

Condeco Conversations

Supporting learning and innovation.

Routes to revival in returning to the office.



WORKTECH
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Introduction.

Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the world of work has been in a constant state of flux. Organizations have been forced to go on a journey of digital adaptation and transformation, making a series of tactical moves to keep their businesses running amid a series of successive lockdowns and disruptions. Now, organizations of every scale and in every sector are starting to think more strategically about the future of work – they are pivoting away from navigating through a crisis to planning their medium to longer-term workplace strategies. They are forging new pathways out of the pandemic.

To support these strategic developments and to share ideas with the global workplace market, Condeco has teamed up with WORKTECH Academy on a rolling research program, Condeco Conversations. We are engaging with the global Corporate Real Estate (CRE) community through a series of workshops, webinars, interviews and reviews of academic research and publicly available material, to understand the barriers that enterprise organizations face and the cultural, architectural and technological solutions they are currently devising as a hybrid world of work starts to emerge. Our main question is a simple one: what are the routes to the revival? It is a question for which everyone is seeking answers.

In this research paper, as vaccine rollouts advance and companies plan a return to the office, we focus on two essential activities that employees say they missed most during the pandemic when they were forced to work remotely – the ability to learn and innovate. Organizations around the WORKTECH network have said that learning, especially over-the-shoulder mentoring and informal training, and creative innovation and ideation were among the biggest casualties of COVID-19, as it was especially difficult to replicate those more intuitive and unpredictable face-to-face processes remotely. Of the dozen CRE leaders who participated in this research, there was an overall consensus that learning and innovation will be the chief reasons why people will want to return to the office.

In this report, we term such activities as higher-value interpersonal work. Why is it so important and how can organizations rebuild this type of work in their workplaces? Companies are having to rethink how they manage learning and innovation activities when office buildings will have a lower density and less predictable workforce populations after the pandemic. In this context, technology and workplace management tools will play a growing role as a bridge between a more flexible, hybrid workforce and the demands of higher-value interpersonal work.


Learning.

Higher value interpersonal work depends on the interaction and chance encounters that occur between colleagues and peers in a workspace.



Organizations depend on this type of social engagement to drive innovation and new ideas, and employees depend on these interactions to develop their knowledge, skills, and career path.

Implementing the right strategy to ensure employees can interact and learn from the right people is key. Research by George Washington University and Cushman & Wakefield¹ found that the chance of encountering a specific colleague in the workplace is around 88 percent when there are no days of remote working, but this number sharply falls to 12 percent when the number of days working remotely rises to just three days. This shows that the rise of remote working as a more permanent feature of the new landscape of work is likely to impact learning and engagement, so there must be a strategy in place to manage a more hybrid workforce.



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Why is learning important?

In a 2018 study by LinkedIn and Bersin – a research and advisory business by Deloitte focused on corporate learning – research found that employees who spend time at work learning are 47 percent less likely to be stressed, 39 percent more likely to feel productive and successful, 23 percent more ready to take on additional responsibilities, and 21 percent more likely to feel confident and happy².



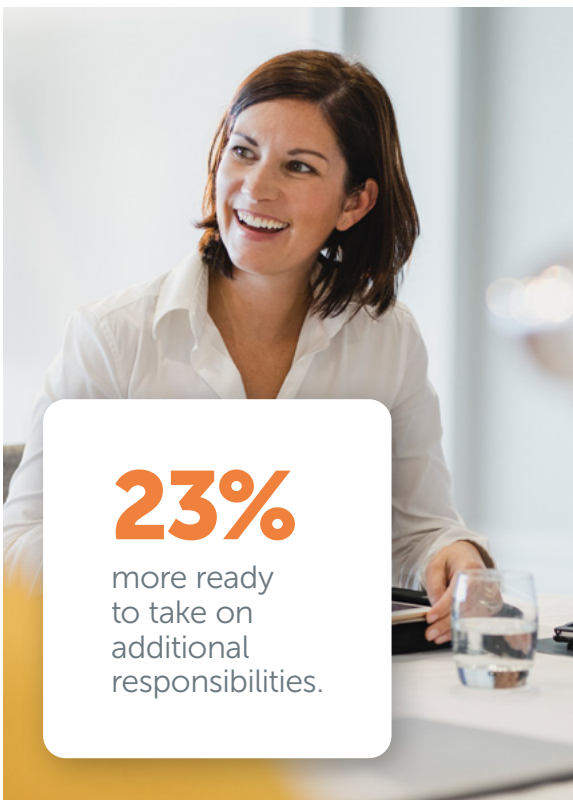
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The single biggest driver of business impact is the strength of an organization learning culture.

