

Uber's workplace VP shares his top 5 strategies for reopening our offices →

Uber for Business

Many businesses are facing the challenge of supporting their employees as they navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. There are many factors companies can consider as they look for new ways to bolster essential workers or bring remote employees back to offices.

As Uber's global VP of Workplace and Real Estate, Michael Huaco has been instrumental in creating the company's plans for COVID-19 and beyond. From prioritizing flexibility to reimagining what an office space can look like, here are the 5 key considerations that helped create a plan that fits our employee needs.



Consult the experts

Considering the perspectives of multiple people can help when building a plan. At Uber, Huaco relies on a cross-functional team of internal stakeholders and external experts. This includes not only the leadership and human resources teams but also an epidemiologist and government health agencies.

Maintain open and consistent communication

One of the priorities at Uber is getting the right messaging out to employees. Huaco is a member of Uber's internal COVID-19 employee-focused response team, which was created at the start of the pandemic to keep communication ongoing and accessible. Using surveys to gauge employee sentiment about returning to work is one tactic they employ to get regular feedback.

Find the right processes and tools

Establishing the right protocols can be an important part of building out a plan. When Uber's offices reopen, employees will use a third-party app to perform health checks at home before they're allowed to come to work. Seating layouts will prioritize social distancing, and features that lessen physical touch are being built into the design of new and existing offices.

What Huaco says

"This is a global problem. We look at case rates and hospitalization rates. There are a million people involved in this to help us develop the tools to get back to work."



"Communication is also a big part of how we talk about this. Getting the right message out, what we say and don't say, is part of the exercise."



"We're taking steps to remove surfaces that you have to push, like doors, so you step on a plate and the door opens up. You're not having to touch things in the bathroom or kitchen."

Be flexible

Even when a plan is created, teams may need to be ready to make necessary changes to help employees feel safe and productive. At Uber, Huaco is helping to determine flexible employee policies that balance remote and in-office work with caregiving and health obligations.

Avoid a one-size-fits-all model

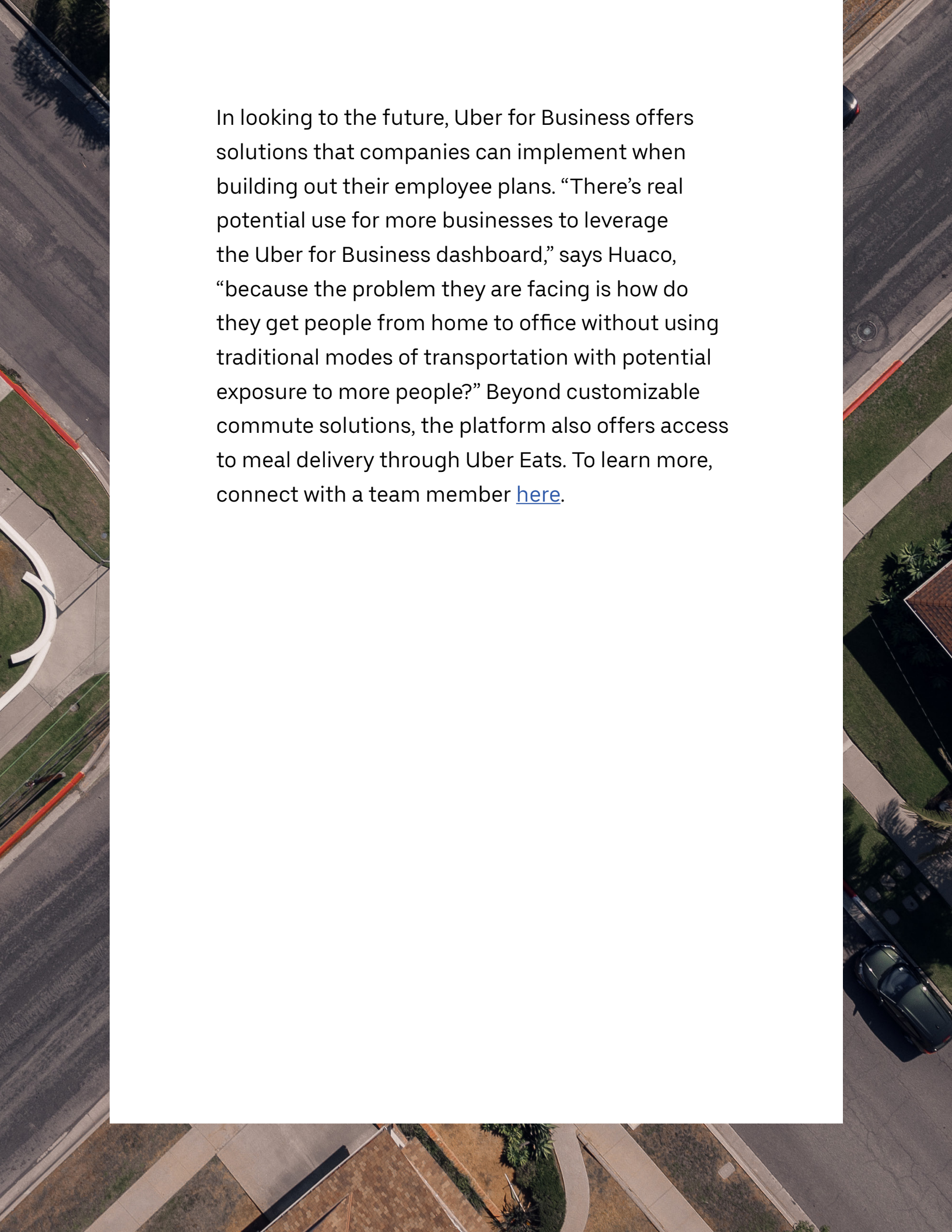
COVID-19 is a worldwide problem, but each area requires a local approach. From San Francisco to Hyderabad and many places in between, Huaco and his team have made strategic reopening or closing decisions to accommodate individual offices or build out new locations that focus on promoting the health and wellness of employees.

“It will go well beyond the physical space. It really has to do with HR policies, and how we use them to provide more flexibility.”



“In San Francisco, we’re one of the few companies going after the WELL certification, which involves how you design the space to create more physical movement to reduce a sedentary lifestyle. Additionally, it also increases the amount of natural light and air, further promoting health.”



An aerial photograph of a residential street. On the left, a paved road curves around a green lawn. A white curb separates the road from the lawn. In the center, a house with a brown roof is visible, surrounded by a green lawn and some trees. A dark-colored car is parked on the street in front of the house. On the right, another paved road runs parallel to the first, with a red curb and a concrete sidewalk. A dark-colored car is parked on this road as well. The overall scene is a typical suburban residential area.

In looking to the future, Uber for Business offers solutions that companies can implement when building out their employee plans. “There’s real potential use for more businesses to leverage the Uber for Business dashboard,” says Huaco, “because the problem they are facing is how do they get people from home to office without using traditional modes of transportation with potential exposure to more people?” Beyond customizable commute solutions, the platform also offers access to meal delivery through Uber Eats. To learn more, connect with a team member [here](#).