

The workplace beyond 2020

Guidance to Departments on return to the workplace

Date: 10 July 2020

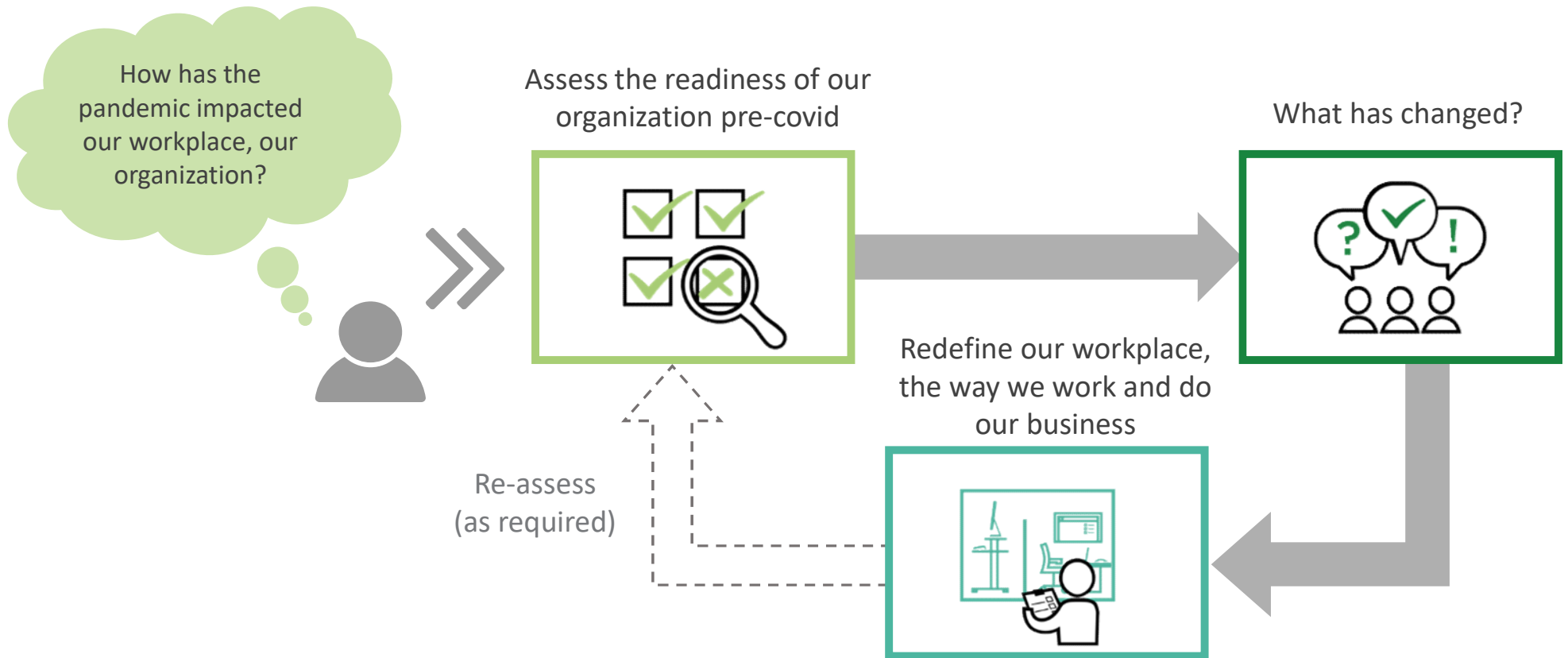


Current trends



- Increased investment in IT infrastructure and mobile tools
- More people working remotely, more co-working, less dedicated workstations = less utilization using existing layouts
- The idea that “work is an activity, not a place” is taking hold in the Public Service
- Evolution of the workplace towards greater agility and greater choice
- Greater flexibility in the way, time and place where we work allows as much or greater productivity than being in the office at all times
- Employees health and wellbeing
- Growing Gen-Z workforce (digital natives)

Moving towards a future workplace



The big questions

More than ever, the **GCworkplace vision** supports the modern, flexible type of workplace that will enable federal employees to keep serving the Canadian public. By considering the potential shifts in **HOW** employees will be working in a post-COVID-19 world, it is important to carefully re-evaluate what the workplace will need to support by questioning the status quo and re-thinking our workplace strategy as a whole.

- ▶ Will a traditional workplace still support our new way of working?
- ▶ Will our workplace be a place for collaboration, with many opting to work from home or alternate sites for individual tasks?
- ▶ Will a co-working approach better support our employees by allowing them to select a site that is more conveniently located, perhaps closer to home?
- ▶ Will we even need a physical workplace at all?
- ▶ What employees will expect from their workplace?
- ▶ What are the new behaviours and mentalities that have been adopted that will guide the way we work in the future?