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Josh Bersin, founder of Bersin by Deloitte

Employees who spend time at work learning are



Learning is critical not only to business success, but also to employee growth on both a professional and personal level. Academic research has found that a lack of learning opportunities is associated with lower organizational commitment and a higher risk of turnover³. The world of work is progressing into what economists are calling the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' (4IR) – this revolution is a result of technological innovation which is creating a vast ecosystem of interconnected, complex, and dynamic interactions between humans and the built environment⁴.

The 4IR brings with it radical changes for employees, organizations and society. The nature and meaning of work are changing for employees, and organizations must now balance the efficiencies of technological innovation with creating new jobs and, critically, reskilling and redeploying existing employees.

The pandemic has cast a harsh light on organizational inefficiencies which have led to the loss of many different job roles. According to the 2021 Workplace Learning Report by LinkedIn Learning⁵, 59 percent of Learning and Development professionals from 27 different countries said that upskilling and reskilling employees are top priorities in 2021 – a 15 percent increase since June 2020. This data shows that workplace professionals are committed to nurturing existing talent and redirecting skillsets into different areas of the business.

Remote working has restricted the spread of peer-to-peer learning and organizations now need to make a conscious effort to integrate learning and personal development back into the business as a matter of priority.

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LinkedIn Learning

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What's happened during the pandemic?

According to a report called *The Super Experience* by Australian developer Mirvac with WORKTECH Academy in 2019⁶, before the pandemic, there was a growing onus on organizations to become learning organizations and for individuals within them to become 'continuous learners' so that the organization can adapt to change, absorb new knowledge and update skills. This movement – coined 'omni-learning' – has been suppressed by the global pandemic.

Organizations were opening up to the idea that learning in the workplace is a fluid, social activity. Johan Brand, the co-founder of Norwegian-based online learning platform Kahoot, explains that 'Companies are often bad at learning – they place too much responsibility on solo learners and not enough emphasis on social learning'. Remote work, in many ways, has removed the social element from the workplace and this has had adverse on learning and mentoring.



A study by Kahoot found that nearly one in two US employees it surveyed did not feel that their organizations had stepped up and delivered a better learning and development experience during the pandemic. Nearly 20 percent noted either a worse experience or learning programs stopping altogether⁷.

Development and career progression have also been stifled as a result of less interpersonal work in the workplace. A survey conducted by online survey service Doodle in September 2020 found that nearly half of the employees surveyed claimed that they are not getting enough training, coaching, and mentoring to advance their careers while they are away from the office⁸. The lack of learning opportunities has had detrimental effects on the perception of career progression with 41 percent of employees saying their career development has stalled during the pandemic, and nine percent saying that the crisis has caused their careers to regress.



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41% of employees saying their career development has stalled during the pandemic, and nine percent saying that the crisis has caused their careers to regress.

What are the current challenges?

The value of lifelong learning in the workplace cannot be underestimated and remote working has created a significant challenge for organizations to integrate meaningful learning schemes back into the workforce. A McKinsey survey found that roughly 50 percent of in-person learning and development programs through June 2020 have been postponed or canceled in North America; in parts of Asia and Europe, this figure is closer to 100 percent⁹.

However, moving learning programs online also come with their own set of challenges. Employees are now suffering from video-call fatigue, the idea that constant virtual communication is exhausting because it is harder to read body language and get organic conversation flowing. People are described as 'Zoombies'.

