



Community perspective on return to the office

Many members of the government and public have expressed the hope that life will be “back to normal” by May or June. But life may never return to exactly the way it was before COVID 19.

In the last few weeks hundreds of family office executives and family members have joined the family office group virtual calls; and they are all talking about how, when, and why to go back into the office. Many family offices are recognizing this is an opportunity to experiment with things they have been thinking about: scaling back space, flexible work schedules, rotating with other employees, and working from home.

5 approaches to return to office from family offices

1 Safety above all else

Working from home until there is not only a vaccine, but that 70% of the population has taken it "This is the safest and best thing to do for our employees and the family members we serve.

2 Slow and conservative re-entry

We will approach this very conservatively. We are productive working from home and are not in a rush to get back into the office and risk the health of our employees. We will very slowly return to the office.

3 Essential employees only

We have some employees who need to go back to the office in order to efficiently complete their jobs. We will work to stagger shifts and office space so that those employees can feel comfortable and safe. All other employees will have the option to work from home until a later date when we can be more certain of safety needs.

4 Creative rotation and staggered shifts

We will go back to the office but will work in shifts in the office. Teams coming in 2 consecutive days at a time and working from home on their non-office days. We will be strategic considering who backs up who and making sure they are on different shifts. Providing a full cleaning between shifts of employee groups.

5 Let's (smartly) go for it

We are going for it and bringing the entire office back together. We miss the comradery and will think smart about social distancing.



Strategic planning approaches

- › One office is creating a task force consisting of employees at all levels. Using this as an opportunity for the workforce to share their concerns, find agreement on what will work for all and a well thought out plan
- › Many offices are consulting other family offices and operating firms on their plans on coming back into the office. Allowing for sharing of thought
- › Some are conducting anonymous surveys of employees to understand their needs, their concerns, and their ideas on working from home and coming back into the office
- › A few reported creating self-reporting options and voluntary coronavirus testing, though it's still unclear what HIPAA laws and regulations are in this space
- › Many are reimagining how we use the office space. Thinking of bringing in architects to rethink the space
- › Analyzing square footage and the number of employees the office can truly handle to offer a safe environment with safe social distancing
- › One office is trying to put some metrics around what our productivity has been compared to January. Not going with preexisting ideas that working from home is less productive

Leadership in approaching working from home, coming back into the office and self-care

- › Family offices agree: it's important to be a role model – make a conscious effort to display flexibility, enhanced communication, and proactivity on suggesting relief days to focus on personal needs and to recharge. Take the additional step to share with employees how / when you as a leader will be doing this
- › It's key to be transparent and yet not alarming. Recognize and communicate you do not have all the answers and share how you are making decisions



- › Leaders should speak to what is guiding your decision-making and update them as the approach evolves over time
- › Executives and family members also pointed out it was important to focus on their values and carry that through during this pandemic

Physical safety measures inside the office

- › Many offices are considering:
 - › Implementing wearing masks when within 6 feet of other workers
 - › Temperature screening while entering the office
 - › Ordering touchless sanitizer machines at all doors, shared spaces and bathrooms
- › A few FO offices who are looking into purchasing and mandating watches that alarm when employees are within 6 feet of each other
- › There are many considerations on how to adjust the common spaces, copier rooms, cafeterias, kitchens, and hallways
 - › Closing off conference rooms, eating areas and cafeterias or repurposing this space
 - › Shutting down the kitchen or putting procedures in place that limit multiple touches across employees
 - › Sanitary wipes at the coffee machine, sinks, refrigerators, cabinets, copy machines – mandatory policy to utilize before and after usage
 - › Some offices are investing in additional refrigerators to provide more room to store food
 - › A few offices have discussed no longer ordering food in and only allowing lunches made from home
 - › Moving away from communal snack bins
- › In shared buildings, some are planning to not enter at the main lobby door and using the side door to reduce exposure to more people



- › Increasing the cleaning service to the office
 - › Some are changing to big cleaning every night vs. weekly
 - › Creating an employee cleaning schedule to wipe down surfaces, handles and shared spaces multiple times a day
- › Those who having security code entry pads to get into the office are planning to move to card swipe
- › One executive shared they intend to continue to foster a work from home environment and will convert the office to hoteling space with a strict schedule and cleaning procedures
- › Some are looking into setting up a schedule where no one is in at the same time where their cubicles are next to each other
- › It is still not clear if offices will be liable for Workers Compensation claims in the case that someone did get sick at the office

Physical safety measures outside of owned spaces

- › Executives agree that shared restrooms in commercial office space are problematic – working with commercial owners to change doors to electric opening doors
- › They all mentioned increasing availability of hand sanitizer – working with commercial owners to install hand sanitizer at all doors, elevators and garage parking kiosks
- › Elevator & hallway shared space within the commercial office – family offices want to work with commercial owners to implement social distancing policies
- › For employees who use public transportation, some offices have said they will give the option to work from home. Other offices will pay for Uber & Lyft services or parking fees for these employees
- › Some offices are working with commercial owners to have office security personnel continually sanitize keypads and elevator buttons
- › Some are suggesting that the commercial space that security guards are the only ones to touch elevator buttons and limits the number of people in the elevator



- › All agreed it was important to have a conversation with your commercial owner to understand what their plans and procedures are for identifying, communicating and managing COVID cases with their tenants

Additional considerations for employees with children at home

- › Leaders are paying attention to their employee's work productivity and managing children at home. Home school and co-existing in the home offers new challenges
- › These leaders comment that they continue to see these employees meeting their deadlines and constantly showing up during peak needs. They are working through the day, before children awake and after children go to sleep and acknowledging this is not a sustainable option
- › This summer will offer new complexities to employees with children unable to attend camps Leaders of family office are thinking about this complexity and how to approach flexible options for employees
- › One family office is considering flexible hours and job sharing. Another family office is sharing with this population that they are not expecting these employees to meet full productivity and are actively taking responsibilities from them
- › Another is bringing these employees onto their task force to collectively create solutions through these difficult times
- › A few family offices have mentioned purposely connecting with the staff on their tension on feeling not being as productive as they can be. They are sharing their own experiences and expectations and leading with empathy

It's clear that when the time comes, it won't be a simple transition back to our physical offices. How are you thinking about going back into the office?

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