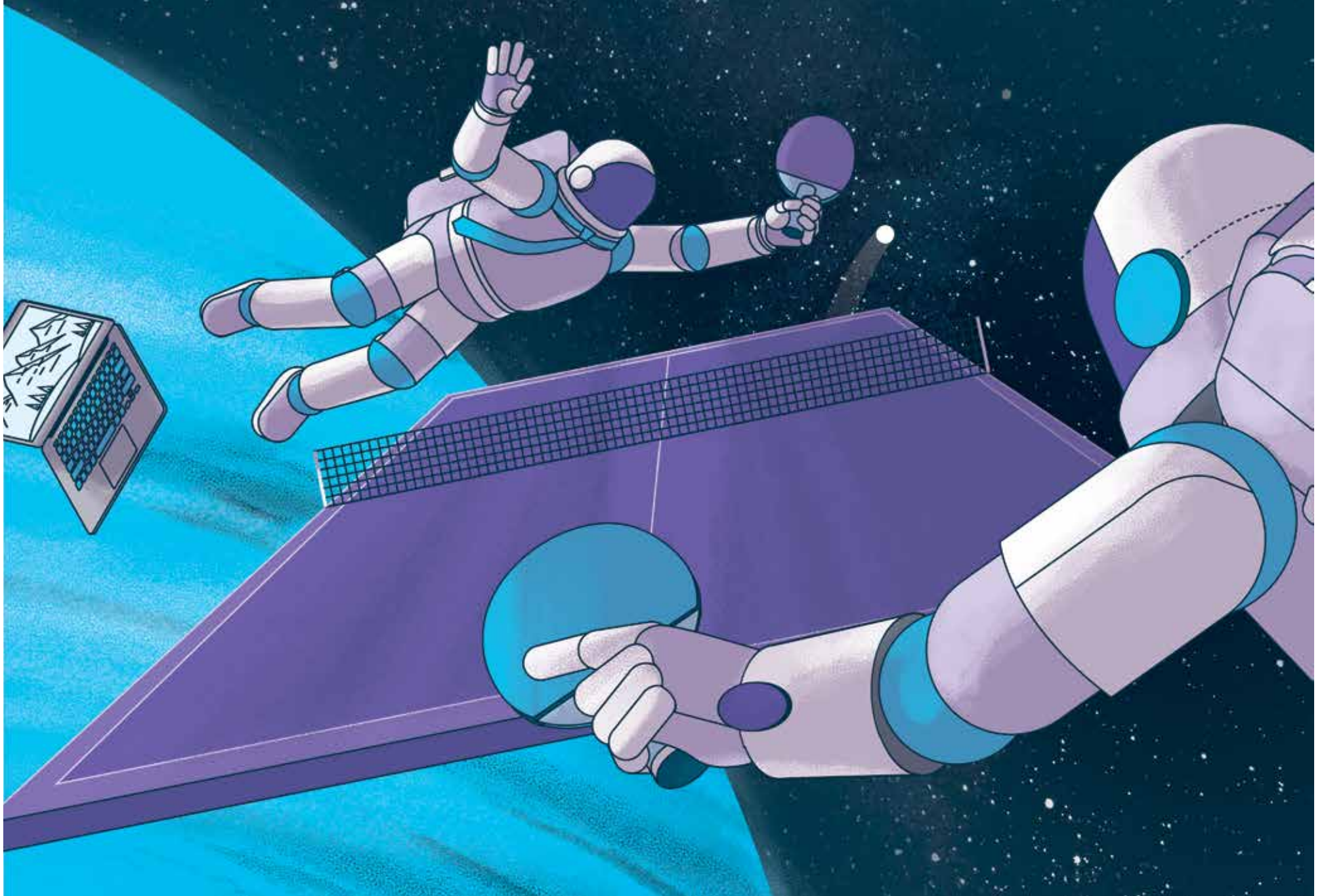


# THE FUTURE WORKPLACE

**03** DOES THE WEWORK  
MODEL STILL WORK?

**12** THE IMPORTANCE OF  
OFFICE BRANDING

**18** BRINGING UNUSED  
RETAIL BACK TO LIFE



**NESPRESSO**  
PROFESSIONAL



## IDEAS NEVER STOP

You sometimes just need to be inspired  
by a new coffee experience

*what else?*



# Over 50 workspaces, no two the same. Work somewhere that works for you.

We understand all businesses are different, so we design each of our workspaces differently too. We take care of the stand-out services, amenities and on-site support to create a platform where your business can thrive.

**Discover more at**  
**[theofficegroup.com](https://theofficegroup.com)**



Clockwise top left:  
**Scott House**, Waterloo  
**Summit House**, Holborn  
**York House**, King's Cross  
**One Canada Square**,  
Canary Wharf



THE FUTURE  
WORKPLACE

Distributed in  
THE TIMES

Published in association with



Contributors

**Mikaela Aitken**  
Journalist and copywriter, she specialises in urbanism and design and is a regular contributor for *Monocle*.

**Nick Easen**  
Award-winning writer and broadcaster, he covers science, tech, economics and business, producing content for *BBC World News*, *CNN* and *Time*.

**Christine Horton**  
Long-term contributor to specialist IT titles, including *Channel Pro* and *Microscope*, she writes about technology's impact on business.

**Rachel Muller-Heyndyk**  
Journalist covering workplaces, culture and activism, she has written for *The Independent*, the *i* paper and *HR* magazine.

**Jon Axworthy**  
Journalist, writing about health, tech, science and the future, his work has been published in *T3*, *Wareable* and *The Ambient*.

**Jack Apollo George**  
Writer and media specialist, his articles on technology and culture have been published by the *New Statesman* and *CLOT Magazine*.

**Katie Monk**  
Freelance journalist and author, her work has been published in *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *Psychologies* and *Food & Travel*.

**Oliver Pickup**  
Award-winning journalist, he specialises in tech, business and sport, and contributes to a wide range of publications.

raconteur  
reports

Publishing manager  
**Ben Bruce**

Associate editor  
**Peter Archer**

Deputy editor  
**Francesca Cassidy**

Managing editor  
**Benjamin Chiou**

Digital content executive  
**Taryn Brickner**

Head of production  
**Justyna O'Connell**

Design  
**Joanna Bird**  
**Sara Gelfgren**  
**Kellie Jerrard**  
**Harry Lewis-Irlam**  
**Celina Lucey**  
**Colm McDermott**  
**Samuele Motta**  
**Jack Woolrich**

Head of design  
**Tim Whitlock**

Although this publication is funded through advertising and sponsorship, all editorial is without bias and sponsored features are clearly labelled. For an upcoming schedule, partnership inquiries or feedback, please call +44 (0)20 3877 3800 or email [info@raconteur.net](mailto:info@raconteur.net). Raconteur is a leading publisher of special-interest content and research. Its publications and articles cover a wide range of topics, including business, finance, sustainability, healthcare, lifestyle and technology. Raconteur special reports are published exclusively in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* as well as online at [raconteur.net](http://raconteur.net). The information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources the Proprietors believe to be correct. However, no legal liability can be accepted for any errors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior consent of the Publisher. © Raconteur Media

[@raconteur](#) [/raconteur.net](#) [@raconteur\\_london](#)

[raconteur.net](http://raconteur.net) /future-workplace-2020

CO-WORKING

Does the WeWork  
model still work?

The office space company once promised to “elevate the world’s consciousness”, but could WeWork now be scaring away the very entrepreneurs it used to cherish?

Jack Apollo George

In early-2019, even though it was haemorrhaging cash, WeWork was valued at more than \$40 billion. Two years earlier, then-chief executive Adam Neumann declared: “Valuation and size today are much more based on our energy and spirituality than on a multiple of revenue.”

Indeed, energy and spirituality abounded. WeWork, which rents and converts office space, described itself as “a platform for creators that transforms buildings into dynamic environments”.

With its plush interiors, 24/7 access, co-working desks and ping-pong tables, the company provides freelancers and entrepreneurs with flexible, short-term contracts. It is a physical manifestation of how many see the new digital economy: open, playful, communal.

The company’s largest benefactor, the Japanese behemoth SoftBank, famously plans its investments according to a 300-year vision. But by the end of 2019, less than 300 days after a multi-billion-dollar injection of SoftBank cash, the markets decided WeWork was, after all, just a real estate company.

A planned IPO was shelved. Neumann stepped down. Thousands lost their jobs. The company suddenly seemed to be worth far less than the billions investors had piled into it.

Despite the tenuous wisdom of making large venture capital investments in companies that do not own any unique technology, WeWork is still with us. It now has 662,000 members in 37 countries, bringing the ethos of West Coast techies to most corners of the globe.

It recently opened a lavish new 16-storey block in London’s Waterloo. Persian-style carpets, books on how to boost creativity on the Tube and lunchtime wellness and “breath-work” sessions attract members to rent desks from £600 a month.

Mathieu Proust, WeWork general manager UK, Ireland and emerging markets, says: “The way we work is changing and we are at the forefront of this change. People are increasingly expecting something different from their workplace, prioritising culture and technology.”

WeWork might have helped kick-start the flexible office revolution, but the company now has a plethora of competition. There are hundreds of such brands in London alone and many of them are attempting to undercut WeWork on price.



Kamal Kant Kosariya/Unsplash

When a number of companies are offering essentially the same thing, it is often “culture” – that nebulous but occasionally priceless framework – which will separate the wheat from the chaff.

So what does WeWork and similar outfits offer that is truly unique? Critics argue that while such companies once prided themselves on providing the environment for ambitious small-business owners to thrive, they now risk alienating and pricing out that demographic.

Some, looking for community and mentorship, question the value of stylish desks and potted plants in achieving business success. Are we witnessing a change in what

ambitious UK startups are looking for when they rent office space?

Oleg Mukhanov, chief operating officer of Steadypay, an early-stage startup that helps provide financial stability to gig economy workers, says the company used WeWork because “as a startup you were pretty much expected to be based in one”. He says of WeWork in 2018: “WeWorks were filled with the spirit of startup and hustle.”

However, as a fast-growing business on a budget, Mukhanov decided: “There are better ways of spending our capital than having a fancy office space. If we need the cool factor, we can always go to a pub next door.”

As setting up a small business has become easier, the idea of working in a startup has also become more widespread. 2019 saw a 44 per cent increase in investment in UK startups.

Tushar Agarwal, co-founder and chief executive of HubbleHQ, an office-finding website, which he describes as the “booking.com to WeWork’s Marriott”, says the growth of the startup sector has had a knock-on effect on workspaces.

“The office market has changed more in the past five years than it has in the last fifty,” he says. “We are generally seeing that as the entrepreneurial ecosystem matures and startups become scale-ups, the spaces these businesses want to occupy are also growing up.”

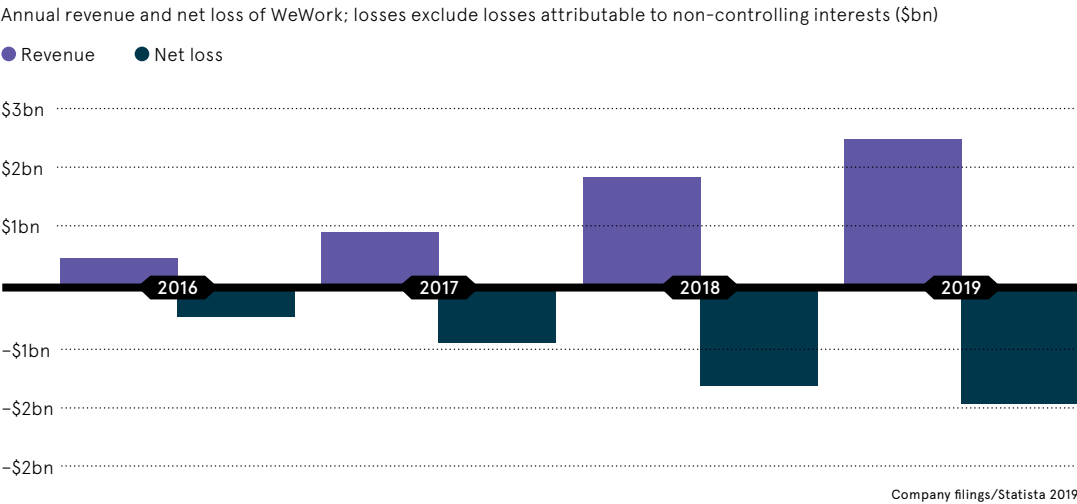
This means that many of the amenities WeWork offer may no longer be as attractive to some as they used to be.

