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FUTURE WORKPLACE

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ENVIRONMENT

Making workplaces more eco-friendly

Many UK businesses are trying to reduce plastic waste and enhance energy efficiency in sustainable workplaces, but change is more difficult in a shared office space

Joel Clark

Banking giant Goldman Sachs told its 6,000 London employees: "Plastic isn't as recyclable as many think. That's why we're eliminating it." Ubiquitous plastic bottles sold from the bank's vending machines, cafés and shops have been replaced by glass, aluminium and cardboard alternatives as part of a multi-faceted drive to make the business more environmentally responsible. Goldman Sachs will move to a brand new European headquarters in London this summer; a building with a top sustainability rating and a green roof garden that will use an advanced rainwater harvesting and filtration system to irrigate plants and reduce water consumption. Meanwhile large numbers of car parking spaces for senior executives have been replaced with extensive provision for cyclists.

Such initiatives offer a glimpse of how the future workplace might evolve if companies and employees take seriously their responsibility to preserve the planet, reduce their carbon footprint and cut plastics usage. Goldman Sachs reckons it is on track to remove 85 per cent of the plastics it consumes by the end of 2019.

"Reducing our reliance on single-use plastics is a natural next step in our commitment to divert 100 per cent of our business waste from landfills by 2020," says Kyung-Ah Park, head of the environmental markets group at Goldman Sachs. "It's our small, daily habits that make the biggest difference; using a reusable cup or bottle whenever possible, carefully separating trash from recycling and only requesting plastic cutlery when we need it."

Goldman Sachs is not alone. Following the airing of *Blue Planet II* and the growing awareness of the harmful effects of plastic waste on marine life, many businesses have looked to cut single-use plastics as part of broader sustainability programmes.

Law firm Allen & Overy has eliminated disposable cups, plastic bottles and takeaway boxes from its London office. It estimates that it used more than 6.5 million disposable catering items in 2018 and plans to donate the money it saves from buying and disposing of packaging, amounting to roughly £100,000, to two conservation charities.

"By making these small changes to our catering waste, we can make a big difference to our environmental



Goldman Sachs' new European HQ in London

impact and do our bit to help safeguard our planet," says Allen & Overy partner Paul Flanagan.

Reducing plastics usage is only one component of the drive towards a more eco-friendly workplace, however. Heating, lighting, electricity and gas consumption all play a role in the overall impact an office might have on the environment, while food consumption and business travel must also be considered if a company is to tackle sustainability at all levels.

Turning a conventional office into a sustainable, energy efficient workplace may be more complex than reducing plastics, as it requires management buy-in, budget and long-term planning. And as many businesses occupy only part of larger office buildings, bringing about meaningful change can be difficult.

"It can be very hard to tackle carbon emissions in shared office buildings because individuals and companies often can't make significant changes to the infrastructure or energy efficiency. There is still lots that can be done, and it comes down to identifying hot-spots of energy consumption and engaging employees to think more about these issues," says Jonathan Winston, occupier support manager for Low Carbon Workplace.

Since 2010, Low Carbon Workplace – a partnership between the Carbon Trust, fund manager Columbia Threadneedle Investments and property developer Stanhope – has acquired and refurbished nine commercial office buildings in London to make them more energy efficient. Better management of heating and enhanced use of natural light are

critical to a more energy efficient office, and the future workplace should put much greater onus on employees to manage this, says Mr Winston.

"Increasingly we are seeing that rather than pushing ever further towards automation, sustainable buildings need to give their inhabitants a higher level of interaction so they can regulate their own lighting and heating through apps," he says.

If the future workplace is one where buildings become more interactive and energy efficient, and reduction of waste is driven from the highest levels of senior management, it may well be the shared offices that lag behind. With a growing number of small businesses and start-ups renting office space in trendy shared spaces, it is incumbent upon the providers of those spaces to set sustainability within the terms of leases and ensure recycling facilities are consistently available.

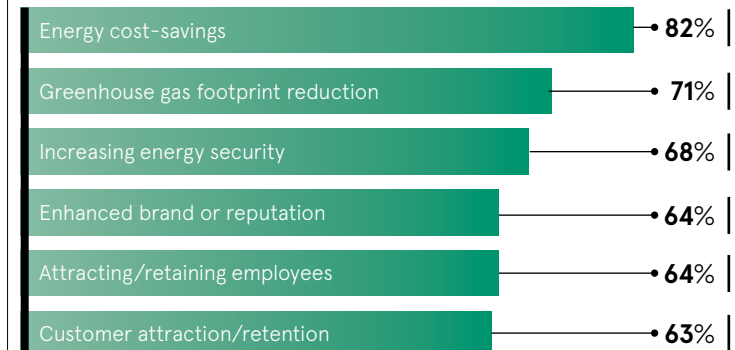
Providers of shared office space have a mixed reputation on this front. Entrepreneur Kevin Sefton began his career at accounting firm Arthur Andersen in the 1990s and is now co-founder of Untied, a startup that seeks to simplify the submission of personal tax returns. Having used many shared offices in recent years, he has become depressed at the widespread apathy towards environmental issues.

"The amount of waste that is generated from shared offices is staggering; very often they have trashcans with no recycling. Twenty years ago at Arthur Andersen I would eat from a china plate with metal cutlery in the staff canteen and there were no single-use plastics. Now it's the complete opposite; there is a huge missed responsibility in shared offices," says Mr Sefton.

Some shared office providers take their responsibility to the environment more seriously than others, he adds, but if neither the shared office nor the individual tenant businesses take action, the carbon footprint will only increase.

Oilly Olsen, co-founder and co-chief executive of the Office Group, which operates 35 office spaces in the UK, says: "We do receive suggestions and queries from our members, and with so many companies under each roof it is harder to rollout common practices across such a diverse member base. There are a number of priorities we are currently focused on, from our waste management protocols, compliance, to transitioning from traditional energy sources to renewables across the portfolio." ●

KEY DRIVERS FOR BUSINESSES MAKING BUILDING ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS



Johnson Controls 2018



COMMUNICATIONS

Don't hang up the office desk phone just yet

Messaging and collaboration apps seem increasingly popular, particularly among younger members of staff, but there's still life left in the old desk phone

Christine Horton

A common gripe levelled by the older generation against young people is that they spend too much time on their smartphones, immersed in messaging apps or browsing social media. Whether the complaint is fair or not, it's hardly a surprise that young adults between the ages of 18 to 21 use text and chat more than any other generation, and they rate chat almost as favourably as an in-person meeting, according to a 2018 survey by Microsoft.

But with the imminent arrival of this Generation Z into the workforce, what effect will that have on how organisations communicate? Could we see the desk phone, or even voice itself, become redundant within a few years? Moreover, is it wise to shun legacy systems such as the desk phone just to accommodate the preferences of future generations?

Unified communications companies – tech firms that combine voice, video and messaging platforms for businesses – are already investing in

messaging and collaboration solutions that can be easily integrated into the workplace. It's a worldwide market that IDC estimates will be worth more than \$22 billion by 2021.

However, the tech firms argue they are not abandoning voice, but offering customers the opportunity to use whichever communications best suits their needs. "What these collaboration tools offer is choice," says Josh Bersin, founder of Bersin by Deloitte, a research and advisory firm focused on management, leadership and human resources technology.

Mr Bersin points to a 2018 study by Bloomberg that found 45 per cent of HR leaders believe the biggest drawback with new graduates is they lack soft skills, if not technical expertise.

isn't appropriate. "There will always be instances where voice is needed, use-cases like emergency services, healthcare and legal where voice will be the primary mode of communication," says Mr Chaudhuri.

Interestingly, despite the huge research and development investments made by these unified communications vendors into developing messaging and collaboration applications, there may yet be life in the traditional desk phone.

An independent survey by tech marketplace Spiceworks shows most companies remain committed to their desk phones, with 93 per cent still using them. Further, most employees are using them as their primary communications device, much more so than their smartphones or Skype, or other collaboration services on laptops or desktop computers.

Importantly too, the human factor will remain a core component of any business' success in the future.

"There's no question that digital communication has become a huge part of the workplace, but despite that, the demand for communication, soft skills, teamwork, empathy, listening, persuasion are even greater than ever," says Josh Bersin, founder of Bersin by Deloitte, a research and advisory firm focused on management, leadership and human resources technology.

Mr Bersin points to a 2018 study by Bloomberg that found 45 per cent of HR leaders believe the biggest drawback with new graduates is they lack soft skills, if not technical expertise.

So not only does it appear that voice won't be disappearing from our lives as feared, advances in technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), may be set to drive a new way of using voice in the future.

Philipp Bohn, vice president of Atos' unified communications services business Circuit, says: "We can use AI to transcribe and translate voice sessions. A lot of intelligence and data is needed to understand who's talking, and understand all the various languages, dialects, nuances and speech habits we naturally process as humans. A huge amount of knowledge is shared through voice conversations and with AI-based transcription it becomes more accessible. Voice is not dead, we are at the beginning of a new, exciting innovation cycle.

Ultimately, young peoples' preference for messaging shouldn't be judged too harshly, says Cara Silletto, a workforce retention adviser who specialises in bridging the generational divide within businesses.

"I often hear older workers say they think face-to-face communication is dying and that younger workers lack communication skills, but I just believe our communication strategies evolve and innovators are creating new options," she says.

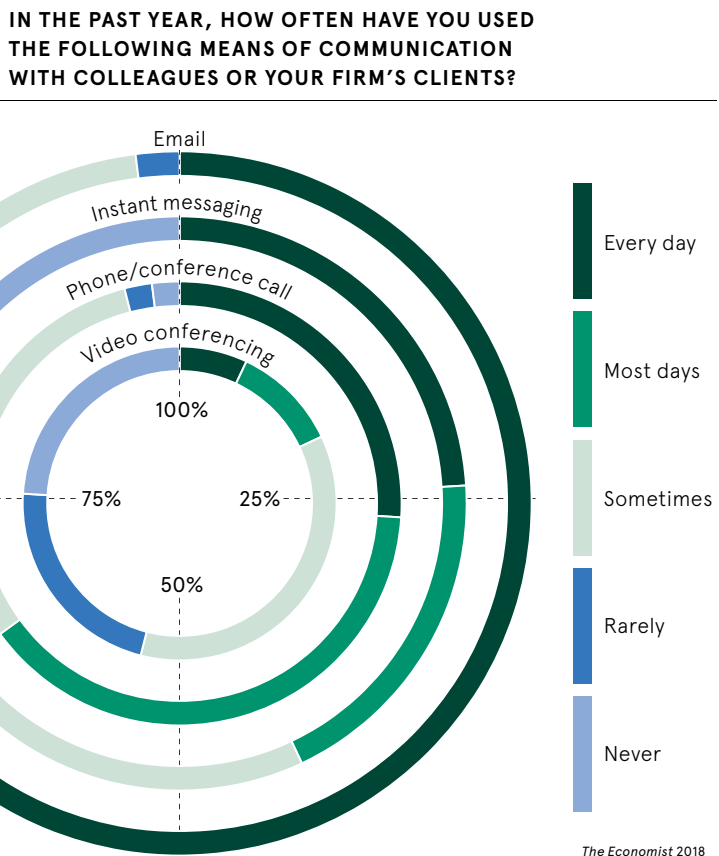
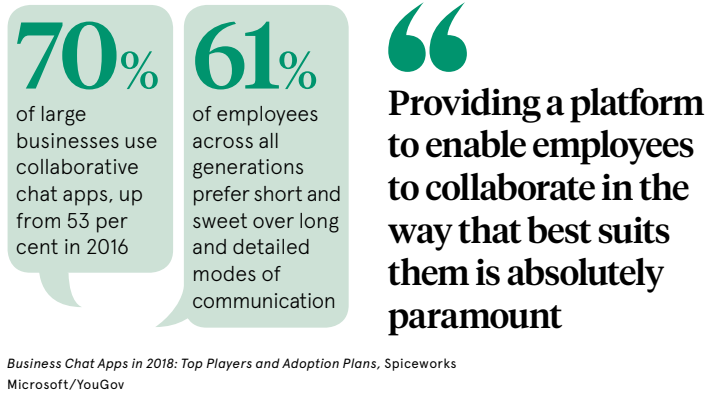
"Instead of forcing everyone to have conversations, face to face or

via phone, in real time with one another, digital channels make room for conversations over time. I'll email or text you my question and you can get back to me when you have time. For many young workers, they feel that approach is more considerate of others' time."

