How technology can help employees return safely to the office after Covid-19

Organisations have always looked to predict future trends and adapt their businesses accordingly. This year COVID-19 gave global companies a set of challenges that have tested many beyond the capacity of what they could manage, and it continues to do so.

The work transACT has done with businesses over this period has provided valuable insight into the short and long-term challenges of remote working and return to office strategies.

Right now, it can be challenging to know how best to react in an uncertain future. Despite this, it is possible to determine permanent changes that can be applied. Prioritising common denominators can produce a significant change that isn't just a reaction to a transient issue.

We help our customer work on short, medium and long-term planning, incorporating cost and ROI. Some of the most useful questions our clients have been asking are:

? Which departments and/or roles have proved to be just as effective working from home?

? Where has work suffered from a lack of face-to-face collaboration?

? What are the positive and negative effects coming from more remote collaboration?

Post Covid-19 business considerations

Employee safety

Government Guidelines will continue to change and must be adhered to, clear plans and processes have to be implemented. Additionally, there will be long-term effects; a business will need to ensure employee well-being; employees must be comfortable in their working environments in the future.

Future cost models

For staff previously based permanently at one desk location then relocated to work from home, there is now or will soon be a choice to be made. Do they return to the office full-time, part-time or not at all?

The cost of office space is under scrutiny. The average desks costs in UK&I is approx. €9,000 per annum and averaging $12,000 per annum in major cities in the U.S. These are costs that could be reduced within a business. Long-term, the future workforce is likely to include fewer permanent desks and a more significant number of hot-deskers and even 'not-deskers'.

(The average desk cost in the City of London is approx £9,000 per year; these are costs that could be reduced within a business)

Business resiliency

Resiliency is business-critical; organisations must ensure they are future-proofed for business continuity no matter the scenario. Technology platforms have been rapidly stress-tested, now providing the right technology, management and processes are in place to scale and protect for the future are vital.

London | Seattle | St Albans | Dublin | Gibraltar

av@transactts.co.uk   www.transactts.co.uk

What has changed in our working environments?

Meeting rooms

Meetings spaces are a vital consideration in a return to office plan, but how and what sort of rooms are most appropriate, safe and efficient moving forward?

We know that distancing will need to be maintained. The large boardroom with thirty people side-by-side is not appropriate for the foreseeable future. Businesses need to think more about flexibly and incorporating collaboration solutions that tie office and remote workforces together.

Small meeting rooms

Small spaces from one to four people will become ever more valuable. Even with just an individual, it's easier and more comfortable to collaborate remotely in a bespoke space, rather than to glued to a screen with a headset. Room based UC systems offer more privacy in sharing content and can deliver more reliable connections. Even with smaller spaces it is important to maintain safety guidelines; workplace management systems can help you use meeting rooms efficiently and safely.
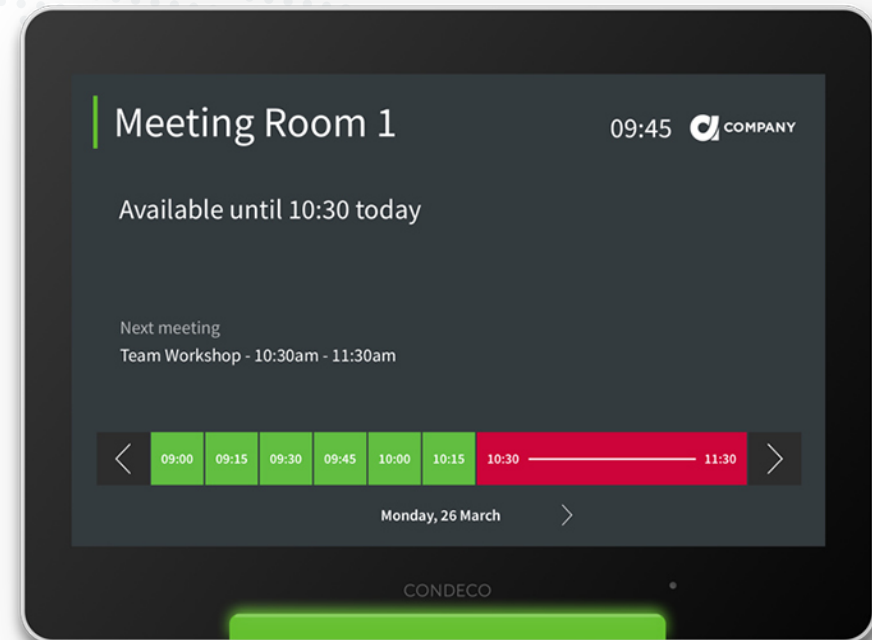
Large meeting rooms

Larger spaces will need to be more flexible and innovative so that different setups can be delivered. This doesn't mean existing space needs to go to waste, consider transferring large meeting rooms into dedicated project rooms, giving teams a place to retreat to and focus on one task. Technology and UC solutions can help maximise space and give you a range of options for the future.

High-qulality broadcasts

Finally, perhaps now is the time to reinvent company-wide and Town Hall meetings. Our clients require that they deliver the highest quality presentations in broadcast level UC facilities. Where presenter can deliver a presentation like a newsreader reads the news.

Quality cameras and production equipment have dropped hugely in price; broadcast-quality addresses are within reach to every size business. Such facilities can double-up to produce rich and powerful customer engagement, delivering real ROI to your business.

