RETURNING TO THE OFFICE IN THE NEW NORMAL

Although COVID-19 continues to present daunting challenges, decision makers—both in governments and across industries—feel more hopeful that we will be able to open workplaces in a cautious, phased approach soon.

The New Normal

As risk-based staging warrants, authorities have begun lifting some restrictions on workplaces, and more and more corporations across the globe have begun preparing themselves for a changed workplace environment.

Some of the most important aspects of the global "return-to-office" initiatives include:

- Encouraging vaccinations
- Prioritizing vaccinated employees for in-office work
- Offering rotating work-from-home/flex-work options to reduce the number of employees in the office at one time
- Ensuring only those employees working on mission-critical (e.g. server maintenance) or important projects are in the office
- Maintaining the audit trail of office visits for contact tracing and compliance
- Providing sanitizing stations and implementing other hygienic tools

Balancing Optimism with Caution

Businesses must take carefully calibrated steps that ensure compliance with health and statutory guidelines as they balance the benefits of returning to in-office work with the necessary regard for their employees' health. While the prospect of increased documentation, reporting, protocols, and vigilance may be daunting, and ongoing compliance with the ever-evolving regulations is resource-intensive, protecting the safety of the workforce is paramount. Finding the tools and strategies to make those processes as streamlined as possible will ease the burden enormously.

Take a Platform Approach for Your Return to Work Processes

A thorough blueprint of carefully curated steps for a planned return to office should be complemented by the right platform, one with the capabilities to ensure a foolproof execution:

- Capturing an end-to-end customizable workflow that can cater to differing local guidelines and other governing factors that vary across geographies
- Creating an audit log of all activities and communications traceable to each employee visit
- Defining a configurable approval process to prioritize critical office visits
- Developing an omnichannel interface to ensure that employees can reach out to the organization easily
- Delivering a drilled-down analytics dashboard to keep a close eye on the ground situation, including the number of employees visiting the office each day, employees raising a request and not showing up, COVID protocol violations reported, employees reported to be symptomatic who have recently visited the office, etc.
- Alerting stakeholders in real time about events that require their attention or intervention

The BMC Helix product suite is a robust platform with all the ingredients required to support a globally compliant, comprehensive, and confident "return to office" rollout. It provides an omnichannel interface known as **BMC Helix Digital Workplace** for employees to raise issues, subject to configurable approvals from the required set of authorities. It also includes an intuitive workflow management platform called **BMC Helix Business Workflows** where these issues can be routed appropriately to people who can perform customized, curated tasks while abiding with the governing service-level agreements (SLAs). This helps deliver a seamless experience for all stakeholders.

"Return to Office"—Content Solution for the Facilities Line of Business (LoB)

With the help of the employee-facing BMC Helix Digital Workplace interface and LoB-centric BMC Helix Business Workflows application, an organization can create end-to-end workflows capable of catering to a variety of scenarios. We have created some out-of-the-box content that emulates use cases pertaining to a typical "return to office" initiative.

The use-case starts with an employee request in BMC Helix Digital Workplace and continues through the resolution of the request in BMC Helix Business Workflows using guided process steps that meet the parameters of the request and a dashboard that helps the administration monitor the ground situation.

The use cases supported by the content solution are:

- Employee office visit workflow
- Sanitary practice violation reporting
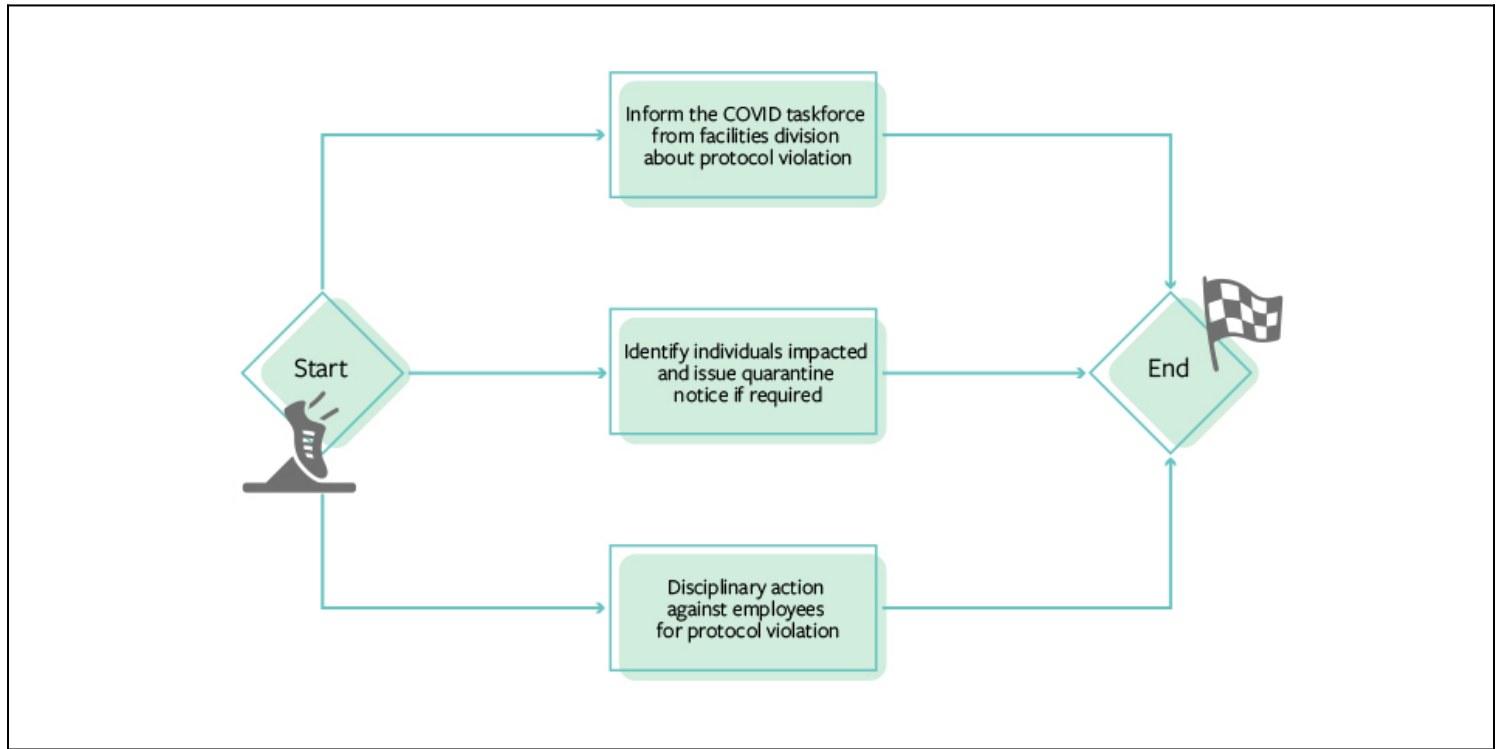- Self-reporting of COVID symptoms or infection

