



# BOUNCING BACK

BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKSPACE

Delivering the exceptional, every day

# A YEAR OF CHANGE



## One event dominated in 2020: a deadly and previously unknown virus wreaked havoc across the globe causing economic devastation and changing the way we work, live, and play.

Whilst buildings and offices were traditionally a place to perform work, in a post COVID world they will become versatile workplaces and venues where people come to learn, collaborate and socially interact. This change in working culture has been emerging over the past five years and the impact of the pandemic has accelerated it exponentially. Now, this change will be aligned with an increase in hybrid and remote working and how they are more enabled by technology platforms such as Zoom and Teams.

As the purpose and role of the workplace changes, the reasons to visit them will need to be more meaningful. Safety and security will remain a necessity along with wellbeing and productivity, however colleagues will look for more compelling reasons to return to the office environment, with a different perspective and specific set of outcomes in mind.

The return to the office will require a greater focus on the workplace experience coupled with how the built environment supports this new workplace culture. Offices will no longer be seen as purely functional working environments, they will become destinations that support your people, facilitate collaboration and drive exceptional business outcomes. These workplace destinations will be more akin to high-end hospitality and events spaces and will be focused on the user journey and interactions.

Most importantly, colleagues will expect to feel safe and secure in these environments. However, it will also need to address how colleagues feel about the workplace, the journeys they make from leaving their homes, through to their experiences in the workplace and their trip home. Once onsite the focus will be on how your colleagues and customers interact with the buildings to perform their work and to collaborate. The traditional role of the Building Manager will therefore change too and become more aligned to the practices of the managers in the hotel and retail sectors. This centres on attracting and delighting people into their premises and making sure they have a memorable experience throughout.

Following the pandemic, organisations will need to learn and replicate the positive aspects of working from home. Providing the same level of digital enablement and convenience that they have in their personal lives, such as watching content, ordering food, booking a taxi, all via smart devices. The expectation will be the same in the office, an environment that is aided by a frictionless and technology enabled workplace service.

Another important consideration is how colleagues feel as they contemplate the return to office, where quite possibly a new or different workplace awaits them. This requires an understanding of how people feel, which will have a likely impact on an organisation's overarching and evolving culture and values. For example, sustainability and social values will be higher on the agenda, whilst health and safety (notably hygiene) will demand an elevated approach by which interventions will need to be visible and resonate with colleague's sentiment and their wellbeing.

This all means that traditional output based KPIs like compliance, tasks done on time to quality, will not be enough to measure the experience of the occupier or ensure the new requirements of the workplace are being met. There will be a shift to include a different and wider set of measures related to EQ: how colleagues feel, how the workplace supports them and critically, is the workplace experience compelling enough to attract and retain the best talent back into the workplace?

**“Those organisations that in the short-term, and sustainably over time, are able to understand the relationship between the workplace, people and technology will thrive and bounce back the quickest.”**

Phil Bentley, Chief Executive Officer of Mitie

In this paper we explore how organisations can navigate these new and complex circumstances without losing focus on their core business purpose. Organisations will require the expertise of workplace partners, such as Mitie, to bring knowledge, know-how and innovative solutions to the table. While collaborating with dynamism and pace, these expert partners must also possess the capability to design and deliver experiences at pace and adapt and evolve them over time.

As organisations develop their plans to return to the office, they should consider four main pillars to help them bounce back effectively:

### Investing in colleague confidence

In the short term, investment in the built environment will be necessary to achieve a safe return to work, supported by the right solutions. The visible presence of safety and security measures along with relevant wellbeing messaging will be crucial for both employers and colleagues as they navigate what should be the last weeks and months of the pandemic. Outside of the immediate decisions that need to be taken to prepare for the return to office, organisations will need to be cognisant of the longer-term impacts of such changes to where and how people work.

### Design for success

Placing colleague experience at the centre of decision-making is essential. The workplace environment should be built by design and with the colleague in mind. Successful workplace strategies require alignment of an organisation's vision, goals and culture; they have a pivotal role to play in shaping colleague experience and contributing to the organisations continued success. Understanding how work is performed and the various tasks and processes this entails from a colleague perspective, will ensure agile or 'hybrid working' is effective in the long-term whilst enabling productivity and wellbeing.

