

A 5-STEP GUIDE FOR THE RETURN TO WORK KEEPING EMPLOYEES SAFE & YOUR DOORS OPEN



COVID-19: a virus nobody will forget. The pandemic has forever changed how we live – and how we work. As economies begin to restart and office buildings begin to reopen, infectious disease experts caution that we must expect to manage this coronavirus in our communities long after 2021, [when the first vaccines are expected](#). They also warn that, because vaccines are unlikely to be cure-alls, society will have to “[learn to live with the virus](#).”

Forward-thinking business leaders will rebound from this crisis by not only focusing on their bottom lines through cost-saving measures and market adjustments, but by protecting the health of their employees and stakeholders – and permanently safeguarding their workplaces.

Companies must address key areas now in order to welcome employees and clients back into offices safely. This 5-step guide details how indoor location technology is primed and ready to provide deep, lasting support – and help business leaders respond to critical questions like: When and how will we be returning to the office? What is being done to ensure my personal health and safety? What if an employee contracts the virus? How will I know if I am at risk? What if there are new waves of COVID-19? How much office space do I need in this ‘new normal’?

Find out how to create a solution that not only addresses short-term post-pandemic requirements but underpins a long-term strategy to maintain business continuity, support employee health and maximize real estate and facilities.

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**THE PANDEMIC HAS
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A hand holding a black pen is positioned over a document with faint, illegible text. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text 'Step One:' is written in a white, italicized serif font.

Step One:

PLAN FOR

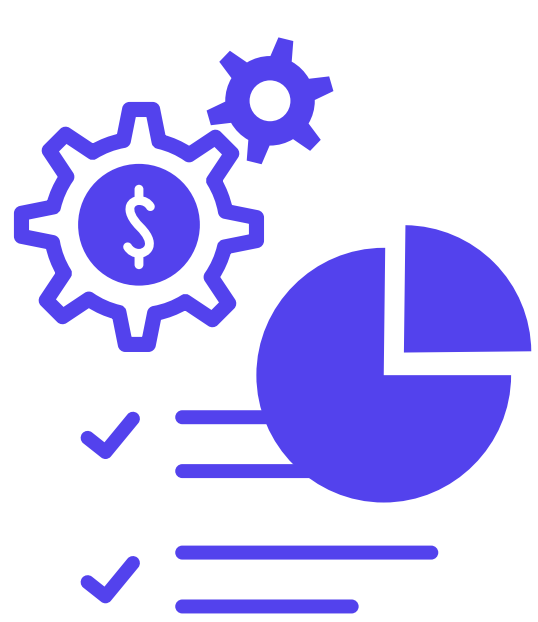
THE RETURN

In order to bring employees back to work, it's prudent that companies review guidelines from local authorities and best practices from agencies like the [WHO](#), [U.S. Department of Labor](#), [the CDC](#), and the [Government of Canada](#).

