Moments

#7

The new landscape
for work

Spacestor Design Center, Manchester, UK

SPACESTOR

SPACESTOR

The New Landscape
for Work

In a world where change is the only constant, the future workspace needs space settings that are flexible, harmonious, and highly adaptable. Spacestor's New Landscape for Work brings together an inter-compatible and highly customizable array of parts that work together as a micro-architectural system which creates spaces within spaces.
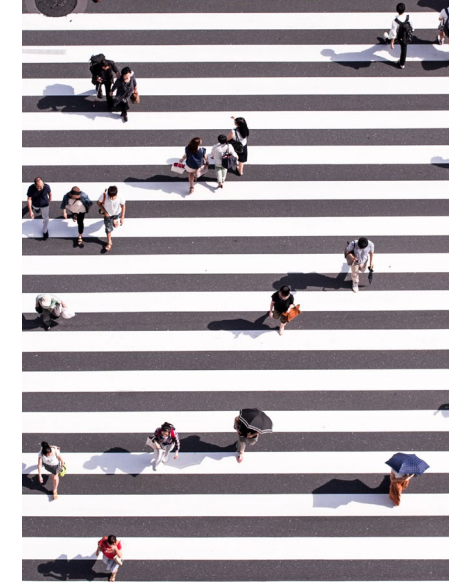
The workspace is continually adapting, with new trends and innovations changing the way we work everyday. We believe the future of the workplace is more than just a physical and sustainable space - it's an experience, a destination space.

Introducing The New Landscape for Work - an endless choice of vignettes that best suit the task in hand. Whether focus, privacy, collaboration, acoustic or visual separation.

Moments / CONTENTS

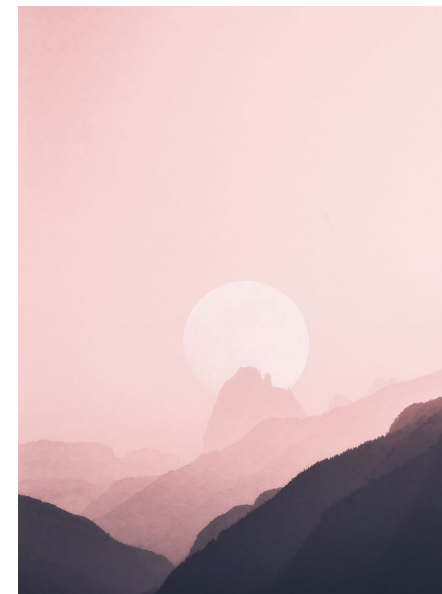**16 - 33**
The Destination Workplace

38 - 49
Future-Proofing with Flexibility

50 - 61
Sustainability

62 - 75
Healthy Minds & Soft Design

Moments

Nic Baxter
VP Global Research & Insights

Nick Stedman
VP Marketing

Tiffany Wilcox
Marketing Strategist & Writer

Lorelle Green
Marketing Strategist & Writer

Esther Jay
Marketing Strategist

Juanita Doouss
Writer

Lila Tuffin
Graphic Designer

Editor's Letter

Welcome to the Spacestor Moments magazine edition seven; formerly SPACES, but as of a couple of years ago we decided to focus on those moments of human experience which are now so varied and a key focus of design thinking.

The essence of work hasn't changed but our use of place and time to do that work has adjusted radically. The world over, the designers we are privileged to collaborate with are creating these moments, which are spent in the workplace, the best they possibly can be.

Not only that, there is a whole new level of thinking about how to make these work settings flexible, so as to be able to adapt again in the future as we discover and rediscover what that future is like.

In this edition we showcase a new set of fascinating case studies which help bring to life themes such as flexibility - a whole new landscape design for work - and other key themes like the destination workplace, sustainability and soft design.

This publication also coincides with the two big annual events in our main regions: Clerkenwell Design Week and NeoCon. The very theme of these will be the new landscape for work and how various product sets work and fit together so as to deliver the full spectrum of choice of work settings, and can be adjusted and expanded as new needs emerge.

We are very pleased at these times to assemble some great panels of well known workplace experts to debate some of the key themes live and streamed online for a global audience.

Your interest and feedback is invaluable. We invite you to enjoy a few moments and do let us know for next time what topics you think should be spotlighted!

Nic Baxter
VP Global Research & Insights, Spacestor

Emerging Trends

Destination Workplace

How and where we work is constantly evolving and in recent years, for many people, the workplace has become secondary to working from home. The workplace has had to fight hard to attract employees back into the office, with many companies deciding to forgo the traditional office environments and instead create a truly human-centric space for employees.

The purpose of the office has changed. Whereas previously, a desk and multiple standard conference rooms were normal practice, today's employees need and want, more. From solo spaces for dedicated and uninterrupted work, to 'meet and work' spaces where a conference room feels too formal, every office needs to adapt to the growing demands of the workforce and the way they work.

Employee wellbeing must therefore be prioritized and it's here where amenities in the workplace can be effective. The office still has a very important role to play, and by cultivating spaces to really support the new ways of working, businesses can create a place where people truly want to be – a destination workplace.


Future-Proofing With Flexibility

With the workplace having drastically changed over the past few years, businesses are now keeping a close eye on the hybrid work model, monitoring effectiveness and continually looking for early signs of a shift. Workspaces need to be able pivot quickly and easily, as space utilization continues to adapt.

All signs are indicating that we can expect and need future workspaces to be agile and adaptable. Employees will need a variety of environments to work in, so companies will need to provide an adaptive architecture that is flexible, innovative, creative and most importantly, is able to cater to employee needs as they change.

Ensuring there is flexibility with the strategic planning and design of the workplace is therefore critical as we look to the future.
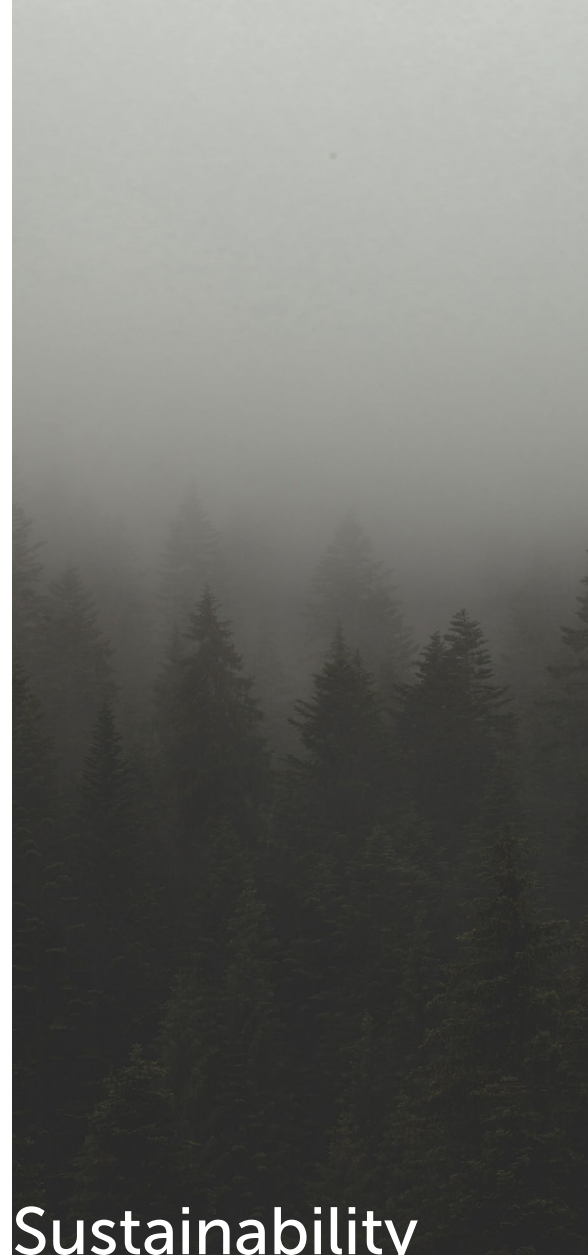
Sustainability

Green is very much the new black, and sustainability in the workplace is no longer just about conforming to regulations and avoiding fines, it's deeply embedded within company cultures and something new employees look out for too.

Sustainability can mean a whole host of different things to different people, and sustainable design is no different. When it comes to workspace design, when harnessed properly, the implementation of sustainable design principles is a great tool to help businesses become a greener workplace of the future.

The built environment is responsible for nearly 40% of global carbon emissions and one of the most effective ways to reduce embodied carbon is to manufacture furniture that can be continually adapted, reconfigured and reused, to ensure they are as sustainable for the future as possible.

Healthy Minds & Soft Design

Wellbeing in the workplace is not a new concept. Like so many similar trends stemming from hybrid working, it has become an increasingly important model to understand. As the new generation of workers become increasingly health conscious, a company culture that prioritizes employee health and wellbeing has the best chance of attracting and retaining top talent.

But what is workplace wellbeing and how can office design as a discipline create spaces that promote and encourage workplace wellbeing? Enter the world of sympathetic design and the inherent need of workspace choice, which can add a genuine level of care in the office and encourage a healthy workspace.

There are a variety of sympathetic design strategies that can be employed to make the working environment more caring, kind and supportive. From biophilia and resimercial design to building a kinder, community-first culture, where workspace and employee choice is at the heart. The introduction of employee choice, to not just work at a standard desk, has not only mental and psychological advantages that aid improved wellbeing, it also promotes greater movement and less sedentary working which is fundamental to workplace wellbeing.

