

**WORKTECH™ ACADEMY**

*Journal*



Q1 April 2020

# Trend Report



# How we'll work tomorrow

Welcome to your customised Trend Report from WORKTECH Academy, which covers the world of work and workplace in Q1 2020



Our latest quarterly Trend Report reaches our premier global network of Global Partners and Corporate Members at a time of unprecedented upheaval and disruption in the world of work as the coronavirus crisis shuts down entire industries and locks down entire cities, leaving millions of office workers to pick up the pieces from home.

However, as organisations everywhere readjust their strategies and operations, now is the time to think carefully about the future and use detailed intelligence to plan ahead in anticipation of the economic wheels turning again.

Your customised Trend Report, based on the tags you have chosen, is based on evidence and insights drawn from right across WORKTECH Academy's global network of workplace occupiers, developers, designers, technologists, researchers and futurists. We also provide some Bonus Trends to supplement our coverage for you at this critical time for new workplace thinking.

Some of our commentary responds directly to the impact of Covid-19 – on the growth of flexible working, for example, or the sharing model behind new low-emission electric urban transport. Elsewhere, however, we have

adopted the position that office life will resume and that key trends will remain relevant – such as the growing use of neurodiverse people in delivering company innovation or the reliance on agile super-teams to improve productivity

You will notice two things about your Trend Report this quarter – more in-depth content and a new look. In response to your comments and our own desire to step up with more resources at this difficult time, we have expanded our editorial content with more extensive pieces, broader perspectives and more links. And we have packaged this information in a bright new WORKTECH Academy 'Journal' format. We hope you like it and we welcome your feedback.

Professor Jeremy Myerson  
Director, WORKTECH Academy



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# Making the journey to an agile mindset

As organisations make the journey to agile transformation, the big step up is to bridge the gap between agile spaces and an agile corporate mindset

## The agile mindset is based on enhancing control by letting go of control

Many organisations have already come to terms with the move towards an 'agile' workplace. This has typically included physical manifestations of 'team' or 'scrum' spaces and a plethora of different work settings for employees to choose from to do different types of work.

In 2016 Professor Julian Birkinshaw of the London Business School declared that we were entering the age of agile; since then, the term 'agile' has

been used as an umbrella term for various new ways of working – and its meaning has been stretched and distorted.

But while office floorplates have been reconfigured to enhance collaboration and productivity, this physical manifestation of agile has not been paired with an agile corporate mindset. In 2020, more companies are realising that the two must be in tandem for an organisation to make a successful agile transformation.

Deloitte and McKinsey both report that 90 per cent of senior executives give high priority to becoming agile, but less than 10 per cent of firms are currently highly agile. This year, organisations will work to bridge the gap between aspiration and reality by matching agile space with an agile mindset. Take the use of agile scrum settings – people are given a choice of work settings but they ultimately report to one leader or 'scrum master'. The agile mindset is at odds with this concept, particularly in large organisations where hierarchy often prevails.

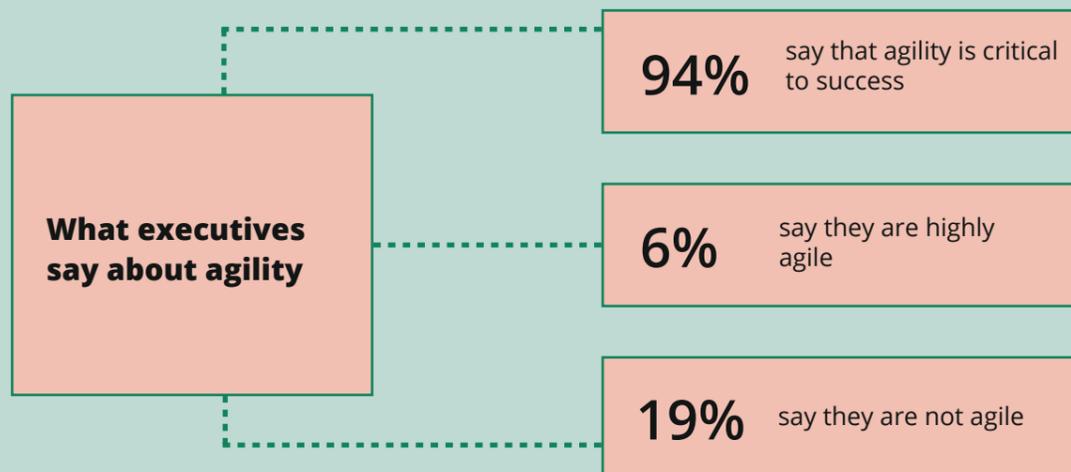
The agile mindset is based on enhancing control by letting go of control. The leader of the scrum should act as an enabler rather than commander, and give the team the tools and autonomy needed to best carry out their work.



## The Agile Mindset

|                                 | The Agile Mindset  | The Bureaucratic Mindset   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Goal</b>                     | The Law of the Customer: an obsession with delivering steadily more value to customers   | The Law of the Shareholder: a primary focus on the goal of making money for the firm and maximising shareholder value                      |
| <b>How Work Gets Done</b>       | The Law of the Small Team: a presumption that all work be carried out by small self-organising teams, working in short cycles and focused on delivering value to customers | The Law of the Bureaucrat: a presumption that individuals report to bosses who define the roles and rules of work and performance criteria |
| <b>Organisational Structure</b> | The Law of the Network: the presumption that the firm operates as an interacting network of teams  | The Law of Hierarchy: the presumption that the organisation operates as a top-down hierarchy, with multiple layers and divisions           |

Source: Stephen Denning, Forbes, August 2019



Source: Deloitte, Rewriting the Rules of a Digital Age, 2017

Leaders of networked teams in an agile organisation require skills such as negotiation, resilience, and resourcefulness. In some cases, the most experienced leaders may be the wrong people to take charge of agile networked teams. This can be a disorienting alteration to a company's DNA and often becomes the blocker to adopting a fully agile culture.

In order to continue the journey of dynamic agile transformation, organisations will move beyond well-designed agile workspaces with hierarchical scrums to instil an agile approach in their corporate DNA. The focus will be on innovating and delivering more customer value, and collaborating in an interactive network which can adapt rapidly to a quickly shifting marketplace. This is really what being agile is all about – it's not simply about space design. ■



### Key Links

[Understanding the Agile Mindset](#)

[Rewriting the Rules of a Digital Age](#)

[How to Create an Agile Organisation](#)

# Why combining big datasets is key

As more organisations decide to develop smart buildings, a Big Data approach to generating actionable insights is set to give occupiers a competitive edge

'AI is the foundation for everything we do. We create intelligent experiences. AI is the kernel that powers that experience...'

Grag Chambers, Global Director of Digital Innovation, Coca Cola

In recent times, there has been a dramatic increase in the volume and variety of workplace data we collect. In parallel, advances in digital data storage have exponentially increased our ability to store data. As we collect and store more and more workplace data on everything from occupancy to acoustics, our ability to gather data has rapidly surpassed our ability to exploit it in a productive way. That means we need novel and innovative methods for processing and analysing these vast quantities of data.

Big Data is a collective term for a range of different approaches that attempt to explore

datasets so vast and complex that traditional methods are no longer helpful in discovering useful knowledge. Big Data techniques include predictive analytics and machine learning. They consist of some of the most sophisticated analytical tools we have and are essential in sorting through today's datasets: these are datasets with special characteristics – in extremely high volume, with large variability and a fast velocity of generation.

More companies are now beginning to recognise that there is no point in collecting data if analysis methods cannot cope with the amount and type of data being generated. This is especially the case for any organisation that is making the journey to providing employees with a smart building. In such a case, companies should not just develop the tools to analyse the data that is being collected, but also devise a clear Big Data strategy that links together disparate data sources in order to create insights that none of them could make independently.

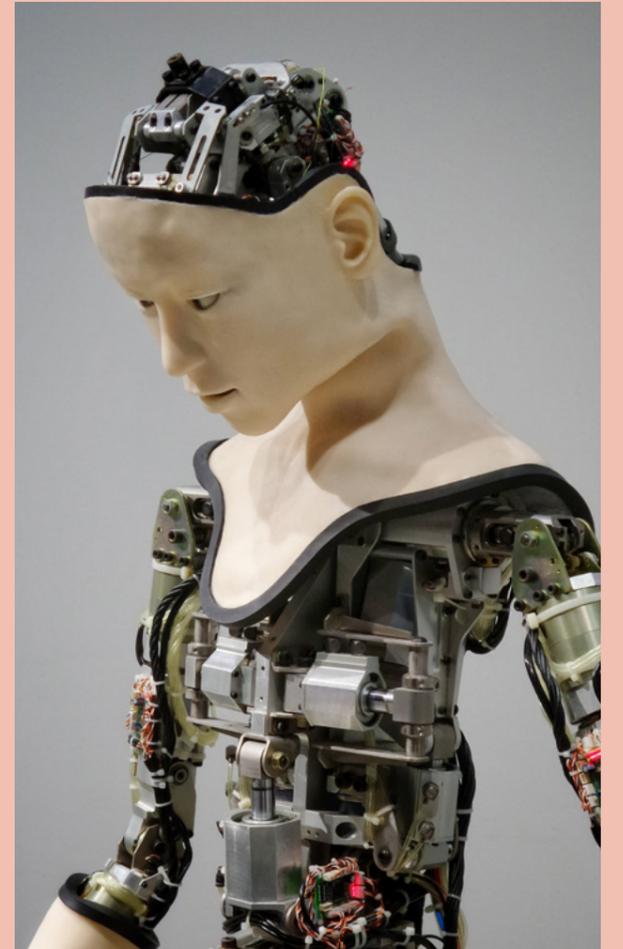
An example of this integrated approach is as follows: occupancy data alone may not be suitable for predicting office usage on a given day, but when combined with weather, transport and HR data, it may be possible to generate a unique model that can. When organisations combine a range of different sources, the capacity for

## Can AI read your mind?

In the latest frontier of artificial intelligence research, scientists at the University of California, San Francisco, have developed an AI system that can turn brain activity in text – literally a case of reading someone's mind.

The research team worked with four participants who already had electrodes implanted in their brain to monitor epileptic seizures. Each participant was asked to read aloud from 50 set sentences while the scientists tracked their neural activity. This brain activity data was fed into a machine-learning algorithm, an AI system which converted it, first into an abstract string of numbers and then a sequence of words. Although the system relied on someone speaking, experts suggest it might eventually aid communication for people who cannot speak or type – such as patients with lock-in syndrome. The research was revealed in the academic journal *Nature Neuroscience*.

Search for new research on Big Data through Science Direct [here](#)



actionable insight is immediately expanded – provided the right methods are used.

Coca Cola was early into the Big Data game with an innovative approach across the span its business operations alongside more obvious suspects such as Google, Netflix and Uber. Expect more corporate use of Big Data approaches within the workplace to leverage datasets, as any extra, valuable insights that can be gleaned will be used to give companies a competitive edge in such areas as estate efficiency, staff productivity, customer experience and the race for talent. ■

## Key links

[How Google applies Big Data to know you](#)

[How Coca Cola uses AI and Big Data](#)

[Big Data lessons from Netflix](#)

[Uber: The Big Data Company](#)

# Why amenities are now at the core

Forget the workplace amenity offer as an added layer – it is now becoming the central place-making core of any new office project

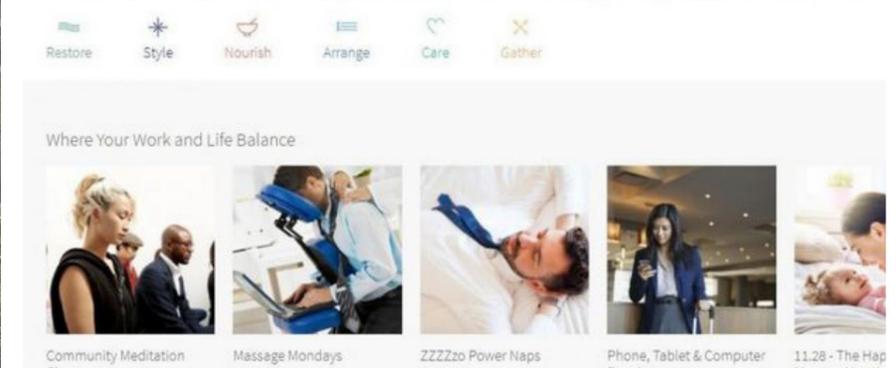
The race to add more and better amenities to the workplace has been heating up for some time; 2020 will see amenities shift even further from an added bonus to the non-negotiable core of a workplace offer. This is driven by the realisation that the workplace is an essential shopfront for attracting and retaining talent, with the curation of buildings becoming ever more competitive as a result. With greater employee choice and mobility, amenities are also part of the offer in terms of what brings people back into the office and, as such, are closely linked to workplace experience.

With the added context of a competitive rental market, amenities are therefore a key opportunity for landlords and employers to create value and stand apart from their competitors. Past real estate cycles embedded a standard set of options in terms of amenities – a fitness centre, parking, meeting space and some kind of food and beverage provision. While these all remain important, they are now seen as the starting point. Amidst the ever-growing demand for more distinctive provision, landlords and employers are becoming increasingly creative – and amenities are located in higher profile areas of the building, rather than being tucked away. For example, electric vehicle charging, beauty and grooming services, and spaces that support personal hobbies such as recording studios or maker spaces are all being added to the mix.