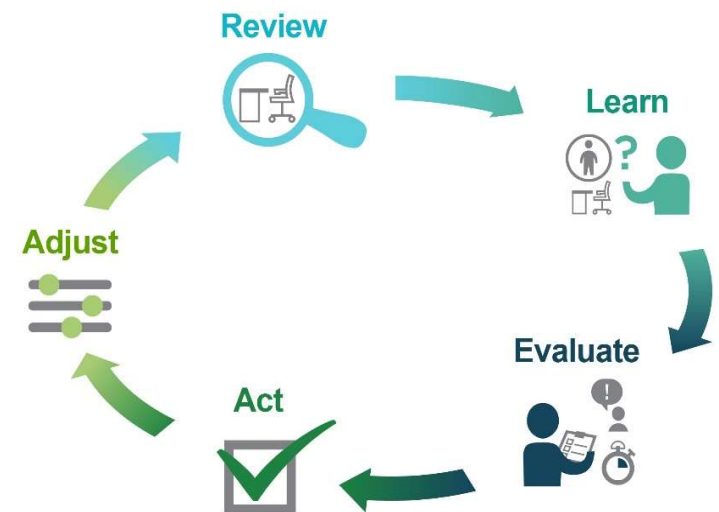


FUTURE WORKPLACE

Temporary adjustments are better than permanent modifications

In the context on the Covid-19 pandemic situation, many recommendations being developed are temporary in nature, focused on **making best use of current layouts**, and making minimal modifications only where required, including simply how space is used rather than permanent changes to layout or design of furniture.

The return to the workplace will be progressive, and it is expected that only a fraction of the space will be occupied at one time. Under this assumption, the **space will be used differently by those who return**. Attempting to make permanent changes to office layout, furniture, or design in the immediate term may be time consuming, costly, and challenging, and, given the evolving context, may also prove ineffective or unnecessary; in some cases it may negatively impact building systems, egress, and other occupant health and safety measures.



A return to the workplace strategy should focus on the **implementation of utilization protocols and **modifying user behaviours**. Permanent physical workplace modifications **should be avoided**.**

Design Considerations for **New & Active** GCworkplace Projects

Why Flexible Seating Is Still The Right Approach

Adopting a **flexible** unassigned work environment remains an effective accommodation strategy despite the pandemic. These workplaces facilitate the implementation of temporary physical distancing measures by allowing employees to choose the workplace that meets their **needs and level of psychological comfort**.

- As a temporary precautionary measure, it is not recommended to take advantage of multiple workpoints per day/shift, contrary to what is normally encouraged in these types of workplaces.
- Once the physical distance measures are lifted, employees will again be able to move freely around the office and take advantage of all the various work settings

Design Considerations for **New & Active** GCworkplace Projects

Design Considerations

Generally, **no major changes to the standard are required**, however, if the project schedule permits, it is possible to adapt these considerations as required:

Workpoint Configurations

Consider more spacious layouts or reorienting workpoints so they are not facing one another. Use a variety of workstation configurations like ‘dogbone’ or ‘pinwheel’ to provide more distancing/privacy between users and less direct face-to-face scenarios.

Workpoint Variety

It is important to continue to offer a variety of workpoints for each type of workpoints (as per the GCworkplace Space Planning Workbook) in order to create a holistic, flexible workplace that can suite various needs and preferences. Although employees may choose to avoid using workpoints like the **phonebooth** while social distancing measures are still in effect, this workpoint is an integral component of a GCworkplace fit-up, providing quick access to privacy for phone calls or video conferences, and should still be incorporated in designs.



Design Considerations for **New & Active** GCworkplace Projects

Design Considerations

Circulation

Consider increasing circulation widths, more importantly in main and secondary corridors to ensure comfortable distance between users and to enhance accessibility. This design practice may be facilitated as workplaces become less dense.

Hand Sanitizing Stations

Hand sanitizing stations are likely going to become permanent workplace fixtures. It will be important to plan these in as early as possible as to not create points of congestion.



Addition Of Screens And Panels

The primary driver for the installation of panels and screens should be for enhanced privacy and acoustic control. They should be placed in high traffic areas to reduce distractions, buffer sound transfer and to provide visual cues for circulation or distinct areas.

