



*Achieve
Ambitions*

Three essential truths

driving workplace change due to COVID-19

*An HR guide to creating
a flexible workplace that works*

Hello

Dear fellow HR colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we work indefinitely.

Not only have work routines been affected, but employees — across all roles — are experiencing the pandemic on psychological and emotional fronts. At JLL, we are focused on understanding our employees' well-being, what they need to succeed and how we can support their work. Career uncertainty, personal fear and unknown risks have been overwhelming to many.

We have been addressing these challenges and continue to lead our global workforce of 93,000 employees through the pandemic and back into their workplaces around the world, in shifts. Admittedly, we are a commercial real estate company, so our teams are familiar with best practices to protect real estate; however, the people side has been harder to navigate. Our HR teams have been on the frontlines helping employees, and our clients, manage these concerns and have played a critical part in workplace re-entry conversations. These conversations have led us to address three essential truths driving workplace change due to COVID-19:

1. Listening to your employees builds trust
2. An effective talent strategy incorporates the workplace
3. Employee well-being will be at the forefront of the future workplace



Mary Bilbrey,
Chief Human Resources Officer, JLL

We dive deeper into these truths throughout this workplace guidebook. Our hope in sharing our perspective is that can help you navigate the next normal, support your people and, ultimately, protect your company.

Mary and Ray



Raymond Hall,
Americas Head of Human Resources, JLL



The COVID-19 pandemic jolted us into a new reality

The global pandemic changed life as we know it. All non-essential employees became remote workers during an extended hiatus from the workplace. This presented challenges as employees navigated a new work-life balance which affected their physical, mental and financial well-being. Now as we transition back into workplaces around the world, it's important to keep employee concerns in mind. While HR has always played an important role in shaping the employee experience, the pandemic accelerated the need for HR's expanded role in the physical workplace conversation.

What comes next? The world is different, but employees still have a desire to be in the workplace. The physical workplace will maintain its importance for facilitating innovation and collaboration and, ultimately, employee health, well-being and productivity. People will always need a place to be inspired, brainstorm face-to-face, have spontaneous discussions that turn into million-dollar ideas, build relationships with their colleagues and learn from senior leadership.

While working from home has become the norm for many, our Human Performance Survey of 3,000 office users shows employees retain a strong affinity for the office, with an increased preference for integrating working from home one to two days per week. In the workplace of the future, a hybrid model of remote work and a physical presence in the workplace will be the preferred model to ensure flexibility for employees. Our report, **Offices will find a new purpose**, highlights imperatives for improving remote workers' experience and enhancing human performance and productivity in the future workplace.

Our Human Performance Survey results

44% said **human interaction and socializing with colleagues** is what they miss most about the office

31% reported **a professional environment with access to tools that enhance productivity** is what they miss most about the office

29% said **face-to-face work with colleagues** is what they miss most about the office



3 essential truths

Driving workplace change due to COVID-19

Most companies are evaluating their people policies, reviewing remote technology initiatives, and — almost suddenly — are prioritizing where work gets done. Never before has corporate America had such a widespread focus on the built environment and how it contributes to both employee and company productivity. The amount, location and function of an organization’s workspaces are being discussed in the boardroom with a new mission to determine employee accessibility, space utilization and well-being,

all while adhering to safety requirements that are changing in many jurisdictions. Human Resources executives are in high demand and now are expected to contribute meaningfully to meet their organization’s mission while managing epic change in workplace norms and public policies.

We identified three truths that are essential to review with leaders across the organization, including real estate executives, to solve today’s challenges.

Truth **1**
Listening to your employees builds trust

Truth **2**
An effective talent strategy incorporates the workplace

Truth **3**
Employee well-being will be at the forefront of the future workplace

Truth 1

Listening to your employees builds trust

The need for flexible workplace programs creates a unique role for Human Resources. HR is now on the frontlines of corporate strategy in action. It is critical to focus on employees, now more than ever. HR has the responsibility to anticipate employees' wants and needs and this unique perspective is invaluable in determining how the business can return to work, buoyed by widespread employee support. The benefits of collaborating with business partners are substantial; when your employees feel better about their work environment your entire company wins. Our research indicates that the physical workplace has a direct impact on employee experience, which is instrumental in retaining and attracting top talent. Employees who feel connected to their company and have a sense of belonging are more productive and more inclined to stay with the company. It also means they're more willing to give their opinions when asked — make sure you're listening and acknowledging their concerns.

How?

Collect feedback about what drives your people, their preferences and needs. Anonymous surveys are one way to hear directly from your employees. At JLL, as we planned for re-entry, we:

- Posted a daily question to our intranet home page
- Conducted a formal, all-people survey to understand their views on returning to the workplace and what support they need from JLL
- Created a special portal for employee information about COVID-19

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Truth 1

Listening to your employees builds trust (cont.)

Change management and ongoing communication from leadership is crucial. It will help to alleviate concerns as employees will be understandably nervous about returning to the workplace.

To bolster our change management communications, our “Step Forward” internal re-entry campaign was designed to educate our employees on what to expect in advance of returning to their workplace.