Within this broad blend, some key themes are emerging, among them: health and wellbeing, community and placemaking, and technology. Research by the Society for Human Resource Management showed that the employee benefit people want most is healthcare coverage. Employers are responding appropriately, with one-fifth of organisations reporting that they increased their health and wellness offering from 2018 to 2019. This encompasses a diverse selection of fitness classes and partnerships to nap rooms, mindfulness spaces, in-house health provision and therapies, and mother's rooms.



Food trucks offer an easy way to create a diverse food offering and generate a sense of event



Clockwise from top left:

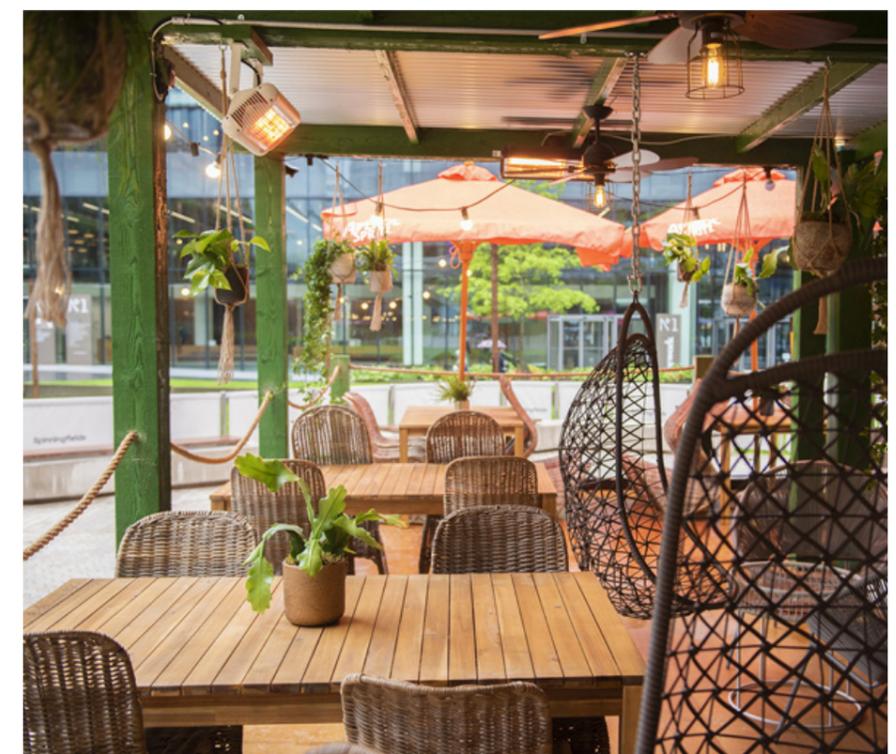
Local, high-quality coffee vendor and lounge in the Perry Brooks Tower, Austin Texas

Wellness centre with nap pods, lounge and staffed wellness area at Fifth Street Towers, Minneapolis

Tishman Speyer's tenant app, Zo

3 Hardman Street in Manchester, UK offers an array of seasonal events throughout the year

Two rooftop gardens with space for eating, socialising and vegetable growing at the B6 building in Vancouver



## Amenities: back to basics

Services and amenities are a key tactic in differentiating organisational experience to potential and current employees. However, a recent CBRE survey of over 1,600 respondents found that high-profile extras aren't worth much if you don't get the basics right.

The survey found that people placed the highest value on natural light and views – above traditional amenities such as fitness centres and games rooms. These were also the two areas where people reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction with their current environments.

Another feature that ranked prominently was food and drink - from strategically located snack stations to a quality of food that supports wellbeing or community kitchens that bring employees together. This aspect was considered to be central to fostering community and culture within an organisation. Respondents ranked access to on-site cafés and kitchens as two of the four highest-valued workplace provisions.

### Top 5 most valued perks or amenities in the office

53% Views of the Outdoors

53% Natural Light

44% On-site Café/Food

37% Kitchen

28% Open Office Space

Source: CBRE



Access to views and onsite food were highly rated

Traditional amenities are no longer considered novel. Providing unique amenities and activated spaces is no longer a luxury; it has become a necessity.

NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association



San Francisco developer DivcoWest placed technology at the forefront of its Cambridge Crossing development

Community and placemaking are also taking on increasing importance in our digital world. Here, businesses are working to create inviting amenity spaces that promote a sense of community, comfort and shared values, and express a distinctive sense of place. This is manifested in the attention paid to the 'customer' journey and the provision of spaces modelled on hospitality environments, all designed to promote connection and conviviality. However, it goes beyond simple spatial provision. The best buildings now actively programme and curate the space to create the sense of a vibrant community.

Finally, technology is increasingly considered as a building amenity. Deloitte's 2019 Commercial Real Estate Outlook noted that weaving technology throughout the tenant life cycle was a key component in strengthening tenant 'stickiness'. The next step in placemaking is therefore to embrace technology innovations that further strengthen the connection and communication between office occupiers and their employees; for example, smart building apps and systems that facilitate the usage of shared facilities. ■

### Key Links

[Performance of building amenities](#)

[Building a great employee experience](#)

[Amenities and place-making](#)

[Perks are here to stay](#)

# Academic alliance on the campus

**2020 will see an acceleration of the trend towards increased university-industry partnerships with campus development at the centre of deal**

The last few years have seen an explosion in the number of research deals between universities and industry, with upcoming projects such as Imperial College London's £1.3 billion White City development bringing the trend firmly into the UK for 2020. This repositions the campus as a shared space between the university and commercial organisations, allowing corporates to benefit from access to new thinkers and universities to monetise their land with commercial lets.

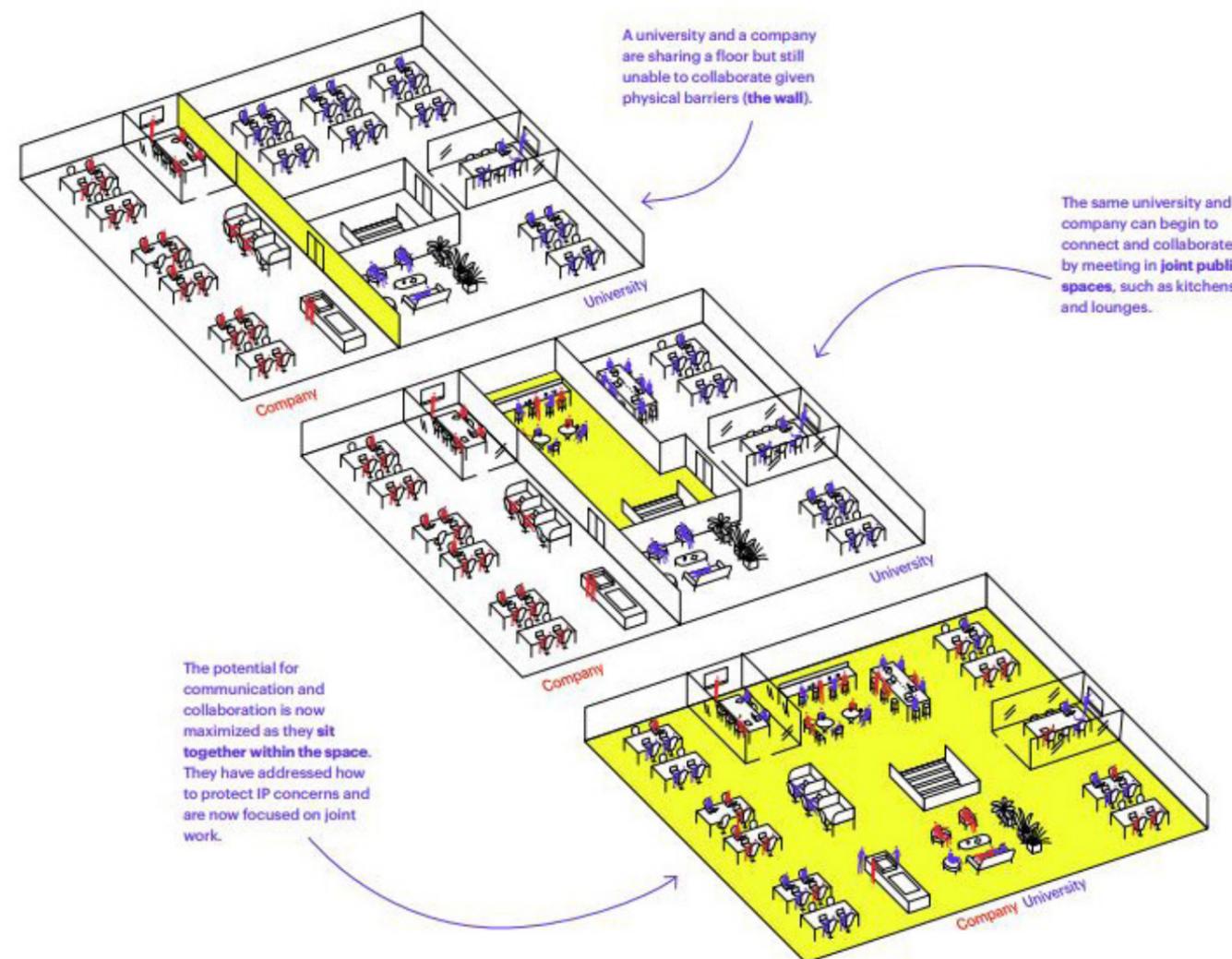
According to the *Harvard Business Review*, big companies have been tending to reduce their spending on early stage research for three decades so have increasingly been turning to universities to perform that role, seeking access to the best academic minds for new knowledge. Meanwhile, faced with decreasing government funding, universities have been more receptive than ever to corporate engagement. However, rather than a purely transactional model that requires constant negotiation, both have been shifting towards a relationship-based model that is durable and cooperative.

This enables companies to partner with academia in ways that enable them to stay 'continuously connected' to early stage research – and to accelerate the translation of that research into new products. These collaborations have resulted in significant discoveries in recent years. One of

the latest to make the news was a melanoma treatment whose molecule was discovered by Dr James Allison of University of California, Berkeley, and developed into a drug by Medarex – this netted Dr Allison and Tasuku Honjo the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

There are clearly significant advantages to these partnerships which have been increasingly recognised by organisations in recent years. With its 55 institutions of higher learning, Greater Boston has attracted an influx of companies, including Pfizer, which established one of its largest research centres there in 2014, and Philips Healthcare, which moved its US R&D headquarters there in 2015 from Westchester, New York – where it had resided for 67 years. GE also transferred its world headquarters to Boston, in order to 'be at the centre of an ecosystem that shares our aspirations' according to the then-CEO Jeffrey R. Immelt.

## Designing innovation spaces



Watch and Wagner interviewed architects designing innovation spaces and found that designers were employing a range of creative spatial strategies to stimulate both mixing (of people and disciplines) and collaboration (between people and across disciplines) as if it were a seamless act.

These included curating mixing through the seating chart, organising researchers into mixed pods, creating open work-floor settings to create

a 'new legibility of landscape' and designing reconfigurable spaces that could support differeng group formations.

The report also identified a shift from organisations and university research partners occupying separate spaces to a fully blended approach in which both research partners shared the same space, maximising the potential for collaboration and the ability to focus on joint work.

Source: Watch and Wagner, Innovation Spaces: The New Design of Work

## How to build a new cooperative model

### 1. Locate the company's R&D near the talent:

Bring the company's R&D presence in industry clusters near major research universities

**2. Seed early-stage research:** Seed research in areas of interest rather than simply waiting for something interesting to emerge – and potentially missing the boat

### 3. Cultivate institutions, not just individuals:

Companies have tended to pursue one-off projects, but more durable models are emerging that enable companies to foster long-term research relationships in areas of interest

**4. Look beyond the usual suspects:** Top talent is not just confined to a small handful of schools

**5. Find common ground on non-disclosure:** Be as specific as possible, spelling out precisely what information is considered to be subject to the NDA

### 6: Develop more-flexible patent licensing:

Models that are resonating include allowing the company to have royalty-free exclusive patent rights and paying the university if revenue from the patent exceeds an agreed threshold

**7. Renegotiate in good faith:** Determining the precise value of a single patent in some products is virtually impossible; both sides must be willing to come back to the table even if the company is no longer directly working with the institution

**8. Bridge the cultural divide:** Companies are realising that if they are to attract the brightest talent, they need to create purpose-driven organisations aligned with values such as meaningful work and social utility. Similarly, universities see their role extending beyond pure research to taking on social challenges and contributing to economic growth.

Source: Kenneth R. Lutchen, Dean of Boston University's College of Engineering, Harvard Business Review



Scale Space at Imperial White City will provide shared facilities for organisations, start-ups and university researchers



Shared public realm at the proposed Imperial College campus in White City

The upcoming Imperial College London development at White City in London – recently given planning approval – gives a sense of what this looks like in terms of master-planning a new campus. The development aims to bring together a community of start-ups, spinouts, major corporations, high-tech and high-growth companies, all collaborating with university researchers to translate cutting-edge research into practical applications across a 23-acre site. A key aspect of this plan is based around a 'co-location ideology'; a lynchpin of the scheme is a building called Scale Space in which Imperial will partner with a digital venture builder to create a high-quality, contemporary office design to provide a home for businesses – from smaller companies to global corporations – to work alongside a network of researchers and academics. The campus will include other co-location spaces, two multidisciplinary research facilities, incubator spaces, makerspaces, accommodation for students and commercial housing. ■

### Key links

[The argument for partnership](#)

[About Imperial White City](#)

[Examples of successful University-Industry collaborations](#)

[The Smart University Campus](#)

# Collaboration looks at a blended future

**As remote teams assume critical importance, organisations will be tasked with creating an optimised blend between virtual and face-to-face communication**

Virtual teams have been increasingly essential to organisations for some time. Today, amid an unprecedented global health and economic crisis, they are more so than ever before. Cloud-based project management systems and virtual teams are quickly becoming the new norm. But even before the coronavirus pandemic, face-to-face interaction was becoming increasingly difficult as teams were dispersed across different geographical locations.