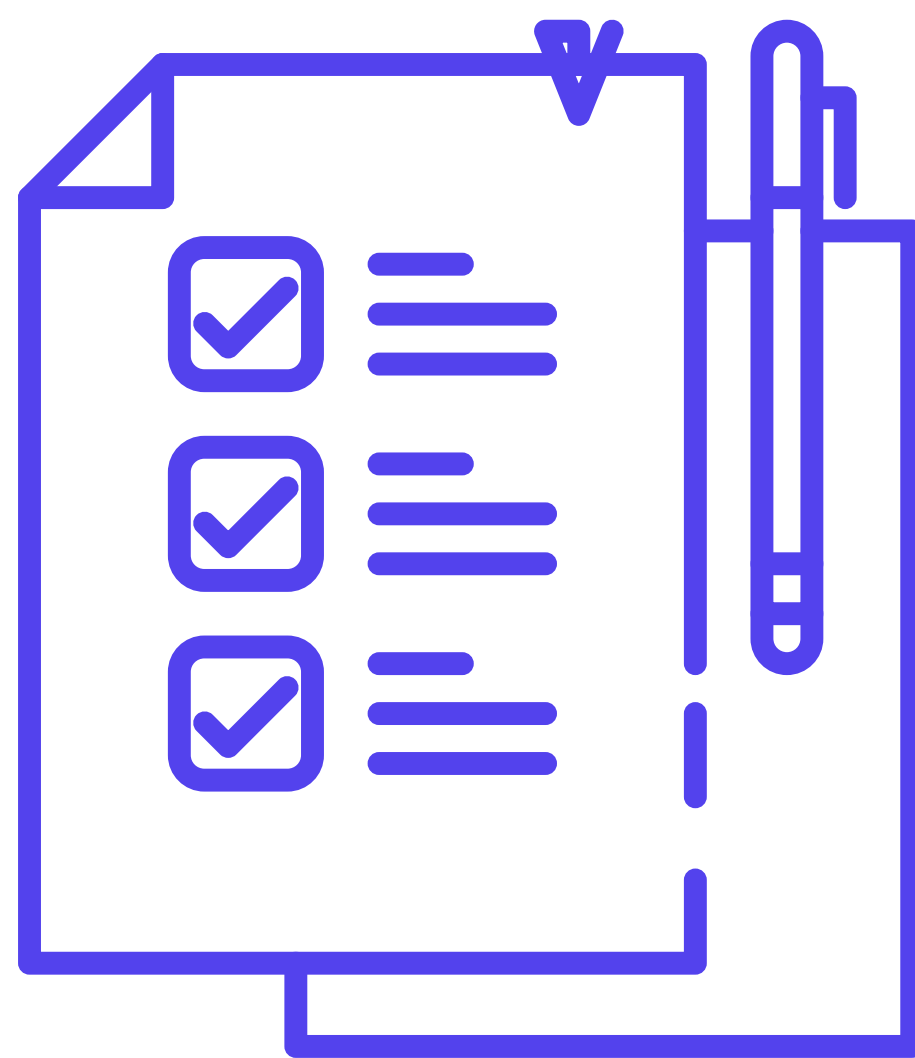
That said, there is no single guidebook on how businesses should configure their offices. And at the same time, employees, customers and stakeholders need to know how they (and, by extension, their families) will be kept safe.

Each company needs to consider the physical attributes of its office(s), employee culture, business objectives to build a plan that makes sense for their organization. Key here is an ability to measure and track across a wide range of variables – data that can be used to validate safety strategies and inform change. Companies can't afford to fail in reopening, so planning the right strategies out of the gate is crucial.

At InnerSpace, our teams are co-creating these strategies with clients, and no two companies are exactly alike in their approach. One global travel company, for instance, is reopening six locations in line with local rules, with each office carrying a different strategy. In one, team members will return in phases, starting with those who are most client-facing and who collaborate cross-functionally. In another, returning to the office is voluntary and employees will book a workspace prior to arriving in the office. In another, everyone is being asked to return, but will be split into two shifts separated by a thorough surface cleaning.

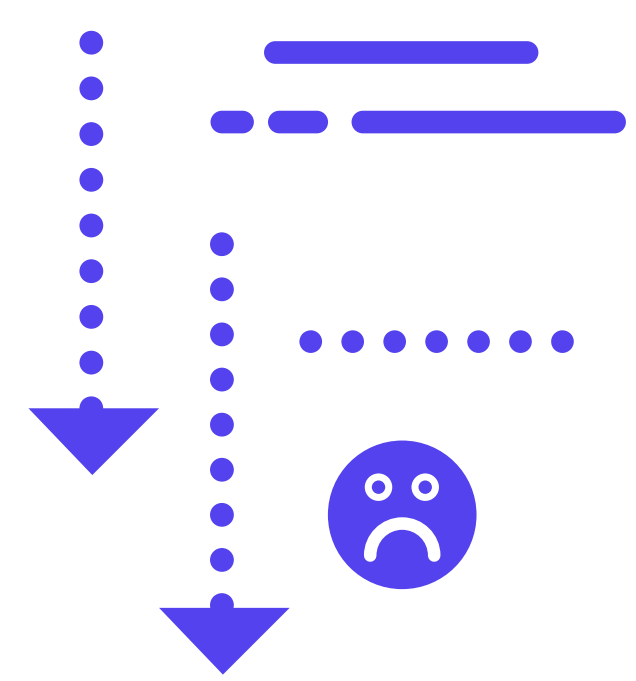


BUSINESS



OFFICE

CULTURE



TECHNOLOGY MUST DRIVE STRATEGY

Whatever the unique variables within the office environment, physical distancing and reducing exposure events is critical. A safe reopening will rely on a redesigned office layout, ongoing management of employee health, and revamped cleaning protocols.