### Data and fact driven change

Understanding and being empathetic to a colleague's purpose and their unwritten (psychological) contract with their employer will also be key. The physical workspace directly impacts how colleagues feel about their role and how this meets their personal expectations. Organisations should implement data and fact-based change rather than take a 'leap of faith'. Understanding and tracking how the workspace is performing from a colleague's viewpoint should form part of the workplace modelling plans as well as the ensuing change management programmes. This will help ensure organisational culture adapts and flexes to be inclusive and empathetic to wellbeing.

### Technology enabled

Technology's role in workplace experience should be considered carefully and aligned to organisational purpose and strategy. User friendly and intuitive technology will lead to improved colleague experiences, a greater sense of colleague safety and security, deliver productivity benefits, and help unlock real estate and space reduction costs.

As the UK's largest workplace services provider, Mitie have carefully considered what organisations should be contemplating as government restrictions ease, and they prepare to welcome back colleagues to the office. This paper explores three key topics covered in three chapters along with a practical checklist which will assist organisations as they navigate the coming months to bounce back in 2021.

Why the physical workplace is here to stay

The importance of wellbeing and 'Well' buildings

The implications on people and technology



Science, technology, and collaboration have been instrumental in developing the many vaccinations which are beginning to help nations around the world begin their recovery. It's no surprise that organisations and occupiers will continue to rely on strategies and solutions that equally centre on science, technology, and collaboration.

# WHY THE PHYSICAL WORKSPACE IS HERE TO STAY



Take time to consider



Have you established a performance baseline that captures how colleagues felt the workplace supported them pre-COVID and during lockdown, in order to track and monitor any changes?



Is it clear how changes to the workplace operating model (including agile working) will impact how colleagues feel about their role, levels of engagement and crucially, business outcomes?



Does the repurposing of the office environment accommodate and take into account the colleague journey? Are you enabling a positive experience to make them want to come back?

Many decisions on whether colleagues should return to the office are being based on feedback obtained during the first lockdown, when warm weather may have prompted some to view working from home with rose-tinted glasses. Fast forward a year and ongoing restrictions, together with minimal social interaction, mean being permanently based at home has probably lost some appeal.

## What's next?

What will the office and spaces of the future look like? For many organisations the design will be a leap of faith, predicated on limited information with very few tried and tested models on which to base their decisions. Other organisations will adopt a more cautious approach, waiting to see what models emerge elsewhere and how successful they are. However, changes to traditional models are almost without doubt a fait accompli.

As companies contemplate which hybrid working model will best meet their needs, there is growing recognition of the need to seek opinions. For example, how do people want to work and interact with the office? Do they feel supported by technology that will plug the 'collaboration gap' associated with remote working?

The extent of the physical workplace's positive impact on employees was often overlooked pre-COVID-19. Benefits such as social interaction complement the wider range of resources and technology that the office provides over the home environment.

The workplace's influence may then go even further, impacting productivity, belonging and loyalty.

## Building colleague confidence must be underpinned by:

Change management

Clear and visible interventions

New approaches

Empathetic company culture

Workplace partners, such as Mitie, offer relevant expertise and know-how. Such trusted partners can advise on the entire customer journey, from booking a desk, to reception arrival services, workplace experience and technology-enabled workplaces.

## Understanding personas

To enable a flexible approach, it is important to look at the different needs of colleague personas and to design corresponding experiences. For example, colleagues visiting offices infrequently for specific events or specified interactions will have a heightened expectation of how the building should support them.

For those that continue to access the workspace as part of hybrid working, the end-to-end experience must meet their needs, address any concerns and allow them to thrive. Experiences should be visualised to colleagues, representing their journey fully, from parking to lateral flow testing, to moving through reception and finding a workstation, using the facilities and their return home.

## Understanding colleague expectations

Studies suggest a far stronger correlation exists between a colleague's unwritten (psychological) expectations of an organisation and business success than with contracted commitments. Businesses need to understand the relationship between the physical environment and what is known as psychological contract fulfilment (PCF).

PCF is a colleague's unspoken emotional narrative. Sometimes it can be hard to articulate, simply because it is so hardwired.

It is how an employee feels about their role and expectations of their employer, influenced by the 4 P's: people, payoff, process and purpose.

A recently published Leesman study<sup>1</sup> found 35% of employees feel more disconnected from their organisation whilst working from home. This directly impacts the feeling of belonging and, therefore, purpose. Mitigating a feeling of disconnection among colleagues should be a priority for any organisation, as it has a major impact on the productivity and retention of talent.

