Post Pandemic Predictions

Design Solutions and Strategies
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BEHAVIORAL STATES

Looking globally, each life stage/generation has weathered the corona virus differently, rapidly adapting as each brought new news and ways of living. Their new realities have pushed them to evolve and expand their view on society, work, and interaction. Understanding each generation can provide insights into new modes of acceptable living.
As one of the generations with the highest risk, this cohort has learned to embrace virtual connection while redefining their retirement plans.

Online services have risen in use with this generation due to limited access, and that is a trend that will continue post-pandemic now that they have established a routine.

Still having a desire to work, this group will be looking to reenter the workplace to offset losses to their retirement plans.

ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATION #1
Face-to-face interaction and connection to a person not an app is still key for this generation. How can you engage using low-touch tech in a personal way?
Having moved into mid-management and even the C suite, this group is fighting to build resiliency in themselves and develop new collaborative skills, while also running the household, becoming teachers, and caring for their parents.

Family has become central to their lives, but the stress of this inequitable work-life balance at home is starting to create a profound new sense of burnout. Quality downtime is key and allowing for emotional support is now recognized as necessary by this generation.

Engagement through self-care and community support will be of high value to this cohort.
MILLENNIALS

Just as the previous two generations, this is the second financial crisis for Millennials. Almost half of this generation have reported losing their jobs or had hours cut.

With a new understanding of the fragility of their world, they are less likely to take risks in the future, which includes reducing spending in the short term, and will want to upskill their lives to prevent such occurrences from happening again.

Already delaying adulthood, this cohort will postpone major purchases and some life milestones to even later in life. This will increase the need for well-being as this was already the most anxious generation in history.

ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATION #3

Implement programs that offer education for financial futures and new skill sets that can help Millennials pivot to new work offerings and offer a sense of calm amidst this trying time.
GEN Z

The pandemic period for this generation will be defined with moments of loss of major milestone events. Research shows that graduating during a recession can have lasting effects on their careers and lives.

Renting is the norm for this generation, and so being confined to smaller spaces will create a desire to want to expand their living quarters and access to the outside.

As the true “world changers,” they are finding collective solutions to combat these two issues already. Students from Brown University created a new platform to connect students with virtual internships and connections to new jobs.

ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATION #4
Consider offering connections to your business resources to allow Gen Zers to find ways to emerge fiscally sound post pandemic.
BEHAVIORAL PREDICTIONS

As we reemerge post pandemic, our lives and perspectives will forever be changed. Having been through a global pandemic, our predictions for key behavioral changes are listed below.

01 SPACEMAKERS
02 PTSD + C SUITE
03 DIGITAL EXTROVERSION
04 MENTAL HEALTH IS WEALTH
With the rise of **boundaries**, both figuratively and physically, being a pre-pandemic conversation, the priority of boundaries will only increase post pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is driving a shift towards a **frictionless, low-impact** society in which brands and consumers have little to no interaction **within a physical space**.

Reducing friction and offering a **low touch but high-impact**, fast and efficient experience that forgoes the need for human contact will be increasingly key.

**DESIGN CONSIDERATION #1**

Companies are responding with strategies that allow for little to no human interaction, while still providing excellent service. What does that look like in the built environment?
Having survived the pandemic and the stress associated, with lasting impacts to businesses globally, C-Suite executives and key decision makers will be likely consciously, or subconsciously, be dealing with effects of **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**.

Psychological studies demonstrate these key decisions may be more willing to accept **minimal losses today** if it means avoiding larger losses later.

This avoidant behavior is a symptom of anxiety and in the case of risk/reward may actually benefit individuals with respect to **decision making**. While we’re focusing on C-Suite this is globally throughout.

**DESIGN CONSIDERATION #2**

How can you tailor client meetings to consider this mindset and be better equipped with recommendations that feel safe to them?
DIGITAL EXTROVERSION

Having survived the COVID-19 pandemic, a higher priority will be placed on digital convenience and incorporation, with people’s reliance on technology being stronger than ever.

