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Digital Workplace Trends for 2021

Screen time at 'breaking point' but can tech help?

Change isn't always easy…
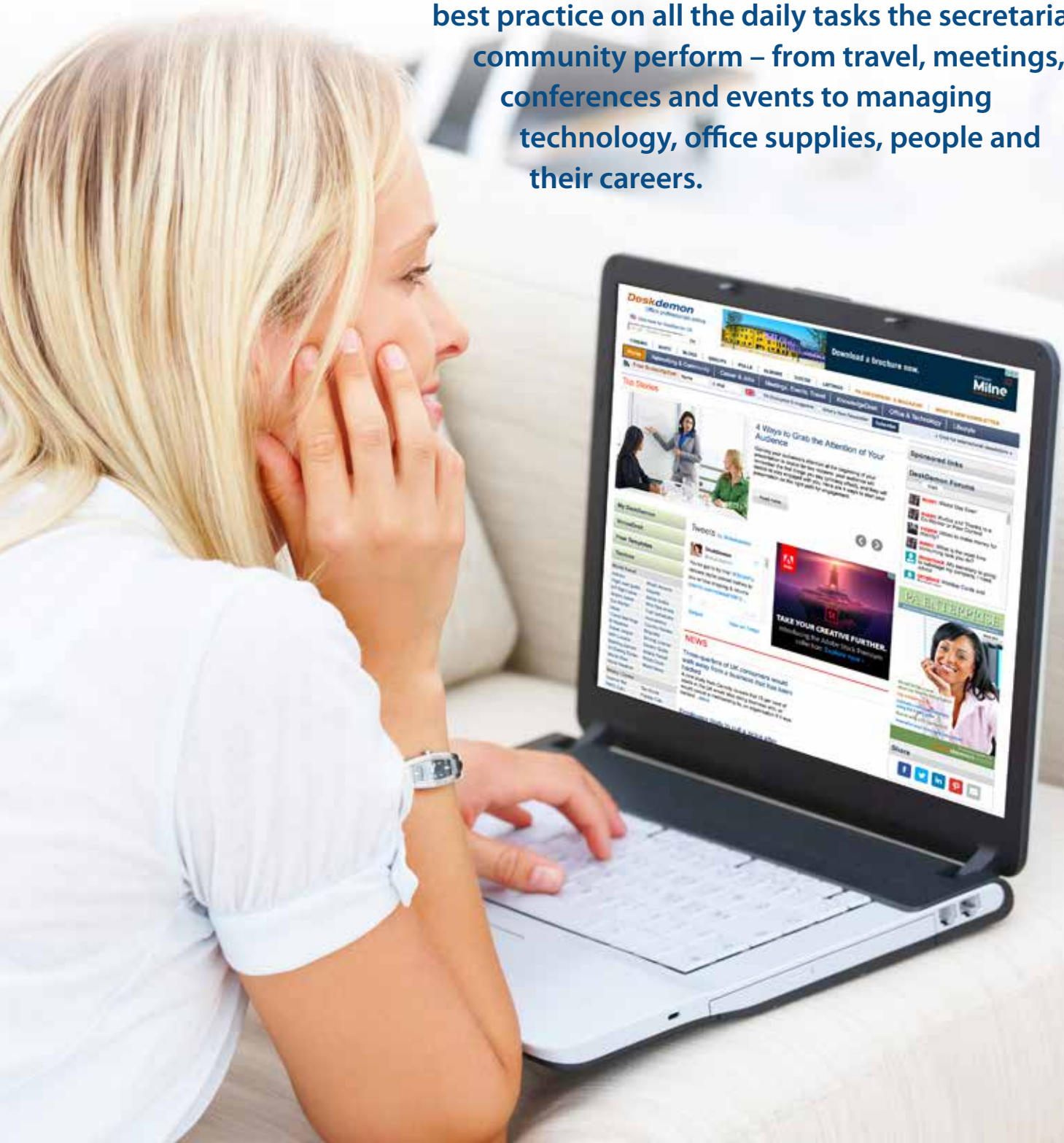
The Hybrid Workplace explained

10 Office Hacks to Improve Productivity

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The Hybrid Workplace:

What it is, why it matters, and how to implement it in your workplace

A hybrid approach aims to provide an optimal balance of productive work with reduced stress and less commuting. But will it work? And is this really the future of work?

The early days of the COVID-19 pandemic were a strange and chaotic time for workplaces around the world.

Many organizations went from asking themselves if a remote work environment was a possibility, to it becoming the only viable option. Almost overnight, millions of people around the world traded their daily commute for a short walk to the kitchen.

For the most part, it was a successful transformation. Liberated from the confines of a physical office, some employees found themselves thriving during the pandemic. This challenged the previously held assumption that remote work environments hinder productivity. Even occupations we never could have envisioned working remotely—lawyers, financial planners, doctors, therapists—all transitioned successfully.

By early summer, as restrictions began easing in some areas, the attention shifted to bringing people back into the workplace. But employees weren't exactly begging to come back—at least not in the same capacity as before. The pandemic had forever changed us, and there was no turning back. Employers suddenly found themselves at a crossroads, trying to appease employees while balancing business and productivity goals.

This paved the way for a new workplace model: The hybrid workplace.

What is a Hybrid workplace?

The hybrid workplace is a business model combining remote work with office work. Similar to how schools offer a hybrid learning approach, a hybrid work environment blends in-office work with remote work.

