



sedus

# Back to the office

Tips and tools to be prepared

Release 1.0 · June 2020

HOW CAN WE HELP CREATE  
FUTURE OFFICE SOLUTIONS  
WHICH ENHANCE PEOPLE'S  
**WELLBEING, HAPPINESS,  
COLLABORATION...**  
AND PEACE OF MIND IN THE  
**POST-PANDEMIC ERA?**

## Together we stand

The global lockdown due to the pandemic has become a major challenge for many of us. More than ever before we realise how important human contact is, especially in the work environment. Many companies are now bringing their employees back to the office.

This step requires particular care and caution to make sure that the return to work takes place with peace of mind and a sense of safety. It is very important to plan and implement essential measures to protect people at work whilst allowing them to be as effective as possible in communicating and collaborating with each other.

This booklet has the purpose of providing some useful tips on how to face this new era and to shape the future of the workplace together. For people to be successful at work, to express their genius and to stay safe.

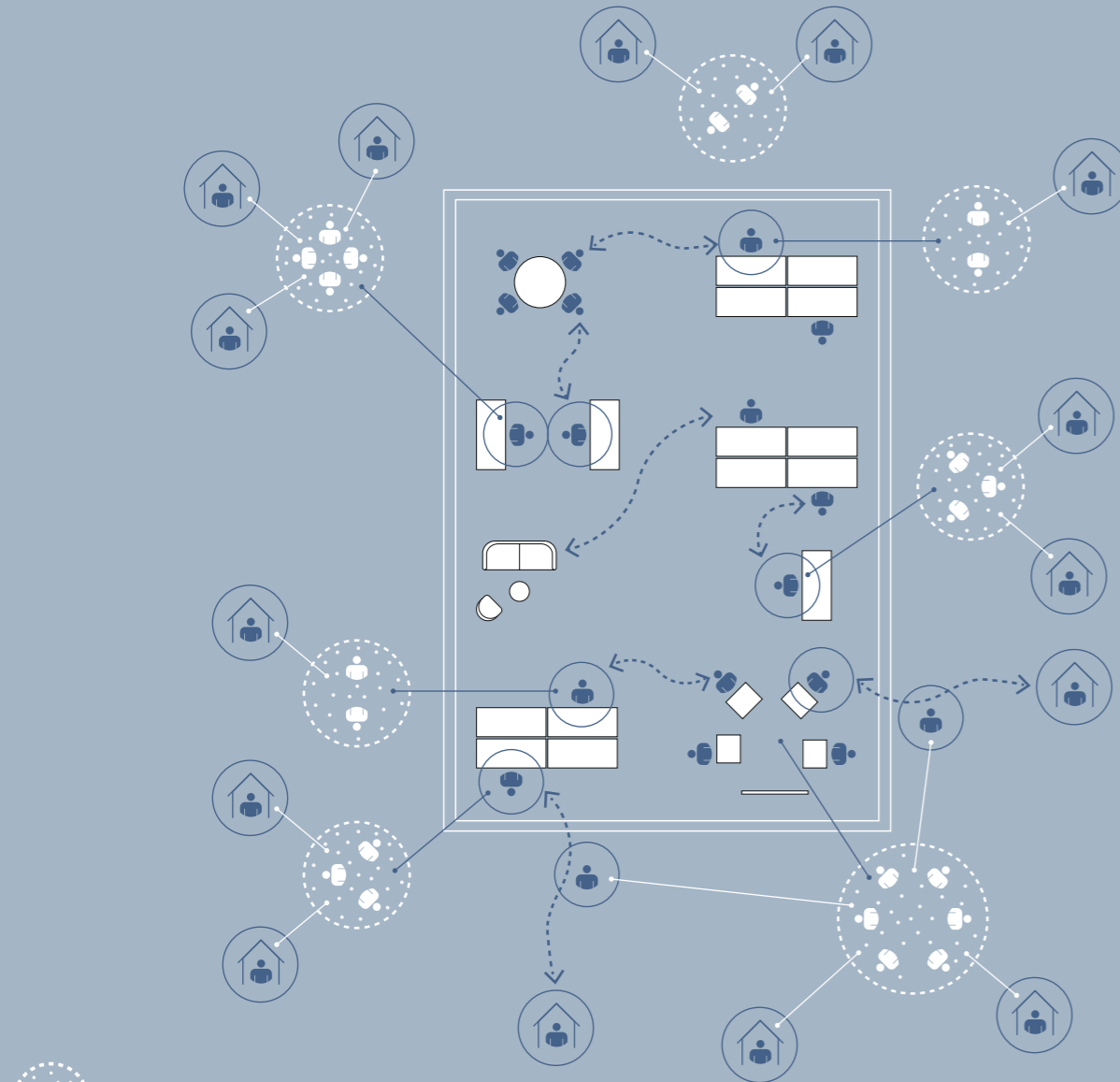
# Diffuse Office



The pandemic confirmed that the office is no longer a single physical space, but is a set of spaces spread throughout the workplace from which we can connect to our colleagues and our work. The idea of a “diffuse office” is not a new concept, but it has taken on strength and represents the main solution to providing employees with a safe, comfortable and convenient workplace.

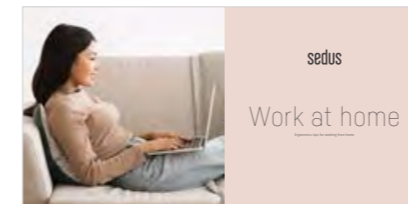
In this period many of us were forced to work from home: we tested the limits and tried the undisputed advantages. Today, any “return to the office” strategy cannot ignore that remote working is still valid, allowing as many employees as possible to continue working from home. This also implies a commitment by the company to support the employee in ensuring an ergonomic and safe workplace at home.

## Contents

- #01 – Immediate Measures. . . . . 4
- #02 – Space Planning . . . . . 5
- #03 – Worksettings. . . . . 13
- #04 – Product Solutions . . . . . 18



 Digital space  
 Physical space



See also our information about “Ergonomic tips for working from home” available under this [link](#)



## #01 Immediate Measures

Coming back to the office is a process, a series of steps which will lead us to a new normality, to a new concept of workplace. After being forced to work from home, new office solutions will have to be developed around the concept of a “diffuse workplace” including office spaces, home and other remote places. It is a process which asks for actions in the short, medium and long term. The office will always be at the centre of this transformation: as a start we will have to adopt behaviours and procedures that will make it easier to adapt to the immediate circumstances and be prepared for possible outbreaks of the epidemic.

### Basic suggestions include:

- Return to the office gradually, integrating office work with remote working.
- Reduce and regulate the use of social and shared areas in the office.
- Adopt all the guidelines of your national health authorities regarding disinfecting spaces.
- Monitor your employees' health with the help of technology and good communication.

### Things we learned during the last few months:

- The lockdown increased the adoption of remote working. We all experienced the gains and pains of working from home.
- We understood, to stay safe, we needed physical distancing. We learned to protect ourselves but we did not appreciate the social implications it created.
- We observed that office areas which were created with a perfect collaborative and creative ecosystem, are the most difficult to manage to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- We understood the importance of being safe and even more of feeling safe: future office spaces need to be designed with mindfulness and trust.

## #02 Space Planning

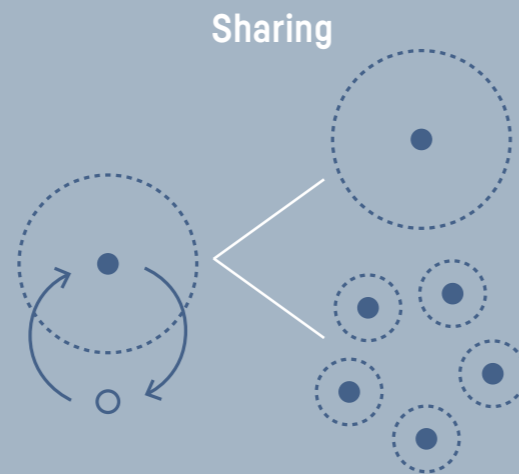
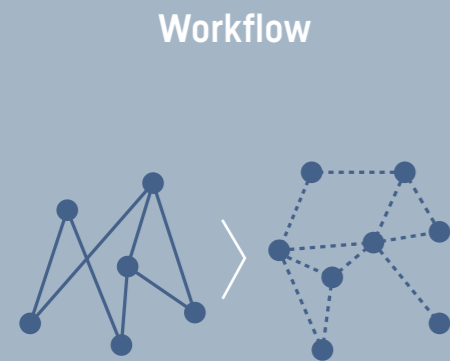
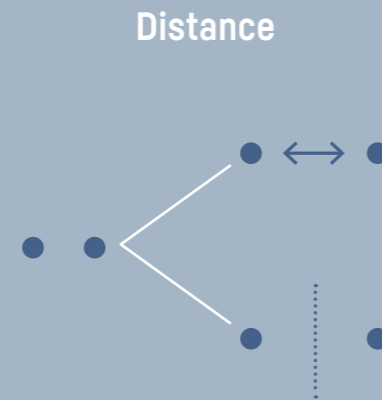
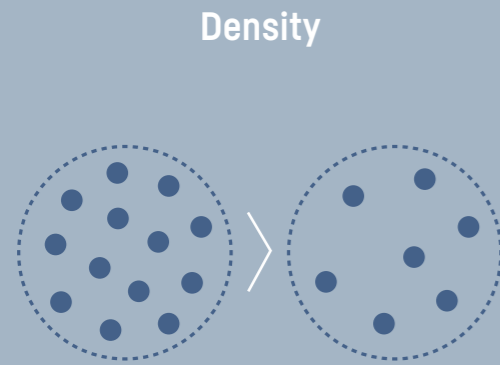
Until a few months ago the focus in space planning was specifically about optimising the footprint and space utilisation factor, whilst increasing the amount of collaboration- and meeting areas. One of the main objectives was to get people together and to share space. The new challenge today is how to make collaboration and exchange as effective and safe as possible whilst using the same spaces. Existing work processes and routines have to be reconsidered. Office spaces need to be rearranged and adapted in order to achieve the required physical distance between people without compromising on productivity and efficiency at work.