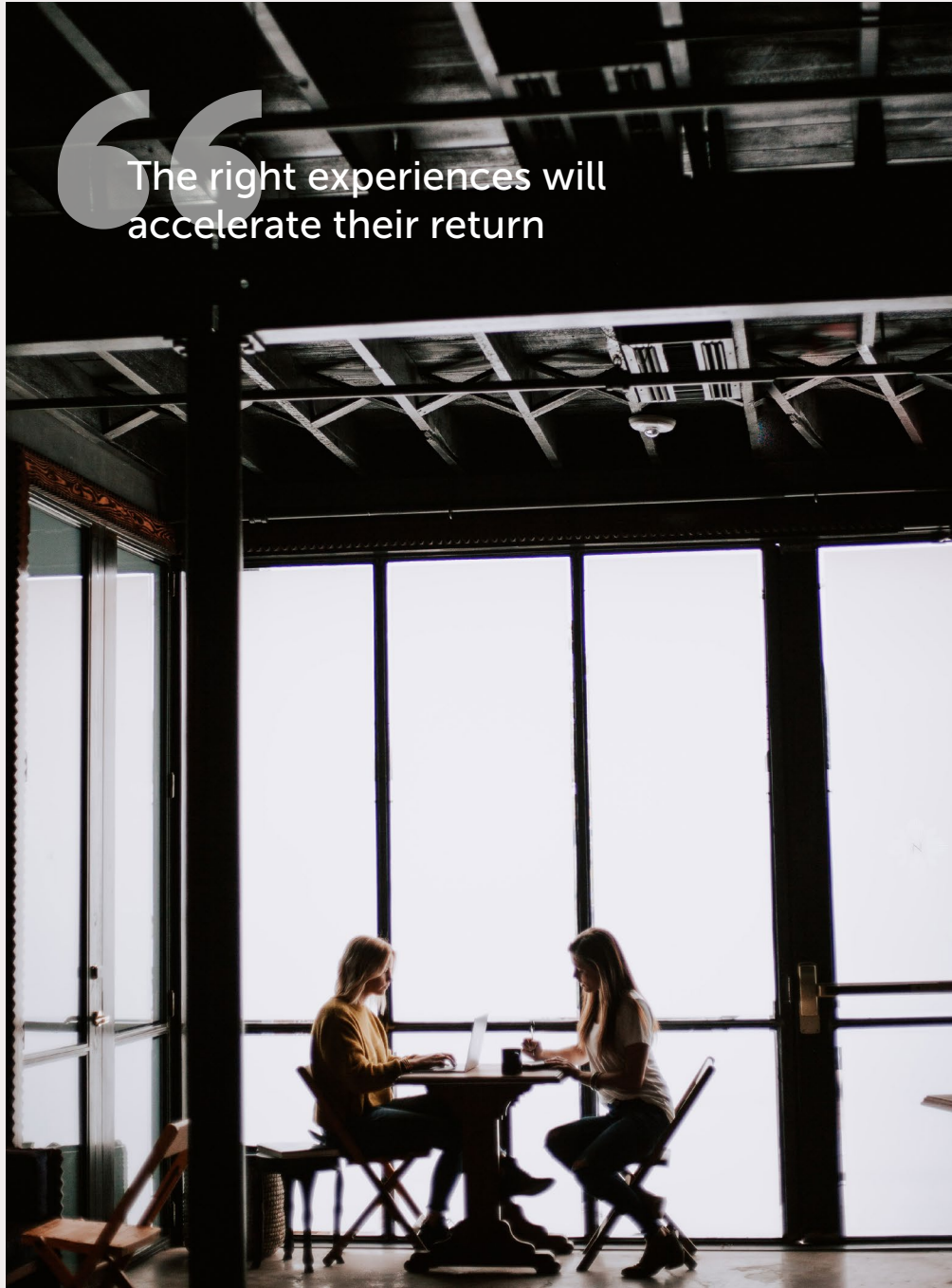> **The main tenet of design thinking is empathy for the people you're trying to design for.**
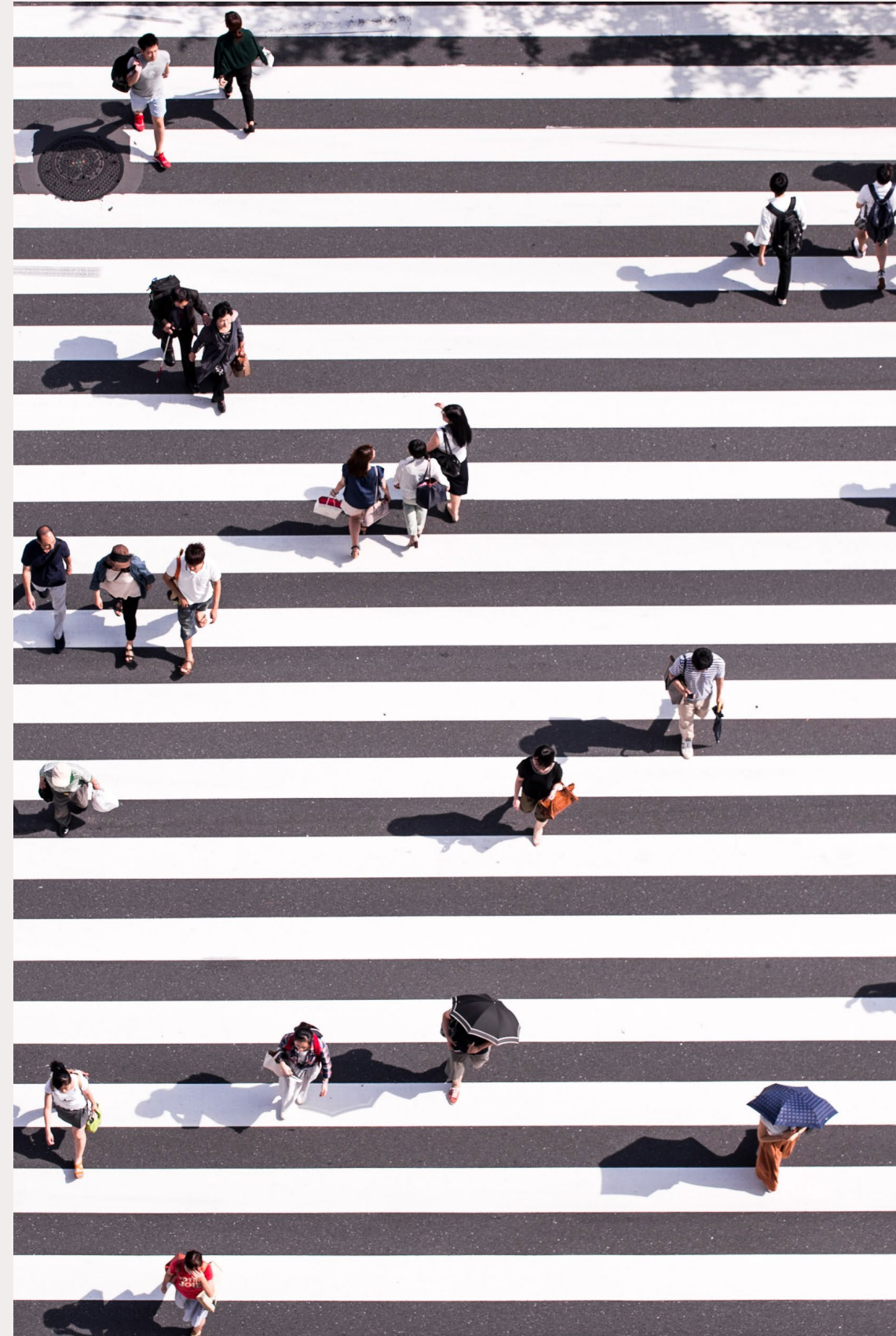>
> David Kelley
> *California*

> **"** The right experiences will accelerate their return

Leah Bauer
Project Director, Gensler

DESTINATION Workplace

Reimagining the Workplace as a Destination Space

The very nature of where and how we work has changed drastically in the last few years, with the line between home and work becoming increasingly blurred. Thanks to the rise of remote and hybrid working, the role of the office has had to evolve in order to attract workers back to the physical workplace as well as to attract the most qualified candidates and retain top talent, who are now spoilt for choice in their employers.

More and more businesses are investing in their workplace design as a tool for talent attraction and retention, positioning the office as a major benefit to joining the company rather than an obligation. This is done by a complete reimagining of the workplace, as not just a place for work, but as a hub for entertainment, socialization, and wellbeing, making the office a destination space.

What is a Destination Space?

Post-pandemic, many businesses struggled to bring employees back into the office, so making the office a destination space – a place where people truly want to be - was a solution that offered a real alternative to working from home. While the benefits of remote working were plentiful, helping to improve work-life balance and save time and money commuting, common complaints as a result of working from home were an increased sense of isolation, lack of socializing and collaborating as well as reduced sense of community and wellbeing.

The purpose of the office is now to provide a space to bring teams together, encourage collaboration and spark creativity whilst looking after employee wellbeing – none of which can be done without offering a truly agile, flexible, and unique workspace environment and culture. Through doing this, companies become a truly desirable place to work and a destination space.

Experience Multiplier

The Gensler 2022 Workplace Survey found that that workers who are choosing to spend time in the office have compelling reasons for doing so, with space to focus on their work, access to technology and scheduled, in-person meetings with their teams the top three reasons employees choose to go into their office. Further research from the Gensler Research Institute found that employees are choosing to be in the office to access specific spaces, materials and resources that only the office can provide, as well as returning to meet with clients. They're choosing to come back to maximize their productivity and build both personal and professional relationships with their co-workers. This revelation revived faith in the role of the physical workspace, proving that the office is in fact an environment that can provide a vital experience that remote working cannot.

Now, more and more businesses are looking at ways their office can be fit for purpose and amplify the employee experience. By ensuring employees have access to resources and experiences that are not available or accessible to them elsewhere, the office serves as an experience multiplier, leading to greater levels of employee loyalty, engagement and job satisfaction.

Focus on Flexible Spaces

Flexibility has been a major workplace trend for years. Now, it's a given – with up to 76% of companies offering flexible working. Flexibility is the new amenity that employees want, but making it an experience multiplier today goes beyond having a remote working policy.

A destination space prioritizes flexibility. Workspaces that offer real design choice and encourage movement are not only great for physical health, they help to attract people to the office for activity-based working – one of the main reasons employees choose to return. Human beings need autonomy to stay stimulated; creating zones and offering multiple, varied spaces to work from allows employees to choose what environment suits them, their mood, and their tasks that day.

Building a Community

Collaboration and socialization are two things that the pre-pandemic workplace had in droves. Now, companies must make an special effort to build a sense of community among colleagues in a world where the number of people in the office at any one time is dynamic and unpredictable.

There are a number of ways that businesses can build a community and great workspace design helps facilitate an environment where chance encounters, personal connection and a people-centric culture can thrive.

The use of flexible, modular furniture that can be scaled up or down depending on how many participants are involved, offers the opportunity for impromptu collaboration. These 'water cooler moments' from pre-pandemic life allow chance interactions that spark creativity and build a culture of camaraderie as well as reinforcing the idea that the office is a hub for socialization – something that remote work cannot replicate.

Wellbeing-centric Workplace

It wasn't long ago that employees chose to stay remote for greater health, work/life balance and wellbeing, so it is no surprise that now companies are looking to prioritize their employee's health and wellbeing, and those that do it well boast a serious competitive advantage.

From a workspace that includes biophilic design principles - the inclusion of plants and nature – to a sympathetic, resimercial design that brings home comforts into the office through soft furnishings and gentle lighting, there are plenty of ways that companies can demonstrate good health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Entertainment zones and wellbeing hubs are growing in popularity with the goal of becoming a destination space. Not only do these attract people to the office by providing something exclusive, but a relaxed environment helps to improve mental health and wellbeing which in turn increases productivity. Other

benefits such as onsite gyms, training facilities and spas show employees their workplace cares about their health, while also seamlessly integrating the company into their employee's day-to-day activities, tasks and enhances their lifestyle - this is a true mark of an effective and cherished destination space.

The Gensler 2022 Workplace Survey found that focusing on work is the top reason people choose to go into the office, which shows the importance of having quiet, solo-work spaces for productivity. This demonstrated that while collaboration and fun experiences are required to attract employees, focus zones are still necessary to protect mental health and wellbeing.

The role of the office has changed, and businesses need to continue to innovate when designing workspaces to win the war for talent. Designing a space that seeks to multiply the employee experience, by adding value to employees' lives, corporations can make their office a destination space and reap the benefits for years to come.

Photography Credits © Gensler/Grant Gay

Railway Carriage

Spacestor

Explore Railway Carriage

spacestor.com

Domestic & General

Domestic & General's space was designed through the years of the Covid-19 pandemic and has been created to reflect and provide solutions for the hybrid workplace. The firm's community-first attitude led them to involve SpaceInvader Design and develop a resimercial, sympathetic interior masterpiece. Sustainability had an important presence during the project including the company participating in the 'School in a Box' scheme. This design won a DrivenXDesign Silver Award and was a Mixology North21 Project of the Year Finalist.

The space is divided loosely into neighborhoods, with the elements of the 'Analog' zones being highly flexible and reconfigurable. Critically, there are a mix of 'Societal' or collaboration communities and 'Principle' or classic work settings. Working with Wagstaff to deliver the furniture package, Spacestor provided pale pink and grey Railway Carriages creating an ideal site for impromptu, informal meetings.

Social climate is perceptively regarded, and D&G's corporate colors are represented in diffused shades to bring a feeling of home to the space. The space is tailored to employee needs, especially the vital need of an equal experience for all in a hybrid working environment, where there are a mix of those in the office and those working from home.

Employee experience is enriched further with a personal storage solution which runs alongside agile working. Banks of Lockers are an extension of the D&G brand, highlighting a soft natural look, a calm environment which attracts and retains talent. Textures and colors are understated, but bursts of color add inspiration and stimulate creative thought. Strongly linked to the sympathetic design is the natural light and biophilia which uplifts mood and assists with employee wellbeing.

Amenities or Culture – What's Best to Multiply the Workplace Experience

As businesses across the globe continue to seek new ways to keep their employees happy, bring them back into the office and retain and attract the best talent into their company, there's a greater societal focus on providing a fantastic workplace experience.

A true workplace experience goes beyond benefits, workload and policy, taking into account the small, almost imperceptible parts of the working day (and beyond) that accumulate into a positive or negative experience. It's these little quirks that contribute to a workplace becoming an experience multiplier or detractor. The last few years - which has seen resignations in droves - prove that it is often the small details, disregarded as immaterial, that have the biggest impact on employee experience.

The Hybrid Experience

According to Harvard Business Review, 76% of knowledge workers believe employees are more likely to prioritize lifestyle over proximity to their job, clearly demonstrating the requirement for employers to provide a workplace that improves and complements employees' lifestyles. This, however, is constantly in flux, and what many would class as a great workplace experience has transformed drastically in the last few

years, due in no small part to the pandemic.

Pre-pandemic, the greatest contributors were amenities in the workplace which always far surpassed other benefits in importance, with features such as game rooms, ping pong tables, arcade machines and bean bags regularly referred to in job listings and touted as main attractors to the workplace. This is a societal trend, indicative of pre-pandemic thinking where people valued things.

Now, employees are craving genuine experiences, connections and community. Starved of authentic face-to-face connections during the pandemic and faced with the potential of permanent remote working, priorities shifted and things such as equity, mentorship and development have taken the place of popular amenities.

Similarly, as the world evolved into a hybrid way of working, the role of the physical office has changed, with greater demands for it to facilitate collaboration and socialisation, becoming a destination space for those craving social interaction.

When planning ways to accentuate the workplace experience, it is critical to consider the needs and motivations of employees returning to the office, and ensuring these are met and built upon.

