INFOGRID

2021 REPORT

CREATING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Healthy buildings for a returning workforce

INFOGRID

Contents

Methodology

Infogrid commissioned OnePoll to carry out a survey of 2,000 UK employed adults between the 10th and 15th of March 2021. This sample excludes those who ordinarily work from home or are self-employed.

About Infogrid

Founded in 2018, Infogrid's smart building platform combines the world's smartest IoT sensors with powerful AI to automate and optimize facilities and building management. Easily deployed, Infogrid's end-to-end system enables Facilities Managers and estate owners to create efficient, healthy, and sustainable buildings, whilst strengthening compliance and reducing costs.

Introduction

**William Cowell de Gruchy,
Founder & CEO, Infogrid**

54% of employees find that the healthiness of their building impacts their mental wellbeing.

56% say it impacts their physical wellbeing.

As humans we spend 90% of our time indoors.

A year on from the first lockdown, businesses are exploring how they can return their workforce to the workplace safely as restrictions ease.

The pandemic has seen unprecedented demand for organizations to create healthy workplaces. However, the challenge of how to create a healthy workplace was identified by forward-thinking businesses long before most of us knew the dreaded term "Coronavirus".

For years, companies have understood that employees are no longer satisfied with the "traditional" office of fluorescent lighting, stale air, and old vending machine food. Many organizations see the provision of healthy and happy workplaces as a fundamental part of their values and their responsibility as an employer.

We commissioned this research with OnePoll to try to understand how employees feel as we rapidly approach our return to the workplace. We wanted to know what changes they would like implemented to feel safe, happy and productive in the workplace, not just as they return from lockdown, but beyond.

Indeed, one of the most powerful statistics we received from this research was on the overall effect of the workplace on personal welfare - with more than half saying that the healthiness of their workplace impacts their mental (54 percent) and physical (56 percent) wellbeing. The impact of our working environment on our welfare shouldn't be a surprise when you consider that as humans we spend 90 percent of our time indoors.
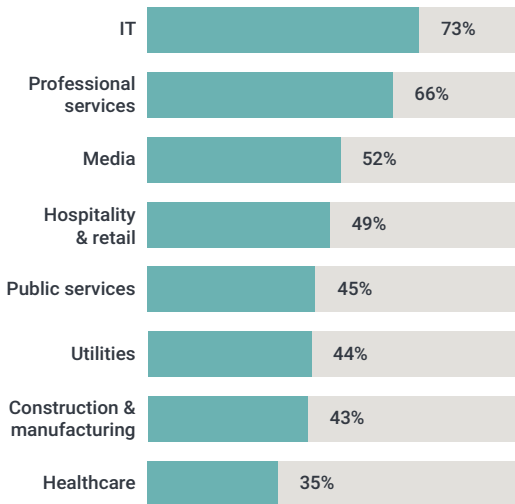
However, even the most progressive companies face a challenge when it comes to creating a good environment for their employees: how can you measure the healthiness of a workplace? Without the available data to identify the areas they need to improve, it is almost impossible for organizations to take positive action.

With the return to work taking healthy workplaces from a "nice to have" to an absolute necessity, we have launched the Infogrid Healthy Building System to solve this problem for organizations, and their employees, once and for all.

By combining state-of-the-art IoT and our proprietary AI platform, companies can have a holistic view of all of the factors that create a healthy working environment - air quality, water safety, cleanliness, occupancy, and employee satisfaction - all at the same time and through a single pane of glass. This will generate new insights and clear ROI that businesses need in order to shape the future of the workplace.

Returning to work

50% of employees are concerned about returning to work.

Industry	%
IT	73%
Professional services	66%
Media	52%
Hospitality & retail	49%
Public services	45%
Utilities	44%
Construction & manufacturing	43%
Healthcare	35%

% concerned about returning to work by industry

The easing of lockdown restrictions will see many organizations reopen their workplaces over the coming months, many of them for the first time since the pandemic began. They will be looking for their offices, retail outlets, restaurants, warehouses, and factories to return to normality. However, in this return to normal, companies must understand that their workforce has reservations about returning to the workplace.

