations plan for people to return in waves, they need a strategy for the physical work environment that follows new safety protocols and allows people to create, collaborate and be productive.

Three key strategies to consider when retrofitting spaces now or reconfiguring in the near term are:

Density: the number of people per sq. ft/m

Geometry: how the furniture is arranged

Division: using screens, panels or barriers

These strategies should be used in combination to create spaces that, when supplemented with new safety guidelines, allow people to confidently come back into the workplace. Going forward, organizations will want to create a diverse range of spaces that are highly adaptable to allow them to navigate what's next.

6ft /2m

Minimum Distance
Create minimum 6ft/2m distancing between people in open workstations, meeting spaces, cafés and lounge spaces. Reduce occupancy by removing desks, tables and seating, or use alternating desks.

Meet in the Open
Use open spaces for meetings of more than five people, leveraging flexible furniture with movable whiteboards and screens to create boundaries.

More Owned Spaces
Reduce/eliminate shared desking and shift to more owned individual spaces.

Re-orient Furniture
Reconfigure desking to reduce face-to-face orientation; turn workstations to 90-degee angles to prevent workers from working directly across or behind one another.

Separate Desks
Pull workstations and desks apart to increase distancing.

Add Space Division
Increase barriers for existing workspaces by adding screening, storage elements, plants or partitions.

Moveable Screens
At workstations, consider increased user-movable screening and privacy devices to reduce exposure.

Height Helps
Implement the highest boundary possible above the worksurface (on all exposed sides) when a minimum 6ft/2m distance cannot be achieved.

Floor Plan Considerations

The key to preparing the office for the return of people requires changing the density, geometry and division of the space.
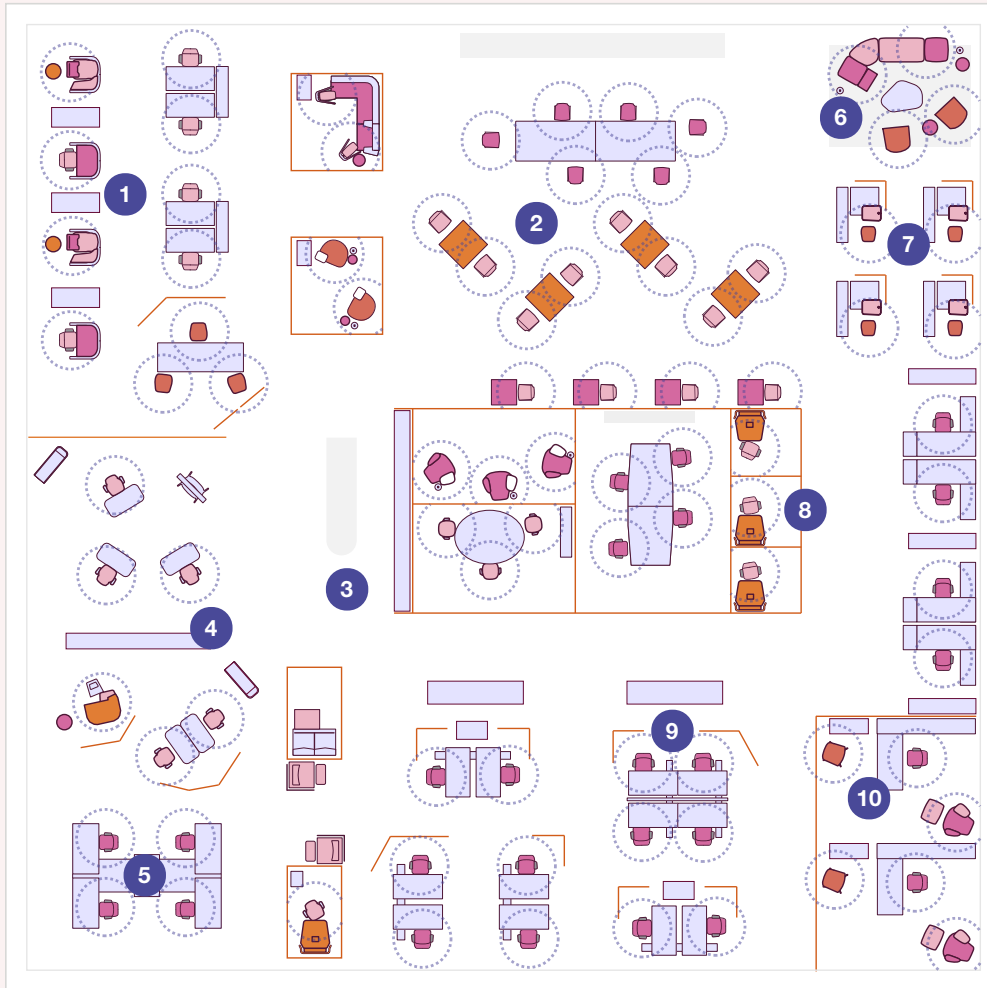
8,830 sq ft

