ISSUE 65

Exploring workplace research, insights and trends

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Leadership Moment with LexJet CEO Arthur Lambert

A new space, revitalized employees and record sales.

Sustainability Spotlight

Sustainability workshops cultivate out-of-the box thinking about the future.

Q&A with Pankaj Ghemawat

Is your business a truly global enterprise? Probably not as much as you think.

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Culture Code

LEVERAGING THE WORKPLACE TO MEET TODAY'S GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Global integration is a strategic business goal in today's interconnected and interdependent economy. The workplace is an underutilized asset that organizations can leverage to accelerate the complex process of integration. Leading organizations that understand the role culture plays within the physical work environment can use space as a competitive advantage.

In response to this challenge, the Steelcase WorkSpace Futures team recently completed a study of 11 countries to better understand culture codes in the workplace. Their insights can help organizations incorporate important values, employee behaviors and larger cultural contexts into work environments that work around the world.

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CONTENTS

24

CULTURE CODE

The Steelcase WorkSpace Futures team recently completed a cultural study of 11 countries to better understand cultural codes in the workplace. Their insights inform how to reflect and incorporate important values, employee behaviors and larger cultural contexts into work environments around the world.

35

An Exploration of Eleven Countries

Insights into the relationship between workplace behaviors and the work environment for each of the 11 countries and what it tells us about them.

102

Same but Different

By comparing work environments in 11 countries, the study identified distinctions and similarities. The opportunities and challenges in these different cultures demonstrate how a thoughtfully-designed workplace can foster trust, improve collaboration and ultimately help an organization go global faster and more effectively.

18 Q&A with Pankaj Ghemawat

Is your business a truly global enterprise? Probably not as much as you think, says economist and author. But it's time to think that way.

136 Leadership Moment with Arthur Lambert

Lexjet CEO shares how their new space has revitalized employees, helped to boost sales to record levels and cultivated a great customer service experience.

140 Meet the Experts

Three of the country's leading authorities share their thoughts on designing active learning spaces and improving education environments.

148 A German Celebration of New Ideas

As part of Steelcase's year-long, worldwide centennial celebration, event brings together diverse thinkers to look ahead to future business innovations.

DEPARTMENTS

6 Perspectives
16 Trends 360
124 Lessons Learned
146 Design Apps
152 Atoms & Bits
126 Insights Applied

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PERSPECTIVES

Meet some of the people who contributed information and ideas to this issue.

The Culture Code Team

"More businesses than ever are global and that means people have the opportunity to work with others from all over the world. There is a fascinating dimension to that, but it can also be frustrating because you have to embrace new ways of thinking," says Catherine Gall, research director, Steelcase WorkSpace Futures.

This was the driving force behind Culture Code, a research study Gall and the internationally-distributed Workspace Futures team recently completed that examined 11 countries to better understand culture codes in the workplace and how companies can leverage these insights to provide effective work environments in a global business world (pg. 24).

CATHERINE GALL
Paris, France

"Global organizations today are heading in the same direction, we're just at different points on the journey."

IZABEL BARROS
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

"I am particularly interested in the challenges associated with multicultural innovation, knowledge capital, new ways of working and change management."

SUDHAKAR LAHADE
Grand Rapids, USA

"The world is definitely more interconnected, but that doesn't mean 'one size fits all.' Understanding the differences of cultures is more important than ever."

ILONA MAIER
Strasbourg, France

"Evidence points to an increasing shift in preferences and behaviors as an economy grows and its society changes. Several distinct approaches exist side by side. Understanding the disparities of a society in motion is more important than making generalizations."

ANNEMIEKE GARSKAMP
Amsterdam, Netherlands

"I'm focused on creating dynamic workspaces by linking the design of the physical space to the ambition of the organization."

YASMINE ABBAS
Paris, France

"As neo-nomads, we're mobile—physically, mentally and digitally…When you move from one culture to another, you adapt and make cultural adjustments. The more you move, the more you adjust."

MELANIE REDMAN
Grand Rapids, USA

"As companies embrace the idea of being truly global, connecting people—both within and outside the organization—will become the most important function of the workplace."

WENLI WANG
Shanghai, China

"User-centered research and the insights it generates are fundamental for formulating design principles that lead to new applications and new products for different markets."

BEATRIZ ARANTES
Paris, France

"I'm a Brazilian global nomad based in Paris, and have split my life between eight different countries."

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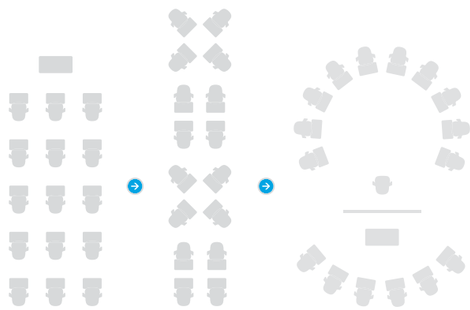

8:05 a.m.
Lecture

8:27 a.m.
Small group project

8:45 a.m.
Large group discussion
and interactive lecture

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Steelcase
Education Solutions

EL CONCURSO

STUDENTS IN SPAIN EXPLORE DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Students from architectural schools in Spain recently participated in a contest sponsored by Steelcase where they were asked to design new approaches to address the needs of an interconnected world. This is the second year where students have been asked to explore a design problem through this contest.

42
PROJECTS

250
SUBMISSIONS

27
UNIVERSITIES

The projects were judged by a jury made up of renowned Spanish architects, including:

Edgar González

Gerardo Ayala

Ramón Esteve

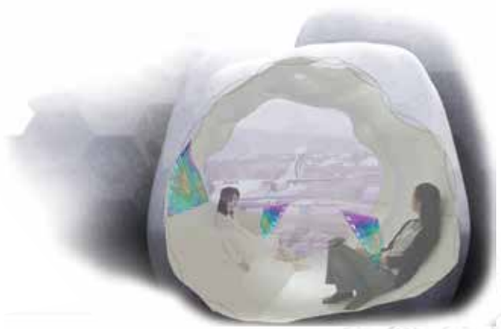
Luis Vidal

Fermín Vázquez

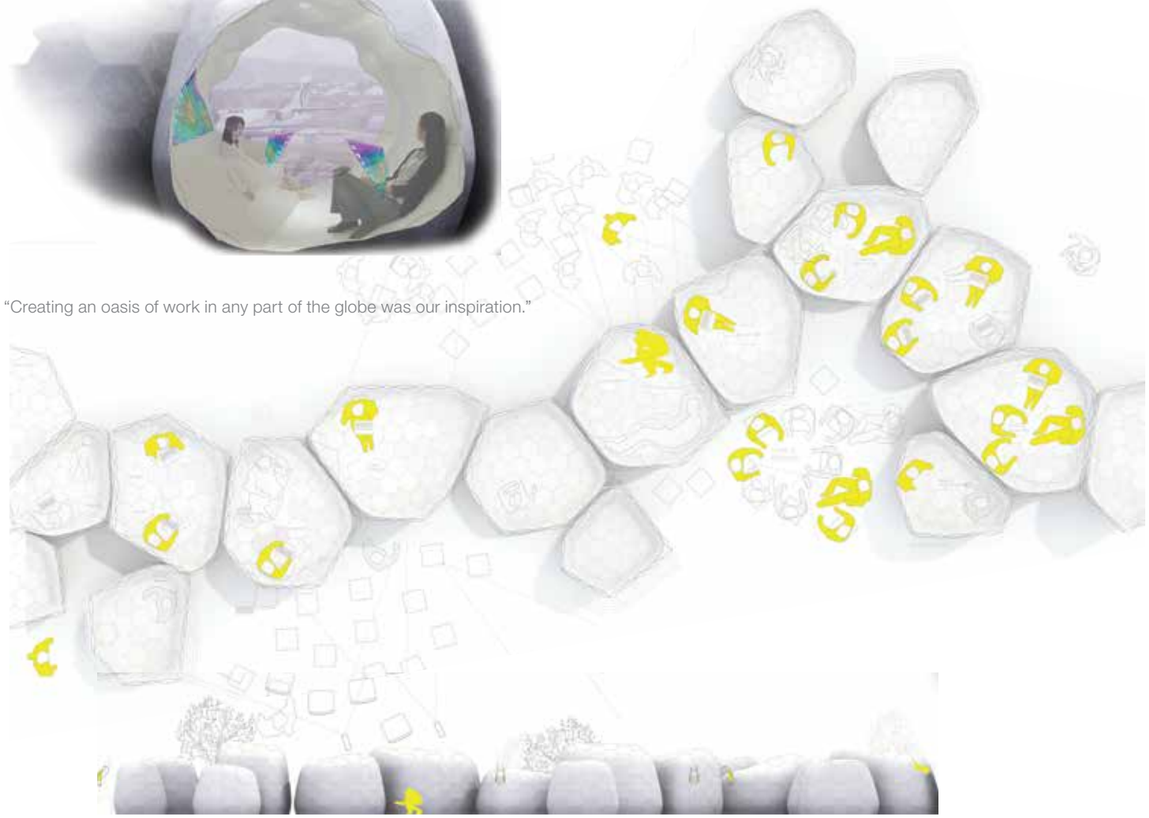
“The contest was created to support the development of architecture and design students, giving them the opportunity to connect with professionals”

— Alejandro Pocina, president, Steelcase Spain & Portugal

“We had a great response—42 projects were submitted from 27 universities,” says Pocina. Students could participate on their own or in groups up to four individuals. Criteria for judging included originality and sustainability, as well as how well the project supported the design of principles of an interconnected workplace: optimizing real estate; enhancing collaboration; attracting, developing and engaging people; building brand and culture; and supporting wellbeing at work.



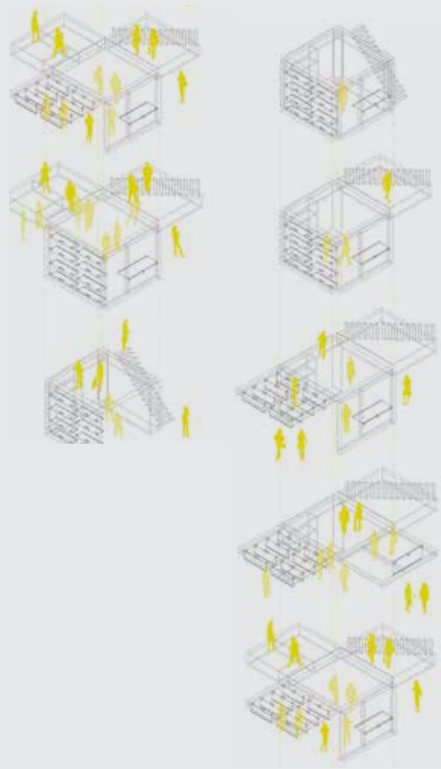
"Creating an oasis of work in any part of the globe was our inspiration."

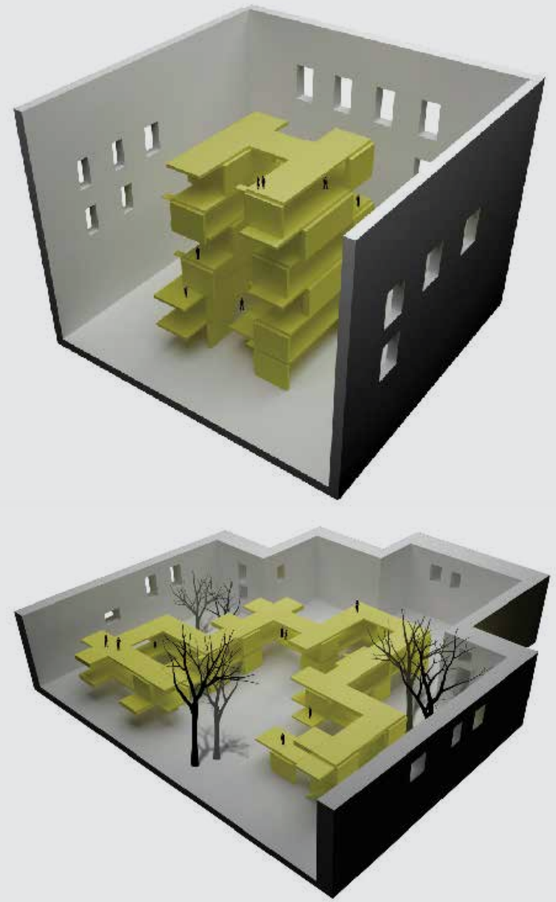


STEELCASE OFFICE BAG

The students created a changeable and customizable space, that is portable and approaching the immaterial. Basic tools are grouped into a single mobile element (computer, wifi, light, chair) and contained in a 'backpack' equipped with an inflatable mechanism that allows easy setup.

1st Place Winners
María Lozano Correa
Sergio Del Barco
Pablo Magán Uceda
Raúl Olivares Chaparro
(Universidad Alcalá De Henares)



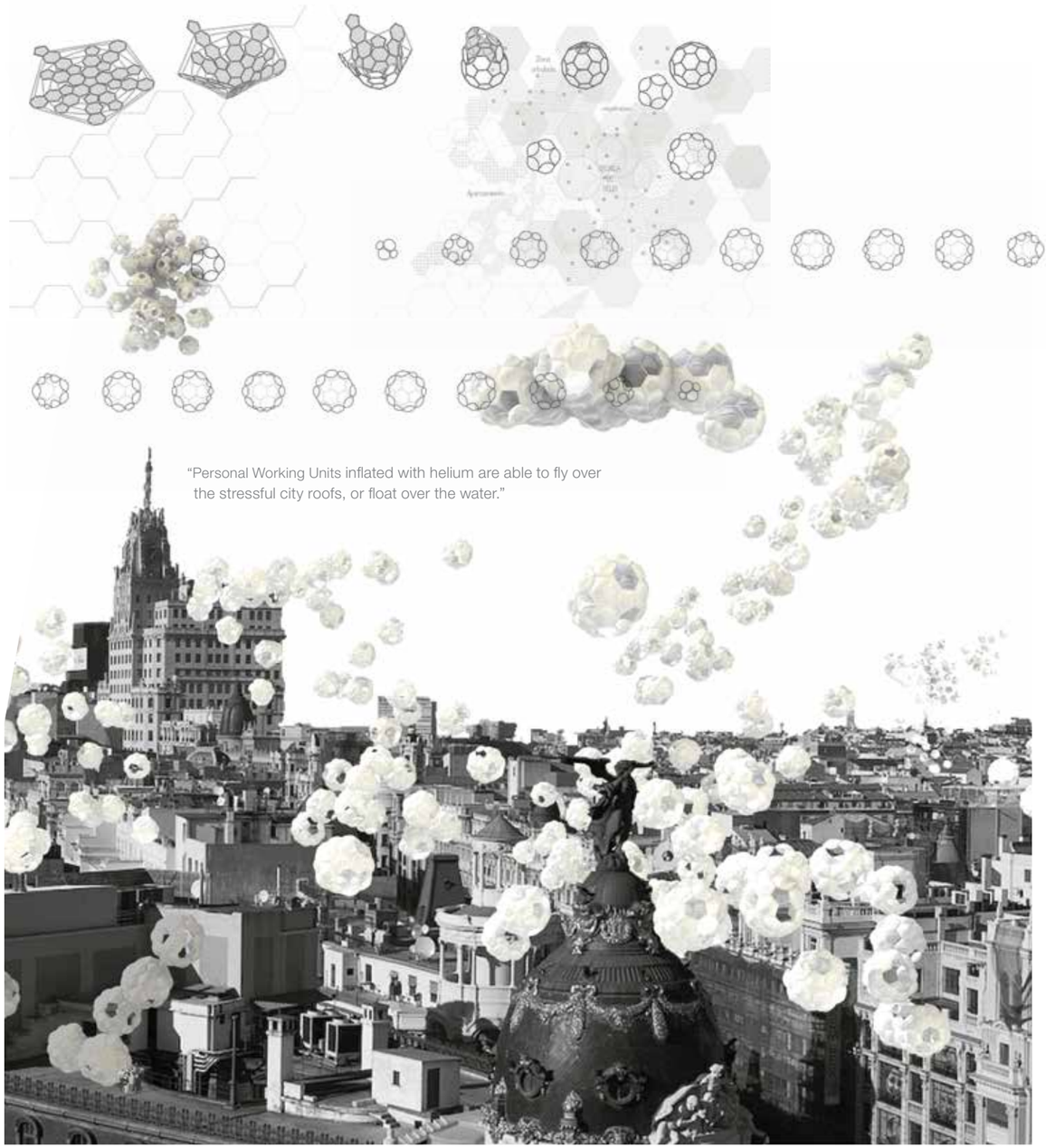


"The walls themselves can be transformed into floors or ceilings depending on the users needs."

THE OTHER WORLD

Inspired by Escher's "Other World", environments are presented from different points of view, toying with perspective and generating the idea that the floor, the ceiling and the walls are all interchangeable.

2nd Place Winners
Paloma García de Soria Lucena
María Carretero Fernández
Pilar Fernández Rueda
(Universidad de Sevilla)



"Personal Working Units inflated with helium are able to fly over the stressful city roofs, or float over the water."

PERSONAL WORKING UNIT

Students created a "Personal Working Unit" (PWU). These PWUs facilitate a comfortable and linked worldwide work fabric where people can work on their own or join two or more PWUs in order to collaborate.

3rd Place Winners
Tamara De Los Muros Sevilla
Juan José Cobo Omella
Beatriz Rodríguez Martín
(Universidad Politécnica de Madrid)

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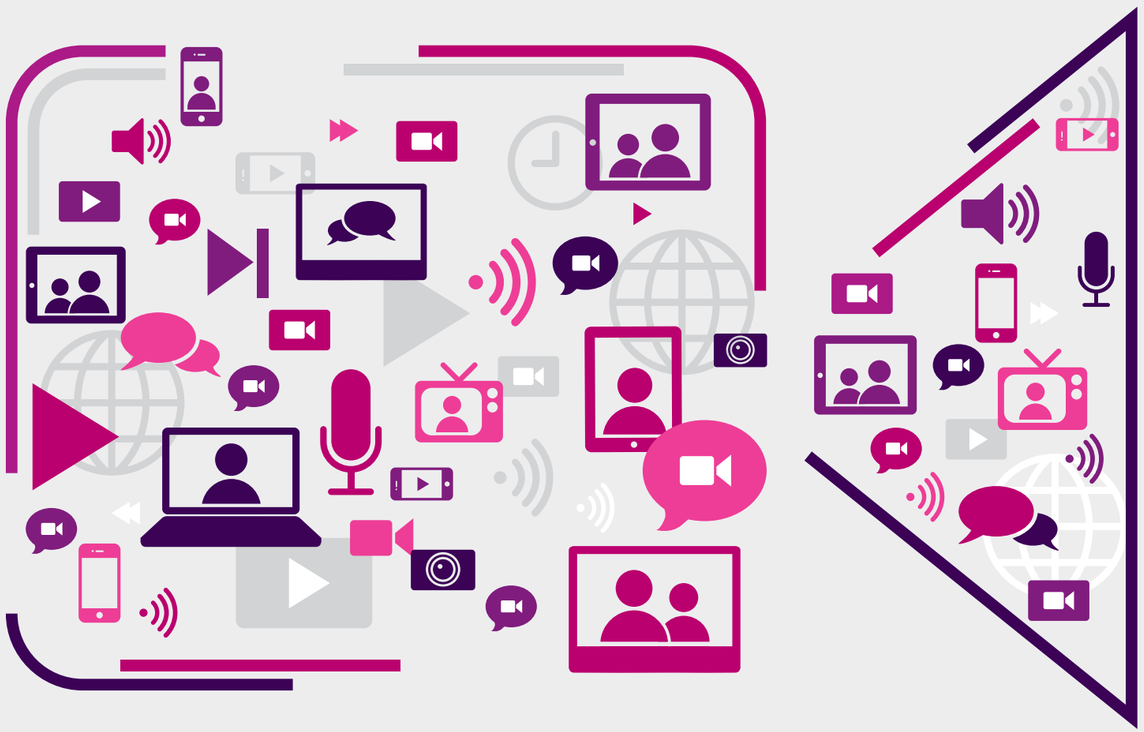
Living On Video



Video has become ubiquitous in both our personal and professional lives. Driven by the convergence of technology—smaller, better, cheaper—and sociology—people are social by nature and often prefer face-to-face interaction—video traffic is increasing exponentially.

In our personal lives video helps us stay connected with family and friends. In our business lives, video is becoming a critical tool to to help us connect with teams and individuals.

Everywhere we are living on video.

Traffic is up

By 2016

70%

of all data traffic will be mobile video, up from 52%.[1]

1 Source: The Cisco® Visual Networking Index (VNI) Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update

By 2016

72%

of the total video traffic is expected to be web-based video conferencing, up from 61%.[2]

By 2016

55%

of all consumer internet traffic will be video traffic, up from 51%.[2]

2 Source: Cisco Visual Networking Index, Forecast + Methodology, 2011- 2016

Behaviors are changing

62%

of employees regularly collaborate with people in different time zones and geographies. As collaboration increases, so does the need for video and digital tools to facilitate interaction.[3]

3 Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009

4 billion

views per day on YouTube.[4]

4 Source: YouTube

40 million

concurrent Skype users in April 2012.[5]

5 Source: Skype data

Room for Improvement

While the use of videoconferencing has grown, people are increasingly uncomfortable with the experience. Interestingly, their dissatisfaction is not only with the virtual experience, but also with the physical one. The places people experience video often add to the problems.

72%

people say they notice their physical appearance on the screen.[6]

58%

people say they look tired, or washed out due to the lighting conditions or camera quality on their computer, when on a videoconference.[6]

Experiences Need to be Designed

66%

of survey respondents say they would use video conferencing if it were as simple and convenient as using the phone.[6]

60%

said that they need small, private spaces for one-on-one videoconferences, plus spaces for large group videoconferences.[6]

6 Source: Harris Interactive Survey conducted on behalf of Steelcase

36%

agreed that their workplace doesn't provide privacy to have a one-on-one videoconference.[6]

Future of Video Experience

What role can design play in delivering an improved video experience? How can we create 'destinations' that augment these human interactions? Learn more at:

http://go.steelcase.com/J3xPtR

TRENDS360

Q&A WITH PANKAJ GHEMAWAT

Pankaj Ghemawat was born in Jodhpur, India, educated at Harvard, teaches global strategy at IESE Business School in Barcelona, and consults with businesses around the world. In his new book, “World 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It”, he argues that contrary to another best-selling book the world is not flat, that local culture, geography, and borders still drive individual and corporate behavior.

“You may not be as global as you think”

GHEMAWAT *received his bachelor and doctorate degrees from Harvard, and became the youngest full professor in Harvard Business School where he taught for 25 years. He has worked at McKinsey & Company and is currently the Anselmo Rubiralta Professor of Global Strategy at IESE.*

Q: In “World 3.0”, you explain how globalization is far less advanced than many believe.

The truth is in the data. Only 1% of postal mail crosses national borders. Less than 2% of phone calls involve international calls. Just 18% of all internet traffic is routed across national borders. On Facebook, 85% of friends are domestic. Then take a hot topic like trade. Some people say the U.S. consumes so many products made in China that that the country could cure its unemployment problem just by cutting imports from China. In reality, the percentage of U.S. personal consumption expenditures accounted for by products from China is between 1.3% and 2%.

Do most companies overestimate how global business is?

Globalization is one of those things that we all feel we experience in our daily lives, so we don’t feel any need to check the data. I like Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s quote, “Everybody’s entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.” I use facts to build a case grounded in reality, rather than something that fits with how we might, in a fanciful mode, imagine the world to be.

Why do highly experienced, well-travelled company leaders underestimate how different countries and culture are as places to do business?

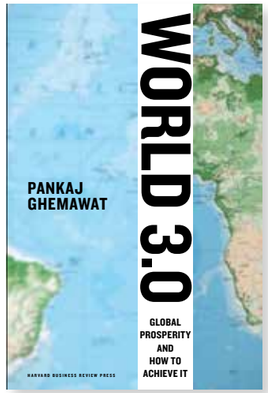
Some people running very successful companies underestimate how difficult operating abroad will be. Companies usually go overseas when they run out of room to grow at home, presumably because they have been somewhat successful. And it’s perhaps human, however misplaced to assume that if we took care of all our rivals at home, other countries, less developed, shouldn’t be that difficult. But borders, geography, and local culture still matter a great deal.

How can companies understand and work with international differences?

The three As: adaptation, aggregation, and arbitrage. Adaptation involves strategies for adjusting to cross-country differences; in other words, when in Rome, do as Romans do. For example, WalMart's changing its business model for India by managing supply and logistics and leaving its local partner to own and operate the stores. Aggregation is the idea that although things may be different, sometimes you can group them together and do a little bit better than just tapping country-by-country scaled economies. WalMart put a regional office in Asia, and while the countries are different, there’s arguably greater homogeneity, and greater geographic proximity between, say, WalMart’s operations in Asia than between two randomly selected countries within the Wal Mart system. So by putting in a regional headquarters, you realize economies in terms of overhead support, managerial time and travel and so forth. The third strategy for dealing with differences is not to adjust to or overcome them, but to use an arbitrage strategy: to exploit differences, such as buying low in one country and selling high in another. Generally companies should select a combination of these strategies, tailored to their industry, position, and capabilities.

Distributed teams are a fact of life today. How can companies help people in different countries and cultures work together?

First, make sure that there are an adequate number of people with experience working across different geographies, and not all of them working in their home countries. Managers should circulate through a global organization. Do they have foreign work experience? The data that I’ve seen that worries me the most is that at U.S. companies in general, it’s



takes longer for expatriates to make their way up the corporate ladder. It's usually the people that stayed within sight of the corner office, at home. How you identify people, train them and move them around is important. It takes a lot of time because you have to win internal credibility. You can't do this as an afterthought and you have to figure out, is my company serious about doing this? The stakes are higher now. For the first 20 or 30 years after WWII, there was a correlation between per capita income and market size. So the largest markets for many product categories were typically going to be the same list of rich countries. In the last 10 or 15 years, for many product categories that's changed. Those distant, different markets that were kind of small and uninteresting are now key customers. In many companies, the organization will have to become more diverse to support emerging market growth strategies, and that diversity will create more internal distance that will need to be bridged.

How helpful is technology in bridging distance?

We have to become much smarter about the way we manage interactions among diverse, far-flung employees. Few companies have gotten very far at exploiting new collaborative tools —they could do much more to leverage technology to improve internal communication. We also know we need to spend time with other people because that's when you get to toss around the idea that you had on your own that turns into a business innovation and you propel it forward. Research shows that electronic communication needs periodic reset through face-to-face meetings. Even if two people have a pre-existing relationship, if they try and get large complex projects done over a long period of time just electronically, there's inevitably going to be some drift in their perceptions of each other. Trust declines sharply with distance.

How can companies better understand distant markets and customers?

For the really large companies, probably the most helpful place to start is pointing out that they may not be as global as they think they are. Traveling abroad just isn't enough. A survey of executives concluded that it takes at least three months immersed in a location to appreciate how the culture, politics and local history affect business there. We all need to become more aware of the world around us, and to make people more curious about what's out there, what's different. That's what's lacking in many cases. The Global Attitude Protocol is a good way to begin to measure what's needed (opposite page).

WHAT'S YOUR GLOBAL APTITUDE?

How aware are you of the world's peoples and cultures? Are you taking advantage of opportunities of get to know the world better? Take this quiz, a simplified version of Pankaj Ghemawat's Global Attitude Protocol for assessing an individual's exposure to the world's peoples and cultures. Answer each statement with one of these responses: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral/not relevant, agree, or strongly agree.

Figure your score:
-2 points for each strongly disagree
-1 for each disagree
0 for neutral/not relevant
1 for agree
2 for strongly agree

Total of 20+ implies no (serious) gap, 10-20 some gap, below 10 a significant gap, and below 0 a huge gap.

Quiz results, say Ghemawat, "may suggest ways to improve your awareness of the world. An understanding of distant places doesn't develop automatically; it takes personal initiative. As journalist Walter Lipmann said nearly eighty years ago, 'The world that we have to deal with is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined.'"

