Members Respond to the Coronavirus Challenge
Week of 25 May 2020

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What's the biggest work/COVID-19 challenge you're facing this week?

Deciding how to space plan new projects according to CDC guidelines without knowing what the long-term impact of COVID-19 will be on the workplace. Project schedules are also challenging because we have to make design selections based on availability of product/furniture and hope that it doesn't change.

What's the current situation in your city relative to opening non-essential businesses?

DC is entering Phase 1 of reopening. The Stay-At-Home order lifted today with a continued prohibition on gatherings of more than 10 individuals. Phase 1 includes non-essential retail businesses opening to customers for: outdoor pickup, delivery of items, and minimum basic operations of non-essential retail businesses to continue. Most businesses are still closed (fitness centers, dining in, malls, sporting venues, etc). COVID-19 still continues to spread in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

There seems to be a decrease in people wearing masks outdoors, but masks are still required to be worn in indoor public places. Toilet paper is slowly coming back on the shelves. Flour remains limited with the increase in bread-making at home.

How do you think COVID-19 will bring about permanent changes in corporate real estate and workplace strategy?

Real Estate: will include looking at factors developed during COVID-19, such as determining how people will get to and from work, budgeting the cost/value of real estate, and an internal shift of company policy to include lessons learned post-COVID, a need for building operations to change standard business hours due to shift work.

Workplace strategy: will include how the workplace will be programmed post-COVID, the allocation of SF/per person, and an increased cost to implement post-COVID building systems (ie: controlled indoor air quality), as well as integration of new workplace policies around CDC guidelines, increased work flexibility, integrated technology, increase in cost per employee due to flex work (cost of more monitors/laptops/subscriptions). People will be appreciative of social interactions as we return but give higher priority to work/life balance.

I also think the definition of "collaboration" will change post COVID. It won't be focused on in-person collaboration but collaboration through different channels utilizing tech (ie: a blend of in-person, zoom, teams). There will be an increased openness to face calls/zoom meetings, shared documents, and more integration of cloud-based services.