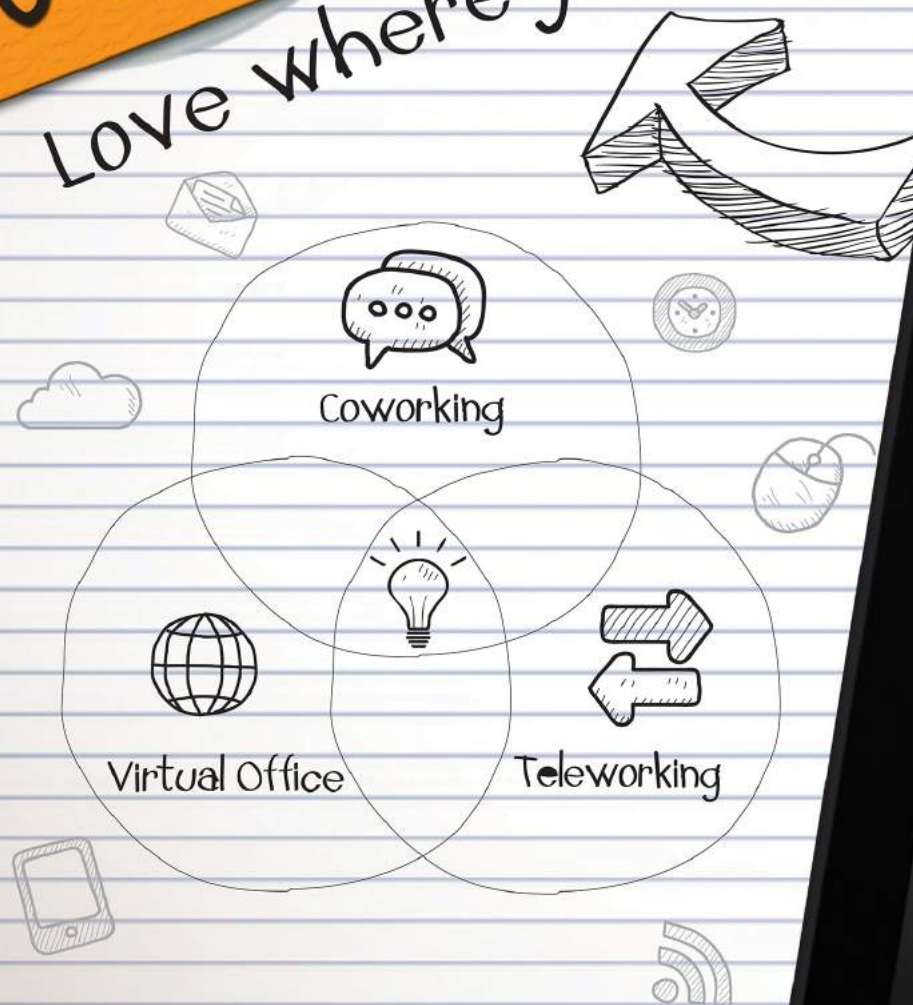


OUT OF THE OFFICE

Love where you work!



Carlos Gonçalves

Foreword:

Ray Lindenberg and José Alberto de Carvalho



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Founder and CEO of the Avila Business Centers and Avila Coworking, with headquarters in Lisbon. Conceived and developed the myOffice app, the first worldwide virtual office application for mobiles. He's International Director of the Global Workspace Association and regularly invited to conferences about the new entrepreneurial organization models, namely Virtual Office, Coworking and Teleworking.



INTRODUCTION

Larry Page, Google's CEO, recently stated that modern society did not need to work as frenetically to guarantee the needs of people and accepting that the 40 hour working week might have its days numbered. Companies such as Google along with other multinationals are adopting flexible working models as a means of not only rationalising costs but also raising levels of productivity and employee satisfaction through a better balance between personal and professional lives through enabling them to work where they feel most comfortable.

Working models and practices accompany the evolution of society and recent studies forecast that 40% of the labour force in the United States will be made up of freelancers in 2020 and hence somewhere just over 60 million persons. [1]

This new paradigm has fostered the creation of a new concept for the "Office" that is portrayed in this book through real cases and case studies of the companies and individuals who are leading the way in adopting these new models as an alternative to traditional working environments.

Whilst we cannot foresee the future, we can identify underlying trends – and the combination between the Virtual Office, Coworking and Teleworking does seem the formula responding to the needs of both the modern economy and the new generations of professionals.

