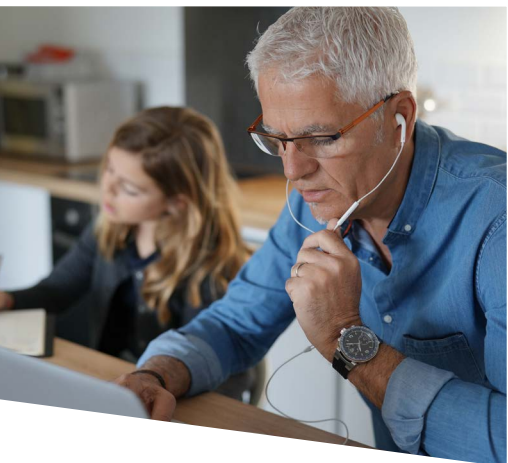# Office 2.0: Returning to Work in a Post-COVID World

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching impacts. Among them, the almost-overnight explosion of working from home. Organizations throughout the world closed offices and sent office employees home to work. Internet connectivity and cloud-based solutions allowed companies to continue to function. Employees collaborated via video conferencing platforms, accessed network drives using VPN solutions, and managed their day-to-day tasks from their home office, couch, or kitchen table. After months of working from home, many company leaders have decided that work from home…works.
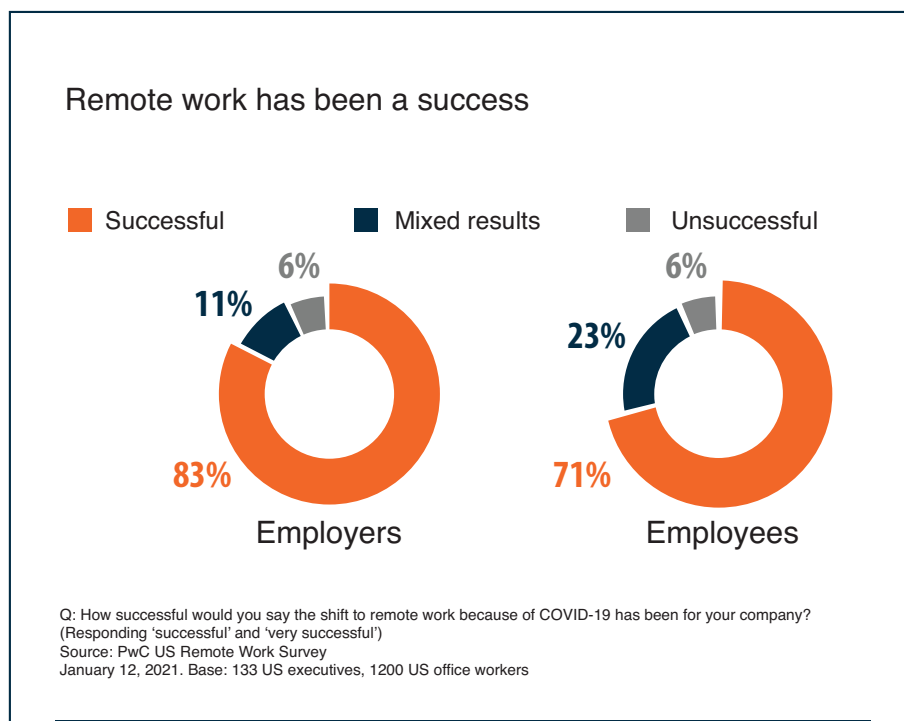
In a survey PwC conducted with US-based business executives, respondents overwhelmingly said remote work has been a success: 83% of employers said the shift to remote work has been successful for their company.

PANDUIT®
infrastructure for a connected world

ATLONA®
a PANDUIT® company

Office 2.0: Returning to Work in a Post-COVID World

With the success of working from home, does that mean the end of commercial office buildings? The answer to that is a resounding 'no.' While a small number of executives say they will shift to a fully distributed work force, that will not be the norm. The same PwC survey found that most companies will embrace a hybrid approach to work going forward: a mix of work from home (or a third-party location like the neighborhood coffee shop) and work from the office. This flexibility is important to executives and employees alike.

