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Seven Steps to Safely Reopen the Workplace

Elo White Paper

Contents

1. Introduction: Preparing for a Return to the Workplace	3
2. Focusing on Employees & the Employee Experience	4
3. Technological Considerations for Reopening	5
4. Keeping the Workplace Safe	6
5. Managing Visitors	7
6. Protecting Employee Privacy	8
7. Preparing for Adverse Events & Shut Downs	9
About Elo	9



1. Introduction: Preparing for a Return to the Workplace

With the COVID-19 Pandemic, most Americans are working from home. But at some point, employees will need to return to the workplace.

Stanford University economist Nicholas Bloom estimates that only 26 percent of Americans are currently working at their traditional workplaces, and these, he notes, are mostly essential workers.¹

At some point it's expected there will be a trend back toward workplaces—though this may be in hybrid scenarios that combine at-home and in-office to varying

*78% Felt a
Return to the
Office Was
Beneficial*

degrees. Adaptive flexibility will be essential to integrate both modes of working—as well as to dealing with the challenge of safely allowing visitors and

other third parties into physical workspaces. Fortunately, Elo already has the technology to support all these scenarios.

While some have said the work-from-home experiment has been so successful that it will, at least to an extent, reduce the emphasis on traditional workplaces, others have pointed to a loss in productivity, communication and collaboration associated with working together within an office or other shared space.

Gensler's "U.S. Work From Home Survey 2020"² found that only 12% of the 2,300+ employees surveyed preferred to work from home full-time. The other 78% felt a return to the office was beneficial, but with critical changes including social distancing, more cleaning, stricter wellness assessments, as well as updates to policies for those who become sick.

The New York Times recently spoke of this in an article titled: "The Long, Unhappy History of Working from Home,"³ in which it cited a history of organizations from IBM, to Bank of America, to AT&T, over the years trying, and then abandoning or reducing, work-from-home programs.

The Times quoted Patrick Pichette, former Chief Financial Officer at Google, as saying whenever he was asked, "How many people telecommute at Google?" he liked to answer, "As few as possible."

While anticipating at least a partial return to the traditional workplace, the huge challenge will be doing so as safely as possible. Consider:

"It's clear that the challenge of returning to the workplace isn't just an operations challenge; it's a human challenge. As organizations try to reopen their physical locations and get back to some form of 'normal,' leaders have to collaborate to promote health and safety in and for the workplace."

- Caroline Walsh, VP, Team Manager, Gartner⁴

"Employers are taking steps to make their workplaces safe from COVID-19, but many aren't pulling these actions together in a comprehensive plan. That's a missed opportunity, as such plans can reduce workers' fears about returning to worksites and defend employers from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) penalties."

- Society for Human Resource Management⁵

"The study found that 70% of people want to work in the office for the majority of their week. However, they want to see changes from the pre-pandemic density levels, ensuring there is more space for physical distancing while addressing noise and cleaning protocols."

- Gensler's U.S. Work from Home Survey 2020⁶

This white paper provides an overview of best practices for workplace re-openings, with special emphasis on the critically important roles played by mobile apps, automated kiosk temperature checks, self-assessment health screening software, and the roles these play in enhancing overall safety for workers and those with whom they interact within the workplace environment.

We'll look at seven key steps to reopening:

- Focus on Employees & the Employee Experience
- Prepare the Workplace
- Keep the Workplace Safe
- Manage Visitors
- Protect Privacy
- Preparing for Adverse Events, Including Shut Downs
- Leverage Technology

Along the way, we'll also look at how Elo solutions can help you keep your employees, workplace, and visitors safe.

2. Focusing on Employees & the Employee Experience

Reopening a workplace is all about the employees and the employee experience. You need to create a safe and welcoming work environment, not just physically but psychologically as well. Here are some guidelines for success:

- **Gain an Executive Sponsor.** Your first step should be to gain an executive sponsor—preferably the CEO. Tell him or her that you need them to clear any roadblocks you encounter along the way. Reopening in the time of a pandemic is going to be challenging and stressful, and you will need someone who can make things happen. A Forbes article, "Before Starting A Project, Get Your Sponsor On Board," notes: "Having an executive-level sponsor can be crucial for shepherding major projects, particularly those that cut across