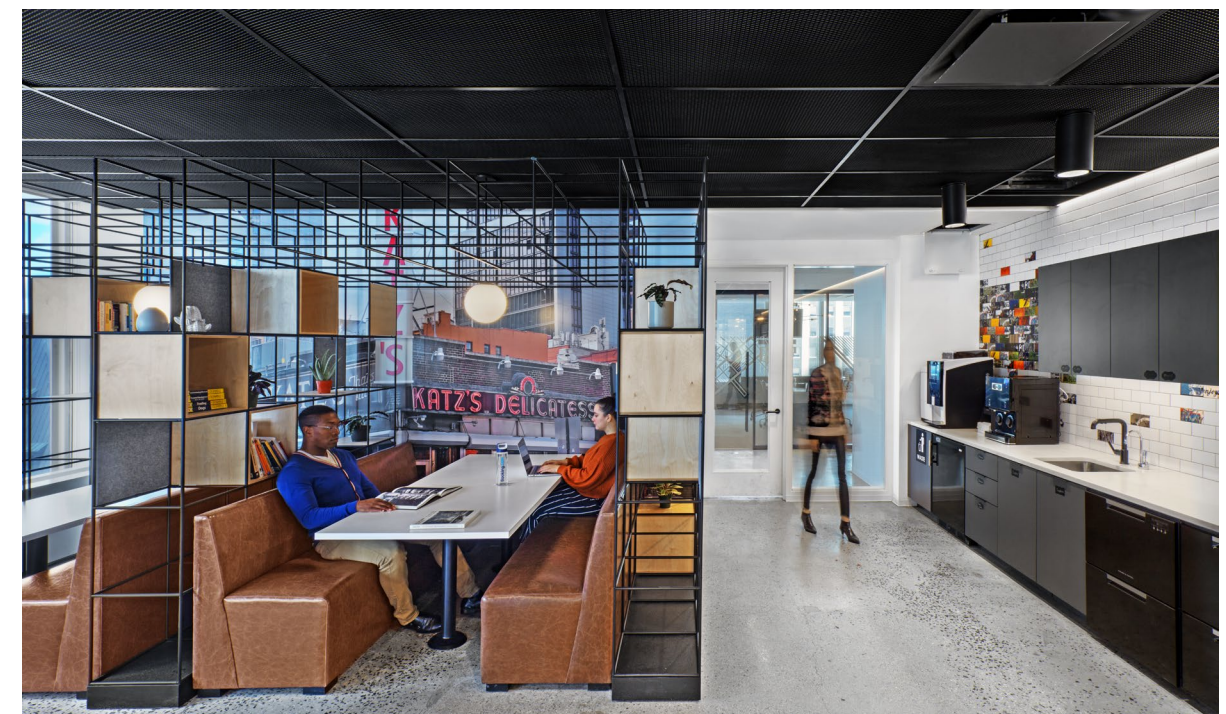## How Workplace Design Becomes an Experience Multiplier

According to Gallup, "Providing a great workplace experience means optimizing the variety and character of spaces that people can choose from during the day, and empowering them to make choices that optimize their individual performance."

This is already becoming a non-negotiable in the physical office, with those offering design choice, allowing employees to decide which environment works best for their tasks, day or mood, reporting greater levels of engagement and wellbeing. Flexible, re-configurable spaces that expand and collapse to accommodate socialisation, collaboration as well as enabling quiet, independent focus work empowers employees to make their own choices, enhancing the employee experience. As an example Spacestor's Palisades II is a powerful zoning tool, allowing for a simple and elegant division of space without sacrificing light or openness by installing walls.

When reinforcing a great culture, top workplaces must stand out by listening to employee's biggest pain points, needs and addressing them through design and policy. One recurring theme every leadership team should be conscious of is an increased, genuine desire

for community and culture. As remote working has slowly chipped away at one's sense of belonging, the physical workspace needs to reinforce this to enhance the employee experience. Supporting this, workplace design is seeing an exponential rise in calls for scrum spaces, collaboration zones and 'war rooms', where work is completed in a social way, which no video call can rival. Workspace design can support culture and community in a number of ways, through encouraging office neighborhoods, prioritizing diversity and inclusion, bringing home comforts into the office and reaffirming company values by building culture into workspace design.

Bespoke, customizable furniture that brings out your brand's personality through color and patterns is a great way to build your corporate culture into workspace design, an idea that was prevalent in the project with accountancy firm, PKF Cooper Parry. Their offices were transformed into a colorful wonderland, embodying their company ethos of being a disruptor in the industry and differentiating from their competitors. The use of Spacestor's Railway Carriage and HotLockers allowed the company to stamp their brand charm throughout the workplace, a true commitment to their company values and creating a greater sense of pride and belonging for their employees.

Becoming a Destination Space

When working to enhance the workplace experience, policy must support great design to be effective. The calls for greater community should be met with socialising outside of the office, team-building exercises that include remote employees, and fantastic diversity, equality and inclusion. Employee wellbeing must be prioritized and it's here where amenities in the workplace can be effective. Leveraging great technology, having activity-based-zones, access to healthcare and benefits are still a key requirement.

So, amenities or culture, which is more important to the workspace experience? Rather they go hand in hand. Amenities help to build a company culture, showing that leadership teams are nurturing their employees. This creates a culture of importance, belonging and value. But without the understanding of human needs and motivations, or creating a universal design based on employees' desire for connection, independence and flexibility, amenities can only go so far in providing an outstanding workplace experience.

Photography Credits © Austin Distel, Foto Bakirkoy, Nathan Dumlao

Residence Connect
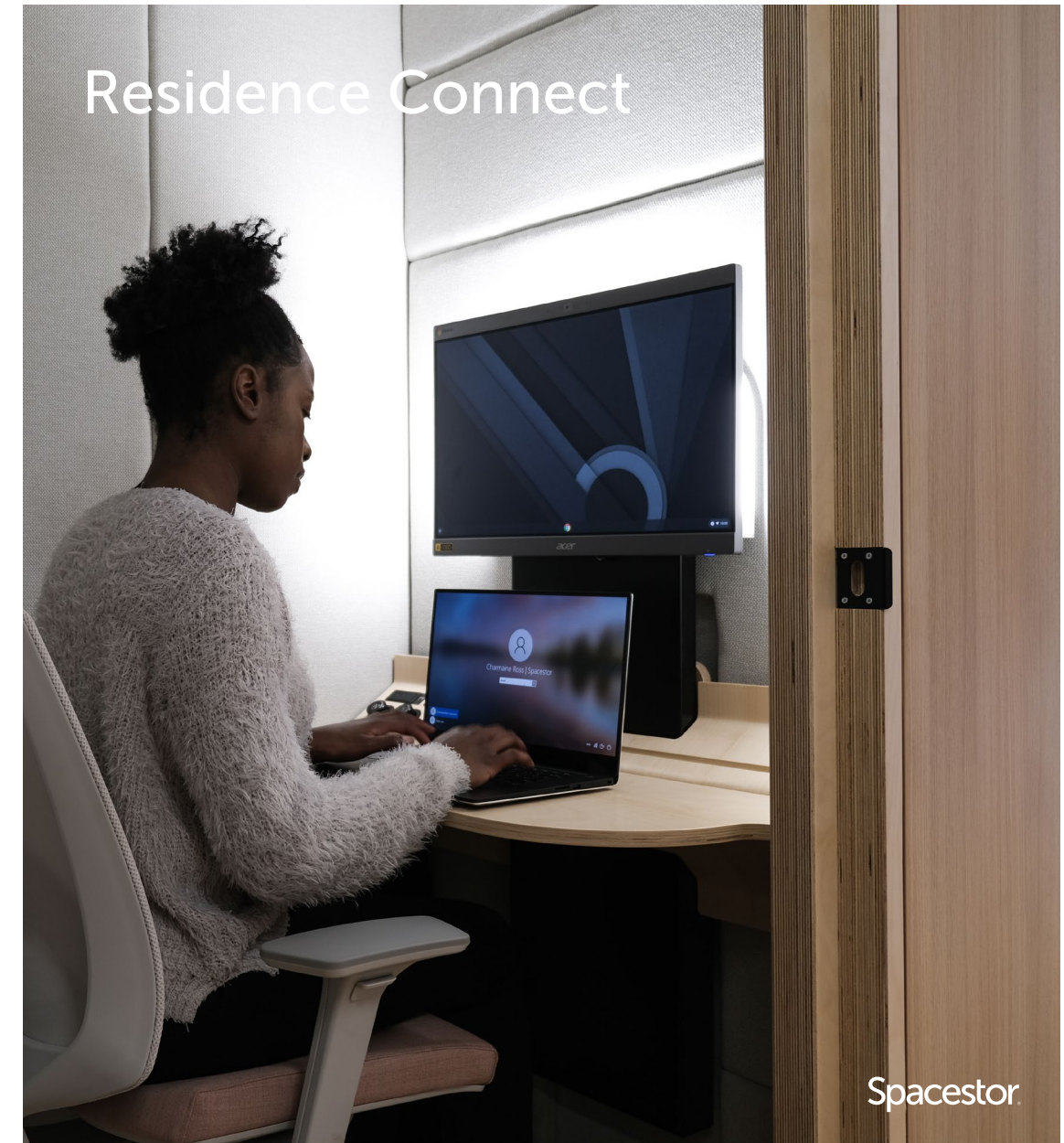
Spacestor

Explore Connect

Confidential International Legal Services Client

Guiding their clients through legal challenges and rewarding opportunities, this International Legal Firm puts people at the center of their proceedings. Their office in Farringdon is a hub for employees, where their needs are provided for, and consideration has been put into zone creation – whether in the main office space, enclosed meeting spaces or individual working pods.

With the tide turning and the emphasis swinging away from entirely open plan offices, quiet areas for focused work are being recognized as a necessity in the workplace of today. The Residence Connect by Spacestor offers an acoustically secluded space where employees can focus. Especially designed from the ground up as a video pod, it is fitted with a screen, adjustable lighting, ventilation, and a height-adjustable desk. A level threshold and easy accessibility makes using the pod The Best Ever Video Conference Experience. For Everyone.

Again and again, the workplace is insisting on the need for flexibility, which is resulting in agile office spaces where employee opportunities can be created through effective and adaptable office design. Completely customizable HotLocker units ensure a sleek user and comprehensive management experience. The radio frequency identification locking strategy used, means employees can unlock, store and lock again using existing staff cards.

This International Legal Services Client is working towards an inclusive and adaptable workplace environment for all employees.