Research finds that increasingly people feel more engaged with a blend of both virtual and face-to-face collaboration. Organisations today need to pay equal attention to remote and face-to-face collaboration to boost the productivity and engagement of communicating in teams. The future of communication is blended. A recent study by Gallup found that employee engagement climbs when employees spend time both working remotely and in the same location as their colleagues. Highly engaged workplaces boast 41 per cent lower absenteeism, 40 per cent fewer quality defects and 21 per cent high profitability.

However, better engagement is currently being blocked through a lack of blended collaboration. Studies have found that video communication can greatly increase the productivity of virtual collaboration, but currently video is under-utilised. A McKinsey report found that when employees

are working more collaboratively the uptick in productivity offers a US \$900 billion to US \$1.3 trillion value to the economy. This will become the incentive for organisations to align their collaborative strategies to the point where video becomes the norm and a blended approach between face-to-face and virtual can be optimised.

There is an underlying assumption that face-to-face collaboration is always the best. Now is the time to challenge this assumption. If done well, virtual collaboration can have the same merit and benefits as face-to-face; the more quickly organisations align to this concept, the better.



**“I’m seeing a new generation of technology emerge that can make dispersed teams more productive than co-located teams...”**

- Keith Ferrazzi, Harvard Business Review

Gartner reports that the market for digital collaboration tools will nearly double in demand from 2018 to 2023. While today’s threat is Covid-19, tomorrow’s is climate change and the detrimental impact of long-distance travel – these threats will continue to increase the demand for virtual collaboration.

Undoubtedly, virtual collaboration is set to become the new norm, but there is still a business case for face-to-face collaboration. Face-to-face is essential to maintain team bonds; the spoken word only conveys 7 per cent of any conversation’s intent while body language and tone of voice convey 55 per cent and 38 per cent. *Harvard Business Review* also reports that a face-to-face request is 34 times more successful than an email. This shows that maintaining a balance between face-to-face and virtual is essential to ensure the most productive and engaged collaboration. ■

## Four tips for effective collaboration

**Personal and professional check-ins:** These are already common in face-to-face meetings but less so among virtual teams. In order to feel connected, personal sharing can be the most effective ways to bond teams. A personal/professional check in at the beginning of meetings makes people feel like part of the team.

**No multi-tasking:** Research shows that multitasking during conference calls is extremely common. In order for collaboration to occur, everyone must be mentally present and engaged.

**Limit mute whenever practical:** Besides encouraging general disengagement, the dead air of mute kills any attempt at humour and eliminates the bonding value of shared laughter.

**Reward naysayers:** Give warm, generous praise to team members who aren’t afraid to speak their minds when everyone else appears to be in agreement on an issue.

**Creating candour:** Create environments where employees feel safe to speak their minds. Achieving candour is hard enough for co-located teams. It’s all the more challenging in a virtual environment. But candour is the key indicator of team productivity.

## Key Links

[McKinsey productivity report](#)

[Gartner collaboration market report](#)

[Collaboration in the time of corona](#)

[How virtual teams create human connections](#)

# Is coworking going back to first base?

**Coworking spaces will return to their community roots over the next year as the need to differentiate and retain members intensifies in a crowded market**

In the 15 years since the first coworking spaces opened, the industry has made the journey from social movement to corporate proposition – so much so that coworking is now a well-established segment of the global flexible space market. The dominant paradigm of coworking spaces today is to find a location which offers a strong potential return, build out the space, then facilitate community around it – if community is a priority at all. This is the opposite of how coworking communities first evolved. Gretchen Spreitzer, a University of Michigan professor and early researcher into coworking, points out that ‘some of them [coworking spaces] actually started as a community of practice before there was even a space’.

As the need to differentiate in a crowded market grows – and as the ‘original brand’ of coworking seeks to distance itself from providers who are purely interested in flexible space rental – 2020 will see a return to community as a central value. This has practical advantages. Marc Navarro, a coworking consultant based in Barcelona, recently pointed out that ‘Copying what’s tangible is easy. If a space is copying yours, and we’re only 100 metres away, what’s the only difference we have? Here, the intangible value of community becomes a key factor in making a space ‘sticky’ and ensuring that members return year after year.

The value of community also has wider benefits in a global economy in which ever-increasing numbers of people work as contractors or remotely from their colleagues. Over the last 15 years, the number of people who work remotely has grown by 159 per cent globally according to research by Merchant Savvy. This is significant because, according a study of more than 10,000 workers conducted by The Myers-Briggs Company, positive relationships with co-workers are the leading factor in workplace wellbeing and we’re facing what has been described as an ‘epidemic’ of loneliness in the workplace.



**‘The true measure of successful place is occupancy; it’s that people have chosen to be there’**

Melissa Marsh, Plastarc

## Loneliness means lost productivity

Although employers are increasingly recognising the importance of promoting staff wellness, loneliness is still considered by many to be an issue that has been neglected – despite the significant socioeconomic costs. In the UK alone, the New Economics Foundation estimated that loneliness has cost employers around £2.5 billion a year due to its adverse effects on health, productivity and staff turnover. Despite the workforce being more digitally connected than ever, this doesn't necessarily translate into close social connections; today, the average American has only one close confidant at work.

Vivek Murthy – former Surgeon General of the United States – identified increasing numbers of remote and gig economy workers as one of the reasons for the growing societal issues caused by loneliness. However, it is not simply a societal issue, it is also a health problem 'associated with a lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day and even greater than that associated with obesity.'

## SOCIAL ISOLATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

22% of adults said they always or often feel lonely or isolated

58% of those reported having mental health issues

33% said it affected the ability to do their job



55% of those reported having physical health issues

49% said it affected their personal relationships

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/The Economist Survey on Loneliness and Social Isolation in the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan (2018).

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/The Economist

## Coworking reduces isolation

54%

Socialise with other members after work

79%

Said coworking has expanded their social networks

83%

Report they are less lonely since joining a coworking space

89%

Report that they are happier since joining a coworking space

Source: Emergent Research and the Global Coworking Unconference

Meanwhile, multiple surveys have found that coworking spaces reduce social isolation and loneliness. A survey by Emergent Research and the Global Coworking Unconference found that 87 per cent of respondents met other members for social reasons, and 83 per cent reported being less lonely after joining a coworking space.

This desire for social connection can be seen to be manifesting in the growth of sector-specific coworking spaces – providing community around shared interests – and in spaces which are designed from the outset around a hospitality-oriented offer. With corporations increasingly coming round to the view that remote working is potentially a mental wellbeing issue, this positions coworking as a potential solution to the challenge of remote worker isolation, particularly as spaces open up outside traditional urban hotspots. ■

### Key Links

[No community, no coworking](#)

[Coworking as a solution for loneliness](#)

[A community of support](#)

[Back to community](#)

[Evolution of coworking](#)

# Activists seek more purpose at work

2020 is set to be the year of bottom-up culture change as increasing social and political awareness drives a new wave of employee activism

‘People are asking fundamental questions about how well capitalism is serving society..’

- Alex Gorsky, CEO, Johnson & Johnson, 2019

In the 1970s, the Nobel prize winning economist Milton Friedman argued that the one responsibility of business was to generate profit for shareholders. In today’s business world, stakeholders are increasingly demanding that organisations be a force for wider societal good, not just for generating ever-increasing revenues. Where culture change used to be implemented from the top-down and the workforce re-educated to suit, it is now becoming more of a bottom-up drive by employees to do things better. This makes 2020 the year of socially conscious capitalism, meeting employee demands for finding purpose and meaning in the work that they do.

Public interest in corporate responsibility is unusually high, with a surge in the numbers of consumers demanding that brands make genuine commitments to positive social impact and sustainability. This is filtering through into our working lives - a 2019 survey by *Fortune* found that 72 per cent of respondents believe that public companies should be ‘mission driven’ as well as focusing on the bottom line. Today, as many Americans say that a company’s primary purpose should include ‘making the world better’ as say it should include ‘making money for shareholders’.

This is reflected in new efforts by organisations – and their leaders – to visibly engage with political and societal issues. Examples include the group of CEOs who signed a letter published in *The New*



Source: Fortune magazine

*York Times* pressuring the American government to pass a bill that requires background checks on all gun purchases, or Salesforce CEO’s Marc Benioff who is battling battle Indiana legislature against a ‘religious liberties’ law that he views as discriminatory.

However, while there have been high profile efforts by individual leaders, the group that’s driving this culture change the most are corporate employees. A 2019 study by Weber Shandwick and United Minds identified this as a new wave of ‘employee activism’, with the majority now believing that employees are right to speak up about their employers, whether to support or criticise – and increasingly to take the potential risk of openly airing political views. The research

found that nearly four in ten employees had spoken up to support or criticise their employers’ actions over a controversial issue that affects society.

Two recent examples of this vocal outcry include an employee protest at Equinox after majority owner Stephen Ross hosted a fundraiser for President Trump, and the walkout of hundreds of Wayfair employees over a decision to sell furniture to a Texas detention camp for migrant children. Employees of Amazon, Bank of America, Disney, Uber and Nike have similarly railed against actions of their employers that conflicted with their social conscience. Social media amplifies these protests, potentially leading to wider boycotts by consumers.

## Who are the employee activists?

A Weber Shandwick/United Minds study called Employee Activism in the Age of Purpose identified Millennials as the generation most likely to be employee activists. While fewer than half of Americans say that CEOs should take a socially responsible stance, support is overwhelming among those aged 25-44.

Leslie Gaines-Ross, Chief Reputation Strategist at Weber Shandwick, explains: ‘As societal issues mount and political rhetoric stirs up emotions in the workplace, a new generation of Millennial employees may feel compelled to speak out more often in the hopes of making a difference or impacting their employer’s point of view or policies.’



Companies should note that potential employees are increasingly choosing to work at companies that are driving this change. In 2019, Kronos found that wanting to work for a company that does meaningful work came second only to overall compensation when talking to Gen Z about their choice of potential employee.

In addition, Gallup polls show a direct link between employees' understanding of their company's purpose and identity and key measures of business health. Their research suggested that a 10 per cent improvement in

employees' connection with the mission or purpose of their organisation would result in: a 12.7 per cent reduction in safety incidents, an 8.1 per cent decrease in staff turnover and a 4.4 per cent increase in profitability. Their final message – organisations need to consider how well employees connect with the company's purpose, brand and culture as an essential part of business performance. With culture change, employees are now in the driving seat. ■

### Disconnect on the value of purpose

A PwC study (Putting Purpose to Work, 2016) found that, while business leaders tended to prioritise the commercial value of purpose, employees see purpose as a way of bringing meaning to their work and understanding the value of the contributions that they're making to their company – as well as society. It also found that employees need to find this meaning in their daily work in order to be fully engaged. However, while leaders typically understand the benefits that greater engagement can bring, they don't prioritise purpose as a means of amplifying this.



Source: Pricewaterhouse Coopers

### Guidelines for navigating the new wave of employee activism

1. Embrace employee activism as a positive force to propel your reputation as an open and transparent organisation
2. Ensure your corporate purpose and culture are known from the point of interview, onboarding and through employee tenure
3. Be mindful of what is on employees' minds, regularly gauging how what is happening both in and outside the workplace is likely to impact attitudes
4. Cultivate a listening culture, motivating employees to share their opinions internally before going elsewhere
5. Establish a response protocol to build a culture of receptiveness
6. Clearly articulate and communicate your company's values to create a clear compass about when to speak out and use purpose as a guidepost for decision making
7. Make your company's values part of the solution to wider societal issues – simply defining the returns you bring to shareholders, employees and customers is no longer enough

Source: Weber Shandwick



Wayfair employee walkout  
Source: The Guardian

### Key Links

- [The Future of Capitalism](#)
- [The Enlightened Capitalists](#)
- [Half a million Millennial employees](#)
- [Employees protest over detention camps](#)
- [Three ways mission driven workplace perform better](#)

# Disengaged staff still costing firms

Employee engagement figures are beginning to turn in the right direction – but it's a slow process suggesting a complex challenge

After several years of bad news for US employers, the top-line figures on employee engagement are finally starting to shift in the right direction. According to the latest Gallop poll, more than a third of US workers (35 per cent) are now 'engaged' - that is, they're committed to their company and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. This is the highest figure since Gallup began tracking the metric in 2000.

Back at the start of the new millennium, just 26 per cent of workers were engaged and 18 per cent were 'actively disengaged' – psychologically absent and likely to sabotage their own company's efforts. Things were destined to get worse – much worse – before the tanker started to turn. In 2014, Gallup recorded just 8 per cent of the workforce as engaged, 77 per cent as not engaged, and 15 per cent as actively disengaged. This low point clearly marked a tipping point for both senior leaders and the workplace industry, which began to focus strategy and resources on creating a better experience at work for employees with a commitment to generating more engagement.

But if the picture is brighter today after five years of concerted attention, the latest Gallop poll (based on a random sample of 4,700 full- and part-time US employees working for an employer from January to August 2019) hardly constitutes the most resounding endorsement of efforts by

employers to improve engagement. There are still plenty of disengaged workers who don't do much more than tamely show up for work, and 13 per cent of workers – that's more than one in ten of the workforce – remain actively disengaged; they're the ones who are having unhappy work experiences and can't wait to spread their unhappiness to their colleagues.

