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Cookbook

*Post-covid flexible working space
best practices*

Contributors

Our group is proudly sharing with you this cookbook as the final **product of our project work within the ABSL Fusion Leader 2021 program**. It is at the same time the confirmation of the power of the networking and knowledge sharing within the ABSL group.

Best practices consolidated in this cookbook have been collected during the group and individual discussions with **ABSL members represented by:**

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*"The workplace is one of the critical elements of the success of GBS. It empowers and inspires people to do their best work – to communicate, collaborate and solve problems. It deepens engagement, spurs productivity and creates efficiency. **This project brings innovative point of view on the workplace of the future.**"*

Ota Kulhánek (Chairman of the Board of Directors, ABSL)

*"Cooking is always creative process and by adding different ingredients or their amount will take you to different meals. And so is the process of creating your company's new workplace. Your success and final product depends on the right mix of equipment, principles, communication and of course offices. **This Cookbook provides summary of main topics to be considered as well as practical recommendations for implementing flexible workplace in your organization.** Enjoy the creative process and don't forget that you cook for your employees tasting your final workplace product as core to their engagement and work satisfaction.*

Thank you to Iveta, David, Bohumil and Chris for your hard work and for getting me involved in completion of this useful guideline."

Jana Vlková (Director, Head of Workplace Advisory, Colliers)

Build your own

* First, chose a type of bread:



* Second, take one kind of sausage or meat:



* Third, fill it up with anything you LIKE



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Miki

On the Menu

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Bon appétit !

☆☆☆☆☆
Don't forget to rate us!



Office Layout



By Christopher Therkelsen

Managing Director / Market Services Director at Ingersoll Rand



*This section focuses on **the physical setup of the office and related factors** to consider to ensure a healthy and effective work environment.*

*No model needs to be an extreme one way or the other.
Do what makes sense and adapt as situations or environments evolve.*

Designing the Layout



Office Layout

- * There are **certain departments and people who may need to be present in the office at, or close to, 100% of the time**. Consider if an exception to the flexible desk model is warranted or if, to support the mindset shift and ensure a clean desk policy, another solution can be found – check the tips.
- * Consider **teams working with confidential matters** as well as those that may support **activities distracting for other teams**. What is the optimal way to ensure each team has the privacy / work environment required to succeed, sufficient allocated space to work in the office and realize the benefits of sitting - and engaging – with different people on a frequent basis?

*Tip: J&J has taken the approach of **segregating departments into ‘neighborhoods’**. This ensures that each department has an allocated number of seats in proportion to their team size so colleagues can be confident to find an available seat in the area. At the same time, mixing between neighborhoods is encouraged to facilitate networking and collaboration.*

*Tip: Encourage multifunctional use of closed rooms in the office. If you have **‘focus rooms’**, consider encouraging usage of these rooms for calls and small meetings / chats to reduce open floor space distractions*

Tip: A consulting company specializing in office layouts can be utilized to help find the starting ratio for desk sharing as well as how to optimally utilize the space.



visit

Tip: It can also be very useful to get some initial ideas around company branding and incorporating real products into the environment.



- * **Evaluate which roles you have in your location to determine the office layout.**
 - * A focus on collaboration spaces for a business that is oriented more towards transactional activities may not be a positive investment. See **‘Cooperation Zones’** for more on this.
 - * Comfort and ergonomics over cool or can you have it all?
 - * Segregating louder teams from those which are quieter through the use of materials or distance. Also consider the location of frequented areas such as kitchens, bathrooms or entrances/exits/corridors. A mitigating option can be creating a Quiet Zone and a Dynamic Zone separated by supporting areas such as phone boxes or semi-open collaboration boxes.

Clean Desks & Hygiene

Office Layout



Part I.

- * **Consider which items should be fixed vs shared.** Anything shared should be cleaned from the desk daily and stored. Storage could be either drawers, lockers or any other secure medium.

Tip: If using lockers, be sure to **buy lockers with a keypad** or combination lock, not one that uses a physical key or badge card. Experience shows that employees lose keys frequently and badge cards are forgotten at home.

Tip: Moving to a shared and clean desk policy requires strong change management. **Do not underestimate the attachment people have to their fixed desks.** See section on [Change Management](#) for more details.