In order to determine if these efforts are having the desired effect, companies need a way to deploy people tracking solutions to monitor and measure progress. It's imperative to select a technology that measures people density, monitors physical distancing, identifies when goals are not being achieved, informs stakeholders and health officials, and keeps employees informed.

When it comes to indoor location technology platforms, look for these key attributes that make them as turnkey and easy-to-manage as possible:

1/ ALWAYS-ON

Connected to the building's infrastructure and managed in the cloud means it is always available, 24/7, ensuring a fully comprehensive dataset.

2/ SCALABILITY

Solutions using existing WiFi networks reduce the need for installing hundreds or even thousands of battery-powered beacons or desk sensors.

3/ PASSIVE

Key to capturing high-quality data that generate new insights is not having to rely on people to download (and then use) an app.

4/ ANONYMOUS

Data privacy is critical. Select a platform that is [GDPR compliant](#) and doesn't store any personally identifiable information.

5/ ACCESSIBLE

Presenting data on both web and mobile platforms ensures the information useful, purposeful and always available to leaders and their employees.

The accuracy and scalability of WiFi-based indoor location technology makes it ideal for the corporate office environment and large campuses. It can be used to analyze traffic patterns and trends, measure real-time employee and visitor counts, calculate how an infection impacts the organization, and reveal how well the reopening strategy has worked, is working, and will work.



Step Two:

ASSIGN CRITICAL METRICS FOR BENCHMARKING SUCCESS

Straight out of the planning process, it is important to establish a core set of metrics that will reliably show if safety protocols are working. Data provided by an indoor location platform is inherently unbiased, enabling managers to make defensible, data-driven decisions based on the true reflection of what is happening in the office environment, free from any personal preferences.

As a guidepost, companies should focus on the following metrics to measure, benchmark, and leverage on an ongoing basis to make sure employees and customers are safe over the long term:

1/ OFFICE TRAFFIC

It is critical to measure the number of people in the office and within key zones as return-to-work strategies evolve. Determining how often people use the office, how long they spend there, and where they migrate is critical to understanding new work patterns and behaviors. This goes double for companies that will continue remote working to some degree or those employing a hot-desking strategy.

2/ OFFICE DENSITY

Calculating the total number of people in an office reveals only part of the picture. Measuring how people congregate over time by floor and by key zones will help managers assess performance of the office redesign, resources and the overall strategy. A revealing metric will be how density changes as a company increasingly brings people into the space.

