



## The App Centric Workplace

By Philip Ross, Founder and CEO,  
UnGroup and Cordless Group

We are all now used to Apps on our smart device, from the ubiquitous Uber through maps and travel to dating and social. They have changed the way we interact with other people and the way we navigate the city. Apps have become our personalised assistants and have altered the relationship we have with the world around us; Apps know who we are and where we are and are busy personalising our experiences.

But much of this tailored approach stops at the doors of the corporate office. While Global Positioning System (GPS) allows navigation in the public realm, inside buildings we become anonymous and unconnected with the space we are in. Not for much longer.

A paradigm shift is about to create a new realisation for the experience of people in physical space. Technology that knows where people are inside buildings will create a 'location layer' within which new personalised experiences will emerge. The layer will be driven by new and old technologies: 'triangulation' with WiFi signals pinpoints position while new location aware technologies from Bluetooth beacons to digital ceilings or canopies powered by connected intelligent lighting will complement a host of new sensors that form part of the vision for connected smart real estate.

The spread of fixed technology led to the growth of the desk bound drones of corporate life, tethered to terminals and workstations by a relentless flow of email and corporate communications: conference calls or collaborative connections over Yammer and Slack. To a large extent technology has dictated the work process and the workplace that has emerged to accommodate it – rigid, repetitive, homogenous, ordered and predictable. Technology has dehumanised the workplace.

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But a new move that puts the user at the centre of a workplace experience is now emerging. The Americanised term, 'user chooser' puts power back into the hands of the consumer as the realisation that people are in control leads to a more 'consumerised' approach to both technology and workplace.

The employee experience or EX is a nod to workplace and technology that embraces human-centred design. Where the EX was homogenised to the lowest common denominator, now we expect a personalised EX based on who we are and what we do.

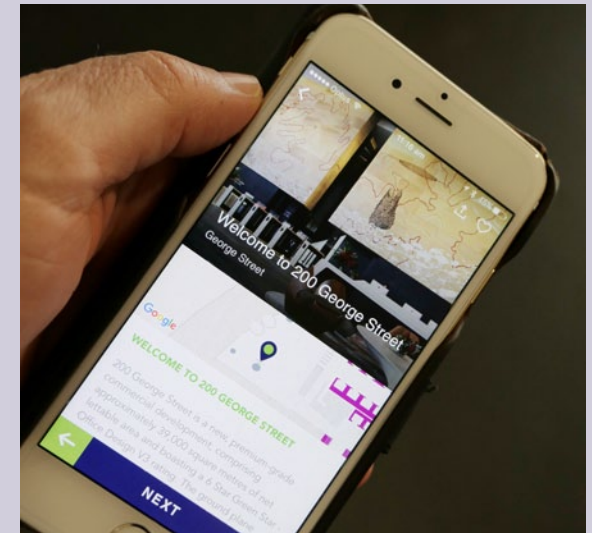
Just as Apps have changed the nature of our relationship between people, the urban realm, service suppliers and ecommerce providers we are about to witness a dramatic shift inside the workplace to an experience enabled by an 'App centric workplace'.

Workplace Apps started out life by providing basic information about the office. Floor plans and way finding, room and desk reservation as well as information about amenities and services. Now they are colliding with social networks to add a 'people dimension' in addition to space. Knowing who is in and where people are, what specialist expertise is available and how to connect with like-minded cohorts is part of a new dimension that encourages the interaction organisations aspire to. Measuring a 'collision coefficient' and 'accelerating serendipity' are just two of the outcomes sought by companies where human capital is the predominant asset. Apps will drive the interactions that create the cultures needed – new ideas and innovation, velocity and fast company behaviours, interaction and collaborative work. Just as Happn brings people together on the high street or main street through proximity and

## Mirvac, Sydney: A Connected Workplace

As part of their new 200 George Street development, property company Mirvac has adopted a workplace App as part of the new activity based working space. The App provides a range of functionality from building based welcome to reserving space within the office.

It has a space and people finder function and also connects to local services. The new workplace has a focus on efficiency and presents a live 'smart tenancy dashboard' that records a range of metrics from 'end of trip' facilities to water, power and even slab temperature and vibration measurements.



