Collaboration detox, less buzz and staggered timings to mark the great return to office

KV KURMANATH

Hyderabad, October 15

The Great Return is happening. But when information technology employees get back to their physical offices in the next couple of months, it's going to be a changed world of work, with fewer colleagues as people do staggered shifts. The configuration of desks will also be changed completely.

Physical-digital model

IT firms are in the process of reassessing their work spaces. Dedicated spaces will start shrinking, making way for people coming in rotational shifts and at staggered timings. New tools will facilitate a hybrid phygital working (physical and digital) model.

"Employees will be back on the same premises but will feel the change as the focus will be on physical distancing and personal hygiene focus. Not all colleagues will be seen in office all the time," said Sameer Bendre, Chief People Officer of Persistent Systems.

"Though you are in the office, digital collaboration will continue to be the default collaboration, particularly for teamwork. If organisations have multiple locations, employees will get flexibility to operate from facilities near them," he said.

Individual 'focused time'

With firms staggering the number of people attending the office, physical meetings for collaboration will have to wait for some more time.

"The staff is likely to need a collaboration detox. In the past,

IT firms are in the process of reassessing their work spaces

people had to be encouraged to collaborate, now there will be equal importance to focused time, and productive collaboration time," Bendre said.

Bharani Kumar Aroll, President of the Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association, said that there will be less buzz. "100 per cent of the employees will be back to the office but only for 50 per cent of the time," he said.

"Large companies might ask their staff to come to the office 2–3 days a week," he added.

Agile people-processes

Mita Brahma, Head HR, NIIT Limited, said, "We are hopefully, nearing the end of the pandemic. The learning of this period will stay with all of us."

"Organisations have learnt to allocate work, supervise, and reward work in a remote fashion. They are better equipped to classify roles suitable for remote work, and to manage them effectively," she said.

"This will result in a new dynamic when people are back at offices.

"I expect all people processes in the post-pandemic era to be much more data driven, agile, transparent, and collaborative," she added.