



The Hybrid Workplace

(how to) thrive at work in the new reality

Solving the hybrid workplace

It's no secret - the way we work has changed forever. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us to stay connected while remaining physically apart, and this new reality has required organizations to quickly react by employing and supporting remote work more than ever before. Recognizing the urgent need, Cisco's first response was to offer free video conferencing and security solutions along with emptying our offices and shipping surplus of video devices to schools, hospitals and governments worldwide.

Why? Because, we believe the world works better face-to-face whether that's in-person or remote. And, when you can't meet in-person, life-like video and collaboration maintains this experience best. As the market-share leader in video conferencing, Cisco has researched the most efficient ways to leverage this technology, and we want to share our learnings in this guide.

In this next normal that we're embarking on, the main challenge that we identified for companies will be supporting a workforce split between the home office and the traditional office. We call this the *hybrid workplace*. There is a need and urge to get back to the office, but keeping employees physically safe and mentally healthy is the primary concern.

As quickly as organizations have adapted to maintaining productivity from home offices as an initial response to the pandemic, they are now faced with a long-term strategy that requires cultural change, strategic planning and better tools. The good news is this can be an opportunity for your business to stay competitive beyond just handling the current situation.

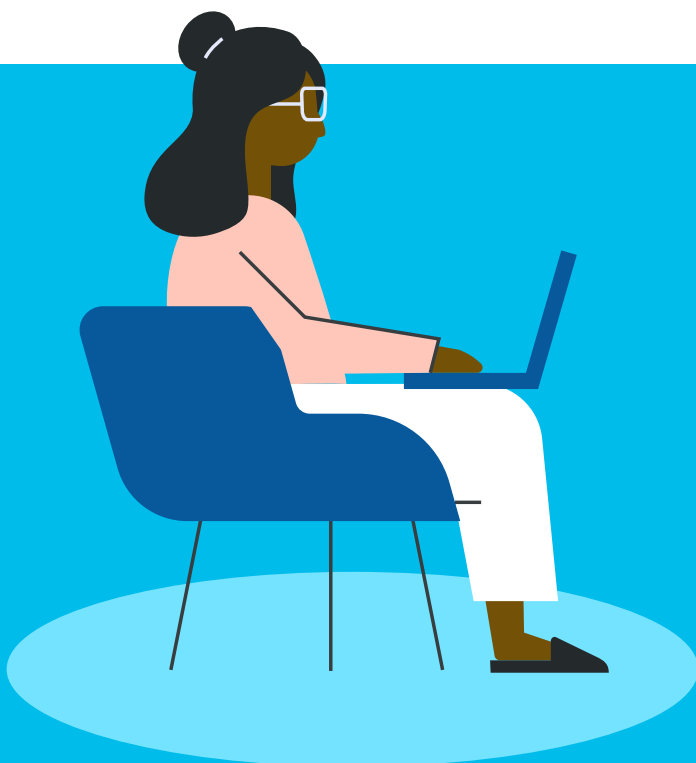
While your other investments related to the pandemic may strictly target safety, moving to the cloud, adopting a mature home office strategy and enabling the collaboration spaces in the office has incredibly positive ripple effects:

- Recruit the best talent regardless of where they live
- Save the environment while saving travel costs
- Give your employees better work-life balance
- Stay productive and collaborative wherever you are, and do it in high definition
- Enable your offices with smarter services across buildings, rooms, and desks with sensors and digital interfaces

In the following pages, we have laid out key principles to help you set up a safe, effective and engaging hybrid workplace of your own. So dive in, stay safe and please get in touch if you want to learn more!

