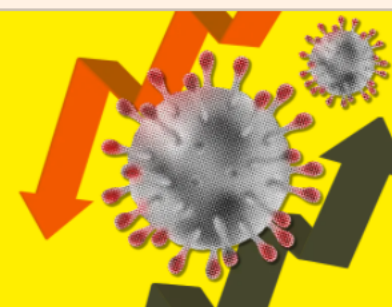


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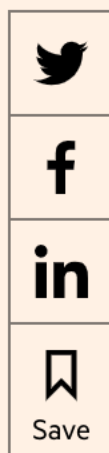


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# Letter: Workplaces are part of our culture and economy

From Nick Riesel, Managing director FreeOfficeFinder.com, London EC1, UK



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Rumours of the death of the office have been greatly exaggerated and, as Lucy Kellaway’s insightful article illuminated ([FT Weekend, May 16](#)), they have an important role to play in our culture as well as the economy.

She astutely emphasised that offices create a barrier between work and home.

Many people who are juggling Zoom meetings with family routines will be thankful when they can return to their desk space. Not everyone wants to or can work from home and there is only so much amusement in a pet or child wandering behind a colleague desperate to share an item of critical balance-sheet importance.

Offices will change, of course. Hot-desking, chill-out zones, water coolers and communal bars will disappear to be replaced by hand-sanitiser dispensers, protective screens and distancing, at least to start with. Companies may reduce headquarters’ space and migrate staff to satellite offices with more flexible working patterns. More start-ups will stay at the kitchen table

stage for longer but the benefits of having a team working in proximity (restrictions permitting) will still deliver on creativity and productivity. Office leases will need to be more flexible with more companies opting for serviced offices and flexspace, which could play a huge role in economic recovery. We cannot rebuild our economy back to where it was from teleconferencing and homeworking.

It has taken a pandemic for us to appreciate the value of office space to both business and wellbeing. All we need now is a futuristic transport system to render commuting obsolete.

**Nick Riesel**

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