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NOT RELEVANT	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I speak multiple languages.	○	○	○	○	○
I have lived in countries other than my home country.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy traveling to and getting to know people from different parts of the world.	○	○	○	○	○
Some of my closest friends are of nationalities different from mine.	○	○	○	○	○
I think I would enjoy working in a country in which I haven't previously lived.	○	○	○	○	○
When I travel/live in another country I try to learn about the political, legal, economic, etc. nstitutions of that country—and how they differ from my own.	○	○	○	○	○
When I travel/live in another country, I try to learn about the cultural traditions of that country —and how they differ from my own.	○	○	○	○	○
I think I can develop an opinion about a person independent of any preconceived image of his/her national culture or religion.	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable working with people located in different countries.	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable working together with people from different cultures and backgrounds in the same location as me.	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the socioeconomic/political ramifications of world events and can evaluate how they might affect my business or investments.	○	○	○	○	○
I read newspapers and magazines with significant international content (e.g., International Herald Tribune, Economist, Fortune).	○	○	○	○	○
I listen to the world news on international TV channels (e.g., CNN International, BBC World Service, Al Jazeera).	○	○	○	○	○
I have used the Internet to expand my access to international news and commentary.	○	○	○	○	○
When I travel/live in another country, I make some attempt to look at local media as well.	○	○	○	○	○

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by Patricia Urquiola

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Culture Code

LEVERAGING THE WORKPLACE TO MEET TODAY'S GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The Steelcase WorkSpace Futures research study of 11 countries reveals what organizations need to know about the role of culture in high-performing global workplaces.

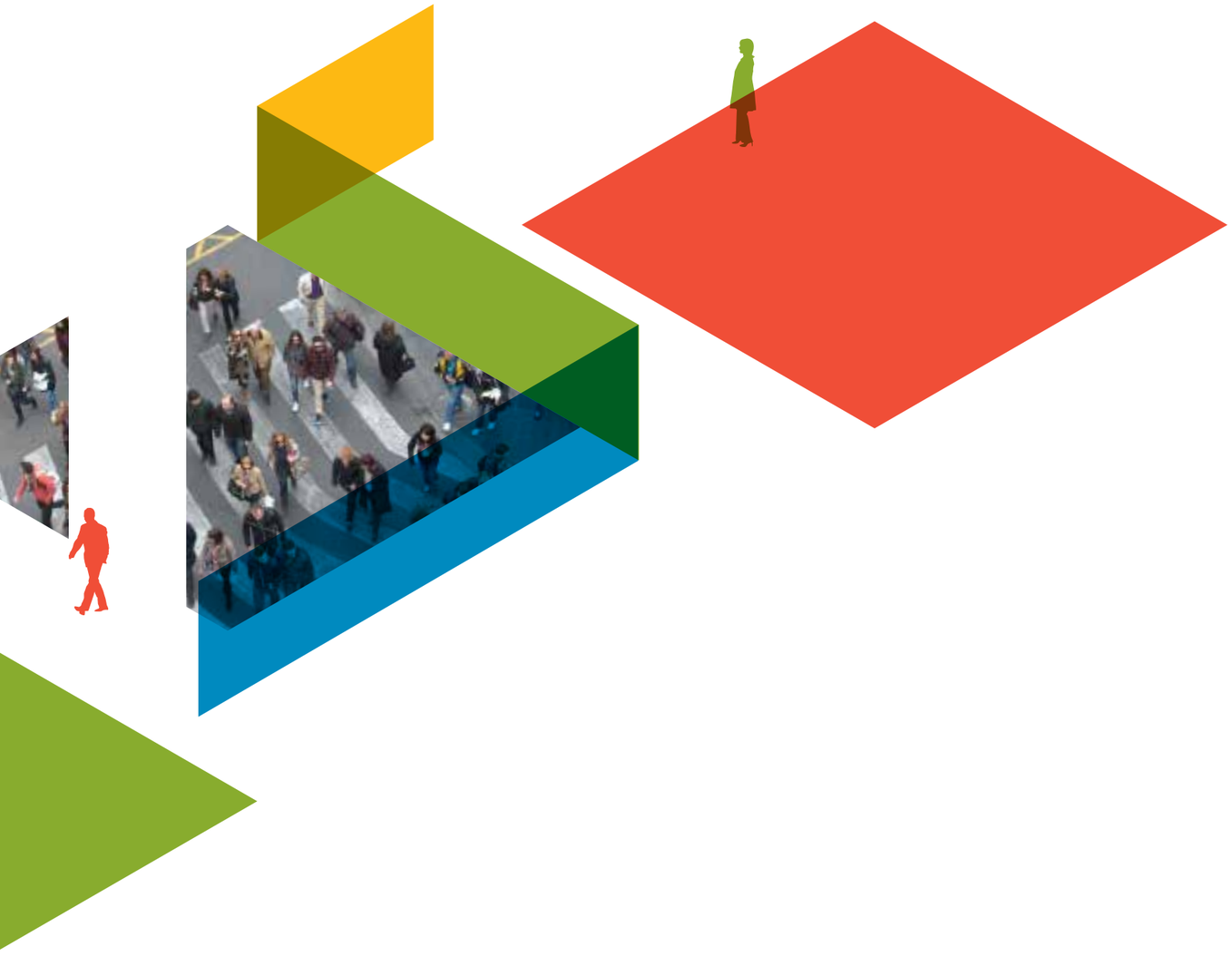
26 Defining the Code

34 An Exploration of Eleven Countries

102 Same But Different:
Mapping the Patterns of Work Culture

110 Unlocking the Code:
What multinationals are doing to address cultural challenges in the workplace

122 The Research Team



Defining the Code

Economist Pankaj Ghemawat stirred up controversy when he wrote “just a fraction of what we consider globalization actually exists… [and] globalization’s future is more fragile than you know.” But how can that be? We live in a wired (and wireless) economy where a designer in Amsterdam collaborates with an engineer in Silicon Valley under the supervision of a Parisian manager, to manufacture goods in Shenzhen for the Brazilian market. Isn’t this world supposed to be “flat,” as Thomas Friedman famously declared?

In reality, much of our work is distributed across distant places, and leading organizations identify globalization as one of their key strategic goals. But the potential power of our globalized economy has yet to be fully realized. “In 2004 less than 1 percent of all U.S. companies had foreign operations, and of these the largest fraction operated in just one foreign country… None of these statistics has changed much in the past 10 years,” states Ghemawat in his book “World 3.0.”

The incongruous state of globalization is nowhere as apparent as in the physical workplace. Workers' behaviors, preferences, expectations and social rituals at work around the world can vary vastly, yet many multinational firms that expand to far-flung corners of the world simply replicate their workplace blueprints from home. Should today’s work environments become globalized into a cohesive form? Or should they remain locally rooted? The global business world has shed a bright light on cultural differences and generated an extensive examination of values and behaviors around the world. Yet despite obvious differences in the design and utilization of work environments, little attention has been given to the implications of culture on space design. As a result, leaders of multinational organizations often don’t realize that, when used as a strategic tool, **workplaces that balance local and corporate culture can expedite and facilitate the process of global integration.**

Balancing Global + Local

The global/local tension is well-known to multinational organizations. What can be globally standardized and what needs be kept local does not follow universal laws. Designing and managing work environments globally requires a deep understanding of cultural ramifications and is a balancing act.

The way in which we perceive and use space is a vital and culturally variable dimension. But most people are not aware of this until they travel to another country and are confronted with an altogether different notion of space (i.e.: amount and kind of light, noise, smells, objects, people). Underlying how space is organized are subtle, unwritten rules. Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, known for his study of people's relationship with their direct surroundings, observed the same paradox about culture: "Culture hides much more than it reveals and, strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants." Therefore, understanding the cultural significance of space is essential in managing the global/local equation. Fortunately, there are some common threads that run through all cultures.

An intentionally designed workplace is a powerful tool for driving global integration within an organization. Understanding the local culture and drawing strengths from each location helps organizations build a corporate culture that works around the world. Diverse cultural preferences pose different barriers as well as opportunities for collaboration. Cross-cultural collaboration is the driving force behind value creation today. In order to foster creativity and collaboration, the implicit and explicit cultural codes embedded in the workplace must be deciphered and leveraged to the organization's advantage.

The Geography of Trust

Though globalization can appear to be a scary prospect for some, it is an inevitable and desirable direction for many business leaders. Globalization can be a force of intercultural interchange and increased productivity. Take IBM, for instance. The computing giant holds online chat sessions among employees from 75 nations to discuss the company's priorities in so-called "jam sessions." Think how much knowledge can be harnessed when your organization successfully engages knowledge from workers of all backgrounds and cultures. Imagine how much stronger the organization can become when it brings together value creation from around the world.

So what can organizations do to accelerate global integration more rapidly and effectively? First and foremost, it's important to better understand and address the notion of trust. Citing 5th century Greek historian Herodotus, Professor Ghemawat declares that people "trust their fellow citizens much more than they do foreigners." Ghemawat goes on to argue that trust decreases as the differences between two peoples' languages and proximity increases, adding that "differences in how much people in a given country trust people in other countries greatly affects cross-border interactions."

Companies cannot afford to ignore the trust issues stemming from cross-cultural encounters. "If businesses really respect differences, they will improve their business performance in ways that also better contribute to society at large, fostering a climate of broader trust and confidence."

The Global Village Inside the Workplace

When designed to foster cross-cultural collaboration and innovation, work environments can help build trust—the currency of collaboration—among coworkers, and between employees and managers. Establishing trust is paramount to success abroad—and can be accomplished by studying the local cultural traits that outwardly manifest themselves in the workplace.

Steelcase WorkSpace Futures began this study in 2009 with "Office Code: Building Connections Between Cultures and Workplace Design" that explored the central question of how cultural differences manifest themselves in the way work is done; what workers need; and how workplaces are or should be designed.

The publication studied patterns of behaviors and design tendencies in six European nations to demonstrate how various cultural dimensions manifest themselves in the work environments. By investigating the key cultural factors that shape the workplace, this exploratory study identified the forces that shape the work environment today.

Responding to businesses' increasing need and desire to integrate global operations, in 2011 Steelcase WorkSpace Futures continued with the second phase of the ongoing project, Culture Code. Collaborating with a diverse roster of business leaders, designers and social sciences experts in Asia, Europe, Africa and North America, Steelcase has built upon the earlier study to further understand culture codes in the workplace. By focusing on the interplay of typical work cultures and workspaces in 11 nations, the research has yielded specialized insights into how to reflect and incorporate important values, employee behaviors and larger cultural contexts into the work environment.

More important, the study has resulted in a set of filters that can be taken beyond the 11 countries in the study and applied around the world to decode the spatial manifestations of culture.

Hofstede & Hall

The work of Geert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall, Jr., social scientists who conducted breakthrough intercultural research, is integral to Steelcase's Culture Code study of the relationship between culture and the workplace in countries around the world.

By analyzing data collected from IBM employees in more than 70 countries during 1967-1973, Hofstede, a Dutch professor and researcher, developed the first empirical model of dimensions of national culture, described in his 1980 book "Culture's Consequences." Subsequent studies and publications by Hofstede and colleagues have extended and updated the original IBM study. Hofstede's findings and theories are used worldwide in psychology and management studies.

Hall was an American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher who developed the concept of proxemics, a term he coined to describe how people behave and react in different types of space. With the publication of Hall's 1976 book, "Beyond Culture," proxemics became widely regarded as an important subcategory of nonverbal communication. His definitions of "High Context" and "Low Context" as a metric of culture have been particularly influential in a wide range of communication and organizational behavior studies.

Hofstede's five cultural dimensions—Power Distance, Individualism & Collectivism, Masculinity & Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-term & Short-term Orientation—plus Hall's High and Low Context communication scale create a framework for Steelcase's investigation of the factors that influence workplace design in different countries and cultures.

Key Methodology

Between 2006 and 2011, Steelcase set out to delineate the connection between space and culture in 11 countries — China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, Spain, Russia, and the United States.

Dutch social scientist Geert Hofstede's seminal works on cultural differences provided one of the core frameworks for the inquiry. The researchers combined his work with that of anthropologist Edward T. Hall Jr., who developed the concept of proxemics, which explored how people react and behave within defined spaces. By synthesizing Hofstede's dimensions and Hall's theory, Steelcase uncovered new insights into cultural influences on the workplace. The researchers observed over 100 workplaces in 11 countries, using six dimensions from Hofstede and Hall.

These models provide a practical foundation for understanding the differences between nations and their attitude toward work/life. How do cultural differences manifest themselves in interpersonal relationships, confrontational situations, or verbal and nonverbal communications? Can workplace design help reconcile cultural differences and foster trust?

Steelcase's team of multicultural researchers conducted workshops, interviewed business leaders, designers and social scientists and benchmarked findings in 11 countries. In India alone, the researchers visited 12 multinational and homegrown companies to highlight emerging design philosophies. In addition to site visits, a total of 30 workshops were carried out in four different continents, bringing experts from different fields to offer insights into design practices from varying vantage points.

The researchers are quick to point out that each of the cultures studied is rich and diverse and that every insight may not apply to every country or company. Sweeping generalizations can be misleading. The value in identifying broad trends and patterns of behavior rooted in culture is to raise cultural empathy and help inform the direction of workplace design, so people in globally integrated enterprises can build trust and work together more effectively.

Six Dimensions of Culture

Autocratic

Power Distance Index (PDI)

Is power distributed evenly (consultative) or disproportionately to a few (autocratic)?

Consultative

Individualist

Individualism vs. Collectivism

Do people identify themselves as individuals or as members of a group?

Collectivist

Masculine

Masculine vs. Feminine

Does the culture show more male (competitive) or female-like (cooperative) behaviors?

Feminine

Uncertainty Tolerant

Uncertainty Tolerance

What is the culture's attitude toward uncertain and ambiguous situations?

Security Oriented

Short-term Oriented

Long-term or Short-term Orientation

Is the culture more concerned with immediate profit or future benefits?

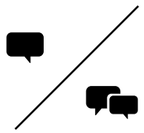
Long-term Oriented

Low Context

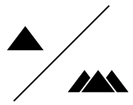
High or Low Context

Does the culture require indirect, implicit communication (high context) between individuals or a more direct and explicit approach (low context)?

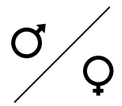
High Context



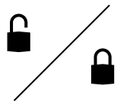
Power Distance Index (PDI):
This index measures how equally or hierarchically power is distributed in any given culture. In cultures with a high PDI, an individual worker has less chance of exerting power. In such autocratic places, the ideal boss plays the role of a good parent with decisive and authoritative power—with physical spaces to represent such authority. In contrast, consultative countries see everyone participating actively in the decision-making process. While some might mistake one end of the spectrum as superior to the other, these values are actually neutral, merely reflecting what most employees find appropriate. An employee in a more autocratic work culture can be just as content as their counterparts in consultatiave cultures, as long as their expectations are met.



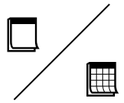
Individualism & Collectivism:
In a collectivist society, strong integration in groups is valued over individual achievement. In such cultures, confrontations are to be avoided and, to a large extent, being in harmony with the group is a universal law. On the other hand, an individualist society expects self-reliance and autonomy from its workers. Promoting frank exchange of opinions is a crucial challenge for managers in such societies.



Masculine & Feminine:
Hofstede considered masculine and feminine traits within cultures, though these monikers may seem misleading. Masculine—or competitive—cultures foster performance-oriented goals. On the other hand, feminine—or cooperative—societies place greater importance on personal relationships and collaboration. In such countries, work/life balance is one of the foremost priorities.



Uncertainty Tolerance:
The fourth scale measures a culture's tolerance levels for uncertainty. In uncertainty-tolerant societies people tend to handle unpredictable situations well: ambiguity and diversity are prized values. These cultures prefer limited rules and are more comfortable with change and facing unknown situation. Security-oriented cultures, on the other hand, seek solutions with clear rules and preventative measures. The paradox is that cultures with a low tolerance for uncertainty may ignore the rules they've established, but feel better that the rule exists.



Long-term or Short-term Orientation:
This dimension gauges a culture's temporal perspective. A short-term oriented society tends to emphasize immediate results and value free time. It focuses on the present while also respecting tradition. Conversely, long-term oriented cultures are concerned with the future, upholding traits like thrift and perseverance.

Low or High Context:
This dimension from Hall's research explores the powerful effect that cultural conventions have on information exchanges, included its unstated rules and styles. In High context cultures (HCC), an understanding of unspoken rules of engagement is required, therefore indirect implicit communication is essential. In Low context cultures (LCC) a direct and explicit approach is key to cooperation between independent individuals.

Respecting Culture

New paradigms of knowledge creation have profoundly transformed our ways of working. Information is created corroboratively in a wide array of spaces around the world. Yet even as information technology has made the virtual world prominent, the physical space remains crucial in fostering trust, creativity, sharing information and shaping a company's identity.

In addition, in the next decade, for the first time in 200 years, more economic growth is expected to come from emerging markets such as Brazil, Russia, India, China or South Africa, than from developed markets.* In this new global marketplace, work and workers are shifting locations, and working across organizations, time zones and physical/virtual spaces. As a result, cultures are colliding.

Business leaders, real estate professionals, architects and designers need new ways to think about how to design for global and local values." People think and see the world differently because of differing ecologies, social structures, philosophies and educational systems that date back to ancient Greece and China and has survived in the modern world," observes Richard E. Nisbett, codirector, Culture and Social Cognition, at the University of Michigan. Understanding the tension points between global rationalization and local identity is key to providing users globally with high performance work experiences.

Today's interconnected economy requires extensive knowledge of the markets in which businesses operate. Understanding how the cultural issues translate into the workspace helps organizations to leverage the physical environment—an often under-utilized asset—in their efforts toward global integration. In fact, it can be a prerequisite to success. Ghemawat summed up the purpose of this research when he wrote: "For many companies, the greatest challenge may be fostering the human capacity to connect and cooperate across distances and differences, internally and externally. How much would your profitability increase if you could broaden circles of trust and cooperation across departments, countries, and business units so people really work together rather than against each other? What if your people could stretch their perspectives to care more deeply about customers, colleagues and investors? People can broaden their sympathies to bring *them* a little closer to *us*, with inspiring results."

*_The Great Rebalancing_, McKinsey Quarterly, June 2010.

An Exploration of Eleven Countries

Steelcase researchers compiled reams of data on each workplace in every country they visited. After an initial understanding phase in which they gathered relevant secondary research, the team moved into the observation phase in which they used a variety of ethnographic techniques to study the activities and interactions of workers in diverse environments. This data was synthesized into key findings for each country. The following section includes insights from those observations, findings from the secondary research, scores on the Hofstede/Hall dimensions as well as thought starters and considerations for each country.

While the needs of organizations are as unique and varied as the countries in which they operate and "one size does not fit all".

The conceptual drawings and design considerations for each country share ideas for designers who seek to balance the organizational culture with local culture. This initial exploration will be followed by ongoing study and prototypes of spaces that reflect and respect the local culture code.

36 China
42 France
48 Germany
54 Great Britain
60 India
66 Italy
72 Morroco
78 Netherlands
84 Russia
90 Spain
96 United States

China

FAST-FORWARDING THE PACE OF PROGRESS

The pace and scope of economic growth in China defies description. Rising prosperity has fueled one of the largest rural-to-urban shifts in history—at least 300 million Chinese have moved into cities during the past 20 years—and by one estimate at least 50,000 new skyscrapers will be built in China's cities during the next 20 years, according to McKinsey & Company.

As businesses from all over the globe are pouring into China to become part of the action, competition is stiffening and the tempo of change keeps accelerating. The Chinese government is on a quest to move the country beyond being just the world's manufacturing center; to drive continued economic growth, China is trying to develop a services and a knowledge-oriented economy. Innovation is the new buzzword, and it means evolving centuries-old cultural traditions as well as the Chinese approach to education. There's a growing difference between attitudes and expectations of older generations and those born after 1980.

NOTABLE Businesses in China, including multinationals, must spend a significant amount of front-end time cultivating *guanxi* with clients. A distinctly Chinese concept, cultivating *guanxi* is more complex than relationship-building as practiced in the West. *Guanxi* is about understanding the responsibilities intrinsic in each role within a relationship, and it can take years to develop. Without *guanxi*, a business can't be successful in China.

Key Facts
China

Work Dynamics

Flexible work arrangements and/or mobile work are the exception due to inadequate internet infrastructure, small homes and cultural norms.

Maintaining harmony and showing respect to superiors is highly valued; employees are reticent to express their own ideas, though that's beginning to change.

Collaboration can be strong within departments, but limited interdepartmentally because trust is stronger within close-knit groups.

Employees tolerate dense work environments.

A paternalistic leadership model means workers' immediate supervisors are expected to be hands-on and personable. Managers are expected to socialize with employees.

Workers expect explicit directions on tasks.

Qualified workers switch companies easily.

Work Hours

Chinese people are among the longest working in the world; the workday is officially set at 8 hours, but at least 25% put in 9—11 hours every day.

Source: Netman

Long lunch breaks provide time to eat, rest or even take a nap to re-energize.

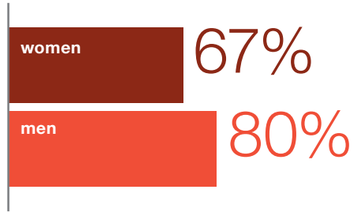
Quality of Life

Overall life satisfaction in China is low, despite unprecedented economic growth and increasing life satisfaction among those with higher incomes. Only 9% of population consider themselves thriving, 14% suffering. Among Asian nations, 41 countries score higher in wellbeing and only 5 score lower.

Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Medium scores for gender equality and human development, 28th in the world.

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Ambitious young Chinese women are making strides in the workplace and government.

Job Satisfaction

Job-hopping is common due to talent scarcity.

Many workers are attracted to multinationals because they provide opportunities to work abroad. There's a recent trend for younger workers to prefer state-owned enterprises due to benefits, stability and shorter working hours.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows China as a society that accepts hierarchy and is influenced by formal authority. People are highly dependent on their society and tend to act in the interests of their group versus themselves.

Autocratic/Consultative
Hierarchy means harmony

Most Chinese companies are hierarchical. Before economic reform in the late '70s, businesses were run by the state according to common principles. Workers were simply expected to complete their tasks and decisions were made at the top. Today, privilege and respect are still dependent on rank, and people accept hierarchy as a means to maintain harmony and order.

Employees look to their managers for mentorship and guidance; most are cautious about voicing ideas and opinions. Attitudes about power are slowly starting to change due to outside influences and as younger, Western-trained executives assume leadership roles.

Individualist/Collectivist
Trust trumps all

Business in China is about relationships, linked to the traditionally collective nature of its culture. Once people establish a relationship, both parties are bound by rules of behavior, which entail rights and responsibilities—a complex system of etiquette known as cultivating *guanxi*. Trust is highly personal and earned. Therefore it exists only within your in-group (department). Relationships are cooperative within in-groups, but interdepartmental collaboration may be very low or nonexistent.

Masculine/Feminine
Quiet strength

China is a masculine culture—success-oriented and driven. Many Chinese routinely sacrifice family and leisure time in order to work.

Yet most find it difficult to admit to being competitive in the workplace. Competition is more obvious between departments than among individuals. Overly aggressive words and posturing are shunned. Strength is displayed through decisiveness and earned achievement.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Ambiguity and pragmatism: facts of life

The Chinese are tolerant of uncertainty, and this serves them well in the dynamic nature of their economy today. They are comfortable with ambiguity, and their language reflects this. Many directives and rules in China retain the spirit of Confucius: worded so vaguely that their purpose can't be immediately grasped. As a result, adherence to rules can be flexible to suit situations, and pragmatism frequently guides actions.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Patience and flexibility

Persistence and perseverance are normal in Chinese society. People tend to invest in long-term projects, such as education for their children and real estate. Doing business in China is about putting in the time to learn about your clients, developing relationships and gaining personal trust. Establishing *guanxi* with the right people is widely regarded as the best way to navigate through the business environment.

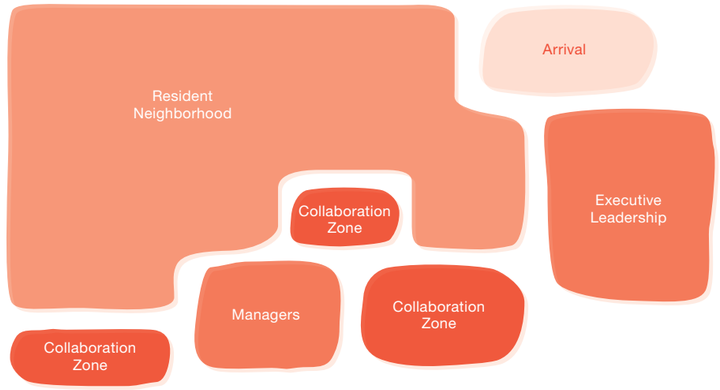
Low Context/High Context
"Yes" may not mean "yes"

Chinese culture is high context. Language is full of ambiguity—it's considered rude to say "no," for example, even if you disagree. To resolve conflicts or navigate sensitive situations, it's common to use third parties as go-betweens.

Communication can't take place outside of relationships. People rely on unspoken signals for meanings and often "read between the lines." Therefore, videoconferencing can be far more effective than a phone call for distance communications, and small group discussions are often more successful than large ones.

Thought Starters
China

Change is accelerating in China and workplaces need to keep pace. Hierarchy continues to be embraced by workers to maintain harmony and order. Executive and manager offices are important symbols of respect and order. Due to cultural norms of reticence and task orientation, collaboration is a significant behavioral change for Chinese workers. Yet attitudes about space are shifting as outside influences expose Chinese organizations to new ways of working. Spaces that promote collaboration and innovation should be blended with traditional views of hierarchy.



Enclosed collaboration areas with glass walls communicate desired behavior. Open booth seating encourages alternative postures.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Chinese workers will tolerate fairly dense workstation planning, which affords extra room for alternative spaces.
- A more progressive interpretation of executive spaces could include a smaller footprint, eliminating the traditional private retreat for rest or study, and creating zones for individual work and for receiving guests both inside and immediately outside the private office.

Enhance Collaboration

- Including videoconferencing spaces that are easy to use will help foster collaboration with colleagues distributed in other areas. For high context cultures such as China, non-verbal cues are critical to build effective communication and trust.
- Centrally locate collaboration zones to encourage inter and intra-departmental communication.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Chinese workers change jobs often, and a workplace that reflects modern values with desirable amenities is becoming a tool to attract talent.
- Younger workers desire a better work experience and appreciate informal areas to socialize or relax.

Build Brand & Activate Culture

- Brands are highly valued in China. Make sure to provide zones to reinforce brand messages not only for visitors, but for employees as well.
- A range of collaboration spaces should be integrated in work areas to foster new behaviors among workers and develop a culture of innovation.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Natural light should be equally available to workers and leaders.
- Transparency and access to a variety of spaces will help employees to stay engaged in their work and have a stronger sense of belonging.

Progressive spaces in China are exploring ways to foster collaboration in semi-enclosed spaces, close to leaders and workers.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

France

JOIE DE VIVRE VS. TRAVAIL

Compared to their European counterparts, the French have a unique relationship with work. On the one hand, they are deeply invested in their professional roles and career advancement. On the other hand, they prize the overall quality of their lives and consider protecting it a serious matter. Moreover, the desire for self-fulfillment through work exists alongside a deeply embedded acceptance of hierarchy. This duality, coupled with the economic instability of high unemployment and other problems in the labor market, can lead to feelings of insecurity and disillusionment. As a result, high emotional engagement in work—evident in vivacious discussions and creative thinking—is frequently juxtaposed with a contradictory desire: to escape to the personal sphere.

As tradition bends to progressive innovation, traditional layouts are giving way to open-plan spaces that promote interaction and flexibility. French workers are still attached to territory, however, and clear attribution of spaces and accommodations for privacy remain very important. The ongoing evolution to open-plan settings is a significant culture change that requires careful planning and abundant two-way communication.

NOTABLE The French preference for centralized power has made Paris the unquestionable financial, cultural and political heart of France. The “city of light,” along with newer satellite cities created around it, far outweighs the rest of the country in terms of national and multinational headquarters, and the prestigious jobs that come along with that.

Key Facts
France

Work Dynamics

The office is still the primary space for work, although mobile technologies and globalization are generating interest in alternative work options.

The French leadership style is outgoing and declarative; management is typically centrally located so they can influence daily work.

Decision-making can be slow due to the need for vetting and approval at multiple levels of leadership.

Collaboration traditionally occurs in structured meetings.

Punctuality is a loose concept; meetings usually don't start on time and often run over.

Work Hours

Personal time has high value, and, overall, workers in France tend to work fewer hours than those in many Western countries.