Sandeep Mehra, VP/GM

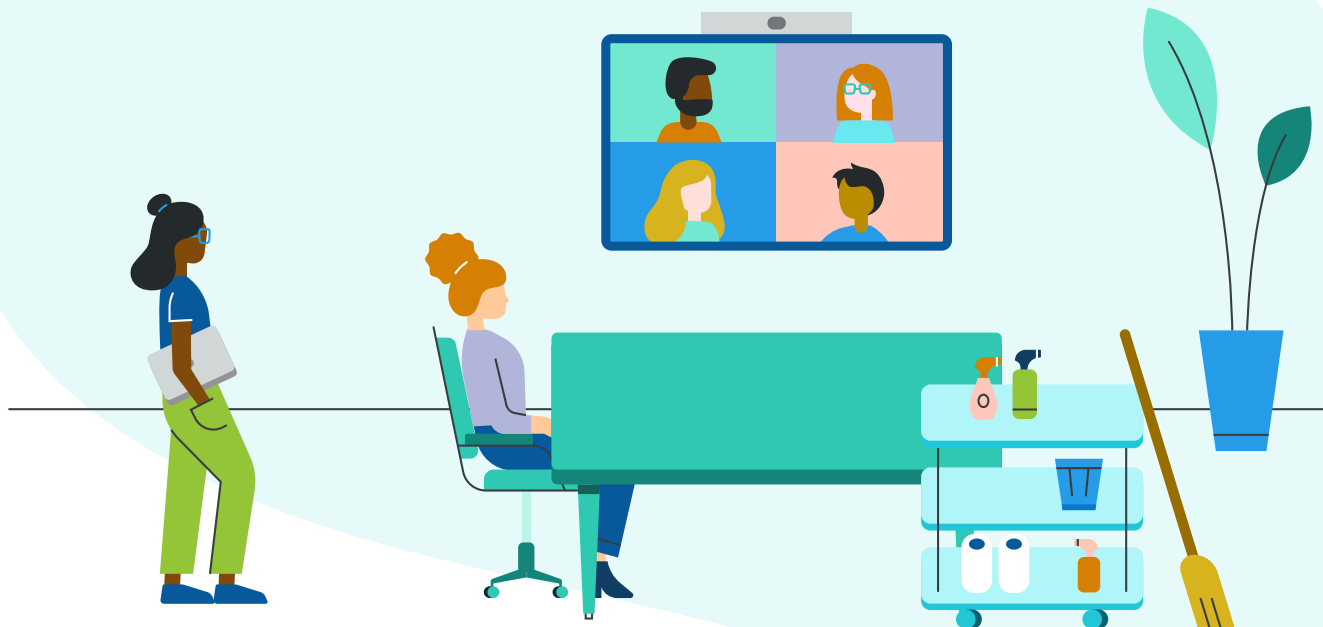
Sondre Ager-Wick, Director of Design Webex Rooms



Contents

1. Solving the hybrid workplace
2. Keeping your people safe
3. Scenarios from a hybrid workplace
4. Moving forward

Keeping your people safe



7 principles for a safe office

We identified seven recurring principles across expert recommendations for a safe workplace during COVID-19. These principles should be implemented by a multidisciplinary team stretching across leadership, HR, IT, site managers and employees.

The following pages identify trends and measures for a safe, collaborative workplace founded on these principles.

- 1 Reduce human-to-human contact**
- 2 Minimize in-person meetings**
- 3 Minimize the need to touch anything**
- 4 Guide and educate people**
- 5 Clean and decontaminate**
- 6 Measure people's temperature**
- 7 Track people count and movements**

Sources:

[WHO](#)

[US Government](#)

[JLL](#)

[Nelson](#)

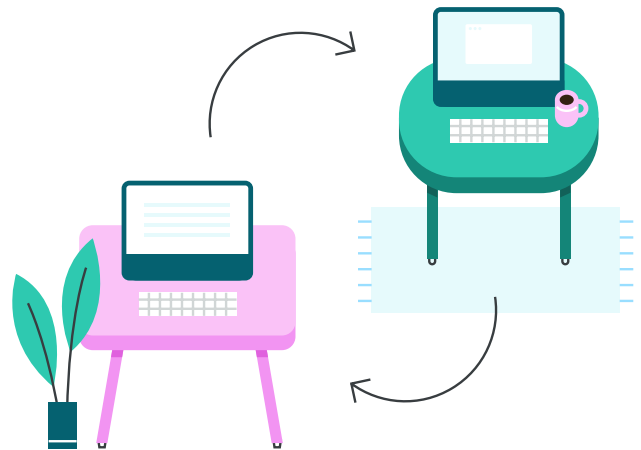
[BBC](#)

[Bloomberg](#)

[Buzzfeed](#)

Reimagined use of hot desks

With a majority of workers moving to remote or flexible workstyles, hot-desking may remain popular as fewer employees will need dedicated office space. However, the practice will require an overhaul in terms of how stations are monitored and cleaned. Consider 'single-use per day' or 'clean in, clean out' policies for existing spaces to meet health and safety standards.