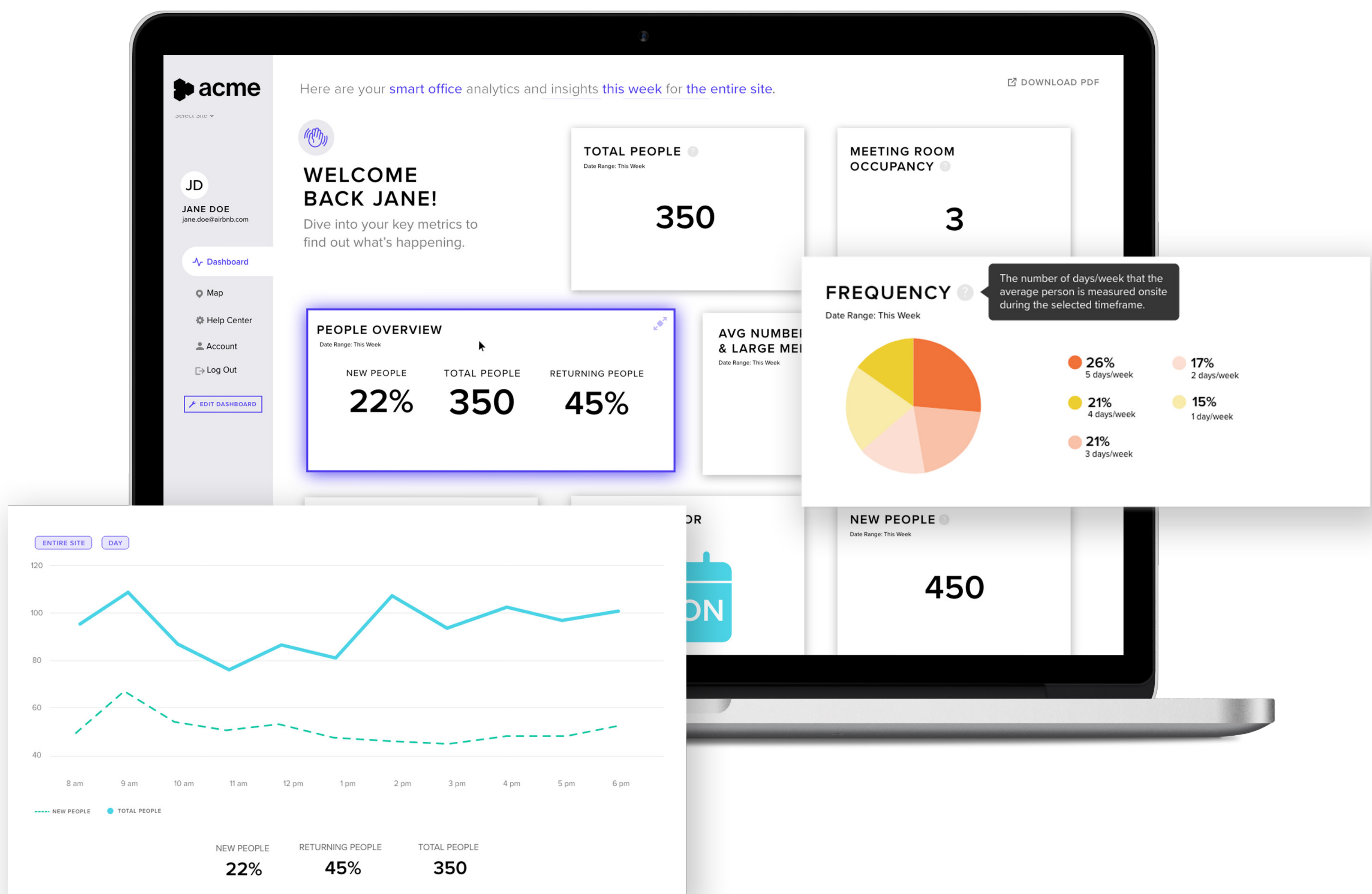
3/ INTERACTIVITY LEVELS

How many interactions are happening between employees, visitors and customers? This directly correlates to potential exposure risks. In the event someone is impacted by COVID-19, understanding the interactivity level of the office will inform the overall infection risk to the business, and point the way to next steps.

4/ TRAVEL PATHWAYS

Ideally suited to WiFi-based indoor location solutions, pathways show where people move in a building and how often they do so. They also shine a light on resource utilization, movement patterns and bottlenecks – critical factors when trying to reduce the risk of exposure in a typical workday.

With these metrics established, and a method in place to capture the data, a company positions itself to measure programs, adhere to bylaws and health policies, and evolve strategies over time.



The InnerSpace inTELLO analytics dashboard filters critical data to help companies establish office performance metrics and inform strategies.

DATA PROVIDED BY
AN INDOOR LOCATION
PLATFORM IS INHERENTLY
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Step Three:

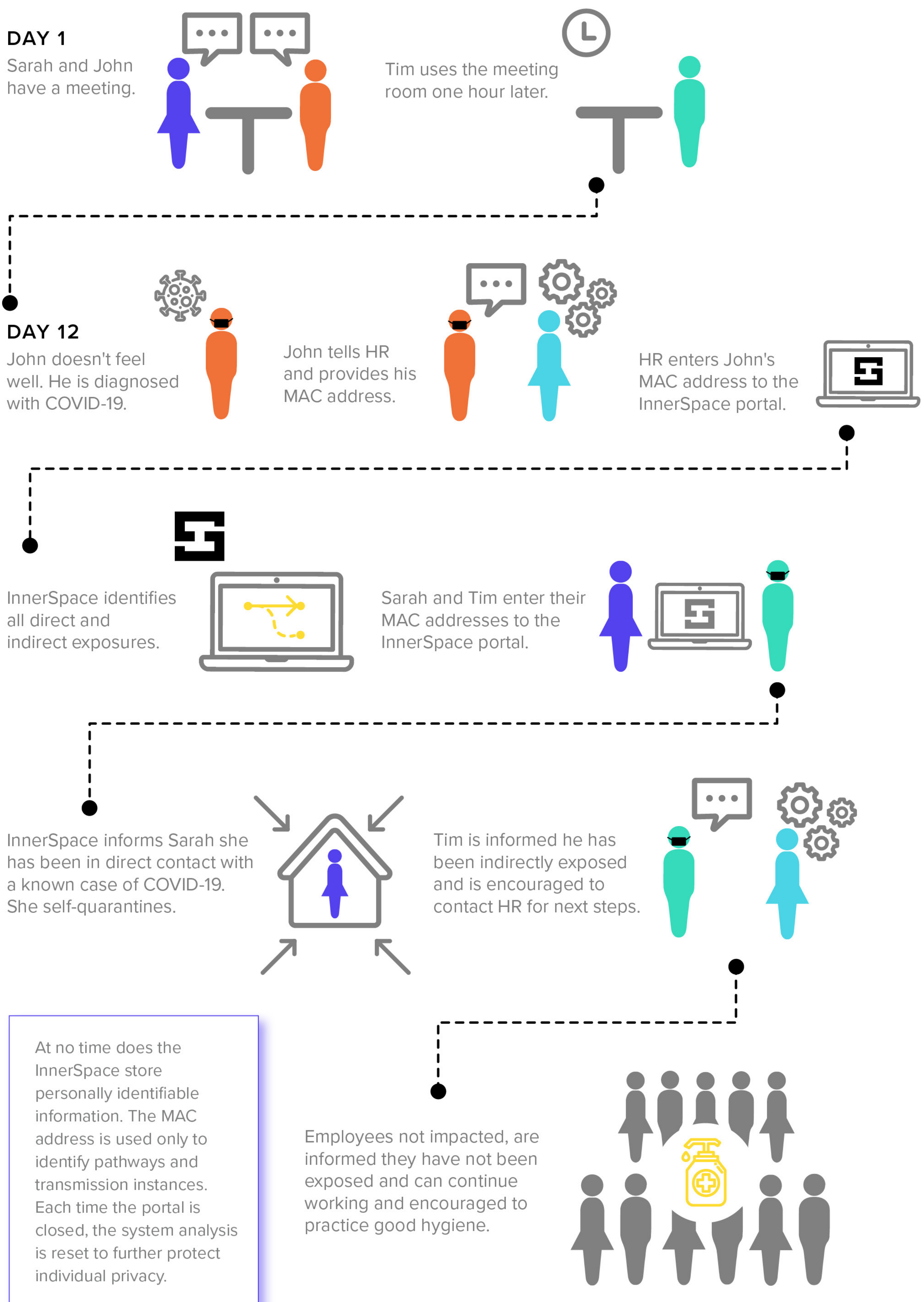
COMMUNICATE & EMPOWER



Prior to returning to the office, employees must know what is being done to protect their health and keep them safe. They will also want to make informed decisions when spending time in the office. Each person has their own unique needs and comfort levels, and clear communication is imperative to ensuring people are empowered to prioritize their own health and safety.

Companies must answer such questions as: *When is it safe to go to the office? Can I find a desk or space to work once I'm there? If someone is sick, how can I find out if I was exposed?*

This is where indoor location data can provide quantitative answers, both empowering employees and providing peace of mind.



InnerSpace has developed a web-based contact tracing solution called inTRACK that enables HR teams and employees to play a greater role in workplace safety. HR managers can submit known COVID-19 cases into the system to generate reports on how many people have been directly exposed to that individual, or who may have experienced surface transmission. This information is critical to comprehend and quickly respond to an urgent situation – and is the difference between closing the office with each case and maintaining business continuity.