- * **Consider your 'low touch' and 'high touch' items** in a flexible working environment.
Low touch: Desk, Chair, Monitor/s, Docking station, Socket board...
High touch: Keyboard, Mouse, Headset...
- * **Do you want your team members to share 'high touch' items?**

Tip: It can be an idea to give employees the keyboard, mouse and headset as **an onboarding gift** that they can keep if they leave. You can even brand the items!

Tip: A **locker and box for belongings** can be utilized to facilitate a clean desk model. Using drawers under a desk does not support a shared workspace.



Clean Desks & Hygiene

Office Layout



Part II.

- * **All desk surfaces and arm rests should be sanitized daily** to help ensure people feel comfortable and secure in their working area. **Insecurity or distraction** can significantly impact a person's well being along with their productivity and overall mindset.

Tip: Providing sanitizer and paper towel points in suitable locations can also allow team members to clean their own areas if they feel it is warranted.

- * All 'high touch' areas around the office should be sanitized, at a minimum, daily, e.g., door and cupboard handles, coffee machine buttons, sink taps etc.
- * **Conference rooms and kitchens may need more frequent cleaning** than once per day due to high usage.

Tip: You may like to consider extending your cleaning service to include conference room preparation - sanitizing, tidying and generally 'resetting' the room for the next reservation.

At large organizations, consider more frequent cleaning and sanitizing of kitchens / eating areas.

- * Adjustable desks vs fixed desks – **a mixed model is also an option** – to help ensure a healthy work environment for our colleagues.



Cooperation Zones

Office Layout

- * **Before creating too many cooperation zones, do carefully consider the roles in your company.** There is a trend to create many cooperation spaces and modern seating areas that in reality are not utilized. If your business consists of activities that are more transactional or individual leaning and do not require frequent collaboration, consider utilizing the space differently or reducing your office footprint. Fewer office buildings – and lower energy requirements required to run them – is only positive for the environment.

Tip: Any available space that you do need to utilize can also be used for other uses, e.g., mother's room, relaxation/mental health area, single person rooms (focus rooms), silent space (no calls / speaking permitted)



- * **Collaboration areas interspersed between working areas** not only helps break up the desks – especially in larger open plan offices – but, if well placed, can direct people through these areas on their way to other areas. This funneling principle is a great way to propel partnership between people and teams.

Tip: Experience has suggested that visible or closely located collaboration spaces to office desks can be under-utilized, with colleagues preferring to use a closed room. This may be to avoid disturbing others or seeking privacy. Consider using curtains, plants or other furniture to increase the potential for active usage.

- * Conference rooms are great for situations with multiple people. However, many companies already experience **conference room shortages** without a flexible working model. **Consider how best to ensure smaller areas allowing one or two people to take a call or have a small 1-1 meeting.** This will allow far more effective use of space. It also supports the evolving nature of the work performed in many of our businesses within Czech Republic as we move away from transactional activities – requiring very limited meeting/call time – to a greater proportion of our people focused on higher value activities, necessitating increased engagement with people either in the same office or remotely.

Promoting a Greener, Healthier Future



Office Layout

- * **Do we still need to print if people can work from home?** Consider reducing or eliminating printers. If printing or scanning is still required from time to time, perhaps walking to a single printer is an option, promoting physical movement as well as a reduced printer footprint.
- * Recycling bins can be great but do utilize space. **Consider what you want to recycle and where to best locate recycling points to maximize usage.** Perhaps have 'core recycled items' points along with 'non-standard recycling level' points, e.g., batteries, glass, lightbulbs etc.
- * **Parking spaces are always a challenge**, especially now if car usage has increased due to colleagues relocating further away. What can be done to **encourage other forms of transportation** – bus, tram, cycling, roller-blading, scooters etc. Do you offer financial support for public transportation tickets? Are there secure areas for colleagues to leave their bicycles, scooters or roller blades? Perhaps you have charging points for scooters?
- * Along with the strong focus on flexible workspace and collaboration areas, sometimes we just need to switch off for a few minutes. **Could a 'mental health area' or 'quiet room' be useful for you** – somewhere to just close the eyes and breathe for a while, to reset?



