

Allsteel®

Ready for What's Ahead

Collaborating to Evolve
the Modern Workplace

Second Edition | Fall 2020

“This uncertain time presents many challenges. We remain committed to offering leadership in workspace thought and research and to offering new solutions in response to this evolving situation.”

Kris Yates
Allsteel President

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Four Key Phases of Adapting in the Evolving Workplace

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Today's Evolving Workplace

Workplace designs have always evolved with the changing landscape of organizational needs. Now more than ever, employers and their employees are hyper-aware of the impact of their workplaces on psychological comfort, physical health, and productivity. This is an acceleration rather than a pivot.

Correspondingly, the approach to evolving a workspace requires both strategic thinking and a much more iterative approach.

Strategic and Adaptable: A Pragmatic Approach

Strategic thinking helps organizations further their long-term goals and protect their employees while leveraging their investments.

An adaptable approach helps organizations and employees more easily evolve over time as things change. Adaptability makes it simpler for organizations to shift with changing circumstances and new information quickly, initiate changes—both physical and behavioral—plan for a variety of scenarios, and anticipate, prevent, and solve problems. This mental and physical resilience enables organizations to simultaneously strategize long-term and quickly pivot to protect employees while circumstances are changing.

How do you get there?

This e-book will present an adaptive four-stage process to workplace evolution. This process is, at its core, a human-centric one, as the highest purpose of the office is to enable effective interactions between workers. It encourages organizations to be **strategic** in matching their workspace to their long-term goals and to be **adaptable** by anticipating and adjusting to changing circumstances and new information: whether addressing safety or strengthening wellness initiatives; or reconfiguring office layouts, rethinking individual workstations, or reinventing shared spaces; or adopting distributed work long-term. While there is uncertainty, we will create safer, healthier workspaces together.

Sharing Knowledge

What We Know

“Establish policies and practices for social distancing. Social distancing should be implemented as recommended by state and local health authorities.”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Distance is an important defense in keeping workplaces healthy.

At this time, for individuals who are asymptomatic, the CDC recommends a 6-foot distance between individuals, while the WHO is recommending a 3-foot distance. Symptomatic individuals should stay home to quarantine. These recommendations are based on research related to the distance respiratory droplets travel during coughing or sneezing.

Strategies include:

- Implementing flexible worksites
- Implementing flexible work hours
- Increasing physical space between individuals
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options
- Delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web)

[Reference →](#)

What We're Learning

"It goes without saying that healthy buildings play a central role in creating a healthy world. In addition to everyday precautions taken by individuals, the building industry and employers have a vital role to play in creating safe environments for themselves and their employees."

Fitwel Interim Planning Guidance



Changes to the workplace will be crucial to keeping them healthy.

OSHA suggests sneeze-guard type barriers as a possible way to reduce exposure but makes no claims about the effectiveness of this strategy. This strategy is secondary to staying six feet away and considering proper ventilation systems.

Strategies include:

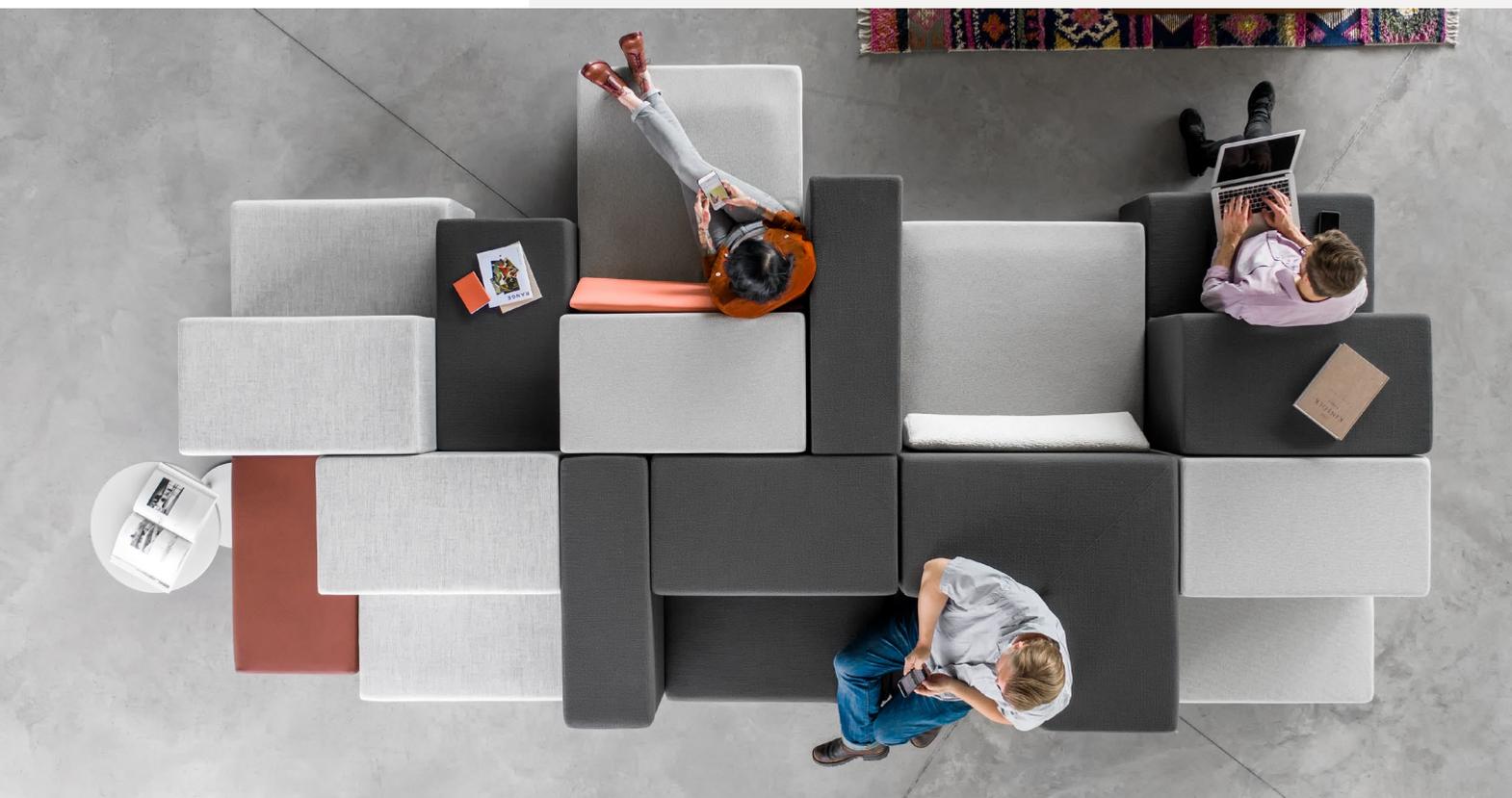
- Ventilation considerations
- Humidity concerns
- Air filtration
- Cleaning protocols
- Handwashing signage

[Reference →](#)

How We're Learning

"The solution will need to be behavioral, not just adding additional screens and dividers. Tell us how we can effectively use space without spending a lot of money."

Allsteel Customer



In order to evolve and innovate, we need to always be listening.

We are learning more and more about the needs of our dealers and customer communities. We're answering their concerns and asking questions of our own. As medical discoveries shine a light on what the future holds and policy changes shift how we behave, there needs to be a commitment to this constant learning process so we can feel confident that the solutions we're providing meet organizations where they are.

Strategies include:

- Gathering and synthesizing feedback from users
- Monitoring public policy and paying attention to those in the medical community
- Applying new learnings quickly and efficiently

Dimensions & Phases

Key dimensions to consider in the evolving workplace.

Knowing that the situation is ever-changing, how do we navigate this multifaceted evolution of work and the workplace? With guidance from our customers, dealers, and designers, Allsteel is approaching the challenges ahead with these three dimensions in mind:



User Experience

The users' physical and psychological health should guide the decisions organizations make moving forward. This dimension explores what employees feel or believe as they return to the workspace—from physically and psychologically safe to confident that their workplace promotes diversity and inclusion in design and culture.



