Re-entering the Workplace – it’s the Human Capital that Counts

In a recent Bisnow-sponsored webinar, entitled Reopening the Nation’s Workplaces, a panel of industry leaders included HOK’s Director of Workplace Kay Sargent. She observed that the initial focus for addressing the health crisis that became a workplace crisis for many companies was the workplace – re-configuring the workspace, HVAC considerations, sanitizing and other brick and mortar issues. Increasingly, organizations are finding that their workforce is largely reluctant to return to the space they previously occupied. “Preparing the people for the return to work is going to be far more complex than some of the real estate issues we’re dealing with,” said Sargent.

Building owners, property managers and employers are expressing their surprise and concern that so few workers have returned to the workplace, and in major urban markets, a survey conducted by JLL in April confirmed the number one concern those surveyed had was safety in using public transportation in a post COVID-19 world. Given that about one-third of North American office space is concentrated in 12 transit-oriented markets (Chicago, New York, Toronto…), that poses a significant challenge to returning to the workplace as we know it.

While corporate preparedness for the anticipated return to the workspace has been front and center, organizations also need to devote attention and resources to the concern of the workforce in three areas to resume returning to common workspace:

- Safety – for themselves and by extension their families and others they regularly interact with
- Speed of decision-making - both reactive to a current threat or crisis and proactively to prepare for the next crisis (there will be others)
- Trust – can employees trust their leadership team to create and maintain a safe environment?

The safety issue has grown in scope to extend beyond personal safety, extending to family members and others who team members regularly interact with. It’s a prime consideration for all employers moving forward if they want to attract and keep top talent. Speed of decision-making is reactive in the current crisis and takes a mostly tactical approach in the short run. To effectively prepare for the next crisis, whether cyber, economic or otherwise, true leaders need to develop a strategic and proactive approach that takes into account the changing needs of their team members, and the stress and distress they’re currently experiencing that can have long-term effects. Health insurance may need to add a stronger focus on mental health coverage in a post-pandemic world.

The issue of personal trust is one that has not been addressed widely in public forums, and yet is probably the most critical issue for the workforce in the current environment. Does your leadership style inspire trust? Are you providing clear communications to your team members about what the organization is doing to ensure they feel safe when they need to return to the workplace, even if it’s less frequent or in a different location closer to where they live? Can you re-purpose the space that may be unused or under-utilized in the future to address concerns and interests of the workforce that enables you to build an outstanding team and keep it? Have you asked what’s important to them?

These are topics OSCRE will be exploring in future virtual meetings and bring you the perspective of industry change leaders who are charting a new course for their organizations, building a competitive advantage that will be difficult to overcome. Look for more information on these sessions via email in the future.

In the meantime, stay healthy, stay safe and know that we’re here to help you on your journey to creating an information-enabled business. You can count on it.

Best regards,

Lisa Stanley, CEO
OSCRE International
The Future of the Workforce, Workplace and Performance
Emerging and Lasting Implications of the Pandemic
By Ian Cameron, OSCRE Chief Innovation Officer

The pandemic is causing significant changes to the workforce and the workplace, much of which will be permanent. The data used to make space decisions in the post-pandemic era will change, especially as the nature of work changes. Additionally, several critical aspects of the real estate world are changing at the same time. For example, occupiers are investigating space use and lease implications arising from a reduced demand for space as remote work expands, while investors are looking at the same issue but from their own perspective – how will their leasing, portfolio performance and property values be affected by corporate occupiers adjusting their occupancy?

There is a need for a shift in the kind of data and data standards needed to work through this next structural change in the market. The OSCRE Industry Data Model (IDM) has specific use cases focused on areas such as space management, valuation, leasing, and portfolio performance to assist you in making the shift needed for change. All stakeholders in the industry today are looking at these use cases for both occupancy and investment. They are trying to assess their current and future exposure to risk and make critical decisions on the make-up of their portfolios. Here are a few examples of the kinds of changes we see coming that involve significant shifts in the way data is used in our industry.

**Workforce changes:**
- Permanent changes are already occurring in the composition of the workforce - more mobile workers, greater degree of mobility, expanded tools and practices to support remote work
- Space planners will have to find solutions for new ways of working – home working support packs, local drop-in centers, collaboration technologies
- Increased diversity of workplace options and increased level of use
- HR organizations will begin re-classifying employees – new data on workforce attributes

**Spaces and Places**
- Changes in job-oriented location selection for employees – new mindset around sourcing talent and corporate location decisions
- Potential resurgence for smaller towns and communities as they support mobile work and increased work from home – new ways of evaluating workspace and living space
- Space solutions will involve a combination of space type, space use, worker type and work type – new types of scenarios matching space to the work and workforce
- Portfolio analytics will involve whole new scenarios around remote work and work types – increasing sophistication in analytics

**Leasing and investment**
- Shorter term leases will change underwriting criteria for loans, acquisition and disposition – potential for new valuation practices and data sets
- Valuation premiums may apply for properties that can be flexibly redeployed to other uses – data on reuse potential might be needed
- Increased frequency of valuation as leasing strategies and investment criteria change – increase in data-driven valuation with new models and tools

In our industry, there is a need to analyze increasingly complex factors and to analyze them all at the same time. The integrated nature of the OSCRE Industry Data Model (IDM) makes it perfectly suited to support this kind of analysis. Additionally, the IDM contains specific use cases relating to space, leasing, valuation and performance. Existing use cases will be reviewed and expanded as needed in the months ahead to make sure that the standardization of data is extended to meet the changing needs of the industry.

---

Learn at home with NEW OSCRE Academy Virtual Learning Labs!

**Option 1 - For your organization’s team**
This option is ideal for teams of up to 20 from across your organization. Incorporates data governance and digital competency. Aligns, enables and equips teams to manage change.
- Series of 1/2-day session over 3-4 months.
- Custom components available.

**Option 2 - Open registration with mixed organizations facing similar challenges**
Recommend team participation - 1 participant from business + 1 participant from IT.
Four 1/2-day virtual sessions with workshops.

Interested in attending a virtual learning lab? Email OSCRE for more details.

### Learn at home with the OSCRE Academy web-based Certificate Programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Governance in Real Estate on-demand Certificate program</strong></td>
<td>This program is presented by industry professionals, giving you access to their knowledge, experience and guidance on how to apply it to your own organization. Defining the Who, What, When and Why critical to developing an effective real estate data governance program. Helping participants assess and grow their organization’s data governance maturity capabilities. <a href="#">Learn more here</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Building Digital Competency in Real Estate on-demand Certificate program</strong></td>
<td>It’s about doing things right, engaging the right people, developing the right skills, and putting the right framework in place. Build an effective data governance framework, competitive advantage and improve business outcomes. This program will help you build the skills you need to take the next steps to build digital competency for real estate. <a href="#">Learn more here</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on the content of this newsletter, OSCRE membership, or any of our programs contact [lori.walters@oscre.org](mailto:lori.walters@oscre.org).

Visit our website at [www.oscre.org](http://www.oscre.org)

**Join OSCRE now!**

**Follow us on LinkedIn**