



Using Occupancy Data to Re-Engage Employees With the Workplace

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About Irisys

Irisys provide the essential technology for understanding people movement in buildings. For over 25 years, businesses have relied on Irisys solutions to deliver actionable insights on people in places – helping them to improve and optimise their workplaces and real estate.

With 500,000 sensors deployed to date, Irisys are experts in occupancy monitoring and people counting – perfectly positioning us to help businesses re-engage their employees with the workplace.

Irisys have a selection of workplace solutions, addressing both the short term and long term occupancy measuring needs of corporate real estate:

SAFECOUNT

SafeCount is a return to work occupancy monitoring solution that utilises real-time people movement data to enable social distancing and protect safety. By controlling occupancy levels and working with connected digital signage to display capacity warnings, SafeCount boosts employee confidence and

facilitates a safe return to the workplace. The accompanying smart display screens also provide building users a reassuring reminder that their safety is being prioritised.

TRUE OCCUPANCY

True Occupancy is an occupancy analytics platform that makes buildings smart. It leverages occupancy data to enable a true understanding of how a building is utilised, providing actionable insights for optimizations, cost savings and evidence for important strategic decisions. Scalable and upgradable, True Occupancy can be deployed in key locations initially, and expanded over time to additional areas, buildings or locations as required.



Introduction

2020 has finally come to an end. Following a year where the physical workplace, our attitudes towards it, and the world at large saw unparalleled disruption, at last there is light at the end of the tunnel. As commentators continue to reflect, dissect and speculate on what it all means for the future of work, it is inevitable that many of us will be re-engaging with our physical workspaces in 2021.

The road ahead is long. For those of us tasked with bringing our workplaces up to date, the coming months will be a question of adapting - doing everything we can to alleviate anxieties and boost employees' confidence as they start preparing for a return to work. Making the necessary adjustments around health and safety will account for a significant chunk of this ongoing effort.

The months spent away from our desks have seen the role of the workplace change on a fundamental level, with many businesses reassessing how and where employees can perform their job functions to the best of their abilities.

WHY RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE?

One of the biggest questions of the year: if employees have managed working from home so far, then why the rush back? But there is so much that we get from working in an office environment that we simply can't get at home, no matter how many Zoom calls we manage to fit into each day. While working from home has been a helpful solution to keep

organisations running in the short term, the physical interactions we have in the office can support engagement, innovation, collaboration and creativity in ways remote working simply cannot. This pandemic has shone a spotlight on just how important a sense of togetherness can be to our personal and collective wellbeing. With deeper issues around practical challenges, stress and mental health, working in isolation has proven to be unsustainable as a long-term solution.

LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

Of course, getting everyone safely back to work requires real thought. We are no longer looking to introduce temporary measures to help employees manage in the short term and return phase, but seeking out long-term solutions that will help businesses and their people work smarter - even after the roll-out of a vaccine.

To fully understand the impact of the pandemic on the workplace, we held an extensive series of Voice of Customer interviews with a number of large companies, industry leaders and solutions providers. We asked them for their

perspectives on the key themes that will drive the future of the workplace, what needs to be done to re-engage employees around a return to the office, and how occupancy data can be leveraged to help on both sides of this equation.

By introducing a range of new measures, including a people monitoring solution like **True Occupancy**, managers will be able to reassure and build trust with employees by showing them that their workspaces can and will adapt to their evolving needs.

From showing employees new processes introduced to protect their wellbeing and help them do their jobs efficiently, to HVAC and indoor air quality, how to get the most out of independent, collaborative and breakout workspaces, why it pays to invest now and how to choose the right solution for your business, here we explore how occupancy monitoring measures can help your business build resilience as you prepare to welcome back your people.