If a meeting runs long, it's considered a sign that things are going well.

The average lunch break in France is now about an hour. Taking time to enjoy lunch, versus eating at your desk, isn't considered incompatible with a strong work ethic.

Staying late at the office is common, especially for those in senior positions.

Legislation passed in 2001 created a standard 35-hour work week for hourly workers; however most salaried office workers put in more time, including working into the evening at home.

Quality of Life

Among European nations, 17 countries score higher in wellbeing and 22 score lower.

35%
of population consider themselves thriving

6%
suffering

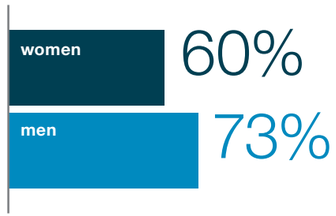
Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

A very high rating for gender equality and human development, 20th in the world.

Percentage of women with at least secondary education is closely comparable to men: 80% vs. 85%.

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Most employed women work fulltime.

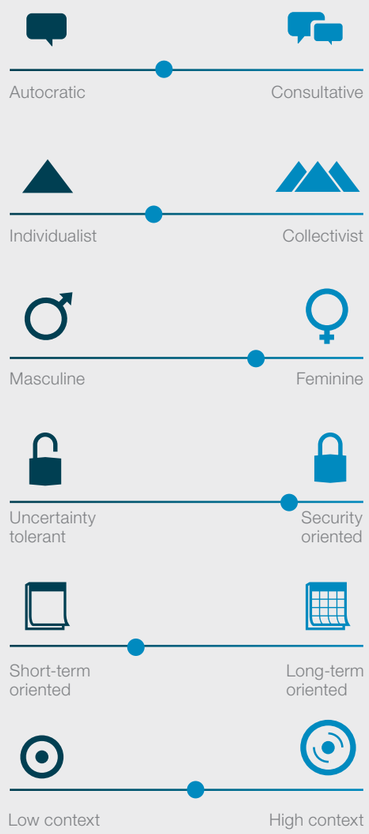
Job Satisfaction

Satisfaction varies widely.

Feeling in control and being rewarded at work are valued; workers are quickly alienated when these are absent.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows France as a country with a distinct culture of paradoxes that can create conflicting situations.



Autocratic/Consultative
Leadership is in charge

Autocratic leadership and hierarchical allocations of authority still prevail in France, perhaps lasting traces from its history as an aristocracy. Rules, titles and formality are taken seriously as reference points for stability.

Individualist/Collectivist
Liberty and equality

French people value the freedom and autonomy to exert their rights, while at the same time they show a strong sense of duty to their responsibilities in designated roles. Smooth relationships depend on everyone following their duties and everyone's rights being respected.

Masculine/Feminine
Balancing assertiveness and cooperation

The French hold an ambiguous position on this dimension. Though moderately cooperative, the French also view assertive criticism as an often-necessary step toward improvement. Both reason and emotion play a part in most debates and decisions. Additionally, masculine and feminine qualities compete with each other because the French value both their careers and quality of life, creating a paradoxical relationship to work among both men and women.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Strict rules, flexible practice

The French show a high preference for security. In general, they adhere to structure, formality and rules to satisfy emotional needs. If a rule doesn't function well, the French are apt to just ignore it; they rarely openly question or challenge its validity.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Balancing today's enjoyments and tomorrow's gains

More long-term oriented than most other European countries, the French trust relationships built over time and tend to make decisions slowly and prudently through thorough analysis. A concern for future results is apparent in many aspects of business, such as investments in research, development and facilities maintenance. At the same time, quarterly results are important and leaders are expected to generate short-term gains.

Low Context/High Context
Behind a mask

The French culture is high context. Because of its culture of autocracy, French people often have a difficult time being spontaneous at work. Instead, they tend to mask personality and what they think. Many things are left unsaid, and nonverbal signals can also be hard to read.

Thought Starters
France

Workplaces in France are evolving from traditional layouts to more open plans that promote interaction and flexibility. Employees, facing uncertainty and instability in the economy and labor market, value emotional engagement and creative collaboration at work. Quality of life is important, although some signs of work and life blurring are emerging. This thought starter is intended to promote a strong sense of residency and balance hierarchy within an egalitarian space.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Moderate density is acceptable to French workers, while assigned space is still preferred.
- Defining boundaries through storage elements and screens will increase workers' comfort with closer proximity to colleagues.

Enhance Collaboration

- Collaboration areas that are defined with explicit protocols are important, and open collaboration areas help promote speed and innovation.
- A café in close proximity to work areas supports an important part of the French work culture, and also supports connection and interaction with peers.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Workers in France are drawn to spaces that are professional and inspiring, without being playful or trendy.
- Collaboration areas will support learning and engagement with peers and leadership.

Build Brand & Activate Culture

- A distinct brand color palette can help to reinforce identity.
- Innovation-oriented brands will benefit from spaces that encourage employees to experiment and prototype new ideas.

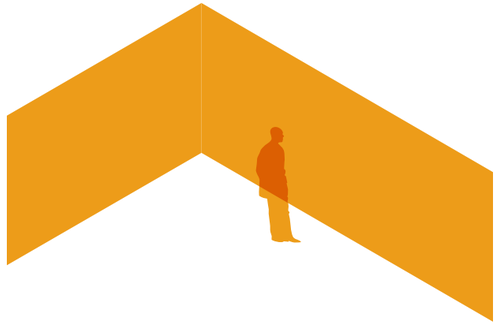
Enrich Wellbeing

- Provide a range of spaces that allow employees to control stressors by amping up or down the amount of sensory stimulation they want, based on the work they need to do and their comfort level.
- Open spaces that reflect clear brand values help employees feel a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their work.

A café area adjacent to open collaborations spaces and "I" work zones can encourage more fluid shifts between modes of work.

Consider increasing the visibility of leadership areas, with adjacent, open collaboration zones to support a culture of transparency.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.



Germany

PRECISELY INNOVATIVE

As one of only a few countries in the world that's referenced by inhabitants as "he" versus "she," Germany flexes a masculine muscle throughout the entire body of its culture. Individuality and competition are leading traits. Within organizations and networks, power and influence are important to everyone, and shared in varying degrees.

Hard work, commitment and loyalty come easily for Germans, and achieving financial success and status at work are often prioritized. Change and new ideas require in-depth, detailed analysis, which can both slow and strengthen innovation. A cultural penchant for acting on facts means Germans take others' input into account on most topics and decisions.

Privacy is a must-have. Closed doors are standard, people don't enter unless invited and touching things in another person's office is unthinkable.

NOTABLE A prosperous economy and high standards for quality have made German workplaces among the most well equipped in the world. Buildings all over the country boast first-rate architecture and premium furnishings. Workers expect abundant personal space, superior functionality, well-engineered ergonomics and close proximity to daylight and outside views.

Key Facts
Germany

Work Dynamics

Flexible work hours are the exception versus widespread.

Autonomy and flexibility are most frequently allocated to certain workers who do not need supervision.

Leaders readily solicit workers' opinions; disagreements are encouraged.

Acoustical, visual and spatial privacy are considered rights for everyone.

The dress code is generally formal and considered a sign of professionalism and respect.

Meetings start and finish on time; participants are expected to come prepared, and work through a detailed agenda.

Work Hours

Germans like to start early and leave early; people are highly productive during work hours.

Punctuality is regarded as a virtue.

Typical workdays are structured, with a set amount of time for breaks.

Distractions at work, such as social celebrations, are kept to a minimum.

Quality of Life

Relatively high sense of overall wellbeing; 43% of population consider themselves thriving, 7% suffering.

Among European nations, 12 countries score higher in wellbeing, 27 score lower.

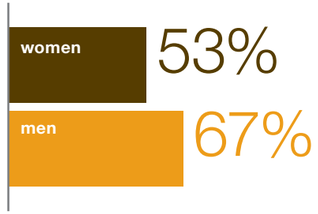
Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

Germany scores very high for gender equality and human development, 9th in the world.

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is high and closely comparable to men: 91% vs. 93%.

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Job Satisfaction

German companies track employee satisfaction and address any issues promptly.

Ongoing training and educational opportunities build high satisfaction.

Germans like their jobs and are proud of their employers; they want to be high-performers and tend to hold themselves as accountable for their own satisfaction.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows that competitiveness ("masculinity") and individuality are strong factors in German culture, along with a security orientation that makes rules and structure important.

Autocratic/Consultative
More information, better decisions

Despite a tendency toward egalitarian,"flattened" power structures, hierarchy is a valued way of organizing, and is evident in the organization of the workplace. Germans prefer leaders who are open to debate. Workers expect clear direction from superiors, but also opportunities to discuss alternatives. Leaders are receptive to this, because they depend on employees for information and insights that lead to better, fact-based decisions.

Individualist/Collectivist
Privacy protection

Germans have a strong need for maintaining personal space. They reject invasions of any sort—acoustic, visual or physical—that break the protective "bubble" of their distance from others. Because they feel exposed in non-territorial settings, open-plan office settings need to be low density with considerable distances between workstations. Sound masking plus some degree of partitioning or other privacy accommodations are essential.

Masculine Feminine
Live to work

Among European nations, Germany is the most competitive ("masculine"). Work is central to life—striving to be the best and rise in the ranks is a constant challenge and often enjoyable.

Complementing their high prioritization of work, Germans place high value on the workplace. Spaciousness, attractiveness, natural lighting, comfort and overall high quality are expected. In this sense, the physical workspace adds a nurturing, "feminine" sensibility that balances the traditionally masculine traits that are highly valued in Germans' professional world.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Certainty is in the details

Germans' aversion to uncertainty is expressed in extreme punctuality and a disciplined approach to every task. They tend to regulate everything in great detail, including architectural and office design standards. Being averse to uncertainty, however, doesn't stop Germans from innovating. It simply means they're cautious throughout the process, minimizing risk by building on knowledge and thorough analysis.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Predictability as a passion

The German passion for time management and organization is manifest in a mid-to-short-term orientation. Germans prize knowing what they will be doing at a specific time on a specific day, and they're averse to improvisation and last-minute changes.

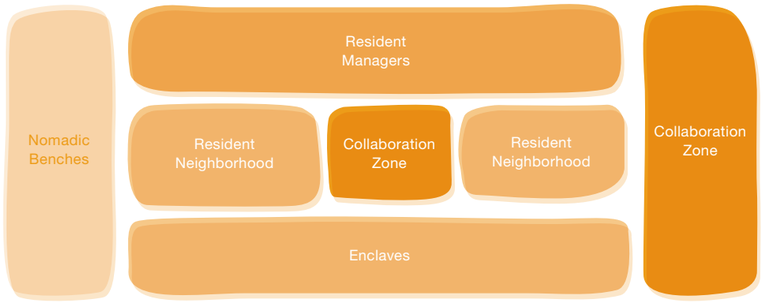
A longer view is evident in business strategies that tend to balance the need for short-term results with an eye on market position over time. Moreover, organizations and individuals are conscious of their ecological impact and tend to favor sustainable solutions.

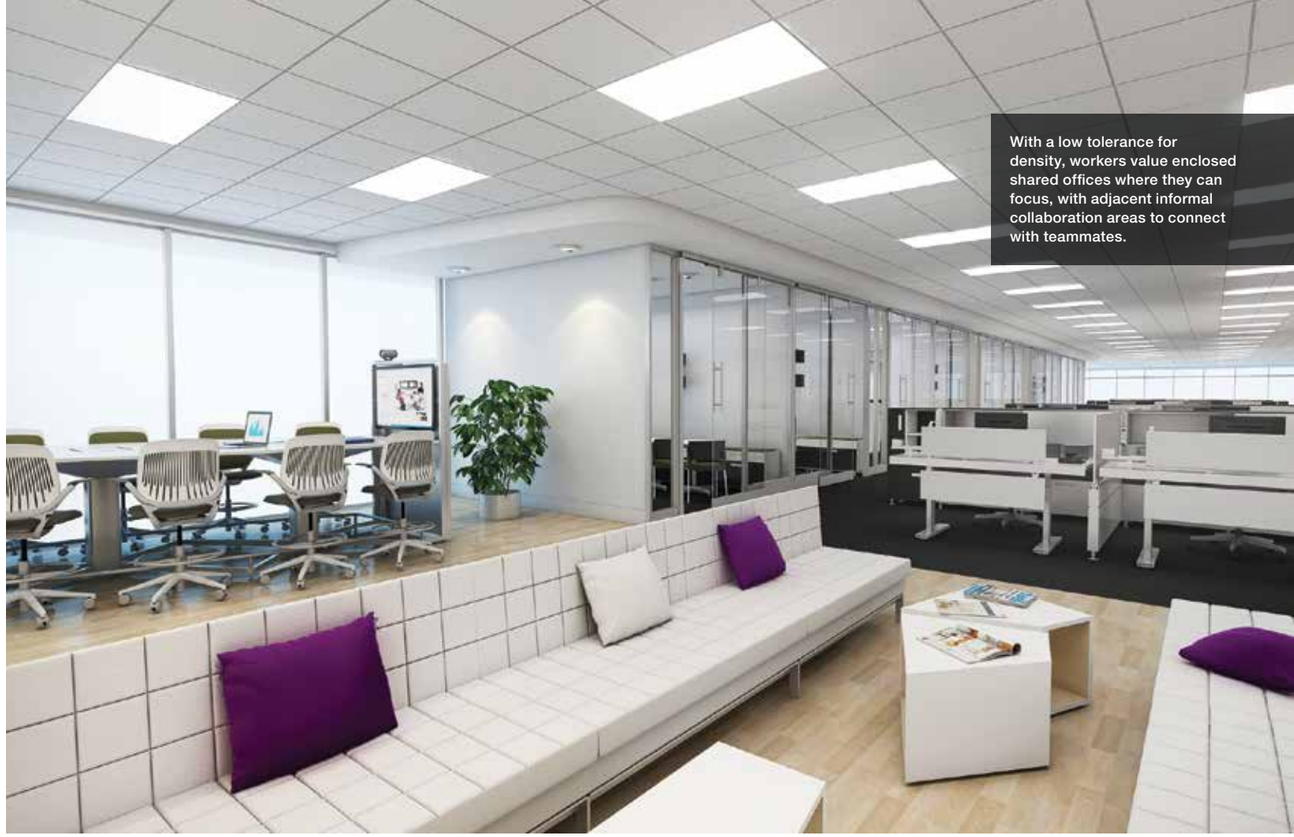
Low Context/High Context
Content and context

Although they put high importance on the time and space of a meeting, in other respects German culture is low context. Shared experiences are quickly established to form a basis for communication, and providing as many details as possible is considered a good way to build understanding. Little time is allotted for building deep relationships with co-workers or business partners, and groupings change easily as circumstances change. What gets communicated is far more important than how it's communicated.

Thought Starters
Germany

German workplaces have some of the highest standards in the world, and employees expect nothing less. Privacy is important but should be balanced with the need for collaboration and openness, while exploring ways to provide ample dedicated personal space.





With a low tolerance for density, workers value enclosed shared offices where they can focus, with adjacent informal collaboration areas to connect with teammates.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Private offices designed for one or two workers should feel spacious with glass walls and natural light, while occupying a condensed footprint.
- Workstations in the open plan should incorporate screens and storage to define boundaries and increase privacy.

Enhance Collaboration

- Collaboration areas should be located at “crossroads” between groups to promote cross-disciplinary interaction.
- Structured collaboration areas with space to display information are important to German employees, and informal areas should be situated throughout the space to encourage impromptu collaboration.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Spacious work areas with plenty of natural light and a range of settings are critical to attract German employees.
- As mobility increases in Germany, lounge areas and unassigned desks will help support new behaviors.

Build Brand & Activate Culture

- Hierarchy is more about efficiency than privilege; executives offices should model visibility and openness.
- To support a culture of innovation provide a range of spaces that promote both collaborative teamwork, and focused individual work.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Settings designed for socialization and collaboration will increase healthy interaction and engagement.
- Workers should be able to easily shift from ergonomic seating, to standing or other postures.

A range of open collaboration destinations allows German workers a blend of structure and informality.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

Great Britain

ISLAND OF INDIVIDUALISTS

As some of the most individualistic people in the world, the British maintain loose ties with others and pride themselves on being independent and self-reliant. For example, spouses usually keep separate bank accounts. The British have high needs for privacy, and tend to speak softly so their words don't intrude on any unintended audience nearby. Great Britain's market-driven economy, with minimal interference from government, meshes well with the country's individualistic culture.

NOTABLE London has had a radical 21st-century facelift. Due to ever-increasing land prices and the work of visionary architects, several spectacular high-rises have been constructed, including the recently completed Shard, Europe's tallest building at 309.6-metres (1,016-feet) designed by Renzo Piano. In general, office design is focused on aesthetics more than functionality for workers.

Key Facts
Great Britain

Work dynamics

Great Britain has become a mature market for mobile work and teleworking; workers are very comfortable using technologies that allow them to communicate in a distributed team.

Independent thinking is highly regarded, and people rely more on facts than feelings.

Conflict resolution can be combative, and decisions are often made outside meetings via lobbying

Punctuality is practiced, but being up to 15 minutes late is tolerated due to heavy traffic and congestion

Open plan is dominant; only executive management has private offices.

People switch jobs and companies often.

Work hours

Working conditions are generally demanding with constant pressure to do more, stay longer.

Executives rarely leave the office before 7:00p.m.and work at least

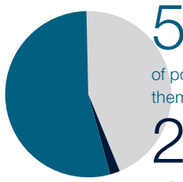
50 hours per week.

"Deskfast" (breakfast at your desk) and lunch breaks in front of a computer are norms.

The work week sometimes ends at a pub with co-workers.

Quality of life

Among European nations, only 8 countries score higher in wellbeing and 31 score lower.



54%
of population consider themselves thriving

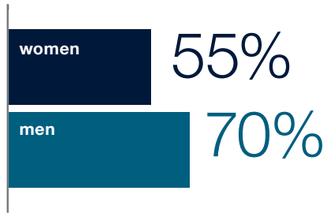
2%
only suffering

Gender Equality

Very high scores for gender equality and human development, though it ranks lower (28th) than many other Western world countries

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is slightly higher than men (69% cf. 68%)

Gender participation in the labor force



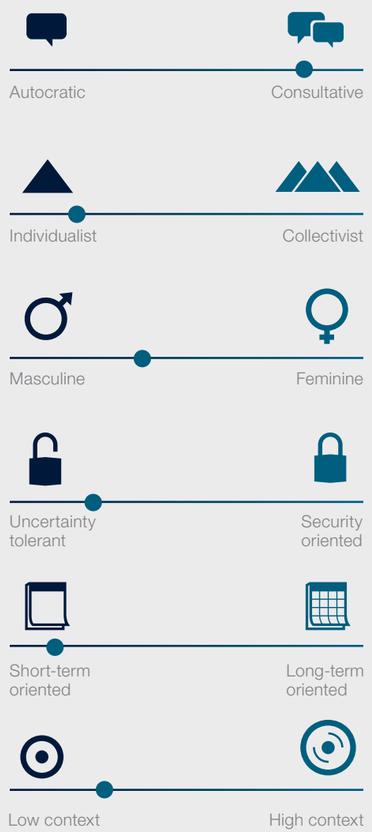
Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Job satisfaction

Many workers are stressed and dissatisfied with their working conditions.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows individuality as the dominant factor in British culture. A short-term orientation, tolerance for uncertainty and strong competitiveness "masculinity" are also strong influences.



Autocratic/Consultative
Career Lattice

Work relations between employees and leaders tend to be consultative and open, and workers don't believe status inherently differentiates people. Many workers choose lateral job changes instead of incremental climbs that can be perceived as requiring more work without significantly more pay. Although hierarchical structures are flat, paradoxically, status is often derived from deeply embedded notions, such as accents, titles and education.

Individualist/Collectivist
Individual focus

High ranking in individualism means there are loose ties between people and organizations. People commonly switch jobs and companies every few years. Employees aren't concerned with deep work relationships and don't stay with jobs just for security. Mostly, workers are concerned with getting the most out of their situation, including salary. If they feel they're not, they move on.

Masculine/Feminine
Work is competition

British workers are more competitive "masculine" than cooperative "feminine", long work hours and skipped meals are common. Men and women are mostly convinced they have to be tough to succeed in business.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Keep calm and carry on

The British are at ease with unstructured, unpredictable situations. They look to formal rules only in cases of absolute necessity and are convinced that people can solve most problems on their own.

At work, change is generally accepted as a fact of life, reversals in decisions are taken in stride and a general sense of chaos is status quo.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Making every today count

As a short-term oriented country, Great Britain is attached to its past and lives in its present. The British put their primary focus on achieving short-term performance metrics. Driven by quarterly financial goals, businesses look to quick profits. The goal is to make a big impact today.

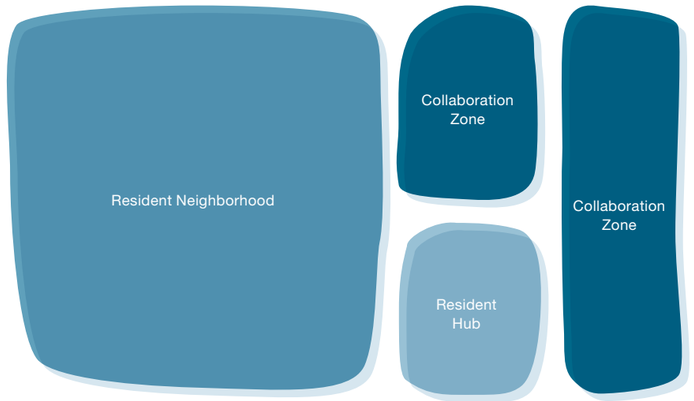
Like many short-term oriented nations, however, Great Britain is taking a longer view in the area of sustainability. Companies are looking to improve the sustainability of their businesses, and requiring suppliers to follow suit.

Low Context/High Context
Staying at arm's length

British culture is low context. In general, the reserved British prefer to keep some distance between themselves and others. Close relationships are not considered important to business. People rely on words versus emotion to carry meaning, and they prefer to keep communication minimal, controlled and on their terms. Telephones go unanswered if a person doesn't want to be interrupted and, in general, email or other written communications are preferred for precision.

Thought Starters
Great Britain

Workplaces in Great Britain today tend to be fairly crowded and sometimes austere due to high real estate costs. This concept offers ideas for maintaining density to control expenses, by literally surrounding employees with a options they can choose from to support the work they're doing. A range of collaboration areas, from open and informal to enclosed, large-scale spaces will attract highly mobile British workers into the office to connect with team members, and as a result, feel more connected to the organization.



A range of progressive spaces with nearby video conferencing offer choices for how to connect with local and distributed teams.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Space

- Dense benching solutions can save on high-cost real estate while thoughtful accessories make it easier for employees to unpack quickly and be productive.
- Incorporate storage elements at benches to provide boundary separation for workers.

Enhance Collaboration

- Equip project spaces with virtual collaboration technology to foster a blend of team and individual work.
- Provide informal collaboration spaces throughout areas for individual work to promote the flow of "I" and "we" work throughout the day.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Offer a range of spaces that allow workers to shift between work modes easily, with greater choice and control over where and how they work.
- media:scape® setting near individual work areas will encourage quick review sessions to share work in process and get feedback.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

- Designate zones to reinforce brand messages for employees.
- A variety of spaces and transparency will promote a culture of openness and collaboration.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Enclosed areas in close proximity to open spaces will support the need for private conversations.
- Access to ample natural light is not a given in Great Britain as it is in other European countries—but it's highly valued by employees.

Highly mobile workers in Great Britain are motivated to come to the work workplace for access to technology and access to other people.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

India

NOTABLE Families dominate Indian culture, although the tradition of multiple generations comprising the same household is beginning to disappear in larger cities.

WELCOMING THE WORLD

A multicultural, multiethnic and vibrantly democratic country, India has a rich history of absorbing customs, traditions, and heritages.

It's often said that India didn't come to the world; instead, the world came to India.

When economic liberalization opened up India's economy in 1991, multinationals discovered its labor force and market potential, and the nation was quickly transformed into a global business hub.

In some ways, Indians' fascination with movies, both Bollywood and Hollywood, is a way for them to see their own lives come to reality. Whereas in the past, passive fatalism was a dominant attitude, today's Indians—especially the younger generations—are full of can-do ambition and entrepreneurial spirit. As their country continues to evolve rapidly, Indians are creating a new identity that wears a distinctly hybrid stamp, blending traditional values with contemporary attitudes and lifestyles.

Key Facts
India

Work Dynamics

Flexible work arrangements and/or mobile work are limited; managers want to observe workers, and workers want to be seen.

Decision-making is based on hierarchy, though leaders may solicit employee input.

Indians gravitate easily toward group activities, a behavior that's easily leveraged for collaboration.

Interaction often happens at individual workstations; work environments tend to be noisy.

Employees tolerate dense work environments.

Conflict with co-workers is avoided in every way possible.

With seemingly limitless opportunities, workers switch employers easily.

Work Hours

Chaotic traffic and overcrowded public transportation lengthen the average workday.

Arriving at work on time is expected, but at the same time, being late is accepted.

Indians don't mind delaying meetings and projects if it means the right people can participate.

Bringing lunch from home and eating at your desk is common.

Companies are expected to host celebrations of national events for employees and their families.

Quality of Life

With poverty still a fact of life, overall life satisfaction is low; only 10% of population consider themselves thriving, 21% suffering

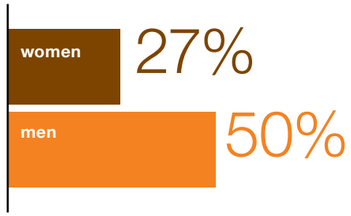
Among Asian nations, 36 countries score higher in wellbeing and 9 score lower.

Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

Medium scores for gender equality and human development, 134th in the world.

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is significantly less than men.



33% of women participate in the labor force vs. 81% men.

Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

India values women's strengths but many strive for higher status and recognition in the workplace.

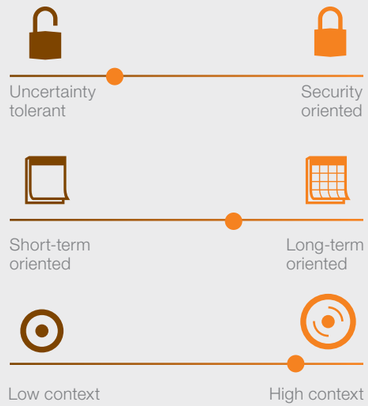
Job Satisfaction

Turnover is high due to booming employment opportunities, especially in high-tech and media.

For young Indians, challenging work is as important as the reputation of the company and salary.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows India as a society with strong leanings toward autocracy and group loyalty, although the rapid and profound cultural transformations underway are making India's younger generations more self-focused.



Autocratic /Consultative
Control as psychological security

India scores high on autocracy. According to Indian beliefs, equality doesn't exist in nature, and it's accepted that social rights and privileges vary with status. In the past, power was associated with family names, but today people increasingly gain power through accomplishments.

In the workplace it's common to leave decision-making to leaders. Workplaces are designed to reflect hierarchy, power and status. Executives and managers get large private offices, while employees usually work in open, high-density environments, and it's a disparity that goes unquestioned.

Individualist/Collectivist
For self and country

Collectivism is an important cultural trait in India. Over centuries, Indian people have been taught to be loyal to family and community, for protection and security as well as the happiness they provide.

Gen Y in India is trending toward strong individualistic behaviors, including little loyalty to job and company. They see personal ambitions as the way to bring their country forward.

Masculine /Feminine
Success and harmony

As a society that places high importance on success and power, India scores "masculine," although in the moderate range. Indian people easily embrace brands boldness as visible signs of success.

At the same time, spiritual values and a drive for harmony are at the heart of Indian culture. Progressive Indian companies as well as multinationals are realizing opportunities to appeal to Indians' softer side by making workplaces more nurturing, hospitable environments.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Trendsetters

Indian people are very tolerant of uncertainty. Their adaptability helps explain the speed and magnitude of change going on in their country as India leapfrogs its way to becoming a world economic power.

Because Indians are so comfortable with change, adapting employees to new work processes and environments may not require extensive change management efforts. For multinationals especially, India can be an ideal "laboratory" for experimenting with radically different approaches or all-new investigations.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Keeping *karma*

Although leaning towards a long-term orientation, Indian people's relationship to time is complex. Their belief in life after death and *karma* generates a focus on long-term versus short-term gains. In fact, in Hindi the word for tomorrow and yesterday is the same: *kal*. This can lead to a belief that there's no rush for getting things done today—the focus of life is on building relationships versus immediate profit. Because this often conflicts with today's expected business behaviors, it can be confusing at best and maddening at worst to other cultures.