Learning and development activity happens most effectively by being in the same room as someone, hearing a conversation and watching how somebody else does their job – essentially learning through osmosis. As Fiona Aldridge, director of policy and research at the UK-based Learning and Work Institute said: 'We don't notice that this type of learning is happening and it's only as we've settled into remote working, we have seen there are gaps in learning'.

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Remote learning has limitations. Connecting with someone online, even when everything works properly, is no substitute for interacting with that individual in person. Online learning modules are not the same as instructors, who can go over something with you until you get it.

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Grant Freeland, senior partner at BCG (Boston Consulting Group)

Another challenge for corporate real estate leaders is ensuring that the right people are connecting and meeting when employees do eventually return to the office. A global director of digital workplace at a European-based multinational bank told us that employee surveys at the organization have found that there is an interesting curve of employee desire to return to the office. Junior employees want to spend more time in the office while middle management is less eager to return, but the number of people wanting to return increases again as management gets more senior.

Younger people are earlier in their careers and less likely to have the space at home to conduct all their work effectively, and they require more interpersonal interaction to learn and build a network. However, when younger people are in the office they need their more senior counterparts in the office also, so they can be mentored and learn from them. This shift in demand from different demographics presents a unique challenge for corporate real estate to make sure that the right people can connect with each other both in and outside the office.

According to global research by the IBM Institute for Business, which interviewed 3,450 executives in 20 countries, including 400 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in the United States, the pandemic has also exposed fault-lines between company bosses and their employees over how well the COVID-19 crisis has been managed¹⁰. Senior executives thought they'd done a good job – but employees said they lacked the required training and support. Companies are keen to close this gap in perception and put the right training in place when the return to the office gets into full swing.

Who's doing it best?

There are bright sparks across several sectors, but in general, the legal sector is leading the way in placing learning and development at the heart of its corporate strategies. This is because law firms felt the loss of over-the-shoulder training and mentoring so acutely during the pandemic. Research on the future legal workplace conducted by Australian architects BVN, Cushman & Wakefield and WORKTECH Academy found that the culture of learning and mentoring is integral to the development of lawyers¹¹. There are emerging job roles such as Chief Learning Officers who are responsible for the longevity of the law firm's knowledge.

One of the key priorities for engaging legal talent today is exposure to senior lawyers and the opportunity for career progression. Sam Nickless, Chief Operations Officer (COO) of international law firm Gilbert and Tobin said that 'one of the things we have realized is that people at more senior levels of their career feel like they do not need to be in the office to do their work, and we have had to point out that they probably don't understand the wider role they play in mentorship and coaching and role modeling'. The future legal workplace research indicates that, across the world, mentorship and learning through osmosis are key areas where law firms have struggled most to engage their employees.



To combat the lack of on-site learning, law firms such as Pinsent Masons surveyed their young lawyers in Australia and found that they believed they were not getting enough on-the-job training. As a result, junior lawyers are permitted to join client calls and listen in to the meetings. Linklaters also recognized the barrier to learning and put 600 training sessions online for trainees and stepped up its monitoring and feedback process. These responses are a reactive response to the pandemic, but in the long term, there is a desire across all regions to return to the office as a mechanism for learning and mentorship.

It is not just law firms that are actively trying to bridge the gap between learning and the remote workforce. Some large corporates are using technology such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to blend the physical and virtual learning experience to increase engagement. Bank of America, for example, has announced that it is partnering with Bay Area-based VR start-up Strivr to bring virtual reality into its workplace training. The financial group has already used the start-up's tech in a pilot program with 400 employees, but a wider-scale rollout would mean scaling the VR learning platform to more of the company's 50,000 client-facing employees.

While research shows that learning is fundamentally a social activity that is best-practiced face-to-face, corporates are investing significantly in the tech space to help bridge the gap and create an engaging learning experience while the workforce is remote. These technologies and strategies are likely to stay in place after everyone is recalled to the office as they cater for a more hybrid workforce where employees will be able to choose how often they frequent the office and how they want to learn.

