RICOH
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THE FUTURE IS NOW.

Your hybrid workforce is defining the future of work

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS • PROFESSIONAL SERVICES • INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

How hybrid work will shape the future

The workplace is changing. While nobody can predict the future, we know companies need to plan for the needs of an evolving workforce. Understanding where we are now can help you define and protect company culture, staff engagement, and productivity for years to come.

It's often helpful to "take stock" of where we are to understand the course we all need to chart.

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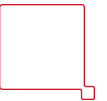
Most companies plan a shift to the hybrid work model, acknowledging the success they experienced in 2020 with remote work and increasing demands from newly empowered employees.

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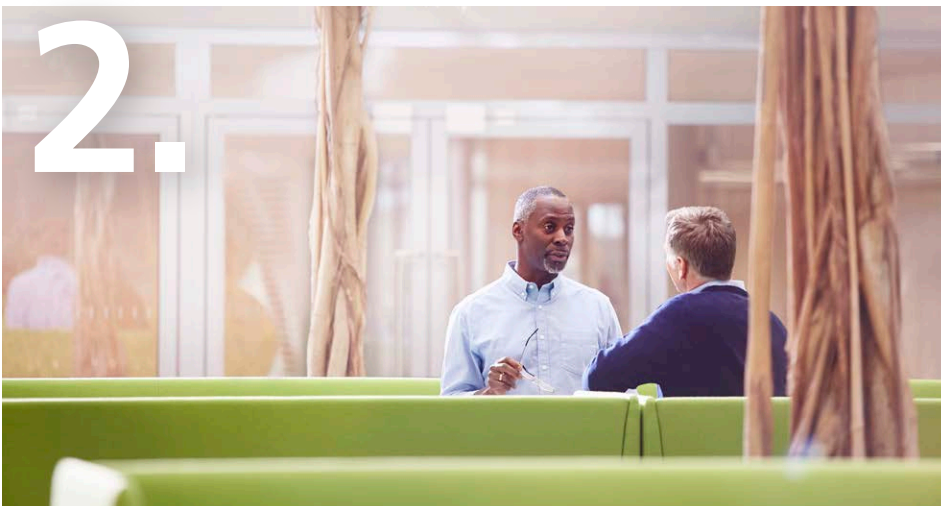
While no one is ready to write-off the in-office experience, employers and employees have yet to agree on an optimal balance with work-from-home.

3.

Demographic demand for remote work varies. According to PWC younger and older professionals prefer more office time, believing they will be less distracted and benefit from direct interaction with management and coworkers.

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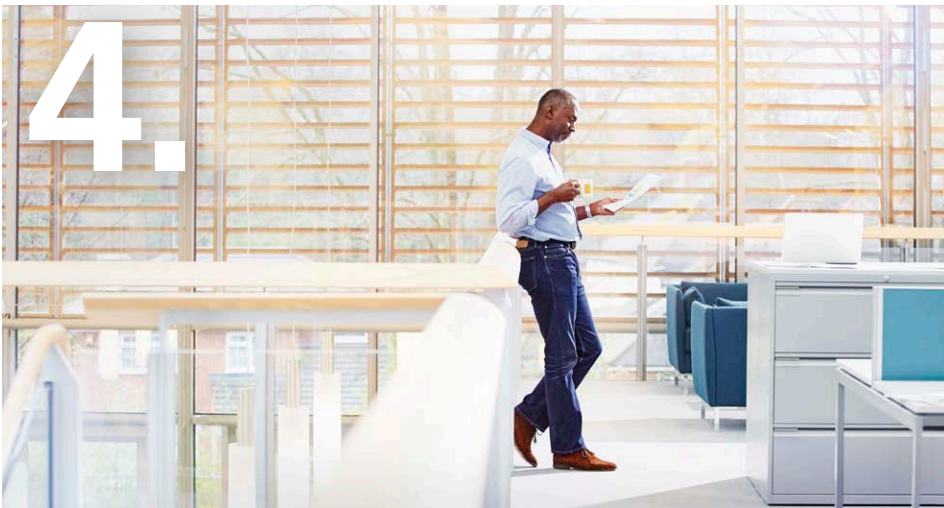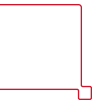
Most businesses expect to shrink their office footprint and nearly half are looking to reinvest in the space they currently have (drawing on their "remote work dividend") to create more "purposeful" workplaces.