*Tip: With people now working from the office and from home and increasing overlap between work and personal life, a **space to reflect could be useful.***

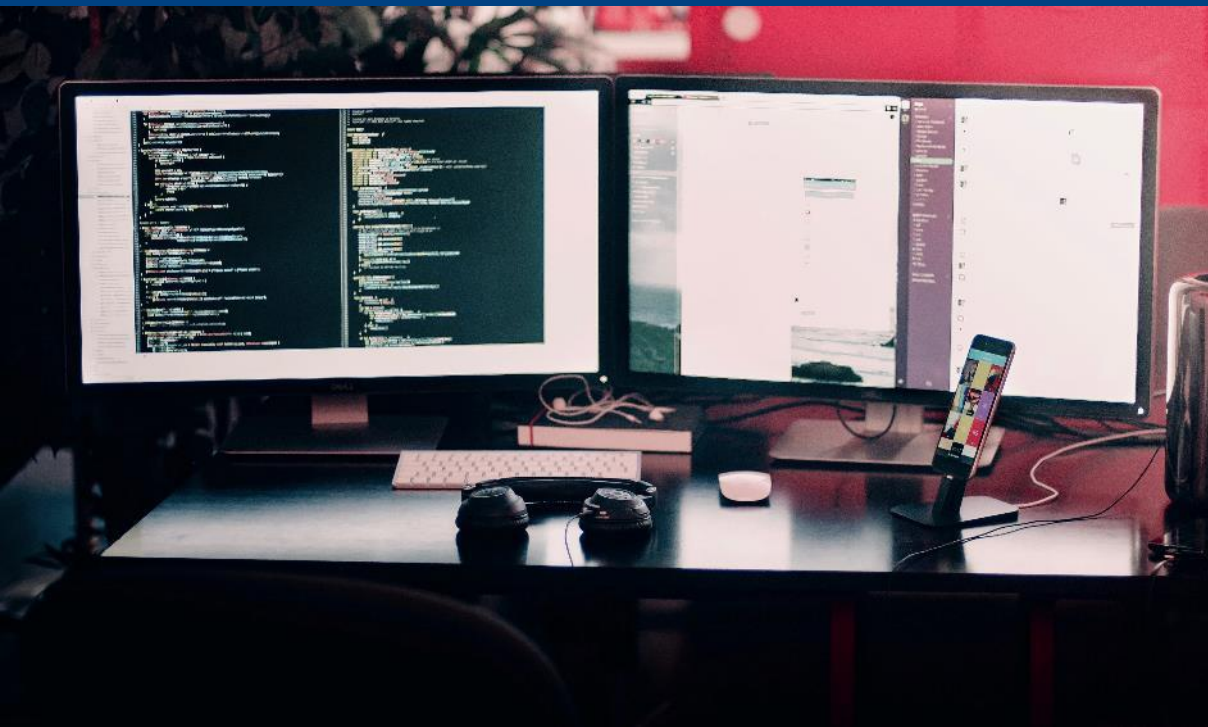


Technology Enablers



By David Böhm

Head of Business Services Europe at Knorr-Bremse



*During our discussions with other ABSL members we focused in this chapter on the **following areas**:*

- **technology solutions** for optimal and seamless work and collaboration of people
- **tools needed for desk sharing** to enable desks and meeting rooms reservation
- **IT security** to protect company intellectual property

Key principles -

easy to use, secure and standardized effective solution.

Hardware: Ingredients for Office Work

Technology enablers

- * Standardized laptops compatible with technology used in the office.

Tip: Go for one brand for all laptops – e.g., Lenovo, DELL. By selecting one brand you will drive standardization across your company and enable a consistent user experience. Note that exceptions for specific functions, based on need, could be accepted, e.g., marketing prefers Apple computers for graphic design etc.

- * Full office Wi-Fi coverage with mesh system to enable network access without disruptions.

Tip: Ubiquity offers a broad range of Wi-Fi solutions for both internal and external use with phenomenal coverage and performance

- * Standardized individual workplace setup - e.g.,
 - docking / charging station and two monitors or one curved monitor 34",
 - external or internal webcam,
 - wireless mouse,
 - chargers or charging points for mobiles

Tip: Powercube offers practical designed electricity sockets with USB ports – <https://www.powercube.cz/eshop/usbcube>



- * Standardized meeting rooms workplace setup

- * **Optimal solution**

- wide range camera and speaker system such as Jabra,
- enough chargers for laptops and mobiles,
- back up wired network.
- for smaller meeting rooms a mobile speaker system is sufficient, e.g., Jabra

- * **Advanced solution**

- interactive whiteboard connected to corporate technology ecosystem

Tip: IT solution companies offer a broad range of solutions for meeting rooms.