I have no doubt that the physical space shall always exist and in-person contacts between persons will remain important in professional relationships and from this perspective approach these "new working spaces" and the challenges they face in this era of collaboration but in which privacy commonly gets overlooked.

This is no technical manual. It is a book packed with inspiring stories told in the first person that invite you to voyage and experience this brave new world. Welcome on board. I hope you enjoy the journey!

Carlos Gonçalves



FOREWORD

'The Work Anytime/Anywhere' Universe

by: Ray Lindenberg.*

We live in an ever-evolving 'Work Anytime/Anywhere' universe, where the challenges of instant, global competition require us to work at lightning speed and in real-time more than ever before...sometimes round-the-clock...to keep pace and not be beaten to the punch. And every step of the way for nearly a half-century, the Serviced Workspace industry has been Johnny-on-the-spot providing a broad array of useful, professional work-way alternatives to meet the market demands. The menu has included the original Business Centers that sprouted up in 1966 - to today's highly popular Coworking Spaces and Virtual Office Plan providers, as well as a variety of other Touchdown Spaces such as at coffee shops; cyber-cafes; libraries; railroads stations, airports and hotel business lounges; plus so many other unexpected places

where a desk-space and bandwidth can be provided conveniently, reliably and cost-effectively so that the growing number of executives and entrepreneurs on-the-go can pop-into and get down to work in a jiffy. Just what the doctor ordered. The remarkable story of the Serviced Workspace Industry can be traced to the advent of the original pioneering Business Centers that opened up primarily for attorneys in Beverley Hills, California in 1966. Not only did this new way of working offer business start-ups a more affordable officing solution - but perhaps more significantly from a general business perspective, it was also the 'Big Bang' that jumpstarted the modern, popular Collaborative Consumption and Sharing Economy Movements that are the darling business model of many of today's hugely successful and innovative organizations.

Way before there was an Ebay, Craigslist, Uber, Airbnb, Zipcar, Kickstarter, TaskRabbit and so many other wildly popular and celebrated Collaborative Consumption icons that started popping up in the mid-90s and burst onto the scene in greater numbers after the turn of the Millennium, there were the original 3rd Place Serviced Workspaces referred to as the 'Executive Suite' Business Centers of the mid-60s, then known as the Fegen Suites - named after its innovator, Paul Fegen - which eventually grew into a private network of well over 200 locations in 26 states.

Thanks to this early form of Business Centers - entrepreneurs and dreamers as far back as nearly 50 years

ago had a place to call 'home' for their budding business that was within their financial reach, as they enjoyed the many advantages of a shared environment, where everything they needed such as the real estate expense of the office space itself, staffing, furniture, equipment and amenities, were divided, spread-out and charged back in affordable rates to the user tenant-clients of the space. It was a brilliant, classic Sharing Economy business model borne out of, what else - the mother of all inventions - necessity...the need and desire to strike out on one's own and live-out his or her entrepreneurial vision and motivations, without breaking the bank...coupled with the entrepreneurial vision of Operators to capitalize on that market opportunity.

The lineal descendants of the original Serviced Workspaces have evolved in many directions during the nearly half-century of existence, branching out from its original Executive Suite Business Center design to include on its menu the more hospitality-based Serviced Office Business Center in the early 90s.

The new Millennium brought us other waves of 3rd Place Serviced Workspace offerings which became the centerpieces of the Modern Workspacism Movement that was gaining a great following and interest - where working at a centrally commuted headquarter office was not so automatic, and the 'how, when and where' that people worked was being reevaluated and refashioned. A higher value was placed on employees' desire for work-life balance, which was gaining momentum and becoming the greater North Star, just as

aspiring to a private office that oftentimes reflected one's stature and status was losing some of its career goal-setting and entitlement lustre, coinciding with the accelerated attrition rates of the older work generations that were taking their 'enclosed-office-must' paradigm with them.

People started to work elsewhere, and practically anywhere, because they wanted to - and simply because they could - thanks to the advances, lower costs and convenient portability of computer and digital equipment, programs and other technologies, coupled with the fact that more places were wired and plug-and-go ready to deliver reliable and quicker bandwidth to support their IT needs, including and especially at home.

This book is a perfect companion to help the curious and the studious better understand and plot their way through the inevitable changes that are on the horizon for our wonderful, high-hospitality 3rd Place Serviced Workspace Industry, as the Modern Workspacism Movement inexorably marches on to meet the demands of the evolving mix of work cultures and values - and rapidly dishing out innovative alternatives for enlightened organizations that are prudently connecting the dots.