Featuring HotLocker, Residence Connect
& Residence Max by Spacestor

London, UK
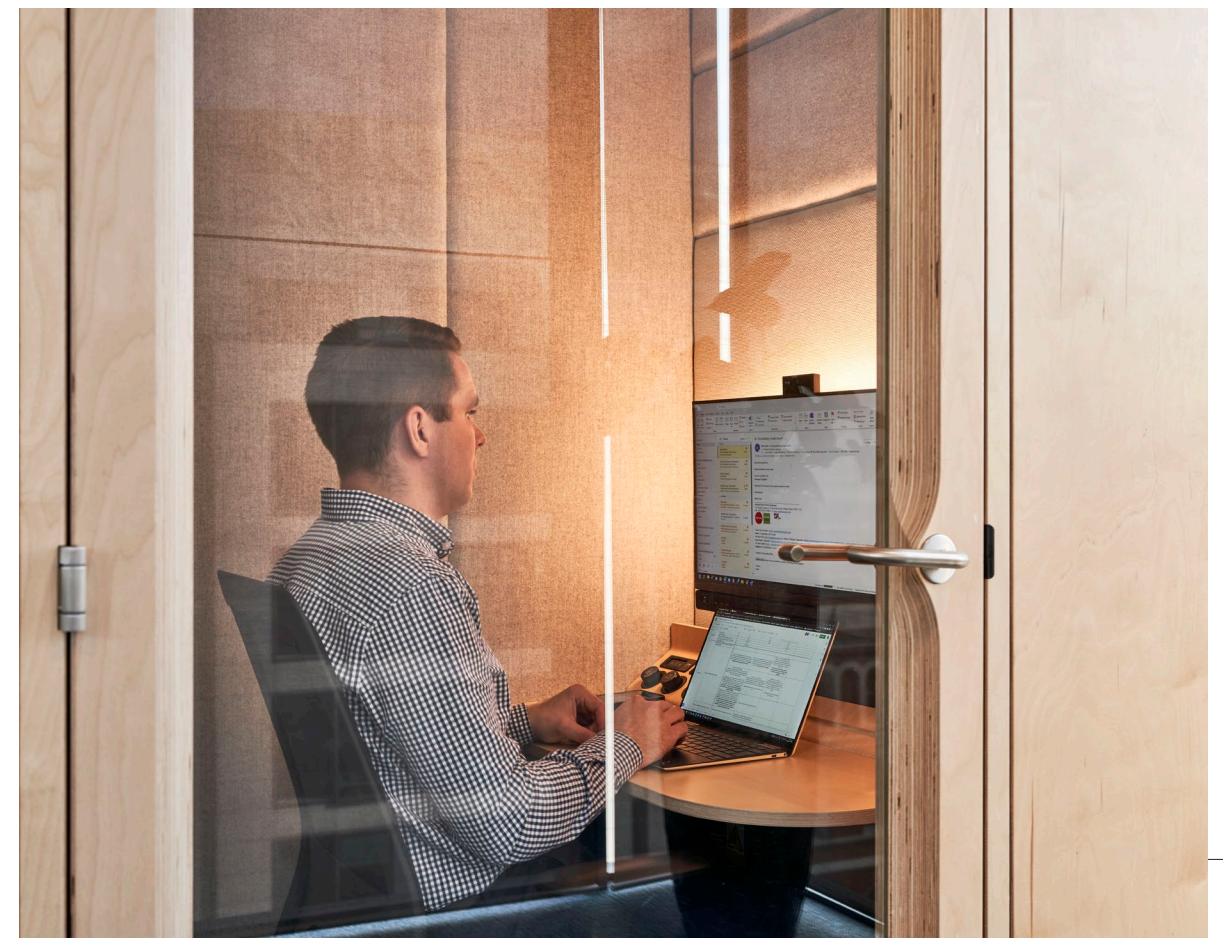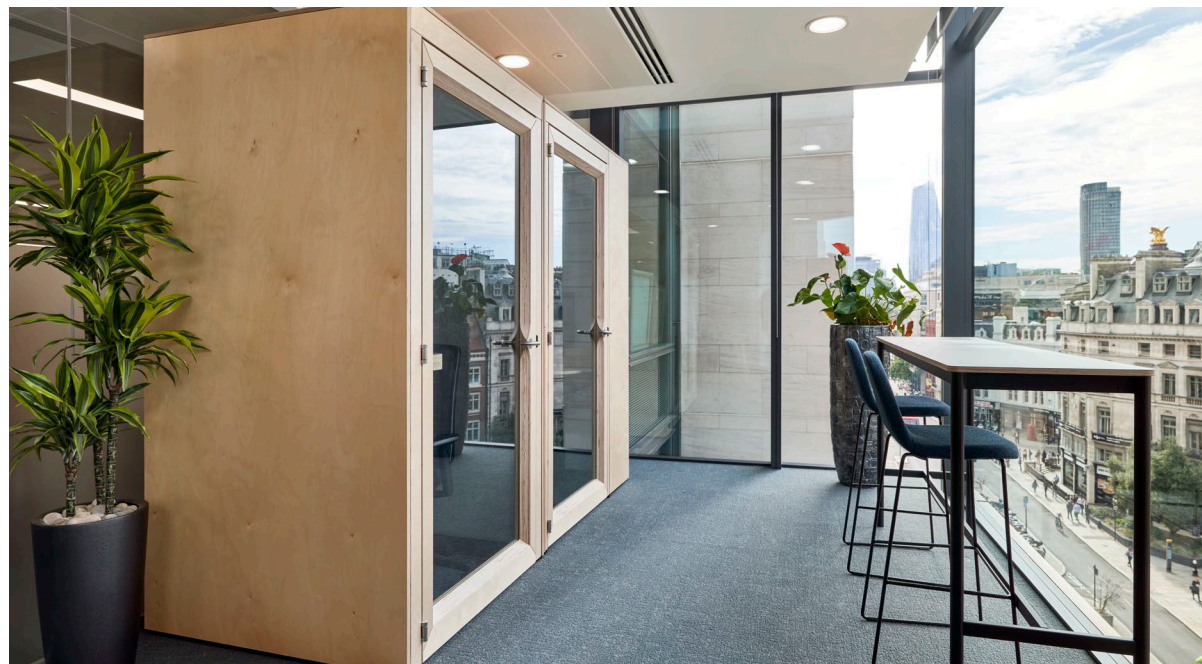
Six Steps to Make Your Hybrid Workplace More Inclusive
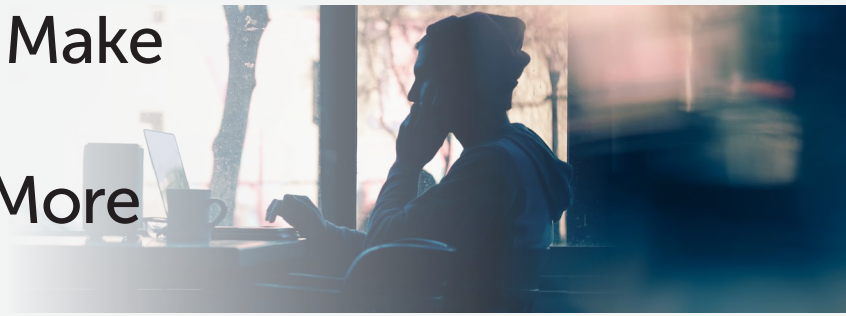
Across the globe, teams are settling into their new hybrid routines. Once a temporary measure, hybrid ways of working are now commonplace, a result of post-pandemic return-to-work procedures consistently favoring the hybrid model.

The hybrid model generally refers to employees choosing whether to work remotely or from the office as they see fit. This approach has a whole host of benefits, combatting the biggest contributing factors to The Great Resignation by offering greater work/life balance, physical and mental health benefits.

However, a hybrid office does have its drawbacks, not least that it destabilizes what was once a relatively simple-to-implement inclusivity strategy. So how can businesses implement an inclusive design for all, while remaining hybrid? Read on to discover the six top tips.

Why is Inclusivity Important ?

Inclusivity is key to having a high-performing workforce. Inclusive organizational cultures that foster trust and support their employees benefit from increased retention rates, collaboration and report higher job satisfaction. An inclusive workplace requires implementing a universal design and corporate policies that consider all colleagues, regardless of race, gender, religion, age and physical ability.

When considering a hybrid team, the playing field is uneven by design. With some members of the team in the office and others at home, co-working spaces or coffee shops, members of staff will naturally have varying experiences of the working day. There is an increased risk that remote employees may feel left out of important decisions, events or conversations and that office-workers' comfort and productivity could drop.

Why is it Important to Have a Hybrid Strategy ?

A McKinsey study found that over 75% of survey respondents that had been working a hybrid model over the last few years wished to retain it going forward. 71% went a step further and said they would seek opportunities elsewhere if their current employer stopped offering it. This is representative of a global workforce, with 63% of high-growth businesses using hybrid work models.

The hybrid model is here to stay, but for the majority of the working world a clear, comprehensive hybrid strategy is still lacking, with 72% of businesses reporting an absence of a clear hybrid-work strategy in AT&T's Future of Work study. Without a clear strategy, inclusivity, performance, innovation and workplace culture is at risk.

Top Tips for Building an Inclusive Hybrid Workspace

1. Host Inclusive Team Meetings

Make sure to plan out how meetings attended by remote and office-based workers can work effectively. Sending an agenda out well in advance of the meeting will give all members an equal opportunity to prepare and raise questions. Using hybrid workplace solutions such as Spacestor Verandas is a great way to ensure all members of the team have a valuable meeting experience by offering soundproofing, as well as technology, to support video conference calls. This creates an opportunity for remote workers to experience face-to-face interaction with their colleagues and feel included.

2. Host Regular One-to-Ones

One of the biggest risks to the hybrid model is that remote employees feel as though they are no longer as embedded in their company culture and could therefore be looked over for promotions, development opportunities and wellbeing checks. Ensuring the team have access to their line manager regularly and blocking out space in the diary every day for catch ups is a great way to reduce the chances of feeling alienated.

3. Implement an Empathetic Workplace Design

While the majority of the focus is on ensuring that remote-workers don't feel disconnected, employees that come to the office may feel that they are missing out on all the benefits that come with working from home. Implementing an empathetic workplace design that emulates the home, implements biophilia and resimercial design is a great step to building a kinder, community-first office culture that can rival the comfort of remote working.

4. Make the Office Agile

Hybrid working means that any amount of people could be in the office at any one time. A universal design ensures that all employees have equal access to facilities, even if they are rarely in the workplace. Modular and adaptable seating and desk solutions are a great way to ensure the office can welcome everyone. Agile locker systems such as personal lockers can be allocated on an individual basis, allowing attending members of staff to assign themselves a locker for a day, using their phone. This system also has the ability to see who's working alongside who, based on the locker audit trail, for greater hybrid working insights.

5. Encourage Culture & Community

As one of the core reasons for keeping the physical office, when colleagues are in the workplace, it is vital that they feel included as part of a community. Creating activity-based zones increases the opportunity for socialisation – a key requirement for remote workers – and removing pre-allocated seats in favor of building office neighborhoods allows opportunity for collaboration across departments and working patterns.

6. Ensure all Employees Have a Voice

Experimenting with hybrid workplace solutions is a great way to make your team feel valued and included in key decisions, ensuring a truly inclusive workplace design. Gathering feedback and experimenting with a number of designs, layouts, furniture and piloting these design solutions allows leadership to gain a better idea of how to mesh the needs, desires and requirements of a diverse workforce. This is a great engagement exercise that can result in a truly universal design.

Barcode Warehouse

Since the brand was started in 1999, Barcode Warehouse has been consistently providing RFID, labelling and barcode technology solutions with exceptional customer service. It was their unparalleled passion for customers and employees that inspired them to partner with Rhino Interiors Group to create their new Innovation and Customer Experience Center in Newark.

The agile working environment incorporates opportunities for collaboration as well as desking, pods, and acoustic meeting spaces. A state-of-the-art reflection of their corporate colors and a brand extension which establishes Barcode Warehouse as a front-runner and talent-attractor.

25,000sq ft of tired office space needed to be transformed to align with the company's ideal around the creation of an immersive and experience-led environment. A project which spanned only seven weeks realized this objective, and the result, an inspirational space enhanced by crafted architectural features and the free entry of natural light.

High ceilings and skylights set the scene for the location, the reception being light and airy with a stately and innovative twist. Sloping windows and indoor gardens inspire interest and provide a mindful aspect promoting well-being and self-care.

Further inside the space, the aesthetic is playful with light woods and blues paired with the bright orange, synonymous with the Barcode Warehouse brand. Two-person Railway Carriages by Spacestor, in the same vivid hue provide drop-in areas for catch ups and quick alignment meetings.

Networking zones with a roof of warm overhead lighting and greenery, maintain the soft feel and encourage creativity in a non-commercial setting. A neutral palette was chosen to create a backdrop which would highlight technology and allow it to speak for itself. Soft vibes initiated by natural materials, with wood grains and black accents are a cohesive response to the demand of a home away from home.

> " IT FEELS LIKE A WORK, HOME AWAY FROM HOME. IT REALLY MAKES US WANT TO GET BACK IN AND BE AROUND AGAIN!
>
> *Emma, Barcode Warehouse*

Photography Credits © Trend Visuals

Insights Live Rewound

Workspace Re-purposed: Catering to New Needs

Ike Cheung
Workplace Environment Manager,
American Family Insurance

Jessica Gracey
Design Director,
Senior Associate,
Gensler

Matthew Rebbe
Senior Associate,
Interior Design Director,
Aecom

Watch here

Listen to the panelists on location at NeoCon 2022 discuss working through actions for powerful experience-based workplace change. The importance of providing for choice-based working within the space, a broader support of employee lifestyles and how design should be closely aligned to represent the culture of a company. Learn about a rise in pilot spaces and research programs, as previously accepted data is re-set to accommodate a change in mindset and demands. Hear insights into how to measure the success of a space and how to integrate future flexibility into what is undeniably a unique requirement based on each company's corporate culture and workplace strategy.

Flex-washing - Is It Really Attracting Talent?

Nathan Manuel
Workplace Experience Nerd,
PagerDuty

Tina Facos-Casolo
Principal Architect, Workplace
Effectiveness,
Genentech

Ian Reves
Design Director,
A Architects

Watch here

Flex-washing is a problem emerging from the need to attract talent and the greater premium put on flexibility by potential employees. Whilst companies claim to offer flexible working conditions, the level of autonomy awarded around where and how employees work can be significantly below expectation. Our panelists discuss the need of clearly defining flexibility; giving tips on how to provide an authentically flexible experience whilst recognizing the need to provide some direction for employees. This episode debates insightful solutions for maximizing flexibility whilst being closely aligned and truly in tune with employee feelings, an evolving solution to attract and retain talent in today's corporate world.

The Worthy Workspace of 2023

**Elizabeth Levine ASID,
NCIDQ, LEED AP**
Regional Design Director,
Nelson Worldwide

Brent Arnold RID
Workplace Experience and
Experimental Design
Indeed

Giselle Bonilla
Director of Global Real Estate &
Capital Projects
Zendesk

Watch here

The office has traditionally been an obligation, but over the last three years employees have started to consider the value and purpose of every attendance. Experts in their industry, our three panelists discuss the tangible reasons why employees make the commute and what actions can be taken to attract them in. From team-based agreements to focused work, the reasons are driven by needs, not convention, and this means we must ensure the workplace is worthy of the commute. The culture, location, amenities, and access; what is the most important thing to get right? And what measures can we take to ensure the workplace is attractive to everyone?

The Destination Workplace

Kim Kolkovich
Head of Design, **Knotel**

Leah Bauer
Project Director, **Gensler**

Ronda Green
Director of Workplace Design
and Furniture, **Oracle**

Watch here

Free flowing and packed with personal experience, this panel dives into the heart of what makes the workplace a destination. Insights into the latest Gensler research uncovers nuances of preference between different regions, demographics, and industries. The implications of this highlights an importance integrated technology, a 'third space' and the fundamental need of humans to collaborate. A concentration on neurodiversity and inclusion it covers tips to help accommodate the requirements of all, including the need for tech-free zones, acoustic solutions, and adjustable lighting. Panelists discuss whether we really know the impact working from home has had on innovation? And what is really the most important factor when creating a destination workplace?

Insights Live

by Spacestor

Join hundreds of other workplace leaders on our virtual panel discussions, Insights Live. Hear from global industry thought-leaders on how to get the best from today's workspaces.

