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Seven Steps to Reopen the Retail Workplace Post-Covid 19

Elo White Paper

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Seven Steps to Reopen the Retail Workplace Post-Covid 19

For more than a year much of retail's head office has worked from home but as the vaccination programme accelerates the end of this enforced home working is in sight. However, many will be returning to very different workplaces and very different working practices. Retail leaders must prepare for reopening offices that serve different purposes and have watertight health and safety measures to ensure employees are protected and risks minimised. This is no easy task and will involve collaboration across many different retail departments and stakeholders from HR and legal, to health and safety and security.

STEP 1: Planning for Hybrid Working

When retail headquarters reopen in the coming months one of the big differences will be how often workers will frequent the office. Hybrid working - which combines at-home and in-office working - is being heralded as the new norm for many. Colliers International's 'Exploring the post-Covid-19 Workplace survey found that 56% of EMEA respondents would like to continue working from home for 1 to 2 days a week¹. In headhunter Korn Ferry's UK Retail Chair Survey 2020², which polled the leaders of the UK's largest retailers, more flexible working was the most prevalent change retailers will put in place following Covid-19, with 92% of respondents saying this was in their plans. 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.

In the Korn Ferry report, electricals retailer AO.com chair Geoffrey Cooper admitted that productivity had gone down since the business had instigated home working.

Meanwhile, River Island chair Ben Lewis says workers lose "peripheral vision through solely working at home. "In the future, the office will have a purpose - that of coming together - for ideas generation, relationship building and deal making - where physical and personal contact matters. If you are sitting there just doing emails and calls, then it doesn't matter where you are." UK online

56% of EMEA respondents would like to continue working from home

retailer The Very Group has redesigned its Liverpool head office to facilitate hybrid working, creating "the optimum team working space" for its 2,100-strong workforce when they return later this year³.

The open-plan environment has breakout and collaboration spaces intended to lend themselves to interactive group working, while hot desks have been installed to allow workers to set up anywhere on site. The Very Group chief people officer Sarah Willett describes the space as "high-energy, high-impact creativity and collaboration". "We want our people to be productive at home and super-collaborative in the office," she says. "But our plans aren't just about productivity. They're about how we can offer our colleagues true value and get value back in return. By offering better balance, increased flexibility, interesting work and an amazing place to come together, we can attract even more outstanding people - and retain the ones we already have."

Safety Measures. However, a return to the office, even when many employees will only be working there for part of the week, will require additional safety measures.

From temperature checks to sensor automation to distancing of desks, retail bosses need to take action to make offices Covid secure. This includes measures that allow for visitors such as suppliers, manufacturers and selling partners to attend meetings. As BRC and Dixons Carphone chair Tony DeNunzio told Korn Ferry: "The most important lesson learnt through this crisis has been ensuring that colleagues and customers stay safe. Health and safety has become the number one priority."

And it's a top priority for employees too. According to trade union TUC's Britain Thinks survey⁴, carried out last September, more than three-quarters of workers have at least one concern about returning to the workplace. More than a third (34%) said they were worried about not being able to socially distance from colleagues while a similar number (32%) said they were concerned about exposing others in their household to a greater risk as a result of returning to work. Retail leaders must address these concerns and have a robust health and safety plans and systems in place before we make a return to the workplace.

STEP 2: Focusing on Employees and Their Experience

With so many employees concerned about the health and safety implications of going back to work, retailers need to create a safe and welcome environment, not just physically but psychologically. Here are some tips to get it right. With so many employees concerned about the health and safety implications of going back to work, retailers need to create a safe and welcome environment, not just physically but psychologically. Here are some tips to get it right.

- **Gain an Executive Sponsor.** Having a senior sponsor, preferably the CEO, who is prepared to clear any roadblocks in preparing the office for reopening will make the process less challenging. Such senior buy-in can help progress such a major project, which will cut across many functions from HR and operations to security. Retailers should also acknowledge that this is a stressful time for

employees and address it. The pandemic has impacted everyone's lives in different ways and unbeknownst to employers, individuals could be experiencing financial stress, deep fears or emotional turmoil. Some may fear that a return to work could raise the possibility of carrying the virus home to spouses, children or extended family, including elderly parents, while others may have an underlying health condition that increases their own risk.

- **Clear Communication.** Clear communication is required that acknowledges anxieties, while explaining all of the safeguards put in place. Business leaders must let workers know they are not alone and that their employer is on their side, working diligently to keep everyone safe. Transparent communication helps employees see that their organisation is deeply invested in keeping everyone safe. McKinsey & Company's "Communications get personal: How Leaders Can Engage Employees During a Return to Work" report advises: "Clear and inspiring communication is central to making this next unsteady phase a success." "Leaders will not know all the answers, but as long as they communicate openly and candidly, employees will respect being brought into the conversation."⁵ Workers will also want, and need, to know what is happening to keep them safe, and should be alerted when something has gone wrong – such as a colleague testing positive for the virus. Technology can help to improve communications with employees. Many retailers are bringing in instant-messaging apps, such as Workplace from Facebook, to improve internal communications. Retailers such as Clarins, Farfetch, Sephora and Dixons Carphone are looking at deploying new chat functions and live streams to communicate directly with their entire organisations. Technology can also be used to facilitate collaboration and ease isolation for those working remotely. The addition of more video collaboration and interactive huddle rooms, where on-site employees virtually engage with offsite employees, such as Elo's Huddles Kit, will aid in those efforts.
- **Accommodating variations in employee comfort levels.** Employers must also accommodate workers with varying comfort levels. While some may be