The research shows 50 percent of employees are concerned about returning to the physical workplace, meaning organizations will need to take steps to demonstrate that their workplaces are healthy and safe.

There are big differences in the responses based on industry. Office-based workers are more concerned about returning to work compared to construction and manufacturing and healthcare workers. This is in part due to the fact that these industries are already back to work and have measures in place to keep employees safe.

An organization's actions in preparing the working environment will have a major impact on their employees' attitude to returning to work. This is demonstrated by the fact that, of those who said they weren't concerned about returning to work, 60 percent said it was because their employer had made their workplace safe.

Incredibly, this factor was considered more important than the vaccine rollout, which reassured only 54 percent, demonstrating the important role business can play in getting their workplaces and the wider economy back to normal.

The research also showed that employees are more aware of the impact of the working environment on health than they were before lockdown.

65% of employees are more concerned about the healthiness of the workplace than they were before the pandemic.
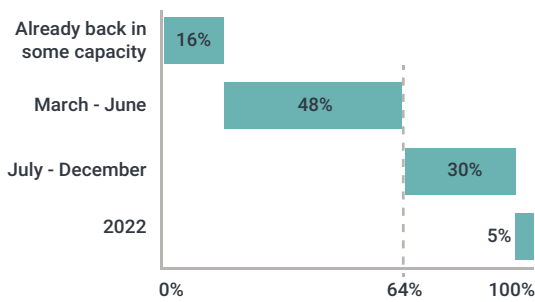
% when employees expect to return to the workplace in some capacity

61% of employees said improved air quality would make them feel safer but only 22% said their employer was taking action on it.

		Employees would like	Employers provide	
Improved air quality	#5	61%	22%	Expectations not met
Desk dividers/ sneeze gaurds	#7	56%	31%	
Regular and thorough cleaning	#1	73%	57%	
Social distancing/ splitting teams	#4	64%	52%	
Limiting the number of people in spaces	#2	69%	59%	
One way walking signs	#8	45%	39%	Expectations met
People wearing masks	#6	61%	58%	
Hand sanitiser dispensers	#3	67%	68%	

Back at work by the summer

Organizations will need to reassure their employees sooner rather than later as employees expect to be back in the workplace in the near future. Nearly half (48 percent) of all people who expect to return to the office believe they will be back before July 2021. A further 16 percent reported that they were already back in their workplace in some capacity.

What employees need to feel safe in the workplace

So what measures do employers need to put in place to provide the most reassurance to their workers? Employees said regular cleaning has the biggest impact on how safe they feel to return to the office (73 percent), followed by limiting the number of people in spaces (69 percent), and the availability of hand sanitizer (67 precent).

This roughly tallies with the most common measures employers are putting in place - hand sanitizer (68 percent), limiting the number of people in spaces (59 percent), and the wearing of masks (58 percent).

However, there are oversights. Only 57 percent of respondents said their employer was providing regular and thorough cleaning, which leaves a big (16 percentage point) gap considering it was the highest contributing factor to making employees feel safe.

Air quality is even more of a blindspot for companies, with only 22 percent reporting that their employer was improving the air quality in the workplace to reduce the spread of COVID-19, despite 61 percent saying it would make them feel safer.

This might be due to organizations finding it more difficult to measure cleaning and air quality and, therefore improve their practices. Or it might simply be harder to demonstrate air quality and cleanliness to their employees. Even if they are taking the right precautions, their staff may not be aware of cleaning they haven't witnessed. In either scenario, it has never been more important to reassure employees that their company is taking every possible precaution when it comes to their welfare.

Improving employee wellbeing

54% of employees find that the healthiness of their building impacts their mental wellbeing.

