

The dream post-COVID-19 workplace and McLaren to mortgage historic cars

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Is it safe to return to work?

As a lockdown relief roadmap is presented by Boris Johnson and return to work begins, people are concerned about how safe an office will be in the light of a global pandemic. Changes around health and safety, social distancing, air quality and temperature will have to be adapted to keep employees safe while in their office. Look at The Edge in Amsterdam, voted one of the most sustainable buildings in the world, now adapting its sensor-packed offices to the reality of living with a contagious and potentially life-threatening virus. Coen van Oostrom, the founder of the real-estate firm that built it, told the BBC that there are a couple of “no brainer” changes that can happen immediately.

Air quality will also require serious attention, as now that the chances of the virus spreading are higher if not enough fresh air is circulating, and people will be increasingly aware of it. The Edge, unlike most buildings, already provides employees with a phone app that allows them to see what temperature the office is and what the air quality is, as well as allowing them to order their lunch from the canteen. Seating plans will also have to be rethought carefully to make sure social distancing rules are respected at all times.

“The doors can currently be opened by hand but it is a small step to be able to open them by voice control or via an app, and we want to do that to make sure the virus isn’t spreading that way. We also have cameras that can see how many people are on a floor and with a software update they are also able to measure how far people are away from each other, and we can send a warning to people’s phones if they are too close to each other. Not everyone likes it and there is a feeling that it is an intrusion on their privacy, so we haven’t decided yet if we want to use it when everyone is back in the office.” – Coen van Oostrom

Weston Williamson + Partners envisions social-distancing office

With returning to work now a close reality, London-based architecture studio Weston Williamson + Partners have outlined their plans for a social-distancing workplace, with transparent screens around desks, hands-free doors and a barista, to allow employees to safely return to its office after the coronavirus lockdown. The studio has created graphics to illustrate the changes it plans to make to its office to allow employees to return safely to work.

Weston Williamson + Partners intends to combine changes in working practices with physical alterations to its workspace to give the employees that want to return the opportunity to do so.

“The drawings show our response with the focus on safety. We want to give our colleagues the choice. Some are very enthusiastic about moving out of their flats and getting back to some sort of normality. Others have some concerns. We need to be mindful of both. It’s a whole new level of flexible working.” – Chris Williamson

McLaren offers classic cars to secure virus help

McLaren is considering raising money by mortgaging its historic car collection and factory to see it through the coronavirus crisis. The Formula One team owner and supercar maker have seen sales and F1 advertising revenues hit as countries globally went into lockdown. Cars on show at McLaren’s Surrey HQ include F1 winners from the 1980s and ’90s and Le Mans competitors. McLaren would not disclose details but said it was exploring funding options.

A possible option is raising up to £300M in loans secured against McLaren's high-tech production factory and racing car collection, including those driven by the legendary Ayrton Senna. The loans would be repaid once car sales pick up and the F1 season, currently suspended, returns to normal. The company, which employs 4,000 people, is using the government's job furlough scheme. But it is thought to have had a request for aid rejected because not enough other fund-raising options had been pursued.

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Article by MADDYNESS