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Shared spaces

FUNKY SHOES

NEXT NORMAL

HELLO

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As we navigate the crisis, Vitra is committed to communicating the latest insights and learnings to ensure a safe journey to the next normal for the spaces we live and work in or travel through. We draw on the knowledge of our network of thought leaders, including scientists, designers, architects and customers. We also look to the empirical evidence gained from the measures implemented by our partners and clients, as well as from our own showrooms and workplaces, including the Vitra Campus. Although the path of the pandemic is still not fully understood, the long-term implications are becoming increasingly apparent. Our papers are continuously updated to share the most recent findings. You can find the most current versions at vitra.com/nextnormal.
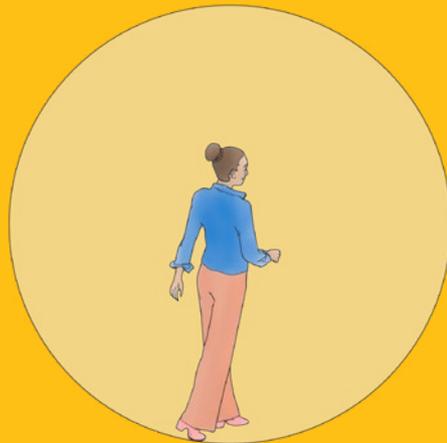
In the past few weeks we have been focused on ensuring a safe return to the office. In response to the pandemic, companies had to quickly implement easy solutions for employee safety along with measures such as shift working and remote working to reduce their occupancy rates.

After a months-long standstill aimed at curbing the pandemic's spread, the travel industry, hospitality venues and public institutions are reopening and preparing for a new normal. With the public yearning to travel, go out on dinner dates or come together to sing, dance and play, effective management of the spaces that host these activities is key to controlling the proliferation of the disease. In a first phase, general health and safety solutions that allow for physical distancing and avoid the spread of infection had to be implemented and were heavily regulated in most countries. In a second phase, the experiences from the first half of 2020 will lead to longer-term design implications in the spaces that we share. This paper collects the best practices encountered over the past months and presents our preliminary insights into the world that awaits us.

Nora Fehlbaum
CEO, Vitra

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Four hypotheses

We will travel in different ways

Hygiene standards will be permanently increased

New hygiene measures for public areas

New rules and guidelines for shared spaces

Taking a closer look at aerosols – learnings from a COVID-19 outbreak at a restaurant in China

Case study: citizenM Zurich

Direct implications for the travel economy

Travelling becomes a more conscious decision

Many interactions can be transferred online, but not all

Social and environmental responsibility leads to more human-oriented aesthetics

From theory to practice: the re-opening of the Vitra Campus to the public and to Vitra employees

Next normal

Hella Jongerius discusses a new focus on materials

Dan Hill on the future of cities

Increased hygiene standards have a direct impact on shared environments

The way we travel and commute has a direct impact on shared spaces – at home, in the office and on the go

Planning examples

Planning examples

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Hygiene standards will be permanently increased

GREAT!

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New hygiene measures for public areas

COVID-19 was a reminder of the efficacy, both on an individual and societal level, of the simple hygiene measures that have helped to eradicate diseases, lower infant mortality and contribute to increasing life expectancies across the globe. It was back in 1850 that a Hungarian obstetrician first promoted hand washing and disinfection prior to performing medical procedures after noting a drastic drop in childbed fever when these simple techniques were practised. Still it took decades for these measures to be widely embraced, long after the pioneering doctor died in a psychiatric asylum following a nervous breakdown. Corona also showed that there is still much to learn. In Europe and the United States this includes wearing masks when we are not well, sneezing into our elbows rather than our hands or ridding ourselves of rituals such as handshakes. Just as airport security was permanently altered to address the threat of terrorist attacks after 9/11, public spaces will adopt new processes to protect users and staff members from infection and disease.
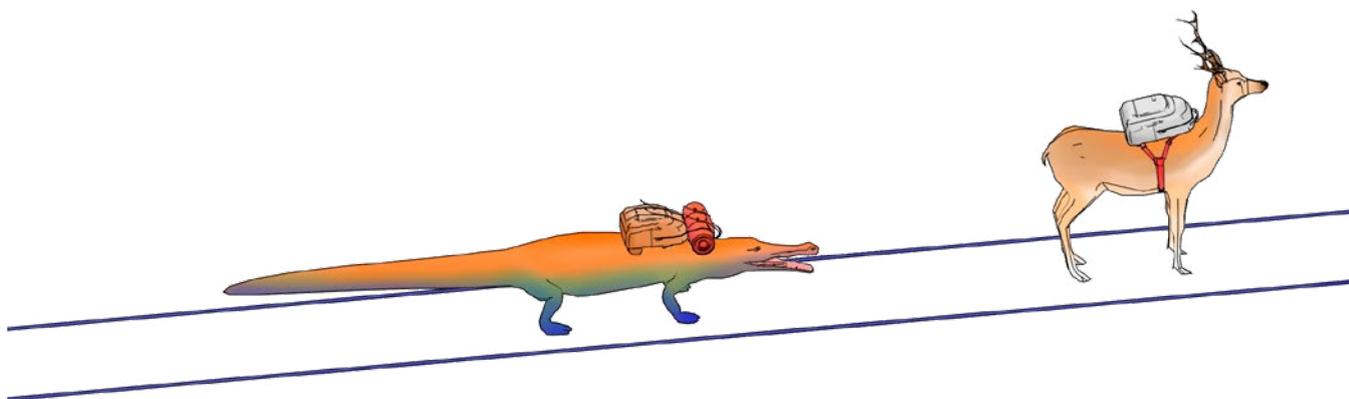
Sanitisers are provided in all entry halls and bathrooms. Surfaces, handles, bathrooms and even frequently touched furniture elements are cleaned more often and in front of users. Working with more aggressive cleaning products, cleaning crews strive to be more visibly active as they perform their duties to signal safety and hygiene. Airbnb, heavily hit by the pandemic and currently reinventing its business model, is releasing a new cleaning protocol. Hosts that cannot prove compliance will be required to wait 72 hours in between guest stays.


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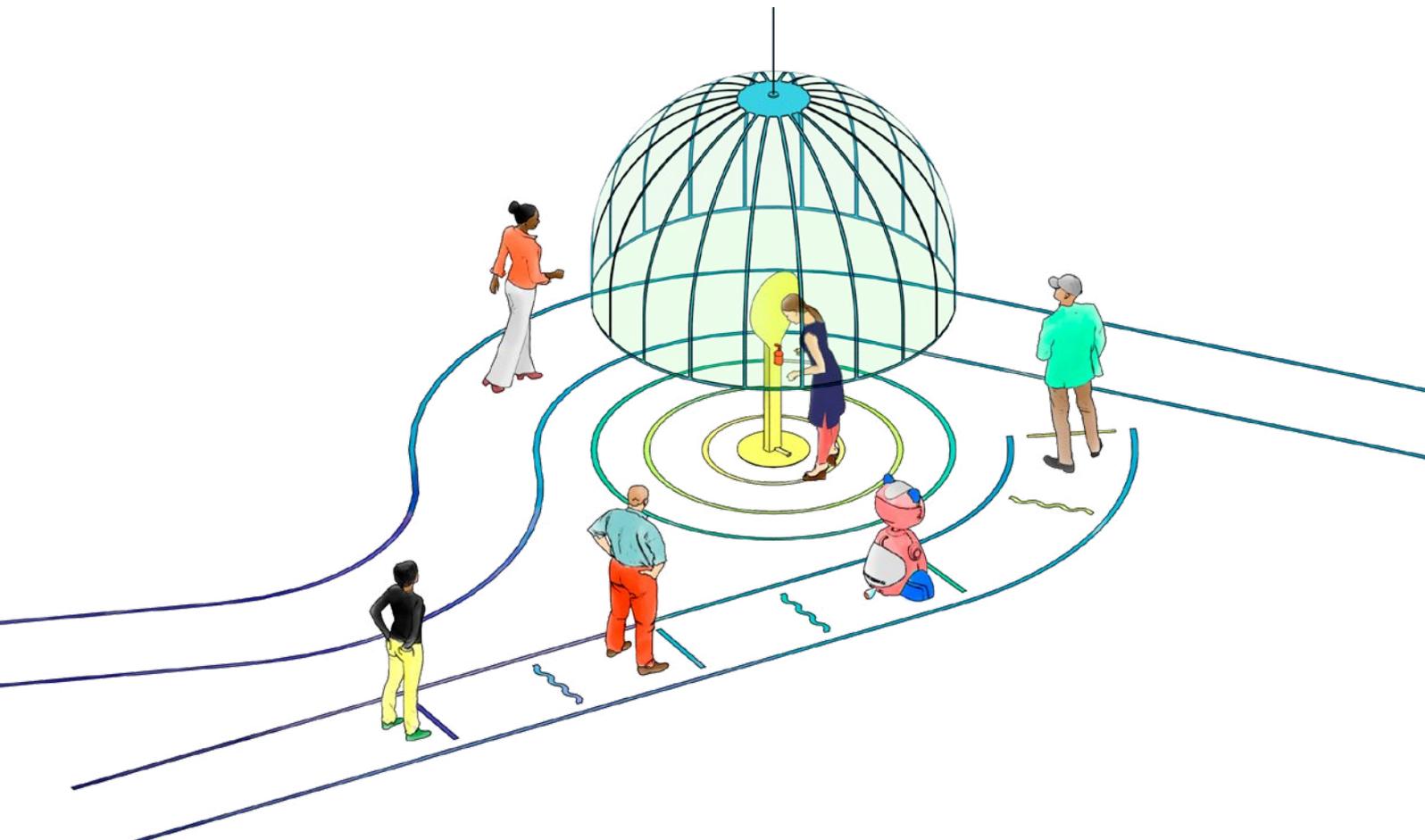
New rules and guidelines for shared spaces

Operators of shared spaces of all kinds will have to allow for physical distancing in their environments but are likely unwilling to invest in expanding their footprint. Rules and guidelines will appear that govern the m2 allocated per person or maximum capacities. Business models that are based on density, such as low-cost airlines, will struggle greatly to comply. In the first weeks and months after lockdown, lower activity levels and reduced density in airports, hotels and elsewhere are the natural result of closed borders and ongoing anxiety. Following the end of lockdown measures in China, hotels, airlines and even shared workspaces quickly reached 30% of their pre-pandemic occupancy rates, but activity levels have not since risen any further. Lufthansa predicts that fear, a preference for digital tools and a permanent change in habits will prevent passenger numbers from reaching their pre-pandemic peak for the next five years. As a result, many airlines and airports are vowing to become 'smaller companies'. Density in public transport may be avoided by distributing passenger volume more evenly throughout the day or week as the working population increasingly incorporates remote work into their routine and adopts more flexible working hours.

In communal environments – such as libraries, university halls, museums or shared workspaces – markings on the floor, separation panels and screens are now installed to guide and distance visitors from each other and shield staff. This begs the question of how short-lived the next phase of the pandemic will be. For a while, we can surely all accept the unfriendly Plexiglas barriers, yellow markings and red-and-white tape reminiscent of danger zones. Should the threat become more permanent, however, we will need to find different, more creative ways to be distanced from each other. In shared workplaces, layouts will change, benches may become wider, and separators such as plants or curtains may be installed. Some items (IT hardware, keyboards, headsets, audio guides in museums) simply can no longer be shared without intense cleaning procedures.

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Taking a closer look at aerosols – learnings from a COVID-19 outbreak at a restaurant in China

In late January/early February 2020 there was an outbreak of COVID-19 involving ten people from three family clusters who had eaten at the same air-conditioned restaurant in Guangzhou, China. A detailed investigation linked these cases together.

On 23 January, one of the affected families, family A, travelled from Wuhan to Guangzhou. On 24 January, the first documented patient, patient A1, ate lunch with three other family members at the restaurant. The two other families, family B and family C, were sitting at neighbouring tables. Later that day, the patient A1 experienced the onset of a fever and cough and went to hospital. By 5 February, a total of nine others had become ill with COVID-19: four members of family A, three members of family B, and 2 members of family C. The only known source of exposure for the affected people in families B and C was patient A1 in family A during their time at the restaurant. At least one person of each family B and C was infected in the restaurant, and then further infections resulted from within-family transmission.

On the day of the lunch, a total of 91 people – 83 customers, 8 staff members – were in the restaurant. All the customers ate lunch at 15 tables on the third floor. Beyond the ten that became ill with COVID-19, the other 73 were identified as close contacts and quarantined for 14 days. During that period, none of these 73 people developed symptoms, and throat swab samples from them and 6 smear samples from the air conditioner (3 from the air outlet and 3 from the air inlet) all proved negative.

From the examination of the potential routes of transmission, the conclusion was that the most likely cause of this outbreak was droplet transmission. Patient A1 was asymptomatic during the lunch, but pre-symptomatic transmission has been widely reported. Given the incubation periods for family B, the most likely scenario is that all three family B members were directly infected by patient A1. However, we cannot not exclude the possibility that patients B2 and B3 were infected by patient B1, the first member of family B to become ill. For family C, a possible scenario is that both patients C1 and C2 were infected by patient A1; another scenario is that the patient C1 acquired the infection while caring for patient C2.

Hygiene standards will be permanently increased
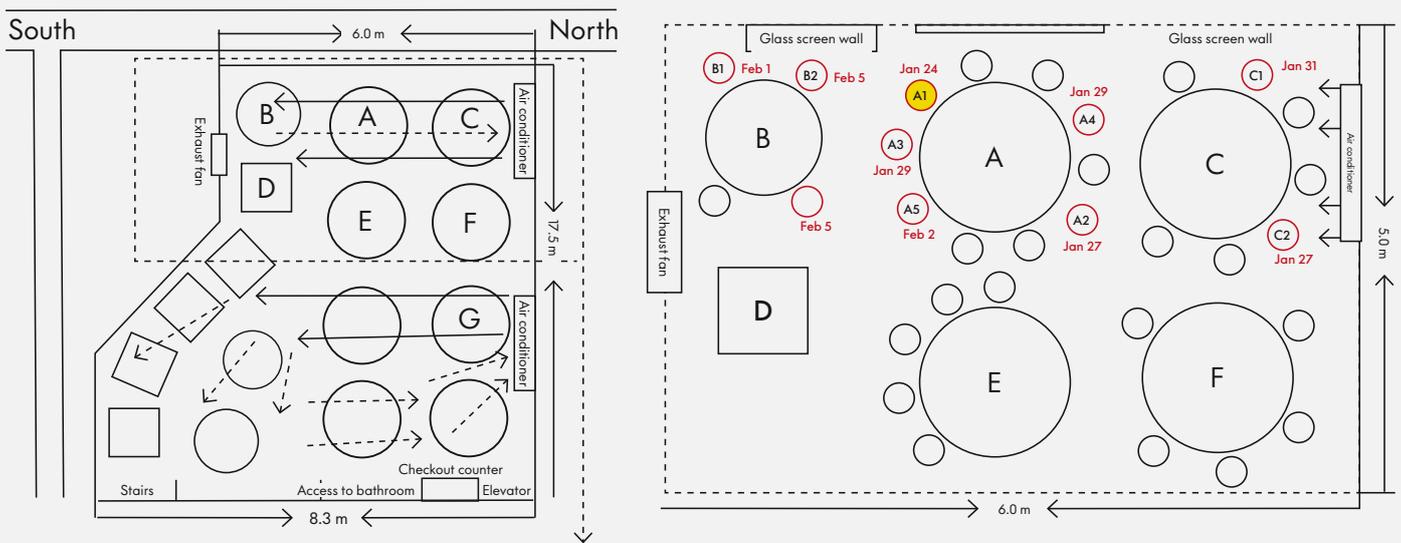
Sketch showing arrangement of restaurant tables and air conditioning airflow at site of outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus disease, Guangzhou, China, 2020. Red circles indicate seating of future case-patients; yellow-filled red circle indicates index case-patient.