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Innovation.

Global competition, challenging market conditions, and the pace of change has made creativity and innovation highly desirable capabilities for organizations.



Innovation has been regarded as a source of competitive advantage in the context of changing organizational environments throughout the evolution of business strategy. Research by CB Insights in 2018 found that 85 percent of business leaders in financial services believed that innovation is the key lever of value creation, yet only 43 percent had established an innovation process¹². As the disruptions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic continue, there is less time for companies to adapt to new market conditions and, as a result, innovation and creativity become more integral to organizational performance. But how can innovation support revival in the post-pandemic workplace?



85%

of business leaders in the financial services in 2018 believed that innovation was the key lever of value creation.

Only **43%** of business leaders in the financial services in 2018 had established an innovation process.

Why is innovation important?

Innovation matters because it creates a competitive advantage and could be the key to the business surviving the turbulence of the pandemic. Collaborative innovation is increasingly viewed as a way for large businesses to link their scale and resources with the ideas and agility of start-ups and specialists. Collaborative innovation seeks to combine scale with agility, achieving large projects at a speed and with a reach that traditional in-house corporate Research and Development (R&D) – with its closed borders and restricted expertise – can sometimes struggle to emulate.

Collaborative innovation requires both formal and informal interaction between peers and stakeholders to spark and ideate new ideas. Research has found that the optimization of non-structured interaction and reflection has been identified as having important implications for organizational innovation, with the flow of knowledge through an organization more often occurring as a result of informal social networks than formal programs and processes. Studies have found that while productivity levels have not suffered as a result of the pandemic, the opportunity for innovation has been significantly stunted.

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What's happened during the pandemic?

Since the onset of the pandemic and the mass exodus from the office, many organizations find themselves in an innovation hole. Before the pandemic, organizations were focusing their efforts on creating internal innovation labs to generate more new ideas within the boundaries of the organization or shared hubs with external partners, which were more open to external influences. Both strategies were place-based. However, the pandemic has forced a move away from this as collaborators can no longer physically come together in one space to explore, share ideate. This means that corporate strategy now has to consciously create unique moments of innovation 'magic' in a hybrid or exclusively digital sphere.

A research study by Microsoft, supported by BCG and public opinion research consultancy KRC Research, found that while 56 percent of executives considered their companies to be innovative with products and services in 2019, that percentage dropped to around 40 percent in 2020¹³. While much of this dip in innovation can be attributed to the disconnect between employer and their team, another reason is that managers do not feel well equipped to handle large groups of remote workers. The research found that 61 percent of leaders reported that they have not learned how to effectively delegate and empower virtual teams.

2019: **56%** of executives considered their companies to be innovative with product services.

2020: Only **40%** of executives considered their companies to be innovative with product services.

The disconnect between teams is one of the drawbacks of remote working. According to Australian neuroscientist and academic Dr. Fiona Kerr, 'our switch from face-to-face communication in the office to all-out remote working is rewiring our brains'. She explained that spending all day on endless video calls is causing employees to hit 'digital walls' which deprive people of vital emotional and behavioral cues which are critical to managing digital teams more effectively and driving innovation.