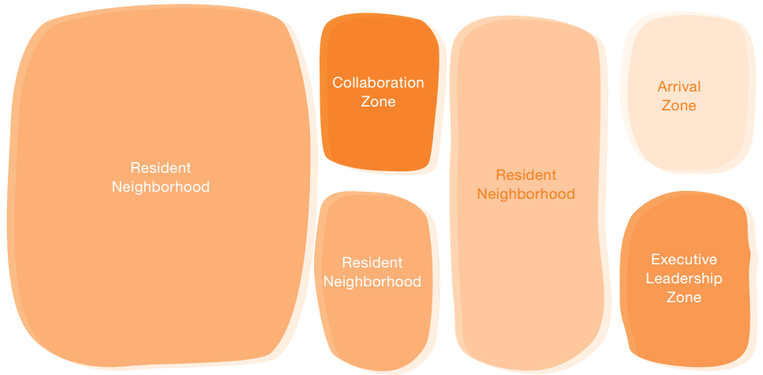
Low Context/High Context
"Yes" may not mean "yes"

India's culture is high context. Because people rely on close-knit groups, they try to avoid conflict, making it difficult to "read" what they really think. Communication is full of nuances that can be easily misunderstood. Notably, the infamous Indian headshake: a side-to-side tilting of the head that can mean yes, no or maybe. Indians would rather say "yes" than "no" to avoid hurting someone's feelings, which would lead to bad *karma*.

Forming questions in a positive way can help encourage more open discussions. Face-to-face communication, whether virtual or physical, is usually most successful, and taking the time to establish a relationship is an essential first step.

Thought Starters
India

Workplaces in India today are steeped in tradition, designed to support a widely accepted autocracy. Lavish executive offices reflect status and power, juxtaposed with employee spaces that are modest and compact. Booming employment has caused high employee turnover, causing Indian organizations to think about the workplace as a tool to attract the best and brightest. Consider design strategies that recognize the role of hierarchy and go on to explore ways to support rapidly evolving work styles.



High density work environments can feel spacious when planned in open areas with high visibility and access to natural light.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- In a country very familiar with close living conditions, Indian workers tolerate high levels of density. Working remotely is limited and employees highly value having an assigned space they can personalize.
- Leadership spaces should reflect the accepted hierarchy, but can be condensed to allow more space for collaboration areas.

Enhance Collaboration

- Indian's collective nature lends itself to collaboration, although it is still a new behavior that needs to be fostered by providing a range of collaboration options.
- Eager to build relationships with global counterparts, videoconferencing spaces will help workers in this high-context culture gain deeper understanding and trust with distributed teammates.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Technology-rich spaces are important to workers in an economy with booming employment and high turnover.
- Offering amenities, such as informal collaboration spaces and a modern aesthetic, sends a message to employees that they are highly valued.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

- Transparency is important for Indian employees who want to see and be seen by leadership. Create spaces where leaders and employees can interact and share ideas.
- Brand messaging throughout the space helps build loyalty among workers and influences behavior.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Tight deadlines and productivity quotas can be stressful within a culture for which time is not a strictly linear progression. Providing spaces for respite or refreshment can help balance the natural rhythms of relaxation.
- Ergonomic seating at the work station is critical for India's long work hours. Areas for alternative postures are important to get employees out of their seats and moving throughout the day.

Gen Y workers in India value informal areas for collaboration or relaxation.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

Italy

ROOTED IN TRADITION

For the most part, Italy remains a traditional society where hierarchy and seniority are visible. New ways of working are not widely embraced or translated into user-centered office design. Instead, economic considerations and aesthetics usually lead the design process, although countertrends supporting new concepts of workplace impact are emerging, largely due to the influence of multinationals.

NOTABLE Italians embrace social networking via the Internet and are more digitally connected in their personal lives than many of their European counterparts.* The technology infrastructures as well as the underlying impetus for telework and flexible workstyles, however, remain underdeveloped. There's persistent belief in Italy that managers need to supervise workers closely throughout the workday.

*European Commission Information Society.

Key Facts
Italy

Work Dynamics

The office is still where most work happens; few people work in alternative settings, though there are emerging signs of readiness to change.

Italian workers expect directions from their leaders, but they also don't hesitate to challenge a decision.

Leaders listen and may ask for employees' opinions, usually during casual interactions versus formal meetings.

Italians are accustomed to working individually with a lot of social interaction, versus as a team following collaborative techniques; the workplace culture is highly competitive.

Meetings are intense and lively, usually led by management, and often start late.

Italians pride themselves on improvising last-minute solutions to sudden problems.

Workers treat their company like family, which can be an obstacle for newcomers or outsiders.

Work Hours

Hard work is equated with long hours behind a desk.

Coffee breaks are important social times in the workday.

Managers feel obliged to be the last to leave at the end of the workday.

Quality of Life

39%
of population consider themselves thriving

7%
suffering

Among European nations, 15 score higher and 24 score lower.

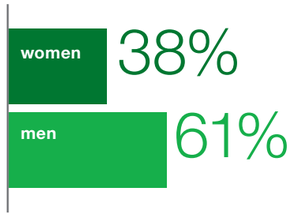
Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

Italy scores very high for gender equality and human development worldwide, though it ranks lower (24th) than most other Western world countries.

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is lower than men (68% vs. 79%).

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Job Satisfaction

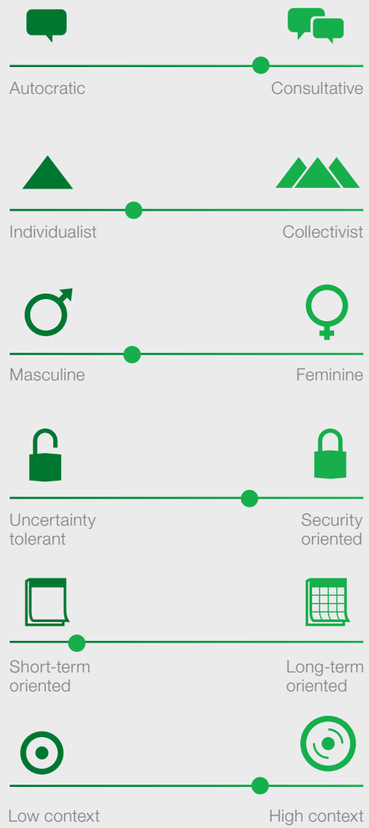
Worker satisfaction tends to be low.

Workers often stay with employers for security even if they're unhappy.

Italy's economic situation has generated more mistrust of business leaders and general uneasiness.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows that competitiveness ("masculinity") and individuality are overriding factors in Italian culture. This is clearly apparent in a high value placed on aesthetics, fashion and outward appearances.



Autocratic /Consultative
Patriarchal leadership is traditional

Autocratic leadership and hierarchical allocations of authority prevail. The ideal model of a superior has traditionally been a benevolent autocrat who may listen to opinions but is a hard driver and always holds the reins. Workers expect explicit directions from their leaders and may feel uncomfortable with collaboration.

Individualist/Collectivist
The power of one

Italians score very high on individualism. Though they value close personal relationships to family, friends, co-workers and business associates, their identity at work remains more individualistic than team-oriented. Italians pride themselves on personal creativity, and they generally prefer to work alone.

Masculine /Feminine
Competitive and private

Italy has strong masculine cultural values, especially in the workplace. Most organizations are male-dominated and have assertive and competitive cultures; workers protect their projects and ideas until they they're ready to be showcased in the limelight of personal achievement.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
A legacy of security and structure

An aversion to uncertainty in Italian culture supports energy, emotional expressiveness and a high need Typical of security-oriented cultures, Italians seek job stability and tend to remain attached to a company even if they don't love their jobs. Employment in the public sector is highly valued because it's reliable, even if routine or unfulfilling. At work, predictable hours and close supervision are comfortable norms.

Although not knowing what to expect can generate uneasiness, Italians improvise all the time. Theirs is a culture of getting around obstacles.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Live for today

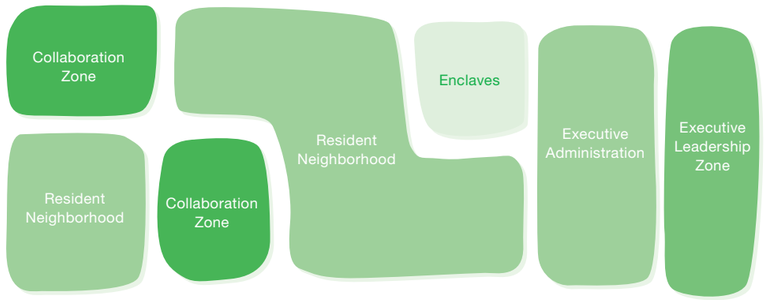
Leaning toward a short-term orientation, Italians strive for fast rewards more than long-term value. Like other short-term oriented nations, they're attached to the past and rooted to familiar environs. For many Italians, changing jobs or moving to another place is considered a major disruption to be avoided if at all possible.

Low Context/High Context
Bonds that bind

Italy is a high-context culture, with a strong sense of tradition and history that creates a solid communication framework for people in each new generation. With strong bonds to family and community, "in" groups are clearly distinct from "out" groups. Voices can carry a lot of emotion as a form of body language more telling than words.

Thought Starters
Italy

Work happens at the office in Italy, a culture that highly values a distinction between work and life. Like other cultures with high tendencies toward masculine values, making hierarchy visible in the workplace design is important. Highly individualistic, this culture is most comfortable with assigned workplaces where workers can develop ideas on their own, then bring into more structured collaboration sessions.



Position collaboration zones outside of executive offices to encourage informal interactions with workers.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Italian workers are comfortable in dense work areas where boundaries are clearly defined.
- A progressive executive space can be more open, with zones for administrative support, receiving guests and interaction with employees immediately outside the private office.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Italian workers tend to stay in their jobs—the workplace can help them stay engaged in their work by increasing transparency, so workers feel a part of the organization's purpose.
- Positioning leadership close to employees helps foster a greater sense of connection.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Younger workers especially are seeking more personal fulfillment from their jobs. Create spaces that encourage more interaction with all levels of the organization
- Access to a variety of spaces with multiple postures will help employees to stay engaged in their work and have a stronger sense of belonging.

Enhance Collaboration

- Transparent collaboration settings within the resident neighborhoods encourage employees to shift between individual and collaborative work more often.
- Positioning collaboration zones near individual work areas can reinforce the message that these spaces are desirable and should be used often.

Build Brand & Activate Culture

- Italian workers are highly loyal, and co-workers are like family. Include spaces that leverage that tendency to foster socialization of ideas at work.
- Provide zones to reinforce brand messages not only for visitors, but for employees as well.

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Collaboration can take place at the bench with nearby team mates, while video conferencing helps connect workers with their distributed team.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

Morocco

BRIDGING CULTURES

A former colony of France and in close proximity to Spain, Moroccan is a blend of Arabic and European influences. Since achieving independence from France in 1956, it has experienced economic growth and expansion. Its location as a stepping-stone between Europe and the Middle East and its overall economic potential have attracted multinationals since the 1990s.

Doing business in Morocco means bridging two cultures: one built around this country's traditional, tribal roots and another around its younger generation's desire to adopt to new behaviors and advance their careers, especially in multinational companies.

NOTABLE *Hshuma* literally means shame. Moroccans' most cherished possession is their honor and dignity, which reflects not only on themselves but on all members of their extended family. Moroccans will go out of their way to preserve their personal honor. *Hshuma* occurs when other people know that they have behaved inappropriately. A Moroccan's sense of self-worth is externally focused, so the way others see them is of paramount importance. If someone is shamed, they may be ostracized by society, or even worse by their family. Loss of family is the worst punishment a Moroccan could face.

Key Facts
Morocco

Work Dynamics

The office is where work happens; mobile work is not widely embraced due to cultural norms and lack of infrastructure to support it.

Relationships are important for getting things done.

Moroccan workers expect clear direction; top leaders make decisions; work processes are formal and bureaucratic and paper dependent.

Moroccans are unlikely to share contrary opinions with supervisors, though meetings among peers can become emotional and lively.

Work Hours

Many people work 40-48 hours per week.

Morocco has a café culture; workers like to step away to refresh and change their view.

Moroccans may arrive up to an hour late for meetings, but "outsiders" are expected to arrive on time.

Most businesses close on Fridays from 11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. for prayer and business dealings aren't conducted during the month of Ramadan.

Quality of Life

80% of the population say they're struggling; 10% consider themselves thriving, 10% suffering

Among African nations, 18 score higher and 23 score lower.

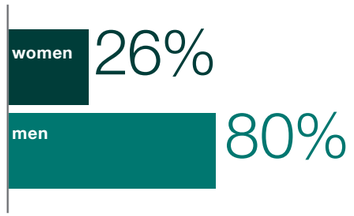
Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

Medium rating for gender equality and human development, 130th in the world.

Percentage of women with at least secondary education is lower than men (20% cf. 36%) girls are now beginning to dominate in schools.

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Women are asserting themselves in business, but may feel obligated to hide their family responsibilities.

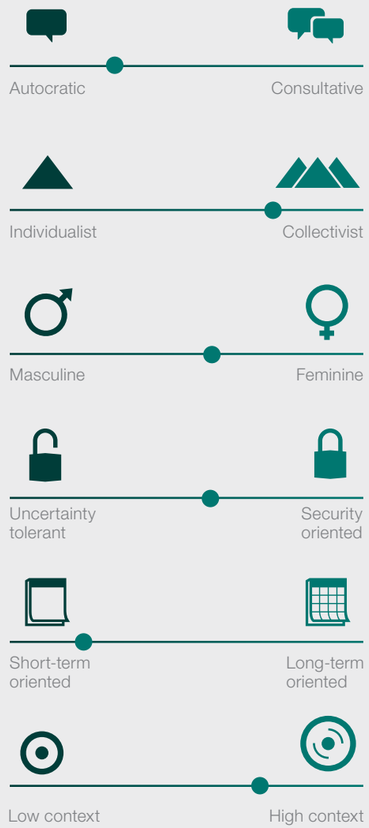
Job Satisfaction

Traditionally, workers build close, loyal bonds to their employers.

Younger workers seek more engagement and satisfaction from their work.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows that autocracy and collectivism are especially strong dimensions in traditional Moroccan culture. Like all developing countries, however, there is evidence of strong countertrends within younger generations that have more exposure to other cultures.



Autocratic /Consultative
Follow the leader

Moroccan culture is autocratic, and the ideal leader has traditionally been a protective figure. Authority is respected; everyone knows his or her place, and subordinates expect to be told what to do.

Decisions are generally reached at the top, although decision-makers generally seek the advice of trusted advisors. Since most organizations are extremely bureaucratic, decision-making is a slow process.

Employees are generally treated with respect. Managers often adopt a paternalistic role with their employees. They provide advice, listen to problems, and mediate disputes that are personal or business-related.

Individualist/Collectivist
Never alone

Moroccans enjoy a collectivist culture of support and generosity. Friends are often treated like family, and sharing is part of life. Relationships are very important, and people make strong commitments to groups.

The family is the most significant unit of Moroccan life and plays a pivotal role in social relations. The individual is subordinate to the family or group. The family can have more importance than business. Nepotism is viewed positively, since it indicates patronage of one's family.

Masculine /Feminine
Competitive and cooperative

Moroccans are competitively "masculine" in business. Leaders are expected to be assertive and decisive, and fight to win. On the other hand, Moroccans are also non-confrontational and workers want to do what's expected of them. In the workplace, cooperation and competition are often framed as leading to the same objectives.

Morocco is wrestling with the challenges of modernity in the context of religious and cultural imperatives. This is evident in the question of what role women should play in the society and how this should impact government policies. Moroccan women want a larger role in society.

The rising cost of living makes dual career families an economic necessity in urban areas. Most Moroccans accept that with the same education and training, women can perform the same jobs as men.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Codified security

Morocco is a low risk and low change tolerant culture. This makes sense considering the importance of avoiding *hshuma*. In their collective culture, personal shame extends to the family. The stigma of failure, especially public, is why many Moroccan business owners keep struggling businesses open rather than publicly admit to the failure.

In low-risk cultures it's often difficult for new ideas or products to prosper. Expect it to take time for Moroccans to support new concepts.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
As time goes by

Most Moroccans see time as something that is fluid that adjusts to various circumstances. They view personal relationships more important than time and would not rush someone to finish a conversation.

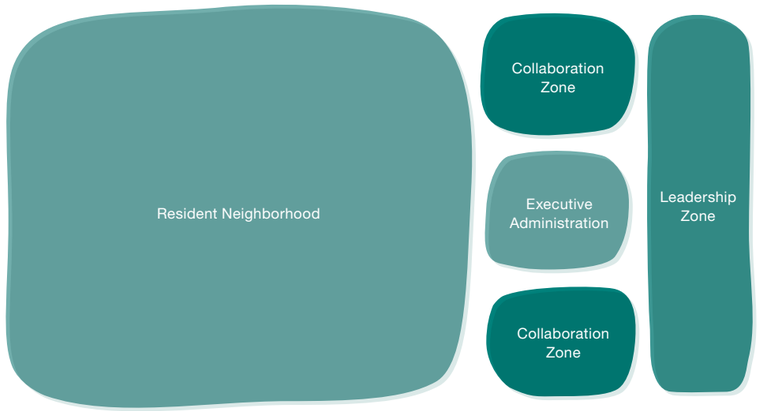
Moroccans believe that their future is written for them—this is called *maktoob*; they accept their status in life and do not believe they can rise above the social class into which they are born. Many sentences end with the phrase *insh'allah* (god willing). This explains the Moroccan approach to time, accountability and initiative.

Low Context/High Context
Silence is communication

Morocco is a high-context culture. There's a layer of meaning that's unspoken in most communications, and people tend to avoid direct confrontation as a way of showing respect. Facial expressions are often more telling than words. It's considered rude to jump into business at the start of a conversation. Important meetings happen only in executive offices, where the design and furnishings communicate stature and hierarchy.

Thought Starters
Morocco

Many workplaces in Morocco today reflect tradition and hierarchy through formal, dark and ornate designs that reinforce established cultural norms. Looking ahead, organizations that are expanding in Morocco have the opportunity to explore more progressive spaces that encourage new behaviors and attract younger generations. Establish protocols and training encourage leadership to help workers embrace new workstyles.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Workers are comfortable with a high degree of density, so benching or other workstation designs that support a small footprint are viable options.
- The executive office is sacrosanct in Moroccan culture, so consider ways to augment the space with technology to communicate stature within less space.

Enhance Collaboration

- Informal collaboration is a new behavior. Position areas for collaboration in close proximity to individual work areas and include settings for lounge postures that are important to Moroccan culture and to encourage impromptu interactions.
- Structured areas for collaboration with distributed colleagues should have video capabilities which helps high context cultures such as Morocco gain a better understanding of the meeting content and enables workers to contribute more effectively.

Attract, Develop and Engage

- Incorporate spaces that offer higher visibility to leadership and encourage more interaction at all levels of the organization.
- Younger workers are enthusiastic about new ways to work and are attracted to more progressive spaces that are open and transparent.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

- The concept of brands is gaining traction in Morocco. Reinforce br d identity and messages throughout the space to help workers understand and adopt behaviors consistent with the brand.
- Build on Morocco's collectivist culture by developing spaces that foster group activities and interactions.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Although comfortable with groups and density, Moroccan workers value places that are calming, where they can step away from others and control the amount of stimulation and interaction they face.
- Create spaces that foster multiple postures, sitting, lounging and perching.

Transparency for leaders and employees can foster trust and enhance collaboration.

Lounge postures are important in Morocco when socializing with co-workers or visitors.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

The Netherlands

A CULTURE OF BALANCED CONTRASTS

As participants in a secular, multicultural and tolerant society, the Dutch respect individuality and typically take a “live and let live” approach to life. At the same time, they place high value on consensus at work to keep things running smoothly.

A small country, the Netherlands has a very good public transportation system and many people also frequently use bikes to get around. Mobility is taken for granted, and people are used to taking their work with them versus always going into the office.

Innovative workplaces in the Netherlands accommodate this culture’s unique combination of individuality and teamwork within comfortable and relaxed environments. Because flexible, mobile work and desk-sharing are so well accepted, a significant number of progressive companies don’t provide any assigned workspaces or private offices; instead, all workspaces are 100 percent shared.

NOTABLE The Netherlands has extensive health and safety regulations that set standards for access to daylight, indoor air quality, noise levels and ergonomics. No other European country has so many norms on the ergonomic quality of office furniture. User-adjusted seating and worksurfaces are required to accommodate a physically diverse population.

Key Facts
The Netherlands

Work Dynamics

Early adopters of flexible work; most routinely do some of their work away from the office.

Resist autocratic management styles.

Tend to keep workplace interactions pragmatic and to the point.

Social norms protect personal space in open offices; interruptions, especially for non-work-related small talk, are regarded as inconsiderate.

Sociability at work typically occurs only at designated times, such as lunch.

At most organizations, an employee work council is consulted for important decisions, including workplace design issues.

Work Hours

The Dutch work fewer hours than workers in most other countries, typically less than 40 hours per week; personal time has high value.

Being punctual for meetings and staying focused on work while at work are norms.

Lunch breaks are short and simple; workers typically eat together.

Staying late or working during off-hours at the office is not common.

Quality of Life

68%
of population consider themselves thriving

1%
suffering

Among European nations, only Scandinavian countries score higher in wellbeing

Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

Gender Equality

A very high rating for gender equality and human development, 3rd in the world.

Percentage of women with at least secondary education is nearly comparable to men (86% vs. 89%).

60% of women participate in the labor force vs. 73% men

Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

More than 55% of employed women work part-time

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011

Job Satisfaction

Satisfaction is very high; 90% say their job gives a feeling of work well done.

Source: Eurofound, 2011

73% say the organization they work for motivates them to give their best job performance.

Source: Eurofound, 2011

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows the Netherlands as a country with a distinct culture of extremes.

Autocratic/Consultative
Questioning authority is a cultural norm

Power and hierarchy don't immediately impress the Dutch; instead, they respect credibility, autonomy and knowledge, and lean toward a consultative approach in which authority is earned and one-on-one dialogue prevails.

Individualist/Collectivist
Working alone, eating together

The Netherlands ranks as the fourth highest country in the world for individualism. The Dutch are self-reliant, focus on self-fulfillment and tend toward social independence. Workplace interaction is pragmatic, functional and to-the-point.

Masculine/Feminine
Cooperation is key

Ranking high on the "feminine" cooperative end of the scale, the Dutch mistrust boasting and prefer modesty. Despite their strong individualism, consensus is an important part of the Dutch "live and let live" mentality. The well-being of all is strongly valued, and leisure and family time are protected as important parts of life.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Open-minded to change and taking risks

As an adaptable and diversity-accepting culture, the Dutch are willing to take risks and implement change. They're less attached to rules, rank and procedures than people in many other countries, and they're favorably inclined toward to new solutions that show promise for good outcomes.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Balancing today's enjoyments and tomorrow's gains

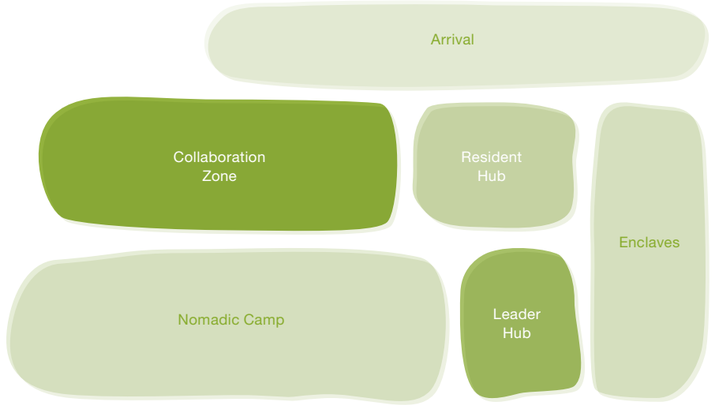
Although tending slightly toward a short-term orientation, the Dutch are more long-term oriented than people in other European nations. They share a relative lack of concern for "keeping face," a common trait in long-term oriented societies. The short-term attributes of enjoying life and valuing leisure are very evident in the Dutch, but they also value the long-term attributes of steadfastness and perseverance, attributing success to effort.

Low Context/High Context
Say what you mean

The Netherlands is a low-context culture. The Dutch like to work independently, and there's an emphasis on directness and verbal clarity when collaborating with others. Work relationships change easily as needed, and time is highly organized.

Thought Starters
The Netherlands

The sociology of work and effective workplace design are well-researched topics in the Netherlands. As a result, Dutch offices are among the most progressive in the world, and worker expectations are high. Within an adaptable, diverse culture, workplaces in the Netherlands are all about flexibility, mobility and democracy. Working from home or at a co-working facility is well accepted, shared workspaces are common and signs of hierarchy are rare. Nomadic workers need spaces to see and be seen so they stay connected to the organization and to each other.



Dutch workers prefer a range of settings to choose from within the office and are accustomed to unassigned spaces.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Executives don't need or want traditional, dedicated suites. Shift that real estate to multi-function spaces that can be fully utilized at all times.
- Uncomfortable with too much density, Dutch workers prefer a range of settings they can choose from that support various work modes.

Enhance Collaboration

- The Dutch embrace distributed work—spaces for video conversations with teammates from around the world can help augment those interactions.
- Most workplace interactions tend to be functional and direct; spaces that support casual collaboration can help workers engage with each more frequently.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- As a culture with individualistic tendencies, the Dutch benefit from open collaborative settings that help reinforce teamwork, learning and group cohesion.
- The Dutch prefer workspaces that feel more like homes or clubs: meeting rooms with lounge furniture incorporating playful elements into workplace design, such as areas for video gaming, can be a good strategy for motivating interaction at the office.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

- Dutch workers expect quality and egalitarianism throughout their workplaces; they respond best to spaces that display minimal or no differentiation based on rank.
- Leaders are comfortable nomads who don't need dedicated executive space. Consider settings that encourage leaders and employees to stay connected.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Ergonomics, access to daylight, indoor air quality and noise levels are regulated for Dutch workplaces, making them among the most supportive and pleasing work environments in the world.
- Settings for socialization and informal collaboration can help workers feel connected to others and create a deeper sense of purpose.

Workers can shift from individual work to informal collaboration easily, while nearby enclaves provide areas for focused work.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

Russia

A MULTI-LAYERED IDENTITY

Abundant natural resources of oil, metal ores, coal and other commodities, along with a well-educated labor force and expanding middle class—these advantages create opportunities that have attracted multinational business to Russia ever since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

Today Russia is one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. Among the challenges this vast nation faces is the imperative to improve productivity and streamline processes in its fast-evolving culture. Due to the many radical changes Russians have experienced in their lifetimes, mismatched attitudes and approaches coexist, which makes its culture difficult to decipher. Like their nesting *matrioshka* dolls, Russian people have built up layers of identity, each springing from a different era in their history.

NOTABLE Moscow, with more than 8 million residents, is the political and business center of Russia, and its real estate is scarce and coveted. Though Russia is the largest country in the world, (almost twice as large as the United States and spanning nine time zones), much of it is undeveloped and under-inhabited.

Key Facts
Russia

Work Dynamics

Flexible work arrangements are fairly common, especially for women; remote work is limited due to a still-developing intranet infrastructure.

The social side of work is very important for most Russians.

In Russian companies, interaction happens at the workstation; few have informal meeting spaces.

There's tolerance for high density in homes and offices.

Processes are bureaucratic and paper-dependent.

Transparency is unfamiliar and can be an adjustment for workers.

The pace of work is fast and intense.

Work Hours

The workweek is officially set at 40 hours, but overtime is common.

In Moscow, many commute for an hour or more.

Arriving late for work or cross-town meetings is tolerated.

The workday typically begins 9:00—10:00 a.m., but often extends late into the evening as business takes place over dinner and drinks.

Quality of Life

Russia's rapid transition to a free-market economy has been unsettling for much of its population and created a split society; 21% of population consider themselves thriving, 22% suffering.

Among European nations, 28 countries score higher in wellbeing and 11 score lower.

Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010

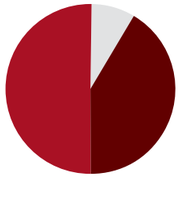
Gender Equality

High scores for gender equality and human development, 66th in the world.

