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ARCHITECTURE STUDIOS

TRENDING

OFFICE TRENDS RESEARCH DOCUMENT

2020.06.18

INTRODUCTION

While the current global pandemic may have sped along the process, the workplace has been in a constant flux since it's inception.

As we find ourselves in the midst of the most significant and fast-paced re-invenvention of the workplace in our time, GASS Architecture Studios draws knowledge from a diverse network of global sources in order to understand the latest and most influential workplace trends of 2020.

This document aims to concisely capture, translate and explore the multiple implications that the fast changing workplace has on the modern workforce. As we adapt to the challenges of recent events as well as plan for the future of our companies, these trends stand to make the most influential impacts on the future of our workplaces.

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TREND

01

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adapting
the open plan

TREND 01:

ADAPTING
THE OPEN PLAN

"Research continues to show that employees feel most productive when they have control over their own work environment. No one-size-fits-all mold can adequately be calibrated to the range of jobs and employee preferences out there. Adjustability and variety go a long way toward keeping employees happy and productive."

Mike Coons
(forbes.com 20190827)

Today's open plan offices occupy a mere 5% of the total workplace composition. Projections estimate that by 2030 the open plan office will exist in 30% of workplaces. While the open plan typology remains a successful way to increase staff interaction, many employees report that the open plan typology poses problems such as unwanted noise distraction and lower levels of concentration.

Trends found to combat this issue include the following:

TREND 1.1:

DYNAMIC FLEXIBILITY

This trend deals with the need for flexibility and adaptability of space.

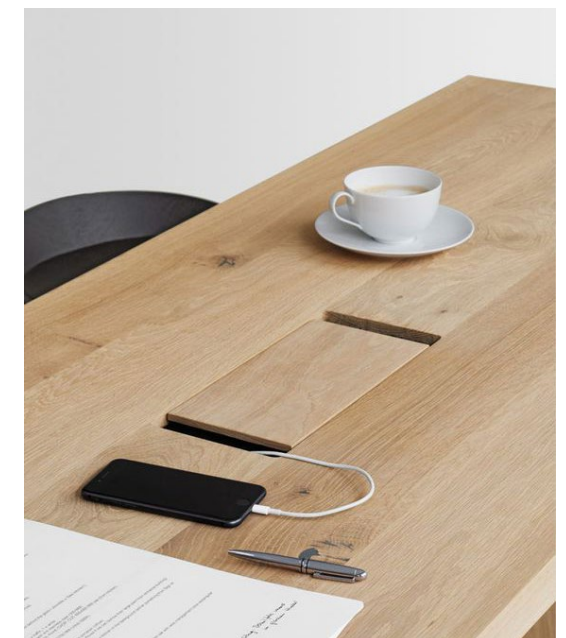Dynamic Flexibility allows the complete transformation of rooms with relative ease,

This is achieved through :

- lightweight, easily movable furniture
- movable walls
- adjustable lighting + technology

TREND 1.2:

TECH-ENABLED SPACES

A shift in technologies has fast become the norm across all facets of life. In the workplace, laptops and cordless phones remain key to allowing employees to disconnect from their desk and not have to be in one place for the entirety of the day.

Adapting the workplace technologies need to allow people the opportunity to 'plug and play" from wherever they are in the office.
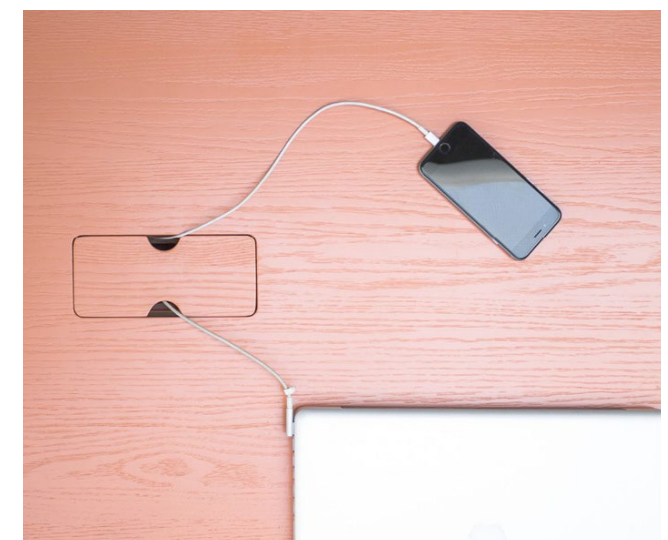
TREND 1.3:

THE MODERN MODULAR

As mentioned previously, the open floor plan is here to stay. However, employers need to offer their staff various breakaway spaces.

These spaces offer employees the flexibility of choosing between various types of workspaces to suit specific types of work. The goal here is to serve every type of employee as well as every type of working scenario with an appropriate space - thereby allowing people to curate their office environment.

PRIVACY BOOTHS

These booths promote focus work through the introduction of small individual pods/booths within which staff are able to work temporarily within sound proof walls with access to power outlets and ventilation.
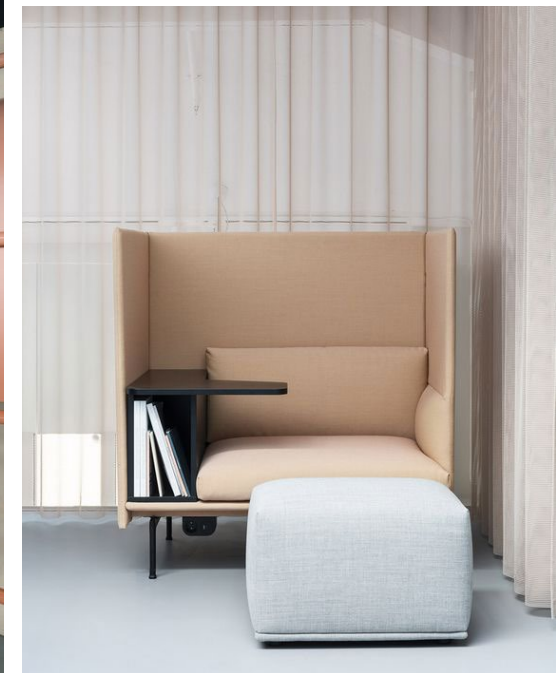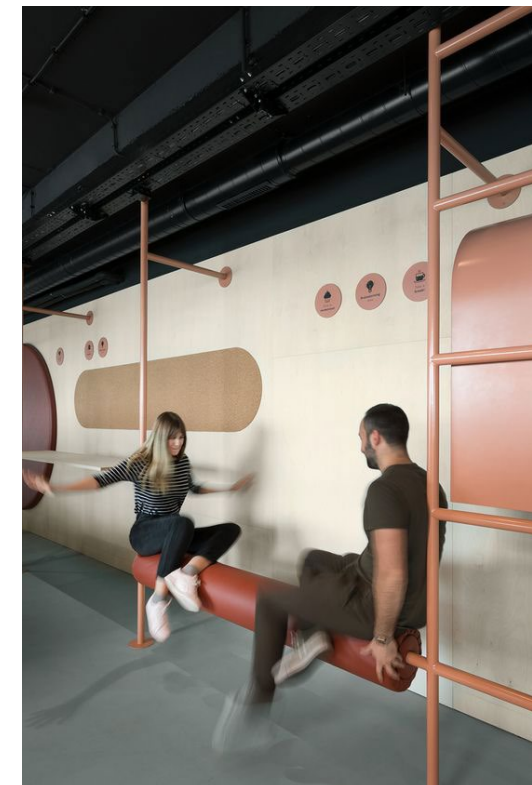
BRAINSTORM | IDEATION HUBS