Executives worldwide today recognise that enhancing employee engagement is in the top five of their global business strategies. They accept without question that the issue has a direct bearing on an organisation's financial health and profitability – disengagement costs US companies as much as US \$500 billion a year in lost productivity. Individual companies such as beverage giant Molson Coors, which has dramatically reduced safety costs, and global construction equipment maker Caterpillar – which has recorded large annual savings from decreased staff turnover, absenteeism and overtime – have demonstrated the financial value of investing in better employee engagement. So why is it proving so hard, and taking so long, to move the dial more generally in this area?



13% of employees remain actively disengaged

One explanation is that employee engagement is a complex nut to crack. It has a large number of inter-related dimensions from HR policy and communication to job design, company culture and workspace architecture. Business leaders sure-footed in one area can misstep in another. Creating a great-looking office space without addressing other important factors is unlikely to achieve traction on engagement. Equally, fixing the culture while ignoring the physical environment won't do much either.

Fixing poor engagement starts with understanding the cause. Opportunities to engage include coaching, mentoring, on-going performance

feedback and recognition programmes. Regular communication touchpoints – weekly meetings, blogs and video conferences – can help. Many organisations conduct workplace surveys and create focus groups to determine the level of significance of the results and to ensure changes are made based on employee feedback. But, in 2020, the going will be hard and evidence further suggests that today's digital workplace – with less person-to-person interaction and an increasing reliance on technology – is eroding employee engagement rather than shoring it up, leaving many business leaders with a mountain still to climb. ■

## Employees at work

### Engaged behaviours

Optimistic  
 Team-oriented  
 Goes above and beyond  
 Solution-oriented  
 Selfless  
 Shows a passion for learning  
 Passes along credit but accepts blame

### Disengaged behaviours

Pessimistic  
 Self-centred  
 High absenteeism  
 Negative attitude  
 Egocentric  
 Focuses on monetary worth  
 Accept credit but passes along blame

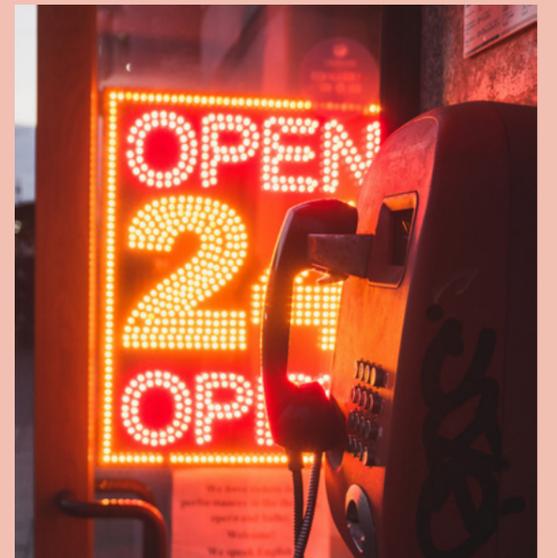
Source: Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)

## Ditching the employee engagement survey

Many companies use employee engagement surveys as a way to connect with staff, but here are six alternative ways to listen to your people which can be easier, cheaper and more fruitful:

- 1:** Every leader or manager can pick a day each week to sit in a break room or lunch room and simply be available for group conversations.
- 2:** Set up a Suggestion Box online and encourage your employees to weigh in with ideas, suggestions and comments.
- 3:** Set up quick one-on-one conversations with any employee who wants to participate – if you want people to talk, you have to listen.
- 4:** Use community events such as end-of-quarter parties to introduce employees to others they don't already know.
- 5:** Set up a confidential telephone hotline for employees to use when bad things such as harassment or discrimination either happen or look like they might happen.
- 6:** Organise a Town Hall meeting for larger teams and ask employees to submit questions in advance of the event.

Source: Liz Ryan, Forbes Magazine



### Key Links

- [Ditch the employee engagement survey](#)
- [More than just a work relationship](#)
- [Developing and sustaining employee engagement](#)
- [Great places to work](#)

# A tipping point for flexible workers?

As coronavirus forces organisations to send their workforces home, flexible strategies have become a matter of survival - not luxury - for companies everywhere

As the Covid-19 global pandemic forces companies everywhere to send workforces home and to re-evaluate their operations, we are seeing a tipping point for flexible working. Some organisations already have the systems in place with staff laptops and collaborative software installed for video conferencing, while others are experiencing a shortage of laptops and have delivered desktops to employee's homes.

Until now, flexible working has mainly been embraced by forward-thinking organisations as an additional benefit to employees. Most firms still operate some variant on the traditional 9-5

working hours despite evidence suggesting that autonomy and control over how and when people work boosts productivity. Now, organisations will embrace flexible working as the new normal as employees are forced to work in physical coronavirus-induced isolation. This movement marks the pivotal moment where work will take on an entirely different character.

It could be that early 2020 is viewed retrospectively as a turning point for flexible work – an adaptive period where organisations are learning new digital ways of working and establishing new work behaviours and daily



Source: Enjoy-Work, Chiswick Park, London

‘There has been a power shift. In many sectors, bosses no longer dictate what a regular working day looks like. The employees, this so-called ‘Generation Flex’, are calling the shots...’

IWG Global Workspace Survey 2019



routines. But, amid rising real estate costs, there were already signs of change in workplace strategy globally: Covid-19 has simply accelerated this process to the point where companies have no choice but to adapt. Those who are not flexing in the face of this change will struggle to maintain business as the world turns to virtual meetings and collaborative technology to remain connected.

A 2019 International Workplace Group survey was conducted which found that 62 per cent of firms globally reported they have flexible working policies in place. This number is likely to surge post-virus and the companies that adopt successful flexible working strategies, which allow for autonomy and choice over how employees work, will reap the long-term benefits of remote working. ■

### Tips on leading flexible teams during the virus

**Experiment:** If your team is new to working at home, this is the perfect time to experiment with new collaborative tools – after all, this could be a more permanent fixture in your organisation in the future.

**Manage expectations:** When in the office, everyone is present and in the same environment. Working from home is completely different, especially during this time. Your job to manage expectations for everyone and treat each person as an individual case.

**Trust:** Flexible working requires a degree of mutual trust between leader and employee. Hold regular virtual ‘huddles’ and team meetings to check in and make sure everyone is supporting each other, but trust that your employees are doing what they are paid to do in the meantime.

**Encourage self-care:** Encourage self-care among your employees the best you can. Be empathetic to tough situations and create a psychologically safe environment where your employees feel like they can express their concerns and thoughts with you and their team.

**Invest in good technology:** In the absence of physical office equipment, it is important your organisation invests in good-quality technology to ensure the productivity and wellbeing of your employees.

Source: WORKTECH Academy

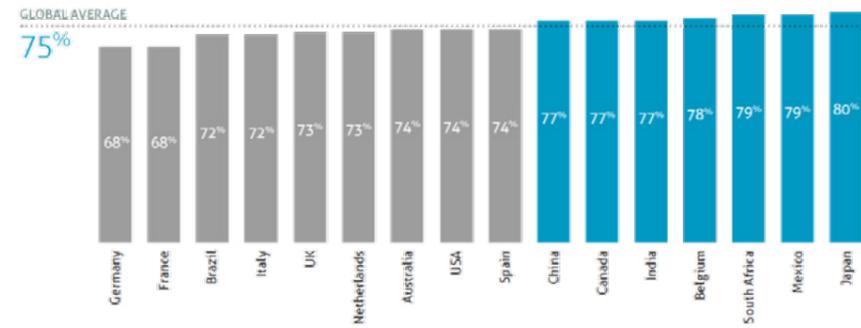
#### Key Links

[Generation flex \(IWG Survey\)](#)

[Flexible working beats pay](#)

[Finland is taking a radical new approach to flexible working](#)

### Percentage of people who consider flexible working the new normal



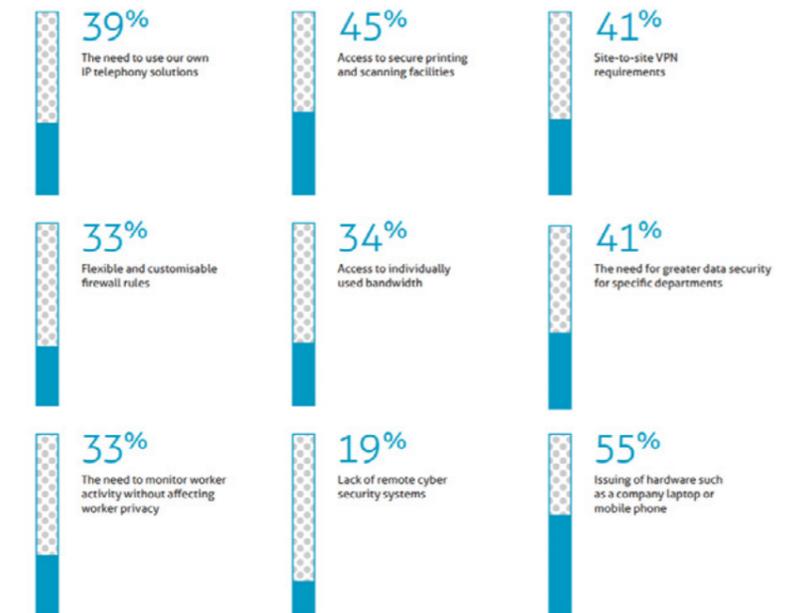
# 75%

of people on average consider flexible working as the new normal

### Key technology requirements for flexible working

# 55%

of companies issue hardware such as laptops and mobile phones in preparation for flexible working practice



### Flexible working to attract talent

- 85% Australia
- 84% Canada
- 84% UK
- 83% Germany
- 82% India
- 82% USA
- 77% France
- 75% Netherlands

- 73% South Africa
- 72% Belgium
- 72% Brazil
- 71% Mexico
- 69% Spain
- 69% Japan
- 66% Italy
- 65% China

# 77%

of companies, on average, use flexible working as a tool to attract and retain talent

Source: IWG Global Workplace Survey 2019

# Digital wellbeing enters the arena

## After physical and mental wellbeing, a third dimension of workplace wellbeing is emerging as organisations face up to the effects of technology addiction

Companies have begun to supplement physical health with mental wellbeing at the top of the workplace agenda in recent years. Now there is a third element entering the equation: digital wellbeing. A recent survey commissioned by Acuvue found that office workers spend 1,700 hours a year in front of a computer screen and that 37 per cent of workers attribute excessive screen use to headaches.

The ubiquitous nature of technology in our social and work lives means that simply taking a 'digital detox' is not always an option and this can take a toll on employee wellbeing. Employers

are now taking measures to mediate the use of technology by their staff by establishing guidelines and restrictions, and implementing 'soft touch' software architecture tools to encourage healthy technology habits.

While organisations may benefit from tech-enabled productivity boosts in the short term, the effects can be detrimental as the line between work and life continues to blur. Research by Deloitte has found that the 'value derived from always-on employees can be undermined by negative factors such as increased cognitive load and diminished employee performance and

wellbeing'. Organisations are now factoring in digital wellbeing as part of their overall wellbeing strategy to get the most from people and technology.

Leaders can play active roles in commissioning workplace design that encourages the adoption of healthy technology habits. Currently, technology is designed to psychologically stimulate the reward centres in our brain to make us want more, in the same way a physical drug addiction works. Research in the field of behavioural science has found that environmental 'tweaks' can lead to changes in behaviours and positive outcomes. Using this theory, employers can adopt a human-centred approach to the design of workspace and choose appropriate technology that enables users to overcome natural human limitations.

It is the joint effort of technology providers and employers to work together to design technology and spaces which encourage healthy tech habits. Policies, restrictions and guidelines on technology usage only goes so far – the next step will be to implement 'soft touch' tools such as smart defaults, commitment devices and setting social norms (see Fig. 1 on opposite page) to encourage digital wellbeing in the workplace. ■

| Nudge strategy            | How it works  |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Reminders</b>          | Design technology-enabled reminders to break through ongoing continuous activity on digital tools such as email and social media  |
| <b>Social proof</b>       | Communicate social norms regarding email and work habits during off-work hours. For example, that the majority of workers and leaders do not check email during certain times |
| <b>Commitment devices</b> | Encouraging employees to take a 'digital detox' or work-life balance pledge, committing to limiting their email use outside of work hours                                     |

Figure 1. Potential environmental nudge strategies to help break technology addiction. Source: Deloitte Insights

### The effects of technology addiction

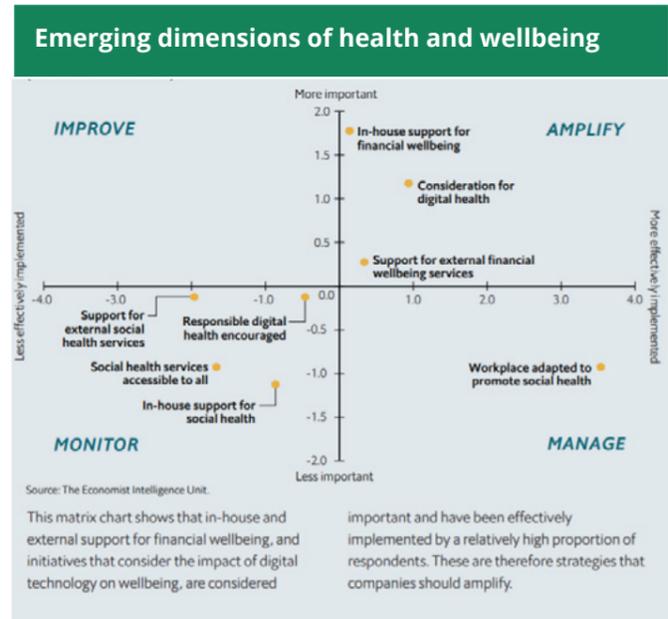
#### Unhealthy use of workplace technology can impair workers' physical and mental wellbeing through:

**Poor sleep:** Addiction to technology and the always-on work culture are contributing to lack of sleep. Exposure to blue screen light emitted by mobile devices reduces the melatonin required for good sleep – employees are now exposed to this light during the day and in the evening. This makes regular sleep patterns hard to maintain and can trigger negative health outcomes.