Employees can use inTRACK to seek out their individual exposure risk. On a dashboard, they can see whether they have been directly exposed to someone known to have COVID-19 due to physical proximity, or indirectly through a shared workspace surface. As importantly, it reveals if they are unlikely to have been exposed. Such information gives them a window into their own safety, and empowers them to make informed choices about managing their own health.

This same data that drives contact tracing goes further to drive traditional metrics like office utilization and occupancy. The data integrates with employee apps, digital signage, and web pages, which can serve as primary communications vehicles to guide behavior in the office.

Effective data-driven communications can generate several important outcomes:

- 1/** Staff, stakeholders, clients and health officials understand that new systems are in place to keep people safe and provide infection control. They also know that these systems are being continuously measured for effectiveness.
- 2/** Executives and HR managers receive ongoing, specific information about real-time traffic patterns in all areas of the office, helping them make decisions and adjust strategies accordingly.
- 3/** Cleaning staff, now more important than ever, can focus their efforts on high-traffic areas, meeting rooms that have just been used, and common surfaces both at day's end and during the workday as needed.



Step Four:

MAKE THE

RIGHT ADJUSTMENTS

With an always-on people analytics solution, managers can continuously measure what's actually happening in the workspace against the baselines established in the return to work strategy. And as the situation evolves, they can make informed adjustments to that strategy, based on reliable intel.

With COVID-19, companies are in for continued dramatic changes, so it's more important than ever to establish strategies that bolster safety in the workplace over time. Indoor location technology enables companies to alter operations in both significant and subtle ways, by providing a window into what is working and what is not.

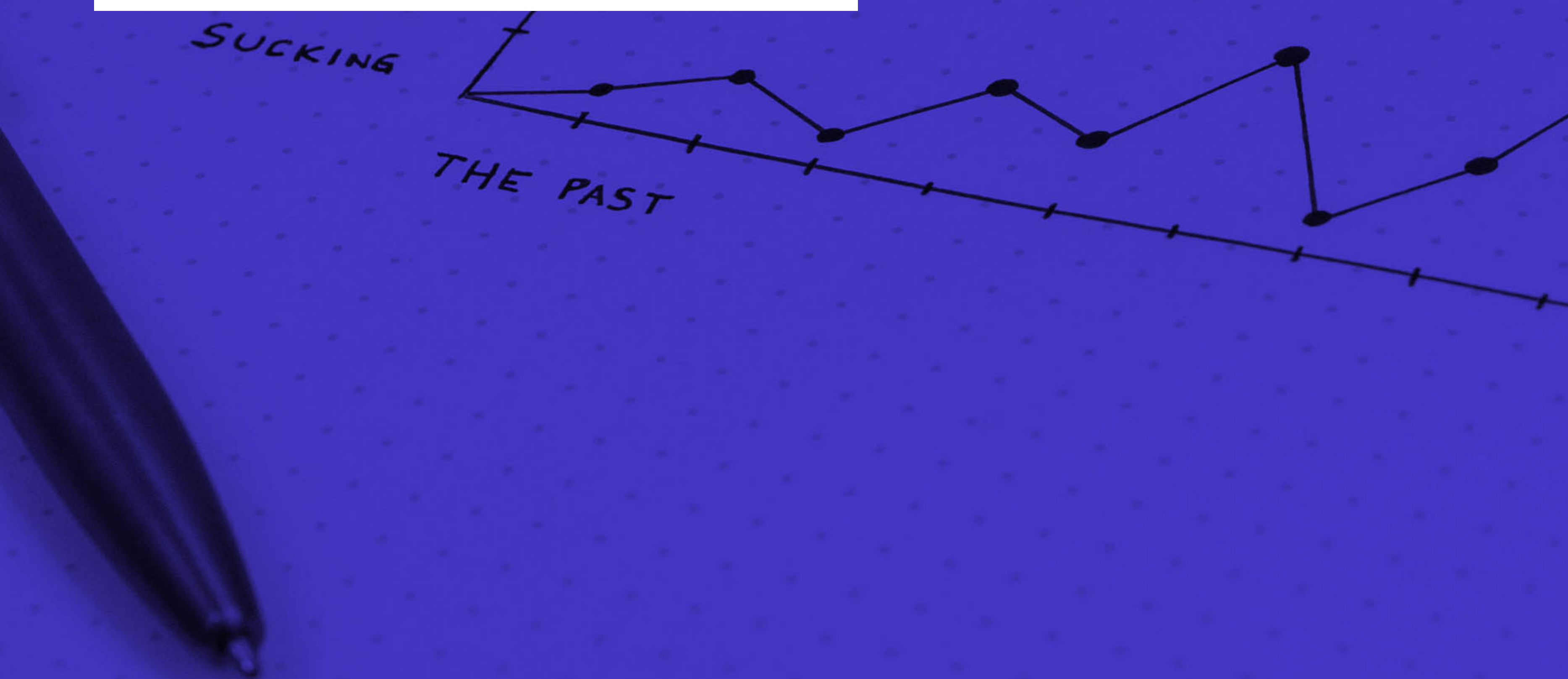
INDOOR LOCATION TECHNOLOGY ENABLES COMPANIES TO ALTER OPERATIONS IN BOTH SIGNIFICANT AND SUBTLE WAYS.

