



EBOOK

The COVID-19 Back-to-Work Playbook: Enterprise Edition

How to leverage technology to modernize
and build a thriving hybrid workplace

The Enterprise Workplace Has Changed for Good

Before 2020, enterprises that embraced technology to accommodate remote working and dispersed teams were deemed modern, forward-thinking, and innovative.

Then COVID-19 hit, and emerging trends became urgent realities overnight. Entire workforces went remote and teams were forced into virtual collaboration. To maintain productivity, companies found themselves relying heavily on collaboration tools like enterprise messaging apps and video conferencing.

On the one hand, these tools worked so well that as businesses began to reopen, many chose to keep at least a portion of their workforces remote. Even after the threat of the pandemic passes, some experts estimate that about 40% of the workforce will continue to work remotely.

On the other, a more mobile workforce and the post-COVID-19 work environment have created a new set of challenges that enterprises may need help to solve.

For instance, how do you communicate effectively across a dispersed organization and integrate across so many additional channels? How can you reduce COVID-19-related health risks for the employees who are back in the office?

In this playbook, we dive into how enterprises should be using powerful communication tools to help bridge the return to the new, hybrid workplace – and thrive in it.

We'll cover how best to use enterprise messaging apps and digital signage, as well as the features and applications of new technology solutions purpose-built to ensure employee safety and continued productivity.





How Has the Enterprise Workplace Changed?

A recent survey of Fortune 500 companies about the impact of COVID-19 on the workplace revealed the following:

65%

reported physical workspaces were operating with as many as 50% fewer occupants

20%

of respondents estimated a reduction in real estate footprints

100%

are looking for tools to help their employees stay engaged

Source: Appspace



Part 1: Leveraging Communications Tools in the Hybrid Workplace

By understanding how to use enterprise messaging apps and digital signage most effectively to engage a hybrid workforce – and knowing the content you should be sharing via each channel – enterprises can easily communicate with dispersed teams and make sure employees returning to the office are safe amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

How to Use Enterprise Messaging Apps



Enterprise messaging apps such as Webex Teams, Microsoft Teams, and Slack are a quick way for employees to stay connected anywhere, any time, and on any device. They can be an especially effective communication tool as some employees prepare to return to the office. Sharing information about what employees can expect when they return to the office will help them feel safe and, in turn, help build and reinforce their trust in their organization.

You can take advantage of these simple team communication tools by publishing company messages simultaneously to enterprise messaging apps and to traditional digital signage. (Just make sure your messages appear appropriate to the medium, and that app users see messages that are engaging, high impact, and in context.)

Use enterprise messaging apps to:

- ✓ Reach both in-office and at-home employees simultaneously
- ✓ Easily share new and changing COVID-19-related policies
- ✓ Communicate with employees while avoiding in-person gathering

Share content like:

- 1 Updated scheduling
- 2 Revised policies and guidelines
- 3 Training and workshop announcements
- 4 New customers
- 5 NPS metrics
- 6 Employee recognition
- 7 Company trivia

How to Use Digital Signage



Arguably more important than ever, digital signage is an easy way to communicate throughout your office building. Signage strategically placed in your lobby, reception areas, and common areas ensures that employees and visitors see important messages. As businesses reopen and employees return to work, it's critical to share and reinforce policies and updates with highly visible, easily consumable messages.

1. Entrance and Lobby

The lobby is the first point of contact for any office, and employees returning to work need to be aware of any changes in policies and procedures that will affect the day. In the COVID-19 workplace, many companies are using temperature checkpoints in their lobbies to keep symptomatic employees away from those who are healthy.

Using signage to announce these checkpoints will keep employees calm, informed, and orderly – reducing unknowns and adding to safety. Digital signs in the lobby can also alert and remind employees about social distancing and sanitizing policies. And, as the policies change and evolve, digital signs at entry points can be easily updated.