Employee Office Visit Workflow

An approval-based workflow for employees wishing to visit the office on a specific day allows the facilities team to regulate the number of employees on premises on a daily basis and ensures that employees validate their health status at each tracked check-in and check-out of the office. Alternative scenarios are also covered, such as when an employee's temperature prohibits an office visit per implemented guidelines.
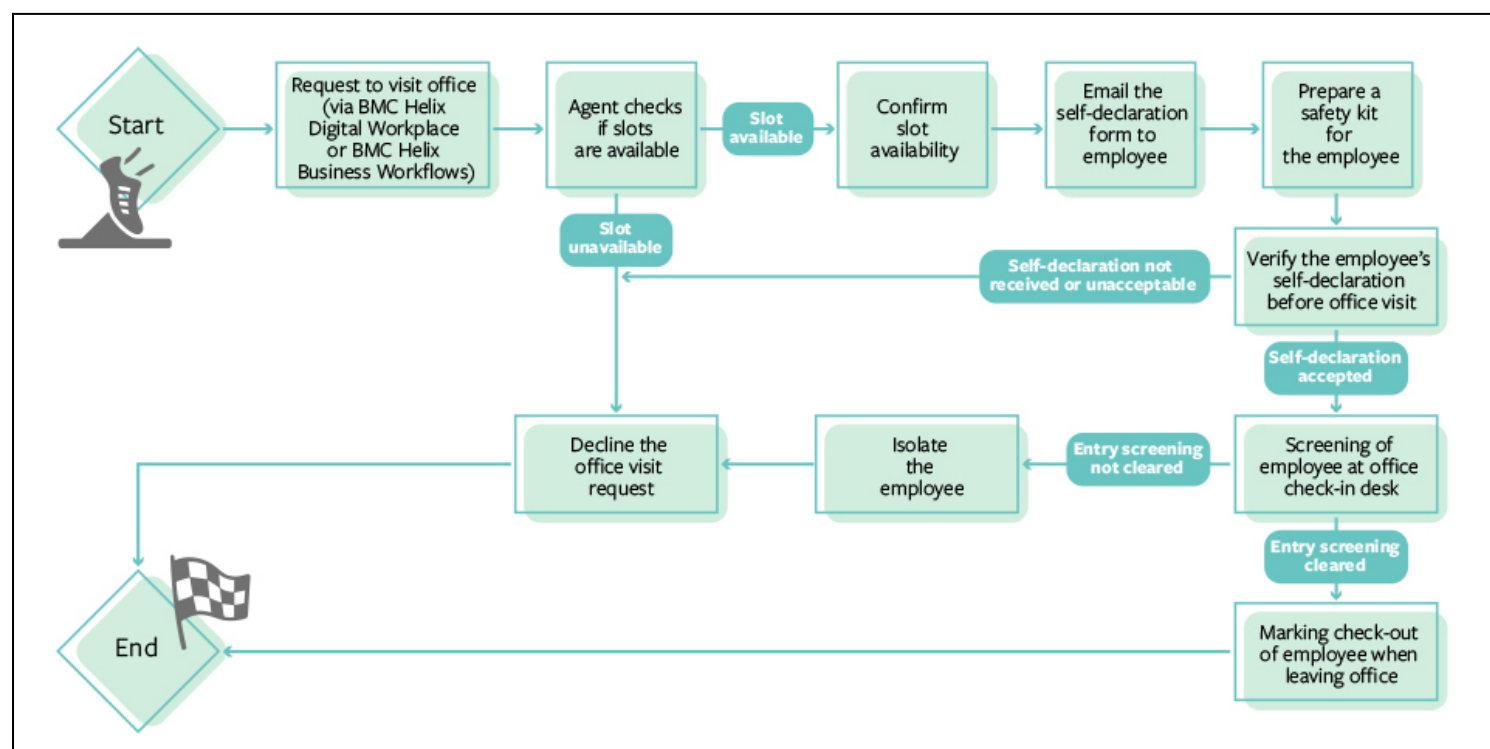

Sanitary Practice Violation Reporting

Employees can report a violation of sanitary practices they may have witnessed during their office visit using BMC Helix. They can also provide supplementary information so the facilities team can conduct a thorough investigation, ascertain the steps required to mitigate the contamination, and identify the colleagues that might need to self-isolate.