Explore the series
and sign up

spacestor.com

Future-Proofing with

FLEXIBILITY

Repurposing Spaces in the Office

The needs of building occupiers have changed. Post-pandemic, investors are evaluating their assets in response to the constant changes in real-estate and hoping to increase the resilience of their property portfolios. Commercial buildings are subletting and diversifying their offerings to attract people back into city center s. The same conversations are happening within workspaces.

With hybrid working patterns returning, it's clear that despite the rise in working from home, the physical workspace is still needed, with data supporting the notion that the physical workspace is still a critical asset for workers, as this is where businesses can provide an environment dedicated to supporting employees' health, productivity and happiness through embedding a great company culture.

As there is a decreased demand for space in the office, corporations may be tempted to scale back their property demands to reduce costs and overheads. This article will explain why they shouldn't, and should instead look to repurpose their space, offering multiuse offices and embedding flexible solutions as a much more effective, rewarding and sustainable way to tackle this issue.

Single-use Spaces are Becoming Obsolete

The ever-evolving role of the office has put a stop to the idea that the workplace must be one thing only: a place to work. Now, in order to truly satisfy the many needs of an employee, the workplace of the future must provide a space for working, socialising, relaxation, culture and encouraging wellness.

The increased responsibility on corporations to address these issues to retain their workforce, along with the rise of working from home has made single-use spaces obsolete, wasteful and costly. With office capacity at an all-time low, this offers several opportunities for companies to offer a reimagined space, and at its core, should always be the desire to create spaces that elevate the human experience. This is a trend happening in real-time across the property board in all industries, with a number of conversions of store and retail to hospitality venues.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the proportion of shopping now carried out online stands at 27.8%. This is down from a pandemic peak of 37.7% but up from 19.4% pre-pandemic. The response from the industry is to repurpose these spaces as flexible, multipurpose venues and buildings that can house year-round activity, attracting a more diverse crowd and thus creating extra revenue opportunities.

The Benefits of Multiuse Offices

As property developers and building owners search for ways to reposition buildings that are below capacity, workplaces must too, and for good reason; it is what their employees want.

Employers can benefit from multi-use offices as they increase engagement, productivity and loyalty of their employees, offering them the freedom to work how and where they desire. In order for this to be worthwhile, repositioned buildings must serve as a genuine alternative to remote work, by helping to alleviate the common complaints of remote working, such as monotony, social isolation, and the lack of work/life boundaries. Simply put; reimagined spaces that prioritize human connection, collaboration and socialization will entice employees back into the office as a preference, rather than an obligation.

Perhaps most significantly, businesses can benefit from multiuse offices as these support organizations with their sustainable office strategy, allowing them to more easily reduce their carbon footprint and reach their eco-friendly targets. Reduce, reuse, recycle has been at the core of sustainability projects worldwide, when applied to the built environment, the impact is even greater.

According to Architecture 2030, a non-profit focused on climate change and buildings, the built environment generates nearly 50% of annual global CO_2 emissions, with building materials and construction (embodied carbon) responsible for an additional 20% annually.

Materials used to make furniture also contribute to carbon emissions, so repurposing spaces and using sustainable multiuse furniture to do so, is another impactful way of cutting down on waste and reaching net-zero future targets.
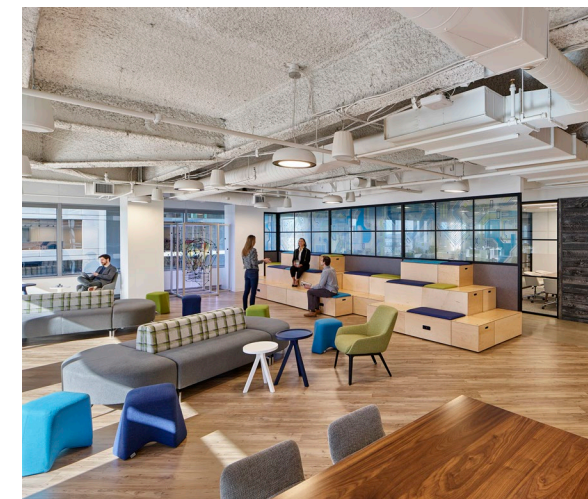
Reimagined Workspace Environments

While many sectors and industries may sublet parts of buildings in response to an increased building capacity, many offices across the world have already begun reusing and reimagining spaces to positively influence their company culture.

There is an increasing demand on workplaces to provide a variety of seating, rooms, and access to technology where people can meet or work alone, as well as micro-offices, allowing for independent work as well as small team meetings, that don't shut off the occupants from the rest of the environment.

This can be achieved through the use of flexible, multiuse furniture, such as Spacestor's Verandas product, a completely adaptable modular meeting room system, which allows organizations to repurpose wide spaces as well as provide a great level of autonomy and design choice for their employees.

Bumble, a dating, friendship and networking app repurposed their London office with the intention to reflect the varying needs of their business and people. The key goal of the new brief was to create a floor that focused solely on collaboration and adaptability. By experimenting over a two-year period and seeking feedback from their employees, they were confident that the reimagined space would be worthwhile and suitable for the future workforce.

Adaptive spaces require design solutions that allow for clearly defined zones for different purposes, whether it's independent concentration work, team collaboration or booths for socializing. Sub-architectural furniture, such as Spacestor's Arcadia developed with Product Design Consultants, Gensler, is perfect for customization of the environment and a great way to repurpose space. Arcadia is a fluid, flexible and future-proof solution, allowing the creation of a vast choice of configurations and forms, from private cloisters, to spacious pantheons – with almost unlimited combinations available to work for any office, with any needs, at any time.

University of East London - Your Space, Your Place

With three campuses based in the cultural hub of East London, UEL is moving wards its ambitious 10-year strategy of becoming the UK's leading careers-intensive university and requires spaces to support transformational change enhancing collaboration throughout the university. Following the 2020 pandemic, staff are more flexible and innovative, and they need workspaces to match new working styles. To support agile and collaborative working, the Projects & Estates Development team turned to iDEA, a workplace design company to create a space for staff to move freely between areas to suit their preference, comfort level and task being worked on. The newly created dynamic space supports multiple working styles - collaborative and breakout working spaces, quiet working zones, individual pods for Teams calls and a social environment for networking.

Supported by leading furniture and fit-out company Wagstaff, the UEL Projects & Estates Development team have curated a cutting-edge learning environment. In several places throughout the space, Spacestor Railway Carriage booths act as both an ideas hub for collaboration as well as a relaxed, focus space for concentration. The closed back on the Railway Carriage not only provides further acoustic protection, but also allows for multiplicity of purpose, with a whiteboard back creating another collaboration zone.

With the new reality of hybrid working, UEL understand the importance of providing spaces specially crafted for virtual meetings and the best video calling experience. The Residence Connect booths provides a spacious interior, allowing users to be seated on an ergonomic task chair, and the user-adjustable lighting, ventilation and desk height all combine to ensure maximum comfort. Using both the Standard and Accessible version of the pod, UEL's commitment to providing an agile workspace for all users is clear to see in the design of the new space.

Allowing users to shape their own space, Spacestor modular Bleachers provides reconfigurable and flexible seating options. Bridging the gap between a meeting room and an auditorium-style space, Bleacher's great flexibility allows users of these spaces to instantly create their desired environment for any interaction.

Photography Credits © Ben Jackson

Bleachers

Spacestor

Explore Bleachers

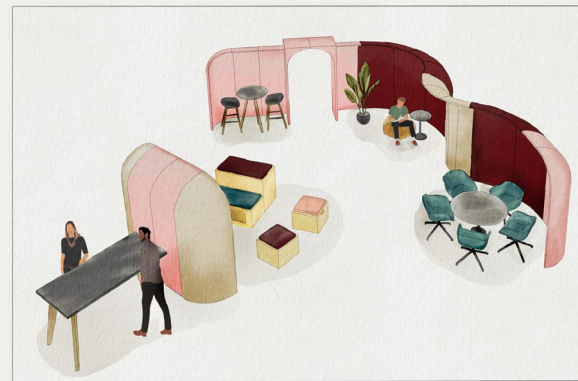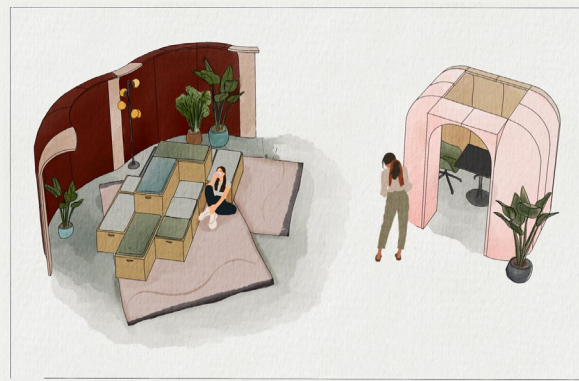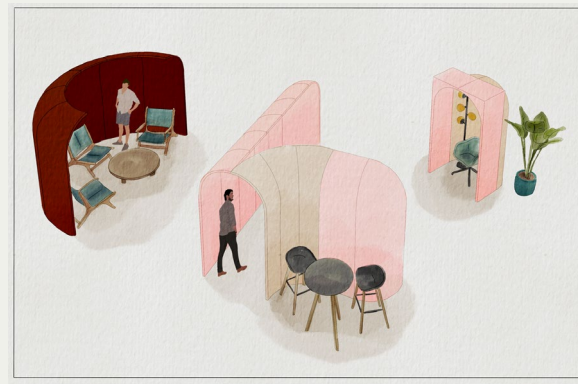spacestor.com   Photography Credits © Tom Bird

ENDLESS
Configurations

One kit. Five parts. Many configurations. The same 21 pieces can be reconfigured to create multiple forms demonstrating the flexibility of Arcadia to work as enclosures, semi-enclosures, space-makers and linear separators.

Arcadia by Spacestor X Gensler

Adaptable Meeting Rooms For the Flexible Office

The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed new ways of working and the workplace industry is looking for innovative, creative and adaptable workspaces that support a healthier workplace. We are still discovering the effect of Covid-19 on workplace design longterm but the most important lesson to takeaway is that adaptability is even more crucial than ever - our workspaces need to be ready for anything.

With companies now realizing the benefits of both remote working and the importance of in-person connections and collaborations, there is a need to find ways to bring workers back to the office whilst also ensuring investment beyond the pandemic. Even before the crisis, businesses were trending towards flexible and remote working. To adequately plan for the future, businesses will need to take both preferences into account. One significant post-Covid-19 result has been that almost every physical meeting will include participants joining remotely. All signs are indicating that going into the future we can expect workspaces to be agile and adaptable. People will need a variety of environments to work in, so companies will need

to provide an adaptive architecture that is flexible and able to cater to the employee needs as they change.

What is an Adaptable Meeting Room ?

The Flexible Workplace is undeniably a growing trend and we are now seeing this more as businesses around the world are reflecting on their implemented initial workplace strategy. In order to cater for this, we need agile solutions that offer modular and adaptable features to enrich the employee experience, solutions where expensive and wasteful construction is replaced by modular architecture with simple, functional design.

Smaller office pods and booths make an ideal spot for one person, or even two colleagues to join a video conference from the office, as well as offering a distraction-free respite for individual work. However, often workers want flexibility in where they work, sticking to the home office for focused tasks and heading to the office when they need to collaborate with their team. With staff members working less in close proximity each day, the ability to bring people together for all-staff meetings and events becomes

essential to building a sense of community and corporate culture.

In order to provide for this, businesses should give sufficient thought to a variety of spaces – open and enclosed meeting rooms, conference rooms, and other areas – allowing for a more engaging and collaborative company culture, that can support productive working and meetings for everyone in the room.

Modular Meeting Rooms for an Adaptable Workplace

Modular meeting rooms designed for adaptability, can facilitate private one-on-ones, as well as larger collaborative discussions and videoconferencing,

whilst also offering a comfortable, private space to concentrate on the task at hand. One great feature of modular meeting rooms is that they open up the traditional team meeting spaces to a new world of possibilities with an open, airy environment ideal for impromptu brainstorms and discussions.

Using these free-standing, modular meeting rooms rather than traditional construction, means they can be positioned in various places throughout the office or moved to an entirely new location as company and employee needs change, evolve or adapt. This allows any company to add space-efficient, ready-to-use, meeting rooms to their workplace enabling the delivery of a seamless experience without expensive, distracting office buildouts.

The biggest change the pandemic has brought in is our thinking. We have a new understanding that being productive doesn't necessarily mean being present. That flexibility truly does allow us to maximize potential and work more effectively. It's a new attitude that is sure to result in more inclusive, diverse, and accessible workspaces. The workforce often wants a destination space that gives them the opportunity to increase productivity and group work sessions, providing this is what makes spaces special.

A Focus on Spacestor's Workplace Solutions

Spacestor's Design Team was commissioned to design and engineer an adaptable meeting room system with high levels of modularity and durability. The key objective was to create a highly modular, sustainable, and customizable system with full user control and an optimal videoconferencing and room experience.

