



## BACK TO WORK:

### Strategies for Returning Employees to the Office Safely and Keeping Work From Home Employees Engaged

Companies are now dealing with the new normal of the on-site workplace—keeping employees physically distanced, maintaining a level of disinfection not previously dealt with, and making sure office workers are comfortable, protected, and happy to be back on location.

Employers must also support the WFH team—acknowledging that there will be employees permanently working from home or who will be remote for the foreseeable future. How do companies keep them connected, a vital part of the corporate culture that has been so carefully cultivated?

Let's not forget that many employers will be balancing a hybrid workforce of in-office and remote employees. Maintaining the company culture and connection will be challenged either way.

For remote workers, they'll be missing those “water cooler” interactions and may yearn for the connection and desire to feel “part of the team” even when they're not on site. Keeping them engaged and satisfied presents new challenges that require fresh thinking.

## RAMPING UP OFFICE PROTOCOLS

Companies need to go beyond the basics to create a safer workplace and a high comfort level for returning employees. These products and measures add an important layer of protection and are what we recommend to our clients:

### Air filtration

Rid the air and surfaces of harmful contaminants (including viruses and bacteria) with compact, hospital-grade, whole-office air purifiers. These portable units are a highly cost-efficient and effective measure and can be placed throughout offices, hallways, and common areas.

### Water filtration and contactless dispensing

- Install point-of-use (POU) [water coolers](#) with high-quality filtration built in that reduce harmful particulates. These also support a corporate culture of sustainability, since the filtered water reduces the need for people to bring in bottled water.
- Install foot pedals on water coolers for touchless dispensing.



### Touchless coffee makers

are an immediately useful tool for companies working in offices. The equipment we install is an industry-leading solution that delivers a variety of brewed coffee drinks from freshly ground beans, ordered via a mobile app. The equipment is tucked inside a cabinet under the counter, with only a sleek swan neck nozzle above the counter.

### In-office catering

reduces employees' need to go out to lunch and be exposed to potential infection. It also saves valuable time (no elevators to wait for in the building, no lines to wait on at the takeout establishment). Consider sourcing a vendor that has an in-house caterer that provides innovative cuisine with fine-dining flair, providing single-serve meals that exceed what employees will grab at the corner deli.



### NanoSeptic self-cleaning film

applied to all high-touch common surfaces – from door handles to copy machines, this innovative product uses oxidation to continually kill pathogens for up to 90 days.

### PPE

Stock the office with all necessary PPE for employees and visitors.







# REIMAGINING THE EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM



As employees come back to a very altered workplace, they will seek out the comforts of the [break room](#)—the proverbial refueling station in so many offices. In an age of social distancing, employee cafeterias are being reconfigured or being shut down; businesses must consider how to continue fueling the connections and comforts of employee break rooms, and keep teams safely snacking while on site.

Providing employee perks is a great way to create a nurturing environment during this difficult period; remember that one way to your employees' hearts is through their stomachs—and that today's discerning workforce expects great coffee and healthy, locally-sourced, high-end snacks, that support workplace wellness. Here are some ways to achieve this:

## Create several micro break areas around the office if space permits.

- Put in smaller touchless coffee machines and snack setups in strategic spots near work groups so people don't all congregate in one or two places. The new touchless coffee brewers fit under a counter, with a streamlined design.
- Have whole fruit and individual-sized snacks available from a trusted office coffee service (OCS) partner, and small refrigerators for cold beverages.
- These are perfect spots for the filtered water systems as well.
- Remember to have all common touch surfaces covered with Nanoseptic film.

## Redesign the existing break room to include the newest technologies and safeguards. These include:

- Touchless coffee brewers and water coolers
- Hands-free paper towel dispensers and trash receptacles
- NanoSeptic film on appropriate surfaces
- Selections of individually-wrapped snacks and snack boxes; consider ordering curated selections according to your employees' dietary or taste preferences.
- Catered to-go meals stocked in a micro market—an important update/move away from the communal office refrigerator, and a way to keep your workforce on site without having to go in and out of the building (and cuts out the wait times).
- Encourage employees to stop in quickly for what they want (from cappuccino to nut bars to fig & beet salad over wild greens) and bring their refreshments to their desks.
- As in any enclosed space, implement a "limited occupancy" or time limit policy if the area is relatively small.
- Remind employees about frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizer.



