



Eruption of Disruption

At the crossroad of the physical and virtual office

As the global pandemic, COVID-19 continues to spread, there are certainties we all can take solace in. First, the human race has endured many great challenges throughout history and we will overcome this challenge too. We are masters at adaptability and that adaptability is the key to survivability. Second, businesses big and small; schools and universities; healthcare facilities; stadiums and sports, all must deal with a “new normal” if the global economy is to thrive once again. Flexible and safe workplaces and learning spaces alike must become agile or “adaptable” as the part of the new normal as remote workplaces alone cannot accommodate the need for mankind to interact in business, learning, and treatments.

The same; but different

A recent Gartner, Inc. survey of 317 CFOs and Finance leaders on March 30, 2020 revealed that 74% will only move 5% of their previously on-site workforce to permanently remote positions post-COVID19. Roughly 26% of respondents said they were considering moving upward of 20% of their workforce to remote positions¹. “This data is an example of the lasting impact the current corona virus crisis will have on the way companies do business,” said Alexander Bant, practice vice president, research for the Gartner Finance Practice. “CFOs, already under pressure to tightly manage costs, clearly sense an opportunity to realize the cost benefits of a remote workforce. In fact, nearly a quarter of respondents said they will move at least 20%

¹ <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-04-03-gartner-cfo-surey-reveals-74-percent-of-organizations-to-shift-some-employees-to-remote-work-permanently2>

of their on-site employees to permanent remote positions.”

Nonetheless, extrapolating the data another way, this means 94% of respondents expect 80% to 100% of their work force to return to the office.

Similarly, very close results were presented by a JLL report that found 58% of office workers missed the office, with those 35 and younger showing a stronger desire to return. That same report, based on Gensler in their panel-based 'U.S. Work from Home Survey 2020', shows only 12% of U.S. workers want to work from home full-time. Most want to return to the workplace, but with critical changes².

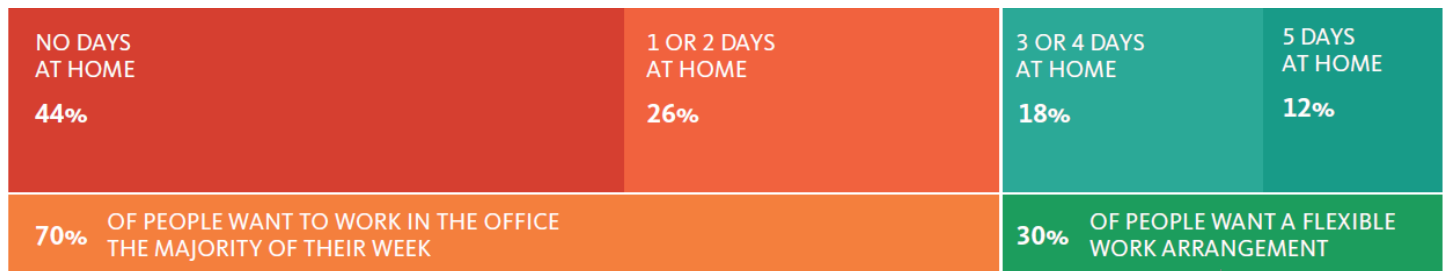


Figure 1: 70% of people want to work in the office the majority of their week according to Gensler's 'U.S. Work from Home Survey 2020'

With a large swath of the workforce and students returning to work or campus, executives are focused on two main areas: safety and agility. No company, school or executives want to put the safety of their workers and students in harms way. And in providing for a safe work environment and learning places they must allow for agility in terms of flexible floor plans that change frequently to adapt to shifting usage patterns and account for contact tracing of those that use those resources.

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The need for agile sage workplaces and learning spaces

One thing is for sure, the transformation of the office is happening, and change is inevitable. Notwithstanding the legal implications of rental agreements, loss of revenue, drop in footfall, forced closure and force majeure, this might be one of the most difficult hurdles to surpass. But creative and real solutions are out there today to make the transformation possible, in an agile protected workplace, and with the strong will and skill of all teams involved.

- The transformed office will introduce the following;
- Pre-screening "healthy worker" kiosks that can interface with employee management systems or security systems.
- Desktop and mobile notification systems that keep employees instantly informed and are synchronized with the corporate communications signage on campus.
- The need for wayfinding, room booking and desk hoteling to create dynamic and flexible floor plans.