overjoyed to be back in the offices, others may be terrified of the potential health risks – especially if they are sole breadwinners 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. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has issued the helpful guide “Safe return to work: Guide for employers on COVID-19 prevention”⁶, which notes: “The concerns that workers have during the pandemic are likely to vary from person to person. “Thus, the first step in supporting workers’ mental health is to understand how they are feeling and what the factors influencing their well-being really are.” Retailers should undertake employee surveys to establish how their workforce is feeling but also use more intimate manager-employee conversations to draw out specific concerns from people on an individual level. The World Economic Forum notes that personalised communication and content could be used to address specific needs and concerns.⁷ Managers will play an integral role in the reopening of retail offices and should be prepared for a new, more emotional environment. In addition to their own stresses, managers will need to be sensitive to the anxieties their employees are carrying.

temperature data for each person detected in the field of view.



STEP 3: Introducing Technology to Ensure Safety

Technology will undoubtedly play a role in workplace reopening. For example, The European Parliament adopted mandatory temperature checks for visitors to its buildings and said that “detection of an increased body temperature before entering the Parliament’s buildings and subsequent denial of access can further reduce the spread of and infection with the COVID-19 virus.”⁸ Elo manufactures devices critically important to reopening offices. These include:

- The Elo Temperature Sensor Pro, which uses an infrared bolometer, 2D camera and heatmap temperature-reading technology all in one of the easy-to-attach Elo Edge Connect touchscreen accessories. Paired with an Elo I-Series touchscreen, the temperature sensor can detect faces, automatically adjust based on height, and output

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

- The EloView device management platform allows employers to deploy and securely manage their entire network of Android-powered interactive temperature sensing and self-assessment kiosks remotely. From anywhere around the world, content can be deployed, settings managed and maintained to reduce operating costs while increasing up-time and security.

Elo can also work with a retailer’s choice of software to manage visitors safely coming to offices. With Elo’s

modular platform, users can easily deploy a wellness questionnaire, and temperature screening using EloView or for advanced functionality and multi-system integration, leverage Elo's robust network of third-party software partners to create a seamless solution to fit into any business.

It is important that retailers choose technology that not only meets the immediate needs brought on by Covid-19 but can serve the wider needs of their business and can be scaled. Elo's modular platform can work with existing software and can be easily adapted as needs change in the future. Whether for access control, self-service, wayfinding or almost any application, retailers can seamlessly configure Elo's interactive displays to create a tailored solution.

STEP 4: Keeping the Workplace Safe

Community spread has been the primary path for COVID-19 transmission, and social distancing has emerged as the single best prevention. The workplace is a community, and special steps need to be taken to maintain social distancing. When Primark reopened its Dublin headquarters after the first lockdown it put in place measures such as staggered arrivals, departures and lunchtimes as well as new seating guidelines and a workplace flow system throughout the building. The fashion retailer also capped office capacity at 30%.

However, 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 office cubicles, increasing the spacing between workstations, reducing occupancy rates, staggering arrival times, providing hand sanitation systems, establishing new cleaning and sanitisation regimes, providing personal protective equipment (PPE), and a spectrum of other measures. Initiatives retailers should look to introduce include:

- **Temperature Checks.** Everyone entering the building – whether employee, supplier or client – 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 of Covid-19

and other airborne illnesses. Amazon, for example, checks temperatures upon arrival for more than 100,000 employees a day. 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 employee that would be assigned to take the readings. The Elo Temperature Sensor Pro non-contact temperature reader provides initial, real-time checks prior to entry for self-service employee and guest screening. And with advanced integration options, this system can be integrated into access control systems or back-end employee databases for added protection and to provide early warning should temperatures trend upwards.