More small meeting rooms and wider use of desk collaboration devices

Keeping a safe distance in meetings is easier when joining from multiple locations - even if from the conference room next door in the same office building. Semi-open spaces designed for flexible use are also perfect for ad-hoc meetings and brainstorming. Employees can easily bring personal computers and phones for proximity pairing and no-touch collaboration.

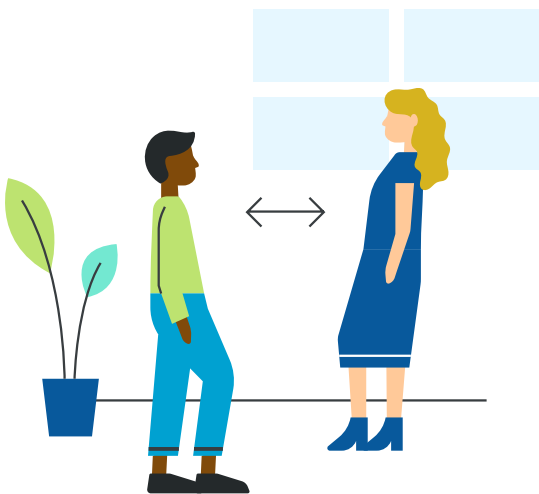
More collaboration, less travel

Travel has already been reduced significantly. Expect it to stay that way for a while causing virtual meetings to be the focus of team collaboration. Having Webex Rooms devices at home and in the office will help ensure equal participation and decision making. Start building changes to your digital infrastructure into your long-term investment strategy now while there is a decreased need for people to gather in one location.



Better ways to meet

An increase in distributed teams and employees coming to the office at different times means there will be fewer spontaneous meetings. Enabling Cisco Webex Hybrid Calendar Service makes it easy for you to plan, schedule and join meetings from any device, no matter where you are while Webex Teams status allows you to see who is available for a quick chat. Cisco Webex Hybrid Calendar supports Microsoft Exchange, Office 365, and Google Calendar.

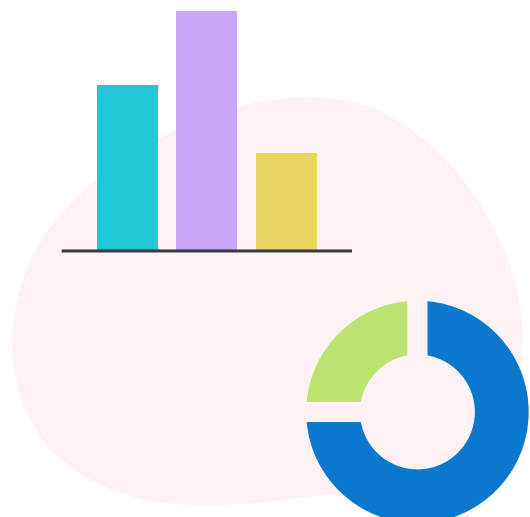


Monitoring and analysis of space usage

Knowing which spaces are in frequent use or currently crowded will help in managing space usage. Thankfully, all Webex Room, Board and Desk series devices come with intelligent people-counting sensors directly embedded. Organizations can build alerts based on capacity, track space popularity, or even create triggers to clean a room after use through simple customizations and available APIs.

Optimization of real estate

Expect to see the tracking and monitoring of real estate usage result in space optimization, flexibility, and cost savings. Our customers tell us that insights and analytics provided by Webex Meetings and Rooms devices are by far the best way of demonstrating savings and ROI. You can confidently make long-term real estate plans backed with data from your Webex solutions.



Scenarios from a hybrid workplace

Working from home

There is no safer place than home. Working from home is also a potential timesaver for your employees in achieving work-life-balance. To make sure they are able to work productively, there are aspects that should be considered:

Cognitive workload

Video conferencing fatigue can be targeted with high-quality audio and video, which minimizes the cognitive workload of picking up cues in meetings.