To create suitable worksettings for your demands the Sedus Workplace Consulting and Design Team can support you: [designservices@sedus.com](mailto:designservices@sedus.com)

### These four approaches could help in redesigning the office space:

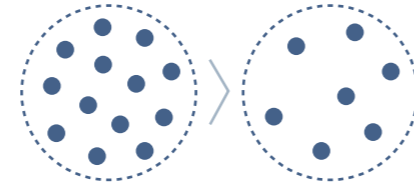
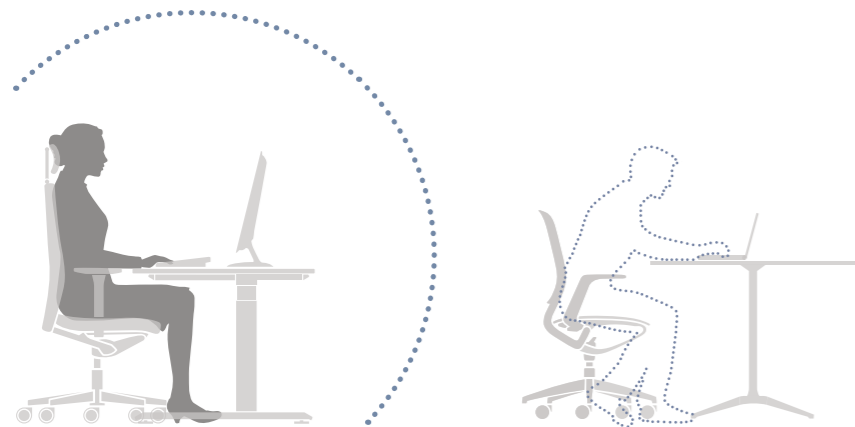
- Density
- Distance
- Workflow
- Sharing



# Density

According to the science, the number of people in a space is directly proportional to the probability of contracting the virus. For this reason, during the critical phase of the pandemic, access to all indoor and outdoor places with a high density of people was restricted or forbidden.

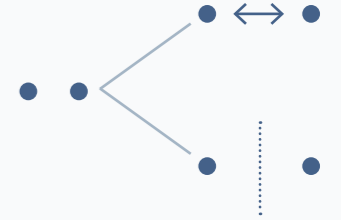
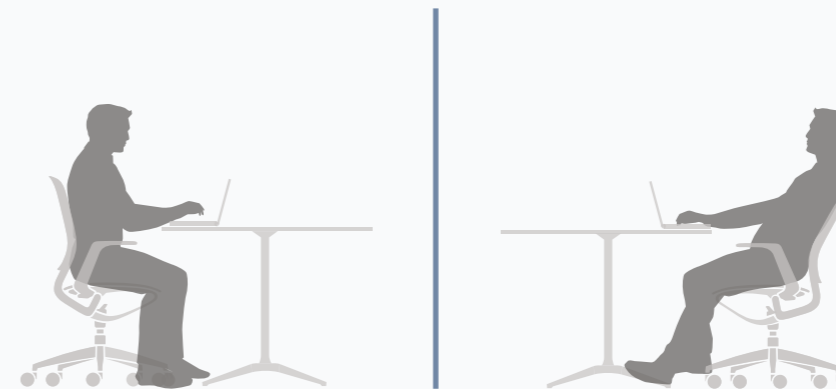
Limiting the presence of people inside offices and facilitating the distancing between people is very important to drastically decrease the possibility of spreading an infection. This also gives employees the sense of feeling safe and in the best surroundings to do their job. To effectively reduce density in an office, it is necessary to consider all possible actions that are compatible with the company workflow and strategy, such as working from home, remotely or on multiple shifts.



# Distance

Science requires us to 'socially distance' ourselves from others when outside or indoors to minimise the risk from the virus. In an office, the recommendation is to keep a safety distance between people bigger than the one travelled by the droplets expelled by the nose or mouth of an infected person. This is particularly important when two or more people are working together for a long period of time.

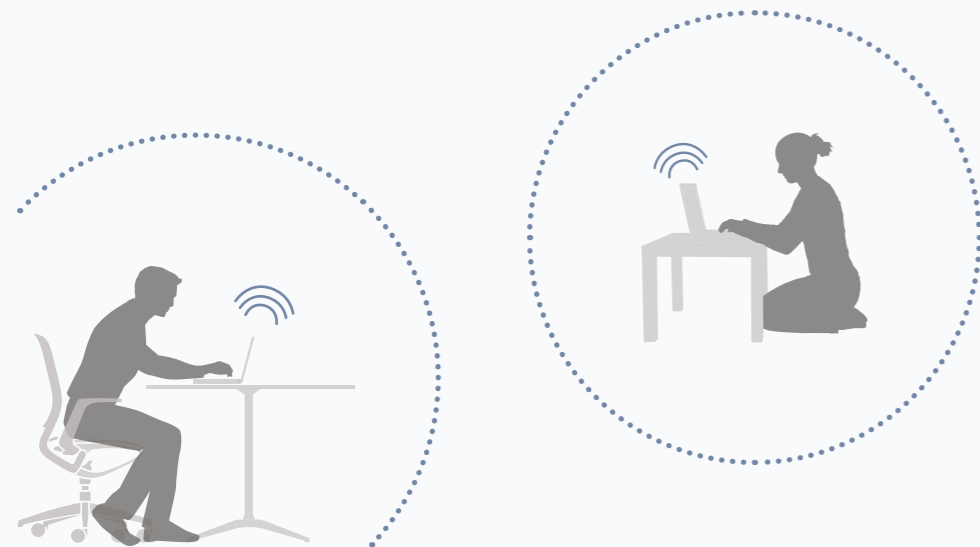
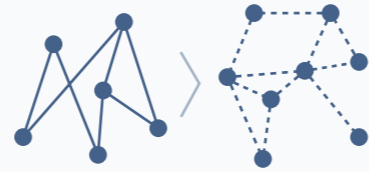
In order to make social distancing even more effective, it is necessary to install separation panels and barriers, preferably made of easily washable and sanitizable material. The presence of barriers also contributes to giving employees a sense of protection and safety.



# Workflow

Offices are the place where every company shapes its work processes and moulds the way employees interact during working hours. Due to the ongoing situation, by necessity, the workflow of companies is changing. New needs arise daily both from workers and the company itself.

The traditional request for flexibility and adaptability is now accompanied by the need to ensure safe spatial conditions, allowing people and the company to work at their best.

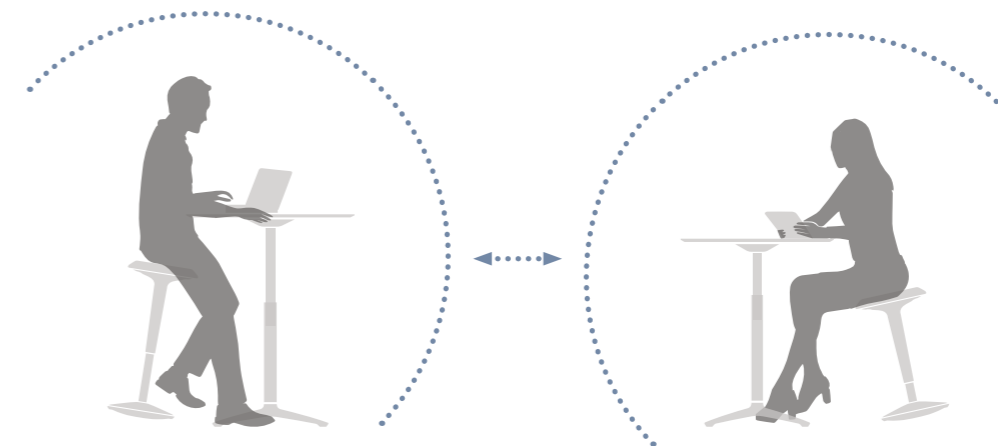
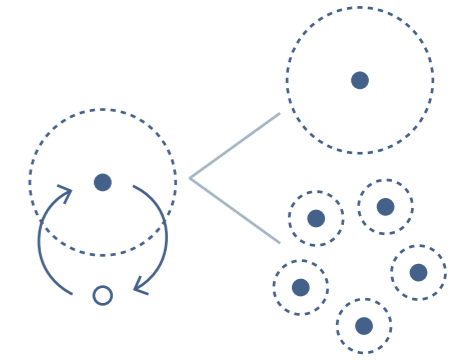


# Sharing

Currently, most offices have communal areas or furnishings which can be shared and used by several people. For example, desks in flexible offices, meeting rooms, social and sofa areas.

In order to meet safety conditions, these furnishings and shared spaces must be considered as areas of possible contagion, both due to the proximity between people and because of a possible contamination through the contact surfaces. Companies must therefore reduce such areas and furnishings or severely limit their use.

Shared work stations should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. More information and recommendations for suitable cleaning solutions and disinfectants for the different surfaces can be downloaded under this [link](#).