1   *Higher space division and natural elements create separation and psychological comfort.*

2   *Decreased density in the café allows people to safely interact.*

3   *Sanitation stations provide easy access to cleaning supplies.*

4   *Mobile boundary screens protect a team's territory and their backs.*

5   *Changing the arrangement (geometry) of the desks reduces face-to-face orientation.*

6   *Individual seating in lounge spaces helps to maintain a safe distance.*

7   *Individual workstations have been separated to provide a minimum of 6ft/2m distance between people. Screens provide additional division.*

8   *Added video conferencing enclaves enable remote collaboration, allowing fewer people to work in the office at a single time.*

9   *Movable boundary screen protects personal space and reduces exposure.*

10   *Reduced guest seating and adjusted orientation creates distancing in the private office.*

Workplace Settings

The following design considerations and thought starters demonstrate how to adapt existing settings for the Post-COVID workplace.

1: Current

Design Strategies
Height-Adjustable Desks and Benches

Ideas for how to progressively adapt existing worksettings to meet the new health and safety requirements for a post-COVID workplace.
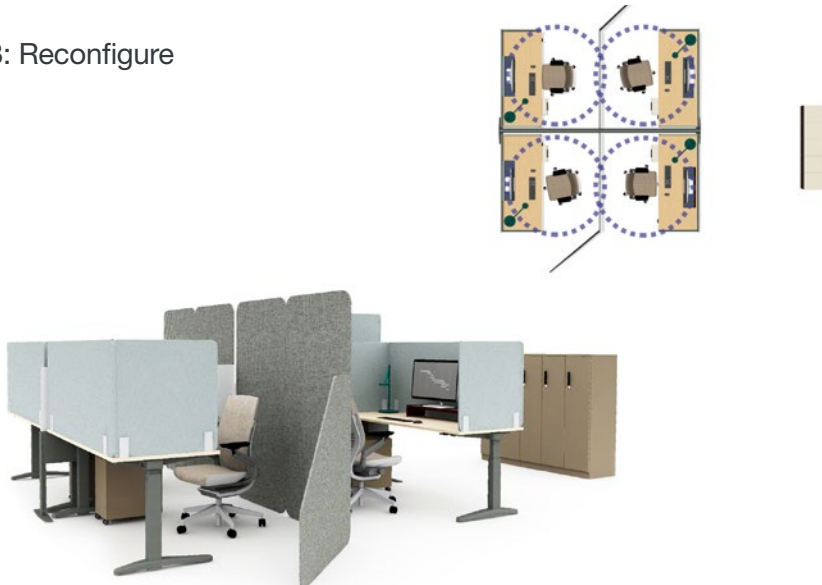
2: Retrofit

Division:

- Add three 24" high AMQ desk screens per height-adjustable desk.

- Add user-moveable 71" & 47" high Steelcase Flex screens to shield team space.

- Add user-moveable 66" high Loftwall screen for boundary and separation between people.

CM3MR2KK - Link to Planning Idea

3: Reconfigure

Density:

- Increase square footage per person by changing desk orientation.

Geometry:

- Rotate desks 90 degrees to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

Division:

- Add three 24" high AMQ desk screens per height-adjustable desk.

- Add lockers to create a boundary and provide storage for personal belongings and cleaning supplies.