Use entrance and lobby signage to:

- ✓ Post critical messages where employees will see them
- ✓ Instantly update content as policies change
- ✓ Tailor messages for specific locations
- ✓ Share information while maintaining physical distancing

Share content like:

- 1 Welcome messages
- 2 Company mission statement
- 3 COVID-19-related policies

2. Open Areas and Huddle Spaces

Workplace open areas are natural places for employees to gather while adhering to social distancing guidelines. In open areas, you can grab employee attention with corporate news, workplace services, live dashboards, and live town hall broadcasts. You can also share alerts, policy updates, and COVID-19-related information just as you would on your more traditional digital signage solutions.

Huddle spaces provide a safe and affordable alternative to the enclosed meeting room. Removing the confinement of a conference room, these spaces allow employees to meet quickly while still maintaining the recommended social distance. Voice control technology can also keep these spaces touchless by accepting simple voice commands to control what's on the screen, lowering the risk of exposure for your employees.

Use open areas and huddle space signage to:

- ✓ Share messages meant to be seen by larger audiences
- ✓ Display company-wide information and updates related to COVID-19

Share content like:

- 1 Open positions
- 2 Benefit updates
- 3 COVID-19 policy reminders
- 4 Leaderboards
- 5 Partnership announcements
- 6 Town hall broadcasts
- 7 Company events

3. How to Use TVs and Collaboration Displays

In the modern workplace, especially in the wake of COVID-19, TVs and displays are invaluable tools for teams to use while training, presenting, or collaborating. With touchless, voice-activated technology, employees can use TVs and displays while minimizing contact with shared surfaces. Whether they're located in meeting rooms, huddle spaces, or in an employee's home office, TVs and collaboration displays act as bridges between you and your workforce, wherever they are.

Use TVs and collaboration displays to:

- ✓ Post location-specific reminders and guidelines
- ✓ Reinforce social distancing and other preventive measures
- ✓ Tailor messages and content for specific teams, office locations, or meeting rooms
- ✓ Use as digital signage while idle

Share content like:

- 1 Team-specific announcements
- 2 Voice command instructions
- 3 Social distancing reminders
- 4 Team recognition
- 5 Motivational quotes

4. How to Use Kiosks

Kiosks have traditionally served as digital concierges and information hubs. In the new modern workplace, they also play a key role in helping employees and visitors navigate the physical workplace with minimal person-to-person contact.

Wayfinding has become one of the most important features. Before COVID-19, the ability to easily locate a person or place in an office was often treated as a convenience or efficiency measure. In the new environment, being able to easily find your way has become a matter of safety. A wayfinding kiosk in the lobby prevents unnecessary foot traffic and interaction, limiting the spread of germs and keeping your employees and guests as safe as possible.

Guest registration has also changed. Most offices prior to the pandemic relied on dedicated employees to set the tone of a visitor's first experience. With social distancing procedures in place, fewer on-site employees, occupancy guidelines, and a smaller real estate footprint, your organization can make sure guests or employees arriving at the office are checked in and counted.

A positive registration experience can be powered by a tech-enabled kiosk in reception areas where guests can sign in, have their picture taken, and get a badge printed from the same device without interacting with a receptionist. As an additional safety benefit, some of the more advanced tools offer a touchless experience for guests, utilizing mobile devices to complete the same workflow. Guests can use QR technology to check in, register, and print badges all from their mobile devices, thereby reducing the risk of contamination through physical contact.

Use kiosks to:

- ✓ Have guests check in with minimal person-to-person contact
- ✓ Help employees and guests navigate the office in the safest way possible
- ✓ Coordinate room scheduling while maintaining physical distance
- ✓ Avoid touching shared surfaces by using mobile devices to check in



Part 2: New Collaboration Tools for the Hybrid Workplace

Technology for video conferencing, space management, and connected physical spaces have risen to prominence since the start of the pandemic. Having software with robust space management functions and features that are purpose-built for productivity and safety will make a significant difference when planning a seamless return to work. For instance, some of the best platforms offer office-mapping tools, room and desk reservations, and building access and check-in from any mobile device, desktop, or interactive display. Here's what else to look for – and how it changes meetings and collaboration for the better.