Virus transmission in this outbreak cannot be explained by droplet transmission alone. Larger respiratory droplets remain in the air for only a short time and generally travel distances of less than one metre. The distances between patient A1 and the people at the other tables, especially those at table C, were all greater than one metre. However, strong airflow from the air conditioner could have propagated droplets from table C to table A, then to table B, and then back to table C. Virus-laden small aerosolised droplets can remain in the air and travel distances of more than one metre, and potential aerosol transmission of other viruses is a known possibility. However, none of the staff or the other diners in the restaurant were infected and, moreover, the smear samples from the air conditioner were all nucleotide negative.

While the study has limitations, we conclude that, in this outbreak, droplet transmission was prompted by air-conditioned ventilation, the key factor for infection being the direction of

the airflow. Increasing the distance between tables and improving ventilation will help prevent spread of COVID-19 in restaurants.

Source: Lu, J., Gu, J., Li, K., Xu, C., Su, W., Lai, Z....Yang, Z. (2020). COVID-19 Outbreak Associated with Air Conditioning in Restaurant, Guangzhou, China, 2020. Emerging Infectious Diseases, 26(7), 1628-1631.

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Case study

**A 'corona-safe' layout implementation
in the citizenM boutique hotels**

The citizenM hotel group was started in 2008 during the financial crisis with the aim of disrupting the traditional hotel industry and creating luxury hybrid hotels for a new generation of travellers. During the pandemic, the citizenM group implemented new safety concepts for its shared spaces and has since upgraded its technology to create a contactless guest experience. Because all its hotels remained open for key workers, the group retained its entire workforce.

With establishments in major cities like London, Paris, Amsterdam, New York, Boston, Taipei and Shanghai, citizenM managed to implement a unique yet coherent plan that offers visitors the space for productive interaction in shared areas such as the café/bar, canteen, workspaces in the co-working zones, and retreats in the lounges and living rooms. As owner and operator of its entire hotel portfolio, citizenM has the freedom to execute new initiatives consistently, rapidly and globally. Most traditional hotels operate under management contracts with separate owners, making it challenging to carry out new strategies. As citizenM owns and operates all of its locations, any decisions made (e.g. hygiene, safety or technology) are implemented in one swoop.

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# Implementing a new safety concept in the shared spaces

To reduce the risk of exposure, small teams operate on-site during the day and at night. The guests see the same faces frequently and come into contact with fewer staff members than they normally would. Breakfast is sealed, bagged and available for room delivery or to take away. To limit interaction, the hotel chain has adopted cashless payments across its entire portfolio, and there are particular house rules in place at each location for extra safety.

Floor plan of the citizenM in Zurich
Before the pandemic
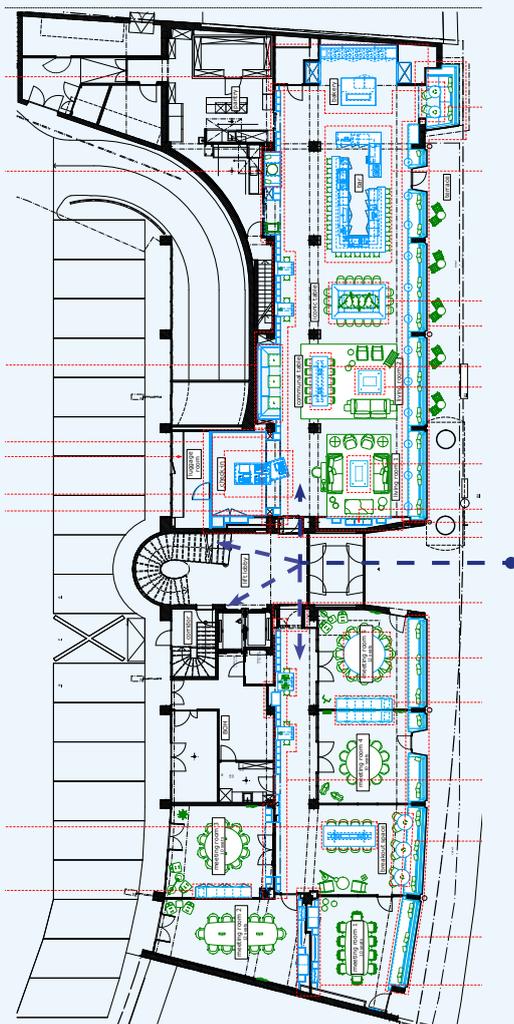
Entrance route - - - - →

Exit route ← - - - - -

Seat count before

Café, bar & restaurant area:	**62** seats
Living room & lounge area:	**50** seats
Outdoor seating:	**10** seats
Co-working area & meeting rooms:	**54** seats

'Corona-safe' seat count

Café, bar & restaurant area:	**10 seats**
Living room & lounge area:	**20 seats**
Outdoor seating:	**5 seats**
Co-working area & meeting rooms:	**15 seats**

Floor plan of the citizenM in Zurich
After the application of new safety regulations

Café, bar & restaurant area

Outdoor seating

Living room & lounge area

Check-in

Entrance & lobby

Co-working area & meeting rooms

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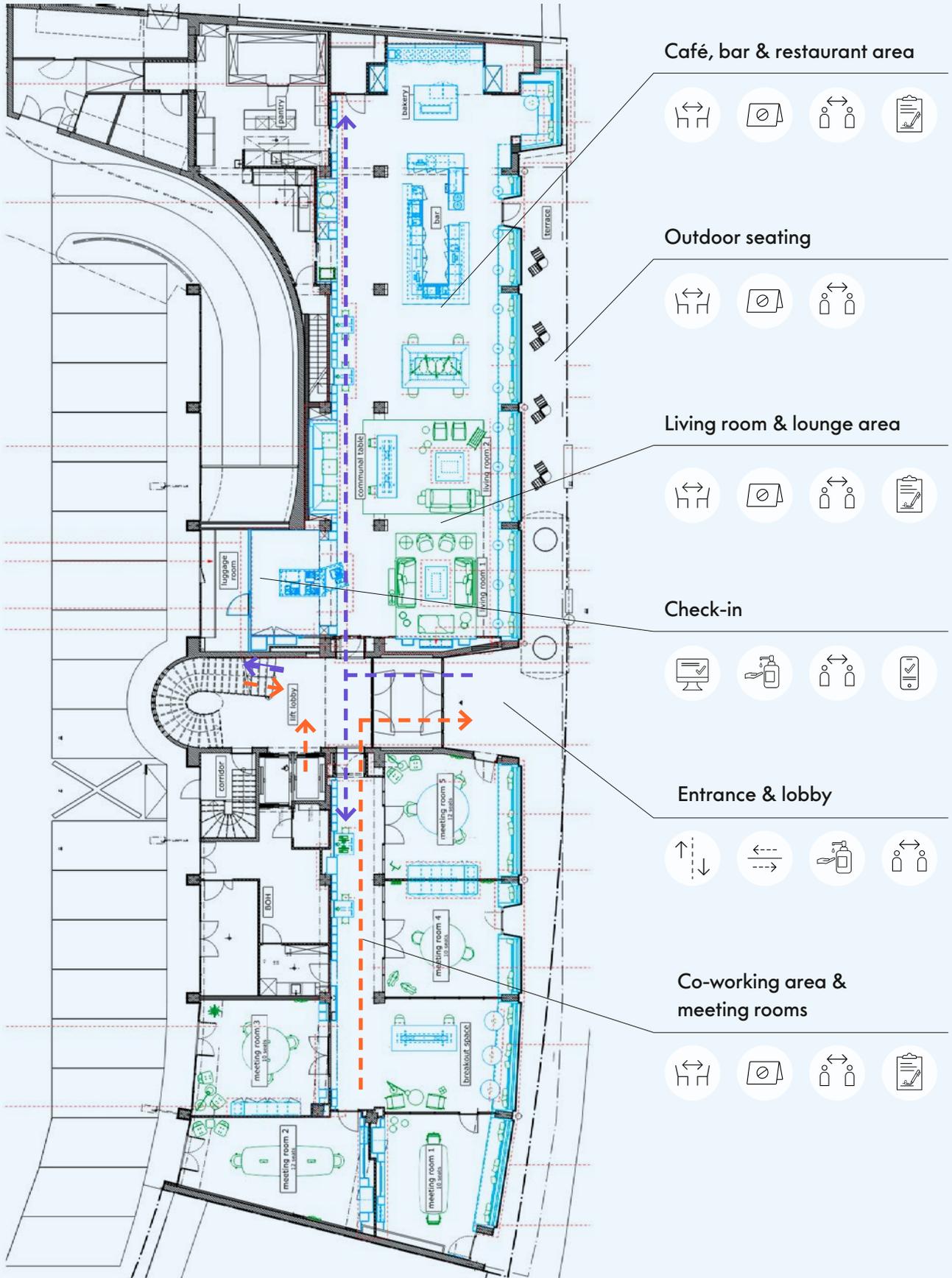
Hygiene standards will be permanently increased

Entrance & lobby
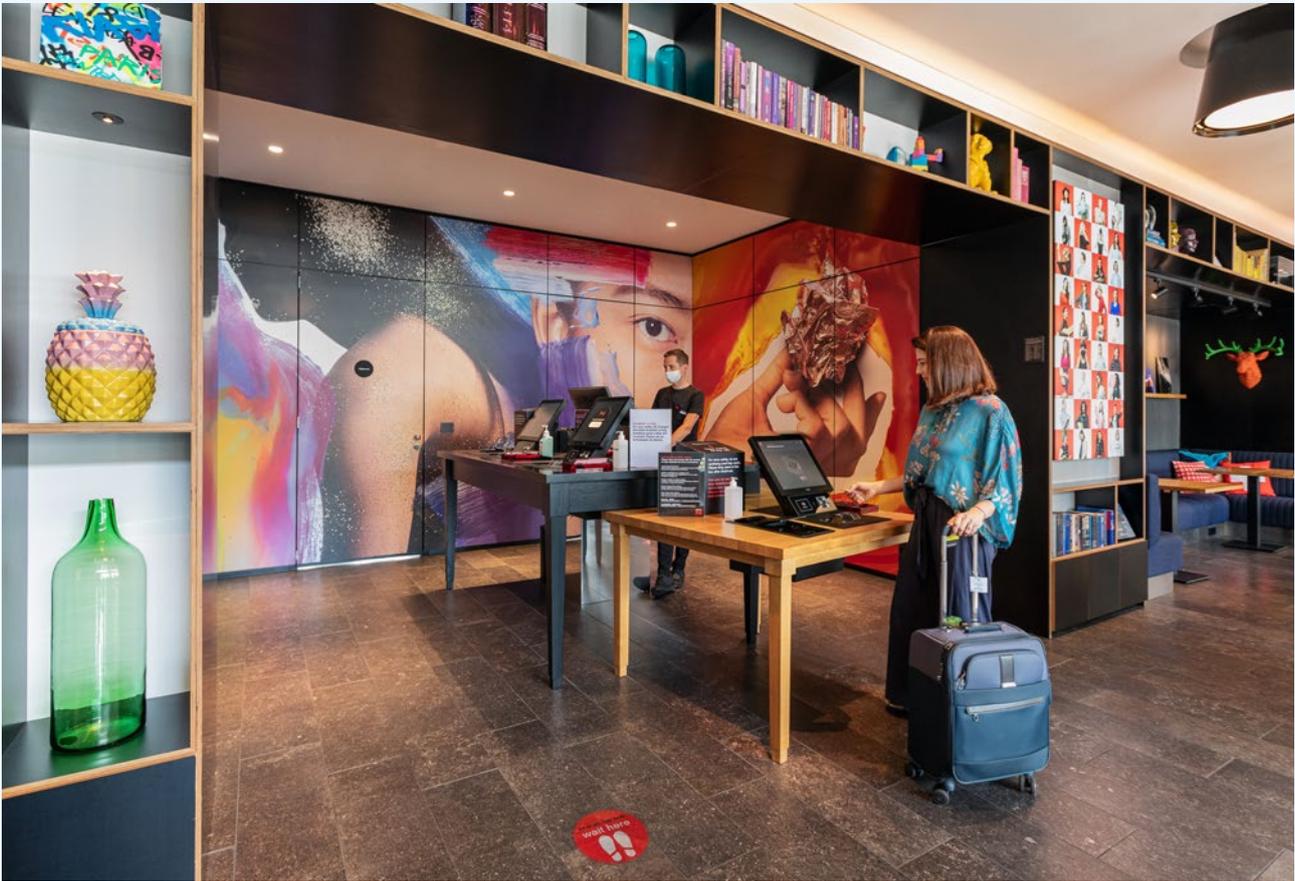
After
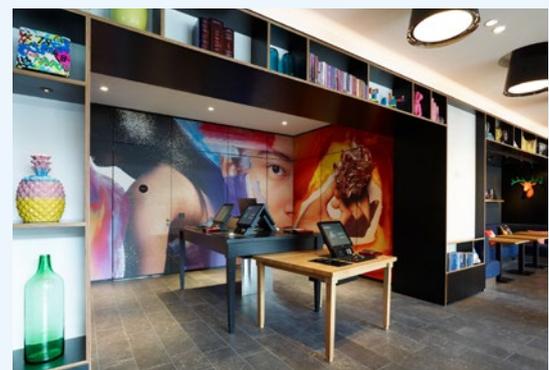
Before

Transit zones to optimise people traffic

Floor markings to indicate
the entry and exit routes

Hygiene & disinfection stations for guests and
employees & regular cleaning of interfaces

2m / 6 ft distance between
guests and employees

Check-in

- Mobile check-in

- Contactless check-in with digital interfaces & cashless payment

- Hygiene & disinfection stations for guests and employees & regular cleaning of interfaces