Companies will have to contend with customers’ enhanced expectations post pandemic, and find ways to engage that makes them feel safe and in control.

Successful companies will proactively explore financial opportunities that utilize digitalization including ways to presents, host virtual events, meetings and remote working.

DESIGN CONSIDERATION #3
What are ways spaces can be designed that capitalize on the concepts of digital integration in the modern world?
MENTAL HEALTH IS WEALTH

An increase of health and wellness spending is being forecast despite economic slowdown.

The COVID-19 pandemic means consumers are becoming more health conscious and are looking to solutions that make them feel in control.

This desire for lifestyle changes leave consumers in the early stages of their health journey, giving an opportunity for brands and retailers to shape the narrative around what it means to be healthy.

DESIGN CONSIDERATION #4
What design solutions can you recommend to clients that address health and wellness and set them up as success for lifestyle solutions?
MENTAL HEALTH IS WEALTH [CONTINUED]

*WGSN recommends designers,*

“Ensure a nuanced understanding of concerns, as health and wellness mean different things to different segments, and connect brand communications and offerings to various lifestyle pursuits”.

Pre-pandemic, anxiety was identified as a key cultural and generational concern, with fear now being recognized as an emergent emotional state.

Organizations and spaces must strategically design spaces that **enhance a sense** of security, well-being, and promote calm.

**DESIGN CONSIDERATION #5**

What does it mean to design a “safe” space? Check out [Kevin Mullinax’s blog](#) on the topic for ideas to incorporate into design.
MARK’S PERSPECTIVE + PREDICTIONS
Current Key Observations

Low-touch curbside pick up
At home entertainment
Back to Basics - finding simplicity
Prioritizing Nature
Combined video platforms
Value of Health + Wellness
Comfort + Control
Digital Reliance + Higher Expectations
Pop-Up Celebrations

Post-pandemic the reemergence of community will foster sporadic celebrations of events lost due to our time in isolation. These could be anniversaries, graduations, renewed workplace gatherings, etc. Small gatherings will focus on specific events and then quickly disperse. Memorials will become totems for people to visit, but not be places for contemplation. Instead these destinations will spark joy over contemplation and a feeling of loss.
Post-pandemic a recognition of our life in the anthropocene, or era of mankind affecting nature, will come to an end.

As humans begin reemerge and gather, these will happen in small clusters as we cautiously approach social gatherings once more.

We will be hyper aware of our effect on the world, and see changing thoughts toward urbanism, production, waste, and overuse.

New products will arise that can be local and homegrown over having to venture into a store, featuring convenience based consumerism.
Retail centers could see an *influx of timed-events* focused toward specific demographics to help *keep some isolationist thoughts*.

Some will continue to *self-isolate*, preferring to move to the country where their safety stands as a priority.

**Home-care will become the norm**, finding new methods of self-care that still provide community in small doses.

Little by little we will find our “new normal,” tempered by a *readiness to return to shelter*.
REENTERING
THE WORLD POST PANDEMIC

A key design principle for successful spaces have been increasingly beginning to rely on the perceived amount of comfort and control the end user feels is offered.

Post pandemic, these principles will find expedited growth in priority and to set up a space up for success will require aspects that allow for choice. Choice allows end users that comfort and control that satisfy them as individuals, personalizing the space to meet their needs in that moment.

Using these two key items will also allow for the regrowth of company culture.
A Futurist’s Perspective

The Lead of M+A’s Research and Innovation Team, Mark Bryan, Senior Interior Designer and Certified Futurist, examines three key trends as consequences of Coronavirus.

Localvists
Brands and spaces must satisfy this newly predominant group’s need for place, convenience, and community.

Repurposing Assets
Beyond the mall, spaces/assets must find ways to be easily adaptable and quickly agile.

