

STOREYS

The Worklife Issue. Created by FranklinTill for Tarkett

JOURNAL



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FRANKLINTILL

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With thanks to all designers, architects, brands and photographers
who have submitted work featured in STOREYS JOURNAL

Cover image Co-working space by Susanna Kubicz. Image courtesy of Zuzanna Kubicz

Working towards the Great Indoors

Tarkett has long been committed to improving the working environment. We made it our mission a decade ago to understand how we can create the 'Great Indoors'. The Great Indoors reflects Tarkett's belief that indoor environments should generate the same amount of interest and excitement as the Great Outdoors, since they are vital to our health, wellbeing and quality of life. This magazine expands on the findings of our recent Great Indoors Index, taking the priorities indicated by our survey of office workers across Europe, and bringing them to life.

Tarkett's extensive exploration of Worklife is reflected in the content of this magazine. Worklife is most commonly talked about in terms of trying to achieve balance between our professional and personal lives. But Worklife as a standalone statement feels much stronger, more positive – even liberating. It reflects the fact that everything is much more fluid now. People no longer compartmentalise their lives into neat, self-contained boxes. When we come to work, we're still switched on to the other parts of our lives. We're connected 24/7. Worklife evidence is all around us: communal working areas in leisure spaces, pop-up retail installations in corporate headquarters, hotels billing themselves as home-office hybrids.

Our Great Indoors initiative is all about raising awareness of a more sustainable and healthy indoor environment, creating a platform to inform and inspire the evolving Worklife conversation – and helping to create healthy and flourishing workspaces.

Tarkett is a customer-centric company. We spend a lot of time talking to architects and designers, sharing our insights, research and products with them – and we also spend a lot of time understanding their challenges, their desires and their creativity. We are also keen to understand the needs of office users. The Great Indoors Index, which surveyed 4,500 office workers across

nine countries, analyses the needs of office users, to understand the physical attributes that matter most to them. It shows that 61% still believe they are most productive 'at work', in a dedicated space.

In this publication, we share and celebrate the work of the creative designers and manufacturers that are responding to these needs in new, beautiful and innovative ways. These creative businesses are already creating a more human future workplace that is bringing us one step closer to the Great Indoors that we aspire to at Tarkett.

To create this publication, we worked with FranklinTill, one of the most respected and influential forces in global design innovation. The agency shares our values, and underpins all its work with expertise in sustainable design innovation. FranklinTill research and insight always provides content with context, identifying convergences in sociocultural movements and scientific and technological innovation: founded on fact, and both beautiful and inspiring.

We hope the magazine you have in your hand will be the first of many exploring these ideas. We hope it will inspire you, and nourish your creativity.

We would love your feedback.

Anette Timmer
Tarkett EMEA Marketing Director, Workplace

A future workplace designed for humans

We can all welcome the speed, efficiency and diversity of the new world of work – but, as Tarkett's research has shown, many physical workplaces have not kept pace with the changes that are now part of our everyday lives. Workplace design must undergo a radical transformation. Business leaders and their design partners must create workplaces that not only aim to extract value from 'human resources' but also create value for them.

In this collaborative project, FranklinTill and Tarkett aim to support designers and architects to redress that balance, sharing our research and shining a spotlight on the innovative designers, architects, and manufacturers that are constructing this new reality. We found that they are not, as one might suspect, creating a future office that is automated, controlled by technology and artificial intelligence. Instead, the most interesting case studies we have discovered are office designs that respond to workers' emotional, social, mental and physical needs.

There are many striking examples. Designers such as Form Us With Love are creating simple, dynamic furniture with non-prescriptive forms that afford many uses. Architects are transforming how we physically share our spaces with nature; Equipo de Arquitectura in Paraguay has brought the forest inside, incorporating two mature trees into their office design. Companies like Vitsoe and Space 10 foster innovative work cultures by embracing serendipity in their office designs, using architecture to designate space for interaction and experimentation, and enabling positive collisions between their people and teams.

Through this research we identified three vital facets to creating a more human-centred workplace. It must be: Convivial, enabling the creation of culture and community through the positive collision of people and ideas; Fluid, adapting seamlessly to the

changing needs of a workforce which is increasingly diverse in terms of gender, age, lifestyle and job; Nourishing, nurturing the mind, body and spirit of workers to promote their holistic health and happiness. These ideas are not radical in themselves – however, when considered together, we believe they can inform and inspire the aspirations and objectives of every workspace: to realise the human potential of each employee and achieve a radical impact.

Our work at FranklinTill is grounded in meticulous research that informs the creative aspect of our practice. On the macro level, we pull together the latest sociocultural, scientific and technical evidence to gain an effective overview of current movements in design thinking and practice. We then identify the designers, manufacturers, innovators and makers who are bringing these ideas to life, bringing emerging aesthetic and design directions to the fore.

Tarkett, a worldwide leader in innovative flooring and sports surface solutions, is known not only for its forward-looking research and its focus on an environmentally conscious future, but also for its generosity in sharing that research and that vision. At FranklinTill, we are similarly passionate about sharing what we learn. We have never believed in fly-by-night seasonal trends; we seek big ideas and innovations that can help drive change for a better future. We hope to inspire and inform, to help you create long-term ideas in line with future consumer behaviour and design movements.

We are proud to be associated with all of the designers, manufacturers and photographers who have contributed to this project, and we thank them all.

Julian Ellerby
Strategy Director, FranklinTill

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The Changing Workplace

Work is changing, in every way. The spaces
we work in must change too, or risk being left behind

Work is changing, in every way. From the global spread of mobile technology and artificial intelligence to greater diversity and the welcome march of women into the boardroom, how, where and when we work is being transformed. The spaces we work in must change too, or risk being left behind.

Cubicles, paper and telephones may have been replaced by open-plan offices, computers and smartphones, but the static environment and structure – desk, chair, fixed hours and top-down management – found in many workplaces doesn't reflect this wider evolution.

Looking for deeper connections across all elements of life, employees now want to take home a sense of meaning and purpose along with their pay cheques. Rather than simply 'doing our job' we now look to collaborate as partners with companies whose values and ethos we can share.

Workspace design that truly reflects the 21st-century world of work needs to reach the highest level of adaptability – both in the concrete sense of more multifunctional spaces, and more importantly in the abstract sense of adapting to human needs rather than expecting people to adapt to the space.

The everywhere and nowhere workplace

Technology has changed the notion of 'going to work'. In many jobs, people can work from anywhere with an internet connection, with

colleagues collaborating in real time across different neighbourhoods, cities and time zones.

Younger generations have wholeheartedly embraced anytime, anywhere working models. They are already accustomed to instability and change in many parts of their lives: housing, finance, travel, leisure. Millennials and the generations that follow them in age are 'digital natives', accustomed to an always-on lifestyle and – for better or worse – 24/7 access to email notifications and social media. These technologies are enabling a dynamic, global-local approach to the workplace and the opportunity to connect to a wider community, wherever we choose to work from.

And that might be anywhere. Dedicated co-working spaces and platforms across the world are welcoming nomadic workers; WeWork reported 54% membership growth in the nine months from May 2017. Just as we are no longer tied to a particular geographic location, we are no longer tied to a desk. 'The rules of formal work have broken down, no matter where or how you work; hotel lobbies and cafes have become the new workplaces of today,' says Edward

Barber, co-founder of industrial design company Barber & Osgerby.

When people can work from anywhere, how can office spaces be transformed to take on new forms and functions for workers?

Jobs are evolving

The very nature of the work we do is changing. The rapid advancement of technology means that routine tasks will become more automated – but at the same time, there will be a greater capacity for human creativity, innovation, empathy and problem-solving.

Workers and businesses alike must adapt quickly and become lifelong learners. Millennials were the first cohort to understand the need for continuous skills development to remain employable (93% think this way, according to a 2016 Manpower survey). Happy to disrupt and to be disrupted, they see individual jobs as stepping stones to self-improvement, rather than a final destination.

Older generations are coming on board too, as tech re-casts the long-established notion of freelancing as the 'gig economy'. While this can sometimes be seen as exploitative

'65% of children who entered primary school in 2016 will end up working in completely new job types that do not yet exist'

Karl Fisch and Scott McLeod, Shift Happens

‘Sustained exhaustion is not a badge of honour, it’s a mark of stupidity’

It Doesn't Have to be Crazy at Work, Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, founders, Basecamp management platform

when applied to low-paid ‘gigs’ such as food delivery or taxi driving, it can also enable radical flexibility. The gig economy covers the ad-hoc, the outsourced and the short-term single project, as companies turn to transient teams that are perfectly pitched for a given task, then disassemble.

The side hustle is also gaining prominence. Henley Business School finds that one in four of the UK’s adult population has a secondary job of this kind, creating fulfilment and interest as well as a lucrative sideline.

‘Flexibility is the buzzword,’ says the report – both for employers seeking an adaptable workforce and for employees who want to organise their work to suit themselves.

As tech speeds the pace of change in business, the growing requirement for agility and dynamism demands a workplace that fosters innovation as a priority, accelerating the incubation of ideas and invention.

How can workplace design support constant learning, enhancing the capability to evolve skills and continuous innovation?

The well workplace

Urban living and an always-on lifestyle bring challenges for mental and physical health. Today, we want a more holistic approach to life-work balance. A 2001 study funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency found that most people spend close to 90% of their time indoors, and the spaces where we work have a profound effect on our wellbeing. Health and wellbeing are increasingly important concerns for employees. In Europe, Tarkett found that

more than half (51%) place noise and indoor air quality as their top two priorities in workplace design – above look, layout and location.

Sedentary lifestyles, pollution and lack of variety in our environments are bad for us, and we value varied and balanced daily routines, access to nature, physical activity and sleep – all of which can be disrupted by a punishing work regime or a poorly designed workplace. Nature, in particular, is increasingly recognised as an integral part of a healthy, happy life, and some GPs in the UK are giving ‘nature prescriptions’ to patients, to treat mental illness, stress, heart disease and more.

Employers are prioritising workers’ health and wellbeing over and above basic health and safety regulations. They are realising that, like so many policies formerly seen as ‘soft’ or as optional, maintaining a healthy workforce also impacts on a healthy bottom line. Happier workers are up to 20% more productive, according to the Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy at the University of Warwick.

How can workplace design promote and support physical, mental and emotional health?

The rise of the purposeful business

The acknowledgement among brands and organisations that consumers expect values as well as value is perhaps one of the most seismic organisational changes of the past decade. In a confusing, fragmented world,

consumers, employees and citizens alike are seeking clear leadership and responsible voices. Across all generational groups, there is an increasingly urgent desire for change and action, particularly around environmental issues. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s staggering timeframe gives us just 12 years to pull back from the brink of disaster, and intense media coverage, coupled with the informative reach of social media, means few can be unaware of the scale of the problem.

Brands that step up to the plate, to become agents for social and environmental change, reap not only economic benefits but also the loyalty of their workforce and their customers. Companies that set aside ‘business as usual’ for business with purpose are successfully balancing enhanced profit with achieving the high standards demanded in today’s economic climate. B-Corp certification is an international recognition of companies with high social and environmental standards, transparency and legal accountability. When it comes specifically to building design, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the most widely used green rating in the world, recognised across 165 countries, setting standards for saving energy and water, generating less waste and supporting human health. WELL building certification, administered by the International WELL Building Institute across 50 countries, focuses specifically on ‘buildings and communities that help people thrive.’

A number of recent surveys all reflect a widespread belief that businesses should aim to improve society, while a significant proportion of employees feel in some way disengaged at work – Tarkett’s own research shows that 48% across Europe feel unfulfilled in their work. The workplace, it seems, is crying out for purpose-driven leadership. As well benefiting wider society, a sense of purpose, strong ethics and clear values help businesses attract and retain a loyal workforce and customer base.

How can workplace design achieve coherence, connection and character that reflect a brand’s underlying purpose and values?

The diverse workforce

In an increasingly diverse world, businesses which embrace that diversity gain a wealth of experience, skills and perspectives, ultimately becoming more creative, dynamic and reflective of the societies in which they operate.

While the trajectory is positive, gender equality still has a long way to go. Flexibility is a major contributor to gender diversity in the workplace – or the lack of it. More than a third (38%) of Europeans say flexible working hours are the benefit they find most attractive, according to Tarkett’s research. Internationally noted examples such as the four-day week introduced by Perpetual Guardian in New Zealand, which achieved a 20% rise in productivity and lower staff stress levels – with no pay cut – are helping to show the way forward.

Much research also points to the benefits of international, multiracial work communities; the International Monetary Fund, for example, underlines ‘diverse talent and expertise’, adding that migrants constitute 15% to 20% of the working-age population in many advanced economies and are ‘essential to ensure the future workforce’.

Today’s workforce also encompasses a greater generational spectrum, as populations age in many developed countries and people work past traditional retirement age for financial or emotional reasons. Deloitte’s 2018 Longevity Dividend report points out the potential ‘competitive advantage’ for organisations that turn advancing worker age into an asset – adding that 80% of US businesses already consider mature employees a ‘valuable resource’.

To accommodate this diversity, workspaces need to cater to an equally diverse range of capabilities – some contradictory. The needs of young parents are not be the same as those of differently abled or older employees.

How can workplace design catalyse and motivate increasingly diverse staff teams?

The office of tomorrow – today

A number of seismic societal shifts have transformed the meaning of work as a whole. Now is the time to radically rethink what it means to design an office for the future.

Spaces must go beyond the need of corporations to extract value

from their employees in return for a sense of security and a paycheck. Instead designers must seek to meet the higher order needs of an increasingly diverse, distributed and values-driven workforce. This will enable workers to reach greater fulfilment and achieve their human potential, in an office that is at once convivial, fluid and nourishing.

‘The gender discrimination still holding too many women back, holds our world back too’

UN Women, Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda

The Convivial Workplace

Enabling culture and community through the
considered collision of people and ideas

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The convivial workplace fosters cross-pollination and recognises the vital role of collaboration in creativity. An open environment allows people to move, act and share freely, encouraging encounters and interaction. Dynamic spaces promote the exploration of ideas and cultural activities which add value to the business, even if they are not obviously connected to its core function.