- 2m / 6 ft distance between guests and employees

After

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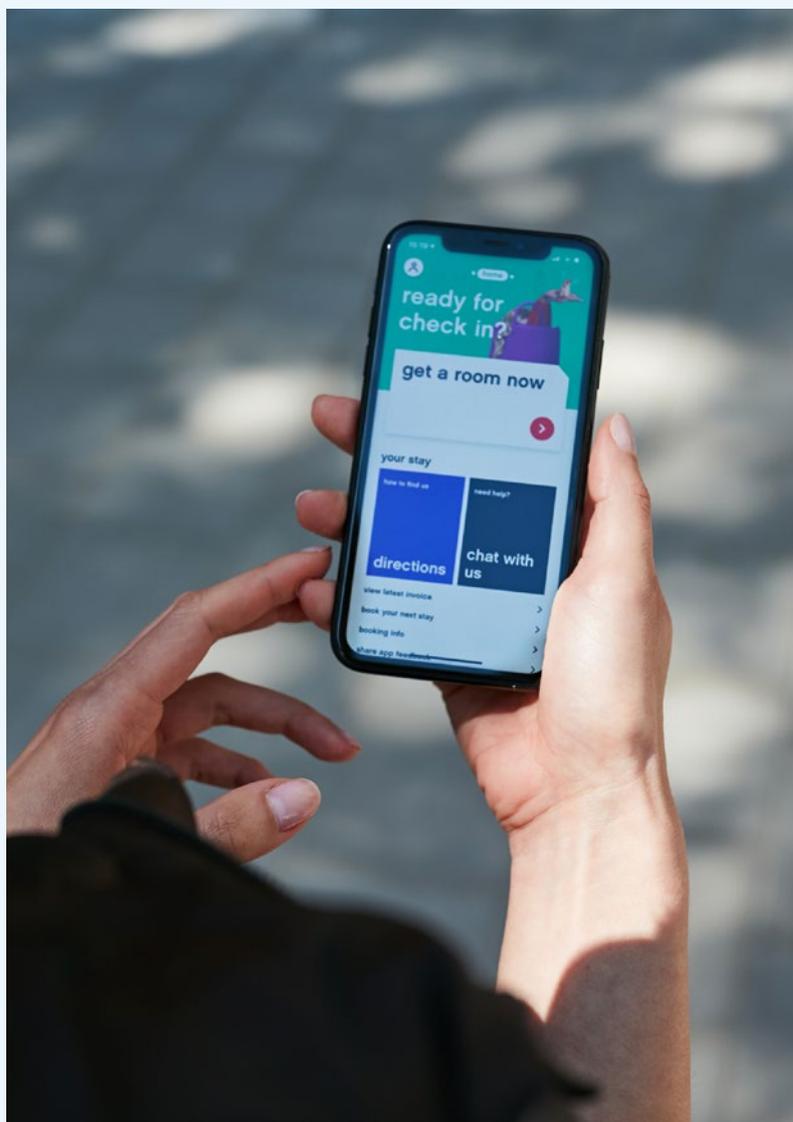
Café, bar & restaurant area

Before

Reduced seating

Signs and markings to inform guests that the seats cannot be used

2m / 6 ft distance between guests and employees

Registration form for guests to be informed in case of a reported infection
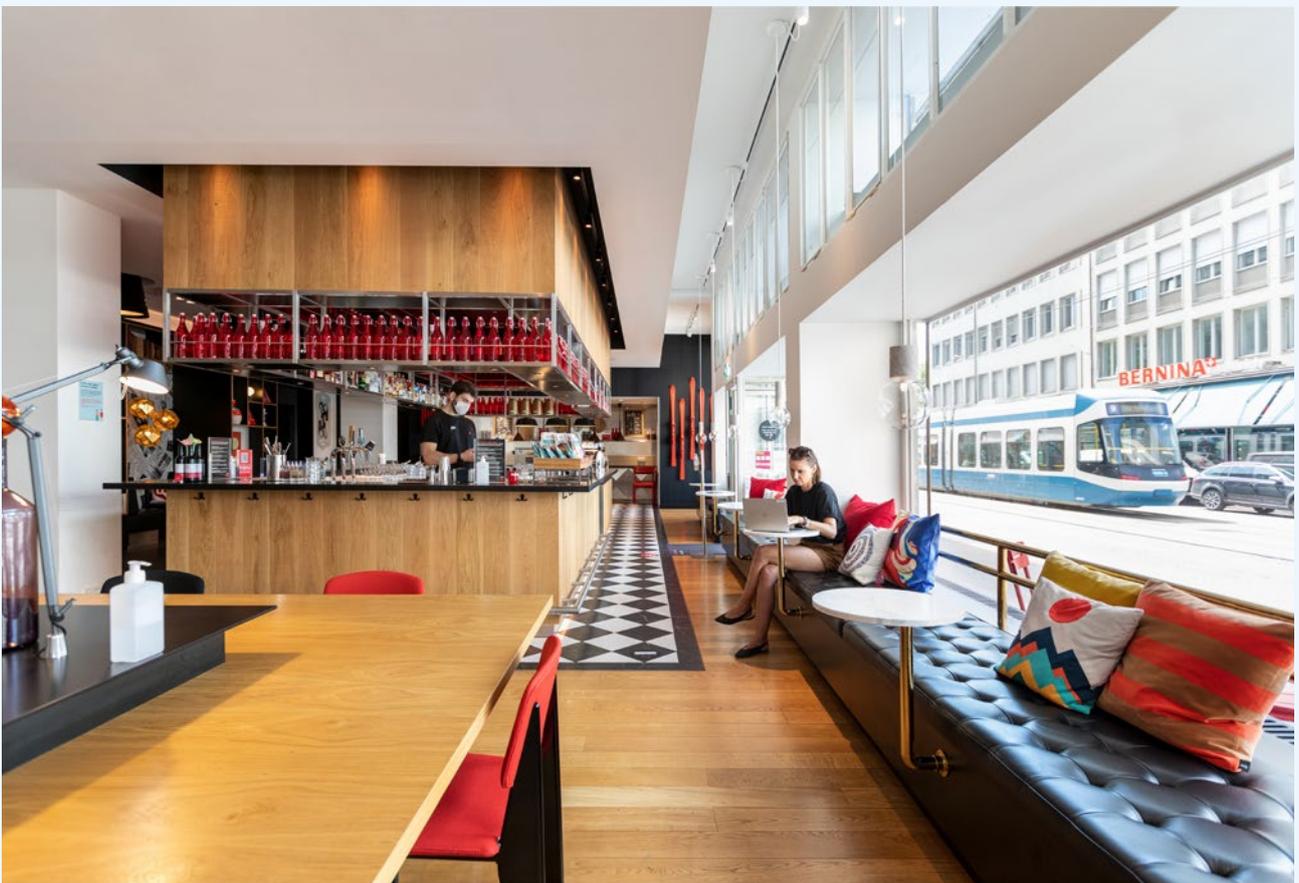
After

Outdoor seating

After

Before

🪑	Reduced seating
🪧	Signs and markings to inform guests that the seats cannot be used
🧍‍♂️↔️🧍	2m / 6 ft distance between guests and employees

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Hygiene standards will be permanently increased

Living room & lounge area

After

Before

⊢⊣	Reduced seating
⊘	Signs and markings to inform guests that the seats cannot be used
↔	2m / 6 ft distance between guests and employees
📋	Registration form for guests to be informed in case of a reported infection

Co-working area & meeting rooms

Before

⟷ Reduced seating

Signs and markings to inform guests that the seats cannot be used

2m / 6 ft distance between guests and employees

Registration form for guests to be informed in case of a reported infection

After

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Hotel rooms

Using a mobile device, guests can open their rooms or create a key card. Once a guest checks in, they can use their phone to open their room, order food and beverages, control the in-room experience and finally check-out when they have finished their stay.

Since citizenM only offers one room type, implementing new hygiene standards consistently was effortless. Guestrooms feature minimal surfaces to clean, innovative materials like Corian®, and no carpets. Likewise eliminated are bedspreads and chocolate on pillows. They have always been independently ventilated with 100% fresh air (instead of being recirculated). The hotel brand has moved to an opt-in housekeeping service for extra hygiene security. Unless guests choose to have their room cleaned, no one will enter it.

Hygiene & disinfection

Mobile check-in

'First and foremost, we care about the health and safety of our guests. And we care about their wellbeing while staying with us. As we implement the necessary corona rules, we also strive to continue to provide a place where guests can unwind, connect with others and still have a good time. Even more so, in these times of isolation and distancing it is important for us to create a place for social interaction – of course while adhering to the rules of the game.'

Claudia Abt, Design Director, citizenM

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A new focus on materials

In conversation with Hella Jongerius

The connection between human beings and the materials that furnish their lives has been the long-term focus of the Dutch designer Hella Jongerius. Arguing these relationships will change in the wake of the pandemic, she also senses that we might be on the verge of a new understanding of both public and private space. Speaking from her base in Berlin, Jongerius considers the new directions we might take in the next months and years.

What changed for you in the past couple of months during lockdown?

HJ I wanted to make sure that the young people from all around the world, who were working here, got home before lockdown. So they all left. That means there are only a few of us now, and we all come in two mornings a week. For the rest of the week, I'm working there alone.

It has probably been a while since you have done that?

HJ Yes, and I must say, I loved it, it felt like a luxury. So while I knew there was a tragedy happening outside, inside it was very peaceful. It has given me time to reflect on all these busy years of my professional practice. I had a chance to look at my archives and I'm reading again.

Do you think this experience might permanently change the way you run your studio?

HJ No, I don't think so. I've always had a studio in Berlin and one in the Netherlands. So working from a distance is normal for me. But I also believe as designers, you need to be in the studio and be together. You need to be able to pass the work from one desk to the other desk. What might change, however, are the kinds of questions that come in for us to engage with.

In which way? What kind of questions will clients bring to you, do you think?

HJ Even more 'humanness' needs to be injected into environments. That topic has been on my agenda for a long time, not just since COVID-19, but recent events have made this idea even more important. Also, I think the role of materials will become more relevant. Again, this was a topic I was already concerned with. As designers, of course this was a main focus for us because of our sustainability agenda.

So an important material evolution, or even revolution, was already under way. But now, there will be an even bigger spotlight on materials because hygiene is playing a very important role. And there will be an enhanced focus on tactility. So the question will be: how to infuse materials with a tactile, human connection and also make sure they suggest a clean, hygienic feel. The way we might be able to do that is to focus on craft processes, and on honesty in production and maintenance.

In the future, many more processes, like conversations, will be happening digitally. What does this mean for the design of physical spaces?

HJ   I think if you are spending your day on a digital platform, once you enter the physical space again it becomes all about connection, about touch. And it's a contradiction because when you think about touching, you often think about textiles. For instance, about knitted materials. But now, in a public or semi-public space, knitted textiles might make people feel like they are too 'home-like' – they get dirty easily and people might become more susceptible to germs or dirt. So there is a question here for a designer, or a conundrum, how to infuse tactility?

So there are a lot of compounding factors. You mentioned that sustainability continues to be an important factor, while hygiene is now also an issue – including ways of cleaning materials regularly. So it appears that designers might, in future, focus even more on the raw materials used for the objects they create, not just production cycles but also maintenance and afterlife. Do you see the role of the designer expanding to include more of these other areas?

HJ   A good designer was always busy with those topics. But now there is an extra layer. Designers are now more focused on materials than on the end result. A while ago, a designer might have just picked materials according to what was available or on offer, but now they should get involved with the creation and production of materials.
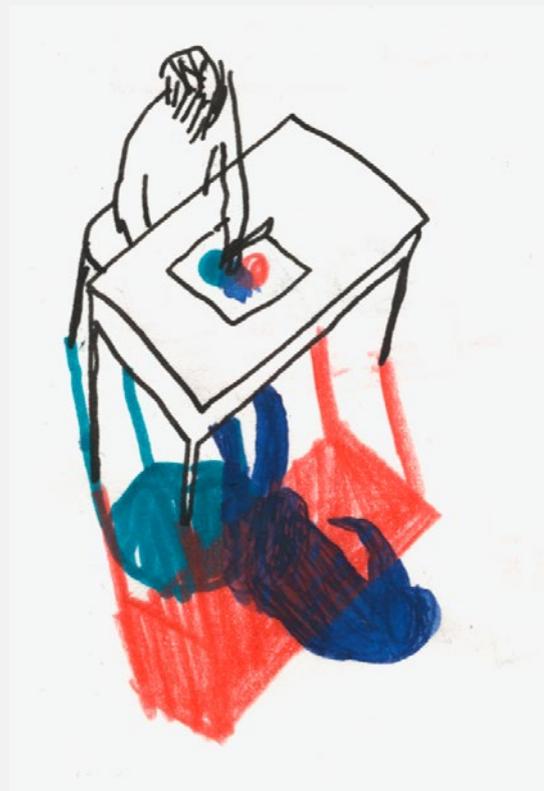
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You previously worked with KLM on the design of their plane interiors. At the time, you also investigated the behaviour of people in these semi-public spaces and explored tactility and 'humanness'. How do you think movement in public spaces, including travel, is currently changing?

HJ   What I find interesting now, when I am in public spaces is that even though we have to keep our distance, we are still aware and mindful of one another other.

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Even though we have to keep our distance, there is an acknowledgement, and a respect. We nod or smile at each other as we negotiate our shared spaces. Also, there is an appreciation for nature and for outdoor spaces. So these might be increasingly incorporated into buildings, public or semi-public spaces. There might be a need for different outdoor furniture typologies that enable only one or two people to meet and sit at a distance from other people.

This is not the first time the design of our personal surroundings directly influenced by global events. The insecurity and human longing for safety after the attacks on September 11 caused people to retreat into their homes – the trend of the Scandinavian-inspired 'hygge' home comfort is often described as a corollary of this event. Do you think this current crisis will also inspire this kind of 'nesting' movement?

HJ   The difference this time is that we were forced to retreat into our homes. And yes, that did give us time to examine the home, to critically examine our furniture, perhaps repair something. We were very focused on our living environments. But we missed the social interaction that is connected to being outside and in public. We want to be mobile again, interact or enjoy culture. We want to be inspired, but do it safely and perhaps within a small radius. I don't see us all going on long-distance flights soon, but also I can't imagine there will be a pronounced retreating, nesting instinct this time.

In this crisis, we also perceived a lot of suffering through isolation, particularly in older people. Nursing homes were closed for visits, or people were isolated at home. Do you think this might lead to more structural changes in the way we

live? Inter-generational living arrangements, perhaps?