VISIT OUR [ONLINE BREAKROOM DESIGN GUIDE](#) AND  
REQUEST A COMPLIMENTARY VIRTUAL BREAK ROOM AUDIT.

## FUELING COMPANY CULTURE AT THE OFFICE AND AT HOME

Enhanced snack options, curated selections of treats, craft coffee and interesting teas, and new age beverages remind your staff that you not only appreciate them—you get them. Taking a break—with access to drinks and foods employees like and want—also increases work satisfaction and boosts productivity.

And, while they may not be able to gather ‘round the table the way they used to for a coffee break or lunch, employers can still foster a company culture of caring with what they make available to their teams. Be sure your OCS vendor can answer the call for equipment and products that really deliver on your promise to make your company a great place to work and recharge. Some of the preferred pantry items to make available for your team include:

- ☞ Café-quality [craft coffee](#)
- ☞ Cold brew coffee
- ☞ Kombucha, coconut water, cold pressed juices, probiotic and energy drinks
- ☞ Low-fat, sugar-free and gluten-free snacks
- ☞ Fresh fruit and veggies, dips
- ☞ Alternative snack options



*According to a Staples survey, 57% of employees want healthy snacks, 63% said complimentary snacks and beverages make them feel appreciated, and 76% reported they could unwind and relieve stress with a well-stocked break room available.*

But what about your work-at-home employees? It's one thing to foster employee engagement with the break room down the hall or the micro break area at the end of the aisle—but how do companies maintain that connection and engagement with team members who are working remotely?

You bring the break room to them, with [curated snack boxes](#) delivered to their doors.

Imagine the look of surprise when they find a gift of appreciation from the office, with treats they like, arriving in the mail. While they are not working down the hall, the connection can remain strong with a weekly or monthly “break room at home”, or a snack box for a special occasion (think office birthday parties gone remote). If

they're coffee lovers, send them some premium coffee to enjoy at home—a taste of the office while they're working off site.

A pandemic isn't the only reason employees end up working from home; natural disasters or extended power outages that render your location inaccessible require working remotely, too. In those situations, sending custom snack boxes to employees' homes is a reminder that management cares about them and appreciates the work they do during unusual circumstances. Think of it as a business continuity measure that keeps those remote employees connected to the company office.



## SAFETY BASICS

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A key to bringing employees back to the office safely is to follow the basic CDC recommendations. It's a common-sense approach that lays the groundwork for a healthful work environment.

- Limit the number of occupants at any given time, whether by creating alternating work schedules or bringing back fewer employees.
- All personnel should wear masks when physical distancing is not possible or in public areas.
- Maintain the six-foot distancing rule between workers. Rethink foot traffic patterns and seating arrangements to reduce proximity among individuals.
- Remind employees to wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer. Installing sanitizer stations around the office will help.
- Restrict random visitors and prohibit anyone from entering who is sick.



## CORPORATE ESSENTIALS: DELIVERING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, WHEREVER THEY WORK

There's no question the pandemic has created a new paradigm for how companies of all kinds will operate—and how they will foster employee well-being, wherever they're working. At Corporate Essentials, we are the single source for everything businesses need to keep employees engaged, whether at the office or in their homes. As leaders in the OCS industry and experts in break room redesign, we can help employers create safe, convenient spaces that deliver what your staff craves, with equipment that offers convenience and workplace safety. Contact us at 973-402-1088 or [getintouch@drinkcoffee.com](mailto:getintouch@drinkcoffee.com) for a break room audit or to find out more about our employee engagement programs that foster corporate culture and help companies maintain meaningful connections with their teams, wherever they're working.

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