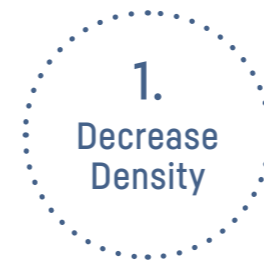
**Stand HERE**  
**Stay 2 m\***  
**APART**

\* Recommended distance without protection screens between people. The distance recommendation might vary from country to country.

## SPACE PLANNING

# Intervention Principles

After analysing the changing characteristics of the company workflow and defining the new needs to which offices must respond, it is possible to intervene on the existing spaces and furnishings according to three fundamental action principles:



To lower the density of people in the office, companies can intervene with the furnishings by limiting the number of seats and spaces that can be occupied.



To maintain safety distances, companies can modify areas and furnishings in order to achieve distance or even separate them through fixed or mobile barriers.



To respond to emerging workflows and new needs, companies can transform areas and furnishings.



## Key Questions

Some key questions may help to provide suitable answers in the quest for safety and to satisfy the needs of employees. These questions relate not only to the four criteria (density, distance, workflow and sharing) in terms of space planning but also to the way the work is organised:

- How many people need to work in the office?  
How many can work remotely?
- How much individual and team work is needed?
- How many visitors should be received at the office?
- Which areas of the office can be converted?



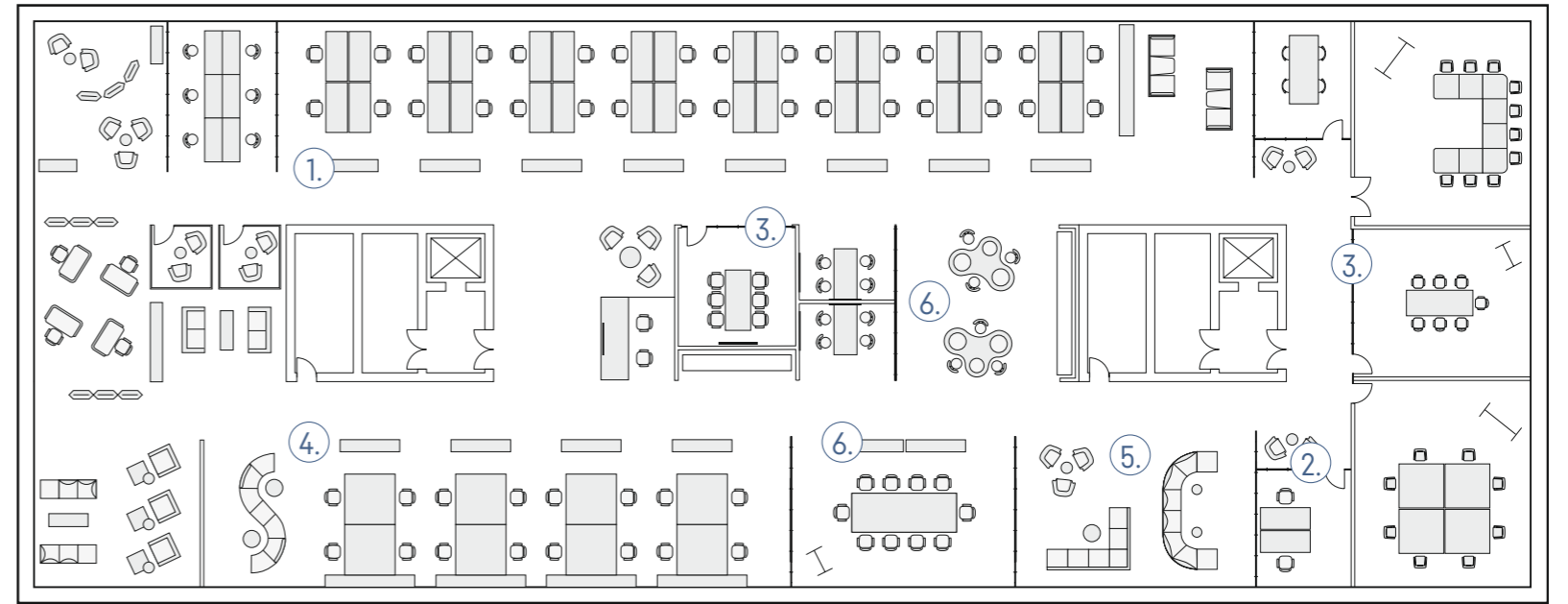
## BEFORE

The design of the office was generally based on a few basic principles:

- Maximum occupancy density
- Encouragement of interaction between people
- Choice between different furnishing solutions
- Privacy management and noise control
- Separation between concentrated and team work

### Office areas:

1. Desk area
2. Closed offices
3. Meeting Room
4. Team work areas
5. Soft seating areas
6. Social Area

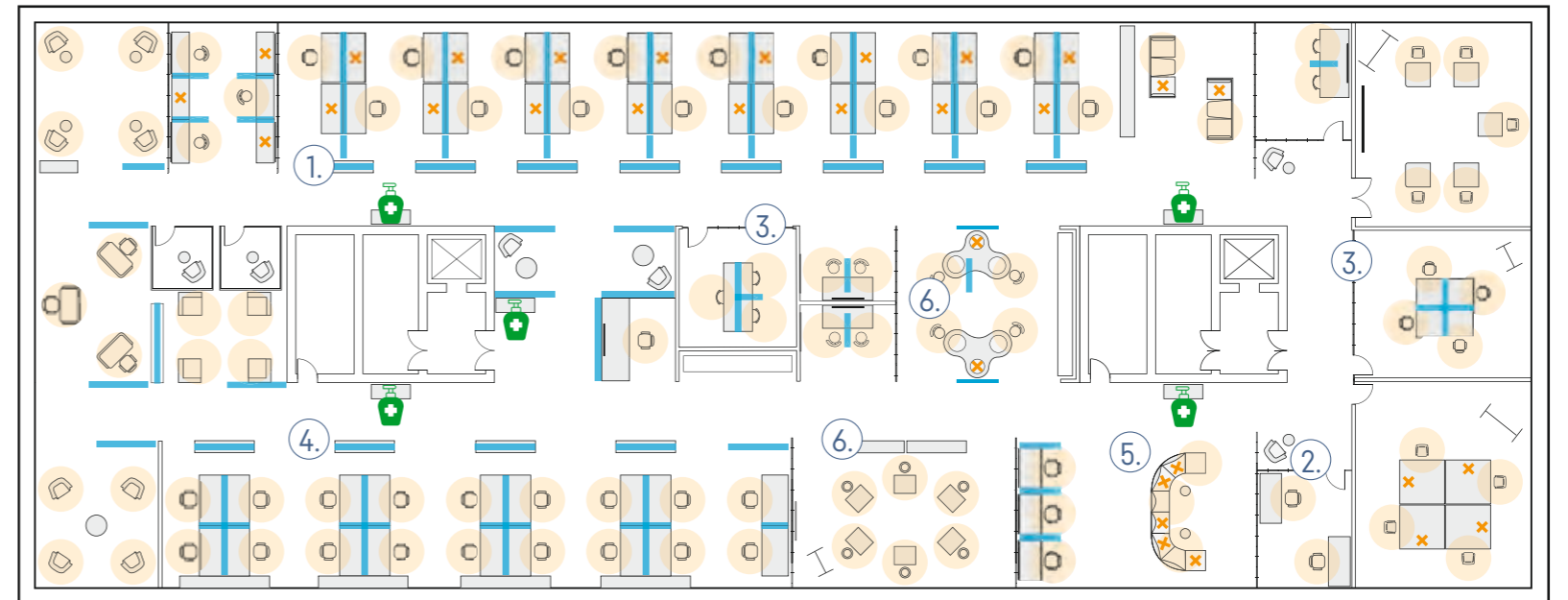


## NEXT STEP

For further safety, these recommendations could help to redesign and organise the office in an appropriate way:

- Reduce employment density by encouraging remote working
- Separate and distance all furniture and workstations where possible
- Install divisions on all workstations and in particular on those that do not allow the minimum safety distance between people
- Set up new areas for web conferences by transforming meeting rooms and setting up new dedicated workstations
- Separate and control guest arrival areas by applying control procedures in accordance with the requirements of the relevant authorities

- ✗ Unavailable places
- Safety Distance
- Transparent division
- 🧴 Disinfectant dispenser



BEFORE

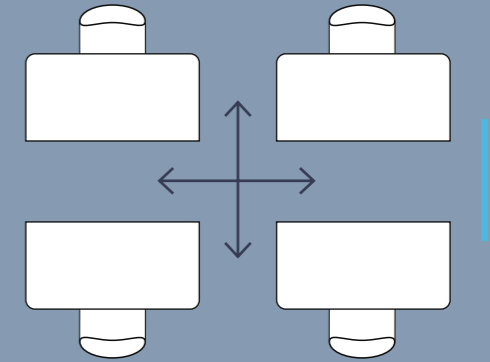
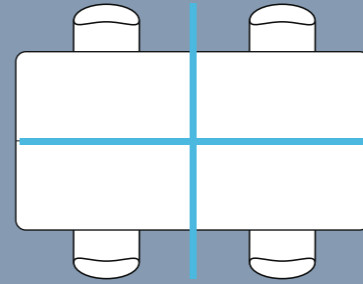
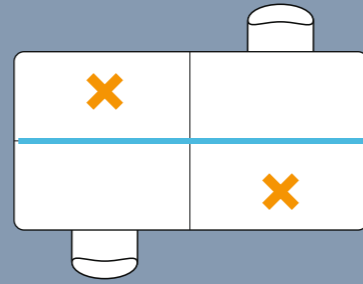
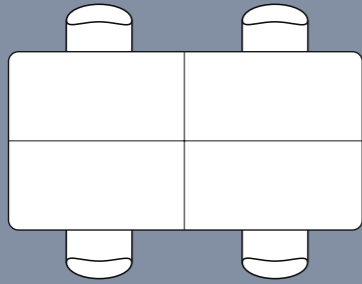
DECREASE DENSITY