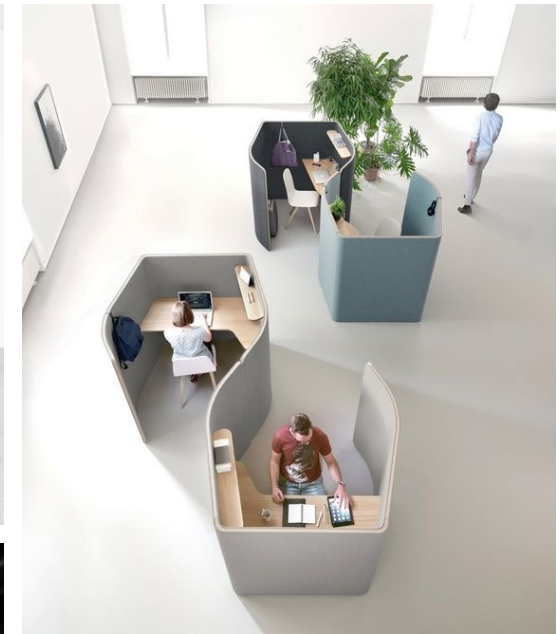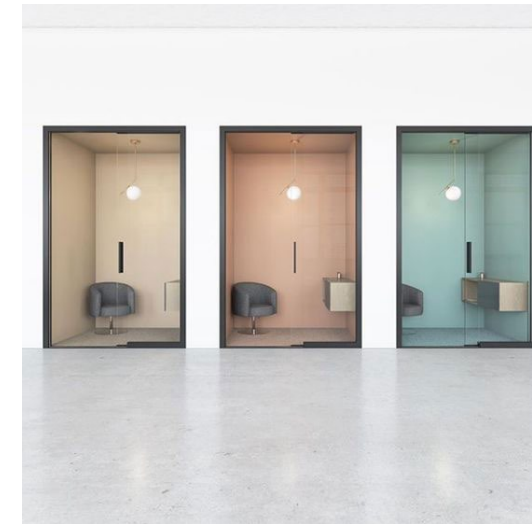Areas expressly for innovation, that allow for things like pin ups and sticky notes and concept diagramming.

HUDDLE ROOMS

Where more sensitive discussions can be held more privately

STANDING DESKS

Stand-up meeting locations where you can quickly spread out plans or designs and immediately collaborate

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TREND

0 2

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FLEXIBLE + CO-WORKING
OFFICE SPACES

TREND 2.1:

CO-WORKING OFFICES

1 office, multiple and alternating tenants

Co-working spaces are very popular lately. These spaces allow professionals to use office space and meeting rooms for a monthly fee. These spaces promote a sense of community, comfortability and shared values (ambius.com; 2020)

This office environment combines features such as restaurants, game rooms, comfortable furniture, fitness areas, showers etc. into a typical office.

Companies like google and Facebook have incorporate these elements.

Trends combine the traditional cluster tables of an open plan office with various other seating options such as private booths for use for short periods of time to get away from loud noise

TREND 2.2:

FLEXIBLE WORKPLACES

1 office, 1 tenant, no assigned desks

Also described as "agile" work environments,

No assigned desks but offers a variety of work environments such as open plan offices, collaboration zones, breakout spaces, relaxing quiet rooms,
Offers staff the opportunity to choose their own work environment based on their activity.
Gives staff members a sense of control and ownership over their work environment
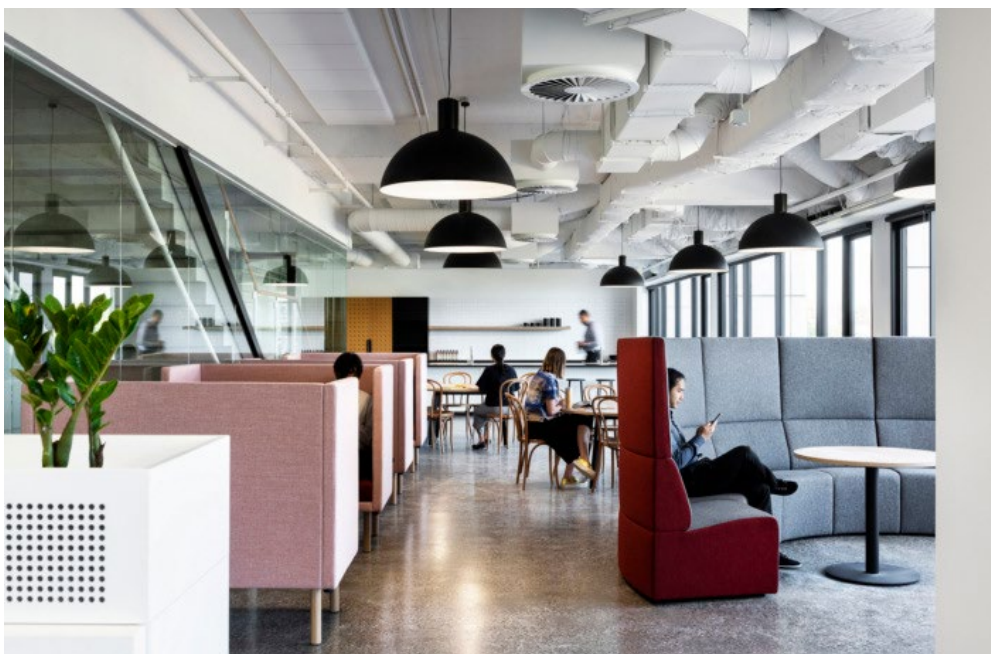
o   Open plan office design
o   Dynamic, multi-use meeting areas
o   Technology resource spaces
o   Unconventional creative spaces
o   Lots of glass
o   Plants and greenery
o   Portable green wall dividers
o   Lightweight, mobile furniture
o   Plenty of desk space / no cubicles
o   Comfortable couches and chairs
o   Coffee & espresso bars

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0 3

WELLNESS DESIGN

TREND 3.1:

PHYSICAL + EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

A major focus found within most developing workplaces is a focus on wellness - physically, mentally and environmentally.

Newly developing wellness trends include the introduction of spaces and techniques such as:

WORKPLACE CULTURE + A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

"At the end of the day, organizations are trying to design for a community that reflects their culture," Webb says. "And this idea of using community as a design strategy impacts corporate culture, wellness, productivity and retention."

NAP PODS

Nap pods (or sleep pods) are special types of structures or chairs, often used in corporate/ workplace environments and universities, that allow people to nap. Users use the pods to take private sleep breaks, often aided by technology and ambient features. Their supposed efficacy is rooted in research that suggests that 20-minute naps could reduce signs of fatigue, boost energy levels and improve focus.

MOTHERS ROOMS

Steering away from the dark, isolated, storage-like spaces that most office spaces currently use. Cutting edge mother's rooms (or nursing rooms) provide ample light and amenities that allow mothers to pump in a more comfortable and private environment.

ON SITE GYMS

A workplace gym can be an absolute asset to your employees, providing a much-needed outlet for stress, a culture of wellness, and a sense of teamwork and camaraderie among your employees.

