

# Returning to a Life Science Workplace Post Pandemic



**Navigating returning to the office and reopening closed offices has been unpredictable for many. There are so many questions that need answers as it relates to people and there doesn't seem to be a clear enough playbook detailing how to handle it.**

When it comes to a life science office, there is added another layer of complexity because not all employees were remote during the past two years. Many scientists and scientific staff have remained onsite keeping experiments and programs running and moving forward. The return to office is not just a shift in workstyle for those who have been working from home but is also for those who have developed their own onsite flexibility over the past two years.

**Below are a few key takeaways we have noticed while advising our clients on reopening their offices:**

## LESSON #1

**You need way more patience than you think.**

Things are most likely going to go wrong, so you must do your best to prepare for major issues but also be ready to roll with the punches and take a deep breath. Whether you face supply chain issues causing delays or employees taking some time to adjust to commuting back into the office, the transition for everyone will take time and patience is key.

## LESSON #2

**You need less than you think, so start with the basics.**

Everyone's work habits have shifted significantly, what we are doing day to day in the office may vary and a lot of our life has moved to digital. Heavy office supply surplus may not be necessary, which means not every desk needs a stapler, tape, and accessories anymore. Keep the desk simple and clutter free to encourage desk sharing and collaboration.



## LESSON #3

**Expect delays.** As mentioned in the first point, supply chain issues are inevitable. There could be furniture additions, construction elements, or AV/IT pieces; everything is taking longer to produce, procure, and ship so it is best to prepare for delays.

## LESSON #4

**Don't underestimate the little things.** Employees haven't been out of their homes in a while so having office amenities like snacks, a Bevi machine, a coffee selection really help make that experience of coming back into the office more of a treat. Also, distributing a communication or instructions around returning to the office will help ease a lot of employee anxiety. Outlining parking and commuting instructions, Wi-Fi information, office and conference room expectations, office tech instruction how to do (i.e., how to book a conference room or desk or Zoom Room).

## LESSON #5

**Create a system for feedback.** Things are not going to work seamlessly; people are going to inevitably get frustrated or annoyed at some point. Have a neutral platform to allow people to speak up if something isn't working but as leaders also speak up if something doesn't work and emphasize kindness and patience.

## LESSON #6

**Emphasize collaboration.** Opening an office requires a team. Create culture champions who are focused on getting employees excited to return to the office and activate operational task rabbits who are focused on optimizing the facility to be ready for whatever return to office strategy may have been adapted.

## LESSON #7

**Leverage technology.** Implement space management software when possible. This simple tool helps manages employee stress and anxiety for when they are planning their time in the office. Give your employees the ability to plan and reserve their space and planning their space ahead of time will result in a much more seamless transition — not to mention how beneficial all the software analytics are to planning the future needs and usage of your space!

## LESSON #8

**Enjoy it!** It's been just over two years since the pandemic started. We have been apart for a long time. Teammates have come and gone, so take this opportunity to make new connections and rekindle old connections. Enjoy the novelty of in person collaboration and the start to our normal in this new world. It's not going to be perfect, but we all come so far, enjoy, it's been earned!



**Interested in learning more on how we can help? Send us a note:**

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