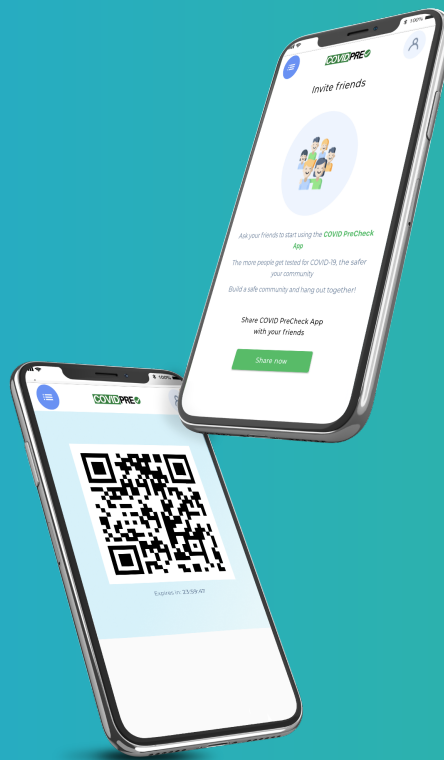


# Creating Safe Workspaces Digitally:

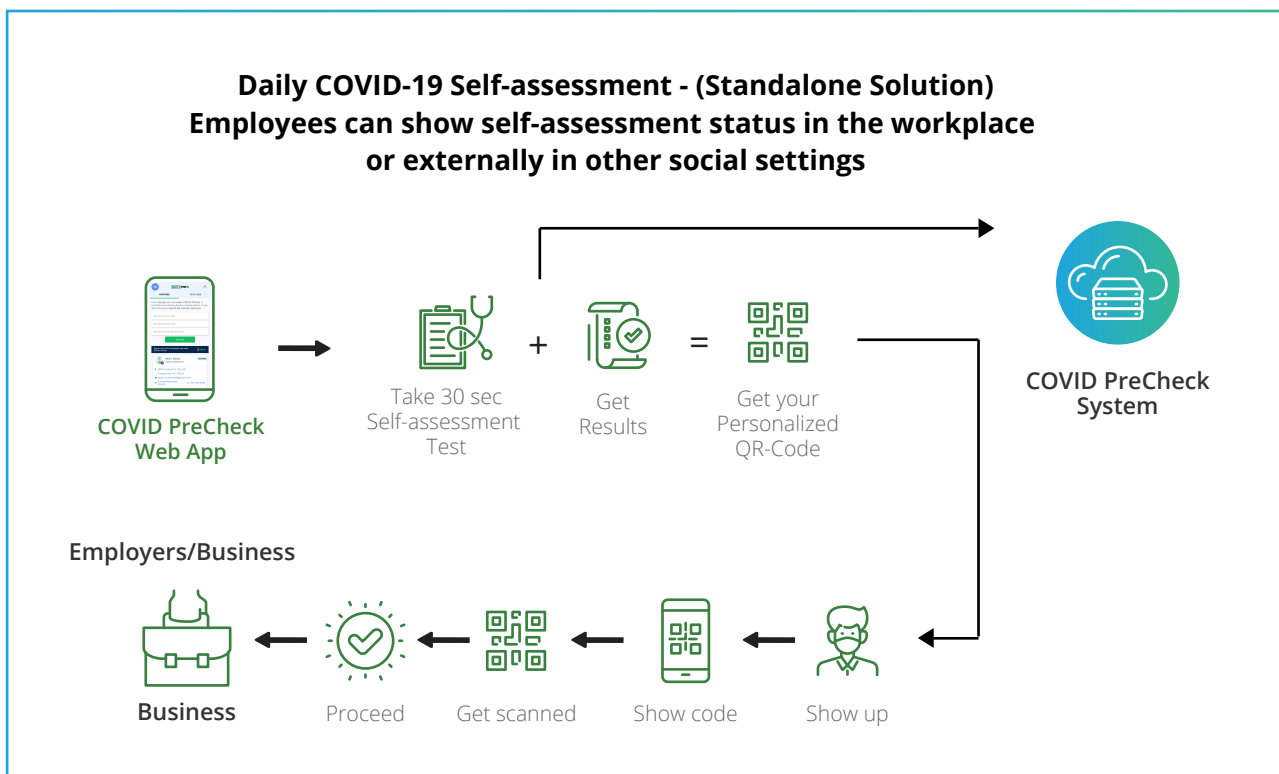
## A Phased Approach



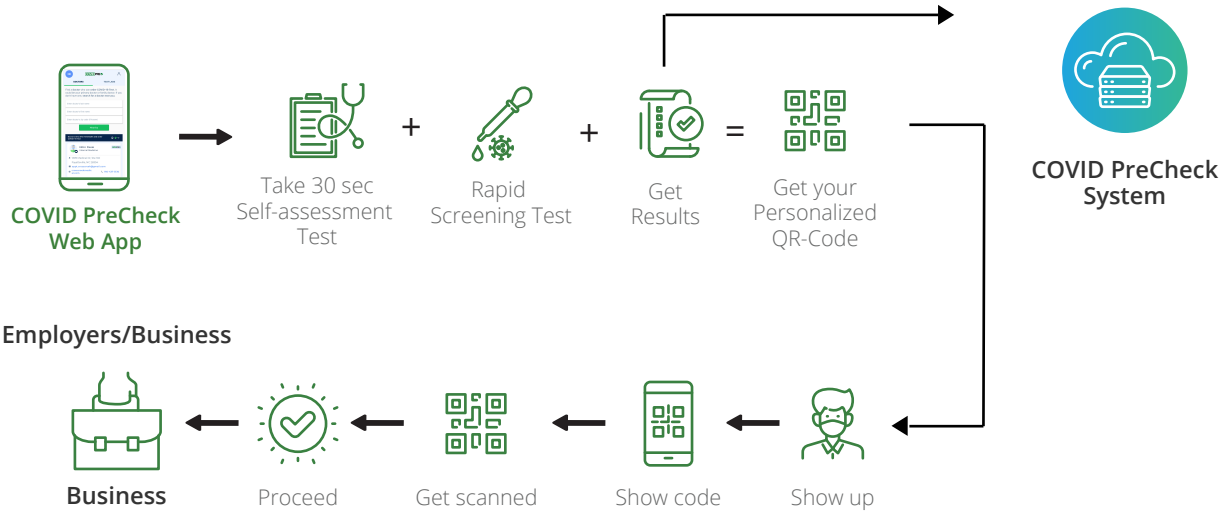
Every industry has adapted to a remote workforce in some capacity, but not all businesses and organizations can fully support this for an extended period of time. A McKinsey & Company survey of 100 executives at firms across the country and various industries found that these executives expect 88 percent of their workforce, on average, to be back on-site by December. The results also suggest that for these companies, working from home is not planned to be the new normal at all. Four in ten respondents indicated that permanent remote work is only possible for less than one-quarter of their desk employees. Employees and HR executives alike recognize the desire to return to the office but are also concerned about the move.

A number of employers have already started taking extra measures to keep their work environment clean and keep their employees protected. However, are they using all the tools at their disposal? HR departments that provide digital access to self-attesting and verification of COVID-19 status are in a much better position to orchestrate a safe return-to-work.