KEEPING A DISTANCE

TRANSFORM SPACE

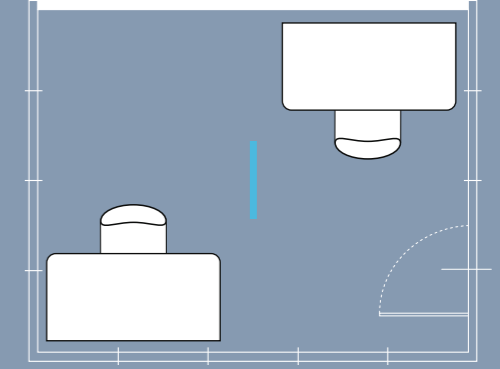
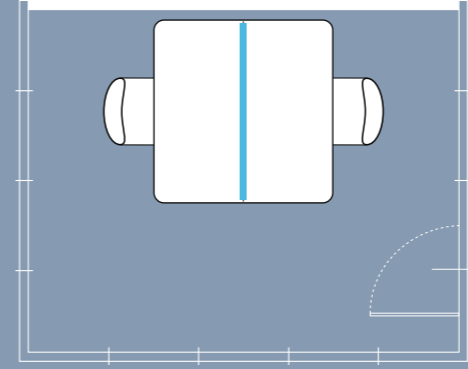
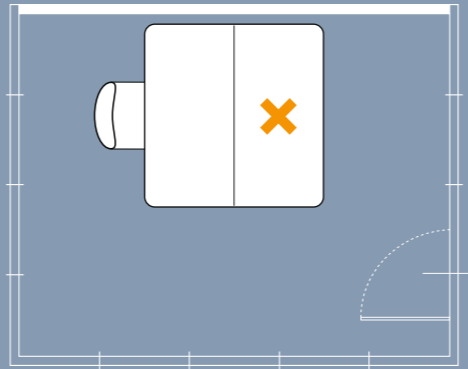
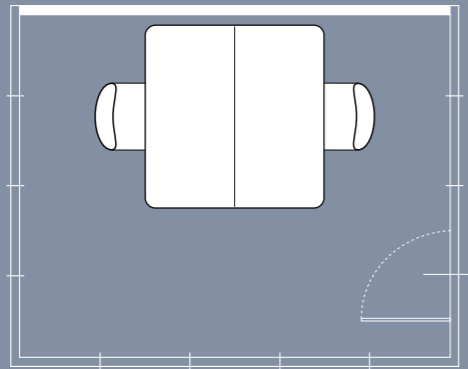
01.

Desk Area



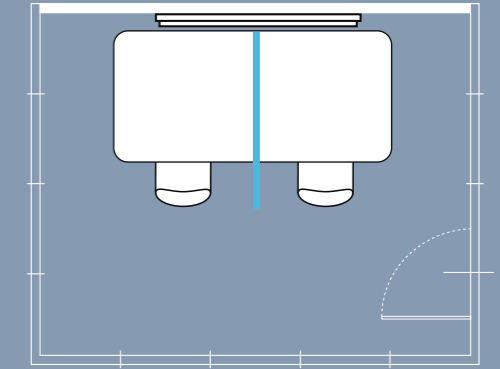
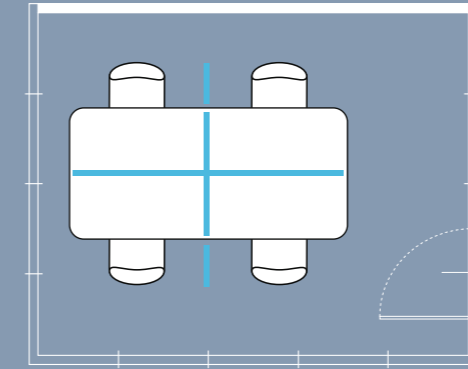
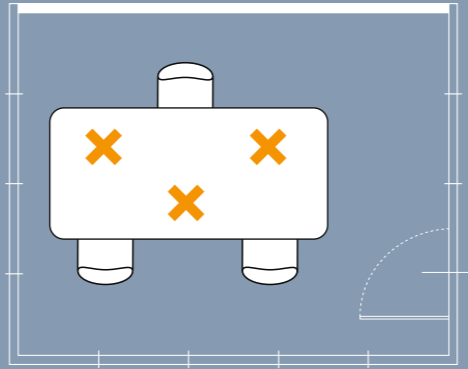
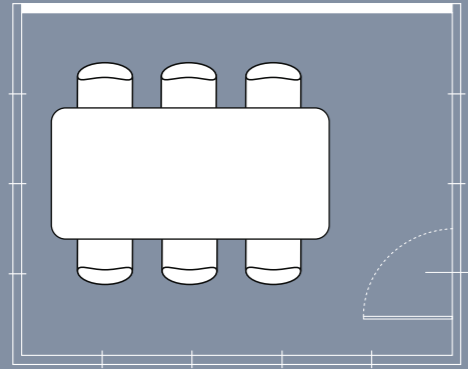
02.

Closed Office



03.

Meeting Room



BEFORE

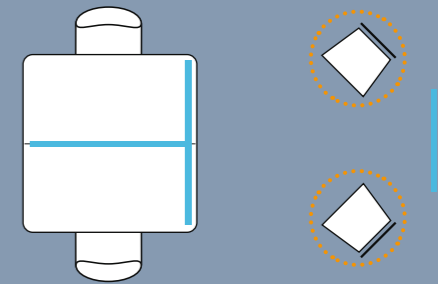
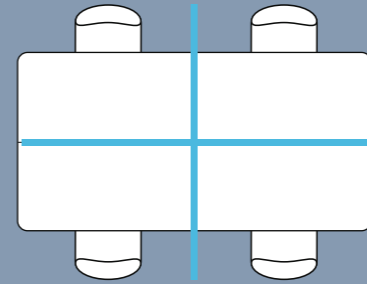
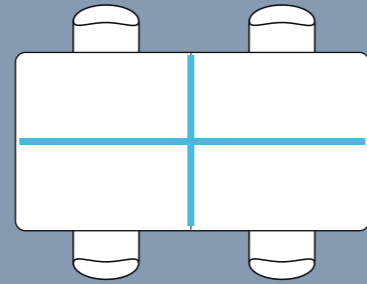
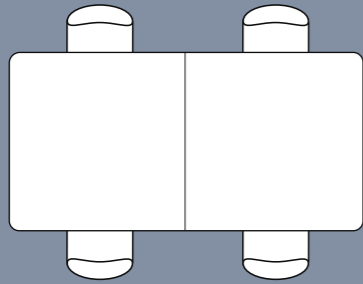
DECREASE DENSITY

KEEPING A DISTANCE

TRANSFORM SPACE

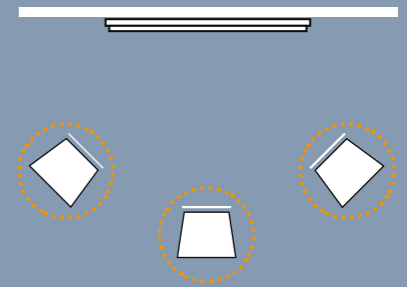
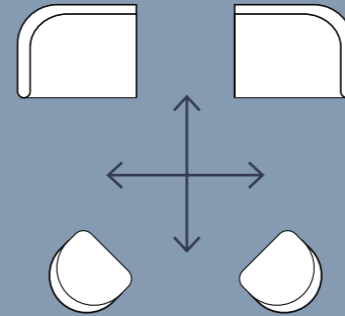
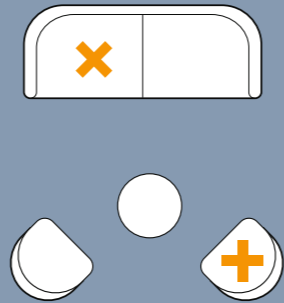
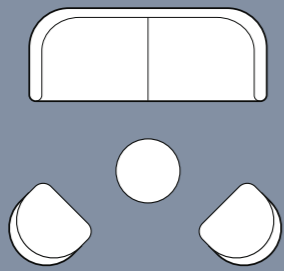
04.