RECREATIONAL ROOMS

Recreational spaces, particularly those that offer a chance to exercise, play games and decompress, will help boost your company morale and energy.
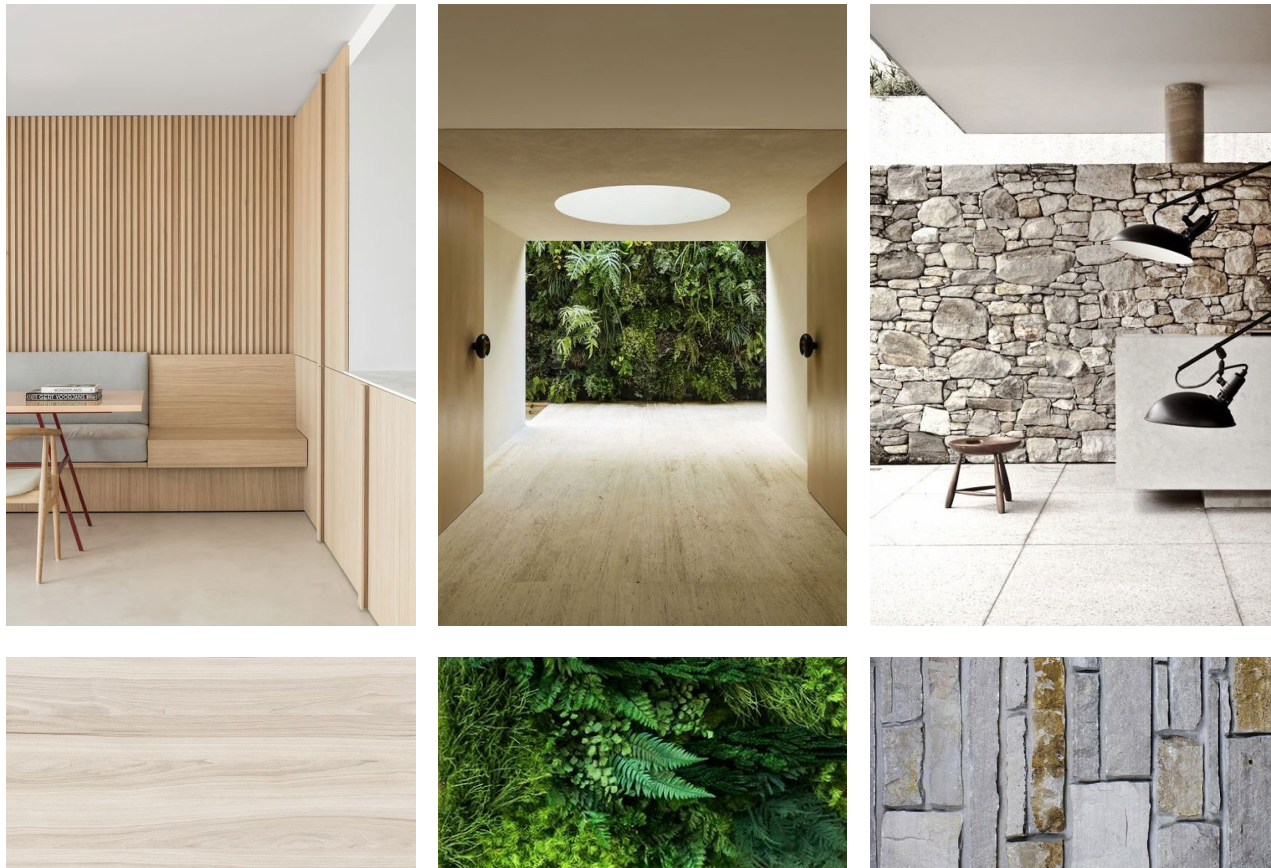
TREND 3.2:

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

The integration of recycled, sustainably sourced, and green building materials into a space and establishes a more harmonious relationship between nature and our buildings.

ENVIRONMENTAL WELLNESS DESIGN

Similar to sustainable design practices but focuses on the interior workings of the building, specifically through its integration with various programs and online platforms such as:

1   LEED

2   WELL

3   Building Standard

4   FitWel

5   Living Building Challenge

BIOPHILLIC DESIGN

Design inspired by nature and the natural world by incorporating patterns, forms and elements of nature into the building design.

includes features such as:

1   sustainably sourced materials such as stone and wood
2   abundance of plants
3   vertical gardens
4   bio dynamic lighting
5   nature inspired flooring
6   green walls / moss walls
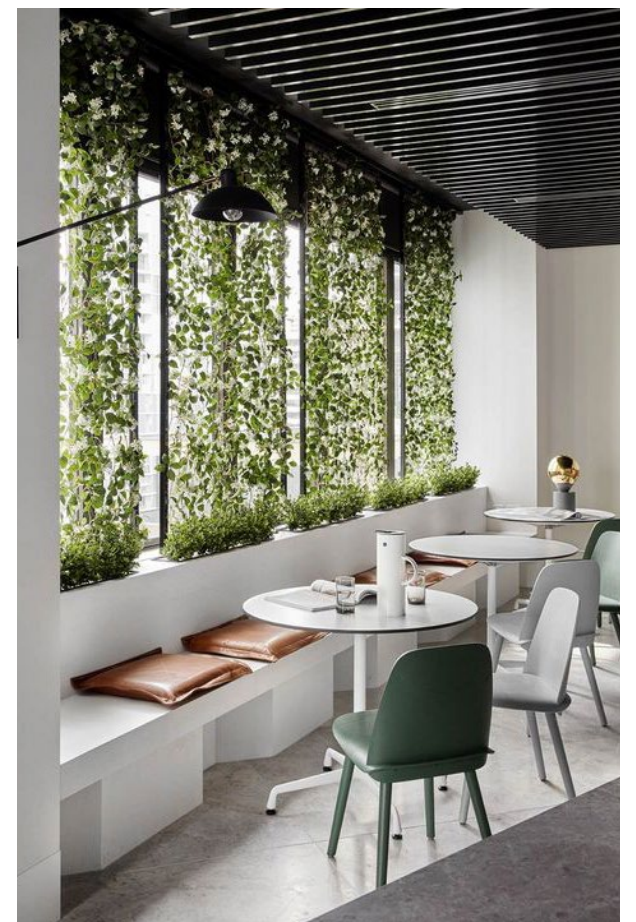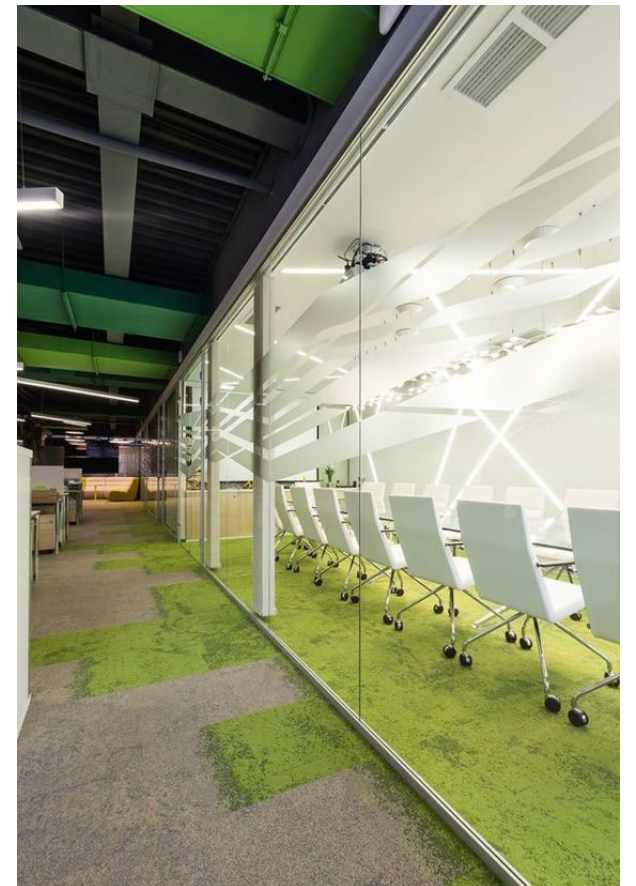
TREND 3.3:

THE RISE OF
RESIMERCIAL DESIGN

"You want to create an office space where people don't want to run home at 5 o'clock."
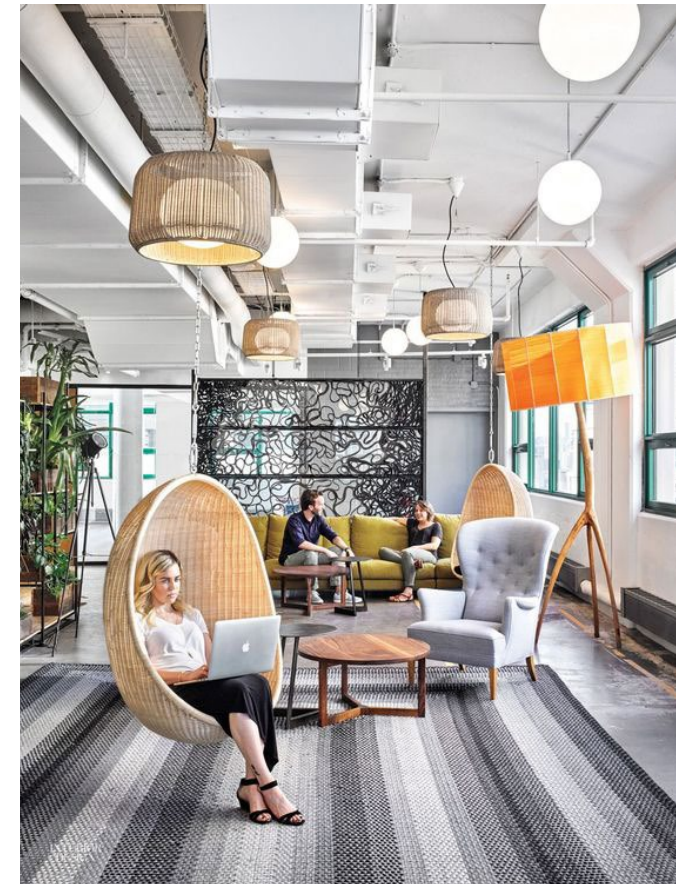*Kane and Aventajado*

RESIMERCIAL:

adj.