We're all making fewer voice calls than we used to. A 2018 report by communications regulator Ofcom shows that the number of voice calls made on mobile phones in the UK has fallen for the first time, along with traditional text messaging, as users switch to messaging services such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

But while picking up the phone might be dying out, an employee's voice certainly is not, says Julien Lesaichere, director of Workplace by Facebook. "Technology will continue to advance, but the power of human connection will always remain prominent, so providing a platform to enable employees to collaborate in the way that best suits them is absolutely paramount," he says.

It seems communicating by voice isn't going anywhere, but choice will be key. In line with the expectations of the next generation of employees, businesses will need to provide a range of communication methods that suits the needs of both the organisation and the next wave of workers. ●



OPINION

'Innovative technology can be revolutionary but we need to think hard about its use'

Technology is changing our world faster, and more completely, than ever before. All sectors have to be aware of developments such as automation and the internet of things, innovations which might yet prove to be godsend, or fresh hells. Workplace and facilities professionals are not immune with increasing developments in the technology we employ to manage buildings.

I'm not going to argue that these technologies aren't important or aren't going to have an impact. They do. But I do believe that people, in my industry and outside, have missed out on its true impact. We are so fascinated with what technology can do for us as professionals that we have lost sight of wider potential.

When a breakthrough is made that is supposedly going to help us work better, smarter or more effectively, facility managers don't sufficiently consider how the new technology can benefit the working experience for everyone else instead of simply helping to manage the building better.

At the end of the day, that is what we should be concerned about. Some companies, in other sectors, have already grasped this. Amazon has risen to dominate the world, not because they embrace every technological novelty going and use it to create efficiency, but because they carefully decide which ones improve the experience of their customers.

The company strives more and more for same-day delivery of anything to anyone. It already knows exactly what a customer is going to order, before the customer does. This might sound vaguely Orwellian, but it's this that has allowed it to continue to shorten delivery times.

Those of us building the workplaces of the future need to learn from this mindset and adopt similar ambitions. It's possible, but only when technology is positioned right. There is, however, a cautionary tale in every supermarket in the UK.

Self-service checkouts have become ubiquitous across the country in recent years, but while shops will insist they make customers' lives easier, we all know the truth. Self-service checkouts

benefit supermarkets by letting them employ fewer people and therefore save money. Their customers up and down the UK have come to loathe the robotic voice telling them "there is an unidentified item in the bagging area".

So what of our workplaces? Innovative technology can be revolutionary but, to make sure it ultimately benefits us, we need to think hard about its use. At first glance, employers and managers might love the idea of tracking staff movements; we know how to do it, but what sort of impact will this have on people while they are at work?

The aim for all workplace professionals should be to use technology not for its own sake, or to drive efficiencies, but to improve the overall experience. In my opinion, the company that has understood this the best is Uber. They removed the old frustrations involved in getting a taxi and replaced it with an almost seamless, personalised and convenient service.

But the Californian company, not yet ten years old, has completely revolutionised the way people get around globally. It didn't only use technology for streamlining or to drive up profits. Instead, it used the latest methods of communication, GPS locators, payment methods and more to make getting from A to B as simple, cost effective and pleasant as possible for the customer. The profits will take care of themselves.

In short, the technology itself doesn't matter, the experience does; and the best role of the former is to improve the latter. That is where the value of technology lies. ●



Chris Moriarty
Director of insight and engagement
Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management



Tech fact, not tech friction

Work-enabling technology in convenient workspaces empowers employees to excel

Improving the employee experience is in the top three focus areas for global human resources leaders who want to support business growth in 2019, says Gartner. It makes complete sense: a happy workforce leads to improved productivity, greater talent retention and ultimately better customer experiences.

And there is solid research to back this up. Workplace futurist Jacob Morgan revealed findings in the Harvard Business Review showing companies focusing on employee experience had four times the average profit and more than twice the average revenue of those that didn't.

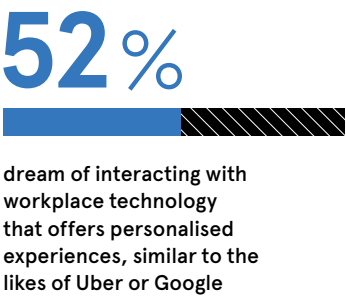
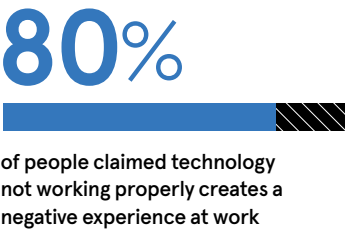
Despite this evidence, the modern workplace doesn't seem to be working when it comes to supporting workers, optimising space effectively and providing technology that enhances positive experiences for employees.

Without sensible, work-enabling technology, workplaces merely create friction; what McKinsey & Company call "organisational drag". With one-size-fits-all workplaces simply no longer possible, workspaces increasingly need technology that enriches rather than enrages.

McKinsey says the average company loses 25 per cent of its productive capacity simply by putting people together in one place, dealing with all the inefficient policies and processes this entails, technology deficiencies included. Not only this, its research finds that with each additional 10 per cent increase in staff headcount, firms lose 2 per cent in productivity.

This all creates a strong case to create personalised working experiences for the workforce, designed to support individual as well as provide the best environment for everyone.

In the latest Cloudbooking report, we found more than half (52 per cent) of



staff dream of interacting with workplace technology that offers the same sort of personalised experience they already get in their personal lives from the likes of Google or Uber.

The reality for a significant 59 per cent is that technology is not working as they expect and actually prevents them doing their jobs properly. If only they had bespoke technology-enabled experiences at work; this is what 61 per cent agreed would make them happier about coming to work each day.

While this may not be a huge surprise, the extent to which there is such high expectation about technology making working life easier possibly is. But it makes sense. At Cloudbooking we believe "Experience" is what employees crave and good experiences at that. Most

workplaces simply aren't working, but technology is now seen as leading the change to make things better.

Just as consumer technology is designed to be customer centric, the workplace technology your business adopts must be employee centric. It should solve the challenges of your workforce and be something your employees can't live without.

This isn't workplace fiction, it is workplace fact. And it exists for one simple reason: it's what employees really want. In the same way we welcome eBay notifications about auctions ending soon or Facebook reminders telling us it's a friend's birthday, we are living in a time where relevancy is king. If technology is out of sight, but serves a purpose, people are clear: bring it on.

Take the relatively, in theory, simple task of attending an external meeting. It's booked in an employee's online calendar, scheduled for a few hours time, across town. But, unbeknown to them, transport problems are creating havoc.

How much easier would this employee's life be if tech informed them of this and suggested that if they left now, rather than when they'd initially planned, they'd still get there on time? Or, what if, mid-journey, artificial intelligence predicts they'll still be late, but that a co-working space with spare capacity was just a short distance away? At least they could decide to still have a Skype call instead. The technology would update the other attendees and book everything for them.

For chief executives and facilities managers, this is actually good news. With the type of technology infrastructure Cloudbooking provide, including tech that monitors where people go, which spaces are occupied, how often and by how many, decisions can be made more strategically using data. We believe this means employers have the opportunity to create even better experiences, with staff feeling they're being set free by technology, rather than it being their master.

Gazing at the future of workplace design

Architects, designers and developers tell business leaders how they can create office environments that make staff happier, better motivated and more productive

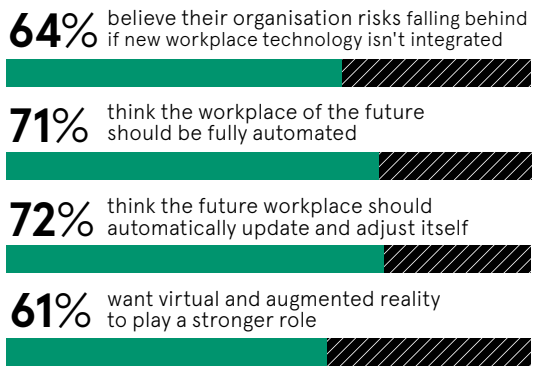
Sarah Dawood

One are the days of employees trapped in isolated booths, heads down with little social interaction. For many businesses, gone still is the ubiquitous open-plan style that followed. Instead, office design has shifted towards flexible working, with spaces to suit different needs, such as co-working and collaboration, socialising and private research.

According to a survey from the Association of Accounting Technicians, flexible working makes employees less stressed and more productive. But as the trend for variation continues, what will the future workplace look like? Andy Heath, design director for Europe, Middle East and Africa at WeWork, predicts we will move away from open plan completely and towards “cellularisation” of various different-sized spaces that can be reconfigured. Eliot Postma, partner at Heatherwick Studio, agrees. “It was previously thought that full collaboration was best,” he says. “But there are introverts



THERE IS A CLEAR APPETITE FROM EMPLOYEES FOR A DIGITAL WORKPLACE



Aruba Networks 2018



01 An artist's impression of Google's Mountain View campus, currently under construction

02 Mountain View in California

03 An interior of the future Google HQ

and extroverts, and offices need to accommodate both.”

Despite the need for quiet spaces, both agree that integrating a sense of community will remain important to the future workplace, especially as advancements in technology encourage people to work remotely and become more isolated.

Mr Postma is working on Google's new Mountain View campus in California, which rather than traditional floors features individual plates with ramps in-between that slope downwards from the centre of the building, splitting a floor across 20 levels so everyone can see out of windows and up the entire “vertical façade” of the space. Up to 100 employees are sat on one plate. The roof is made of a series of fabric canopies that allow light and air in.

“It strikes a balance between everyone working on one level, but not being lost in an anonymous sea of white sadness,” he says. “The plates provide people with their own space and team ownership, while giving them access to outside views and daylight.”

As technology gets smarter, architects need to focus on creating social spaces, Mr Postma adds. He foresees the removal of reception desks and gated barriers, where employees scan their passes, as facial recognition software advances. “People will always want social interaction,” he says. “We should prioritise spaces for them to come together.”