For instance, in the eyes of many founders, having a private office still seems to be an essential ingredient for success. And while bean bags and fridges full of beer are pleasant and good for networking, they are not always great for getting work done.

Companies like WeWork helped to establish the concept of the flexible workplace, but whether the model can be profitable in the long term remains to be seen.

It is difficult to assess whether WeWork and similar offerings can continue to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. They will no doubt always be an attractive option for some cash-rich businesses that want to prioritise staff conditions, but may not necessarily be the best place for an ambitious, bootstrapped founder to get started. ●

WEWORK FINANCIALS







PENSON

01

## BRANDING

# First impressions still count

How important is the physical office space when it comes to brand building in the digital age when so much business is conducted outside the traditional working environment?

Oliver Pickup

It's now three years since Airbnb first offered more rooms than the world's top five hotel brands put together. This remarkable feat was achieved without the rental pioneer buying a single brick for users. More recently, at the start of March, branchless UK challenger bank Monzo celebrated attracting its four-millionth customer, an impressive milestone reached in a handful of years.

Considering the rapid and seismic paradigm shift in the global business landscape, wrought by technological advancement, how vital, then, is physical office branding in the digital age?

"On its own, physical office branding is arguably less important today than ever before," says Jed Backhouse, a digital brand consultant at Infinite Global. "Instead, what is crucial is the alignment of a physical brand with digital and experiential dimensions."

"This means ensuring an organisation's purpose and values are consistently demonstrated, communicated

and manifested across all brand touchpoints. That includes the workplace environment, but also media, marketing and other interactions. Therefore, the office can, in some ways, now be considered part of the media mix for brands."

Indeed, business leaders would be foolish to neglect investment in workplace branding and the working environment, says Steve Sharp, director at Fat Cow Media, given its enormous potential to enhance company reputation for employees, customers and investors alike.

"While a tangible brand identity remains the cornerstone of any good marketing strategy, it's not enough to rely on digital experiences," he says. "Physical experiences leave a longer-lasting impression and offer a more personal opportunity to reach consumers."

Beth Hampson, commercial director at The Argyll Club, which has 38 luxury workspaces across London, agrees. "Carefully selected colour palettes, logos and website designs are

key in 2020, but organisations may be missing a huge trick by not considering what the four walls around them say about their brand," she says.

"While a lot of business is conducted via tech these days, the most important decisions often still happen in person. Why, then, are businesses pumping money into their digital brand, but overlooking the impression given to clients, investors or recruits after a simple meeting at the office?"

"Businesses shouldn't forget the power of that first impression when you walk through the door, especially in this digital age. As life is increasingly digitalised and automated, the physical and tangible may become more valuable when attempting to stand out from the crowd."

Office branding has been an essential element of the workplace "for centuries and the birth of the department store accelerated its evolution", says Dr Teea Palo, lecturer in marketing at University of Edinburgh Business School. However, workplace branding has been dialled up in the last two decades, in America, especially.

For Backhouse, Apple leads the way. "Their buildings designed by Lord Norman Foster are incredible, physical and environmental articulations of a brand's purpose and values," he says. "Apple's mission statement includes ideas around simplicity, innovation

and cross-pollination, which are all apparent in the design of their offices and shops, as they are in the physicality of its products."

At Facebook, the potency of physical office branding, or lack of it, is used in an unorthodox and perhaps slightly threatening way. At the social media titan's California campus, Facebook's branding is the focal point as visitors enter, but the tatty signage of the previous occupier, Sun Microsystems, has been retained at the exit. A mistake, surely?

"No, it's used as a constant reminder of the balance between winners and losers in the industry, a rather direct reminder to employees of the need to stay focused," says Tom Carroll, head of Europe, Middle East and Africa corporate research at real estate services firm JLL.

American attitudes towards office branding might be too in-your-face for some, though. In the UK, a more understated approach is required, according to Peter Matthews, founder and chief executive of digital brand designer Nucleus.

"Inside-out branding has always been important and being proud of the brand you work for is a natural aspiration for many," he says. "But it can be overdone for British sensibilities, when some brand consultants and CEOs demand employees to 'live the brand'."

This chimes with Lee Penson, chief executive of world-renowned architecture and interior design studio PENSON. "Brand celebration should be displayed as subtle suggestions at the right moment," he says. "Client-facing environments must touch on branding, but not overdo it."

"The reception, for instance, is definitely not the best place to use branding; it's frankly an overwhelming introduction for people. Employees and customers want to feel part of something bigger and somewhere they are supported to do their best work, not just a 'branded' workplace."

As an example, Penson nods to Sony PlayStation's European headquarters in London, which his company recently designed. "The space was planned around their brand logo and has clusters of clever and cool spaces," he says. "It's little touches like this that make our clients feel confident in their space. They live and breathe their brand implicitly. Images and banners will not do this."

Office location and the heritage of a building, especially in a city, can help boost company reputation, too. "Trendy London startups may be more inclined to set up shop in the hipster hotspot of Shoreditch rather than Paddington, because the area aligns with their ambitions for branding and company values," says Bradley Baker, director at office developer CO-RE.

Finally, for business leaders seeking advice about office branding, Hampson from The Argyll Club offers a conclusion. "Start small and gradually think bigger," she says. "Look at your workspace itself, then zoom out to your building, your address, your neighbourhood. What would a visitor think when hearing about or seeing each for the first time?"

"If you aren't confident a potential investor, employee or client would align each of these physical images with your brand values, it may be time to consider an office move." ●

**01** Sony PlayStation's European headquarters in London, designed by PENSON

**02** Apple's offices, such as this one designed by Sir Norman Foster, reflect the company's ethos of simplicity and innovation

“Physical experiences leave a longer-lasting impression and offer a more personal opportunity to reach consumers



02

Dromancy / Shutterstock



# How flex is leading the way in diversifying the workplace

The future of office flex space may well be a shift towards niche-operators and corporate provision. To keep pace with change, workspace providers must raise service standards, offer different sizes and kinds of spaces, and become more focused on specific customer needs because new generations of employees are leading a workplace revolution

**A**s the successful offices of tomorrow must accommodate today's increasingly digital-native, eco-conscious and wellbeing-focused workforce, it's clear that flexibility will be the lifeblood flowing through the future workplace.

The beating heart of any healthy organisation is its people. Therefore, attracting and retaining top talent is paramount for business leaders in 2020 and beyond. To triumph in the raging war for talent, it is essential to tool up with flexible and diversified workspaces that enable greater collaboration and, in turn, innovation as well as a variety of appealing services, amenities and experiences.

Consider that tech-savvy millennials and the slightly younger Generation Z make up 60 per cent of the global workforce, according to ManPower Group. Device-wielding millennials, aged between 24 and 39, have already revolutionised the way we all work, with the conventional nine-to-five day now extinct in most industries and remote working increasingly the norm.

Similarly, they have catalysed an evolution towards more flexible workspaces that serve purpose-led brands. Variety in space styles and designs within buildings, to suit different types of work and working, is becoming vital for businesses of all sizes.

"People want to enjoy their lives while they work, and seek flexibility, mobility and variety in their jobs," says Olly Olsen, co-founder and co-chief



executive of The Office Group (TOG). "Creating optimal working experiences is now a must, not an optional extra. Employers will be amazed by how much happier, more loyal and engaged staff will be if they are granted greater freedom and flexibility, and the strict rules of engagement around where and when people work are removed."

Corporate Proposition, a research paper launched in January by TOG, UnWork and WORKTECH Academy, highlights that as Generation Z and the tail-end of the millennials enter the workplace, employee expectations will start to revolve around the agency to control the immediate environment.

Consumerisation is now deeply ingrained in our personal lives. Social networks market products based on predicted need through our search history, for instance, and Amazon offers same-day delivery on a vast range of different products. Delivering immediacy and adaptability to suit customer needs is bleeding into workplace design, too.

TOG embraces people-led design, knowing that in the digital age all businesses and their needs differ and evolve. "It's critical to gain an understanding of who the audience is that will work from the building and to

respond accordingly with our design," says Charlie Green, TOG co-founder and co-chief executive.

"We design all our buildings individually, driven by the differing architecture of each building and its unique location. We feel strongly that if we approach the design in that way, we're respecting the context of each building."

## Power to the tenants

Tenants will have greater power in the future workplace, which will focus on holistic experience, building connected ecosystems and encouraging cross-pollination. Notably, Europe's workers only spend around 66 per cent of their working time at their desk, according to Savills' What Workers Want survey. Consequently, office providers must ensure their workplace offers breakout spaces, high-quality catering areas and other services generally associated with the hospitality sector.

Little wonder new models in the flexible workspace market are emerging. Co-working and serviced offices have experienced an incredible surge in recent years, thanks to a growing realisation by progressive corporate organisations that flex spaces should be included in their overall space portfolio.



**Creating optimal working experiences is now a must, not an optional extra**

Business leaders have realised that dialling up co-working capabilities helps future-proofing efforts, partly because of the manifold benefits of flexibility, which engender diversity and community, two key pillars for the modern workplace.

Increasingly, major corporates view flex office spaces, or more specifically satellite or project spaces, as an attractive alternative to house groups of staff with specific needs without needing to maintain their own office areas.

As an example, Ocado approached TOG last year looking for flexible project space for one of their innovation tech teams of almost 50 people. They sought a design-led aesthetic, a convenient and relevant location, and a quick turnaround time. The White Collar Factory on Old Street

roundabout, one of fifty-one flex spaces TOG offers, was selected by them as it matched their requirements.

## Flex space is the future

The flex-space market is expanding quickly, European Office Outlook 2020, a report published in January by Savills Research, reveals that last year 12 per cent of Europe's office space was taken up by the flexible workspace sector, up from 10 per cent in 2018.

While flex space is often used by corporates to manage overflow or to assist travelling employees, it appeals to the emergent workforce, too. Indeed, those aged under 35 value workplace flexibility as highly as anything else in a job role. It's not just the younger generations though, as workplace flexibility is one of the most prevalent trends among UK workers as a whole. In fact, more than three quarters (77 per cent) of respondents to *The Future Workplace* survey, unveiled in late-2018 by Unum and The Future Laboratory, state it is very important.

As the flex-space market develops, office providers should be aware of three megatrends, highlighted by TOG's Corporate Proposition report. Firstly, the service level must be raised to meet the standards now expected. Next, flex-space providers are diversifying. Larger, more-established providers are buying smaller competitors in a bid to cultivate a broader ecosystem of organisations and communities.

The third, and most prominent, megatrend in the flexible workspace industry is the proliferation of sector-specific hubs. These facilitate work and collaboration in an isolated industry, tailored to a particular type of clientele. By focusing on a niche sector, a co-working facility creates a community of likeminded members that can support each other by developing a shared knowledge economy.

The TOG report forecasts that by 2029 the flex market will have grown significantly, with many more providers offering sector-specific spaces joining the market. In the coming decade, as office providers explore this new frontier, flexible workspace provision needs to be at the forefront of reimagining and shaping the way people work.

**For more information please visit [theofficegroup.com](https://theofficegroup.com)**

**TOG**  
THE OFFICE GROUP

**35%**

**of office deals in London involved operators of flex workspace in 2019**

Instant Group

**51**

**differently designed, well-located flex spaces are offered by The Office Group across Europe**

TOG

**77%**

**of UK workers say workplace flexibility is very important**

Unum/The Future Laboratory

## CREATIVITY

# How to beat the crisis in workplace creativity

Creative thinking is in short supply. Can understanding how the brain works, and how our workplaces can impact it, solve the crisis?

Nick Easen

If someone managed to bottle creativity and sell it to businesses globally, they'd be a billionaire. The elixir is in short supply in the knowledge economy. It's why there's a whole industry trying to create the ultimate workplace model, reconfiguring the office to supercharge employees and spark innovation. But they've forgotten the most important element: the human brain.

The most complex organ in the known universe is still our best untapped resource, yet it's divided. The left and right sides interpret the world differently, influencing how we work. The left brain likes detail, is goal orientated, with a narrow and short-term focus. The right is more insightful, since it sees the broader, contextual picture and is vital for original thought.