**Physical disconnection:** Technology is having an even more profound negative effect on social wellbeing. While it can enable us to engage in relationships across distances and time zones, this sometimes comes at the expense of face-to-face relationships with friends and family, which can often be neglected.

**Anxiety and depression:** Information overload is not only distracting, but potentially mentally damaging. With phones and computers constantly alerting us to all the opportunities available, becoming double-booked is not infrequent and can lead to anxiety when the user needs to skip one meeting in favour of another.

Source: Deloitte, 2018



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

**Key Links**

- [The workplace wellbeing pyramid](#)
- [Designing for digital wellbeing](#)
- [Seven dimensions of workplace wellbeing](#)

# Space rethink for the neurodiverse

**As companies wake up to the creative potential of a neurodiverse workforce, the design of spaces for innovation is set to be transformed**

In an age of increasing business commitment to diversity and inclusion, there is now a focus on what neurodiverse employees can bring to corporate innovation. Not so long ago, people with such conditions as autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and other forms of social anxiety struggled in the workplace. Employers were often slow and reluctant to make the necessary adaptations for neurodiverse minds – or even recruit them in the first place. Today the situation is changing; there is growing appreciation that people and ideas from outside the boundaries of neurotypical thinking have a great deal to contribute to company breakthroughs. As a result, workplace designers are facing a rethink on how in-house innovation spaces are configured.

According to the *Harvard Business Review*, ‘research shows that some conditions, including autism and dyslexia, can bestow special skills in pattern recognition, memory, or mathematics.’ Many people with dyslexia exhibit unusually strong visual and problem-solving skills; ADHD workers can also be hugely creative, dedicated and energetic with a strong ability to think outside the box. Commentators also noted how so many people working in science and engineering jobs on digital innovation have autistic-like traits.

C-suite executives are now eyeing a vast,

‘Neurodiversity can benefit a company’s ability to innovate and problem-solve, yet many employees with neurodevelopmental differences have encountered less-than-ideal experiences...’

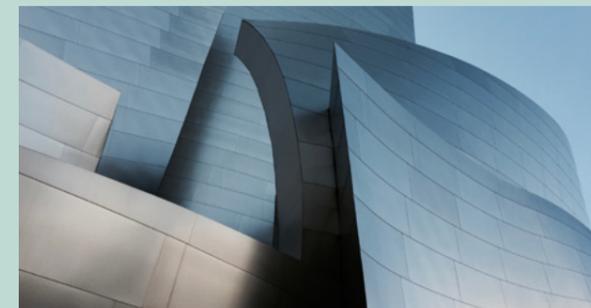
Rebekah Bastian, *Forbes* magazine

untapped talent pool and adjusting HR processes accordingly to bring once-excluded neurodiverse individuals in from the cold. The term ‘neurodiversity’, first coined in 1998 by Australian sociologist Judy Singer, has itself come of age in the workplace. Not before time, one might add, as one in 10 full-time office workers are considered to be neurodiverse, according to some estimates.

## Inclusive innovation spaces: a design guide



**Emphasis:** Create focal points within the space – be it an architectural element or graphics – which can aid in wayfinding and mapping of the space, making navigation easier.



**Rhythm:** Design the space with common elements within one’s viewpoint can aid in orientation and provide a reassuring sense of order within an environment.



**Proportion:** This ensures the relative size and scale of the various elements in a design. If the proportions are off, a space can feel unbalanced or not in sync with human scale. Ceiling heights and room proportion are critical to ensure the feel of the space is appropriate.



**Balance:** Balance creates visual equilibrium and often reconciles opposing forces in a composition. Most successful compositions achieve balance by either symmetry or asymmetry.

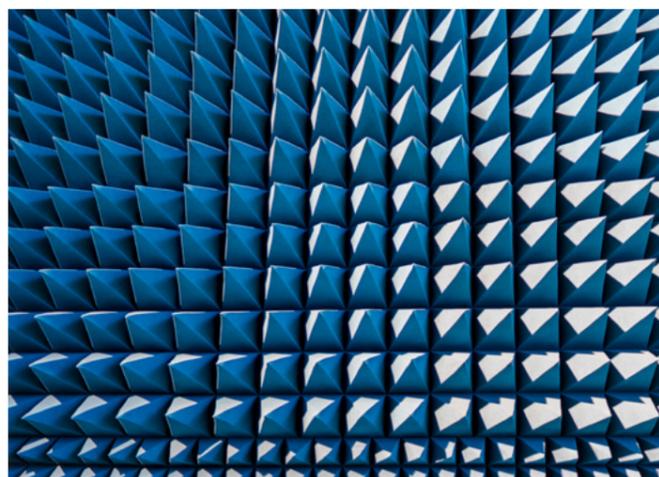


**Light:** Bright light can intensify feelings, both positive and negative. Turning down the lights can help us make more rational decisions. When interior lighting conditions are changed during the day to mimic the changes in light colour and intensity experienced outside, the functioning of the circadian system can reduce stress.

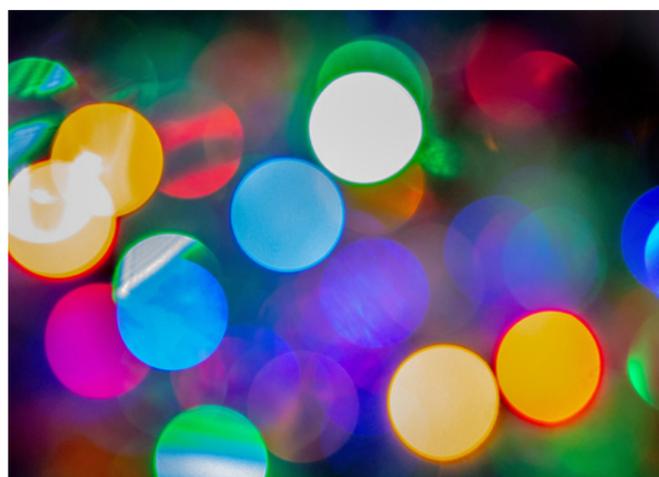
**Colour:** Colour is a powerful communication tool and can influence mood and impact performance. It should be applied carefully. Certain colours have been associated with increased blood pressure, increased metabolism and eyestrain.

**Pattern:** Predictable patterns help us understand, manage and navigate our world. Pattern recognition, logic and order often results in acceptance and pleasure.

Source: Kay Sargent, HOK Architects



So, what do neurodiverse people struggle with in the working environment? Bright lights and background noise would be a fair summary. Distractions are a huge problem for this workforce so companies are now looking at designing spaces with areas for focus and escape away from constantly being pinged by technology. For many people with cognitive differences, sensory cues can be overwhelming so creating an innovation space where you can control the level of sensory stimulation is important. Some people with autism, for example, are hyper-sensitive to their environment; other are hypo-sensitive and struggle with a lack of stimulation.



Many workers with neurodiverse conditions need repetition, predictability and clear boundaries to feel safe and in control. So, the workplace needs to make sense to them with clear lines of sight and visual landmarks. Designing innovation spaces with intuitive wayfinding elements can assist the brain's innate positioning systems – light levels, signage, art and the strategic use of colour can all assist this process. Companies should also think about additional props that might aid innovation-oriented work by neurodiverse individuals, such as noise-cancelling headphones, balance balls to sit on, and sensory objects to hold. Whatever it takes, corporate innovation is increasingly going to turn towards a neurodiverse workforce in 2020. ■



TOP: SAP's Autism at Work programme

BELOW: A Lego Mindstorm Robot created by the Danish company Specialisterne helps to assess different analytical skills to match neurodiversity employees to roles that suit their skills

## A corporate viewpoint on neurodiversity

International software company SAP has been a pioneer in championing the creative contribution of neurodiverse employees. Brian Duffy, a senior leader and executive sponsor for diversity and inclusion at SAP, explains: 'I am always struck with the raw authenticity they bring to our teams and customer relationships; they interpret and present ideas with such clarity, which as a business leader is extremely refreshing... When you also look at some of the more typical traits which come with those individuals who are on the spectrum, such as having strong visual learning skills with an ability to recognise patterns, then attention to detail, concentration and perseverance over long periods, as well as high diligence and low tolerance for mistakes, these are just some of the skills you can expect to gain from expanding your talent pool in this way.'

### Key Links

[Autism at work](#)

[The next talent opportunity for the neurodiverse workplace](#)

[Fostering neurodiverse teams](#)

[Tips for supporting neurodiversity in the workplace](#)

# Subscription model for furniture

As occupiers constantly adapt workplace environments, furniture subscription services are take centre stage as the latest office-as-a-service trend

The past decade has seen the traditional office leasing model being turned on its head. Gone are the days of organisations taking very long leases on office space; leasing models are now responding to the increased demand for agility and flexibility. In response to the dynamic demands of the contemporary office, companies are increasingly introducing subscription models for software, hardware and, more recently, furniture.

While the concept of furniture as a service loomed onto the horizon in 2018, it is now coming right into foreground view as more and more organisations engage with the subscription economy. Office service provider Knotel, for example, has launched its own modular furniture called Geometry which is based on a subscription model in response to customers constantly changing work environments and tastes.

The surge of subscription models in the workplace is fuelled by a constantly evolving gig economy, rapidly changing markets and the rising expectations of service and experience in workplace. In order to be agile in the face of change, organisations are opting for their office suppliers to provide a full-service subscription model. This means that over time companies do not accumulate outdated office furniture, which

is ultimately thrown away as soon as there is a major internal reorganisation or office move. Organisations are now removing furniture from their list of capital expenditure and are instead absorbing it as part of their overall operating budget. This will soon become the case with all depreciating assets, as organisations own less physical assets and focus on the overall agility of their business.

The next challenge for office service providers is to provide a bespoke layer of convenience for each organisation where space, software and office furniture are all part of the service. ■

## Key Links

[Understanding the Agile Mindset](#)

[Office furniture subscriptions](#)

[How subscription businesses are taking over](#)

[Knotel furniture subscription](#)



# Making teams more productive

2020 will see the search for improved organisational productivity shift from individual performers working in hierarchies to agile, interconnected teams

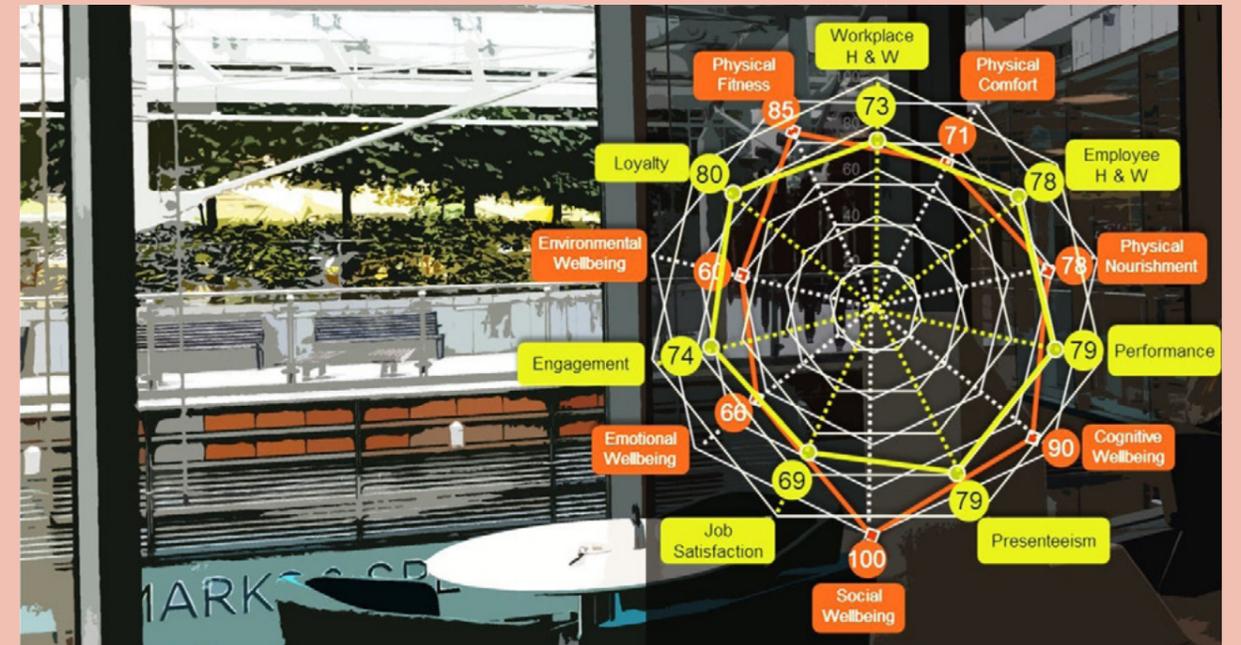
‘In some ways, businesses are becoming more like Hollywood movie production teams and less like traditional corporations, with people coming together to tackle projects, then disbanding and moving on to new assignments once the project is complete.’

Deloitte, 2019

2020 will see a shift in focus from the productivity of individual high performers to the productivity of cross-functional teams. Staying ahead in a complex and dynamic business environment increasingly relies on interconnected group effort. This shift away from traditional hierarchies has been underway for some time now, but it is now being thrown into increasing focus with research suggesting that shifting towards team-based organisational models improves organisational performance – often significantly. It explains why leading companies such as Cisco and Google actively promote teaming and networking.

