

# Monthly Newswire

Welcome to our monthly newswire. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it useful.

April 2022

## Evolution of the office

### The requirement to work from home was lifted in January but offices are still less than full.

Across the UK, the shift to agile or hybrid working has reduced the office space requirements of many companies. Businesses are rethinking the office and repositioning it as a place to connect with colleagues, encourage face to face collaboration and promote staff wellbeing (we are social animals, after all). Many landlords are reconfiguring their office buildings to allow for office space that is more easily reconfigured as business adapt to new working patterns now and in the future.

While greater flexibility and a consideration for wellbeing are a concession to employees, businesses are also under pressure from regulators and their customers to reduce their carbon footprint. This is driving a shift to office buildings that meet the energy performance requirements that regulators will require in the future.

Sustainability and the war for talent are two major priorities for most businesses. The office needs to become a "destination" where people want to come together to collaborate and to share experiences. Having a space that people want to use, that also supports the environmental aspirations of the business (and its staff) will be key to attracting the right people.

Staff want to work for businesses that prioritise wellness, happiness, environmental impact and sustainability.

As such, many businesses are investing in revamping their offices now, in the hope of drawing people back. However, the days of spending Monday to Friday in the office are gone. People enjoy the comfort of working from home and the time they get back by not having to commute. The modern office will continue evolve and the future for most businesses looks set to be hybrid / agile working.

## Develop your customer engagement strategy

### Customer engagement is earned through trust and over time.

Customer engagement is all about attracting and influencing customers in order to capture and retain their attention.

Good communication is the foundation of any customer engagement strategy. As more and more interactions with customers have moved online, businesses have had to adapt in order to make brand communication more personal.

Although conversations are central to effective customer engagement, the goal is to get the customer to talk, while you listen. The more the customer talks, the more they will reveal regarding their needs. If a customer feels that they have been listened to, they will feel like they are building a relationship with your business.

You can also drive customer engagement by helping them along the customer journey.

For example, many businesses now use live chat applications to ensure that customer queries can be responded to in real time. This makes the customer feel valued.

Engaging with customers effectively means reminding them about what you have to offer. You should avoid the hard sell. Instead, focus on sharing little bits of useful information. For example, sharing articles or short 'how-to' videos that address particular points of pain for customers. Many businesses use blogs and social media to share regular articles, tips and ideas with customers. If you provide a solution to a problem, customers will come back to you again and again, for further inspiration. The point is to share interesting content that adds value for your customers.



Your customer engagement strategy should focus on retaining existing customers as well as acquiring new ones. Retaining existing customers is more cost effective in that they already have a degree of trust in your business. Existing customers tend to spend more and if they are happy, they will recommend your brand to family and friends, which further drives customer engagement. Customers engage with businesses repeatedly when they feel appreciated, listened to and looked after.

**Please contact a member of our team if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.**

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## Towards Net Zero

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### Top tips to help your business move towards net zero carbon.

Businesses need to lead the way in moving towards net zero carbon emissions. There is no quick fix so businesses need to start the journey now and move towards the ultimate goal of net zero, over the next few years. Here are some of the changes that you can implement in your firm.

#### Switch to a green energy supplier.

Green energy is generated by renewable sources such as wind, hydroelectric or solar. The more businesses that switch to green energy suppliers the quicker the shift away from fossil fuels such as coal or oil will be.

#### Switch to electric vehicles.

If your business has a fleet of petrol or diesel vehicles, you could switch across to electric-only vehicles. It is also worth noting that company car drivers who choose an electric vehicle also enjoy a reduced benefit-in-kind, for tax purposes. If you deliver products or services to your customers, showing up in an electric vehicle sends a positive message that your firm is an environmentally responsible business.

#### Reduce business travel.

Reducing business travel will help to reduce your carbon footprint. Air travel is responsible for significant carbon emissions so really challenge yourselves on whether meeting objectives can be met via Zoom or Teams. Commuting also contributes to carbon emissions. Encouraging your staff to work from home, some of the time, will help to reduce your carbon emissions. Face-to-face meetings are still very important but it is key to get the balance right.

#### Focus on reducing waste.

Wasted paper, water, energy or raw materials contribute to climate change and also cost money.

You can reduce your energy bills by ensuring that all equipment is turned off at night.



You can also invest in improved insulation and thermal management of your business premises in order to reduce the amount of central heating that is required, particularly in the winter months. You can also encourage staff to print less and reuse or recycle materials, where possible. Embracing new technology such as electronic signatures, etc. can further reduce your reliance on paper.

#### Switch to lower carbon suppliers.

Research low carbon suppliers and where possible, switch to using them instead of your traditional suppliers. Even small changes such as using a local supplier rather than an overseas firm, will help to reduce the carbon footprint of transporting materials to your business premises. If you only buy from other businesses that are taking action on climate change, you will help to further drive the business community towards our shared goal of net zero carbon. Examples could include banks who offer paperless statements, logistics companies who use electric vans or food companies who recycle and use minimal packaging.

## iCloud+

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### If you use iCloud storage for your iPhone, iPad, etc. you may be wondering what iCloud+ is all about.

Many iCloud users will have received a notification saying they have been upgraded to iCloud+, free of charge.

iCloud+ offers a range of new features and it is a free upgrade for anyone who has a paid iCloud plan. The free 5GB iCloud account doesn't get these additional features.

Other than the free 5GB plan that all iPhone / iPad users get, Apple offers 3 levels of paid for iCloud+ plans. £0.79 per month for the 50GB plan, £2.49 for the 200GB plan and £6.99 for the 2TB plan. You can also share everything with up to five other family members.

In addition to cloud storage, iCloud+ offers security features such as Hide My Email, which generates random email addresses that forward to your personal inbox. This means you don't have to share your real email address when filling in forms to sign up to public Wifi or subscribing to an email newsletter. This is helpful if you don't want to have your actual email address added to marketing databases.

Another useful new feature is iCloud Private Relay. This service is a bit like a VPN and is designed to protect your privacy online. Private Relay encrypts your browsing data as it leaves your device, which protects it from being read by others. It encrypts the URL so that nobody (not even your Internet Service Provider or Apple) can see both who you are and what sites you are visiting. This prevents third parties determining your identity and building a profile of your location and browsing history.

Another security feature built into iCloud+ is Mail Privacy Protection, which helps prevent email senders from collecting information about you. The system protects your IP address and is intended to prevent unwanted email marketing, etc.

iCloud+ also features HomeKit Secure video. This allows users to connect home security cameras to iCloud. Once set up, footage from your security cameras is automatically stored in an encrypted format in your iCloud storage.

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