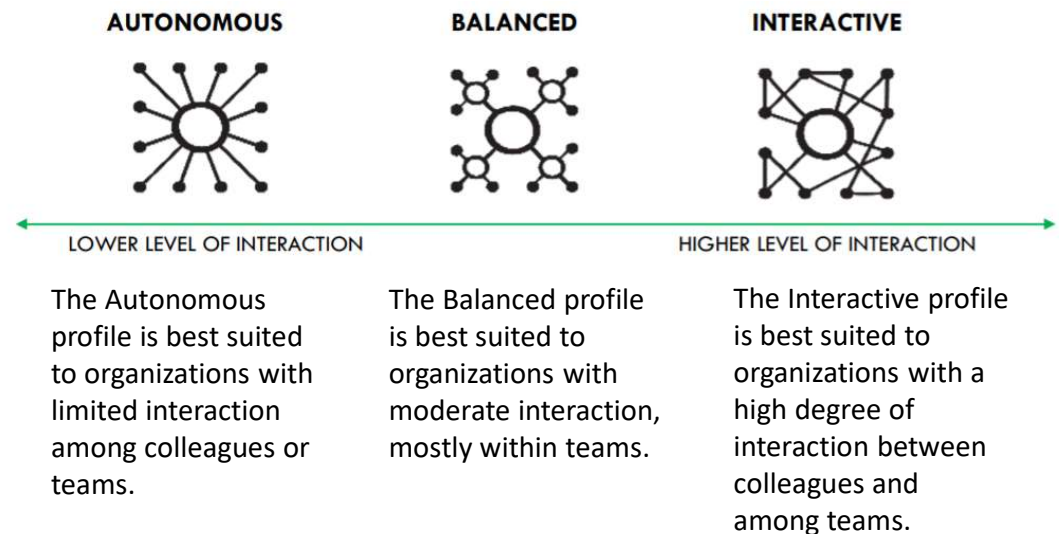


GCworkplace **Workplace Strategies** for the Future of Work

Workplace Activity Assessment

Workplace activities are being redefined. As a result of the pandemic, most employees have been propelled into remote work, some for the first time. The evolution of the workplace towards greater agility and greater choice will likely be amplified and accelerated as it has been proven that greater flexibility in the way, time and place where we work allows as much or greater productivity than being in the office at all times.

The GCworkplace **Activity Profiles** provide three models for workpoint distributions based on three different profiles of employee interaction. Workplaces may **shift towards more interactive spaces**.

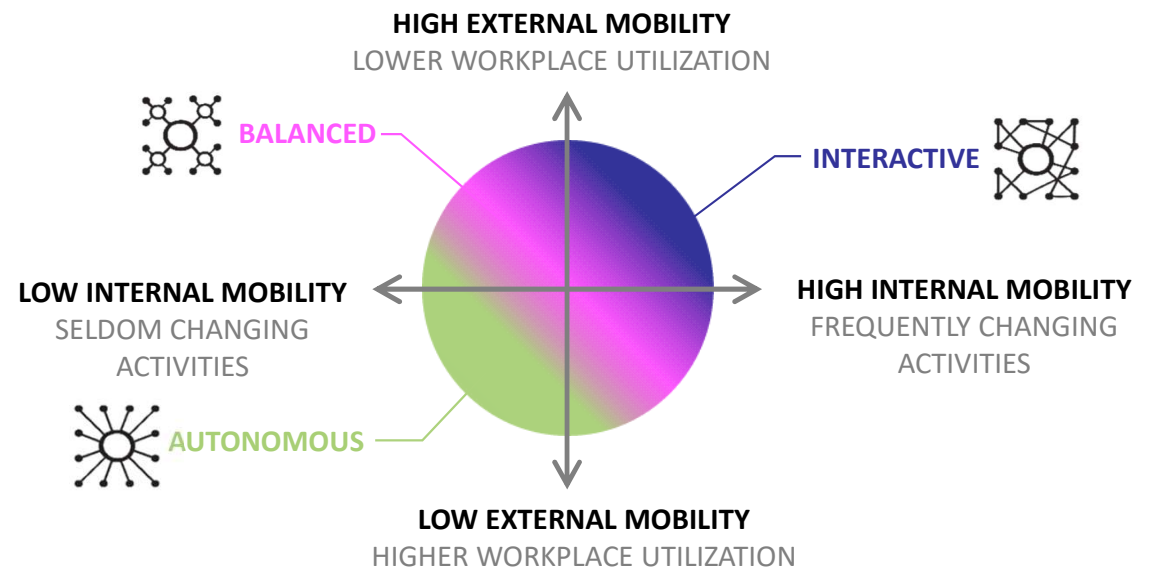


GCworkplace **Workplace Strategies** for the Future of Work

Activity Profiles And External Mobility

With a potentially sharp increase in **external mobility**, referring to activities being performed outside of the primary workplace (whether telework, field work, external meetings, or through the use of coworking or alternate work sites), there will be an impact on the recommended activity profile for the primary workplace design. It is therefore essential to determine mobility level, and what types of activities are being performed within or outside the workplace, in order to determine the optimal planning approach.

The following chart illustrates how mobility influences which activity profile is used:



Next Steps

- ✓ Emphasis on **functional programming** for new projects to identify potential change in requirements & mobility levels
- ✓ **Support** to project teams for active fit-ups to potentially reassess designs
- ✓ **Lessons learned** from return to our federal workplaces
- ✓ Continue **research** into workplace best practices and performance from industry upon return to the workplace

Thank you

To contact the **Interior Design National Centre of Expertise**, please email the GCworkplace generic mailbox:

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