Peter Fisher, director at Bennetts Associates, says that giving employees choice makes them feel more in control. He thinks we will see office design with rooms that have different ceiling heights, paint tones and lighting, air conditioning and temperature levels.

“The need for people to have perceived control is important,” he says. “Research shows that people believe



they are more comfortable if they have the opportunity to change their environment, even if they've actually made it worse for themselves.”

Mr Postma also predicts that more buildings will be designed without a set user in mind, creating a versatile shell that could be filled with modular fit-outs to suit different brands and fashions, which is why ex-industrial buildings continue to be popular.

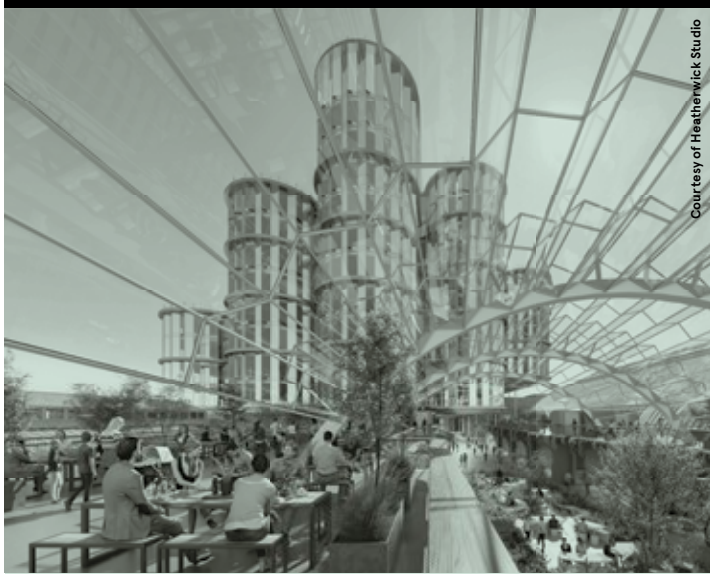
“There's an ongoing trend for industrial aesthetic,” he says. “The scrappiness gives soul and allows users to feel like they can change the space. It doesn't feel polished and perfect, giving people autonomy to make a workspace theirs.”

Simon Allford, director at Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM),

says buildings should be permanent, with the ability to change interiors. AHMM designed Google's 6 Pancras Square, London office, which opened in 2016, and created a modular meeting room concept known as Project Jack. The plywood pod can be mass-produced and constructed by office staff into different sized spaces with varying levels of privacy.

Mr Fisher predicts there will be a shift to hybridisation in office design, where outdoor and indoor areas merge, and previously closed and private areas are used, such as basements turned into “maker spaces” and back entrances revitalised with ramps and cycle parking.

“Research shows that people believe they are more comfortable if they have the opportunity to change their environment



Kensington Olympia

Architectural firms SPPARC and Heatherwick Studio will soon begin renovating Olympia London in West Kensington, a 150-year old exhibition hall, events space and conference centre. Due to open in 2023, the refurbishment will see new offices alongside restaurants, hotels, theatres, music venues and gyms.

The offices will be based on the ground floor and connected to Olympia London's exhibition halls, while an elevated public space will feature on the building's roof, says Eliot Postma, partner at Heatherwick Studio. This will include a square and garden, and cultural, food and fitness venues.

These will lead to an elevated streetscape that visitors walk across, mirroring a ground-level environment while giving them a skyline view of London.

The hybrid building will cater for employees at London Olympia and the local community, creating a cultural hub that gives an “unappealing part of London a new lease of life”, says Mr Postma, while making work more enjoyable for employees by offering them lunchtime and after-work activities.

The venues will be modular and adaptable, to accommodate changing trends in leisure. “We are creating flexible infrastructure because things could change over the next four years,” he says. “The ability to be agile is really important.”

Also, says Mr Allford, there will be a shift towards multi-purpose buildings that cater for a whole community, rather than only the people who work there. “There will be a move against trapping employees in buildings,” he says. “In the future, offices might have a school on the roof with a playground and apartments below. Buildings will become a microcosm of the city.”

Architects recognise a need to be close to nature will dominate offices in future. This includes providing more opportunities for employees to see outside through features such as staircases around the periphery and segmented floor panels that let light in, as well as introducing natural or biophilic elements into office design itself, says Mr Postma. Introducing soundscapes, such as of running water, and using fabrics with textures inspired by nature are two examples.

“The trend goes way beyond green walls and potted plants,” he says. “People want a strong understanding of the time of day, seasons and weather; it's the opposite of the casino model.”

Helen Causer, senior projects director of asset management at Argent, says a focus on health and wellbeing will also see indoor environments monitored.

Businesses will assess air quality, carbon-dioxide levels and temperature, and analyse them alongside staff happiness and productivity. They will source more sustainable

materials for furnishings, as well as investigate which synthetic products, such as paint and plastics, emit chemicals and how this impacts people's health.

“Not only do businesses have a moral obligation for staff's health, but addressing this helps them make money,” she says. “If staff are more creative and productive, it's better for the bottom line.”

WeWork's Mr Heath believes data will increasingly be used to create offices tailored to individuals. Currently, WeWork looks at the culture of different countries to define its office design. Its Swedish workspaces have large communal lunch tables, while those in the UK have smaller breakout spaces as people tend to eat in isolation more.

“Offices will become far more customisable based on people's data,” he says. “An office will track my location and adjust preferences to suit me. After lunch, the temperature where I am sat might drop by a degree and the blinds may go up slightly to wake me up, creating my optimum work environment.”

While offices continue to evolve, the future workplace will see interesting advancements beyond modular meeting rooms, from personalised environments to furniture that is better for our health. We could further see a push towards workspaces that value the wellbeing of staff on equal measure with their productivity. ●

Delivering food for thought and happiness

Providing staff with tasty, nourishing food is not only good for employees' wellbeing and engagement, it also feeds the bottom line

Eat, work, sleep. Sometimes it can feel like that's all many of us do on any given day, and increasingly not in equal measures.

With an ever-lengthening working week, people in the UK now toil on average for 42.3 hours, the most in Europe. The workplace is fast becoming a space where instead of getting the most from staff, it curtails creativity and drives stress levels to new heights. More than this, it reduces the time to eat to a snatched 20 minutes here or there.

With the decline of staff canteens only exacerbating this – only 6 per cent of firms with fewer than 50 employees have one, according to the 2015 Workplace Report – time away from desks, or the ability to access healthy food, is for many becoming a thing of the past. Food seems to have lost its role in helping us rest, relax, collaborate and enjoy ourselves at work.

But the workplace needn't, and shouldn't, be such a culinary desert. For centuries people have come together, socialised and made connections specifically around eating great food. Value is seen in having shared experiences, developing friendships and connecting intellectually. And as workplaces shift to become places for collaboration, idea-sharing and creation of micro-communities, it seems incongruous for food to be left out of the picture.



Not only is sampling a variety of great cuisines the perfect way of bringing people from different cultures and backgrounds together, it also generates happiness, as well as full stomachs. Workplace experts increasingly link happiness to staff engagement and engagement to productivity. A Social Market Foundation study found that happy employees are 20 per cent more productive than unhappy ones, while the Harvard Business Review recently reported close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by up to 50 per cent.

But there are more reasons why enabling staff to eat well improves the company bottom line. At a time when employers are increasingly waking up to the very serious implications of poor employee wellbeing – stress, anxiety and mental issues have now overtaken traditional musculoskeletal problems as the number-one cause of employee absence – there's no doubting the wellness contribution that food breaks and socialising has.

Not only does eating well fuel people properly, avoiding traditional dips in sugar levels, concentration and productivity, it also enables staff to tackle what they need to do with verve. In addition, it serves as valuable time out to reset busy minds.

When Deliveroo for Business first launched three-and-a-half years ago, it was all about servicing companies with a culture of long hours and late nights. They provided hard-pressed staff with amazing food within 30 minutes, to help fuel their evenings at the office.

But as mindsets around what healthy work is have changed, so have they. They now offer companies healthy team lunches that are amazing opportunities

for staff to chat, collaborate, and learn. They also provide healthy breakfast and meeting snacks to maintain employee health throughout the day.

And it goes without saying that the over 10,000 businesses (and growing) that use Deliveroo for Business excite their staff by giving them access to the best food our cities have to offer. Japanese food, sushi, ramen and noodle dishes are the favourites among tech client businesses. Manchester-based employees have a penchant for mezze platters; employees in Leeds prefer chicken tikka spice bowls.

“It's our aim to be the number-one provider of amazing food experience, for everyone from startups to big global corporates. And that's because we see food differently”, says Juan Diego Farah, global head of Deliveroo for Business.

Not only do they see it as an integral part of ensuring good personal health and wellbeing, they also believe food is key to building great teams in a 21st-century workplace.

And, at a time when creating great experiences for employees is everything, and not just for millennials, workplaces need to offer something different to pull people in and retain top talent. Delivering on this can come from getting everyone around the table to enjoy amazing food together.

When people eat well, they work well and they sleep well, and they're more likely to be happy too. What's not to like about this?



42.3hrs

a week worked on average by UK employees is the most in Europe

6%

of firms with fewer than 50 employees have a staff canteen

Workplace Report 2015

20%

more productivity from happy employees

Social Market Foundation

10k+

businesses use Deliveroo for Business

BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Naturally, it’s so good for office workers

Biophilic design incorporates elements from nature, such as plants, water features and natural lighting, into the workplace. Although this approach has yet to hit the mainstream, many experts believe the business benefits mean it will become widespread. Here are five benefits

Cath Everett



Physical health

By introducing plants, either in pots or in the form of living green walls, into the office environment, it is possible to improve air quality significantly as the vegetation absorbs pollutants, toxins and airborne microbes, such as mould spores and bacteria.

For example, research by Norway’s Agricultural University in Oslo indicates that plants remove harmful volatile organic compounds, such as formaldehyde and benzene, found in the paint, carpet and furniture of most buildings. As a result, their presence reduces the symptoms of so-called sick building syndrome by a quarter.

But plants also help to put water vapour back into the air, which inside offices is naturally dry. This is beneficial as breathing in dry air can irritate sensitive membranes in the nose and throat, making staff more susceptible to viruses and allergens as well as respiratory ailments, such as asthma.

In fact, according to research by the US Joint Commission, 40 per cent of all sickness absence is down to indoor air pollution or poor air quality.

As Philippe Pare, design director at architecture and design consultancy Gensler, says: “Improved air quality has to be up there as one of the biggest benefits of biophilic design as it plays an important role in reducing absenteeism, which is a huge business cost.”

Mental wellbeing

It is estimated that most people in the developed world spend as much as 90 per cent of their time inside buildings and cars. But according to UK mental health charity Mind, being out in green spaces or bringing nature into everyday life can help reduce feelings of stress or anger, making people feel calmer, while also improving their confidence and self-esteem.

Gensler’s Mr Pare explains: “Quite a few studies show how a proximity to nature, or even a visual image, helps foster a more positive outlook. If you ask someone to give you an image of something inspiring, nine out of ten people will show you a landscape, so there’s something innate in nature that equals happiness.”