*President of WANY - Workspace Association of New York -;
Chief Consultant & Innovation Officer at the Winning
Workspaces Hospitality Group.

“The organisation is the message”

by: José Alberto de Carvalho.*

Over the last quarter century of my professional career, I have worked for very different companies and in very different surroundings. In extreme cases, this has involved a very large scale company, employing over 2,000 employees, in which all of the middle and senior management were ensconced away in closed off offices and usually with the right to personal assistants (secretaries) that both organised their agenda and filtered access to their office. At the other end of the scale, there was the regional delegation of a medium scale company in which everybody shared an open space office and there were no secretaries.

In the first company environment, the dominant prevailing values included factors such as age, territorial demarcation, the “army” under command, thus, the number of persons answering to each manager, the hierarchy... In the latter company situation, the ascendant values featured creativity, innovation, individual talent and team spirit, mutual help, competition...

The former companies were historically deficient and operationally heavy while the latter were historically profitable and operationally agile. I spent time in various company environments in which the dominant norm was open space offices. However, this open space was nevertheless organised according to the history and the habits of the company and

therefore correspondingly immutable. Furthermore, this also proved highly dependent on the technology available at the respective time of founding of each company that, in turn, meant that despite the technological innovations introduced in the meanwhile, the internal workflows maintained the pre-existing habits and organisational patterns typifying the prior technological status quo.

I work in the media sector where technology has advanced at a galloping pace over the past two decades and where there has been a practically constant clash between the old and the new media and within the framework of which the lead actors in the previous regime had to react whether actively or passively to the newly emerging actors.

The media, whether housed in a television station, in a production facility, a newspaper or a radio station, have been constantly and progressively challenged to undergo technological renovation but, above all, to seek out their publics just as people have undertaken changes to their patterns of consumption. And, in sum, they changed “place”! Now, those publics are everywhere. However, media companies and content producers have remained in their same spots. Indeed, from my perspective, the patterns of consumption have changed and thus it is inevitable and desirable that the patterns of production also undergo changes. All of the changes that I have sought to introduce into the working organisational models have focused on new working models challenging the all but inevitable inertia of

persons, their routines and the “previous” technologies: in exactly the same way that in many workplaces, computers started out in life as mere electronic typewriters...

Altering working patterns inevitably extends to changing internal company routines, shaking up the habits of their professionals and fostering new flows of productive outputs...

In the case of the media, the internal resistance to change proves far greater, with a range of benchmark companies concluding to this end: the New York Times decided to build a new headquarters to organise the new multimedia flow of journalist production and to incorporate efficiently and visibly all members of staff, the new professions of multimedia producer, photo-video reporter, community moderator, etcetera.

In the case of The Daily Telegraph, the reorganisation of the newsroom involved a new physical distribution for journalists with the installation of a hub in a star-shaped layout that converges on a meeting table that is, above all, an editorial decision making table and enabling every editor to develop and hand out tasks along the course of each star “beam” and culminating in the multimedia editing facilities found at the extremity of each of these “beams”. Those who truly understand the thinking of Marshall McLuhan know just what he meant with his concept “The means is the message”. Those unable to grasp this will be restricted to criticising the idea and somewhat confusing “form” with “content”. In practice, and however difficult it might be to accept, McLuhan

defended how companies have always been better defined by the way in which they communicate rather than by the content of their messages. Our now ubiquitous digital era, which has ended with time and space, has proven how right he was. However, for the structures of production, whether in a textile factory, a law firm or a media company, it is impossible to redo the working models and take advantage of all of the technological potential available without making changes to the physical layout of staff members. And, in many cases, this also involves adapting their tasks to the technology available. For whoever manages people and processes of change, the organisation is the message: the way in which workers are organised and how they are distributed throughout the space available (and whenever companies contain such physical spaces, of course!) and how members interact with each other throughout the different phases of production proves more determinant than everything else. That is the message conveyed by this book: the need to review, both each company and each one of us, our relationships with working.

We live in a time in which “being here” may involve being further away than “being there”. And that shattering of geographic borders begins with our own professions.

*Journalist at TVI, Portugal

There's no more work/life balance.
There's just life and it happens everywhere, every day.
Forbes, Work Life Integration: The New Norm (2014)

MURPHY'S LAW

Humans get confronted by countless challenges of both a personal and a professional nature over the course of their lives. For all these challenges, preparation proves essential. The risks and expectations shape the process resulting when reaching the moment to think, plan and take decisions.