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<sup>1</sup> Your workplace of the future, Leesman, January 2021



## Towards the future workspace

Achieving optimum employee experience is undoubtedly one of the toughest challenges in a post-COVID-19 workplace. Due consideration must be given to assuring comfort and safety levels akin to what colleagues know at home, creating an environment that:

Builds confidence

Supports working practices

Excites and entices people back to the office

Employees who predominately worked from home during the pandemic will need reassurance and confidence that their wellbeing and safety has been accounted for in the workplace. Visualisation and design of the colleague journey, which begins before they leave home, will be key.

Organisations should retrospectively baseline the impact the physical workplace had on employees before the pandemic. Mitie's Workplace Effectiveness Monitor will deliver this baseline for you. It will define how colleagues are impacted by independent working, collaboration, decision making and new working environments. This enables customers to track and monitor longer term impacts and is informed and developed through corresponding data.

A recent McKinsey report<sup>2</sup> identified several activities that are normally done more effectively in the physical workspace: negotiations; critical business decisions; brainstorming sessions; providing sensitive feedback; and onboarding new employees.

What we have learned consolidates the status of the office, confirming it is here to stay. Rather than being a place to simply accommodate employees, the COVID-19 pandemic has hastened change that means the office plays a defining role in the organisations culture along with productivity, creativity performance and even profitability.

Instilling confidence in building occupants will be paramount for organisations wishing to thrive after the pandemic, which goes far beyond one-way systems and hazard tape markings. Therefore, if your organisation needs to better understand workplace experience and journeys, now is the time to begin any necessary research to support fact-based change.

**“35% of colleagues feel more disconnected from their organisation whilst working from home.”**

<sup>2</sup> The Future of Work Post COVID-19, Feb 2021

## THE MITIE SOLUTION

At Mitie, we recognise the impact both employee and customer experiences have on the bottom line. Leveraging the expertise and experience of our in-house Customer & Workplace Experience Team, Mitie are able to work with our customers to create the data and insights to inform their future workplace design, creating retrospective baselines and bringing together the re-purposing of the workplace and the formal adoption of hybrid working.

Our Workplace Index Score (WIS) is a unique Mitie product that measures how the physical and sensory elements of the workspace influence productivity, wellbeing and colleague engagement. It's a part of a diagnostic tool kit that uncovers the strengths and weaknesses of working environments, how they effectively support colleagues and where they need to improve. Together with workplace employee journey mapping and design, you can be confident your workplace experience is by design not by chance.



**Iain Shorthose,**  
Director of Workplace and Customer  
Experience at Mitie  
[iain.shorthose@mitie.com](mailto:iain.shorthose@mitie.com)

# WELLBEING AND 'WELL' BUILDINGS



Take time to consider



Does your built environment support wellbeing-based working (WBW), combining sensory elements with technology to create an inspiring workplace?



Is the workplace experience designed by mapping the customer journey and re-engineering the touchpoints that have the biggest impact on safety and wellbeing?



Does your organisation have sufficient data and more importantly, insight, to enable the development of the sensory and environmental features of the workplace?

Activity-based working will undoubtedly influence and inform both the workplace and agile working as organisations move into the post COVID-19 world. Environments will be optimised for productivity and wellbeing, with much greater understanding of how colleagues should be supported.

Beyond the short-term, the focus will shift to wellbeing-based working (WBW), which encompasses well buildings, individuals and the workforce as a whole. WBW combines sensory aspects of the environment with technology and workplace strategy to create an inspiring workplace experience.

For organisations that get it right, the impact will be transformative. Colleague efficiency (output), engagement and loyalty will benefit, with a corresponding improvement in attracting and retaining talent, plus a reduction in absenteeism and inefficiency.

How can organisations achieve this? Focus is required on the sensory elements of the workplace and how they influence the most important asset of all: people.