OFFICE SPACE

- Real-time occupancy
- Desk availability
- Busy/quiet areas
- Wayfinding

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

- HVAC control
- Lighting control

MAIN ENTRANCE AND LIFT LOBBY

- Visitor wait time
- Visitor tracking
- Lift + elevator control

OFFICE FACILITIES (E.G. GYM)

- Real-time usage

RESTAURANT

- Queue monitoring
- Food preparation

WASHROOMS

- Cleaning scheduling

CONFERENCE AND MEETING ROOMS

- Right number, right size
- Real-time availability



Workplace map demonstrates potential real estate opportunities where occupancy data could be used to measure and enhance a building, and its services.

Employees and Employee Wellbeing

The world of work has changed. Where in the past, there was the expectation that employees would bend to fit the one-size-fits-most requirements of their organisation, in the post-pandemic world, health and wellbeing is a much bigger part of the conversation.

Balancing the needs of the individual with the needs of the business, re-engaging employees around a return to the office hinges on showing them you have rebuilt the workplace around them, and that their health and safety is a priority, not an afterthought.

HYGIENE PROTOCOLS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

Knowing there are procedures and measures in place to keep them safe will help reassure them throughout the return phase and beyond. From social distancing to [hygiene protocols in washrooms](#), the standards for safety that are being set right now will define employee expectations in the workplace for years to come. If employers manage workplace hygiene effectively post-virus, then days off sick related to other illnesses may also be dramatically reduced.

As part of a comprehensive plan for employee safety, occupancy counting sensors are a visible and effective tool that show staff you are taking their health and wellbeing seriously. Sensors can be used in the following ways.

Firstly, they can show that specific areas of your building, including washrooms, cafes, meeting rooms and floors are safe to enter based on their real-time capacity, enabling social distancing to be maintained.

OPTIMISE CLEANING SCHEDULES

Secondly, they can help businesses optimise cleaning schedules, notifying cleaning staff when enough people have used a high-touch space for it to be ready for cleaning. Facilitating cleaning schedules in this way will be a key feature of the future workplace, ensuring cleaning is efficient and effective at all times, and that resources aren't being unnecessarily wasted in certain areas. Even once we reach a stage where many of us have already been vaccinated, this element of efficiency will still be incredibly useful, ensuring areas are cleaned based on the frequency with which they are actually used.

Elsewhere, using desk occupancy sensors to indicate when desks are free, booked, or have just been used, will help cleaning staff see at



a glance where their efforts are needed. The benefit for employees will be even greater, helping them find a freshly-cleaned available seat to work in without any worries about safety.

Looking to the future, a key factor demonstrated in the interviews we carried out was that extending the use of desk sensors to enable desk hoteling will be a priority for businesses. This will create a "frictionless check in" process, where the employee books a desk and checks in with ease, either using a swipe card, or simply by sitting down.

With smart technology already having a positive influence on many areas of our working lives, occupancy sensors will eventually pave the way towards a touchless building experience. While some businesses were just getting to grips with the possibilities of smart buildings before the pandemic, there is no doubt that the events of 2020 have accelerated the widespread adoption of such tools and platforms.

Even taking COVID-19 out of the picture, we were already seeing lighting, doors, elevators and entrances being automated for ease of use, and using occupancy data to do so. Not only this, but smart technology in the form of 'employee apps' is enabling employees to utilise this occupancy data for themselves. Allowing them to improve how they plan their routine while at work, such as identifying a desk to book, find available meeting rooms, grab lunch or use the workplace gym facilities in concurrence with quieter times can greatly aid their workplace experience and boost productivity overall.

“We introduced the True Occupancy technology to increase collaboration and improve working lives, but also reduce energy use as part of National Grid's corporate social responsibility targets..”

— SIMON CARTER, HEAD OF CORPORATE PROPERTY, NATIONAL GRID

HVAC and Indoor Air Quality

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that we need to be paying more attention to the quality of the air that we're breathing and in the interviews we conducted, this was also shown as a primary concern for businesses to improve on in the coming year.

As statistics show 56% of office workers are worried about this, maintaining indoor air quality is going to be a crucial part of making employees feel comfortable and confident as they come back to the workplace.

Integrating occupancy sensors into your HVAC system allows you to control temperature and ventilation based on people entering and exiting the room. But why is this important?