The ad hoc workforce

Today's gig-based and freelance workforce has changed communication in the workplace. Routine daily encounters have given way to unexpected encounters, as different faces bring new ideas and traditional hierarchies are disrupted. The design challenge lies in creating an environment that supports meaningful interactions and relationship-building beyond fleeting involvement.

This ad hoc approach is worth fostering; the National Bureau of Economic Research found that between 2005 and 2015, approximately 94% of net employment growth in the US occurred in alternative work arrangements such as temporary contracts or independent freelancing, rather than a nine-to-five at a regular desk.

New ways of working – the gig economy, short-term contracts, start-up culture – mean that spaces also have to change, responding to varied budgets, business sizes and flexible outputs. Solo workers and small companies may need to prioritise affordability – yet still require the capacity to network and exchange ideas. Start-up funding grew by 50% globally across the world between 2012 and 2017, according to Statista – which also notes that, while it was once difficult to create a business without 'a tremendous amount of capital', today innovations can occur just about anywhere. In the UK, the number of businesses grew from 3.5 million to 5.5 million between 2000 and 2017 –

Caulfield Grammar School,
Melbourne, by Studio Tate.

Inspired by a traditional village square, Studio Tate set out to create a series of informal gathering points in this heritage-listed building. The playfully textured spaces create welcoming and intimate zones to meet the ad-hoc needs of varied teams.

Photography by Sean Fennessy





Rapha headquarters,
London, by Jump Studios.

Rapha celebrates the beauty and history of cycling culture in everything it does. That passion is built into every aspect of the company's HQ, from in-house mechanics and bike storage facilities to the café that serves as a central hub for watching live races and sharing a post-ride espresso. Photography by Gareth Gardner

the majority of the newcomers employ fewer than 10 people.

The need for flexibility isn't confined to small businesses or start-ups, however. Larger companies are also affected by the new structure of the modern workforce, and also by the need to stand out and differentiate. Their working environments need to encompass an unprecedented degree of agility as they work more responsively, frequently scaling projects up and down.

Extra-curricular culture

Businesses are recognising that fostering and communicating a strong, distinctive culture attracts high-calibre employees. This is about genuine, shared interests and passions, which transcend the now clichéd incentives of an office slide or a free lunch. Extra-curricular culture enriches the workplace over and above the company's core discipline. This enrichment not only makes people want to be part of the organisation, it also helps companies stand out from the crowd.

The Fjord global design company has taken a particularly original approach in its London office, where one of the team has started a fermentation club. 'The idea was that there would be a wall of fermentation and it would be smelly and weird and messy – it would literally break the cleanliness of the space and break the notion of what it is to have a generic workspace,' the instigator recalls. The club has become a popular space where employees converge, experiment and create their own culture.

This kind of fascinating, surprising conversation starter transcends the corporate and establishes companies as thought leaders with their own unique identity. While not every organisation can accommodate a fermentation wall, activities such as cooking or crafting can also bring employees together to foster the sharing of ideas and skills. The importance of this is increasingly recognised by organisations and spatial designers alike – to the extent that what once might have been considered a sideline is now becoming as important as the company's core mission.

Corporate culture also plays its part. International design agency UsTwo, for example, is referred to as a 'fampany' – a mix of family and company – by its two founders, who cultivate an energy that encourages collaboration and friendship as well as ideas. 'We've displayed the best mates vibe the whole time and that's rippled down and been the stimulus for the culture,' says co-founder John Sinclair.

Competition for talent is fierce, and a strong, appealing work culture helps to attract and retain the best. When people ask themselves 'Why do I want to work here?' Extra-curricular culture is likely to be a key part of the answer. Think of it as the equivalent of meeting someone interesting at a party: what you are most likely to remember about them isn't a description of their latest PowerPoint presentation, but their passion for hang gliding.

The squeeze on space

Space is at a premium in cities, and the idea of one building for one business is fading fast. Rapid population growth and the increase in single living are all putting pressure on residential space, while high costs and competition for prime spots are driving up the cost of commercial property. More than half the world's population already lives in a city and two thirds will be urban dwellers by 2050, according to the UN.

The places where we live, work and spend our down time must therefore make maximum use of every square metre. Micro-apartments are meeting the need for affordable, streamlined living. However, as our living spaces get smaller, the spaces 'in between' need to respond to a multitude of needs as we seek the room to work, to be creative and to socialise. Hotels and restaurants already double as workspaces, and retail environments are merging with gyms and wellness venues.

The squeeze on space also means that we are having to reconsider the notion of 'our own space'. Multifunctional and shared space is an increasingly essential workplace solution. The number of co-working spaces worldwide doubled between 2015 and 2018, according to Statista, which predicts a further 43% growth by 2022. This sharing ethos extends to facilities and equipment too: multi-

business communities such as Makerversity, which has campuses in London and Amsterdam, allow small companies to physically share expensive machinery such as 3D printers, allowing them to become early adopters rather than waiting for new tech to become more affordable. This enables early testing of innovative tech, and hands-on experimentation – and also powers the sharing of ideas, creativity and expertise, the kind of Enabled Collision described in the following section.

CANOPY co-working spaces, San Francisco, by Yves Béhar. Catering to creatives and entrepreneurs, this members-only club includes areas for various working styles, with private glass enclosures complementing an open-plan atrium and café for more convivial activity. Designed by Yves Béhar, co-founded by Amir Mortazavi, Steve Mohebi and Yves Béhar, image courtesy of CANOPY. Photography by Joe Fletcher



Enabled Collision

By embracing elements of serendipity, contrast, and even chaos, designers are creating workplaces that physically enable people and ideas to collide and interact in new ways

These spaces break down silos and grow un-expected collaborative communities, moving away from rigid 'one layout, one purpose' design to incorporate space for social, shared and solitary time – enabling collaboration, communication and contemplation.

Wide open space

Dynamic, agile, multi-use spaces draw on openness and transparency figuratively and literally. Departments and disciplines can easily connect and people can see out – and in.

The famously successful principles of Vitsoe's world-renowned modular furniture are carried through in its UK headquarters in Royal Leamington Spa. In this flexible, multifunctional space, manufacturing areas, office space and reception are purposely conjoined. Joists, beams and columns can be reconfigured, parts can be added or removed, allowing the building to host varied activities. Different teams work alongside each other. Huge windows invite staff to look out – and

visitors to look in. The convivial mix is further enhanced by allowing a local dance-circus company to use Vitsoe's space for rehearsals. A shared lunch or a game of petanque encourages conversation rather than gazing at smartphones – all facilitated by the workplace architecture.

Breaking down silos within the workplace – for example, by making manufacturing areas visible to office staff, and encouraging teams to interact informally – not only fosters collaboration but a sense of being part of a team. When all aspects of the business are clearly visible, it reminds everyone why they come to work each day.

Stronger together

Everybody needs good neighbours and start-ups in particular can often use extra support. Bringing businesses, related or disparate, together under one roof enriches the experience for all partners.

Pfau Long Architecture's design vision for the McClintock Building in San Francisco supports



Both images

Vitsoe headquarters, Royal Leamington Spa. Designed to reflect the principles of Vitsoe designer Dieter Rams, this multifunctional space brings together manufacturing areas, office and social spaces. Reconfigurable joists, beams and columns, made from laminated beech, allow form to follow function as they flex around the needs of current and future users. Photography by Dirk Lindner



a variety of tenants. The interior of this art deco 1930s former factory is configured to create a light, airy work centre with a central atrium that acts as a hub. The flow of people across this central space encourages collaboration, communication and a genuine sense of community. The individual spaces have glazed, openable frontages reminiscent of garage doors, again encouraging human flow – whether purposeful or meandering. Production, distribution and repair spaces on the ground floor and office space above have drawn in businesses that include design, floristry and garbage services, all coming together in one complex that covers a whole city block.

It's a given that any town centre requires a healthy mix of different businesses in order to thrive. Could the same be true in microcosm for the modern work complex? A space that can bring together complementary or contrasting enterprises not only fosters collaboration but also shared investment in the working community.

Quiet contemplation

We have acknowledged the need for productive collision, but to complement this there is an equal need for privacy and quiet. Space for contemplative time must also be created.

Space10's office space, research laboratory and design studio in Copenhagen, recently redesigned by Spacon & X, hosts not only working facilities, including a fabrication laboratory and tech studio, but also exhibitions and events. However, the redesign also acknowledges employees' need for privacy and thinking time (not to mention the preparation of commercially sensitive work that may not be ready for a wide audience). The flexible, reconfigurable space allows for privacy as an essential partner to collaborative working. Space10 is Ikea's research arm, delivering design solutions that respond to major global societal changes. The company philosophy is as forward-looking as its research, and its employees' wellbeing is a key

Both images and next spread

Space10 headquarters, Copenhagen, designed in collaboration with Spacon & X. In contrast to the traditional open-plan office, Space10's HQ makes use of soft, light diffusing partitions to create space for quiet focus and privacy for prototyping, as well as for collaboration. Social spaces such as the kitchen are places for playful experiments, conversation and debate, to encourage cross-pollination and a sense of community across teams. Photography by Hampus Berndtson



‘The physical workspace ensures that a bio-engineer, a chef and an architect share a coffee or a beer, and bring different perspectives to the table’

Kevin Curran, program lead, Space10





workspace consideration. 'The physical workspace fosters personal relationships, cross-pollination and a sense of community – all of which are crucial for boosting happiness, creativity and wellbeing,' says Kevin Curran, program lead at Space10. Space10 describes its offices as a do tank rather than a think tank and Enabled Collision is key to this. 'The physical workspace ensures that a bio-engineer, a chef and an architect share a coffee or a beer, and bring different perspectives to the table,' says Curran.

Variable space

Is it an office, a space for launching new products, a presentation platform, an exhibition gallery or a pop-up store? All of the above.

Pernod Ricard's Breakthrough Innovative Group is known as BIG, which gives some indication of how wide a range of hospitality-centred functions the company expects of its Paris space. Malka Architecture rose to the challenge, drawing on mobile,

stackable 'micro architectural units', custom-made furniture, and intelligent lighting systems that can all be used to transform the space. The headquarters have three distinct functions: the think tank in the attic is designated for creativity, the do tank is a development platform, and the make tank includes a theatre space, kitchen and tasting area. Clever lighting and playing with mirrors are key to the witty, playful design – a 3D mirror system creates infinite fields of reflection. The practical side is not neglected. A three-metre floating table allows not only for tastings, but is also a hub for collaborative working.

Variable spaces provide end users with two, three, four spaces all in one. In this instance, Studio Malka's use of bespoke design elements (including MuFu, or mutant furniture, and SOP Sound-proof Open Pods for quiet working) tailored the space to the client's exacting multiple and simultaneous needs.

Both images

Pernod Ricard BIG office, Paris, by Malka Architecture. The main atrium is built from mobile, stackable 'micro architectural units' that allow the space to be transformed at will. In other areas, storage spaces and libraries are made with a modular system of upcycled scaffolding, easily assembled and dismantled to adapt to users' needs. Image courtesy of Malka Architecture 2019. Photography by Laurent Clement



Enabled Collision Design Toolkit

1

Improve innovation with greater collaboration and cross-pollination, turning non-prescriptive spaces such as atriums and corridors into hubs for informal interaction

2

Improve openness between teams with large windows, communal walkways and shared facilities that increase visibility and connection

3

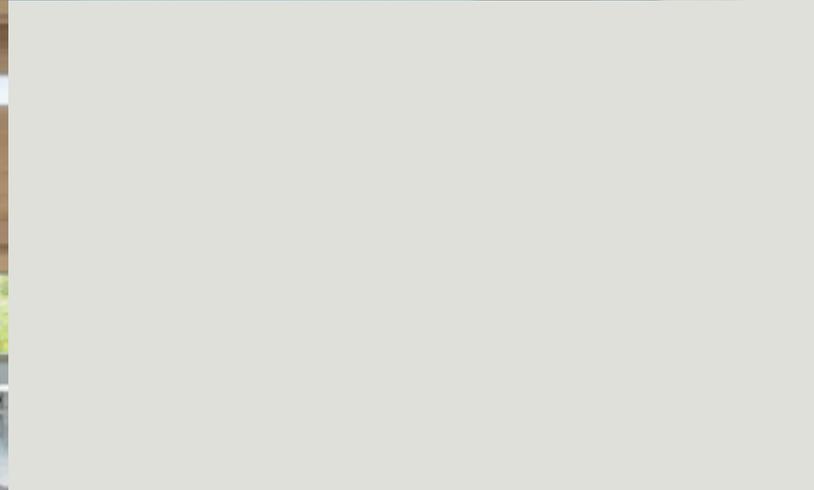
Agile businesses require protean spaces. Enable multiple uses with furniture that is reconfigurable, modular and adaptable

4

Think in systems for flooring too. Use products that enable a modular approach and adaptable zoning

5

Privacy is valued as much as collaboration – incorporate spaces for quiet contemplative time as well as shared and social



Opposite from top
Space10 headquarters,
Copenhagen, designed in
collaboration with Spacon
& X. Photography by
Hampus Berndtson

Danish Design Center,
Copenhagen, by Spacon & X.
Photography by Julie Due

Vitsø headquarters, Royal
Leamington Spa. Photography
by Dirk Lindner

Above
Danish Design Center,
Copenhagen, by Spacon & X.
Photography by Julie Due

Left
Tarkett iD Click Ultimate,
Stylish Oak Natural and
Timeless Concrete anthracite

Office as Platform

In a world where connection is all, companies large and small need to enable and nurture networks and communities through their workspaces

Both images

Testone Factory, Sheffield, by Teatum + Teatum. This redesign of a former factory puts connectivity at the core. The space centres around a timber-framed studio that acts as a platform for screenings, talks and events. Photography by Luke Hayes



A constant flow of ideas, both inwards and outwards, attracts desirable collaborators and a company with a rich cultural matrix can establish itself as a knowledge provider and a thought leader, over and above its core business. How can design enable this kind of cultural programming? The key concept is hosting. Space that can be adapted to host activities of all kinds – lectures, speaking events, exhibitions, workshops – is an invaluable resource. Such activities may appear far removed from the company's core role, but they provide an opportunity for employees across all types of businesses to connect, interact and collaborate.