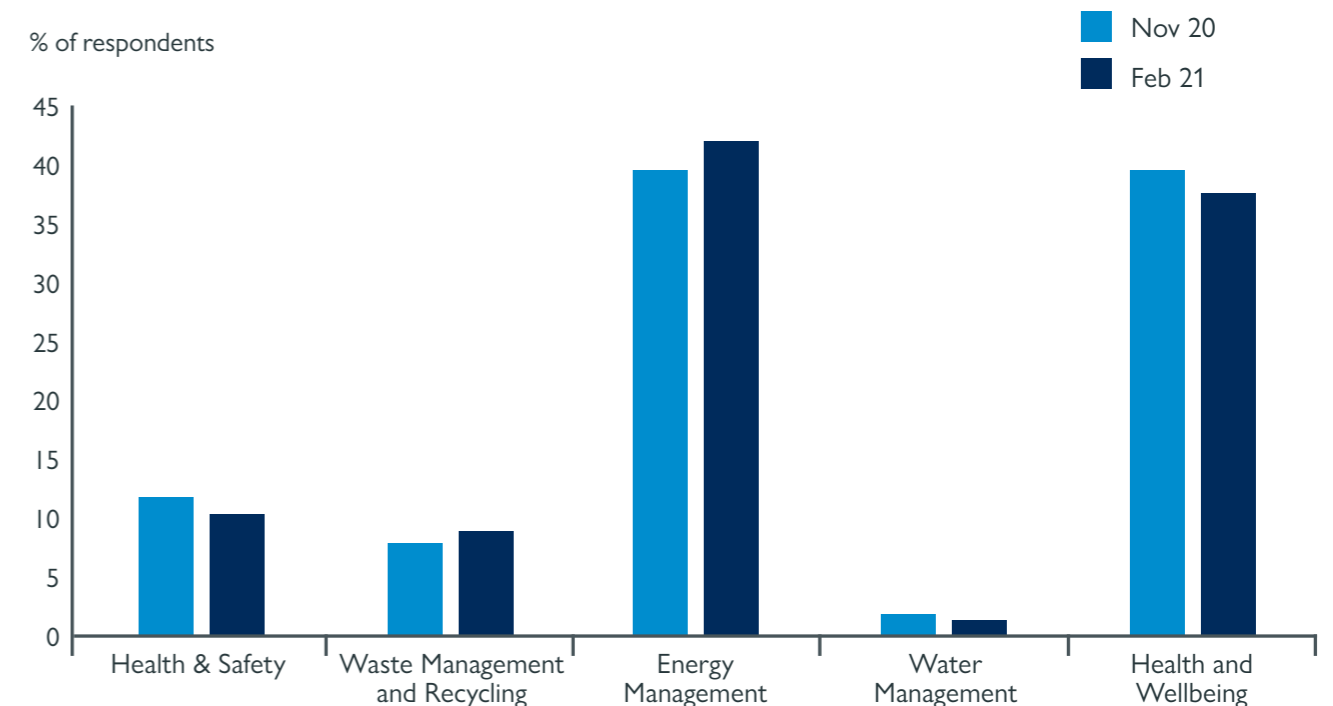
Undoubtedly working remotely has been enjoyable for many, with added flexibility and other benefits associated with being based at home. However, for others it has been a struggle, with the blurring of lines between home and work life, and complications such as loneliness or providing childcare alongside the demands of a day job.

As the return to the office looms, there is no better time for companies to support their workforce with well built, well designed environments with employee wellbeing at their core. The signs are good: the February 2021 RICS UK Facilities Management Survey shows that employee health and wellbeing has seen some of the strongest growth in investment in recent times (see below).

The study acknowledges the environment's role in wellbeing and productivity; well-designed and maintained workplaces create healthier, happier and productive colleagues.

**“Focus is required on the sensory elements of the workplace and how they influence the most important asset of all: people.”**

Which of the following areas of sustainability has seen the strongest growth in investment over the past twelve months?





## THE MITIE SOLUTION

As a leading provider of workplace transformation and programme management services, Mitie can support Workplace Design and Occupancy reviews including:

### Workplace Design

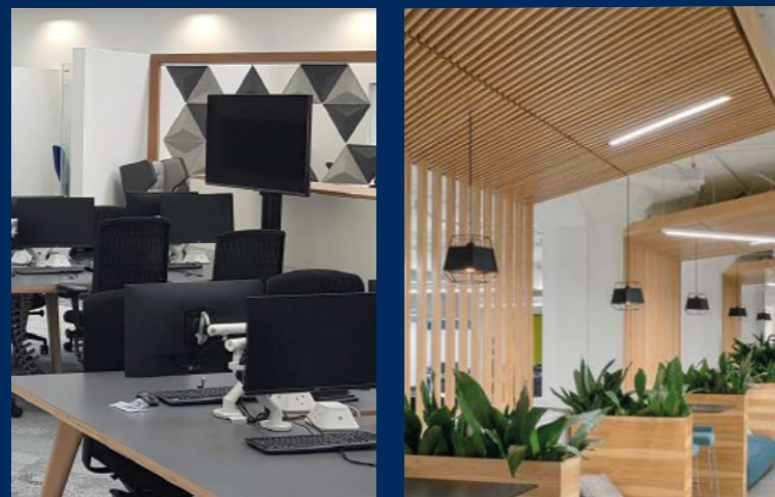
Feasibility studies; concept design; detailed construction packages; 3D modelling and visualisation; furniture specification and scheduling

### Space Data Management

Estate space data management; utilisation measurement and reporting; occupancy surveys and sensor deployment.