Surveys show creative thinking is a skill that's in short supply. Is this due to an epidemic in left-brain thinking that's hijacked our lives? Key figures in advertising and media think it's a full-blown creativity crisis. They believe that similar shifts in thinking style have occurred down the centuries. Citing examples from the Renaissance to the Reformation, as well as today's lack of advertising effectiveness.

"Culture oscillates between left and right-brain periods; we're now in a left-brain dominant era, one where productivity trumps

creativity. People have become too analytical and focused on linear processing. People are seeing this in their personal and daily lives, and with this crisis in creativity we've lost our fifth taste bud," explains Orlando Wood, chief innovation officer at System1.

This diagnosis has wider implications for the global workplace culture. Wood's analyses are based on the work of Dr Iain McGilchrist, psychiatrist and brain expert, who has detailed the left-brain dominance of societies through history and the issues it causes, stifling innovation.

"The left hemisphere thinks there must be a quick fix, but there isn't. We need to change our culture. Thriving communities can fall into ruin. We may be repeating this pattern, which is clearly visible at the end of the Greek and Roman civilisations, as well as today in the West," says McGilchrist, author of *The Master and His Emissary*.

Left-brain domination of workplace culture can be seen everywhere. The open-plan office is an example, where you're able to see most colleagues and the boss, who sits directly behind you, along with managers monitoring what employees are doing. "It's all about power and control, where people feel the need to watch over others; this is a left-brain tactic," says Wood.

"The client lunch has gone, which was great for right-brain,

creative conviviality. Timeframes are compressed, which promotes left-brain focused goals. Today nothing happens behind closed doors. The creative's office used to be a space for silliness, a laugh, to be naughty, and right-brain creativity."

During morning news meetings at *The New York Times*, journalists now take it in turns to read a poem out loud. The aim is to inspire and boost creativity with say a bit of William Wordsworth at the start of the working day. Most definitely, an ode to right-brain thinking.

"Creativity has always been stifled in traditional workplaces; we're just now becoming aware of it because we're suddenly focused on innovation. When it comes to creativity, if you want to light a

**"The creative's office used to be a space for silliness, a laugh, to be naughty, and right-brain creativity"**



said for banning them in the workplace. I have banned them from my life."

fire, get back and let it breathe. Set people and their minds free," says Andy Swann, author of *The Human Workplace*.

Acknowledging your workplace culture might dampen down the right, creative side of the brain is a start. But sparking it up involves more than just a smattering of novel art installations, a few bean bags and funky breakout rooms. Amazing looking spaces and enforced rules aren't suddenly going to supercharge free thought. This happens on the walk to work, in the shower or when you're idle.

"Creativity isn't something that can happen to order, but it can easily be prevented from happening. You can't make a plant grow, but you can certainly kill it off. So create space and then stop doing most of the things you think you must do, since they probably will get in the way," says McGilchrist.

"Relaxation, informality and spontaneity are helpful. Stress and pressure make people narrow their focus. Fragmentation of attention, distraction and anxiety caused by smartphones and the media lead to issues too. There is a lot to be

No Brainer, a content marketing agency, has even put the issue at the centre of their company's ethos. They ban devices during creative sessions, and recognise there's a diversity of thought among employees and a need to be inclusive within a workplace culture.

"People operate with different levels of left and right-brain thinking, that's why our offices reflect a healthy mix of spaces that embrace both. This means there's consistency across the team when it comes to their ability to be creative and in a space that suits them," says Gary Jenkins, managing director of the Warrington-based company.

Therefore, the workplace of the future is about giving people the tools and physical space to explore right-brain creativity on their own terms. The environment should be an empowering one. Then we might see change.

"There'll never be one way that suits everyone. But free people up, as much as you dare. We should be encouraging free-thinking with a light, not a heavy, hand on the tiller. No one is happy being reduced to a cog in a machine," McGilchrist concludes. ●





# Why coffee is the social glue of the modern workplace

Research proves office coffee breaks increase productivity, help motivate and destress workers, sparking innovation among other benefits. And the trend towards sociable, hotel-like offices means the importance of having quality coffee will only grow

**T**he workplace evolves with the workforce and quality coffee is the social glue of the most successful offices in 2020. Coffee breaks spark social interactions and, more importantly, innovation, which is business critical for future-focused organisations. And coffee's influential role for businesses will only surge in the coming years.

That's because business leaders have realised that coffee breaks help inspire and enable new levels of congeniality, learning and productivity within a community. Moreover, coffee is the catalyst for collaboration, creativity and contemplation.

"The workplace is changing rapidly, with workers demanding more flexibility in their environment while enjoying the community feel of an office, such as enjoying coffee catch-ups with colleagues," says Guillaume Chesneau, managing director of Nespresso UK and Ireland. "People are the most important asset in a successful working environment. Ultimately, they are the ones who create thriving office culture and collaborate to form better innovation and better business."

Professor Jeremy Myerson, director of WORKTECH Academy, a global online knowledge network exploring the future of work, agrees. "The future of the workplace is a social

and interactive one," he says. "Offices will become places where people go to have conversations, share ideas, collaborate with others, and to be trained and mentored."

Myerson believes we are moving towards a "much more social landscape in which offices begin to look like hotel lobbies or retail malls". He continues: "Hospitality, generosity and conviviality, often based around food, drink and social activities, are going to be very important anchors in how these spaces are managed."



**The workplace is changing rapidly, with workers demanding more flexibility in their environment while enjoying the community feel of an office, such as enjoying coffee catch-ups with colleagues**

Martin Raymond, co-founder of strategic foresight consultancy The Future Laboratory, says: "Looking at the shift in the workplace, the office is increasingly social and hospitable, and work is almost secondary. One Swedish survey shows that if you put the accoutrements of hospitality into a building or an environment, it will increase productivity by 20 per cent."

## Exploring the many benefits of high-quality coffee

The trend for collaborative workspaces will continue to grow and evolve, according to the Nespresso Professional Workplace Futures report, published in October by The Future Laboratory. By 2030, workspaces will be designed and built to satisfy the multi-faceted identities of tomorrow's fluid workforce, with spaces to suit different needs, from co-working and collaboration to socialising, creativity, even neurodiversity and private research, the study suggests.

Organisations that embrace new concepts, such as using technology to urge workers to take breaks in social spaces and encourage conviviality, are likely to experience a boost in productivity.

ComRes' Coffee in the Workplace report, for example, demonstrates the impact social spaces can have on overall efficiency,

with more than two thirds of workers (67 per cent) feeling more productive after a coffee break. Furthermore, four in five workers (82 per cent) who take coffee breaks at work during the day feel they help relieve stress.

Provision of good coffee is also a differentiator when it comes to attracting and retaining top talent. The ComRes research reveals that three quarters of workers (75 per cent) agree having high-quality coffee available in the office suggests the employer cares about their wellbeing. Hence, dwell areas and pause points play an essential part in creating a culture of resilience.

**67%**

**of workers feel more productive after a coffee break**

**75%**

**agree having high-quality coffee available in their office suggests the employer cares about their wellbeing**

**82%**

**feel coffee breaks at work help them to relieve stress**

Nespresso / ComRes, Coffee In The Workplace 2017

Angela Oguntala, director at Greyspace, a design and futures consultancy, says in the future workplace coffee breaks will become more important for wellbeing-conscious employees and employers. "While people will still believe in the dream of the hustle, we'll also see a growing segment redefine the speed at which they work, slowing down to protect their health," she says.

"We need to create a workspace that is open and collaborative, but in the right kind of way. Employees are searching for ways to minimise distraction and have protective spaces, some of which are social and some of which aren't."

## Hybridisation of the workspace and hospitality

These spaces will filter out from capital cities and business districts and become increasingly localised, causing co-working to become "lo-co-working". My Hustle, a Perth organisation that turns small bars into casual weekday co-working spaces, shows what this lo-co-working future might look like. Its first location enables workers to choose between private booths or communal tables, while enjoying free wifi, unlimited coffee and tea, and discounts at surrounding businesses.

With work now based around conviviality, the meshing of the workspace and hospitality is a natural one. This trend, the Workplace Futures report predicts, will inspire a new wave of hospitality-focused brands to develop their own co-working spaces, as a new workplace phenomenon emerges: the "worktel".

Worktels, a hybridisation of the office and the hotel, are rising in number. They are spaces for people to work, play and to stay. It is likely that within a decade, socially focused lobby spaces equipped with flexible workstations will sit alongside areas designed for impromptu team huddles and fully private rooms, enabling all kinds of work to occur.

It's clear from the new Nespresso Professional study that hospitality will be central to the future workplace, providing workers with food and drink options, including coffee, throughout the day and thought-provoking entertainment in the evenings.

"The trends outlined in our report point towards a radical transformation in the expectations of the 2030 workforce," says Chesneau. "We predict a demand in workplaces that serve a multitude of purposes, inspiring social interactions, facilitating focus and promoting wellbeing."

And what permeates through all those three facets? Good-quality coffee breaks, of course.

For more information please visit [nespresso.com/pro/uk/en/home](https://nespresso.com/pro/uk/en/home)

**NESPRESSO**  
PROFESSIONAL

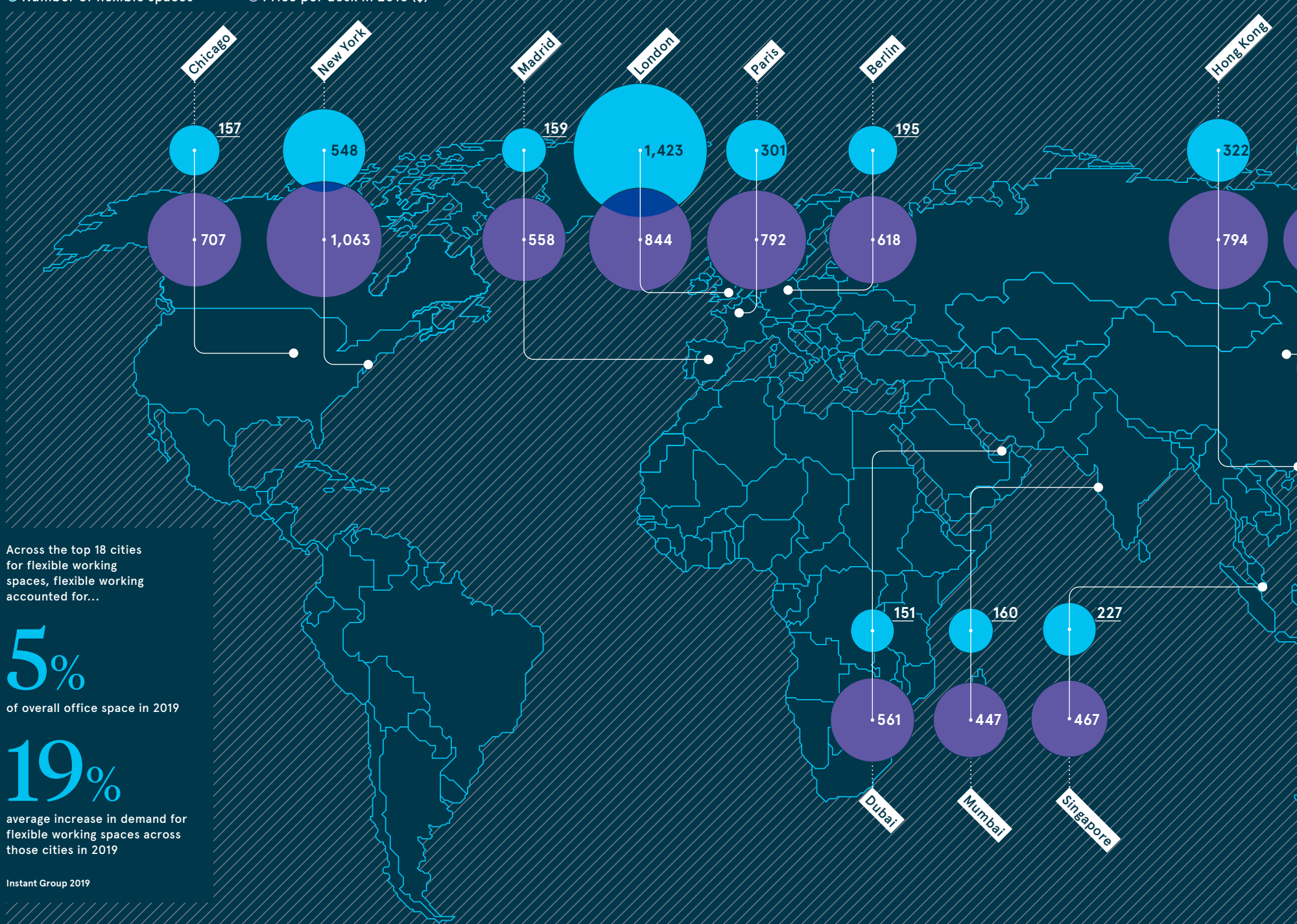
# COWORKING: THE NEW NORMAL?