Founding a company or launching a business from scratch is one of the challenges normally emerging out of the needs imposed by a particular moment. However, whatever the motive inherent to taking on such a challenge, when actually embarking on such a task, the pleasure of creating, developing and implementing the project enables the definition of a path through to attaining the proposed objective. This is exactly the challenge that most motivates any entrepreneur.

This was the situation faced by Paulo Maria on graduating in law in 1999. All of a sudden, without any other means of support, he was out in the labour market and facing his first professional challenge: setting up on his own or

practicing his profession in a law firm formed the first equation he had to solve.

The second option would guarantee him financial stability as he embarked on his career as well as experience within a traditional working environment. However, Paulo Maria very much feared that sooner or later he would become enslaved to the office. He knew of fellow lawyers and their fervent complaints about the immense workload and the corresponding number of hours they had to spend in the office and, coupled with relatively poor levels of pay, Paulo Maria says amounted to the key factors in his opting to work alone as a freelance professional some thirteen years on from that decision. Whilst convinced it was the right decision, the beginning of the process was anything but smooth and could hardly have started off in a worse fashion. Paulo Maria first came into contact with the most primary of all laws in the real world, the globally famous "Murphy's Law": anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.

When opting to work for himself with all the underlying risks, he knew that he had an immediate handicap to overcome. He lacked the structure of clients belonging to his law firm as, quite simply, he did not have any office. As he stresses, this choice was his but very much about starting from scratch. The former law student, at the time doing his

legal internship, had never before heard of “virtual offices” especially because the history and tradition of law stipulate that the normal course of events is to graduate and qualify as a lawyer, set up an office and step by step proceed to build up a client portfolio.

The actual work gets done in a physical space, that of the office. “I was not in a position to rent out a very large space and even less so one with a good location and hence I opted to begin working in a space provided by a lawyer colleague in a room large enough to store my files and processes and where I would attend my clients” he recalled.

Paulo Maria chose to start out on his own but did so in a traditional and shared office that did not make much sense to him. “I had to do everything, sort out the mail, answer the phone, attend clients and the only thing that was not done by me was cleaning the floor,” he said laughing. This situation lasted some seven years and with all of the drawbacks that you might imagine. The office was a long way from Lisbon, the delays in the postal service and the quantity of people in the queue waiting to be dealt with blocked the smooth running of processes, which were at this time only dealt with on paper as there was no scope for information technologies such as email within the judicial system. To take but one example, this meant going to the store to take photocopies in order to save on his own printing costs. Everything had to be well managed to

ensure that the costs did not exceed the revenues, which at the beginning of his professional career proved an extremely complicated tasks.

In summary, the professional position of Paulo Maria only worked out because the turnover of work was not significant and the people that made the room available to him only charged him a symbolic amount of rent. We are talking about the cost of utility and phone bills and not a real rental charge as that would have rendered the business unprofitable. Only thus was Paulo Maria able to manage his professional activities and we may hence easily perceive the difficulties that he went through in his first few years in the legal sector.

However, the law invented by Major Murphy, which the young lawyer very much had to confront, once again came back to impose itself in the most ostentatious fashion – after all, if something can go wrong, it will and at the worst possible moment so as to cause the greatest damage possible. And just as happened.

UNDER STARTERS ORDERS

In 2005, Paulo Maria had a serious road accident that left him needing medical treatment and unable to work for a long period of time. During this time, the lawyer that had loaned him his office felt the need to make some money from it. "Taking into account that I was not then working, I was not in a position to match his expectation and, in 2006, I once again found myself in the position of having nowhere to work from and hence I had to let go of the client portfolio in the meanwhile built up. Without the physical health to accompany all the cases, I was back to square one".

That was when Paulo Maria decided to do some research in an attempt to grasp just what alternatives existed in the market in order to be able to reengage with the world of work. He noticed that there were many adverts at the Portuguese Bar Association from colleagues wishing to share rented office space. There was indeed plenty of offers from persons with spaces for such purposes but his memory did not let him down and this time his decision was different.

After receiving his medical discharge, the starter's gun fired. A new whirlwind of ideas began filling his head: a type of constant brainstorming but only to himself. He felt dominated

by a desire to continue with his project and decided to seek out his own solution. In the course of his search process, he came up against the concept of virtual offices, something that he had hitherto not had the slightest idea might exist. Whilst completely unknown, the concept did appear to be a viable solution at least in keeping with what he had read on the Internet.