Through the campaign we highlighted:

- Health and safety precautions
- Our collaboration with landlords to prepare workplaces by implementing social distancing guidelines
- The importance of face-to-face collaboration
- The joys of seeing friends and colleagues
- The ability of the workplace to foster creativity

Everyone is experiencing the crisis differently, so **re-entry plans** need to be flexible and provide managers with the proper resources to support employees. Remember: your culture is unique to your company; do what feels right for your people.

“*Through employee feedback we learned that the majority of our people want to return to the [workplace] in some capacity. We also learned that they continue to be concerned with their health and safety, as well as with child and family care.*”

Raymond Hall

Americas Head of Human Resources, JLL

**Returning to the office:
What HR leaders need to know**

Truth 2

An effective talent strategy incorporates the workplace

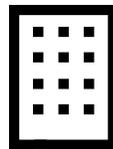
There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to implementing employee-centric workplace changes.

The key is to be authentic and take time to understand the right environment for your culture. The physical workplace is a great tool to reinforce your organization's culture, build employee pride and support your talent strategy. Make sure to incorporate elements that reflect your organization's overall beliefs and ambitions. For example, at JLL, we design our workplaces with branded elements, display photos of our people, recognize award recipients and place reminders of our purpose throughout the space.

In addition to building culture, the workplace should make employees feel safe and secure. During the re-entry phase, top employee concerns include safety (cleanliness), commuting, childcare and job security. Employees want to see safety measures and programs in place that make them feel at ease and cared for while in the workspace and feel a sense of belonging when working from home. It's important to support employees' well-being by creating a positive experience within and outside of the physical workplace.



In the U.S.
1 out of 4
employees care for at least
one child under the age of 14.



Based on current school reopening plans, up to
25 million office-using employees may
not be able to return to the workplace due to
childcare issues.

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Truth 2

An effective talent strategy incorporates the workplace (cont.)

How?

After the pandemic hit, [many companies launched programs](#) to support their employees' mental, physical and emotional health. Extending paid days off, providing a stipend to pay for work-from-home essentials and holding non-work virtual events are a few ways employers eased the sudden transition to remote work. Moving forward, re-entry and employee support programs will need to continue to be flexible due to the fluidity and uncertainty of the pandemic. Your change management, communication and business continuity plans should maintain a focus on both re-entry and re-exit scenarios.

To encourage employee retention, help employees feel comfortable when they return. Ensure you are transparent in how you're making the space safer. Communicate and showcase enhanced cleaning protocols, how the building fights airborne disease (HVAC, filtration systems, airflow, etc.), provide access to hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies, post signage and enforce social distancing practices. Also consider investing in health and wellness products such as: visitor and employee screenings, health screening services, workplace experience analytics, risk assessments and internal air quality monitoring services. For more ideas, read what other companies are doing in [our report, Global findings on workplace re-entry](#).

Employees who are also parents, or elder caregivers, may have additional uncertainties, including in-person or virtual learning that's often changing on a weekly, or even daily, basis. We are finding this affects women in the workforce more than men, as the burden of childcare often falls on females. This will greatly impact the progression of gender equality in organizations as more men return to the workplace while women stay home and are forced to choose between their career and childcare. HR leaders can navigate this challenge by creating and fostering environments where working parents can be successful at home and at work. [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of our report about balancing school and work highlights strategies companies can take to ease the burden on working parents. We also created an internal website to support working parents and caregivers. They have access to trainings, information about benefits, well-being resources and activities for kids.

Finally, providing employees with flexibility on where they work or how often they come into their workplace will help them reduce the stresses put on them and help navigate their journey in this next normal. Flexibility can also become a desirable trait for recruiting with big benefits to talent strategy. Some have personal obligations that prevent them from returning (child or family care), commuting concerns regarding public transportation, or they or their loved ones are at high risk for COVID-19. Support their decisions and ensure they have the tools they need to perform their roles. This flexibility is important, as the risk of the virus can change daily, and employees need to feel supported in doing what's best for their family and themselves. You want the best for your people, so be sure to develop a plan that makes sense for your organization as you create a workplace of the future.

“*How, where and when employees work is undergoing a seismic shift as a result of the pandemic. Moving forward, employee health, well-being and their experience in the office will be front and center. Buildings can either promote health or exacerbate problems within buildings; it's important to reduce risk as much as possible.*”

Healthy environments:

Re-entry lessons learned ft. Dr. Joe Allen

Dr. Joe Allen

Harvard Chan School Healthy Buildings Director



Truth 3

Employee well-being will be at the forefront of the future workplace

A people-centric workplace that focuses on talent strategy, workforce preference, health and well-being and the human experience will be a cornerstone to how successful organizations move forward during and post-COVID-19. Moreover, companies that embrace a people-first strategy will preserve their top talent and their culture.

HR has an expanded role in ensuring that employees' needs and preferences are supported as they return to their physical workplace. People want to work for a company that cares about them as an individual and in a place where they feel a sense of belonging.

Employees who don't feel that their company has their safety and well-being in mind could be asking themselves:

- What is my company doing to ensure my safety and well-being?
- If nothing, which companies *do* support their employees?
- Would I rather work elsewhere?