Team Work



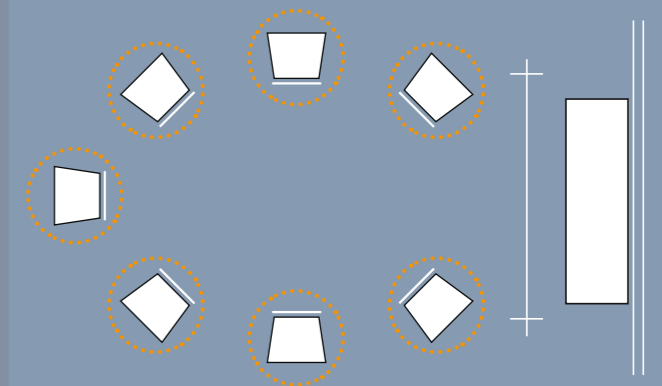
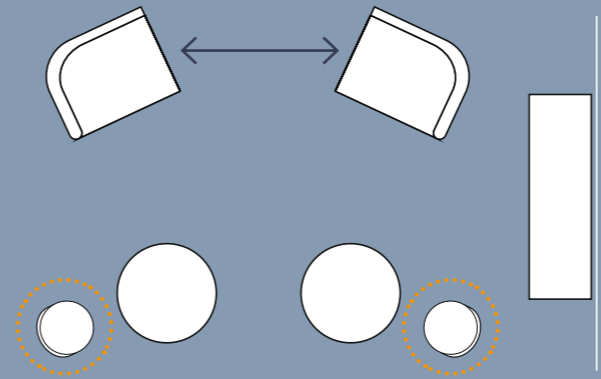
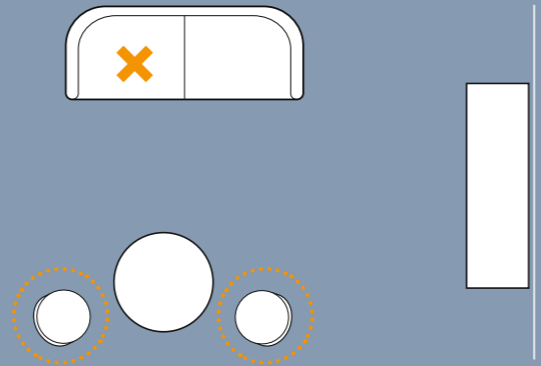
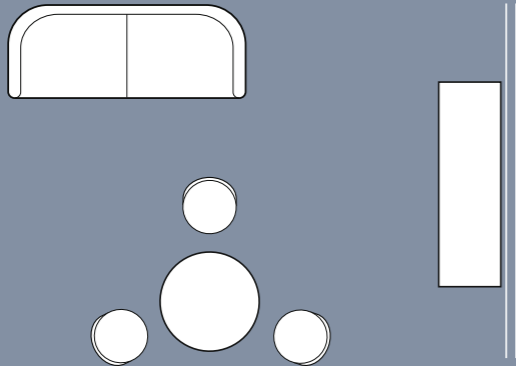
05.

Soft seating area



06.

Social Area



## #03 Worksettings

Existing furniture solutions and products can be modified to meet the new needs of employees and the company. Based on the three principles: Decrease Density, Keeping a Distance and Transform Space, it is possible to reconfigure individual furniture components to create numerous different layouts within the same space.

The following pages show various areas of the office and how these can easily be modified to comply with the new safety requirements.

### The main work areas taken into consideration are:

- Desk areas
- Teamwork and benches
- Meeting rooms
- Informal working areas
- Booths
- Soft seating areas
- Training areas

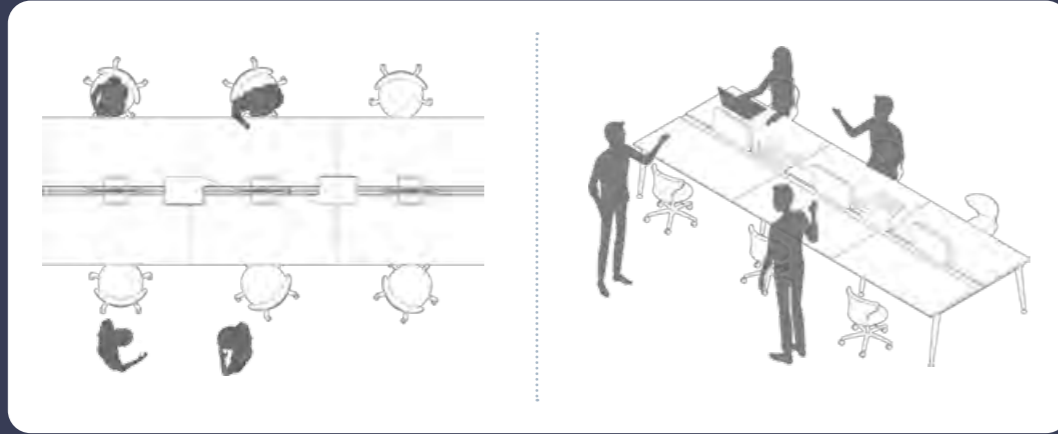
### Useful tips and quick wins:

- Use current furniture in a new way by increasing distance. Transform space and optimise the distance between people.
- Integrate current work areas with transparent aerosol screening solutions to protect people.
- Substitute current work settings with new ones by changing furniture. A bench solution could be substituted by single desks or with a few secretaire desks.

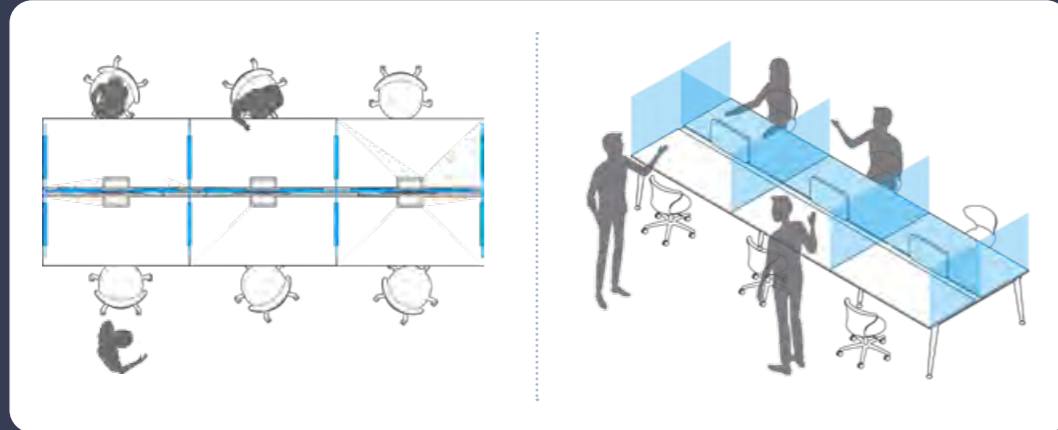


## DESK AREAS – FIXED HEIGHT

Before



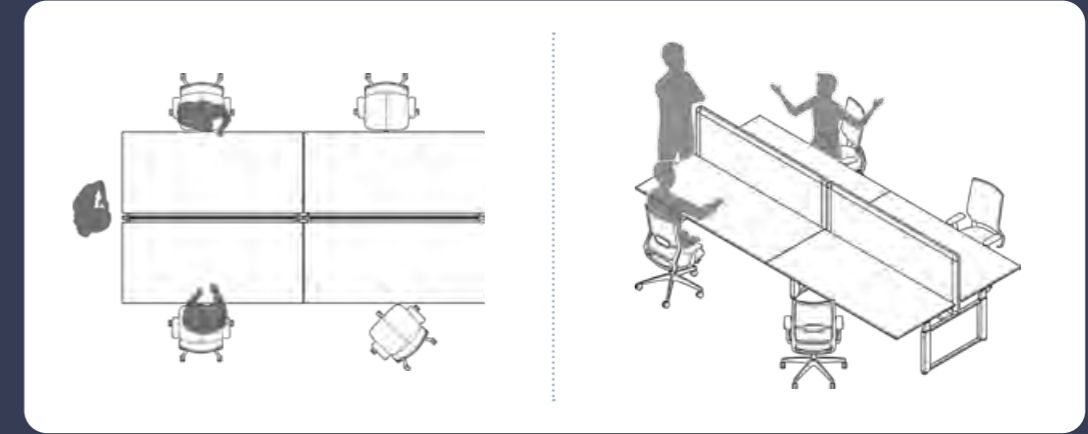
Next Step



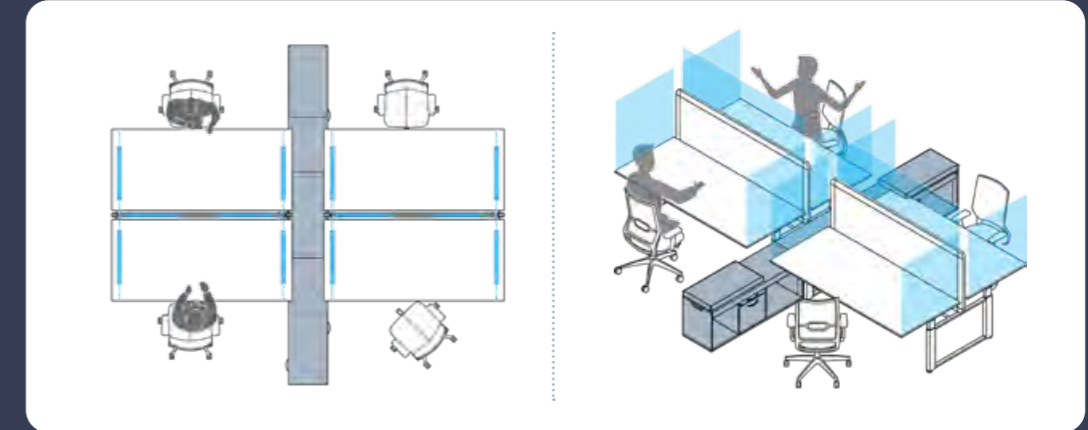
In order to make group benches safer, it is recommended to add transparent hygienic protection elements on the desk between the work places.