Spatial Effectiveness

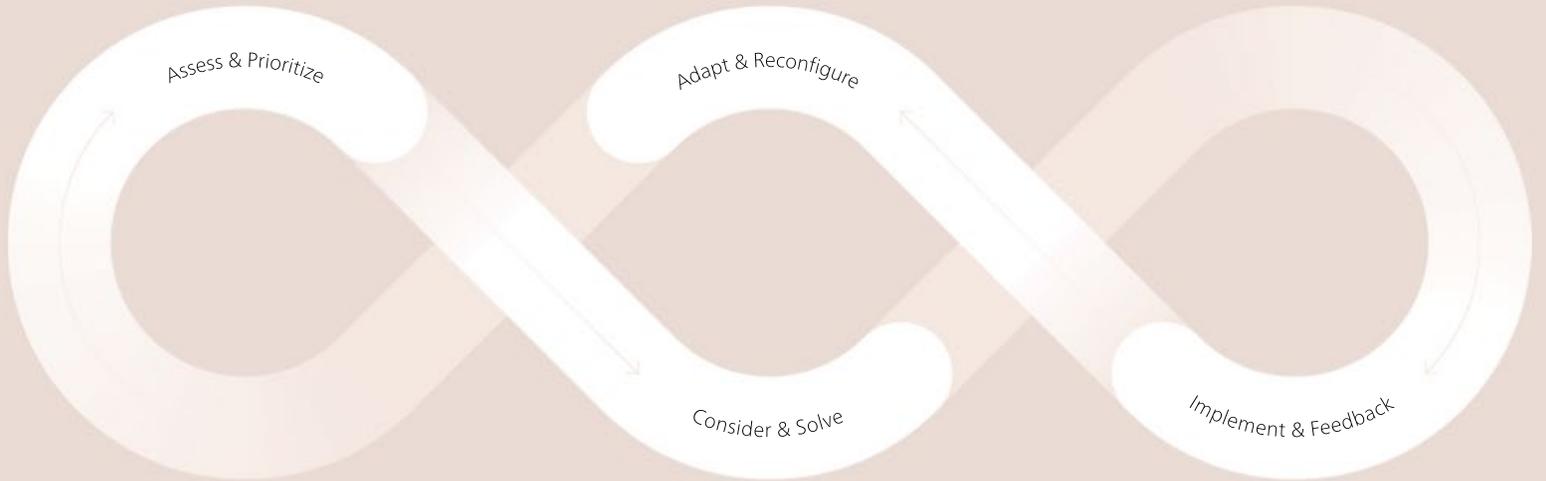
The way organizations use space will be elemental to how healthy and safe their workplaces are. This dimension looks at how employees use and manage physical workspace and how employers can keep them protected and effective at both individual and shared spaces.



Distributed Work

Recent experiences have shown that work can happen from anywhere. Distributed work will be instrumental in ensuring healthy workspaces. This dimension explores how organizations can balance various modes of workspace with the nature of work being done and how employers best support workers, wherever they work.

Key Phases



Key phases of adapting in the evolving workplace.

Allsteel works with organizations through four crucial phases in a continuous, adaptive process to improve user experience, spatial effectiveness, and distributed work. These four phases are:

Assess & Prioritize

Work together to identify needs and challenges, and establish goals. Then analyze and prioritize how to best leverage what's already in place while planning for both short- and long-term changes to workspace and work norms in a post-pandemic world.

Consider & Solve

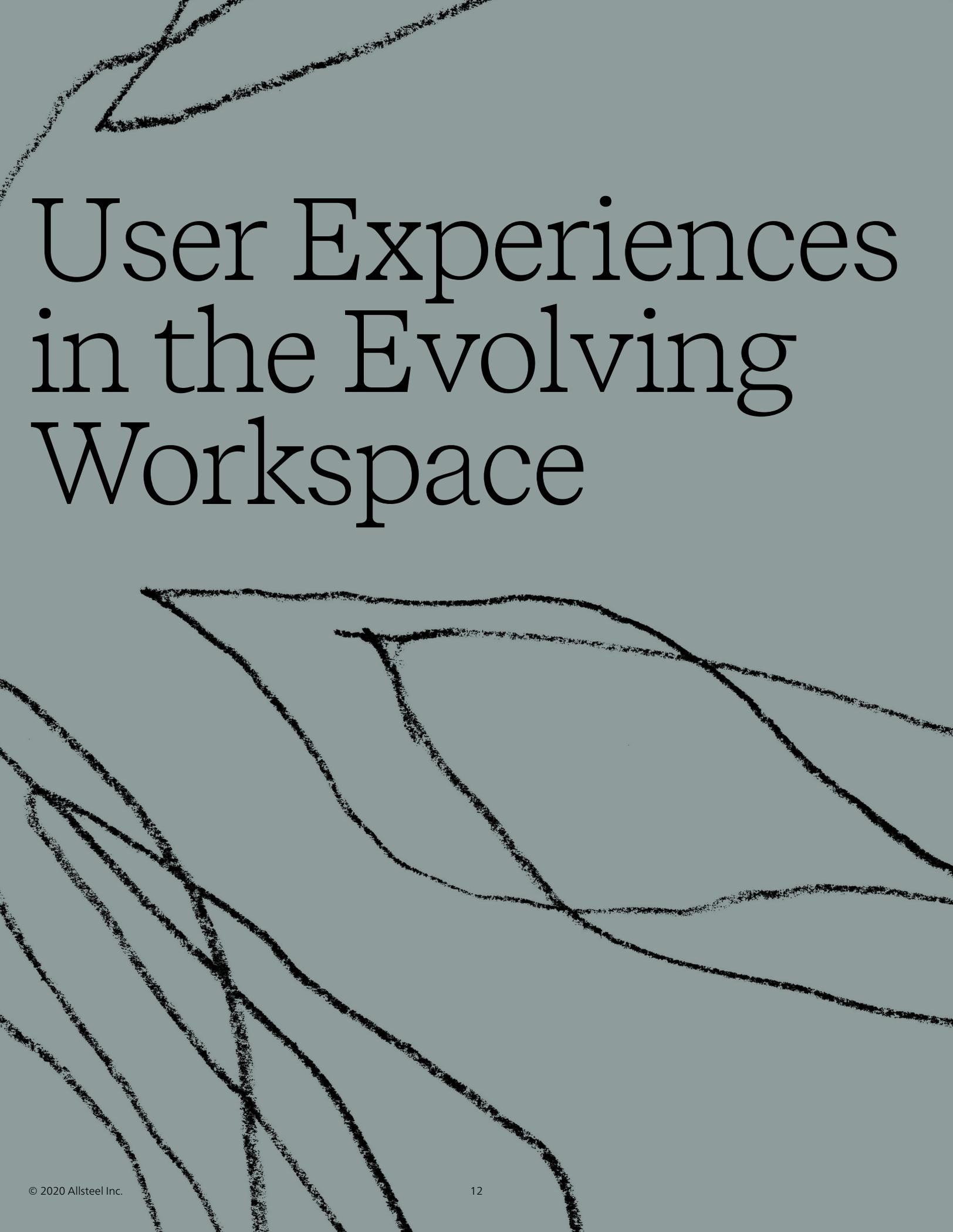
Find immediate short-term options and retrofits to implement for physical distancing in current workspaces, as well as longer-term solutions in new configurations. Identify policies and solutions to make moving between home, other distributed work locations, and the office seamless.

Implement & Feedback

Collect feedback on safety, effectiveness, and connectivity as employees use newly implemented spaces. Practice effective change communications to continually update users.

Adapt & Reconfigure

Learn from updated configurations. What's working and what isn't? Utilize the latest findings from outside researchers on the evolving health situation to develop new solutions and make further improvements as organizational goals evolve.

The background of the slide is a light blue color. It is decorated with several large, abstract, black scribbled lines that resemble hand-drawn shapes or calligraphic strokes. These lines are scattered across the page, with some starting from the top left and others from the bottom left, creating a dynamic and artistic feel.

User Experiences in the Evolving Workspace

The first step to returning to work is creating a sense of safety, security and support for employees. If workers are going to return to sharing space with others, everyone must feel secure.

Organizations will need to open two-way communication channels and adopt flexible policies and procedures that are sensitive to the needs and concerns of workers. Workers will need to be trained on building and office circulation protocols and cleaning procedures. As we learn more and policies and procedures are modified, workers will need ongoing communication and training.

With an established culture of mutual safety and clear two-way communication, people will feel secure that their health and wellness come first. And they're more likely to do their best work because of it.

“In these trying times, there is also opportunity to reassess and improve. To strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and to reestablish psychological safety as a vital prerequisite to physical comfort, social cohesion and performance.”

Lauren Gant, PhD
Human Factors and Ergonomics Manager

Assess & Prioritize



Allsteel collaborates with organizations and subject matter experts to identify the goals and challenges associated with cultivating an atmosphere of safety and a sense of belonging. Together we analyze the unique needs of workers and prioritize ways to foster health and wellness today and into the future.

Critical Questions

How do we engage user concerns?

What will help users feel safe coming back to work?

What's needed to allow employees to feel safe, supported, motivated and engaged once they're back?

How do we continue over time to actively support the physical and psychological health of workers?

How can we strengthen diversity and inclusion, as well as the elements of social cohesion to further strengthen our employees' well-being?"

Key Action Items

Establish a cross-functional and representative task force together with key stakeholders to identify and validate needed updates to safety protocols and facility guidelines, i.e., visitors, entry screening, maximum occupancy, cleaning methods and frequency.

Develop a two-way, ongoing communication plan.

Anticipate and support workers' needs for schedule flexibility.

Think through expectations and accountability to teammates and leaders both in-office and when working remotely. Ensure that employees have access to tools that ensure psychological comfort and nurture a collective ability to give honest feedback and voice concerns on an on-going basis.

Work to understand where social cohesion may be lacking and understand drivers to strengthen it for both in-office and remote workers.

