



Importance of Workplace Data

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As an industry, we are trying to predict what the future of work will look like in a post-COVID world, but the truth is that no one really knows how we all will be working in 2021 and beyond. Of course, there are many conversations, assumptions and theories about the future of work and the workplace with many trying to plan for the year ahead.

For many organisations in Australia, January 2021 will be the first time that employees return to the workplace after many months of remote working. In preparation for this, organisations are required to adapt the workplace to be COVID-safe whilst also attempting to understand how the workplace will be used by employees. What will stay the same? What will be different?

Purpose of the workplace

It is widely recognised that the purpose of the workplace is changing in response to the global pandemic. Some industry experts have suggested that there will be a greater emphasis on spaces for innovation and collaborative ways of working, whilst others have predicted the workplace of 2021 to be a destination for focused work for

employees wanting to escape from the distractions and interruptions of home. Despite all the speculation, nothing is certain. There is no doubt that the events of 2020 have provided organisations with an opportunity to re-evaluate and redefine the purpose of their workplace and what it means for people and business.

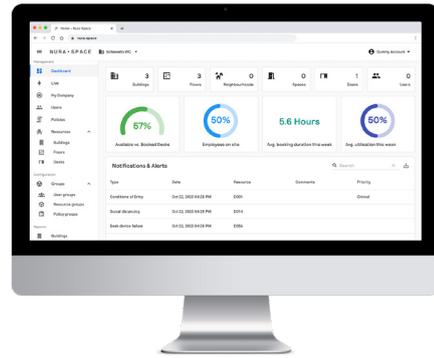
Collecting workplace data

There is still a lot of learning to occur before leaders can determine what the future of working will look like for their organisation. The most effective way for businesses to understand how their people will work in the future is by collecting information about how the workplace is being used and employees' perceptions of its purpose.

Knowledge is power and organisations should be drawing on as much data as possible to make informed decisions about their workplace and future ways of working.

Thoughtful data collection can assist organisations with staying up-to-date with how their employees are using the workspace, enabling them to anticipate and plan for future changes in ways of working and workspace needs. Before making decisions about the future workplace, like reducing their real estate footprint with the expectation that employees will spend most of their time working from home, organisations should dedicate time to data collection.

2021 will be a year of readjusting, testing and trialling in the workplace, as businesses are trying to navigate the return and re-purposing of the workplace. By dedicating time to data collection, organisations will have the metrics and understanding before making high-impact decisions about changing the workplace.



Technology for efficient data collection

As an industry, we are seeing a shift from labour-intensive data collection with the superseding of manual processes for collecting workplace metrics. Schiavello's People and Culture Consulting team (PCC) have been working with clients for many years, running employee feedback surveys, workshops and observation studies to gain insights into how individuals and teams are working within a snap shot of time. The data collected in these client projects enable organisations to understand their people's functional needs and assist with optimising their workspaces and driving greater efficiency in their workspace.

Intuitive technology solutions with automated data collection methodologies grant organisations with access to meaningful workspace data in real-time. Automating the process for collecting information will enable organisations to collect more data, for an extended period of time, giving them a more holistic understanding of what is happening in their workplaces.

The need for meaningful data to drive business decisions has never been more important than it is now. Rather than making decisions about the workplace based on predictions and speculation, organisations have the opportunity now to take a step back and take time to collect real, reliable information.