



Should Yahoo Call Us Back to Work Again?

BY AMANDA BUCK

IN 2013, Marissa Mayer—newly appointed as CEO of Yahoo—called for a return to the office from an uptick in remote work. Although it is not 2013 and the circumstances of 2020 are quite different from that of the 2012 recession, there is much that can be learned in the way industry and economy bounced back from that time in our not so distant history.

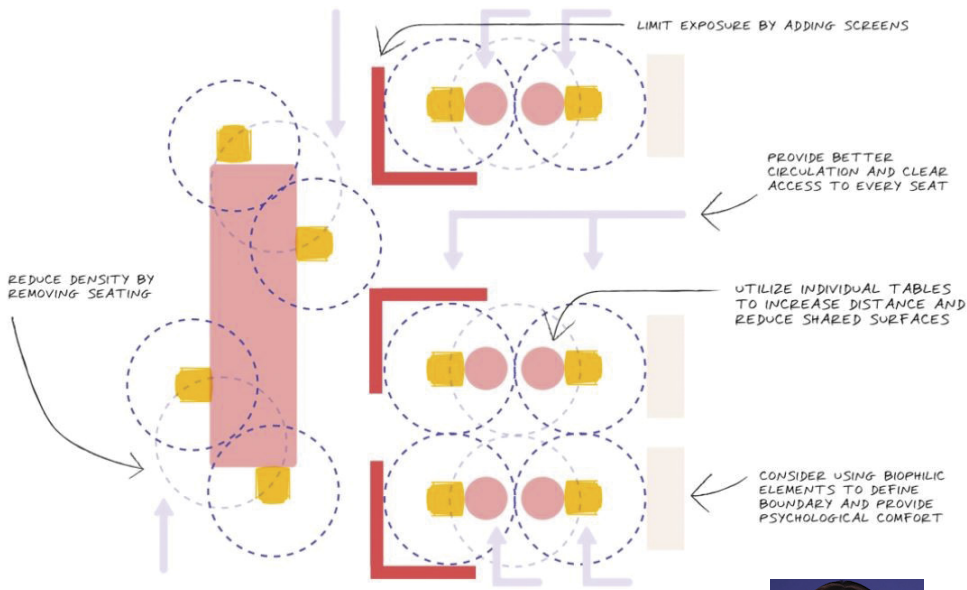
It is not a secret that the question keeping business owners up at night is whether to return to the office post-COVID-19. Many top companies were surprised to find that the transition to working from home not only went smoother but was more successful than originally thought. This leaves many pondering whether or not to bring non-essential workers back to a physical office. So, should the C-Suites of America make like Yahoo and call us back to the office—with proper safety requirements in place, of course?

Health safety aside, many thought leaders feel the answer is yes. At the end of the day, or rather the pandemic, the office still very much mat-

ters. According to a recent article by Steelcase 360 author Allan Smith, “COVID-19 has proven resilience is more important than ever. Having a strong cultural foundation and spaces outfitted to promote in-person decision making is key to an organization’s ability to shift gears and resources to support unexpected disruptions. Strong, decisive leadership and healthy teams are the backbone to an innovative, flexible, and resilient workplace that can bend but not break.”

Steelcase is not only the largest furniture manufacturer worldwide, but also an initiator of cutting-edge research on how we work. The belief that they, among others, posit is that the very ability for companies to transition to remote work is attributed to strengths fostered as part of their core office culture.

So, how does this connect to physical space? Space drives behavior and behavior over time is culture. For top companies to continue to attract and retain talent, this culture must be nourished and the physical



office, specifically its proximity to tools and resources, is what will do that above all else.

Experts feel that ultimately a safe return to work is what is best for employees as well. Humans are social creatures and emotional wellbeing depends largely on the ability to connect and collaborate. To safely

accomplish this post-pandemic, there will need to be major shifts in the way we imagine offices. The road to return will require thoughtful planning.

The open office and the spontaneous collaboration as well as socialization it once posited will now need a high-level focus on increased cleanability, proper distancing, and capacity planning for the foreseeable future. Corporate Interiors, the local Steelcase Premier Dealer, is currently partnering with local businesses in the tri-state area to do just that through technology, manufactured solutions, wayfinding, and a diverse platform of products and services. If you have not already, it is important to start this conversation today! ■



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