To meet the need for an adaptable room system, Verandas was born.

Verandas is designed with the key elements of being inclusive and sustainable in its design. As well as this , it is tech-enabled, with cable routes and modular plug-and-play 'power plinth', and is considerate towards user comfort with unique room cooling and temperature control system and acoustic qualities that are unique to Spacestor.

Verandas is a highly adaptable and modular way of creating space division and pods, as well as incorporating accessories and customization. High levels of modularity are integrated into the construction of the Verandas, meaning each room variant can be dismantled and rebuilt with ease and at high speed. Designed for ease of construction and reconfiguration, making full use of the flexibility of Verandas enables the space-efficient creation of integrated multi-modal spaces.

Verandas

Spacestor

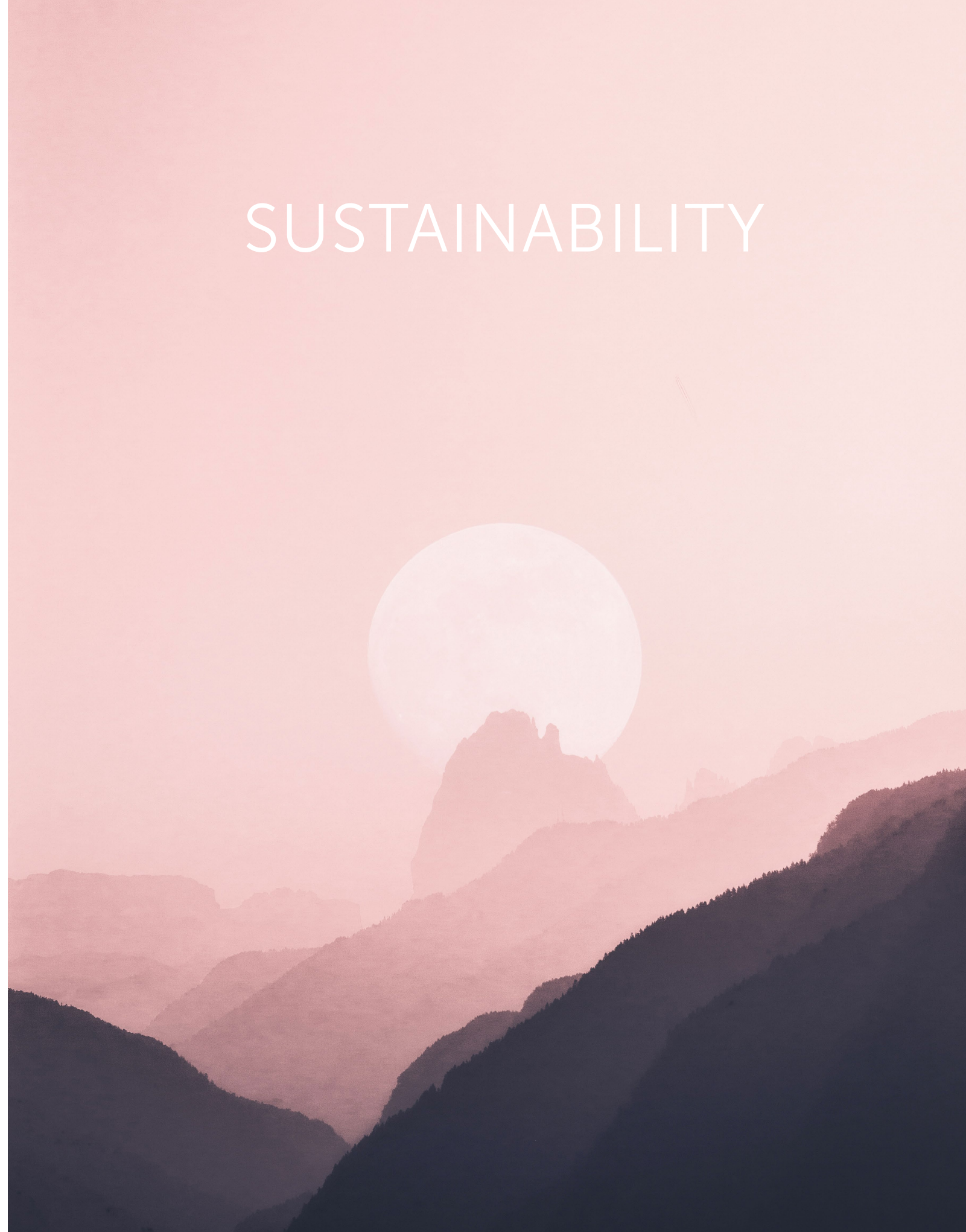Explore Verandas

SUSTAINABILITY

" One of the fundamental changes we can make is to attribute value to an existing building based on the longevity or deconstruction credentials of the materials inside.
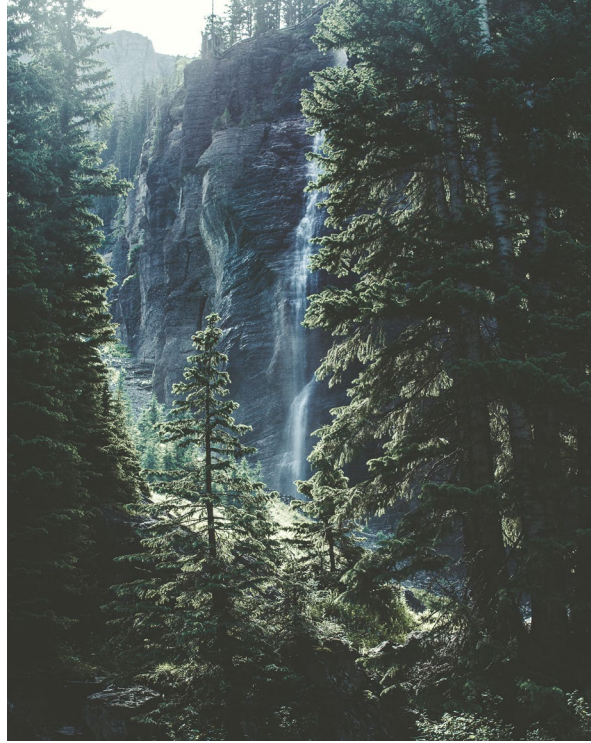
Juliette Morgan
Climate Action & Sustainability Services Leader, Gensler

Spacestor - Net Zero by 2040

As the environment becomes more and more important to clients all around the world, companies have become increasingly criticized for greenwashing. 'Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image'; the development of a façade, crafted entirely out of an attempt to enhance image, rather than the genuine desire to give back and improve the environment.

By all means, the term does not define every corporate's attitude to the planet, but it is increasingly urgent that more genuinely concerned companies come on board and state where they stand in relation to carbon goals and sustainability.

So, is this a call to action? Is this a rallying cry? Perhaps.

Having dipped into sustainability, Spacestor brought out Environmental Management Certification, FSC Certification, installed biomass boilers, and have been issued multiple Declare Labels. Now, they are taking an industry-first, ground-breaking step and have made a pledge to be Net Zeroby 2040.

As Consulting & Real Estate Services Leader for Gensler, Jacob Simons, observes – 'Disingenuous CSR goals are the best way to stand out for the wrong reasons.' It is true, and this also: that many smaller companies in the manufacturing industry shy away from publishing their environmental goals, in the risk that they will receive backlash for 'greenwashing'. It is because of this, as well as a sincere care for the planet, that Spacestor have taken the time to thoroughly research their impact on the environment and consequently publish a timeline of science-based targets on their journey to Net Zero:

2030 – reduce the carbon intensity from across their operations (Scope 1, 2 and 3) by 15%. Transition to 100% renewable energy.

2035 – reduce absolute emissions from their operations (Scope 1 and 2) by 50%. Transition to zero carbon supply and distribution.

2040 – achieve Net Zeroemissions.

As part of the Science Based Targets Initiative (STBI), Spacestor's timeline will see them reach Net Zero10 years ahead of the goal committed to in the Paris Agreement.

Indeed, following this ambitious commitment, the future holds many changes! Developments in technological infrastructure, switches to greener electric sources, innovations to effect change company wide and beyond. The future will be challenging, but also uniquely rewarding to know that the small actions taken now, are contributing to a larger aim – to prevent the transition of the climate crisis into a climate catastrophe.

It is in the publishing of these specific goals and SBTI timeline that Spacestor hope to encourage and spur on other manufacturers to do the same. Combatting global warming and reducing greenhouse gases can only be done by working together, as an industry and as a community, energetically driving reduction in emissions and the recovery of the planet.

" Huge opportunities exist for companies ready and willing to go Net Zero.

Natal Dank
HR Trends & Future of Work
PXO Culture, HR Trend Institute

Mycelium – Shaping the Future of Sustainable Furniture Design

Residence Max

Spacestor

Mycelium is the new material creating a stir in the furniture industry. Made from the root-like structure of fungi, it is gaining attention as a sustainable and eco-friendly alternative to traditional furniture materials.

Grown from agriculture waste, mycelium can be molded into any shape whilst needing only minimal energy input to grow. Its innate versatility means its already being used as insulation and packaging for its foam-like structure, having made an appearance in the fashion world in the form of faux leather, and now it's breaking into the furniture industry in the form of chairs, lighting and even architecture. Its unique qualities; light weight, durable, fire-resistant,

water resistant, and some acoustic properties, make it a highly desirable material to continue to push the boundaries of what furniture is, while being a highly sustainable material due to the low energy needed for it to grow. With potential of significantly reducing the furniture industries' environmental impact, it may become a designer's go-to when looking for a highly sustainable material, with there being little limitation on its range of applications.

As the industry continues to evolve, mycelium's sustainable and versatile nature, paired with its unique range of properties means it will likely play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of sustainable design.

Explore Max

Photography Credits © Toa Heftiba, Adobe Stock

spacestor.com

Five Tips for a More Sustainable Workplace

Sustainability has been a topic growing in importance over the last decade, spearheaded by the clear impact of the climate crisis which can be felt across the globe. With pressure building on businesses to cut their carbon emissions and improve their eco-friendly credentials, many leadership teams are reworking their green policies to help them achieve net-zero carbon goals in the next few years.

When it comes to workspace design, when harnessed properly, the implementation of sustainable design principles is a great tool to help businesses become a greener workplace of the future.

Why is Sustainability So Important Right Now?

Sustainable design in the office takes into account a variety of things from workspace layout, the use of materials in furniture to embedding a sustainable company culture. Yet, the last few years have seen some interesting and more holistic developments in the sustainability agenda.

While protecting the planet and reducing carbon emissions remains the main priority of sustainability initiatives, for corporations, becoming truly sustainable now includes finding new ways to improve employee wellbeing, becoming increasingly health conscious and improving cost-efficiency; areas that benefit greatly from good workplace design.

If becoming a more efficient, eco-friendly company isn't enough, evidence shows that workplaces with sustainable designs reap many benefits when it comes to competitiveness. Nicola Gillen, Head of Total Workplace at Cushman & Wakefield says that having a sustainable workplace design is paramount for productivity. "A bad office can really impact on output and happiness," therefore having a clear impact on profit and performance.

1. Organic Materials & Declare Labels

Greener, natural materials not only look attractive and encourage a kinder, more calming workspace, they are core to the sustainability agenda. The use of salvaged, recycled and organic materials in workspace design reduces the impact on the planet through minimized manufacturing processes.

The built environment is responsible for nearly 40% of global carbon emissions and one of the most effective ways to reduce embodied carbon is to manufacture furniture and fittings using bio-based materials such as wood, straw and bamboo.

Bio-based products typically require less energy to produce and have the potential to capture and store carbon through photosynthesis. As well as having a longer shelf-life, using natural materials saves money and makes office furniture reusable.

One way to ensure all furniture is as sustainable as possible is through the use of Declare Labels. Issued by the International Living Future Institute, a Declare Label provides complete material transparency, taking complex chemical analysis and raw material source information and providing it to consumers in an easy-to-use and read label.

2. Modular Furniture

Modular solutions for sustainability are rising in popularity for a multitude of reasons. Investing in furniture that is reconfigurable by design means that it is future-proof, adaptable and reusable, even when moving offices or unforeseen circumstances arise.

With the rise of hybrid working, modular and scalable furniture retracts and expands alongside the workforce, allowing for complete flexibility regardless of who is in the office at any given time.

Highly-flexible solutions, such as the Spacestor Palisades II range or the increasingly popular modular meeting booths are great choices for sustainable solutions as they can be reconfigured easily and are an inexpensive alternative to building permanent meeting rooms. Modular furniture helps to diminish delivery, manufacturing and demolishing fees as well as carbon outputs.

3. Biophilia

Biophilic design principles follow on nicely from the importance of using organic materials in office furniture as they have similar benefits. However, biophilia in the workplace – bringing nature into the office through plants, natural lighting, water features and even natural scenery artwork - not only improves air quality and creates a greener environment, studies have shown that it has a significant impact on employee's mental and physical health.

Biophilic design principles help employees to reduce their stress levels, improve cognitive function and enhances creativity, mood and productivity. A combination of all of these improves employee wellbeing and health; something that is vital to encouraging a truly sustainable workplace.