56% say it impacts their physical wellbeing.

The pandemic has increased employees' consciousness about their health in the workplace, but this trend is not limited just to the extraordinary times that we are currently living in. The impetus to improve the quality of life in the workplace began before the pandemic and will continue once employees have returned to work.

The effect of the workplace on personal wellbeing was strongly identified by those surveyed, with more than half saying that the healthiness of their workplace impacts their mental (54 percent) and physical (56 percent) wellbeing. With their health on the line, employees will understandably be expecting more action from their employers to improve their work conditions.

The cost for organizations

Organizations should therefore not stop at pandemic measures but be exploring long-term changes that will have a material affect on their employees' welfare.

Employee wellbeing is core to many companies values and ESG goals. However, there are additional benefits for organizations that invest in making their businesses cleaner, safer and healthier.

The research shows that these businesses are paid dividends in a more productive workforce and a healthy workplace also means employees are less likely to succumb to illness and require sick leave. They are also better able to attract and retain talent:

49% of respondents said the healthiness of their workplace impacts their **productivity**

47% said that the healthiness of their workplace impacts their decision to **stay** in a particular company

39% said that the healthiness of their workplace impacts their decision to **join** a new company

This is backed up by studies from Harvard and over 20 other academic institutions linking air quality to lower sickness rates and higher productivity.
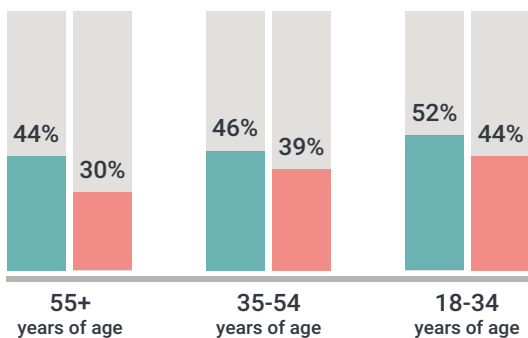
How much does the 'healthiness' of your working environment impact your decision to:

■ *stay in a particular company?*
■ *join a new company?*

The good news is that 87 percent of employees believe their employer cares about creating and maintaining a healthy workplace. However, organizations will need to live up to this reputation as employees return to work and their expectations increase.

Companies should take special note that, while the impact of the workplace on wellbeing and productivity was consistent across all age groups, younger employees are far more willing to act based on their working environment, with a significantly larger proportion saying that it would inform their decision to stay at or move to a particular company.

As the workforce becomes increasingly conscious of the impact of their work on their health, they will make decisions based on the quality of their working environment. Businesses that fail to meet the standards expected by their workers risk losing talent to competition that does place a high value on the health of their employees.

Companies do not have unlimited budgets for round the clock cleaning. In order to balance the cost of cleaning against the cost to their workforce they need to find a smarter way to monitor and maintain a clean environment. For example, by focusing cleaning efforts on spaces that have been used. This is where healthy building data comes into play.

Creating a healthy workplace

44%	59%	67%

55+ years of age	35-54 years of age	18-34 years of age
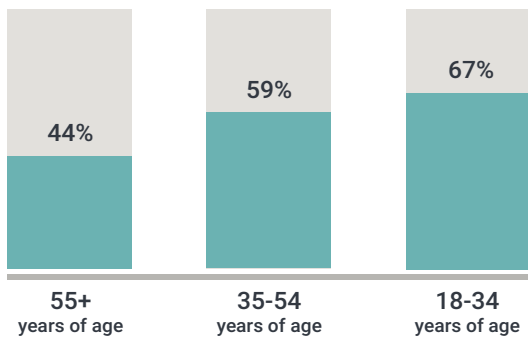
% that would be reassured by data, by age