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

A well-ventilated office is a happy and productive office. In light of the nature of the current health crisis, it is important for employees to see that steps are being taken to reduce transmission, improve hygiene and protect their personal wellbeing. Proper ventilation will help reduce absence relating to sickness and curb the headaches and drowsiness that can occur in a poorly-ventilated office - found to affect 86% of employees. Occupancy data can be used alongside air quality sensors to better manage air quality for building occupants.

ENERGY SAVING AND COST REDUCTIONS

Your people come first, but it's worth nothing that having occupancy sensors in place can also help you improve energy efficiency and reduce your carbon footprint. Being able to intelligently connect occupancy data to the HVAC system allows you to adjust or shut off the system automatically when the room is unoccupied. Great for your overheads; even better for the planet.



Space Utilisation and Optimisation

Throughout 2020, we saw an unprecedented change in attitudes around how we live and work. Having started out as a temporary solution for many, remote working has gathered pace and will now affect some key decisions being made by businesses, from the terms of contracts with staff, to how much office space is actually needed.

As discussed earlier, productivity, collaboration, co-ordination and opportunities for socialising mean it is well worth hanging onto your physical office space if you possibly can, even if it is reduced in size. What could this look like - and [how could occupancy data help organisations make the most of their new arrangements?](#)

FLEXIBLE WORKING PATTERNS

Although it looks certain that people will eventually return to the workplace, giants such as Unilever, Twitter and Morgan Stanley have indicated the adoption of more flexible and hybrid working patterns, deciding that their employees won't return to the workplace full time. Some employees may be asked to work from home permanently to help with costs and leases, others may not feel comfortable coming back to the workplace based on their personal risk level. Our interviews with end customers and integrators suggest a consensus that new working patterns will be varied.

NEW FLEXIBLE WORKING PATTERNS

Stationary: Where the employee is in the office most of the week and spends most of their time at their workstation.

Mobile: Where the employee is in the office half or less than half of each week and the office is used as a collaboration hub for these days.

Remote: Where the employee is in the office a few days each month.

This new approach to working will have an impact on the workplace, resulting in a significantly reduced requirement for office space. What's more, the space that is needed may not be optimised to facilitate this. With people working on more flexible schedules, you may have no way of knowing when people are actually using the office.

Following the transition period, occupancy data will be able to identify how much space you are actually using - and which areas could be repurposed, consolidated, sublet, sold or otherwise released to help lower costs.

Going one step further, data from occupancy sensors allows you to progressively fill certain areas of the building to ensure the available capacity is utilised to its full potential in order to save on utilities and energy costs. No need to turn the lights on for an entire floor - just direct staff to the appropriate working area for the day where they can find safe, empty spaces.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE

Why do we have offices? For many employers, this is the question of the moment. With answers ranging from "to collaborate" and "to meet with clients", to "to socialise" and "to celebrate wins with my team", we're seeing the role of the future workplace shift to accommodating employees' real needs over

traditional working patterns.

For example, if employees are in the office for two days per week, the office becomes a space to engage in the social elements of their role such as collaboration and group work. The office layout will therefore need to change to include more breakout and social spaces, doing away with desks altogether in some cases and making collaborative areas the main event. People can then work remotely when needed, and treat their offices as 'collaboration hubs', for example, two days per week as outlined in their contract. This kind of thinking could also be extended to campuses - leading us towards a reality where all kinds of workspaces are more dynamic, creative and fit-for-purpose.

In all scenarios, having occupancy data can enable you to understand your workspace to put a strategic plan into place to adapt layouts, make working safer and more efficient for everyone involved. All this whilst maintaining social distancing, ensuring people have enough space to work, improving cleaning schedules, reducing utilities and energy costs, and optimising space that is being under-utilised due to remote working.

Leaders must now decide how to incorporate this new reality into company policy and culture, weigh up how to efficiently manage real estate costs and effectively communicate their plans to their workforce.

“Office-based firms with 250 or more employees in England and Wales are together spending £10,158 million on underutilised office space- including rent, rate and associated costs of running a workspace and related office functions.”