### Strategy and Change

Strategic planning; workplace strategies; change management; post occupancy surveys and evaluation.



**Kath Fontana,**  
Managing Director of Projects  
kath.fontana@mitie.com

### Real estate strategic objectives over the next three years

It is clear that for many organisations the pandemic has been a catalyst to propel their real estate strategy forward by a number of years in a matter of months. According to the Global Corporate Survey: Smart Building Technology Budgets, Priorities & Preferences, improving the comfort and wellbeing of building occupants ranked as one of the most important objectives, primarily due to its impact on productivity and attracting talent.

The below ranks the real estate management objectives by importance over the next three years (1 being most important and 5 least important.)

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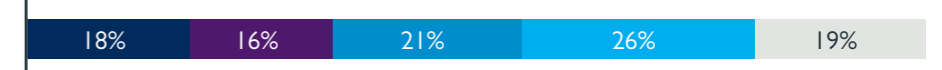
Attracting and retaining talent



Improving the resiliency of buildings



Improving the health and wellbeing of building occupants



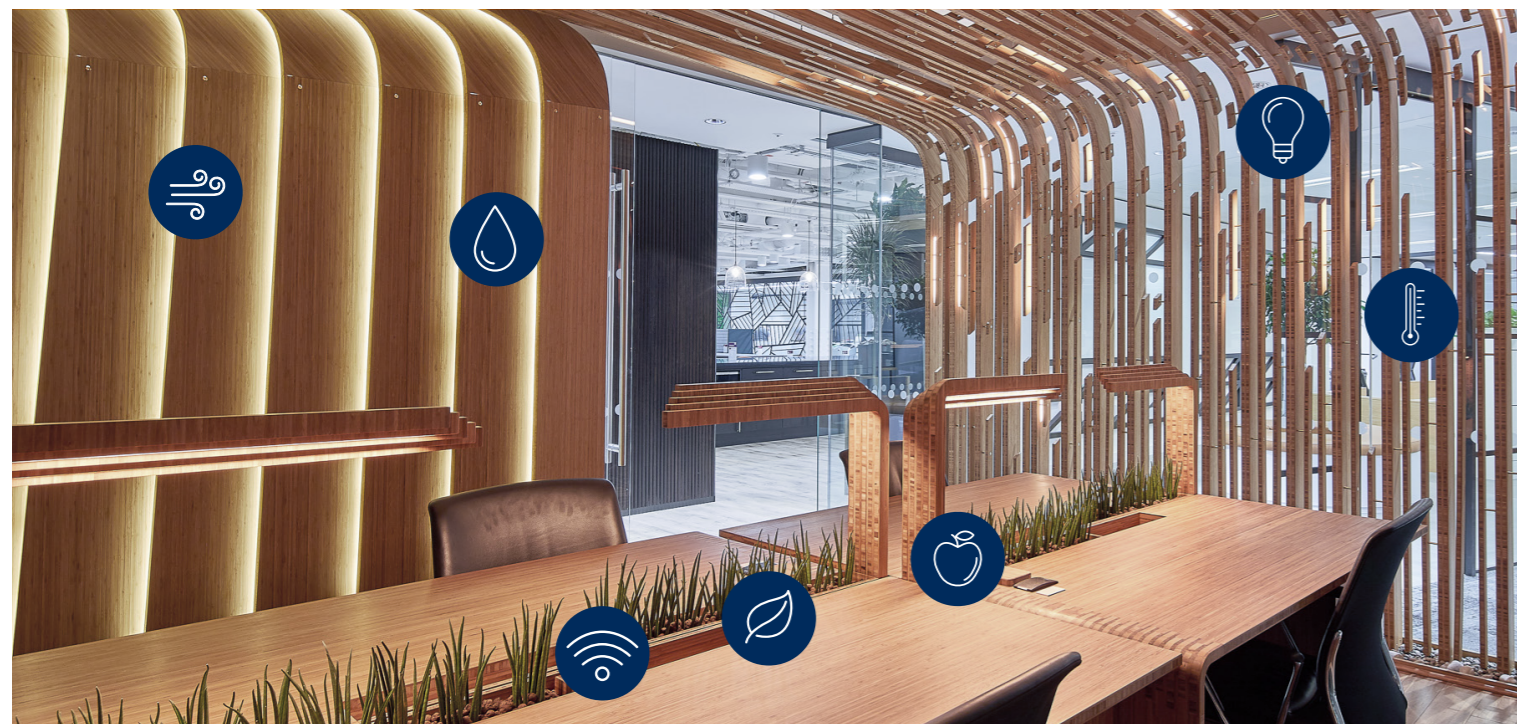
Reducing real estate capital costs



Reducing real estate operating costs



1 Most important | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Least important



### The impact of the sensory workplace on productivity and wellbeing

Creating a safe environment for colleagues has never been more critical and is at the top of the agenda for all property leaders. The below points explore how the sensory workplace will support the enhanced requirement for safety in sight.



**Air Quality** - We know poor air quality is detrimental to productivity and cognitive performance. The key point of difference in a post-covid world is that air quality can no longer be a hidden agenda item, it must be a very visible action in order to drive reassurance.



**Hydration** - A two per cent drop in hydration levels can impact cognitive performance, interfering with perception, attention span, memory and wellbeing. Fresh water should be readily available, both chilled and at room temperature.



**Biophillic Design** - Incorporates natural materials, light, vegetation and other elements of the natural world into the built environment to help with stress reduction and mental health, plus aid cognitive function. Greenery and natural materials should form part of the workplace environment.



**Keeping Connected** - Supporting colleagues with connected technology in the office and beyond has a positive impact on performance and enhances emotional connection with the workplace. Provision should include video conferencing for laptop and mobile, workspace reservation, advance refreshment ordering, meeting room booking and parking reservation, if required.



**Lighting** - Low level lighting can cause headaches, eye strain and loss of concentration, while brighter lighting stimulates focus and efficiency. Workplace lighting should be varied according to the purpose of each area or hub.



