Should I take temperatures?

Who would have thought "should I take temperatures" would become a top-of-mind business or in the case of schools, education question?   As we all work to reopen and reopen safely, temperatures and masks have become the new hot topics. We are all looking for clear direction on the right step forward, but just like with COVID-19 itself there is much to learn. While we aren't experts, we have spent time combing the web and talking to people to learn as much as possible. Here's what we are seeing.

Square One: Is it required?

This one is easy. If it is required, take temperatures! Follow your local laws and regulations. Now the reality is relatively few countries and cities are currently requiring temperatures to be taken for all businesses. Singapore is a notable exception that requires temperatures to enter any business.

Here's a comprehensive state-by-state list for the US on what is required. It was prepared by Littler. We found it to be a good reference.
https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/wont-hurt-bit-employee-temperature-and-health-screenings-list

What if instead of being required, it's recommended?

"Easy" is now behind you. It is on your shoulders to make the right judgement call. Most jurisdictions are recommending temperatures along with screening questions as a best practice for employees and visitors. So how do you decide whether to follow the recommendation or not? That is the million-dollar question. We didn't find much written on this, so we put our own common sense to work. Here's the list of considerations we ourselves have looked at in reopening our office.

- How many employees will be in the facility at any one point in time?
- How many visitors can be anticipated on any given day?
- How important is it to you to do everything you can to protect employees and visitors?
- What is your trust level relative to people knowing and/or admitting they are ill (be that with COVID-19 or even just the flu)?
- What would the cost be to the business, if it was forced to close the facility for two weeks after learning an employee or visitor had COVID-19?

There is an upside to taking temperatures and asking screening questions. It will provide additional data that can be useful. You would have data on who is going in and out, including the number of employees and visitors. If you are considering involvement in contact tracing, you are in a better position to send notifications should someone have COVID-19. It could offset liability concerns (check this one out with your legal counsel). It can instill greater trust with employees and visitors. And, let's face it, it can help to prevent and/or reduce the spread of other illnesses such as the flu.

Where should temperatures be taken?

Ok, you've decided to take temperatures. Relief, the decision has been made. As you'd expect, there are more questions to answer including whether you take temperatures at the facility or allow people to do so at home before coming in. Most states allow you to decide, though there are some industry specific guidelines in some states that mandate temperatures be taken on site. Let's consider the pros and cons from the lens of letting people do this at home. On the surface, it feels like the "easy" answer.

Pros	Cons

• Reduces the expense of hiring an employee to take temperatures or purchasing a system to do health screenings
• Ensures all private information stays in the individual's home
• Speeds up and simplifies arriving at work
• Reduces the risk for an employee dedicated to taking temperatures
	• Introduces uncertainty:
	  ○ Can you be 100% be sure it happens? (People could forget to do it in the process of getting to your facility.)
	  ○ Will people take their temperature accurately? (It can be hard to use some of the IR thermometers to ensure they have proper placement for a temperature.)
	• Requires all employees to have an accurate thermometer in their home
	• Requires other means to address screening questions

What are the options for onsite temperature taking?

For the sake of safety, let's assume you plan to take temperatures and implement screening questions at the facility. The next question to answer is "how". Here's the run down on your options.

Option	Description	Contactless	Interaction / Personality	Screening Questions
Shared Thermometers	Thermometers shared by staff to manually self-check temperatures when they arrive at work	No	No	Yes (manual shared sign in sheet)
Employees Manually Screening	Hired employee or repurposed employee to take temperatures	Yes	Yes (but sometimes it's not good)	Yes
Kiosk	Kiosk system for automated temperature checks	Yes	No	No
Tablet + thermometer	Tablet + integrated thermometer	No	No	Yes
Robot + thermal camera and screening app	A dynamic robot doing the work of temperature taking and asking screening questions	Yes	Yes (if the robot has personality; Misty II is an example)	Yes

What about the "people" side of this?

We have been engaging with a variety of businesses and schools to learn more about what they are seeing from a human perspective relative to the options. "Awkward" seems the going word.

- Person-to-person testing - *"There is an awkwardness to deal with another person in this situation."* This is understandable. It requires people to be closer than 6 feet of one another, the distance we are being told over and over to respect in social distancing. Having someone hold a thermometer to your face is awkward as well.
- Kiosks – It's still "awkward" in that you are being screened, BUT at least there is not a human involved. Social awkwardness is reduced.
- Robots - If it is a more personable experience, it reduces the friction and can change the dynamic from something forced and negative to a delighter. Don't laugh, we have seen people come back to be screened again just to see the robot in action.