Examples:

Check **Bechtle** website – <https://www.bechtle.com>.

Premier solutions are offered by **Microsoft** with Microsoft Surface Hub –

<https://www.microsoft.com/cs-cz/surface/business/surface-hub-2>

- * Centralized printing solution for ad hoc printing

Tip: Kyocera or Ricoh offer a card authentication solution to print only documents for the respective user –

<https://www.kyoceradocumentsolutions.com/hk/en/products/business-application/card-authentication.html>

Hardware: Ingredients for Home Office



Technology enablers

- * **Stable internet connection** – for optimal results use group video conferencing at HD quality and screen sharing 20Mb both download and upload.

*Tip: Company IT should provide your staff with a **technical checklist** which they should give to the telecom / ISP provider – e.g., effective home office work requires not only download bandwidth, but upload and network stability is extremely critical for effective Teams / Zoom calls / conferences and desktop sharing.*

*Tip: Wi-Fi – **optimal** 5G – category ac; **best** – category ax.*

Tip:
→ **low-cost solution** –
TP-Link Archer AC1200 is stable router with great Wi-Fi connection below 1000 CZK

→ **solution for future** –
TP-Link Deco Mesh systems with most advance Wi-Fi standards with all home coverage – e.g.,
<https://www.tp-link.com/cz/home-networking/deco/>

- * Subject to the type of work, the **employer may provide two monitors 21” or one curved monitor 34”**.
- * **Practical bag for laptop**, accessories, and personal items.

*Tip: Check if your company offers **branded bags** to give to your staff.*

- * **Smartphone enabled to access corporate technology ecosystem** – whether you choose Apple or Android, your IT should be able to connect smartphones to the corporate ecosystem depending on IT security policies. Smartphone connection also represents a back up solution in the event of home office connection outage.

*Tip: Consider providing “**high touch**” technology equipment to employees are part of their onboarding.*

*Tip: Discuss what IT equipment could the employees receive as a **gift** (e.g., by opening the new office layout) – mouse, keyboard, monitor.*

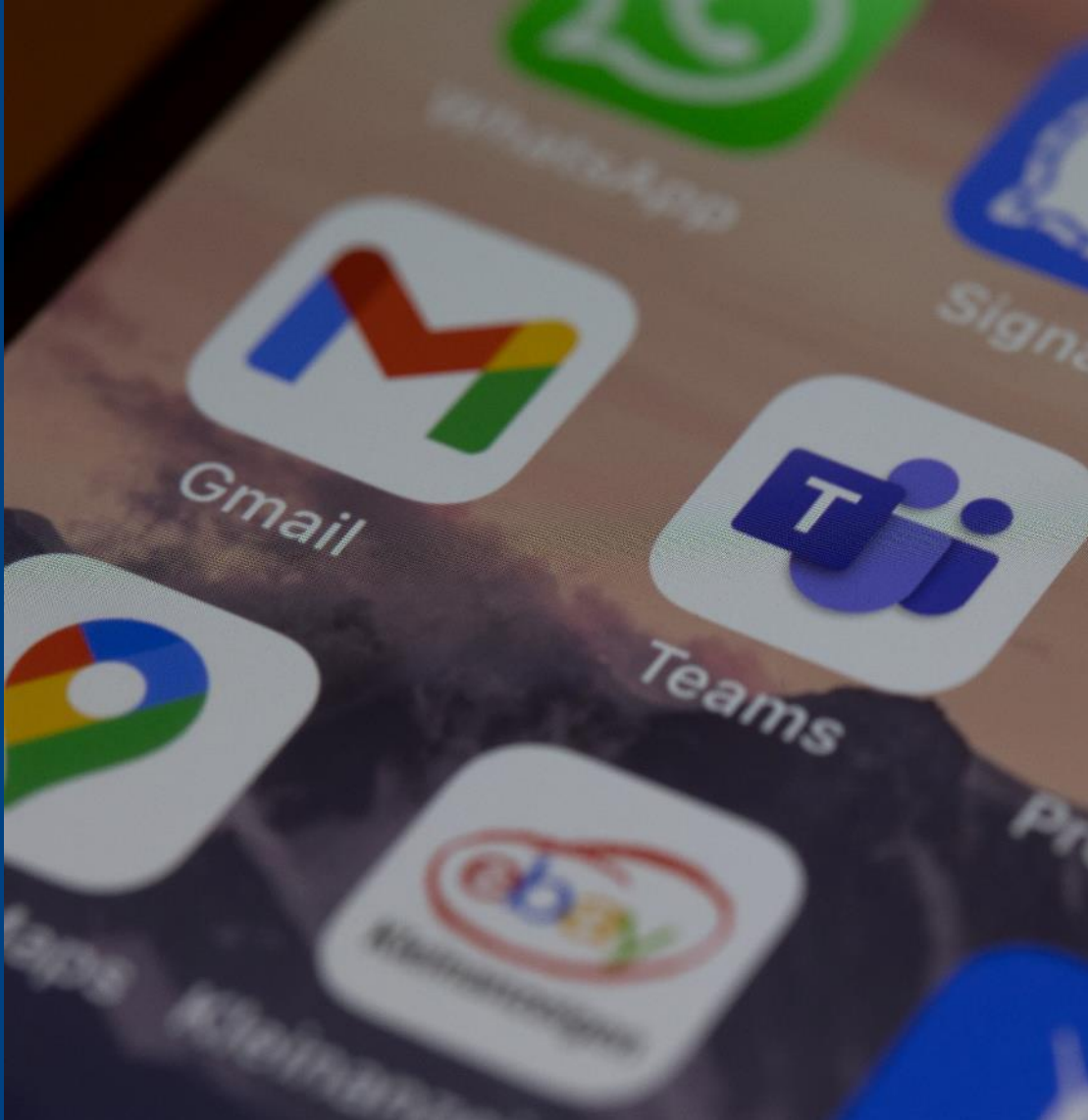
*Tip: In transition to flexible working model companies may want to **lend spare IT equipment** to employees*