Rather than forced mingling or a top-down programme, hosting provides the physical and intellectual space to build relationships and promote an organic and enriching office culture. This is not about self-promotion, but about celebrating the work of others, and about generosity in sharing inspiration and insight (as exemplified by this very publication). While the credit is indirect, it is very much a positive. There is a great thirst for knowledge and guidance

in these uncertain times, and, while we are all now familiar with FOMO (the fear of missing out), the fear of not knowing is arguably equally as potent.

A further benefit is continual activation of workplace space, which leads to a sense of dynamism and activity. While spaces can be hired out to attract additional income, the key motivation is not financial: it is much more about generating cultural capital.

A cultural core

Making a cultural dimension a key element rather than an add-on proves commitment to connectivity.

The Testone Factory in Sheffield by Teatum + Teatum was created for communications agency Peter and Paul and other young creatives who are offered affordable micro-office space – and much more besides. The redesign of the former factory is centred around a timber-framed studio that the architects envision as a 'space for speculations' – film screenings, talks, readings and other events. A public



gallery allows local artists to exhibit their work. The mix of co-working space and creativity serves the local community as well as connecting businesses. The visionary design includes a library with an outdoor terrace cantilevered over the River Don.

Putting culture at the heart of the workplace is a design challenge that 'requires an openness to new working methods and spatial organisations, but can result in possibilities for both small and big organisations,' say the co-directors of Teatum + Teatum.

Community hub

Bringing the outside community into shared spaces – café, gallery or retail – allows integration and assimilation between employees, visitors and the local community.

Brooklyn-based creative hub A/D/O (Amalgamated Drawing Office), part of BMW/MINI's innovation arm, gathers together public exhibitions, bars and restaurants under its roof – not to mention designer

residencies and the Urban-X start-up accelerator, which between them provide a regular flow of new talent. This converted industrial space, designed by nARCHITECTS, allows plenty of room not only for work-related interaction, but also for the local community to share in the creative environment. Solid partitions with large openings divide the space while encouraging free movement – a deliberate policy. A large, cross-shaped table forms a multi-faceted focal point. 'Meaningful design requires exchange and stimulation and we've built a place entirely for that purpose,' A/D/O managing director Nathan Pinsley told Dezeen.

Generous design encompasses communal facilities that are open to everyone – an auditorium, book or material library, a coffee counter or restaurant.

Destination design

A comprehensive culturally centred design can encompass so many elements that staff will hardly need to leave the office, whatever the project.

Both images, this spread
A/D/O, Brooklyn, by nARCHITECTS. Part of BMW/MINI's innovation arm, A/D/O is a platform where public and corporate come together. This converted industrial space encompasses designer residencies and the Urban-X start-up accelerator, alongside communal facilities such as an auditorium, a shop, a coffee counter and restaurants. Photography on left by Frank Oudeman; Photography on right by Matthew Carbone

Next spread, left
Quartz office, New York, by Desai Chia Architecture. The media company's quirky, intellectually playful ethos is

engrained into the design of the space. The town-hall arena with bleacher seating can be configured not only for meetings but also for parties, screenings and symposiums. Photography by Mark Craemer

Next spread, right
Sugarhouse Studios, Bermondsey London. Small-scale individual studios at Sugarhouse run by collective Assemble, provide access to workshops for metal, wood, ceramics and stone, and there are fine art and music studios on site. These varied spaces actively encourage a messy, hands-on approach to manufacturing. Image courtesy of Assemble, featuring work by Ying Chang





When Desai Chia Architecture took on the design of the Quartz offices in New York, the brief encompassed 'Quartziness' – the media company's quirky, intellectually playful ethos and wide-ranging cultural needs. The Quartz elements include a large town-hall arena with bleacher seating that can be configured not only for meetings but also for TED-style presentations, parties, film screenings and symposiums. Casual amphitheatres and 'show and tell' spaces are all supported with robust tech to enable professional-standard delivery. Alongside these very practical elements, an undulating wood-framed structure houses a coffee bar, book lounge and maker space to allow space for Friday evening cocktails, horticulture, robotics, book collecting, artisan coffee brewing and more.

Walls and rooms whose function remains loose and flexible enable cultural adaptability that can rival that of dedicated galleries, cinemas and presentation halls.

Making spaces

Workspace design that enables the sharing of facilities and equipment not only benefits individual companies but also helps keep hands-on making alive.

Innovations in 3D design software and digital fabrication tools have transformed the idea of manufacturing from something that happens in factories far away to something more accessible and affordable that could feasibly happen on your desktop. Open workshops, called Fab Labs or makerspaces, have been established in many cities to offer wide access to such tools, including 3D design software and printers, CNC and laser cutting), as well as the technical support and materials required to bring your ideas to life.

Brought into the office space, these workshop-type configurations help companies benefit from machinery and tech they might not otherwise be able to access, and allow the early adoption of cutting-edge making techniques.

Spaces designated for experimentation foster the freedom to innovate

Sugarhouse Studios in south London, run by the multi-disciplinary Assemble cooperative, provides space for artists, designers and fabricators around a core of common facilities. The small-scale individual studios at Sugarhouse can draw on space for working in metal, wood, ceramics and stone; there is also a fine art studio and a music studio on site. Flexible project and event spaces serve as platforms for the resident creatives and can also host public exhibitions, inviting the community in. The varied spaces, both dedicated and open-access, actively encourage a messy, hands-on approach to manufacturing.

Spaces designated for experimentation foster the freedom to innovate; think hardwearing, multi-purpose, easy-to-clean fixtures, floors and walls, designated as free space for drawing, pinning, pasting and building.



Office as Platform Design Toolkit

1

Position communal facilities such as amphitheatre, library or workshop at the heart of the office, to demonstrate a commitment to sharing, connection and learning

2

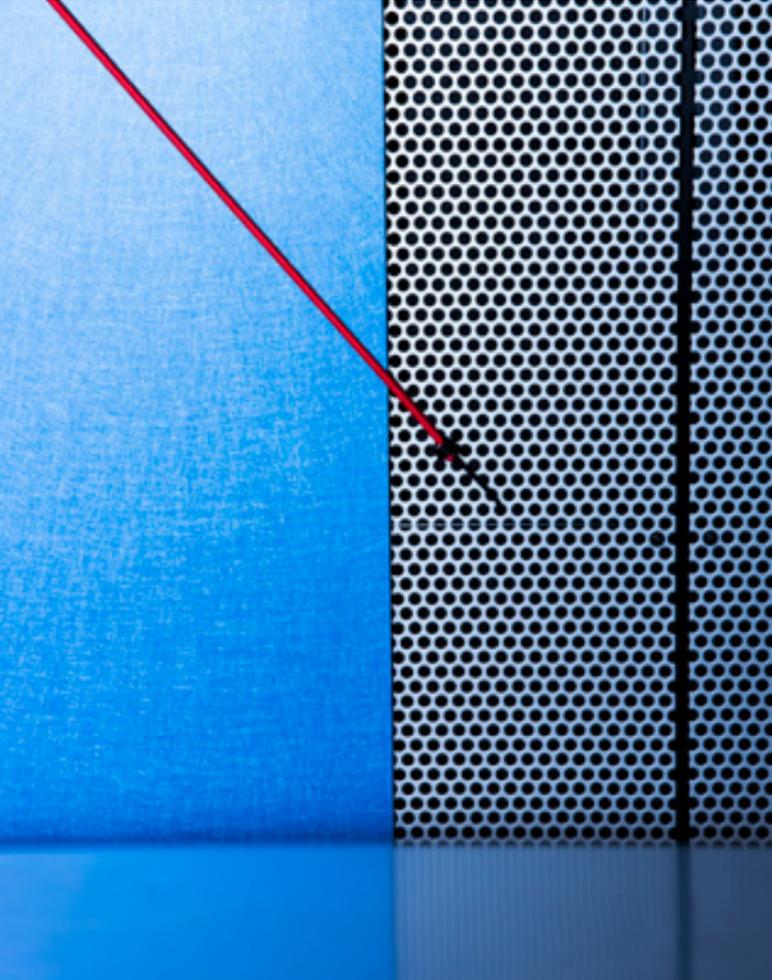
Invite the outside in to create a richer community. Consider spaces such as galleries, retail stores, bars or cafés that attract diverse audiences, not just employees

3

Create open workshops to allow freedom, creativity and access to tools and cutting-edge techniques

4

Designate 'messy spaces' for play and experimentation with hardwearing, multi-purpose, easy-to-clean fixtures, floors and walls



Opposite from left
Danish Design Center,
Copenhagen, by Spacon & X.
Photography by Julie Due

Space10 headquarters,
Copenhagen, designed in
collaboration with Spacon
& X. Photography by
Hampus Berndtson

Clockwise from above left
iD Square Vintage Zinc Metallic
luxury vinyl tiles by Tarkett

Quartz office, New York,
by Desai Chia Architecture.
Photography by Mark Craemer

Testone Factory, Sheffield,
by Teatum + Teatum.
Photography by Luke Hayes

The Working Kitchen

The preparation, sharing and eating of food, an important focal point in the home, is being recognised as such in the workplace too

Both images, this spread

PDG headquarters, Melbourne, by Studio Tate. The project brief specified an office 'more like a home or hotel than a typical workplace fitout.' A welcoming kitchen was included, with counters and seating built into a corner space so that light floods in on two sides and plants can flourish. Café-style tables and stools at high counters add to the informality. Photography by Peter Clarke Photography

Next spread

CANOPY co-working spaces, San Francisco, by Yves Béhar. The kitchen at CANOPY is located in a light-filled central space, making it a focal point for workers. A soft palette of pink and warm wood feels calm, while the high counter and bar stools are informal and convivial. Designed by Yves Béhar, co-founded by Amir Mortazavi, Steve Mohebi and Yves Béhar, image courtesy of CANOPY. Photography by Joe Fletcher



Sharing recipes and dishes can be a vehicle for sharing cultures and ideas, and is another example of breaking down silos through a communal, democratised act. Good nutrition is essential to physical health, and a pause in the working day enhances mental health; so companies who take even the most basic care of their employees are likely to encourage a lunchtime break. Over and above that, innovative workplaces increasingly revolve around social and convivial activities, and what could be more social and convivial than sharing food?

Artist Olafur Eliasson is passionate about food and his Berlin studio incorporates a large kitchen that prepares daily meals for his team. There is also a studio cookery book, and the roster of guests who have visited to share a dish or two includes Ai Weiwei and Meryl Streep. At London's Hato Press, the ritual of communal eating manifested in its *Studio Cookbook*, an account of various sociable lunches within different workspaces outside the studio. *WE Factory* is a work-place eating culture design studio

and consultancy founded by Veronica Fossa. It aims to 'advise, design, communicate and educate about eating culture and hospitality in the workplace, in order to help teams eat better, foster human connection, and increase the quality of life at work.'

Table talk

Creating a communal eating area where people can come together over a shared lunchtime break enables downtime as well as informal exchange.

The Melbourne headquarters of property developer PDG, designed by Studio Tate, stemmed from a brief that required an office that looked 'more like a home or hotel than a typical workplace fitout.' This is exemplified in the welcoming kitchen, where counters and seating are built into a corner space so that light floods in on two sides and plants can flourish. Café-style tables and stools at high counters add to the informality. Enough space has been allocated to allow multiple, communal use and relaxation.



In Portland, Oregon, Casework's design for a collaborative hub for the Work & Co digital agency puts a Japanese slant on the kitchen and dining space. An elegant monochrome aesthetic provides the backdrop for an area acknowledged as a key space by Work & Co partner Casey Sheehan. Because tasks are project-based and no one has a permanent desk, 'it was critical the office was modular, and offered ample spaces to gather,' says Sheehan. 'The kitchen and dining area is really special,' adds Casework founder Casey Keasler. 'It promotes balance.'

Give the kitchen a prominent space – rather than hiding it away, make it a priority for natural light, high-quality materials and create a space that everyone wants to access frequently.

The heart of the workspace

Just as a well-designed kitchen is the heart of the home, it can also be the heart of the workplace, promoting a sense of warmth and comfort

As the office kitchen takes its place as a key workplace zone, effective designs are drawing on the elements that we associate with home kitchens and their positive positioning as the informal living hub of the house. The New York offices of the Objective Subject design company, designed by GRT Architects, are colour-coded according to room; the kitchen's warm, dusty pink is more generally associated with home decor, but its functionality is very much work-oriented, with generous counters that allow space to roll out large documents as well as room for plenty of plates. Unconventionally, the kitchen is the entrance to the offices, and thus a focal point – just as it is in the home.

Pink is similarly used in the kitchen space designed by Note Design Studio for personal finance app Tink, alongside warm orange and gentle grey. Warm, tactile materials and an open layout, with the prep area adjacent to sofa seating, add to the home-like feel – as does a central position with meeting rooms and desk spaces opening off it.

The design of the office kitchen can take its cues from that of the family home – albeit with extra touches that make it practical for the workplace. A large central island or table and familiar, characterful materials such as marble, warm wood and inviting soft furnishings all offer a taste of home. Fittings such as a high counter that can double as an evening bar or space for entertaining add the extra value that would also be expected in a well-designed home.



Far left

Tink, Stockholm, by Note Design Studio. A warm palette of pink, orange and a gentle grey, tactile materials and an open layout, with the prep area adjacent to sofa seating, add to the home-like feel of this workplace kitchen. Photography by Kristoffer Fagerström of Note

Above

Objective Subject, New York, by GRT Architects. Dusty pink is more generally associated with home decor, but the functionality of this kitchen is work-oriented, with generous counters that allow space to roll out large documents and host meetings. Photography by Nicole Franzen

Left and next spread

Work & Co, Portland, Oregon, by Casework. To create balance in the office and space for teams to gather away from projects, Casework created a generously proportioned and calming monochrome kitchen and dining space. Photography by Nicole Mason



The Working Kitchen Design Toolkit

1

Eating together is a positive social act. Create a communal eating space to allow colleagues to come together in informal, unstructured ways

2

Give the kitchen a prominent and generous space – think light, bright and open, with long tables and central islands to encourage conviviality

3

Draw on the elements associated with home kitchens and employ materials that are familiar and warm

4

Consider kitchens as multifunctional spaces – a high counter can double as an evening bar or a space for meetings



Opposite from left
Tink, Stockholm, by Note Design Studio. Photography by Kristoffer Fagerström of Note

Work & Co, Portland, Oregon, by Casework. Photography by Nicole Mason

Clockwise from above left
DESSO Orchard collection, featuring 100% recyclable DESSO EcoBase™ backing

PDG headquarters, Melbourne, by Studio Tate. Photography by Peter Clarke Photography

Work & Co, Portland, Oregon, by Casework. Photography by Nicole Mason



The Fluid Workplace

Adapting seamlessly to increasingly diverse
and changing needs

Home / Office
60–69

Hackable Spaces
70–77

Family Friendly
78–85

The Fluid Workplace adapts seamlessly to the changing needs of employees. The fast pace of work today means that employers expect infinite adaptability from staff. Those employees invest more and more of themselves in their work purpose and expect more from an environment that is integral to their lives.