² <https://www.gensler.com/uploads/document/695/file/Gensler-US-Work-From-Home-Survey-2020-Briefing-1.pdf>

Such technology-enabled systems can be used by building managers to schedule cleaning of work spaces that are rotated out, possibly relocated if a department becomes infected. And it helps employees feel safe about what desk, office, meeting room they are occupying, when they were last cleaned, and who was the last occupant.

The major change for companies will be that employees will want to continue to work from home. Preliminary findings from Spacelab show a large majority of workers (59%) want to work from home at least two days per week in future. When asked their views on the most important future design considerations for the office, respondents prioritized the provision of technology that would enable “work anywhere” collaboration³.



The digital signage market is expected to increase from \$20.8 billion in 2019 to \$29.6 billion by 2024, growing annually at a rate of 7.3 percent, as interactive digital signage offers extra value during the pandemic⁴.



317 CFOs Revealed the following:

74% of companies plan to shift to more remote work post COVID-19, out of which;

27% of companies will have

5% that will remain remote

25% of companies will have

10% that will remain remote

17% of companies will have

20% that will remain remote

4% of companies will have

50% that will remain remote

2% of companies will have more than

50% that will remain remote

Let's take a look at the new floor-plan

Starting at the entrance of the building or office; here, all the necessary signs are up to maintain a proper hand-washing hygiene, respect the 6-foot distance and the preference to wear some sort of a face covering, with an update on the working hours and other relevant information. Due to the dynamic nature of such content, the majority of businesses are opting for digital boards or kiosks, as they do not require physical contact, and they provide an abundance of features, from physical temperature checks with thermal scanning and touch-less voice control, to emergency alerts, updated news and bulletins and other, all managed remotely.



Figure 3: Shrm.org warning posters at business entrances as well as social distancing guidelines at work

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Technologies introduced

Physical screening

- 1** Thermal Sensing
Contactless Access
Facial Recognition

Professional Distancing

- 2** Wayfinding
Hoteling/Hot-Desking
Voice Control

Communication & Collaboration

- 3** Instant Messaging
Video Conferencing
Visual Communications



As recently highlighted in a CBS report, stating that this technology is actually helping to reopen the economy; "What we're seeing is there will be a new normal that will involve thermal screening as a frontline tool," Chris Bainter, director of global business development at FLIR Systems, told CBS News' Jericka Duncan⁵. These automated kiosks are proving to add value to access and flow control, maintaining a safe work environment and a secure route for visitors to their destinations, a prerequisite for getting back to the physical office.

Figure 4: Temperature sensing provided on stand-alone kiosk or part of a gate-keeping access solution

Continuing down that one-way journey, and ensuring we're surrounded by that 6-foot imaginary bubble, we've probably reached the reception area, that might be equipped with additional visual communication tools, directing staff and visitors alike to their work or meeting areas.