**Nutrition** - With proven links to workplace performance, adequate nutrition is essential. Organisations should encourage a wholesome diet and provide breakout areas that facilitate socialising during mealtimes.



**Temperature** - The brain performs best when individual colleagues feel comfortable with the surrounding temperature. Information on optimum workplace temperatures should be made available to assure all colleagues that their comfort and performance has been considered.

Remote monitoring of environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, noise and light via sensors and BMS linkage means any necessary adjustments can be made without the need for input from colleagues in the workplace. This not only means conditions can be changed before complaints arise, but also means users can focus on their reason to be in a workplace, without being distracted by building comfort.

High levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in workspaces are known to negatively impact cognitive function, but also serve as an indicator of conditions ideal for transmission of COVID-19. As reported in Smart Buildings magazine in November 2020: "There is increasing evidence that Carbon Dioxide levels in buildings correlate strongly with the airborne spread of infection."

Consequently, monitors could act as the 'canary in the coalmine' to mitigate the coronavirus threat." The ability to monitor CO<sub>2</sub> levels, with an automatic alarm when they become dangerously high, followed by rapid ventilation, is just one possible future safety measure with colleague wellbeing at its heart.

Besides implementing these solutions as buildings reopen, organisations must be cognisant of the need to 'lead from the front', equipping managers to lead teams as everyone adapts to new ways of working. Technology will be a key enabler, providing employees with the tools they need to thrive, enhancing the workplace experience and ensuring wellbeing is preserved and prioritised.

## THE MITIE SOLUTION



Through Mitie's three stage process: Prepare, Protect and Preserve, we achieve improved Indoor Air Quality, system optimisation and monitoring.

**Prepare:** detailed surveying and analysis of current HVAC systems with full risk report and recommendations for improvements, followed by deep cleaning regimes of hidden air ducts using Mitie's natural and safe cleaning solution, Citrox. Through various forms Citrox can be applied to provide cleaner environments, from our misting solution for large areas, to Citrox Protect, which delivers a three-dimensional microbiota barrier coating created by mixing two natural ingredients: SiO<sub>2</sub> and Citrox, both eco-friendly compounds.

**Protect:** Implement recommended improvements, including enhancing protection regimes and using technology to cleanse the air of viruses and germs.

**Preserve:** Install sensors to monitor air quality, with the ability to remotely diagnose faults and issues, adjust parameters and identify adverse trends to prevent failure.