Designed to embrace workers' individual needs, the Fluid Workplace promotes opportunity for all, offering an environment that is as diverse as the workforce itself. This is the office reimagined as home, as gallery, as creche, as restaurant, as convenient retail outlet, as gym, as wellness space... A one-size-fits-all approach is out – today's innovative office must offer home comforts and leisure opportunities alongside its core functionality, with space and fittings that invite adaptation and experimentation.

Debunking open-plan

The open-plan office was developed as an interactive, less hierarchical alternative to cubicle culture. In fact, perhaps surprisingly, open-plan spaces make us more likely to communicate via email or Slack, rather than talking to each other. Research published by the Royal Society shows that open-plan working reduces face-to-face interactions by 70%. WeTransfer's 2018 Ideas Report surveyed 10,000 users and found that 65% need quiet to produce their best work. Tarkett's own research shows that only 31% of workers globally would choose to work in an open-plan office. Forward-thinking designers are looking at compromises that combine the best elements of open-plan with spaces that allow privacy and concentration. Dynamic, adaptable spaces allow for the open, social, collaborative approach that defines the 21st-century workplace, but also acknowledge the need for quiet focus, private conversations – and, simply, the opportunity to pause.

Co-working space by Zuzanna Kubicz. In a move away from the distraction and compromise that can come with open-plan offices, spaces are reimagined to allow private focus. Zuzanna Kubicz illustrates her vision for soft partitioning in co-working spaces, enabling quiet solitude without rigid walls. Image courtesy of Zuzanna Kubicz





Soft Work seating system

by Barber & Osgerby for Vitra.

The collection encompasses a work anywhere ethos with a range of adaptable pieces, suited to home or office. The modular system incorporates ergonomic seating options with adjustable table surfaces, power outlets and partition screens for quiet space.

Family-friendly fluidity

As discussed in our introduction, flexible working benefits everyone – including employers. Women, however, are disproportionately affected when provisions such as childcare and flexible options are not available. In 2017, the Australian Bureau of Statistics cited lack of childcare as the biggest factor preventing women from entering the workforce or taking on more hours. Working mothers with young children have the lowest employment levels of all parents with dependent children, at 65.1% compared to 93.2% for fathers, according to the Office for National Statistics in the UK. This is not because women don't want to work: the report also shows the proportion of employed mothers with young children has increased by almost 10% over the past two decades.

Changes within the workplace don't have to be huge to be significant. Anna Whitehouse, founder of the Mother Pukka blog and the #FlexAppeal campaign, found that finishing her working day just 15 minutes earlier made a huge difference to her childcare arrangements. Whitehouse highlights the benefits of a fluid workplace: 'It boosts productivity, helps attract and retain talent and can save on site costs. And it's good for society in general, by tackling the gender pay gap, addressing the issue of 54,000 new mothers being forced out of work each year, and keeping more taxes and skills in the economy.'

Women are also more likely to have responsibilities such as caring for an elderly or disabled relative. According to an International Labor Organization report, women across the world perform more than three times as much unpaid care work as men. Offering options for childcare and flexible and remote working improves work-life balance for all employees.

Co-living, co-working, co-everything

Pressure on space and budgets has driven an enormous rise in multi-functional, super-flexible spaces, explored in our Convivial Workplace section. Technology has given us the freedom to work where and when we want, in turn boosting the inexorable rise of freelance culture. Yet no one wants to work in total isolation – apart from the need to work collaboratively,

as human beings we want to feel connected, and come together in real life. Shared spaces are well on the way to becoming the norm across all sectors, from established businesses sharing their spaces with start-ups or with the wider community to the co-working spaces for individuals that are proliferating across the world.

We have reached the point where we are willing to compromise on the idea of ‘my own space’ in favour of optimised communal facilities – for work, home and leisure. The co-everything approach is summed up by Collective Old Oak in London: private apartment space is combined with communal workspaces, a gym, social activities, the practicalities such as a shared kitchen, laundry facilities and cleaning services, all covered by one monthly bill that makes London living more accessible and affordable for Old Oak tenants.

Diversifying diversity

As discussed in the Convivial Workplace chapter, a diverse mix of cultures, ages and genders fosters innovation. This diversity means recognising that each employee is an individual with unique needs and ways of working. Research by Tarkett, for example, highlights that 19% of workers in Europe prefer working collaboratively, while 32% prefer working independently and 44% are equally happy with either. Given that different projects require different processes, and the mood can change with each one, there is no one single ‘best’ way to work. This is neatly summed up by a Frameweb feature on Pallavi Dean of interior design studio Roar. When Dean was gathering employee viewpoints on new Edelman PR agency offices in Dubai, she met ‘a cacophony of different answers. The youngest staff members wanted to, literally, lie down on the carpet with their laptops. The senior employees, who would rather drop dead than drop to the floor, wanted more acoustic and visual privacy.’

Different personality types and diverse needs are also being acknowledged and celebrated. A quiet revolution is amplifying the role of the introvert. In her bestselling book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*, Susan Cain focuses on ‘helping companies and organisations empower the introverted half of their populations.’

Specific physical and mental requirements also need to be accommodated, from the needs of older workers, who may prefer more private space, to those of employees with neurodiverse conditions such as dyspraxia, dyslexia or ADHD, or workers with disabilities. The company seeking to benefit from a diverse range of high-calibre talent must in turn be ready to make room for diversity of all kinds.

The Office Group, Summit House, London, by Note Design Studio. Indulgent furnishings blend workspaces with inviting drop-in lounges, optimising communal spaces for multi-use comfort. Featuring Tarkett Noble Oak Soho, a modular wood floor inspired by traditional parquet



Home / Office

Drawing on the design elements of more homely spaces, hotels and members' clubs, to create rich, sophisticated and intimate work environments



Far left and next spread

The Wing, New York. Alluring velvets in rich emerald, soft pink and ochre dress recesses and sunken seating to add a sense of depth and indulgence to the brightly lit co-working spaces at both The Wing Dumbo, and The Wing SoHo designed by Chiara deRege. Photography by Tory Williams

Left

The Office Group, Summit House, London, by Note Design Studio. This co-working interior provides a warm and tactile environment for workers. Contrasting rich materials and textures throughout, such as an olive-green velvet rug alongside Tarkett's Noble Oak Soho wooden flooring, for a luxurious but homely effect.



The divisions between the spaces in which we live, work and spend our leisure time are less and less distinct and rigid. Today's office design needs to acknowledge that work is also the gym, the retail outlet, the yoga studio, the coffee shop, the creche. Home workers can arrange their tasks around various comfort zones, even if the shift is no greater than moving from the sofa to the local coffee shop, and office workers deserve the same autonomy.

The inexorable rise of women-led businesses and of co-working spaces catering specifically to women mean the hard-edged boardroom is giving way to a more modern, feminine aesthetic. These workspaces take cues from this desire for comfort and flexibility, with the same level of consideration and personalised detail that we expect from leisure spaces.

Creating different zones for different tasks allows a sense of movement. Dedicated zones with cosy sofas and tucked-away nooks give workers space to read and think. Furniture that reflects a home or café-style informality, with features such as high-top bars and

stools and warm wooden flooring, is more inviting than a starkly conventional office space.

Softly, softly

Soft, comfortable design elements such as padded upholstery and luxurious floor coverings and textiles temper rigid architecture.

The Dumbo, Brooklyn branch of women's co-working space The Wing has nailed the 'softly, softly' aesthetic. A green velvet sunken sofa, looking almost like a swimming pool, is both a striking centrepiece and an enticingly cosy recess. Contrasting pastel and bold tones add to the allure of padded armchairs. The company's signature Wing pink appears throughout. Floor and wall coverings and cushions suggest the handmade and human with bouclé, tufting, embroidery, rattan and wicker.

Kvistad's design for the Amsterdam office space of digital studio Bakken & Bæck is similarly successful. The bold, illustrative designs of the Norwegian studio's



own hand-tufted rugs add depth, warmth and a tactile sense to the space in a palette of natural rust, dusty pink and deep earthy brown.

Tactile, cosy design elements such as deep, sumptuous sofas, cocooned and padded upholstery and deep-pile carpets invite workers to settle in, whether for quiet solo focus, one-to-one conversation or an informal meeting – though behind a soft face, all the professional elements remain in place.

Room for everything

At any one time, a workplace may host multiple activities and ways of working and conversations. Design should cater to this with soft zoning and a multitude of areas and configurations.

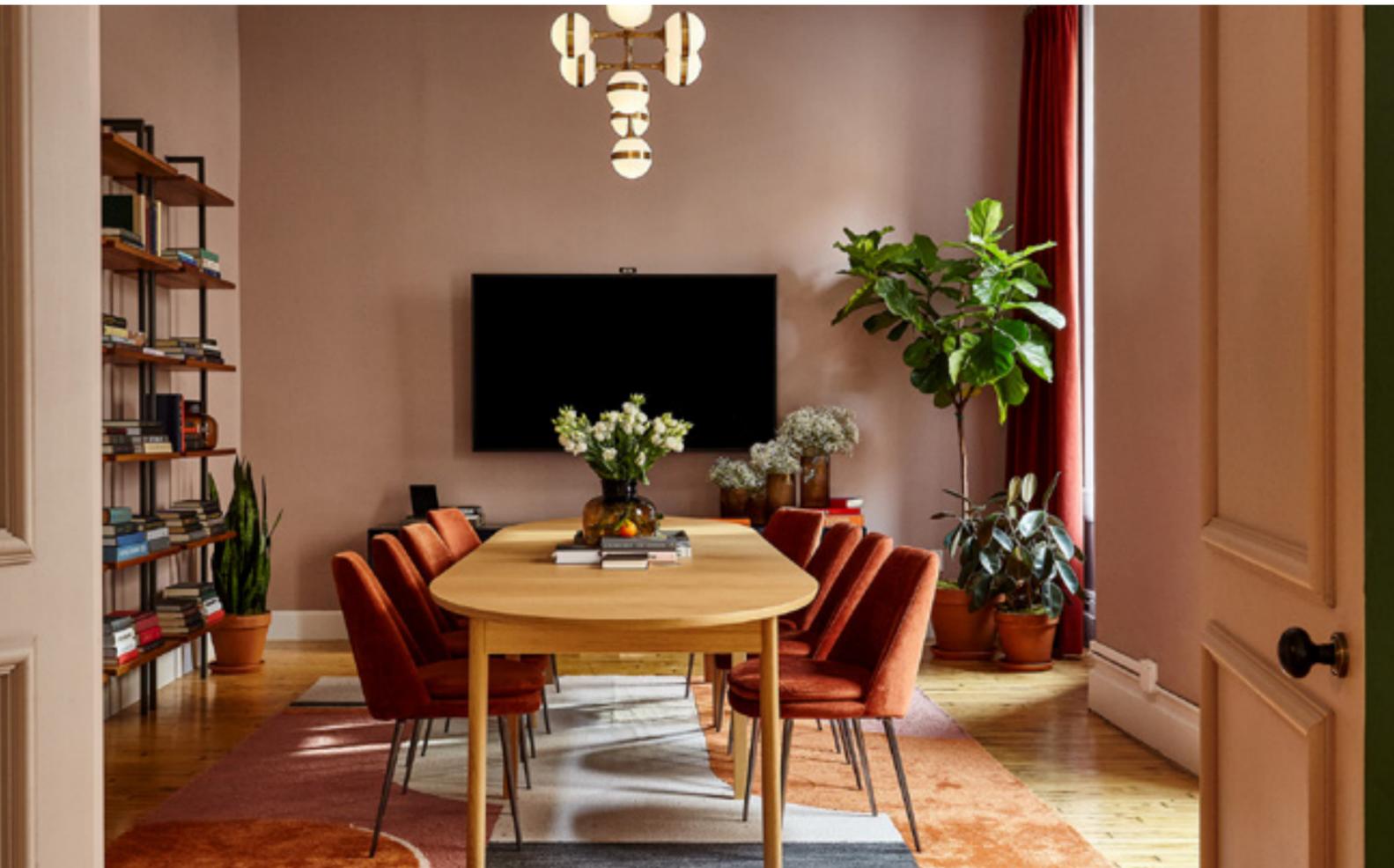
Subtle divisions of space again draw on residential design, reminding us of the dining, living and study areas in our homes. Rather than closed rooms, soft zoning uses changes in flooring, or sunken or elevated areas, or visually appealing partitions or screens, to

denote different areas. Rather than the uniformity of cubicles and identical desks, fittings and furniture range from sofas to sink into, desk arrangements with the feel of the home study, and relaxed private meeting spaces.

At Chief, a Manhattan executive members' club for women, designed by The Springs Collective, carefully positioned informal seating creates areas that are at once intimate and open. Armchairs are arranged in pairs or small groups beside larger, more communal lounge areas. Desk set-ups are given space and privacy in corners reminiscent of home studies, while small meeting tables feel personal. 'We recognised that we were creating a space meant to foster communication and to support the formation of new relationships, so we strove to provide comfort and intimacy, while also projecting the sophistication, elegance and timelessness that would be familiar to a Chief-calibre woman,' says Amy Butchko of The Springs Collective.

Raised or lowered work areas, high bar stools, mezzanines, sunken sofas, conversation pits, all create varied spaces and subtle zoning without the

Tactile, cosy design elements such as sumptuous sofas, cocooned upholstery and deep-pile carpets invite workers to settle in, whether for quiet solo focus, one-to-one conversation or an informal meeting



Left

Chief, New York, by The Springs Collective.

The executive members' club for women offers both intimacy and space with a variety of meeting areas, private desk set-ups and informal communal lounge areas, all equally elegant and inviting. Image courtesy of Chief

Right

Bakken & Bæck The Yellow Submarine, Amsterdam, by Kvistad Design Studio.