Tech-Enabled Room and Desk Scheduling Solutions

Finding an open meeting room in any office can be a challenge, however, now the management of these spaces is not only important for productivity, but also for safety. Using a tech-enabled room scheduling solution will further engrain healthy habits into your staff as they adapt to their new normal.

Since many enterprises are planning to reduce their real estate footprints in the coming months, the overall decrease in space will increase the demand on the meeting spaces that remain. By adding room scheduling technology, these rooms can be reserved for those who need them, when they need them, keeping your transition back into the office as smooth as possible.

In addition, room scheduling technology can be used on wayfinding kiosks and interactive panels outside meeting rooms. In the new, modern workplace, you can use it to keep teams organized, keep track of occupancy counts, and ensure that in-person meetings adhere to government recommendations.

Top features to look for:

- 1** When a meeting room is occupied, a meeting-in-progress message will appear on the screen outside the meeting space to prevent interruptions and unnecessary contact
- 2** Room scheduling panels to check in to an unoccupied room at the last minute
- 3** Meeting-related updates seen on the screen outside of the room as well, so if cancellations happen, employees can find out quickly and get back to working on other things
- 4** Touchless voice technology for room check-ins and simple meeting-related activities (i.e., to claim the room, extend the time, etc.)
- 5** Easy integration with existing (and constantly growing) tech stacks



Video Conferencing and Collaboration Solutions

With dispersed teams, the use of video technology is increasing, and efficient meetings are essential – especially with COVID-19 rules around occupancy limits, meeting-length, and room sanitization.

Collaboration displays in meetings rooms can address these challenges by allowing you to access training content on the actual device and making it easier for teams to use the technology.

Some organizations provide their employees with collaboration endpoints that they are able to use at home. All-in-one machines, screens, share-devices, and media players power a home in the same way they power an office. As more companies shift to remote work, collaboration displays at home can be used to ensure that everyone in your organization stays informed regardless of where they are working.

Collaboration endpoints also can be used with signage mode when they are idle so that important, relevant updates and policies are displayed just as they would be in-office. Different content can be targeted to in-home collaboration endpoints, so you can make sure that the messages are relevant to remote employees.

Top features to look for:

- 1** Displays can be used in signage mode when they're idle
- 2** Ability to easily add content that reinforces capacity limits and reminds attendees to wipe down surfaces before and after use
- 3** Voice control features allow you to take advantage of a touchless experience, further reducing contact and exposure in your workplace
- 4** Ability to start meetings, display content, and more, all while lowering the chances of exposing yourself and others to the virus with simple voice commands