HJ   I think that was a movement which was already happening, but it might become more dynamic. However, I do think we might need to re-think some of the typologies we know or live with. What about the way nursing homes or health care facilities are designed? The crisis has put the spotlight on the shortcomings in these facilities, which are often designed as medically safe but feel inhumane and sterile. Also, our homes had to serve entirely new functions. They became classrooms, families were fighting for privacy to do their work. Perhaps the way we have set up our homes needs to become more flexible. We need new furniture typologies or ways of dividing space flexibly. There is lots of potential for change and experimentation.


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Photo on the right ©Vitra Headquarters

# Increased hygiene standards have a direct impact on shared environments
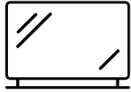
Self-opening doors and ele-vators that respond to voice instead of touch buttons are now widely recommended. Hotels and canteens will provide a zero-touch food and beverage service with individual portions, pick-up and card payment only. If a sit-down option is offered, then easily wipeable tables and chairs will be specified, and unnecessary shared elements such as saltshakers are avoided.
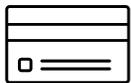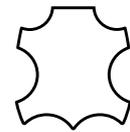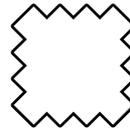
Textiles and upholstery become the less obvious option, while **materials like plastics or wood that are easier to clean gain in relevance**. While plastics bring the added benefit of lower cost, wood can be considered a good option: a warm natural material, comforting to touch, yet hygienic and easy to clean, wood was chosen by Alvar Aalto as the material of choice for the Paimio tuberculosis sanatorium.
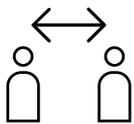
To protect high-risk groups, these individuals may be directed to a different environment or handled with a separate process altogether, e.g. a special line or individualised service.
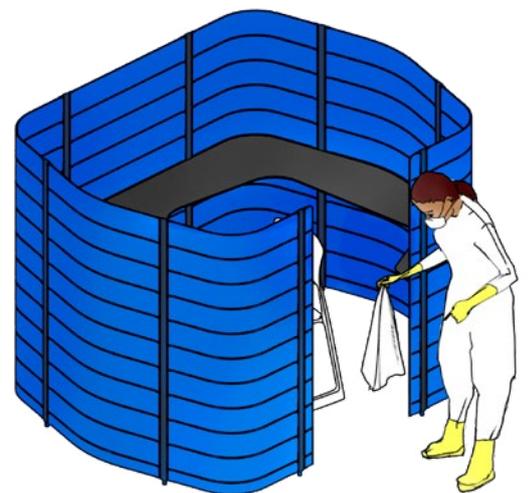
Rules and guidelines specifying the required m2/person will be adapted to ensure less density. As a result it may be necessary to incorporate more walls, partitions and individual spaces.
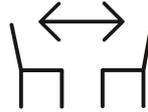
Furniture **is optimised for physical distancing**, e.g. by dismantling every second seat on a sofa or by mounting screens between seats and on tables/ benches.

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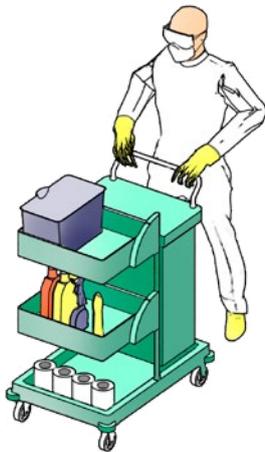
Safe settings for shared spaces Planning examples

Hygiene standards will be permanently increased

Safe settings for cafés & restaurants
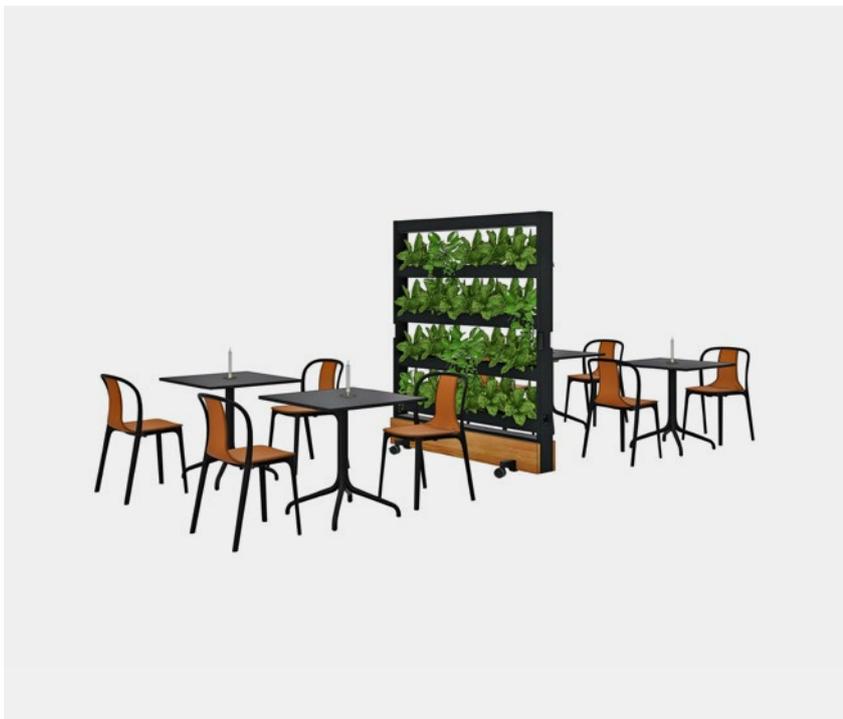
**Cafés & restaurants
indoor setting 1**

Belleville Table, Belleville Chair,
Candle Holders, Dancing Wall

Download planning example
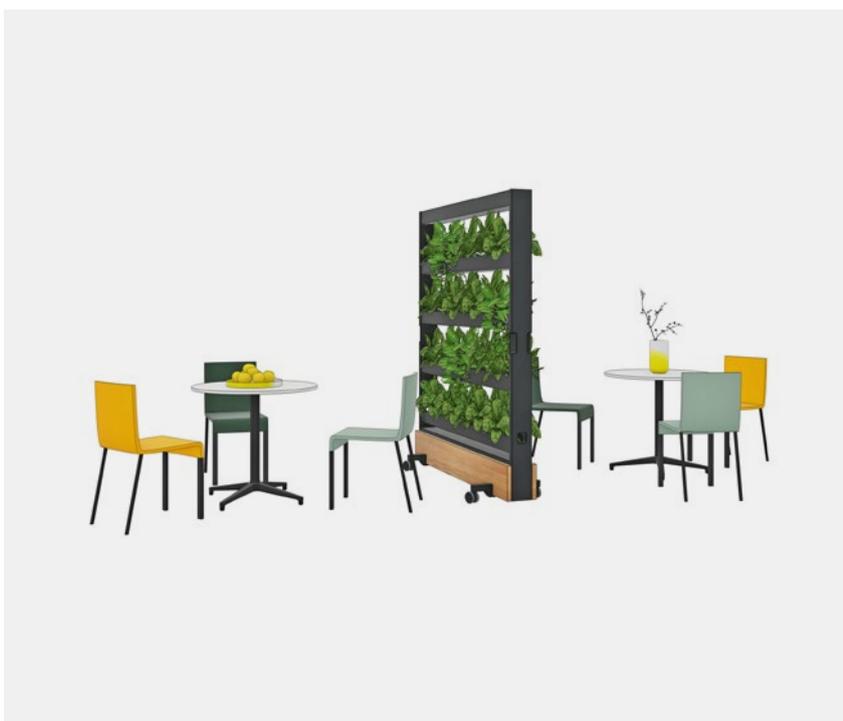
**Cafés & restaurants
indoor setting 2**

.03, Bistro Table, Herringbone
Vessels, Dancing Wall

Download planning example

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Safe settings for cafés & restaurants

Cafés & restaurants outdoor setting 1

Landi, Eames Contract Table, Nuage

Download planning example

Cafés & restaurants outdoor setting 2

Belleville Table, Belleville Armchair, Herringbone Vessels, Hexagonal Containers

Download planning example

Safe settings for lobbies & lounge areas
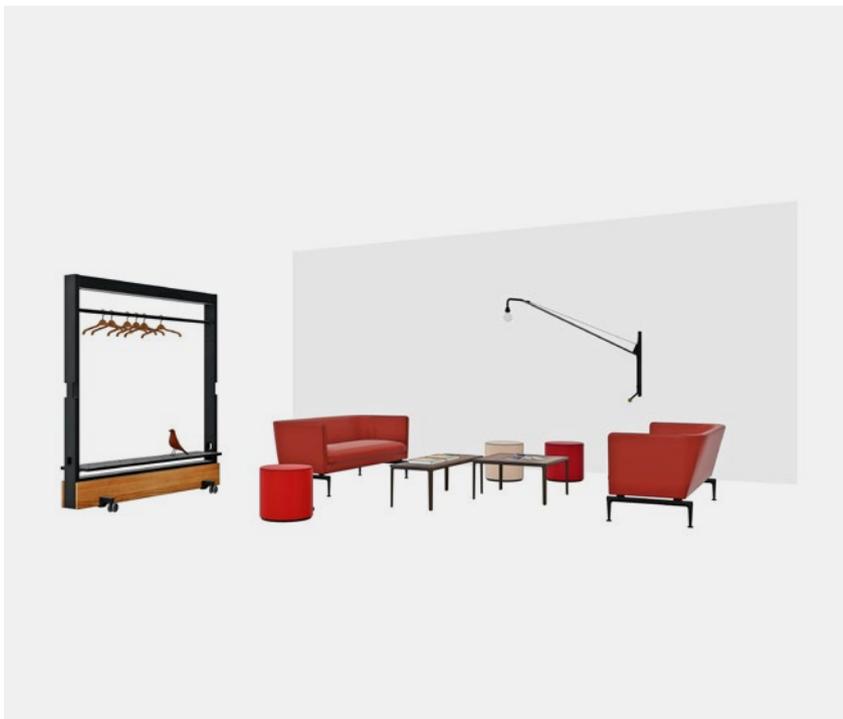
Lobby & lounge setting 1

Suita Club Sofa, Plate Table, Visiona Stool, Dancing Wall, Eames House Bird, Potence

Download planning example

Lobby & lounge setting 2

Soft Modular Sofa, Nelson Bench, Cork Family, Cork Bowls, Occasional Low Table, Potence

Download planning example

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Safe settings for lobbies & lounge areas
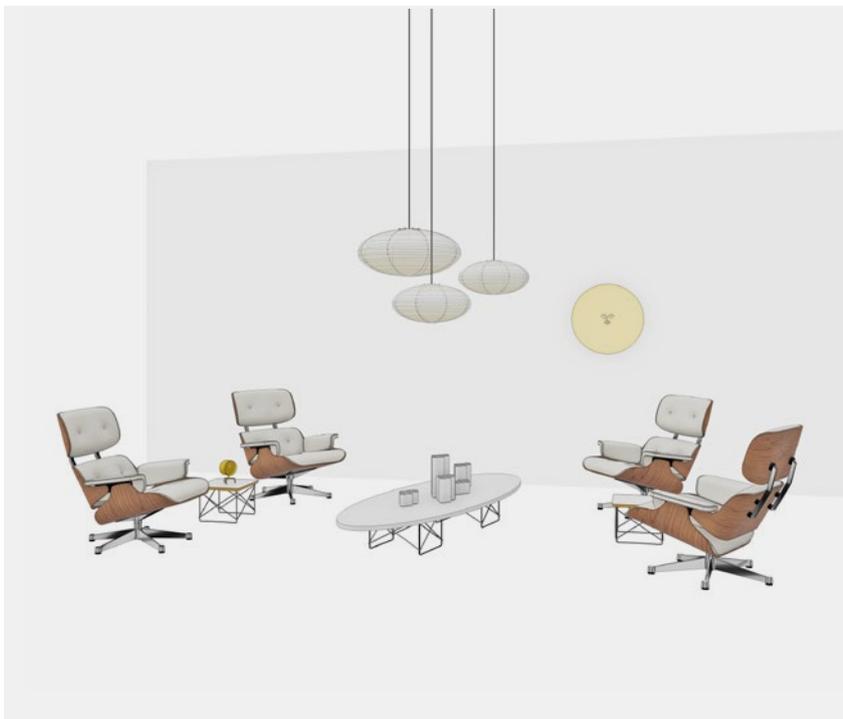
Lobby & lounge setting 3

Lounge Chair, Elliptical Table ETR, Occasional Table LTR, Nuage, Metal Wall Relief Sun, Akari Light Sculptures

Download planning example
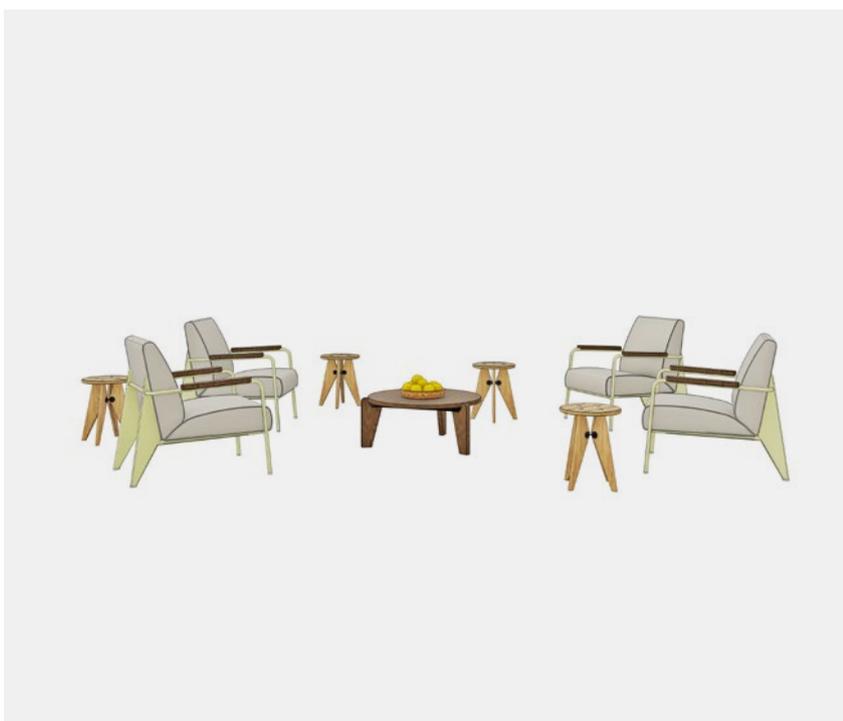
Lobby & lounge setting 4