## CITIES WITH THE MOST NUMBER OF FLEXIBLE SPACES

Selected cities worldwide as of June 2019

● Number of flexible spaces

● Price per desk in 2018 (\$)



## REGIONAL/COUNTRY SHARE OF GLOBAL FLEXIBLE WORKSPACES

By estimated number of flexi workspaces as of 2019

Statista/Savills 2019

Asia-Pacific

35%

Europe, Middle East and Africa

21%

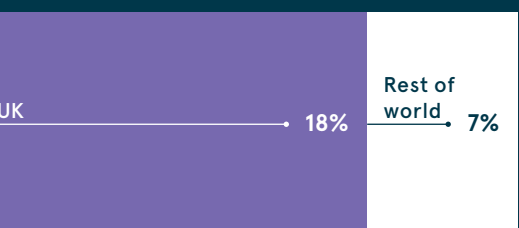
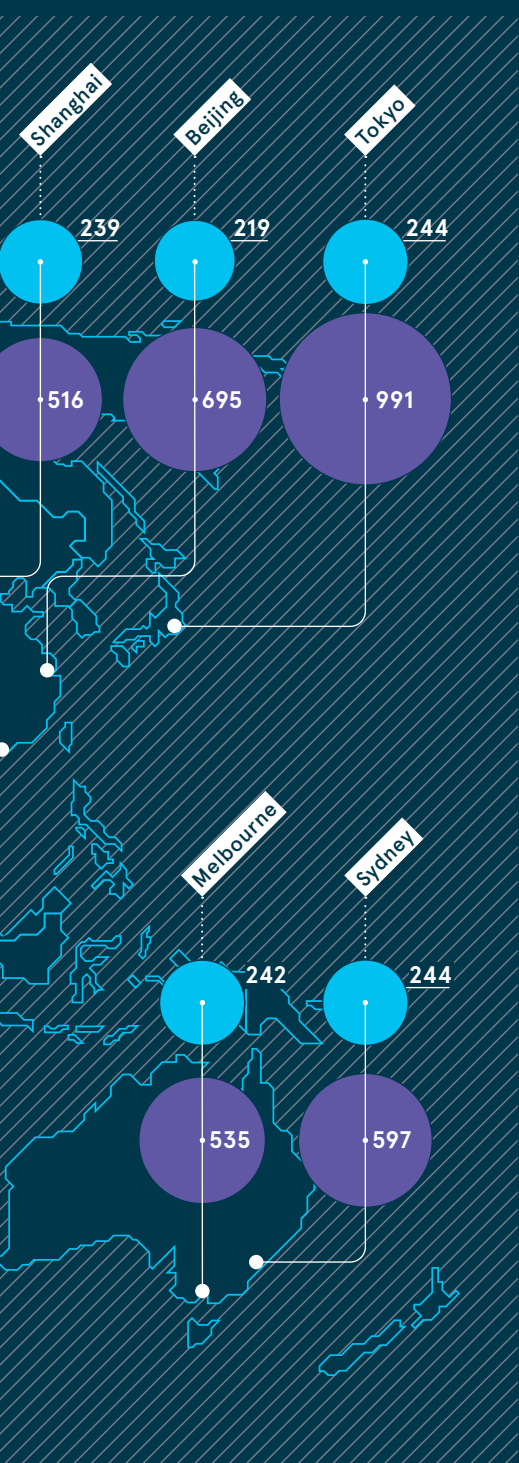
United States

19%



London still holds the crown for the city with the most coworking and flexible spaces, but as the industry continues to evolve, new hubs are opening up worldwide – and fast

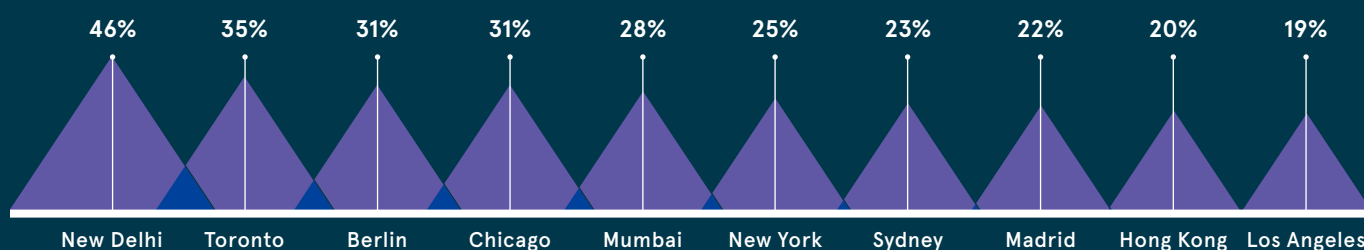
Instant Group 2019



## FASTEST GROWING COWORKING-SPACE MARKETS

Annual growth in city-specific inquiries for flexible workspaces; year to June 2019

Instant Group 2019

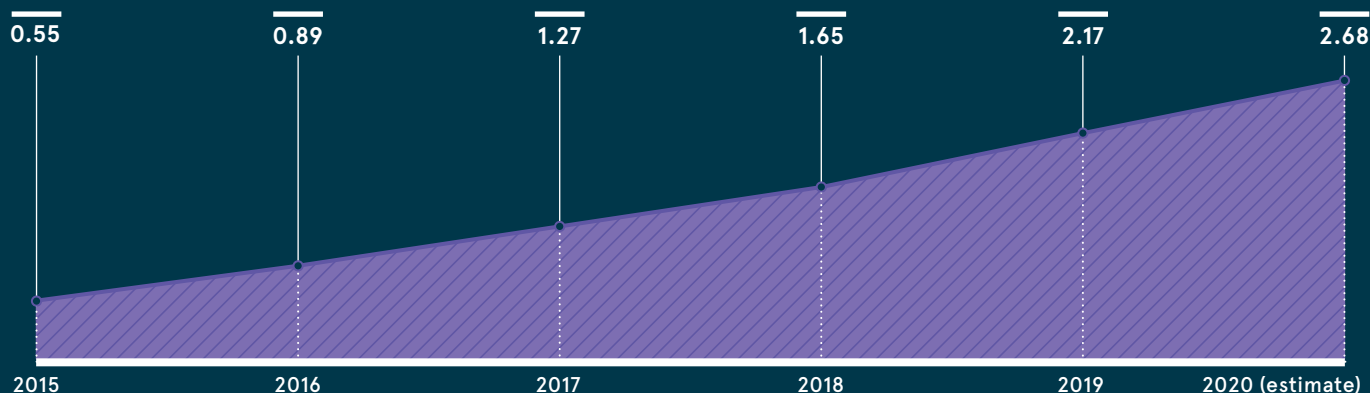


## COWORKING GROWTH WORLDWIDE

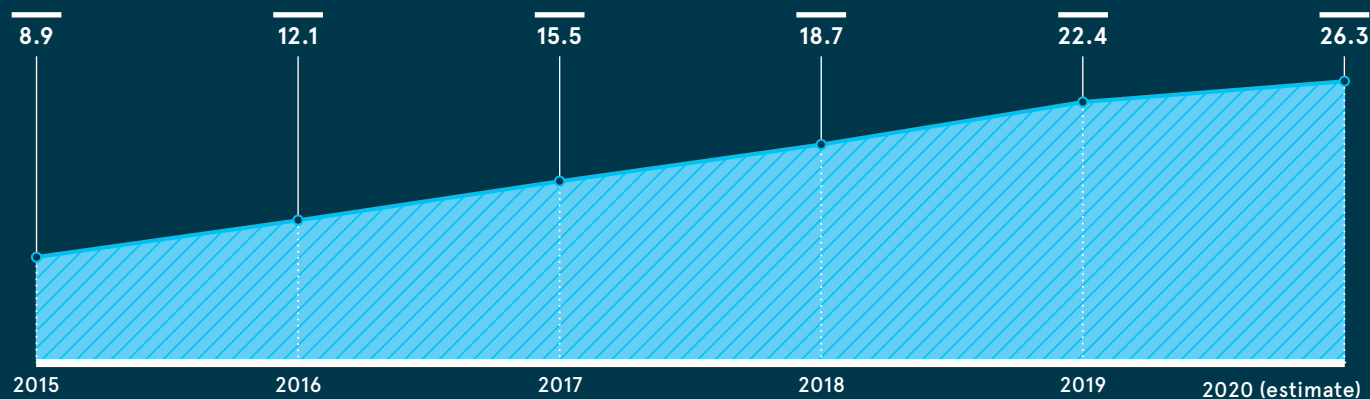
Figures as of December 31 for each year

Deskmag 2019

Number of members (millions)



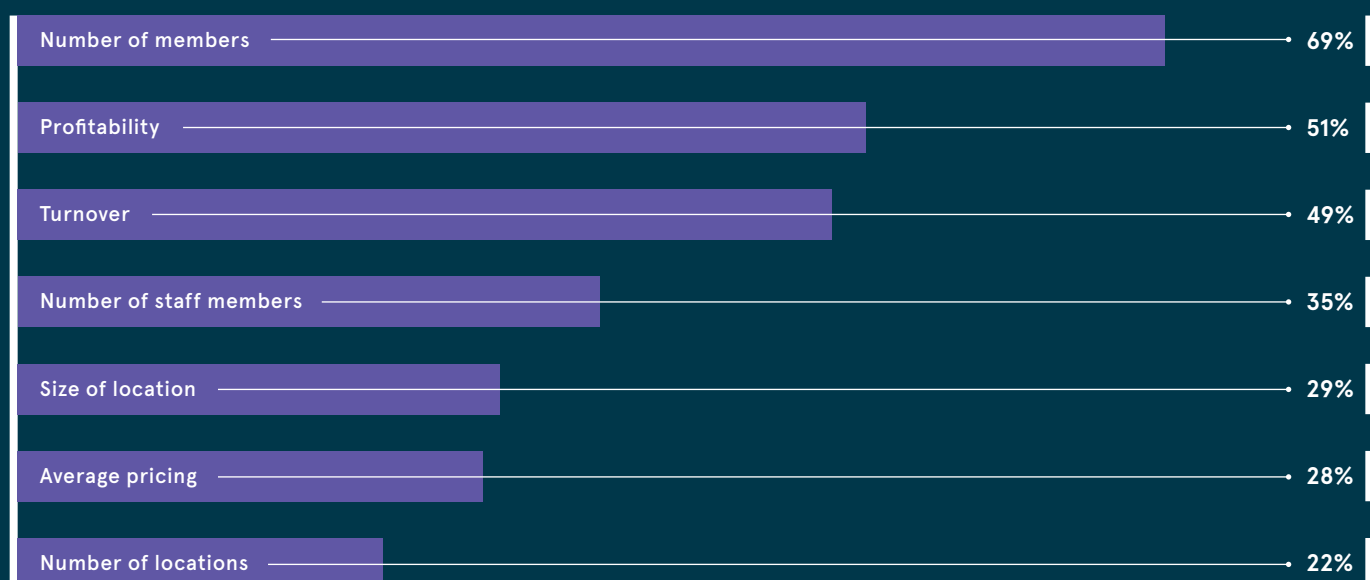
Number of spaces (thousands)



## GROWTH METRICS

Percentage of coworking-space operators who reported an increase in the following over the past year

Deskmag 2019



## LONELINESS

# Is tech making you lonely at work?

Workplace technology has made it easier than ever to communicate, but are we missing out on truly human connections?