Digitisation
As we look to limit contact with each other, there is an increasing spike in people looking to use digital forms of services and connection.
Localvists

Transparency + Stability
Locally sourced and close to home will satisfy the immediate fears of shopping and engaging with other businesses. Localvists will want to understand where their products came from and how they were handled.

Convenience
Starting with shopping, “Localvists” start online but expect mainstream retailers to develop a presence in local neighborhoods. Local delivery hubs will be used by more than food delivery platforms, perhaps even allowing for medicine dispensing. Locations closer to home for work will be highly sought after, giving co-working an even higher boost of interest.

Community
Focus on personalized service, strategically using highly-focused design concepts and experiential elements to be locally relevant.

Localism is will be a key trait in 2020 and beyond thanks to the need to stay close to home.
Repurposing Assets

**Agility**

Whether the asset is space, product, or service, all assets will need new modalities or shifts in their function that will not allow for disruption if markets, workplaces, etc shrink or close.

**Reinvention**

Singular-use spaces will become more hybridic in allowing use during “off-hours.” Weekend use will shift spaces to have less permanent structures that cannot be simply rearranged. Empty entertainment assets will be used by local IRL meetings or use. Shifts toward home office or childcare will require new thoughts on space as the need for being in the office changes, resulting in new workplace culture connections.

**Purpose**

The experiential purpose will be essential for assets to have relevance. The driver for engagement will be key as smaller communities look to find what is of value to them and connects them.
Digitisation

New norms of interactions are being accepted that provide connection, security, and wellbeing.

Connection

Video platforms and live-streaming views are preferred in times of crisis for security. These platforms will be elevated to break into more AR and VR experiences that feel personal and allow for human connection. Digital tourism will allow for global connection.

Security

Drones and unmanned services allow for a sense of personal space and safety. Shipping and delivery services that offer drive-up and humanless service will be prioritized.

Augmented Intelligence

Fear from AI has passed as we now understand how connective and helpful deep learning and information gathering can be. This will propel us to designate tasks to our helpful systems to allow us to focus on ourselves and upskilling our careers. Frictionless technology will have high impact on augmented living.
JOHNNA’S PERSPECTIVE + PREDICTIONS
Post pandemic, the priority of wellness and the control of disease spread will remain a high priority globally.

Principles of sustainability are predicted to have an extreme increase in priority and implementation throughout industries.

Elements like mindfulness, cleaning + air filtration, restoring nature, and human connections are among some strategies that will be a priority for our partners and clients.
The importance of emotional well-being will create a mindset of calm, intention, and preparedness.

**Trauma**

After being in crisis-mode, we will be more aware of trauma and our own resilience, discovering new ways of managing our stress.

**Emotional Well-Being**

Emotional support, stress reduction, and work-life balance will be key factors in moving towards a more mindful life.

**Respite**

To alleviate stress and anxiety, areas for respite will become a priority, allowing for a reset and increasing overall productivity and happiness.
Cleaning + Air Filtration

The importance of cleanliness will shift our focus to more rigorous cleaning policies, touch-free technologies, and air filtration.

Handwashing
The concern of germ spread has caused more frequent (and proper) handwashing, creating a healthy habit for all. This may push sinks out into the public realm to be more accessible on a more frequent basis.

Cleaning Policies
With attention to high-touch surfaces -- like door handles and light switches -- we already see increased cleaning protocols. This attention to cleaning will increase and will spark the desire for touch-free technologies.

Air Quality
Current air filtration and purification technologies will be embraced, and new technologies will emerge to enhance air quality -- increased ventilation duration, operable windows, bi-polar ionization.
Outdoor Recreation + Bikeways

Being outside -- walking, biking, running -- feels freeing in an otherwise restricted world. Our public parks have become places of hope and connection, inspiring us to not only protect our green spaces but also increase our recreational opportunities. Bikeways instead of empty roadways?