Fauteuil de Salon, Tabouret Solvay, Guéridon Bas, Cork Bowl

Download planning example

Safe settings for shared workspaces

Safe work setting 1

Hack, Rookie, Lampe de Bureau,
Toolbox, Happy Bin small

Download planning example
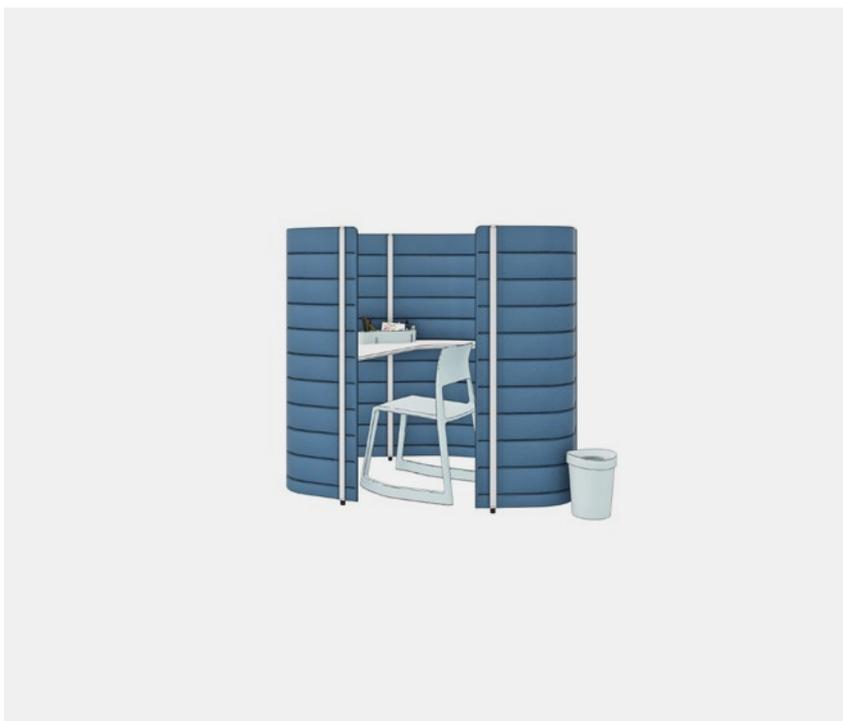
Safe work setting 2

Workbays Focus, Tip Ton,
S-Tidy, Happy Bin small

Download planning example

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Safe settings for shared workspaces

Safe work setting 3

Map Table, AC 5 Work Lowback,
Lampe de Bureau, Hexagonal
Container, Happy Bin

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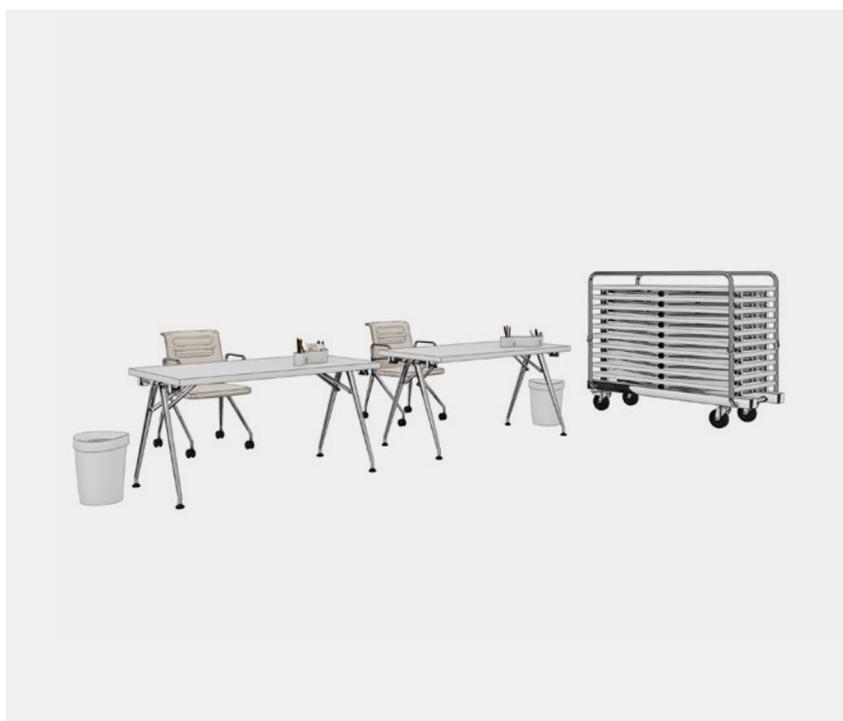
Safe work setting 4

Click, AC5 Swift,
Lampe de Bureau, S-Tidy,
Happy Bin

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Safe settings for shared workspaces
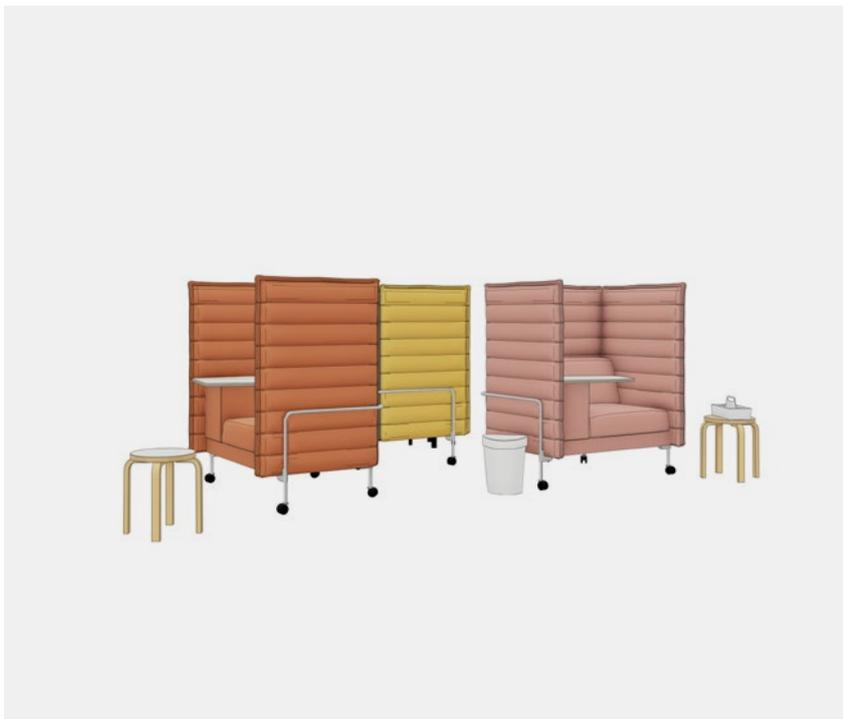
Safe work setting 5

Alcove Highback Work, Stool
E60 (Artek), Toolbox, Happy Bin

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Safe work setting 6

Dancing Wall, Rookie, WorKit
Workstation, Cork Family,
Happy Bin small, Elephant Stool

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We will travel in different ways

Direct implications for the travel economy

The pandemic has severely affected the travel industry. On the one hand, our pre-crisis travel habits can be identified as a cause for the immediate global spread of the disease. On the other hand, the travel bans and lockdowns that followed have demonstrated how globally interconnected we are – both as people and in terms of trade. This global connection allowed for unprecedented increase in wealth and prosperity and a decrease in hunger and poverty over the last twenty years.

Year-on-year change of weekly flight frequency of global airlines from 6 January to 22 June 2020, by country
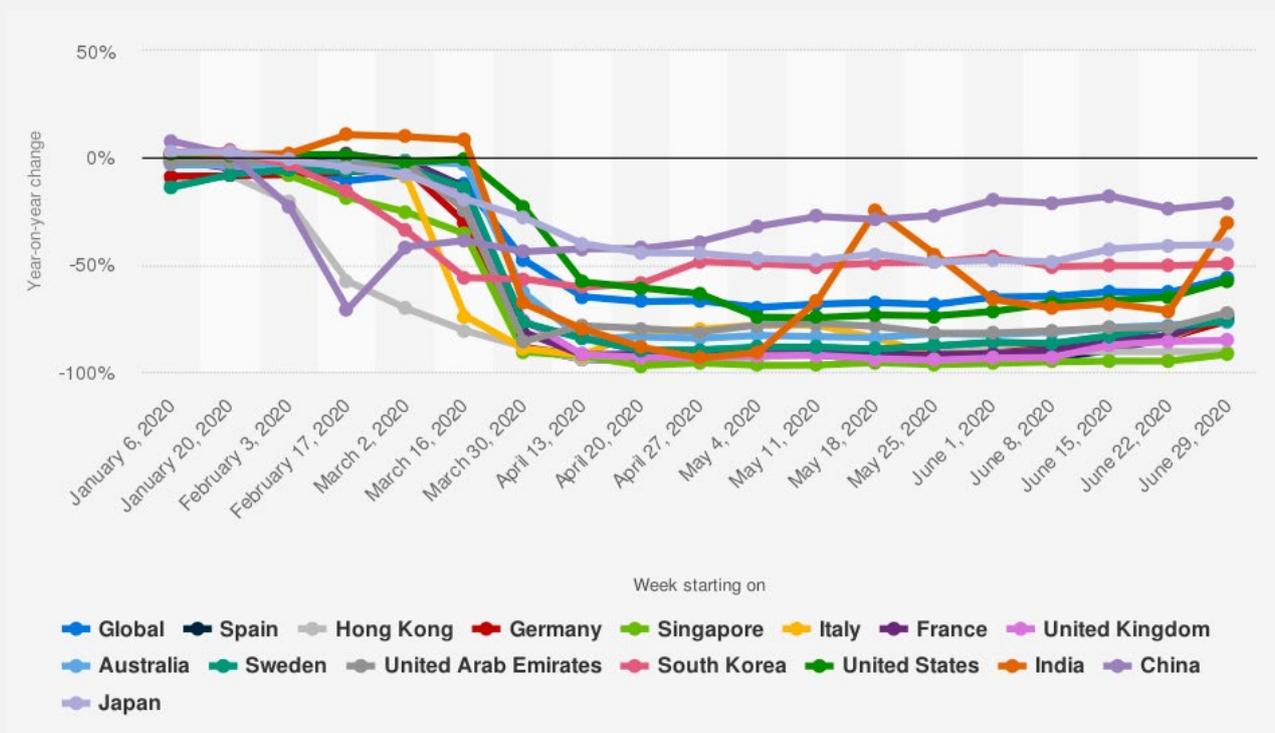
Source: Statista, consulted at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1104036/novel-coronavirus-weekly-flights-change-airlines-region.
Status: 1 July 2020

Relative change in the estimated number of passengers on metropolitan subways in Tokyo Prefecture in Japan from 10 February to 14 May 2020, by time of day

● 6:30 to 7:30　● 7:30 to 9:30　● 9:30 to 10:30
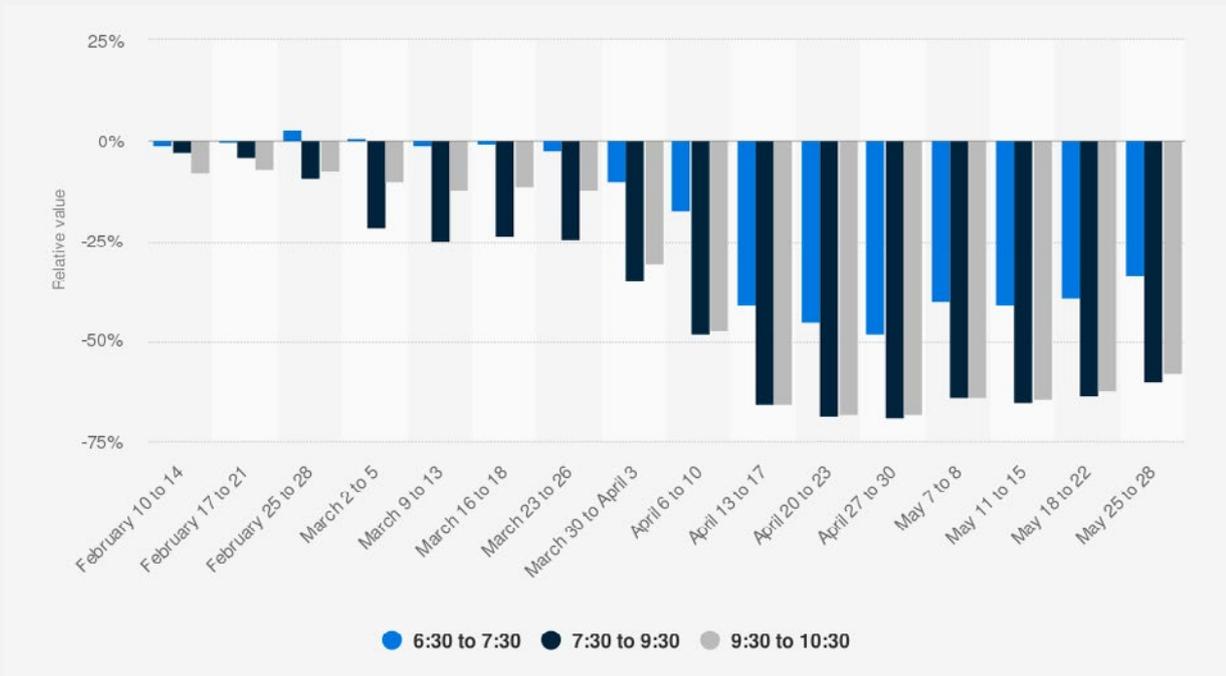
Source: Statista, consulted at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1102626/japan-relative-change-number-of-metropolitan-sub way-users-tokyo-prefecture-by-time-of-day. Status: 1 July 2020

Daily change in requests for directions in Apple Maps in Poland from 13 January to 18 June 2020, by type of transportation

● Driving　● Walking

Source: Statista, consulted at https://www.statista.com/statistics/1110874/poland-mobility-trends-during-covid-19-lockdown. Status: 1 July 2020