In software development, the term ‘10x engineer’ emerged in the late 1960s to describe someone who is ten times better at the job than their peers. This ‘10x individual’ has assumed near mythical status in the intervening period. However, this focus on individual output can be toxic, resulting in teams of ‘superstars’ operating in silos, tolerance of bad behaviour, and placing huge emphasis on individual performance – potentially at the expense of team output. Organisations are now recognising that it’s much more effective to build teams of talented people with diverse experiences and abilities. These ‘10x teams’ can move faster, scale more quickly and are more resilient, leading to better business results. The ability to develop and manage networks of high-performing teams will be central to organisational success in 2020.

## Team productivity depends on collective wellbeing



If teams are the new unit of productivity, then organisation-wide wellbeing arguably takes on greater importance. Losing one highly productive individual is bad enough, but in an interconnected system in which everyone has a crucial role to play, the impacts of poor wellbeing can be significant. A recent Levell study found that 60 per cent of workers experience performance drops as a result of stress and burnout, and Kronos research showed that 95 per cent of HR leaders think that stress is ‘sabotaging’ workforce retention.

While workplace health is therefore a critical issue for organisations, there is a disconnect between how it is traditionally viewed and the new focus placed on teams, with the majority of workplace health intervention research focused on individual health outcomes. The academic literature suggests that simple and easy metrics such as sickness, absenteeism or presenteeism alone are not meaningful measures as they don’t provide critical information for employers to establish directions at the organisational level. Such organisational outcomes as productivity,

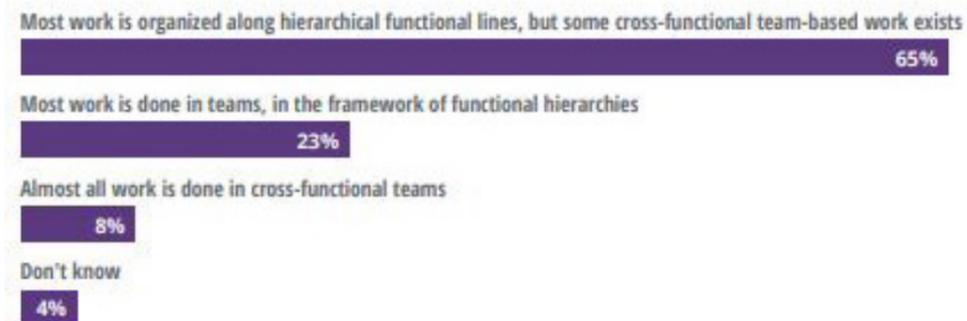
job performance and employee engagement have been explored in more recent studies, but the relationship between workplace health and wellbeing and these business outcomes remains unclear.

Dr Young Lee, Director of the Innovative Workplace Institute in New York, has therefore proposed a new ‘portfolio approach’ to understanding workplace wellbeing at an organisational level as a lever to improve productivity. This uses a scientifically rigorous approach to pairing different types of data to overcome the limitations associated with individual information streams. These are categorised under the three domains of health and wellbeing: Physical, Mental, and Social as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Seven Dimensions of Workplace Wellbeing – Fitness, Comfort, Nourishment, Cognitive Wellbeing, Emotional Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing, and Environmental Wellbeing – in the PROWELL model. This allows organisations to identify and implement high quality health and wellbeing initiatives that are specific to organisational and productivity goals.

## Organisational performance as a 'team sport'

### Thirty-one percent of respondents say that "most" or "almost all" work is done in teams

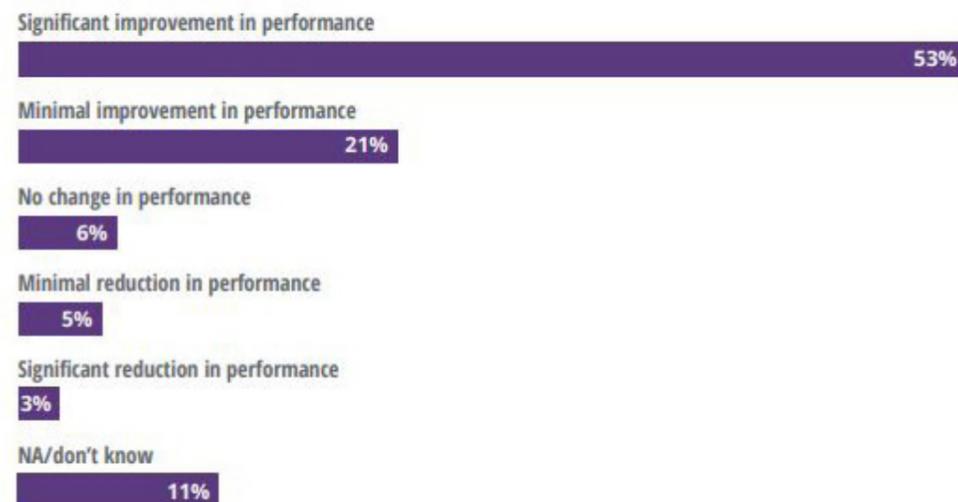
How far along are you in the process of moving to a team/network-based organization?



Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2019.

### Shifting to a team-based model improves performance

What impact are you seeing from the transition to a team/network-based organization?



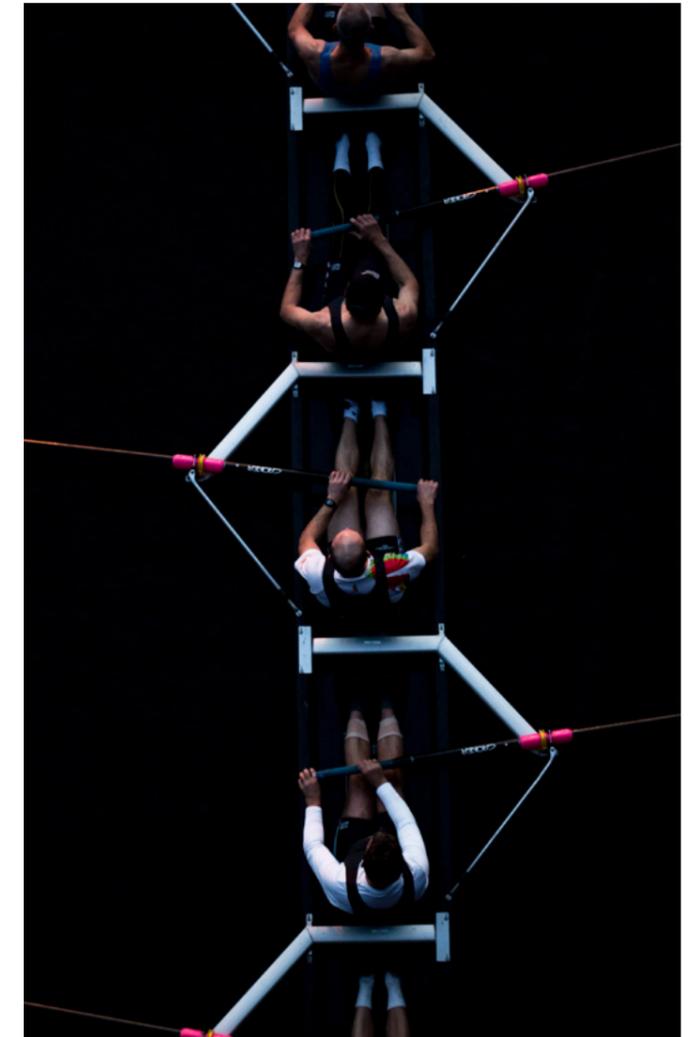
Note: Only respondents whose organizations worked at least partially in cross-functional teams answered this question.  
Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2019.

Source: Deloitte Human Capital Trends Report 2019

This was recognised in Deloitte's 2019 Human Capital Trends Report, which described one of the key shifts for 2020 as being organisational performance as a 'team sport'. 31 per cent of company employees said that they operate mostly or almost entirely wholly in teams, with another 65 per cent saying they are mostly hierarchical but with some cross-functional team-based work.

However, while 65 per cent felt that this shift from 'functional hierarchy to team-centric and network-based organisational models' was important or very important, only 7 per cent really felt ready to execute this shift. Only 6 per cent rated themselves as 'very effective' at managing cross-functional teams. This struggle goes right to the top; a Harvard Business Review survey found that only 17 per cent of respondents reported that their C-suite leaders regularly collaborated on long-term interdependent work.

So how do we make these 10x teams work? The massive growth of team environments such as Microsoft Teams and Slack emphasises the fact that organisations are keen to harness this productivity, and seamless knowledge transfer is certainly key. However, it goes deeper than space or work processes. It means changing the way that organisations allocate funds, train people and reward workers. It also means cultivating greater collaboration at senior leadership levels – and changing career models to be able to put the right people on the right teams at the right time. For those who can successfully overcome these challenges, the rewards can be great. ■



### Key Links

[Team of Teams: An Emerging Organisational Model](#)

[Organisational Performance: It's a Team Sport](#)

[How to Build a 10x team](#)

[Measuring the link between employee health and company performance](#)

# 5G set to boost the Internet of Things

With the capacity of 4G too limited to support a truly connected workplace, 2020 will see 5G open up the full potential of the Internet of Things

'We have always underestimated the innovation that would result from new generations of wireless networks. The immutable law of network history will again repeat itself as 5G spawns transformational secondary effects...'

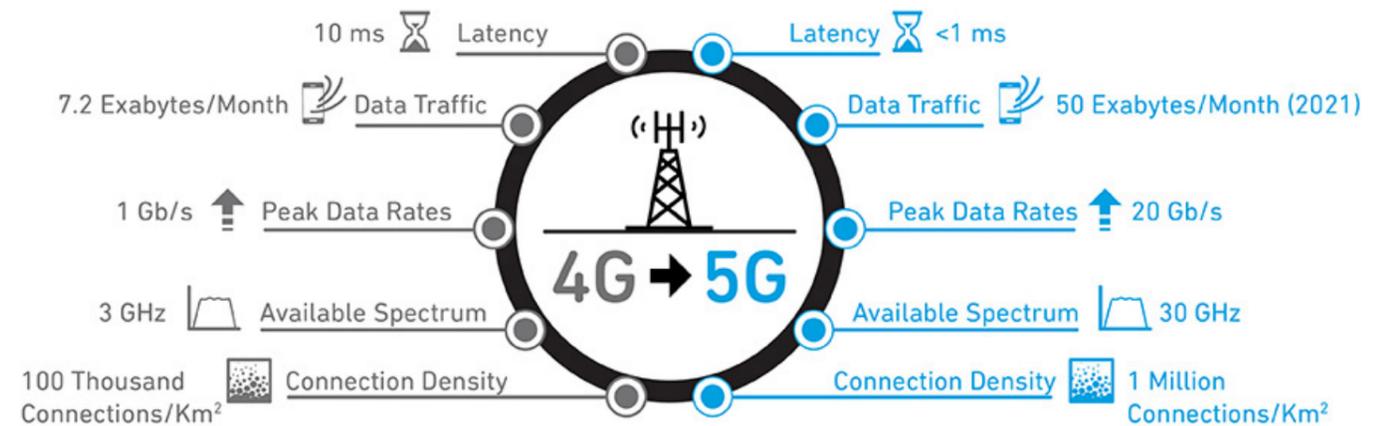
Tom Wheeler, Visiting Fellow, Governance Studies, Center for Technology Innovation

While 4G and mobile devices have transformed the way we work, 4G is inadequate for handling the data load from the ever-increasing number of connected devices around the world; it is imposing limits on what the Internet of Things (IoT) can achieve. 2020 will see the fifth generation of connectivity technology – 5G – bringing exponential improvements in speed and performance, generating data transfer rates up to 100 times higher than 4G.

While a much-hyped feature is the ability to download an HD movie in seconds, 5G is more than just fast downloads. A key differentiator is 5G's low latency period. While internet providers typically emphasise bandwidth – such as 'sign up and get speeds of 150mbps' – they leave out latency, which is the other half of the internet-speed equation. Latency is how long it takes for two devices to 'speak' to each other, which is why buffering can still happen despite a theoretically fast connection.

The high frequency of 5G also means higher bandwidth, enabling multiple users to connect to services simultaneously without a noticeable decrease in speed. While this might be merely irritating while conducting a video conference, it could be the difference between a smooth traffic flow and a four-way pile-up at an intersection when it comes to the wider use of smart technology.

## Comparing 4G and 5G



Source: Qorvo

## 5G smart building: where it's happening

There are a number of high-profile examples of smart buildings such as The Edge Olympic that already collect and analyse large volumes of data to optimise light and heating. With the higher bandwidth and speeds of 5G, workplaces could go fully wireless, from printer to sensors, windows and doors. This paves the way for totally cloud-based building management systems (BMS), simplifying building management – especially for companies with a portfolio of buildings. While 5G is currently only available in a limited form, some companies have begun leveraging its benefits.

**SK Telecom:** At SK Telecom's building in downtown Seoul, South Korea, all employees need to carry is their smartphone. They enter the building using face recognition, and can instantly start work at a reserved desk by connecting their phone to a cloud computing system using a docking pad. Desktop computers and cables are a thing of the past with the 5G virtual infrastructure system.

Employees also have access to the company's 'T-Real telepresence', a system designed for

holding meetings via augmented reality headgear to talk to each other's avatars in cyberspace. The company aims to collect as much data as possible in order to keep improving the employee experience. For example, AI-based recommendation systems will be able to offer tailored choices on which desk to book based on individual preferences.