Mirvac's workplace App connects to local services and helps locate specific employees in the building



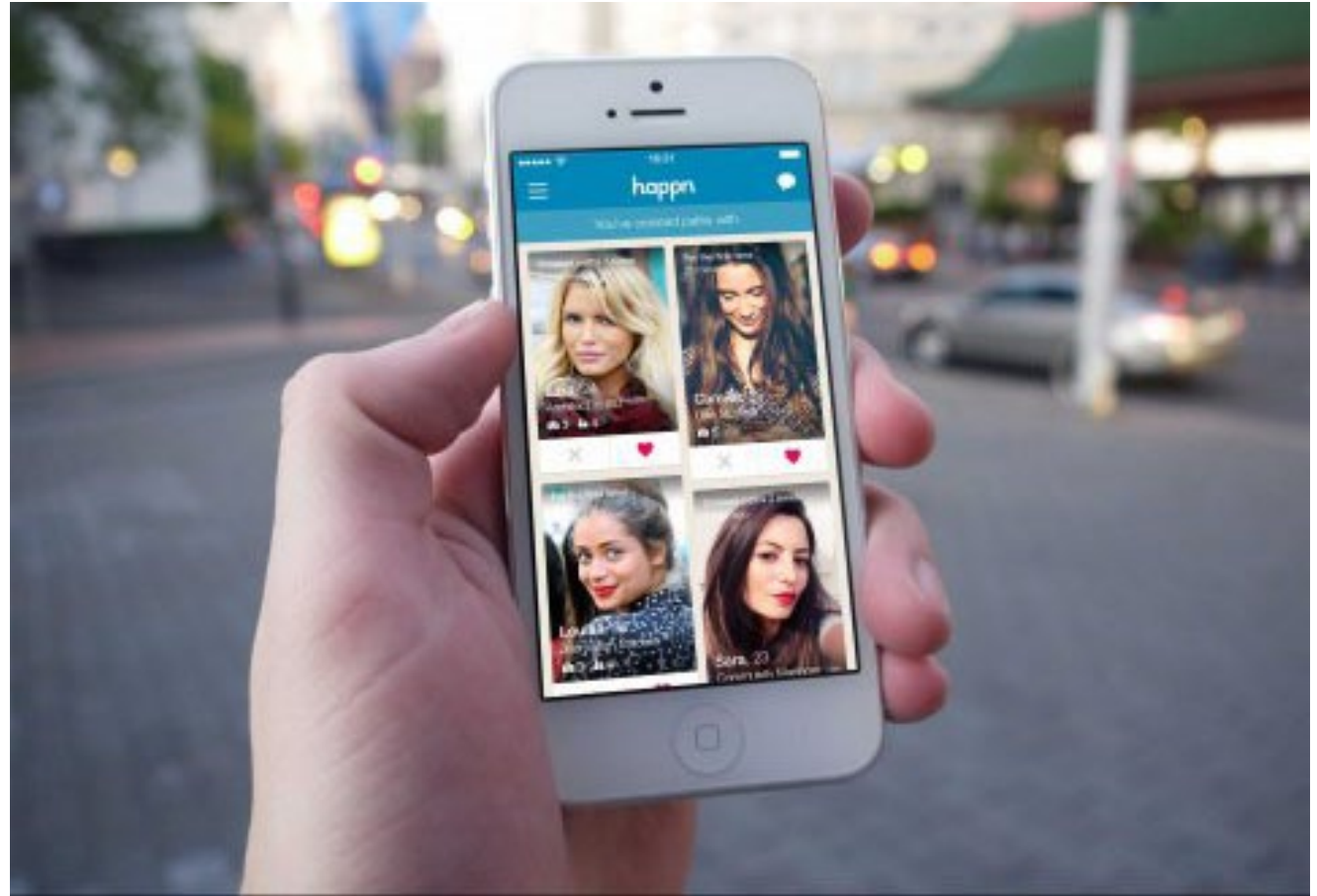
interest, so the App centric workplace will become a place for unplanned encounters.