Collaborate with confidence

Staying professional is still a priority when at home. With Webex devices on both sides, people can join meetings quickly, appear in high fidelity and engage in close collaboration using purpose-built equipment such as the [Webex Desk Pro](#) or Webex Room kit.

Manageability

What about the admin experience of managing home offices? No worries – security, devices and licenses for home offices can all be managed from the Control Hub..



Going to the office

For employees going to the office, guidance and nudging towards the right behavior is critical.

Guide and educate

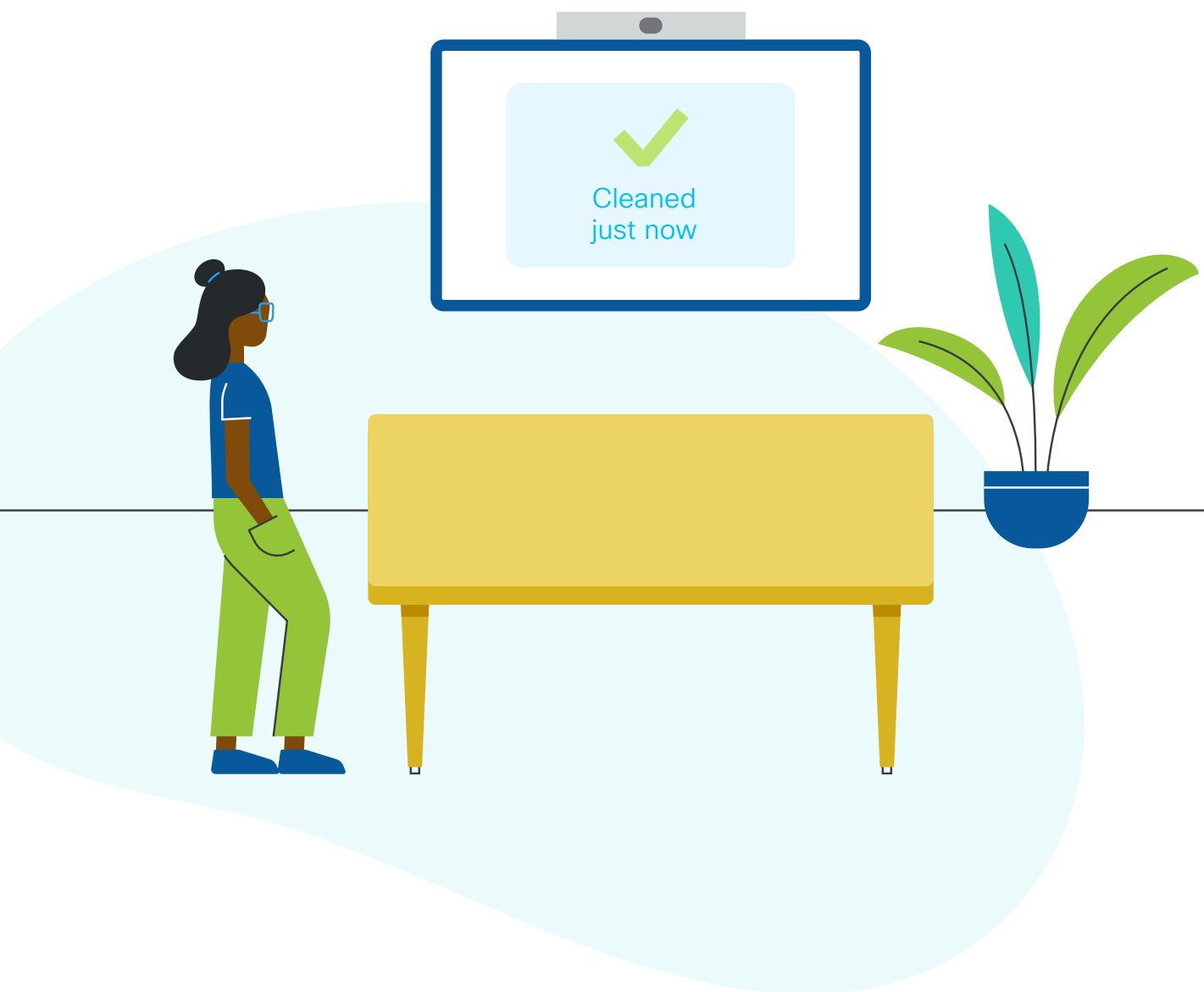
Give employees updated safety guidance through digital signage, easily managed via Control Hub to all shared devices. Here is how to [configure digital signages](#) for your devices.