5.

The sudden rush to "all remote work" put a spotlight on gender inequality as women have borne the brunt of child and family care. Forced to extend the working day or, worse, resign has severely impacted collaboration and company culture.

6.

Finally, some are calling this "the great resignation" as workers take a hard look at their priorities and consider alternatives.
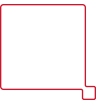
Data shows most employers are ready for a return to the office. Employees remain reticent, citing safety concerns despite escalating vaccination rates.

So, what to do?

1 Redefine the purpose of having a physical office and align your organization to meet stated goals.

2 Set Service Level Agreements for safety and publish the protocols established to maintain them.

3 Incorporate scheduling tools. This is especially vital in shared-space environments.

4 Employee engagement will be an ongoing challenge as the workforce ages. Encourage your teams to be flexible and adaptive. It's unlikely you'll get everything right the first time and protocols will need to evolve over time.

What's the office for anyway?

Ask this of employers and employees and answers will vary, particularly when results are segmented to type of work, age, and tenure. If the hybrid work environment is the "new normal", organizations need to level set. Common sense tells us that offices are an essential component of:

Culture/ Community

Collaboration

Client Interaction/ Meetings

Career Development/ Management Access

To work effectively, these uses must be facilitated by tools that will promote and maintain Service Level Agreements specific to safety and security protocols.

What is a safe and secured office?

It basically comes down to the three "S's": space, surfaces, and scheduling. Communicating the decisions made, specific to these three elements to the organization, will go a long way to restoring a positive office environment.

Spaces

Social distancing is likely to remain a core concern for the foreseeable future regardless of vaccination stats. Offices already partitioned by cubicle and office walls may require little alteration, or it may require the elimination of desks and common areas to enable "safety zones" for smart and effective collaboration spaces. Either way, communicate decisions and changes made with your employees. A Space management solution from Ricoh includes:

- **Workplace Capacity Management & Analytics.** We analyze your environment and provide you intelligence to create an agile work environment and gain full visibility into room and desk utilization.

- **Space Management.** By defining safe working spaces, you can prevent clusters and more easily manage occupancy rates.

- **Smart Meeting Spaces.** Our meeting room services streamline scheduling meeting and conference rooms as well as tracking cleaning schedules to ensure safe, clean spaces.

Surfaces

Where possible, install and employ touchless technologies in common areas. Mobile technologies linked to "Internet of Things" devices, motion or light activation, and defined cleaning protocols should be identified and promoted. Again, document all changes and routinely distribute reports to all staff. Consider:

- **Touchless or low-touch device management.** Infrastructure management, especially for shared print, copy and scan devices, can reduce the need to touch devices.

- **Ricoh Intelligent Mail Delivery** eliminates your mail room, automating mail delivery, delivering mail electronically to employee email inboxes.

- **Ricoh Intelligent Locker Services.** Deliver consumables, packages, and more with lockers that make receiving physical mail entirely touchless. Reporting, asset control, and real-time fulfillment supply data for informed decision-making of facilities usage.

Scheduling

Social distancing will affect available office spaces. A sophisticated and comprehensive scheduling solution can provide universal access to unassigned desks and meeting rooms, eliminate squabbles over real estate, secure client meetings and, above all, promote employee safety. Consider a workplace management system from Ricoh:

Meeting planning

- Book rooms, schedule meetings, send meeting invites, and track confirmations.
- Schedule remotely through mobile booking.
- Plan the space to maintain proper distancing.
- Coordinate technology, AV equipment and other collaboration tools.
- Arrange for meeting spaces to be set up prior to the meeting.
- Order catering.
- Track cleaning schedules and only allow cleaned spaces to be available for reservation.
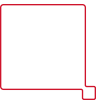
Setting Expectations

Confidence must first be earned but once done, sustained over time. Be transparent, inclusive, and flexible. It is impossible to over-communicate what is being done to keep your employees safe. Doing so will accelerate a comfortable return while building trust.