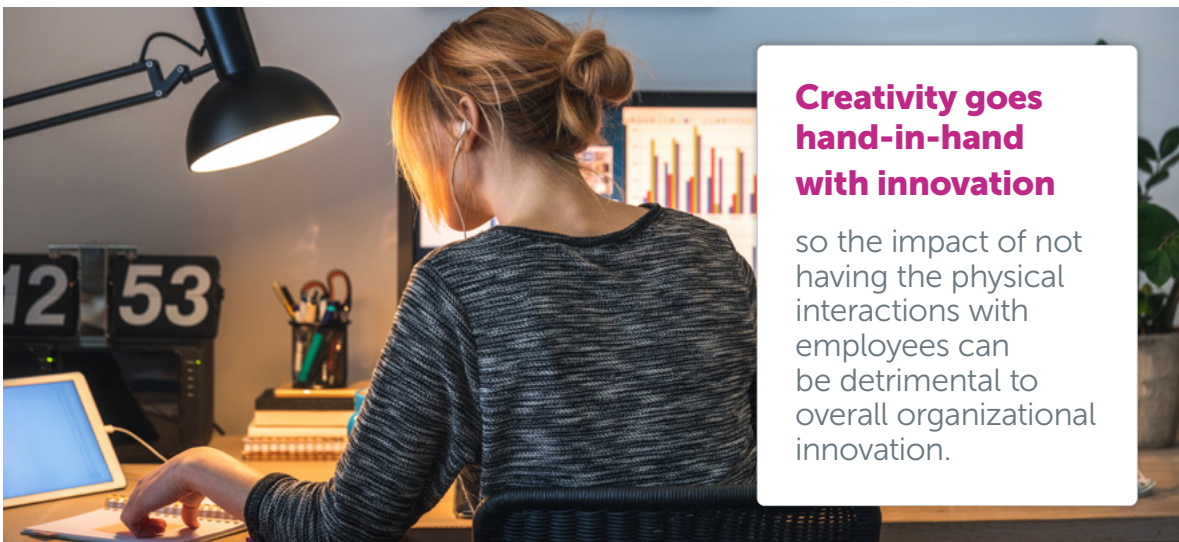
Team members see colleagues only through a screen without direct retinal alignment, and they're starved of external stimuli normally provided by commuting and the random encounters of office life. Without the regular level of electro-chemical 'hits' that the brain craves, people can 'switch off' and experience a dip in energy and creativity, says Kerr. Creativity (broadly, the generation of new ideas) goes hand-in-hand with innovation (the delivery and implementation of new ideas) so the impact of not having physical interactions with employees can be detrimental to overall organizational innovation.

The opportunity for chance encounters is significantly lower in a hybrid workforce. Remote work accommodates asynchronous collaboration which mitigates the absolute need for employees to constantly be in the same space at the same time. Phil Kirschner, an independent workplace consultant who has worked for JLL and WeWork, told our survey that global companies have been innovating across time zones and geographies for years: 'Serendipitous encounters will not come from over-scheduling space, it will come from creating compelling environments where people want to be'. Now, more than ever, it is critical for corporate real estate leaders to get the workplace experience right to ensure that people want to come to the office to innovate.

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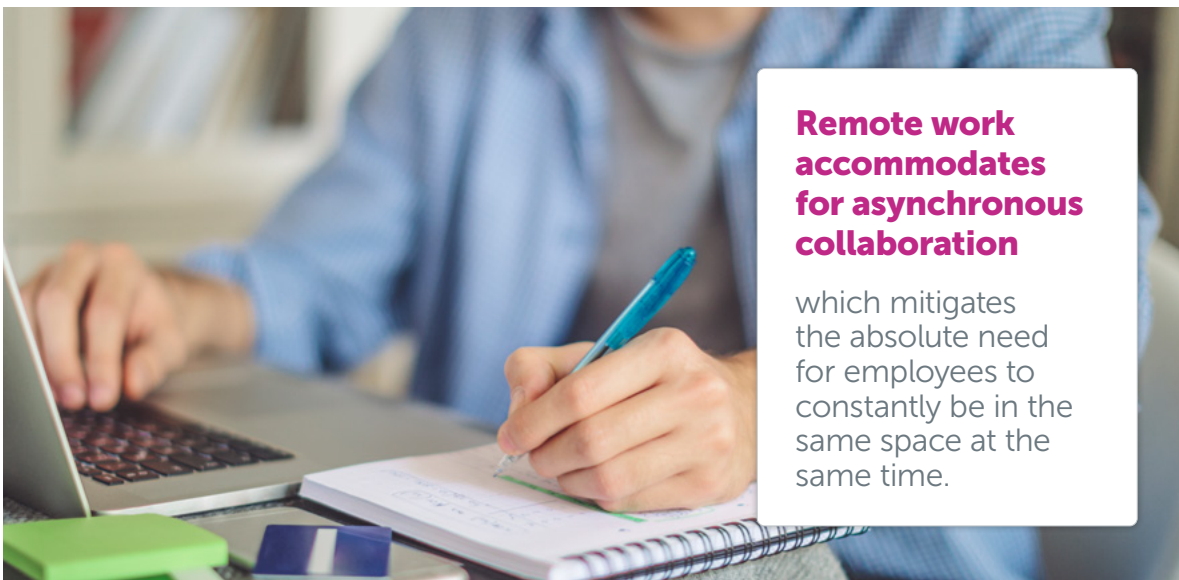


