

# FUTURE PROOFING THE OFFICE

*Preparing today's workplace for  
tomorrow*

## THE FUTURE OF WORKPLACE

COVID-19 has altered many aspects of our society. The way we live our lives is changing and will continue to evolve even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides. As we seek to understand the role of design post-pandemic, one thing remains clear: moments of crisis also present opportunity. As designers driven by the prospect of transforming all dimensions of the human experience, we advocate for spaces that support health and wellness and create future proof concepts so that companies may adapt and evolve without the need for relocation. With every project, our team promises and delivers spaces that meet the standards of today and tomorrow.

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**30%**

Almost a third of all office space will be used flexibly by 2030

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**7%**

Only 7% of workers want to go back into a physical office 5 days a week

## FUTURE PROOFING THE OFFICE

One area of our lives that has changed the most since the onset of COVID-19 is the workplace. Before the pandemic, 90 percent of the average person's lifetime was spent indoors, mostly in the office. However, the days of routine office hours and the daily commutes are long gone. Not to mention, people are drastically reconsidering what is important to them at work as a result of the virus and have different expectations of the workplace moving forward. It has become increasingly important for businesses to incorporate new strategies to office design to embrace the new workplace dynamic for the sake of achieving future proof solutions. So what does it take to accomplish this?

Throughout the pandemic, the term "the new normal" has been used but holds little meaning for the future of the office. Rather, "the next normal" is a more effective and all-encompassing term that foreshadows what is yet to come. For businesses looking to curate a workplace that is equipped for the future, they must first establish what that next normal looks like. While it may be difficult to predict how people will work even a year from now, companies can start by establishing a structure that dictates the options available for employees. As countries start to welcome employees back through their doors, we can expect to see a hybrid-virtual model that combines remote and on-site working. New to many organizations, this work style grants employees increased productivity for both individuals and small teams, more access to talent, individual flexibility, and overall improvements to employee satisfaction rates. Historically speaking, hybrid-virtual models have not been universally preferred, but COVID-19 has proven that staff is capable of working remotely while maintaining the same levels of productivity that would otherwise be found in a traditional office setting. The employment of such organizational cultures is one of many steps taken to ensure a resilient office.

Despite all the ways the coronavirus pandemic has normalized working from home, a recent survey conducted by JLL revealed that three in four workers hope to return to an office soon. Roughly one-quarter of office workers hope to return to the office full-time after the health risks of the virus subside, while about half hope their employer supports a hybrid model of being remote part-time (on average twice a week, per survey results) and in

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The office should be **dynamic, an ever-evolving destination.**

What brands need today, may not be what they need tomorrow, so our goal is to create a **foundation for constant iteration** - to better address those future needs.

Craig Anderchak, ASID, NCIDQ  
Regional Interior Design Director

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the office for the remainder of the workweek. Though the findings make it evident that much of the workforce long for days back in the office, we need to understand the why—but, it is quite simple. People yearn for the ease and accessibility of collaboration that was present in the office. Possible, but difficult, remote working is unlike in-person collaboration which challenges people to think, interact, and share ideas. Fruitful and meaningful relationships are built upon in person, not online.

Due to the acceleration of the digital revolution post-pandemic, many companies have discovered how critical the role of technology is in their day to day operations. To equip staff with the proper tools and technologies to successfully transition their workforce online for months to come, organizations were faced with revamping what they already had. To build a workplace that is proofed for the future, the adoption of up-to-date technology and systems will be crucial to support staff for years to come—with or without a pandemic.

In addition to technology and a hybrid model, a workspace must be fluid with adaptive elements. By taking into consideration how the workplace will evolve, as well as the preferences of current and future employees, companies can curate spaces that are multi-functional and adaptable to various styles of working. Not to mention, modular interior design elements such as movable walls allow spaces to be multi-functional, adding fluidity and dynamism to the design. And while the definition of a workspace has certainly evolved during the pandemic, providing flexible spaces will be part of the next normal. In addition to working more collaboratively, modern employees will want to take advantage of these relaxed approaches as it relates to flexibility. As this progresses, it will be imperative to incorporate spaces within the office that cater to different work styles—making companies better prepared as attitudes and behaviors continue to shift.

The way we work and the workplace itself are constantly changing. While that presents a handful of opportunities for companies to improve their office work styles, it also gives rise to new challenges. However, to meet the needs of a future that we can't fully predict or anticipate begins with being open to new ideas, technologies, and preferences. Without being able to know whether or not the workplace will be shaken just as drastically as it did back in March, companies must be prepared to provide an office for any type of change that could potentially come.

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## KEY CONSIDERATIONS



### Flexible Futures

Utilizing spatial elements that have built-in flexibility is the first step in creating an evergreen design. Think furniture over fixtures and flexible dividers over walls. Look to retail for inspiration with pop-up privacy or nap pods, without changing the physical footprint. Magnetic graphic systems allow for inexpensive modifications and dedicated shelving, peg walls, or digital screens provide a platform for temporary featured content.



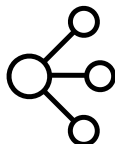
### Community Is King

Invest in larger, multi-purpose space in your office. From teammate collaboration to after-hours entertainment, prioritizing these brand-centric environments allows a third space that employees cannot replicate from their home office. This dedicated space will become a destination to foster community and encourage teammate engagement.



### Invest in Technology

From dedicated Zoom suites to dynamic video walls, brands that invest in technology will not only have a more frictionless foundation to support blended teams, but are also creating a platform for ever-changing content. Featuring new, digital content is an efficient way to make a space feel fresh while watching the bottom line.



### Take Your Amenities Virtual

While in-office gyms and cafes won't lose their value, offering virtual-based incentives to employees will allow for more customization and flexibility to services and content. By considering virtual amenities like access to streaming fitness, discounts on food delivery apps, or even virtual doctor visits, you can prioritize your workplace square footage and keep the perks in the cloud.



### Four Season Entertainment

This past year we saw a surge in the return to the great outdoors and this trend won't peak anytime soon. Consider investing in a dedicated outdoor space that retains Wi-Fi connectivity to provide an extension to your traditional office footprint. In colder climates, provide a four seasons alternative with a covered space, access to natural light, views of nature, and the ability to engage in non-work-related activities.



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