- Add user-moveable 71" & 47" high Steelcase Flex screens between people to create on-demand boundaries.

CW5UH5SG - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Height-Adjustable Desks and Benches
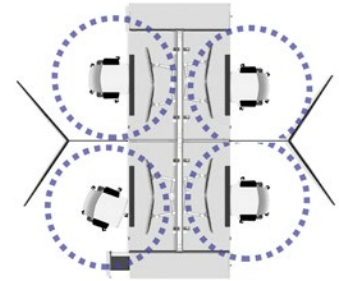
- Three 24" high AMQ screens per height-adjustable desk.

- User-moveable 71" & 47" high Steelcase Flex screens between people to create on-demand boundaries.
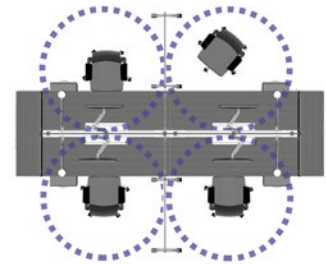
- Flexible storage boundary.

PM7ME8YF - Link to Planning Idea
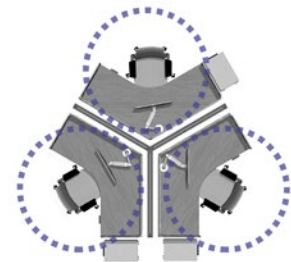
- Two 24" high AMQ screens per height-adjustable desk.

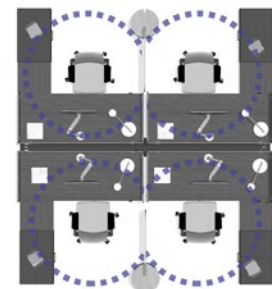- 120-degree configuration of Ology height-adjustable desks to reduce face-to-face orientation.

CK2RV4NM - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Height-Adjustable Desks and Benches

- 24" high AMQ screens on FrameOne benching.

- 54" high Groupwork mobile whiteboard screen.

UX8HT9QK - Link to Planning Idea

- Three 24" high AMQ screens per height-adjustable bench.

- 71" high Steelcase Flex markerboard with stand.

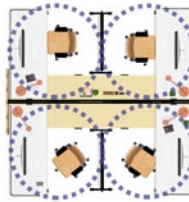**XN7PR4KC - Link to Planning Idea**

1: Current

Design Strategies
Panel-Based Workstations

Ideas for how to progressively adapt existing worksettings to meet the new health and safety requirements for a post-COVID workplace.

2: Retrofit

Density:

- Increase square footage per person by changing desk orientation.

Geometry:

- Rotate desks 90 degrees to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

Division:

- Add 28" high AMQ screens to two sides of the Ology height-adjustable desk.

- Add 18" frameless glass screens to 48" high Answer panels.

CW7GH4NC - Link to Planning Idea

3: Reconfigure

Density:

- Increase square footage per person by changing desk orientation.

Division:

- Add 18" high glass stack to the top of the 48" high Answer panels.
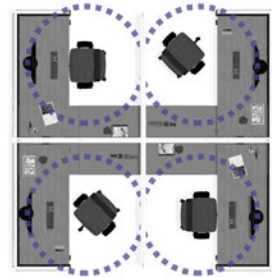
DU4GR9ED - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Panel-Based Workstations
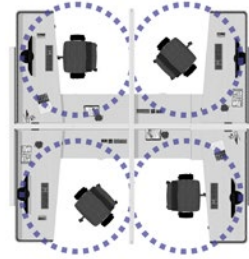
- 28" high AMQ screen per Ology height-adjustable desk.

- 18" high frameless glass screens on 48" high Answer panels.

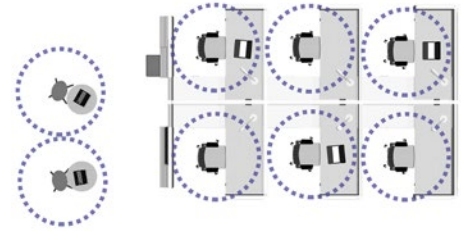- Desk orientation perpendicular to the panel to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

ES5CE5HX - Link to Planning Idea

- 18" high frameless glass screens on 48" high Answer panels.