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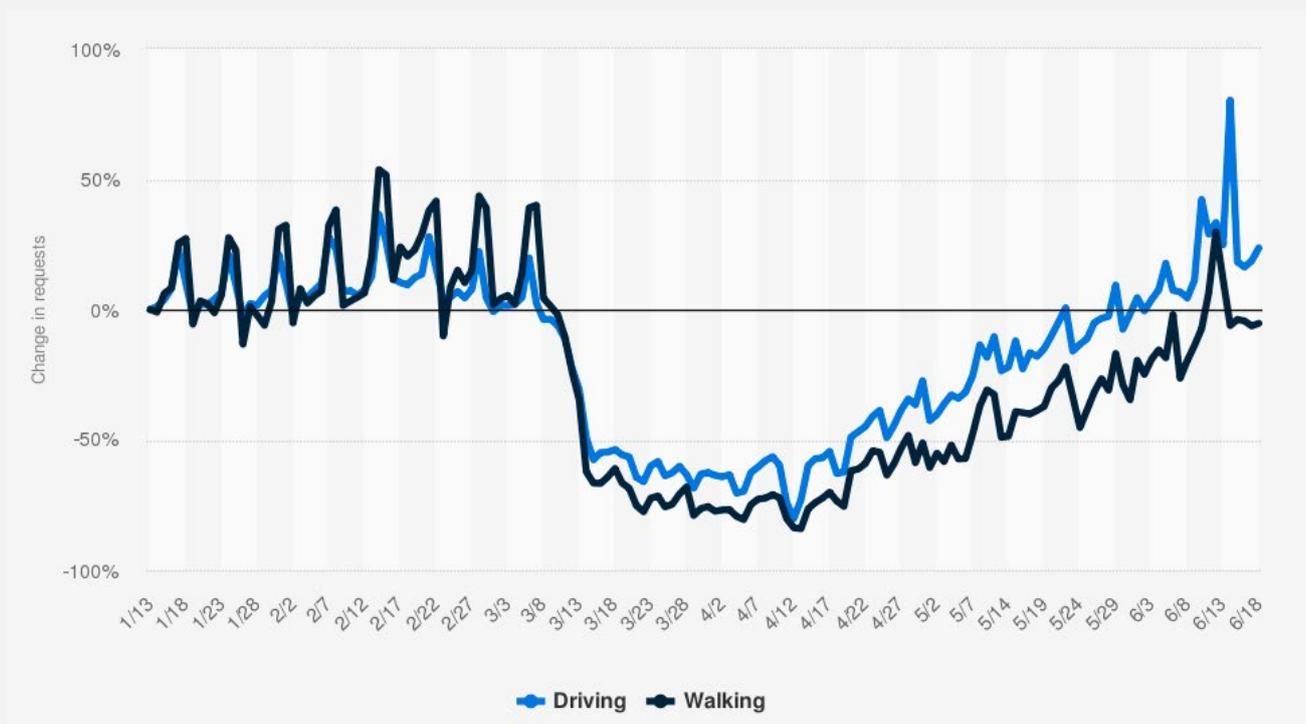
Every trip becomes a conscious decision

The crisis will make us all think carefully about which interactions truly require personal presence. As a result of the possibilities offered by modern-day technology, we will travel less, but with greater purpose and deliberation. The crisis has affected many industries directly or indirectly, causing budgets to be cut and expenses to be questioned. Consequently, business travel will be reduced, just like after every previous economic crisis. For now, however, travel also means potential exposure and therefore personal risk. This particularly impacts fairs, bigger events or conventions, which have been largely proscribed in 2020, putting their very existence at risk in the aftermath of the pandemic. Travelling for leisure and personal reasons will also decline, but perhaps to a lesser extent. We might take a car or a train for shorter distances, where we may previously have boarded a plane. We will perhaps question intercontinental trips in the coming months, to avoid the risk of being quarantined or locked down far away from home, should a second wave develop, or simply to improve our environmental footprint. At the same time, unlike business conversations it is much harder to limit personal relations with loved ones or the handling of family emergencies to online communication. And even in business, while regular meetings can be held remotely, getting to know each other for the first time is difficult over Zoom.

We expect a widening gap between high end travel, which seems less risky due to its private, exclusive nature, and the low-cost travel industry that we have seen flourish over the last two decades. The latter – dependent on high occupancy, which is unimaginable with physical distancing measures in place – will suffer more with an overall drop in activity.

Designing for the next normal of shared spaces

An interview with Dan Hill

Dan Hill is a UK-born, Stockholm-based designer and urbanist whose approach to chronicling the pandemic is to observe, listen and write from the midst of the slowdown. He is Director of Strategic Design at Vinnova, the Swedish government's innovation agency, and a visiting professor at UCL Bartlett. In various leadership positions, he has applied strategic design to the built environment, education and research, government and media. Here, he responds to questions about the impact of the current crisis across a multitude of contexts: the home, the office and public space. A century ago, the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen suggested that we should 'always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context – a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, an environment in a city plan'. This approach has become beloved of 'strategic designers', practitioners who aim to realign the principles of design to meet 'big picture' systemic challenges. Working along these lines, Hill believes that positive post-pandemic change will require ambitious policy and planning at every level.

The current crisis might change the way we work and reside. Let us begin in the private sphere: working from home is not new. Aside from having better-equipped workstations at home, what are the more fundamental changes you could imagine?

DH For years many have 'worked from home', and regularly. Yet we have never flicked a switch like this, shifting the broad mass of professional classes at least, back into their homes, in order to work. Modernity thoroughly separated out form around disparate functions. The lazy phrase that 'my office is wherever my cellphone is' was never more clearly false. It is awkward to work in this way. Apps like Zoom can mask your domestic environment with virtual backgrounds, just as noise-cancelling headphones can mask the sound of your flatmates, children, pets. Yet given that the restrictions that come with the pandemic could well continue for much of the year, and working from home will become much more common, will we see a genuine design response that does not mask, or negate, but supports?

Ivry-sur-Seine social housing complex

There is no doubt an increased pressure on a space not designed for families and friends working from home, or living together almost 24/7. This pressure is both physical and spatial, as well as psychological, emotional, social. By far the majority of dwellings we live in have not been designed for this.

What might this mean for the design of our homes if we continue to work from home even after the threat of the virus subsides?

DH   We will need to rethink how that pressure can be dissipated over time and space in different ways, building out new spaces, or conditions, for disconnecting, not-working but also not-interacting, for zoning out as well as tuning in, for shifting layers of privacy, focus and congregation. These spaces could be complex, resilient and super-green. They would adapt well to new patterns of living and working in the same place, given the open diversity of spaces and amenities built around and within private residences. There are historical examples that can serve as starting points to think about this, take for instance the Ivry-sur-Seine social housing complex, designed by Jean Renaudie and Renée Gailhoustet in 1967–75.
On a smaller scale, 'home-work' spaces could be designed specifically to address and resolve tensions. Functionally, there are precedents in the 'shop out the front, studio in the back' model of the Renaissance-era Florentine bottega or even the live-work studios of '80s New York.

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THE CITY AS AN EGG

boiled   fried   scrambled

ANCIENT   17-19 CENT.   MODERN
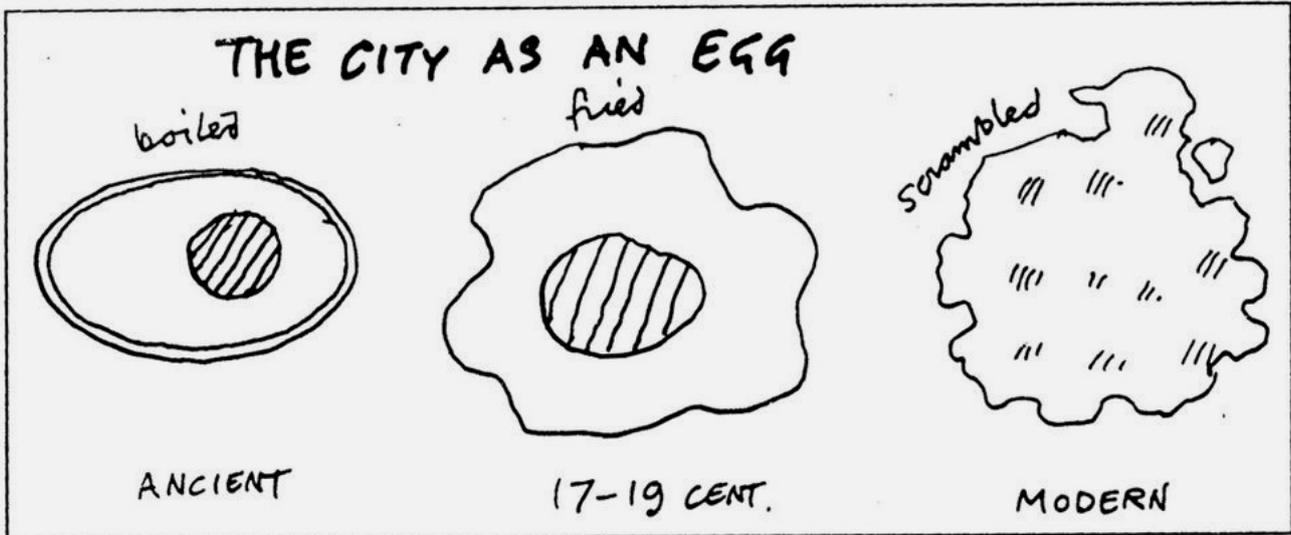
Cedric Price

Yet what is this for every home, including in suburbia, and for furniture generally? There, too are historical precedents. Alvar Aalto's simple curving plywood Screen 100, for instance, effortlessly demarcates space in ways that afford multiple, moveable activities. Screen 100 is a luxury item now, albeit with the true sustainability of lasting several lifetimes. But we could ask ourselves: what could more accessible versions be?

What if we never simply return to city centres en masse? What if, after the virus, some people decide to stay at home permanently, or supplement their home-work space with their local co-working space, library or café? Applying the Saarinen principle, how might our neighbourhoods change as a corollary?

DH   A shift to being at and around the home almost half of the week, en masse, not only saves tonnes of carbon and other pollution, reducing congestion on public transport, creates space for increased biodiversity, shifts patterns of activity across the city — but it also destabilises much of the speculative commercial office market, and

thus much of the model of the city centre itself. The premise that 'the city centre is where work happens' no longer applies. By removing the idea of the all-consuming city centre, we end up with numerous city centres, pinned on actual neighbourhoods. Known in the trade as a polynodal city, comprising many 'nodes' rather than one big one in the centre, the British architect Cedric Price once described this shift as moving from the ancient city's boiled egg, protected by a shell of city walls, to the 17th-19th century city's fried egg — both predicated on a clear 'yolk' in the middle — to the modern, or post-modern, 'scrambled city', a shapeless, albeit often tasty, mush, connected by the albumen of cars, a featureless morass of egg. Right now, we might think of a further iteration: the city as omelette, a simple dish with many variations, which can carry numerous different elements, each with different ingredients, each offering different focal points of taste, different local cultural influences, distributed concentrations of intense flavour in a sea of egg. If we want to articulate Saarinen's multiple scales, however, perhaps a better

description might be a kind of 'polka dot pattern' spread across the city's fabric, with multiple 'mixed-use' neighbourhoods full of people working, learning, playing and living. This breaks the model of the single large city centre, with work and leisure carried out at neighbourhood level, and the city centre empty.

This sounds like a very large shift. Given that many cities are affected by these developments, would we see a whole new type of metropolis emerge?

DH In fact, there is one city that already exemplifies the polka dot city motif mentioned above: Tokyo. There is no discernible meaning to the centre of Tokyo (Tokyo Station is not really it) but instead, the city is pinned-up on dozens, hundreds of sub-centres, mini-neighbourhoods with agglomerations of higher density around their subway stations, which after the protective firebreak of tall-ish buildings, drops quickly to humble but beautifully human-scale side-streets. No particular single central business district rules over the others, and the neighbourhood currently in vogue can apparently shift

with the wind. Yet each area seems to retain its values, character and function within the city, one way or another. Crucially, at street scale, on-street parking is not allowed, which opens up the streetscape for people, on foot and on bike, for conversation and activities, and yes, for moving goods and people around but as a secondary 'enabling' activity to the life of the street itself. Buildings of the quality of Sou Fujimoto's House NA or Ryue Nishizawa's Moriyama House humbly thread themselves into these neighbourhoods, blurring the domestic and the urban, home-life and work-life, a polka dot pattern mentioned before. This is not to say we should all 'Be More Tokyo'. The place is unique, as all places are, and its value would resist copy-pasting.
Whilst a global pandemic is a completely awful thing – there can be no 'silver linings' – it does also present a chance to rethink cities and places, from the scale of the screen up to the neighbourhood and beyond. I'm interested to explore exactly how we might do that, and with whom, and what kind of new patterns of living might emerge as a result.

Ryue Nishizawa's Moriyama House, Edmund Sumner-VIEW

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The way we travel and commute has a direct impact on shared spaces – at home, in the office and on the go
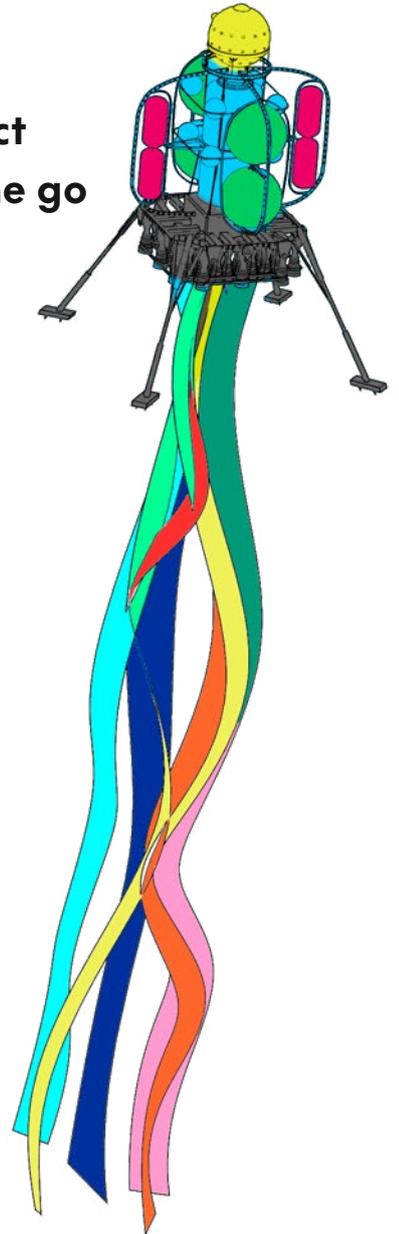

The widening gap may lead to an upscaling of high-end waiting zones such as airport lounges, offering more individual spaces and potentially even personal sanitary facilities.

With a shift towards leisure and personal travel, airports may become less anonymous and generally more inviting as the industry fights for customers.

Avoiding time-consuming and hazardous commutes, employees may choose to work remotely more often or on a regular basis.

Planes and public transport are among the first places where physical distancing is out the window. Therefore, the spaces we travel through will need to feel safe, and not come across as danger zones. Physical distancing is implemented by offering fewer seats spaced further apart or by marking seats as 'reserved', rather than crossing off seats with red banners.

Working from home permanently has now revealed well-documented downsides, such as lowered emotions and connection with the team and the company mission, solitude and feelings of isolation, which may lead to the emergence of a new typology of collaboration workspace in residential areas.