Include employees in the decision-making process. For many, work is their home-away-from-home. They should be actively involved in making it secure.

Finally, ensure you have prepared for future events. Policies need to be adaptable, shutdown plans (business continuity) must be implemented, and continued communication is vital so all know what is needed and expected.

Learning from our experience

Ricoh's own experience is a great example of how platforms and services help transition people back to the office.
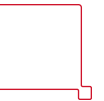
The team crafted a comprehensive playbook for leadership and staff, detailing protocols for returning to the office, calling specific attention to changes and new requirements. Thorough engagement helped staff feel supported in their return to the office. Documenting changes helped everyone receive the same message, alleviating confusion or assumptions.

Conference rooms and in-office desks can be requested digitally; manual visitor logs were transitioned to iPads and cloud-based hosting of logs. Office floor plans were redefined for social distancing protocols with wayfinding technology that helped people find safe routes back to their desk from any point in the building.

This wasn't only handy for staff returning to the office full-time. Remote staff were able to view the new floorplan online, and request office desk space for the day, a few hours, or longer as needed.
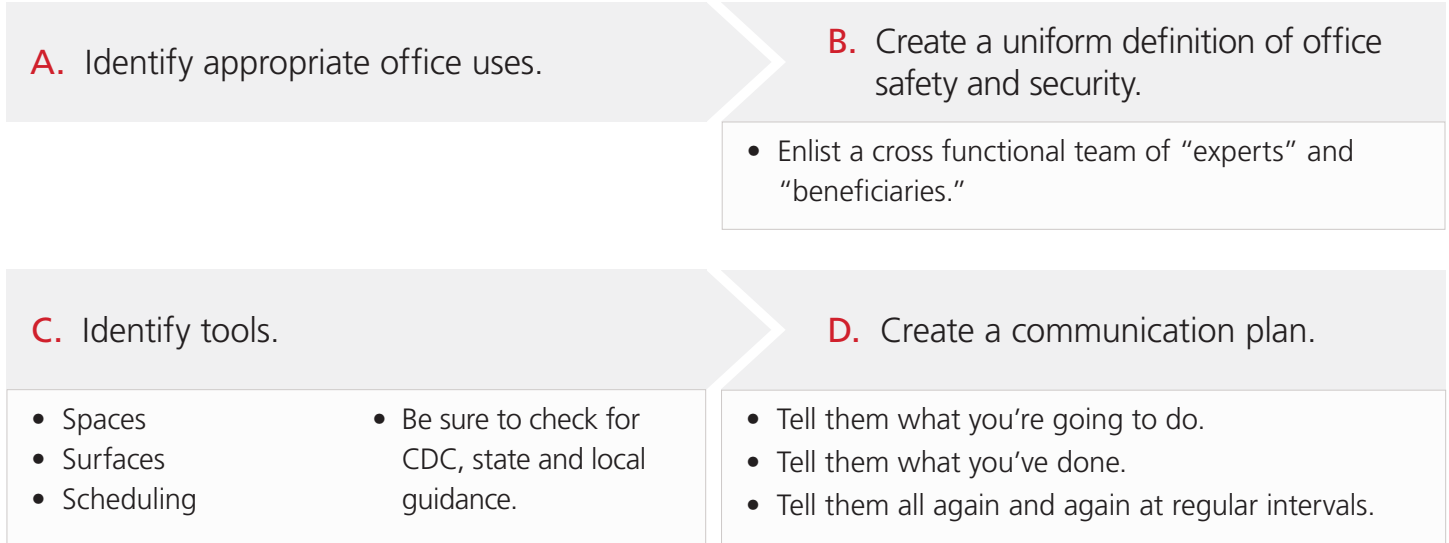
The results are profound. Staff were more comfortable returning to work — even if they were remote and were just dropping in for the day. State and local regulations were adhered to and Ricoh was able to cut costs while aligning its real estate portfolio for potential changes in the future. In a time when business disruption was assumed, Ricoh designed a plan for continuity that increased employee satisfaction.
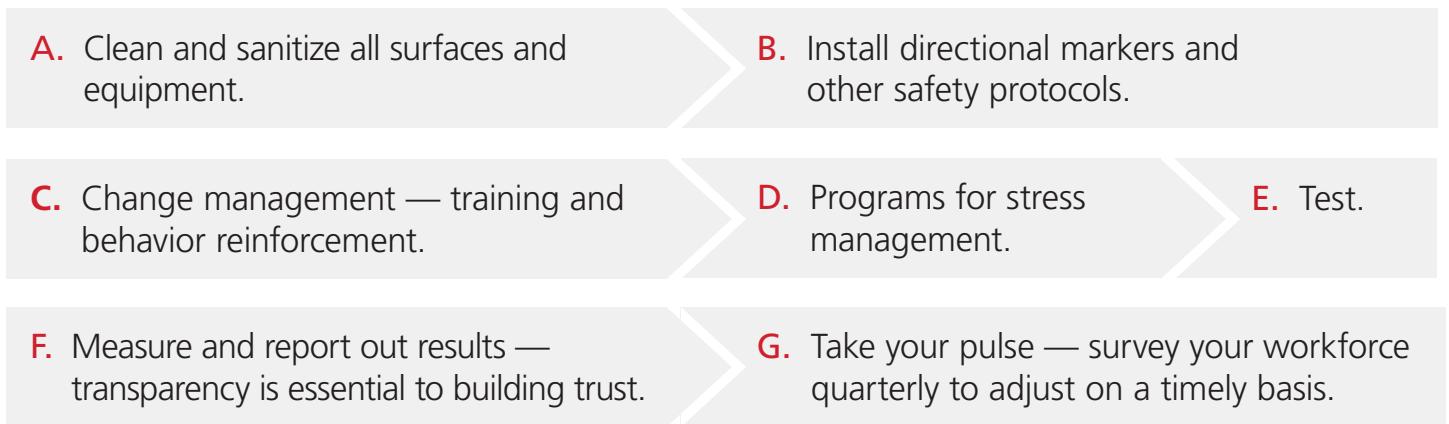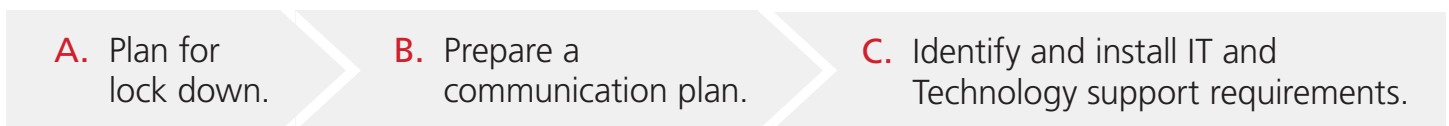
Next Steps