A layout and furnishing style that brings the homey feel of residential furniture into the workplace. Resimercial design celebrates commercial quality, residential-inspired features over the sterile and standardized feel of corporate furnishings

More and more companies are attempting to incorporate elements of residential styling in order to mimic a homely feel within the workplace. Creating a "home away from home" has proven to increase staff morale and happiness within many companies as they are able to associate a more comfortable and familiar relationship with their workplace.

This trend borrow stylistic elements from the hospitality industry, such as:

1   spaces such as canteens, bar areas, game rooms

2   sourcing furniture from local vendors

3   comfortable seating

4   soft ambient lighting

5   fireplaces

6   soft and plush elements

7   Residential-inspired accessories like rugs, lamps, flower pots and throw pillows

TREND

0 4

THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE

HOME STUDY VS OFFICE

TREND 4.1:

THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE
OF THE OFFICE TYPOLOGY

CREATING COMMUNITY + CULTURE

With 70% of professionals now working remotely at least one day per week, the need to enhance a sense of company culture and community is essential to employee morale. The office is critical to our humanity. We are social creatures and crave connections with other people – even at socially -distance lengths.

IN-HOUSE INNOVATION

Innovation is often driven by chance encounters that take place in the workplace. Physical / face-to-face encounters spark new ideas that would most likely not be the case over the planned, agenda-based nature of video calls.

VARIETY

The office also helps us get out of the house and experience somewhat of a variety in daily activity. Healthy boundaries are also maintained by separating work life and home-life, i.e.leaving one's work at the office and ensuring a focus on personal / family life while at home.

TREND 4.2:

ANTIBACTERIAL MATERIALS

As is the case with every
industry, the full impact of
the COVID-19 pandemic
on the building industry
remains immeasurable. Clear
consequences are developing,
though, one of them being an
obviously heightened attention
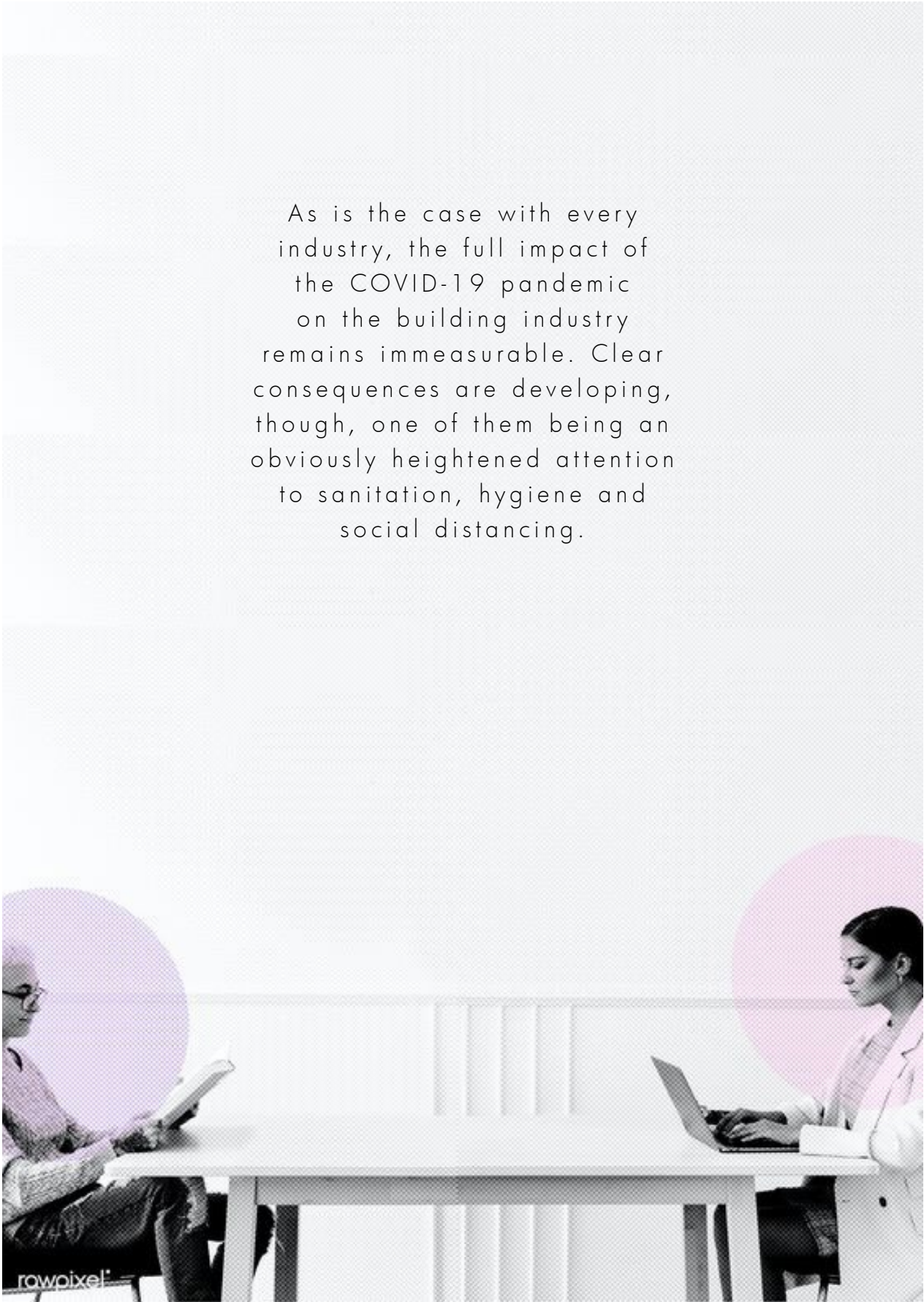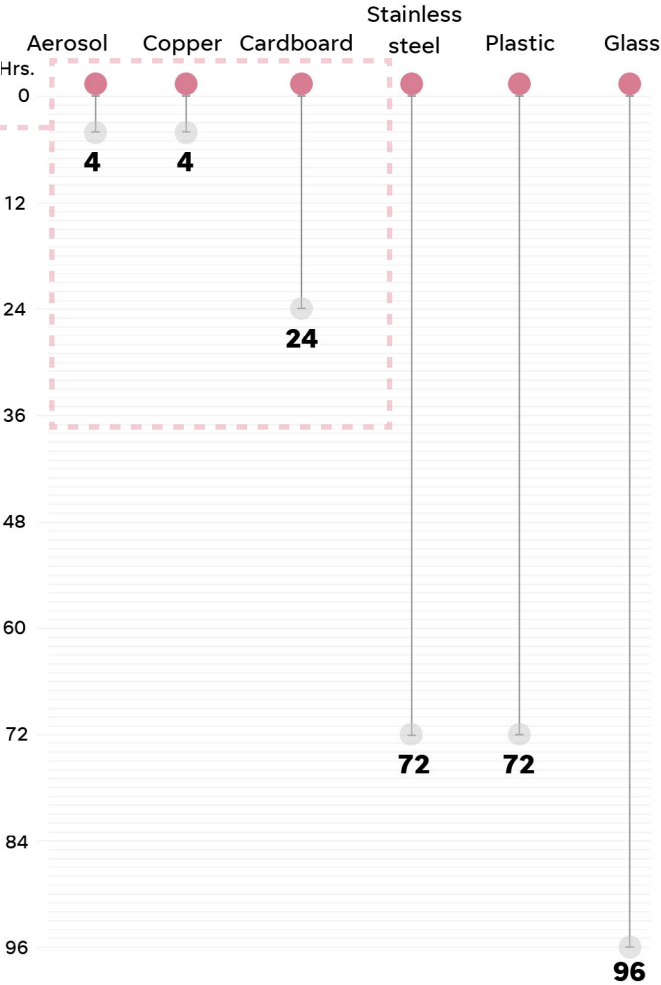to sanitation, hygiene and
social distancing.