Simplify safety

Creating a micro-service to show the last time cleaning occurred is easy. Find out how from the [Webex blog](#) or check out the Room Devices section of [DevNet](#).

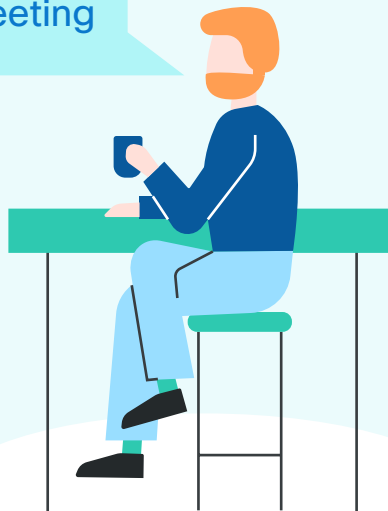
Analytics and tracking

Monitor people density throughout the building by leveraging Cisco DNA Spaces and Meraki. Cisco DNA Spaces offer rich location-based services that you can integrate with any custom HR approach you want to establish. [Discover more about DNA Spaces.](#)



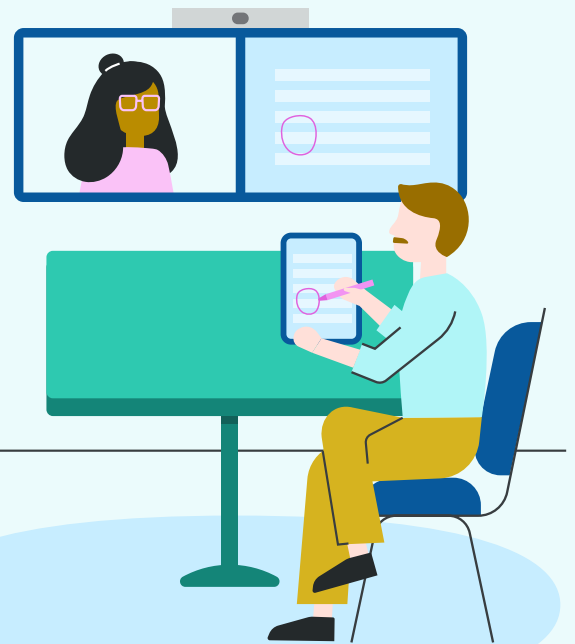
Working together at the office

Join Meeting



Voice control to minimize touch

With [Webex Assistant for Webex Rooms](#), you can control the device using your voice. To further minimize contamination while taking good care of the device, please use the [cleaning guidelines](#).



Personal devices are welcome

With the Webex apps on your personal device you can do amazing things. For example - whiteboard from your home, or a tablet in the meeting room, while it displays on the big screen in the meeting room. Stay safe and collaborative.