Local Farms + CSAs

Seeing empty shelves in groceries has demonstrated the value of local food production through locally-owned small farms and CSAs. Local nurseries and seed suppliers have also noticed an increase in sales for home gardens. People are investing in local, resilience and being self-sufficient.

Biophilic Design

Hearing the birds chirping outside, having our pets beside us while we work, hopping outside for a minute of fresh air -- we're realizing our connections with nature are more important than ever, giving us a moment to reconnect, refocus and recharge.

The importance of nature in our daily lives will spark interests in biophilic design, encourage more opportunities (and infrastructure) for recreation, and increase support for local farmers.

Restoring Nature
A back-to-basics approach to life will encourage more frequent and meaningful interactions with family and friends, as well as increased community aid and support.

**Back to Basics**

With the increased information from news outlets, finding ways to slow down and be intentional with our time will provide the emotional health and resilience to lead to more fulfilling lives, post-pandemic.

**Family Interactions**

With the increased isolation and crisis, connecting with our extended families, friends and communities will become critical for emotional support and human connection, sparking new and creative ways to communicate.

**Community Involvement**

This crisis is revealing the current disparities in our local communities and we’ve come together to help one another on a national scale. Community aid and support are key factors in community resilience and sustaining a prosperous future.
ACTIONABLE PERSPECTIVES
While there are many possibilities dependent on each company’s focus, we recognize the new modes of remote working will affect our current workplace models. Focused team interactions, understanding mental health, and providing comfort, control and choice will become key to engagement and workplace culture. Allowing for agile spaces and working will allow teams to be productive when and where they need to. Augmented intelligence and working will become the norm, with more vide/VR conferencing or digital avatars. Deep learning and data gathering will allow us to upskill new career pathways. The counterpoint to this will be tech-free zones to allow time to disconnect and focus on wellness. We will see the rise of touchless entries and safety/quarantine spaces to address times of crisis. Remote access means more touchdown spaces versus assigned desks, increasing the need for collaboration zones and allowing for denser footprints with more seating options that can still be separated. Asset gapping will be key to re-evaluating how spaces are used during “off hours.” The familiarity of working from home will relax views on traditional workplace formality, and even cause part of the workplace experience to come home. Co-working silos of the office will allow for safe/local workplaces closer to home and new revenue streams.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Short term:
- Create a commute plan
- Create an entry plan for employees and guests
- Create a socially distanced plan
- Allow for agility
- Focus on company culture + engagement
- Address concerns + fears with transparency + stability as employees re-engage.

Long term:
- Plan to retrofit for safety and cleanliness
- Implement touchless procedures
- Create workplace hubs to allow remote workers to allow for comfort, control, and choice
As people are able to re-emerge and resume a certain degree of normalcy, there will still be many concerns around spending time in public. Consumers will want to stay close to home and find opportunities for new products and offering that allow them to engage within their local community. Now is the time for businesses to redevelop their footprint, customer journey, and brand engagement. Repurposing your lobby and waiting space to allow for technology interactions versus gathered waiting can revitalize those assets. Low-touch technology can rebuild connection through high-impact customer service experiences and stories. Interactions that can be done virtually will continue, continuing the trend that physical stores and locations will be about an engagement other than selling goods and services. Community support and give-back stories will bring more customers to those businesses that do so, as customers see the importance of it even more after the pandemic. Start to consider providing systemic transparency of your goods and services and invest in locally sourced materials to support the surrounding community. Create touchless delivery methods or pop-up locations to take your store to the consumer. New partnerships can also offer new products that can allow for new income sources when times of crisis arise.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Short term:
- Create limited in-store experience
- Develop delivery offerings
- Find new local sources and locations to engage
- Define your values and what importance you want to communicate

Long term:
- Redevelop your physical space to allow for virtual interaction
- Offer secondary products to change from waste to reuse
- Develop local or pop-up locations to engage the community with where they are
Enriching lives through innovative design.
To continue the conversation, please feel free to contact us!

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