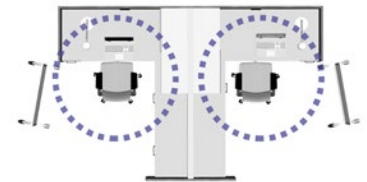- Desk orientation perpendicular to the panel to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

JH7AT5DX - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Panel-Based Workstations

- 66" & 54" high Answer panels with 12" high frameless glass screens in workstations.

- Desk orientation perpendicular to the panel to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

DV2MW9MK - Link to Planning Idea

- 54" high Answer panels and boundary screens for full shielding at the fixed-height desk.

- Desk orientation perpendicular to the panel to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

QR8RJ8NG - Link to Planning Idea

1: Current

Design Strategies
Ancillary

Ideas for how to progressively adapt existing worksettings to meet the new health and safety requirements for a post-COVID workplace.

2: Retrofit

Density:
- Break multi-seat lounge furniture into individual seats by introducing table elements to reduce density.
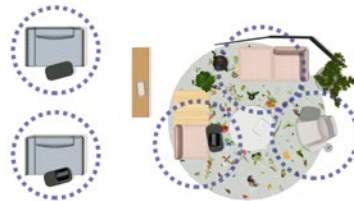
Geometry:
- Arrange seating to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

Division:
- Add 71" & 47" high Steelcase Flex screens to increase shielding.
- Add storage to create boundary and store PPE, cleaning supplies and sanitizer.

XA7MF5TY - Link to Planning Idea

3: Reconfigure

Density:
- Break a single setting into multiple smaller settings with increased separation and reduced density.
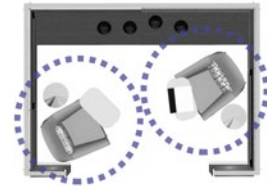
Geometry:
- Arrange seating to eliminate face-to-face orientation.

Division:
- Add individual Lagunitas lounge seats with personal screens.
- Move storage to create separation between lounge settings.

YW9JS7GA - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Ancillary

- 96" high V.I.A. demountable walls.
- Individual seating and personal tables to ensure appropriate distancing.
- Storage to hold PPE, cleaning supplies and sanitizer.
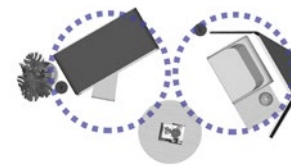
- Turnstone Bivi Rumble Seat with Hoodie.
- Turnstone 56" high Clipper screen creates a boundary.
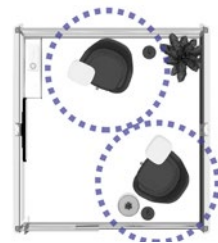- Appropriate distancing between people.

RP6DQ6GQ - Link to Planning Idea

Thought Starters
Ancillary
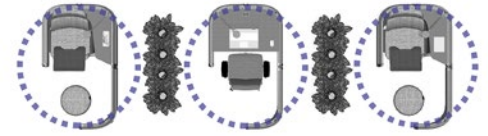
- Brody WorkLounge and Brody Desk with screens and extensions create shielding.
- Appropriate distancing between people.

JG4ZT6YP - Link to Planning Idea

- Individual seats and personal tables provide appropriate distancing between people.
- Storage for team tools, PPE, cleaning supplies and sanitizer.
- Orangebox Air³ Pod enclosure provides shielding and privacy.

MK9JC6GU - Link to Planning Idea

Home Office Settings

We've designed these home office solutions to help you work better at home — whether you're creating a small office, multipurpose space or large dedicated office.

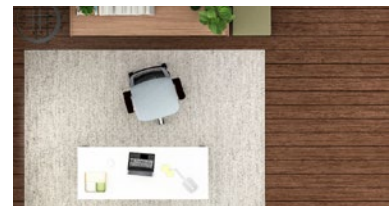Thought Starters
Home Office

A freestanding desk and office chair with a more residential aesthetic can easily be added to any existing space.