**Dan Guest,**  
COO/CCO, Mitie Technical Services  
[Daniel.Guest@mitie.com](mailto:Daniel.Guest@mitie.com)



**Kevin Tyrrell,**  
Commercial Director, Business Services  
[Kevin.Tyrrell@mitie.com](mailto:Kevin.Tyrrell@mitie.com)



Combining both of our exceptional skills and expertise, Mitie have partnered with Luxibel, a global provider of UVC Disinfection Systems, to introduce cutting-edge air cleansing technology to support customers and enhance the safety assurance in properties.

UVC is recognised as an option for surface cleansing by HSE and provides visible reassurance that building users are in a safe space. Additional benefits include:

#### Chemical-free

UVC technology is environmentally friendly and leaves no chemical residue when used on surfaces, in water or in the air.

#### Measurable

The disinfection effect is directly related to the UVC dose, so its effectiveness can be measured using on site sensors connected to our Service Operations Centre (SOC).

#### Effective

UVC has been proven to be effective against waterborne and airborne pathogenic microorganisms and many other bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases.

#### Rapid result

UVC works rapidly and the effectiveness can be monitored with simple, visual guides.

#### Low cost

UVC installations have low capital and operational cost and can be installed quickly with minimal disruption.



# PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY



Take time to consider



Is your vision and ambition for the future workplace and agile working model sufficiently enabled by technology to support the reconfiguration?



Has your organisation adopted the necessary software and applications to facilitate agile working and to manage flexible office spaces, while maintaining employee productivity?



Does your existing workplace technology produce the data and insights required to inform longer-term decision making and de-risk any short-term decisions?

There has been a wholesale adoption of home-working in the last year, even among organisations that were previously reluctant. Video conferencing platforms have been indispensable, with Zoom reporting a rise in meeting participants from 10m in December 2019 to 300m in March 2020. Similarly, Microsoft's Teams platform has seen daily active users more than triple since late 2019. Internet service providers are equally seeing an exponential increase in network use and traffic. Emerging from the pandemic, the power of technology will be paramount. As organisations set their sights on reoccupation, there are big choices to be made about whether the solutions adopted over the last 12 months will become a permanent fixture of the workplace.

## A twofold challenge

Unoccupied and partially occupied buildings, combined with the evidence of continued productivity from a remote workforce, has forced a rethink on organisations' real estate portfolios. Some occupiers were quick to shed leased property in order to reduce operational costs. Other owner-occupiers are accelerating exit plans and carefully considering what they will retain together with how spaces can potentially be re-purposed.

The result will be the same: more staff than available workspace. This creates a twofold challenge: as workspaces are being used differently to before COVID-19, how should organisations manage employees' usage of them, and equally, how should employees be enabled to work where they want and need to? Clearly technological solutions will underpin successful outcomes.

Many organisations are reconfiguring meeting rooms to create larger and more flexible collaboration spaces.

**“Smart occupiers can drive higher agility ratios across offices through managing larger numbers of staff in a smaller number of workplaces.”**

Managing this becomes even more challenging in light of high demand for room bookings; increased desk-booking is a widely adopted solution with the following advantages:

- Improved capacity management
- Reduced dependence on support staff
- Supports hybrid working with more even distribution of workspace demand
- Greater colleague working autonomy
- Supports demand-led cleaning
- Ensures employee safety and corresponding workplace confidence

Smart occupiers can drive higher agility ratios across offices through managing larger numbers of staff in a smaller number of workplaces, aided by the removal of 'first-come first-served' spaces. Discreet sensor technology provides evidence of how space is being used, producing granular metrics on density, which can help safeguard employees. Such utilisation data and insights can inform workspace design and layout, providing a new baseline from which to make more informed decisions.

The new workplace will also require a shift in colleague behaviours as they become accustomed to new ways of working. Property leaders now need to think with the same mindset as a retailer; what is attracting people back into their stores now that we have become so accustomed to having most options available at the touch of a button? What is making our workplaces attractive to leave the safe comfort of home to visit? By making buildings richer and more resourceful, this enables greater colleague efficiency and further enhances reasons to visit the office, with clear social and wellbeing benefits.

In new workspaces, smart processes and products will be an intrinsic part of the building systems controlling air conditioning, heating, lighting and security.

### At the touch of a button

Workplace Apps consolidate disparate technologies, seamlessly enhancing the workplace experience with a huge variety of options:

- Report service issues
- Raise comfort complaints
- Receive targeted alerts and communications
- Order and pay for food and refreshments
- Book desks, lockers or car spaces
- Request IT support
- Obtain directions

Smart buildings are not exclusively newbuilds. Much of what has been covered here can be deployed retrospectively to existing buildings with little disruption. In order to create the best outcomes, occupiers must be able to:

- Create an improved user experience going beyond the workplace and which includes wider building infrastructure systems
- Implement enhanced and visible safety measures that acknowledge the duty of care to staff
- Provide operational benefits through automation
- Obtain rich, meaningful data and insight to allow data-driven decisions
- Drive colleague enablement and an improved working environment, simultaneously instilling new behaviours to adapt to the changing workplace.