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What are the current challenges?

Research from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) has shown that successful innovators build a foundation of trust around micro-interactions that occur in the workplace¹⁴. David Shrier, program director of the Oxford Cyber Future program at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, said that 'the Allen Curve shows that if you don't see someone face-to-face, you don't collaborate with them... New technology can help bridge this gap, even to the extent of having artificial intelligence assistants that help your team do a better job of working together. This technology exists, but it's down to the willingness of organizations to implement it.'

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We recognize that **innovation is not a linear process**, it is more random, sporadic and stems from **moments of magic and sparks between colleagues**.

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Head of Workplace, global pharmaceutical company

Among participants in our research, the head of workplace at a global pharmaceutical company commented that innovation in their company has suffered as a result of being away from the office and this is one of the main motivators to bring people back into the office for at least part of the week. He explained that ‘we recognize that innovation is not a linear process, it is more random, sporadic and stems from moments of magic and sparks between colleagues. You can systemize innovation to an extent, but you need the serendipity of human presence to ideate and bring ideas to fruition.’

Serendipitous encounters between colleagues are clearly vital to business growth and innovation. While the research shows that these encounters happen more organically in physical space, technology and digital tools can help facilitate these interactions. This could lead to a new type of ‘planned accidental meet up’ where workplace apps can show who is in the office and you plan your day around who you know will be in. This could see the rise of digital serendipity as a means to spark innovation and collaboration between peers.

In order for this type of planned serendipity to occur, there needs to be digital equality across the entire workforce. People must be able to participate in creative brainstorming or workshops on an equal basis whether they are physically present or joining digitally. It becomes essential that all employees have access to the right technologies to facilitate this type of work. If there is even a small fracture in the digital process, the entire experience is compromised and innovation suffers as a result.

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We now need a co-ordinated approach to asynchronous working where we allow people to plan their weeks around meaningful face-to-face interactions.

Phil Kirschner, independent workplace consultant and former workplace strategist at JLL, WeWork and Credit Suisse

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Who's doing it best?

The pandemic has forced companies in almost every industry to innovate their business in some regard. Despite the lack of face-to-face connect, organizations have used digital tools to create innovative solutions in response to the pandemic. As a result, some organizations have found new business opportunities that will outlast the pandemic, and others have developed new skills that can be reapplied to solve other problems and discover new opportunities for innovation in the future.

By orienting their organizations within an innovation framework, business leaders can better understand how they have responded throughout the pandemic and leverage newfound innovation skills for long-term success. Companies such as IKEA, for example, used the pandemic as an opportunity to build on an innovation that was emerging in its business before COVID-19. IKEA has previously invested in AR to help customers choose furniture without physically going to the store. During the pandemic, the Scandinavian furniture company decided to invest more in this new technology and added more than 2,000 products that customers could visualize from their homes. Beyond the pandemic, IKEA can continue to innovate this offering by optimizing its augmented reality app to enhance the in-store experience.

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The magic of innovation is not presence dependant.

Phil Kirschner, independent workplace consultant

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Other companies in the healthcare and appliance field have directly addressed the COVID-19 crisis by rapidly improvising innovation processes to create ventilators, face masks, mobile screening units and other pieces of equipment for deployment in the emergency. The expertise developed will be valuable to these businesses long after the crisis has passed. Indeed, the global innovation success in developing new vaccines so quickly has itself given science and technology a shot in the arm and the confidence to innovate faster in the future.