Hybrid work includes increased freedom and autonomy around when to work, and where. It generally allows employees the opportunity to fit work around their lives, rather than structuring work around fixed hours logged into an office. For many employees (and employers) it's an ideal scenario as it combines autonomy with sociability and structure.

A hybrid workplace may look different among organizations, but it typically includes the onsite presence of a skeletal staff, while others are free to come and go as they please, within reason . It could be the same employees mandated to be onsite, or it could include a staggering of different people present on different days or times. Or, there may simply be specific days where employees are requested to attend in-person meetings.

A hybrid approach aims to provide an optimal balance of productive work with reduced stress and less commuting.

What do employees want?

A study by Boston Consulting Group revealed that 75% of employees who have transitioned to or remained remote during COVID-19, are at least as productive in performing their individual tasks as they were before the pandemic struck. And about half report that they are at least as productive on collaborative tasks that normally would be performed in conference rooms.

Another survey revealed that 55% of US workers would prefer a mixture of home and office working. And according to a recent survey of Google employees, sixty-two% want to return to their offices at some point, but not every day. For this reason, the company is working on hybrid models for future work.

Fuelling some of the anxiety about a return to office is the lack of safety associated with public transportation. In a study of 3,500 workers worldwide, 81% of participants said they used public transit to commute to work, and of this

group, 67% were at least moderately concerned about commuting when they return to work during the pandemic.

The pros of a hybrid workplace model

A hybrid workplace prioritizes the employee, and encourages a stronger work-life balance. It additionally can help ease anxiety employees may have relating to returning to a public workspace, and those noted above relating to public transit. This is particularly critical for those caring for, or who themselves, are immunocompromised.

A hybrid workplace is also a more economical workplace. With less reliance on large scale offices, organizations can save thousands of dollars in real estate and office maintenance costs.

Organizations offering a combination of in-person and remote employees will also have a larger talent pool to work with, as they will

no longer be confined to hiring employees in specific geographical regions.

Additionally, a hybrid workplace can help build a crisis resilient culture by preparing organizations for potential future lockdowns. With many employees already working from home, your workplace can easily adapt back to a fully remote environment if necessary.

Finally, a hybrid workplace can reduce the spread of contagious viruses, as employees can choose to work from home if they are feeling unwell.

The cons of a hybrid workplace model

As some critics have pointed out, the hybrid workplace model isn't without its flaws. Not all of us have the luxury of quality internet access, designated home workspaces, or distraction free environments. And obviously remote work or hybrid work isn't an option for frontline workers like many employed by hospitals, factories, and law enforcement.

A hybrid environment may additionally put employees who cannot work in the office at a disadvantage of those that can. For example,

consider a scenario where one employee is unable to attend an in-person meeting. Even if they join via video, there are potential side conversations they may miss out on. Female employees in particular may be at a disadvantage, as they are disproportionately expected to care for young children, and thus unable to return to an office environment.

There is also concern that employees 'seen' in the office will be viewed as providing greater output. Remote employees may feel passed up for opportunities because they are less visible than those who return to the office. This could be especially problematic if leadership are the ones present in the office. In other words the physical office should not hold more power than a remote office.

Equally important are the challenges associated with collaboration and communication. With two different experiences to manage, there is increased risk that one group may feel excluded in crucial conversations.

Such scenarios highlight the importance of a robust hybrid workplace plan. If not properly

executed, a hybrid workplace could create a divide between those who work in the office and those who don't.

How to implement a hybrid workplace model

Say hello (again) to your intranet

The hybrid work environment may be new, but the challenges associated with connecting and communicating with employees aren't. The good news is that these problems were solved a long time ago with intranet software. Long before COVID-19, organizations around the world depended on their intranet to increase knowledge management, communication, innovation, efficiency, and resilience. Modern intranets take it one step further by automating a variety of business processes, like those involving paper forms.

Intranets play a key role in the success of a hybrid workplace by providing centralized repositories for ever changing information related to the pandemic. Intranets also make it easy for communicators to understand if employees have read important announcements.

Include your employees in the process

There is a greater chance your hybrid workplace initiative will be successful if employees feel included in journey and related discussions. This could be accomplished through employee surveys, where employees are asked for input on how they feel about returning to the workplace.

Make it safe

Any return to the physical workplace must satisfy all health and safety requirements. Guidance can be found by contacting local health or work safety authorities, and should aim to answer questions relating to maximum amount of employees allowed in a workplace, cleaning and hygiene techniques, employee communication, social distancing guidelines, and risk assessment.

Establish an even playing field

As mentioned above, not every employee may be able to return to a physical workplace. This could include those caring for either young children or an elderly parent, those dependant on public transportation, and those with anxiety who simply don't feel safe returning until a vaccine is developed. It is therefore important to ensure that employees who continue to work remotely are provided the same opportunities for success as those who return to the office.

Don't neglect your culture

A hybrid workplace requires the management of two distinct employee experiences, making it challenging to retain and grow a unified workplace culture. Again, it's about investing an equal amount of effort into your at-home employees as your in-office employees. Virtual social hours video townhall meetings, and the continued usage of online collaboration platforms can help keep all employees connected to your shared values and goals.

Communicate your plan

To ensure the best outcome for a hybrid workplace initiative you must ensure it's carefully communicated to all employees. Employees must understand their expectations, as well as what they can expect from their leadership.