This means that incorporating natural elements, such as an indoor water feature and wooden furniture, or providing people with access to natural light and beautiful views, can help to create a more positive and harmonious workplace ambience.

This is important because, as John Williams, managing director of interior design consultancy SpaceInvader, points out: “The boundaries between work and personal life are becoming more and more blurred, so the idea of wellness and how to optimise it are becoming increasingly important.”



Productivity

Natural light plays a surprisingly important role in terms of enhancing employee productivity as it boosts the creation of melatonin. This hormone regulates people’s sleep-wake cycles and, therefore, makes a material difference to their energy levels.

For those workspaces in which natural light is not the dominant source though, circadian lighting systems, which undertake colour temperature and illumination changes during the day, can also be used to ensure staff feel more awake and energised.

Another useful approach to help improve productivity rates is to open up workspaces and create separate zones that can be used for different purposes. Such spaces include communal areas for socialising as well as quiet spots, where employees can work undisturbed.

Steve Taylor, project director at office design consultancy Peldon Rose, provides an example of how this technique worked when



introduced at behavioural planning agency Total Media.

“We designed an open-plan, smart working space that used furniture, bookcases and clear glazing to create different zones and meeting spaces without the need for fixed walls,” he says. “This allows everyone to visually connect and enables natural light to flood across the office; all crucial in helping enhance productivity and collaboration.”



Staff retention

A recent survey by Peldon Rose indicated that maintaining and improving the office environment boosts feelings of loyalty in 53 per cent of workers of all generations, rising to two-thirds among millennials. This is because doing so demonstrates that their employer cares about their working conditions and, by extension, them.

But biophilic design can also engender a sense of belonging, particularly in activity-based workplaces, where employees tend not to have assigned seating. This means they lose the ability to personalise a desk or workstation, which can make the workspace feel anonymous.

Mr Pare at Gensler explains: “If done well, biophilic design can help make up for some of the challenges that come with more impersonal spaces. Some offices can feel quite stark and sterile, but if you add other layers, such as plants, it feels more human and more relatable to a primal, sensory level.”

Lloyd Coldrick, managing director of interior design consultancy Cobus, says although such reactions are generally unconscious, they create a powerful draw. “An office design has the power to change your state of mind,” he says. “We are all highly sensitive to the behavioural cues embedded in our environments and unthinkingly adjust our mannerisms, mood and body language as we adapt to our surroundings.”

Branding

According to a study by the US Association for Psychological Science, it takes just one tenth of a second for someone to form an impression of a stranger and the same principal applies to potential new employees or customers assessing an organisation’s offices for the first time.

Mr Coldrick at Cobus says: “It’s important that a company’s character and personality match exactly what they want them to feel, and the health and aesthetically pleasing elements of biophilic design mean brand awareness is bolstered.”

This is particularly true for purpose-driven companies that are keen to demonstrate a sustainable approach, not only to staff wellbeing, but also towards the environment by using natural, recyclable items.

To illustrate the point, when Peldon Rose revamped the offices of Jacada Travel, the design consultancy introduced more than 200 exotic plants as a reference to the international



destinations in which the luxury travel provider operates, in a bid to reflect its brand image.

The idea was that the plants complemented the cork and sisal details of the fixtures and fittings, and gave workers “the sense of being in a tropical paradise”, says Peldon Rose’s Mr Taylor. It also made the space “peaceful, restorative and an inspiring place to walk into every day, allowing for creative and inspired work to take place”, he adds. ●



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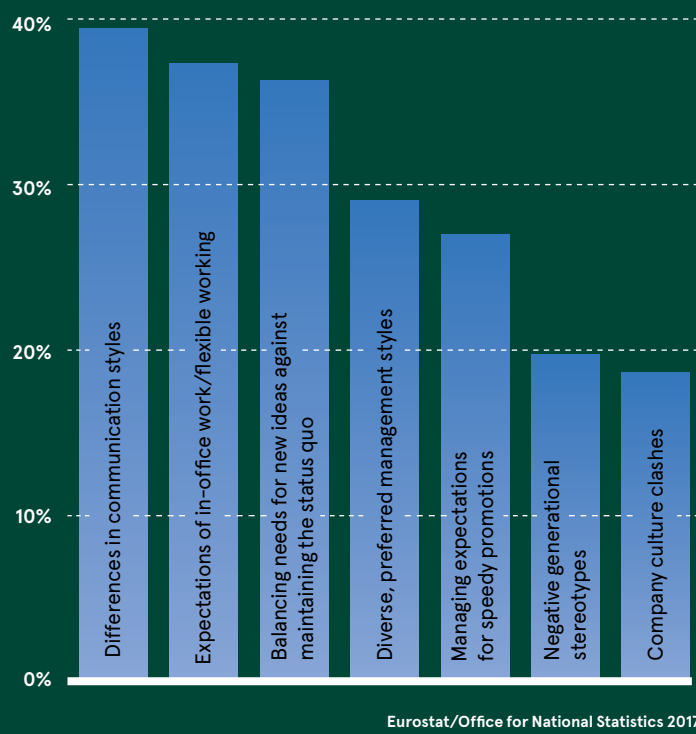
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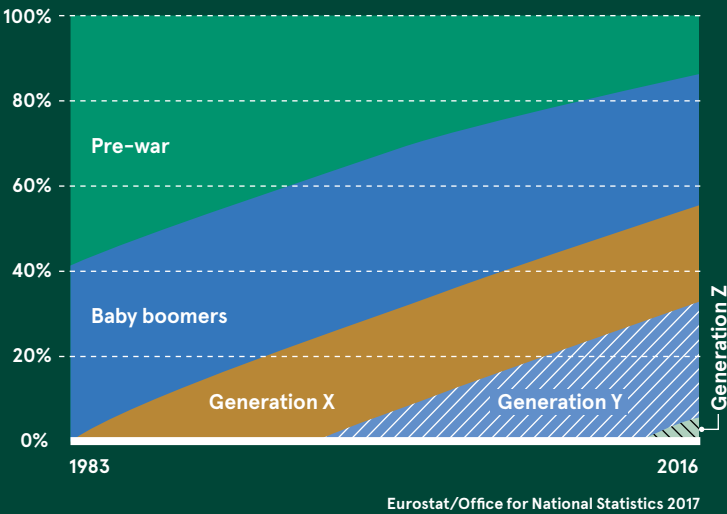
TOP CHALLENGES IN MANAGING A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Survey of HR decision-makers



GENERATIONS OF THE UK WORKFORCE

Proportion of UK adults by generation combined



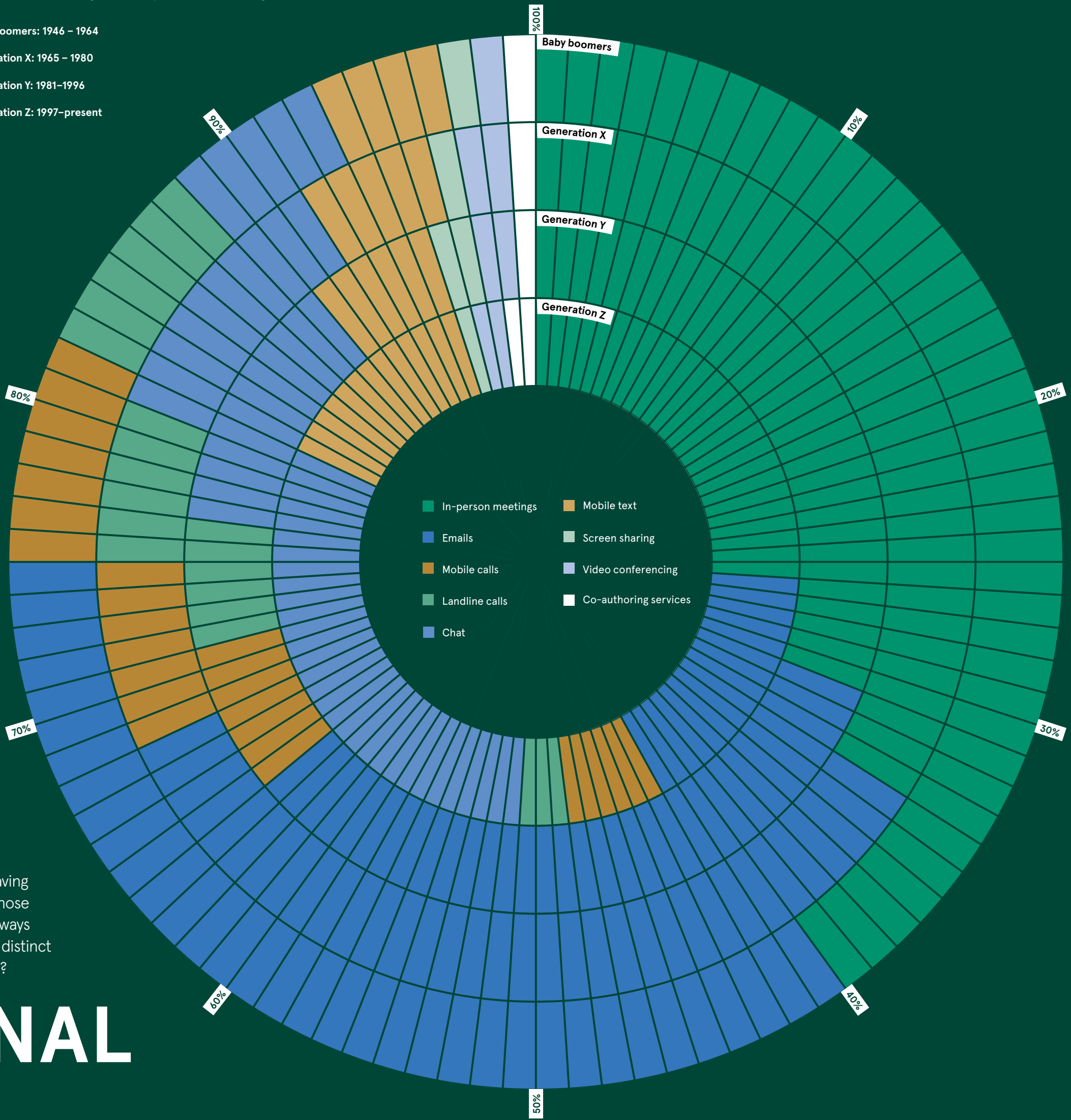
We are living longer and retiring later, which means that up to five generations of employees now have to learn how to work together under one roof. In most workplaces, this is realistically limited to four generations, with people born shortly after the Second World War having to adapt to the working styles of their digitally savvy colleagues, and those younger employees having to respect the experience and traditional ways of working of older peers. But how do working patterns of these very distinct generations differ and how are businesses adapting to this new norm?