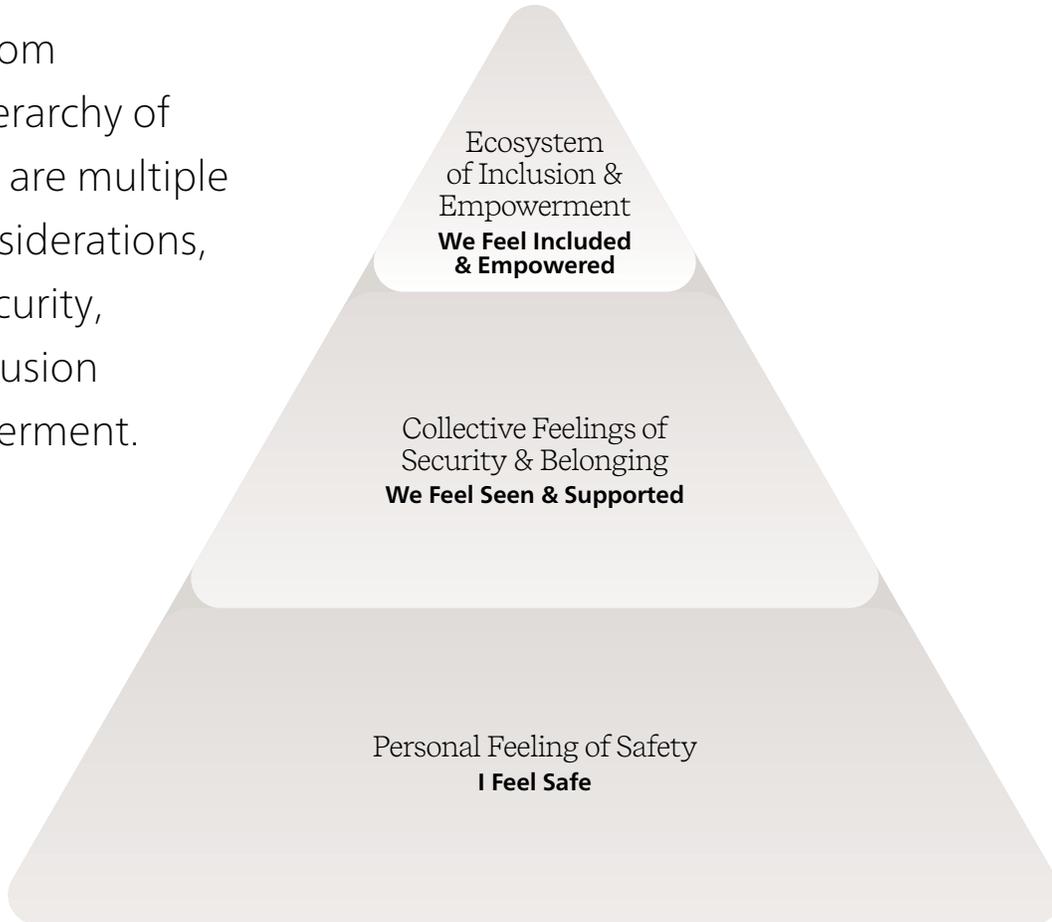
Review current wellness support to determine whether programs are inclusive and broad enough to include physical and mental health, and are relevant to the current climate.

Minimize unnecessary physical changes—outside of safety protocols—to conserve familiarity and manage expectations: Returning to familiar spaces and ways of doing things can be soothing and reduce unnecessary stressors.



Psychological Safety in Workplace Re-Entry

To borrow from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are multiple levels of considerations, including security, support, inclusion and empowerment.



I Feel Safe

Communication is two-way, open, ongoing and in multiple formats—I can express my concerns, and I know what is being done to keep me safe. New cleaning standards and visual reminders, as well as protocols to address issues such as building entry and elevator use are in place. Limited occupancy is enforced to create social distance, and staggered work schedules are for essential and confirmed-healthy colleagues only. Employees are provided tools to support their physical ergonomics and their cognitive health.

We Feel Seen & Supported

Formal remote and flexible work policies are established, and a system of trust and accountability is promoted with a mutual understanding of expectations. Our physical health and mental wellbeing is considered and supported, and options are provided for health care and therapy programs, there is recognition that each of us has a unique experience and culture, and when possible, systems support us and our dependents holistically. Our teams are strengthened through shared ownership and spatial identity, thereby creating an environment of community and cooperation.

We Feel Included & Empowered

Communication is open, mutual, and free from fear of judgment or retribution when centered on the intent to improve, progress, or innovate. Our culture is diverse and inclusive and evolves when a disruption improves current policy. We are supported to express unique perspectives, communicate objectives, and to be our whole selves in the work environment, with the shared goal of promoting autonomy, mastery, and ultimately, purpose.

Consider & Solve



Allsteel works with organizations to find solutions that can be implemented to encourage healthy and inclusive workplaces. This is accomplished, in part, by keeping workers informed and educated on best practices and listening to employee needs and concerns.

Critical Questions

What behaviors or protocols will build resiliency?

What guidelines need to be put in place and communicated consistently?

How are wellness and cognitive function being supported?

Where can we improve our diversity and inclusivity?

How is social cohesion being explicitly strengthened for both in-office and remote workers?

Key Action Items

Enact and communicate new cleaning standards and protocols.

Explore changes to arrival and facilities that will encourage physical distancing, i.e., entries and exits, elevators and lobbies, and solo and shared spaces.

Create any needed training, orientation, communication, and feedback plans. Consider videos and signage to keep workers up to date on cleaning schedules and best practices.

Encourage autonomy and choice in the completion of expected work tasks, i.e., in-office workers can find privacy when needed.

Assess current levels of social cohesion and worker effectiveness, and talk through strategies to strengthen.

Knowledge & Resources

[Psychological Safety →](#)

[Knowledge Worker Performance →](#)

[Social Cohesion Series →](#)

[Wellness Program Considerations →](#)

[The Art of Clear Communication →](#)

[Promoting Movement in a Constrained Workplace →](#)

Implement & Feedback



As people return to 'reset' office spaces, or continue to work remotely, Allsteel is collecting feedback from our own members and from customers, dealers, and designers on perceptions of their physical safety, security and support. Insights are sought from a diverse spectrum of voices and weight is given to all inputs.

Critical Questions

How can we welcome users with transparency and trust?

How do we elicit honest feedback from employees?

Are we hearing from a representative sample of our population?

Is our communication format conducive to all that need to provide input?

Are all voices considered with equal weight?

How can we also take this opportunity to expand our understanding of our employees' experiences of inclusivity and how our space supports neurodiversity, gender expression, cultural differences and the like?

Key Action Items

Hold worker/workplace orientations.

Share plans for ongoing modifications as use, science, and feedback suggests.

Continue communicating what's being done to keep users safe.

Maintain a continuous feedback-gathering mechanism to foster an open, action-oriented environment.



Adapt & Reconfigure



Learn from the initial reset: What's working and what isn't? Is it safe to bring back more workers? What else can be done to promote safety, security and employee effectiveness? Utilize the latest findings from experts and researchers on the evolving health situation and the best science on worker effectiveness to develop new approaches and make further improvements as circumstances and organizational goals evolve.

Also consider how users feel about the changes. Do they feel safer? More productive? More connected?

Critical Questions

How can we continue to prepare for the future?

Are we considering the needs of all employees to the best of our ability?

How do we prepare employees for ongoing changes?

How can we intentionally support social cohesion and other knowledge worker factors?

How do we gauge employees' feelings of psychological safety?

Key Action Items

Consolidate feedback received and look for solutions that can be accomplished with simple reconfiguration and minimal churn.

Consider implementing aspects of a more agile office over time, including expanding worker agency to self-perform needed updates or new changes.

Continue to adapt and communicate protocol changes.

Explore opportunities to foster, improve, and promote inclusivity in spaces, culture, and conversation.

Knowledge & Resources

[Wellness Considerations for Working from Home →](#)

[Working from Home: Making it Work for Managers & Their Teams →](#)

[Practicing Resilience in Uncertain Times →](#)

[Psychological Safety: Safe, Supported, and Seen →](#)

[Listen to Allsteel's Virtual Learning Lab Series →](#)

Spatial Effectiveness in the Evolving Workspace



As organizations consider options for their unique 'return to workplace' approach, they will need to take a fresh look at their overall approach to space. Will their office footprint decrease in reaction to more distributed work? Will the office landscape increase to support an ecosystem of space types and locations? Or will the overall real estate footprint scale out neutral, due to a rebalance of locations and strategy?

These are just a few of the many questions clients, designers and real estate organizations are asking. Without history to guide us, we are in speculation mode.

Post COVID: Potential Shifts in the Workplace Landscape



Underlying Factors

Industry/Work Performed

People in certain roles need to be in the workplace to access resources they cannot access elsewhere; resources = technology, people, unique workspace, etc.

Location & Size

A large company in small community vs. a small company in larger city will have different consideration sets; access to talent, corporate real estate costs, and transportation.

Extent of Distributed Work Strategy

How willing an organization is to support employee expectations of choice and control over where they work.

Workplace 2025: If Only We Had a Crystal Ball...

We can imagine a range of scenarios in how different organizations might approach their workplace strategy moving forward.