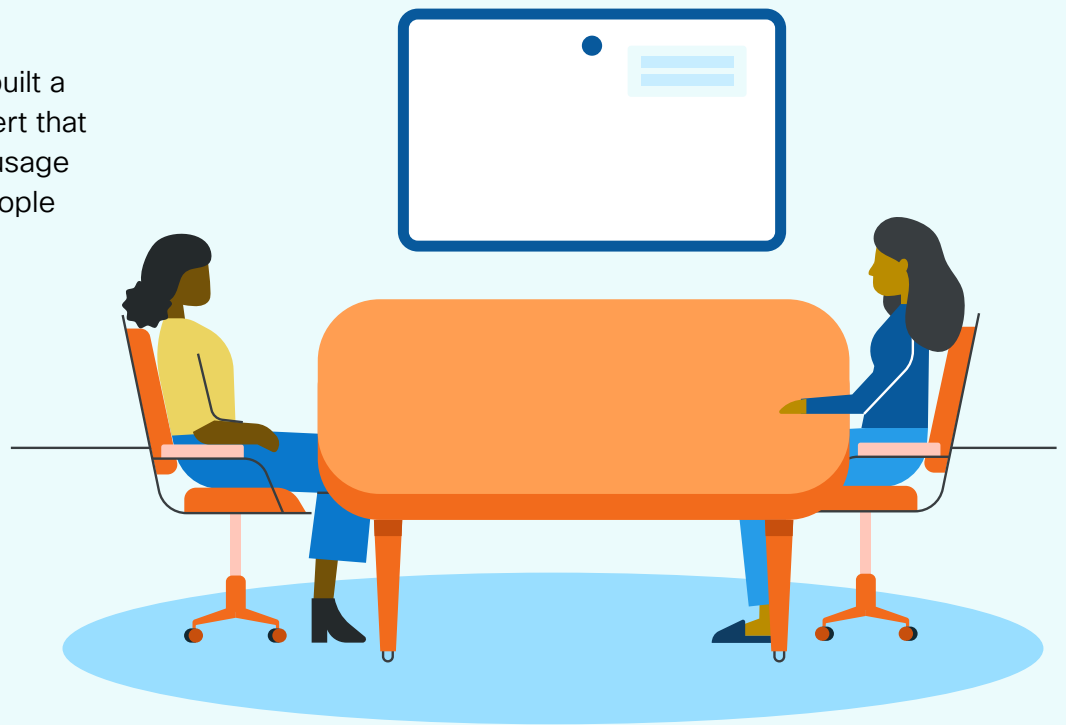


Working together at the office

Oops! There are currently too many people in this room.

Nudging to stay safe

An Australian customer built a custom meeting room alert that reminded people of the usage limits per room, using people count and macros.




Up and running, quickly

Expect sudden changes in location for your employees as they disperse or rotate between home and office.

When they're cloud enabled and have a similar working experience at home and the office, the hassle of getting up and running is minimal.

Wrapping up after a workday



Cleaning alert

The illustration shows a person with a beard and blonde hair, wearing a blue uniform, standing next to a blue cleaning cart. The cart has a broom, two spray bottles, and a bucket. The person is holding a smartphone, and a speech bubble above them says "Cleaning alert".

Simplify decontamination

Based on people count from meeting rooms, or people density tracking in DNA Spaces, cleaning alerts can be arranged to prioritize cleaning for maximum ROI, safety and convenience.

Resilient collaboration

It might not be possible or practical to attend every workshop or meeting in person or virtually - make sure your employees can choose to catch up later in Webex Teams, watch meeting recordings or read automated transcripts with Webex Assistant for Webex Meetings.



Moving forward

Depending on where your business is at now, there are different jobs to be done. The three phases shown below will help you approach this in a systematic way.

	1. Care and continuity	2. Return to the office	3. A hybrid workplace
Suggested goals	Preserve business operations. Provide care and support to employees.	Instill confidence and initiate the hybrid workplace.	Take advantage of your new skills and leverage emerging market opportunities.
Workplace Policies	Only critical employees allowed in the office. Support people working from home.	Controlled use of facilities: prioritize by role, occupancy by appointment, tightly clustered teams. Majority of workforce still working from home based on risk vs reward assessment.	Intelligent use of facilities; available to all and used when needed, based on work activity.
Space Design and Management	Nudge towards social distancing using in-context guidance and education.	Retrofit existing office layouts, reconsider geometries to separate and distance. Reduce density via workstation separation and occupancy limits.	Adjust corporate real estate (CRE) strategies: focus on “safe” collaboration, learning and socializing. More open “we” environments. Dynamically manage density and adjustable spaces. Investigate new materials and fabrics to ease disinfection.
Technology	Enable WFH: laptops, VPN and collaboration tools. Ramp virtual events for executive communications, town halls and education.	Scale video device deployments to support a more dispersed workforce. Deploy hands free tech for workplace interactions. Provide contextual guidance to all.	Leverage data and location-based services - for risk and contact tracing, workplace concierge services, intelligent way-finding, smart-healthy building technology.
Outcomes	Alleviate fears and prove productivity outside the office building.	Win trust, adapt 3Ps (policy, process, procedures) to new realities, enable rapid tech innovation.	Accelerate CRE portfolio optimization, access new talent pools and evolve employee social contracts.

Contact

For more on how Webex Rooms can help your transition to the hybrid workplace, visit www.cisco.com/go/webexrooms or to find which device is right for you, www.cisco.com/go/collabbuynow.



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