A building material's surface plays an important role in limiting the spread of bacteria and infection. Choosing buildings materials that cannot be cleaned or which contribute to the spread of micro-organisms can deeply impact the indoor environment and the building user.

When considering which materials to choose, it is key to evaluate how a building's products will influence its environment.

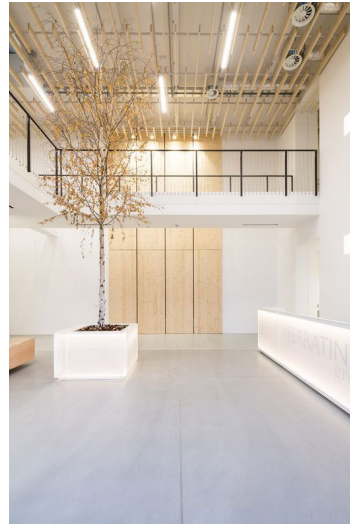## BACTERIAL LIFESPAN ON VARIOUS MATERIALS

LOW RISK MATERIALS

The surfaces and elements that make up the spaces we inhabit can easily house bacteria of all kinds, and their level of adherence depends directly on their physical and chemical composition. From our own cell phones to door handles, to our desks and food handling counters, an interior space is full of bio-contaminated places. And although hand washing and disinfecting surfaces be effective in mitigating the spread of these bacteria, choosing the right materials can further enhance the health and hygiene of the place we live in.

	Aerosol	Copper	Cardboard	Stainless steel	Plastic	Glass
Hrs. 0						
4	4	4				
24			24			
72				72	72	
96						96

RISK ZONES

①   ②   ③   ④

LOBBIES + ENTRANCE PORTALS   **KITCHENS + CANTEENS**   **ABLUTIONS**   **COMMUNAL OFFICE SPACES**

doors, walls , floors, counter tops, railing, switches, interactive devices and POS

appliances, handles, knobs, taps, counter tops

doors, taps, flushing mechanisms, hand driers, surfaces

work surfaces, electronic devices, doors, floors

HIGH CONTACT SURFACES + OBJECTS

①   ②   ③

SURFACES   **OPENING & CLOSING DEVICES**   **CONTROL PANELS**

walls , floors, counter tops

handles, knobs, hand rails, taps

light switches, flushing mechanisms

CERAMICS:

- naturally non-toxic
- a compact surface that doesn't trap mites, mold, and other irritating substances
- the surface is impermeable and resistant to stains, while still accepting even the most aggressive chemical detergents.

MICROBICIDAL PAINTS:

- prevent the nesting of microorganisms
- color and act on the presence of pathogenic elements, preventing proliferation
- contribute to improving the quality of the air, lowering the levels of formaldehyde present within interiors
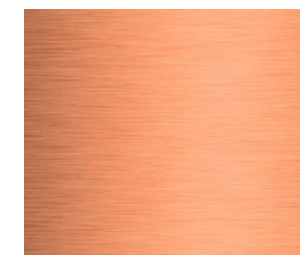
PROTECTIVE ACRYLIC SCREENS:

- offer protection from both sides of the barrier but at the same time need to allow good communication.

Isometric View

- MATERIALS COMPOSED OF NATURALLY ANTIBACTERIAL METALS

preferred metals which effectively reduce the lifespan of bacteria
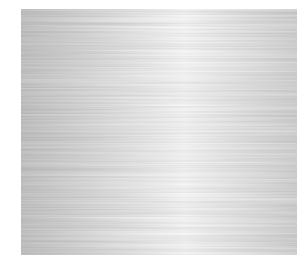
SILVER   COPPER   GOLD   ZINC

TREND 4.3:
ANTI-COVID
SPATIAL CONFIGURATION

REDUCING DENSITY

-                    Open plan just further apart
-                       zig-zag configuration
-                           6foot office

DIVISIONS + DISTANCING

-            screens where spreading further is not possible
-                  Reduce face-to face orientation

CLEAN IN | CLEAN OUT
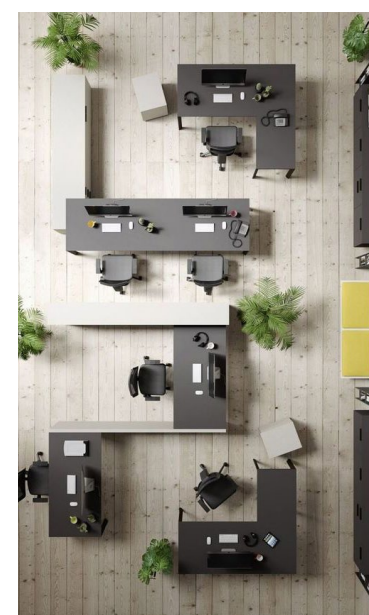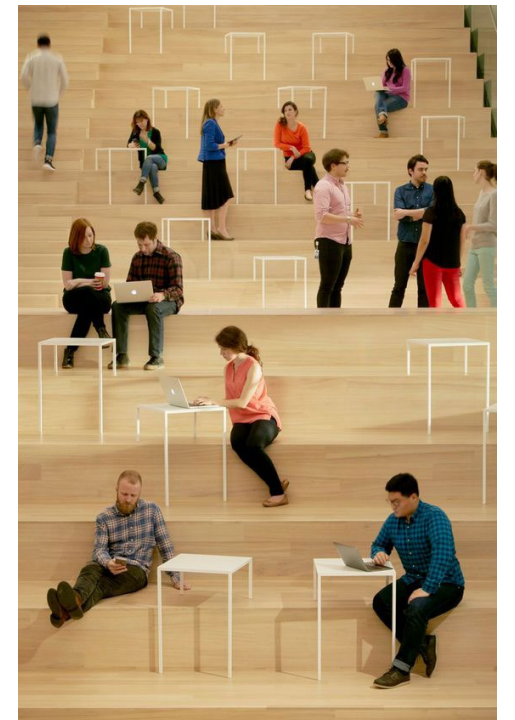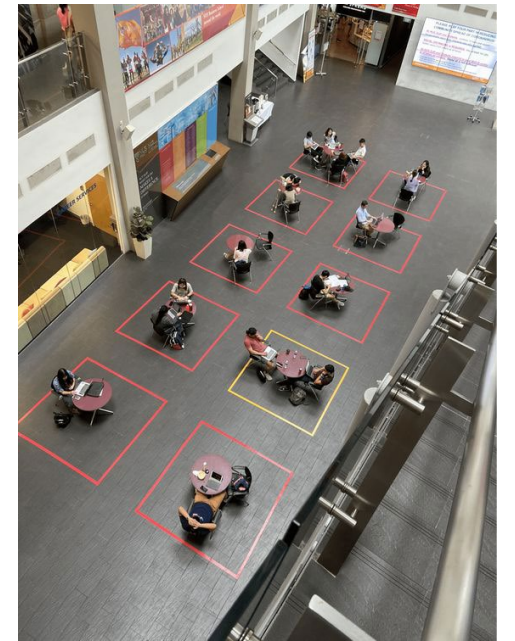
-                      hot desks not shared
-        if hot desks are used they need to be cleaned after each use