Scenario A

Updating Existing

(Minimal \$, Traditional Space Types)



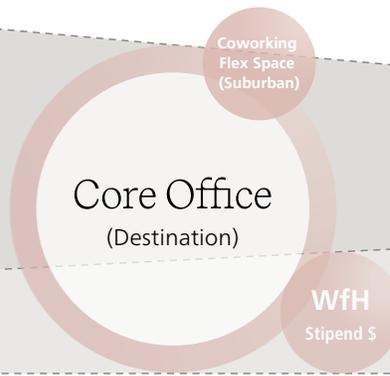
Furniture Implications

Reconfiguration of existing
Additional (additive) screening

Scenario B

Exploring the New Normal

(Modest \$\$, Enhanced Space Types)



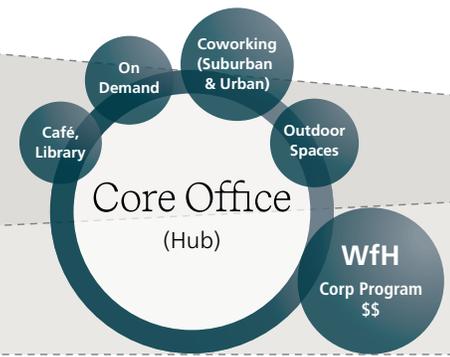
Furniture Implications

Flexible spatial KOP
Advanced meeting spaces
Enhanced focus ie: micro offices
Coworking/flex space for those who cannot WfH effectively

Scenario C

Creating an Ecosystem

(Diverse Portfolio, Hub + Satellites)



Furniture Implications

Diverse, adaptable solutions, new space considerations ie: biophilia & wellness
'Branded' coworking sites
Increase in unassigned desking & lockers
Corporate WfH programs

→ Overall CRE footprint may stay the same or slightly decrease, offset by rebalance to satellite locations

← Anticipated increase in distributed workplace strategies

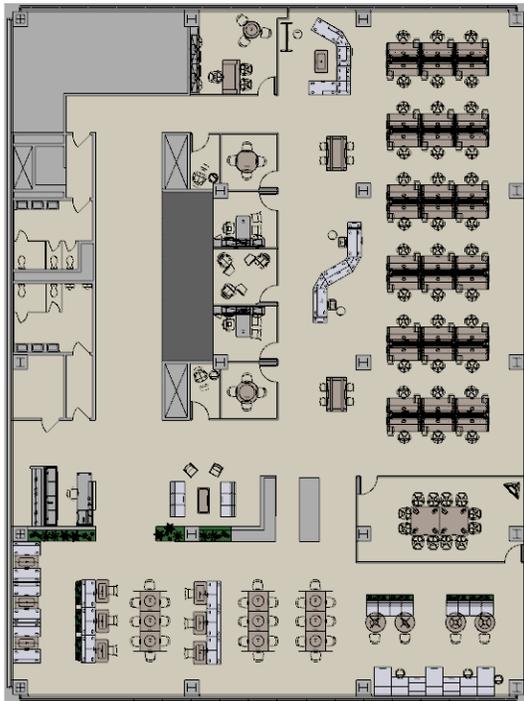
“In times of uncertainty, analytics and predictive modelling based on human behavior can guide and inform decision making; maximizing the outcomes while empowering clients to optimize the design and operations of their workplaces.”

Lisa Miller
Director, Product Insights & Applications

Now that we have moved beyond the initial shock and subsequent reactions to a place where we as designers and place makers can begin to think—perhaps even dream—about a ‘return to workplace’, we have the opportunity to provide a place that offers psychological comfort, is inspiring and collaborative and provides users with choice and control of how, when and where they do their best work.



To evolve our understanding of how to best plan for social distancing and circulating in the office, we have partnered with global engineering and analytics firm Buro Happold.



Base Layout

This plan will be assessed for its accommodation of social distancing, using the Buro Happold Workplace Analytics Model with over 15 years of research into human behavior.



Intervention Layout

The review of peak capacities and bottlenecks helped to inform this intervention layout—featuring reconfigured and additional furniture elements.

Dynamic Movement & Heat Mapping Studies

[See the Simulation in Action →](#)



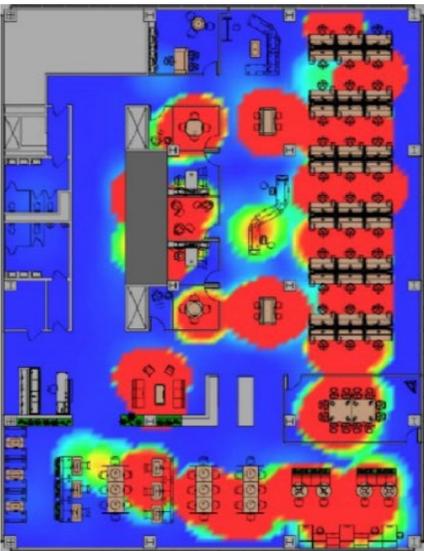
Base Layout:
No furniture changes



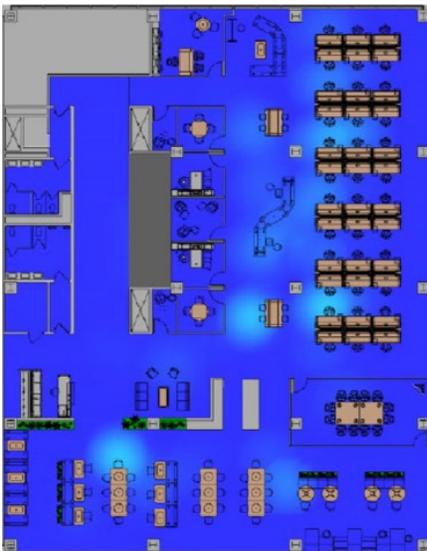
Base Layout with Distancing:
Removal or marking of seats



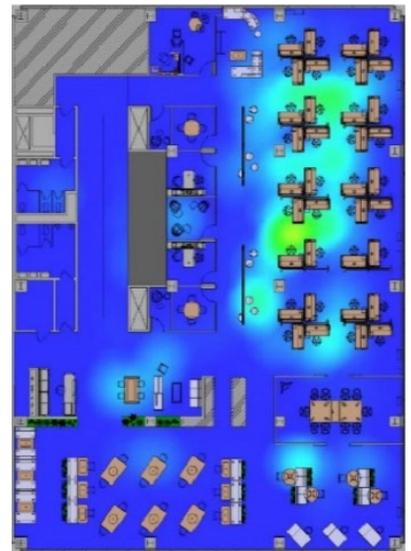
Intervention Layout:
Furniture reconfigurations



100% desk occupancy
Collisions **75%** of the time



52% desk occupancy
Collisions **0.7%** of the time



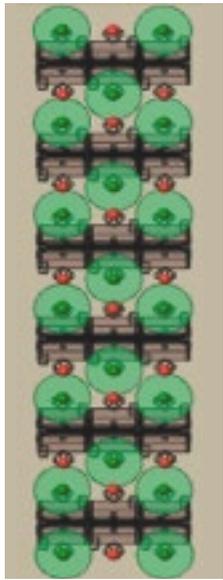
100% desk occupancy
Collisions **1.4%** of the time

Insight #1

Orientation matters. A simple reconfiguration of furniture elements can increase utilization from 52% to 100%.

Even with a 6-foot wide workspace on the Base Plan, the back to back dimension between seats can cause collision, therefore requiring a 'checkerboard' or every other seating occupancy.

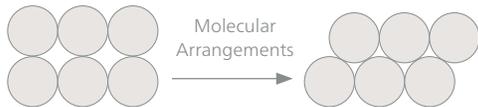
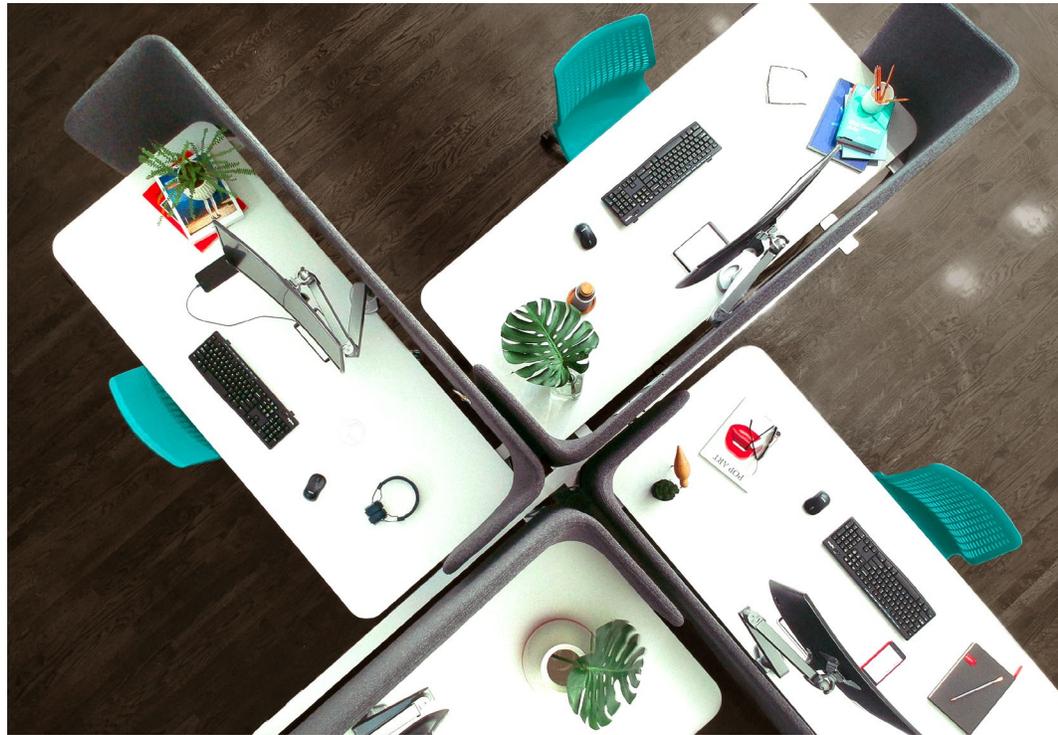
Reconfigured plan uses slightly more square footage and will require additional in feeds, however—this achieves 100% occupancy at the desks.