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is close to men (91% vs. 96%).

58% of women participate in the labor force vs. 69% men.

Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011



over 1/3 of managers are women

Source: GrantThornton International

Job Satisfaction

Many Russians are strained financially and divided on capitalism.

41% disapprove of the move to a free-market economy

50% approve

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2009

Finding balance between work and life is a challenge and growing cause of dissatisfaction. Older workers are nostalgic for security; younger generation workers want more free time.

With a shortage of experienced Russian talent, job-hopping for a higher salary is common.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

Because the culture of Russia has been fundamentally recreated during the past two decades, distinctly different attitudes exist side-by-side. Compared to the greater uniformity of cultural dimensions seen in more established nations, Russia displays many disparities.

Autocratic/Consultative
A shift is occurring

Autocracy has been visible throughout Russian history, but recent studies suggest that different attitudes to power and decision-making now coexist. A preference for participative decision-making and more egalitarian management styles are gaining ground as democratic reforms have created opportunities based on education, skills and experience versus political connections.

Individualist/Collectivist
100 friends vs.100 rubles

Russia is less individualistic than developed countries, but the most individualistic among developing ones. If Russians are individualistic, they go about it in a collective way. Especially during the Soviet years, many people depended upon *blat*—complex, personal networks of underground favor exchanges, regulated by unspoken rules. Many collectivist values are expressed in Russian culture—routinely you will hear "Better to have 100 friends than 100 rubles."

Masculine/Feminine
Today's' realities vs. yesterday's ideals

While dominant "masculine" behaviors are expected from Russian leaders, less confrontational and more inclusive bonds of friendship are accepted among peers. Coupled with an emphasis on *dusha* (the Russian soul), this signals leanings toward a more feminine culture. As the market economy provides more incentives for hard work, the intensity of workstyles is increasing. Aggressiveness and a drive for personal status may overtake the more idealistic, nurturing values.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Getting around obstacles

Rules and bureaucracies abound in Russia, presenting significant barriers to foreign companies doing business there. There are so many rules that it's virtually impossible not to break one. This has led to a wide margin for doing business with bribes, but collective efforts by international firms beginning to change this practice. Russians have shown adeptness at navigating conflicting worlds, working in chaotic business situations and finding creative solutions to obstacles. They are frequent job-switchers, on a constant quest for a higher salary. Their economy is dynamic and evolving daily, and so are they.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Paycheck-to-paycheck

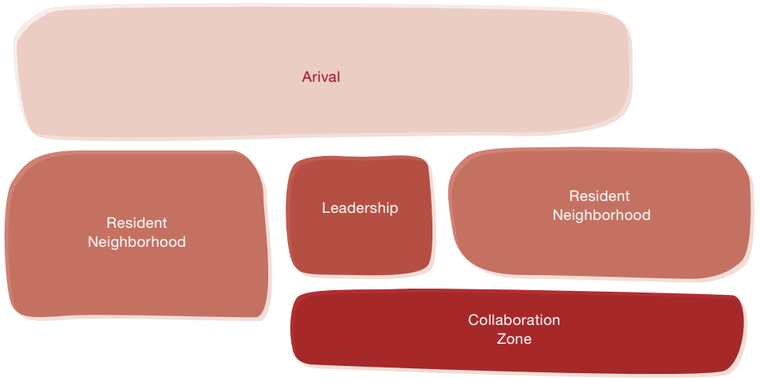
Russian people and businesses have generally adopted a short-term attitude compared to Soviet times when life was more predictable and basic needs were assured. Now, many people live paycheck-to-paycheck without savings and are inclined to "live for today," though they remain nationalistically proud of their country's past achievements such as victory in World War II and the first manned space flight. They're averse to debt, and birth rates are very low.

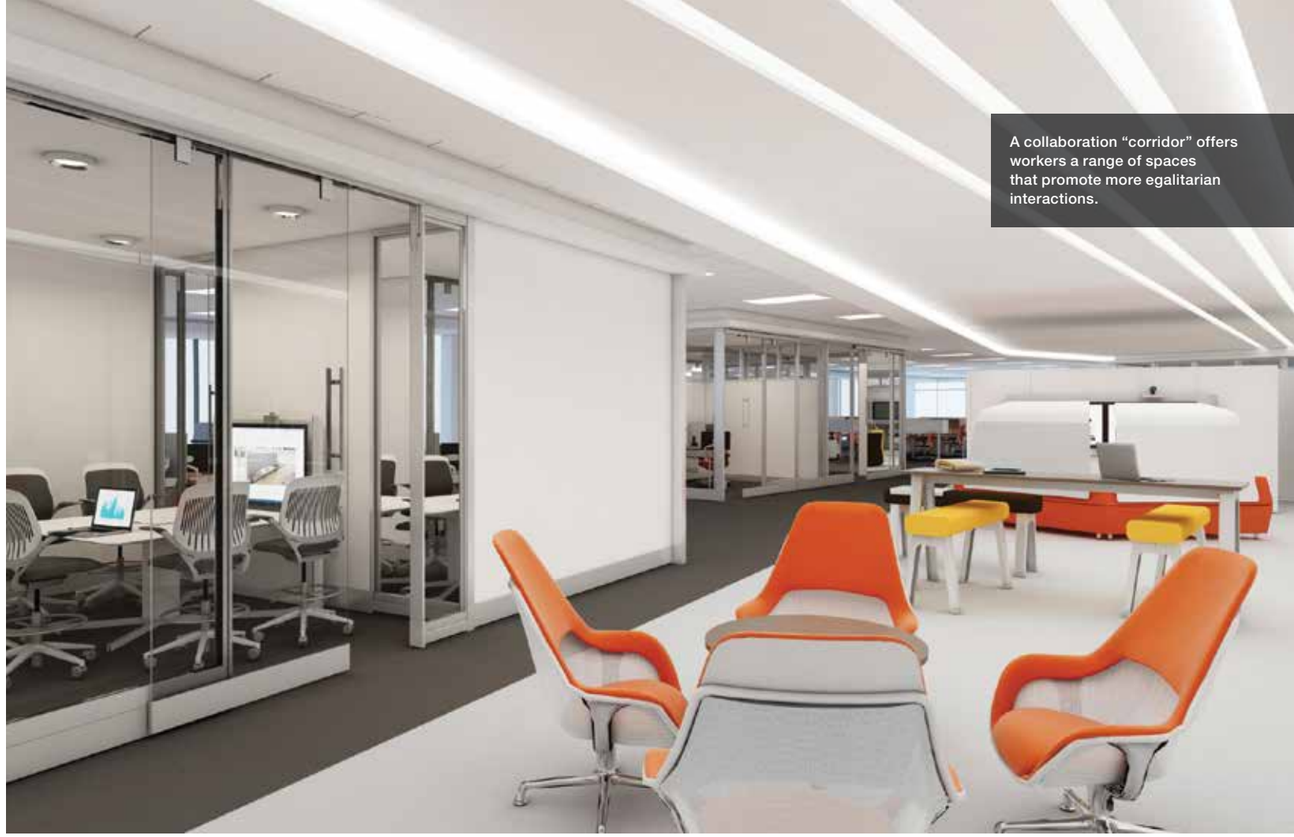
Low Context/High Context
Nyet may not mean "no"

Russia's culture is high context. Relationships must be established before meaningful communication can take place, and the focus of business presentations is often on having detailed context and background information. In verbal tone, Russians can seem blunt to outsiders. In Russian culture, it's generally considered good to know what a person is feeling, but words can be layered with ambiguity. For example, *nyet* may mean "please approach this in a different way"—not necessarily "no."

Thought Starters
Russia

Like other developing nations, change has happened rapidly, which means Russian workplaces are both grounded in traditions, yet quickly incorporating new ideas and new ways of working. Despite its vast territories, urban real estate is expensive, especially in Moscow. Open-plan environments offer cost savings and are becoming more common as multinational firms stream into Russia, though they contrast dramatically to the traditional Soviet "cabinet-style" layout in which enclosed rooms line long hallways and the size and location of each office reflects hierarchy. Change management strategies will be key to help Russian workers embrace new workplaces and styles.





A collaboration "corridor" offers workers a range of spaces that promote more egalitarian interactions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Russian workers tolerate fairly dense workstation planning, which affords extra room for alternative spaces.
- Executive offices are important to the culture; explore reduced footprints with enhanced spaces that reflect status by including high-end surfaces and materials, and embedded technologies.

Enhance Collaboration

- Socializing and tight bonds are integral to the Russian culture. Cafes in close proximity to work areas can build on that cultural trait and encourage informal collaboration sessions.
- A collaboration "concourse"—a range of spaces within a high-traffic area—can promote more regular shifts between "I" and "we" work.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- The work environment is becoming a powerful tool to attract the best talent, who are looking for upbeat, creative environments that also speak to the Russian desire for "hominess". Providing a variety of spaces to choose from based on the type of work they need to do can help workers stay more engaged.
- Russians change jobs with increasing frequency. Open spaces that help them feel connected to the organization's purpose and to other workers can improve retention.

Build Brand & Activate Culture

- Brand and company culture are new concepts to most Russians and not fully utilized yet. Especially for multinationals, design spaces that are authentic to the brand to increase understanding and build trust.
- In this culture where family and friends are extremely important, brand and company loyalty can be cultivated by creating spaces that promote a sense of community and belonging.

Enrich Wellbeing

- A more egalitarian approach to space, and more choice and control over where and how they work will help employees feel less stressed and more highly valued.
- In a country where pollution-related health conditions exist, emphasis on sustainable materials and practices in the workplace can enhance workers' wellbeing.

Transparency for Russian leadership spaces builds on the culture's tendency for inclusiveness and nurturing.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

Spain

READY FOR CHANGE

Spanish culture today is teeter-tottering between time-honored traditions and the lure of new ways of working and living. Holdovers from the past are tenacious: status based on hierarchy, centralized decision-making and long working hours. Younger generations, however, have a strong appetite and readiness for change. As they gain influence, a more informal and participative approach to work is emerging.

With Spain at an economic precipice, the best companies realize the need to be more innovative, high-tech and global, and many young workers are eager to reinvent their county's work culture and strengthen its economy.

NOTABLE The Spanish attitude toward time is "flexibility". Meetings often begin late, and need to follow an agenda. Managers are expected to moderate discussions, which can become lively. Although Spaniards value the stability of structure, they are used to living with uncertainty, so an improvisational approach frequently prevails. Knowing how to "go with the flow" is an admired trait.

Key Facts
Spain

Work Dynamics

New technologies are increasing mobility and flexibility, but managers still prefer supervising people at the workplace.

Meetings are intense and lively, usually led by management.

Most Spaniards believe fun and work don't mix; spaces for relaxing or socializing in the workplace are less common.

Work Hours

People put in long days; the percentage of people who work more than 50 hours per week is higher than in most Western world countries.

Source: Eurofound 2010

50 hours per week.

Lunch hours draw people together; business lunches are vital for developing relationships.

Social time at work is becoming more accepted; employees escape for a coffee to have quick discussions or celebrate special occasions.

Quality of Life

Sense of overall wellbeing is declining; in 2010 36% of population considered themselves thriving, 6% suffering 2010; since then unemployment rates have climbed to 25% as Spain battles recession.

Source: Gallup Global Wellbeing Report

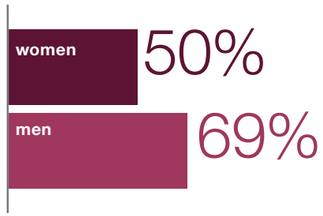
Gender Equality

Spain scores very high for gender equality and human development worldwide, though it ranks lower (23rd) than many other Western World countries.

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is slightly lower than men (71% vs. 76%).

Overall unemployment remains high, but employment opportunities for women have risen dramatically during the past 15 years.

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

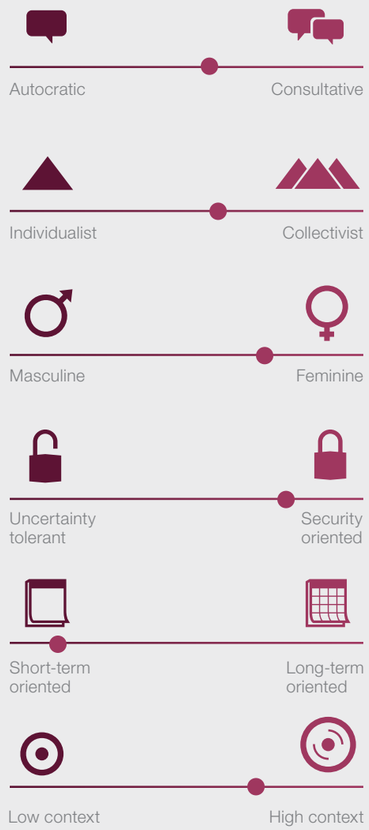
Very few women are in executive ranks.

Job Satisfaction

Because there's clear delineation between work and personal life, Spaniards put less importance on job satisfaction; personal life is the realm for doing what you want to do.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The distribution of scores shows Spanish culture distinguished by a strong aversion to unpredictability along with an extremely short-term orientation. This often results in a unwillingness to take even small risks for long-term gains.



Autocratic /Consultative
An evolving distribution of power

Spain's recent political history of authoritarianism and paternalism is still evident in the importance of hierarchies i-n most aspects of life—politics, public administration, business and family. But as a new generation comes of age in a more liberal and democratic society, there's growing opposition to formally centralized power. In business, securing managerial positions has become less about seniority and more about skills and relationships, opening doors to young professionals who want to lead their companies toward change.

Individualist/Collectivist
Working alone, together

Spaniards are individualists, but they also have collectivist leanings. Solidarity, loyalty and group attachments are important values, and Spaniards are likely to embrace group activities. Workstyles and spaces however, still mostly support individualism and working alone. At multinationals and progressive Spanish companies, a shift is underway toward work as a more collaborative and social endeavor.

Masculine /Feminine
Hard edges, soft center

Balanced between masculine and feminine, Spanish workers contend with conflicting values. On the one hand, work is an arena for competitiveness driven by needs to ascend the ladder and achieve. On the other hand, Spaniards regard personal time as more important than work. Their culture is rich with family celebrations and frequent get-togethers. Many Spanish business people feel professional success means relinquishing a work/life balance. Because personal life holds such high cultural value, giving it up can lead to stress and dissatisfaction.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Laws with loopholes

Because of a strong security orientation, Spaniards have high needs for rules and predictability. But they're also improvisational and tend to take regulations lightly. "A new law, a new loophole" is a Spanish expression that reveals this fundamental dichotomy.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Spontaneous, but stretching forward

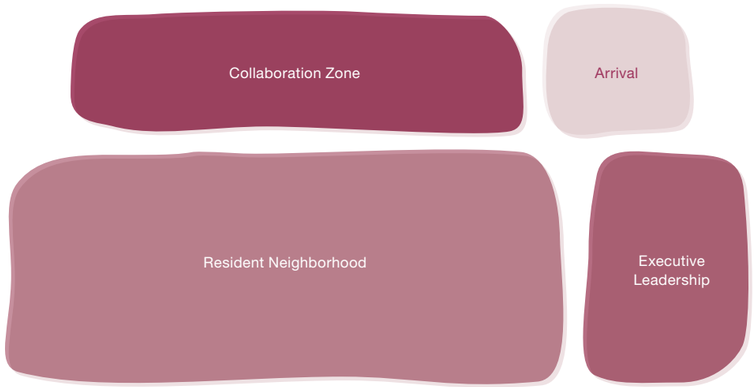
Spaniards are accustomed to an insecure future, and their short-term focus is intense. This sometimes collides head-on with a comparably strong intolerance for uncertainty. As world economies become more interconnected, Spaniards have compelling reasons to plan more for the future.

Low Context/High Context
Relationships frame communication

Spanish culture is high context, placing a high value on interpersonal relationships and being part of a close-knit community. Spaniards typically have a strong sense of family. How a person communicates can easily be more important than the content. Many messages are implicit versus explicit, and showing emotion is considered important for communication. For distance communications, videoconferencing can be more effective than emailing or phone calls since it provides a less nebulous, more intimate frame-work for dialogue.

Thought Starters
Spain

Many workplaces in Spain today still reflect a strong focus on hierarchy, structure and intense work. Leading organizations in Spain, and their young workers are driving a shift toward spaces that recognize tradition, yet promote innovation and new ways of working. This concept offers ideas for balancing expressed hierarchy and employee comfort with density in the open plan. Private offices continue to be important, but collaboration spaces should be situated throughout the plan to encourage visibility of leadership.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Private offices can be designed on a condensed footprint, with administrative assistant spaces grouped together for efficiency.
- Benching can be dense for workers, who are comfortable being in close proximity to colleagues.

Enhance Collaboration

- Multiple media:scape settings can encourage workers to embrace new technologies and foster an open sharing of ideas.
- Spaces intentionally designed to cultivate creative collaboration should be readily accessible.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- A variety of spaces will offer the right mix of both support and autonomy for Spanish workers.
- Provide opportunities not only for focused work, but also for socialization.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

- Incorporate both informal and structured team areas to support group cohesion
- Lead by example. Executive spaces, while present, should be more egalitarian,and less sequestered to promote more engagement with employees.

Enrich Wellbeing

- As employers embrace more flexible, distributed work arrangements, offer a broad range of spaces that people can choose from based on the work they need to do.
- Providing ergonomic seating for Spanish employees who work long hours is a must. Create spaces that encourage alternative postures—standing, leaning, perching—to keep employees alert and engaged.

Incorporating open collaboration areas near spaces designated for individual work, will encourage new behaviors.

Private offices for leaders continue to be important, while adjacent spaces for administrative support and collaboration will encourage openness and transparency.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.

United States

EMBRACING CHANGE

The American culture is often referred to as a quilt: many distinct pieces creating a whole. Even Americans have a difficult time describing their culture without noting paradoxes. Although regional differences are strong, America's penchant for standardization and efficiency has given rise to a number of trends that prevail throughout the country.

With increasing globalization and a predisposition for having status as "the leader of the pack," the United States inspires innovation in other nations in several important arenas, including branding and workplace design.

The skyscraper and the cubicle are among the workplace break-throughs created in the United States. Additionally, America is where the term "creative class" was first coined to describe workers who perform highly skilled knowledge work. Today this country leads in the development of technology-augmented, communal workplaces and the rise of flexible, distributed work. The United States has "the largest number of distributed workers in the world. This trend is generating a radical rethinking of the workplace as a place where employees come often, versus being where they work all the time.

As part of its evolution, the United States is becoming more open and adapting to other cultures to satisfy customers and get things done. At the same time, it's driving concepts of what it means to be a globally integrated enterprise.

NOTABLE Faced with stiffer competition than ever before, design thinking is becoming prevalent within the highest echelons of U.S. corporate leadership as a way of solving problems in a holistic, creative way. Leading corporations now encourage this approach throughout all levels of their organizations.

Key Facts
The United States

Work Dynamics

Flexible and distributed work arrangements are the norm in many industries; more than 70% are implementing alternative work strategies to reduce real estate costs.

70%
of industries are implementing alternative work strategies

Source: CoreNet Global

Connecting with global colleagues is common throughout the day.

Being fast, flexible and innovative are goals for every organization.

As work becomes more collaborative, private offices are on the decline.

Balancing focused work with collaboration is a growing issue.

Workers typically take their cell phones and laptops to meetings so they can multitask.

Work Hours

The work week varies by industry and education level, typically ranging from a 37.5-40+ hour work week..

At least a third of Americans don't take all of their allotted vacation days and consider it important to demonstrate they are sacrificing their personal lives for career.

Source: CNN

U.S. companies expect employees to stay connected via technology during off hours.

Working lunches are a way to optimize productivity.

Quality of Life

Despite ongoing economic uncertainty, Americans score high in wellbeing; 57% of population consider themselves thriving, only 3% suffering.

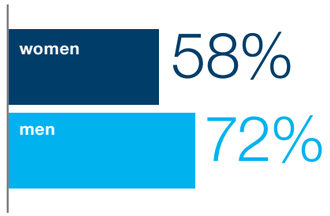
(Gallup Global Wellbeing Report, 2010)

Gender Equality

Very high scores for gender equality and human development, 4th in the world

The percentage of women with at least secondary education is equal to men at 95%

Gender participation in the labor force



Source: United Nations Development Programme Report, 2011

Job Satisfaction

Almost half of Americans consider their jobs extremely stressful

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Job-hopping is low due to high unemployment in the current economy.

Scores on Cultural Dimensions

The United States is the most individualist nation in the world; the needs and rights of individuals are extremely important in American life. Other culture dimensions are subservient to this dominant trait.

Autocratic/Consultative
Question authority

The United States is low on this power distance scale, and a strong mark of its consultative leanings is the reign of informality. From dress codes to communication styles, the American approach is much more relaxed than that of other countries.

In the workplace, employees are expected to voice opinions as a way to participate in decision-making. Authority is still valued, although networks are often more influential than hierarchy.

Individualist/Collectivist
The cowboy as icon

America's extreme individualism lies in its history—founded by immigrants who wanted to create their own destinies among the seemingly limitless opportunities in the vast expanse of its Western territories. It's no accident that the cowboy—the personification of a self-reliant individualist—became an icon of American culture.

Even within families, people are expected to be independent, to pursue their own interests and make choices about their own lives. Ownership of property and mobility are highly valued.

There's a tendency to connect important achievements with a single hero, such as Steve Jobs, versus companies or teams, and recognition of individual efforts is considered essential to motivation.

Americans are highly philanthropic; they set records for being the biggest donors to charitable causes in the world. For many, their contributions don't end with money but continue with donating services and expertise.

Masculine/Feminine
Competing to win

The United States culture tends toward the competitive "masculine" side of this scale, oriented to results and achievements. Americans like to win and are comfortable being in charge. Credibility comes from objectivity and expertise. Rational decision- making and logic are valued over passion.

Work is very important, but, as in many other countries, behaviors associated with a feminine culture are on the rise as Americans seek better work/life balance and meaning in their lives.

Uncertainty Tolerant/Security Oriented
Encouraging out-of-the-box

The United States is an uncertainty-tolerant nation. Its culture appreciates creativity and unusual ideas. Routine is considered a rut; people value spontaneity. Rules, regulations and policies are kept only if they make sense. There's an open approach to education and work. Managers tend to focus on strategy more than day-to-day operations—unthinkable in a more security-oriented culture.

Short-term Oriented/Long-term Oriented
Live for today

America is a short-term oriented culture. Consumption was most common for decades, but has shifted to sustainability. Collaborative use models, such as Zipcars and shared workspaces, are gaining a following, especially among younger generations.

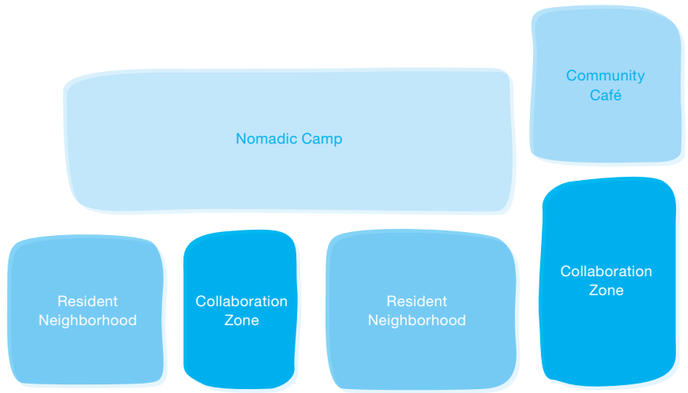
Business partnerships can be fluid, based on the opportunities available and changing market conditions. Having vision and a sense of purpose is important, but is balanced with the need to measure performance on a quarterly basis, and investors expect quick results.

Low Context/High Context
Time is money

The United States is a low-context culture,but sustainability is becoming more valued. Getting things done is more important than relationships, and communication tends to be overt and clear, with more focus on the verbal component than body language. Value is placed on "straight talking" without "beating around the bush." The indirect communication styles of high-context cultures can be frustrating to Americans, while those cultures may consider American directness abrasive.

Thought Starters
The United States

A typical American workplace used to be summarized in one word: cubicles. The need for both collaboration and focused individual work, combined with the freedom of mobile technology, has led to radically new ways of working. The physical workplace has to keep pace and even lead to new behaviors. A key principle is to offer a palette of places for workers to choose from that support both "I" and "we"work - that can be either owned by individuals or shared by many - allowing workers to toggle back and forth between modes of work.



A reservable enclosed space provides options for focused collaborative and individual work.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE FIVE KEY WORKPLACE ISSUES

Optimize Real Estate

- Alternative workplace strategies will allow employees to work off-site at various locations as appropriate.
- Spaces should support multiple functions so the real estate is fully utilized at all times (i.e. telepresence room that can used also as a local collaboration tool).

Enhance Collaboration

- Provide spaces for all of the types of collaboration, from quick project evaluation to full-day generative sessions.

Attract, Develop & Engage

- Younger generations seek to integrate their personal and work lives—so some spaces should support a relaxed work style.
- Create visual transparency so newer employees can see and learn from experienced teammates.

Build Brand and Activate Culture

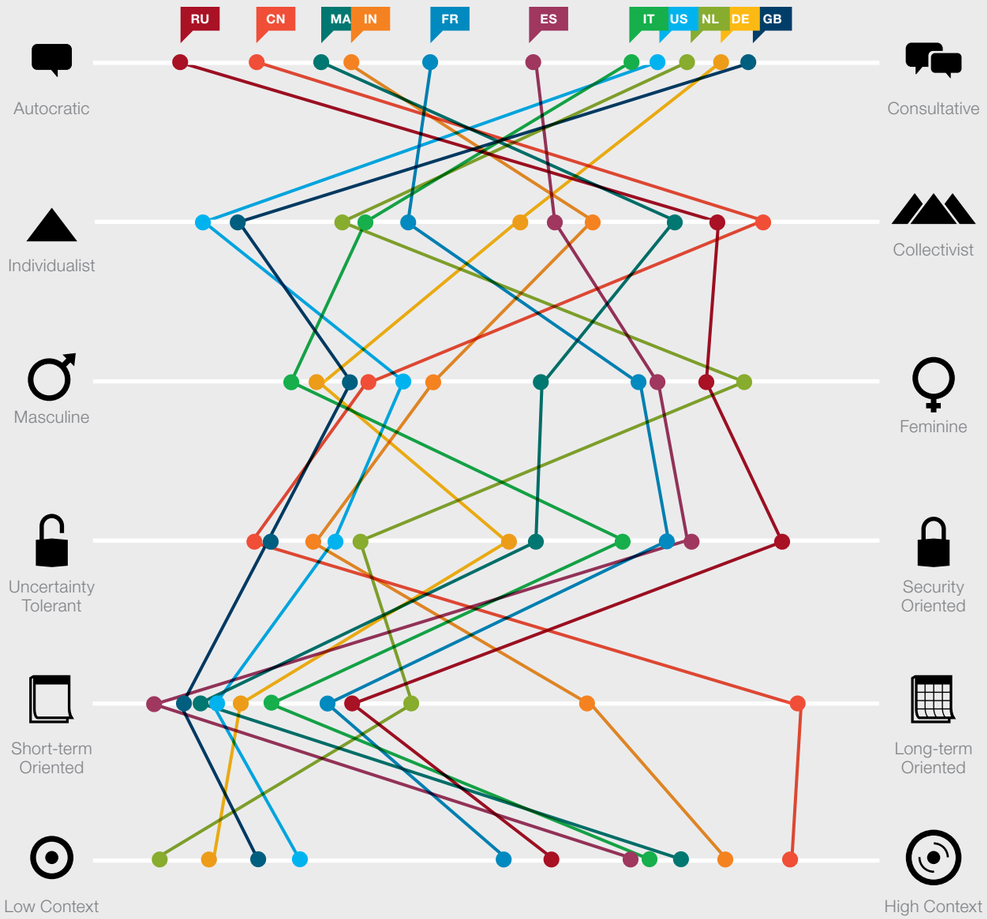
- Spaces should support the types of behaviors consistent with organizational culture.
- Integrate brand messaging throughout employee spaces, not just customer-facing spaces.

Enrich Wellbeing

- Support multiple postures, so employees can sit, stand, walk or perch.
- Some spaces should offer solitude, so workers can moderate the amount of sound or visual stimuli.

Open collaboration spaces and video capability are woven throughout to encourage quick connections with either co-located or distributed teams.