Organisations that seize the opportunities offered by experience-enhancing technology will receive the greatest returns on their investments – and create a workplace that works better for their people too.

## THE MITIE SOLUTION



Mitie's Connected Workspace technology removes the friction in managing and maintaining facilities. Offering colleagues a reassuring contactless workplace experience and giving property and facilities teams access to insightful data and the ability to efficiently manage spaces seamlessly during the pandemic and beyond.

In a service-driven world, people have come to expect convenience, speed and simplicity as a standard. This is especially true of the workplace. That's why Mitie developed Aria, an award-winning workspace solution to seamlessly connect users to services available as both an app and online.

Aria allows users to book spaces, order refreshments and report FM issues through Esme, our chatbot, which links to your Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) system to raise and process jobs.

It also provides interactive communication between colleagues, building operators and facilities. The ability to send and receive information provides visible reassurance of the measures in place to keep all users safe.

Mitie's highly skilled security and front of house team not only provide an exceptional first impression for all building users, they also act as an additional layer of comfort to alleviate any natural anxieties that returning to the workplace may present. Our specialist testing services has proven to provide colleagues with the confidence their employer has covered all bases to keep them safe before they have entered their workplace. Additionally, our cutting-edge technology enables a safe and frictionless journey into the building, removing any unnecessary challenges and social distancing infringements.



**Ian Smithyman,**  
Director of Mitie's Connected Workspace  
[Ian.Smithyman@mitie.com](mailto:Ian.Smithyman@mitie.com)

# BOUNCING BACK: CHECKLIST

## THE PHYSICAL WORKSPACE IS HERE TO STAY



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**Iain Shorthose,**  
Director of Workplace and Customer Experience at Mitie  
[Iain.Shorthose@mitie.com](mailto:Iain.Shorthose@mitie.com)

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**Kath Fontana,**  
Managing Director of Projects  
[Kathleen.fontana@mitie.com](mailto:Kathleen.fontana@mitie.com)

**Dan Guest,**  
COO/CCO, Mitie Technical Services  
[Daniel.Guest@mitie.com](mailto:Daniel.Guest@mitie.com)

**Kevin Tyrrell,**  
Commercial Director, Business Services  
[Kevin.Tyrrell@mitie.com](mailto:Kevin.Tyrrell@mitie.com)

## PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY



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**Ian Smithyman,**  
Director of Mitie's Connected Workspace  
[Ian.Smithyman@mitie.com](mailto:Ian.Smithyman@mitie.com)



For more information please visit <https://www.mitie.com/bouncing-back/>

### Contributors

Dan Guest – Chief Operations and Commercial Officer, Mitie Technical Services  
Kevin Tyrrell – Commercial Director, Business Services  
Iain Shorthose – Director of Workplace Experience  
Kath Fontana – Managing Director of Projects  
Ian Smithyman – Director of Connected Workspace  
Stuart Bleazard – Operations Director, Mitie Business Services  
John Lambert – Solutions Director, Mitie Business Services  
Tina Hobart – Head of Customer Experience  
Simi Ghandi-Whitaker – Products Solution Director, Mitie Technical Services  
Harriet Cloake – Head of Communications, Mitie Technical Services  
Kelly Asher – Creative Manager, Mitie Technical Services

### Photography

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### About Mitie

Founded in 1987, Mitie is the UK's leading facilities management (FM) and professional services companies. It offers a range of services to Central Government & Defence and Communities (Hospitals, PFI schools and Local Authorities to the Public Service); and Technical Services (Engineering Services, Energy, Water and Real Estate Services) and Business Services (Security, Cleaning and Office Services) to mainly Private Sector clients in Financial Services, Manufacturing, Transport, Retail and Telecoms; and Specialist Services (Care & Custody, Landscapes and Waste Management) both Public and Private Sectors.

Mitie, which acquired Interserve's FM business in December 2020, employs 77,500 people and is the champion of the 'Front-Line Heroes' who have kept Britain running during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's mission to take care of our customers' people and buildings, by delivering essential services and deploying industry leading technology to create safe and effective workspaces, has never been more important.