Employees signalled in this research that regular cleaning, social distancing, and hand sanitizer were key to them returning to the workplace. However, practices such as mask wearing and hand sanitizer are just temporary and reactive measures. Now the expectation of a healthy workplace has been set, what can employers do to ensure they are meeting their employees' ongoing expectations?
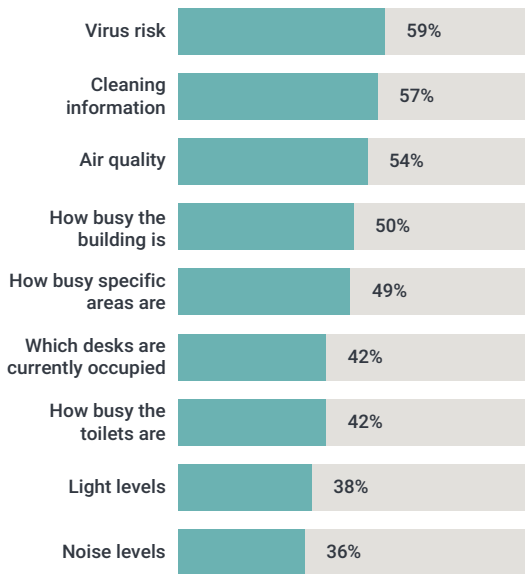
Healthy building data

The answer lies in the use of data. Organisations can only identify areas of improvement and take action if they already have a clear picture into the performance of their facilities and how people use them.

58% of employees would feel more comfortable returning to the workplace if their employer was using data to improve the 'healthiness' of the building.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger workers (18-34 years old) are the most eager for their employers to be using data to make them feel safe, with 67 percent in support.

The challenge for companies has been in the ability to collect and measure this data. Until now, the measurement of the factors that contribute to a healthy workplace - such as occupancy, cleanliness and air quality - has been a difficult, manual, and costly process. As a consequence, checks are typically done irregularly and the data produced is unreliable.

Virus risk	59%
Cleaning information	57%
Air quality	54%
How busy the building is	50%
How busy specific areas are	49%
Which desks are currently occupied	42%
How busy the toilets are	42%
Light levels	38%
Noise levels	36%

% that would find value in having access to data, by data type

There is an appetite among employees to have access to their company's healthy building data. Workers would be most interested in having access to data on virus risk (59%) followed by cleaning information (57%) and air quality (54%).

Even if a company does have a clear measurement of one factor, such as building occupancy, the data is incomplete if the organization is unable to cross-reference and compare it to other contributing factors, such as air quality and cleanliness. Moreover, organizations have little or no context into how they compare against their peers, which would help inform their priorities and give a true understanding of where their buildings are coming up short.

These challenges around data make it difficult for organizations to implement positive changes to improve the welfare of their employees. However, breakthroughs in cost-effective and simple to deploy IoT technology means this no longer needs to be the case.

Infogrid Healthy Building System

The Infogrid Healthy Buildings System is the first scalable solution that combines the factors that contribute to making a healthy workplace into one unified view. The system can be retrofitted at low cost into any business, building, or entire estate, using state-of-the-art IoT sensors for each particular use case:

Improved occupant satisfaction, productivity and wellbeing

Air quality

Monitor CO2, VOCs, radon, humidity, light levels, ventilation, virus risk factor, air pressure, and a range of pollutants including particulate matter (1, 2.5, and indicative for 10).

Occupancy

Track the movement of people to monitor space usage, control social distancing and limit access at the busiest times. Understand which rooms, desks and facilities are being used, when and for how long, to better utilise facilities and guide users to free space.

Smart cleaning

Tailor cleaning based on usage to reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. In addition, sensors can be used to validate when and where cleaning has taken place.

Water safety

Automatically monitor water movement and temperature to help reduce the need for labor-intensive processes and to determine if pipes require flushing to reduce the risk of diseases such as legionella. The system can also detect leaks and prevent mold.

Occupant satisfaction

The Healthy Buildings System integrates feedback from employees and occupants to help organizations quantify the impact they are having on their welfare and for the first time get true ROI measurement on employee satisfaction.