Base Plan
19 Seats



Intervention Plan
36 Seats



Social distancing would suggest one person per booth (105 sq.ft.)



Pinwheel configuration provides solo spaces in a more efficient footprint (90 sq.ft.)

Kit-of-Parts in Action



Surface

30"x72" Height Adjustable Table



Storage

Undermount Bin

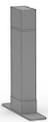


Space Division

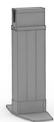
Desk Screen



60W Power Rail with 2 duplexes per station



Beam End Leg



Beam Mid Leg



Seating

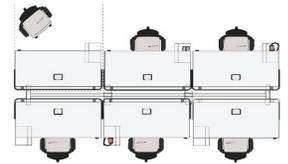
Task Chair

A thoughtfully curated KOP demonstrates the ability to effectively accommodate shifts in planning, with minimal new product required.

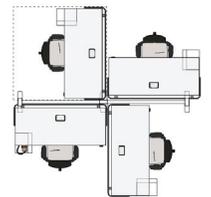
Product Needed for Conversion

- 4 Power In-Feeds
- 2 Power Beams
- 8 End Legs

Base Plan Linear Bench



Intervention Plan Pinwheel

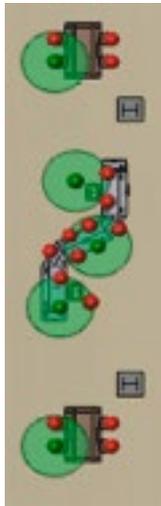


Insight #2

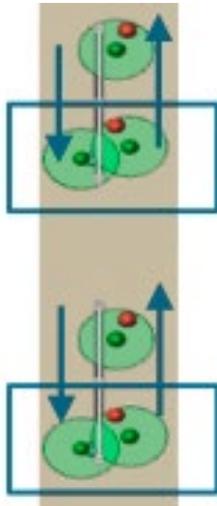
Architectural elements can support higher utilization.

By adding a Viz Wall architectural element from floor to ceiling, the 6-foot diameter circles are allowed to come closer than social recommendations would suggest because of the vertical separation.

These elements also promote a clear path of travel to reduce collisions and direct 'path of travel'.



Base Plan
Social Collaborative
5 seats



Intervention Plan
Viz Wall Integration
6 seats



Before Viz Wall

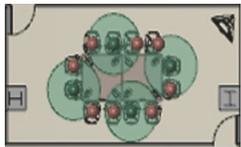


After Viz Wall

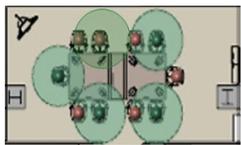
Insight #3

Expandable meeting room design comfortably supports a range of group sizes and addresses opportunities for social distancing.

A simple separation of two tables allows a 25% increase in capacity.



Base Plan
Continuous table
4 Seats



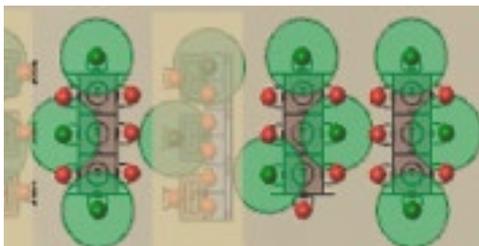
Intervention Plan
Bench in the middle
5 Seats



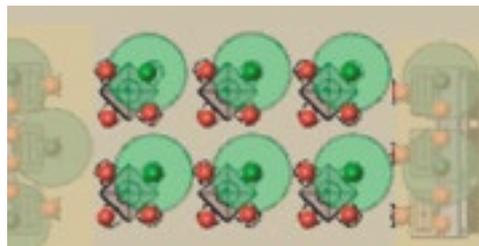
Reconfiguration of Beyond Walls to allow for double door entry for distanced entrance and egress.

Insight #4

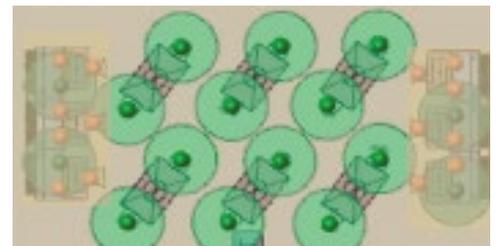
A series of tables placed together can accommodate more socially distanced seats than if they were spaced apart.



Base Plan
Community Tables
9 Seats



Intervention Plan 1
Separate Square Tables
6 Seats



Intervention Plan 2
Separate Square Tables
12 Seats

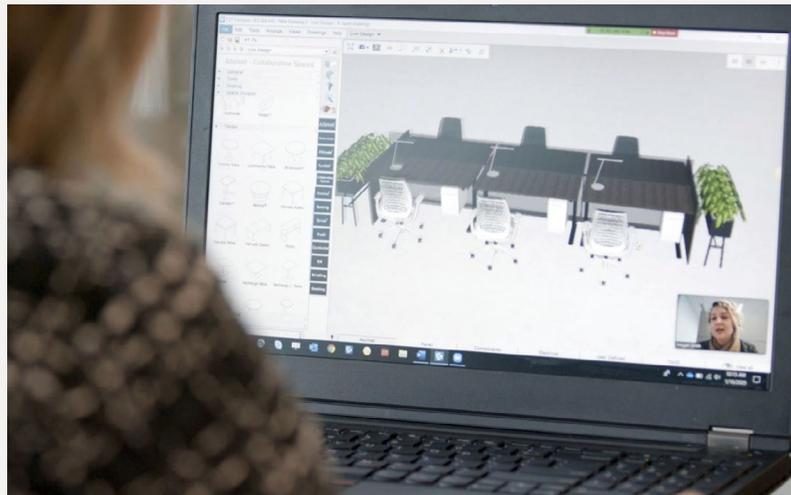
Designer on Demand

Allsteel and our dealer partners have dedicated designers ready to help.

We understand each customer's approach to the evolving workplace will be unique.

We have been working hard to research and share our continuous learnings with our design teams to apply new ways of thinking including analytics, flexible planning practices and new product enhancements, all realized through the real time CET Live Design experience.

[Learn about CET Live Design →](#)



“How can we build social cohesion when we need to social distance?”

Jan Johnson
VP, Workplace Strategy

Assess & Prioritize



As each organization considers what might come after initial, interim safety measures can be phased out, how might we use this time to explore new ways of working? With worker demand for more autonomy and choice in when, where and how they work, and even more emphasis on psychological safety, wellness and social cohesion, how might we newly understand and design for both function and behavior?

Critical Questions

What safety measures and learnings from assessments or remote work experiences should be carried forward?

Who will work when and where? What's the nature of their work?

How might we reimagine our portfolio and workplace strategies given how the world has changed?

What elements of people, place and technology strategies will best support their functional and social requirements and expectations?

Key Action Items

With a cross-section of workers/teams, identify how their work processes may have changed.

Consider what can be done to advance wellness support.

Analyze the nature of each group's work and determine key factors for productivity and psychological comfort.

Consider what can be done to improve the workplace's accommodations for neurodiversity and other physical and cultural differences.

Assess current levels of social cohesion to identify where there's room for improvement.

Knowledge & Resources

[Social Cohesion Series →](#)

[What Your Workplace Design Says →](#)

[Our Workplaces Will Change →](#)

[Wellness Considerations for Working from Home →](#)

Social & Collaborative Spaces

If we have learned anything from current events, the ability to reconnect with our friends, families and coworkers is top of mind.



How might our evolving workplace integrate more natural light, more biophilic elements, sensory supports, and opportunities to embrace wellness best practices, both inside and outside of the office?

Expansion to outdoor spaces offers a change of scenery and fresh air.



Work Geometry

Learn More →



Human-centric considerations of posture, fit and tools to be comfortable and productive.

Table Height & Application

Considerations

Occasional 16" — 18"

Meeting Type: Casual conversations, shorter duration, likely free of technology.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–3 people.