ADAPTING COMMUNICATION +
INTERACTION METHODS

-                    Smaller meetings at a time
-                        Meet in the open

COMMON AREAS
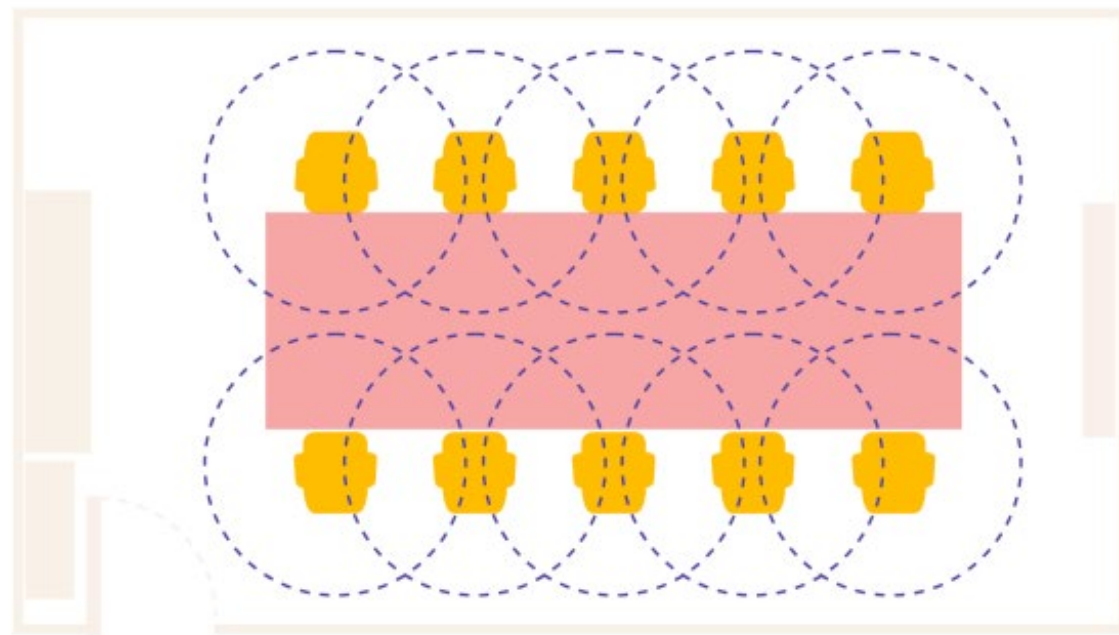
-                    Individual seating in lounge
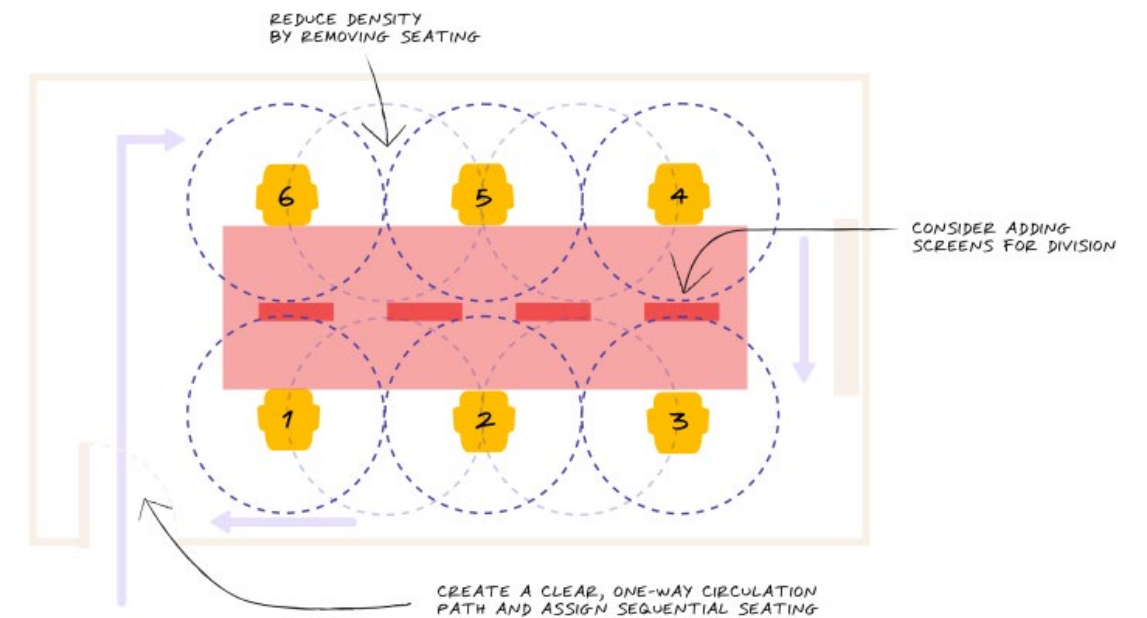
MEETING SPACE ADAPTATIONS

1   reducing density by removing seating
2   consider replacing single table with smaller, indivual tables
3   define a one way circulation pattern
4   consider adding screens between seats to limit exposure

PRE−covid scenario

Spatial context: Fixed walls and entryways in an enclosed space limit the space available to provide adequate physical distancing and safe circulation patterns — particularly for generative work.

enclosed space : Formal Conference

capacity: 10 pax

POST−covid scenario 1

REDUCE DENSITY
BY REMOVING SEATING

CONSIDER ADDING
SCREENS FOR DIVISION

CREATE A CLEAR, ONE-WAY CIRCULATION
PATH AND ASSIGN SEQUENTIAL SEATING

capacity: 6 pax

POST−covid scenario 2

ENABLE GENERATIVE WORK BY SUPPORTING MOVEMENT
AND PROVIDING EASY ACCESS TO WHITEBOARD OR DISPLAY

DIRECT PEOPLE TO
ENTER, SIT AND
EXIT SEQUENTIALLY
TO AVOID CROSSING PATHS

MOVE ENTRYWAY TO
THE CENTER FOR
BETTER CIRCULATION

capacity: 4 pax

* graphics and text summarised from SteelCase publication: *Together Again : The Future of Shared Spaces*