Remote work has been a success

- Successful
- Mixed results
- Unsuccessful

Employers: 83% Successful, 11% Mixed results, 6% Unsuccessful

Employees: 71% Successful, 23% Mixed results, 6% Unsuccessful

Q: How successful would you say the shift to remote work because of COVID-19 has been for your company?
(Responding 'successful' and 'very successful')
Source: PwC US Remote Work Survey
January 12, 2021. Base: 133 US executives, 1200 US office workers

In a survey conducted by PwC, employers and employees alike reported that they felt remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has been successful.
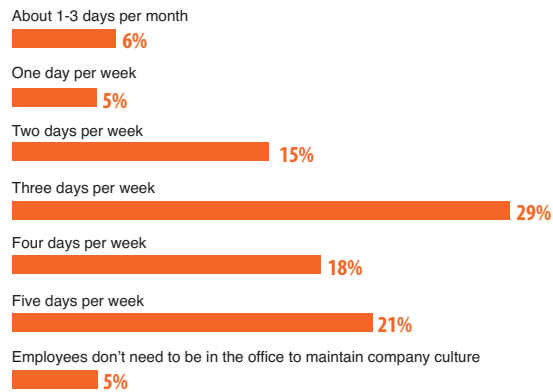
Source: PwC

Office 2.0: Returning to Work in a Post-COVID World — CONTINUED

In the same PwC survey, executives said they expect companies to embrace a hybrid approach to returning to the office: some days in the office and some days remote.

Source: PwC 🌐 www

Few executives think company culture will survive a purely remote working set up

■ To keep a strong culture, employees should be in the office...

About 1-3 days per month
6%

One day per week
5%

Two days per week
15%

Three days per week
29%

Four days per week
18%

Five days per week
21%

Employees don't need to be in the office to maintain company culture
5%

Q: If COVID-19 was not a concern, how often do you think a typical employee needs to be in the office, if at all, in order to maintain a distinctive culture for the company?
Totals do not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Source: PwC US Remote Work Survey
January 12, 2021. Base: 133 US executives

The role of the office building, however, will shift. The office building of tomorrow will not be row after row of people working in cubicles. It will have a decidedly different purpose:

*The next generation of corporate office space will be used to showcase brands, attract and retain employees, and inspire collaboration, culture, and community supported by an increasing investment in building technology; a place where people **want** to work.*

Deloitte supports this theory in their Deloitte Insights 2021 Commercial Real Estate Outlook 🌐 www

"Companies that adopt a hybrid work approach will likely use offices to develop more emotional connections, facilitate collaboration, and create human experiences."

Office 2.0: Returning to Work in a Post-COVID World — CONTINUED

Collaboration Space

QR Code for Touch-Free Option

To fulfill these new roles, corporate buildings will see significant changes in both the functionality and operation.

Among the key shifts:

- The buildout of more collaboration spaces: conference rooms, training rooms, and huddle spaces provide opportunities for employees to meet and for face-to-face meetings with customers or clients

- Meeting rooms will be larger to allow more physical distancing between occupants

- An increased reliance on AV technologies will facilitate collaboration in those spaces, including the ability for remote workers to participate via video conference

- Expanded health, wellness, and safety technology, doing everything from controlling building access to circulating clean air to monitoring the population density in various areas of the building

- More touch-free options – motion sensors, voice activation, and QR codes will control a multitude of applications such as lighting, HVAC, elevators, AV equipment, and room scheduling; even sinks and coffee service will be touch free

- Fewer individual workspaces and more hoteling areas for employees to work at when onsite

- Expanded wireless connectivity will facilitate workers moving throughout the building when onsite, along with connecting sensors and technology used in building operations

These changes are expected to begin almost immediately.

The PwC survey found that 87% of executives expect to make changes to their real estate strategy over the next 12 months.

www.panduit.com

Making the Office a Space where Employees WANT to Work

One of the important hurdles that employers will need to address going forward is how to make the office a destination where employees want to be.

Note: The focus on employee well-being has opened a new seat
at the table when it comes to technology decisions.
Human Resources is now frequently involved in making IT and
technology decisions that impact the work force.