In conclusion

If there is a silver lining from 2020, it's that the pandemic has empowered us to re-imagine the workplace, and the opportunities to optimize it. But for the hybrid workplace to be successful, it must be well planned and executed, and not treated as a novel experiment.

While the hybrid workplace may seem like an answer to a temporary problem, it's really a solution for the future of work. It's about finding ways to structure and balance work, safety, communication, and mental health.

The pandemic will eventually end. And when it does, the workplace will be a happier, healthier, and more productive place than before.

www.thoughtfarmer.com

10 Office Hacks to Improve Productivity

How about giving your work routine a little upgrade? These tips from outsourcing platform Airtasker are essential to killer productivity.Look around your desk right now. Is it organized chaos, or just everyday chaos? A cluttered brain and a cluttered to-do list don't do much for productivity. Here are ten genuinely useful office assistance hacks to help you get organized and do more.

1. Clean between keyboard keys with tape and a toothbrush

There have been a few different tests on this, but the consensus is your keyboard has over 3000 more germs per square inch than an actual toilet seat.

Use some sticky tape to pick up crumbs and even a toothbrush can come in handy to dust between the keys, then an antibacterial wipe to sort those germs out.

2. Stick time slots on your water bottle

You'll have heard just about every fitness influencer stressing about how drinking a minimum of two liters of water a day is a smart choice; however, us mere mortals know this is more difficult to do than it sounds. With the autumn/winter months approaching, all you want is a hot chocolate or a good old builder's tea.

Not only will drinking more water ward off the need for snacking, since your brain is mostly water, drinking it helps you in many ways, including improving concentration and cognition.

The best way to challenge yourself into doing this is to get yourself a refillable water bottle (which we're sure you own because you care about plastic's damaging impact on the environment) and mark 1-2 hour time slots on it. You'll also know at a glance if your water-drinking is behind schedule.

3. Choose a plant for your desk

Just because it's your work desk, that doesn't mean to can't add your little personal touch or even a little life to it. Some desks are a bit sad and dreary, even in the freshest and innovative office spaces. According to the University of Exeter, plants can improve wellbeing by up to 47% and enhance creativity by 45%. Searches for 'air purifying plants' and 'aloe vera' were up a

whopping 550% year on year in 2017.

Try a peace lily, bamboo, bonsai, or a succulent. The last one hardly needs watering.

4. Learn keyboard shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts can help you screenshot, change your font size, or drag an email back from the jaws of being sent too early.

While you're learning them all, pin a handy chart to the wall in front of you. This cheat sheet is for both PCs and Macs. Soon though, they'll become muscle memory.

5. Schedule time for emails

It's estimated we spend over 2 hours a day reading and answering emails. That's a bit disturbing when you think about how much office admin you can do in 2 whole hours.

Considering it takes an average of 23 minutes and 15 seconds to get back to the task when interrupted by something it's worth also blocking out a particular time of the day that you use specifically for a team meeting and replying to emails.

Allocate a specific time of day for answering emails, rather than swapping between tasks and breaking concentration. For immediate stuff, there's instant messaging, or even a quick chat.

6. Tidy up leads and wires

There are lots of ways to keep cables out of view. Two of the simplest involve attaching bulldog

clips or plastic picture hangers to the back of your desk. Just fix the wires to the desk legs and feed down to the plug sockets.

If you want to go full Pinterest, label tab stickers to identify what each lead is for and where it's plugged in.

7. Keep a notepad for ideas and reminders

Ideas can hit at any time, and we all know that even if we say we will, we will not remember them the next day. Buy a small notebook and jot down anything you want to remember or use later. It's particularly useful when you're on the phone and madly searching for a post-it.

When you're stuck for inspiration, or want to jog your memory, refer back to it.

8. Ignore notifications. Temporarily…

If you need to focus, you don't need productivity apps or notification blockers. Just turn your phone to silent and put it face down in a drawer.

It feels strange at first, but push notifications continually distract us, and app developers keep giving us more and more to look at.

9. Stand up every hour

The NHS advises we "move more, sit less." If you're often at a desk, it could be slowing down your metabolism and weakening your muscles and bones gradually over time.Stand up every hour, even just for a few minutes. Take calls on your feet, walk for 20 minutes at lunchtime, and park further away from the front door.

10. Remember, multitasking is a myth

It's virtually impossible for a human to focus on more than one thing at once and do them both well. Our brain switches between tasks quickly, pausing one and picking up the other.

Have a to-do list, do each task individually, and tick them off. You'll work through it far faster.

