



Encouraging in-office employees to adopt the new normal.

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The problem with the 1.5m economy is it relies on one single chaotic factor... people.

The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges the importance of behaviour in managing pandemics. Their [Outbreak Communications Guide](#) suggests behaviour changes can reduce spread by as much as 80%.

So how do you ensure colleagues in your office are adhering to the post-covid office rules? Here are three tried-and-tested strategies to implement in your offices to encourage the right social distancing and hygiene behaviours.

1. Lay out your expectations

Your employees or visitors won't adapt to new behaviours if they don't know or understand what is expected of them. First you must lay these expectations out, clearly, and via as many mediums as possible: email, signage, verbally, and especially through your own (and leaders) behaviour.

2. Make it visible

People are more likely to follow the rules if they can be publicly observed as doing so. Meaning if you request people to stay 1.5m apart from one another, they are more likely to do so if you mark out circles or crosses on the floor that are 1.5m apart. Being seen standing on a mark in this instance is publicly observable and considered as good behaviour by others, which feeds into our natural inclination to be a 'good citizen'.

3. Make it easy

Changing our ingrained behaviour is a difficult task, and naturally we will find every excuse possible to avoid doing so. So eliminate excuses as much as possible.

Are you requesting your employees & visitors to wear a mask? Consider making them available in a visible place with signage. Don't want employees sharing an elevator? Shut it off, open up the stairways, and provide clear signage (except of course to those with mobility impairments). Employees are not to share desks & equipment? Bring back the name plaques and dust off the label maker. Want to ensure no large meetings are taking place? Lock and close off the large meeting rooms.

Whatever it takes, and as silly as it may seem in the moment, these tiny interventions are crucial to encouraging sustainable behaviour change. Practicing these new behaviours in our post-covid offices is imperative to global public health. Take comfort in the fact that encouraging employees and visitors to adopt the 'new normal' is saving lives.



Elyse Nijse is a Wellbeing Specialist focused on designing programs to improve the physical and mental health of people at work.

"My work helps those who are in mental health crisis, all the way through to those who are thriving. And now with ElyseCare I'm on a mission to improve how we manage mental health & wellbeing at work, globally."

Read more about Elyse [here](#).