The workplace App is an aggregator. Through bringing together disparate systems and provisioning a unified EX, it creates a multiplier effect building value for the enterprise beyond individual systems. It must have utility, and so can extend into building access, expenses submission or content sharing and on boarding. It will be the conduit to book food for delivery to one's desk or to find out about colleagues who also enjoy running marathons.

The App creates an elastic building matching supply and demand to load balance the space. It allows users to choose appropriate space and creates an ability to fine tune the experience, for example extending a meeting room booking when a session is in full flight so that the room reservation system re-allocates space – how often have meetings been cut short when people begin to hover outside the door at the top of the hour?

The other key area of innovation through Apps will be the client experience. Today it's anonymous and primitive; walking up to the barrier that is the reception desk to collect a plastic badge and arriving unannounced on the relevant floor. Tomorrow, a boarding pass will be sent to a customer's smart phone and if they have an App it will integrate to a planned meeting showing attendees, agenda and arrival instructions. As the client walks into the lobby, Bluetooth beacons will allow an interaction to welcome them and an alert is sent to the host to notify them of the arrival. The 'meet and greet' is transformed from impersonal to personal.

Apps will lead the way to engineered serendipity. A vision of a connected workplace in which people are



brought together and workspace has the intelligence to know who is in and what activities people are undertaking, their footfall and utilisation of resources. They point to a vision of a corporate marketplace where resources and human capital are allocated and organised on a real-time basis, mirroring the rise of external market places for freelancers in the so-called 'gig economy'.

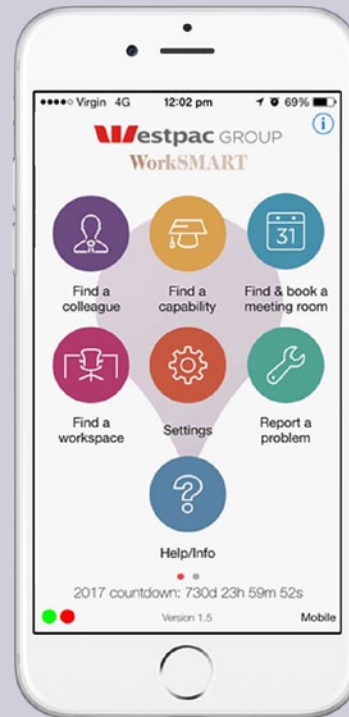
Workplace Apps have a similar concept to the dating App 'Happn' in that it brings people in close proximity together to create mutually beneficial acquaintances

Eventually, we see the App centric workplace challenge the organisational hierarchy and command and control structure of today where people are employed for specific jobs, based in departments of likeminded people. Tomorrow's dynamic organisations will use a marketplace to cluster people into teams for projects based on their skill sets, experience, knowledge and availability. UnWork believes that 'Activity Based Clustering' (or ABC) will be the new workplace paradigm to accommodate a dynamic business based on empowered people, big data and artificial intelligence and a smart, responsive building that accommodates the real work that needs to take place.

'Apps will drive interactions that create the cultures needed in the workplace. This will drive new ideas, innovation and collaborative work.'

### Westpac, Sydney

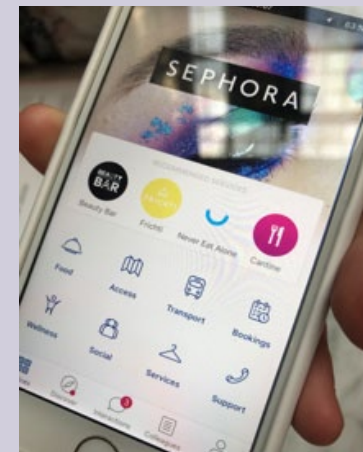
A part of the move to Barangaroo and the Work Smart initiative an App was created that allows people a range of experiences within the innovative new workspace. As well as space and amenities the system allows people finding based on their technology log in details. It also cleverly lets you find people with specific expertise or skill sets who are in the building.