**Automated manufacturing:** Worcester Bosch is piloting the improved network technology of 5G in boosting factory output – a significant advance in the future of industrial manufacturing. The test utilises the new potential of the IoT, using sensors for preventative maintenance and real-time feedback while drawing on data analytics to predict any potential failures before they happen. This will allow the company to react in real time and even pre-empt problems to minimise factory errors and downtime. This trial is part of the larger journey into smart factories, using the low latency and responsiveness of 5G networks to drive innovation.



VR conference



4K interactive conference



720 degree panorama conference



Conference room with 3D projector



TOP: 5G multi-media enabled conference. Source: Huawei

BELOW: 5G VR vision. Source: Huawei

The good news is that online audio calls, video conferencing, cloud-based collaboration and other activities that consume a lot of data will become much faster, enabling us to connect in real time. It will also open up the opportunity for data to go totally wireless without having to manage connections across different networks. This seamless connectivity will enable users to move around the workplace – and outside it – without ever having to worry about losing connectivity.

The real benefit of 5G, though, will be its ability to support large numbers of connected internet devices with this unique combination of high-speed connectivity, ultra-low latency and ubiquitous coverage, thus enabling the full potential of the IoT to be realised. Crucially, 5G's low latency allows for all of these devices to be connected to each other as well as to a main hub – for example, robots will be able to interact with other robots as well as performing their own tasks. Another advantage of 5G is the ability to easily onboard nearly any type of device, with 5G networks able to support healthcare wearables,

biometric attendance systems, digitised employee identification cards and a host of other smart objects in a complex network of inter-related systems.

Research from Cisco recently predicted that more than 500 billion IoT devices will be connected to the internet by 2030, enabled by 5G. According to McKinsey, the economic value to be generated by IoT globally could be between 3.9 trillion USD and 11.1 trillion USD per year by 2025. While the majority of IoT revenues today come from connectivity, the next five years will see an explosion in service enablement platforms, apps and services that turn bulk data into smart data to transform our experience of work, workplace and the city. The future of work is fast. ■

### Key Links

[What the 5G offices looks like](#)

[Everything you need to know about 5G](#)

[Internet of Things endpoints](#)

[Ericsson 5G](#)

# Air quality rising up green agenda

**At last the workplace is wising up to the impact of poor air quality on employee productivity, concentration and wellbeing**

As sustainability rises back up the corporate agenda, one issue in particular is attracting a lot of attention. Air pollution causes over six million sick days per year in the UK. We often think we are safe in the protective shell of the office but research shows that air pollution indoors is often between two and five times greater than outdoors – and it can get up to 100 times worse than the open air at its extreme.

Poor air quality has a negative impact on concentration, productivity and employee health and wellbeing; and organisations are finally wising up to this. In recent years, sustainability in the workplace has been focused on Net Zero Carbon Buildings (NZCB) and while this concept is important for new buildings on the block, it doesn't factor in legacy offices. The key consideration for sustainability today is the silent killer of productivity: poor air quality.



Air purifiers are becoming a core part of interior design

'[With the coronavirus shutdown] we are now, inadvertently, conducting the largest-scale experiment ever seen. Are we looking at what we might see in the future if we can move to a low-carbon economy?'

Paul Monks, Professor of air pollution, University of Leicester

As scientific research unearths more shocking truths about the impact of poor air quality in the workplace, organisations are collecting more data of their own to help understand and improve the situation. According to a recent study on workplace wellness, air quality was cited as the most positive influence on wellness and poor air quality has detrimental effects on workplace productivity. The survey revealed that 44 per cent of participants claimed that poor air quality makes them feel sleepy at work and over a third (37 per cent) said that the symptoms improve when they leave the building at the end of the day. This indicates that indoor workplaces can become a breeding ground for poor air quality.

More attention has been paid to indoor environmental quality factors recently, including consideration of natural light, thermal comfort and air quality. A study by Allen et al found that 'green' workspaces with higher ventilation rates can improve cognition by 61 per cent. This has become a key consideration for designers and architects to engineer into workplace environments.

## Indoor air pollutants...



### Heating

Combustion of solid fuels causes indoor as well as outdoor pollution



### Damp and mould

Caused by air infiltration through cracks in building fabric



### Chemicals

VOCs, emitted from certain materials, have adverse health effects



### Toxic materials

Construction materials, e.g. asbestos, can cause harmful airborne pollution



### Outdoor infiltration

Most exposure to outdoor air pollution occurs inside buildings



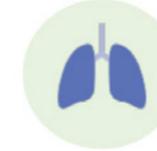
### Energy

39% of global energy-related carbon emissions are attributed to buildings



### Construction

Most of the 1,500 billion bricks produced annually are using polluting kilns



### Construction

Concrete production can release silica dust, a known carcinogen



### Heating

Traditional cookstoves cause 58% global black carbon emissions



### Cooling

HFCs, potent climate forcers, are often found in AC systems

## General contributors to air pollution...



Inhale air purifier designed by Hyunsoec Kim

As the awareness of the impact of air quality rises in the public at large as well as corporate organisations, we will start to see a collaborative approach to improving air quality across our cities. This will stem from having a better understanding of where air pollution is worse. While governments are planting sensors to measure outdoor air quality, corporates are now embedding air quality sensors inside their offices to help configure the workplace. The current coronavirus crisis, which has taken most cars off the road and most planes out of the sky, has flagged up just how polluted the air we breathe has become in major cities.

Based on the evidence that good air quality improves cognition and alertness, organisations can configure their space to optimise workplace productivity. Spaces with good air quality can be allocated to high concentration spaces, while areas with poorer air quality can be dedicated to short-stay work areas such as informal collaboration booths. Measuring workplace air quality can help organisations understand the areas where they need to pump in fresh air to improve the productivity of their employees. It can also enable them to take greater responsibility for the workplace environment in a bid to limit one of the most negative effects of sick building syndrome. ■

#### Key Links

[Air quality and natural light impact on wellbeing](#)

[Sustainable design features](#)

[Pandemic led to huge drop in air pollution](#)

[Hidden air pollution inside the workplace](#)

[China demand cleaner office air](#)

# AI's growing role in talent acquisition

More employers are turning to artificial intelligence to speed up and sharpen recruitment, but is this 'techno creep' unfair to job applicants?

'It's not the system that's biased, it's the people operating the system...'

Juror comment from RSA Forum for Ethical AI

Artificial intelligence is beginning to revolutionise the world of recruitment, reshaping the parameters of how talent is acquired. The types of AI-related tools that will have the greatest use will include Big Data analytics, automated assessment and predictive analytics. Already, however, the move is proving controversial and two opposing camps are emerging on the role of AI, with both

advocates and critics of the approach jockeying for position.

In one corner is the growing band of advocates all for sifting job seekers by algorithms. HR practitioners are motivated by the promise that they will be released from a tedious and time-consuming process – from physically wading through CVs and covering letters to watching and analysing video interviews.

Plenty of big corporate employers are jumping on the bandwagon, including Vodafone, Singapore Airlines, Intel and Unilever, which claims it is saving hundreds of thousands of pounds annually by replacing human sifters with software to analyse video interviews. The multinational has been using US company HireVue to use software to scan such things as a job candidate's language,



## Key questions to make AI in recruitment more accountable

1. Will I know that an ADS (Automated Decision System) is being used?
2. How (or is) ADS regulated?
3. How can I challenge ADS?
4. Are there any legal requirements around accuracy?
5. Who is determining the ethical standards?

Source: Democratising decisions about technology: A toolkit, RSA 2019

tone of voice, speed of delivery, facial expressions and use of active and passive phrases to help make recruitment decisions.

According to a survey by Oracle in 2019, only 10 per cent of company respondents currently use AI in recruitment, but more than a third (36 per cent) expect to do so in the next two years. The prospect of HR professionals identifying better candidates while expending less hours sifting is driving the shift. Oracle sees that AI will be used to source and prioritise candidates and match them to job roles. Other goals are to find more qualified candidates and fill positions faster.

There are challenges, however: HR teams not only need to develop the ability to use AI systems properly and manage the budgets to run them, but they also need to deal with the blowback from critics who characterise the approach as dehumanising the recruitment process and open to discrimination due to bad programming. AI systems in recruitment are, after all, only as fair as the people programming the algorithms.

Growing unease about the application of AI in recruitment processes was brought into sharp relief by research conducted by the UK-based RSA last year, which suggested that 60 per cent of the public are opposed to the use of automated decision-making in talent acquisition. The RSA

report described growing public anger at what was called 'tech creep' unless citizens were given a greater role in designing systems. One solution on offer: to have citizens involved in the design and a 'watchdog' or independent regulation system in place to oversee. The RSA research panel also raised questions about whether AI decision systems would simply reinforce an organisation's existing profile – for example, white and male. And how would job applicants know if the technology was being used at all?

So, the role of AI in talent acquisition is a trend is that is set to really take off with employers – but it is not without its critics and naysayers, and it triggers awkward questions about how far technology should go in mediating the human world of work. It could be that AI's involvement with recruitment might well be a good fit when dealing with data-driven people but still have limitations when candidates are required to display judgement, intuition, creativity and emotional intelligence. ■

### Key Links

[Oracle 2019 State of Artificial Intelligence in Talent Acquisition](#)

[Unilever saves on recruiters by using AI](#)

[We need to talk about artificial intelligence](#)

# Will shared mobility model apply brakes?

We're on the brink of a major shift to electric and autonomous urban transportation, but the sharing model that underpins it is now under threat

As urban air pollution, traffic gridlock and commuter misery continue to be a drag on workplace productivity and wellbeing, the race is on to find new mobility solutions that offer a better future for our cities and our workforces. We're increasingly leaning towards a world of CAVs and ACES: CAVs are Connected and Autonomous Vehicles; ACES are Autonomous, Connected, Electrified and Shared vehicles. They both belong to a new vision of electric and autonomous vehicles for cities, which has the sharing economy as its driving force. The pace of development over the past two years has been astonishing, but the question right now is whether the current Covid-19 crisis will push the whole shared mobility movement into reverse.

CAVs are being developed against a background of the growth of sharing services such as Zipcar and Uber as more people in large cities use smartphone technologies to access car sharing, carpooling and e-hailing. CAVs are expected to reduce congestion, contribute to cleaner mobility and increased productivity, create new jobs, reduce traffic accidents and help to solve mobility restrictions for children, older and disabled people, according to the UK's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). ACES push this trend even further in terms of disrupting

traditional automotive markets – in 2019, electric vehicle sales set a new record globally and many cities, including London, have begun subsidised workplaces schemes to charge electric vehicles and thus accelerate the switch to electric by commuters.

'If I have to give a number, I'll say probably in five years...we'll see a wide adoption of fully autonomous driving vehicles on the open roads...'

James Peng, CEO and co-founder of Pony.ai



PARK(ing) day is an annual worldwide event that encourages locals to reclaim car parking space in cities for rest, relaxation and play. Source: Agile City

## How Cities Curbed The Car

|      |            |  |
|------|------------|--|
| 2000 | Tokyo      | Diesel vehicles without purifiers banned |
| 2003 | London     | Congestion charge                        |
| 2008 | Berlin     | Low emission charge                      |
| 2016 | New Delhi  | Alternative day licence plate car ban    |
| 2018 | Oslo       | All private vehicles banned              |
| 2018 | Paris      | Car ban first Sunday of every month      |
| 2018 | New York   | Cars banned from Central Park            |
| 2019 | Copenhagen | Diesel cars banned from city centre      |
| 2020 | Madrid     | All diesel cars banned citywide          |

Source: Plan London

## Flying taxis on the horizon



Source: Hyundai

Flying taxis have appeared in a number of sci-fi movies, but now they are set to become a reality due to a partnership between US ride-hailing firm Uber and South Korean car maker Hyundai. The two companies are jointly planning to build a fleet of autonomous airborne taxis for commercial take-off in 2023. Uber announced the move in January at the CES technology conference in Las Vegas, saying that it wants to conduct flight demonstrations of its Elevate service this year.

A full-scale model of the PAV or Personal Air Vehicle has already been unveiled and the operational version will debut in Dallas, Los Angeles and Melbourne. The electric-powered craft will take off and land vertically, carrying four passengers at a cruising speed of up to 180mph, and fly between 1,000 and 2,000 feet off the ground. Each flying taxi is equipped with parachutes in case of emergencies. Uber's Elevate project already runs helicopter rides for passengers in New York City and is also working with Boeing on a separate concept for air taxis.



TOP: Proposed delivery drone for urban locations. Source: Fortune

CENTRE: Autonomous boats for Amsterdam's waterways. Source: Senseable City Lab

BELOW: Medical delivery drone in Switzerland. Source: Fortune

According to a McKinsey report, regulators have also begun granting approval to drone flights and deliveries, and to electric vertical take-off and landing craft, thus opening the door to making flying taxis, robo-taxis and autonomous shuttles a viable service for the first time. Meanwhile cities around the world have begun to clamp down hard on private car use in city centres, with more regulation set to be introduced. It all adds up to the perfect runway for new forms of shared city transportation to set off, powered by electric and performing at higher levels of autonomy than ever seen before.