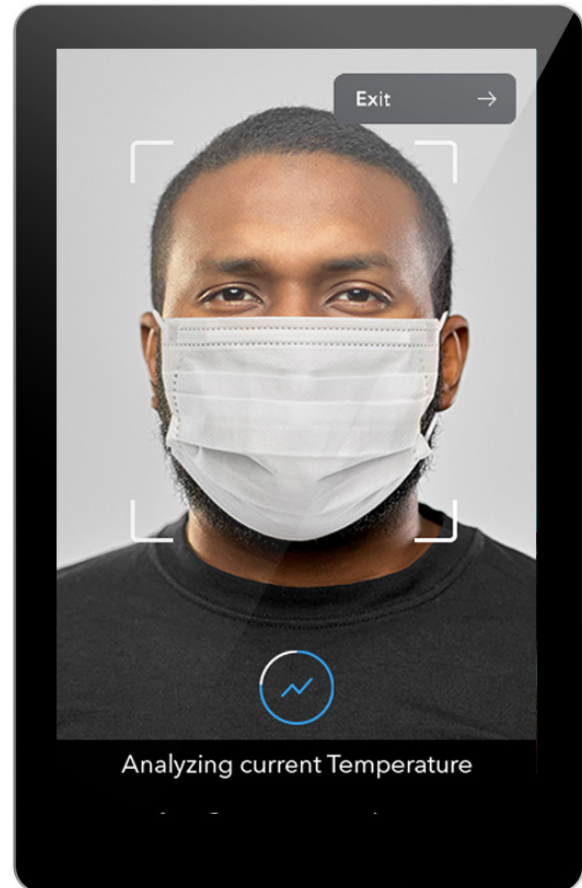
functions."⁷ And reopening will certainly cut across functions—from HR to Operations to Security and beyond.

- **Acknowledge and Address the Stress.** We are living through a once-in-a-century event that is shaking the world. It is disrupting the lives of your employees in ways you will never know. Your employees may be experiencing financial stress, deep fears, or emotional turmoil. They may fear that a return to work could raise the possibility of carrying the virus home to their spouse, children, or extended family, including elderly parents. They may have an underlying health condition that increases their own risk. Clear communication is required that acknowledges anxieties, while explaining your safeguards. Let them know that everyone is stressed, and that your organization is on their side, working diligently to keep everyone safe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a helpful guide "Coping with Stress for Workers," Which notes: "Fear and anxiety about this new disease and other strong emotions can be overwhelming, and workplace stress can lead to burnout."⁸
- **Prepare Managers for a New Emotional Environment.** Managers should be prepared for what will be a new emotional environment. In addition to their own stresses, managers will need to be sensitive to the stresses and anxieties their employees are carrying. Again, clear and frequent communication about what is being done should be helpful. The Harvard Business Review, in the article "Help Your Employees Manage Their Reentry Anxiety," notes that "While workforce reentry certainly includes logistical and operational planning, it is not just physical well-being that employers must take into account. Equally important is how organizations will respond to employees' emotional and psychological health – a topic that, regrettably, is discussed far less frequently."⁹
- **Accommodate Variations in Employee Comfort Levels.** Some workers may be overjoyed to be back at the job, while others might be terrified of becoming ill—especially if they are sole bread

winners fearful of what would become of their families if they were to become severely ill or worse. Expect there to be a spectrum of anxiety and be prepared to accommodate all. Gartner notes: “Employees may still find it hard to commute, secure childcare and manage the continued disruptions in their daily lives. These stresses will reduce their productivity at work. ... Invite employees to share specifics of their situation and equip managers to respond.”¹⁰

- **Embrace Employee Communication.**

Communication is paramount during and after a re-opening. Employees want to—and need to—know what is happening to keep them safe, and to be alerted when something has gone wrong—such as a co-worker testing positive for the virus. Transparent communication helps employees see that their organization is deeply invested in keeping everyone safe. McKinsey & Company, in its report “Communications get personal: How Leaders Can Engage Employees During a Return to Work,” writes: “Clear and inspiring communication is central to making this next unsteady phase a success.” With a nod to the uncertainty we all face, the report concludes: “Leaders will not know all the answers, but as long as they communicate openly and candidly, employees will respect being brought into the conversation.”¹¹



Elo Temperature Sensor Pro on Elo Access™ kiosk provides non-contact temperature sensing.

