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The Workspace Dilemma…

Exploring Data Driven Solutions in a Post-Pandemic World

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For assistance, please contact:
Kai Thompson
kthompson@splicepm.com
206.773.5018

THE WORKSPACE DILEMMA

Preface

We are in a situation that none have faced in our lifetime. Members of the commercial real estate industry – those who manage workplaces and consumer spaces, as well as tenants and landlords – are all in a place where weighty near- and long-term decisions must be made. In the face of the current pandemic, many often find themselves having to doing so in the absence of critical information about what the 'right' thing to do is. As queried in an age-old public health mantra, we must collectively ask ourselves... 'What do we KNOW? What do we THINK? What can we PROVE? And what do we DO?'

> " *Strong analytics have always been needed to effectively manage working spaces. Cost per square foot, utilization, and life cycle value are typical categories that real estate managers often care about most. But what happens now? As the outside world forces itself upon our working lives and spaces, having the right data is vital to addressing immediate end user challenges, mitigating future ones, and measuring strategic performance."*

Scott Davis
Splice President

Exploring Data Driven Solutions in a Post-Pandemic World

As businesses across the nation prepare to reopen following coronavirus lockdowns, many are wondering *what will the return to work look like?*

During our recent Bisnow Webinar titled **Data's New Rules for the Office Space: How Data Can Drive Better Decisions Going Forward**, Splice President, Scott Davis, sat down with Jordan Lott (Lake Washington Partners), Marc Weigum (Starbucks), and Doug Loates (TPCHD) to explore the important role data has played and will continue to play in the ongoing management of corporate spaces.

While it's true that each company's unique set of needs means that no two transitions will look exactly alike, **Splice** has identified three key challenge areas that organizations and workplace leaders should anticipate as they look to bring tenants back into buildings...

1. **Building Re-opening / Expanded Occupancy**
   In order to safely open or expand, certain protocols, limits, controls, and physical attributes should be put in place. Organizations must find efficient ways to pivot, optimize and maintain their current spaces and assets, and sourcing the right information to drive these decisions is paramount.

   - **Current Science.** With the prevalence of social media, identifying reliable sources of information can be challenging. We are incredibly grateful to Doug Loates of TPCHD for creating a list of **Data Resources** in the public sphere, many of which are particular to architecture and facility management. (Rough indications of the level of reliability have been attributed to each resource)

   - **H+S Best Practices.** Understanding effective practices already in place by others; quick, low cost layout configuration options; thorough testing prior to the restoration of water, HVAC and other H+S support systems in previously dormant and/or very low occupancy buildings.

2. **Managing Spaces with Expanded Occupancy**
   In a world still waiting for a vaccine, knowing what leaders want and how staff are feeling, along with occupancy and utilization data is vital to managing spaces safely and productively on an on-going basis.

   - **Qualitative Intel.** Critical evaluation of whether a space is needed, and why. Interviews/surveys with business leaders to thoughtfully consider the need for people to be in the office; and with staff to discuss and find corollary with their desires or concerns about being in the space, as these could ultimately trump the desires of leadership.

- **Access & Occupancy.** Buildings with controlled access have a great advantage here as it's far easier for those with a badge system to know how many people are in the building at any given time. Beyond knowing volume, capturing this vital data point can also help support contact tracing and disease spread suppression.
- **Utilization.** It's one thing to know how many people are in a space, it's another to know where they're going – what spaces are getting used and which aren't. In instances where there are more people in a given space than is safe (according to current knowledge) automated sensor data could prove highly valuable. Phone apps are also useful tools, provided you can get compliance.

3. **Capital Investments and Lease Decisions**

These decisions are expensive and often come with long term implications. If they can be put off, many are choosing to do so until more is known. But circumstances may require deciding now. If you can extend a current lease two years rather than going 10, you should probably do it. If you can delay a capital change or major reconfiguration of a space, you might want to do that as well.

Current speculation asserts that – given the amount of attention by the global science and public health community on this specific disease – the pace of knowledge acquisition has been incredibly fast. It may very well be the case that within the next six months we could have more concrete information about disease transmission and prevention and give workplace decision makers landlords and tenants, much greater confidence to proceed with longer term decisions.

Here to Help You Succeed…

Is your organization confidently prepared to reopen or expand the occupancy of its space(s)?

Have you established sustainable protocols to protect the H+S of your tenants and/or employees?

Need help deciding what your next 'right' thing to do is? Give us a call!

We'd love to discuss how **Splice** can help bring your organization's vision to life.

work.together@splicepm.com | 206.773.5018