TE4DX9SX – Link to Planning Idea

Featured Products
Blu Dot Desk 51
Gesture Chair
Blu Dot Dang File Pedestal
Blu Dot Punk Table Lamp

This dedicated home office combines performance and expression. The height-adjustable desk allows you to sit or stand throughout the day, while the accent pieces add a personal touch.

AJ2DF3KG – Link to Planning Idea

Featured Products
Migration SE Height-Adjustable Desk
Amia Air Chair
SOTO LED Task Light
Blu Dot Peek 2 Door Dresser
Blu Dot Perimeter Floor Lamp

Thought Starters
Home Office

Sharing a space? This shared home office provides ample space for two with a back-to-back desk. The nearby lounge chair creates a place to step away and reflect, refresh or work in a relaxed posture.

QP9TS2UT – Link to Planning Idea

Featured Products
Turnstone Bivi Table for Two
Turnstone Bivi Trunk
Gesture Chairs
Coalesse Bob Lounge Chair and Ottoman
Coalesse Free Stand Personal Table
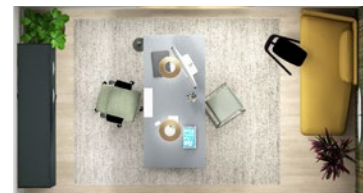
Focus on solo work at home in this stylish and inspiring home office. Tackle your to-do list at the standing-height table or join a virtual meeting from the sofa — all in one space.

XR3VR4XQ – Link to Planning Idea

Featured Products
Blu Dot Strut Bar-Height Table
Gesture Stool
Blu Dot Ready Barstool
Blu Dot Bloke Chaise
Coalesse Free Stand Personal Table
Thread Power Hub

Materials: Cleanability

Cleanability of the surfaces in an interior is more important than ever. Without sacrificing aesthetics, we can make some intentional material decisions that will help promote a healthy, highly cleanable, and beautiful environment.

The cleaning guidelines for Steelcase products in the Surface Materials Reference Manual align with the guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Laminates, painted metals, and other hard surfaces can be cleaned with commercial cleaning products which have shown to be compatible with our products through Steelcase testing, when used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

https://www.steelcase.com/ cleaning-steelcase-products/

Some high-performing textiles have a colorfastness that allows them to be cleaned with a bleach solution. The CDC recommends diluted bleach for disinfecting surfaces, and our bleach safe textiles are designed for a 10 parts water to one part bleach solution.

All soft surfaces, including seating upholstery and vertical surface fabrics should always be cleaned according to the manufacturer recommendations.

https://www.designtex.com/ media/pdf/Designtex-Cleaning_ Manual.pdf

Safety
Guidelines

A holistic approach to health and safety will allow people to *be* safe and *feel* safe when they come back to the workplace. Recommendations focus on three key areas beyond the design of the physical workplace: new employee protocols and communication, sanitization and disinfection and personal protective equipment (PPE).

The information contained in this section provides general recommendations for reopening the workplace safely and aligns with governmental and global health agency recommendations to the greatest extent possible. There may be unique circumstances that require organizations to adapt these recommendations to address facility requirements or laws specific to a region.

Parts of this guide are adapted from Lear Corporation's Safe Work Playbook which has been published for public use.

Plan and Prepare Before Bringing People Back

Set-up a Pandemic Response Team (PRT)

A PRT is a cross-functional team led by a workplace manager to address the health and safety of employees returning to work.

- Designate leaders and teams in key areas including physical space, employee protocols and communication, sanitization and disinfection, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Develop protocols and train leaders and teams prior to a return to the workplace. The PRT should meet daily and have a plan in place to adopt and coordinate the execution of this framework while also developing site-specific protocols.

Develop new employee protocols and communication plans

Organizations will need to develop and communicate new protocols to address new work behaviors and manage illness.

Protocols:
- Schedule how people will return. Decide how many people and how often. Some organizations may choose to rotate employees by day, week, month and even shut down intermittently for deep cleaning.

- Develop health screening protocols. Require employees to self-screen daily before arriving to work. Request a verbal or non-verbal confirmation. Conduct on-site daily temperature checks upon arrival (38°C or 100°F or higher should contact HR to follow necessary protocols).