Depending on what metrics were prioritized by the company, managers can make strategic decisions that are precise rather than hopeful. These include the ability to:

- 1/** Measure outcomes over several weeks, allowing for time to make changes before moving on to a subsequent phase of reopening (e.g., if companies are adding back one team at a time, or a percentage of employees each month)
- 2/** Pinpoint hot zones where physical distancing is proving to be difficult and reconfigure those areas or redistribute people to more sparsely populated areas
- 3/** Adjust cleaning schedules based on the knowledge of high-traffic and high-use areas
- 4/** Monitor levels of interaction and behaviors as more and more employees return to the office, and/or track differences between teams and shifts to inform COVID-19 health protocols
- 5/** Test assigned seating vs. shifts vs. cubicles to determine optimal configurations

Step Five:

COMPLIANCE & REPORTING

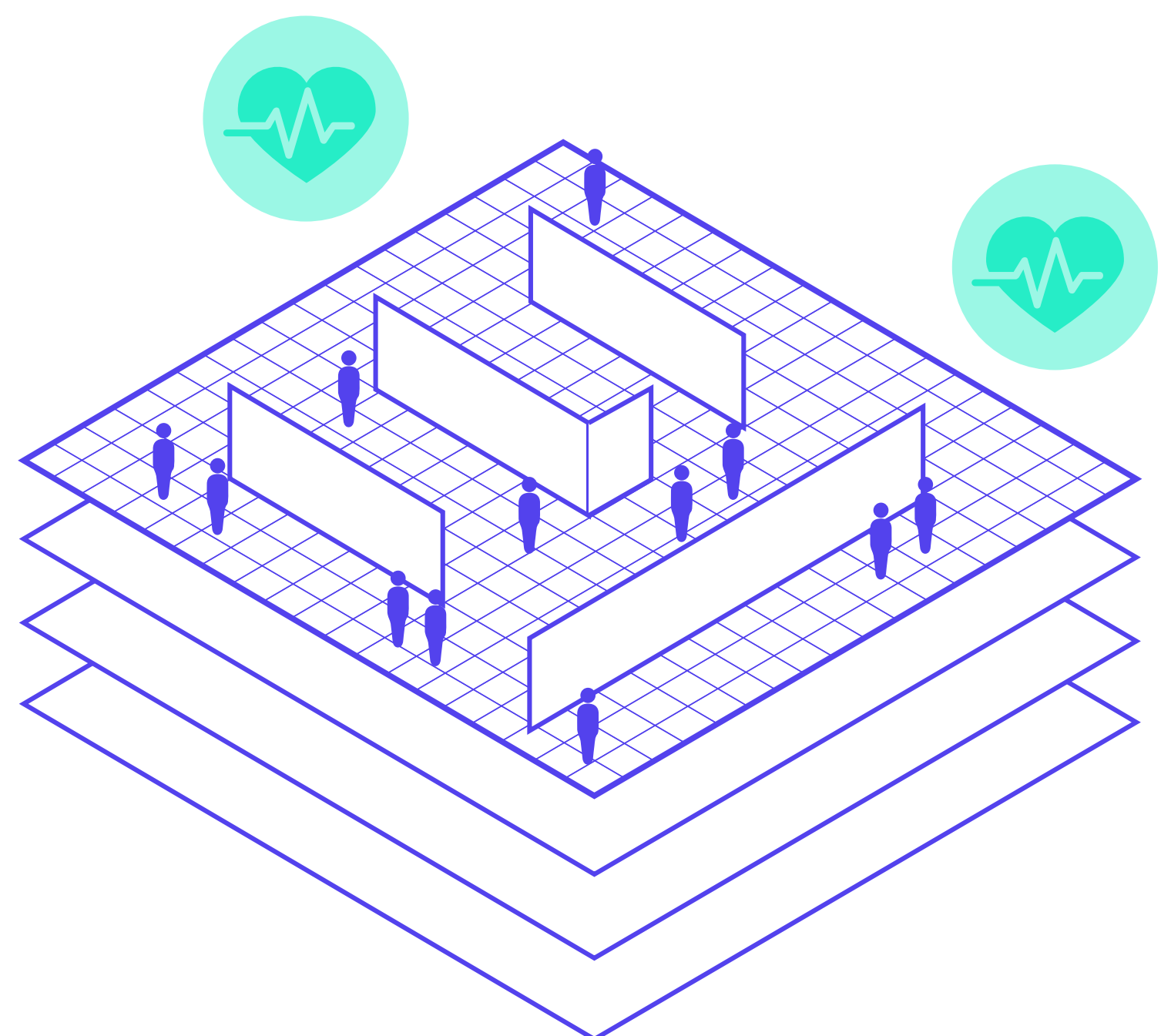


While different countries will have [varying COVID-19 requirements](#), employers should expect that any official guidelines are more than just suggestions and will go above the standard “[general duty clauses](#)” for occupational health and safety. Indeed, the risk of creating an unsafe working environment in any capacity can lead to serious [personal injury and negligence lawsuits](#). Beyond government and public health requirements, it’s important to ensure transparency for employees, clients, and other visitors to the space, in order to foster trust and demonstrate a true commitment to safety and well-being.

Fortunately, by building the office reopening strategy on the foundation of data, such trust is implicit so long as the communication is sound. By capturing data from the outset, the ability to prove compliance or report back to stakeholders is effortless.

Overall, a healthy office that protects the health and well-being of its employees is one that:

- ✓ Clearly communicates and is transparent about any risk factors
- ✓ Provides contact tracing without the need to download additional apps