As an HR leader, your insights into the people that make up your organization put you in a position to guide the needs of the organization's portfolio while also providing perspective into employee concerns, motivations and desires. As you look to create a workplace of the future, you have a unique purview and should be an integral part of conversations about the physical workplace.

How?

Collaboration among leadership is critical in designing an employee-centric space. At the start of the pandemic, our HR team was called upon to partner closely with corporate real estate, IT/corporate technology and the C-suite to help manage the cost structure of the organization. Our HR team's insights helped keep company culture, employee engagement and candidate engagement paramount. If you are not already engaged in conversations about the organization's physical space, connect with your commercial real estate team. Find out what they are planning and what they are being asked to do to ensure a safe re-entry, but also how they are thinking about the longer-term. You may be the catalyst, with the corporate real estate team, to elevate the workplace conversation to ensure that the employee's needs are being considered in conjunction with the organization's concerns.

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“ *We can now talk openly about mental health, well-being and inclusion in the workplace. While the pandemic changed how we work and behave, it also afforded us the opportunity to take these topics and make them a part of how we do business moving forward. We should lean into these learnings and make sure they're offered to employees — not only in times of crisis, but in ongoing support to them as individuals.”*

Mary Bilbrey

Chief Human Resources Officer, JLL

**Reinventing, Reimagining and Reinvigorating
Human Resources**



Truth 3

Employee well-being will be at the forefront of the future workplace (cont.)

Employees' level of comfort at the workplace: Based on survey results, determine their concerns regarding returning to their physical workspace. Consider how new technologies can monitor building access and occupancy and provide support for remote work, health screening, robotics or touchless technology to ease their concerns.

Short- and long-term growth plans: This will inform occupancy needs. The workplace of the future will likely allocate less space to individuals and more space for innovation, collaboration, learning, socialization and employee experience. HR input into these plans will be instrumental in designing a workplace that is future fit, but that also represents the organization's culture and employee work-life needs.

Where employees work: The challenge for organizations is to establish the right balance between different options and working patterns. Whether on-site, remote or a combination of the two, you should understand where work gets done and ensure employees have the tools and resources to be productive.

Managing costs: There's tremendous value in providing a positive employee experience. Frame these conversations in bottom-line terms to demonstrate the positive investment of programs and resources that enhance the workplace experience.

It's important to iterate on the processes and programs you put in place; there's no time to adopt a wait-and-see approach. A good data strategy can set you up for success; this is a journey and you should be prepared to evaluate and test the results — and then iterate again in order to find the right mix for your organization.

“ *You will need to monitor and partner with the business to understand how the future-of-work models that you design and implement are working over time. You'll want to run post-occupancy surveys and studies to ensure the hypotheses you're testing and piloting are working. You can tweak and change it over time. This is what we would recommend to any workplace strategy, and for post-pandemic it'll be even more important.”*

Bernice Boucher
Managing Director, JLL Consulting

[New workplace models for the next normal](#)

Next steps

Ongoing efforts to maintain a people-centric workplace

HR has a clear role in leading conversations about the workplace. The human experience will be front and center as you navigate the **future use of your space**. Companies who do not adopt this thinking will fall behind in the increasingly competitive recruitment and retention landscape. But, there's a great opportunity for companies who prioritize employee experience to be perceived as a top place to work.

Remember: creating a workplace optimized for employees with a focus on experience is not an overnight process. Maintaining a patient, long-term approach will help you manage expectations along the way. No matter where you are in the journey to your future workplace, consider these three truths as your guiding principles and a workplace of experience as your north star.



What questions do you have about transforming your workplace?

Learn how JLL can help. Find additional insights on our [HR resources page](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

Lean in on HR advocates



Mary Bilbrey is JLL's Chief Human Resources Officer. Mary partners with the company's businesses to acquire, develop, engage and reward employees. She leads a team of professionals that deliver thought partnership, problem-solving and tactical support to help drive JLL's business goals and priorities. Mary is a member of JLL's Global Executive Board, which is responsible for the firm's strategic direction. She also manages JLL's corporate offices around the world, with a focus on creating spaces that promote engagement, collaboration and well-being.



Raymond Hall is JLL's Head of Human Resources in the Americas. In his role, Raymond partners with the businesses focusing on leading all strategic, commercial and operational aspects of HR for the region. He leads the Americas HR Leadership Team, and is a member of the Global HR Leadership Team and the Americas Executive Committee, working closely with Americas CEO Greg O'Brien.

About JLL

JLL (NYSE: JLL) is a leading professional services firm that specializes in real estate and investment management. JLL shapes the future of real estate for a better world by using the most advanced technology to create rewarding opportunities, amazing spaces and sustainable real estate solutions for our clients, our people and our communities. JLL is a Fortune 500 company with annual revenue of \$18.0 billion in 2019, operations in over 80 countries and a global workforce of nearly 93,000 as of June 30, 2020. JLL is the brand name, and a registered trademark, of Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated. For further information, visit [jll.com](https://www.jll.com).