3. Technological Considerations for Reopening

As we’ve seen, managing a workplace reopening is a major undertaking. Fortunately, technology can provide assistance. The FDA, in its publication “Non-contact Temperature Assessment Devices During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” notes that: “The available scientific literature supports using thermal imaging systems and non-contact infrared thermometers to detect elevated temperatures.”¹²

As noted earlier, Elo manufactures devices critically important to reopening:

- **Elo Temperature Sensor Pro.** Elo Temperature Sensor Pro utilizes an infrared bolometer, 2D camera, and heatmap temperature reading technology—all in an easy to attach Elo Edge Connect™ accessory. The temperature sensor can detect faces, automatically adjust based on height, and output temperature data for each person detected in the field of view.
- **Elo Access App.** Elo can help simplify visitor management with wellness-check access control solutions. With Elo’s modular platform, you can easily deploy a wellness questionnaire, mask

detection and temperature screening using EloView® to provide initial, real-time checks prior to entry for self-service employee and guest screening. For advanced functionality and multi-system integration, Elo's robust network of third-party software partners can create a seamless solution to fit your business.

- **EloView®.** EloView allows you to deploy and securely manage your entire network of Elo Android-powered interactive temperature sensing and self-assessment kiosks remotely. From anywhere around the world you can deploy content, manage settings, and maintain the OS to reduce operating costs while increasing up-time and security. EloView's modular system is designed to integrate with your business to enable smarter content distribution and device management abilities alongside your existing CMS platforms and MDM tools.

4. Keeping the Workplace Safe

Community spread has been the primary path for COVID-19 transmission, and social distancing has emerged as one of the most effective forms of prevention. The workplace is a community, and social distancing was never part of how collaboration worked in the past. So special steps are required to prepare the workplace for re-opening, and to keep it safe after opening.

- **Preparing the Workplace.** Each workplace provides its own set of challenges when it comes to reopening. Considerations can include HVAC and air filtration, increasing flow of outside air, extending the height of cubicles, increasing the spacing between work stations, reducing occupancy rates, staggering arrival times, providing hand sanitation systems, establishing new cleaning and sanitization regimes, providing personal protective equipment (PPE), and a spectrum of other measures. The CDC provides a good baseline with its publication "Employer Information for Office Buildings."¹³
- **Temperature Checks.** Everyone entering the building—whether employee, supplier, or customer—

should be required to have their temperature checked. While not fool-proof, checking temperatures has proven to be an effective adjunct in protecting against community spread. Amazon, for example, checks temperatures upon arrival for more than 100,000 employees a day.¹⁴ Ideally, the temperature sensor should be non-contact, and automated, such as built into a free-standing kiosk. This provides privacy for the person being screened, while also protecting the person who would otherwise be assigned to take the readings in person—exposing them to a steady flow of close encounters with arriving employees and visitors. We created our Elo Temperature Sensor Pro non-contact temperature reader to provide initial, real-time checks prior to entry for self-service



Elo Access provides a user-friendly and efficient platform for completing health check self-assessments.

employee and guest screening.¹⁵ And with advanced integration options, this system can be integrated into access control systems or backend employee databases for added protection and to provide early warning should temperatures trend upwards.

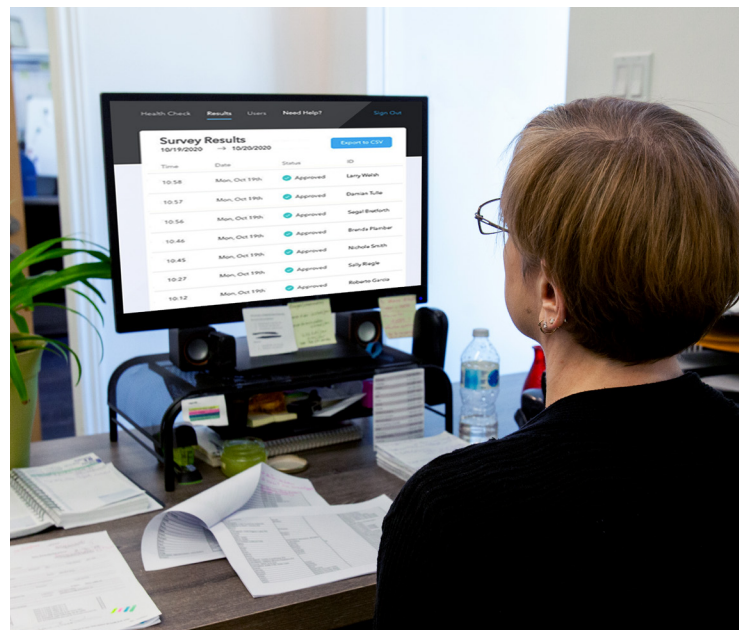
- Automated Health Check Self-Assessments.** A health check self-assessment, such as the one created by the CDC, should be used for screening all employees, suppliers, and visitors prior to entering the workplace. The self-assessment asks about proximity to others who have been confirmed as positive for COVID-19, and also asks about the most common symptoms such as fever, trouble breathing, chills, muscle aches, loss of smell or taste.¹⁶ Although some organizations use paper forms and clipboards, a better way is through use of an interactive screen, ideally dedicated and free standing. That's why we created Elo Access,TM our modular platform for hosting wellness questionnaires.¹⁷ This frees personnel from handing out and recovering clipboards, and automatically provides electronic storage of forms, which is easier and more efficient than dealing with paper-based forms. And with an edge-to-edge glass design, Elo touchscreens are much easier to sanitize than traditional clipboards, pens and pencils with a design meant for rigorous cleaning protocols.¹⁸
- Controlled Points of Entry.** Every point of workplace entry should be controlled in order to maintain a safe environment. As noted above, each entry point should have a non-contact temperature sensor and a screen for completing the health check self-assessment. The temperature sensor kiosk and self-assessment screen can be integrated with door lock access to ensure completion at entry ways not manned by a receptionist or security. Limiting points of access can result in unwanted crowding. And there should be a sufficient number of temperature sensing and self-assessment devices—spread safely apart—so the flow of arriving employees isn't adversely affected. Multiple devices, safely distanced, also help ensure user privacy.
- Monitoring Temperature Sensing and Self-Assessment Results.** Part of the reopening planning process should include procedures for monitoring and reacting to adverse temperature sensing or self-assessment results. Ideally, an employee or visitor registering a fever, or recording multiple COVID symptoms on the self-assessment, would not enter the workplace. But you should also consider the potential for someone ignoring warnings in order to make an important meeting or complete a critical task. Your devices should be able