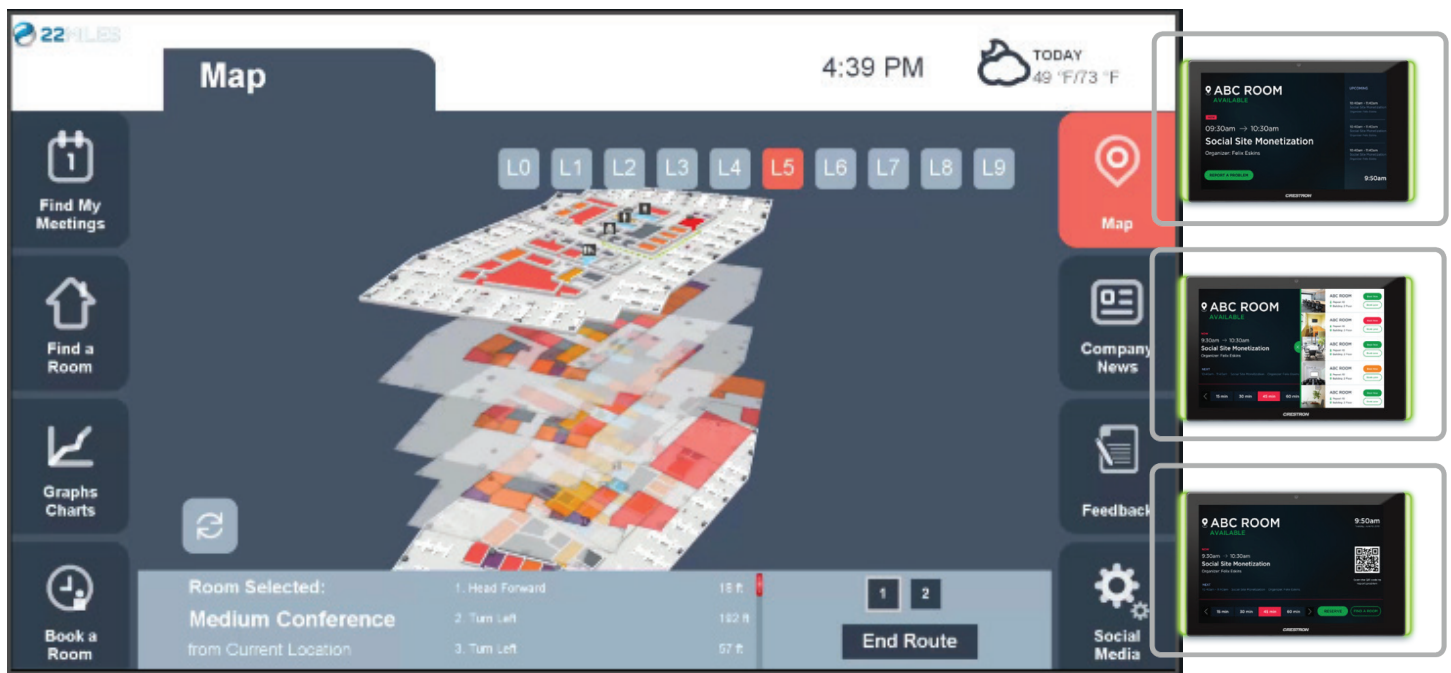


Figure 5: Wayfinding kiosks facilitating safe movements in the transformed office with room booking integration tablets displaying room list, room list with photos, and Carry2Mobile.

Once again, interactive wayfinding supports scheduled navigation to control traffic pathways and flow around the workplace; from cafeteria usage, break-rooms, or other common areas for spatial consideration. Moreover, features like the virtual receptionist, room booking and hoteling, regulate available huddle space or conference rooms so there are less people wandering the halls, but instead can now dynamically see their planned routes, or visualize their availabilities and land in their allocated rooms quickly while controlling professional distancing in the office.

Mobile can also be leveraged to further highlight routes, dynamically and on-the-go to avoid clusters, and to provide density controls for a safer work environment.

With the adoption of interactive wayfinding, the user experience is enhanced with multi-floor destinations, screen navigation orientation, ADA compliance within a smart-pathway algorithm. A proper solution should now provide additional wayfinding features for best social/professional distancing and occupancy controls. The system will be leveraging preferred route scheduling to control traffic flow or one-way routing, to also assist with managing break room and cafeteria usage per scheduled office regions and departments.

It is considering more AIoT type applications from sensors and even smart voice controls, to avoid contact with screens. All this will allow auto-generated routes based on personalized shortest path and ease of accessibility with smart detour scheduling for safe movements in the office or campus. And along that navigation path, dynamic pop-ups will add alerts and safety notices with images and descriptions. This experience can be ported to the mobile device with instant turn by turn directions through SMS, QR codes, and emails.

With all its features and benefits, and the live feedback and utilization data received through the analytics engine, it is fundamental that organizations adopt wayfinding as a mean to fast track their digital transformation.