Build occupant confidence by demonstrating your healthy building measures

Increase productivity and wellbeing through safer, cleaner and healthier environments

Improve occupant satisfaction by providing more enjoyable spaces to work in

The Infogrid Healthy Building System can also integrate additional use cases including fire safety (e.g., keeping fire doors closed, fire walk-around compliance), unauthorised access, and a host of other healthy building measures.

The Infogrid Healthy Buildings System integrates the data from each of these sensors securely in the platform, providing organizations with a holistic view of their estate. Infogrid's AI correlates the raw data generated by the sensors, unlocking the power of combining different use cases, and deriving insight that makes it easy for companies to identify issues and take timely action.

It also provides companies with a score of where they stand in their healthy building journey, in comparison to their peers. This gives them a benchmark to make improvements against and - for the first time - the ability to quantify the impact of measures such as regular cleaning and air quality in the office, to reassure employees that it is a safe environment for them to return to.

More importantly, with the new ability to have holistic oversight of their estate, companies can make long-term positive decisions that improve working conditions for their employees. It will help organizations demonstrate regulatory compliance, meet their ESG goals, and improve the sustainability of their buildings as well.

Real time SMS/Email alerting lets you know immediately when problems occur

Benchmark the healthiness of your buildings with a single score

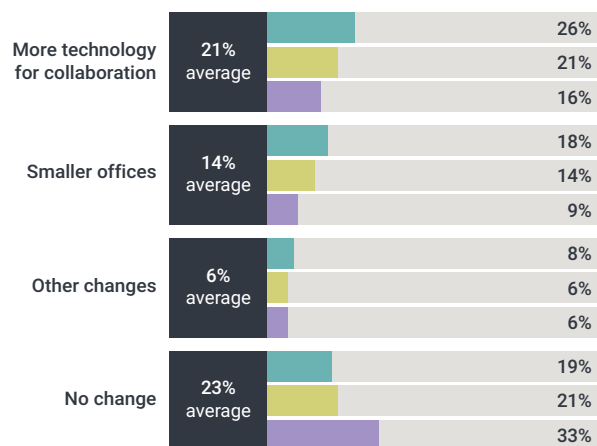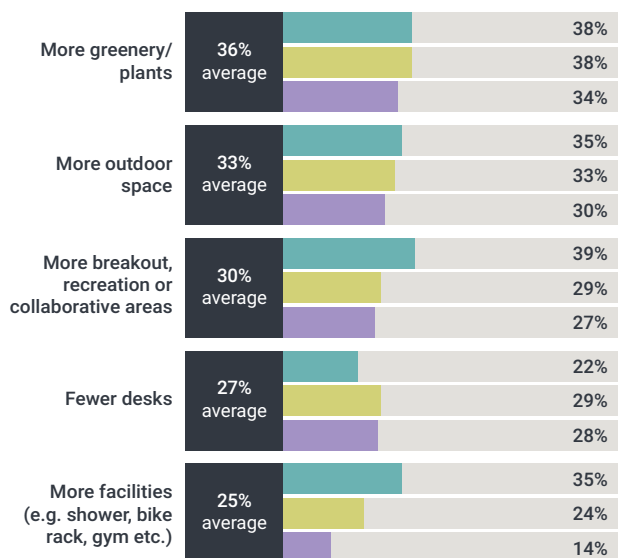**Take action with AI-powered recommendations to improve the healthiness of your buildings**

Use floor plans to visualise data and highlight where action is needed

REQUEST A DEMO

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The workplace of the future

	18-34 years of age	35-54 years of age	55+ years of age
More greenery/plants — 36% average	38%	38%	34%
More outdoor space — 33% average	35%	33%	30%
More breakout, recreation or collaborative areas — 30% average	39%	29%	27%
Fewer desks — 27% average	22%	29%	28%
More facilities (e.g. shower, bike rack, gym etc.) — 25% average	35%	24%	14%

	18-34 years of age	35-54 years of age	55+ years of age
More technology for collaboration — 21% average	26%	21%	16%
Smaller offices — 14% average	18%	14%	9%
Other changes — 6% average	8%	6%	6%
No change — 23% average	19%	21%	33%

Changes that employees would like to see in the workplace of the future, by age (multiple selections).