Jon Axworthy

Offices up and down the UK are empty, desolate places for the foreseeable future, as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to grip the nation. But even if a government-mandated work-from-home policy wasn't in place, would they be quieter than they used to be?

With the rise of the modern digital workspace, the answer is likely to be “yes” as the watercooler chatter and face-to-face interaction of workers is replaced with the muted sounds of instant messaging and project management apps.

Technology is clearly redefining how we communicate at work, collaborating on projects through Slack or organising workflows over Asana. However, it appears the ever-growing suite of collaboration tools at our disposal could be masking that we are getting further away from having meaningful interpersonal relationships at work and increasing workplace loneliness.

A study commissioned by Totaljobs and Mind concluded that 60 per cent of employees had experienced isolation at work. That may be hard to fathom given the ultra-connected culture that thrives in most workplaces. But just because technology makes it easier to communicate with colleagues doesn't mean we feel more connected to them.

The future of workplace technology has consequences for the bottom line too and, as physical workplace interactions dwindle, there appears to be a knock-on effect on productivity. Research from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, reveals companies whose employees feel isolated experience almost 37 per cent higher absenteeism and 16 per cent lower profitability.

“People who feel lonely become less committed to their organisation,” says Professor Sigal Barsade of The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, a US expert in

organisational behaviour. “This means they care less and performance suffers as a result.” Isolation also seems to modify personality, so a person becomes less approachable.

“When people are lonely in a particular setting, it leads to a negative cycle of overvigilance to social threat,” explains Barsade. “As such, rather than reaching out, they withdraw. We saw this in our workplace study where employee loneliness was positively related to being perceived as less affiliative, that is less available for close work bonds and relationships, and this also related to lowered work performance.”

As anyone who usually experiences regular morning commutes will testify, the need for

**“We should use technology as a bridge to human connection instead of letting it be a barrier between us and our teammates**

presenteeism at a communal work hub remains largely unchanged, regardless of the future of workplace technology. And as long as humans congregate in defined corporate spaces to work, there is an opportunity to encourage staff interaction and tackle workplace loneliness in the office environment.

A striking example is the Bloomberg European HQ in London, which houses 4,000 employees within its one million square feet. “This building is designed to encourage co-operation and collaboration, and that's what makes for a successful business,” declared Michael Bloomberg on its opening in 2018.

Every one of its six floors is connected by a 1.5-metre-wide stepped ramp, which loops through the full height of the building and is designed and proportioned to allow workers to hold spontaneous conversations with one another, without feeling like they are stopping other people getting by.

Formal meeting rooms are equipped with recessed “voice lift” microphones, so everyone can be heard and on the sixth floor there is the “pantry”, a double-height, staff breakout area. Comfortable booths are located around the building and, although they are equipped with a monitor and keyboard, they serve as an alternative space for informal face-to-face meetings and conversations.

“Humans are social creatures and it's these in-person conversations that are still relevant and critical to combat workplace loneliness and increase engagement,” says Jenny Maenpaa, a psychotherapist specialising in professional and organisational development.

For new office buildings, such as Bloomberg London, influencing social interaction by baking it into the architecture is clearly one way to encourage these conversations. But it's more problematic for existing locations, which usually have a stark choice to become more or less open plan.

Recent Harvard Business School research, which studied the interaction of employees before and after their companies redesigned to an open-plan office, found collaboration doesn't suit the current trend. In fact, the study showed that, as an office becomes more open, usage of email and collaboration apps goes up.

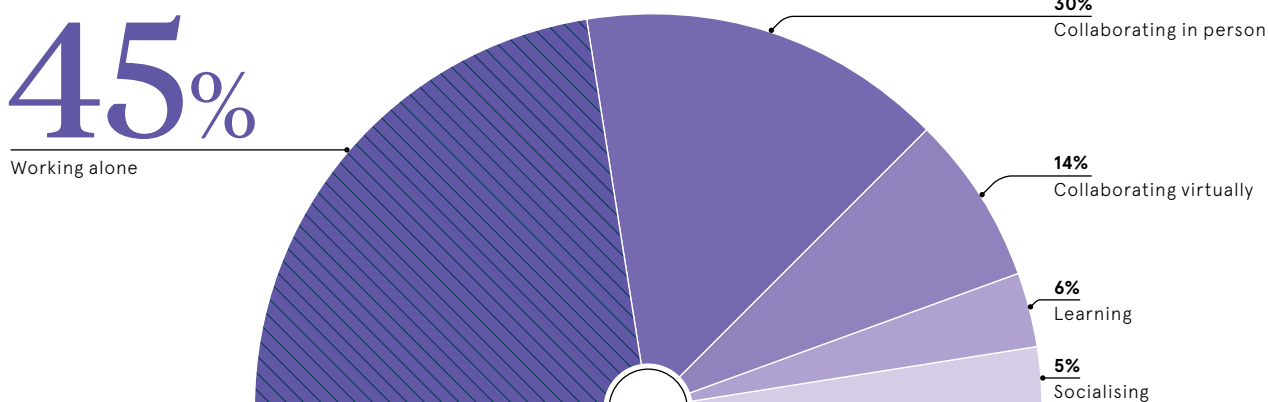
“Rather than prompting increasingly vibrant face-to-face collaboration, open architecture appeared to trigger a natural human response to socially withdraw from officemates and interact instead over email



## TIME SPENT BY WORK MODE

Share of an average week spent in each mode, according to US workers

Gensler 2019



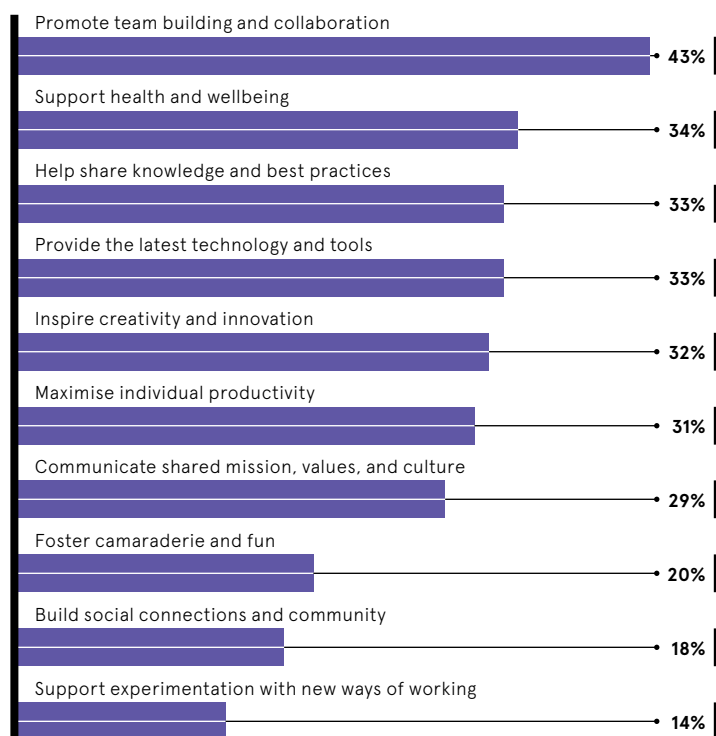




Fiona Jackson-Downes/Getty Images

## ATTRIBUTES OF THE BEST WORKPLACES

According to a survey of US workers



Gensler 2019

While leaders often label loneliness as the worker's problem, researchers emphasise that C-suites need to make it theirs. For example, if workers feel they're not being heard or understood, which will only be amplified by the ever-present use of tech, it is a direct result of bad business culture. The key is not to see workplace tech and loneliness as competing forces.

"In the workplace, we should use technology as a bridge to human connection instead of letting it be a barrier between us and our teammates," argues Dan Schawbel, managing partner of Workplace Intelligence and author of *Back to Human*. "For instance, the biggest thing that gets in the way of human connection at work is still email, yet a study by Harvard Business Review found that one face-to-face conversation is more successful than 34 emails exchanged back and forth. It's all about knowing when to employ the technology and not using it as a constant crutch for communication."

Schawbel has also led a study, in collaboration with Virgin Pulse, determining the most effective ways to enable stronger relationships at work. The survey of 2,000 managers and employees found that offsite meetings were a helpful strategy for reducing feelings of workplace loneliness.

Following these meetings, data revealed that productivity and engagement increased, while feelings of isolation decreased. These events can be organised using email or an app, but then the interpersonal interactivity takes over naturally.

"We can have a better balance between technology and interpersonal communication at work by being more self-aware and thoughtful about how, when and where we use the technology to connect," Schawbel says.

Our reliance on technology will be tested further in the coming months as employees – working remotely due to coronavirus – slowly return to their offices. Time will tell whether this better balance can ever be achieved. ●

and IM [instant messaging]," says Associate Professor Ethan Bernstein, one of the study's authors.

When workplace design can't shoulder the burden of minimising workplace loneliness, Barsade believes business leaders need to look at the overall culture of an organisation in a bid to keep all the perks digital work tools allow, while encouraging staff interaction.

"Loneliness is not a trait, it's situational in particular areas of life, like work," she says. "Given the amount of time people spend at work, leaders must address the issue because it's an organisational problem."



## SoundCloud's Berlin HQ

When audio platform SoundCloud commissioned Kinzo architects to design their Berlin-based headquarters, a significant part of the brief was to turn its premier work-hub into "a space that exudes and encourages innovation and creativity".

As a business innovator it's only to be expected that the audio platform would also have a progressive approach when it comes to the

emotional culture of the company, which has 180 employees in Berlin.

Among the concrete and distressed wood on one of the upper floors there is a quiet zone, an area that features a wood-burning stove and bean-bag recliners. There is a no-tech rule here, according to community manager David Noel, to promote more open, relaxed conversations that might be restricted when sitting behind a monitor and keyboard at a desk.

Throughout the three-level building there are open concept workspaces, a yoga room and even an indoor garden to increase employee wellbeing, interaction and spontaneity.

This communal culture even extends to how workers use technology when they are desk bound, including a window of time when emails can be sent to ensure a more co-operative, physical approach during the working day and reduce feelings of loneliness in the workplace.

## OPINION

# 'Our workplaces should prioritise the needs of individuals rather than the cult of productivity'

There's an undeniable, unarguable link between wellbeing and productivity. But something we need to start embracing is the equally important and instrumental role smart buildings play in facilitating this.

And there's a clear context to this: we spend around 90 per cent of our time indoors, so what we do with our workspaces is of critical importance. Yet, the fact is, workplaces are making us miserable. The next generation of smart buildings is meeting this challenge, however.

Smart technology is more capable than ever of improving the workplace experience by making accurate measurements of light, heat, occupancy and air quality, and translating these into optimum working conditions. This can have a demonstrable effect on wellbeing and productivity, accounting for differences in age, sex and so on, if the building managers running it are up to scratch.

The Health and Safety Executive estimates that around 12.8 million working days are lost each year in the UK to stress, anxiety and depression. Although one of the major causes of workplace stress is workload, stress and its symptoms such as headaches and fatigue in particular can be exacerbated by poor heating and lighting. Furthermore, many buildings trap dangerous levels of CO<sub>2</sub>, which left unchecked can impair brain function and introduce a whole raft of other problems.

We need to see more businesses and building managers control these variables using smart sensors and automated systems, which will let us actively adapt the workplace to the needs of its occupants and alleviate, if not totally eliminate, these problems. In addition, the data gathered through smart sensors can be used to keep improving and optimising systems, equipment and facilities.

Lighting that responds to the time of day, heating to the time of year and air conditioning to the level of CO<sub>2</sub> and the number of occupants in the room improves moods and alleviates anxiety. Other functions, such as meeting room booking that adjusts temperature or orders refreshments according to occupancy, or robust smart security, have an intangible impact, making people feel secure and catered for.

Despite the fast pace of change, smart buildings can help us future-proof our businesses. With smart building controls we can embrace

the transition, under the growing influence of the millennial generation, to a workplace that prioritises the needs of individuals rather than the cult of productivity.

The future-proofing works for two reasons. Firstly, it will let us build a workspace around employees, which makes it more attractive to the wellbeing-conscious younger generations that now make up the largest single cohort of UK workers.

And secondly, it will demonstrate an ethical commitment to wellbeing, mental and physical health, and technological innovation. This is important to younger generations and a demonstrable driver of talent acquisition and retention.