to integrate with dashboards that can be monitored in real time or issue alerts to designated HR, management, or security personnel who can intercede to keep your workspace safe.

5. Managing Visitors

Visitors should be managed in much the same way as employees—with temperature sensing and health check self-assessments. As noted above, planning and policy is required for dealing with potential positives.

While all visitors should be required to wear a face mask, a visitor with an elevated temperature, or a self-assessment listing symptoms, might be directed to undergo a second, employee-facilitated screening utilizing a handheld thermometer to verify the kiosk



Elo Access provides admins with the information they need in one location. Know who visited, their results, when they occurred and what was inputted.

result. If the elevated temperature is validated, the visitor may be asked to reschedule.

While a variety of actions can be taken, it all begins with threat detection through use of temperature sensing and health check self-assessments.

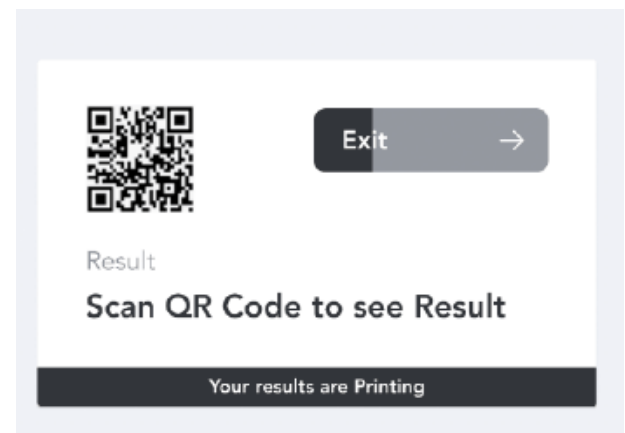
6. Protecting Employee Privacy

COVID-19 has paradoxically put an emphasis on the importance of the health status of all we come in contact with, while creating, at least in some, a hypersensitivity about their own health status. The fears can be exacerbated by articles about the virus lingering and rebounding, making it difficult—without repeated testing—to be sure just when recovery has been achieved. A recent report from the Mayo Clinic, “COVID-19 (coronavirus) stigma: What it is and how to reduce,” notes that “Some people worry that individuals who have recently completed quarantine have COVID-19 and are contagious, but there is no current evidence to suggest that’s the case.”¹⁹ Steps to ensure employee privacy include:

- **Respecting the Employee.** Having plans and procedures in place to protect employee privacy—and clearly communicating this—is important to building trust with employees that their information is secure. Missteps will cause loss of trust, which can be difficult to rebuild. Much of this is already covered by existing employment law, but the pandemic introduces new complexities such as dealing with employees leaving for—and returning from—quarantine, or treatment for the virus. HR and Legal should be key players in this area.
- **Protecting Information Captured by Temperature Sensors and Self-Assessments.** HR and Legal should also play key roles in formulating policy and practices for handling information generated from temperature sensors and health self-assessments, including how readings that may indicate potential for infection are handled. Basic questions include who sees the data, and what actions are taken and by whom. An SHRM article