The spaces shown here are intended to help spark ideas. Every product is not available in every country.



CN China
FR France
DE Germany
GB Great Britain
IN India
IT Italy
NL Netherlands
MA Morocco
RU Russia
ES Spain
US United States

Same but Different:

MAPPING THE PATTERNS OF WORK CULTURES

When the American sports broadcaster ESPN opened its New Delhi branch, it understood the importance of balancing the company culture and local sensibilities. Sudhakar Lahade, a senior researcher at Steelcase WorkSpace Futures, says that ESPN India set up a giant screen dedicated to showing cricket matches in the cafeteria. The employees would watch the games together while eating lunch and socializing. On the surface, it is a disarmingly simple apparatus catering to Indian employees' love of the sport. More profoundly, it is a gesture that acknowledges the local culture while inspiring workers to forge trust and emotional bonds over the most beloved, basic activities like eating and enjoying cricket.

Plenty of pundits have been debating how cultural differences impact international business. In this study, Steelcase looks at intercultural issues through the lens of the workplace, exploring patterns of similarities and differences between countries. How do culture-based issues, such as the fear of "losing face," or losing respect and status in public, manifest themselves in the configuration of Chinese workplaces? How does the Netherlands' egalitarian attitude become visible in a Dutch work environment?

The link between culture and space can pose a boundless quandary. Designing a culturally relevant workplace requires understanding the varying and mutating connections between those two seemingly vast concepts. As in the case of ESPN India, it requires knowledge of local behaviors and expectations. At the same time, managers should also pick up on subtle cultural cues embedded in space and leverage them.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORKPLACE CULTURE CODE EMPOWERS AN ORGANIZATION.

By comparing patterns of behavior and of workplace occupancy, this study identifies distinctions and similarities among distant nations. Studying rituals and work processes of 11 nations around the world, Steelcase's multinational team of researchers identified several spatial and behavioral themes and tensions. While a culturally sound workplace has no universal formula, comparing nations according to these parameters shows the dynamic tensions that shed light on the myriad of factors to consider when designing and optimizing workplaces.

The opportunities and challenges in these different cultures demonstrate how a intentionally-designed workplace can foster trust, improve collaboration and ultimately help an organization go global faster and more effectively.

OPTIMIZING SPACE:

Don’t Just Shrink, Rethink

In cities where real estate is a precious commodity, businesses that optimize their space will have a distinct advantage over their competitors. Organizations can’t simply shrink the workplace while ignoring the employees’ wellbeing and productivity. They need to rethink as much as shrink.

A culture’s tolerance to density and acceptance to alternative work strategies will identify how to best optimize real estate in culturally-accepted ways.

Numerous cultural factors must be considered when optimizing real estate. Are Indian employees as averse to density as their German counterparts? Can Chinese bosses thrive in unassigned workspaces as Dutch managers do? Do Moroccan workers expect their environments to be as standardized as their European counterparts who are accustomed to stringent workplace regulations? Could American employees succeed in a tight configuration as much as their Indian colleagues would?

When it comes to space optimization, two dimensions play a critical role in the potential for shrinking space:

1) tolerance for occupancy density and

2) acceptance of working in alternative locations.

Organizations trying to maximize every square meter of real estate in their global markets will face different sets of barriers as well as opportunities.

CHINA, INDIA, MOROCCO, RUSSIA

One pattern encompasses the emerging -economies of China, India, Russia and Morocco, which are similar in their prioritization of executive offices. Executives must present a distinguished impression on behalf of the whole firm, and “losing face” is a cultural taboo, especially in China. In countries with a high power distance score, staff and leaders alike have expectations that executives are benevolent figures, with decisive and authoritative power—their physical spaces should reflect their authority and position.

As a result, shrinking the executive suite will be met with greater resistance in these nations.

Of course, there are variations within the group; unique company cultures and individual differences should always be taken into consideration. Nonetheless, national trends can be observed. In Russia, for instance, open-plan workplaces appear more frequently in small sizes. An intimate group of employees routinely share an open space that they customize, perhaps as a communal home for the “family” of colleagues. “In Morocco, employees tend to personalize their individual territory no matter the scale, sometimes marking their chairs with nametags, other times completely reconfiguring the office to suit their needs,” says Ilona Maier, interior designer and senior researcher at Steelcase.

Lahade observed that Indian employees see designated space as a representation of the individual's role at work. According to Lahade, Indian workers ask themselves three questions in order to establish their place within the organization: “What’s my title?” “How much will I be paid?” and “Where is my space?”

The dominant cultural thread between these four countries is a high tolerance for dense staff workspaces and a willingness among managers to reduce space in order to cut costs. Workplace design is less regulated in these countries, allowing companies to experiment with different measures to optimize space. A notable example is Russia, where the numerous regulations and codes can be contradictory, allowing room for interpretation.

Beatriz Arantes, psychologist and Steelcase researcher, sees a common opportunity here. “The reconciliation of globalization and local identity is best embodied in these emerging markets,” she says. Having undergone rapid changes in the recent years, these dynamic nations are coming up with creative ways for traditions to coexist with new ways of work, Arantes says.

FRANCE, ITALY, SPAIN

The Latin-based European nations in the study, have very similar patterns regarding space optimization. Workers in France, Spain and Italy are less tolerant of dense work environments than emerging markets. The need for ample space, prevalent in the general culture, is supported by stringent regulations on both national and Europe-wide levels. However space allocation is more egalitarian than in emerging countries. While executive spaces continue to be an important reflection of order in the workplace, spaces for both employees and leaders can be reduced, if done in a manner that respects their personal need for boundaries.

The reality of high (and rising) real estate costs has driven space optimization in Italy, Spain and France. Even traditional organizations with entrenched hierarchies have begun applying pressure to reduce every employee’s workspace. Opportunity is being found in the increasing adoption of alternative ways of working (working from home or from another third place location). While working beyond the confines of the office is still not widely adopted in these countries, an infrastructure of coworking spaces, satellite offices and telecenters is emerging in cities and suburban areas as a response to ever-increasing real estate compression and transport congestion.

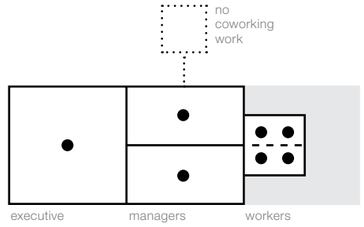
NETHERLANDS, GREAT BRITAIN, UNITED STATES, GERMANY

The United States, Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands all rank high on the scale of individualistic nations, according to Hofstede’s research, which means they expect self-reliance put word on one line and higher levels of autonomy. As a result, workplaces designed to optimize real estate are progressive, focused on driving innovation. Seeking to reduce costs in a competitive global business environment, organizations recognize that workers in these countries are also averse to density, but comfortable with trying new ideas. Germany is beginning to explore a variety of workplace strategies, while the U.S., Netherlands and Great Britain are experienced pioneers of ideas such as hoteling, desk sharing (or “hot desking”), use of coworking spaces or working from home. The latter three countries have seen a wide range of on-and-off-site work arrangements, extending the workplace ecosystem beyond the physical barriers of the office.

Employees are growing accustomed to sharing space in a more democratic manner. In the Netherlands, for instance, where there are less formal hierarchies, the management often occupies the same space with their employees.

“When the Dutch information and communication technology company, Goldfish, set up its first bricks-and-mortar venture after five years in operation and a 33-fold increase in staff, it opted for an innovative hoteling concept,” says Annemieke Garskamp, interior designer and applied research consultant at Steelcase. “One-hundred employees now share 26 workstations that consist of height-adjustable desks for focused work and a variety of other settings supporting different work modes (collaborative, social, learning). By offering employees a wide range of spaces on-site, in addition to the option of working away from the office, the company’s work environment offers employees choice and control while minimizing required space and allowing for increasing headcount.”

PATTERNS FOR OPTIMIZING REAL ESTATE:



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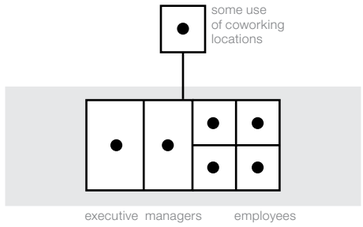
In China, India, Morocco and Russia, who all share a high tolerance for density and are highly hierarchical, space optimization is only achieved by reducing space for workers.



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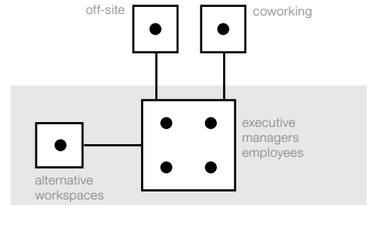
For France, Italy and Spain, which are less tolerant to density, and less hierarchial, space optimization is achieved by reducing space both in private offices and the open plan, and by offering some alternative work strategies.



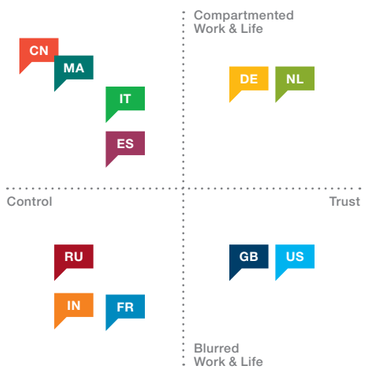
US NL GB DE

In the Netherlands, Great Britain, the United States and Germany, space optimization is achieved through alternative work strategies.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:

Nurturing the Workplace Ecosystem

There is a fundamental shift in the way people work today. Distributed workers are increasingly working with colleagues from around the world, which challenges the notion that work can take place only during business hours. In an effort to navigate time zone differences—as well as the simple desire to balance work and life in many countries—more work is starting to happen outside the office.



Not all cultures have the capacity or willingness to adopt workplace strategies that support flexible hours and distributed work. The countries' readiness for expanding the workplace beyond the office can be best evaluated with two key factors: their preference for separating work and personal lives, combined with their attitudes about work supervision.

Demands for increasing creative collaboration and innovation have shown that rigid organizational structures based solely on hierarchy are proving to be less effective than networks. Leading organizations comprise of project teams, committees, communities and individuals, all of which are virtually and physically networked. New places have emerged as alternative workspaces: coworking centers, innovation hubs and third places have created a new 'workplace ecosystem.'

However, not all cultures have the capacity or willingness to adopt workplace strategies that support flexible hours and distributed work. National culture influences how large and far-reaching a workplace ecosystem can be. A country's readiness for expanding the workplace beyond the office can be best evaluated with two key factors: preference for separating work and personal lives, combined with attitudes about work supervision. For instance, in Germany, where personal time is inviolable, shifting the work hours has not gained as much traction as in the United States, despite the proficient spatial and technological infrastructures. In China, with its employees' tendency to work together under the guidance of supervisors, the extent of flexible work arrangements seen in Great Britain is widely-adopted to be adopted in the near-term.

GREAT BRITAIN, UNITED STATES

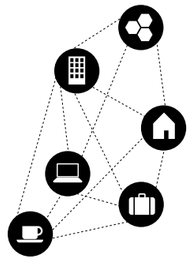
Work cultures in the United States and Great Britain are defined by a trust-based managerial culture and porous boundaries between work and life. Work is ubiquitous—on the road, at the airport, in the living room. Melanie Redman, WorkSpace Futures researcher, says "What is at stake is not so much work/life balance, but work/life blurring." A worker's career is becoming organically integrated into his or her personal life. In these nations, the workplace ecosystem extends well beyond the boundaries of the physical work environment; work happens anywhere and everywhere, says Redman.

GERMANY, NETHERLANDS

For countries like Germany and the Netherlands, nurturing the workplace ecosystem means striking the right balance between privacy and peer interaction while supporting both remote work and on-site tasks. Considering that employees tend to actually put in longer hours when working remotely, this requires not only sufficient digital technologies, but also support networks, governmental or otherwise, for workers who must juggle career with household tasks and child-rearing duties.

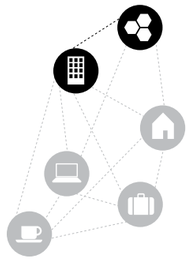
NETWORK ECOSYSTEM

In this ecosystem, workers have a range of options, but culture determines which are viable and most appropriate.



GB US

Work happens anytime and anywhere and workers in these countries have been early adopters of alternative work practices for a long time.



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Working outside of the office is a fact of life. After years of home office experimentations, German and Dutch workers are now moving to coworking environments to enjoy work and community interaction.

HIERARCHICAL ECOSYSTEM

In this ecosystem, work happens exclusively at the office. Some employees, based on position and activities, may be able to work at alternative locations.

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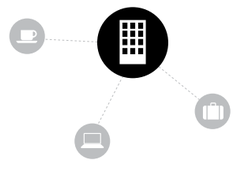
The corporate office is still the primary destination for work in these countries, but an emerging offering of alternative spaces is occurring and is rapidly transforming urban and rural landscapes.



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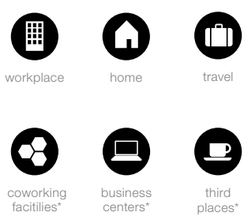
The need for control and supervision and the preference for separating work and life is limiting the practice of alternative work strategies.



***Coworking facilities**
an alternative to working at home, with an emphasis on creating community, usually for self-employed individuals and small startups

Business centers
individual offices available for rent that share office equipment, services, and other amenities

Third places
such as coffee-shops and libraries

FRANCE, INDIA, RUSSIA

In Russia, India and France, the legacy of managerial culture based on control is combined with a blurred work/life boundary. Employees spend all their working hours (and more) in the office. Distributed work is not widely accepted by middle managers and work often can seep into personal time. Coworking centers and other third spaces have emerged in big cities in these markets, but the adoption curve by corporations is low. Freelancers and other independent workers are regular users of the work ecosystem versus corporate employees or civil servants.

CHINA, MOROCCO, SPAIN, ITALY

In places like China, Spain, Morocco and Italy, workers and leaders prefer to keep work exclusively inside the office, making distributed tasks less likely. There is little demand for enlarging the workplace ecosystem today. In China, where supervisors' guidance at the workplace is prevalent, workers don't expect to seek out alternative spaces for focused work like their British or American counterparts do.

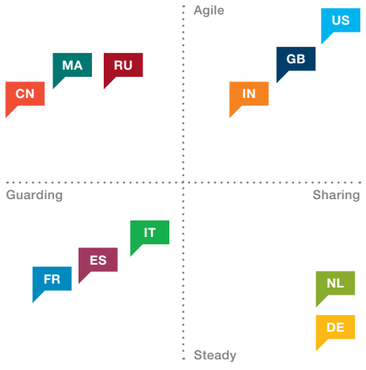
A "hands-on" approach to managing workers, in addition to the divide between work and life, has discouraged alternative work practices and a broader ecosystem from becoming more commonplace.

Distributed teams collaborating in order to innovate is an economic reality and a strategic goal for many organizations, but it is only possible when the workplace ecosystem is in harmony with both the organizational and national cultures. By understanding the dominant component of managerial culture and work-life blurring in a given culture, business leaders and design professionals can understand the barriers and enablers of implementing alternative workplace strategies in different markets.

FUELING INNOVATION:

Creative Collaboration

What makes a culture more prone to collaborating than others? How can employers channel these characteristics into creativity and innovation?

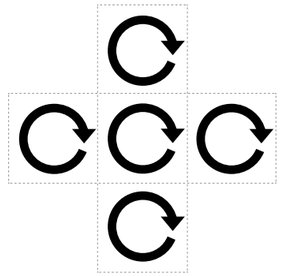


How much a culture is open to innovative collaboration practices can be predicted by comparing two sets of behavior: a culture's agility, measured by whether workers are generally resistant or open to change; and how prone they are to sharing or guarding information.

Conditions for innovation are complex. "A work environment is much larger than just a sum of its furniture," says Yasmine Abbas, professorial research fellow at Zayad University. In a world where technology has enabled workers to perform tasks anywhere, physically going to work takes on a significant meaning. Abbas sums it up: "Space is about creating a community."

A space that is optimized for innovation encourages new ideas to flow and realize their potential. But an ideal configuration in Minnesota may not work the same way in Guangdong. Design must take cultural traits into consideration. How much a culture is open to innovative collaboration practices can be predicted by comparing two sets of behavior. On the one hand, a culture's agility can be measured by whether workers are generally resistant or open to change. On the other hand, how prone they are to sharing or guarding information can be an indicator of how comfortable they are with collaborative work. Together these attributes help us seek solutions for designing creative and collaborative spaces that are appropriate to the culture.

Ultimately, fostering creativity and integrating it into collaborative processes requires an appropriate management culture. Understanding cultural similarities and differences between countries is integral to inspiring fruitful collaboration among workers. When collaborative spaces are designed with an understanding of cultural norms, it can help foster innovation.



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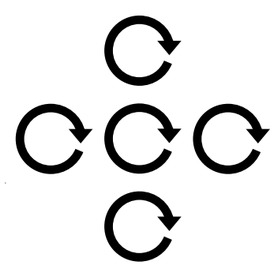
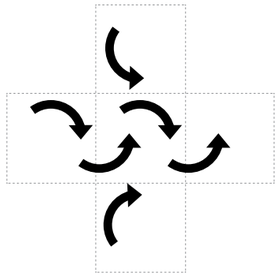
Creative collaboration tends to be intra-departmental and takes place in dedicated spaces following a formal process.



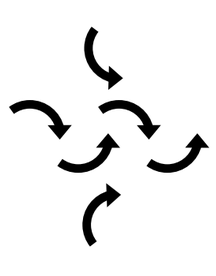
CH MA RU

Creative collaboration tends to take place in dedicated spaces (not always structured collaboration spaces) following a formal process and only with a select group of participants.



DE NL

Creative collaboration tends to take place in structured collaboration spaces, following a formal process and involves people from both within and outside the organization.



IN US GB

Creative collaboration tends to take place anywhere; it is second nature to the work culture.

FRANCE, ITALY, SPAIN

France, Italy and Spain can be loosely grouped together as nations where interactions are explicit and take place in specific spaces. The research shows that in cultures with a lower tolerance for uncertainty, workers tend to be careful about sharing information with colleagues and are deliberate before making big changes. Accordingly, spaces and processes of interaction need to be structured and explicit. Cafés and other informal spaces may be regularly used for socialization, but it requires a new set of protocols and executives leading by example for these behaviors to be readily adopted in the workplace.

INDIA, GREAT BRITAIN, UNITED STATES

In agile and collaborative nations like the United States, and India, interactive processes are open-ended and not anchored to specific spaces. Perhaps it's predictable that a country that celebrates the concept of "open source", the United States has a work culture that requires collaboration and participation. "Collaboration is an iterative, rolling, often very informal process. Collaboration relies on social networks, informal connections, and how many interactions you have during the day," says Julie Barnhart-Hoffman, Steelcase design researcher. India, which is in a dynamic state of change, shows how a nation can quickly adopt technologies to become a new, global business hub. Even as the nation is undergoing great social changes, personal relationships continue to be valued, making collaboration an ingredient necessary for doing business. An individual desk in this South Asian nation can easily double as a place for communal interaction among colleagues according to Wenli Wang, a member of the culture study research team at Steelcase.

CHINA, MOROCCO, RUSSIA

In China, Morocco, and Russia companies take internal confidentiality seriously, which means workers have been traditionally cautious about sharing knowledge. While teamwork within the same branch of an organization is emphasized, different departments tend to be highly segregated in separate spaces. So there tend to be few — if any — places dedicated to interdepartmental interaction among colleagues. In a high context culture, collaboration with colleagues in other parts of the world can become more fluid and productive if space is designed to promote the use of video, allowing workers to derive meaning from nonverbal cues and other elements that add context.

Cafés are other spaces where interdepartmental communication can be encouraged. In Russia, kitchens have traditionally been important aspects of the Russian work life, but they were often relegated to small corners where function was more important than socialization. When the international group Sodexo opened its Moscow office, it experimented with well-stocked, open kitchens to encourage workers to mingle.

GERMANY, NETHERLANDS

Germany and the Netherlands share work cultures that are steady and collaborative. In these countries, the workers' need for structure can be seen in spaces that are specifically designated for collaborative work. Catherine Gall, director of Steelcase WorkSpace Futures in Europe, has worked extensively in Germany and observes that Germans are very open to sharing information with colleagues, within a structured framework. "They are used to working with consultants, but they'd prefer to not have last-minute changes to their plans. Their capacity to collaborate is nuanced by the fact that process discipline is very important and may constrain the volume of new ideas," she says. Employees actively share information, but their interactions take place in structured settings, like meetings and conference calls.

Vodafone, Amsterdam

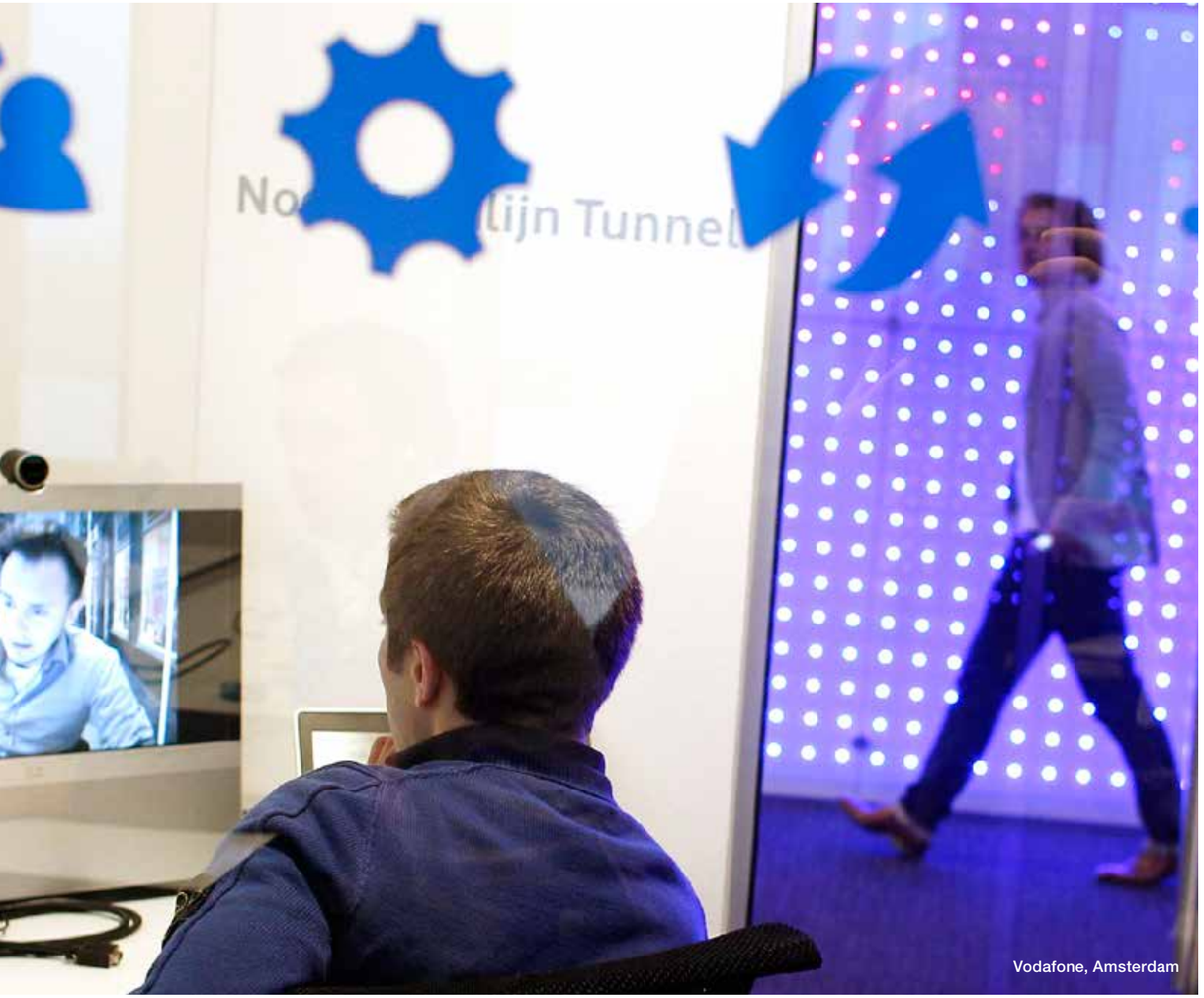
Unlocking The Code

THE CULTURAL CHALLENGES MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES ARE FACING, AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING TO ADDRESS THEM

Global organizations that design and manage their work environments to respect cultural values often realize substantial benefits—attracting and retaining talent, allowing distributed teams to be more productive, promoting employee wellbeing, and much more. As global businesses seek to implement a workplace strategy, their offices have become stages for playing out cultural differences. Many organizations try to export the same workplace strategy that worked at home, without always considering how those spaces will be perceived within a different culture. We all need desks and chairs, right? What could be so different?

It starts with understanding social rituals, spoken and unspoken rules of behavior, hierarchy of needs, employee expectations and legal requirements, says Catherine Gall, Paris-based research director for Steelcase and the leader of an in-depth study of country cultures and their impact on office design. “Trying to decrypt the complexity of the interrelations between culture and space can be overwhelming, but when companies fail to understand and consider this equation, their workplaces are often dysfunctional, stressful, and unappealing to workers.”

"Any project that involves creating a new workplace or transforming an existing one carries some risk," says John Hughes, a principal with Steelcase's international work and workplace consultancy, Applied Research & Consulting (ARC). "With the two most common work environment changes — reducing real estate, or significantly changing workstyles—companies need to account for human factors. Without accounting for this, employees may be very slow to accept new workstyles or resist them outright. It's a killer for morale and that directly affects organizational performance."


Vodafone, Amsterdam

Vodafone, Amsterdam

Hughes says any workplace transformation has four key parts:

- actively engaged leadership;
- significant employee involvement;
- design solutions that evolve over time based on user behavior;
- a carefully planned and executed change management program.

A multinational telecomm headquartered in Great Britain with operating companies in twenty countries, Vodafone has a global workplace strategy that respects local needs. "The Vodafone DNA is evident in each office, but they're not clones of Great Britain headquarters. Vodafone is a family and there's a resemblance from country to country, but we're not identical twins," says Billy Davidson, global property director.

Vodafone has a design guide on an internal collaboration website that's used by the company's property directors worldwide. The guide contains corporate standards for real estate acquisitions, procurement contracts, and workplace standards such as office density, furniture choices, and color palettes based on Vodafone branding. "It gives each local office the opportunity to innovate within boundaries, about 80/20. Based on the guide, they can adapt their workplace to local business needs," notes Davidson.

For example, Vodafone opened a new Netherlands headquarters in Amsterdam in January 2012, that consolidated and replaced three different offices into the one location. "That meant changing the culture of the organization, so it was critical to get staff involved in the process of planning and implementing the changes," says Hughes. The ARC team conducted interviews with the staff, surveyed workers and held day-long workshops to get employees engaged in the project.

Leadership and staff expectations were carefully assessed and compared; understanding where management and employees were aligned and where they diverged showed where the most effort was needed. Both groups wanted to see more teamwork in the organization and the opportunity for workers to take more individual responsibility for how they worked. They envisioned a more mobile workforce in a more flexible work environment.

Management participated in leadership workshops, communicated plans to their staff and, perhaps most importantly, learned how to manage a more mobile workforce, in particular how to measure results instead of more traditional work measures such as hours clocked and face time. "Based on input from our staff and management in the Netherlands, we created a long-term pilot space to test Vodafone's global workplace strategy in Amsterdam and to test many of the new workplace design strategies that later would be implemented at our permanent home," says Paul Smits, global director for organizational effectiveness and change at Vodafone.

"The Vodafone office in Italy probably will never adopt the same workplace model as the Netherlands, but that's the whole point. The age of the team in Amsterdam and the vision of leadership there was different from Italy's, and they each developed the kind of offices they need," says Davidson.

"The Vodafone office in Italy probably will never adopt the same workplace model as the Netherlands, but that's the whole point."

BILLY DAVIDSON, global property director, Vodafone

Culture Change Management

Managing the culture change at Vodafone in Amsterdam was quite involved. “We had to make sure our employees were ready to make the move to a more mobile way of working and a new work environment to support it,” Smits says. Involving employees in the planning process was important, but so were an array of resources created as part of the change management effort, including:

- an intranet information site with virtual tours of the new space;
- temporary workspaces employees could try out and training with new technology;
- coaching and training for managers;
- staff meetings with leadership to discuss the move;
- a launch event in the new space before move-in;
- relocation assistance for those moving to the city;
- an orientation booklet about the new work environment and the surrounding Amsterdam neighborhood.