theundercoverrecruiter.com

Digital Workplace Trends for 2021

We've been preparing for the digital shift for years, and the pandemic finally tipped the scale. Organizations had no choice but to implement new business models and new technologies to support working from home and to stay ahead of the curve.
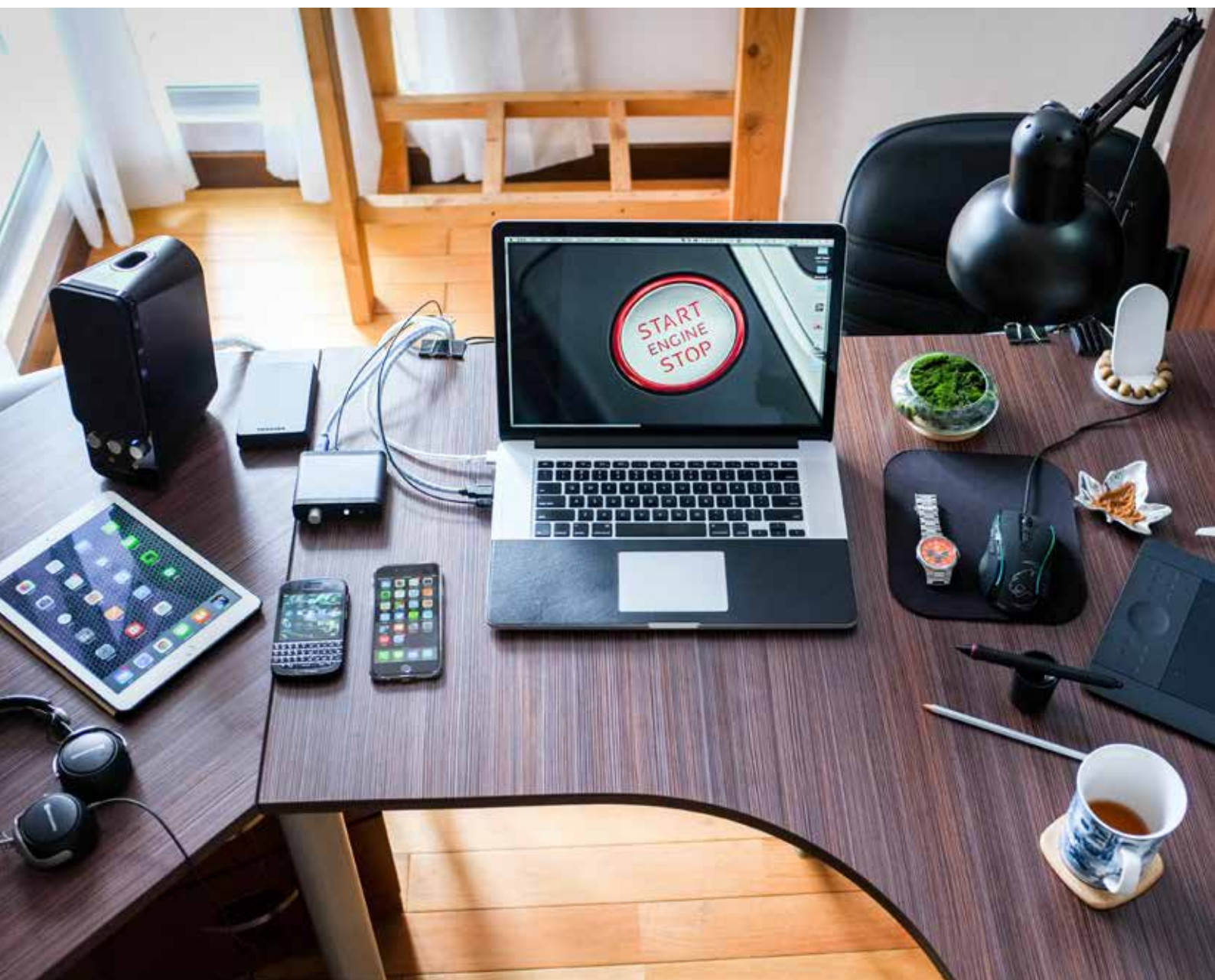
Predictions suggest that soon, the greatest competitive advantage for 30% of companies worldwide will come from their ability to implement new technologies and digital workplace technology trends creatively.

Here are six top digital workplace trends that will become more prominent in the coming year.

1. Cloud-based software

The traditional work nucleus consisting of saving work to local drives and servers is difficult to manage across a modern, distributed workforce. It creates data silos and leads to a lack of transparency and collaboration.

Cloud-based software enables smarter, more efficient business processes and workplace management because your organization can access it anywhere. This is true whether you're looking for an easier way to share documents or a better way to manage multiple buildings.

Unlike legacy software systems that are hosted on premise, cloud-based software doesn't require a significant upfront capital investment. It's much easier and more cost-effective to maintain and upgrade as well because the software vendor typically includes this in the subscription fees.

Cloud services continue evolving to make it even easier for users to integrate new technologies with them.They have become a cornerstone of the digital workplace and will become even more essential in the future, as companies look for better ways to collaborate and store data.

2. The use of personal digital devices at work

The lines between home and work have become even more blurry over the past year. Employees are working primarily from their living rooms, bedrooms, or home offices, and many have become accustomed to using their own devices.

That means we'll see an expansion of the trend known as bring your own device (BYOD) or bring your own thing (BYOT).

Popular digital workplace devices today include

not only laptops, tablets, and smartphones, but smart earbuds, smart lights, and voice assistants, according to Gartner.

This trend could soon evolve to include robots and drones that help employees stay safe and automate repetitive tasks.

Allowing employees to use personal devices reduces business costs and gives employees more flexibility. However, they can make your organization more vulnerable to hackers if they don't have proper security features.

While 85% of organizations now allow employees to use their own devices, according to Bitglass, only 56% of them have the ability to remove sensitive data from those devices remotely.

As the BYOD trend becomes more popular, it may be time to update your acceptable use policies for workplace technology. Every employee, contractor, and consultant with access to your company's data needs to understand their obligations for protecting it.

3. A virtual economy

After most in-person events were canceled due to the pandemic, many companies transitioned to doing more business online.

Virtual meetings, conferences, and job interviews became commonplace, while even more of the sales cycle moved online.