“A Guide to Employee Temperature Checks,” underscores what should seem obvious: “The temperature reading should be kept confidential.”²⁰

- **Ensuring Privacy while Using Screening Devices.** Ideally, temperature checks should be self-administered from an automated kiosk such as EloAccess.²¹ Having an employee perform the temperature check requires a dedicated person equipped with PPE, and also results in a direct conversation that could be overheard by others: “Your temperature reading is high. You have to go home.” Another benefit is that the kiosk reading is seen as a screening measure, not a medical one. Best practices dictate that a temperature screening kiosk should be positioned so that others waiting for entry can’t see the reading. And, of course, you will want a sufficient number of safely spaced kiosks to handle your anticipated traffic flow.



Protect privacy with the option to view results on a personal device by enabling employees and guest to scan a QR code on the display with Elo Access.

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point-of-sale terminals, interactive signage, gaming machines, hospitality systems, point-of-care displays and transportation applications—to name a few. Learn more at [EloTouch.com](https://www.elotouch.com). ■

7. Preparing for Adverse Events & Shut Downs

Your reopening plans should include policies and procedures for dealing with adverse events—such as employees contracting COVID 19, including protocols for which co-workers would need to self-quarantine, or at what point a department or other segment would be shut down. And, finally, your plans should include policies and procedures for events beyond your control. No matter how efficiently you have prepared and safeguarded your own workplace, a spike in infections beyond your walls could cause local or national health officials to order a sweeping shut down.

About Elo

As a leading global supplier of interactive solutions, #EloIsEverywhere. To date, we have deployed more than 25 million installations in over 80 countries. A new Elo touchscreen is installed every 21 seconds, on average, somewhere in the world. Built on a unified architecture, Elo’s broad portfolio allows our customers to easily Choose, Configure, Connect & Control to create a unique experience. Choose from all-in-one systems, open-frame monitors and touchscreen monitors ranging from 10 to 70 inches. Configure with our unique Elo Edge Connect peripherals that allow use-specific solutions. Connect & Control with EloView®, a secure, cloud-based platform for Android-powered devices. EloView enables secure deployment and management of a large network of interactive systems designed to reduce operating costs while increasing up-time and security.

In addition to access control solutions, consumers can find Elo touchscreen solutions in self-service kiosks,

1. <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/06/29/snapshot-new-working-home-economy/>
2. <https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/insights-from-genslers-u-s-work-from-home-survey-2020>
3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/technology/working-from-home-failure.html>
4. <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/return-to-workplace-guide-for-hr-leaders/>
5. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/coronavirus-safety-plans.aspx>
6. <https://www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/insights-from-genslers-u-s-work-from-home-survey-2020>
7. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ronashkenas/2016/05/09/before-starting-a-project-get-your-sponsor-on-board/#7e9ad4cb79c9>
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9. <https://hbr.org/2020/06/help-your-employees-manage-their-reentry-anxiety>
10. <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/return-to-workplace-guide-for-hr-leaders/>
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13. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>
14. <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/company-news/update-from-amazons-operations-network>
15. <https://www.elotouch.com/elo-access>
16. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/covid-19-self-assessment-tool>
17. <https://www.elotouch.com/elo-access>
18. <https://myelo.elotouch.com/support/s/article/Cleaning-Methods-for-Elo-Touchscreens-COVID-19>
19. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-stigma/art-20484278>
20. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/eeoc-coronavirus-temperature.aspx>
21. <https://www.elotouch.com/elo-access>
22. <https://www.elotouch.com/elo-access>
23. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/coronavirus/article/CDC-adds-six-new-COVID-19-symptoms-to-list-15228647.php>

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* Screening questions for the Elo Access App are the responsibility of the user, who must confirm compliance with applicable data privacy, medical data privacy, and employment laws and regulations, including HIPAA compliance. Not available in all areas.

** The Elo Access Temperature Sensor is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, mitigate, or prevent any disease or health condition, including COVID-19. An indication of an elevated body temperature should be confirmed by a secondary evaluation method (such as a non-contact infrared thermometer or clinical grade contact thermometer). Use only as directed; various environmental and methodological factors can impact thermal imaging. HIPAA compliance is responsibility of user. This is not an FDA-approved device. Not available in all areas.