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COMMON AREA ADAPTATIONS

POST−covid scenario 1

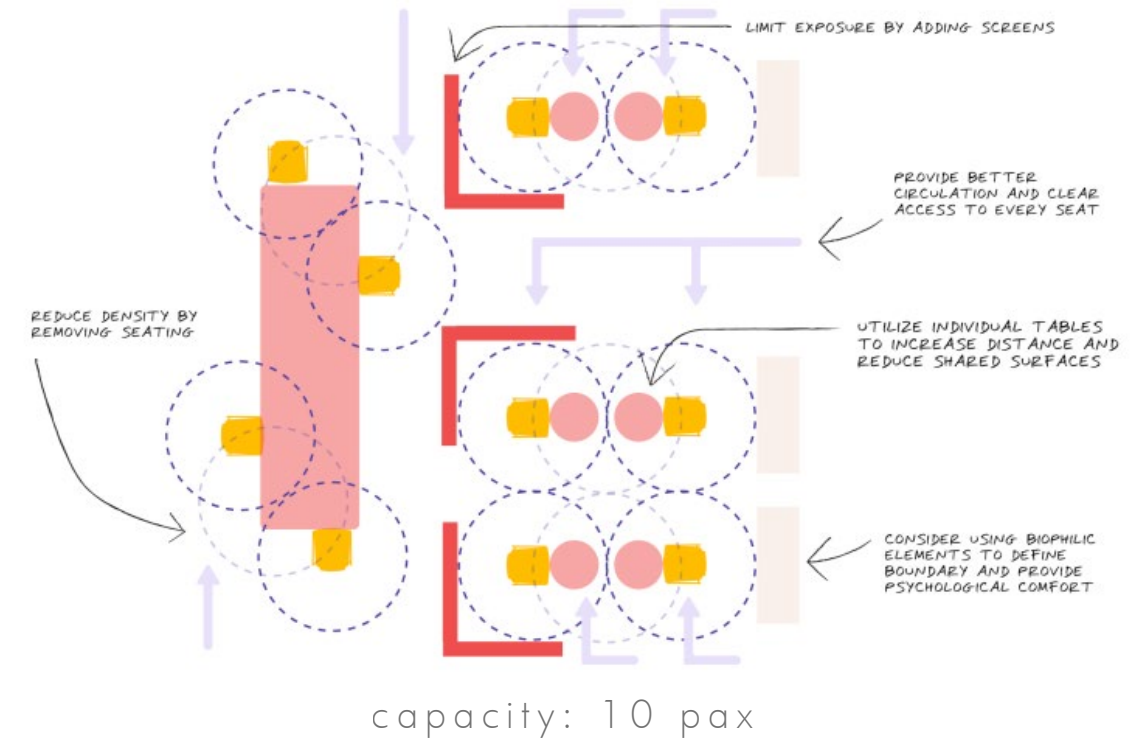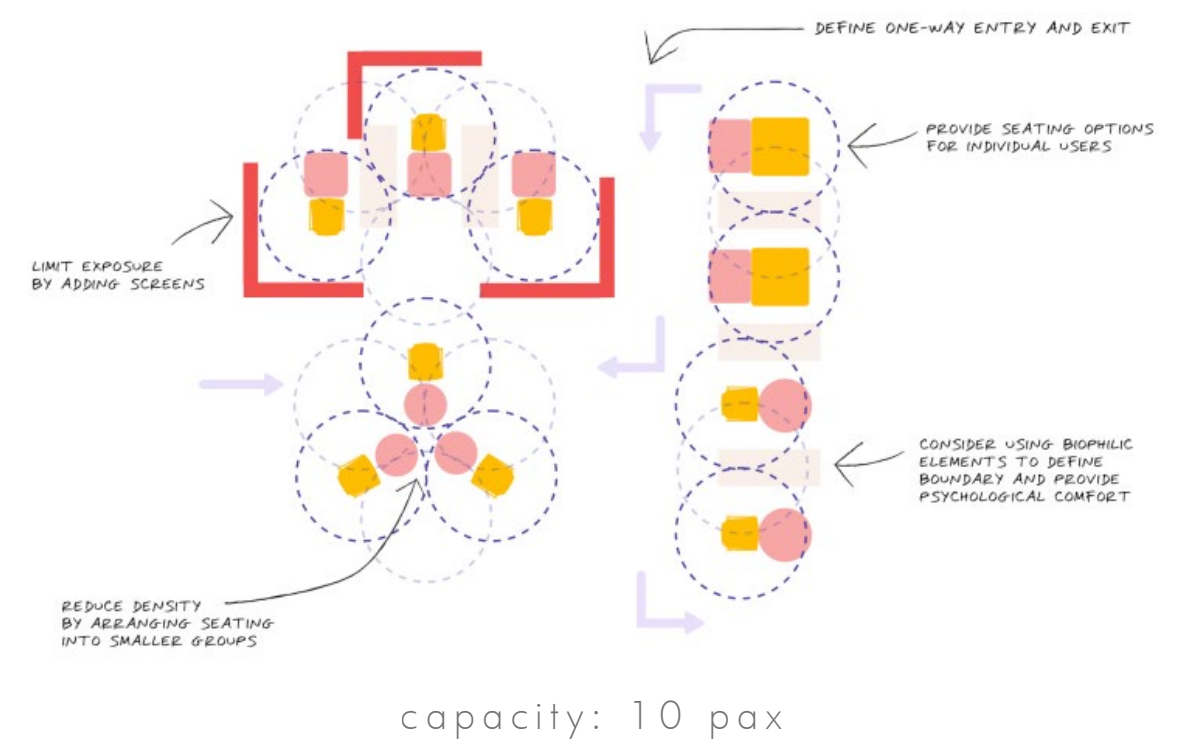|	
1	develop staggered schedules to avoid congestion
2	reducing density by removing seating
3	consider replacing shared tables with smaller, indivual tables
4	define a one way circulation pattern
5	avoid face-to-face interaction
6	consider adding screens and biophillic elements to limit exposure

LIMIT EXPOSURE BY ADDING SCREENS

PROVIDE BETTER CIRCULATION AND CLEAR ACCESS TO EVERY SEAT

REDUCE DENSITY BY REMOVING SEATING

UTILIZE INDIVIDUAL TABLES TO INCREASE DISTANCE AND REDUCE SHARED SURFACES

CONSIDER USING BIOPHILIC ELEMENTS TO DEFINE BOUNDARY AND PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL COMFORT

capacity: 10 pax

PRE−covid scenario

Spatial context: Open space settings provide more flexibility to allow for adequate physical distancing and safer circulation patterns.

open space : Staff Canteen

capacity: 20 pax

POST−covid scenario 2

DEFINE ONE-WAY ENTRY AND EXIT

PROVIDE SEATING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL USERS

LIMIT EXPOSURE BY ADDING SCREENS

CONSIDER USING BIOPHILIC ELEMENTS TO DEFINE BOUNDARY AND PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL COMFORT

REDUCE DENSITY BY ARRANGING SEATING INTO SMALLER GROUPS

capacity: 10 pax

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TREND

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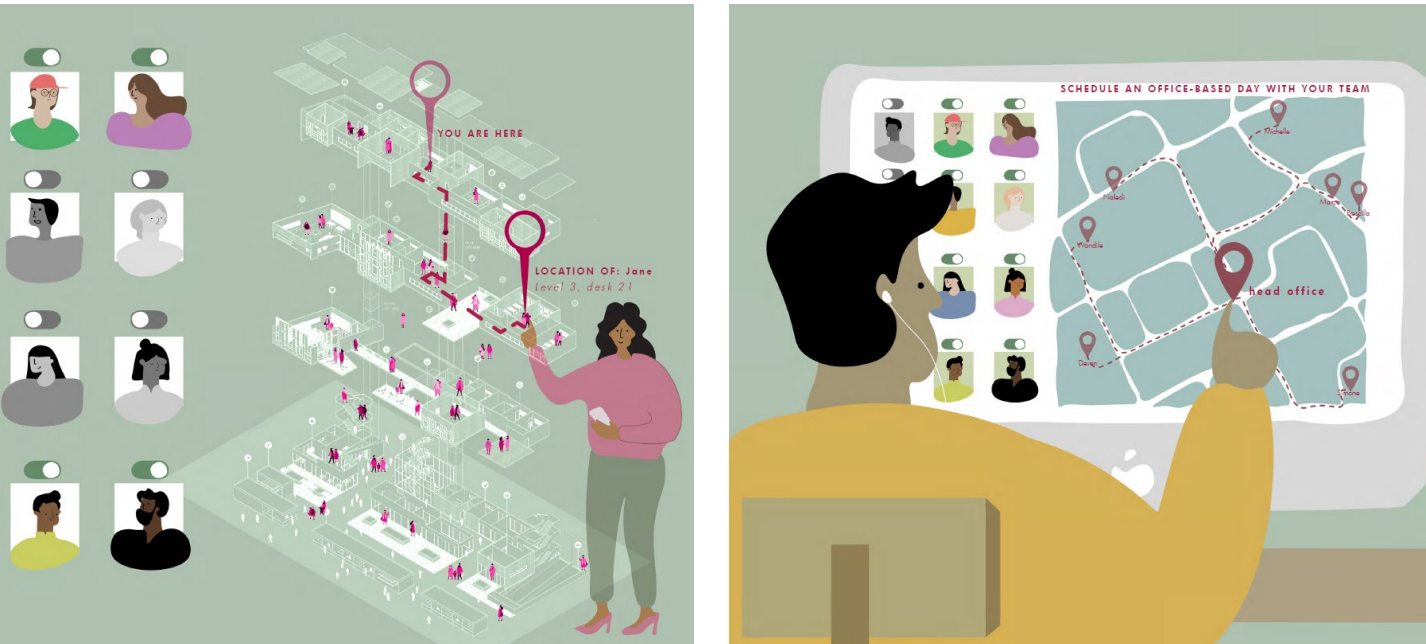
DIGITAL TRACKING
+
THE SMART CAMPUS

