

Return-to-office checklist

Each decision you make about how you return to the office impacts your business, team members and potentially your customers. There are many variables and variations to consider and every organization is different. To get you started, we've put together a checklist to help you create your return to office plan. Remember, this process is iterative and will need updates over time as you learn what works for your organization and what doesn't.

How to use this checklist

1. As you work through the considerations below, use each line item to determine the relevant areas of focus for your organization.
2. After you've determined your focus areas, prioritize each piece. Some areas may require involvement from a cross-functional team. Assign them as appropriate.
3. Develop plans and communicate.
4. Re-visit your plan once it's in motion and make adjustments as needed.

Communications and employee expectations

Open communication and transparency will help set and manage employee expectations.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Getting started			
We understand how our employees feel about returning to the office, staying remote or working in a hybrid way.			
We are openly communicating that we're preparing for our desired approach (back to the office, remote, hybrid) and provide regular updates.			
What will success look like?			
Our employees understand that the shift to hybrid/remote work is an iterative process and will evolve over time.			
We have an open feedback loop to address employee concerns.			
Our return to work plan is documented and accessible for employees to reference.			
We have developed an onboarding program to help employees transition to the new norms and practices of hybrid/remote work.			

Health and safety

Enhanced health and safety measures to consider to protect employees as the province re-opens and key public health indicators improve. Health and safety measures will vary by approach.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Example health and safety measures			
We've developed a home ergonomics checklist for remote work.			
We can safely accommodate our employees in our office space according to Public Health guidelines.			
We've reconfigured our floorplan to accommodate social distancing measures.			
We've enhanced cleaning protocols for the building and individual work stations.			
Signage has been installed to help with traffic flow and wayfinding.			
Meeting room capacity has been adjusted to allow for proper social distancing.			
We've considered mandatory COVID self assessments and active screening protocols.			

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
We've adjusted protocols on business travel (local, regional and international) based on public health guidelines.			
We have a clear procedure for visitors to our office.			
We have a process in place to handle symptomatic and asymptomatic employees.			
We've considered requests and provided accommodations for employees who may not be able to return to office (high-risk employees, childcare/eldercare conflicts, employee's concerned about safety).			
We are prepared to consider policies regarding vaccinations pending Public Health guidance and legislation.			

Workplace & cultural norms

The office is no longer the only place work can be accomplished. In a hybrid environment, the purpose of the workplace and the way we work needs to be intentionally designed based on your business strategy. New routines, techniques and work practices need to be considered in a hybrid environment.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Purpose of the workplace			
We understand how our clients and customers want to interact with us; what services do they prefer to engage in remotely vs. in-person?			
We've outlined the primary activities our workplace will be used for, e.g., collaboration, team meetings, team building, client meetings, primary place of work, etc.			
Team member expectations			
We've determined how many days our employees need to be in the office; what roles and teams are mandatory and what roles and teams have flexibility?			
We've defined what flexible work means; work from anywhere vs. work from home vs. time in the office.			
Our employees understand what skills are required of them in a remote/hybrid environment and what skills are no longer required.			
Our leaders understand they should be measuring output and outcomes vs. time worked and facetime in the office.			
Collaboration			
We've decided on key collaboration hours – core hours employees are required to be online and available to collaborate.			
We've developed and shared a schedule of designated days in the office highlighting who is in the office and when.			
We have reviewed our tools and technology and are confident our employees have the right tools in place to do their work regardless of location.			
Our meeting practices allow equal participation from those in office and remote.			
Communication practices are remote first and do not exclude remote employees.			
We have acknowledged old work practices that no longer serve the team and have discontinued them.			
Culture			
We have built a culture of trust and empower our employees to manage their time and meet their deliverables regardless of location.			
We have a plan in place to maintain strong team connection and engagement across all working environments: in office, remotely and across time zones.			
Remote and in-person employees have equal opportunity to access learning and development, recognition and rewards, and special projects.			