While companies such as those in the medical sphere have managed to innovate remotely throughout the pandemic, the value of face-to-face innovation is critical to consistent future innovation. Incoming Amazon CEO, Andy Jassy, has announced that 'invention is hard to do virtually compared to people brainstorming together in person'. As a result, Amazon has presented its plans to return to an office-centric culture as its baseline. It believes that the office enables its employees to invent, collaborate, and learn together most effectively.



Technology.

There is a clear need to close the gap between a hybrid workforce and higher-value interpersonal work in corporate organizations through technology.



As companies create strategies for bringing their employees back to the office, they are looking to technology and smart solutions to pave the way to a safer, more collaborative workplace. From occupancy and environmental sensors to workplace apps and facial recognition systems, the post-pandemic workplace can offer an office experience for its users that is not just safe, touchless, and responsive but supports learning and innovation.

One of the big challenges facing large corporates now is creating a seamless employee experience inside and outside the office. As people start to work in a more hybrid way, office space will need to accommodate both virtual and physical presence. Meeting spaces will need to be integrated with advanced audio-visual technology; workplace apps will provide customized information for each employee by sharing who has booked to be in on a particular day, by nudging or suggesting when would be good to go into the office, and by providing a safe experience when accessing the building; and digital booking tools can alert employees into how busy the office is and enable employees to book valuable time with peers and team-mates.

Video conferencing and new technology tools can mitigate the gap in creative performance in teams to a certain degree. Recent research entitled 'Innovation and communication media in virtual teams: an experimental study' by the University of Cologne and Leibniz University Hannover, found that

'creative performance is significantly lower when there is no face-to-face communication¹⁵.

However, the lockdown has fostered the adoption of new technologies to conduct collaborative tasks when team members work from home.'

A big challenge facing large corporates now is creating a seamless employee experience inside and outside the office.

Planned serendipity

One of the challenges of a more hybrid workforce will be scheduling and accommodating employee choice while at the same time making sure there is a critical mass of people at the office to benefit from interaction and collaboration. This could be solved by managers arranging for their whole team to come in on specific days. Alternatively, companies might choose to take advantage of the available technology to inform employees of who is in and integrate this information with their individual daily schedules.

An effective workspace management solution can help organizations understand patterns of occupancy and inform employees of less busy days in the office. The solution can collect all the data generated through its day-to-day use and feed it into a powerful analytics functionality and generate data-driven insights. These insights can then be used to make informed decisions on how different workspaces should be shaped to meet the needs and demands of the type of work being carried out in the office.

Data and technology solutions can inform employees who is in the office so they can make informed, conscious decisions about who they want to interact with. This data can be presented through a workplace app, which can make bespoke recommendations about who individuals should speak to and allow individuals to share their location with others. This will generate more meaningful interactions between colleagues because employees can plan their day based on the interactions, they want to have whether it is for social, learning or, collaborating purposes.

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Space management

Space management is essential to understanding how, when, and where people are working around the office. In the post-pandemic workplace, the workforce will behave in less predictable patterns and therefore higher-value interpersonal work needs to be orchestrated more carefully than ever before.

Technology plays a critical role in how Corporate Real Estate (CRE) professionals understand how the space is being used. With different workspaces and different employees, all operating on individual timescales, keeping control and ensuring the building runs efficiently becomes a more challenging task. Workplace management and scheduling solutions can help reduce some of the burden and support building managers as they navigate the erratic flux of employees as employees settle into a new rhythm.

An overhead photograph of a modern office workspace. Two people are seated at a light-colored, curved wooden desk. The person on the left is a woman with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, focused on a laptop. The person on the right is a woman with short grey hair, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt, looking at a smartphone. The desk is equipped with a spiral notebook, a smartphone, and a power outlet. The background shows a dark wood-paneled wall and a large green plant in the foreground.