With an extended absence of face-to-face meetings, we saw a greater adoption of digital workplace technologies that bridge the gap between the virtual experience and the physical one.

That includes collaboration tools like Slack and alternatives like Ryver and Flock, project management software like Basecamp, Asana, and Monday, file sharing solutions, and even virtual whiteboards.

Companies that weren't already using customer relationship management platforms like

Salesforce or recruitment management systems like Workable are now investing in them.

The ability to find new prospects online, manage simple, secure online payments, and offer better customer support will also become increasingly important in our new virtual economy.

Although these digital workplace trends present challenges, they also bring many opportunities. For instance, it's easier to find diverse talent and people with highly specialized skills when your candidate pool isn't limited by geographic boundaries.

And removing friction from the sales process results in a better experience for everyone, as well as the potential for higher profits.

4. A smart workspace

Imagine having your own personal workspace that recognizes you and automatically adjusts to your preference for desk and chair height, lighting, temperature, and humidity. You can sit anywhere and get to work right away.

When you're finished for the day, sensors automatically notify your facilities management team to clean and sanitize the space so it will be ready for the next person.

It sounds like a futuristic fantasy, but the Internet of

Things (IoT) is already making smart workplaces a reality. According to Deloitte, smart workplace technology includes sensors, digital signage, facial recognition, and integrated workplace management systems.

Sensors detect real-time occupancy and motion, and they can connect to other IoT-enabled systems to control temperature, lighting, and other environmental factors. Digital signage can make it easier for employees to navigate the workplace and find colleagues by providing interactive maps and directories. Employees can search for anyone by name and see if they are working in the office that day. They can also see which rooms or workstations are available to reserve.

Facial recognition technology allows employees to customize their work areas according to their preferences.

And integrated workplace management systems bring all this data into a single platform facilities managers can use to make adjustments to the work environment as needed.

For instance, they can see occupancy data from the previous week and have a better idea of how many workspaces they'll need to have available. They can adjust cleaning schedules based on demand, rather than cleaning and sanitizing the entire workplace every day.

And they can optimize their space and energy usage to reduce building costs.

Smart technologies aren't only for traditional office spaces. Any location can become smart with the right digital technology, including a coworking space or a home office.

5. Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS)

With remote work becoming more popular and more companies investing in agile talent, many are looking for solutions that make onboarding easier.

Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) allows employees to access a desktop's virtual applications from

anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection.

This subscription service is managed by a third-party cloud provider who hosts the backend virtual desktop infrastructure and streams the applications to users.

These virtual desktops can be customized and saved for frequent users or wiped clean each time a user logs out.

DaaS is a perfect solution for companies that need a fast way to manage many users while maintaining security. The providers handle all maintenance, upgrades, storage, and data backup. This reduces costs and the need for IT support.

6. Democratized technology services

In the not-so-distant future, more people will have the power to develop new applications using low-code or no-code tools. The fact that they will be assembling their own services for their own use means that they will be able to create systems that provide solutions to their specific problems. This allows for a new level of personalization in the workplace.

Gartner also predicts an expansion of citizen data science, which will give users the power to extract complex analytics from data without a data science background. This will empower them to make more informed decisions faster.

However, for your workforce to use these solutions to their full potential, you need an integrated platform that helps you make sense of data from many different sources.

That includes occupancy data from sensors and data from other workplace applications, such as service request software and asset management software.

It should have easy-to-use dashboards that allow you to track the key performance indicators that matter most to the success of your organization.

By Chad Smith www.iofficecorp.com

Screen time at 'breaking point' but can tech help?

It is no secret that technology has become increasingly present in our lives, especially over the past year.

We use our devices to stay in touch with friends and family, to educate and entertain our children and, for many, to work from home.

But endless virtual interactions have resulted in so-called Zoom Fatigue, according to scientists at Stanford University.

To prevent digital burnout, tech firms are now trying to design technological solutions to encourage productivity and creativity and to allow you to spend less time staring at a screen.

Take breaks

Microsoft has introduced a new tool on Outlook that encourages people to take shorter meetings with plenty of breaks.

The settings schedule meetings five minutes after the hour - to provide a natural break between calls.The tool was created in response to Microsoft's own research, which found that back-to-back virtual meetings can make people stressed and distracted.