Make a plan

A. Identify appropriate office uses.

B. Create a uniform definition of office safety and security.

- Enlist a cross functional team of "experts" and "beneficiaries."

C. Identify tools.

D. Create a communication plan.

- Spaces
- Surfaces
- Scheduling
- Be sure to check for CDC, state and local guidance.

- Tell them what you're going to do.
- Tell them what you've done.
- Tell them all again and again at regular intervals.

Execution

A. Clean and sanitize all surfaces and equipment.

B. Install directional markers and other safety protocols.

C. Change management — training and behavior reinforcement.

D. Programs for stress management.

E. Test.

F. Measure and report out results — transparency is essential to building trust.

G. Take your pulse — survey your workforce quarterly to adjust on a timely basis.

Business Continuity

A. Plan for lock down.

B. Prepare a communication plan.

C. Identify and install IT and Technology support requirements.

Ricoh is the workplace expert. For over 80 years, we have been providing the services our customers need so they can focus on what they do best. With that said, few things could have prepared us for the Pandemic we have all just experienced… except Ricoh was prepared!

Many believe it's all about digital transformation. We believe it's about people and what they need to maximize their talents to remain focused on the future. That's why we've engineered our services and solutions to be flexible, adaptive and, above all, empowering. **Imagine. Change.**

For more information:
www.ricoh-usa.com

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