An Ideal Work Space

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The Lepage Center's Strategic Advisers program connects Tulane students and recent graduates with New Orleans area entrepreneurs and small business owners who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The advisers are working for the businesses full-time for 10 weeks during the summer of 2020, providing immediate services based on each business's specific needs.

The strategic advisers meet weekly via video conference to discuss what's going on at their companies and to learn from one another. **Last week we discussed work spaces, and advisers were asked to imagine they were CEOs with the chance to design their own spaces and choose where to locate their companies.** Below are some examples of what they envisioned:



"As far as design goes, open offices are great, but people really enjoy having the privacy of their own office. The mentality of the mob is a great motivator in these open environments, but personal work may be compromised. I would try to implement a common area for work as well as individual stations for people to work solo if needed. Implementing policies that focus on mental health in the workplace is crucial to a competitive and comfortable workplace."

"Because social distancing tactics are much more effective in outdoor settings, functional outdoor working/socializing space will be of high value moving forward. I would opt for a smaller city with a more moderate climate in order to maximize outdoor work opportunities. I would design the workspace to account for remote working and social distancing. Instead of providing each employee with their own desk, I would design the space to a be a fluid, moving work environment. This would allow for employees to work from home a few days a week and come into the office and set up at a mobile desk when necessary."

"I would design my space with glass offices for everyone, including executives, to promote transparency and organizational flatness. Ideally, everyone would have an office to call their own, but company policy would encourage leaving office doors open except during meetings and phone calls to avoid disturbing others."

"Much like the co-working spaces that are popping up all over the place it will be designed as an open floor plan with unassigned desks in the middle and breakout conference rooms and offices on the periphery. This concept works because the employees will be allowed to work from home as often as they like unless there are meetings in the office. Furthermore, if my employees are interested in coming in to work, we have the available space for them with the unassigned desks. This will allow us to keep our overhead costs down because the space will be smaller than if we had offices and cubicles for every single employee. It also helps with the continuity of business in case of a natural disaster or, God forbid, another pandemic occurs, because the company will already be set up to continue all operations remotely."

"Working remote has become part of the norm; therefore, I would look to recruit young talent from all over the United States and allow them to work remote. I have seen this work effectively in the startup I work for today where all four employees work from a different city."

"For one, I think having small teams of 5-6 people, so they could meet independently at coffee shops, rent-able work spaces or even an individual’s home would be a necessity. I think that having small, almost self-sustaining groups would serve as a valuable protector against isolation and being unproductive. Of course meeting in person would not be required, but locating in a secondary city (not NYC, LA, San Francisco etc.) would be more attractive for employees and potentially carry less risk and stress (lower rent, population density etc.)"