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

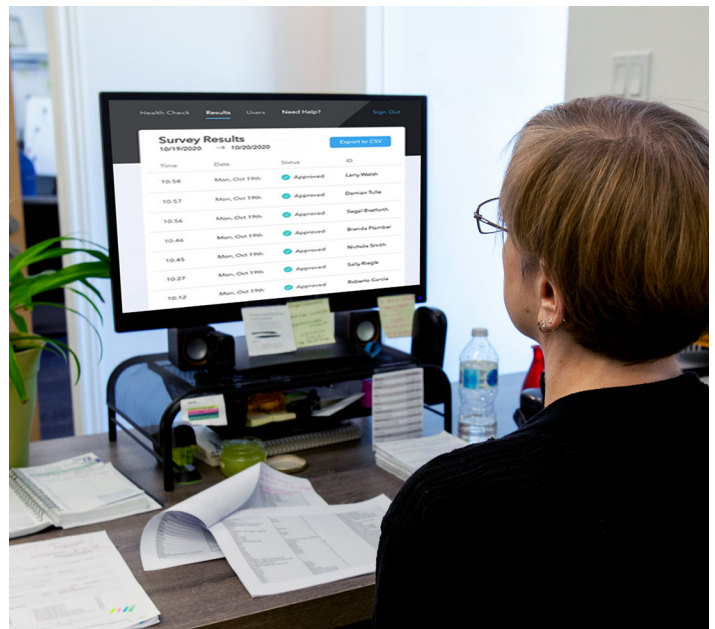
- **Automated Health Check Self-assessments.** The health check self-assessment, such as the one created by Google⁹, should be used for screening all employees, suppliers, and visitors prior to entering the workplace. The self-assessment tool asks about proximity to others who have been confirmed as 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. An interactive screen, ideally dedicated and free standing, is a better way to carry this out rather than via paper questionnaires. The Elo Access solution is a modular platform for hosting wellness questionnaires on a touchscreen, which frees personnel from handing out and recovering clipboards, and automatically provides electronic storage of documents, which is easier and more efficient than dealing with paper-based forms. With an edge-to-edge glass design, Elo touchscreens are also much easier to sanitise than traditional clipboards, pens and pencils with a design meant for rigorous cleaning protocols.

- **Controlled Points of Entry.** Every point of workplace entry must be controlled in order to maintain a safe environment. Limiting points of access can result in unwanted crowding but 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 entrances not staffed by a receptionist or security. 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.** Retailers need to put in place 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 employers should also consider the potential for someone ignoring warnings in order to take part in an important meeting or completing a critical task. Business 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 the workplace safe.

STEP 5: Managing Visitors

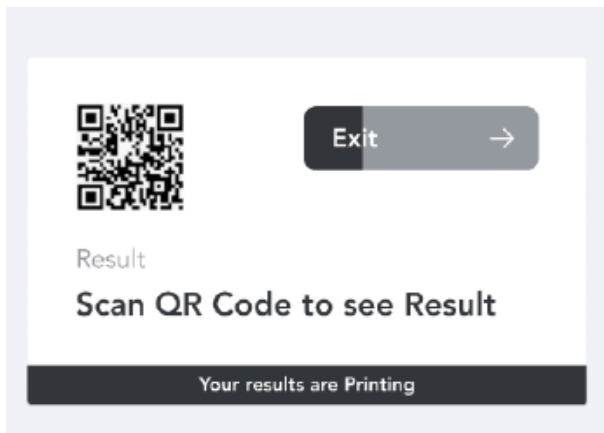
Visitors should be managed in much the same way as employees – with temperature sensing and health check self-assessments. As noted above, planning and policy is required for dealing with potential positives. While all visitors should be required to wear a face mask, a visitor with an elevated temperature, or a self assessment listing symptoms, might be directed to undergo a second, employee-facilitated screening using a handheld medical-grade thermometer to verify the kiosk 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.



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

STEP 6: Protecting Employee Privacy

COVID-19 has 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. A recent academic article by researchers at Cairo University and Ain Shams University in Egypt notes that: “The government should request employers to prevent and curb discrimination against confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 within the business.”¹⁰ Measures retailers should take include:



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

- **Protecting employee privacy.** Having plans and procedures in place to protect employee privacy – and clearly communicating this – is important to building trust with staff 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 departments will be crucial in developing such plans. This includes formulating policy and practices for handling information generated from temperature sensors and health self-assessments. Local or regional health agencies may require record storage for use should contact tracing later be needed for public health efforts. This is why temperature readings and self-assessments should be performed using computerised devices that can automatically transmit data for electronic storage. HR and legal should guide 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. A protocol issued by the Italian government underscores what should seem obvious: “In the event of temporary isolation due to the temperature threshold being exceeded, ensure arrangements to guarantee the confidentiality and dignity of the worker.”

- **Ensuring privacy while using screening devices.** Ideally, temperature checks should be self administered from an automated kiosk such as the Elo Access solution. 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, such as “your temperature reading is high. You have to go home.” 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, employers will want a sufficient number of safely spaced kiosks to handle anticipated traffic flow. A kiosk-style self-assessment device such as the Elo Access solution is ideal for health check screenings and, when paired with a business’ third-party software, can automatically save records to accommodate local or regional health mandates. All devices can be instantly updated should the WHO update symptoms, as was done when loss of smell and taste were identified.

STEP 7: Preparing What to do During an Outbreak

Reopening plans should include policies and procedures for dealing with adverse events – such as employees

contracting COVID-19, including protocols for which workers would need to self-quarantine, or at what point a department or other segment would be shut down. Plans should include policies and procedures for events beyond a business' control. No matter how efficiently businesses have prepared and safeguarded their workplace, a spike in infections in the outside world could cause city, regional or national health officials to order a sweeping shutdown.

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 and Connect & Control to create a unique experience. Choose from all-in-one systems, open-frame monitors and touchscreen monitors ranging from 10 to 65 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, 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.eu](https://www.elotouch.eu).

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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.