GENERATIONAL WORKING

HOW DIFFERENT GENERATIONS COMMUNICATE IN THE WORKPLACE

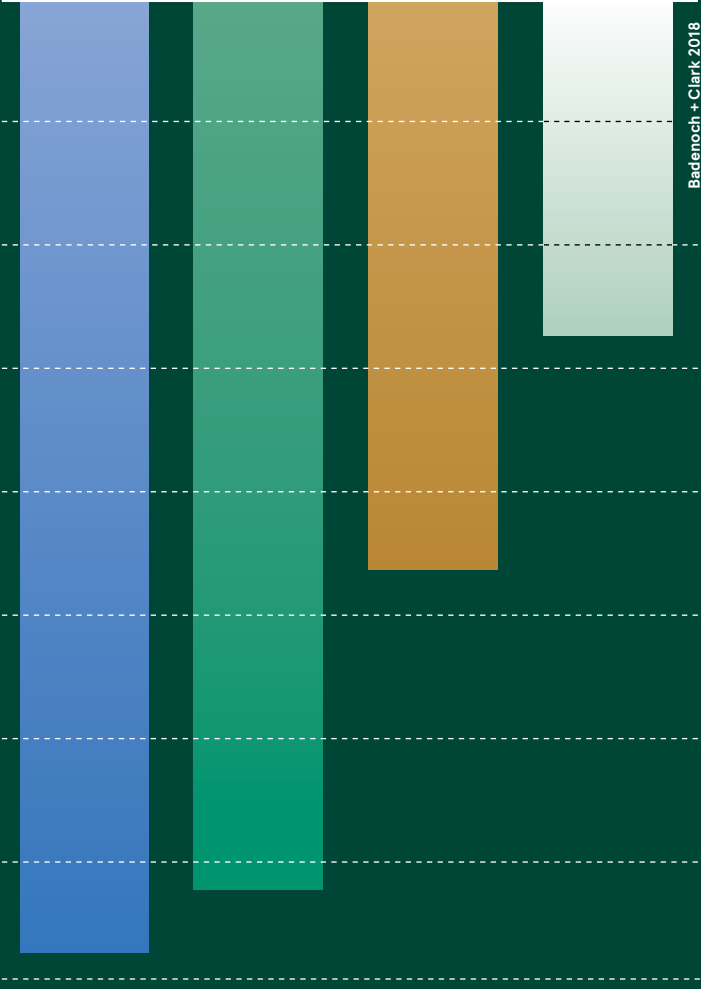
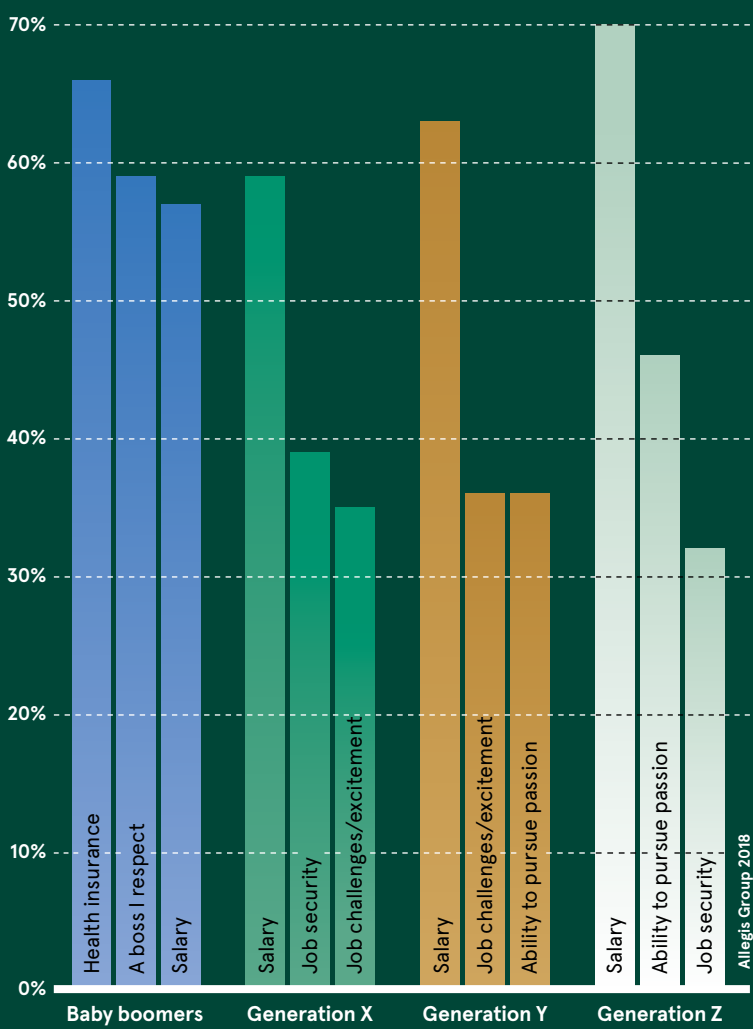
Amount of time different generations spend with the following communications at work

Baby boomers: 1946 – 1964
Generation X: 1965 – 1980
Generation Y: 1981–1996
Generation Z: 1997–present



TOP WORK MOTIVATORS FOR DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

Percentage of different generations who said the following were important



MULTI-GENERATIONAL LOYALTY

How long the following generations on average would like to spend at a company in any one role (years) combined

Rethinking workspace to connect space and people

WeWork is no longer only for co-working and startups. As people increasingly demand flexibility and enterprises crave more simplicity and agility on a global scale, large companies are embracing shared-space solutions that enable them to grow faster

Attitudes towards workplaces and office environments have changed drastically in recent years as employees have demanded more flexible ways of working. Work-life integration is now a crucial quality that people look for in employers, so offering a workspace that enables this is important to attracting and retaining talent.

Millennials, in particular, expect more from their work environment. According to a study by KPMG, 69 per cent of millennials would trade other benefits for a better workspace. With this demographic set to make up half the UK workforce next year, it's clear businesses must listen to them if they want to retain their employees and attract fresh talent.

Employees perform at their best when they're engaged and have the opportunity to connect on a human level,

so WeWork designs workspace that encourages collaboration and interaction through innovation. Its technology powers its network and provides insight on space utilisation to evolve their spaces and drive more opportunities for connection. Members are able to turn everyday frustrations, like booking conference rooms and checking in guests, into delightfully seamless experiences, creating a smarter and more effective workspace.

These benefits have previously been mostly utilised by small businesses, which have led the evolution of workspace for many years. In the digital age, opportunities for real connection are rare and a growing number of workers are in satellite offices feeling increasingly disconnected with the world. They crave a working environment that prevents loneliness and allows them to connect with like-minded individuals.

As the largest physical social network in the world, with more than 400,000 members globally, WeWork has become a home for these people and companies. By mixing real-life connection with technology that keeps employees engaged, productive and open to opportunity, its workspaces enable businesses to grow and keeps them motivated. In the last year, the average growth rate across WeWork member companies in London was 31 per cent, compared with 2 per cent for all companies in the capital.

However, large organisations are catching on to this crucial trend too. In a rapidly evolving business landscape, speed is now one of the major currencies for commercial success. Enterprise companies are realising that speed can't be enabled in traditional office solutions which take around 12 months to select, negotiate, permit, agree contracts, design, build and move in. WeWork's standard move-in process is 30 days.

Flexible spaces are increasingly attractive to enterprises because they provide the agility required to scale their workforces seamlessly when they need to and without worrying about moving offices. According to PwC, six in ten executives are unable to predict labour costs three years ahead. Locking into a long-term lease is no longer an option.

The process involved in creating an engaging, activated and well-utilised work environment can also be costly and complex. It's more difficult than ever to bring a building to life without a large, dedicated team and there is now a greater need for vertical integration. Integration solutions, therefore, remove the stress for businesses.



Workspaces will continue to evolve as the way people, space and technology work together transforms

These changes are shifting perceptions of WeWork from a small co-working company to a global provider of shared space offering office solutions for companies of all sizes. With a suite of products available to suit businesses of all sizes, WeWork creates entire headquarters for companies as well as providing custom build-outs through a unique suite, a specialised floor or a private, optimised layout.

Large companies still want their own space with their own brand, identity and culture, but they also want to simplify their office management. They don't want to spend time on real estate processes and logistics, or wonder why the cleaner hasn't shown up or whether the printer ink is low. Instead they want to focus all their energies on

A WeWork location with its atrium transformed into a collaborative shared space, designed to encourage interaction between members.

delivering the best value to customers and shareholders.

WeWork's members range from large enterprise companies, such as banks, to artists, designers, writers, app developers and more. They all benefit from being part of the WeWork community, and their employees are happier and more motivated as a result, with access to discounted health insurance and gym memberships, special events and an internal social network for professional development.

A third of the Fortune 500 are now WeWork members and 46 per cent of enterprise members globally say it has helped them enter new markets. With WeWork's Global Access membership, companies are given unlimited access to WeWork's entire network of offices around the world, ensuring consistent workforce productivity wherever people are.

Workspaces will continue to evolve as the way people, space and technology work together transforms. Work will be distributed into three categories: human workforce, intelligent automation and logistics, or wonder why the cleaner hasn't shown up or whether the printer ink is low. Instead they want to focus all their energies on

specialised, flexible working practices are needed to keep up with the latest technological advances.

The repetitive tasks that are in many cases done by people, such as booking space for a meeting, will increasingly become automated and jobs still considered only possible for people to do, such as writing a news article, will be completed by machine-learning and artificial intelligence tools. Rather than replacing employees, these types of technologies will augment the jobs human employees are doing.

In this new world, the future of work will be measured by how people feel. It will be flexible, distributed and built around community. WeWork provides a ready-made portfolio of high-profile locations, allowing companies easily to flex their space. The opportunity is there to have their own identity and culture without the stress of managing offices, using WeWork's technology and community to grow their business.

For more information please visit we.co/scale2019



CLUSTERS

Location, location, location can boost your business

Flying in the face of cyberspace and virtual connectivity, physical clusters of like-minded businesses can energise and accelerate enterprise

Nick Easen

The UK's startup culture is doing very well thank you. Despite the Brexit psycho-drama, a dizzying record of 663,272 businesses were started in 2018, according to the Centre for Entrepreneurs. Some say it's second only to Silicon Valley.

A nation of so-called shopkeepers has reinvented itself as a nation of startups. Almost a third are in London. But why? It turns out hubs make a difference.

You are more likely to be successful if you're on Silicon Roundabout, the biggest tech community in Europe, than operating down a country lane in Devon. East London Tech City, as it's officially called, even surpasses San Francisco in terms of fintech startups, according to research from Accenture.

"Clusters are important for entrepreneurs and the businesses they lead," says Dr George Windsor, head

of insights at Tech Nation. "Aside from bringing people together, which can accelerate innovation and growth, it also creates a diverse mixing pot of ideas and opinions."

With employees placing a growing importance on where they work, as much as what they do, the buzz of Manchester, Silicon Fen or Emerald Valley, with a critical mass of com-

Aside from bringing people together, which can accelerate innovation and growth, it also creates a diverse mixing pot of ideas and opinions



Silicon Fen

Cambridge, the fenland city, 45 minutes north of London is going great guns as a high-performing hub and part of the "golden triangle" with London and Oxford. The data speaks for itself, with productivity 50 per cent higher than the UK average, more than 24,500 companies, £43-billion turnover and 223,000 employed in the area, according to the Cambridge Cluster Map.

