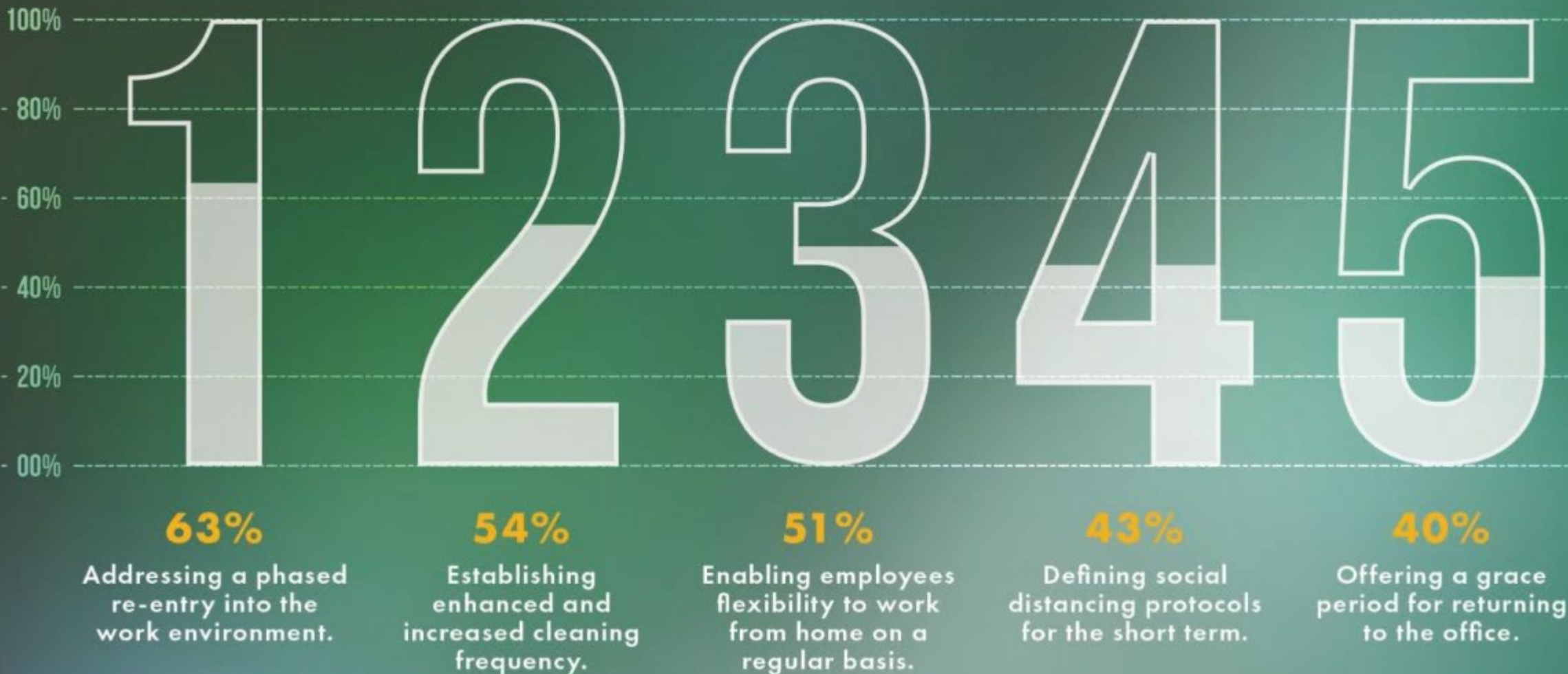# IA- What Happens When We Return to the Office

Webinar 4/17

SURVEY RESPONSES

WHAT SHOULD ORGANIZATIONS BE DOING IN THE **NEAR TERM** TO MAKE EMPLOYEES FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SAFE RETURNING TO THE OFFICE?

63% Addressing a phased re-entry into the work environment.

54% Establishing enhanced and increased cleaning frequency.

51% Enabling employees flexibility to work from home on a regular basis.

43% Defining social distancing protocols for the short term.

40% Offering a grace period for returning to the office.

Communication and transparency is key
- Important to have good change management strategy
- Access to information
- Focus on the human experience and lead with empathy to make people feel safe
- Big emphasis on the change management component
- None of the strategies are going to be successful if we're not being communicative
- On site training for new protocols in the workplace – cleaning, travel path, meeting room density
- Communication to employees about what is happening behind the scenes.

Physical distancing
- Utilizing 6' of separation
- Signage with directional travel paths - Integrated graphics that show direction of flow
- Limit Capacity of community space- Provide new guidelines
- Show physical spacing with carpet tiles, baffles hug from ceiling- look for creative ways to show this without having to put down tape
- Technology
    - Smart sensors to show where the patterns of movement are
    - wayfinding apps to tack movement
    - Apps that track employee heath

Individual Physical space
- Staggered seating
- alternative configurations that limit face to face interaction
- adding short term screens to create buffer.
- Hygiene stations visual and usable

Other enhancements or changes
- Increase outside air ventilation
- commission HVA systems- tune up
- portable air cleaners
- Get rid of shared snacks
- Making things in the background more visible. If cleaning typically happens at night, do a day crew so people see it

How the space may change-

Will the workplace shrink as a reaction to empty seats with more people continuing to work from home?