**Workflows for a Phased Approach to Return to Work:**

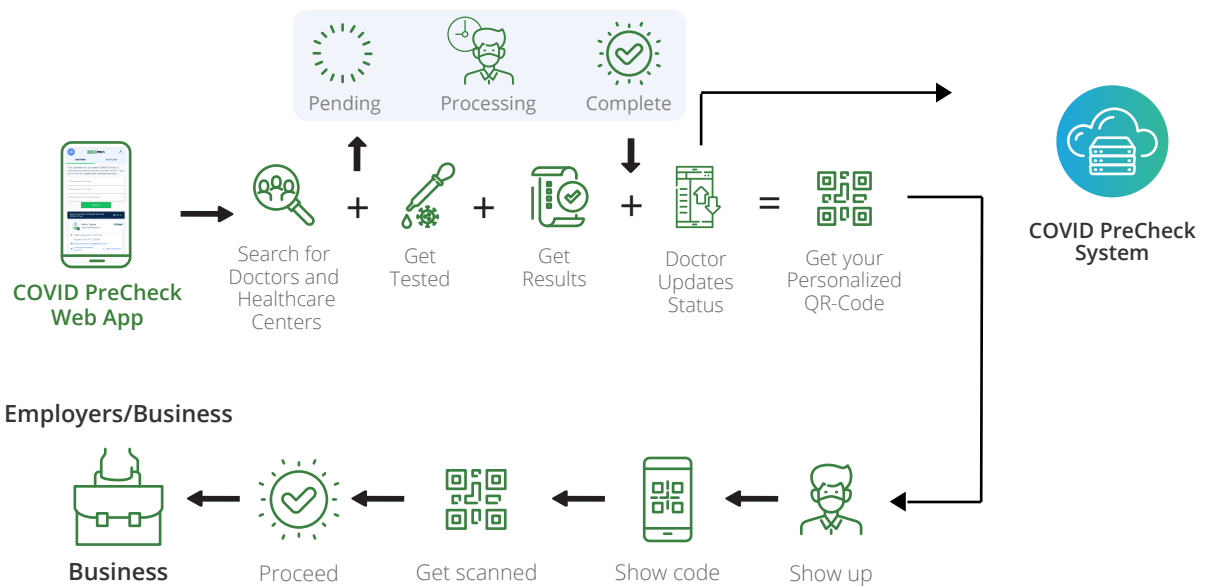


**COVID-19 PreCheck Status Updated with a Rapid Screening Test - (Standalone Solution)**  
**Employees can show COVID PreCheck status in the workplace**  
**or externally in other social settings**

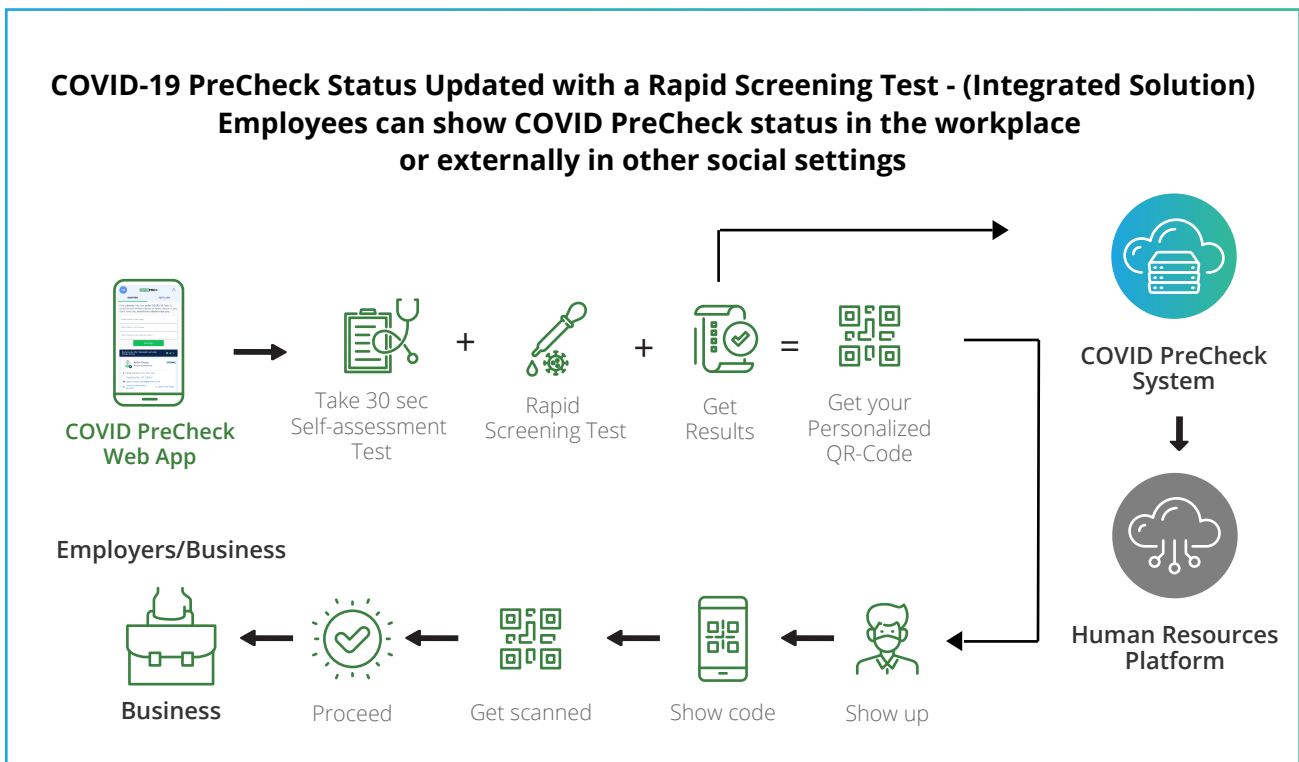


In addition to self-assessments, technology can help in other ways. For example, employees can leverage digital assistants to help them locate test centers and physicians who provide Telehealth consultations. In turn, this enhances employee confidence that returning to work is safe.

