

Getting back to the office towers

Declaration of commitment

The successful vaccination rollout means that we can return to some kind of normal life at last. There are so many options now, and the time has come to start bringing workers back to the downtown office towers safely.

Most workers want to come back, and all the downtown stakeholders support the idea, because it is key to the economic revival of this strategic area for our collective prosperity. Getting back will entail several adjustments aimed at a better balance between our professional and personal lives.

That is the backdrop against which we have mobilized to bring workers back successfully, so that everyone can once again say "I love working downtown!"

THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL BE SAFE

We are committed to providing back-to-work plans that meet all the health guidelines so that the workers are guaranteed a safe and healthy environment.

Worker health and safety is everyone's business and it must be at the heart of all back-to-work policies. All of our decisions must comply with the health guidelines.

Clear back-to-work plans that follow those rules will mean workers can come back safely. We already know that 81% of the workers who responded to the most recent Chamber - Léger survey are confident that their employers will set up such plans. We must build on that confidence and bring them back properly.

THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL BE GRADUAL

We are committed to encouraging a gradual and orderly return to the office towers.

The fall will be a turning point in bringing many workers back. While the health situation remains uncertain, the successful vaccination rollout gives us reason to believe that the workers will be able to come back.

The return will be gradual and supervised. While working at home, workers have fallen into new routines and changed the pace of their lives. Nearly a third of the workers we surveyed would like to return to the office for two or three days a week starting in September. About 20% of them even want to go back to four or five days a week. We will offer them a gradual and progressive return schedule. The key will be to have employers and employees work on the return plans together and to make the organization of work predictable.

THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL BE FLEXIBLE

We are committed to finding flexible scheduling strategies that allow workers to enjoy the benefits of working both in the office and from home.

As teleworking increases, many people have radically reorganized the way they work. The workers who have experienced it are satisfied with the savings in time and concentration and report better overall work-life balance. 75% of them said that flexible scheduling would be a good incentive to bring them back to the office.

Our plans for getting back will have to take these paradigm shifts into account. Employers will have to dream up and propose new ways of working in the office wherever possible. Many compromises will have to be made to accommodate workers as we bring them back, including staggered work hours and hybrid models.

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THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL BE EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

We are committed to working together to make the return go smoothly, including before and after working hours.

While employers are at the forefront of getting their workers back, all downtown stakeholders will have a role to play. The back-to-work plan must be cross-disciplinary, designed as a process that everyone contributes to and everyone benefits from.

The process has already begun. The public transit companies have already committed to doing everything possible to ensure a safe environment and frequency of service to meet the needs. Confidence in public transit remains relatively high, with 63% of the workers saying they are confident that they will be able to ride safely in the coming months. Everyone will have to help make this work, providing services adapted to the workers' needs.

THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL BE ATTRACTIVE

We are committed to making the downtown area an attractive place to work, with exciting workplaces and services tailored to the needs of workers.

The return is an opportunity to design new ways of organizing living and working spaces so that they are more attractive to workers. These places where workers spend their daily lives must be redesigned to encourage creativity, socializing and collaboration.

We also want to be able to enhance the downtown experience. Everyone will have to get on board and find ways of enriching workers' daily lives and making the downtown core a place to enjoy living, sharing and working once again. The call for creative projects launched by the Chamber, which invites creative people to make use of private and semi-private spaces, is part of this renewal.

THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE TOWERS WILL ALLOW US TO MEET AGAIN

We are committed to making it easier for workers to be in direct contact and socialize by providing work spaces that encourage informal exchanges.

Getting back to the offices will have to be done properly if we want to restore the human dimension to the downtown revival. After people have worked from home for over a year, we see a real lack of exchange. The office should be a place for socializing, with human relations at the heart of workers' daily lives.

Among the reasons why the workers we surveyed want to come back, socializing, collaborative time and more direct access to colleagues and superiors are the most cited. Informal discussions are at the root of company culture and synergy with colleagues. The return must be an opportunity to reknit the social ties that have been missing since the beginning of the pandemic through a dynamic and inclusive office life.

We are convinced that getting back to the office towers will be a success and we encourage the entire business community and downtown stakeholders to get involved with us.