Rather than bringing people to their work cluster, the work cluster may move to the people. If they do not operate such spokes or clusters themselves, employers may support their employees by financing memberships to high quality, well-run local collaboration workspaces.
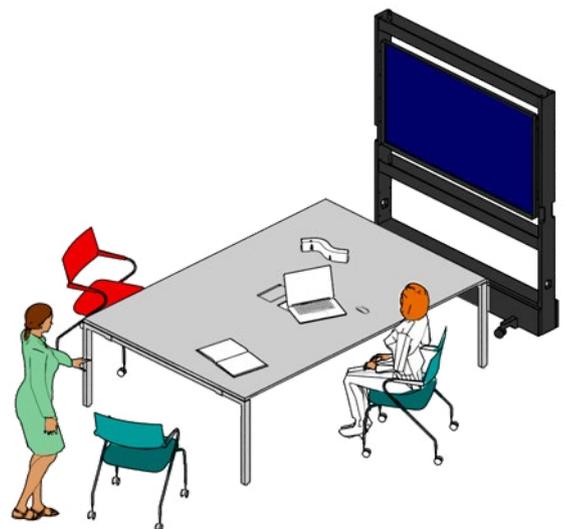
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Theory into practice: the re-opening of the Vitra Campus to Vitra employees and to the public

📍 VitraHaus Welcome
& Reception

📍 VitraHaus Shop

📍 VitraHaus Café
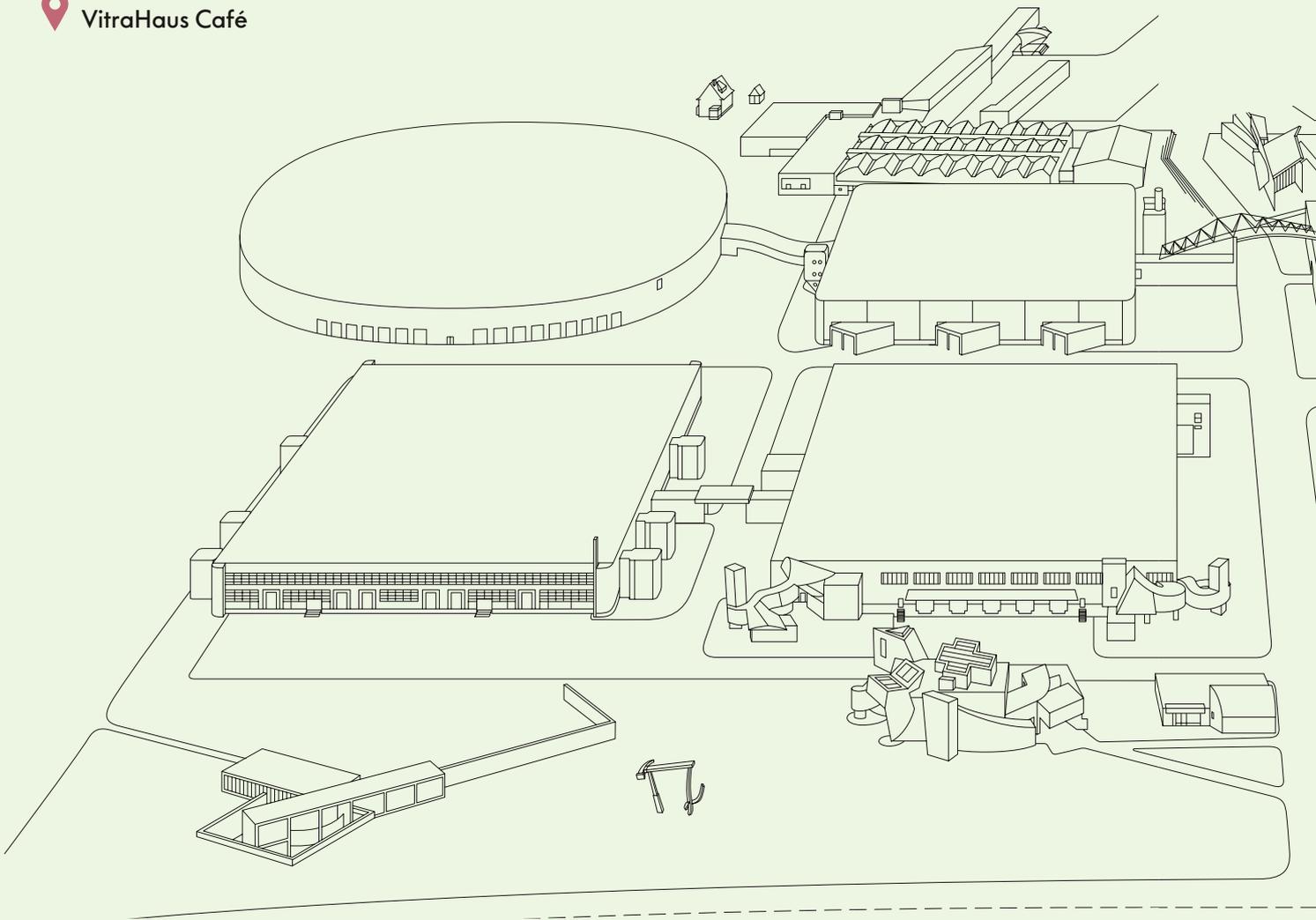
The Vitra Campus and the Vitra Design Museum have been reopened to the public since 11 May 2020. A holistic security concept was developed for the public areas of the Vitra Campus with an internal task force and the company doctors, which informs visitors upon arrival about the safety guidelines on the Vitra Campus and implements the applicable security regulations with the teams on site. To ensure the safe return of the visitors, new safety measures had to be implemented on the ground floor of the VitraHaus – in the Welcome & Reception area, the VitraHaus Shop and the VitraHaus Café. The upper floors of the VitraHaus are currently undergoing a rehaul and are therefore closed to the public. They will reopen in summer 2020.

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VitraHaus

Welcome & Reception

All guests entering the VitraHaus are required to wear face masks and only 15-20 people are permitted inside at a time. Plexiglas screens protect the teams on-site and the visitors. Once the health regulations are relaxed, these screens can easily be removed. The visitor services team provides masks to guests without one in the entrance and lobby area. All visitors and employees are asked to keep a distance of at least 1.5 m/5 ft between themselves and people outside their party.

VitraHaus

VitraHaus Café Outdoors

E

D

A

B

Eingang

C

Welcome Area

Shop

Empfang / Information

VitraHaus Café Indoors

Welcome & Reception

VitraHaus Shop

Floor markings

Face masks

Hygiene & disinfection

Credit card payment options preferred

Limited admission

Reduced seating

Registration form

Shopping basket

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We will travel in different ways

VitraHaus Shop

Only 15-20 guests are allowed in the VitraHaus Shop at one time. Guests are asked to respect the 1.5m/5ft distance rule.

Floor markings

Shopping basket

1.5 m / 5 ft distance

To easily keep track of the visitor volume and to also reduce contact between the visitors and the pieces on display, the guests have to pick baskets in order to enter the shop. Once the baskets are gone, further access is denied. At the cashier desk, screens allow a safe checkout and cashless payment options are preferred.

Face masks

Limited admission

Credit card payment options preferred

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VitraHaus Café

Indoors

The VitraHaus Café is able to accommodate 20 guests, with a maximum of four per table. There are markings to indicate which seats can and cannot be used, and guests are asked to keep a distance of at least 1.5 m/5 ft between themselves and other guests or employees. To avoid excess paperwork and to be able to act quickly in the case of an emergency, all guests are required to fill in a digital registration form that allows the staff to contact them after a reported infection.

Before

After

VitraHaus Café

Outdoor

Limited admission

1.5 m / 5 ft distance

Registration form

Reduced seating

VitraHaus Café

**Outdoor**

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Travel areas
Planning examples

Waiting areas
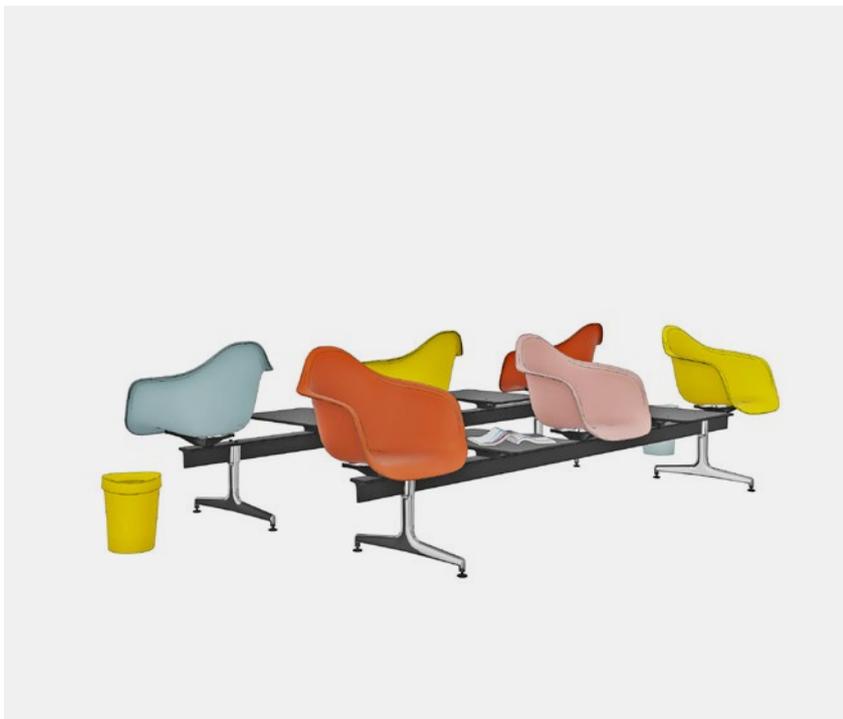
Waiting area 1

Eames Plastic Armchair beam seating, Happy Bin small

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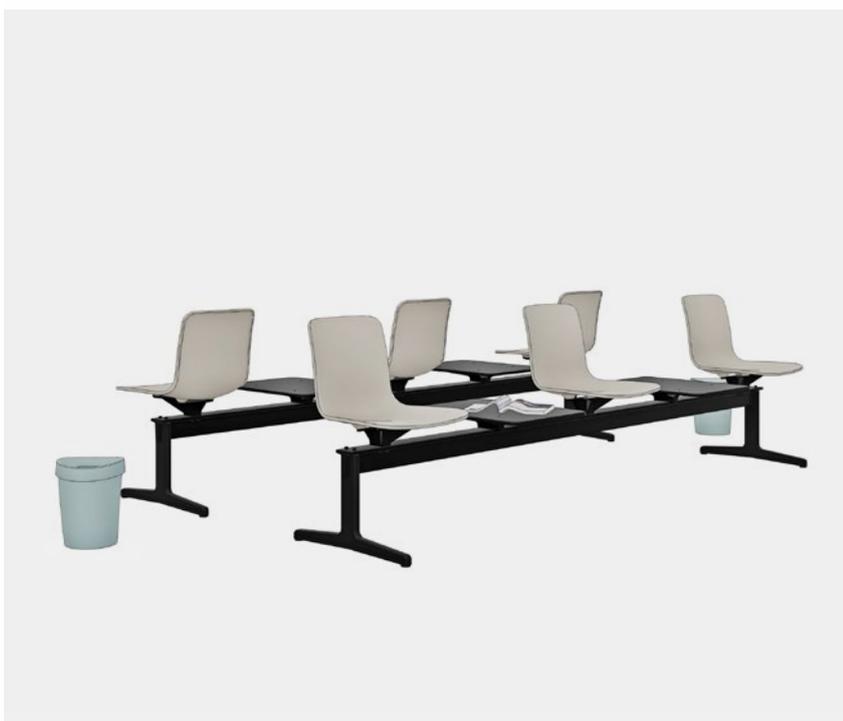
Waiting area 2

HAL beam seating,
Happy Bin small

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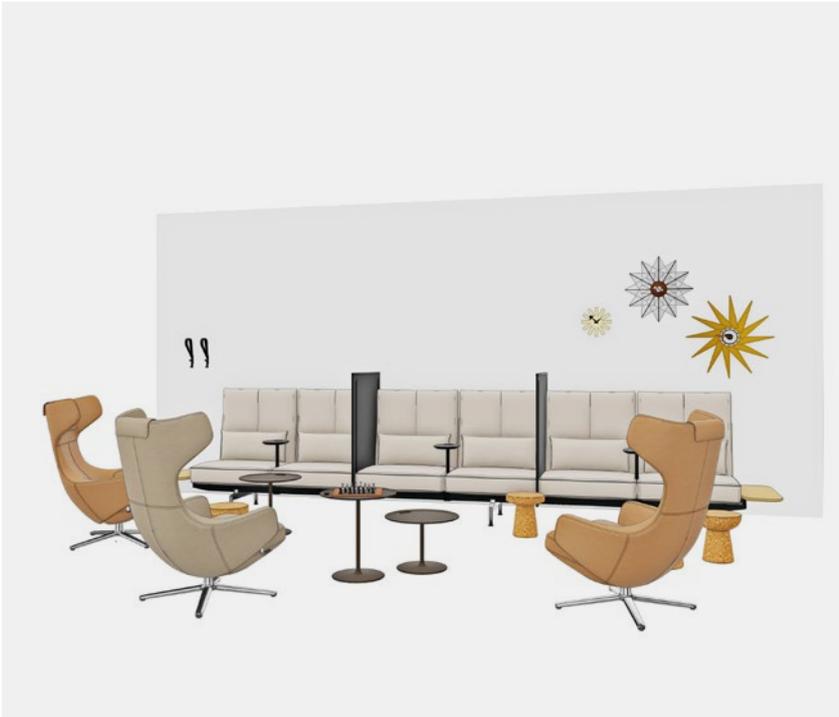
Waiting areas

Waiting area 3

Soft Work, Grand Repos,
Occasional Low Table,
Cork Family, Wall Clocks

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Waiting area 4

Soft Work, Cité,
Tabouret Solvay, Wall Clocks,
Petite Potence

[Download planning example]