The shared future mobility model has been developed on the basis that it will provide greater fuel-efficiency, lower emissions, more interior comfort, better wellbeing and an improved aesthetic experience than traditional car ownership. But now it risks being brought to a complete halt by the global pandemic, which has badly shaken both investor confidence and customer willingness to share. Conceiving shared mobility in the context of shared places, shared services and shared technologies makes perfect sense in an ideal world. The trouble is that the world is currently far from ideal right now. We're on the brink of accelerating into an exciting world of CAVs and ACES. Will Covid-19 apply the brake? ■

### Key Links

[The disruptive power of robo-taxis in autonomous driving](#)

[Future mobility](#)

[The future of mobility is at our doorstep](#)

[Autonomous vehicles and the future of work](#)

# Apps in the age of ambient intelligence

Workplace apps are taking on a new role in the age of ambient intelligence as they move from passive informers to active collaborators

‘When our phones are growing smarter with new and innovative apps every day, why can’t our workspace have the same? App-savvy workplaces are powerful enablers that can change the work systems....’

Mehnaz Farooque, Zyeta

Workplace apps are becoming an integrated part of the smart workplace movement. App-savvy offices are powerful enablers of workplace performance. From facilitating collaboration on a global scale to seamless visitor management, new and innovative apps allow a degree of personal control and autonomy over an individual’s workspace. This is now being taken to new heights with the introduction of ambient intelligence into the workplace. Ambient intelligence facilitates a seamless, unobtrusive, entirely controllable interaction between humans and machines.

In today’s working climate, we are increasingly connected to everyone and real-time collaboration is a crucial part of the working day. Ambient intelligence can contextualise real-time data from employees and their environment to assist in building personalised interactions, so it acts as a ubiquitous electronic assistant. The system uses artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things

## Expansion on the horizon

Gartner is projecting that the global market for social software and collaboration software in the workplace will grow from US \$2.7 billion in 2018 to US \$4.8 billion by 2023. This growth will be fuelled by collaboration app expansion into emerging markets and a growing base of knowledge workers hoping to stay engaged.



collectively to improve the work environments of each independent user, and on a wider-scale, by optimising lighting and thermal controls throughout a building.

This new ambient-assisted workplace progresses workplace apps from passive informers delivering information on space and meeting times, to active collaborators which can use available real-time technology to best serve the need of each individual occupant. This system will eventually become entirely autonomous and embedded within the smart workplace.

Ambient intelligence will empower decision makers by supporting their actions with supplementary knowledge on specific topics. It will also be used in the smart meeting room to scribe meetings, pull up relevant documents and take note of everyone in the meeting. Adapting to an ambient assisted workplace will transform the smart office into a dynamic contributor to the workforce. ■

## Three key technologies of Ambient Intelligence:

1. An omnipresent computing system needs to be established by integrating microprocessors into the workplace environment from furniture to lighting
2. This opens a ubiquitous communication among different environmental objects and the individual user
3. The user needs a personalised user interface to control and interact with the environment – such as a workplace app

Source: Zyeta, 2020

## Key Links

- [The beginning of a convenient future](#)
- [The rising collaboration software market](#)
- [Concept of ambient intelligence in smart factories](#)

# Strategy shifts to data-driven view

Armed with an abundance of data, workplace strategy is going to be increasingly driven by key insights from multiple data sources

'The question the business needs to ask is: how can we design our new workplace environment based on how people are using the existing one?'

Cordless Consultants

As workplace strategy seeks to achieve a dynamic alignment between an organisation's work patterns and its work environment in order to meet core business objectives, there seems to be an ever-increasing interest in data. Most of this interest is in how we collect and process data – advances in micro-electronics, energy harvesting and wireless signalling have made it possible to collect almost any data about anything. But what if data could be used to directly inform workplace strategy itself?

Now that we have methods of collecting data easily, what to do with all of the data collected is becoming a more and more prominent question for businesses. Many businesses are struggling to find applications for the vast amounts of data that they are collecting and are simply analysing datasets without a particular objective to see if they can find anything interesting. While this approach has some merit, data is going to be key to the success of companies in the future and knowing how to generate actionable, relevant insights will be a critical part of this.

The workplace is an excellent area to start using data to inform strategy. We already have well established methods for collecting a huge amount of workplace data and have the knowledge base to apply it effectively. This is causing a shift away from workplace strategy that is based on



## Key components in crafting a data-driven workplace strategy

### 1. Choose the right data to collect

Define what objectives you want to meet and decide what data you need to collect to achieve it. For example, in order to enhance wellbeing, you might collect data on natural light levels. For improving productivity, perhaps acoustics would be more appropriate.

### 2. Create an independent structure for strategy

Rather than collecting data as an exercise in validating pre-existing opinions, ensure that strategy has an appropriate structure in place to follow through. Do not let data collection be a tick-box exercise followed by management doing what they were going to do anyway. Even if data analysis does not fit pre-existing notions, it should be addressed with an open mind.

### 3. Choose the right tools and analysis methods

Too often companies use analytical methods that are based on guesswork rather than appropriate evidence. Ensure that methods being used are valid and any assumptions are acceptable given the project aims. For example, a higher margin of error may be acceptable for saving space than for a health intervention.

### 4. Make the process experimental

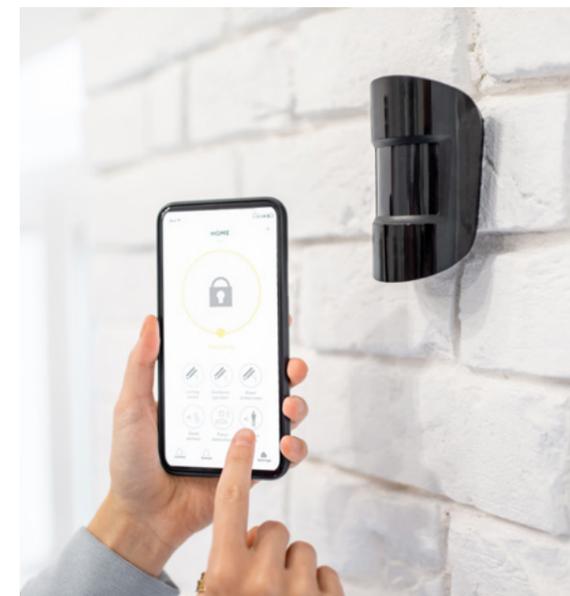
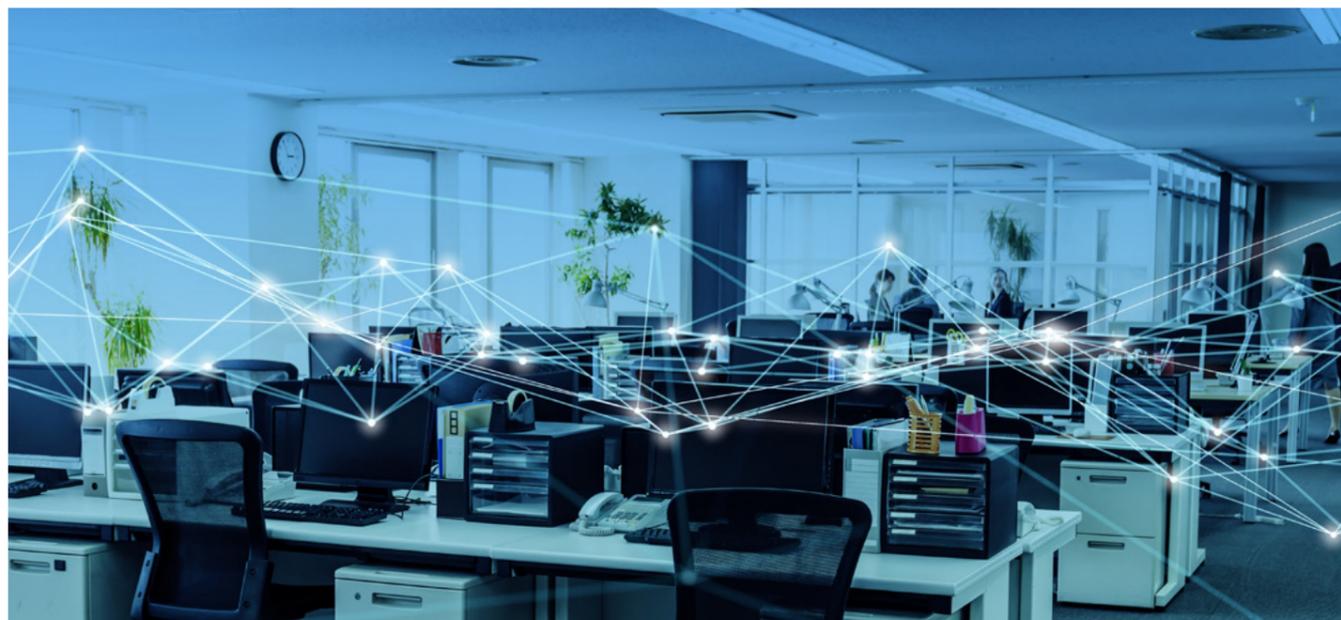
Any strategy should be an ongoing, evidence-based process. Creating a great workplace is a journey and not a destination. As the nature of work, technology and culture gradually changes, so the strategy should adapt to meet new requirements. A data-driven workplace is not static; as new data emerges the workplace should change.

observations, preferences and anecdotes towards a data-driven approach. As the workplace is viewed more and more as a driver of performance rather than as a built container for workers, companies are beginning to see the huge value of using data to unlock the potential of the workforce and the workplace.

By collecting data on occupancy rates, air quality, light levels, social interactions and more, companies are beginning to formulate their workplace strategy around the metrics that have a strong evidence base in supporting the workforce and making buildings run more efficiently. This has a double benefit: it often saves costs as well as making a better working environment. For example, companies that have conducted occupancy studies have been able to reduce their floor space significantly based on the amount of space actually being used, allowing them to take smaller offices and potentially even sub-let some

space. Without the data on their occupancy level they may have been able to make an educated guess, but there is a lot more room for error.

Now that we have the ability to collect data very easily and in real-time, workplace strategy has no reason not to be based on tangible, actionable, quantified information. Strategy should also be dynamic rather than static: occupancy sensors can give a minute-by-minute understanding of occupancy rather than just a snapshot, providing further opportunities for refinement and adaptation of the strategy. Using data to inform workplace strategy ensures solutions that can be measured, tested and evaluated and have a much greater potential for building a better workplace. ■



#### Key Links

[The rise of the data-driven workplace](#)

[Big Data in the workplace](#)

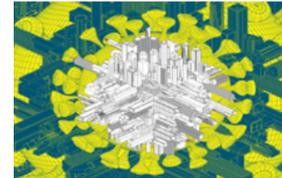
[Interpreting the data-driven workplace](#)

[Does Big Data give us big answers or big problems?](#)



# On our Radar

Here is a selection of external links from contributors to WORKTECH Academy's global network on subjects that are on our radar this quarter:



**Corona Virus is crushing the economy. Here's how to bring it back to life.**

From designing for social distancing to transitioning to remote working, *Fast Company* produced a four-point-plan for how companies should adapt in these turbulent times.

[Read more](#)



**China's economy after lockdown**

This *Financial Times* article describes that reclaiming economic growth may not be as simple as we think. What can other countries learn from China after lockdown is lifted?

[Read more](#)



**Dressing up for work...at home?**

This article by the *New York Times* explores the importance of carrying on routine - including dressing for work - as video conferencing becomes the new norm.

[Read more](#)



**Barcelona's car-free smart city experiment**

As we become more conscious about sustainability and our impact on the world, Barcelona's Superblocks urban plan places people at the heart of the city, not cars.

[Read more](#)



**10 essentials to help you set up your home office**

From small spaces to organisational tool boxes, *Dezeen* lists 10 pieces of furniture to help put together an optimal home office despite space constraints.

[Read more](#)



**5 positive predications about the future of work**

The corona virus has accelerated the pace of the workplace change whether companies are ready or not, *Forbes* looks at 5 positive outcomes

[Read more](#)



**Do you have a plan for the future of work?**

AI and automation are charging into the workplace and it's no secret that companies built with a digital core outperform those who don't - is your business ready?

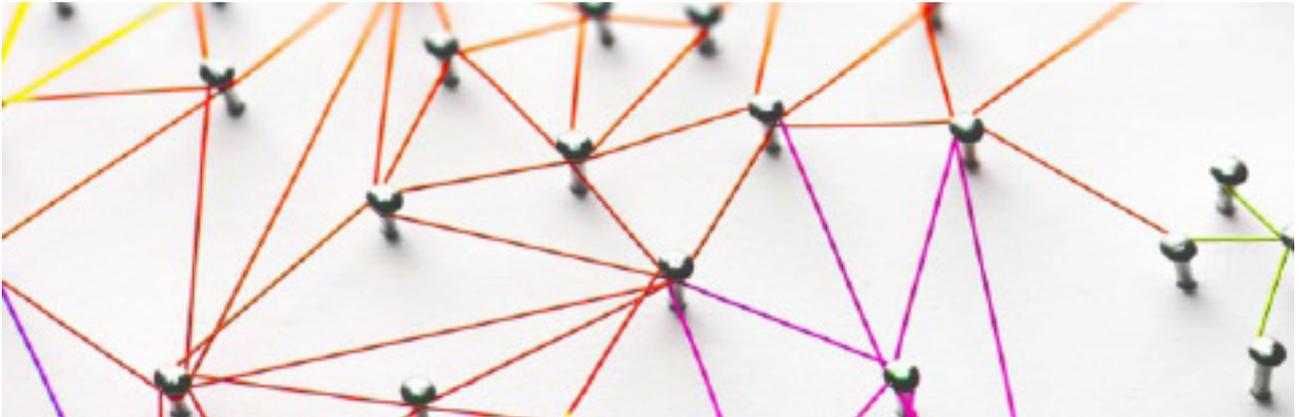
[Read more](#)



**How Covid-19 could rapidly alter urban life**

From increased surveillance to 'de-densification' and new community activism, Covid-19 is already shaping the urban fabric of our cities

[Read more](#)



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