Raquel Santana did not study law but her professional career did cross paths with that of Paulo Maria. At the beginning, recalled Raquel, manager of the Avila Business Centers that provides both virtual office services and "renting key in hand office space" in Lisbon, "people would ask, just what is this? But in what way is it virtual? There was very much the idea that the word virtual meant something less credible".

The concept remained broadly unknown in the Portugal of 2006. To the extent that the business began growing and the number of clients increasing, the "virtual office" concept began developing and becoming ever better known. "Nowadays, there is already a general perception as to the advantages that this way of working provides to all those who do not need a fixed office as well as those needing such a working space as the key in hand office service, existing in the business centre, overlapping with that of the virtual office and raising the value of the service provided to the client", guaranteed Raquel

Santana.

Paulo Maria knew that the image behind the person providing a service proves as critical to its credibility as in any other field. Welcoming a client into a meeting room in a business centre becomes completely different to hosting that same client in some rundown building, in some room tucked under a flight of stairs irrespective of the professionals working there being just as competent. Nobody goes into a large legal firm in Lisbon or New York thinking that the bill is going to be



cheap. They are going to pay for the image that comes with a thirty or forty square metre office. They are going to pay for a set of services they may not actually require and are effectively paying only for the guarantee of quality legal advice. Quite certainly, that guarantee comes with a fairly hefty charge.

In sum, this is somewhat like restaurants. Those that have a good appearance convey an image that is synonymous with quality and high prices. In the legal sector, caring about one's image also proves important as clients pay a lot of attention to this fact and hence the grounds for advancing with the "virtual office" initially stemming from an undeniable set of advantages. "This enabled me to gain the support from a credible office environment without incurring major investment costs", added the lawyer.

We cannot reduce the entire "virtual office" concept to a phone answering service. "We never get two days the same", Raquel Santana asserted, "in addition to answering phones, we also have to manage the back office, handle the client portfolio as well as the physical environment".

Lacking the means to invest in setting up a physical office, equipping it, hiring a secretary and ensuring the necessary working conditions forced Paulo Maria into taking the best decision from his own perspective and despite the inherent risks.

After all, the importance of dealing with and receiving professional clients proves overwhelming especially as it is these clients who pass on the word-of-mouth recommendations that bring in new clients and boost the business turnover. The lawyer for whom everything had gone so badly after the beginning of his career was now ready to relaunch his career but back starting out from scratch. He was however positioned to make recourse to a quality and very well located (in the city centre) office for client meetings and already equipped with secretarial services including the redirecting of phone calls. Furthermore, he was able to use the “virtual office” address as that of his own company without ever having to worry about managing administrative staff or office maintenance along with the other secretarial tasks.

“Virtual office” packages differ substantially and there is a broad range of choice Raquel Santana explained highlighting how a personalised phone service does release the client to focus exclusively on their work. This optimises the costs, improves the company’s image and with the added advantage that interaction with the business centre itself helps expand its range of contacts.

Paulo Maria features among the longest standing clients of the Avila Business Centers that Raquel Santana manages. Making the change did not prove difficult he explained. “The

virtual office has only brought me advantages as I did not have to put cash into renting a space that in Lisbon is always complicated due to the sheer cost of real estate”.

In fact, when the demand for business office space confronts sharp falls, when the real estate market goes through a profound crisis whether caused by world or regional conjunctures, physical office space cannot dodge the bullet and commonly proves one of the most severely affected sectors.

Within such contexts, the services rendered by business centres often prove a means of salvation for many companies given the range of solutions they make available and including physical and virtual office spaces alongside coworking.

In truth, many companies in start-up phases or freelance professionals who adopt traditional office solutions end up among the dark statistics of such recessions. Around a half of all businesses shutdown prior to completing their second anniversary. The figure jumps above the halfway mark prior to the third year and with almost sixty percent failing to make it through their fourth year. Contributing to this fate are both the high costs incurred on structures as well as the heavy fiscal burden.

Hence, the way in which the entrepreneur undertakes the first steps proves fundamental as may easily be understood.

The virtual office concept fits in to perfection with the projects of huge numbers of persons worldwide and in alignment with the needs of both professionals and modern companies. A common thread to both the current and future society interconnects different patterns and ways of working: digital mobility enabling communication at whatever the distance through access to the Internet. It was this field of mobility that generated the fertile terrain in which virtual offices have grown and thanks to the assistance rendered by technological developments.

THE GIANTS

The advantages deriving from virtual offices do not only apply to the liberal professions, freelancers, small companies or companies in their start-up phases. Multinationals have long since made recourse to the benefits generated by this type of service.