"The city is a hotbed of ideas with more startups as a proportion of the population than London. Cambridge is also well connected by transport links," says Peter Cowley, serial entrepreneur and angel investor, based in the city.

Life science and tech companies benefit from a culture of collaboration with its world-class university. "At Cambridge Science Park, for example, a gaming company is working closely with a large pharmaceutical firm to create technology that children can use to help them remember to take their insulin," says Saul Western of property consultants Bidwells.

Growing a strong talent pool has helped as has creating a critical mass of companies, although success comes at a price. "Some people don't want it to grow," says Mr Cowley. "It's now expensive. A two-bedroom flat for over half a million pounds is a lot of money."

and a hub can take on a life of its own, especially as they fund incubators looking for the next unicorn companies. "This select group of tech giants act as magnets and can redefine an area or create a whole new cluster with a new wave of affiliated businesses," says Michael Davis, head of JLL Unlimited.

There is also increasing recognition that clustered businesses benefit from cross-pollination across sectors and scales. "A hub focusing on high-tech automotive manufacturing may produce precision components for F1, but also parts for medical devices. As a result, their reach and their supply chains are larger than a single sector cluster," explains Mr Baird.

Yet the hub model can become a victim of its own success; ask those on America's West Coast. Buy a house next to the garage where Hewlett-Packard started in Palo Alto and you're talking a price tag in the millions of dollars. "Silicon Valley is starting to reach unsustainable levels; they are the test case," says Rob Moffat, partner at Balderton Capital.

Gentrification of popular spots causes a steep rise in prices, which stifles young, bright and less-well-off talent or those wanting to branch out on their own. The cost of housing and commercial office space is an issue. Higher rents are pushing chief executives to keep office costs down by renting flexible spaces in the short-term and making staff mobility a priority.

Entrepreneurs surveyed by Tech Nation in its latest *State of the Union* report found cost of living was a top challenge. "In the last nine years, Oxford has seen house price growth of 67 per cent and Cambridge 73 per cent, which is over 20 per cent ahead

of the national average," says Saul Western, partner at property consultants Bidwells.

Developing new hubs could be an answer to the UK's low-productivity crisis. Tech Nation's research also shows higher productivity correlates to greater levels of clustering. "Certainly, hubs are becoming more important as the knowledge-based economy grows in dominance," says Colin Wright, partner at UHY Hacker Young chartered accountants.

More than a century ago, a mentor to John Maynard Keynes thought industrial hubs were good. Maybe it's time to breathe new life into the idea. ●

Cambridge Life Sciences Cluster

Development Economics 2018

Home to...

430+ companies

Creating...

15.5k jobs

Generating...

£2.9bn annually for the UK economy



than in any other office or business I have worked in or for. I guess you could say we all work alone together.”

Finding a way to combat loneliness is more than a productivity issue, it’s also a pressing mental health concern. Matthew Knight, independent strategist who works on freelancer mental health campaigns, says: “While those who switch to a freelance life generally report they are happier, it’s the unique set of challenges a freelancer faces that put independent workers more at risk of dropping into poor mental health.”

Mr Knight says that there are many small things which freelancers can do that will not only help combat loneliness, but also keep their mental health in shape. These include joining a community, but also maintaining a schedule that works for the individual, looking after physical health and talking to clients about the stresses of freelancing.

“From reducing your payment terms or just letting you work from their space, there are plenty of things which those we work with can do to support us,” he says.

Many sole traders and individual freelancers, however, don’t find co-working spaces work for them. In fact, according to research from IPSE, 76 per cent of freelancers have never used a co-working space. The association believes this is an issue for government to address.

“There are still nowhere near enough places for co-working and government must work to open more up,” says IPSE’s Ms Jepps. “The government should extend rate relief to co-working spaces and publicise unused buildings where co-working spaces could be created.”

Many freelancers instead gravitate towards virtual spaces to interact with one another. Mr Knight started a Slack group called Leapers to “support anyone who wants to

freelancers who want to recapture the support and camaraderie of an office environment.

“Co-working spaces are also a great opportunity for the fruitful collaborations that fuel the dynamism and creativity of the flexible economy,” she says.

Caroline McShane, independent social media consultant and member of Growth Hub in Cirencester, says: “We all support each other by acting as sounding boards or offering advice when asked. I would go as far as to say there are more experts here

FREELANCE WORKSPACES

Working ‘alone together’ solves freelance isolation

A regular Raconteur contributor tells of her experience as a self-employed freelance journalist and asks experts how to regain the support and camaraderie lost by working alone

Anna Codrea-Rado

When I first went freelance, I was determined to go it alone. In the beginning, this was empowering; I set my own hours, worked only with clients I wanted to and generally had more professional satisfaction than I had in office jobs. The very sharp double-edged sword of working for yourself, however, is dealing with something else that comes with working on your own: loneliness.

The self-employed sector now accounts for nearly 15 per cent of the UK’s workforce. As this group continues to grow at an increasing pace – the number of self-employed workers over the age of 65 has nearly tripled since the recession – the unique

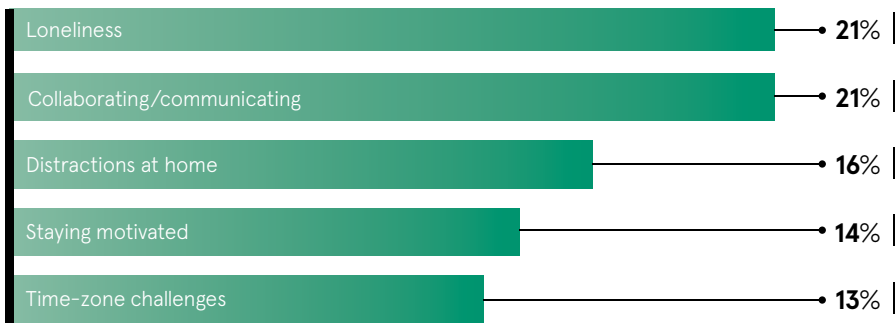
set of challenges independent workers face need to be addressed, starting with freelancer isolation.

I’m not alone in feeling alone as a self-employed worker; a 2018 survey by Epsom found that nearly half (48 per cent) found it lonely. So I spoke to other self-employed workers and industry experts to find out how freelancers can solve loneliness and isolation.

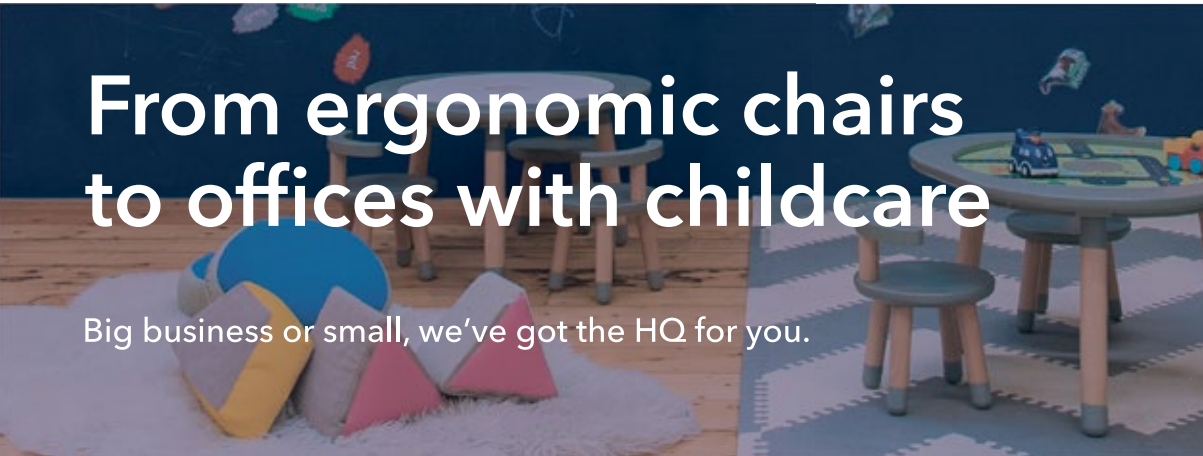
“Freelancing is a liberating and flexible way to work, but it’s not without its challenges,” says Chloé Jepps, deputy head of research at the Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (IPSE).

According to Ms Jepps, co-working spaces can be a solution for

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Growth of co-working spaces

As a larger percentage of the country’s workforce turns to freelancing as a long-term career plan, what will become of the traditional office?

“The traditional office model is out of date,” says Chantal Robinson, operations director at LABS. “Working in cubicles or even in the more modern idea of open plan have been demonstrated to damage health and decrease productivity.” LABS’ growth co-working space with five London locations is open 24/7 to meet the demands of non-traditional workers.

While the first generation of co-working spaces was born out of Silicon Valley, in recent years niche spaces that cater to the needs of specific types of freelancers have emerged. These include industry-specific spaces such as EdSpace for the education sector, female-only ventures such as AllBright and Third Door, a co-working space with an onsite Ofsted-registered nursery.

“In the future, co-working places will be more tied to the

local community, rather than a place to commute to,” says Shazia Mustafa, co-founder of Third Door. “This will help create a sense of belonging, where you can share experiences, knowing you are surrounded by people of similar values and mindset.”

Working in a non-traditional style will also extend beyond freelancers and permeate wider office culture. Tushar Agarwal, chief executive and co-founder of Hubble, a platform for finding office space, envisages a future in which offices act more like headquarters, with staff working remotely. “We will see offices served more as ‘central meeting points’ and ‘nerve centres’ which will be reflected in the design,” he says.

The office of the future will not become redundant, however, says Mr Agarwal, because he increasingly sees “how much team members value being part of a bigger movement and how company culture is best fostered while being part of a physical structure”.

work differently”. Members of the community celebrate each other’s wins, and offer help and advice to one another.

I moderate a Facebook group for UK-based freelance journalists, which acts as a peer-to-peer support group. It was through that group that freelance journalist Abby Young-Powell started holding regular meet-ups for London-based freelancers to work together two days a week.

“What I miss most about being in an office is being sociable,” says Ms Young-Powell. “Going for after-work drinks and having someone to bounce ideas around with. I notice that I’ll start to feel miserable if I’ve been working from home for a while.”

After posting on the Facebook group asking if anyone wanted to meet, she found a group of freelancers who were keen to work together in venues such as the British Library and Barbican that allow free use of their space where individuals can work.

Members of the community, which now also has a WhatsApp group of 27 participants, continues to meet twice a week to work and socialise. “It’s inspiring to have a core group of people who are all

“I notice that I’ll start to feel miserable if I’ve been working from home for a while

doing interesting work, but also going through the same struggles,” she says.

Ms Young-Powell’s tight-knit professional community speaks to my own personal favourite aspect of being self-employed: picking your own colleagues. I have a couple of “work wives”, close friends whom I turn to for professional advice. They are all female friends who are in the same industry as me; we celebrate each other’s successes together and counsel one another on any tricky situations.