- 18-34 years of age
- 35-54 years of age
- 55+ years of age

Employees are demanding more of their workplaces. They are aware of the impact of the workplace on their happiness and wellbeing and will no longer tolerate an unhealthy working environment. But what do they want from their workplace in the future?

The research uncovered a clear desire to move away from the "traditional" office and work environment in the future.

Employees want more greenery (36%), more outdoor space (33%), more recreation areas (30%) and fewer desks (27%).

Once again, younger workers (aged 18-34) signalled that they want more change from the workplace, suggesting organizations are increasingly going to have to work to keep their staff.

In order to keep their workforce productive, engaged, and happy, businesses will need to rethink what their workplaces look like.

Data will play a critical role in helping to inform these changes to the working environment, helping to measure what works, feed decision making, and ultimately shape what the workplace of the future looks like.
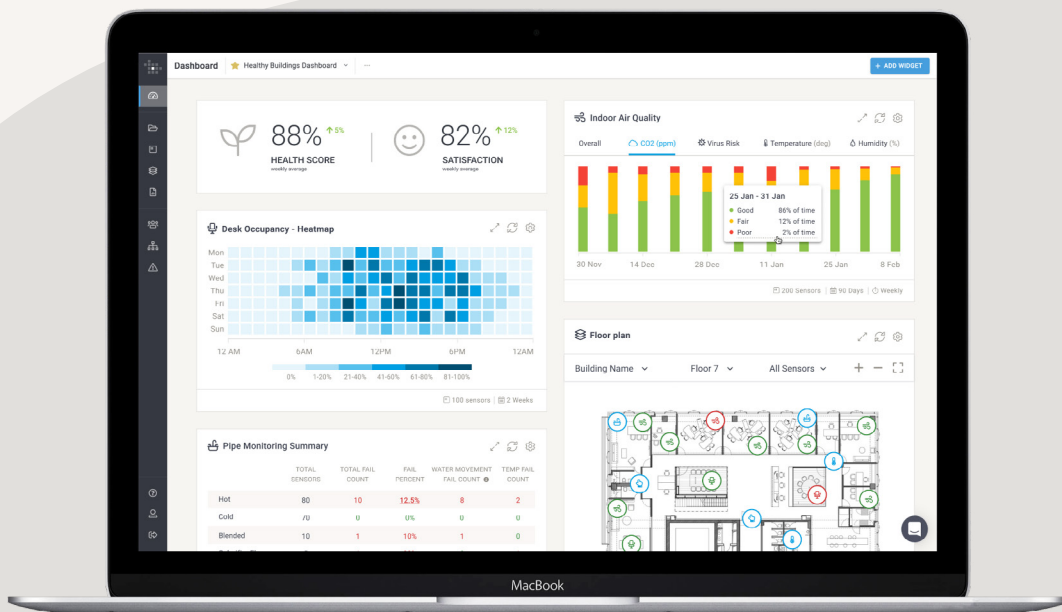
Get started

The Infogrid Healthy Building System has been designed to ensure both installation and use are simple - making it scaleable to deploy across your estate. A suite of best-in-class wireless IoT sensors can be fitted to any building in just a few steps, removing the barriers and expense of traditional smart building technology.

Book a meeting with the team to get a demo and find out how to begin your healthy building pilot.

BOOK A MEETING　　　**GET PRODUCT OVERVIEW**

powered by
DISRUPTIVE
TECHNOLOGIES

About Infogrid

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