

# Reimagine

Returning to a Better Workplace



# BACK to BETTER

After a year in quarantine, workplaces are reopening to a new reality. While quarantine might have been temporary, the shift in how we have come to work and behave will never look the same. Custer has unlearned old processes, reimagined where we're going, and will transcend what had previously defined interior space.

This year, it is not just back to work, it's **BACK TO BETTER**. It has to be.

# Custer has been in the business of creating exceptional interior spaces through design strategy, furniture, and technology for 40 Years.

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This year our expertise was put to the test as we turned the lens on ourselves and examined how COVID-19 would affect our business, our culture, and the overall built environment. We do not guess what our employees want or need. We ask questions, we do research, we give a voice to those who make our business run. We effectively create change by making observations to inform our design and using those lessons to help you – our clients – reimagine your own spaces.



Throughout the pandemic period, our staff was largely working from home with essential workers continuing to install and deliver to keep our clients' businesses running. While we were physically apart, we surveyed leaders and employees multiple times to check the pulse on key topics that were impacting our work-force.

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## **MENTAL WELLBEING**

What positives have you seen come from WFH?

What difficulties are you facing at home?

What are you excited about for the future?

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## **PRODUCTIVITY**

What do you need to do your job better?

What do you have at the office that you miss the most from home?

Do you feel you have the tools and technology to do your job effectively?

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## **CULTURE**

What is leadership doing well and what can we do better?

How are we doing sustaining our culture and feel of belonging?

Are we under or over communicating company wide?





Through our regular Custer check-ins, as well as industry research from Gensler and Steelcase, we captured key learnings to apply to the design strategy for a new pilot space utilizing our existing real estate. We built an integrated interior space to revitalize the ways in which we come together and how we productively work while we are apart.

# KEY PRINCIPLES:



## **HARNESS HOME + HOSPITALITY**

We looked to the benefits of our recent collective experience to bring the luxuries of working from home into the office space. Opening the floor plan to incorporate comfortable lounge postures and kitchen-table-like elements invites you to use the space like you do your house.

We partnered with KLH Custom Homes, an expert in residential interior design, to thoughtfully incorporate accessories and finishing touches to make Custer feel more comfy and less corporate.

Using biophilia, art work, brand messaging, and our core values throughout the space, we put our company culture front and center.



## **SUPPORT TEAMWORK AND ME WORK**

This space is free address, without dedicated workstations. It is important to support various types of work and give the individual choice and control over their environment. The floor is designed for a user to shift quickly from heads-down solo work to collaborative brainstorming sessions within the same footprint.

Architectural elements, such as pods and reservable conference rooms, are provided to give users acoustical privacy for meetings and phone calls.

Mobile pieces, such as deskings and screens, allow for the room to be quickly re-set for a particular meeting, giving the owner the freedom make the space their own.

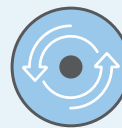


## **EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY + TOGETHERNESS**

We have enriched our physical spaces with updated technology to collaborate with others from across the room or across the country. Our immersive tools such as ClickShare and Microsoft SurfaceHub, support those who are meeting face-to-face and impartially connect those who are working remotely.

Room reservation capabilities and the planned implementation of sensors will improve transparency by reporting data on who is using the space and how it's being used.

Technology is not a replacement for physical interactions. As humans, we crave connection. The design gives employees and guests the ability to use space to connect with each other.



## **FLEXIBILITY IS THE FUTURE**

Research shows that the majority (70%) of business leaders in the United States believe that a hybrid work style will be implemented within their organizations moving forward. Custer is no exception. As we've discovered, productive work can happen in more places than just the office and the user experience must adapt to that reality.

Work can be done anywhere, but we have built a space that we hope will encourage employees to return to focus, meet, and connect in a way they cannot do at home.

We will use employee and guest feedback to develop protocols for how to use physical space.

# Unlearn. Reimagine. **TRANSCEND.**

Custer will continue to collect feedback on how our employees and guests utilize the space and it will evolve based on our experiences. Our change management experts have guided us through a process so we might do the same with our clients. We look forward to welcoming you into our “home” and helping you unlearn pre-COVID ways of working, reimagine your interior space, and transcend challenges to build your own flexible, cohesive environment.