Software



Technology enablers



- * **Go for Cloud.** Enterprise solutions are rather outdated these days and most of the companies have built their software ecosystem on cloud solutions. A cloud solution will offer more effective solutions and improve the user experience.
- * **Operating system and office solutions** – Microsoft Windows became a standard of today's corporations. Also, most of the employees have a good level of practical experience to work with Microsoft tools.
- * **Communication tools and video conferencing** – Slack, MS Teams, Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting, WebEx.

Tip: Microsoft Teams enables integration of chat, video conferencing and project management in cloud solution fully to Microsoft ecosystem.

- * **Virtual collaboration tools** such as MIRO, ConceptBoard, BeeCanvas, MURAL, Trello.

Tip: Doesn't matter which tools you select for your company – just make sure that everyone knows which tools are available and knows how to use them.

- * **Consider the need for a reservation system** before deploying the technology. For enterprises with smaller scale reservation system may not be needed. Leave it on your team to choose a table that serves the need of the day. For larger enterprises, a reservation system is recommended to book a table in advance. Reservation system for office workplace incl. office navigation connected to smart office (reserved desks, parking space, incl. indication of booked desks,...) – e.g., created by ABInbev or Siemens.
- * **Robust security is critical for future flexible work.** Security is a broad topic beyond this document scope. **Please make sure security is consulted with corporate IT and legal.**

Tip: Minimum requirements for flexible work include protection of devices and network communication –

- Devices' protection – encryption by Windows operating system protection – BitLocker
- Network protection – VPN
- Password protection with security strengthened by two level of authentication.



Change Management



By Bohumil Říha

HR Operation EMEA Director at Johnson & Johnson



“The only constant in life is change.” Heraclitus

*One of the hottest topics in all companies is **change management and communication around the change**. It is crucial to **prepare the employees for upcoming change** and support them on the journey.*

This chapter will give you an overview of what must raise the appetite for a delicious product and serve it to your customers.

Communication Plan



Change Management

Part I.

- * While communicating, **think always about “Why”** are you doing the change and **“What”** the employees may want to hear and is important to them.
- * Accordingly, **select the most suitable tools, combine different formats** and design your communication plan.
- * Feel free to utilize the following practical examples

Townhall

Purpose

- Informing all staff about the **decisions taken and the status of the project.**
- Give more visibility to the project and **prepare staff mentally for the change.**
- Ideally presented by **stories / references and led by example.**
- Organized as a hybrid event or live streaming from the office can **inspire employees to return to the office** for socializing with colleagues.