All this is no longer just the province of IT professionals tinkering with heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems: this is a big, holistic project to improve employee experience. Indeed, the process of making buildings "smarter" also includes low-tech solutions that make a real difference. There's no excuse not to, for instance, add some plants and greenery into the workplace; this is called biophilic design and has a huge impact on air quality and employee wellbeing.

In the coming years I anticipate we'll see widespread adoption of smart technology, less so for the substantial cost-savings it offers and increasingly from the perspective of wellbeing, led by human resources professionals as well as facilities managers and technicians. The cost of smart buildings, traditionally seen as prohibitive, will no longer be the decisive factor.

But adoption of smart building technology can only happen with the collaboration of all these different stakeholders and only with the needs of the building's occupants as its priority.



Chris Edwards

Brand director  
Intelligent Building Europe 2020



## DESIGN

# Sustainable workplace design for the future



Hendrik Oula/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images

What are the key considerations architects and designers take into account when designing and building sustainable workplaces of the future?

Mikaela Aitken

**T**he last decade has seen a noticeable shift in the way architects and builders formulate and construct a workplace. For Nicola Gillen, head of total workplace, Europe, Middle East and Africa, at Cushman & Wakefield, having a sustainable workplace design is paramount for productivity. “A bad office can really impact on output and happiness,” she insists.

To create the most productive work environment, Gillen recommends companies focus on three key areas: the psychological benefits and the wellbeing of workers; how technology integrates and enhances workflow; and the sustainability of the initial build and ongoing maintenance.

Not only is the world’s understanding of sustainability growing, but so too is the technology and expertise involved. The number of practitioners working and innovating in this sector is the highest it has ever been.

Design scientist and systems theorist Dr Melissa Sterry says this growth

spurt is a promising sign for the world of sustainable workplace design, as more talent equates to greater potential. “It’s a very exciting time to be in the built environment industries,” says Sterry. “We’re in the very early stages of a paradigmatic shift unfolding at considerable speed.”

While exciting changes are afoot, the secret to effective sustainable workplace design does not lie in outlandish architecture or extreme artificial intelligence (AI). The problem requires a simplified and thoughtful solution.

“The foremost factor to remain consistent in the workplace is the impact of a company’s culture on its employees,” says Sterry who emphasises the importance of the key principle that humans are a social species. “Little else matters more than relationships in business,” she says.

It’s arguably for this reason that core principles haven’t drastically changed since the early days of workplace design formed at the turn of the century.

Architect Gary Clark, chair of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Sustainable Futures Group, says the most significant change is the understanding of the importance of daylight. “Architecture through the late-1900s became sealed glass boxes ironically with poor quality of daylight and a corresponding lack of personal control,” he says.

The White Collar Factory in London’s Old Street opened in 2017, complete with flexible and customisable workspaces, adaptable common spaces, floods of natural light and a running track on the roof.

“What the current generation is doing now is effectively rediscovering the passive design principles of the Romans, the Renaissance, the Georgians and the Victorians,” says Clark.

The RIBA Sustainable Futures Group, for example, is reintroducing these principles into their coursework and giving awards to designs that are both sustainable and humane. Preferred

characteristics include no fixed desks, mobile technology, working in a setting that suits the mood and activity, sticky spaces for deep collaboration, blurring inside and outside, contact with wind, sun and greenery, as well as mixing eating, working and socialising.

Google’s London HQ is an outstanding example of these design principles on a large scale, while a smaller example of best practice is the 19-strong collection of co-working offices by London-based brand Club Workspace.

What were once optional extras for designers have become imperatives in the creation of sustainable workplace design. However, designers can still lose their way, says Sterry. “We still see a lot of very crude, and in the worst instance, misguided approaches,” she says, referencing placing plants on balconies and roofs without checking for potential risks, for example.

Shanghai Tower (right) is said to be the world’s greenest skyscraper, with 200 wind turbines that generate a tenth of its electricity, systems to collect and reuse rainwater and nine plant-filled gardens

“

**Rather than designing things that can only be used once, we’re designing them so they can be disassembled and used again**

Sustainable design involves recycling materials for use in construction. For instance, engineers and manufacturers have problem-solved how to create an entire flooring system using recycled materials, such as ghost or abandoned fishing nets.

Currently pushing the boat out in this sector is British startup Biohm. Not only is the company working towards fabricating construction materials from waste products, such as paper and even dried orange peel, but it’s also working towards an off-site modular construction approach.

Gillen favours a so-called circular economy as a streamlined solution to sustainable workplace design. “It’s about designing for modularity, disassembly and re-assembly,” she says.

This could involve avoiding some adhesives in furniture construction and instead employing slotted techniques, upcycling and maintenance of cupboard frames while only replacing countertops. She says: “Rather than designing things that can only be used once, we’re designing them so they can be disassembled and used again and again.”

She estimates that the average organisation goes through a physical office change roughly every 18 months. Therefore eliminating waste and creating reusable products are central to sustainable workplace design.



“The typical office is a receiver not a giver of resources, of energy, water and other materials,” says Sterry. But technologies are fast developing that enable businesses to flip workplaces into resource production. This could include the micro-harvesting of energy through solar panels and wind turbines, as well as the use of AI water technology by companies such as Living PlanIT to harvest and process rainwater.

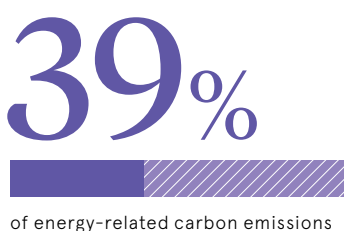
There is also increased pressure for businesses to turn waste streams into resources. Some multinationals, including Microsoft, have made the commitment to become carbon negative, for example.

“In many sectors, including tech, employees are typically more informed and thus concerned about environmental issues, including climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss,” says Sterry. “Climate change and its consequences will render some currently habitable sites unsuitable for homes, offices and factories, due to increased flooding and coastal erosion, among other reasons.”

An organisation’s sustainability agenda is becoming as important, if not more so, as its bottom line. While profits will always remain a priority, increasingly stakeholders and employees expect a measurable commitment to sustainable best practices.

“We have a strong bottom-up pressure for workplace sustainability and wellbeing,” says Gillen, who references younger generations pushing for meaningful organisational change. “Soon there will be a time when, if an organisation cannot prove

In 2018, the buildings and construction sector accounted for...



IEA/World Green Building Council 2019

strong targets and certifications, people won’t want to work for them.”

Yet all experts warn that decision-makers no longer have the luxury of time to deliberate the perfect approach to sustainable workplace design. “We cannot wait to find the holy grail,” RIBA’s Clark concludes. “We need to act now with our current knowledge and with a holistic sensitivity to any unintended consequences.” ●



### Sydney’s Barangaroo

Recent and devastating Australian bushfires, followed by floods, have highlighted the island continent’s susceptibility to the effects of climate change. It’s little wonder that developers, engineers and designers there are leading the charge in sustainable building technology.

In 2017, Sydney-based developer Lendlease opened carbon-neutral precinct Barangaroo, including the three commercial high rises dubbed International Towers Sydney. All buildings within the precinct, from toilet blocks to skyscrapers, help

contribute financially to off-site renewable energy and carbon offsets. The three towers are also equipped with rainwater tanks, solar panels, sun-shading panels to reduce cooling needs and a zero-waste management system.

Beyond environmental sustainability measures, Lendlease sought to enhance the community’s wellbeing. With a central Sydney footprint, the precinct accommodates an estimated 23,000 office workers, 3,000 residents plus additional shoppers, diners and visitors. Therefore, 50 per cent of Barangaroo is dedicated to public spaces, with plentiful squares and vibrant ground-floor activation. Busy rows of restaurants, cafés and shops help the public to permeate the office buildings above and create a bustling mini-city within Sydney.

Such sustainability systems go beyond building and construction, and help comprehend the impact of office spaces and workplaces on communities, incorporating a business hub’s life cycle outside the normal nine to five.

# Need to rework your marketing strategy

We can help.  
Contact us for  
new ideas that  
deliver results in  
just 6 weeks

## RACONTEUR AGENCY

Contact: [agency@raconteur.net](mailto:agency@raconteur.net)  
Find out more: [raconteur.net/agency](https://raconteur.net/agency)

## FOOD

# Reinventing the canteen experience

Companies are beginning to realise how important good food is in attracting talent and creating healthy workplaces that look after their employees

Katie Monk

For a long time, unless you worked in a big ad agency or in entertainment, an office lunch usually consisted of competing for the kitchen microwave or for the lucky few grabbing a sandwich from the staff canteen.

But tech giants such as Google and Facebook changed all that. With their unlimited snacks, tap beers and third-wave coffee, they raised the bar and shook up the future of food in the workplace forever. Traditional organisations are now beginning to catch on.

"Regardless of the sector they work in, top talent now seek the environment and benefits offered by leading tech companies," says Collin Burry, design director at architecture firm Gensler, which has designed workspaces for Etsy, Adobe and Facebook. "For many, a major part of the draw is feeling

coddled and cared for, and food is a big part of that."

Millennials especially expect more from their workplace, and businesses are having to consider the needs and expectations of an agile, multi-generational and frequently international workforce.

Current dining trends include street food trucks, in-house cookery schools, organic and seasonal ingredients, global cuisine, fully stocked fridges, barista-made coffee and free happy hours. The better the offering, the stronger the company culture and staff retention.

At the All Work & Social XYZ co-work building in Spinningfields, Manchester, members can sip on cocktails and feast on wood-fired pizza while listening to in-house DJs. The catering team were trained in Naples to ensure the product is top notch and authentic.



"The pizza dining experience has always been perceived as a social practice," says Anthony Powell, All Work & Social's managing director. "Something that is extremely important to our approach in creating work and social spaces."

Traditional organisations are starting to provide more sophisticated, healthy dining options to rival the big tech companies and co-working spaces. According to the Allegra

Health and Wellness Summit, 27 per cent of employees say access to healthy food and drink is the number-one way their workplace could support them.

Famously good canteens can be found at Kellogg's, Verizon, Morgan Stanley, Esprit, UBS, Audible and Neal's Yard Remedies. Some are even open to the public.

Sodexo, which provides food in the workplace for the likes of Microsoft, Unilever and Nestlé, partnered with London-based branding agency Without, to create Modern Recipe, a new-look canteen that offers a range of international dishes, including plant-based options, smoothie bars and Ottolenghi-style salads.

The rebrand, which adapted to the changing tastes and demands of its clients, was rolled out across several company sites, including global pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and UK multinational drinks company Diageo.

"Instead of a classic corporate canteen, with inflexible hours, heavy food and 'Mexican week', we imagined a flexible space suitable for eating and meeting, where a range of healthy, well-sourced food was available all

day and felt as desirable as the best modern high street brands," says Roly Grant, Without's co-founder and creative director. "Ultimately, if their office has a buzzing, multi-use space full of healthy, happy motivated people, that's a win for the corporate client."

The investment has paid off. Since Modern Recipe was introduced at AstraZeneca's Cambridge site, workplace dining increased by 45 per cent and revenue went up 60 per cent. At Diageo, sales turnover rose by 15 per cent.

Canteen design is just as important as the quality of the food. Breakout areas, hotel lobby-style seating and cosy nooks allow for privacy as well as socialising.

"Workspaces have become more influenced by a sense of comfort," says Burry. "Canteens are beginning to be used as co-working spaces all day round and employees can invite guests inside rather than travel to meet them at an outside café. A well-considered canteen is becoming an integral part of the broader working environment."

Having a welcoming place to hang out also combats loneliness, and allows for creative thinking and cross-pollination of ideas. "MAG's success is directly linked to the fertile minds of our employees," says David Amor, director of mobile gaming company MAG Interactive, which gives staff a free daily breakfast, as well as lunch on Fridays.

"But creative ideas rarely come when staring at a computer screen. A conversation with your peers over breakfast can kick the day off. It's a meeting that doesn't feel like a meeting." ●



## The power of food

It's 1pm at PROPER SNACKS HQ and the sound of George Michael's *Careless Whisper* drifts across the office. This is a signal to the company's 50 employees that it's time for lunch.

PROPER co-founder and chief executive Cassandra Stavrou was inspired to give her employees free homemade food in the

workplace after visiting an Italian factory where all workers stopped at 1pm sharp to eat a bowl of pasta together.