Researchers conducted brain scans of 14 people during four half-hour back-to-back meetings - once without breaks, and once with 10-minute breaks in-between each meeting.
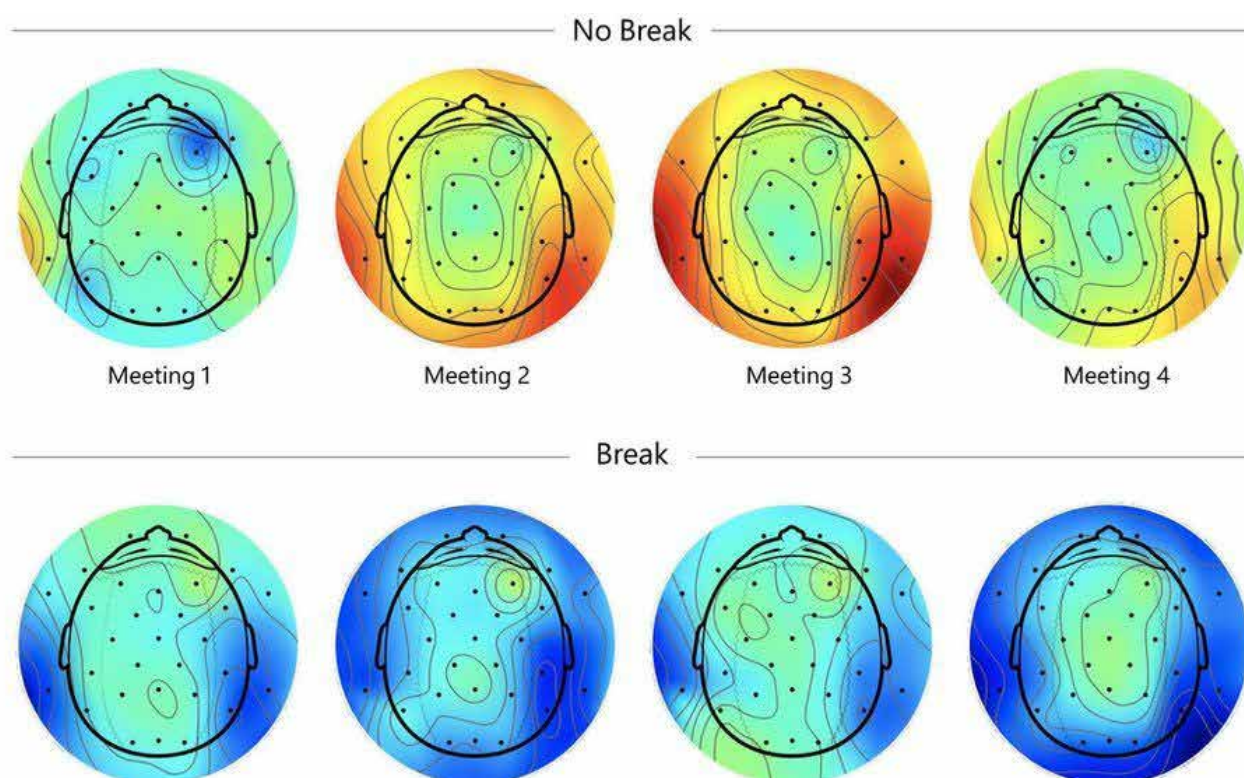
Blue colours show little or no stress, whereas red and yellow colours show higher levels of stress in the scan

The analysis said no breaks led to a spike in stress levels, especially when switching between calls.

"Taking a physical break from screens is also essential, as this can improve our ability to focus," Nick Hedderman, modern work lead at Microsoft UK, told the BBC.

He suggests that leaders could create a "positive remote culture" by:

• **shortening meetings to between 20 and 40 minutes**

• **conducting "team check-ins" that aren't related to work**

• **scheduling voice-only walking meetings "to change the scenery and improve physical wellbeing"**

Clear boundaries

"If we are mindful of our behaviour and establish clear boundaries and schedules, we can choose to have technology work for us instead of against us," says Naz Beheshti, former executive assistant to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

In her new book, Pause. Breathe. Choose: Become the CEO of Your Well-Being, she stresses the importance of being bored, a lesson she learned from Mr Jobs to encourage creativity.

"The next time you have a gap of time in your day, refrain from filling it," her book says. "Resist picking up your phone or other electronic devices, which could temporarily entertain you with something diverting like your never-ending

social media feed."

There are a mounting number of scientific studies which have shown that phones and notifications have a detrimental effect on productivity and attention.

Research from the University of California Irvine found it took 23 minutes to return to a single task after a notification. And people managed to focus their attention on computers for an average of only 47 seconds, before turning to another screen such as a phone.

Notifications can take time to recover from, lead to errors and can cause stress, the research suggests.

Daily limits

Apple and Google have both tried to empower smartphone users, with Apple's Screen Time feature and Android's Digital Wellbeing tool.

A user's device will brief them on how much time is spent on each app, and how many notifications they have received. You can set daily limits and timeframes and customise notifications.

And Google is adding a new feature that will send an alert telling you to look up from your phone when walking.

Without notifications, even the presence of a phone can reduce your ability to concentrate, according to one study from the University of Chicago.

Digital detox

For those without the willpower to disable notifications, there are tech hardware solutions.

The Light Phone is a simple mobile phone, which aims to eliminate distractions caused by smartphones.

It has very basic capabilities: calls, texts (and group messaging), alarm and mobile hotspot.

You can also add a calculator, simple music player and podcasting tool.

But the phone "will never have social media, internet browsing, email, news, or ads", the company promises.

There has been a steep increase in orders of the Light Phone over the pandemic, as people struggle to switch off at home.

"The problem is still there, if anything it's worse because we are locked down," co-founder Kaiwei Tang explains.

Only 50% of Light Phone owners use it as their primary phone, many switch to it at the weekend, on holiday or in the evenings, when they want a break, Mr Tang adds.

And for drafting documents, or editing them, reMarkable offers a technology solution… to the notebook. It looks like a tablet, but feels like writing on paper. The technology can also convert your handwriting into a text file to send over email.

But as it is designed to "take you into production mode", you can't browse the internet, receive emails or even check the time on the tablet.

"It isn't just a device, it is a counter-movement against all of that," says chief executive Magnus Wanberg.

He says it is "hypocritical" of big tech companies to put the responsibility of limiting screen time on the users, when devices and algorithms are designed to be addictive.

"Focus is the scarcest commodity now that we have," he adds.