How

- presentations to all employees
- plans (floor plans, section ...)
- high level timeline
- links to relevant websites



Project corner

Purpose

- **Inform employees about the project** (concept, layout, amenities etc.).
- Give people **a place where they can meet and discuss the project.**

How

- set-up a room or open area in a high traffic zone to display current project information such as schedule, key messages, pictures of new facilities etc.
- example of working place, locker
- large format floor plans
- promotional graphics, visualizations of interior

Communication Plan



Change Management

Part II.

Project video

Purpose

- To tell the story and introduce the project in an engaging way.
- To help people **get familiar with the new way of working**, understand benefits and explain the different working environment possibilities.

How

- promote top features/benefits of the new way of working
- choose the right people for video shooting
- right video branding
- senior management video of how not to behave
- sharing experience sessions

Newsletter

Purpose

- **Project updates** sent to all employees via email.
(possibility of printed newsletter or posters in project corner)
- **Informing employees about the decisions** taken and the status of the project.

How

- agree on frequency (weekly, monthly..)
- short and clear messages
- linking to share point (other storage) for detailed info
- focus on important topics

Sharepoint

Purpose

- Project web page for **informing employees about the decisions taken** and the **status of the project**.
- Share information about the project **including frequently asked questions** about the transition.

How

- project logo, banner on the homepage
- contact list
- FAQ (or forum where to publish / answer questions)
- floor plans + site plans
- project updates
- key facts + principles
- timeline
- articles / updates / messages
- folder for uploading key presentations



Engagement Activities



Change Management

- * Communication plans and engagement activities are important to get feedback from the employees and listen to their individual concerns and fears. .
- * We are offering again some practical examples

User guide for the new environment

Purpose

- A **practical guide** for employees and newcomers **for the new way of working/office environment**.
- The guide contains all sorts of **practical hints** and description of the new work environment.

How

- inventory of several issues that then need to be worked out by the persons concerned (Frequently Asked Questions)
- all information compiled into an easy User Guide, distributed in hard copy (in a handy format)
- also made available on the intranet

Employee' ambassadors

Purpose

- Create a group of employee' **ambassadors who will participate on the project together with leadership** and engage the teams.

How

- identify representative from each team
- agree on roles and responsibilities
- set up the meeting structure
- the representatives should have voting rights and be involved in important decisions
- the representatives should set up meeting cadence with their teams to inform them about the project and discuss any concerns
- promote the new way of working

Employee contests

Purpose

- Organize a contest for all employees **to participate in the project and create a sense of ownership and choice**.

How (examples)

- meeting rooms naming contests
- voting to select artwork for community spaces

Meet your manager

Purpose

- Allow people to **meet face to face with the managers** to discuss their concerns/wishes and **feedback openly**.

How

- define branding – e.g., Red chair session, Leaders talk, Meet you manager..
- smaller groups recommended – up to 10 people
- communication the purpose of the event
- allow people to sign up for the session, not make it mandatory
- definite the topic – Return to work, New office layout, Flexible working arrangements



Golden Principles



Change Management

• Change Management

- ***I don't have a dedicated workstation and I occupy only one workplace at a time.***

*The office offers several options of working space – based on the type of work which you are busy with. But you should always occupy only one **workplace** at a time.*

- ***I completely clear my desk in an open workspace when I am not present for more than 2 hours. The same applies to other rooms when not in use for more than 1 hour.***

Meeting rooms are not intended to serve as personal offices on a regular basis.

- ***I store my coat, bag, umbrella and similar personal belongings in the wardrobe or personal locker.***
- ***I preferably work in my “Neighborhood”.***
- ***I protect confidential information. When I leave my workplace, I lock my screen and I do not leave any valuables at the workstation.***

- ***I eat heated and aromatic meals only in the main kitchen and not behind the desk. Small snacks are an exception.***
- ***I respect my colleagues, and I do not make loud phone calls and conferences in the open workspace.***
- ***I keep all the workstations tidy, and I always clean after myself when I leave an open or closed workstation.***
- ***I can book any conference room in the building, but if the meeting gets cancelled, I cancel the reservation so others can use it.***
- ***I bring customers/ guests predominantly to the reception and I accompany them for the entire duration of their visit.***
- ***Be a role model and don't do anything which you wouldn't like others to do to you!***



People Management



By Iveta Isbister

L&D Business Partner at Siemens GBS CZ



*How to manage teams in the **hybrid work environment**?*

*What is now the **purpose of the office**?*

*How to **motivate people to come to the office**?*

Those were the most frequent questions raised during the interviews with ABSL members. They might seem to be strongly connected to the current pandemic situation; however, we believe that they are equally relevant for the “new normal” as any flexible work environment.