Vodafone’s Amsterdam project demonstrates what Hughes calls a “pull” strategy of change management: leaders define the strategic intent and key behavior changes needed, while users define needs for the new workplace. “It’s important to generate excitement about the future of the workplace and have employees share that excitement with their colleagues and show how new ways of working will help them do their jobs.”

A “push” strategy takes a different tack. Employees are not necessarily involved in defining what they need in a new workplace and instead are provided the rationale for the change, what the benefits will be, and status updates. The focus is on communication and training, such as how to work in the new environment. “It can be effective in some organizations, especially in more traditional cultures that are more top down driven, but a push strategy doesn’t ensure satisfaction or even acceptance by everyone,” says Hughes. “It’s not unusual for companies to blend pull and push strategies to fit the local and organizational cultures.”

Watch a video on Vodafone’s Amsterdam workplace:

http://go.steelcase.com/7fNbCh

“It’s surprising, really, how well and how quickly people have adapted to all of the changes we’ve made.” notes Smits. You give people support through the transition, you police your policies a bit without going over the top, and you let people know you’ll revisit those policies, and if there are issues you’ll adjust.”

PAUL SMITS, global director, organizational effectiveness, Vodafone

Bridging Oceans, Countries and Cultures

Cross-culture ventures, such as mergers and acquisitions by companies from different countries complicate workplace planning. Izabel Barros, a senior ARC consultant in Latin America, worked with Siemens, the German electrical and telecommunications firm headquartered in Germany, and Nokia, the Finnish telecomm, on a joint operation—Nokia Siemens Networks—with offices in Brazil and Chile.

"First, we made sure that, together with their design firm, Moema Wertheimer Arquitetura of Sao Paulo, we clearly understood the organizational culture of both Siemens and Nokia, their headquarters' country cultures, and the cultures of Brazil and Chile. We explored differences not only between the companies and countries, but even between offices in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Only after we had those issues sorted out were we able to dive into what they wanted for the new company's organizational culture and workplace strategy."

The goal was to apply a global workplace strategy in different locations (Nokia Siemens Networks operates in 150 countries) with some adjustments for local norms.

Barros and her team worked with representatives from all departments to contribute to the planning process. A sophisticated change management program helped employees understand new work processes and the work environment, dubbed "The Modern Office," which "drives corporate culture toward one of teaming, collaboration and interaction. This is critical for high-tech companies who succeed or fail based on their ideas and their ability to create intellectual property." This meant workers, including middle and upper management, would have to change how they went about their work. Individual workstations, for example, would be smaller and closer together to encourage more communication and collaboration, while private offices would be resized, repurposed or go away entirely, depending on local needs.

"We worked with middle management so that they would buy into the idea of smaller offices, working in the open plan, going to places for more privacy, and so on. We also helped people accept more responsibility for how and where they worked, as a way to foster more independence," Barros says.

"It's often the unexpected members of the rank and file who step up and make a difference in driving change, and sometimes pushing the change further than executive leadership thought possible."

IZABEL BARROS, senior ARC consultant, Steelcase

Nokia Siemens, San Palo

Engagement is Key

Deeply engaging workers in the process lies at the heart of a successful organizational change. "It used to be that the hierarchy was the catalyst for behavior. Business today is more complex and changing behavior is more successful when you engage the human networks of the organization. It's often the unexpected members of the rank and file who step up and make a difference in driving change, and sometimes pushing the change further than executive leadership thought possible," notes Barros. "When you involve users in the process of planning the workplace, you get a more culturally appropriate work environment as well as earlier and deeper buy-in from everyone."

The Nokia Siemens Networks change management plan included preparing detailed protocols for each of the new workspaces for employees. Project areas, videoconference rooms, on-demand drop-in spaces, phone booths (small enclaves), lounges, coffee points (places for spontaneous meetings) and individual workspaces (most unassigned)— were explained in detail, with suggestions for best uses, which spaces could be scheduled and how, etc.

Workshops explored the benefits of the new work environment and a 16-page brochure on "The Modern Office" explained how knowledge work is changing and how the new work environment supports it. All materials were produced in the local language and in English, an acknowledgement of the local culture and as an aid to quicker adoption of new workstyles.

"If you're going to make dramatic changes to the workplace and how people work, leaders at all levels need to be involved in planning the change and implementing it. In the Sao Paulo office, for example, not even the president's office had a door on it. Change management involves every level of the organization, but it starts at the top," says Barros.

Accenture, Tokyo

The Global/Local Tension

Even for companies fluent in wide-ranging countries and cultures, global workplace strategies must be adjusted to local needs. Multinational consulting firm Accenture, with clients in over a 120 countries, deals with this issue constantly. “In some ways, Accenture company culture trumps local culture. We have a lot of mobility in our workforce and a decentralized and distributed approach to work: for example, business might be sold in the U.S. but designed in Manila, built and operated in delivery centers in India,” says Dan Johnson, workplace innovation lead for Accenture. “Plus, our clients, who like Accenture are primarily global in scope, expect a high level of consistency from us whether they work with an Accenture office in Chicago, D.C., Warsaw, or Sydney.”

Yet striving for consistency across the corporation shouldn’t be confused with consistency across borders. Patrick Coyne, global director for Accenture Workplace Solutions, says companies err when using markets to define geographies. “You can’t draw borders around a group of countries simply because that’s how you define a market. That underestimates the complexity of the geography and the countries involved. Even though the world is getting smaller, it’s important to understand that doing work in Japan is different than doing work in Russia.”

Accenture offices reflect both local and global insights. “Our workplace strategy focuses on enhancing collaboration and innovation with a consistent physical space, a single look and feel, and the right balance between the company culture and the local culture,” Johnson says. For example, in Tokyo, Accenture opted to relocate some of the staff functions from downtown Tokyo to an office in Yokohama about 45 miles away, and used virtual technologies to connect the two locations and help people stay connected. This approach lowered their space costs in a very expensive real estate market and improved overall work effectiveness.

They managed the change through roundtable discussions with staff who helped plan the changes, email newsletter updates, and a user committee to plan the relocation to the new Yokohama office and implement new work processes. Change is often challenging. “For some of our people, the move to Yokohama meant a longer commute. We spent a lot of time talking with them about the impact and options to minimize it. In response, we introduced a telework program that allows people to work from home two days a week. People thought that wouldn’t work in Japan, where employees often feel the need to work where management can see them. But after two years, we’ve documented increased productivity and engagement, even compared to when they were working in downtown Tokyo. When you look carefully at existing cultures and norms, challenge them a bit as we did with remote working and involve the people in developing the solution, you can knit all of this change together and have an even more positive outcome.”

Youth and Technology Ease Change

Johnson points to two other factors that help with work environment changes. First, demographics. Accenture's workforce, averaged worldwide, is young: nearly two-thirds Gen Y, one-third Gen X and about 3 percent baby boomers. Approximately 70% of the workforce has been with the company for less than five years. "As we grow, we want an early foothold on the kinds of environments that stimulate young people. In some places we're challenging some typical paradigms around leadership and hierarchy, but we plan that intentionally because it's so important to our culture and our workforce demographics give us an opportunity to take some fairly progressive strides."

The second helpful factor is technology."The level of consistency and the number of enabling technology tools are dramatically different from just a couple of years ago. It's very typical for us to have global teams built from a number of locations and they work well together," Johnson says.

For workers in the Yokohama office, technology has helped them become more efficient and more autonomous in their work. They regularly collaborate via videoconference with colleagues in the downtown Tokyo office. A major transition from print to digital media is underway. The home telework program has been a boost as well: 96% of employees say it's increased their level

"Teamwork, impromptu collaboration, things like that are important no matter where you are in the world."

BILLY DAVIDSON, Vodafone

Accenture, Tokyo

People Matter Most

Post-occupancy measures are routine for Accenture and other companies engaged in workplace changes, and a necessary ingredient of change management. Johnson says Accenture "just completed post-occupancies on some new offices around the world and the scores, if you will, vary a bit, probably for cultural reasons, but we're seeing really dramatic improvements in things like networking and mentoring, which is going to be important regardless of your culture.

How organizations work in teams, how they collaborate, can vary. "We can't go to Italy, Germany, France, or any other country and say, 'You have to have offices like we do in Great Britain.' or, 'You have to use the Netherlands as the model,' because it just won't work everywhere," says Vodafone's Billy Davidson. "Teamwork, impromptu collaboration, things like that are important no matter where you are in the world."

"Instead, we encourage creativity within boundaries." Vodafone encourages every country to post photos of their latest project on their design guide site as a way to share ideas among the property managers team.

Accenture has researched the value of employees understanding the company's workplace strategy and its link to company performance. "It's getting off on the wrong foot if a workplace project is viewed primarily as an effort to manage costs. It has to be about enabling your people, making sure we all understand where the company is today and how we work and even more importantly, how we'll work tomorrow," says Coyne.

Accenture's Yokohama project was nicknamed Project Darwin, after the famous naturalist. They also paraphrased a Darwin sentiment to inspire the staff, one that also may inspire any organization that wants to grow and thrive: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."

In a time of unprecedented transformation and innovation, workplaces that evolve and adapt to the needs of the organization and its employees will be the most successful in optimizing real estate, fostering creativity, enriching workers' wellbeing and ultimately reaping the benefits of accelerated global integration.

Culture Code Contributors:

The Research Team

Understanding human behavior in the workplace is what the Steelcase WorkSpace Futures team is all about. Eight members of this multicultural and internationally distributed team recently immersed themselves in studying first-hand how people work in different parts of the world. Their work focused on understanding the important implications of culture on workplace design and how companies can leverage these insights to provide effective work environments in a global business world.

The team, based in North and South America, Europe and Asia used many research techniques based in the social sciences. In addition to doing field research, they also collaborated with other business leaders, designers and social sciences experts in different countries to develop a deep and rich understanding of the issue.

Interestingly, the team became a microcosm of the very issue they were studying—how do you bridge cultural differences among distributed teams to create trust and highly-effective working relationships?

Beatriz Arantes specializes in the psychology of human emotion and behaviors and how they relate to work and the work environment. She holds degrees in psychology as well as Portuguese and Brazilians studies from Brown University, studied clinical and organization psychology at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil, and earned a master's degree in applied environmental psychology from Université René Descartes, France.

Izabel Barros is an expert on people-centered strategies for innovation and organizational effectiveness. She has more than 20 years of experience as a professor and professional consultant serving global clients to deliver strategies and solutions in the areas of content management, work environment innovation and change management.

With multi-lingual capabilities (English, Portuguese, Spanish, French), she holds a Ph.D. degree from the Institute of Design at The Illinois Institute of Technology. She is also a certified engineer with master's degrees in both product design and production engineering and is certified on change management by PROSCI.

Catherine Gall directs the WorkSpace Futures team. She has more than 20 years of experience consulting with corporations on the essential interplay of space and culture, working with companies on social and organizational studies and workplace design research.

She has lived and worked in France, North America and Germany. A native of France, she graduated from the Strasbourg School of Management and has also studied product design and development at Stirling University in Scotland.

Annemieke Garskamp has more than 20 years of experience in developing, designing and consulting on workspaces, working with multiple teams of interior designers, space planners and workplace consultants.

After graduating from Ecole Supérieure des Arts Modernes in Paris, she attended the College of Architecture, HBO Engineering and Open University, Business & Management, all in Amsterdam. With experience in multiple European countries, she speaks Dutch, English, French and German.

Sudhakar Lahade has conducted user-centered workplace research for more than 15 years and is now manager of growth initiatives at Steelcase.

Born and raised in India, Lahade worked in the Mumbai area for more than eight years at the start of his career. A graduate in architecture from the University of Mumbai, he has earned master's degrees in design from both the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Ilona Maier is a senior developer, advanced marketing and applications, with extensive experience in France, Germany, Malaysia, Morocco and Russia. A conceptual thinker, she applies culturally-based insights to create applications, design tools and thought starters that support effective workplace design.

She holds a degree in engineering for architecture and interior design from The University of Applied Sciences Rosenheim.

Melanie Redman has a left brain/right brain perspective on culture as both an artist and a researcher. After earning a degree in Russian and International Studies from Emory University, she went on to earn a bachelor of fine arts degree in graphic arts from Purchase College of the Arts, SUNY.

At Steelcase she conducts human-centered research in various markets, including healthcare and small companies. She recently completed an in-depth study of the post-80s generation in China.

Wenli Wang leads Steelcase's research efforts in Asia Pacific. She has participated in projects focused on office environments in Asia as well as the healthcare and higher education industries in China. In addition, she played an integral role in research of Gen Y in India and the post-80s generation in China.

She graduated from Vanderbilt University with a degree in economics.

Yasmine Abbas is a French architect and consultant who has worked with Steelcase's WorkSpace Futures team and contributed to this issue of 360 Magazine. She has studied and worked in Morocco, France, the United States, Denmark and the United Arab Emirates in the fields of art and architecture, business ethnography and sustainability.

She graduated from Paris-Val de Marne and earned a master of science degree in architecture studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a doctoral degree from Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the new global marketplace, work is shifting to new locations and cultures are colliding as a result. Business leaders, real estate professionals, architects and designers all need new ways to think about how to design culturally fit work environments. While there is no universal step-by-step, how-to blueprint, Steelcase research has yielded high-level insights for success that apply everywhere.

Don’t assume you can transplant workplace standards intact from one country to another; find the right balance between local and global.

Having a common thrust is important for any multinational organization, and leveraging local differences requires customization that plays to dominant needs and desires.

Power dependency, for example, is a highly relevant factor in the mix. People in cultures that are relatively independent require egalitarian work processes and spaces, while people in cultures that are dependent on power figures have emotional needs for visible hierarchy. Likewise, for people in cultures that are highly intolerant of uncertainty, security is a strong motivator so “ownership” of an individual workspace is likely important.

How people express emotion, release tension and communicate with each other are among other important dimensions of culture that profoundly affect the design of an effective workplace.

Wherever you locate, invest in the workplace to achieve your business goals in the context of culture.

Because they profoundly affect people’s motivation, satisfaction and wellbeing as well as the efficiency of their work processes, the spaces where people work are investments that can make or break an organization’s ability to meet its goals in any location. The right spaces can bring out the best in employees, reconciling cultural differences and capturing the value of every person as a source of strength that contributes to the success of the whole.

At the same time, designing space for culture should never mean reprioritizing your business goals. Workplace design must correlate with the strategic issues facing an organization, addressing ongoing and emerging business trends in culturally appropriate ways.

Design for collaboration wherever you locate.

Globalization, complexity and the drive for innovation have made it a now and future trend for any business, anywhere. Different cultures are adapting to it and practicing it differently, but it is indisputably the way the 21st-century world will work everywhere. Building community, inspiring flow and trust must be managed for successful collaboration, and the workplace plays a critical role. People’s increasing need and desire to be connected—physically as well as virtually—demands workplaces that deliver the best set of choices and experiences to support it.

Take time to learn about a culture before doing business in another country.

Everything will make much more sense, much faster, when you do. Working for a multinational company today can be a lot like working for the United Nations—it requires diplomacy, tact and sensitivity, as well as new models of organizational dependency and interaction.

Attitudes toward company culture are strongly influenced by cultural values and norms. Being smart about globalization means seeing the world through different lenses. Whether it’s an issue of religion, gender roles, dress standards, food or any other dimension, it’s important to always realize that culture is deeply seated in every person’s sense of self. Passing judgment is limiting and builds barriers; understanding other cultures as different, versus better or worse, opens opportunities.

Use design thinking to think about designing for global and local needs.

Whenever a complex problem arises, the process of design thinking has proven to be an effective tool that enables creative thinking to emerge. Design thinking allows for seeing a problem holistically, through a microscopic lens to scrutinize the pieces and a telescopic lens to see patterns and the bigger picture. By deconstructing and reconstructing the key components of any challenge, new insights about interrelationships can emerge, supporting an effective translation of larger issues into local solutions.

Allow for cultural as well as brand manifestations in the workplace.

While the design of the workplace is an important tool for establishing your corporate brand consistently in any locale, some degree of tailoring and customization is also essential. It shows respect and can be a powerful visible demonstration of your commitment to the country and your employees there.

INSIGHTS APPLIED

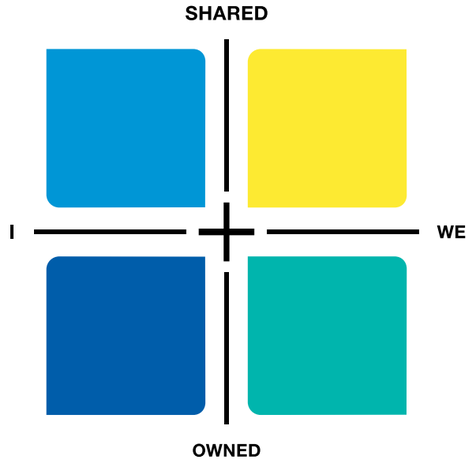
Creating a workplace that meets today's global challenges

A workplace that supports how people work today while anticipating their needs tomorrow is one that Steelcase refers to as an **Interconnected Workplace.**

It leverages the opportunities offered by an interconnected world, and is designed to augment the social, spatial and informational interactions between people.

It offers choice and control over spaces that support the physical, social and cognitive wellbeing of people, and provides a range of spaces designed for the many modes of work they engage in.

It is a workplace that amplifies the performance of people, teams and organizations.



This framework provides a methodology for creating and assessing a workplace designed for an interconnected world. It recognizes that people need to do both individual 'I' work and group 'We' work. It also breaks the paradigm that all individual spaces should be assigned or 'owned' or that all group spaces should be shared. The range of spaces in an interconnected workplace need to support focused work, collaboration, socializing and learning.

The Interconnected Workplace

CHALLENGE

Leverage the complexities of competing in an interconnected world.

UNDERSTAND

PEOPLE NEED TECHNOLOGY

PEOPLE NEED PEOPLE

PEOPLE NEED SPACES THAT BRING TECHNOLOGY AND PEOPLE TOGETHER

OFFER

CHOICE AND CONTROL
over where and how people work.

CONSIDER

CULTURAL CONTEXT

CREATE

PALETTE OF PLACE

An ecosystem of interrelated zones and settings that provide users with a range of spaces that support their modes of work.

PALETTE OF POSTURE

A range of solutions that encourage people to sit, stand and move and support the multiple technologies they use.

PALETTE OF PRESENCE

A range of mixed-presence experiences (physical and virtual) in destinations designed to augment human interaction.

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SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

A look at people and organizations that are making the world better for us all.

Dream Big

Workshops in Canada, Mexico, and the United States invite thought leaders to imagine the future of sustainability.

This was the challenge issued to thought leaders during a series of seven envisioning workshops hosted by Steelcase throughout the Americas this spring and summer. It was designed as a part of Steelcase's year-long100th anniversary project, entitled "100 dreams. 100 minds. 100 years." The project seeks to collect dreams and ideas from around the world on a wide range of topics. These workshops brought together minds from the design community, academia, real estate, business and non-profit organizations to collaborate and dream up the cultural, economic, and environmental landscapes of the future.

Participants viewed a short documentary titled One Day (QR CODE), commissioned as part of the anniversary celebration. The film captures the dreams of 10 year-old children tasked with imagining what their future will be like. Their limitless imaginations helped to set the stage and encourage workshop participants to answer the question, "What if…?"

Together, these teams challenged and re-invented engrained systems, dared to imagine great shifts, and offered hope for a better, more sustainable future. These ideas will be synthesized with Steelcase's ongoing insights and research into how people live, work and move and how to best serve their physical, social and cognitive wellbeing — to enrich design thinking and develop future strategies.

The participants' ideas resembled some predictions from pre-eminent experts, including The Institute for Future (IFTF), a non-profit research center that specializes in long-term forecasting and quantitative futures research methods. "Today we are in the early stages of defining a new age," says Marina Gorbis, executive director, IFTF. "The very underpinnings of our society and institutions —from how we work to how we create value, govern, trade, learn and innovate—are being profoundly reshaped by amplified individuals".

Dramatic transformation is a double-edged sword: simultaneously exhilarating and unsettling, as systems we've long taken for granted evolve and morph into what's next. Workshop teams grappled with this dualistic reality — questioning, hypothesizing, and dreaming big.

Every idea and story was catalogued and grouped under a key topic. The top five categories identified:

Technology

Globalization

Education

Personal/Community social issues and wellbeing

Industrial reinvention

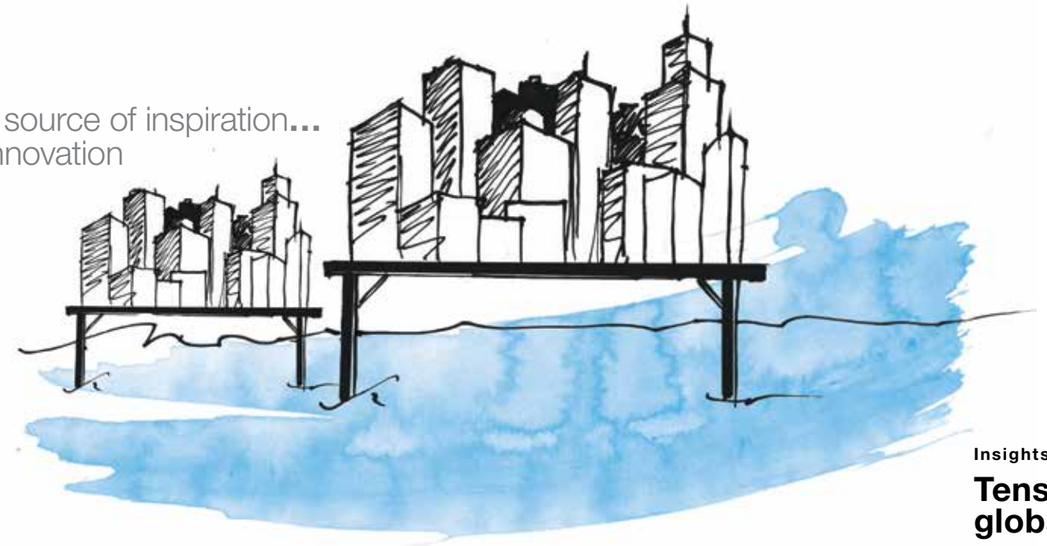
Tension seeks resolution

Throughout the course of history, cultures and economies have exerted great effort to reconcile competing tensions: security versus freedom, simplicity versus complexity, creation versus destruction, individual versus group affiliation and numerous others. Invariably, cultures and economies oscillate between the two ends, moving gradually more toward the middle of the continuum. Eventually, with imagination and innovation comes resolution. A better way. A new paradigm. Expanded possibilities.

Participants' ideas reflected these opposing pressures, more frequent swings and movement toward resolution. In the future, participants imagined some of the old tensions disappeared, replaced by new pulls creating the future's dynamic. As history shows us, tensions must be reconciled in order for new systems to emerge.

SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

Biophilia is a constant source of inspiration... nature now nurtures innovation



Insights:

The environmental landscape

From Chicago to Mexico City, Toronto to New York City, all teams agreed that forty years from now, the participants believe the planet will look very different. There are wars over access to water, catastrophic natural disasters continue and climate refugees rise.

Nature isn't seen as an endless source of raw materials any longer, instead it's revered as a source of rejuvenation. Disparate forces join to rescue and reclaim damaged rivers, land and air. Resource scarcity isn't risk management like it was in the early 2000s; it's now the cost of doing business.

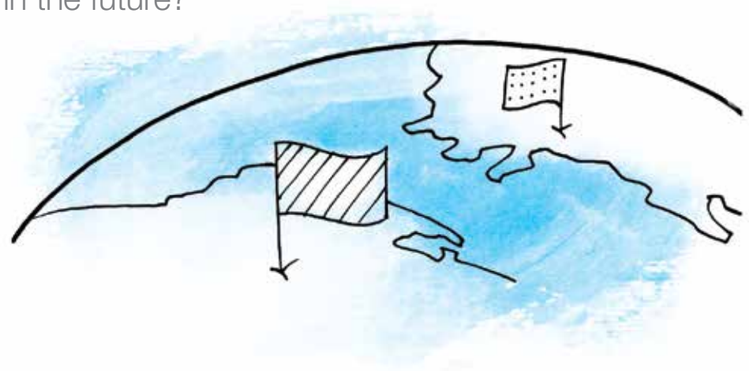
Biophilia is a constant source of inspiration. There's acknowledgment that the planet has been innovating for millennia, and maybe its successes and failures can guide us. Nature now nurtures innovation.

Artificial boundaries between the built environment and the natural one are breached as design integrates with natural cycles and processes. Energy is generated from the wind and sun; renewable investments made in the beginning of the century are paying off.

Conservation has replaced consumption as a way of life.

Here's an interesting question posed by several groups from Washington DC to Houston: Can natural disasters have positive impacts? Their answer was largely yes. Their reasoning: natural disasters create unmatched opportunities to rebuild from scratch, tearing down the remnants of broken systems and replacing them with thoughtful, hyper-efficient new models based on design thinking. As old systems are literally washed away, new ones will emerge. But where does that leave us now? Do we really have to wait for natural disasters to move us to change?

How will we feed our families in the future?



Insights:

Tension between global and local

The increasing polarization between global and local concerns, governance and business appeared in many of the scenarios developed in the workshops, from Toronto to Mexico City. Participants identified pressing needs and opportunities at both ends of the spectrum, pulling and tugging at the institutions and systems that now comprise the middle.

These simultaneous movements toward centralization and decentralization sparked questions from participants like "What can we as a community do for ourselves, and what priorities need to be determined at a global level?" This reversion to local dependence and newly accepted reliance on global authorities appeared in several sectors from food to family structure, government to education in New York, Houston, and Seattle.

Local food played a critical role in the future scenarios as agricultural needs became a full-scale crisis. From families producing their own food to the transformation of large chain grocers to local co-op. The majority of the cities looked to the past to guide the future: reliance on yourself and your neighbors; sharing and trading resources to meet individual and community needs; a return to purity and simplicity in what we eat and where it comes from.

Conversely, the group in Toronto envisioned a food and agricultural system led by a newly formed Global Agricultural Association (GAA), created by leading companies and nations to address the lack of arable land. The GAA would incentivize farmers to produce what the planet needs in the regions where the climate still allows, and create equitable food distribution systems.

One of the main issues was how to feed our families in the future. This led to discussions about the evolution of traditional "family". Instead of genetics alone, future families will self-organize around shared values and resources, spanning generations, embracing different ethnicities, and ignoring other imposed boundaries of today. It's an idea that's both global and local, individual and group.

Many groups imagined that government will be re-invented and redefined. Interestingly, the groups imagined government's role at both ends of the global-local spectrum. Imagine a World Council on Energy, ensuring access to clean energy for everyone. Or a Seattle group's vision of a global election where everyone votes. Or a Planetary Council, comprised of the 30 largest multi-national corporations who now run the economy, redistributing resources and re-engineering products through a global needs filter.

Personal identities shift toward community belonging, signaling an end to overconsumption, waste and inequalities. The shift from "me" to "we" has kicked in. The human consciousness has taken a beautiful leap forward toward empathy and connection, resolving tension between individual needs and the larger community.

But this shift cannot happen without help. Education systems must change, and the way the human brain functions must also change. In Mexico City, participants envisioned ways to "speed up evolution" by optimizing brain function - improving neural connections and therefore humankind's ability to synthesize vast amounts of data. "Recabling the brain" will enable new ways of learning and processing information; neurochemistry solutions will obviate human intelligence's limitations to handle the scale and complexities of global, systemic problems. The shift from biological evolution to technological evolution is underway.

There will be greater emphasis on science since many of the world's challenges are ecological. There's also a renewed emphasis on teaching creative problem-solving skills, resiliency and collaboration, since these are in-demand. There's a shift from learning the basics to practicing and learning the principles of design thinking. Education has shifted from facts to wisdom.

Insights:

Economic reinvention

The groups hypothesized that the economic meltdown of 2008-2012 and beyond caused a permanent re-adjustment in the way goods and services are exchanged. Values shifted toward pragmatism and practicality, balance and sustainability, flexibility and creativity. Values drifted away from personal status, luxury and indulgence.

As a reflection of this swing, new ways of buying and selling appear. Bartering, sharing and trading resources replace old currencies. Water, time and happiness is the new currency. Singular ownership is now considered wasteful and scarcity is a fact of life, as envisioned by New York groups. Babies are issued water and carbon cards to track their planetary impact. But the access economy is in full bloom, sharing food, skills, cars, tools, living space and other resource-intensive goods that often go unused.