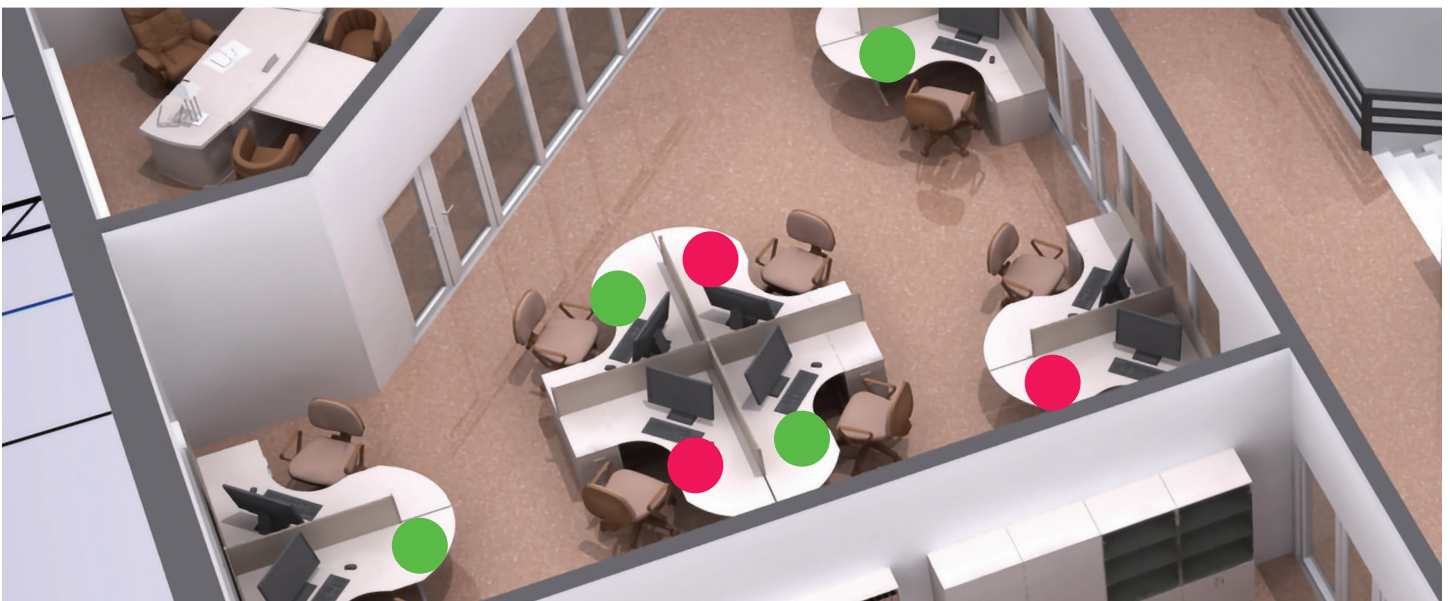


Figure 6: Hot-desking with sensors will allocate and block working space maintaining a safe and healthy environment

Looking at the new floor plan, be it huddle rooms, open offices or hot-desks, the 6-foot distance markings will be noticeable around actual seats and tables. Hot-desking provides an additional advantage by blocking some 'red-desks' and allowing the use of 'green-desks' to dynamically distribute the space per usage for that particular shift or office capacity, and that applies to meetings and room bookings too. As a new practice, and with a blended work option, more and more staff are placed on staggered or rotating shifts so that offices aren't filled to capacity, and ample professional distancing is maintained.

This integrated system, running on adequately selected hardware that ties in office capacity with sensors and edge devices, collaboration, visual communications, safe access and interactive wayfinding, will significantly create a safe, and more favorable professional distancing and effective strategy to the return to office, in addition to improved productivity.

Communication is key

One thing is clear during this pandemic, and with all remote perks present, employers are going above and beyond by over-communicating. Be it daily virtual stand-ups, weekly or biweekly all-company meetings, even a 'Family fun Friday' or a 'Pet parade', immense efforts are being put in place to maintain a healthy, supportive, fun and accountable work environment.

"We believe that the most successful companies in the future will be those that increase permeability between their internal machinery and external talent in the form of fast-paced and highly-innovative companies developing emerging technology."

As Alex Scandurra, CEO of co-working space and innovation hub Stone & Chalk describes it "While it's difficult to predict exactly what a post-COVID-19 workplace will look like, we anticipate that remote working and digital collaboration will play an ongoing role in our industry and beyond".

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Technology is playing a big role here too, from collaboration tools with videoconferencing, social media, VR and AR, to instant messaging and desktop announcements, providing dynamic and relevant information to teams, departments or even regions through desktop notification solutions. These applications can be used to give the admins access to their remote users' workstations and provide infotainment at home through a widget or screen saver. All things

that maintain a live company culture and the water cooler conversations flowing, but in a meaningful and immersive visual communication way, and contributing to work-life balance in this unbalanced and uncertain chapter humanity is living today.

Moving forward. What's next?

The current uncertainty has made a stark change in how organizations will rethink and what the employee desires in the workplace design overhauls, and office alterations should put the most recent technology innovations and safety at the heart of the work space conversion.

Moving forward, returning to the office will turn out to be significantly more about meeting spaces instead of socializing spots. Uniting workers and keeping up efficiency will be key for companies, with video conferencing at the core of the collaboration in the agile office of the new-normal.

"Executives must come to terms with a new reality – flexibility and safety are the new normal when planning how to best use space." Thomas Strade - COO 22Miles Inc.

Ready to seamlessly transform your workspace?

Book a demo by emailing info@22miles.com

<https://www.22miles.com>