4. Focus on a Culture of Wellness

A modern workplace's resilience requires exceptional employee wellbeing, health and sustainability. It is through connecting these principles that we see real success.

Wellness is an investment in people's safety, health and welfare. So, through biophilic principles such as improving the air quality through plants, or tapping into employee's natural circadian rhythms through the use of natural daylight, concepts of nature that are better for people and for the environment, can be used to create a culture of sustainable wellness.

This can also be achieved through empathetic design, that which protects employee wellbeing and seeks to make employees feel as comfortable as possible in the workplace, improving wellness overall.

5. Embrace Ultra-flexibility

Flexibility is something that is now a given. When it comes to sustainability however, flexibility is an enabler of impactful changes that go a long way in reducing emissions.

The hybrid workplace is made for flexibility, reducing the commuting emissions released by allowing employees to work remotely when they need to. Working from home isn't going away anytime in the near future, but neither is the physical workplace – and similarly, allowing to staff choose how they work in the office has great benefits for wellbeing and thus sustainability.

Ultra-flexibility allows for reduced real-estate costs, reduced electricity and heating costs with the employer benefits of gaining a more diverse, fulfilled, healthy workforce, improving talent retention and competitiveness.

Sustainability in the office goes beyond natural lighting and plants; it's about creating an environment where people and the natural environment can thrive in harmony. Companies that encourage a sustainable design will benefit from a resilient and healthy workforce and world for years to come.

Photography Credits © Simon Bevan

Zendesk

Smaller in size only, this workplace is a biophilic masterpiece with a focus on wellbeing, employee synergy and superior concepts.

Collaborative Hub featuring
Bleachers by Spacestor

A project halted by the pandemic which learnt from experience and came back stronger. Zendesk had to reconsider the role of the workplace and the new hybrid model, which ultimately led them to working with Ménard Dworkind architecture & design, to create a space half the size of their previous location. Smaller in size only, this workplace is a biophilic masterpiece with a focus on wellbeing, employee synergy and superior concepts.

The preliminary environments are shared spaces. The café has an open feel with varied seating options to give the 'coffee shop' vibe. The central area and breakout tables, allow for socialising as well as focused work and team networking amongst the buzz. Modular Bleacher seating of birch ply, beautifully blend into the organic design, and create an ideal setting for scrum working.

The Garden is a wilderness where employees can be intrinsically connected to nature. Curved seating and neutral upholstery maintain the organic feel. The choice of glass and acrylic over solid walls increases natural light, while fluted and opaque versions still evoke a sense of privacy and security. Almost magical, this space inspires innovation and creative thought leadership.

Above all, wellbeing is at the heart of this creation. Biophilia is proven to boost brain function and reduce stress as well as stimulating creativity. Greenery in abundance, natural light and organic materiality means employee experience is enriched and Zendesk increase their ability to attract and retain talent, as a return on their investment into their people.

Photography Credits © Alex Lesage & David Dworkind
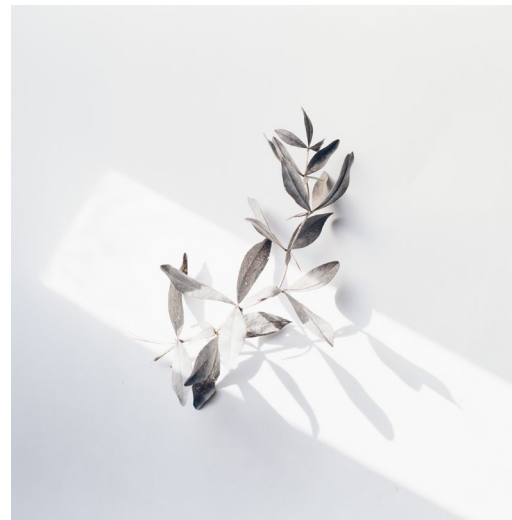
BDO, London

HotLocker

Spacestor

Photography Credits © Mikey Reed

Explore HotLocker

HEALTHY MINDS
& SOFT DESIGN

AstraZeneca

In the heart of one of London's most rapidly developing districts, a pharmaceutical and biotechnology company renowned for its own fast-paced developments, has extended its commercial Head Office workspace. AstraZeneca UK, respected worldwide for their role during the Covid-19 pandemic, are continuing to push the boundaries and drive collaborative work in science and biopharmaceuticals.

Working with Ekho Studio, their Mixology 2023 Finalist workspace design is a soft and secure place for quality employee experience, steering away from a cold corporate feel and replacing this with a flexible, people-centric environment.

The welcoming entrance ensures that from the first step, employees and customers alike, can feel comfortable, through an understated color scheme and soft contours. The curved walls and reception desk enhance this feeling, especially suited to the workplace of today, where many companies are endeavoring to recreate the comforts of the home in an office environment.

The theme is maintained in an arched opening, which can be closed off by pulling the curtain across, to give greater privacy and create spaces for private meetings or focused networking sessions. The strip lighting elevates the archway, highlighting its fluid shape and creative atmosphere, paving the way for insightful conversation without the constraints of a traditional corporate feel.

Employee experience is further elevated by an efficient personal storage system. Working with The Furniture Practice, Spacestor provided their HotLocker system as an extension of the brand, as well as being fully customizable and freestanding. The shades of pink and burgundy chosen maintain the integral color palette of the space and make this storage solution aesthetic, as well as seamlessly functional.

Further zone definition can be created in the larger spaces to give scope for varying styles of work. The burgundy bi-fold doors enable a flexibility not normally achieved in the meeting room setting, and paired with natural woods, the space feels even less like a meeting room and more like a place for honest communication and impromptu catchups. A sympathetic workplace design creation - an office which is home-away-from-home.

Photography Credits © Billy Bolton
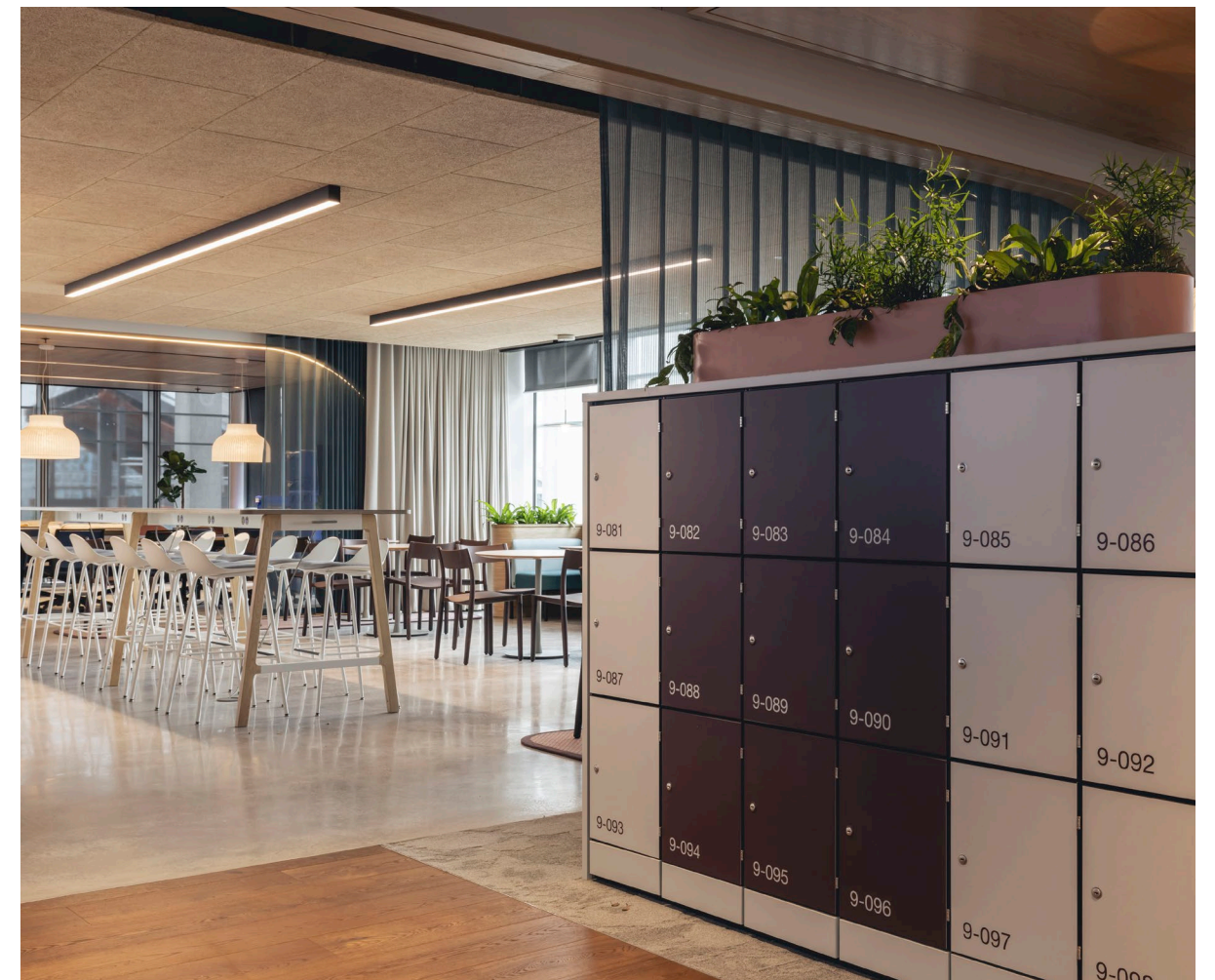
Demonstrating Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

mplementing strategies to improve health and wellbeing not only reflects a culture of care but attracts more employees back to the office as an experience multiplier.

For years, the health and wellbeing of employees have shown an undeniable correlation with engagement and productivity, but in recent times, it has rocketed in importance to the very top of the executive agenda. According to Gallup's 2022 State of the Global Workplace report in 2021, workers were more stressed than ever before, contributing to the waves of resignations evident in 'The Great Reshuffle'. Now, as the new generation of workers becomes increasingly health conscious, a company culture that prioritizes employee health and wellbeing has the best chance of attracting and retaining top talent.

Through recent employee surveys - in stark contrast to changing views during the pandemic - it is being revealed that an overwhelming number of employees do want to return to the office, albeit for different reasons than before.

Previously, employees chose to stay remote for greater health, work/life balance and thus, wellbeing advantages. Now, employees are motivated to return to the office by their desire for authentic experiences rather than virtual exchanges. By combining and prioritizing both of these motivations, the physical workspace becomes an experience multiplier, with the potential to be preferable to working remotely.

Tackling Tech Fatigue

While technology is nothing new to the workplace, the pandemic saw the use of tech tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams and Zoom increase tenfold, with more businesses searching for remote working solutions to ensure efficient communication. While these apps enable a number of useful workplace activities, they encourage dependency on technology and with a greater need to be contactable comes more screen-time than ever before, which comes with side effects.

From physical repercussions such as eye strain and headaches to poor mental health through task-switching and overstimulation, spending too much time on computers damages health and wellbeing in the workplace.

The severity of these symptoms can be reduced by implementing low-tech solutions, or by encouraging the use of collaboration zones or 'scrum spaces' as an alternative to video calls where possible. Encouraging employees to move often throughout the day is a great way of promoting healthy habits and providing relief from screens. Spacestor's project with Headspace was designed with this specific outcome in mind.

For remote workers, providing relief from screens can be more challenging, but implementing regular screen breaks or identifying 'video-call-free days' affords employees a chance to rest their eyes as they need without risking their productivity.

Biophilia in the Workplace

Biophilic design replicates nature. Bringing the outdoors inside has been repeatedly proven to have mood-boosting benefits in the workplace. Natural light is consistently regarded as an important aspect of
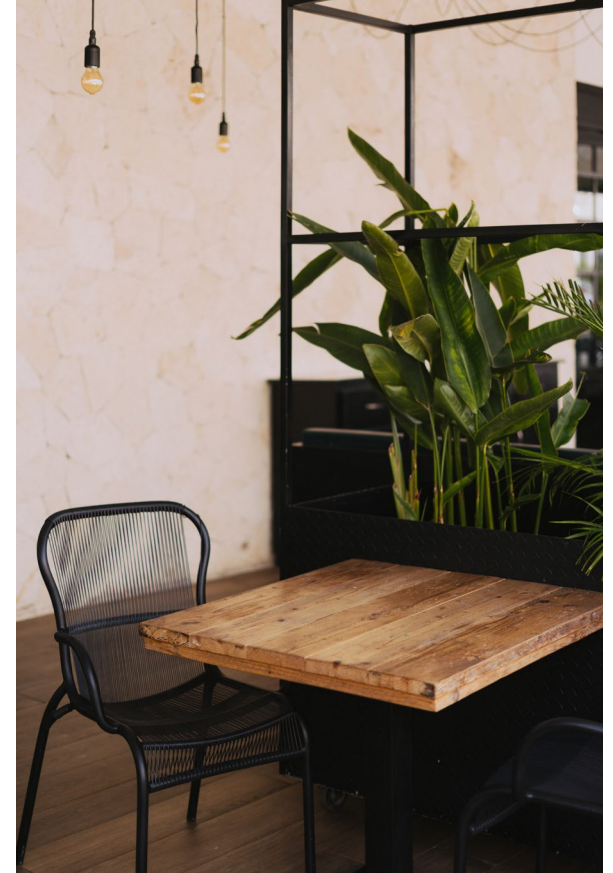
employees with plants around their offices experienced a 30-60% reduction in stress levels and negative feelings.