After all, the key words to this concept are efficiency, flexibility and rationality, with this type of company turning to “virtual offices” whenever needing rapid solutions capable of



generating added value. Fundamentally, this stems from the opportunity to be able to swiftly launch their activities in whichever country they are setting up in, within the space of twenty-four hours, with working and meeting facilities on hand and a telephone service in the language of the country hosting the new subsidiary.

Starbucks Coffee, a company quoted on the North American NASDAQ stock market, makes use of partnerships to develop its business similar to many other large scale companies. That was how it opened in Portugal, for example, through a joint-venture that led to the opening of its first café in Lisbon in 2008.

Having defined the business support format and the partnership with companies holding knowledge about the local reality and able to identify the needs of clients, the culture as well as the best locations, all that remains left is to open for business. “Respecting the environment surrounding those communities we locate in is an important factor”, stated Martin Coles, President of Starbucks Coffee International on the company’s official website.

“It is essential that there is a strong and trusting partnership that understands the market and shares the values of our brand as well as our passion for people. Quality and service are fundamental”, Martin Coles went onto add.

However, this objective, the core business, the mission exists alongside a collateral demand that is precisely met through recourse to “Virtual Office” services. Beyond all else, this enables the focus to be permanently targeted on that deemed essential.

The “Virtual Office” was also the option chosen by the global giant Google when deciding to open up a subsidiary in Brazil. The story is told in the first person by Mariana Sensini, Industry Manager at Google Brazil, through the webpage of the São Paulo based business centre Clubwork Escritório Virtual 2.

“Our anxiety and our spirits were at intense levels throughout the first days of “Google Brazil”. We had just finished an amazing training program at the company headquarters in Mountain View, California, when we were able to witness the technological and human potential of the company. We met incredible and massively talented people: some of whom we had already seen in newspapers or on the Internet, men in turbans getting around on roller skates, young people with blue hair and their Labrador dogs, others sat on footstools debating the most varied of ideas. With each passing second, the expectations gathered still further intensity and my head sorted the ideas in a still clearer fashion”, Mariana Sensini explained.

Having just arrived in Brazil, there were surprises to

come. Emerson, the senior sales manager had to spin out the time spent waiting for consumers and in the meanwhile becoming a typical “ambassador” for the company and steadying the hype from the markets that had already gone euphoric over Google’s products.

Newspapers, magazines and clients, they all had the same question: was Google in Brazil for the duration? “Definitively, there was still a great deal to come” recalled Mariana Sensini.

The office grew from a single room barely able to accommodate two people to a site with dozens of staff. Each member joining up with the “family” made a clear point of preserving the culture of the Google founders and thereby highlighting what remains as one of the company’s core objectives: quality in convenience and in relationships.

The mission was both highly motivating and challenging. Mariana Sensini and her senior sales manager wanted to import the googler culture as then already existing in many other countries. Brimming with enthusiasm, she told us: “I well remember getting up onto the table to affix the first ever banner with our logo on it up onto the wall immediately after its arrival from California. Then came the lava lamps and every other type of coloured object as well as state of the art equipment. Our colleagues in Mountain View really did want us to feel at home however far we might be from the

headquarters”.

“At that time, we only had a small room at the top of a building and that gives an idea of just how we imagined our horizon”. It was the “Virtual Office” that enabled Google to expand and reach out to those horizons. The option went to the most rational and intelligent and, naturally, lowest cost alternative. The “Virtual Office” ensured Google opened up in Brazil and began working the market rapidly.

These are but the beginning of examples of a changing paradigm. And case studies of success as well!

ONCE UPON A TIME...

The concept of the “Virtual Office” was born in the 1990s and went onto gain significant ground in the United States and in Britain. Now, the concept has taken root worldwide. The initial idea may be summarised as retaining a physical address to take in mail and correspondence and handle telephone calls. It was to win over new clients and to hang onto those already existing that these “Virtual Offices” began expanding their services and including the renting out of meeting rooms



Raquel Santana,
Manager Avila
Business Centers

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and offices in addition to the professionalised service structures matching anything on offer to major firms. Indeed, those same major companies also make recourse to the concept and on a global scale as previously mentioned.