Natural rust and dusty pinks create a warm and inviting space enhanced with hand-tufted wall rugs, structured glass and matte black furniture. Photography by Tekla Evelina Severin

Next spread, left

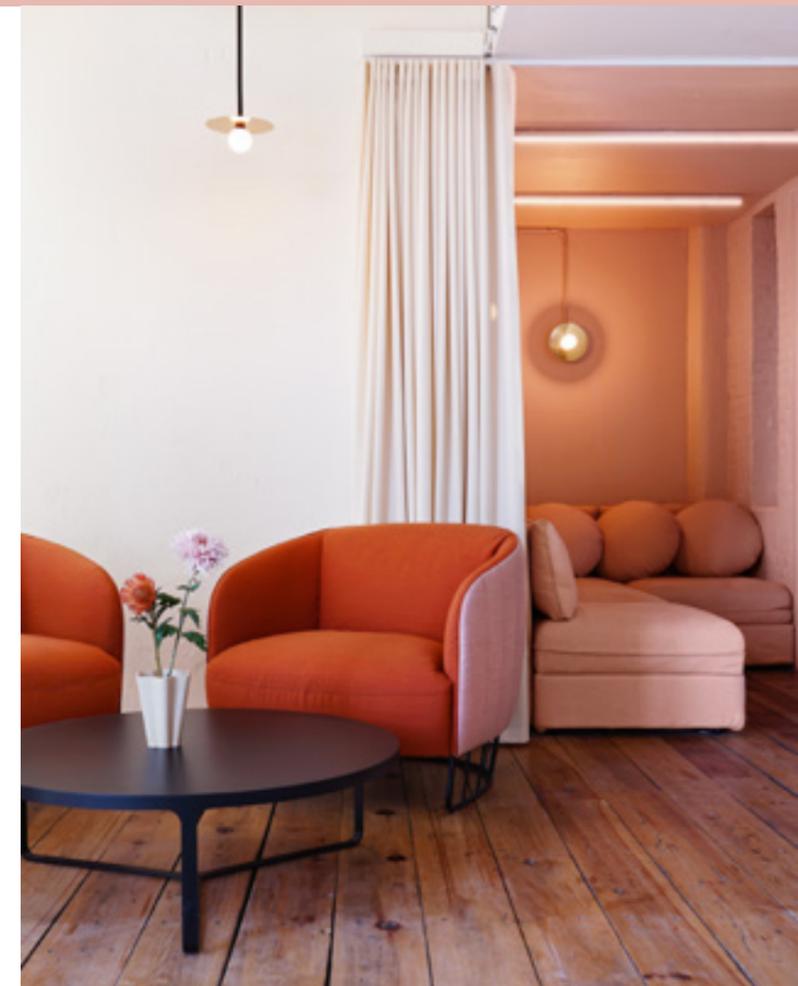
De Beauvoir Block, London, by Sella Concept.

Homely sofas and low wicker chairs soften a typically industrial-style space, while multiple zones offer a change in environment for a more inspiring headspace. Photography by Nicholas Worley

Next spread, right

Artek headquarters, Helsinki, by Sevil Peach.

The Finnish furniture brand showcases its minimalist designs against theatrical curtain partitions designed to break up areas and conceal shelving, softening the space and hiding away the busy reality of the working day. Photography by Tuomas Uusheimo



need for hard partitions and closed doors – and, as Amy Butchko of The Springs Collective says, ‘encourage the physical act of “leaning in”’.

Home comforts

Eclectic office design brings together multi-referential elements – one-off pieces, old and new, unique local or grassroots artwork – in the same way we decorate our homes.

Workspace at De Beauvoir Block, London, was designed by female design duo Sella Concept. The industrial-style space is softened with pink-washed walls and combines multiple zones that are adaptable throughout the day, including a melange of long wooden tables, a sofa-lined ‘living room’, low wicker chairs and ‘latte and laptop’ counters. ‘We spend most of our days at work, so it seems crucial to develop a space that calls upon your various moods at different points of the day – particularly in creative industries, where a shift in your environment can take you to

a more inspiring headspace,’ says Tatjana von Stein of Sella Concept.

Even in the most uniform, corporate offices, few people can resist personalising their desks with a photograph, a plant, a memento – a significant item that inspires or comforts, and lends a touch of home. Imaginative office design acknowledges this desire for individualism and inspiration.

Feminised design

Traditional boardroom aesthetics are giving way to a wave of design that is nuanced, soft and female-centred.

Office spaces of all types, whatever the make-up of their staff, are turning to soft, sophisticated, subtly authoritative aesthetics that also offer a sense of empathy and nurture. Colour in particular is playing a key new role. The cold office standards of blue, black and grey are giving way to softly refined, rich, complex tones, and dirty pastels. We see dusty pink combined

with deep green, indigo and matte black, alongside natural shades of brown, rust and ecru. Texture too is under the spotlight. Richly textured, intriguing finishes are created with bouclé, tufting, padding, embroidery, alongside natural materials such as rattan and wicker.

Colour and texture once barely figured on the office design radar. Times have changed, as our case studies show – while our examples are diverse, they all feature complex, striking palettes and material combinations.



‘We spend most of our days at work, so it seems crucial to develop a space that calls upon your various moods at different points of the day’

Tatjana von Stein, Sella Concept

Home / Office Design Toolkit

1

Look to the home environment for aesthetics that feel warm and informal, suggesting dining, living and study areas

2

Combine comfort with flexibility – sunken or raised seating areas, sofas to sink into and desk arrangements with the feel of a home study

3

Add eclectic and multi-referential elements – local artwork and one-off craft pieces and furniture that reflect the ambience of a home or a members' club

4

Create subtle zoning with warmly textured rugs to suit different moods at different points of the day

5

Tactility is key – cosy design elements such as sumptuous sofas and cocooned upholstery invite workers to settle in, whether for quiet solo focus, one to-one conversation or an informal meeting



Opposite from left
The Wing, New York.
 Photography by Tory Williams

Artek headquarters, Helsinki,
 by Sevil Peach. Photography
 by Tuomas Uusheimo

Clockwise from above left
Ultimate Bliss rug by Mae
 Engelgeer in collaboration
 with cc-tapis

Chief, New York, by The Springs
 Collective. Image courtesy
 of Chief

DESSO&Ex cut pile broadloom
 carpet and made-to-measure
 carpet rugs collection by Tarkett,
 in collaboration with Ex Interiors



Hackable Spaces

Design needs to be malleable and reconfigurable, moveable and shapeshifting, to adapt to the increasingly diverse needs of a desirably diverse workforce – and offer ultimate flexibility

The move to makeshift

A dynamic, even makeshift, approach allows the flexibility to respond to changing needs.

Heller Designstudio employs a 'zero-hierarchy floorplan' for its Firestarter office design. Sliding walls and plug-and-play desks mean the space can transform from an open-plan environment to isolated, concentrated workspace, and back again.

The Photography Workshop by London-based studio Alma Nac draws on impermanent materials, such as recycled plastic and plywood, to divide its multipurpose space. Joists and stairways are utilitarian green and industrial elements suggest reconfiguring. Adaptability is underlined with peg-board walls and furniture by open-source manufacturer Opendesk.

Low-fi or utilitarian materials, such as plywood or exposed fixings, and clearly signposted moveable elements, suggest impermanence and extend an invitation to hack the space.

Adaptable by design

No one better understands how space needs to adapt than the users of that space – the collaborative contract here is between designer and end user.

The Danish Design Centre by Spacon & X is designed to mutate; the interior can be disassembled and reconfigured as needed, allowing, says Spacon & X, 'anyone, without the use of tools, to assemble and disassemble new structures as office behaviour changes over time.' Furniture by open-source platform Opendesk features heavily. Pieces have been playfully adapted to create a movable 'meeting coupé' along with dividers, whiteboards and configurable shelving. Opendesk enables agility, with customisable designs and almost instant on-site production of bespoke office furniture that removes the need for shipping.

Furniture is increasingly required to afford many kinds of uses. 'A high sofa or winding table do not cry out how people should use them. They are more intuitive for people who work only from what is in their



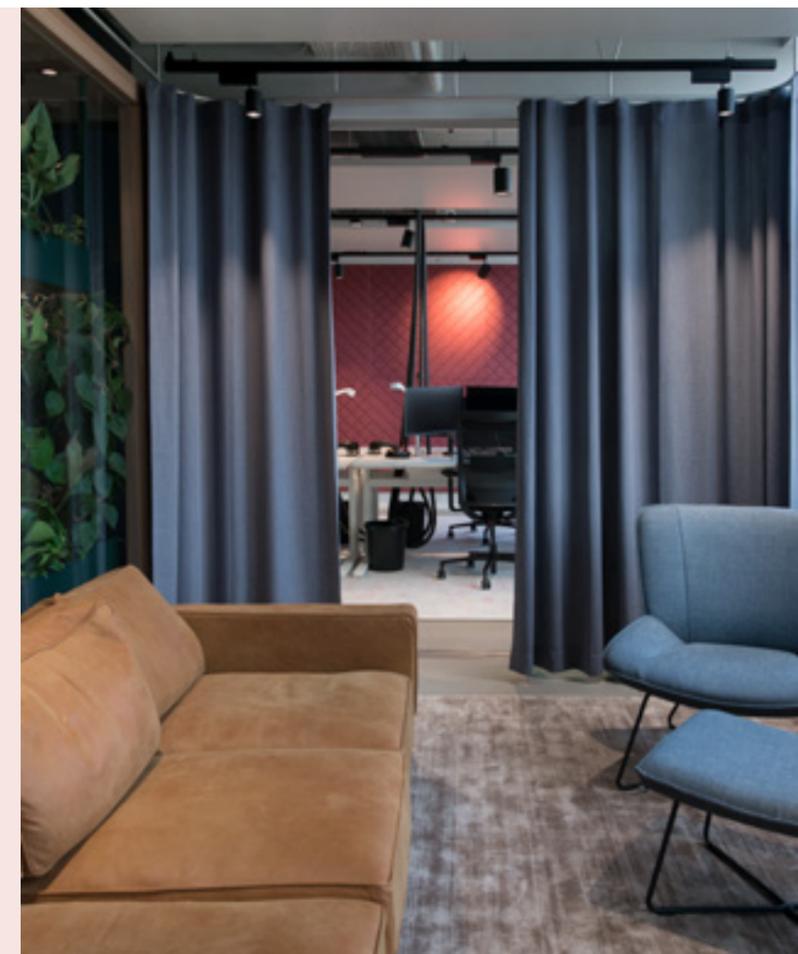
From left

Danish Design Center, Copenhagen, by Spacon & X.

The Danish Design Center is liberatingly configured with modular furniture, so that new structures can be assembled and disassembled as required without the need for tools. Photography by Julie Due

Firestarter by Heller Designstudio & Partner for Vector Informatik GmbH.

Designed with a 'zero-hierarchy floorplan', the Firestarter office design adopts sliding walls and plug-and-play desks for a fully transformable space.



bags,' says Jonas Pettersson, CEO of Form Us With Love, which created Nest System tables for Danish brand +Halle. The Nest System is designed to adapt to a mix of productive and informal behaviour; the modular table and seating solution can be reconfigured, twisted and turned to adapt to any space.

Schemata Architects embraces impermanence and adaptability in its design for the Tokyo offices of the Toy's Factory record label. Organised around a central core that houses meeting rooms and services, the perimeter of the space incorporates moveable partitions, tables, walls and workbenches built in plywood and industrial steel components. Archive-style shelving units run along one side of the office, maximising the floorspace when closed and opening to reveal hidden spaces for ad hoc meetings and focused working.

Design that puts control into the hands of users, allowing them to hack and reconfigure key elements, encourages ownership of the workplace.

My space

Personalisation of space, for individuals and groups alike, demands an unprecedented level of design flexibility that can accommodate everything from a focused space or a private meeting to a creative brainstorm or a TED-style lecture.

Mini Living's Built By All collaboration with London firm Studiomama explores four concepts for future live/workspaces that combine functionality in a single compact area. Each is highly personalised to the needs of a fictional user. For a pattern cutter, storage for textiles and a functional workstation are incorporated, while the version designed for a record producer includes a soundproof recording room.

The much-maligned cubicle is finding a new lease of life as a space for quiet focus, re-envisioned as a softer, more adaptable, more attractive structure. BuzziBracks by BuzziSpace, 'a room within a room', takes cubicle design to a new level with tactile walling and mix-and-match colour and curtain options.



Design that puts control into the hands of users, allowing them to hack and reconfigure key elements, encourages ownership of the workplace

This personalisable flexibility is also seen in furniture and partitioning.

For the Fjord design and innovation consultancy's relocated London office, Jenny Jones Studio included adaptable spaces, encouraging workers to configure areas and allowing spaces that they can 'own'. Walls and garden boxes are moveable to create an open 'amphitheatre' around the wide staircase, or to partition spaces and individual project booths. Fjord head of design Heather Martin told Wired that the key requirement was 'freedom to tweak or mark the space, within reason. It needs to feel like the space belongs to everyone, reflecting the culture of the occupants.'

Fluid and adaptable office space should go beyond objects on wheels or a sliding partition. Design language must foster experimentation and encourage workers to own the space – to push, pull, slide, cover, build and dismantle, according to their needs.



Both images, previous spread

Toy's Factory, Tokyo, by Schemata Architects. Space is maximised by moveable partitions organised around a central core. Tables and workbenches reconfigure for ad hoc meetings and focused working. Photography by Kenta Hasegawa

Above

Office Pavilions by Kettal. Modular, adaptable wall solutions shape open-plan spaces to create secluded rooms and optimise acoustics.

Left

BuzziBracks by Alain Gilles for Buzzispace. A room within a room, BuzziBracks is designed to create micro-environments for open-plan space. The modular system can be adapted and layered with varied curtain heights to create different levels of acoustic and visual privacy.