Safety First

Employees must feel the office is a safe environment to return to. Beyond security measures like controlled access and security cameras, the post-COVID office needs to address factors like cleanliness, physical distancing, and controlling population density. The Deloitte report backs this up. "Our survey responses also suggest that unlike the prior emphasis on location, health and safety-related smart building features, and occupation density may play a more important role in leasing decisions going forward."

A Sense of Purpose

Individual work can be accomplished remotely. Employees will benefit from being onsite for team events, training, meetings, and collaborative experiences. Collaboration is expected to be the single biggest reason that employees will return to the office.

Make it a Destination

Beyond the job function, companies are looking for ways to make the office more of a destination. A community-type environment, with dining and recreation options, along with fun, engaging events, will encourage people to be in the office more frequently. In an interview published by LoopNet 🌐, Patrick Donnelly, client leader at BHDP Architecture in Cincinnati, says, "A physical space that exemplifies the corporate culture of a company, while encouraging workers to come together and connect, is core to creating a vibrant community. It's critical in the new way of working to draw people in and provide an opportunity for both planned and unplanned interactions, where people can chat and form relationships.

www.atlona.com

5

The Collaborative Work Environment

With in-person collaboration as the primary driver for being in the office, more attention – and space – will be devoted to collaborative experiences. Some considerations:

- BYOD/BYOM options so participants can wirelessly share from any device they're using

    BYOD vs. BYOM: What's the difference?

    BYOD, or Bring Your Own Device, simply means meeting participants are bringing their own devices (laptops, tablets, or phones) to present from during a meeting, rather than relying on a resident computer in the meeting space.

    BYOM, Bring Your Own Meeting, means the meeting organizer is providing the platform for the meeting, as well (Teams, Zoom, or other videoconferencing services).

    BYOM is becoming common. When organizing a meeting, the organizer needs to ensure that all participants, whether in-person or remote, can see the content and hear all audio, including seeing and hearing all participants.

- Support for an engaging experience for those in the room and those who are remote
    - *Multiple screens enable meeting participants to see the ideas being shared, and their co-workers who aren't in the room*
    - *Cameras and digital white boards allow remote participants have a full view of activity in the room*
- Easy-to-use technology as a wide variety of users move in and out of rooms throughout a workday
- Touch-free options to connect to display equipment, and control lights, blinds, and HVAC
- Room scheduling tools that show real-time room usage

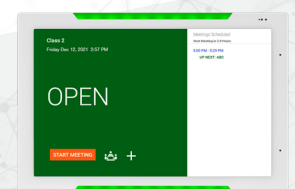# The Infrastructure that Enables Office 2.0

With an increased dependency on technology in new office designs, a robust and reliable network infrastructure is more important than ever. New systems enable coordination and collaboration with an eye on employee productivity and safety.

Buildings have been evolving over the past decade into smarter buildings, with converged systems that communicate with each other to improve efficiencies. Changes that will be implemented as part of the new Office 2.0 trends will accelerate the implementation of intelligence. What should your infrastructure support?

Collaboration spaces:

AV solutions that are touch free and easy to control and operate are a key first step. Atlona, a Panduit company, has a range of AV signal distribution and control products that support BYOD and touch-free operation, so participants can share information from any device without the need to disinfect components between uses.
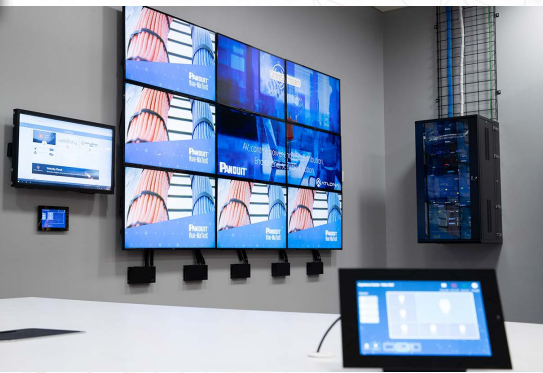

AT-VTP-1000VL

AT-OME-MS52W

www.panduit.com

The Infrastructure that Enables Office 2.0 — CONTINUED

Scheduling tools that connect to scheduling software help optimize the use of meeting spaces. Room scheduling tools provide real-time visibility into whether a room is being used – not just whether it is reserved, but if it is in use. This improves efficient use of available rooms, rather than rooms sitting empty, or employees scrambling to find a space for an impromptu meeting.