- ✓ Is flexible and adaptable to ensure optimal physical distancing and density
- ✓ Deploys regular cleaning services
- ✓ Doesn’t compromise privacy



EMBRACING THE OPPORTUNITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The truth is that no modern office space was ever designed with the sole purpose of mitigating the spread of disease. COVID-19's lasting impact will be that workplaces are forever changed. While new guidelines and regulations will influence how workplaces move forward, each individual business is responsible for determining what approach works best for them, based on physical office features, cultural fit, risk tolerance, and more. There is no one-size-fits-all solution – and all strategies will evolve over the next few years.

Implementing an always-on data-driven strategy will differentiate the companies that can successfully reopen offices, keep those doors open, and ensure their people are safe and healthy – from those that are leaving operations to guesswork.

To embrace this modern innovation, the first piece of the puzzle is already in place: a WiFi network. From there, deploying an effective indoor location network that can inform decisions is just a few steps away.





ABOUT INNERSPACE

InnerSpace is on a mission to become the world’s leading indoor location platform. Delivering the world’s most accurate WiFi-based indoor location data, the company gives clients unparalleled value with its easy-to-use API, out-of-the-box analytics, and workflow initiation solutions. The company’s Fortune 500 clients use InnerSpace to create innovative solutions that drive revenue and improve operations in their Smart Buildings.

innerspace.io

A WORD ABOUT PRIVACY

People may be rightfully concerned about their privacy in the workplace, and communication will play an important role here. The InnerSpace platform converts the MAC addresses of smart devices to a unique identifier through a process known as “hashing.” No MAC addresses, or any personally identifiable information, is stored in our system at any time. InnerSpace is private, secure and GDPR compliant.