Hackable Spaces Design Toolkit

1

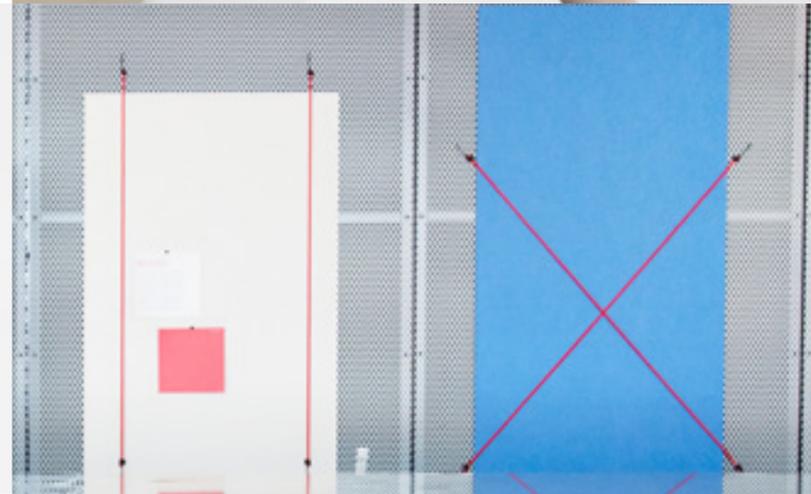
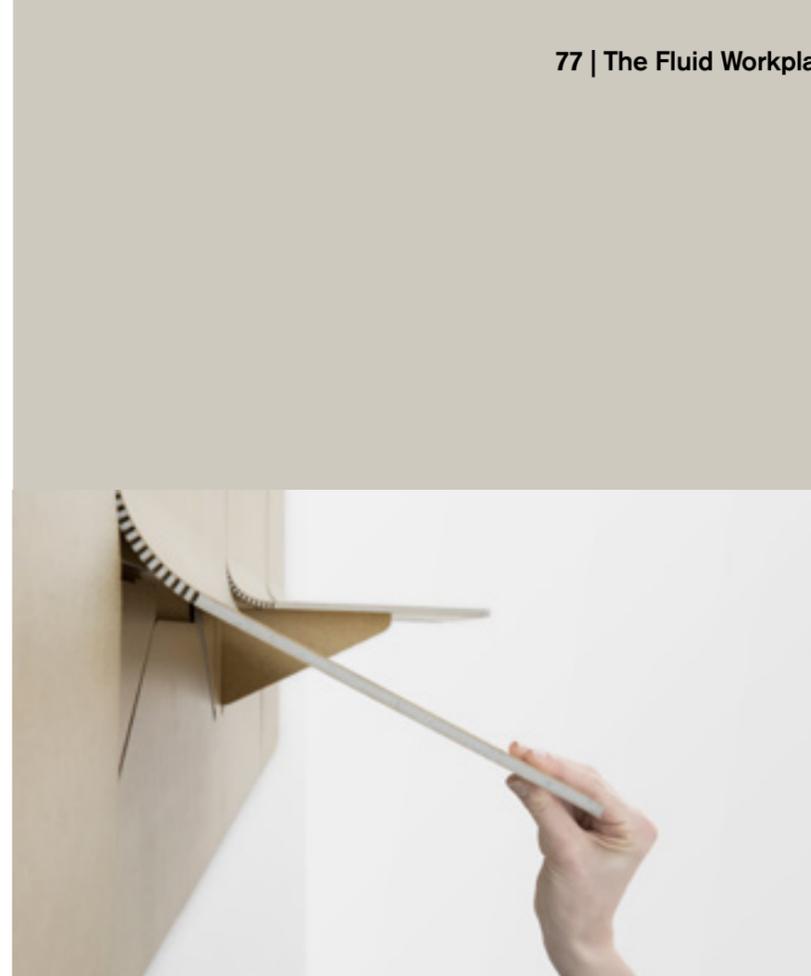
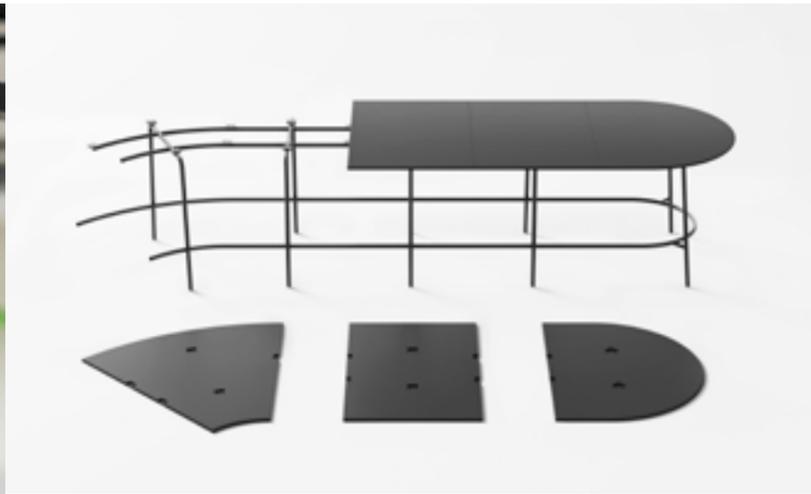
Allow for dynamic and intuitive interaction with modular furniture systems designed to bend and reconfigure around the user

2

Invite users to adapt spaces to changing needs — expose functionality, such as wheels, to reveal flexibility, and use materials such as plywood and pegboard to imply impermanence

3

Promote mixing, matching and movement – use bold colour to invite interaction and encourage employees to ‘play’, deconstruct and rebuild the office



Opposite from left
Municipality of Breda, featuring
DESSO AirMaster® by Tarkett

Nest System table by Form
Us With Love in collaboration
with +Halle. Images courtesy
of Oleksandr Shestakovych

Clockwise from above left
Shift shelving by Kvadrat
x Benjamin Hubert/LAYER.
Image courtesy of LAYER

Vector Firestarter designed
by Heller Designstudio & Partner
for Vector Informatik GmbH

Danish Design Center,
Copenhagen, by Spacon & X.
Photography by Julie Due

Family Friendly

Design can help working spaces become more family oriented, not only easing stress on parents but also supporting the retention of high-quality female staff



Both images

The Little Wing, New York.

An enriching, child-friendly space, designed as a support system for Wingers, that uses warm colours and tactile furniture to stimulate young imaginations. Photography by Emily Gilbert

THE **LiTTLE** WING



Leading the way with flexible work options, and sympathetic to the needs of families, co-working spaces such as The Wing and Second Home offer space for children, recognising that increasingly fluid working lives need adaptable childcare support and facilities. These spaces for children are as rich, nourishing and thoughtfully designed as their grown-up counterparts.

Caring for children – and their carers

Co-working spaces, in particular those that are female-led, are taking the lead on designing childcare into office spaces.

The mission of women's co-working space The Wing is 'the professional, civic, social, and economic advancement of women through community.' To that end, it recently added childcare to the offer in its SoHo, New York offices. The Little Wing 'exists as a support system for moms and families by creating a magical space for their kids to gather under the

same roof for enriching programming that takes them higher.' Certified childminders known as Wing-sitters run the facility, where parents can drop in for play sessions. Imaginative child-friendly design features warm, tactile wood furniture and partitioning, with neutral pale pine and undyed wool offset by bold applications of colour in flooring and textiles.

Similarly recognising the working family, international co-working brand Second Home has incorporated childcare into its new east London location. Second Home members get priority access to an exclusive nursery run by the N Family Club, which features a rooftop garden and a café where adults can pause for coffee, blurring the divide between 'parent time' and work time. A neutral palette of light plywood and off-white natural textiles and walls is punctuated with bold colour, again bringing the child-friendly into the heart of the workspace.

Spaces for messy play and creativity foster imagination; less obvious design elements such as transitional spaces – coffee bars or play areas where

adults can join the fun – keep caregivers actively involved with their child’s day.

Small people, grown-up design

Rather than being an add-on, design of workplace childcare spaces needs to show the same thoughtful consideration for materials and detail as spaces that adults use.

Climbing-inspired clothing company Patagonia, much lauded for its progressive family-focused policies, on-site childcare and 100% retention of mothers after maternity leave, reflects the values of extreme sport in its corporate culture too. Encouraging exploration, play and risk-taking in adults and in its child-focused spaces and activities, the company’s playgrounds, climbing walls and bike tracks allow children to test their limits.

The Big and Tiny co-working space in Santa Monica, California, puts space for children at its heart, rather than on the periphery. Catering to children

from six months to six years old, its creative kids’ space is rich in sensory features and stimulating toys. Children are encouraged to climb, dive, perform, build and read in a space whose design mirrors that of the co-working space for adults, with wood panelling and a calm palette of soft greys and pinks. The design aims to foster productivity, creativity and flexibility for users of all ages.

Big and Tiny describes itself as an all-family learning and co-working space, designed to prioritise children as much as adults – founder Keltse Bilbao, a designer herself, has used her expertise to create a ‘destination for the modern family’.



Left and right
Second Home nursery, London. Supporting the working family, the Second Home co-working space in London Fields offers exclusive use of an in-house nursery run by the N Family Club. It has created a child-friendly environment with an off-white palette punctuated by bold and playful colour. Image courtesy of Second Home

Above and next spread
Big and Tiny, California. Big and Tiny describes itself as an all-family learning and co-working space. It uses rich materiality in the form of wood panelling and sensory features to stimulate both work and play. Photography by Aaron & Jon Photographers





Family Friendly Design Toolkit

1

Calm and playful imagination are equally important – combine neutral elements with bright, bold application of colour

2

Mixed-use spaces promote a flexible ethos – cater to both adults and children together, and include a café or an open play area where parents can join in

3

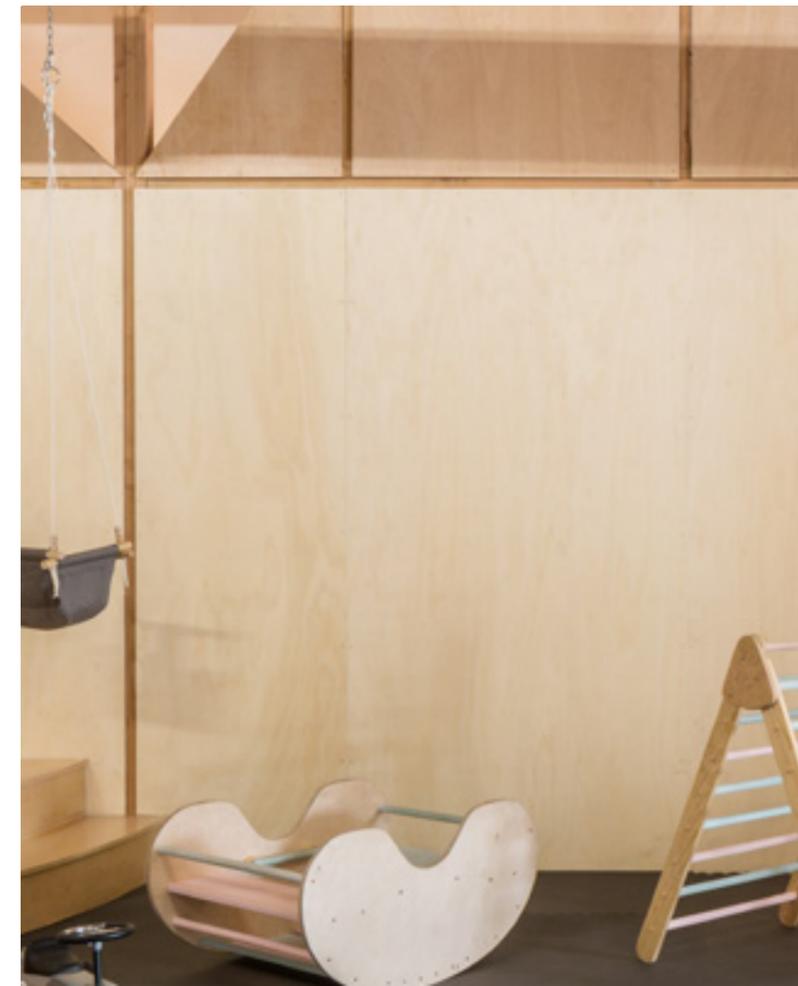
Storytelling is a vital element of play – utilise materials with narrative, such as recycled plastic and locally sourced artwork and textiles

4

Transform blank spaces into playful environments for children using bold, colourful and graphic flooring and wall coverings

5

Foster creativity and learning with rich sensory features, stimulating toys and interactive surfaces



Opposite from left

Tarkett Acczent Unik
heterogeneous vinyl
loose-lay compact rolls,
100% phthalate free

The Little Wing, New York.
Photography by Emily Gilbert

Clockwise from above left
Second Home nursery,
London. Image courtesy
of Second Home

Charlie chair by ecoBirdy.
Photography by Arne Jennard

Big & Tiny, California.
Photography by Aaron
& Jon Photographers

The Nourishing Workplace

Nurturing mind, body and spirit
to promote holistic health and happiness

**Outside-In
92—99**

**Sensory Sensibility
100—107**

**Optimised Wellbeing
108—115**

The Nourishing Workplace nurtures mind, body and spirit, promoting holistic health and happiness through a greater connection to nature, tailored sensory experiences and integrated technology. Stimulating workers intellectually and emotionally, it allows quietude, focus and contemplation – and green spaces where our imaginations can run wild.

Live well, work well

Health and wellbeing are key considerations as we seek to counteract the negative effects of urban living with a renewed focus on a healthy mind and body. The wellness industry grew 12.8% between 2016 and 2018, and the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) values the industry at \$4.2 trillion globally. The GWI values the workplace wellness market (expenditure by employers to improve employee wellness, including health screening, diagnostic tests, counselling and so on) at \$48 billion and points out that much of this spending is intended to lower healthcare costs in the long run, by improving both morale and productivity. The GWI also points out that \$48 billion is a small market ‘compared to the economic burden of an unwell and disengaged workforce’ – which it estimates at 10% to 15% of global economic output.

Sedentary lifestyles are linked to more than three million preventable deaths every year globally. A 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics survey revealed that most corporate workers spend more than 75% of their time sitting. Sleep is also essential to health. Insufficient shut-eye is linked to cardiovascular disease, obesity, and depression, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that it costs the US economy up to \$411 billion each year in lost working days. While we can't expect businesses to take full responsibility for employee health, they can certainly play their part in ensuring those who want to make healthy choices are supported – and also need to catch up with the wider shift towards supporting wellness rather than treating illness.