"I'm from a Cypriot family, so I believe in the power of food," she says. "Everyone knows that a good sit-down meal at home brings people together. We've just brought that thinking into the workplace. And it means a healthier, happier, closer-

knit team and a really strong company culture."

Head chef Ed cooks everything from scratch, sourcing local, seasonal ingredients, and often using veg and herbs from his own garden. All dishes are vegetarian and span an array of mouthwatering flavours; think roasted butternut with kale and broccoli and a smoky romesco dip.

Food in the workplace is about bringing people together and removing barriers. "You'll see the CEO sat next to the intern and everyone chatting as equals," says Grace Chau, PROPER's communications manager. "And as most of us are spending more and more time glued to screens, there's real value in taking time away from your desk. I always feel a lot better, physically and mentally, after lunch."



**For many, a major part of the draw is feeling coddled and cared for, and food is a big part of that**



## OPINION

# ‘Sustainability is a pressing concern that will not wane because agendas change and headlines expire’

**T**he idea of the workplace has changed dramatically in recent years. It is no longer a nine-to-five destination, somewhere people sit behind a desk before commuting home; it's a setting that can positively contribute to enhanced employee wellbeing, create a sense of community and improve pride in a place of work.

Facilities management reflects an organisation's DNA: it underpins culture and is a foundation upon which organisational performance can be built. In building tomorrow's workplace, organisations must put sustainability at the heart of everything they do, in terms of their social, economic and environmental impact. Sustainability must be considered holistically to protect future needs.

When it comes to the environmental aspect of sustainability, workplace and facilities managers are at the frontline of helping reduce carbon emissions from the built environment. This includes making more effective decisions regarding heating, air quality and insulation, as well as enabling green vehicle technology.

This makes sense for two reasons: the built environment contributes around 40 per cent of the UK's carbon footprint; and while construction and refurbishments have an impact, it is the facilities professional who can really optimise a building's carbon-saving potential.

But organisations must raise the threshold on what currently constitutes best practice and in the future this should be considered common practice.

The sustainability conversation has mostly focused on the “hard” end of the green agenda, driven by a “what gets measured gets done” approach by governments. In recent times, we have seen a significant rise in climate change awareness and, as we come to terms with the personal changes needed, more of us will be looking to our employers to set a sustainable example. Organisations may have made progress with energy, but the widening sphere of sustainable practices means that a more holistic approach is required.

Sustainable and ethical workplaces extend beyond the built environment and workplace and facilities managers play a critical role in creating positive surroundings that, in addition to promoting environmental sustainability, will advance economic and social sustainability. This is increasingly being regarded as the right thing to do and effective when

organisations are considering ways to enhance their business performance.

Hiring sustainability directors helps organisations signal their commitment in this area and many will be appointed from a background in workplace and facilities management.

We're also seeing organisations establish initiatives encouraging behavioural change, hiring wellness managers to ensure businesses view the impact of their workplace holistically. From food and nutrition to mindfulness and volunteering, workplaces of the future will place greater emphasis on employees' social values.

Sustainability is an ongoing concern that will not wane because agendas change and headlines expire. To succeed, organisations need skilled managers who develop clear goals to reduce carbon emissions and combine this with ways to drive the sustainability agenda.

Decisions made by these practitioners will have an enormous impact. This is particularly true when considering the life cycle of a managed building is 40 to 50 years and the many individuals who will use the building during that timeframe. The ripple effect would be significant.

In the future, sustainability and social values in the workplace will be imperative factors for people choosing where to work. Research shows millennials place great value on social and environmental responsibility and “making a difference”. Workplace and facilities managers are agents for change and ought to be driving the ways workspaces can adapt to become more productive and sustainable.

Organisations that fail to recognise the role sustainability plays in the workplace risk long-term damage. Decision-makers must consider sustainability as a core working practice and policy that drives business advantage, not a threat-enhancing add-on to their core business.



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

## Office food...



## but better sustainable personal healthier tastier.

Discover the most flexible way to feed your team with Feedr's full suite of office food solutions.

visit [feedr.co](https://feedr.co)

@feedr



# Creating a high-performance space for a diverse workforce

Shifting sands of time and societal change have seen countless revolutions in workplace design. Cube farms gave way to open-plan offices then, with diminishing personal space and countless distractions, workspaces are evolving again

**T**he pace of change in office design continues to accelerate. What's clear is high-performance spaces that cater for a diverse workforce are now in demand.

"We're really starting to understand a lot more about people's different needs in the working environment; it's now a real science," says Simon Pole, global director of design at Unispace, a workplace strategy, design and construction specialist agency.

"There's so much data and we continue to collect a lot more, from surveys to sensors and beacons, so we know exactly how people use office space. The old adage applies: 'What gets measured gets done.' We want people to do their best at work."

Demonstrating a causal relationship between workplace and productivity is the holy grail of business and many now realise it can be dependent on creating the optimal workspace. When looking at most companies on a Best Places to Work list, you will find their workplace is unique and tailored to achieve their business objectives and reinforce the company culture.

Workplaces are more successful when they're built on evidence and experience. Pole says: "Our integrated



**Simon Pole**  
Global director of design, Unispace



Archetype's New York office by Unispace, offering a completely agile model allowing employees to become more productive

strategy, design and delivery teams work hand in hand to use everything we already know, plus what we discover about our clients' employees, industry and location, to transform the way people work and transform our clients' business results. This essential strategy phase is so often left out of office design and construction, yet it's crucial to getting the best return on investment.

"Not that long ago very few employers talked about good design, now many realise performance can be boosted by innovative spaces. We all have different attributes that require differing work environments. Not only do we increasingly need a mosaic of spaces to get the best out of talent, we also need a variety of working conditions as well. Diversity is key."

For instance, women generally prefer the office two degrees warmer than men. Baby boomers and the older generations need more light as their eyesight degrades. Extroverts excel in open environments designed for larger groups. Introverts generally enjoy smaller group spaces and the ability to seek solitude.

"Diversity and inclusion doesn't just stop with the types of people you employ. It must be respected in the spaces we create for them too. All this needs considerate and thoughtful design. Diverse work styles cannot be expected to perform at their peak in a cookie-cutter environment," says Pole, whose company works in 25 countries with tech firms, notably Facebook, professional services businesses such



**We're all different and we need different environments to achieve high performance**

as PwC and Herbert Smith Freehills, through to bio-pharma giant Biogen and Boston Scientific, as well as the likes of Coca-Cola Amatil and Deliveroo.

"For the first time in history we have the diverse needs of four generations of workers within the office environment. At the same time, retaining talent has never been so important, while we increasingly expect more creativity and innovation from our workforce. The demands are high. The question we ask is: 'Does your workspace work hard for you, releasing people's energy, boosting creativity and productivity?'"

Different industries and jobs require different environments. Those in tech need spaces that foster high degrees of concentration, crucial for those buried in code on a regular basis, others require increased social environments. However, the types of tasks vary throughout a working day.

Distractions in the workplace vary across visual, acoustic, ergonomic, thermal or spatial. "Great workplace

designers remove distractions to allow workers to be as effective as possible. This also involves creating optimal spaces for different types of working. Hot-desking isn't necessarily right for everyone, some like assigned spaces. Completely open-plan offices aren't always great for those who need to focus," explains Pole.

A Unispace global study of professional service firms, involving more than 10,000 respondents, found that 61 per cent of time spent in the office involves individual focus, 24 per cent requires collaboration, while only 8 per cent is spent socialising and 7 per cent is learning time.

"Increasingly, we're observing employees involved in 'co-focus', when they're collaborating on focused work in open environments disturbing others around them. With this behaviour on the increase we must fit out spaces in a way that respects the type and diversity of tasks, focusing on flexibility. We're all different and we need different environments to achieve high performance. It's personal," says Pole.

"At Unispace, we've also surveyed and benchmarked hundreds of offices around the world over the past ten years. We know what to look for and how to achieve a great result for our clients."

Certainly, there needs to be some new thinking and articulation in this space. The productivity of UK workers fell at the fastest pace for five years in the second quarter of 2019. It was the worst performance since mid-2014.

Economists believe improvements in productivity are crucial for boosting economic growth and raising living standards, especially in a post-Brexit world.

"While the workplace cannot solve the country's productivity puzzle, it can assist with employee performance," says Pole.

In addition, there are other factors office designers are looking at. For instance, fresh air flow can heighten brain function. Lighting levels and colour boost activity, as do views of nature. Unispace also looks at colour psychology, pattern theory and spatial psychology.

"We have an incredible number of tools in our armoury that can help the high-performance working environment. At the same time, organisations are starting to really thrive on diversity. Marry the two and we have an incredible potential to make a real difference. Don't knowingly underestimate what can be achieved by fantastic workplace design," Pole concludes.

Unispace has more than 700 staff in 46 studios around the world, focused on helping businesses create places where people do their best work.

**For more information please visit [www.unispace.com](https://www.unispace.com) or follow Unispace and Simon Pole on LinkedIn**





## SURVEILLANCE

# Why employee tracking needs trust

Best-laid plans for workplace technology such as employee tracking will come to nothing if employers don't include workers themselves in the planning

Christine Horton

**B**arclays was forced to abandon its pilot of a controversial employee-tracking system that monitored the time staff spent at their desks.

The system, which the bank said was brought in to raise productivity, tracked the activity of employees in real time. It reportedly told staff to avoid breaks if they were deemed not to be working hard enough and it recorded activities such as toilet visits as "unaccounted activity".

Following a backlash, Barclays last month scrapped the system. But it wasn't the only time the bank has been criticised for implementing "intrusive" tech in the workplace. In 2017, it installed heat and motion devices, which tracked how much time employees spent at their desks, to determine the best use of office space.

Taking the concept of employee tracking one step further, in January the US House of Representatives

passed legislation stipulating that employers cannot force their employees to have an ID or tracking chip implanted in their bodies as a condition of employment.

This might be an extreme example, but organisations using everyday workplace tech to track employees' activities is increasingly common.

A 2019 report by Gartner found more than 50 per cent of organisations are using some type of non-traditional employee-tracking techniques. The firm expects this figure to jump to 80 per cent in 2020, with companies typically "analysing the text of emails and social media messages, scrutinising who's meeting whom, gathering biometric data and understanding how employees are utilising their workspace", Gartner says.

As with any workplace tech investment, employee buy-in is essential. Hostility from workers can stop any corporate plan to improve the workplace in its tracks. So what can business leaders do to ensure the workforce is on-side with any new investment?

"The Barclays incident is a great example of a company seemingly rushing to implement technology that they believe would give them better insight into their staff and improve productivity. To believe that employees were going to accept such surveillance technology, especially with the pop-up warnings that appear if you are away from your desk for too long, was naive to say the least," says Bryce Davies, UK general manager at Workforce.com.

"It appears to have taken staff by surprise, which meant there was no period of employee consultation or engagement, to talk through

**“To believe that employees were going to accept such surveillance technology was naive to say the least**

the reasons why Barclays thought this was a good idea and to listen to feedback. Had they done so, they would have quickly realised the extent of their employees' disquiet about such a solution being introduced and could have come up with an alternative which better suited both parties."

The problem of organisations failing to communicate with employees is not new. In the early-2000s, Coca-Cola placed GPS trackers inside vehicles that held cash and stock during working hours. However, those same vehicles could be used by members of staff freely after hours, ostensibly enabling employee tracking, says Jonathan Philips, former head of digital communication at Coca-Cola.

Philips, now head of consulting at workplace consultancy Simply Communicate, says: "Launching this kind of tracking technology

without clear well-communicated mutual benefit for both business and employee always struggles to get adoption or, worse, may be inadvertently or deliberately sabotaged by employees."

Complete transparency from employers is crucial to getting employees on-side while also protecting themselves from potential legal or reputational damage. "If this kind of high-level surveillance is to be rolled out, companies should be making it clear within contracts that this is a possibility, stopping employees claiming it was an 'invasion of privacy' they knew nothing about," says Phil Hails-Smith, corporate and commercial partner at law firm Joelson.

"Ultimately, it comes down to the need for employers to be honest with their staff and weigh up what benefits surveillance technology is really bringing."

