

The Impact of Covid-19

The Opportunities and
Considerations for
your Organisation

The logo for Active Workplace Solutions is centered within a large, stylized graphic of concentric white circles on a blue background. The word "active" is written in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font, with the 'a' and 'i' having a dot. Below it, the words "workplace solutions" are written in a smaller, lowercase, sans-serif font.

active
workplace solutions

Workplaces that work

The Impact of Covid-19

An Uncertain Future

Since we first saw Covid-19 in January 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has become a global tragedy with severe human and economic consequences. As the devastating impact continues to be felt worldwide, many more organisations will be forced to reduce headcount, and to look at potential cost savings in order to survive.

However, it has forced many people who were previously resistant to the idea to realise that home working is possible and productivity has not dropped (and in certain cases increased). It presents an opportunity to completely re-evaluate how we work and what that means in terms of where we work, the required workplace size and facilities, and the associated costs. The post Covid-19 world of work (the “new normal”) remains uncertain but what we can predict is:

- There will be an expectation from employees to continue with at least some form of home working.
- Previous resistance to agile working (especially from line managers nervous about trusting home working employees) has reduced significantly.
- Organisations will be able to be much more ambitious about the agile models they adopt and reap greater operational savings and benefits.
- Organisations adopting more agile and remote working practices will see significant gains in staff retention & attrition, improvements in staff morale and reductions in operational costs, absenteeism and gains in productivity
- Organisations not adopting agile working and reverting to old ways of working will be left behind



Creating New Ways of Working

Opportunities

The permanent adoption of a more agile / home working model has the potential to provide the following opportunities;

- Reduced utilisation levels within offices that can enable businesses to consolidate their physical office requirements; reducing rent and overhead costs and enabling property to divest of assets no longer required releasing capital back into the business.
- Reduction in desk numbers required allows a repurposing of space within the office to support the organisation better, creating spaces more relevant to the current ways of working and to encourage collaboration
- Flexibility for employees (both in terms of time and location) that can significantly impact in a positive way on staff retention, provide improvements in morale and make considerable increases in productivity and reductions in operational costs, and absenteeism
- Streamlining the way in which activities are conducted, taking advantage of new technology encouraging more video conferencing and reducing travel time with significant cost savings and productivity improvements.

Considerations

Whilst working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic has proved successful for many, a return to the office in the new reality will require consideration of the following issues;

- A need to make offices more relevant for the new reality. Is there going to be more focus on and less need for desks due to a rise in homeworking? How many desks do you need?
- How much home working do you allow? If we allow employees to work from home when they want, we will see empty offices on a Monday and Friday and full ones on a Tuesday. It needs structure and guidelines.
- Although employees are getting adept at using Zoom / Teams and can collaborate remotely, there is still no substitute for face to face interaction for collaboration, peer to peer support, mentoring & learning, we must encourage collaboration.
- Increased home working may create isolation and a silo working mentality that organisations moved away from with increased open plan working over the last 20 years. This could also increase mental health issues within the business.
- Offices will need to work much harder to “attract” employees if they have the option to work from home. Creation of more social and collaboration spaces will create a reason to come to the office.
- Not everyone wants to work from home (or is able to) and there is a danger in sweeping everyone along in a tide of flexible working that doesn’t suit them; they may have chosen your organisation particularly for the culture, office environment or location.
- And what about your Clients – will there still be an expectation of have a brass plaque on the door and a client meeting suite?

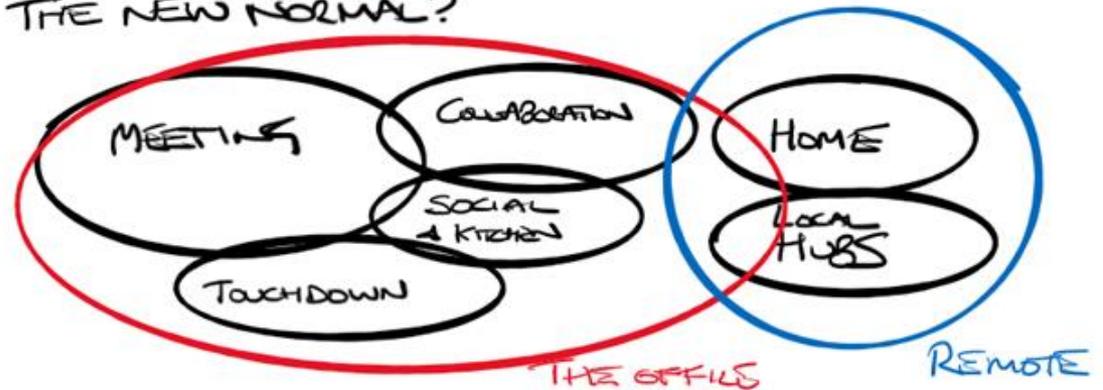
The New Normal – Impacts on Office Design

EXISTING OFFICE DESIGN



WE MUST DETERMINE
THE OPTIMUM
BALANCE OF SPACE

THE NEW NORMAL?



Delivering a Blended Strategy for the Future Workplace

To create and deliver a successful and sustainable way of working for the future it is key to ensure that you consider all elements of the workplace together in order to create a holistic, people centred approach. This approach should seek to cover all aspects that impact how people will work, and what they will need from the different types of spaces they use to undertake different types of tasks.

Office

A workplace that is designed to support how people will work, to improve effectiveness of the organisation and that promotes collaboration & interaction.

Bricks



Home

The right policies and support to promote employees wellbeing and effectiveness when working remotely and to ensure that the organization can discharge its legal responsibilities to their employees.

Policies & Guidance

The way people are to work requires policies and guidelines to set expectations, encourage employees to make the most of it and ensure they are treated fairly and consistently.

Technology

The tools, software and infrastructure to support staff wherever they may be working, to promote collaboration and interaction and seamlessly support all the activities being performed to enable mobility.

Support & Training

Engagement with the employees and managers to ensure they are committed to making the new ways of working work for them. To ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and support to make it a success.

Data and Storage

Records and data management policies, systems and processes to ensure staff can access the data and materials they need quickly and efficiently from anywhere in the office, home and other locations in a secure but easy way.

design

build

furnish

move

manage

maintain

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Workplaces that work



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IN PEOPLE