Water, time, and happiness is the new currency.

Work is fundamentally changed. Having one job is uncommon. As free agent knowledge workers seamlessly move between employers, they offer their skills and talents as needed. Centralized offices are now considered archaic, as work takes place everywhere. Mobility, multi-functional infrastructure that enables digital communication, and embedded technology are the new norms. As imagined by groups in Washington, D.C., hologram conferences have replaced conference calls and air travel. All spaces are wired for work. Work and life are meshed.

Individuals are the new prototypers - catapulting innovation forward. Failure is encouraged more than ever. People begin to re-value the imperfections of handmade, organic and other processes that reveal human creativity and expression. Mass production falls out of favor for many who long for a stronger sense of story and connection to the things they choose to incorporate into their lives.

Goods are rarely made from new materials. Reuse dominates the creation process and drives new product design. Innovation is sourced from Earth's natural cycles and innate wisdom, and prices take life cycle costs into account. There's a worldwide lifecycle protocol guiding companies, perpetual recycling provides a steady stream of materials, and disposable products are exceedingly rare and very expensive. New and old are one and the same.

The success of the economy is no longer measured by efficiency metrics. The new success metrics are based on quality of life: fulfillment, flexibility, family time, relationships, customization, and wellbeing.

We'd like thank the following organizations for dedicating time to envision the future with us.

Chicago: Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill; Cannon Design; Chicago Design Network; Epstein; Holabird & Root; Leo A. Daly; Myefski Architects; Narrington; Nelson; TVSdesign.

Houston: Center for Houston's Future; City of Houston; Gensler; HOK; Houston-Galviston Area Council; Kirksey; Page Southerland Page; Perkins and Will; University of Houston; WHR architects;

New York: Cannon; Cushman Wakefield Real Estate; David Brody Bond; Environetics; Gruzen Sampton; G3 Architects; IA; Interface Flor; HDR; NYC Building; Perkins+Will; Perkins Eastman; Posen; RB Design; Switzer Group; Ted Moudis Assoc.; TPG; Trinity Wall Street Real Estate; Viridian Energy & Environmental; Woods Bagot.

Mexico City: Anahuac; AMIC; ATXK; Centro; CB Richard Ellis; Cushman Wakefield Real Estate; GA&A; Gensler; Iconos; Jones Lang Lasalle; KMD; Serrano Monjarraz; Space; SUME; T4; VFO.

Seattle: Boora; Callison; DLR Group; EHS; Gates Foundation; GSA; HOK; NBBJ; Premera; Starbucks; SRG; Wille Design

Toronto: Affecting Change, Inc.; B+H Architects; Bull Frog Power; Co-Operators Insurance; Corus Entertainment; Devencore; Diamond Schmitt; Dialog; Figure3; Gensler; HOK; IBI; Kasian; Loyalty One; MODO; KPMB; Quadrangle; Smith Grimley Harris; Straticom; York University.

Washington DC: Gensler, HOK; IA; OPX, Perkins+Will; RTKL; SmithGroup; Studios; USGBC; WBA.

In the grand scheme of things

Technology. Globalization. Education. Well-being. Industrial reinvention. These are all recurring themes throughout the workshops and all point to one concerning thought: are we going to hitch humanity's wagon to outside forces or are we willing to look within and make changes at the individual level? Will we be willing to sacrifice comfort, convenience, time and money to create a future where we live more in balance with our natural environment?

Mostly, change comes at a glacial pace. People generally resist change because it's hard, it's threatening to the status quo, and it's usually accompanied by fear. But today, the rate of change is amplified. The amount of information available is a quantum leap from previous generations. Likewise, the problems we collectively face are on an unprecedented scale. It begs the question: Are we equipped to continue on this planet-change course? Today, human intellect alone seems insufficient to tackle the ambiguous and entrenched problems we face. In the future, perhaps Enhanced Intelligence (aka Big Data) will show us new options. Perhaps human nature and the natural environment will come more into balance. Perhaps we will learn the value of systems that are more harmonious with our environment and finite resources.

Have we reached the point where we must re-examine engrained ideas? Isn't it time to ponder our true purpose? How far can we stretch the limits of human potential? These are the questions we will wrestle with, adapt to and chart a course for success based on our insights.

Like each generation before, the coming decades will dissolve boundaries that were once considered sacred. New definitions of old institutions will surface. Human consciousness itself will grow and expand to create new possibilities. Inspiration will be drawn from new sources, ideas will be instantly shared and socialized, and impacts will be more transparent. Humans, always resilient and malleable, rise to the occasion and create a future that harmonizes the tensions between sustaining people and sustaining our planet—and in doing this, create a culture of abundance.

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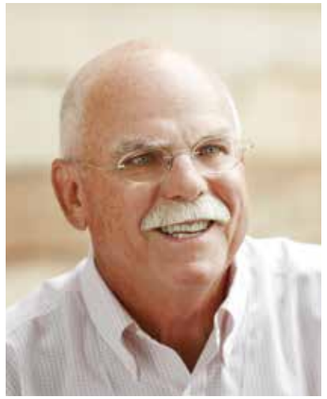
LEADERSHIP MOMENT

The Value of Place: LexJet leverages their workplace for competitive advantage

360 talked to LexJet CEO Arthur Lambert to discuss how their new workplace has helped to amplify the performance of their organization



ARTHUR LAMBERT
CEO, LexJet Corp.

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"We had three rules when we started the company: Have fun, make money and don't get in anybody else's way having fun and making money. We live that every day," says CEO Arthur Lambert, who started LexJet with partner Rob Simkins in 1994. It's an approach that's paying off—the company has been recognized on Inc. Magazine's list of fastest-growing private American companies and by Deloitte & Touche as one of the fastest-growing technology companies in the United States.

But their cultural approach to business is what really makes them special, says Lambert, "We have no bosses in the company. Our leadership team is there to manage the business, not the people. Our culture is like a family. It's fun, it's open, it's casual, it's entrepreneurial. All you've got to do is walk into our office and see the fun and the excitement and the energy that's there and you get hooked very easily," he raves.

ATTRACTING AND ENGAGING THE BEST TALENT

"One key to our sustained growth has been the ability to consistently attract and retain the best talent. It's all about the people that work here, it really is, and the workplace is a big factor in their satisfaction. The tools you give them contribute to that satisfaction — the environment, the technology, the culture you help them create, that's what it's all about. Our employees love the new space and The Tampa Bay Business Journal and Florida Trend Magazine recently ranked us as one of The Best Places to Work in Florida.

"Our attrition rate is below 10 percent in an industry where 30-40 percent is more typical. We've had competitors come in who shake their heads and wonder how they can compete. Other competitors have even decided they want to partner with us, rather than compete with us. We just had a competitor turn over their entire direct sales business to us, worldwide. These people walk in and they see where we work, but more importantly what and who we are as a company. It says more about our company than we could ourselves."

A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

"Creative problem solving and idea creation are essential to our success… We've always had a highly-collaborative culture, but there was a time when teaming at LexJet meant our customer specialists hovered around a desk or a kitchen table. These were the only places LexJeters could gather and share their technology. But our new work environment has changed all of that.

"Our new space also hosts our technology in a more thoughtful way, which has enhanced interactions with remote team members, partners and even our customers. We can more easily share information with customers, while offering higher levels of technical support…so much so, that it's been a factor in boosting sales to record levels and enhanced our customer service experience."

OPTIMIZING REAL ESTATE

"Our approach to real estate is simple—get more out of the space we already have and when necessary, get more space when we need it. I don't want to force people to work remotely because we need more space. It's not the right reason to do it. If you need more space, you need more space… get more space. Don't cram, because then you start to hurt culture and productivity. Our new space has helped us achieve our goals by delivering more usable space in a smaller overall footprint than we had before. We're able to accommodate a staff that is 20 percent larger in an area that's about 2,000 square feet smaller… in a space that is not only more vibrant and welcoming, it's more connected and productive."

PEOPLE MATTER MOST

"We are growing quickly and plan to expand to another floor in the same building within the next few months. Ultimately, our success is directly connected to the enthusiasm of our employees. Our people are the most important part of LexJet. Our new space aligns the needs of our people with the needs of the organization in a way that has reinforced a great culture. It's a win-win."

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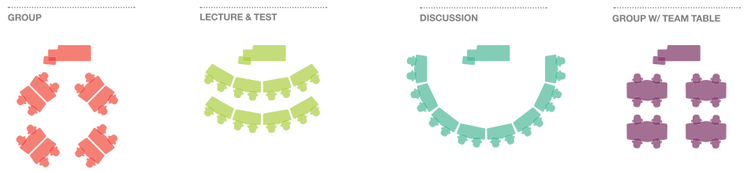

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"I get quite disturbed when people label our educational system as broken. It's not broken. It just needs to be redesigned."

TRUNG LE, PRINCIPAL,
CANNON DESIGN, CHICAGO, IL

EXPLORING HOW SPACE AFFECTS LEARING

Steelcase brings together three leading authorities on designing active learning spaces and improving education environments.

"In order to be able to develop active learning, the importance of the classroom is huge"

DR. LENNIE SCOTT-WEBBER

CLASSROOM BY CLASSROOM, THE NATION'S LEADING EXPERTS ON LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AIM TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY WE EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN.

"If we want to change education, we literally have to change the way we design the space," says Trung Le, a principal in Chicago's Cannon Design and lead designer for its education group.

That means revamping classrooms to promote active learning because traditional settings and approaches simply aren't working as well as they should. Michigan school administrator Greg Green was so inspired, he's retooling educational models to reduce student failures and boost academic achievement.

The movement to transform classrooms has picked up steam in recent years, according to Steelcase's Dr. Lennie Scott-Webber, Director of Education Environments, who has long pursued "that dream to change how we educate and how we design educational environments, because some of them are just horrid."

Stimulating rapid and radical changes in traditional classroom environments—to yield enhanced active learning that allows students to own their own knowledge, foster collaboration, and maximize inquiry and discovery—took the spotlight in a Steelcase-hosted panel discussion in July at Chicago's Merchandise Mart. The VIP Event came during the Society for College and University Planning's 47th Annual International Conference & Idea Marketplace.

"The current model in which we think about a classroom needs to deconstruct itself," says Le. "It's quite an exciting time to actually think and innovate in ways that are really driven by pedagogy, driven by very different ways in which the educator wants to teach.

"We recognize that children need to move. We are a species in motion and yet it's really unnatural the way we place children of various size in the same-size seat and desk, and ask them to sit very quietly, and listen, and focus."

For centuries, the traditional classroom has promulgated passive learning, or as Scott-Webber puts it, "Sit and listen, if you're a student. Stand and deliver, if you're an educator. Now, it's really changing to be much more dynamic. The idea is for students to be more engaged in the actual learning process so that they begin to own their own knowledge."

> "Active learning breeds success and a more vibrant educational environment"
>
> GREG GREEN

"Active learning breeds success and a more vibrant educational environment by incorporating a mix of teaching styles, tools and classroom configurations," says Green.

"It's a blend of teacher, technology, content delivery and your classroom design. They all fit together. One without the other, it's a broken wheel," he says.

Active learning also means meshing and balancing the varied ways in which students assimilate knowledge.

"There's instruction where you're maybe engaged in a simple conversation with the teacher in more of a large group setting," Green says. "There's independent work where you're engaged as an individual trying to go through something. There's also collaborative work where you're doing some small group stuff. There's also computer-assisted instruction, and then there's teacher-led instruction where the educator may be working with five or six students."

This turns an educator from "a content delivery person to a learning specialist" and reverses the archaic educational approach that has discouraged collaboration between students.

"We're starting to realize that we need to create learning groups, instead of … people with individual knowledge," Green says. "Collectively, we have a stronger learning environment when we have a learning group, rather than just a bunch of individuals."

Consequently, it's critical that a classroom facilitate this active approach.

"It's the catalyst," argues Scott-Webber. "In order to be able to develop active learning, the importance of the classroom is huge…the faculty member has to develop a strategy to support the content to be delivered."

"We talk a lot about Steelcase Education Solutions as the physicality of the inside-the-box. It's not just about building a beautiful building. But it's actually asking the tough questions about what you're going to do as a teacher, what are the strategies you're going to incorporate, and how best can we support that with the design of the space and the furnishings for the room."

Bolstering active learning by refashioning learning environments has infused these experts with fresh optimism about the future of education.

"I get quite disturbed when people label our educational system as broken," Le says. "I think the message that we want to say is that, It's not broken. It just needs to be redesigned, because we want new outcomes."

MEET THE EXPERTS

Trung Le, Practice Leader for Third Teacher Plus of Chicago's Cannon Design and a widely recognized advocate for incorporating multiple intelligences and learning styles in education environment design. As a pioneer in the field, Le focuses on spaces that spark student imagination and inquiry, while triggering dynamic collaboration.

Greg Green, principal of metropolitan Detroit's Clintondale High School and innovator of the "flipped classroom" that has students reviewing materials at home and performing homework in class to enhance learning. One of Converge Magazine's Top 50 Educators for 2011, Green is an internationally renowned speaker on learning structures.

Dr. Lennie Scott-Webber, an interior designer, retired professor and former chairperson of university design programs with expertise in determining how environment affects behavior, especially in higher education settings and corporate learning centers. Within Steelcase Education Solutions, as Director of Education Environments, she oversees the "D3" portfolio: discovery, design and dissemination.

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A NEW LEARNING CURVE

Ideas on planning and designing learning spaces from Lennie Scott-Webber, Ph.D., Director of Education Environments for Steelcase Education Solutions

WHY DON'T A&D SCHOOLS TEACH THE DESIGN OF EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTS?

It's a question I hear regularly, and it's worth pondering given the importance of formal and informal learning environments. These are the places where our children spend more of their first two decades than any other single place. Here they grow intellectually, discover how to communicate and work with others, and develop the critically important skill of learning how to learn.

Given the significance of a learning space, you'd think there would be courses galore on the design of learning spaces. Sadly, there are not.

Why? One reason is that for decades classroom design, the formal learning place, was treated (by school administrators, faculty and designers alike) as a process akin to chain restaurant replication: there was a template (classroom boxes filled with rows of chairs, a lectern and writing boards) and you followed it. There was no need to rethink something that seemed to work for millennia.

That template is still practiced. But today that poses a problem since teaching and learning is incorporating new instructional methods, deeply engaging students, taking advantage of new technology and recognizing that since students learn in different ways, classrooms need to support different learning styles and teaching practices.

Education space design was considered a specialty and, given the assumption that classroom buildings really didn't need a lot of creative design, why would design education focus on academic buildings when other markets offered more interesting projects with less bureaucratic organizations?

The design of higher education and K through 12 spaces today, though, is about much more than code compliance and other regulations. When designing for formal learning spaces—what we call inside the "box"—designers need to recognize the major changes happening to accommodate active learning. Tackle the design of advanced learning spaces and you have an opportunity to solve for some pivotal and fascinating issues. It's necessary to understand:

- How students will learn in the new millennium;
- What tools and spaces will help spark creativity in both faculty and students, and change behaviors; and
- How the decision of space and furnishings impact those behaviors.

Consider also the challenges of spaces outside the college classroom:

- Learning is enhanced when students interact with others outside the classroom, so what informal settings foster learning and community building?
- How can the campus be used to add continuity and community to the learning experience?
- What spaces serve and encourage informal/impromptu learning?
- How can design support the new ecosystem of balancing pedagogy, technology and space intentionally?

The simple fact is that there's a revolution going on within the classroom and most design schools have yet to enlist.

One school that has incorporated education space design as a studio could be a role model. At Radford University, we developed an educational studio that began with pre-design programming to renovate a general purpose classroom building. Through the course, students worked in multiple teams to review environmental and behavioral theories, survey faculty and observe them in teaching spaces. The semester culminated with students presenting their inspired learning space designs, which were also judged (very positively, I might add) by practicing A&D professionals, focused on higher educational design.

What exactly needs to change in the design of learning environments? That's a discussion for another column, but it starts with the realization that some long-held beliefs about educational space design are out-of-date. For example, classrooms that only allow teacher-centered learning—the old "sage on the stage" approach—are a thing of the past. While a lecture can be a valid approach for a short timeframe, learning today encompasses a variety of approaches: project work, small group interactions, problem-solving sessions, student presentations and mentoring, and other strategies.

Any classroom that can't be quickly and easily adapted (by students and teachers, without the assistance of the maintenance staff) to these new modes of teaching and learning won't work in the 21st century. Classrooms must be more flexible, less formal.

Learning happens anywhere on a campus and formal and informal places are in a huge transition. Teaching and learning strategies are also being challenged. Technologies are integrated at every level, not always supporting the teaching and learning strategies. Spaces should be designed to support these emerging needs. Who best to think these complex challenges through but designers.

It's an incredibly exciting time to be a part of academia today. It can be an equally exciting time in design schools if they join to help lead this revolution.

"There's a revolution going on in the classroom and most design schools have yet to enlist."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, LENNIE SCOTT-WEBBER, Ph.D.

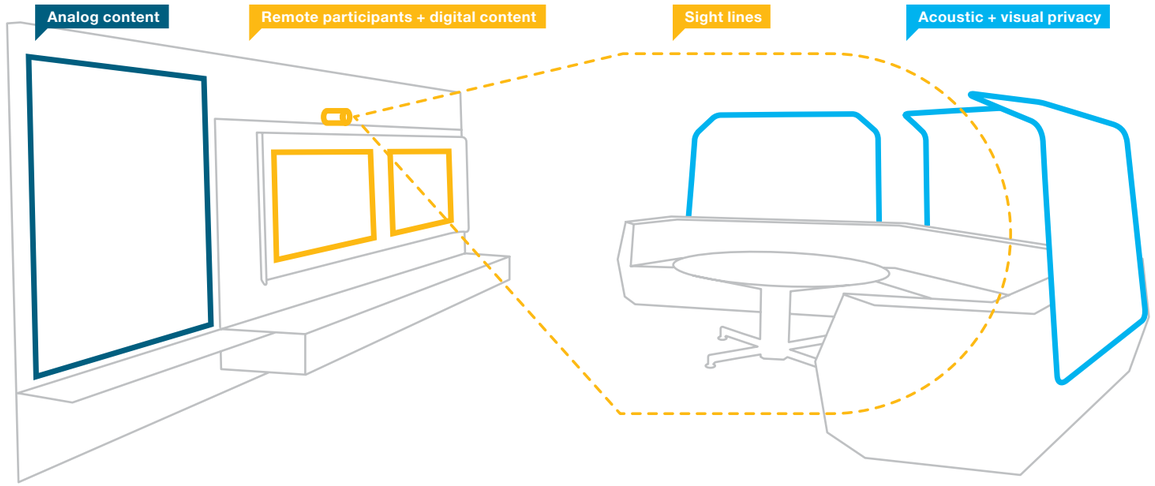
I've owned and operated design firms in the U.S. and Canada, taught at three universities and held administrative positions as well, all the while researching educational environments. Over the years I've seen the insides of more classrooms than I can count. Many of them are an insult to students and teachers alike.

My passion, and my job, is helping people understand the behaviors that come from different environments, and creating classrooms that truly support new ways of teaching and learning.

Email your ideas and questions to **lscottwe@steelcase.com** or on twitter to **Lennie_SW@twitter.com.**

DESIGN APPS

Innovative Application Ideas



3-in-1 High Definition Videoconferencing Setting for Creative Collaboration

Today, distributed teams require environments that support videoconferencing for creative collaboration. This media:scape with HDVC setting allows local and remote teams to connect, as well as share digital content with each other. The camera angles have been designed to allow far-side participants a clear view of all near-side participants. When HDVC is not required the setting supports local teams who require a high-performing collaboration space.

In addition, when technology is not required at all the setting becomes a sheltered destination for teams to connect with each other and share analog information on the writeable glass surface.

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

STEELCASE GERMANY CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Focusing on the future, more than 950 customers, dealers, media and employees gathered in late June to commemorate Steelcase's 100th birthday in Rosenheim, Germany. As part of a year-long, worldwide centennial celebration, the event called 'Bavarian Days' brought together diverse thinkers to look ahead to future business innovations that could dramatically alter the global marketplace in the next century.

The forward-thinking ideas shared through presentations, demonstrations and lectures by respected corporate leaders and researchers ranged from revamping management systems and encouraging interdisciplinary communications to embracing multi-functional, collaborative working environments.

"A fundamental understanding of cultural differences has never been as important as it is now."

The gathering in Rosenheim featured addresses by Steelcase CEO Jim Hackett and renowned German architect Stefan Behnisch, an advocate of designs that stimulate interaction and communication. Behnisch focused his remarks on the importance of buildings and cities as living and working spaces.

The event featured speakers who explored systems and methods businesses can use to unlock the true promise of their employees by setting aside conventional practices and embracing new ideas:

- **REACH OUT TO OTHER DISCIPLINES:**

  By encouraging intensive, wide-ranging and open communications across all disciplines and hierarchies, start-up businesses can often avoid unwelcome problems. That was the thrust of a presentation by Anne Berger, Professor of Integrated Product Design at the University of Coburg, and Franz Glatz, Managing Director of the Gate Garchinger Technology and Entrepreneur Center in Munich and an expert on business incubators. "If your only tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail," goes the well-known philosophical credo that speaks to being overly dependent on a familiar utensil or implement.

- **WHY IDEAS FAIL:**

  According to Oliver Gajek, co-founder of Brainloop AG and Chairman of the Board for Munich Network, who serves as an advisor to many of these fledging companies, young start-up enterprises frequently encounter a host of obstacles. He cautioned that great ideas often fail due to financial hurdles, difficulty in finding talent and the excessive length of time it takes to develop these concepts in a fast-changing world. By the time an idea comes to fruition, he said, too often the project already has become obsolete.

BREAKING PATTERNS AND CHANGING ATTITUDES:

That served as the central theme of a presentation by Dirk Osmetz, graduate economist in the Musterbrecher Managementberater management consulting practice in Taufkirchen, Germany. Rather than trying to perfect an old system, he suggested, companies must be willing to change the emphasis of management, exhibit courage to experiment and systematically analyze their business practices. "We call this 'system working,'" Osmetz said of companies which utilize modern management tools and constantly improve themselves.

IMPROVING THE BRAND EXPERIENCE:

Pat Kalt and Alexander Strub, Creative Directors for Munich's Expolab, a communication agency and design studio, offered examples of the criteria required for brand creation and the way brand engineering can systematically be revised and enhanced.

THE CHALLENGES OF BECOMING GLOBAL:

Sudhakar Lahade, Workspace Futures Researcher for Steelcase, who was part of a team that conducted intensive studies of Generation Y's influence on work environments, addressed the need for workplace flexibility as businesses become ever more global. "Companies are becoming increasingly global and the world is more and more networked," he said. "One-sized solutions for workplaces are extremely unsuitable. A fundamental understanding of cultural differences has never been as important as it is now."

Other presenters included Gunnar Bauer, Managing Partner of Nurnberg's Leonhard Office and Design, and Bianka Tafuro of one the world's largest market research companies, GfK,.

As a Steelcase in-house event, Bavarian Days also saw the introduction of Coalesse to the European market, allowing hundreds of visitors to see and experience for the first time the portfolio of progressive live/work solutions that fit naturally in your environment, both at work and at home.

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← LIVING ON VIDEO

This year at the NeoCon trade show in Chicago, Steelcase previewed concept products designed to address a new trend the company is forecasting will become the most pervasive form of workplace communication: Living on Video.

"We've spent years studying how video is used in the workplace and as a result, we saw a need to transform today's complicated, static, and technology-centered videoconferencing solutions into complete applications that are more intuitive, dynamic, and user-centered," said Allan Smith, vice president, marketing and advanced applications.

Several iterations of the concept were featured, including solutions for one-to-one video calls, as well as concepts that can accommodate two people for impromptu meetings or calls.

Concept solutions were also shown for small, medium, and large multipurpose spaces. The idea behind these concepts is to find a solution that will bridge the gap between spaces designed for co-located collaboration and those that are dedicated for videoconferencing. The concepts aim to amplify teams' performance by allowing videoconferencing to facilitate easier content-sharing between local and globally distributed teams, and will bring video communication and informational tools together in a more authentic, scalable and user-adaptable spaces.

This year's preview of concept products at NeoCon also garnered some extra media attention for the extension of the media:scape family. Wired.com featured the concepts in its article "Cubicle Couches and Other Hot Workplace Designs," Fast Company's Fast Co. Design Blog admits we're all 'living on video' in its article, "Office Furniture that Makes Video Calls More Apt for Brainstorming" and the CBS SmartPlanet article, "At NeoCon, Big Brother and Nanotech Invade the Office" gave Steelcase credit for finding a better way to conduct a videoconference.

CELEBRATING AT THE GRAND PALAIS →

As part of a year-long, worldwide celebration to commemorate Steelcase's 100th birthday, Steelcase participated as a sponsor of the *2012 Monumenta Art Exhibition* at the Grand-Palais in Paris. The exhibition featured original work by French artist Daniel Buren. Organized by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, each year MONUMENTA invites an internationally renowned contemporary artist to design art specially created for the historical 13,500 m² venue.

In honor of the centennial anniversary, 600 Steelcase guests from France were invited to attend an exclusive viewing of the exhibit. Almost 260,00 people attended the exhibition during the six-week event, held this past May and June.

The exhibit was called *Excentrique(s) Travail In Situ* which further explored a concept Buren has been using to describe his art since 1965. In situ means that the work is site-specific; it cannot be conceptualized without the setting that it was designed for and built in.

http://www.monumenta.com/en

100 Steelcase

Photo-souvenir: Excentrique(s) travail in situ, Daniel Buren in Monumenta 2012, Grand Palais, Paris. Détail.© ADAGP Paris & DB. Photo: Alexis Tourn

↑ LET THE $25K MAKEOVERS BEGIN

This past spring, turnstone set out to find five small businesses who would benefit most from a great workplace. They asked businesses to submit short videos that told why they should win a $25k office makeover. After receiving hundreds of entries, 25 were selected by judges for and the public voted for the five winners.

The winners are:
Infomedia, Birmingham, AL

HopeFULL Company, St. Paul, MN

Veel Hoeden, Pella, IA

IncubateNYC, Brooklyn, NY

Fracture, Gainesville, FL

The transformations are just about to begin. Check on their progress at myturnstone.com.

best of NeoCon 2012

↑ BEST OF NEOCON

The Steelcase family of brands won five Best of NeoCon Awards. Sponsored by Contract magazine, the 23rd annual Best of NeoCon awards recognize the top new commercial interiors products introduced at the show—the World's Trade Fair for Interior Design and Facilities Management.

Coalesse, a division of Steelcase, won three awards, including a Silver award, Innovation award and Editor's Choice award for Free Stand, a foldable and portable table that offers a simple yet elegant solution for people to work comfortably anywhere.

A Gold award went to the Techniques Collection from Designtex, a new wallcovering collaboration with celebrated surface designer Carla Weisberg.

↑ RUGS DESIGNED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Steelcase and ARZU STUDIO HOPE have been conducting Rug Design Competitions in cities across North America in search of innovative designs for a limited-edition collection of rugs sold by Steelcase called "The Designer Series". Profits from the sale of the rugs support the nonprofit organization that provides Afghan women with rent-to-own looms and materials while promoting literacy.

Rug designs are judged by a panel of local judges. The winner receives a 4 x 6 rug of their design.

Participating at the events is Connie Duckworth, ARZU founder and CEO. "I wanted to ensure that Afghan women had a place at the table," says Duckworth. Employing over 700 women, Arzu combines fair pay with literacy and social programs, benefiting the entire community. From a starting point of only 30 carpet weavers, ARZU's work today impacts the lives of tens of thousands of Afghans, providing private sector jobs and direct social benefits in seven rural villages in Bamyan and Faryab provinces.

Bringing individuality and life to any setting, this collection works well in contract, healthcare, hospitality and residential environments, and is a part of the Designtex 1 + 1 brand, which maintains the philosophy of doing well by doing good through promoting collaborations with outside sources, and in turn supporting local artistic communities.

Verb, a first-of-its-kind table-based collection of class-room furniture from Steelcase Education Solutions, won a Silver award. Verb creates an integrated, table-based learning space with personal-sized, one-of-a-kind whiteboards throughout the classroom for instantaneous collaboration.

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