



## RETURN TO THE OFFICE: REIMAGINING WORKPLACE DYNAMICS AMID ONGOING COVID-19 CRISIS

The COVID-19 crisis is ongoing, but one certainty is that a staged, controlled, and cautioned approach to returning to the office is on the horizon for most companies this fall. Corporates are still collecting information from their employees with a year and a half of experience and lessons learned regarding employee work arrangements.

At this point, work-from-home flexibility is undisputed as much as the benefit of collaboration of in-office work. Conversely, lack of collaboration is often cited as the biggest drawback of remote work combined with the risk of employees operating in silos and mental health challenges related to isolation.

On the other hand, in-person office work often cites lengthy, unnecessary meetings and loss of productivity due to them.

All said and done; both approaches have their benefits as well as shortcomings. But many of us wonder, how will office life look like once we do go back? In this month's InfoPays, we are considering three main points:

### 1. A hybrid approach may be the way forward

A happy medium could be found in a hybrid approach -- a combination of in-office and remote work. For now, most employers are adopting this approach, either allowing employees to choose the amount of time they spend in-office or setting a 60/40 schedule. We will have to wait and see if this is only a transition strategy used in the interim or genuinely the way of the future.

### 2. Offices as collaboration hubs of the future

The pandemic has forced leaders to consider how office space will be used in this new reality and plan how it can be redesigned to a new way of collaborating with others. One thing is sure: the importance of having a touchdown base with access to collaboration tools and technology will be of high priority.

### 3. Changing nature of office leasing patterns

Demand for leasing was high going into the pandemic, but the initial idea of getting rid of the office altogether post-pandemic is no longer realistic either. Since the pandemic, leasing demands have gone up, so only time will tell if and how things have permanently changed.



## HOW TO FOSTER TRUST IN THE WORKPLACE

Companies that foster trust are better environments to work in, and their employees are more motivated, innovative, and productive.

According to a study done by the University of British Columbia, confidence in management was the top consideration when people spoke about their job satisfaction. The study cited that a slight increase in management trust was equivalent to the amount of job satisfaction employees would receive from a 36 percent pay increase!

What do you do in your business to foster trust? For this month's InfoPays, we are discussing three types of trust established in the workplace:

### Contractual assurance

This form of confidence means that any parties who enter an agreement do what they say they will do. It also means employees have a clear direction, are engaged in their jobs, and work towards realistic goals and expectations. In essence, contractual trust results in a clear-headed and productive workforce.

### Communication trust

Communication trust is paramount because it rests on transparency and timely sharing of the correct information, being helpful, and keeping employees in the know. Employees can ask questions, contribute ideas, provide feedback, and offer an honest perspective when with communication trust. The most crucial aspect of communication trust, however, is to speak with good intent. When people talk with good intent, they foster confidence in



the workplace and prevent gossip and backbiting. Genuine motivation to do good work wins over fear.

### Competence trust

Managers need to have faith that their employees possess the right abilities to do their jobs effectively. In high trust environments, managers support their employees by developing their skills through exposure to new assignments. Being entrusted competence means that instead of feeling micro-managed, employees get the motivational boost from demonstrating their expertise. The suggestion is not that ideas are not questioned or challenged in this environment but that managers operate from trust in their employees' abilities to deliver quality work.

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