- Develop illness protocols. If employees present symptoms of exposure to a virus, follow isolation or self-quarantine procedures. There should be a trained coordinator on-site, a designated isolation room and clear protocols that have been communicated to all employees and require strict adherence. Similar protocols should be in place to determine when someone is ready to return to the office.

  - If someone presents with an illness at work, coordinators should be contacted by an employee or coworker. Protocols should limit exposure while seeking help from a local health authority.

  - Clearly communicate when employees need to self-quarantine. Employees should remain off-site for 14 days if COVID-19 symptoms are present, if they have a positive test, or have been exposed to COVID-19. Return to work in compliance with governmental/global health guidelines.

- Create new lunchtime protocols. Implement extended hours and staggered lunch schedules for café/food service areas. Use signage on the floor to delineate safe distancing practices.

Communication:
- Develop and deliver safety training for all workers before returning to the workplace, using virtual learning tools as well as written and verbal communications.

- Localize presentation materials to be consistent with each facility environment.

- Review new policies and protocols with employees and leaders. Review COVID-19 signs and symptoms, self-screening procedures, on-site screenings, isolation and self-quarantine protocols.

- Host first-day training and orientation to reinforce physical distancing, hygiene and sanitization practices and new procedures.

- Create and install signage throughout the workplace to visibly communicate new protocols and safety procedures. Signage should include health screening checkpoints, isolation areas, visitor checkpoints, sanitization and disinfection guidelines, social distancing requirements and personal hygiene tips.

- Use all internal communication channels available including intranet, email, instant messaging, email signatures, and signage to reinforce new protocols. Pervasively communicate desired behaviors for cleanliness, distancing and PPE usage.

- As we all learn more about how to prevent the spread of the virus and as protocols need to change, have a plan in place to communicate evolving guidelines.

Create and reinforce sanitization and disinfection protocols

Deep-cleaning and ongoing sanitization practices should be planned and prepared for before reopening.

- Develop a sanitary baseline before reopening. Conduct deep cleaning and disinfection prior to a return to the office per environmental, health and safety guidelines. Also,

conduct a deep clean anytime an active employee is identified as COVID-19 positive.

- Deep cleaning is defined as a more comprehensive cleaning using advanced technologies and more aggressive cleaning solutions administered by a third party.

- Take site-specific circumstances into consideration when sanitizing and disinfecting. Pay special attention to restrooms, cafeterias, lockers, common areas such as handrails and vending machines, computer screens and keyboards, elevator buttons, light switches and other common touchpoints.

- Develop protocols for ongoing cleaning, disinfection method and frequency. The PRT should supervise.

- Assess and maintain inventory of disinfectants. Confirm facilities have at minimum a 30-day supply of soap, disinfection spray, hand sanitizer, paper towels and tissue.

- Encourage employees to self-clean individual workstations and shared spaces before and after use. Provide "Sanitization Stations" that include disinfectant spray, wipes and hand sanitizer to encourage new cleaning guidelines.

- Implement hands-free experiences wherever possible. Leave doors open or incorporate door opening sensors, automatic lighting based on occupancy, or voice-activated experiences.

Determine personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines

Employees need clear direction, training and demonstrations of how to properly use PPE and frequent reminders to comply.

- Determine usage guidelines of PPE. Response teams such as medical employees, screeners and cleaning crew should be required to wear face coverings, gloves and glasses. Based on guidelines, confirm at minimum a 30-day supply.

- Appoint COVID-19 supervisors. Designate team members to train employees on proper usage of PPE and ensure compliance with PPE policy.

- Anticipate making masks the norm for all employees in the office, particularly at times where people need to interact. Provide masks and give guidance on how to wear them.

These guidelines are based on our current understanding of the safety precautions required. They will be updated as we gain science-based data and learn more about how to effectively address this pathogen and any future pandemics.

Our Commitment

We know that employee and organizational needs are going to evolve as people return to the workplace. We will continue to work closely with our global network of leading organizations and experts and share our observations and insights with all of you.

steelcase.com/postcovid

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