Whether it’s through on or offline communities, developing professional relationships with people you’ve chosen to work alongside can make the isolating business of working for yourself feel less lonely. ●



Rise of business hospitality

Despite the trend for workspaces that look like coffee shops, many businesses are demanding a return to more professional working environments. Landmark explains how it is harnessing the fundamentals of design and service to bring professional hospitality into the flexible workspace industry

From meetings in coffee shops to laptops in hotel lobbies or typing from a sofa in a co-working space, the line between hospitality, residential and business environments has become increasingly blurred. Driven by the rise of startup and freelance culture, these new hybrid office environments encourage an informal and laid-back style of working that has now become the norm across the business world.

But despite its prevalence, some businesses are starting to question this new hybrid approach to the workplace. Is it really the best way of instilling a professional culture and supporting how people like to work?

At Landmark we believe that, despite the trend for coffee shop style work spaces, this new laid-back approach doesn’t provide the professionalism, or the variety of working environments, many businesses and their people

require. In a recent poll, we found that 70 per cent of our small and medium-sized customers want their workspace to feel professional, while just 51 per cent would prefer a creative environment. This gives a clear indication of where priorities lie.

A bustling, noisy workspace might be suitable for informal meetings and catch-ups, but isn’t appropriate for important client meetings, quiet contemplation or taking sensitive phone calls. That’s why Landmark has built its approach around professional working, aimed at businesses that want to embrace new, flexible and more open work styles, but do so while maintaining that important air of professionalism at all times. We’ve embedded this approach into our workspaces through a combination of design and service.

Zoned design

Having analysed the activities and tasks that people spend their time on while at work, we’ve planned all our spaces to incorporate four distinct zones to suit these diverse requirements. Our workspaces are also designed to give a distinctly professional rather than residential feel, without sacrificing any of the comfort and facilities that clients expect.

Every centre has a private working zone, where clients can go when they need to focus and concentrate on tasks such as drafting important emails, thinking about big problems or digesting reports and data. Meanwhile, the collaborative working zone is far more interactive, enabling small teams to come together to talk about ideas, brainstorm solutions and collaborate on tasks.

For more formal meetings and presentations, we offer a selection of options to suit a range of different situations and needs, depending on a client’s particular requirements on a given day. And finally, a social zone provides the buzzy, café-style environment that suits networking

and informal catch-ups, as well as providing a place to relax and take breaks between tasks.

People and service

Delivering the right level and style of service is also fundamental to creating a working environment with a professional look and feel. We understand that our people are the face of our clients’ businesses; they’re the first thing guests see when they walk through the door. That means the service has to be spot on.

We think of our customer service approach as a “handshake culture” because it retains that respect for traditional business values and expectations. We train all our people to an exceptionally high standard and we’re currently working towards becoming the first flexible office space provider to be recognised by the Institute of Customer Service. Our client feedback speaks for itself. In our most recent survey, all our staff received a consistent nine out of ten rating for presentation, attitude, responsiveness and efficiency.

With 20 years of providing flexible workspaces, we’ve seen the market and client demands evolve enormously during that time. Yet, while we’ve always evolved as a business in response to new ways of working, we’ve also been careful to retain a more traditional approach to professionalism and service. We like to think we’ve created the ideal hybrid of old and new styles, so our clients can enjoy the best of both.

For more information please visit landmarkspace.co.uk





SMART BUILDINGS

Building on tech to get even smarter

Just how smart are commercial buildings and can they get any smarter?

Rich McEachran

Smart buildings might be the sustainable saviours of the skyline, but applying advancing technology that adds value and interconnectivity is key if they are to become more “intelligent”. By definition, a building is smart when its various components, including the air conditioning and security alarms, are connected and controlled by an operating system. A survey by Nielsen Thailand and The Parq, published in January, found that smart features in commercial buildings can be just as important as food courts and gyms. The survey of more 400 workers under the age of 45, living in Bangkok, found that 62 per cent ranked a smart security system as the most important feature, while 50 per cent said smart energy management was important to them. Smart parking was a feature supported by 47 per cent of respondents.

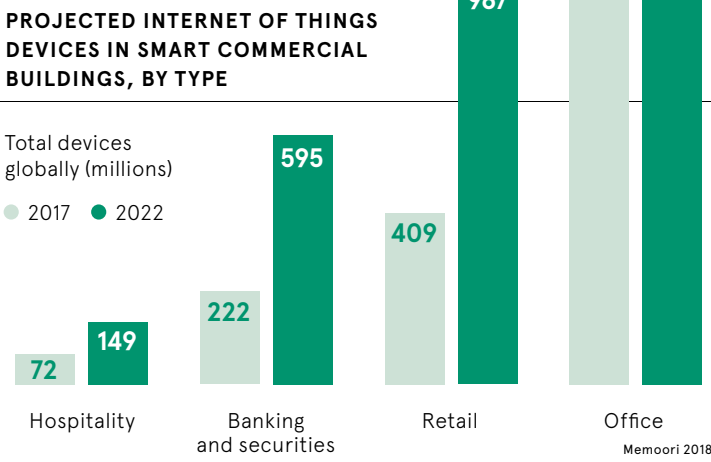
One aspect of smart buildings that technology is expected to transform is how easily office workers are able to move around them. Busy workplaces can get pretty congested, especially at peak periods such as lunchtime. With hundreds of buildings at least 20 floors high set to be built in London alone between now and 2030, there’s clearly demand for more efficient mechanisms for transporting office workers, according to Nick Mellor, managing director of the Lift and Escalator Industry Association. Mr Mellor envisages smart buildings in the future being programmed to group people by assigning them to specific lifts. Using artificial intelligence, an elevator system will be able to predict which floors people want to go to based on past behaviour. Workers will be alerted by push notification

and directed via bluetooth beacons to areas of the building where lifts will be waiting for them. “Not only will this keep people moving around smoothly, without them experiencing congestion, but it’ll also reduce travelling times and cut energy consumption,” says Mr Mellor. Amenities and features that are linked to smartphones will increasingly become a major component of the smart building infrastructure. But this should come as no surprise. Workplaces are being occupied by a generation of digital natives, who curate and live their lives through technology, says Layth Madi, managing director of Drees & Sommer UK, a leading consultancy that has delivered smart workplace projects for FTSE 100 companies. “Future smart buildings will mirror the way in which an entire generation

“Without interconnecting the different types of intelligent features and services, including heating and lighting, smart buildings won’t be truly smart

is accustomed to interacting,” he says. “The most successful developments will be those which recognise this generational shift, and that their expectations and habits will change how smart workplaces will be designed, occupied and operated.” While various amenities and features will be able to be controlled by smartphones, and even voice activation, this doesn’t necessarily mean a building should be fitted with the technology. For example, a smart vending machine is nice to have in an office, but it doesn’t add any value or have a meaningful impact on the building’s sustainability. “The key is to focus on what people will need from a building to be productive and successful in their use of it,” says Rick Robinson, digital property and cities leader at Arup. “How will connectivity improve productivity, engagement and wellbeing?” With the potential for so many connected services, from the toilets to water dispensers, it could be argued that there will come a point when buildings become too smart for their own good. Tim Stone, a partner at the internet of things investor Breed Reply doesn’t agree. However, he does believe that without interconnecting the different types of intelligent features and services, including heating and lighting, smart buildings won’t be truly smart.

“Sensors can gather data on people’s movements or analyse energy use to improve efficiency. But if you combined weather data with this, then you could make a building react to weather conditions. Or by incorporating up-to-date transport information, you could predict when workers will arrive and then make adjustments,” says Mr Stone. “There are a few platforms where you can bring this information together to enable richer analysis. Generally, though, there is a lack of interconnectiveness.” Mike Coons, head of workplace design at flexible office provider Knotel, thinks “we’re nowhere near peak smart”, as real estate has been one of the worst offenders when it comes to willingness to adopt technological innovation. “I estimate that the percentage of buildings in New York, for instance, with any kind of integrated control systems is in the single digits,” he says. “There is plenty of room to grow in terms of building performance and technology integration. ●



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OPINION

‘It all starts and ends with a genuine focus on technology improving the lives of the workforce’

For the past ten years, the workspace has been undergoing a quiet revolution. There was a time when the humble office was temporary, nine-to-five accommodation for the workforce and things like on-site catering and bike racks were about as good as perks could get. We now live in an age of one-upmanship. Every week there’s a new workspace featuring playground slides, tree houses or gondola carriages. The office has now become a badge of honour for what an organisation stands for. But it’s not this that will drive the adoption of technology in commercial property. Over that same period, our expectations as a society have shifted. The information age has allowed a range of disrupters to change the way we do everything, from ordering food to owning music to managing our finances to meeting the love of our life. It is all underpinned by technology. In a lot of respects, the commercial property sector still lags behind, but even here the impact has been felt from startups offering flexible, tech-smart office space. Building owners and operators can no longer ignore technology as a major factor in their forward planning and should be increasingly mindful that having a connected building is becoming a hygiene factor for the latest generation of workers. Before, we were happy with quick. Now we want instant. Instruction manuals are a thing of the past and everything should work from the phone in our pocket. The benefits of getting this right are huge. And they are matched in scale by the risks of sitting still. Some high street retailers are bemoaning not investing more heavily in ecommerce all those years ago. In the same way, commercial real estate professionals could regret failing to adopt technology ten years from now. Once people get a taste of technology as an enabler in the workplace, it’s hard for them to consider downgrading and therefore they are less likely to switch employers. Staff in a smart building are used to meeting rooms with localised air conditioning controls, access control passes that also allow you to buy lunch or earn rewards and a building where you can work as easily from the café

as your desk. They are far less likely to enjoy heading off to a building where the last one out has to turn the lights off. It shouldn’t be underestimated how smart buildings can have an impact on wellbeing. We’re just starting to understand how powerful mental health can be, both when things aren’t right, but also when they are. Wellbeing can make an truly positive difference to business performance. An organisation whose building provides light, space, healthy catering and areas of the workspace not necessarily dedicated to facilitating work is more likely to be seen as one that cares for its people. And this breeds commitment and dedication from them. Technology can have a huge impact on this important area too. Better engineering can provide buildings with cleaner, fresher air and internal temperatures that react to users and the overall environment. From an asset perspective, if facilities managers, landlords and boards start to show a commitment to these areas, there are inevitable benefits which come with making a multi-million-pound property produce the kind of data that would make the likes of Google sit up and take notice. Improving energy management and space efficiency are two outcomes that are hard to avoid once you understand exactly how your building is being used. But it all starts and ends with a genuine focus on technology improving the lives of the workforce. ●



Chris Edwards
Event director
Facilities Show

Commercial feature

It’s the workplace, but smart

As organisations look to maximise employee engagement and productivity, building owners must move with the times, by making life as comfortable and frictionless as possible. Now, thanks to Smart Spaces, a new app from London-based D2 Interactive, developed in partnership with Great Portland Estates plc, workspaces can become more interconnected to allow businesses and their employees unprecedented control over their environment – and work-life

Creating an inspiring and productive workplace isn’t just about investing in the latest furniture and fit-out. Today, businesses expect more from their office space. Modern workplace providers must not only provide the ultimate in comfort and ergonomics, but also help to boost efficiency, productivity and employee engagement for their occupiers. And that means taking an altogether smarter approach. Smart Spaces enables building owners to add an extra dimension to their services via its internet of things cloud-based platform and smartphone app, giving clients 360-degree engagement with and control of their office environment. From a secure automated entry system, to control of lighting and heating, and connecting with the office concierge, the technology is revolutionising the role of the traditional building owner and what it means to come to work.