## DESK AREAS – ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT

Before



Next Step

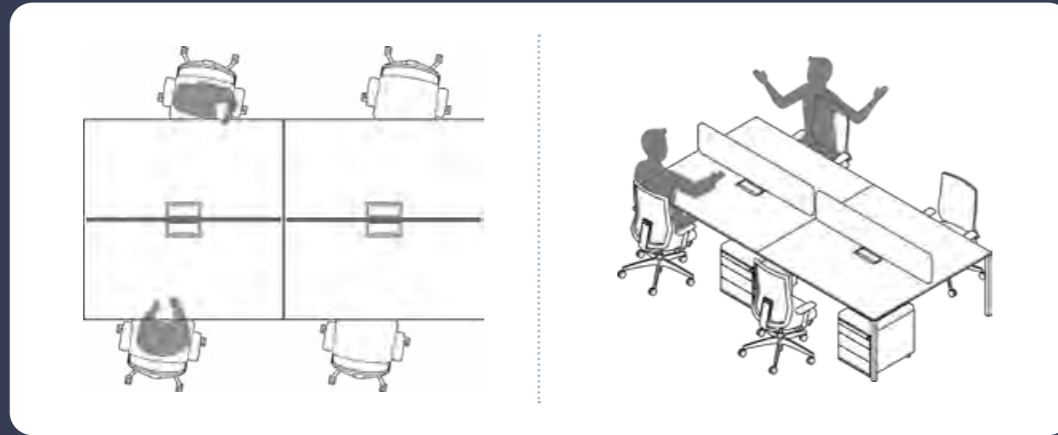


For work areas defined by height adjustable desks, the following measures could help to provide more protection:

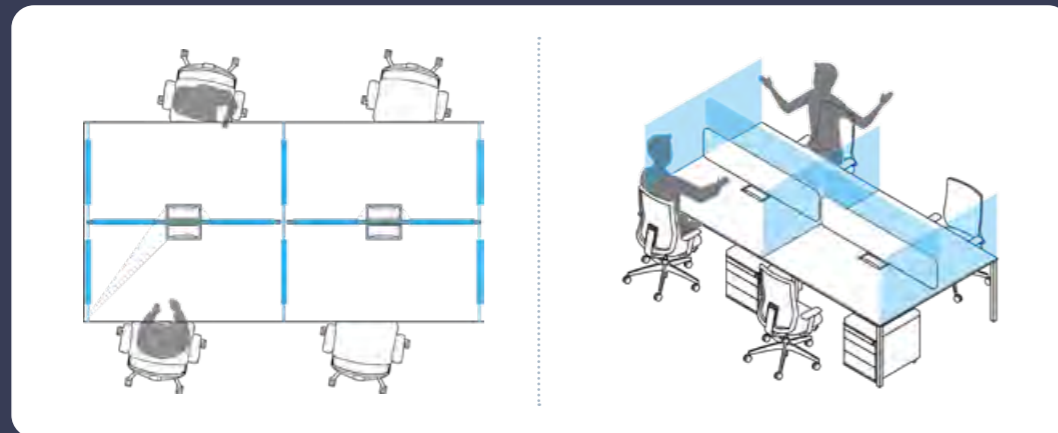
- Adding transparent acrylic glass elements as a vertical protection shield between people
- Mounting a low storage unit between the desks in order to increase the distance between workstations.

## TEAMWORK and BENCHES

Before



Next Step

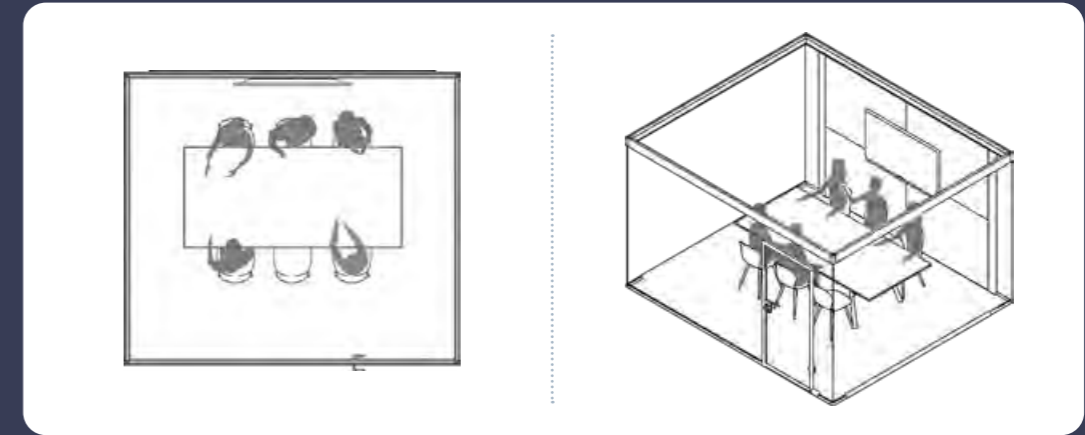


Team benches can be adapted to the new needs by:

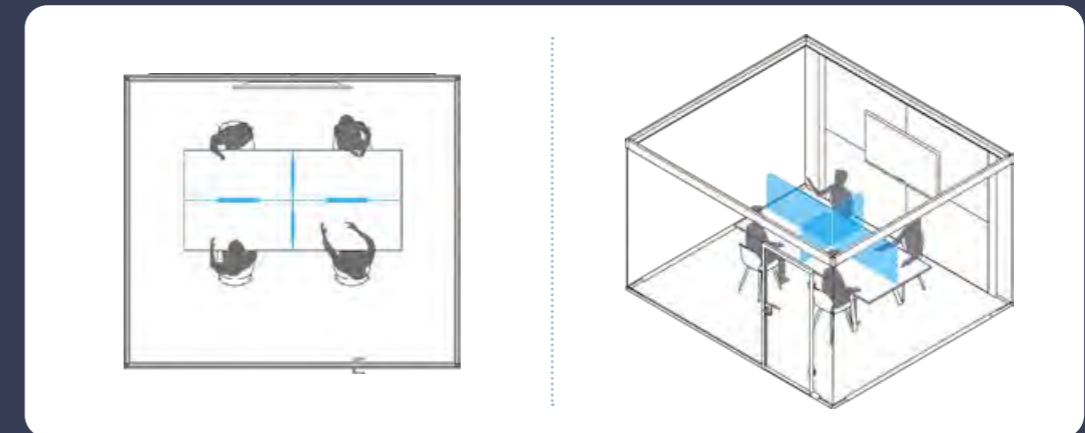
- Adding transparent acrylic glass elements as vertical protection shields between people

## MEETING ROOMS

Before



Next Step

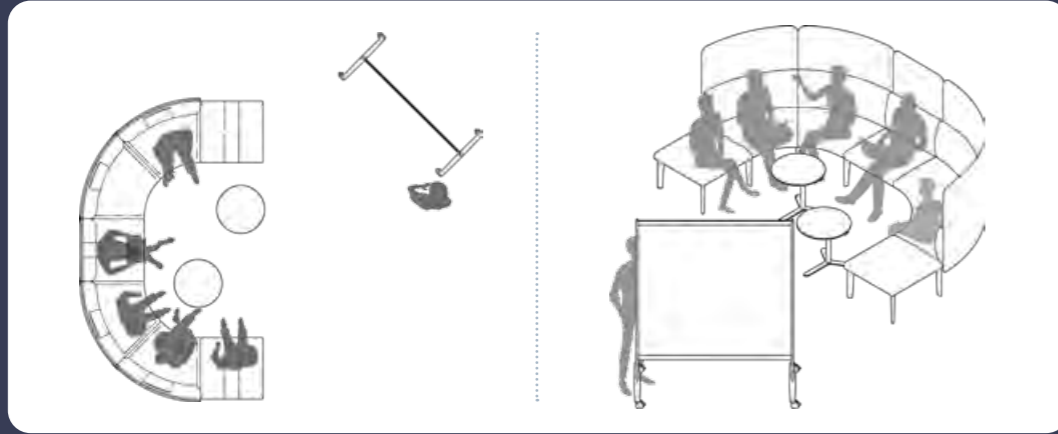


In meeting rooms where it is difficult to maintain safety distances, the following adjustments can be made:

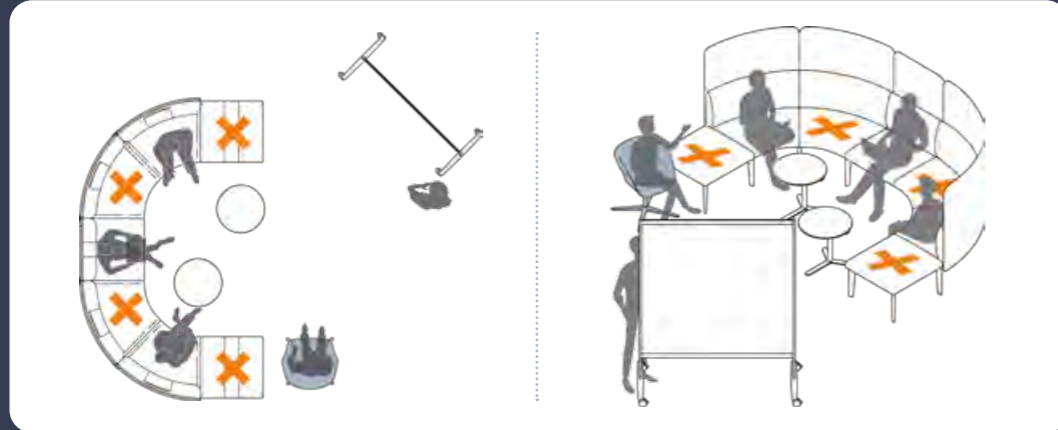
- Reduction of available seats to decrease the density and increase the distance between people
- Adding acrylic glass screens as vertical protection shields on the meeting table