Daily Team Management



People Management

- * How to organize teams while **combining working from the office and home**?
How to ensure that the **office desks will be equally utilized across the week**?
How to ensure that the **team members will interact** within the team?
- * **“One size doesn’t fit all”**, was the most frequent response from the interviewed ABSL members. The approach of a company **depends on various aspects**:
 - size of the teams,
 - nature of the performed tasks
(*required level of collaboration or availability of specific technology*)
 - number of available desks
 - technological prerequisites
 - company policy and others.
- * In the current situation, which is strongly influenced by the recent Covid-19 pandemic situation, even companies with already implemented flexible seating review their approach and adjust it to the “new normal”. Therefore, most companies are now **testing the different approaches to confirm what will work best** for them.



Collected examples

- **Fixed plan for teams**
 - *plan on which days which teams are supposed to work in the office to ensure that teams will meet and work together.*
- **“Neighborhoods”**
 - *dedicate areas in the office to specific teams and enable the team leaders to manage their teams according to the company policy (mainly number of allowed days for work from home)*
 - *in this case companies often use a technical solution for the reservation of desks/seats*
- **Full autonomy**
 - *enable the employee to decide when to work from the office and where (an option can be even a different office building in the location)*

Digital Leadership



People Management

- * How to **monitor the performance of teams?**
How to **ensure that the team members are collaborating?**
- * Flexible working environment brings **challenges also for leadership** and requires a significant **change in the leadership style**. The team leaders need to be **equipped with necessary (hard/soft) skills and tools** to be able to manage their teams and maintain positive mood.



How to support the leaders?

- **Communication** (see in '[Change Management](#)')
 - open
 - transparent
 - up to date
 - on time
- **Change management** (see in '[Change Management](#)')
 - understanding of what? when? why? how?
 - change of mindset (explore new ways of working, **trust!**)
 - **tip:**
organize workshops in smaller groups, involve the higher management, discuss the upcoming changes, ask what are the concerns and challenges in respective teams
- **Training**
 - related to different aspects of the leading of teams in the 'new normal'
 - providing the information how to efficiently work with different tools and technology used in the company
 - **tip:**
be the leader and set the example, explore new available tools and look for opportunities on how to benefit from using them; demonstrate the positive effects of the change, find and support ambassadors within your teams
- **Experience sharing**
 - create an offline/offline forum where leaders can raise questions, discuss them, share what works well, learn from each other (e.g., regular management meetings / Yammer group or MS Teams group)
 - **tip:**
establish regular discussions dedicated to a specific topic each to encourage the best practices sharing across leaders with different level of experience, e.g., in a form of a short workshop with a facilitator

Belonging

People Management



Examples of initiatives

- **Stay connected**
 - communication (see in '[Change Management](#)')
 - platform to regularly meet and discuss with the management
 - present company products in real life by company experts
 - encourage departments to present their portfolio and projects
 - organize contests and charity activities
- **Networking**
 - lunch / coffee roulette
 - platform where people introduce themselves and their interesting hobbies
 - mentoring / reverse mentoring
 - buddy program for newcomers
- **Trainings on how to work efficiently**
 - soft skills – time/priority management, team agreements etc.
 - hard skills – SW and tools in daily usage in the company:
 - communication tools, sharing documents, virtual collaboration
 - equipment in office / meeting rooms (e.g., MS Teams meeting room)



- * How to **motivate people to come to the office?**
How to ensure their **connection to the team and company?**
- * Organize events and activities fostering the **company culture and sense of belonging** to the team and company.
- * Think about **the most suitable format** (offline / online / hybrid) according to the goal of the activity.