Building a community
With the rise of co-working, organisations and their employees increasingly want to work somewhere with a sense of community, and this is at the core of what Smart Spaces helps to deliver. In fact, when you first login to the app, it looks much like a social media platform, with a social wall where occupants can post, like and share content with others in the building. Users can also learn about and connect with their neighbours via an occupier directory or consult the events wall to register for upcoming seminars, presentations and networking opportunities.

88%
of executives believe smart building solutions can directly benefit employee satisfaction and similarly impact productivity.

Global Research Study, JLL

75%
reduction in lighting energy

Smart Building Reduced Utility & Maintenance Analysis, WSP



Control over the environment
Choice and autonomy over the work environment is one of the biggest factors in employee performance and Smart Spaces takes this to a new level. Through integrating with a building’s systems, the app enables occupiers to control various elements of their environment, including intensity, colour and rhythms of lighting, temperature levels and even the music in their vicinity. Employees can choose the ambience in which they are most comfortable and productive, while also saving time and energy they would otherwise spend liaising with building management. **Easy to implement and manage**
It might sound futuristic, but Great Portland Estates plc, a FTSE 250 property investment and development company, is already rolling out the Smart Spaces technology across its central London office portfolio. And it’s actually surprisingly straightforward. As long as a building’s systems have been updated in the last ten years, no additional hardware is required, so you can have all the tech functionality of a new building, without the expense of moving to one. The platform is totally customisable to the needs of each workspace and its occupiers, while access controls mean that employees and building management can be assigned varying levels of permissions and functionality, depending on their position. How we work is changing. Organisations and their employees are looking beyond the traditional nine to five, to build a more fluid, flexible and sustainable approach. And workspace providers must evolve along with them, by giving their customers the environment and tools they need to work in better, smarter ways. It’s the workplace, but smart. And it’s happening right now. **For more information please visit smartspaces.app**



TRAINING SPACES

Space to learn and develop at work

Business leaders are wrestling with how to integrate formal and informal learning spaces at work to nurture a necessary upskilling culture

Peter Crush

In Cal Newport's influential management tome *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*, the central tenet is true learning, growth and reflection can best happen at work in a dedicated quiet space.

For Matt Kwiecinski, co-founder and chief executive of Leeds-based digital marketing agency Journey Further, it's such a powerful message that the book takes pride of place in the agency's office library,

which also doubles as its book club. These are monthly get-togethers when staff discuss a business title and reflect on how its ideas can be incorporated into their enterprise.

"To us it's obvious that you can't hope to think differently if you're sitting in the same spot you always do," says Mr Kwiecinski, who has also created a space staff have dubbed the Thunderdome, an "amphitheatre" used for group learning.

"If you were designing our office from scratch, it might be tempting

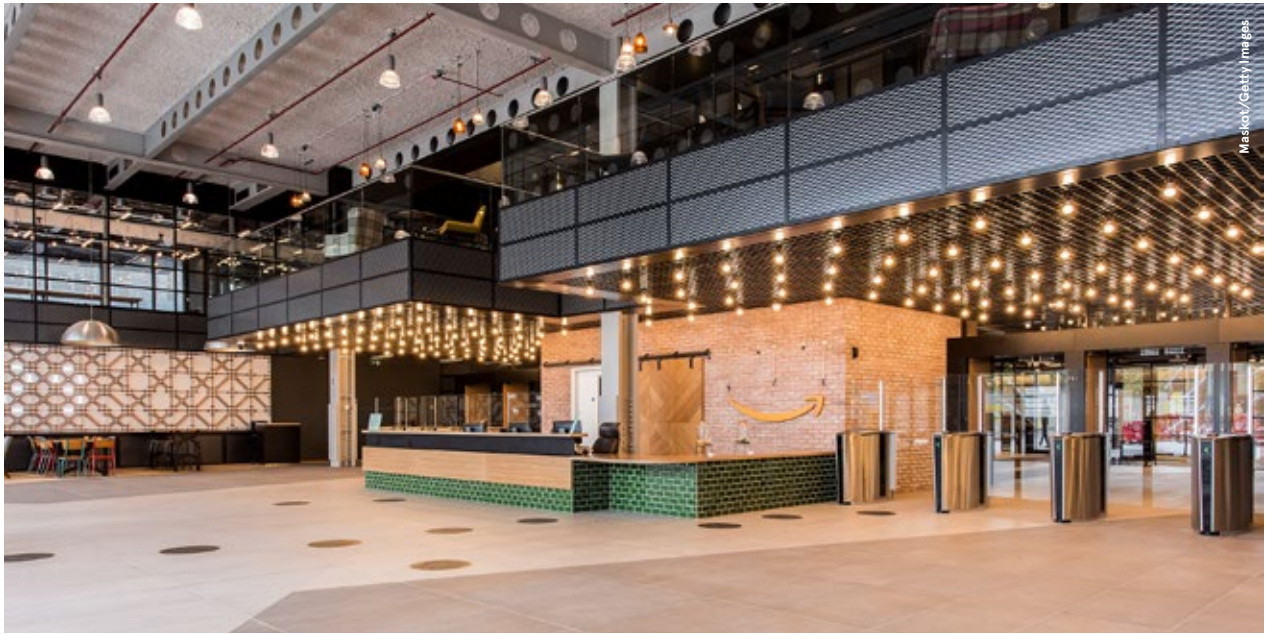
not to have either," he says. "The library is only used as a place to go and read; the Thunderdome probably gets used twice a month, but that's not the point. It's all about us exhibiting our ethos through our workspace, which is caring about clarity of thought and everybody adding value."

Mr Kwiecinski is part of an emerging band of business owners pulling back on recent trends for workspaces to be designed to be as multi-purpose as possible; areas that are meeting rooms one minute, brainstorming spaces the next, social areas another. It's almost a return to when offices had distinct classrooms; spaces purely for ongoing training and development. But can't workspaces operate like classrooms too?

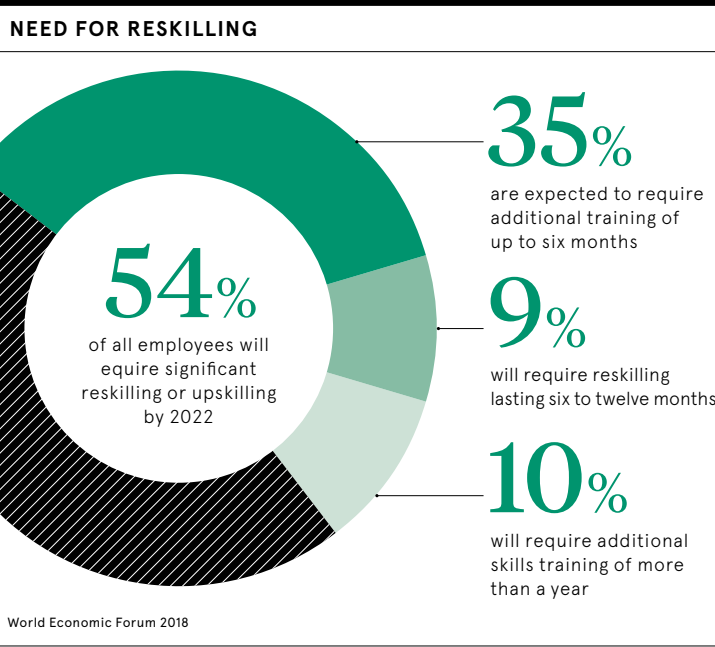
"While classrooms in the traditional sense feel outdated, the notion there should be permanently designated space for learning or one-to-many experiences has increasing relevancy," says Robin Hoyle, head of learning and development at Huthwaite International.

Atul Bansal, co-founder of interior office design firm Sheila Bird Group, adds: "Most CEOs haven't yet made the connection between space and learning. But they should. Today if you want to encourage continual upskilling, you don't 'teach'; you just need space at work to share information. The problem with fad-based office design though is that often space lacks permanency. Staff still need to know what a space is for, and ideally it should try and stay the same."

Amazon UK's headquarters in Shoreditch, London



Staff of Leeds-based agency Journey Further in the Thunderdome, a space used for group learning



Not only does incorporating distinct learning areas into workspaces visibly demonstrate learning is valued, it gives offices additional purpose at a time when staff have more choice about where they decide to work. More than this, many argue true learning only happens if mistakes can be made and that at-desk learning simply doesn't allow this.

Adrienne Gormley, head of Dropbox Business in Europe, Middle East and Africa, says: "We have the whole floor-to-ceiling scribble walls, space for video conference learning and so on, but we think it's important to take people to specific and, what we call, 'safe' training destinations. By this we mean areas of privacy where people can feel empowered to challenge ideas without fear of onlookers.

"When people don't feel safe, they contribute ideas that are middle of the road. For learning to happen, you need to be somewhere boundaries can be pushed."

With studies showing open-plan offices can actually reduce collaboration – at one firm studied by Harvard University, human interaction fell 72 per cent, while 56 per cent more emails were sent when a business moved from a private to open-plan arrangement – more human resources leaders are warming to the idea of trying to understand how to integrate formal and informal learning space to encourage an always-learning culture.

Some, like the manufacturer Worcester Bosch, are leaning towards looser learning spaces. "We took a big management leap of faith recently," says chief executive Carl Arntzen, "to have two living-room sized coffee areas built to encourage people to move away from their desks and talk and learn from each other."

Others are upping the ante with much more formal space, which is often beautifully designed. Retail agency Geometry recently opened The Flagship, a space designed by BDG Architecture and Design, comprising a totally immersive 3D floor-to-ceiling projection area that allows brands and retailers to prototype, test and trial technology, which aims to influence shoppers' behaviour and purchasing decisions.

With two such different approaches, identifying which works best may be tricky. But

according to Ben Farmer, head of human resources at Amazon UK, creating workspaces that can be classrooms too is simply about being in tune with the existing culture.

"The way we think about space and culture is linked," he says. "But for us, we believe learning is best achieved through real-time collaboration and on-the-job learning." As such Amazon's style isn't having closed-off areas, but lots of group pods, so-called flex rooms, and a variety of other communal spaces, all present at its new London headquarters in Shoreditch.

"Our philosophy is if we have a variety of spaces, people gravitate to whichever suits them. We've tried to

“For learning to happen, you need to be somewhere boundaries can be pushed

design our workplace to uphold one of our values of being curious."

It's a shared sentiment. "If cultural expectation is met with space or technology, learning becomes less about having a certain workplace layout and more about much broader issues, including how management supports employees and dedicating time for development," says Karen Hebert-Maccaro, chief learning experience officer at learning provider O'Reilly Media.

Recent City & Guilds Group research finds that 34 per cent of UK employees say they work in overly controlled workplaces. Some 32 per cent want better space for more innovation and creativity.

Jane Duncan, vice president and head of people and organisation at Capgemini, concludes: "As employee expectation continues to grow, pressure is on organisations to rethink their approach to learning. This makes understanding the evolution of the workspace a strategic imperative." ●

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