**COVID-19 PreCheck Status Updated by Licensed Healthcare Professional - (Standalone Solution)**  
**Employees can show COVID PreCheck status in the workplace**  
**or externally in other social settings**



Today, many organizations have Human Capital Management (HCM) systems deployed in hybrid IT architectures. These consist of both new cloud applications and legacy on-premise systems. Any new solution for creating a safe workplace must provide flexible, repeatable integration in a diverse application ecosystem to efficiently manage how employees return to work safely during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Many companies are concerned about bloat in their HR tech stack as businesses digitally transform themselves. However, this isn't about throwing another piece of software into your workflow. COVID PreCheck needs to become an integral part of your employees' digital experience as they return to work. To reach this goal, COVID PreCheck needs to work collaboratively with your existing HR platforms. This creates a cohesive, easy, and natural experience that helps employees return to work safely and rapidly at scale. However, it also requires connecting data related to employee's COVID-19 status across the entire HR ecosystem.

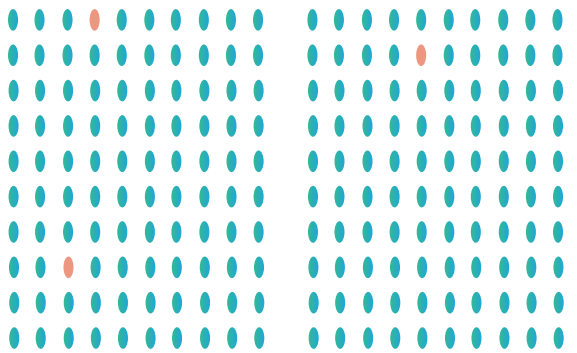

How does this play out in practice? Based on the outcome of the self-assessment test, employees can leverage digital assistants to look for physicians who offer Telehealth consultations for COVID-19 or locate test centers that are nearby. Making COVID-specific digital tools available to employees anywhere showcases that HR is focused on caring and protecting employees' health and well being.

# Pool Testing

We also need to consider some of the other testing alternatives on the table. Until a vaccine becomes widely available, Pool testing could be a way to efficiently test a large number of employees frequently. Rapid turnaround antigen testing to identify COVID-19 cases is evolving at breakneck speed. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has even issued Emergency Use Authorization for saliva testing and COVID-19 diagnostic tests that can be performed entirely at home or in other settings besides a lab, such as offices or schools, and that could be available without a prescription.

The major issue here is resources. The testing may work quickly, but there's a limited amount of materials. Group testing is designed to get the same amount of testing, with a smaller resource crunch.

For example, take a small business with 200 employees. Every so often, the company could test the staff, and instead of running 200 separate analyses, it could group 10 samples into a pool, mix the swabs of those 10 samples and only run 20 analyses. If three of those pools came back positive (which on average, would be the case if the prevalence rate of infection in that area was 1.5%), those 30 employees could be retested individually to see who was infected and could remain out of work in the interim. The other 170 employees, in the pools that tested negative, wouldn't need to be retested.

Round 1: Test each of the 20 pools	Round 2: Test each 30 Individual specimens	Total test: 50																
		<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total kits required</td> <td>200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Test kits used</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Test kits saved</b></td> <td><b>150</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><hr/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Specimens</td> <td>200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of pool</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pool Size</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Prevalence rate</b></td> <td><b>1.5%</b></td> </tr> </table>	Total kits required	200	Test kits used	50	<b>Test kits saved</b>	<b>150</b>	<hr/>		Specimens	200	Number of pool	20	Pool Size	10	<b>Prevalence rate</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
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After the testing is done, results can be made available digitally to the employees, so they can show their COVID status to their employers. What this approach is currently missing is a way to securely communicate these results to organizations/institutions and their employees. Some employers may elect to do pool testing along with daily self-assessment in order to help determine who can enter their facilities. This accounts for the fact that a self-assessment test may not detect asymptomatic spread.