Deep work

There is a growing understanding of the importance of being left uninterrupted while doing focused "deep work", says Prof Duncan Brumby, of University College London.

"We know that periods of focused deep work are short-lived and hard to carve out. These periods should therefore be used wisely, and notifications disabled during these times."

But although this may be more productive, such working patterns may not be suitable for everyone.

"You are at the mercy of your boss" if you don't respond to calls or emails for long periods of time, says Bruce Daisley, former Twitter vice-president, now author writing about workplace culture.

"Pretty much the whole of modern working is suboptimal for concentration," he adds. "We're at breaking point with screen time."

By Cristina Criddle bbc.co.uk

Change isn't always easy…

However, change is an extremely important part of business. Now, more than ever. Whether it's something large scale like facilitating a merger, or a smaller scale change such as introducing a new software system – managing it effectively is the only way to ensure a smooth transition. Here's a quick rundown of what change management means, and how companies may use it.

What is change management?

Change management (CM) is a term used to describe the systematic approach and management of organisational change.

The change could be driven by anything from the evolution of technology and reviews of internal processes, to crisis response, mergers, and customer demand.

Whilst the overarching meaning of change management remains the same in all situations, the way the term is used may differ depending on the context it's used in. For example:

In project management – change management usually refers to the introduction and approval of changes to the scope of a project.

In IT and infrastructure – change management usually refers to the process of testing and installing a new piece of equipment or software system.

Why is change management important?

Managing change effectively and efficiently is important for a number of reasons.

Not only does it ensure employees and

employers are equipped to adopt change in their daily roles, it also minimises risk and reduces disruption – both for staff and customers.

Following change management processes is also key to keeping positive morale among employees, making sure they're open to change, know what it involves, and are given full transparency on the situation.

Change management levels

Change management can be broken down into three key levels:

1. Individual change management

Individual change management is the first step to ensuring a positive transition. It focuses on communicating a vision that influences behaviour.

Ask yourself:

What are the core messages that people want to hear? And what actionable steps can be taken to achieve the change?

2. Organisational change management

Organisational change management focuses on the implementation of steps on a project level, figuring out which groups of people will be responsible for the change, and setting clear objectives – involving staff every step of the way.

Ask yourself:

What is the ultimate goal? And what kind of changes need to be made?

3. Enterprise change management

Enterprise change management is all about embedding change into your core values. Once individual and organisational change has been managed effectively, the way your business works will have drastically improved. These strategic initiatives should be reflected in your company culture and consistently applied to optimise performance – whilst responding quickly to market changes.

Ask yourself:

How can the change be incorporated into your company values?

7 Rs of change management

Change and potential risks go hand-in-hand, making a thorough and effective process of

managing change essential to ensuring a smooth transition.

Here are seven questions to ask before implementing change:

1 Who Raised the change?

2 What's the Reason for the change?

3 What Return is required from the change?

4 What are the Risks involved in the change?

5 What Resources are required to deliver the change?

6 Who is Responsible for the 'build, test, and implement' portion of the change?

7 What is the Relationship between this change and other changes?

Answering these questions before implementing change enables an organisation to:

• **Measure risk more effectively**

• **Reduce disruption to their customers' experience**

• **Assess and improve their change management processes**

Change management certifications

There are a number of change management certifications that'll teach you vital change management techniques – whether you're working in project management, your role involves regularly updating software or systems, or you're in a leadership position.

Here are a few of the different ways you can study:

Take a CPD change management course. Offered at varying levels and great for aiding your professional development, boosting your CV, and expanding your knowledge of change management.

Perfect for: People who are brand new to change management, or existing project managers/ change managers who are looking to work on their CPD.

Will I get certified? No.

Take a professional Change Management® course. Offered at Foundation and Practitioner level, this professional qualification is globally recognised and awarded by APMG (The Association for Project Managers Group)

Perfect for: Anyone looking to start or develop a career in change management. You don't need any previous qualifications or experience to start studying at foundation level.

Will I get certified? Yes.

Get PRINCE2® certified. PRINCE2® principles are a core part of project management – and they include adapting to change and managing risks within projects. This makes it a good area of study if you're looking to put change management into practice.

Perfect for: Aspiring project managers/change managers. If starting at foundation level, there usually aren't any prerequisites to get started.

Will I get certified? Yes.

Why study change management?

Getting qualified could help you:

• Gain the skills you need to succeed in roles in change management, leadership, project management, IT, and more

• Prove your change management abilities to prospective employers, and stand out from the crowd with a formal certification

• Learn how to manage change within your organisation, making you more successful at your job

• Demonstrate your adaptability when applying for new jobs with which involve the use of different processes and systems

• Progress in your career and qualify for change management specific roles

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by Amber Rolfe reed.co.uk

Wearable social distance monitor

WorkSpace, a division of IT specialists, Emtec Corporation, has launched the WorkSafe Safe Spacer™ wearable social distance monitor. This device helps users maintain a safe social distance in the workplace and alerts wearers when other units come within two metres with light, vibration and sound.

In April 2020, Devon-based company, Emtec, began looking at solutions to get people safely back to work during the pandemic.

The lightweight, wearable Safe Spacer™ is helping businesses to reopen safely and create a Covid-secure workplace. The device uses ultra-wideband radio-frequency technology to achieve precise distancing and is up to 10 times more accurate than traditional Bluetooth. When operated with other protective measures, the Safe Spacer™ reduces the possibility of person-to-person infection by alerting wearers when other units come within two metres or six feet of them.

