

Whitepaper

Planning for the new norm: A guide to RTO & Beyond

Today: Current state

The pandemic has had a significant impact on how we work today. Most people have been working from home for close to a year now, leaving our offices mostly empty. For Corporate Real Estate teams, the pandemic has put an even bigger spotlight on massive space underutilization, which was already the case before COVID-19. As the world of work is going through a phase of unparalleled change, CRE teams need to be nimble and adaptive in order to optimize portfolios for RTO and beyond.

Tomorrow: Return to Office (RTO) & Planning for the "new norm"

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CRE objectives for 2021 include:

- Identifying opportunities for overall portfolio reduction
- Defining the "hybrid" workplace of the future
- Leveraging real time utilization data and space analytics to inform future space design and repurpose underutilized space
- Driving an enhanced employee experience and improved productivity

Real time utilization data and infrastructure is paramount to be prepared for the return to office and beyond. The window for preparation has already started, and the time to make sure you're ready is now.

Portfolio Reduction

Underutilization was a known problem pre-Covid. With enterprises adopting more hybrid workplace strategies in which working from home plays a larger role and COVID pressuring revenue streams across industries, cutting real estate costs has become a priority. Understanding what areas of the portfolio are under-utilized and translating these insights into portfolio downsizing is the agenda for most CRE teams. Without actual insights in utilization across the portfolio this is like taking shots in the dark. In order to attain essential insights in utilization, leading enterprises are looking for scalable technology solutions that provide real-time insights.



74% of Corporate Real Estate decision makers expects moderate to extensive changes to their real estate footprints in 2021 and beyond



CRE objectives for 2021 include:

While working from home has become the norm, future work will likely be distributed across home, the office and satellite offices going forward. In the post-pandemic future most employees will have more freedom when it comes to choosing at which of these locations they do their work. This will make managing the supply and demand even more challenging than it has been in the past, as the demand for space will be far more unpredictable.

Until recently, it was a challenge to understand how workspaces were utilized at the building level, let alone an entire portfolio. Companies relied on anecdotal data gathered via short term utilization studies that often had people walking the building with floor plan print outs and clipboards which only provided snapshot data.

With advances in technology, valuable and actionable utilization data can be mined from badging systems, WiFi networks and sensors.

Badging Systems:

Access card systems have always been a low cost source of high level utilization data to determine the number of people entering a building on a given day, but do not provide information around how employees interact with space once they arrived or when they left the building

WiFi Access Points:

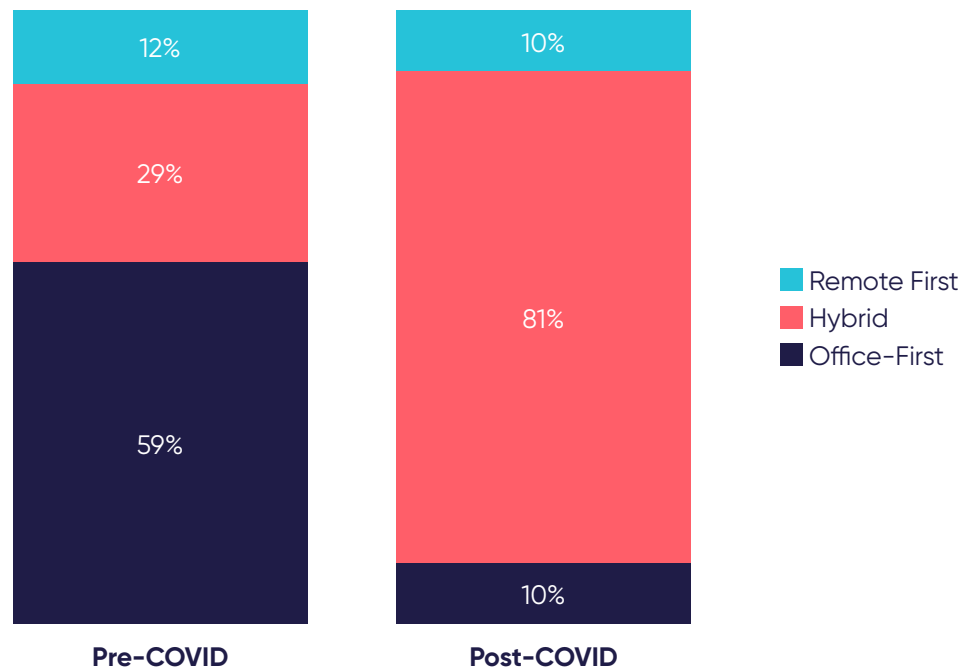
Modern WiFi access point platforms can collect anonymized location on connected wireless devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops. This provides directional utilization data by portfolio, building, floor and zone. WiFi utilization data can be captured at scale very quickly and at a reasonable cost.