Self-reporting of COVID Symptoms or Infection

Employees can inform the organization if they are experiencing COVID-related symptoms or have tested positive for the infection. If the infected employee has visited the office in the recent past, they can also report the facilities and rooms they occupied during their visit. The facilities team can then take preventive measures, de-sanitize the premises, and identify colleagues who might need to self-quarantine.
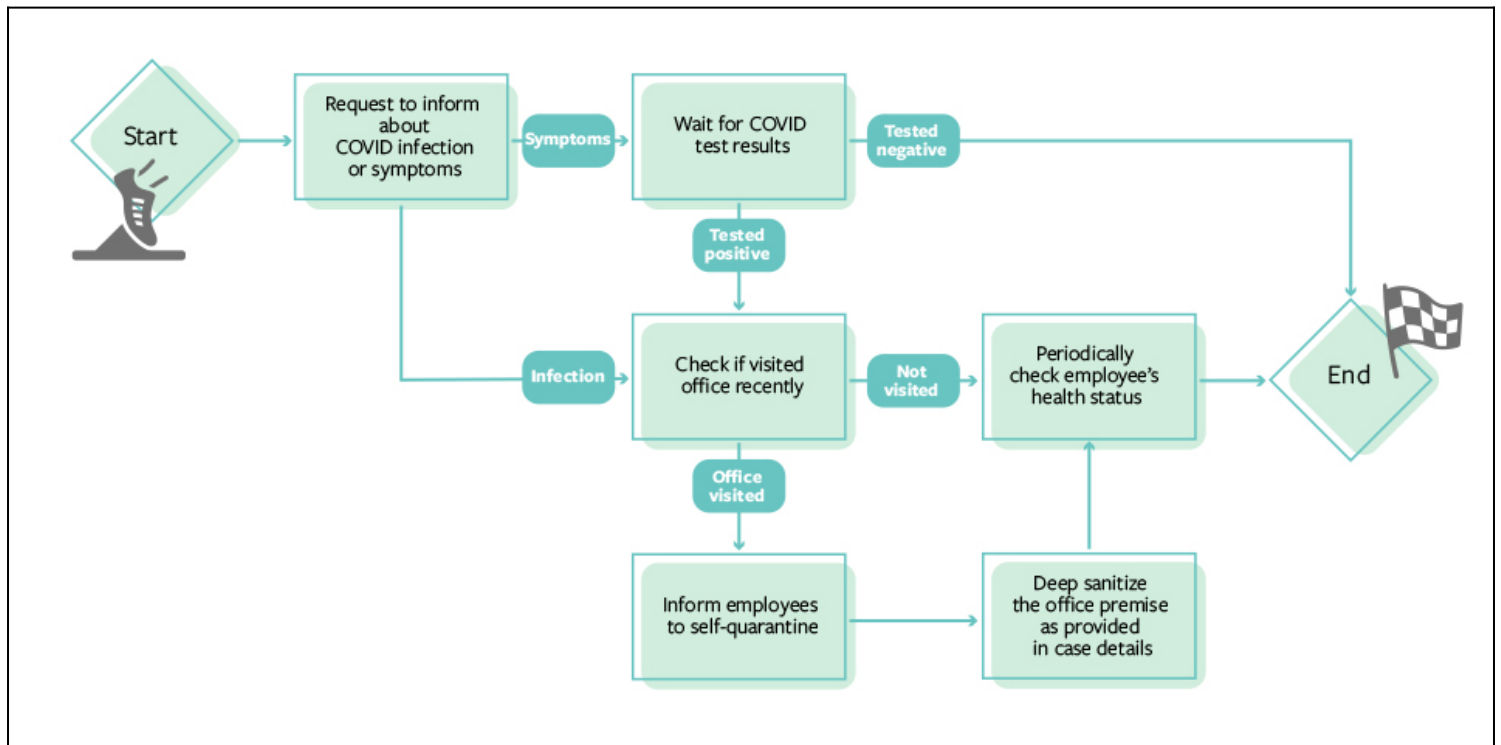
With BMC Helix, the above-mentioned use cases are executed with the help of task flows associated with case templates. The conditions embedded in the task flows enable or disable the succeeding tasks based on the information fed into the system by the agents working on the case. Each action taken during the resolution of any of these requests is captured in the BMC Helix

system, providing a robust audit log to ensure compliance with guidelines. It also enables data collection at the ground level, which gives the Facilities or Infrastructure team tasked with ensuring a safe working environment much-needed visibility and actionable insights to keep operations running smoothly. Moreover, the entire process flow, along with notifications and data collection questionnaires, can be customized based on the organization's requirements and the guidelines of local governing bodies.

Conclusion

It is an undisputed fact that COVID has posed challenges that the world has never seen before. While the battle is ongoing, organizations must safeguard their employees as well as serve their customers efficiently while complying with a seemingly ever-increasing set of regulatory and health guidelines.

BMC Helix Digital Workplace and BMC Helix Business Workflows empower users to configure complex business scenarios to achieve organizational goals while ensuring global compliance and a safe working environment for employees.

Check out the "Tutorial: Implementing use cases for BMC Helix Business Workflows" to learn more.