The device can be worn on a wristband, belt loop or lanyard and can adapt to any workplace, without compromising existing safety protocols. There's a choice of visual, vibration or audio to suit any work environment or individual need, and the device can also log contacts to facilitate fast contract tracing in the event of a reported exposure.

Each unit can be charged individually, or for organisations managing multiple units, the optional S-Charger docking/charging station allows the simultaneous bulk charging of up to 25

Safe Spacers™. The S-Charger can be connected to a computer to easily configure multiple units and customise alert distances and types.

Ideal for use across the hotel, logistics, medical, manufacturing, food processing and construction industries, the device is also suitable for big corporations with large numbers of staff, who need to maintain distancing while working in a shared office space. It is waterproof and therefore easy to clean and sanitise and perfect for businesses operating multi-shift facilities or those that are open to the public such as museums, art galleries, churches, schools, casinos and other visitor attractions.

Talking about the device and what it means for the workplace, Emtec's Co-Founder and CEO, Martin Wedge said: "Our aim in creating the Safe Spacer™ was to help organisations get back to business and operate in a confidently secure way, and we're delighted to have achieved this. The Safe Spacer™ is a real game-changer and what's more its future-proof design offers many additional uses post-Covid, so it's a real investment for any business."

www.globalworksafe.co.uk

Working Parents:
5 Top Tips for finding time to exercise

For many parents, exercise takes a back seat up against more pressing concerns that need attending to during the day. Yet finding time to work out, even for just 10 minutes, can be a real mood booster for both you and your children (not to mention, a great stress reliever!).

The key to working out as a parent is finding quick exercises and activities that you enjoy doing; and , most importantly, fit around your work-from-home and home schooling commitments. Along with a little activewear inspiration from Denise Lewis's debut range with Next, here are five helpful tips on fitting that workout session into your routine.

Tip 1: Stick to a schedule

Finding 'me' time is hard when your kids are up and running, so working out before everyone gets up can be a good strategy for many. Try to get up 10 minutes earlier than usual, fit in that quick workout and kick start your day.

Alternatively, try blocking out some time in your work calendar. If you have a meeting scheduled, you make the effort to show up – and the same should be true for things like workouts!

Plus, adding it into your calendar lets your team members know you may be out-of-office for a brief period. You could add these workouts in between meetings, during the lunch break or even during a quick tea break.

Lastly, align your workouts with your partner's routine. Letting them know when you're planning on exercising means they can be there for the children during that time.

Tip 2: Have a workout plan in place

Having a workout routine or list of exercises you enjoy can help save time and allow you to jump right into it without overthinking. Create a list of short, medium and long length workouts,

according to the time you have available, and keep them handy for when you are going to train.

Planning your exercises on the weekend means that by the time the busy, work-fuelled weekdays arrive, you're ready to go and don't waste any time figuring out what to do and when to do it.

Aside from planning, creating a dedicated space for your workouts is important to stay motivated and jump into exercising right away. Not only will it help you get into "workout mode" faster but it will also save time in the long run.

Prep your chosen area in advance – either in the morning before you're due to work out or during a work break – so that you're ready to go at your scheduled time.

(Don't worry if you don't have all the equipment; as long as you have enough space to lay down an exercise mat then you're good to go!)

Tip 3: Prepare your workout clothes the night before

To save some time and always be "workout ready", prepare your workout clothes the night before. This will help you switch between working and working out with ease, whilst at the same time allowing you to be comfortable to move and play around with your kids.

Since what we wear can often determine how powerful and confident we feel, putting on functional and flattering activewear can also boost your motivation to work out by automatically making you feel more fit and active. Mother-of-four Denise Lewis OBE has just launched an activewear edit with Next. As a busy parent, she likes the simplicity of exercise clothes:

"What I love about activewear is that it's easy. It doesn't matter what time of the day I put it on. It's simple. I can go to the gym, I can pick up the kids from school. It's just comfortable and I feel good in it."

Tip 4: Include your children in your workouts

If you're struggling to carve out those precious

minutes of "me time", why not include your children within your workouts? This could be a walk to the park; a bike ride; or a dance party in the lounge during your lunch hour.

A fun way to work out from home with your kids is to take on the role of personal trainer. Try adapting some fun moves into a child-friendly workout.

If you have babies, you can wear a baby carrier and use them as a makeshift weight and include them in your daily workout too!

Investing in a good running buggy can be a good idea. If your children's early wake-ups threaten your morning jog, try to include them in your routine. This is also a fun way to bond with your kids and to get some fresh air during lockdown.

Tip 5: Get creative with distractions

If you can't include them….distract them! To carve out time for exercise alongside work, you may need to get creative with distracting your children. Scheduling a designated TV hour at the same time as your workouts; or giving them a colouring assignment or time-consuming game to play may be just what you need in order to work out in peace.

As long as the children are close enough for you to keep an eye on them, you should be able to steal some time to yourself.

Finding time to exercise

Incorporating fitness into a busy schedule is challenging. Working out is often the first thing to be removed from the calendar. But, with a little forethought and planning, it's absolutely doable.

Taking care of our physical and mental health is essential – especially given the current circumstances. Combining fitness and activities with your kids will not only be beneficial for the whole family but will also instil a love for exercise in your kids from a young age.

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