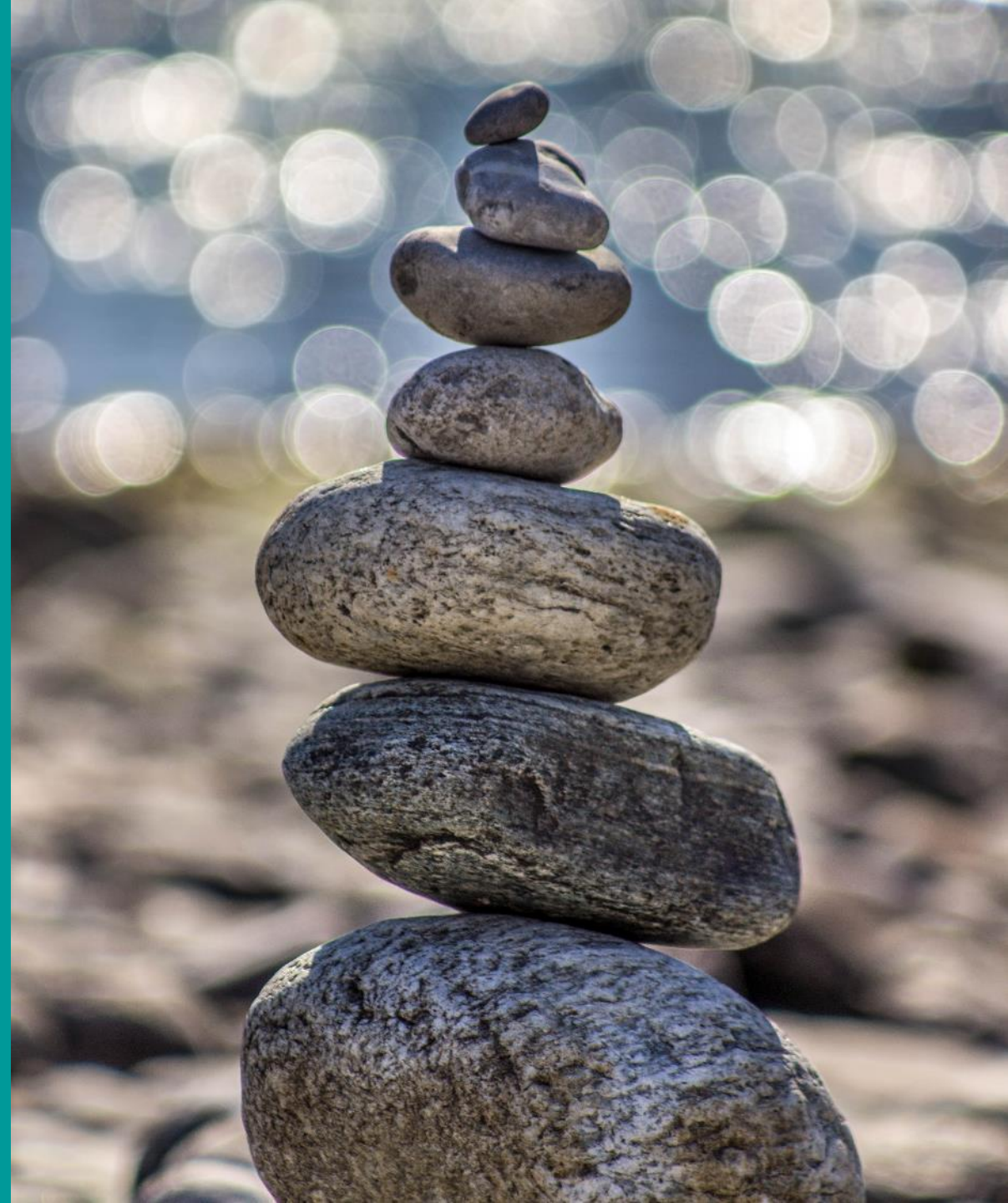
Mental Health & Wellbeing

People Management

- * How to support **work-life balance**?
How to **strengthen employees' mental health and resilience**?

Examples of initiatives

- *helpline, sessions with a psychologist*
- *webinars / seminars with interesting speakers and experts on related topics*
- *“day of health” (workshops, office stretching, yoga, meditation, etc.)*
- *promotion of healthy habits
(walking to printers and recycling bins, arrangements for bikers)*
- *company gym / Multisport card*
- *sport challenges (running, walking etc.)*





*Don't wait!
Go for it 😊*