## INFORMAL WORKING AREAS

Before



Next Step

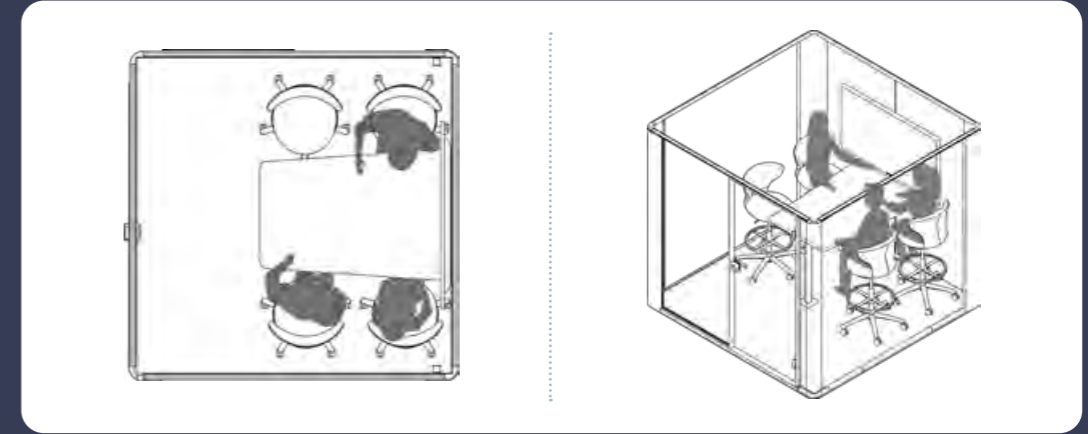


In the areas dedicated to informal working with sofas and armchairs, the following adjustments can be made:

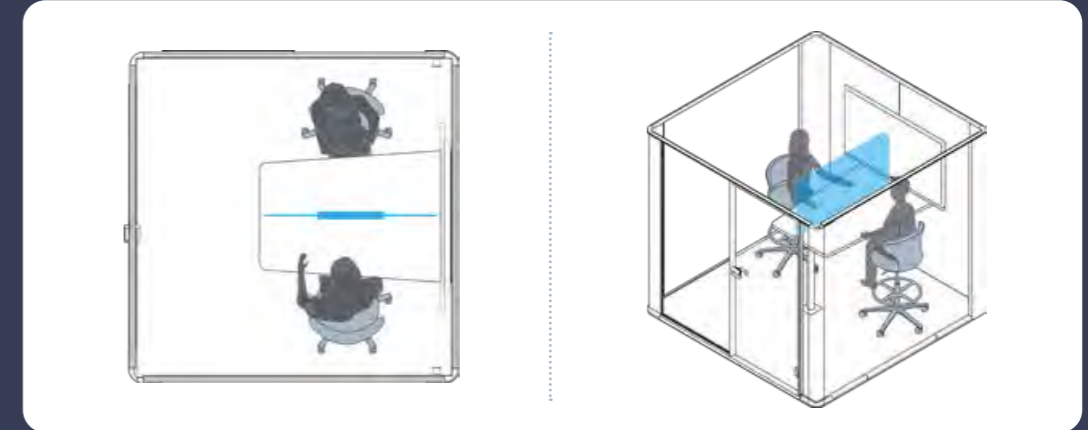
- Reduction of available seats to decrease the density and increase the distance between people
- Single armchairs can easily be added to the work setting in order to obtain more distance between people whilst maintaining the same look and feel of the environment

## BOOTHS

Before



Next Step



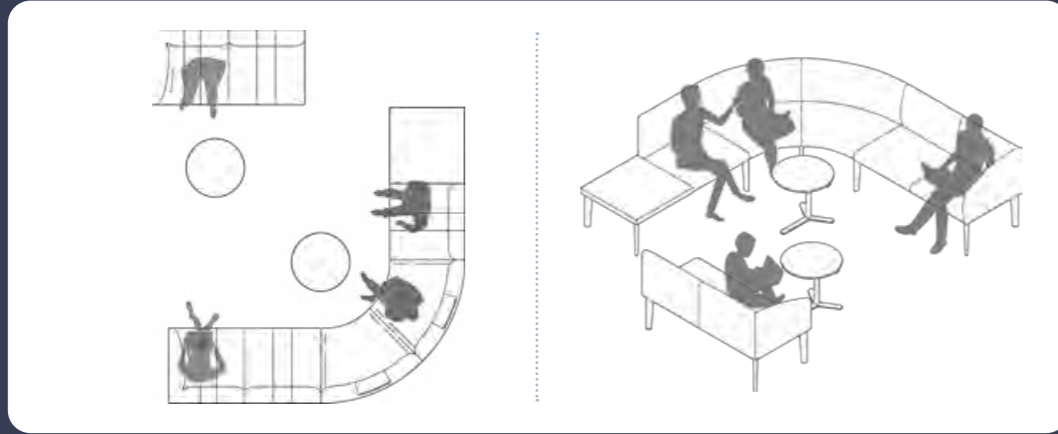
In booths used by several people as meeting rooms and web conference rooms, where it is not possible to maintain safe distances, the following adjustments can be made:

- Reduction of available seats to decrease the density and increase the distance between people
- Mounting acrylic glass screens as vertical protection shields on the table



## SOFT SEATING AREAS

Before



Next Step

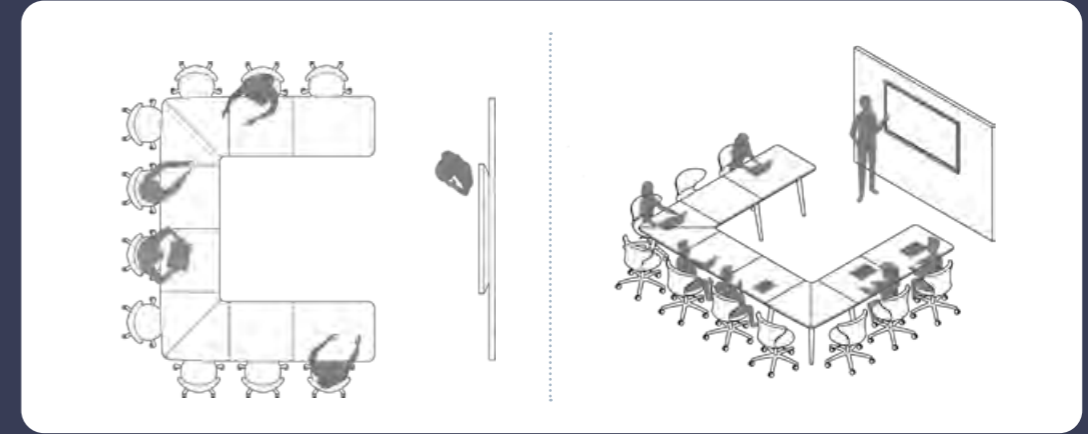


In the areas dedicated to socialisation and soft seating, the following adaptations can be made:

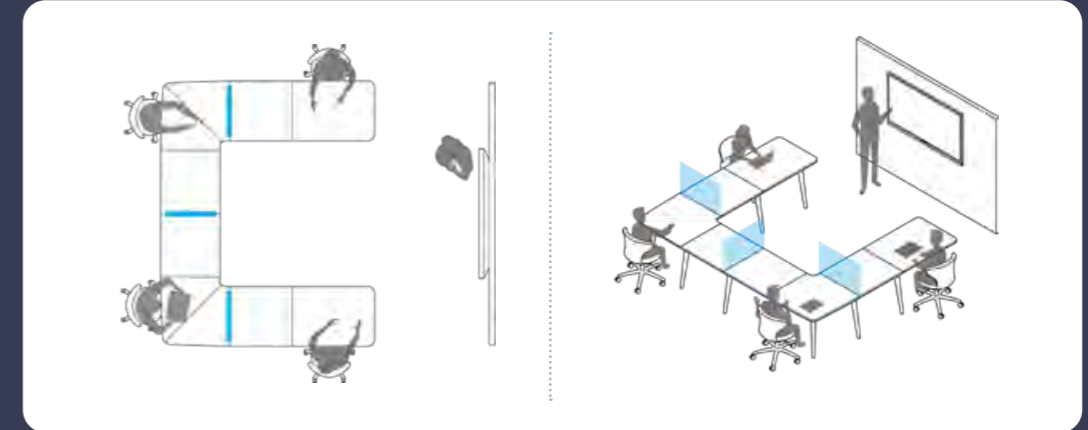
- Reduction of available seats to decrease the density and increase the distance between people
- Add single armchairs to the area in order to provide enough safety distance between seats
- Add vertical partitioning walls behind the sofas in order to create protection from the surrounding circulation areas

## TRAINING AREAS

Before



Next Step



In training areas where people are sitting in close proximity and often for a long time together, the following adjustments can be made:

- Reduction of available seats to decrease the density and increase the distance between people
- Assembly of acrylic glass screens on the desks



## #04 Product Solutions

Furnishing solutions can contribute in an important way to define space and improve the way people interact with each other and their surroundings. Choosing appropriate product combinations and settings can therefore help to make office areas safer and make it easier for people to adapt their behaviour and to keep to a safe distance.

The product solutions on the following pages are based on work setting proposals and apply to the main categories:

1.  
Decrease  
Density

2.  
Keeping a  
Distance

3.  
Transform  
Space

**Useful tips:**

- Close the gap between home office and the corporate office. Employees can be provided with a good ergonomic and flexible chair at home to keep them healthy. When employees move back to the office the products can return with them.
- Consider the implementation of a smart working digital management solution such as se:connects. It helps to manage the occupancy rate of space, allows booking of work areas and enhances communication between people via the App. Powerful analysis tools support the optimisation of space.

# 1. Decrease Density

These product solutions are flexible and can easily be moved around in order to reduce the density of occupied space.