Location functions can be used to find people with a particular expertise or skill

### Sephora, Paris

The LVMH subsidiary has embraced employee experience with an App that provides a range of innovative functionality, especially around social connections and food and drink. Incorporating the idea of 'engineering serendipity' it allows people within a company to sign up so that they can choose to meet 'internal strangers' for lunch (the Happn of the workplace) as well as a range of other functions from food delivery to the desk to Uber bookings and dry cleaning services. The App acts as an aggregator and incorporates a 'WeChat' type platform for internal communications. As a platform, it also provides room booking and a range of other services such as FM fault reporting, concierge and social communities of interest.



Apps can be used as a social aggregator by connecting internal strangers through food and drink based on mutual interests

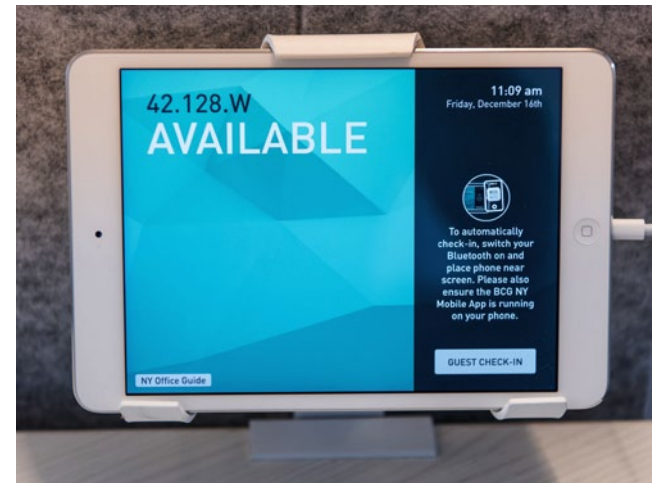
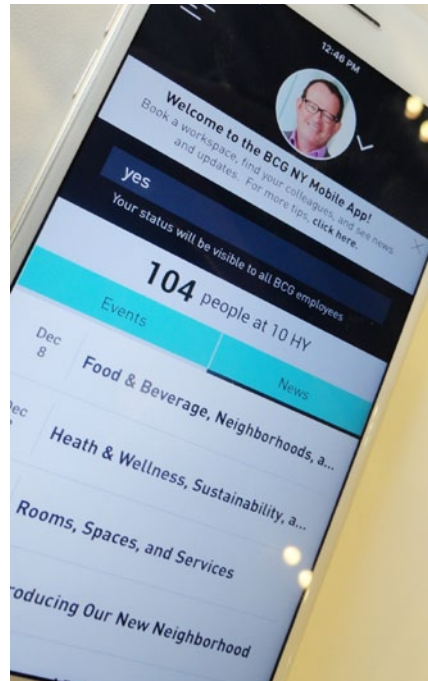
# Case Studies

## The Boston Consulting Group, Hudson Yards, New York: The Collision Coefficient

Just as Apps and digital 'platforms' have changed the way we interact outside the office, so was a new BCG App developed to change the experience inside workspace, providing a map-based space reservation system, desk panels with photo frames, news, events, a help section, receipt scanner, and crucially, the ability to find a colleague.

Building entry is enabled through a HID App on the smart phone, allowing people to use their devices to enter but also triggering Bluetooth beacons for future experience innovation. Apple location services provide data for the number of people in the building, while integration into space management optimises the workplace.

People can be identified and found, and a 'who's in' that shows, for example, people that you started with who are currently in the building creates the collisions that are desired; an App centric approach that in effect creates a physical social network that facilitates the 'bump' factor – engineering serendipity as a key ingredient in future high performing workplaces.