Kinfolk office and gallery spaces, Copenhagen, by Norm Architects. Bringing the Kinfolk ethos of slow living into the workplace, the magazine's workspace is defined by a quiet Scandinavian essentialism, grounded in natural materials that are harmonious and haptic. Photography by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen





Nature deficit

Over 50% of the world's population now lives in urban areas. As our experience of the natural world is reduced, we run the risk of losing out on the widely recognised emotional and physiological benefits of being outdoors. Nature is thus being incorporated into all manner of urban spaces, as designers and planners create spaces where natural ecosystems can thrive. From exhibitions and immersive experiences to the choice of materials in office design, we are seeking reconnection with nature. Architects and designers are facilitating this with increasingly imaginative designs that show how the workplace can also play its part in greening our lives.

The conscious generation

We make conscious choices about the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the purchases we make and the companies we bank with, and we want to work for organisations that mirror our values. According to The Harvard Business Review, more than nine out of 10 employees would be willing to trade a percentage of their lifetime earnings for greater meaning at work. This collective conscience and awareness of sustainability are becoming core principles for all age groups, and particularly among the Millennials who make up a large cohort of today's workforce and the Generation Z members who will succeed them over the coming decades.

The spaces in which we work thus need to acknowledge the conscious generations. Carefully considered design and material can communicate a sustainable organisational ethos to employees and visitors alike. We select natural, sustainable materials in our homes – wood, naturally dyed textiles, wool, stone – and we do not want to work in offices furnished with unsustainably produced plastics and toxic synthetics. Sustainability needs to be a core consideration: how is the building constructed, how is its energy sourced, do its fixtures and fittings carry any detrimental impact?

Time to switch off

In today's hyperconnected, always-on workplace, employees need the opportunity to switch off. Workplace noise distracts 26% of workers, according to Tarkett research, which finds that more people are concerned about noise than about aesthetic, layout or air quality.

We are also constantly distracted by communications tech. In a globalised workforce, emails and social media frequently transcend time zones and disrupt the work/life balance. Some employers are recognising this; Volkswagen has introduced a 'right to switch off' policy and was one of the earliest businesses to ban access to work emails out of hours. The 'right to disconnect' has been enshrined in French law since 2017, following a report in September 2015 on the impact of 'info-obesity' on the health of the country's working-age population. As the wellbeing benefits of activities that enhance switching off and calm, including yoga, meditation and mindfulness, become increasingly evident, organisations are seeking to bring such activities into the workplace. The spaces we work in should thus cater to the need to disconnect, providing quiet and calm that allow employees to refocus.

left

DESSO Arable part of the Human Fascination collection. Inspired by agricultural landscape and in keeping with Tarkett's sustainability commitment and wish to protect the planet, the Arable, Breccia, Granite and Flores carpet tiles in the DESSO Human Fascination collection are created with eco-conscious production processes and reusable materials. The aim is to create healthier spaces with sustainable flooring, to benefit both people and the environment. Cradle to Cradle® Silver Level certified. 100% recyclable DESSO EcoBase™ backing.

Outside-In

The emotional and physiological benefits of the great outdoors are enormous, so architects and designers are building connection with nature into the workplace

Left

Earthbox, Paraguay, by Equipo de Arquitectura. The biophilic space is configured between two existing trees: the flame tree which frames the exterior and the guavirá tree that shares the central space with the human inhabitants. Photography by Leonardo Méndez

Right

Sony Music Entertainment, A'DAM tower, Amsterdam, by Space Encounters. Greening the workplace goes beyond the decorative and taps into an innate need to be connected with nature. It was a priority in the design of the Sony Music Entertainment office. The space also makes use of large unobstructed windows to allow natural light to flood in. Photography by Peter Tijhuis



The emotional and physiological benefits of the great outdoors are enormous, and architects and designers are building connection with nature into the workplace. Some designs exploit a geographic advantage, with constructions that blur the boundaries between inside and out. Others make use of super-natural materials such as wood, living plants, wool, jute and earth – raw, honest, humble and, in the right situation, extremely high-performance.

This is not just an aesthetic choice. The University of East Anglia finds that ‘spending time in, or living close to, natural green spaces is associated with diverse and significant health benefits’, pointing out specific physiological indications that exposure to green spaces reduces stress, and further noting that in the UK, 11.7 million working days are lost annually due to stress, depression or anxiety.

Greening the workspace

Natural assets such as existing greenery, light and structures make effective design elements,

alongside sympathetic materials that reflect the local environment, either sourced or reclaimed locally, or derived from waste streams.

For the Earthbox architecture office in Paraguay, Equipo de Arquitectura brought the forest inside with a design that physically shares the space with nature by incorporating two trees. Walls made from rammed earth and wooden interiors are warm and tactile, and reflect the exterior environment, while a vast ceiling opening allows natural light to flood in. Natural elements are at the core of the design and lead the form of the building.

Effective office design that includes lush greenery is key for workspaces that do not benefit from a geographical natural connection. For the Joolz pushchair and stroller company, Amsterdam-based architect Space Encounters designed a densely planted greenhouse space where employees can take a break from their desks. In the offices of property development company Synchroon, another Space



Encounters project, plants become a living, breathing partition that breaks up the semi-open office.

Making biophilia (the natural human affinity with nature) central to office design goes much further than placing a plant on a desk. An immersive environment packed with plants creates connectivity to nature literally and directly, enhancing both productivity and wellbeing; if there isn't room for a greenhouse or a whole area dedicated to plants, designs based around 'natural conduits' add room for them to thrive.

Back to the land

Giving employees access to living, working gardens and even farms offers an even deeper immersion into nature.

London-based architecture firm Feilden Fowles has been committed to the Waterloo City Farm volunteer project since 2015. The farm is a learning resource for local schools and the wider community, home to pigs, sheep and chickens, and planting areas

and polytunnels, offering connection to nature through involvement in growing and preparing food. It is also home to the Feilden Fowles studio. The connected spaces share features such as frames made of Douglas fir timber and wooden cladding, and structures draw on classic agricultural buildings such as the traditional tithe barn. A glass facade is open to natural light. The courtyard garden was designed by Dan Pearson Studio, which works to create landscapes that offer 'escape, delight, reflection and illumination'. As well as hands-on experience, the farm is a platform that allows for connection with wider sustainability issues, hosting workshops, talks and demonstrations.

Urban farms are becoming more common globally, even in the world's biggest and busiest cities, to the benefit of businesses and individual residents alike. Aeromate runs working community gardens from the rooftops of Parisian businesses; the design of the QO Amsterdam hotel incorporates a rooftop greenhouse that supplies the hotel kitchens; GrowUp Farms is educating the UK capital about aquaponic and vertical

growing technologies; and the New York Agriculture Collective promotes a 'vibrant and fast-moving urban agriculture scene.'

The most effective indoors/outdoors design draws first on the existing locale, even in the city, where trees, parks and urban farms can provide an important connection and focal point.



Previous spread and left
Joolz headquarters, Amsterdam,
by **Space Encounters**. The space features an indoor glasshouses packed with plant life in a bid to encourage regular desk breaks. Photography previous spread Peter Tjihuis. Photography left by Jordy Huisman

Above
Waterloo City Farm, London,
by **Feilden Fowles**. A learning resource for local schools and the wider community, the urban farm is designed to connect people. Its glass facade opens onto a light-flooded courtyard, hosting activities such as gardening, carpentry and cooking. Photography by David Grandorge

Outside-In Design Toolkit

1

Exploit natural assets by making a focal point of existing greenery, natural light and structures

2

Connect to nature through sympathetic and responsibly sourced materials – reclaimed, locally grown or derived from waste streams

3

Create a healthy space by using smart materials, flooring and textiles that can clean and purify the air

4

Plants are integral to wellbeing and productivity – generously green the workplace as a living and breathing functional feature



Opposite from top
Waterloo City Farm,
London, by Feilden Fowles.
Photography by Kendal Noctor

Sony Music Entertainment,
A'DAM Tower, Amsterdam,
by Space Encounters.
Photography by Peter Tjihuis

DESSO AirMaster® Gold
collection. Cradle®
Gold certified

Clockwise from above left
DESSO AirMaster® Gold
collection. Cradle®
Gold certified

Joolz headquarters, Amsterdam,
by Space Encounters.
Photography by Jordy Huisman

Earthbox, Paraguay,
by Equipo de Arquitectura.
Photography by Federico Cairoli

Sensory Sensibility

As much as we need and yearn to connect and collaborate, we also need to retreat, recharge and reconnect with ourselves



Both images and next spread
Kinfolk office and gallery spaces, Copenhagen, by Norm Architects.
Bringing the Kinfolk ethos of slow living into the workplace, the magazine's workspace is defined by a quiet Scandinavian essentialism, grounded in natural materials that are harmonious and haptic. Photography by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen



Workplace designers can create areas of privacy and calm, sensitively protecting and stimulating the senses of workers to create a powerful sense of quiet contemplation. Surfaces ranging from the natural and intrinsically textural to the embossed, embroidered and hand-made draw our eye. Honest materials, selected for their quietude and ephemeral impact, promote moments of connection and pause. Acoustics are thoughtfully considered to cocoon and provide calm spaces. Aesthetics take on an essentialist feel, with pared-back decoration and tonal use of colour.

Tactile wellness

The tactile workspace features intimate design that focuses on haptic and sensorial material qualities.

Touch is one of the greatest human connectors. It's the first sense to develop in the womb and we use hugs, kisses, even handshakes, to express our common humanity. While human touch is obviously limited in the workplace, designers have a key role to play in

channelling a sense of tactility through form, material and sensory design.

Norm Architects embraced Scandinavian essentialism and quietude in its office design for Kinfolk magazine. The workspace has a 'harmonious, precise and natural feel with haptic qualities' that meshes perfectly with the Kinfolk credo of slow living. Subtle textural qualities are embodied in velvet, unfinished plaster, slate, pale wood, felt and linen. Materials respond and 'breathe' as light changes; soft shadows are created by features such as a seating recess that offers retreat, while rust-coloured velvet appears luminous. Rust is part of a calming overall palette of muted tones.

The offices of the Deknudt Nelis law firm, designed by Arjaan De Feyter, are housed in The Cubes mixed-use development near Antwerp. A pared-back feel does not preclude tactility; blackened steel, dark walnut and green marble are confident, pure materials, softened by plaster walls, warm-hued timber cabinets, and curved forms such as a stairway with handrails



that invite touch. This sophisticated design manages to feel at once soft and authoritative.

Workplace design with tactility at the centre of the brief creates spaces that feel nourishing, warm and human.

The sound of silence

Soft materials and textiles are not only tactile, they have a second key function: sound absorption that creates a healthy auditory environment.

The Baux acoustic pulp panels designed by Form Us With Love were inspired by paper-folding techniques such as origami to create 'restful acoustics' for communal spaces. Baux specialises in sustainable, functional construction materials, and the panels are 100% bio-based, created from sustainably harvested fir and pine, non-GMO wheat bran and potato starch. Different concentrations of the wheat bran provide three different colour strengths. Combined with three origami patterns, this offers nine options which all

combine Japanese-style quietude and simplicity with a Scandinavian aesthetic. The panels have multisensory appeal – they are beautiful to look at, beautifully textured, and acoustically effective sound controls.

The Focus Podseat by Note Design Studio for Zilenzio is a sound-moderating seating unit; encapsulated and intimate, it absorbs sound, creating a calming effect. The Focus Podseat combines screen, bench and worktable, and, like the Baux acoustic pulp panels, is as good to look at as it is effective. Warm woven textiles, soft, lightly padded upholstery, curving lines, neutral light wood and matte black come together to create an acoustically insulated 'nook' that promotes calm and focus. Sound absorption specialist Zilenzio describes itself as 'selling silence' and focuses on 'healthy acoustic surroundings'.

Sound quality is an essential consideration if spaces are to feel calm and enable focus and productivity; calm and quiet also enhance privacy and intimacy, which are key elements of the Nourishing Workplace. Where sound moderating features might

once have been designed to disappear or blend in, the latest designs are also aesthetically pleasing, with subtle patterns and intriguing textures.



Left

Focus Podseat by Note Design Studio in collaboration with Zilenzio. This sound-moderating seating design promotes privacy and intimacy with softly woven upholstery and natural light wood.

Right, both images

Baux Acoustic Pulp by Form Us With Love. 100% bio-based, recyclable and biodegradable acoustic panelling, inspired by origami, promotes restful quietude in communal spaces.



Sensory Sensibility Design Toolkit

1

Focus on haptic and sensorial qualities – employ natural and intrinsically textural materials such as wood, wool, unfinished plaster and stone

2

A sense of calm is vital to focus and productivity – create an honest, essentialist and pared-back aesthetic with tonal colours and smooth, restful forms

3

Embrace the subtle textural qualities of soft carpeting in neutral tones to emphasise a sense of calm

4

Consider multisensory tactility – include acoustic treatment with cocooned areas and panelling



Opposite from left
Kyoto partitioning system by
Note Design Studio for Zilenzio

DESSO Linon, featuring
100% recyclable DESSO
EcoBase™ backing

Clockwise from above left
Focus Podseat by Note
Design Studio in collaboration
with Zilenzio

Baux Acoustic Pulp by Form
Us With Love. Photography by
Jonas Lindström

Kinfolk office and gallery
spaces, Copenhagen, by Norm
Architects. Photography by
Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen

Optimised Wellbeing

Technology and material experimentation are providing more human-centred, responsive and adaptive installations and solutions



Workspaces are being designed to promote physical and mental wellbeing as well as to evoke a sense of visual poetry to add interest – and even awe. This sense of wonder allows escape, focus and relaxation. Examples include the use of dichroic glass to enhance changes in natural light across the course of each day. Natural light is particularly important as it signals to our bodies when we should wake and when we should sleep, so disconnection can lead to insomnia – especially in cities, which are polluted with artificial light around the clock. Long exposure to screens similarly disrupts sleep patterns and the ability to achieve calm. Designers and architects are recognising this problem and are actively exploring the ways that technology can help us to reconnect with our natural daily rhythms.

Luminant rhythms

Natural light is nuanced, changeable and evolving.

Tech can synthesise these qualities, which are missing in an office flooded with flat artificial light.

Supporting employees' circadian rhythms – their natural, internal body clocks – promotes more efficient working by regulating rest and sleep patterns as well as contributing to a healthy and engaging workplace atmosphere.