- Too early to tell the long-term impact. In short term people will spread out.
- Theory that unassigned will lead to less personal items and cleaning more often
- Not convinced it will shrink
  - Change in how we utilize the space
  - More flexible space- allow this and pay attention to how people use it. Stay the course and avoid a knee jerk reaction. Play the long game and look at the balance between changing the physical space, changing process and integrating technology.
  - Flexibility is going to be key because we don't know the impact yet. Nimble workplace strategy that will evolve. Don't put a policy in place that you must reverse 30 days later.
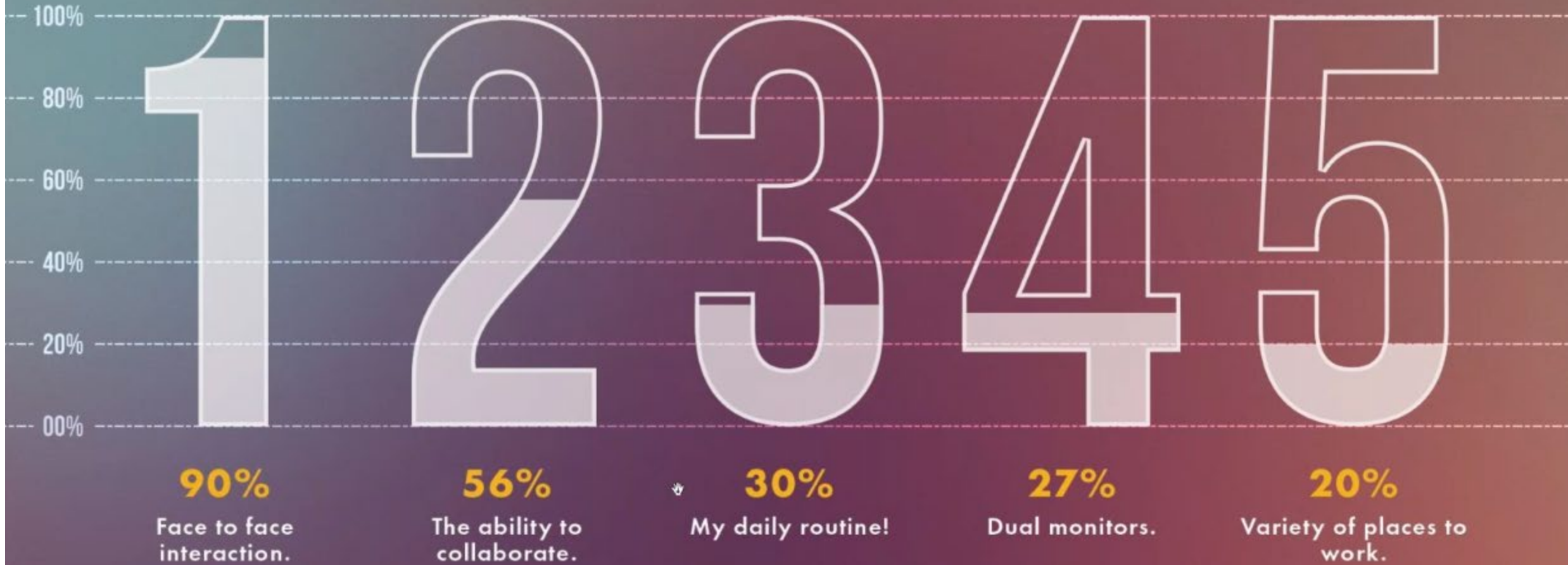
Adjust furniture settings with tweaks to the space

Don't discourage face to face collaboration, but implement some etiquette to keep people stay safe and reduce the density and distance between people

How will meetings spaces change?
- People may want to meet in more open environments rather than confined huddle or meeting rooms
- Larger conference rooms may be more utilized then smaller meeting rooms but with less people
- How do we communicate the change in capacify of meetings rooms
- Thoughtful of where we place hygiene stations- Place in high touch areas
- - maybe don't have close door meetings for a while
- Clean the meeting room before and after you leave the space
- Most of the issues with open place environment is the lack of control over the space. Need for variety will be important but must give people the control. Provide people with the technology to be able to control their new work environment. Scheduling tools will be important.

- Encouraging sick people to stay home

- Watch out for salespeople- there is no definitive solution, and everyone is trying to sell you something that will protect you.

- Advanced strategies – what we'll see in future buildings
    - Upgrade your filters
    - Smart technology- keep it simple
    - Touchless entry- smart buildings
    - Touchless everywhere
    - Humidity control- 40-60%

Huge realization that we CAN be productive with work from home

- **More intentional and thoughtful about where they do their work**
    - Home is now a viable option for productive work where it wasn't before
    - Still will be a drive to the office for collaboration, learning, creativity etc..

- **Distributive workforce model**
    - Before companies adopted this model for workforce attraction tool, not it's being considered for safety but will still have an impact on employee attraction and retention. People will expect it from their employers.
    - Had to spend extra money to upgrade the firewall, increasing bandwidth, moving apps to the cloud
    - Need less AV hardware but more AV software and training
    - Make sure people have the tools they need at home- home ergonomics are not the same as office ergonomics
- **People are realizing the importance of Ergonomic furniture**
    - This will keep people coming to the office
- **How do you have highly productive/utilized space**
    - This will continue to be the goal for workplace design.
    - Want to ensure long term strategy is effective
- **Will there be a return of Private Offices?**
    - Offices send a different message. Culturally it's a different model.
    - If you want to be isolated, you might as well be at home. The office should be about collaboration. Building walls around each other will just stifle collaboration and continue to create the separation of people
    - People are going to want transparency
    - There could be unintended consequences- a hierarchy established when you tried hard to flatten
    - Can create a safe space with out having to build enclosed walls. Look for ways to achieve the open office culture with a safe space – don't want to create a bubble

- **Flexibility and Choice w/ transparency**
    - Measuring productivity with results.
    - Don't care how and where you get your work done- as long as you get it done
    - Lead to more trust