BCG developed an app to provide a map-based space reservation system and help people find specific colleagues



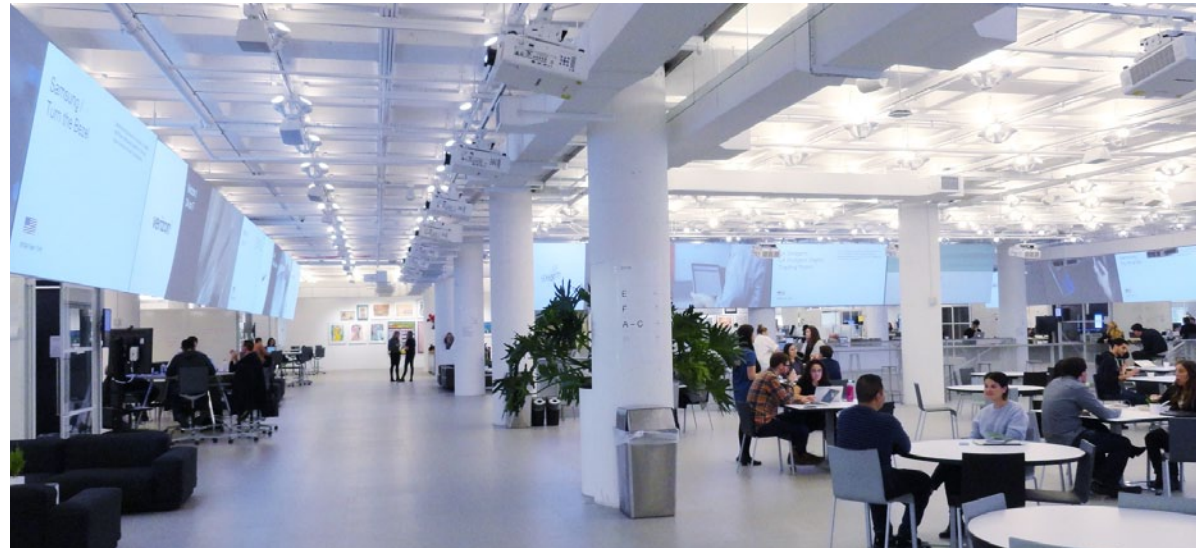
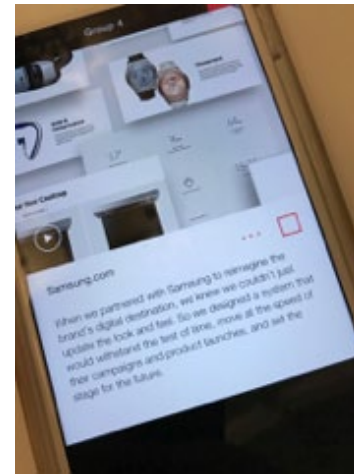
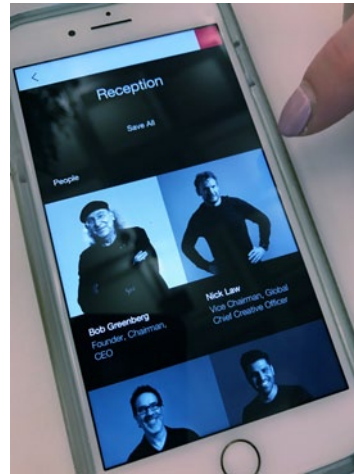
## RG/A, New York: A Digital Workplace

“We come to RG/A to do the best work of our lives.” This bold statement drives the vision to create a ‘people-centric’ workplace that enhances what makes RG/A special and focuses on the 3Rs – recruiting, retention and revenue.

RG/A has measured a 5% improvement in attrition since moving into their remarkable new workspace and it’s no wonder that people don’t want to leave. The first impression is a magical arrival, with a reception space based around a buzzy café and digital displays welcoming you by name.

And it is in the digital realm that the workspace really excels. Sir Norman Foster designed the environment and his vision was to use digital media to get people to ‘look up’. And this digital ‘canopy’ surrounds you with images, ideas and content... a digital experience that extends to an App that connect people, space and content. A central content management system (Scala CMS) acts as a cultural unifier bringing global knowledge and ideas together for the website, the App and the space.

In the space, 500 Bluetooth beacons provides a location layer that allows localisation of experience. And this includes access to the campaigns being worked on by teams in the vicinity where you are standing – content aware Apps to connect creatives and knowledge workers in physical space.