The Rise digital lamp created for Nalii by Benjamin Hubert's Layer studio illuminates and dims to imitate the passage of the sun. While it's a technically advanced product that can be controlled with an app, its minimalist, curved form is simple and tactile. It can be used to promote a gentle morning wake-up that evokes the sunrise, and brightened to increase alertness and 'alter the atmosphere or mood of any given environment,' says Hubert.

The Dawn to Dusk lighting range by Haberdashery similarly emulates the rising and setting sun, both in its simple, appealing round form and in the way it changes colour from stimulating bright white through peach and orange to soothing red, giving users the 'opportunity to lift the sun from below the horizon and place it in the sky.'

Surfaces that play with light interaction lend a sense of wonder and immersion to a day at the office



The Haberdashery studio specialises in a ‘poetic approach to lighting’ and harnesses it to transform perceptions of space, colour and form.

Beautiful, functional and healthy solutions such as these are the antithesis of glaring banks of harsh strip lighting. Lighting is key to a healthy working environment – good lighting is not only physically and mentally beneficial, it is also a design element employees can engage with and genuinely appreciate.

Dynamic interactions

Surfaces that play with light interaction lend a sense of wonder and immersion to a day at the office.

Designers and architects can create daily mini-experiences in the workplace by incorporating dynamic materials into structures, installations and features. Low-fi or high tech, the scope is limited only by the designer’s imagination – will you help workers find calm and focus, or immerse them in an experience that emulates nature?

The Dutch Invertuals design collective has collaborated with Luxaflex to reimagine the role of lighting in new and unexpected forms, working with six designers, including Jetske Visser and Michiel Martens, with visions that go ‘beyond the obvious.’ The Enlighten exhibition, presented at Dutch Design Week 2017, was conceived to ‘move, shine and glow’, providing ‘new insights into aesthetics, experiences and usability’ and looking to the future role of light in our living environments. While the individual projects are eclectic and conceptual, they are thoughtfully constructed from relatively low-fi materials, and draw on natural light for their dynamism.

Studio Y incorporated dichroic glass into its office design for lighting specialist Ambience. The kaleidoscopic effect is enhanced by colour variations as the natural light changes throughout the day; the playful, mesmerising effects of the prisms see hues become denser and shadows more dynamic. There is also a practical application: light and colour denote different areas of the office. As Studio Y suggests, the



Previous spread

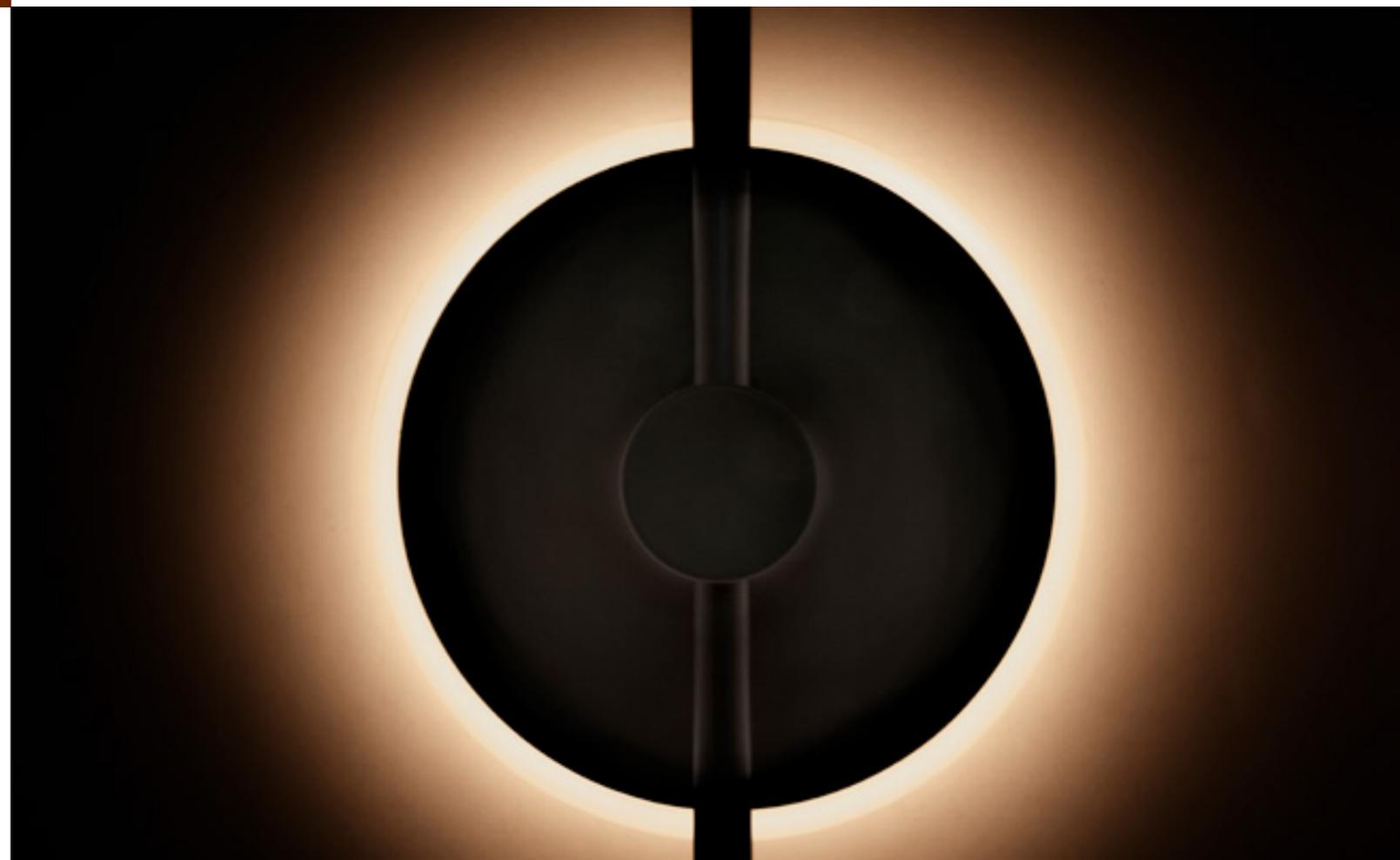
Rise wireless lamp by LAYER for noli. Minimalist and tactile, the Rise lamp illuminates and dims to imitate the passage of the sun. Image courtesy of LAYER

Left

ambience office, Victoria, by Studio Y. Dichroic glass floods the space with prisms of coloured light that respond dynamically to the time of day. Photography by Ben Glezer

Above and right

Dawn to Dusk lamp by Haberdashery. Taking a poetic approach to lighting, Haberdashery simulates the rising and setting sun. Stimulating bright white light flows into an ambient, heady glow.



Victoria office is a 'workspace that is its own Instagram filter'

Sony has also worked with this kind of dynamic interaction, in its Hidden Senses exhibition at Milan Design Week 2018, and again in 2019 with Affinity in Autonomy. Hidden Senses drew on sensors that responded to movement or touch, causing walls, furniture and individual items to light up when approached and offering 'fresh experiences and surprises' through these unexpected interfaces. The concept shows how technology can enhance our environment in a nuanced, sensitive, unobtrusive way. The Affinity in Autonomy exhibition went even further, offering playful interactions with robotics, and ultimately imagining the establishment of natural, friendly relationships between humans and robots. Rikke Gertsen Constein, art director of the Sony Nordic design centre, envisages a future of intelligent technological adaptation that 'enriches the wellbeing of the individual', including light and sound which responds poetically to individual needs.

The infinitely varied effects that can be created through responsive, dynamic surface and lighting design go far beyond simply regulating light and dark – they can make the difference between a humdrum, bland office space and one that inspires, motivates and delights.



From left
Sony Hidden Senses exhibition, Milan Design Week 2018.
A playful take on the potential of intelligent technology to enrich wellbeing, explored through human and robotic relationships.

Tense by Panter&Tourron at Milan Design Week 2019.
Neo-nomadic furniture reimaged in a playful and poetic way. Each lamp is constructed and adjusted entirely through the force of tension, encouraging sensitive interactions between user and object. Photography by Jagoda Wisniewska



Responsive, dynamic surface and lighting design go far beyond simply regulating light and dark

Optimised Wellbeing Design Toolkit

1

Reconnect workers with their daily biological rhythms, emulating natural light through a changing spectrum of hues, illuminations and shadows

2

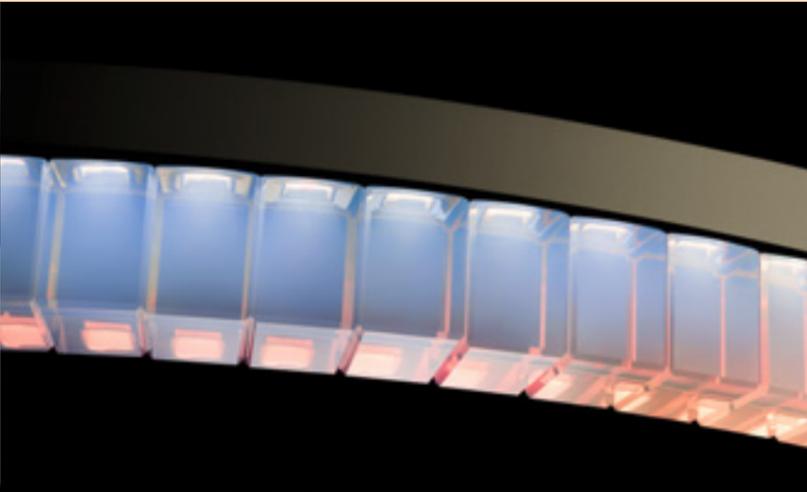
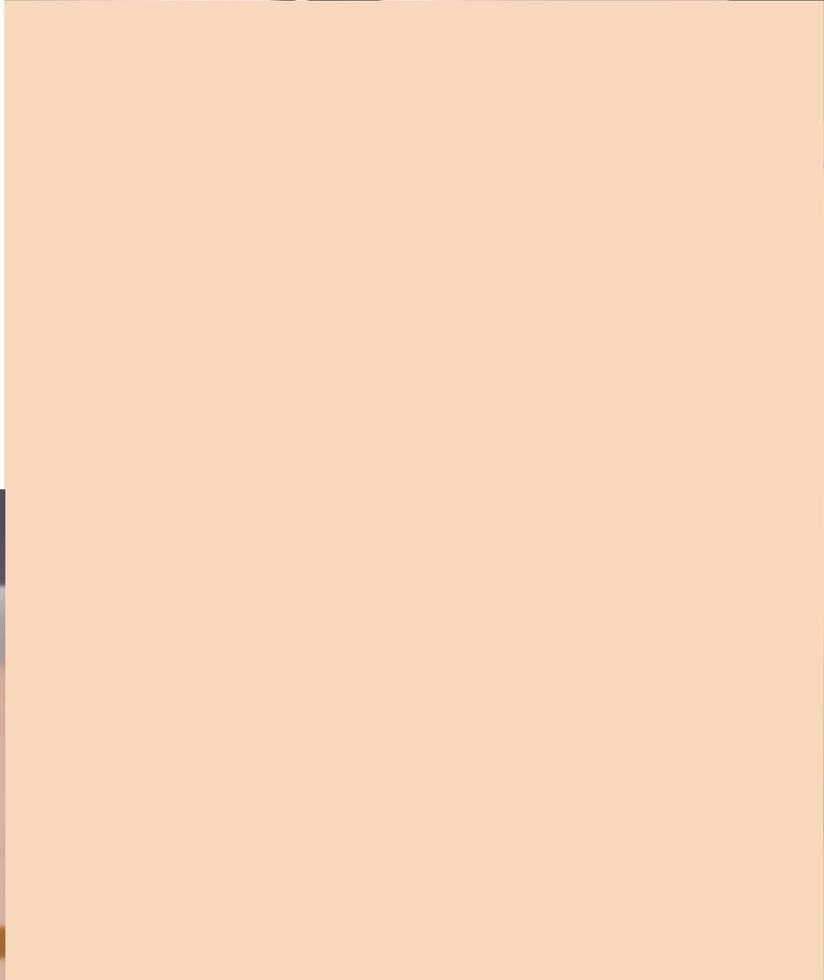
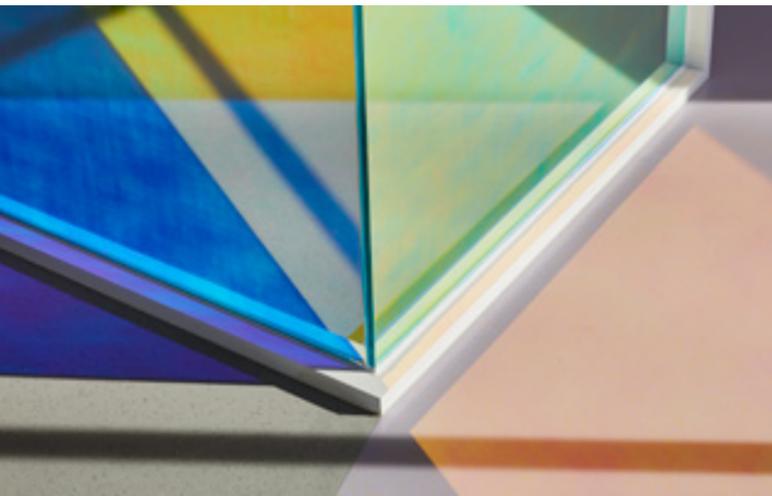
Lend a sense of wonder and inspiration to the office, using playful and poetic immersive installations that inspire and refresh the workforce

3

Promote positive technological interactions with intuitive interfaces that enhance the environment in nuanced, sensitive and unobtrusive ways

4

Harness the evolving qualities of natural light, selecting materials that adapt, respond, refract and enhance



Opposite from left
ambience office, Victoria,
by Studio Y. Photography
by Ben Glezer

Tense by Panter&Tourron at Milan
Design Week 2019. Photography
by Jagoda Wisniewska

Clockwise from above left
Cyanometer by Marjan van Aabel,
for Swarovski Crystal Palace

Dawn to Dusk lamp
by Haberdashery

Rise wireless lamp by LAYER for
nolii. Image courtesy of LAYER

FranklinTill
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