Creating green spaces, utilising patios or balconies, having large windows to allow in natural lighting and using earthy color palettes are just some biophilic principles offices can apply to create a healthy space. These principles go beyond promoting wellbeing, impacting physical health too. Plants improve air quality and naturally ventilated spaces reduce the risk of drowsiness and headaches. Spacestor's project with Zendesk harnessed the power of greenery and organic materials to create a calming, creative space.

How Zoning and Quiet Spaces Support Wellbeing

A sense of belonging in the workplace and relationship building with co-workers goes a long way in contributing to employee wellbeing. According to Gallup, Americans report the highest levels of happiness when they spend six to seven hours per day socializing, so it is vital to create spaces where colleagues can not only collaborate but socialize with others to create a culture of community and become an experience multiplier.

However, not every employee has the same socialization needs, so offering a universal design for all moods, personalities and purposes is key. Employees

need choice and autonomy to thrive, meaning that quiet, focus spaces for independent work and low light zones are equally important to preserve the mental and physical health of employees. Designs with activity-based furniture, such as pods and booths offer a space for concentration and solo-work, away from distraction.

Offering areas for quiet relaxation is a great way to support wellbeing. In Spacestor's collaboration with Huckletree, their Palisades II zone divider product was used to create a meditation and wellness zone, facilitating creative thinking and relaxation. The added impact of biophilia and low lighting resulted in a space that truly prioritizes the employee experience.

Healthy Habits in the Office

Ergonomic furniture can encourage good posture, supporting the lower back and reducing the risk of ailments such as poor circulation, long-term back problems and neck strains.

Adjustable desks that can be tailored to the correct height are also key in reducing the chances of physical damage, a feature available in Spacestor's Residence Connect and Portals products.

Clear and tidy spaces are also intrinsically linked to wellbeing, meaning appropriate storage for personal possessions and office equipment is key. Spacestor's customizable HotLockers are attractive, tidy and support good hygiene by keeping personal items stored away securely. Hot-desking also enforces a clear desk policy, leaving little room for clutter that may accumulate in assigned seating areas.

Implementing any or a number of the above strategies to improve health and wellbeing not only reflects a culture of care but attracts more employees back to the office as an experience multiplier. Through providing an environment that prioritizes workers' happiness and offers choice on how and where to work, companies can provide much more than a place for business, but an environment where human beings thrive.

Portals

Spacestor.

Photography Credits © Ergonofis Dwmuiy

Explore Portals

spacestor.com
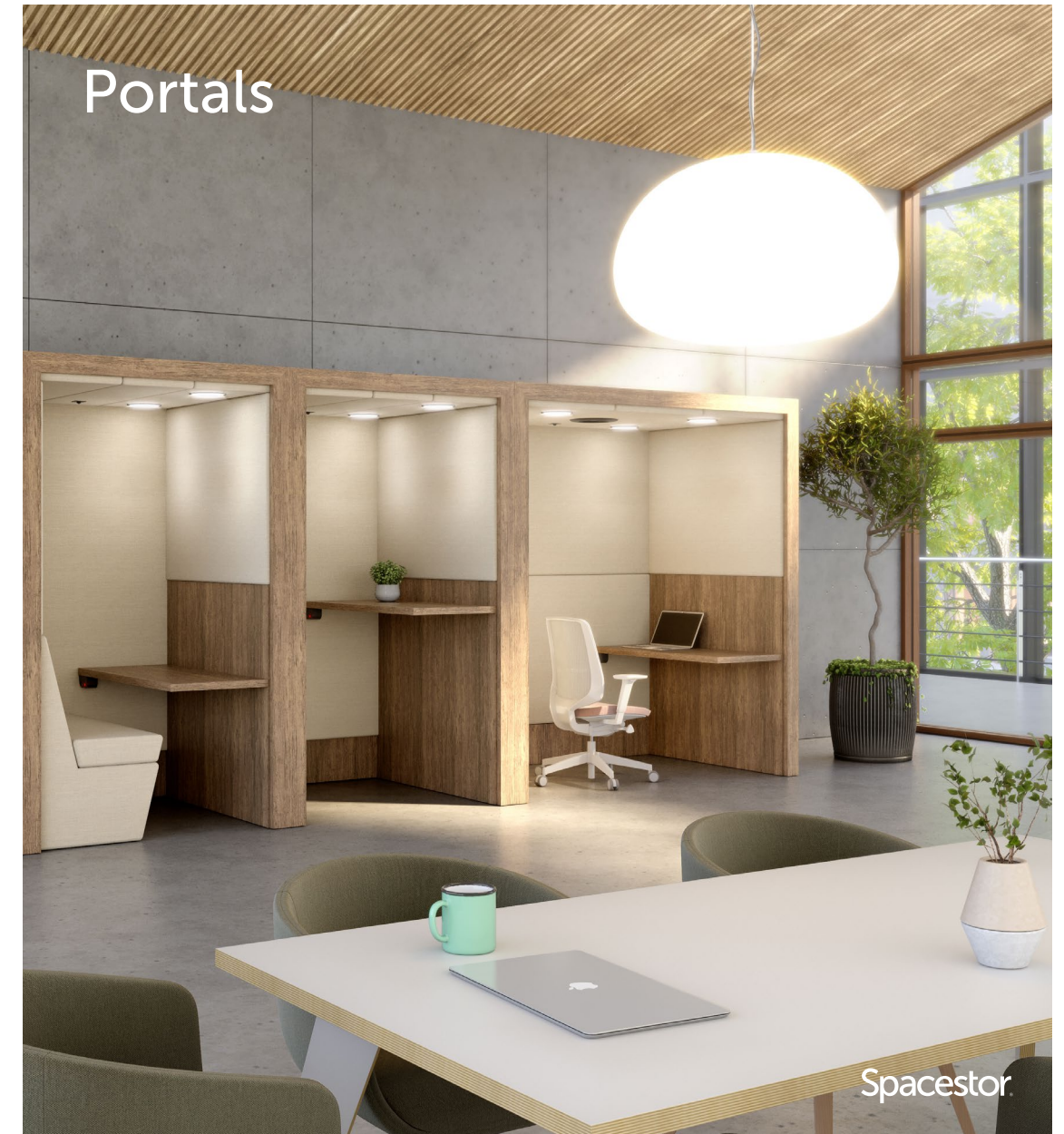
TOG

Neutral but bright, calm but dynamic – in this space paradox makes sense and works fluidly in a stunning workplace experience.

The Office Group is a fast-moving, highly innovative community providing varied and personalized office spaces for both established and start-up businesses. It's ability to conceptualize and beautiful spaces is shown in the product of their partnership with Note Design Studio to design the new Douglas House location. Bold and earthy colors and an organic aesthetic successfully merges period features with a modern and much sought after versatility, resulting in a bright and dramatic environment, tailored for dynamic and agile teams reaching new heights.

Intriguing shapes and attention-grabbing colors highlight the sophisticated backdrop of creams and woods. Biophilic presence is keenly felt and the enormous windows provide natural light, an invigorating, organic airiness which helps to boost productivity and enhance employee experience.

Spaces for networking are configured throughout the space and divided by a glass wall, it's curvatures flow with an unprecedented feel. As well as provisions for collaboration, there are also offerings of quiet spaces. Through by Bailey, Spacestor supplied their Residence Work and Residence Meet, which in birch ply, maintain the natural vibe and furnish employees with an iconic enclosure within the workplace, a serene sanctuary for focused work or private conversations.

The Recharge Room to enjoy an atmospheric escape. The Oxygen Room for a boost whilst connecting with nature. The Café in olive yellow, cue that much-needed cuppa! Even a courtyard so employees can meet and work in the open, inspired by the outdoors.

Vivid and neutral, dynamic and calm - in this space paradox makes sense and works fluidly in a stunning workplace experience.

Photography Credits © Simon Bevan

Sympathetic Office Design for the Modern Workforce

The past pandemic has been responsible for a number of workplace changes; the rise of remote work, the great recession and a greater focus on social and environmental issues to name just a few.

Among these changes, is a renewed focus on empathy, kindness and supporting employees in the workplace and beyond; widely regarded to be the key to enticing colleagues back to the physical office.

As employees continue to return, corporations are preparing for a brand-new, more diverse than ever workforce, with Gen Z entering the workplace for the first time, some of whom have never worked in a "traditional" 9-5 office and have a very different view on what should be prioritized.

Enter the world of sympathetic design which, when backed up by policy, can add a genuine level of care in the office and encourage a healthy workspace. Read on to discover what sympathetic and empathetic design is and why designing with empathy is crucial to productivity.

Designing a Sympathetic and Empathetic Space

There are a variety of sympathetic design strategies that can be employed to make the working environment more caring, kind and supportive. From biophilia and resimercial design to building a more considerate, community-first culture.

At its core, an empathetic design acknowledges and addresses health and safety concerns - which have become even more prevalent post-pandemic. It goes without saying that offering a choice of socially distanced, reconfigurable and adaptable spaces can help address health concerns, as well as give colleagues options from which to choose somewhere where they feel comfortable and protected. A universal design also takes into account accessibility for a diverse workforce with different physical needs.

Physical health, however, is just one aspect of a sympathetic design; environments that positively impact mental health, wellbeing and make employees feel happy experience a 12% boost in productivity as

well as greater talent attraction and retention.

When it comes to sympathetic design as a tool to achieve a happy, healthy workplace, solutions must address the main complaints workers have about remote working and offering a genuine alternative.

Lack of belonging, social isolation and loneliness are the top issues employees reported facing during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, so an environment that provides a sense of community, opportunities for socialising, encourages relationship building and collaboration is sympathetic and empathetic design in action.

Office "neighborhoods" – communities of people who have similar jobs or tasks being assigned areas to work in, rather than individual desks - have been implemented for years to give a sense of ownership to employees that would theoretically result in a cleaner, higher-functioning workplace.

Post-pandemic, there's a wider discussion as to whether office neigborhoods are still fit-for-purpose, with various members of staff in the office at any one time. In order to revive a re-discovered need for community, the workplace needs to encourage cross-divisional socialisation and co-working to ensure no segregation for employees whose team and close contacts may be working remotely.

Businesses can also embed an empathetic workspace design with community at the forefront by implementing changes as a result of employee feedback; a useful engagement exercise. Through office layout experimentation and trialling environment solutions, which seeks to adapt spaces based on evaluation from those working within it, employers can show genuine care and ensure a universal design that works for all people. It's important to note that sympathetic design values everyone as a stakeholder in the organization from executive level down to employees and staff, even including customers.

Bringing Home into the Workplace

Sympathetic design principles recognize the social climate; understanding that over the pandemic, being at home became safe, comfortable and vital to survival. By bringing the home into the office, businesses can replicate that same sense of belonging, relaxation and security.

Design solutions that incorporate homely furniture such as armchairs, lamps, cushions, coffee tables and mood lighting help to provide a relaxing, gentle atmosphere; a far cry from, uniformity of bright, harsh office lighting.

The use of color in workspace design can also contribute to the mood of a workplace, such as the softer, more natural tones adopted by Brookfield Properties in their New York HQ mirroring the home environment to create a residential office for their workers.

Installing furniture designed to promote peace and calm in the workplace, such as Spacestor's Arcadia which brings in softer, curved forms and earthy tones, enables the effortless creation of a cosier and more restful vibe; perfect for empathetic design.

How Biophilia and Nature Can Help

Biophilic design – that brings the outdoors and nature inside – has been scientifically proven to boost employee's physical and mental health. A study by Human Spaces of 7,600 workers in 16 countries found those that worked in spaces with natural or green features reported a 15% higher level of wellbeing and are 6% more productive and 15% more creative overall.

Designing with biophilia can easily be achieved by use of color, plants, greenery, water features, art that depicts nature and most importantly, natural lighting.

By having plenty of windows and natural lighting, employees can mitigate social jet lag and the issues that arise from irregular sleeping patterns such as stress, fatigue and poor physical health.

Gen Z, newcomers to the workforce, also place greater importance to sustainability and workplaces that advocate a reusable, recyclable and eco-friendly culture. Biophilic design principles help to achieve this while promoting a healthy, sympathetic design.

Brookfield Properties, New York, featuring Residence Work & Railway Carriage by Spacestor

Papa Johns, featuring Palisades Grid by Spacestor

This edition of **Moments**, as with every edition, is printed on responsibly sourced uncoated paper, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), originating from sustainably-managed forests. Made from virgin fibre, it is also classified as Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF), meaning the pulp bleaching process avoids the use of harmful chlorine.

Photography Credits © Saira, Ryan Klaus