— WORKPLACE INSIGHT
— THE “WASTED SPACE:
THE COLOSSAL COST OF
UNDER-USED OFFICE REAL
ESTATE” REPORT

Why Investing in a Solution Now Pays Off in the Future

Keeping your employees safe in the return to the workplace requires careful consideration. Decisions made during these months could have significant long-term effects. Better to take the right action now, than be forced to rethink the entire shape of your business several months or years down the line.

DURING THE RETURN

First things first. To get employees on board with a return to the office in the short term, you need to show you have their safety and wellbeing front-of-mind as we battle to get the current pandemic under control. Occupancy data can help reassure employees by demonstrating safety measures, increasing hygiene, facilitating social distancing, improving air quality through HVAC system integration and limiting touch points.

IN THE "NEW NORMAL"

Occupancy data can also help guide decisions about how your spaces are used during the return phase, and how these might adapt in the future. It can also greatly improve employee wellbeing and productivity, using apps to show

real-time availability of rooms, desks, on-site facilities and so on. This could help businesses save on costs by optimising their space.

Investing in the right solution now puts you in the best possible position for the future, making sure you have complete control over the positive experience your employees have when they return to the office. Measures put in place now will reap productivity benefits in the future.

"...occupancy analytics will prove a pivotal fixture in the future of 'connected' real estate and the workplace at large. Companies embracing change, and leading innovation in this space will see rewards beyond the obvious and immediate cost reduction benefits as they adapt building design to empower the heartbeat of the business, its people."

— JAMES MCHALE, MANAGING DIRECTOR & FOUNDER OF MEMOORI

WHEN CHOOSING THE RIGHT OCCUPANCY SENSOR SOLUTION FOR YOUR BUSINESS, THERE ARE CERTAIN QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK YOURSELF:

- 1. How quickly do I need it installed and deployed?*
- 2. What are the costs involved? Are they one off or ongoing?*
- 3. Would a cloud-based service suit me better, or do I need a locally hosted solution?*
- 4. How do the sensors detect people, and are there any privacy concerns?*
- 5. Is the solution scalable? Can I start with my priority areas today and add to it over time?*
- 6. Does it integrate with other systems, such as, HVAC and cleaning scheduling platforms?*
- 7. What are the networking requirements and are there any security implications?*
- 8. How stable is the company? Will they be around for support and servicing in the future?*

How to Select the Right Solution for your Business

Our interviews with leading corporate real estate customers tell us that their clients need a wide portfolio of solutions to make effective use of occupancy data within their workplaces. Furthermore, they don't want to source individual point solutions from fly-by-night startups. Backed by industry leader Fluke, Irisys provides a range of solutions for critical real-estate occupancy use-cases. Powered by our highly accurate and anonymous, people counting technology our real time occupancy monitoring solutions can provide the occupancy data you need to re-engage your employees with the workplace and help your people get back to work.

SAFECOUNT

For the immediate return to the workplace, our easy to implement [SafeCount](#) solution can help protect employee safety and enable social distancing by controlling occupancy levels and working with connected digital signage to display capacity warnings.