Meeting Room 1   09:45   COMPANY

Available until 10:30 today

Next meeting
Team Workshop - 10:30am - 11:30am

| 09:00 | 09:15 | 09:30 | 09:45 | 10:00 | 10:15 | 10:30 — 11:30 |

Monday, 26 March

CONDECO

What has changed in our working environments?

Phones

The phone seems to ring less, but we're just as in touch as before. 2020 has been a pivot of change in the way we communicate. However, nobody would write-off the landline yet.

To leverage the power of this transformation while keeping the best of the past, consider a truly integrated solution. With a correctly configured Cloud PBX, workers can be more agile and available as and where they need to be. With Teams Direct Routing or Cisco Call Manager, your extension can come with you and critically be set to answerphone when your finished for the day. You can put an end to the days of swapping headset for handset, giving just one point of contact for all of your calls.

✉ av@transactts.co.uk   🌐 www.transactts.co.uk

Technology to manage the return to the office

Current guidelines dictate that office desks must be spaced apart and office processes, including sanitisation, should adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Technology can help to manage these complex requirements and allow for changing strategies in the future.

Workplace management systems

transACT Workplace Management Systems that help you to use your office space, safely, effectively and efficiently.

With solutions from partners, including Condeco, that allow you to:

- ✓ Reduce your workplace density
- ✓ Manage space capacity
- ✓ Sanitise and contact-trace system
- ✓ Manage groups of people

Fully integrated systems

transACT Workplace Management Systems can be fully integrated with office calendars as well as having a dedicated App.

The App provides detailed wayfinding so users can navigate to their desk. The rich graphical interface connects the user to booking kiosks, desk signs and digital signage displays.

London | Seattle | St Albans | Dublin | Gibraltar

av@transactts.co.uk   www.transactts.co.uk
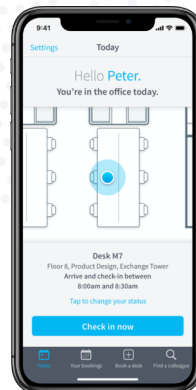
The growing need for interoperability

More online meetings have resulted in greater exposure to other Unified Communications standards that might not be compatible with your own.

With strict permissions required for new software installations, many corporate users face a struggle when needing to quickly join a call with a third-party using a different platform. The interoperability between platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Cisco WebEx are improving but true compatibility remains an issue. As employees return to corporate environments this problem becomes even more prevalent. Employees need to use single-standards based conferencing rooms where options for interoperability are even lower. How can these challenges be overcome?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to cater for interoperability. The right approach is best governed by the technology employed by the organisation, the location of users and their access to local permissions.

Example 1   Interop-friendly rooms

For organisations with multiple meeting rooms fixed to a particular UC platform, you can create a start by analysing call requests by platform. For the percentage that fall outside of your compatibility, the same portion of meeting rooms can be reconfigured as interop-friendly rooms.

This can mean using an interop-friendly hardware solution such as Starleaf. Such a system offers seamless access from Teams, Webex, Skype for Business, Zoom and BlueJeans. Alternatively, transACT have custom solutions where a single set of cameras and microphones can feed multiple conferencing PCs. With such a solution we can even deliver a full, large boardroom.

Example 2   BYOD in collaboration spaces

Employees have become more empowered using UC on their own devices and more agile in the way they work. With solutions such as the new Crestron M-Series, a system can have a dedicated Teams or Zoom account while still allowing a user to connect their laptop and join another platform.

Example 3   Cloud-based interoperability

For easy compatibility without a change of hardware, Cloud-based interoperability solutions can give flexibility and agility to businesses. transACT are an Advanced AWS Partner and Cloud Provider; we provide integrated UC and Cloud solutions so our clients can maximise the potential of both.

speak to one of the team ↘

hangup
☎↘

vpod

vpod

Contact-free receptions

A critical area to address in a return to office plan is the front desk and reception. A receptionist is passed by virtually every visitor as well as regularly seeing internal members of the team.

transACT, in partnership with Vpod provide the perfect solution in Vgreet. Vgreet keeps the personal touch while removing personal contact. As a fully integrated solution, it offers contactless check-in, visitor compliance management, personal help via video and customised content to suit any brand.

Vgreet covers the whole visitor journey, starting with full Outlook integration giving a contactless QR code within any meeting invitation. The check-in process is easy, with no contact required, and voice recognition still provides access to full functions. Full wayfinding can direct visitors as well as staff coming for the day, keeping people in the right place and out of harm's way. But most importantly, you can still talk to a person, enabling technology to support people in your process, not to replace them.

Next steps

We at transACT have been working with our customers throughout COVID-19 supporting and advising their back to the office plans.

We utilise cutting-edge technology and best-in class support services to deliver a range of digital workplace solutions; from remote working strategies to workplace management and contactless receptions, our specialist AV and Digital Workplace teams can support your return to work strategy.

Let us help you:

- ✓ Elevating employee experiences for a multi-generation workforce
- ✓ Break down communication barriers to improve collaboration, productivity and efficiency
- ✓ Reduce costs by adopting optimal technologies and support models.
- ✓ Provide safe environments and processes for all workers.

Contact us at **av@transactts.co.uk** and one of our digital workplace specialists will be delighted to discuss how we can support your business to deliver secure and safe digital workplace experiences.

av@transactts.co.uk   www.transactts.co.uk