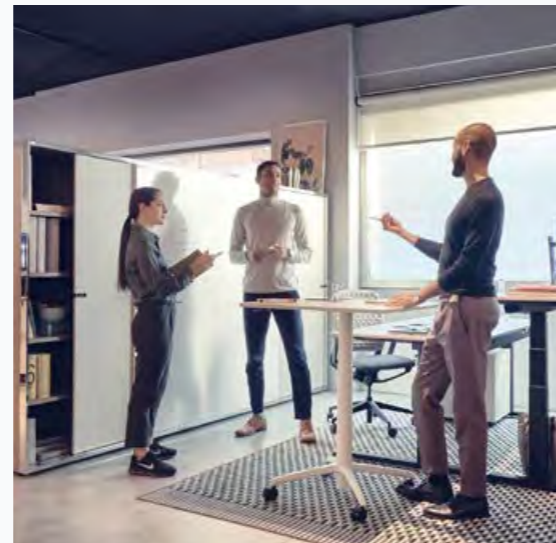
## se:assist

### Flexible, movable desk

This desk is easy to move around and extremely versatile making it suitable for temporary workstations. It can also be added next to a workstation as a standing desk. This will create a barrier to help keep the required physical distance. It is equipped with castors and a gas lift for height adjustment.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/seassist/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/seassist/)



## brainstorm – personal desk

### Versatile workshop and meeting desks

This personal desk provides the optimum support for team meetings and workshops when people need to work together without sitting directly next to each other at the same desk. They are compact and height adjustable with a gas spring and are equipped with wheels which enhance flexibility. When they are not in use, the desks can be compactly stowed together without taking up too much space.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/brainstorm/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/brainstorm/)



## secretair

A temporary haven for solo work

The secretair provides a space to retreat and a visual barrier from other work areas. Due to its shape and height the secretair also offers a sense of safety and helps to keep a distance from other work areas. The desk is lightweight and equipped with castors which make it easy to move around and create distance between workstations.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/secretair/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/secretair/)



## se:fit

The flexible height adjustable stool

Changing space and changing posture is easy with the se:fit. This stool can be carried around and is a versatile additional seating solution that enhances movement. It is a compact stool for various application areas, suitable for the home office or even next to a work desk when sit standing is required. The se:fit is also useful for spontaneous brainstorming meetings.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sefit/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sefit/)



## se:motion

Easy to clean ergonomic task chair with add-on upholstery

This lightweight, ergonomic task chair is especially suitable for flexible working environments. Thanks to the smart shape and intelligent structure, the backrest pressure automatically adapts to the user based on weight. The whole structure is made out of highly resistant PMMA material which makes it easy to clean and disinfect after use. Additional upholstery for the seat and backrest can be added and replaced in seconds.

[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/semotion/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/semotion/)



## temptation c

Gas spring height adjustable work desk without the need for an electric motor

Without additional electrification of the desk, this work station can be moved in order to increase distance from other workstations. Height adjustment takes place intuitively and with ease due to a preloaded gas spring. This encourages a change of posture and leads to more vitality at work.

<https://youtu.be/as5onoMhTbU>



## se:connects

### Management system for smart working environments

se:connects is an intelligent solution for the use and management of the workplace. Via smartphone or other user devices, employees can easily find a suitable and available workspace or book meeting rooms. Facility managers can additionally access and analyse the occupancy data which allows them to optimise the design and organisation of the work space. Based on the prevention requirements of Covid-19 and in order to ensure the health of employees, some additional functions have been developed and added to the se:connects space management and app solution.



Floor plan with coloured markings showing booked, available and non-bookable workplaces (COVID-19 prevention).

NEW

#### Enhanced Covid-19 Features



##### Distance Management

Once a workplace has been booked, only those surrounding workplaces with a sufficient safety distance in place will also be available for booking.



##### Home-Office-Status

The new home office status option allows colleagues to indicate whether they are available in the office or can be reached in the home office.



##### Access monitoring

Monitoring the number of people in buildings, floors or rooms using people counting sensors. This makes it easy to control and limit the number of people in a space.



##### Distance Alarm (optional)

If employees get too close, an alarm is triggered on the device or phone by sound or vibration (Smart Crowd Management by Kapsch).

#### Basic functions

- Find a suitable workplace with the required equipment in an appropriate work environment.
- Find and book a suitable meeting room with the necessary capacity and suitable equipment.
- Find colleagues and automatically book a workplace nearby.
- Integration of further third-party solutions (such as catering management, parking management, building control systems etc.) due to open programming interfaces.



se:connects was created by Sedus and developed together with Kapsch, an internationally experienced specialist for IoT and data transfer.

[www.sedus.com/en/solutions/seconnects/seconnects/](http://www.sedus.com/en/solutions/seconnects/seconnects/)



## 2. Keeping a Distance

These product solutions can help and add protection barriers when people are working close together.





## flexible hygiene protection

### Transparent protection for every situation

This shielding can be placed in various areas in the office. Due to the transparent acrylic glass it is suitable for use at work desks or in conference and meeting areas. The retrofitted acrylic glass provides additional hygiene protection. The stable stand and anti-slip surfaces make it easy to clean. No drilling or screwing is necessary, so that the hygiene protection element can be retrofitted on tables, cabinets and reception desks in a flexible manner.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/hygiene-protection-elements/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/hygiene-protection-elements/)



## easy screen add on protection shield

### Additional aerosol protection shield

An additional transparent screen, which can be added to the existing easy screens, provides additional protection at desks. It fits seamlessly into existing work environments whilst guaranteeing a good visual transparency between workstations.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/easy-screen-4/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/easy-screen-4/)



## se:wall add on protection shield

Additional aerosol protection shield

This is an easy to mount additional protection shield which can be placed on top of existing se:wall screens and partitioning walls. It is made out of transparent acrylic glass and provides additional protection at the work desk.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/hygiene-protection-elements/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/hygiene-protection-elements/)



## se:wall

Free-standing partition walls and screens

This complete product range contains both free standing partitioning elements as well as screens. They can be mounted on all work stations and provide a useful barrier to keep to a set distance. Due to excellent acoustic absorption they additionally contribute to a reduction of noise at work.



[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sewall/](http://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sewall/)



### 3. Transform Space

... it's about extending boundaries, expanding existing office space and redesigning. Make the home office part of this.



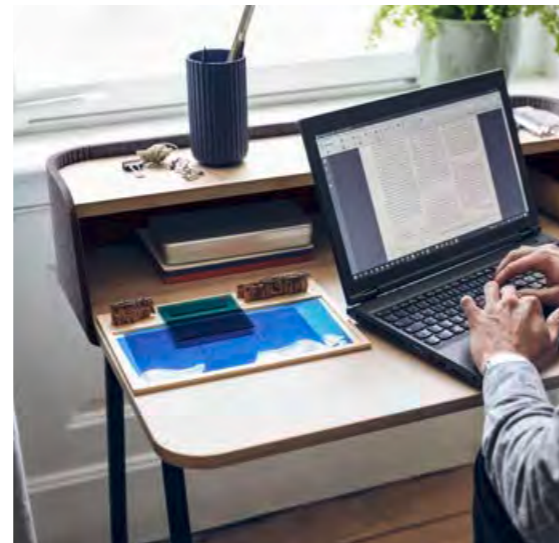
## secretair home

The space-saving way to work at home

The secretair home has a modern and simple design. Thanks to its compact dimensions it also fits neatly into smaller niches. The integrated shelf in moulded formfelt is made out of recycled PET bottles and provides space for pens, notes and stationery.



available from the end of June 2020



## on spot cosy

A comfortable and versatile armchair

This compact lounge chair can easily be added to existing soft seating areas. In this way, it is easy to keep a required safe distance between people whilst maintaining a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. The elegant design of the on spot cosy fits perfectly into a living environment and makes this product suitable for temporary work situations at home.



available from the end of June 2020



## se:works assistant table

The practical, movable and height-adjustable table

In striving to reduce occupancy density at workstations, the demand for alternative work areas increases. A good alternative in transforming space can be delivered by adding small and flexible tables for temporary tasks in lounge areas. The se:works assistant table is height adjustable and especially suited for use when working on a sofa.

<https://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/seworks-table/>



## se:spot

The ergonomically shaped chair – for meetings or at home

For temporary work, meetings or simply for a break. Thanks to its stylish design and the ergonomic shape of the seat shell, the se:spot is ideal for use in the office as well as at home.

[www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sespot/](https://www.sedus.com/en/products/details/sespot/)





Further information on ergonomics & design and office@home can be found on the Home Office Shop website:

[www.homeofficeshop.co.uk/](http://www.homeofficeshop.co.uk/)

sedus

THE NEXT STEP  
– **BACK TO THE OFFICE** –  
IS BOTH A RESPONSIBILITY  
AND AN OPPORTUNITY.  
IT IS A CHANCE TO  
**CARE ABOUT PEOPLE**  
AND TO  
**REDEFINE THE WAY**  
**WE WORK TOGETHER.**

All selected images have Common Creative rights to be shared, adapted, and used for commercial purposes.

p.1, p.4: Shutterstock Images  
p.9: Nadia Snopek, Adobe Stock  
from p.19 to p.29: SEDUS Media Center Archive

Content, concept and graphic design:

**PIERANDREI ASSOCIATI**

**Milano, Italy**

+39 0258319844

[info@pierandreiassociati.it](mailto:info@pierandreiassociati.it)

[www.pierandreiassociati.it](http://www.pierandreiassociati.it)

Publisher:

**SEDUS STOLL AG**

**Dogern, Germany**

+49 (77 51) 84-0

[sedus@sedus.de](mailto:sedus@sedus.de)

[www.sedus.com](http://www.sedus.com)