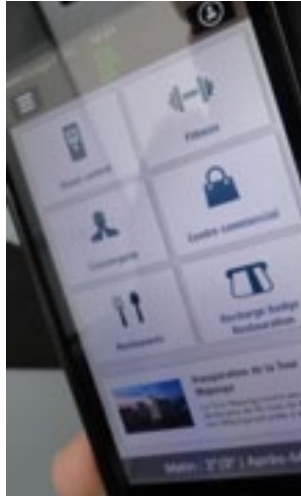
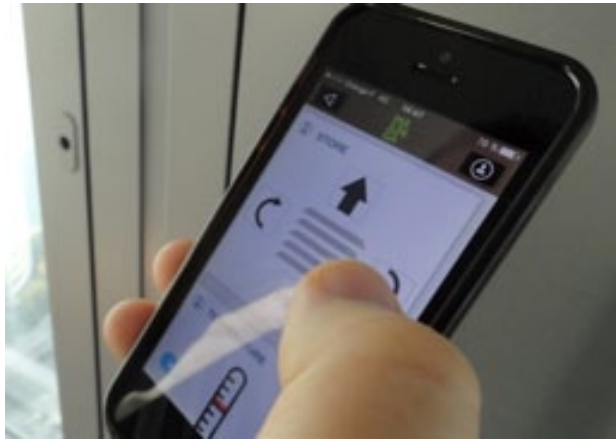
RG/A's New York office, designed by Sir Norman Foster, features digital displays that welcome employees personally

## Majunga, Paris: A Smart Building

For AXA's new workplace in the Majunga tower in La Defence a smart building infrastructure was enabled with an intelligent building management system (IBMS) to allow people to have control over their local work environment. The system allows a smart phone to scan a localised pdf bar code/QR code that defines location and allows control over heating, lighting and blinds.

As well as environmental control, the App features connections to the building concierge, amenities such as the fitness centre and food and drink - showing everything from menus to queue times with live feeds.

As part of the transition to a new workstyle, AXA allocated a desk for everyone but there are no offices at all. People use private space as needed based on activity and there are a host of other new spaces in which to work including a cool co-work space for interaction and ideas generation.



AXA are giving control to their employees by using an App to dictate local work environments from a personal smart phone

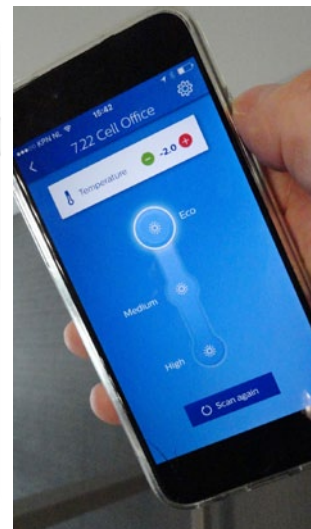
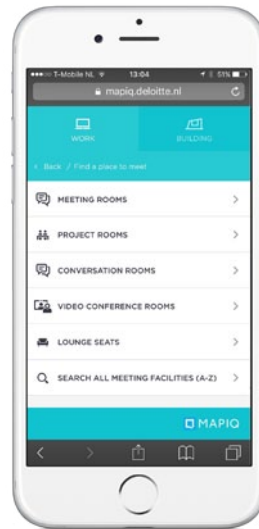


## The Edge, Amsterdam: Sustainable Best Practice

For the Edge in Amsterdam, becoming the world's most sustainable building was one of the key aspirations for this innovative workplace. Dominated by Deloitte who has the head lease, an ecosystem of partners such as Salesforce has been created in a building built on connectedness and community.

An App was central to the user experience and two have been created. The first builds on wayfinding and space management, providing access to reservation and room data as well as amenities and facilities. The second provides user control, allowing connection to the intelligent lighting system to control lux levels in the localised environment.

An ecosystem of partners has been created in a building built on connectivity and community



The most sustainable building in the world has adopted two workplace Apps. One focuses on space management, while the other places emphasis on user control



## A WORKTECH Academy knowledge resource.

Members of the WORKTECH Academy have access to in depth case studies of workplace innovation from across the globe, along with insight, future trends, ideas and points of view

**For further information, please visit:**

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