Waiting areas
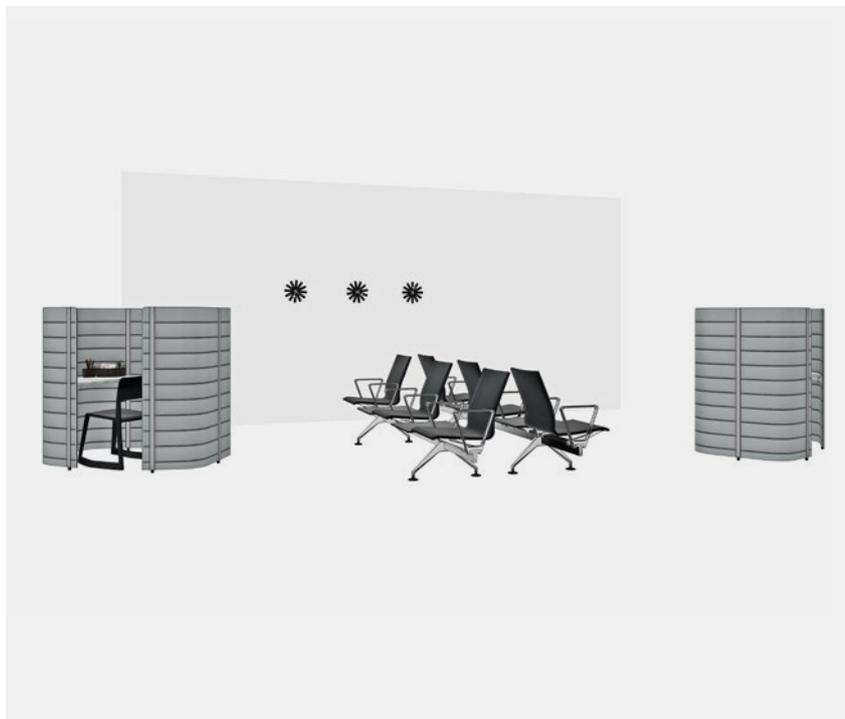
Waiting area 5

MedaGate, Workbays,
Tip Ton, S-Tidy, Wall Clocks

Download planning example
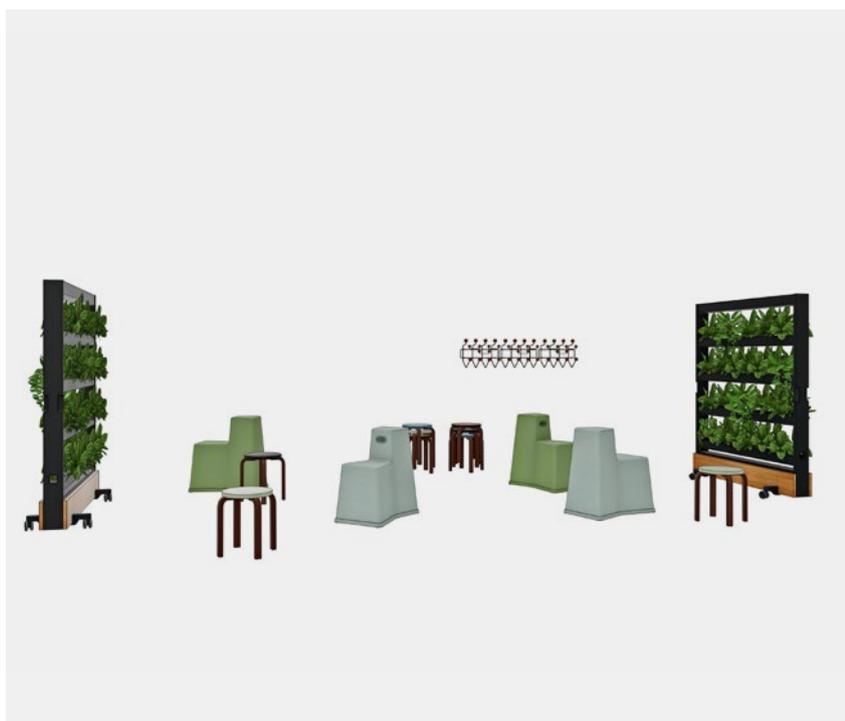
Waiting area 6

Stool-Tool, Dancing Wall,
Hang it all, Stool E60 (Artek)

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Lounge areas

Lounge setting 1

MedaGate

[Download planning example]

Lounge setting 2

Eames Plastic Armchair beam seating, Happy Bin small, Happy Bin large, Eames Elephant small, Eames Elephant, Visiona Stool, Toolbox

[Download planning example]

Lounge areas

Lounge setting 3

HAL beam seating, Happy Bin
small, Happy Bin large,
Visiona Stool, Cork Bowls

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Lounge setting 4

Visiona Stool, Amoebe,
Amoebe Highback, Resting Cat,
Herringbone Pillows

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Lounge areas
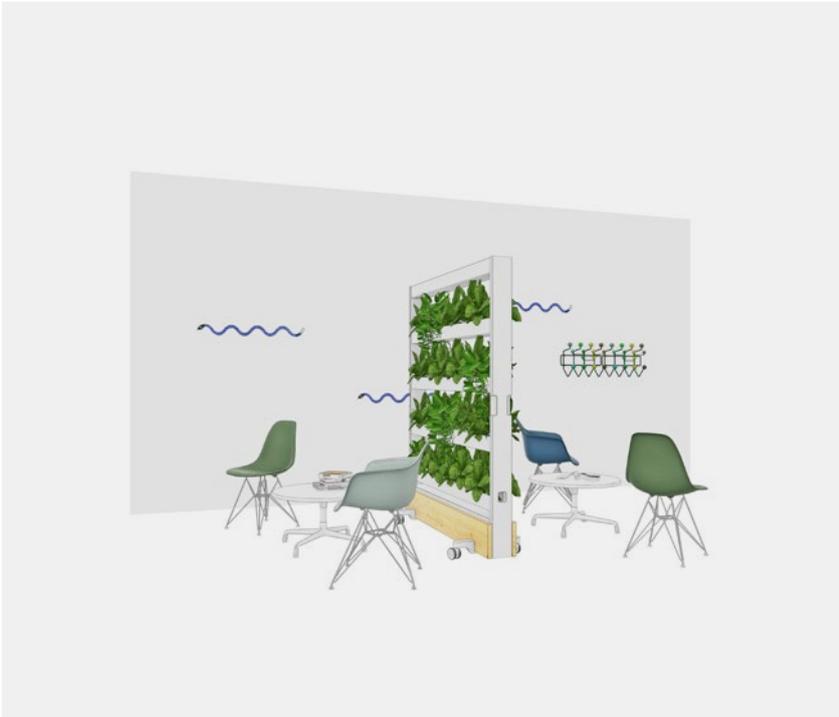
Lounge setting 5

Eames Plastic Side Chair DSR,
Eames Plastic Armchair DAR,
Eames Side Tables (Ø 70),
Dancing Wall, Metal Wall Relief
Magic Snake, Hang it all

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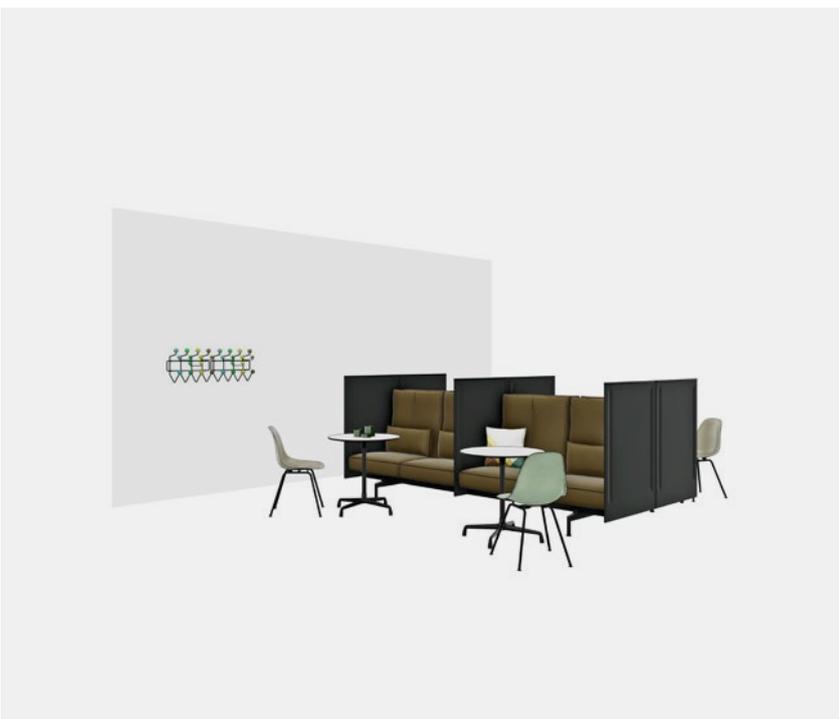
Lounge setting 6

Soft Work, Eames Fiberglass
Side Chair DSX, Super Fold
Table, Herringbone Pillows,
Hexagonal Containers,
Hang it all

Download planning example

Lounge areas
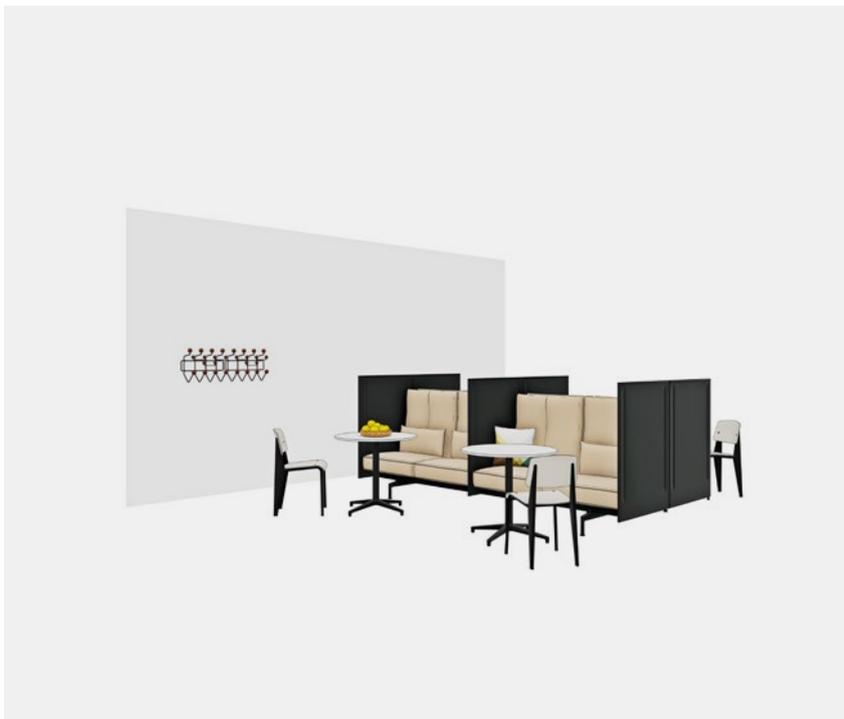
Lounge setting 7

Soft Work, Standard, Super Fold Table, Herringbone Pillows, Cork Bowl, Hang it all

Download planning example

Lounge setting 8

Alcove Sofa, Bovist, Metal Side Tables,
Herringbone Vessels,
Herringbone Pillows

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The bookshelf

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Let's start the conversation
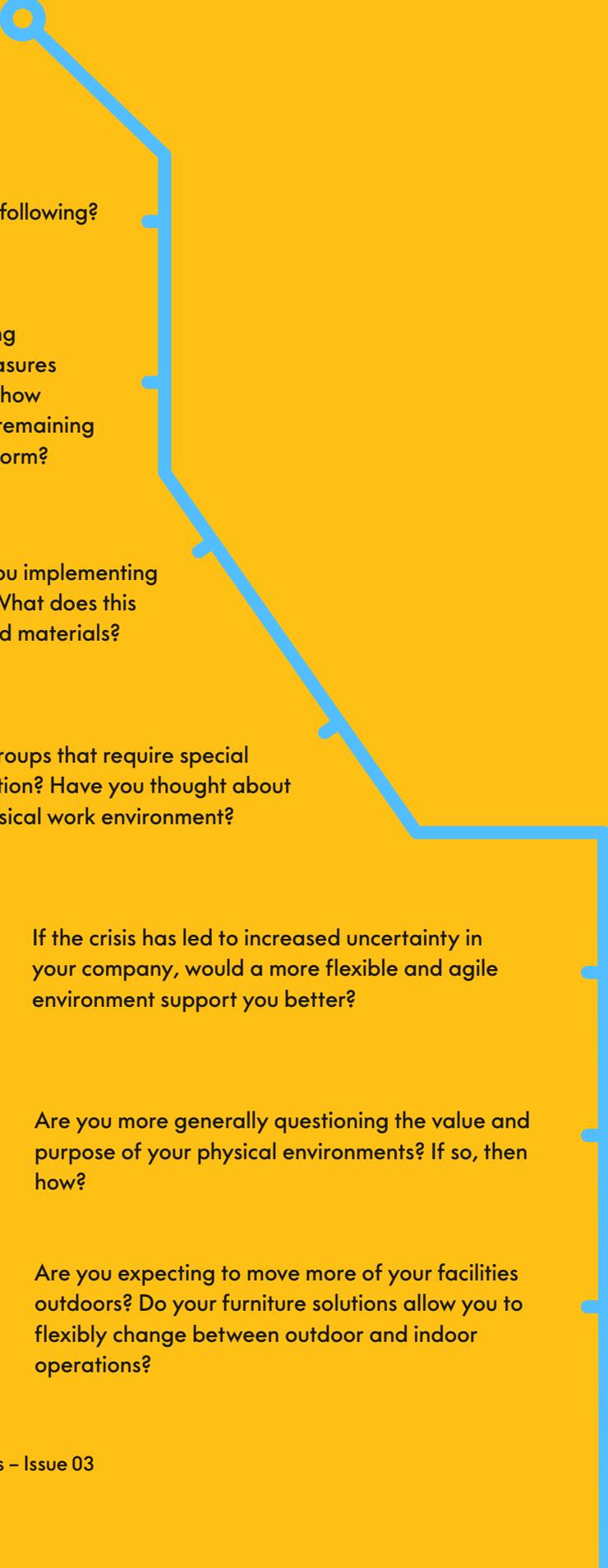
Are there new guidelines your business is following?

If you have introduced physical distancing measures in your spaces – are these measures temporary or permanent? If temporary, how would you react if the measures end up remaining in place and becoming the established norm?

What new hygiene standards are you implementing (frequency, intensity of cleaning)? What does this mean for your choice of surfaces and materials?

Do you have risk groups that require special treatment or attention? Have you thought about changing their physical work environment?

If the crisis has led to increased uncertainty in your company, would a more flexible and agile environment support you better?

Are you more generally questioning the value and purpose of your physical environments? If so, then how?

Are you expecting to move more of your facilities outdoors? Do your furniture solutions allow you to flexibly change between outdoor and indoor operations?

For corporations and operators of shared workspaces: are you thinking of introducing a hub & spoke system to decentralise workspaces? Would you potentially help your employees/members to outfit their home offices? Are you considering memberships for shared workspaces close to your employees' homes?

For operators/owners of lobbies, lounges, waiting zones: are you expecting a change in the clientele that uses your lounges? If so, will you be upgrading your facilities to meet new demands? Will the function of your lounges change towards more individual services instead of traditional waiting zones?

For educational institutions: are you expecting to serve more students online? Will the function of your physical environment change as a result? Are you supporting agile learning methods? If so, what does that mean for your environment?

For healthcare providers: how has the crisis influenced your institution? Did your environments signal the safety and comfort needed by your patients? Did they serve the risk groups as effectively as other patient categories?

For the public sector/governmental institutions: what values do you want to represent post-pandemic? Are you thinking of modernising your spaces? Do your current environments allow you to flexibly shift between crisis and non-crisis mode? Are your current environments optimised for digital interaction?

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We're here to help

Do you need support preparing the return to your physical offices or public spaces? Our teams are here to help you pave the way by developing safe workplaces and public venues and facilitating the 'next normal' with tailor-made solutions.

vitra.com/nextnormal

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twitter.com/vitra

#vitra #nextnormal

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