According to Paulo Maria, who had as troubled a start to his professional career as any might, the “Virtual Office” complies with one professional requirement, that of having a professionally registered address where he is able to receive official correspondence but without having to have the four walls rented out or bought; furthermore, he is able to welcome clients in purpose prepared and equipped meeting rooms with the rest of the work done at home or in any other place. “On a café terrace for example. Nowadays, with the level of portability and with web connected platforms, portable computers and smartphones, work really can be done in any place and at any time,” the lawyer confirmed. However, receiving clients from various companies and dealing with different questions in the same physical environment may confuse these same clients. Imagine, for example, a client of Paulo Maria, who has a meeting booked and arrives a little early. While awaiting the lawyer to call him through, the secretary takes several calls as if working for various companies and all at the same time. A diversity of persons pass by the client heading off into different offices.

The secretary does not simultaneously work at various companies, s/he instead works for various companies simultaneously and, for each call taken, s/he puts on the colours of the company s/he is in the service of at that exact moment. As Raquel Santana explained: “the majority of clients already knew about this business dynamic. However, there are those who pull strange faces, looking cautiously around them and we grasp that they would like to ask some questions. For them, we explain that there are various companies in the business centre and, as such, we provide support to them all and generally demystify the concept”.

Paulo Maria, speaking about the utility of the Virtual Office, illustrated this with an example of what Raquel Santana says above: “legal clients in particular but also those involved in other activities are used to traditional offices but the relationship with clients has changed. Before, people would make a call or write or send a fax.

Today, the vast majority of communications that I have with my clients are via the mobile or the Internet, which is wonderful as I always get a registration or copy of a document and it’s both much quicker and equally reliable”. To ensure the client feels the appropriate level of security and knows that business is being dealt with accordingly, there is already somebody very well trained and prepared on hand to ensure

such standards are met in practice.

Raquel Santana duly acknowledged that one of the most sensitive tasks within the scope of back office management duties stems from handling these phone calls. “We have to manage the duration of these calls carefully as we do not want to brush off any client overly quickly and nor do we ever want them to feel that their subject is only slowly getting dealt with. But we also do not want to miss any of the other calls that are coming in. Never. To this end, we attempt to carefully manage the times of phone calls that should have a roughly average duration. We strive for a balance between effectiveness and availability in our phone call service standard and in this way meet the needs of our different clients”.

“Correspondingly, whoever works in a “Virtual Office” back office has to have flexibility in their arguments and high professional telephone and personal presentation standards. Hence, in the more critical situations, we deploy a strategy with the objective of aiding the person on the other end of the line, nurturing a particular empathy whilst without becoming a kind of anti-stress support service.

We know our clients are always pushed and tired. We foster the conditions for such people, whether on the phone or here before us, to feel that their message has been passed on and their issue getting dealt with. Whoever contracts a

“Virtual Office” service expects an efficient standard of service and that is what they get” maintained Raquel Santana. The vision of business centre clients is exactly that with “Virtual Office” users expecting high standards of professionalism from whoever is representing their structure at any particular moment in time.