Postures: Relaxed sitting or reclining.

In this application, the table will likely be used to place items such as coffee cups or phones not in use. Power access may be beneficial to charge items during a brief get-away from work.

Continental 26" — 27.75"

Meeting Type: Discussions that are intimate or informal, technology may be necessary to complete work tasks.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–3 people.

Postures: Relaxed sitting.

Smaller table sizes may be more appropriate for intimate conversations.

Standard 28" — 29.75"

Meeting Type: Suitable for technology-based meetings that are formal or informal, medium to long in duration.

Size of Group: Any, based on size of table.

Postures: Engaged sitting.

For longer meetings where technology is supported, power access will be important. This table height is versatile and can accommodate casual meeting or eating areas as well as formal conference spaces.

Counter 36" — 37.6"

Meeting Type: Short to medium length meetings, formal or in formal, technology or not.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–6 people.

Postures: Engaged sitting and relaxed standing.

Comfortable for sitting and standing work and a great option to promote posture changes. Higher or mid-back stools may be used for longer conversations.

Bar 41" — 42"

Meeting Type: Quick, casual conversations. Place to pause and chat.

Size of Group: Solo work or discussion with 2–6 people.

Postures: Engaged sitting, leaning or upright standing.

Consider a lower stool back that can be tucked under the table and declutter the visual landscape. A footrest on the table or stool can support posture changes.

Consider & Solve



In this interim time between 'old normal' and as-yet-to-be revealed 'new normal,' Allsteel continues to explore how your existing products can be repurposed during COVID, then repurposed again post-COVID.

Critical Questions

How can we use space effectively today without making substantial new investments?

What safety measures and learnings from assessments or remote work experiences should be carried forward?

How might we reimagine our portfolio and workplace strategies given how the world has changed?

Who will work when and where post-COVID?

Are there things we know now about the nature of their work post-COVID?

Key Action Items

Determine how spaces/applications and circulation patterns must be modified to support six feet of distance.

Identify needed new supports/tech (i.e., white boards, video conference capabilities) to support in-office/remote workers during COVID.

Explore what might be possible to reimagine post-COVID and how to migrate with minimal investment.

Knowledge & Resources

[Material Cleaning Resource →](#)

[How Certain Smells Affect Our Brains →](#)

[Poka-Yoke: Mistake-Proof Your Space →](#)



Social & Collaborative Spaces



Collaborative spaces anticipated to grow

- A large percentage of focus work can be done remotely
- Employees will likely come to the core office to collaborate
- Employees have a strong desire for face-to-face interactions

Comfort is crucial for productivity

- Consider work geometry and support for various postures
- For many, distancing comfort will be psychological as much as physical

Work activities distributed across the floor

- Plan for user-reconfiguration for physical distancing and psychological comfort
- The average in-person meeting will likely be reduced to 2–3 people
- There will be an increased need for solo space (focus work and online meetings)

Social & Collaborative Solutions: Multiple Personalities?

Two-for-one functionality.

As we develop new products, we have an additional layer to consider. For many years we have seen the evolution of social collaborative spaces. Now we need to think how these products can be both collaborative and singular use.



Wedge seating in triad configuration for collaboration



Wedge seating in solo arrangement for focus work



Existing Booth Installation
Social distancing would suggest 1 person per booth (105 sq.ft.)



Return to Workplace 50%
Pinwheel configuration provides solo spaces in an efficient footprint (90 sq.ft.)



Return to Workplace 100%
Reconfigure back to 4-person work booths



Meeting Spaces

Come together again.

As more people begin coming to the office to collaborate, meeting spaces will need to be reexamined and enhanced, both with technology and furniture, as well as the protocols for people both in room and on video.



[Technology in the Workplace →](#)

Architectural Elements as Functional Division



Cabana booths create the perfect 'room within a room' meeting space.



Path of Travel is defined by Viz Wall while enhancing both spaces with functional vertical surface



Pavilion structure defines meeting area

Collaboration within Private Offices

Provide psychological comfort for guests inside private offices requiring collaboration by creating separation and zoning.

Height adjustability within a shared surface creates separation between users.



Individuals have their own 360 degree pivotable surface within a shared space for social distancing away from the primary desk.

Micro Offices

When in the core office, individual focus work will still be a critical component to the workday, even if only between collaborative sessions. For some, the office may no longer require or desire collaborative work within the space. This could drive to new concepts around smaller, efficient micro offices.



A potential 'in between' space may take on the form of a front porch or quick collaboration area outside the smaller office footprint.



This series of micro offices is the equivalent of three 7' x 7' workstations. The intention of the glass above the 30" datum line is to avoid a sense of false privacy.

Ecosystem of Space Types

As workplace strategies evolve, so will the variety of space types to accommodate how, when and where people do their best work.



Workstation Neighborhood



Private Office



Coworking Space



Meeting Spaces



Home Office



Outdoor Spaces

Implement & Feedback



Thoughtful organizations will make gathering user feedback simple, effective, and rapid. Think of the office as a continually improving space as users tell employers what works and what doesn't. Listen to concerns about distancing, efficiency, shared spaces, and workstation placement. Usable, applicable feedback will also come from Allsteel's entire client base and the latest findings from outside researchers on the evolving health situation.

Allsteel is also formulating our point of view of what's possible as we come through all the upheaval—how we can be opportunistic and create more relevant, inspiring and supportive-of-worker-and-organizational-success workplaces.

Critical Questions

What's missing and what needs to change?

How can we monitor how our changes are working?

How do we engage employees to provide honest feedback?

Key Action Items

Gather early feedback on functionality of space, fit-out, and tech support.

Adjust solutions in real time, i.e., add space delineation if needed.

Substitute touchless options where possible.

Adapt & Reconfigure



With evidence-based learning to drive improvements and design, organizations can adapt and build on their successes and learn from their setbacks. Allsteel learns from their entire client base what works for customers and combines data from industry findings to make further improvements as organizational goals evolve.

Critical Questions

How can our workplace evolve to keep up with organizational change?

How quickly can we apply new learnings?

How do we keep employees' psychological health a key consideration?

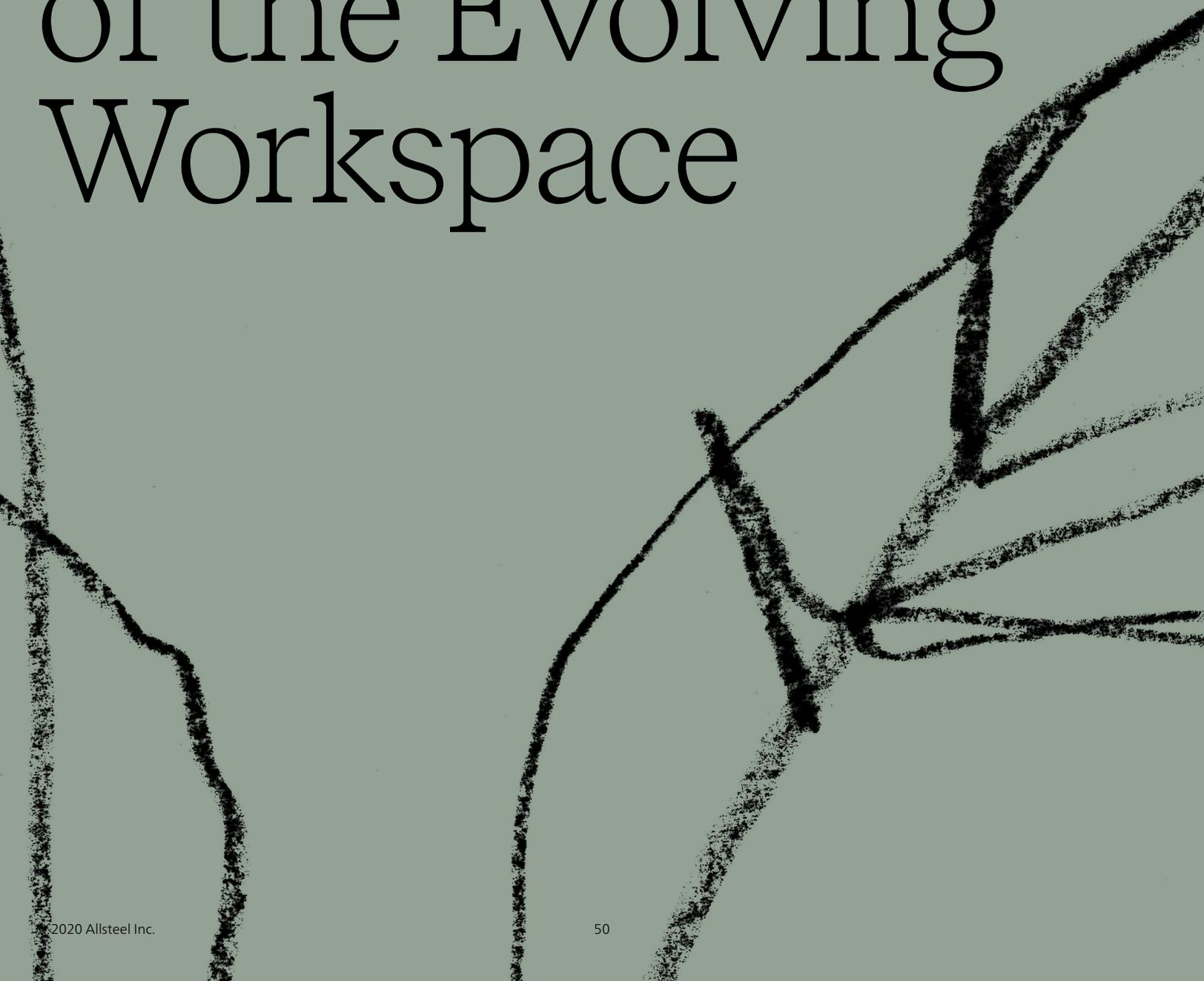
Key Action Items

Repeat these steps as new groups return and/or constraints are lifted.