Digital signage:
Deliver announcements or provide wayfinding throughout the facility using Atlona AV over IP technologies.

Ethernet-enabled applications:
Everything from traditional data connections to lighting, building automation, and power can be distributed over Ethernet.

Wireless connectivity:
With a more mobile workforce in the building, the ability to wirelessly connect to data and cellular networks has never been more critical. Robust and reliable cabling and connectivity supports Wi-Fi and in-building wireless applications.

Power over Ethernet:
More and more building applications can be powered via Ethernet – using the same cabling to deliver both data and power. Panduit Category 6A copper cables and connectors are designed to manage PoE better than any other solution on the market.

Space optimization:
Every piece of technology deployed in the building puts another piece of equipment in the telecommunications room. Squeeze more functionality into that space with small diameter and high-capacity solutions that optimize the space.

Wellness technology:
Temperature tracking, contact tracing, and measuring population density are among the wellness functions going into buildings. Whether hard-wired or wireless, these systems easily connect via Ethernet.

www.atlona.com
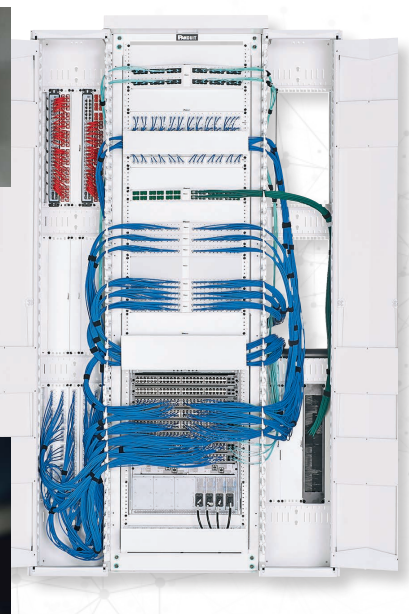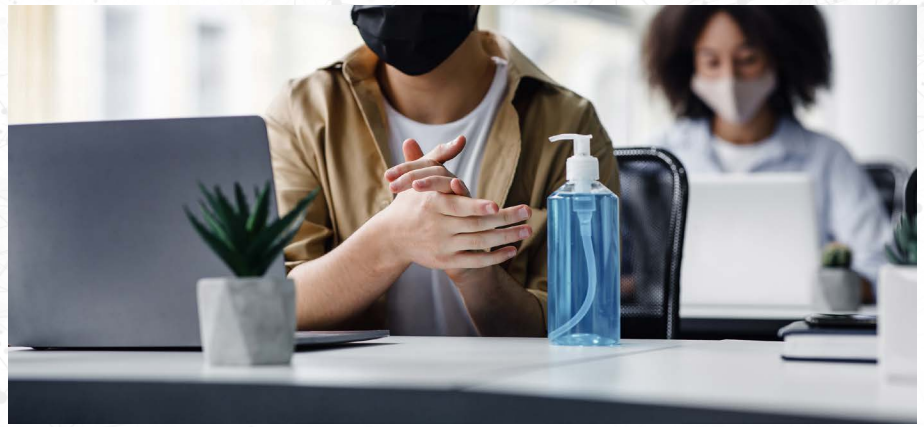
Getting Started

Whatever steps your organization is taking to address returning your workforce to the office, chances are, your building and your employees will function differently than they did previously. COVID-19 accelerated the move to a distributed work force and a hybrid work force is here to stay for many companies. Your organization will determine what is right for your operation and your employees. And, once those decisions are made, Panduit is here to help with the robust and reliable infrastructure and AV solutions that make it work.

Whether you are renovating an existing space to respond to changing workplace dynamics, or are embarking on the development of a new office space, there are many ways that technology can improve the office experience for your employees. Learn more about how we can support your changing office at www.panduit.com/newoffice.