Sensors:

Sensors provide very accurate and granular data that can be used to understand how individual space types are being used and for how long. Computer Vision sensors have become the most popular due to their wide coverage and lack of intrusiveness to the general employee.

The Future is NOT Binary

Which Most Closely Matches Your Company's Approach to Work?



Which Most Closely Matches Your Company's Approach to Work? image by CoreNet Global, Cushman & Wakefield

Data driven space design and repurpose underutilized space

The nature of work done at the workplace is expected to change. Unispace head of Strategy Albert De Plazaola: "Moving forward, the office will exist to satisfy our social and collaboration needs, functioning as an idea and revenue generator, while our home office will provide us with the opportunity to focus and learn." The assumption is that we will see less desk space and more collaborative spaces needed in the "new norm".

The prevailing thought is that future offices will be turned "inside out" from 70% desks and 30% collaboration space to 30% desks and 70% collaboration space.

When employees come to the office mainly to collaborate for 1 to 3 days per week, it will be difficult to justify each employee having an assigned desk. Desk booking and room booking solutions paired with sensors has become a hot trend for managing the workplace. This is important in ensuring that visitors, employees that usually work remotely and part-time employees are assured of adequate workspace without the expense of providing these individuals with full-time assigned workspace.

But before acting on concepts like these, many are looking to inform the thesis through the use of real-time space utilization technology. Actual space utilization data collected via a variety of data sources, enables data-driven decision workplace design and will ultimately be the most cost effective way to address this challenge.



87% of employees say the office is important for collaborating with team members and building relationships – their top-rated needs for the office (PWC)



Employee experience and improved productivity

Leading corporations are focused on how the workplace can fuel improved employee productivity to drive top line results. Many believe new workplace designs will need to be implemented to facilitate higher levels of collaboration and diminishing use of permanent desks. Employees expect to be facilitated to do their best work when they elect to spend time in the office versus working from home.

Real-time utilization data can be a strong ally to improve the employee experience when returning to office. For employee safety, COVID capacity thresholds can be set per zone with automated alerts that are sent out when these thresholds are exceeded. For employee experience, real-time utilization can be visualized on kiosks and through mobile applications. Employees can quickly identify congested areas and choose a space that matches their planned activity for the day.



64% of millennials miss the office, and 80% of high performers have missed their office greatly during lockdown (JLL)



The pandemic legacy

The final impact of the pandemic on the workplace is unclear at this point. It will likely differ by industry, by company, and even geography. So how do corporations prepare for a future that is unknown?

RTO means need for utilization insights at scale

We are in the midst of unprecedented workplace change. Eventually all offices across the globe will reopen, and the requirement to understand how offices around the world will be used will be stronger than ever. Corporations will need to be nimble and adaptive in their return to office activities. Utilization data helps to continuously measure and validate return to office tactics and plan for the new norm. Real Estate and Workplace teams can now make data-driven changes to workplace design and be agile as the landscape changes.

Introducing HubStar

HubStar is a Building Intelligence Platform that provides real estate & workplace teams with aggregated utilization data and guided analytics for data-driven decision making. HubStar enables customers to reduce overall real estate spend while positively impacting employee productivity and workplace experience.

Aggregate:

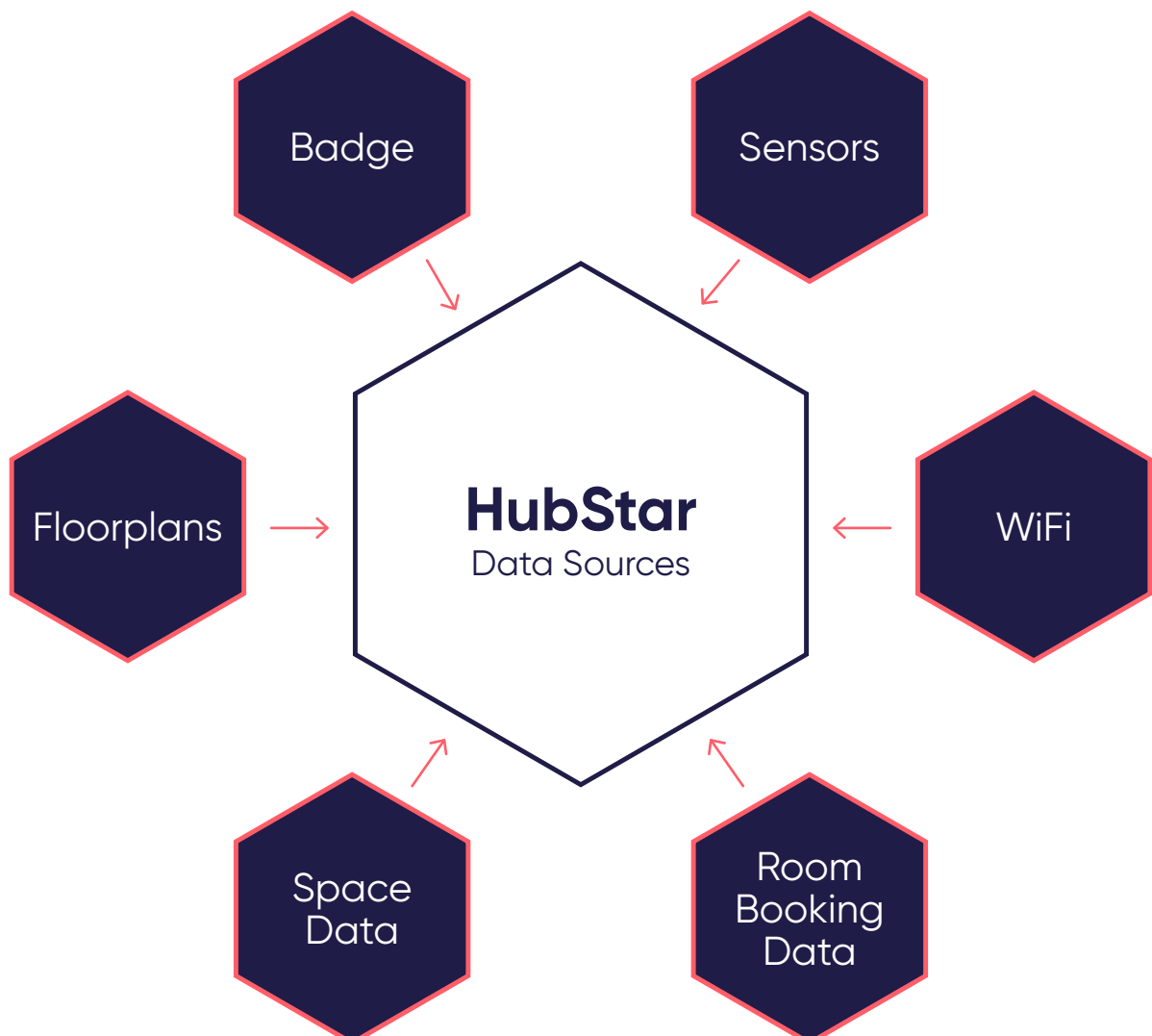
HubStar consolidates multiple utilization data sources across the portfolio by leveraging its powerful API and data normalization capabilities.

Assess:

HubStar a building intelligence platform or "single pane of glass" of space utilization data with guided analytics to drive optimal results.

Act:

HubStar operationalizes utilization data via "push" alerts to RE stakeholders when user defined utilization thresholds have been met.



Conclusion

Uncertainty around when COVID will end and what the new norm will look like is making accurate utilization data more important than ever. In order to get utilization insights across a large CRE portfolio quickly, it is critical to be able to leverage utilization data from multiple sources, yet analyze the data from a single analytics view.

HubStar aggregates multiple utilization data sets by leveraging pre-built connectors to leading WiFi network and sensor providers. Data is then normalized and presented through a single, centralized view versus independent silo analytics for each data source. Finally, HubStar offers predictive, "guided" analytics to identify utilization outliers and trends and pushes them to the user. Risks and opportunities are presented to the user before they happen to ensure return to office is a success.

**Book a meeting with us to learn how you
can leverage our technology to meet your
workplace objectives now**

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