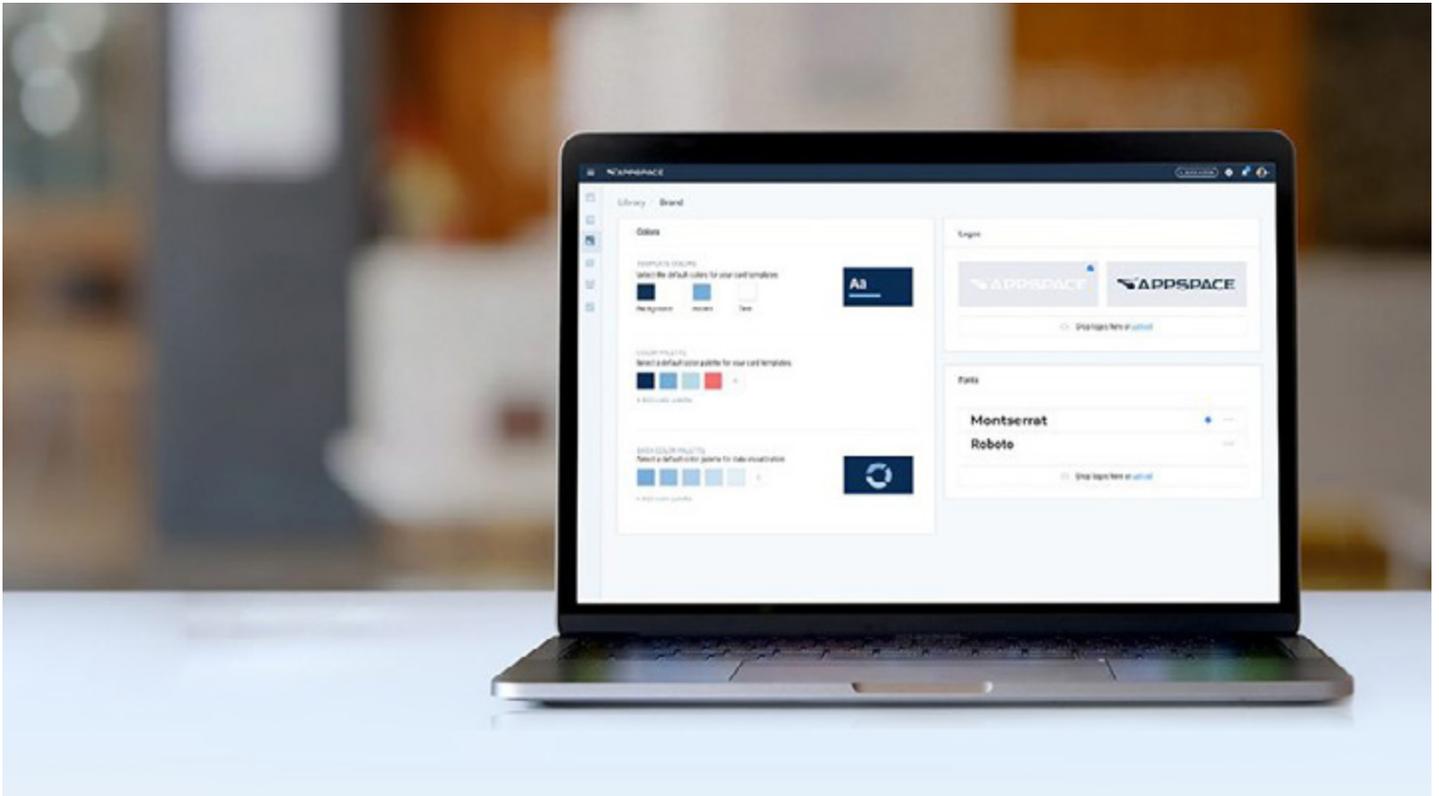


Tackle 6 Major Back-to-Work Challenges with Appspace

As employees return to a post-COVID-19 workplace, enterprises need to be prepared for six major new challenges in the workplace. Used by more than a quarter of the Fortune 500, Appspace's unified platform helps companies:

- 1 Inform employees of rapidly changing policies and procedures
- 2 Reach all employees while maintaining social distancing
- 3 Reinforce infection-control best practices
- 4 Continue to train the workforce
- 5 Keep employees safe and healthy
- 6 Reassure visitors and customers

Power your workplace communications strategy with Appspace to make the back-to-work transition as smooth and safe as possible.



Book a demo or sign up for a free six-month trial.

“We use Appspace to support workplace collaboration, which has become increasingly important since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Appspace helps us deliver our corporate storytelling using global content from headquarters and localized content from regional offices.”

John O’Grady, Global Workplace Services at Pfizer

“Appspace is the primary platform we use at LinkedIn to manage and distribute our digital signage content. This has been extremely valuable for our employees as it allows them to stay up to date on relevant company announcements, events, and internal communications.”

Alex Huin, Unified Communications Engineer at LinkedIn



About Appspace

Create an exceptional, collaborative workplace experience with the simple communication and space management tools your teams need to stay connected, whether they're at work, at home, or on the go.

Founded in 2002, Appspace offers global solutions with offices in the US, UK, UAE, and Malaysia, plus remote experts in a dozen other countries. We provide support to thousands of customers who trust us to help them communicate with their teams and modernize their workplace experiences.

We are proud to help nearly 3,000 customers and many of the Fortune 500 deliver a modern workplace experience, unify brand culture, and enhance communications across teams big and small.



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