SONY

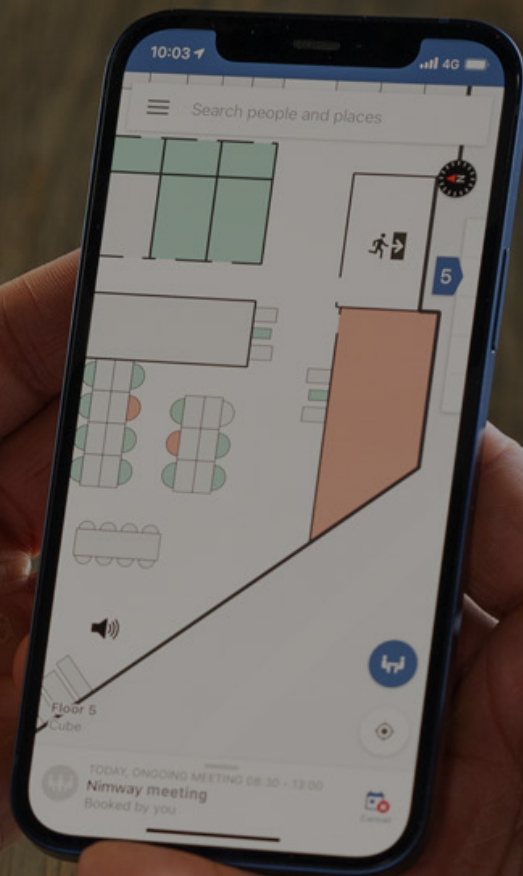**Reserving space at the office**

What can go wrong?

The answer is that *a lot* can go wrong. Most booking systems run into all kinds of trouble. In this article we go through the four most common problems experienced by companies using space reservation software.

nimway

Sony's research clearly indicates that post COVID-19, one of the main reasons people will go to the office is to meet their colleagues. We all want to see and talk to other people, and to reignite the creative spark that only comes from face-to-face interaction. And we definitely don't want to have to do a whole lot of extra work to make that happen. This explains why space reservation systems are such a hot topic right now.

1 Room squatting

Room squatting refers to the occasions when people book a room for the whole day, but only occupy it for a short part of that time. A team might leave their bags and computers in the room and go off to another location, making the room unavailable to others. This leads to a higher reported occupancy level than is actually the case.

One of our customers experienced a similar problem before installing the Nimway solution. Employees were 'squatting' in meeting rooms for up to 45 minutes before their meeting began, for fear that another group might come along and claim it. This problem disappeared when they installed Nimway.

Nimway's sensors indicate when a room hasn't been used for a certain period of time. Colour coding in the app, on the room panels, and on the floor plan change automatically from red to yellow or green, to indicate a change in occupancy status.

With Nimway, users can also release their bookings when leaving a room by cancelling their reservation on the app or room panel. Of course, there may still be times when employees have to change their plans at a moment's notice. The key is to have a really intuitive reservation system.

2 No-shows

Sometimes, employees book a room and end up not using it, which means that empty rooms appear as unavailable to other people. It might even give the impression that no rooms are available. The result is that meetings are delayed, or have to be held in inadequate spaces, and employees get frustrated.

No-shows are surprisingly common. Pre-COVID, approximately 30% of meeting rooms were booked but not used.

The solution is a system that allows users to check into a room when they arrive. At Sony, we realised this was key and decided to take it one step further. Nimway room sensors automatically check users into the room, so they don't have to do it manually.

3 Technology matching

It's frustrating if you've had the foresight to book a room but then can't use it because it doesn't have the right technology in place. It wastes time, since you'll have to search for another room, or perhaps even reschedule the meeting.

Knowing you'll have access to the tools you need to work is especially important if you work in an Agile environment. 'Hot desking' involves moving around all the time. Being allocated a space far away from the nearest printer on a day that you need a printer is obviously not ideal.

For all these reasons, space reservation systems need to show which technological aids are available in different meeting rooms and areas. And, when searching for a workspace or meeting room, it should be possible to pick a spot that has the tools you need.

At Sony, we understand that different companies have different types of equipment, and the Nimway solution can be customised to accommodate them. We make it easy for you to scan rooms for their tools. Icons show up on the room panels outside meeting rooms, on the floor plans and in the mobile app. And of course, Nimway also shows proximity to printers, coffee areas and bathrooms.

4 Size matching

The fourth common issue, occupancy mismatch, describes a situation in which unnecessarily large rooms are occupied by small groups. As a result, really large groups end up with nowhere to sit and are forced to use rooms designed to accommodate fewer people.

This was an issue before COVID-19 and is likely to become an even bigger issue when offices reopen, since many companies intend to reduce max room capacity in order to meet social distancing guidelines.

Matching the group to the room will be both trickier and more important than ever. With people going to the office primarily to meet people after lockdown, this is an issue no organisation can afford to ignore.

In the Nimway app, max room capacity is labelled and visible at every stage of the booking process. The figures can also be adjusted quickly, making it easy to follow new health and safety guidelines.

Features of successful space reservation systems

Ideally, one reservation system should be able to handle all smart office functionalities.

Intuitive and playful

Sony's technology is easy to customise and intuitive to use. Some key aspects are automated such as the desk and meeting room check-ins mentioned above. Nimway is also packed with playful, intuitive features, such as Nimbubbles that pop up on the digital floor plan to guide users to their meeting rooms.

Catering to the post-COVID office

To ensure compliance, following social distancing policies should be frictionless for employees. Since most Nimway functions are accessible through the mobile phone app, staff can make quick room and desk bookings on the fly without needing to touch common screens.

Space reservations can be made in advance, so people don't need to wander around looking for a desk or collaboration area when they arrive. Neither do they need to ask for directions, since the Nimway indoor positioning system guides them directly to the right desk or area. Similarly, when planning a trip to the office, employees can use the Nimway app to identify which colleagues will be there. This makes office attendance all the more worthwhile, since team members know they will meet one another and, if working on a joint project, can arrange to sit in the same area.

Use the data to adapt

With today's technology we can gather all types of data on offices – information about which rooms or desks are occupied, how long people stay, how often they book meetings, and more. The challenge is bringing it all together, drawing conclusions, and gaining insights to move things in the right direction.

Right now, companies around the world are trying to predict what will happen when employees return to work. But, in the end, only personalised data can offer you the insight you need for your company. Each company is different, and the right decision for you may not suit others. The ability to analyse your own data will become an increasingly important factor in your company's future adaptation.

Nimway takes the guesswork out of workplace occupancy questions. It gives you the data you need to see what's really happening on a day-to-day basis and to adapt quickly to a changing reality. At the same time, it helps you build an effective workspace for your employees. People will be able to get the most out of the time they spend in the office, follow health and safety guidelines, and to do all of this without spending undue time and effort.

Nimway puts people in the centre

To conclude, our workplace technology should be automated, intuitive to use, and align with the way we already do things. We need simple, non-intrusive solutions that are connected to one another.

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To find out more about Nimway, contact contact@nimway.com

Or go to our website nimway.com