To manage the risks involved in creating a safe workplace, it is particularly important to partner with a company that not only has the technical expertise, but also medical and scientific skills. They can apply their expertise to consult HR executives on if and when to leverage pool testing in combination with rapid tests.

## **Segmenting, Staggering and Scheduling**

Deploying digital tools can also aid in quickly implementing and facilitating segmenting and staggering in a return-to-work plan. For example, if the employer can verify employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies, those employees can return to work right away. Employees who were infected but recovered can also return to work based on CDC guidelines.

Employers can set up policies requiring multiple negative tests for COVID-19, a positive antibody test, and a two-week period of self-quarantine during which the person shows no symptoms. Employees younger than 65, without any health conditions, can return to work as long as they take the daily self-assessment test and prove they don't have symptoms related to COVID-19 and have not been exposed to someone infected. Finally, employees who can show they are immunocompromised with a digital note from their doctor can return to work with special provisions and accommodations.

The COVID-19 crisis has added many layers of complexity to how businesses tackle workforce planning. An employee scheduling strategy that automatically takes into account the COVID status of each person helps create a safer workplace. A solution that keeps pace with the latest rules relevant to your industry and location and translates those requirements into how your scheduling needs get calculated will help your employees be safe and stay productive at the same time.

## When a Vaccine Comes Out

In theory, the advent of a COVID-19 vaccine would mean the end of these provisions. However, based on various polls, less than half of American adults say they would get a government-approved coronavirus vaccine if one becomes widely available. The end result is that many employers will end up managing a pool of employees with various degrees of COVID-19 risk. Some would be vaccinated, some may have developed antibodies from a past infection, while some others will be at high risk of COVID-19 complications.

It will be important to consider a digital platform backed by a panel of health and infectious disease experts who are constantly evaluating and interpreting the guidance coming out of public health agencies. At the same time, it is crucial for the platform to evolve and incorporate developments in testing, diagnostics, immunology, and treatment related to COVID-19.

Technology has been invaluable for keeping workers connected while being forced to stay home. Many organizations have started evaluating digital technologies to implement a new set of protocols and standards they have to put in place to create safe spaces in the workplace.

In addition, employers have to implement safety measures across the full range of activities associated with their operations, including activities that take place outside the work environment. Any process or tool or technology that helps the employee fight the virus in the workplace should help the employee do the same outside the workplace in other social settings, or when they are interacting with people who are not necessarily their fellow employees. Protocols and policies that define when to return to work post-infection also apply when someone is able to return safely from quarantine to their community.

With top health experts opining that temperature checks are pointless, a number of companies are now requiring employees to complete a daily COVID certification to indicate whether they have COVID-19 related symptoms or if they have been exposed to someone with the infection. Employees have to attest that they have self-assessed their health prior to coming to the workplace. A self-assessment test can be and should be interconnected across all HR functions from recruitment to onboarding to sick leave management and a safe return-to-work after recovering from the infection. New processes and applications that are implemented to create safe spaces have to become part of a coherent and integrated digital HR engine which employees can access digitally in their workplace and at home during their non-working hours.

With the goal of protecting the workforce from exposure to COVID-19, employers are working to identify those who are most vulnerable to serious illness and make accommodations to provide a safe working environment. Once it is verified that an employee may be at high risk for contracting the virus, HR departments need to work with the employee to implement potential adjustments/accommodations to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Some examples include:

- Remote work
- Alternative work schedules
- Specifically fitted personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Physical alterations to workstation or office

## In Summary

The key to implementing these policies is to leverage cloud-based digital tools that require a minimum amount of time to onboard and can scale to hundreds or thousands of employees at multiple locations. The science behind understanding COVID-19, improved testing, and vaccine development are evolving rapidly. HR executives are faced with a return-to-work decision unlike anything they have faced in recent history. Evaluating a solution just on its technical merits will not suffice. Employers need to work with the medical and health experts to support and iterate solutions as they evolve with new science. If the solution has open APIs and can integrate with existing Human Capital Management software and Workforce Management platforms, that is even better.

Finally, employees will expect to use the same set of applications and tools both in the workplace and outside the workplace. Anything the employer can do to facilitate the dual use of applications that helps create safe spaces in the workplace and at home or other social environments would increase employee support, morale, and buy-in.





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