# FUTURE OF WORK & BUSINESS

## RESPONSIBLE RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE OUTCOMES REPORT

The emergence of COVID-19, and the response of governments around the world, has changed the way we live, work, and do business. The Dallas Regional Chamber (DRC) is sharing best practices and key learnings to help guide employers as the Dallas Region returns to the workplace, explores new ways to work and grow, and transitions to regional economic growth.

Following the onset of COVID-19, The Crowther Group, Furniture Marketing Group, and RealCom Solutions sponsored five meetings on the first phase of the DRC's Future of Work and Business programming. This first phase, Responsible Return to the Workplace, focused on near-term policy and practical information necessary for a responsible return to the workforce.

The series featured insights from DRC member companies and community leaders, including infectious disease experts, emergency response leaders, human resource executives, labor and business attorneys, and business leaders. These meetings focused on types of facilities and operations including essential businesses; hospitality, retail, and transportation; manufacturing and distribution; and offices.

Through these meetings, the DRC compiled best practices and key takeaways for a responsible return to the workplace. The collective results will help the evolution of work and workplaces as we shape the future of work and business.

# DRC
## DALLAS REGIONAL CHAMBER

## BEST PRACTICES & KEY TAKEAWAYS
**Although each meeting focused on a different audience, consistent themes emerged across all discussions:**

**Reboarding & New Policies**
- Develop written return-to-work plans
- Work from home, when possible
- Follow CDC suggested guidelines

**Testing & Tracing**
- Create and implement employee self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms
- Track individuals in meetings and days employees are in the workplace in case of an infection
- Implement self-quarantine policies

**Changes to Physical Space**
- Adjust workplace operations, including unassigned seating, rotational schedules
- Reduce potential areas of employee congestion
- Increase workplace cleaning and safety measures

**Communications**
- Regular communication with employees builds trust and transparency
- Communicate if an associate tests positive
- Poll employees to gauge readiness to return to the workplace

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# BEST PRACTICES & KEY TAKEAWAYS

## REBOARDING & NEW POLICIES

Reboarding informs employees of new policies such as physical distancing measures, self-screening processes, and new social norms in the workplace, while also fostering a culture of compliance and accountability among staff.

- Develop written return-to-work plans, including the possibility of a company outbreak, or a resurgence of cases in the region
- Reduce employee impact and work from home when possible; consider rotational schedules
- Create policies that encourage employees to stay home when sick
- Implement a self-screening process prior to arriving at the workplace
- Follow CDC guidelines when building your plan (six feet of separation, masks, hygiene measures)

## TESTING & TRACING

Organizations should identify their role in the collection, storage, and management of employee health data.

- Self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms or health issues before arriving at the workplace
- Provide access to testing locations for employees showing COVID-19 symptoms; consider offering paid on-site regular testing
- Travel policies and restrictions on travel for employees and/or visitors
- Consider tracking individuals in meetings and days employees are in the workplace to help simplify tracing measures in case of an infection
- Implement self-quarantine policies for potentially infected employees

## CHANGES TO PHYSICAL SPACE

The three key areas to focus on for design are operations, public space, and janitorial operations, such as HVAC and ventilation.

- Follow CDC, OSHA, and State of Texas workplace recommendations
- Adjust workplace operations, such as unassigned seating and rotational schedules
- Increase cleaning and time for janitorial services to implement new measures
- Immediate design changes could include cubicle dividers, software that monitors room occupancy and tracks cleaning, hands-free thermal scan check-in terminals, and UV or electrostatic cleaning equipment
- Explore new innovation that will redefine a workspace (e.g. smart phone apps, wearable tech to open doors, UV cleaning stations)

## COMMUNICATION

During crises and periods of rapid transformation, frequent, accurate, and honest communication with employees builds trust and transparency, creates sense of safety, and enables management to refine policies.

- Survey employees to help inform the decision making process
- Communicate if an associate tests positive, but protect the employee's privacy; you cannot share the name of the affected employee without his/her permission
- Do not be afraid to discuss the mental health with your team members
- There is no rule book for a response to a pandemic; correct and acknowledge when new information becomes available
- Practice empathy in your communications as everyone's risk tolerance is different