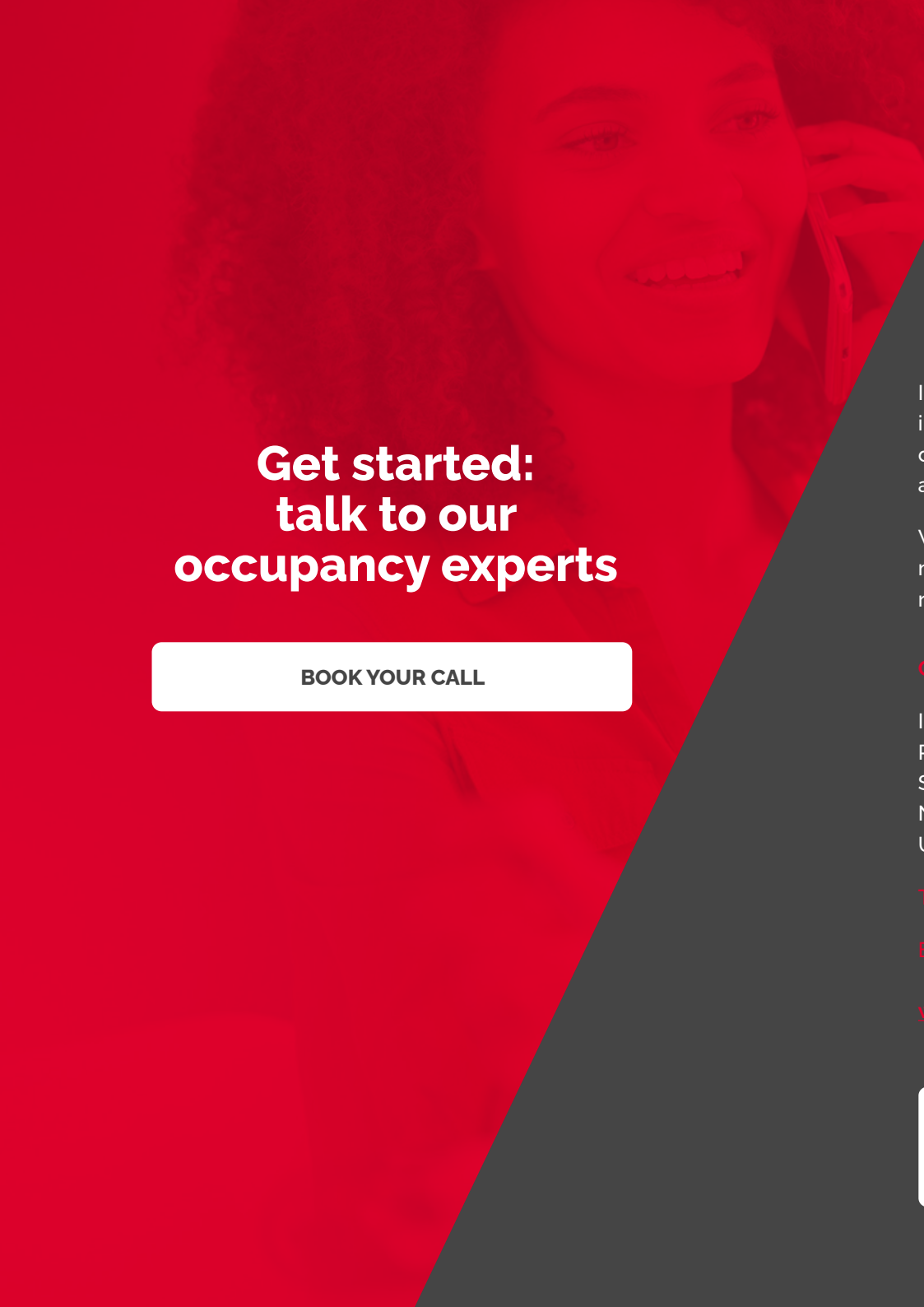
"I really looked for a system that was going to give my staff assurances that we had a safe workplace in terms of occupancy load and SafeCount did that."

— KEVIN WEATHERILL, CEO, THE MARKET

TRUE OCCUPANCY

Looking to the longer term, our [True Occupancy](#) solution enables you to really understand and optimise how your buildings are used. Fulfilling all your occupancy data needs, our scalable and upgradable solutions let you start small with a SafeCount solution in key areas, then expand this as required over time. If you choose to upgrade to True Occupancy, you can utilise the same sensors you have installed to gain new insights. It can extend further to provide anti-tailgating functionalities, and integrate with other systems in the Fluke portfolio such as desk hoteling and a scheduler for demand based cleaning.

So, whether you're planning your employees' return to the office or a bigger change to help facilitate a new, better normal, request a free consultation with one of our workplace occupancy experts to find out how the Irisys occupancy solutions can help your employees re-engage with the workplace.



Get started: talk to our occupancy experts

BOOK YOUR CALL

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LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR TRUE OCCUPANCY SOLUTION

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