Create a system to monitor and trigger change as internal and external factors evolve.

Open ongoing feedback loops.

Distributed Work as Part of the Evolving Workspace



Remote working, or working from home, has — by necessity — grown phenomenally in the past months. But it's part of a bigger strategy and can be far more involved than setting up an employee's home workstation. "Distributed work" — getting substantive, critical work done away from the main physical space organizations think of as a traditional office — is now an undeniable part of working for millions of employees.

Distributed work gives employees more choices and options to get their assignments done in a way that makes sense for both them and the organization. It can give workers greater autonomy and boost productivity; and can give organizations the opportunity to expand their talent pool and and, in some cases, reduce their real estate footprint. But it can also challenge legacy beliefs and behaviors for both employers and employees.

Many organizations who have had no formal program to support WfH discovered — during this giant experiment — that productivity did not drop, and their employees are interested in the option to work remotely at least part of the time.

Allsteel is ready to be a collaborative partner to help organizations understand the role distributed work can play in supporting work processes and employee success, and achieving organizational goals.

Building a program for distributed work follows the same four phases we've introduced throughout this document. Think hard about the critical questions here, as they may not be ones an organization has truly asked themselves before. Stand on the shoulders of those organizations who have deep experience and offer best practices for working effectively from alternative locations and successfully working on or managing distributed teams — addressing work-life balance,

meeting and communication skills and tools, and the like — as well as employee home office setups.

Allsteel offers helpful resources for organizations looking to build or expand their distributed work practices, including our Ready to Ship program to get work-appropriate furniture to employees' homes.

[Working from Home →](#)

“With an underlying concern about our health, office workers moved, literally overnight, into a place where working from home is the ‘new norm.’”

Eric Johnson
Senior Workplace Advisor

Assess & Prioritize



For those organizations broadly implementing distributed work for the first time, it's very reasonable to step back and take the time to identify what 'good' came from this forced experiment. Approach distributed work with the goals of making sure it supports organizational objectives, enables worker effectiveness, and improves resilience to other unexpected external forces, rather than it just being a cost-savings measure.

Distributed work will very likely be a more significant component of every organization's workplace strategy. We need to assess what features/components have worked well during this challenging time and translate them into a program that sustains current successes, addresses current problems, and will be effective longer term.

Critical Questions

During COVID, what's been working, and what hasn't—and has it clarified what the purpose of our office is?

How can workers balance autonomy and responsibilities?

How can our Distributed Work program align with the needs and objectives of our business, including culture, worker effectiveness, and asset efficiency and resilience over time?

What new technologies, and/or changes to the office will be needed?

How do we address employee concerns about this new way of working?

What shifts in management styles or culture will be needed?

Key Action Items

Coach employees—and their managers—to consider their responsibilities to their colleagues to share information, meet deadlines, and participate fully in discussions so that work processes are not adversely affected by their choice of work locations or work hours.

Plan to support and coach managers and employees during a period of defining and assessing best practices for working effectively, sharing information, collaborating, and managing time.

Open a two-way dialogue with employees about their current experiences with WfH—positive and negative—to identify factors that can impact their effectiveness

Assess the range and frequency of activities the office needs to accommodate as distributed work patterns may change overall office utilization patterns.

Coach employees to consider the nature of key work processes and activities to identify the optimal spaces or places to support them.

Defining “Distributed Work”

Distributed work involves more than just ‘work from home’ — think of it as an integral element of an organization’s workplace strategy designed to support the organization’s goals, work processes, activities and culture.

Whereas work once centered exclusively on the office for many organizations, Distributed Work gives workers more autonomy and more options for places and settings that are most conducive to the specific work activities users are responsible for. This requires that managers trust that their employees will ‘go where they can do their best work’ as Frank Duffy, an early proponent of distributed work, said.



Distributed Work is not “one-size-fits-all” — that workers are either in-office or work from home—but rather a range of options for working in different locations, and may include:

- Defined full- or part-time remote work
- Flexible part-time remote work schedules
- Flexible workday start and end times
- Working at remote locations that are not “home” (i.e., public spaces, coffee shops, coworking) at any time
- Any combination of the above

While embracing Distributed Work doesn’t have to change office design, monitoring office utilization/occupancy patterns can inform strategies for making better use of in-office spaces, as well as to address both COVID and post-COVID health and safety requirements.

Consider & Solve



Working from home is only part of a long-term distributed work strategy. How individuals and teams work within the office is also pivotal to designing a positive remote experience. An organization can start the process by exploring how work is happening with departmental representatives and facilitating a discussion among functional stakeholders—Facilities, HR, IT—about who is responsible for what.

Distributed work is standard practice for some, and a brand-new concept for others; and will very likely be a more significant part of most organizations' workplace strategy. Assess what's worked well during COVID and translate successes into programs that can evolve. Consider that what we're really advocating is agency and resilience—the ability to exercise choice and adapt to situations and circumstances as they come.

Distributed work will very likely be a more significant component of every organization's workplace strategy. They need to assess what features/components have worked well during this challenging time and translate them into a program that sustains current successes, addresses current problems, and will be effective longer term.

Critical Questions

How do we get key stakeholders to embrace distributed work?

How do we support home office ergonomics and set-up?

What can we learn and adopt from others' best practices?

How do we adopt distributed work best practices?

Who will distributed work involve and why?

What support or training will be needed?

What will it entail: remote work, flexible schedules, unassigned seating, alternative workplaces?

Which technologies, like video conference platforms or shared file platforms, will be needed?

What communication, knowledge sharing and collaboration technologies will be needed to support work processes?

Key Action Items

Set explicit expectations and accountability for projects so team members are clear on goals, timing, and interdependencies.

Model virtual meeting etiquette—like video is generally “on”, but colleagues will understand when it's not—and general best practices, like remembering to take breaks.

Follow—and in doing so, model—communication norms, such as regular availability updates, or demonstrating the unwritten rules for encouraging and resolving debates in virtual communications.

Setting Expectations

Team processes and activities, and individual needs and preferences for where, when and how they work should inform what range of options for working in different places a distributed work program enables.



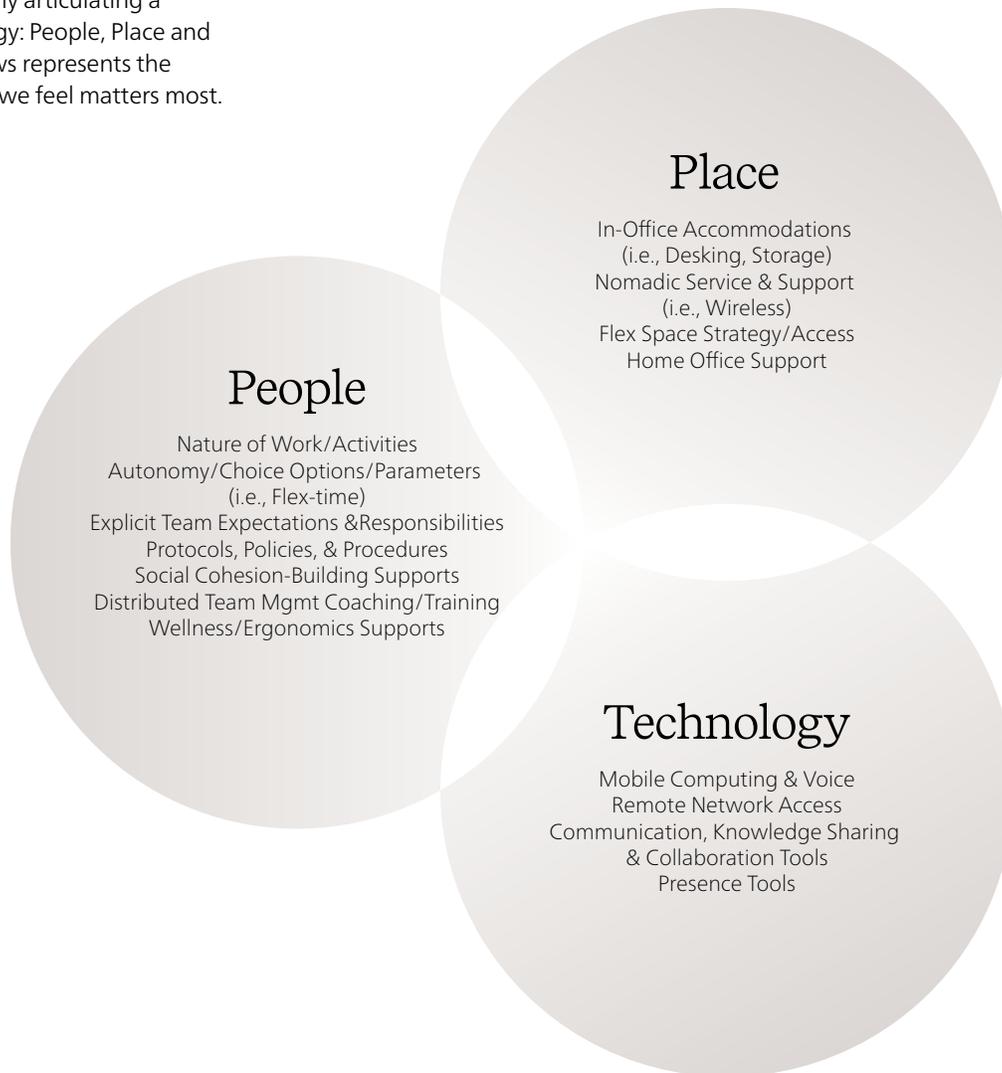
Distributed Work requires setting more explicit expectations and accountability between teammates or co-workers. It's helpful, for example, to develop and communicate protocols for distributed work (in all its forms) including:

- Preferred communication, knowledge sharing and collaboration tools and processes
- Availability when working remotely, i.e., using text/IM to determine/ verify when a team member is available
- Guidelines for timely responses to emails, voice mails, texts

Remember—if you are working in the office, you are 'remote' from those working elsewhere. Consider, too, the anxieties distributed workers may have—like “out of sight, out of mind” or “they don't think I'm working” and work to build/maintain psychological safety and social cohesion.

Key Elements of a Distributed Work Strategy

Three categories of key elements can act as a checklist when clearly articulating a Distributed Work Strategy: People, Place and Technology. What follows represents the range of considerations we feel matters most.



The topics covered by these three categories each play a role in the employee’s feeling of psychological safety and their confidence in their effectiveness, as what is now work-from-home evolves into a broader strategy with more work “places” to choose from:

People

Organizations must help employees work effectively outside the office by keeping that critical sense of connection and belonging. As well, they must help build invaluable social cohesion with their teams and interdependent colleagues.

Place

Employees can now match their work to the locale where it makes the most sense: office, home, client office, flex space. Organizations should consider what provisions and policies are made for employees, both in remote spaces and when they’re in the office.

Technology

Organizations must identify and provide employees with the tools and platforms they need to successfully do their work remotely—including collaborating with their teams—and make sure workers understand how to use them effectively and securely.

Implement & Feedback



Gather feedback on how distributed work impacts user experience/effectiveness, workplace efficiency and adaptability and fine-tune your approach as needed. Allsteel will continue to collect and share findings from our entire client base and the latest findings from outside practitioners, as well as researchers on the evolving learnings from those directly addressing the pandemic.

Because distributed work expands the ways workers can accommodate their circumstances and preferences, organizations have greater opportunities to support diversity and inclusion.

Critical Questions

How should we assess the effectiveness of our distributed work program?

Do workers have any technology challenges that need addressing?

How can we identify management, social cohesion, and well-being challenges for distributed workers?

Are there crucial external factors that are changing that may impact our approach to supporting distributed work?

Are workers more productive? More satisfied? More engaged?

Key Action Items

Build or enhance existing feedback systems (i.e., IT Help Desk, Program Manager-issued surveys) to capture and address positive and negative input, and to quickly address any immediate issues, like connectivity.

Check in with teams whose members work in distributed locations from time to time to assess team/worker effectiveness and identify opportunities to refine and improve.

Communicate what technologies are being added, and how home office furnishings will be addressed.

Communicate—and train workers in the case of new technologies or processes—any program expansion or changes, i.e., duration, new tools, memberships to coworking locations, etc.

Adapt & Reconfigure



As distributed work evolves into both a workplace pillar and a decisive advantage for organizations, Allsteel's Workplace Advisory and Wellness teams are here to help as employers make that journey. We will continue to collect, confirm and share best practices from the most successful programs and thought leaders.

Critical Questions

How do we make distributed work more successful and an option for more workers/ teams?

How do we track and integrate learnings and advancements from other organizations or technology providers?

How does distributed work become an advantage for an organization?

How can we improve our assessment/ measurement and feedback processes?

Key Action Items

Consider repeating previous steps as health and policy standards evolve.

Create a system to trigger change as internal and external factors evolve and new opportunities emerge.

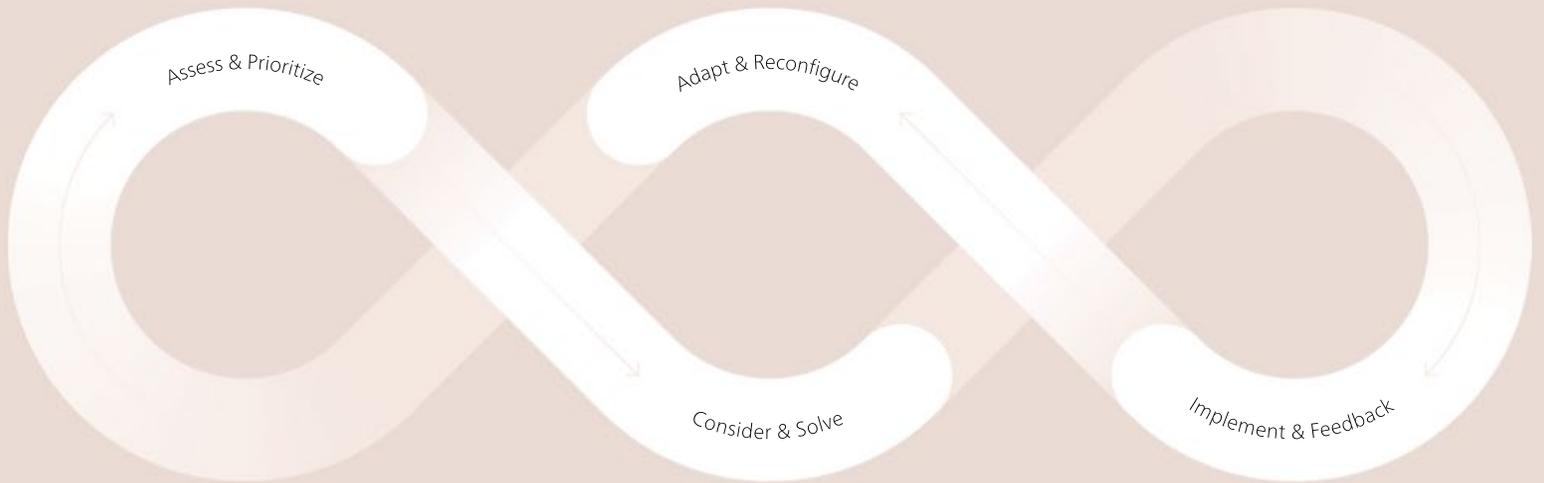
Check in periodically with distributed teams to discover and share new best practices or ideas for improving tech support.

Expand successful elements of distributed work in a meaningful way (i.e., remote hotspots for face-to-face collaboration).

Keep feedback loops open.

Conclusion

Moving Forward



As workplaces evolve to meet both organizational goals and establish psychological safety for employees, Allsteel is there to support, listen to, and guide customers to real solutions. Whether in user experience, spatial effectiveness, or distributed work, Allsteel can help organizations assess, design, and implement a more evolved workplace.

Allsteel plans to share further insights and findings as our customers learn, improve, and build the evolving workplace over the next year.

Share Your Experiences

We would like to hear about your experiences with adapting your workspaces to these changing times. Please contact your Allsteel representative or dealer partner to share your insights.

Customized Survey

We'd be happy to build a customized survey for you to help you plan your evolving workspace. Please contact your Allsteel representative or dealer partner to share your insights.

Further Reading

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers →](#)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

[Fitwel COVID-19 Strategies →](#)

Allsteel Insights

[Wellness Considerations for Working from Home →](#)

[Working from Home: Making It Work for Managers and Their Teams →](#)

[Practicing Resilience in Uncertain Times →](#)

[Psychological Safety: Safe, Supported, and Seen →](#)

[Listen to Allsteel's Virtual Learning Lab Series →](#)

[Screening Solutions →](#)

[No Silver Bullet: A Perspective on Antimicrobials →](#)

[GSA Contract Disaster Recovery Supplier →](#)

[COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Office Workspaces →](#)

California Department of Public Health

No practices contained herein will guaranty that COVID-19 will not be transmitted. The practices recommended in this book are based on knowledge at time of publication, recognizing the planning for a post-pandemic world is a rapidly changing and learning experience.

Allsteel is ready to help customers navigate this new reality and help organizations keep their employees at the center of their decisions on distributed work.

[Need Help? Connect with Us →](#)