Workplace management and scheduling solutions can help reduce some of the burden and support building managers as they navigate the erratic flux of employees as employees settle into a new rhythm.

Integrated workplace solutions such as mobile apps and software such as Microsoft Outlook, enable employees to check workspace schedules anywhere, anytime and make bookings in advance to facilitate the work they need to do. Employees can also arrange meetings by checking the schedules of their colleagues and securing an appropriately sized meeting room or collaborative space. Having the right spaces for the right type of interpersonal work activities will become even more crucial as employees choose to come back to the office environment.



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Smart Data

Data has become the essential informer of work behavior and business success throughout the pandemic. Although for many organizations, the process of data collection and analysis is still in its relative infancy, its importance in defining the workplace experience of the future is rising.

Data-driven insights can help organizations understand how workstations and meeting rooms are used – from who uses them to how often they are booked and whether they are being utilized effectively. This information can be used to make quick, effective changes to spatial layouts in the office and can help create dynamic and flexible spaces for an increasingly unpredictable workforce.

The rise in data analytics will create a dynamic role within corporate real estate teams for data science expertise. CRE teams need to understand what the data is saying about behavior and space, and work with respective teams to help adjust and optimize. However, the data approach can put CRE teams at risk of ‘analysis paralysis’ where the organization relies too heavily on the data and not enough on initiative and experience – there needs to be a balance of the two to create effective workplace strategies for the future.

Information can be used to make quick, effective changes to spatial layouts in the office and can help create dynamic and flexible spaces for an increasingly unpredictable workforce.

Your schedule

The direction of work and workplace is rapidly heading towards a flexible, activity-based working model. The purpose of the office is shifting to become a more social, collaborative, learning space and physical resources will need to be shared effectively between a more hybrid workforce. In order for this model to work in a post-pandemic workplace, physical resources and spaces need to be digitized and moved from dedicated resources for one person or team to fractional resources used by many.

In a similar way to which Uber and Airbnb have transformed transport and accommodation through the ability to easily find, schedule, book and use their resources – so the future of workplace will move to fractional usage driven by activities performed in that space at that point of time.

In the move to activity-based working, workspace is reimagined for collaboration, training and innovation. People will go to the office because they have a need or desire to meet face-to-face with other colleagues. As space moves from permanent usage to fractional usage, it becomes increasingly important that the space can be bookable in advance to avoid conflicts and to ensure effective use for the desired purpose. Employees can check when the space they need is available, who else they want to collaborate with is in the office on that day and find and schedule the right space.

Information can be used to make quick, effective changes to spatial layouts in the office and can help create dynamic and flexible spaces for an increasingly unpredictable workforce.

Routes to revival.

As we move forward, the importance of higher-value interpersonal work has become evident.



A lack of face-to-face interaction has highlighted how strongly rooted activities such as mentoring, training and innovation are in the physical workplace. As corporate real estate leaders plot their routes to revival and pivot off the pandemic towards a more permanent hybrid working model, it has become clear that learning and innovation are core activities that need to be in any future workplace strategy.

Learning and innovation have suffered in many ways because of the disconnect between employees and the physical space. The loss of over-the-shoulder mentoring has been particularly difficult to replicate outside the office, with many younger employees feeling like their careers are being side-lined as a result.

While the pandemic has forced some large organizations to try new things, many others have keenly felt the deflation of innovation and creativity within their business and want to fix the issue. Technology is moving training, mentoring and innovation activities into a more blended space between the digital and physical where employees use technology as a tool to make more informed, conscious decisions about who they meet and in what medium. The role of technology in the post-pandemic workplace will shift the ultimate facilitator, allowing employees to plan their work activities and work location based on data, personalized prompts from applications and the availability of bookable workspaces.

While COVID-19 has had mostly detrimental effects on higher-value interpersonal work, the pandemic has ironically reinforced its importance and paved the way for learning innovation and mentoring to be reimaged to fit into the new world of work after the crisis is over.

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