Dr Guzman de Yarza Blache, international property firm JLL's Europe, Middle East and Africa head of workplace strategy, adds: "Fear over workplace technology often stems from a fear of the unknown. If employees can see how technology can improve their lives, they're more likely to get on board."

He cites McDonald's new smart headquarters in Chicago as an example. Meeting rooms can be booked just by walking into them and an integrated mobile app combines wayfinding, work order

requests, temperature adjustment and navigation services.

"Employees will become less concerned about tracking if they experience the benefits. Put simply, tracking that allows for footprint optimisation can make the working day much easier. This cuts to the core of the issue: workplace technology is all about the user experience and done well will become a key tool in the battle to attract and retain staff," he says.

Workplace tech such as employee tracking is always likely to generate controversy. Organisations therefore need to delve deeper into what they hope to achieve and this will help to ensure they aren't introducing technology for the wrong reasons.

"Technology brought in as a disciplinary device is never going to be welcomed or understood by staff," says Workforce.com's Davies. "Introducing technology that reflects modern workday practices, which helps staff find efficiencies and allows them to focus on key areas, would have secured Barclays the insight they have been looking for from this surveillance tech."

"Most importantly though, businesses have to involve employees in the process of technology procurement. Even the best, well-thought-out technology implementation will go wrong unless you have the staff on your side and fully bought in to the decisions behind the solutions." ●



Dong Wenjie/Getty Images

50%+

of organisations are using some type of non-traditional employee-tracking techniques





## RETAIL SPACES

# Bringing unused shops and stores back to life

Repurposing underutilised shopping centres or abandoned stores for urban workspaces could bring talent and customers to towns in need of new business

Rachel Muller-Heyndyk

Since the 2008 financial crash, the so-called death of the high street has been presented as a cold, inevitable fact. Experience in America, however, shows that with a bit of creativity, bricks-and-mortar retail may have life left in it yet. One of the most intriguing solutions so far has been to repurpose retail properties through the introduction of urban workspaces on site.

This trend has proved so popular, in fact, that real estate advisers JLL estimate that urban workspace in US retailers will grow at a rate of 25 per cent annually through 2023, reaching almost 3.4 million square feet.

"There's no denying that the UK has its problems, but if you take what's happening here and make it six fold, that's what they're dealing with in the States," says Tim Vallance, head of investor services and retail chairman at JLL.

In spite of all this, he believes that the panic surrounding retail is misleading. "First and foremost, despite the headlines, UK retail is still growing, not shrinking. In 2019, consumers still spent £360 billion in shops and £404 billion online. With popula-

tion growth and inflation, this could increase to £600 billion," he explains.

A glimpse at Westfield in San Francisco shows how repurposing retail spaces could offer a significant boost for businesses, the self-employed and retail properties alike. Urban workspace company Bespoke's millennial-friendly, plant-filled offices house freelancers and startups looking for like-minded entrepreneurs right within the hub of the mall.

The San Francisco branch is particularly special, explains Bespoke director Judith Shahvar, because it offers easy collaboration on projects that could improve the sector. "We're really a retail technology ecosystem. We can connect C-level executive with Silicon Valley startups to help them gain new insights. It encourages a sense of community; it's a feel-good space," she says.

While these urban workspaces are open to anyone who wishes to rent them, Bespoke offers a discounted rate to entrepreneurs working on projects directly related to improving retail.

As Westfield recently opened a 500,000-square-foot expansion of the space, with a host of new retailers



Collaboration spaces at Bespoke's offices at Westfield in San Francisco

targeted at its influx of office workers, its approach seems to be working.

So far there are no models replicating San Francisco's urban workspace in the UK, but Vallance confirms that several retailers have already laid out plans to repurpose retail sites. And there's no reason why it shouldn't work out.

He says: "As well as London, which is fairly obvious, providing urban workspaces could be a great opportunity to attract new talent and customers to any of the big metropolitan shopping centres. This could work particularly well for any of the Russell Group university towns like Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester."

The picture is slightly more complex for smaller towns, however. Gary Hemming, commercial lender at ABC finance, says the popularity of street food is an example of how shopping centre-urban workspace hybrids could breed exciting new businesses.

"These flexible working environments could well prove to be the breeding ground of tomorrow's high street retailers, as we've seen in previous years with street food traders going on to open their own restaurant," he says.

The temporary nature of startups means there's still an element of risk involved. For major cities, this is not such an issue; for otherwise quiet market towns that have relied on the steady footfall for large, permanent department stores, it could be a very different story.

It could prove tricky for landlords too, adds Hemming. "The main issue as I see it is the temporary nature of the tenancies. While it benefits tenants, it does create a very high turnover and a lack of certainty for landlords," he says.

"While I do think this will be a big part of the high street in the future, it may be tricky without middle men as it will take a property from being an investment into a more time-intensive business, which may not suit all landlords."

JLL's Vallance concludes: "There are going to be a lot of empty shops. But this really isn't a disaster. It's about accepting that to an extent, we need to let evolution do its work. We just need some clever people to think about how to use those spaces." ●



## Selfridges moves to co-working

The first major retailer to follow America's example, Selfridges has announced plans to redevelop a building close to its flagship store on London's Oxford Street and then rent some of it out to co-working office provider Fora.

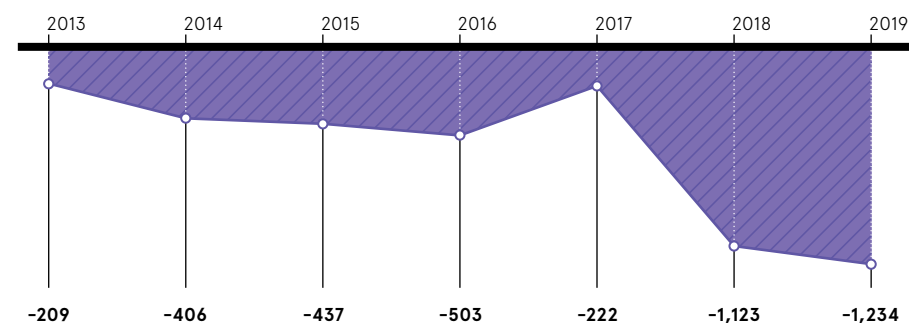
They've set out plans with Grafton Architects to create 45,000 square feet of commercial space of which almost half will be retail. The retail part will be configured

as up to four individual units fronting Oxford Street and Duke Street. Fora will occupy six storeys of the building, on the corner of the development, hosting both shared and private workspaces.

There will also be an event space which will cover two floors and feature an expansive terrace, as well as a barista bar. Selfridges group head of asset management Tim Reade says the flexible working space will enable the retailer to "cultivate a young, creative community in the Duke Street neighbourhood".

## RETAIL STORE CLOSURES

Net change in store numbers (openings minus closures) by chain retailers across the top 500 town centres in the UK; statistics for the first six months of each year only\*



\*Chain retailers are classed as those that have more than five outlets nationally

PwC/LDC 2019



# Q&A

## Working for long-term success

Orega has been a major player in serviced office provision for more than 20 years. Co-founder **Zach Douglas** explains his company's longevity



### Q How has Orega stayed relevant?

A Over the last two decades, we've adapted, evolved and modified our model to ensure we're profitable and relevant.

I think it is down to the fact that Paul Finch, with whom I founded the company in 2000, and I both understood from day one the importance of putting customers' needs first. We built a flexible workspace that could accommodate change for every type of business looking for an agile work environment.

This year our space has achieved a net promoter score (NPS) for customer service in line with leading brands, such as Amazon and John Lewis.

Drawing on our first-hand experience in the sector, we both knew we wanted to offer landlords, such as Propcos and Funds, an alternative to the traditional lease model.

To set ourselves apart, we developed a management agreement model where the owner can provide first-class amenities for the building and retain full control of their asset.

Part of this control is financial with fully auditable and transparent accounts, retaining 100 per cent of customer deposits in client accounts.

### Q What makes a great flexible workspace?

A It starts with a great location. Our business centres are

centrally located and close to transport links. Then, it's about the workspaces themselves, ensuring they offer a combination of being both aesthetically pleasing, while supporting optimum workplace performance.

We are dedicated to creating corporate quality environments to provide a flexible, professional, productive and, most importantly, enjoyable work environment.

Our customers' success is completely aligned with our own success and we have always understood this.

### Q How do you stand out from the crowd?

A Orega is focused on making our customers' business work. We offer a blank canvas so they can put their own unique stamp on their office space, working with them to create an environment tailored to their requirements.

Our solutions range from long-term contracts with flex-up and down options, project space, short-term requirements and swing space.

We're unique in that we don't offer memberships. Customers in our centres belong there, giving their guests the appropriate first impressions, availability of all facilities, privacy and the right environment to conduct business.

Also, our experience in the sector means we know moving is costly, time consuming and stressful, therefore we

offer a "perfect move-in" service providing a turnkey experience.

One trend we've distanced ourselves from is the significant reduction in working space. When we started, around 60-plus square foot per person was offered and now we see some competitors at less than half that. Our focus on the right environment to do business gives our customers more space and contributes positively to their workplace wellbeing.

### Q What makes Orega customers so loyal?

A We have a business model that means if you're a decision-maker, placing your people in a flexible workspace, you get certainty on long-term security without the long-term liability.

That's why customers stay with Orega, on average for three years and our longest-running client has been with us for more than ten.

As we're in partnership with our landlords, as economic changes occur, we will continue to operate. This provides the security of continued service to our customers because Orega has proven to be a no-risk, resilient provider.

Closure of several high street retailers is testament that a traditional lease model carries with it a lot of risk, and therefore customer risk, which doesn't exist under a management agreement.



**We are dedicated to creating corporate quality environments to provide a flexible, professional, productive and, most importantly, enjoyable work environment**

### Q What are Orega's biggest achievements?

A We now have 18 business centres across the UK and 7,300 workstations, and I'm proud to say Orega has stayed true to our service, value and quality mantra. This is demonstrated by leading NPS scores and strong customer retention from all types of customer profiles, including world-leading corporates, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), startups and everything in between.

### Q How have you survived and thrived?

A We have traded through two difficult economic periods. We watch the current market growth and can't quite understand the buy-long, at the top of the market, and sell-short strategy of the newcomers.

The market needs to mature as the hotel market did, as it's about long-term asset-based returns for delivering short to medium-term flexible real estate. We've proven that we're in this market for the long term and our customer base recognise Orega as being a brand that stands for service, value and quality.

### Q How hands-on are you these days?

A Day-to-day the business is led by Lynsey O'Keefe, chief operating officer, supported by Laura Walker, sales and marketing director, and Ann Fahey, finance director. We have a wealth of experience in serviced offices, real estate, hospitality and facilities management, from SMEs to large corporates, underpinning our values and exceeding customer expectations.

After many years of doing everything, I now focus on business growth and real estate development, which is what really energises me. That and my passion for cycling that led to our involvement with Ride 25, which started in London and ends in Sydney, where I cycle with my fellow property execs, completing legs of 600km in four days every year.

We are now the primary sponsor of the event, which is doing so much good on the ground. I saw this for myself when I visited Uganda last year, enabling more than 240 street children to go to school, have a place to live and a future to look forward to. Next up is Turkey, so I'm going to be very hands-on, especially on those hills.

### Q Where next in 2020?

A In the last year, we've opened five new centres in the UK. Most recently, Old Bailey in January 2020, a stunning building in the heart of London, which is nearly three-quarters occupied. This is going to be another busy year, we have a business model that works for our customers and we are excited for the year ahead.

Our focus remains on profitable, sustainable growth where we exceed our landlords' expectations. Our business centres now feature cutting-edge design, high-end furniture and state-of-the-art technology.

For example, our breakout areas are equipped with plug-and-play screens and meeting rooms feature 86-inch Clevertouch interactive screens for seamless team collaboration. Desk phones are enabled for smartphones, premium coffee can be customised at the touch of a button, customer feedback is real time and centres are now keyless.

The industry is changing and so are we, welcome to the new Orega.

For more information please visit [www.orega.com](http://www.orega.com)





NESPRESSO®  
PROFESSIONAL

# IDEAS NEVER STOP

You sometimes just need to be  
inspired by a new coffee experience.

NESPRESSO MOMENTO

DESIGNED FOR MEANINGFUL  
COFFEE EXPERIENCES

*what else?*