TREND 5.2:

INTEGRATED SMART TECHNOLOGIES

Integrated smart technologies record energy data and automate energy use, enabling the building to learn from employee behaviors and remember their preferences.
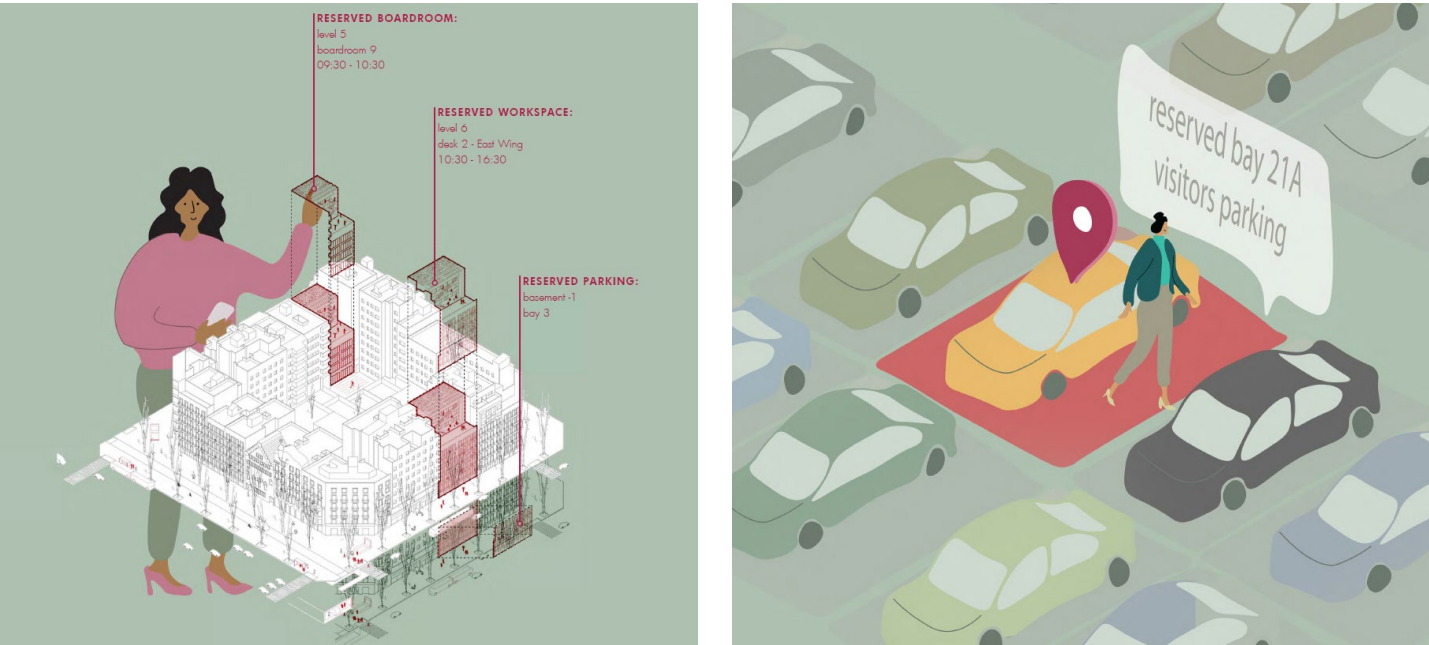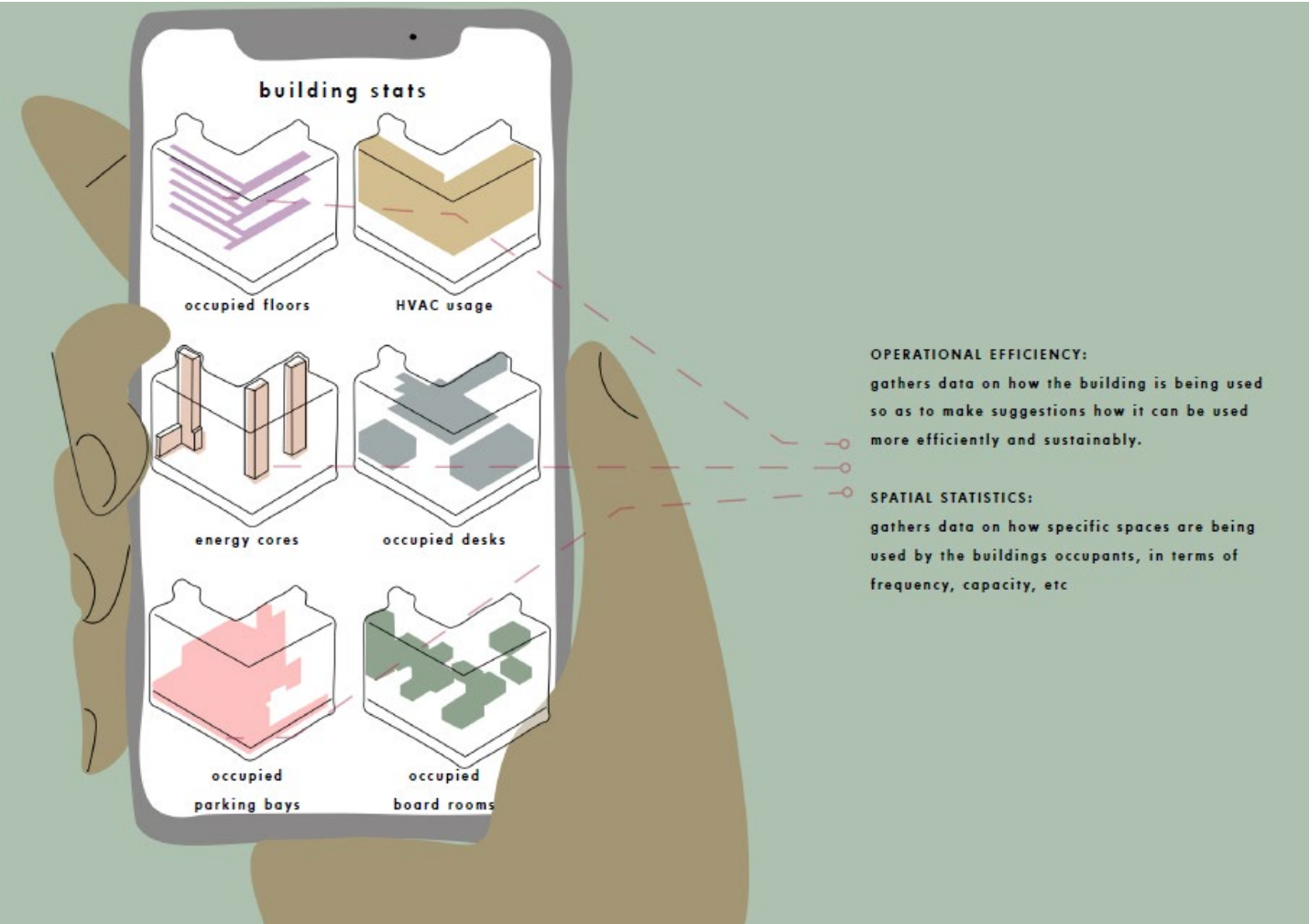
PLAN MEETINGS

TRACK EMPLOYEES

BUILDING NAVIGATION

TRACK SPATIAL DATA

Rooms, even entire floors, can turn themselves off during periods of infrequent use, and staff can customize their personal lighting and audiovisual systems with custom apps and sensors that are deployed all throughout the interior space.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY:
gathers data on how the building is being used so as to make suggestions how it can be used more efficiently and sustainably.

SPATIAL STATISTICS:
gathers data on how specific spaces are being used by the buildings occupants, in terms of frequency, capacity, etc

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