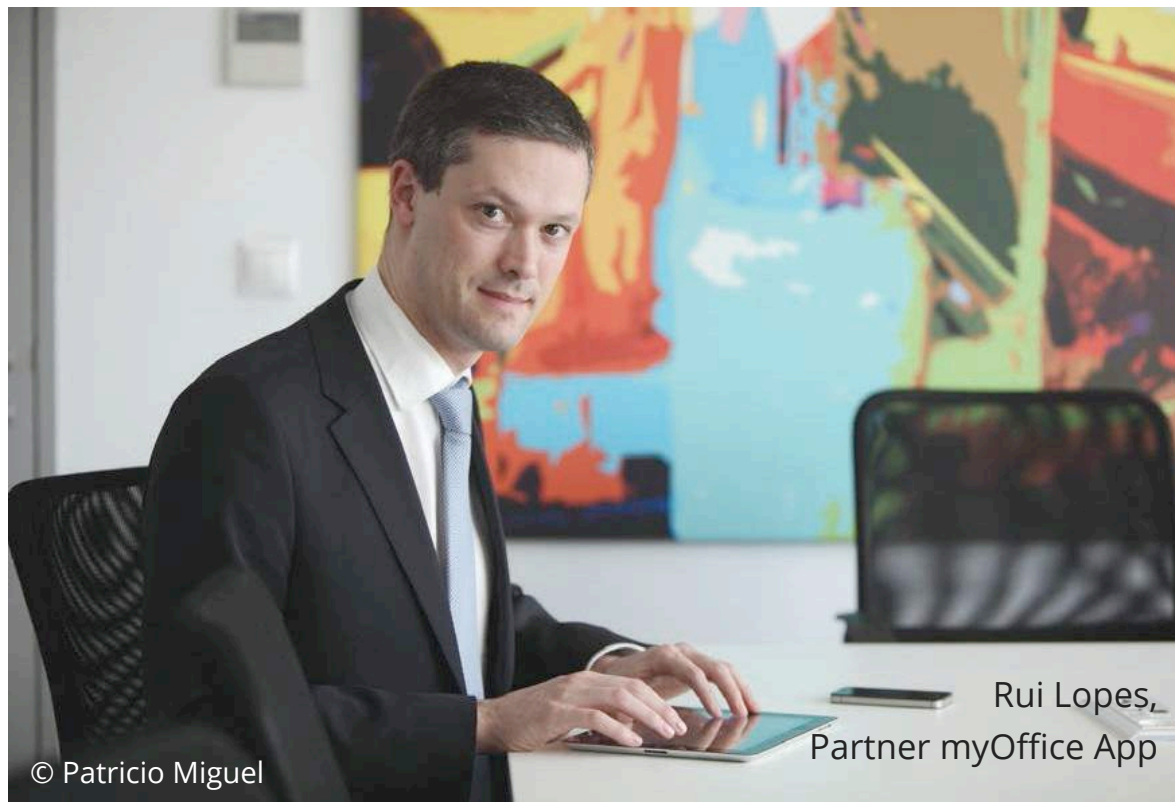
“My daily correspondence is received by the business centre, my professional address and I get a real time notification through a mobile app but I could also be informed by sms or by email. This message also contains a report on the persons visiting my office in my absence or that made calls to get in touch. I get this complete report daily and can access it from anywhere”, Paulo Maria exemplified. The lawyer made a point of focusing on two of the essential points underlying this model of work, firstly the low cost. “I pay seventy-five euros for using the service. This payment is made quarterly and we’re talking about two hundred and twenty five euros, around about that... that would not cover paying a secretary to deal with the mail. If I have to meet clients in my office, taking into consideration the average number of working meetings I have, I would not be profitably using the room and incurring unnecessary fixed costs. Thus, that is another problem I do not have. I limit myself to meeting clients whenever necessary and I have someone doing the irritating task of dropping

everything to sign for registered letters, which I can pick up or have re-sent to my other address. The experience has been so positive that at this time I do not have any consideration of changing and have absolutely no need to advance with any other working model”.

OFFICE À LA CARTE

The technological advances increasingly shape the models, ways and patterns of working and, consequently, influence the tastes, trends, attitudes and decisions. We are referring to an innovative, creative and differentiating concept as we have already seen in this book.

Business centres, as with every other productive pole, have made ever greater recourse to these new tools. For business centres to further evolve, they need to render their



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Rui Lopes,
Partner myOffice App

services on a still more closely personalised basis and efficiency is fundamental to accompanying technological development. Their management teams see themselves confronted by this rise in quality and the corresponding demands made by clients of this service type.

At Avila Business Centers, where Raquel Santana works, the management of all information is carried out based upon a technological platform called myOffice, an app exclusive to this service provider and unique worldwide. Today, the tool has already been deployed at various business centers and coworking spaces around the world and having undergone internationalisation under the Software as a Service (SaaS) regime. This endows the business centre back office to gain a differentiating capacity in terms of information management.

As Raquel Santana explained: "Therefore, the company name appears on the telephone screen and we can immediately carry out a detailed search in various different ways, Through name, for example, and we are in the back office where there is all the data and details regarding our client – name, field of activity, message to be given – we have all of the instructions immediately available. There is a script about what we can say, what information may be provided, what details we are authorised to give out, in sum, everything we can say about the company that we are representing at

that moment.

When a client signs a contract with the business centre, they instruct us on what to say although we already have three pre-defined alternatives. Within these different frameworks, we can and do personalise them somewhat because, in reality, we do not make that kind of automated response as so commonly happens in call centres. Back office professionals that have greater difficulties at adaptation such as, for example, those who have not been in the position very long, they may simply stick to reading from the script. If we just do this, we certainly won't be making any mistakes".

The myOffice platform enables the team managed by Raquel Santana to guarantee a high quality service. "It is fantastic for a reason: there is a very high level of reliability as regards the information getting to clients. Clients know that they are going to get all the information. Any client making usage of the back office service soon knows that the technological platform is excellent and especially because of its speed. Searches can be made to find all of the information relating to the client but the effectiveness is most proven when, on the other end of the telephone, somebody wants to get a message through to one of "our" clients. This is an enormous sense of security as the client knows that we are not going to make any mistakes. We know that we are doing a

good job because we have all the information provided by "myOffice" available for ourselves and "our" clients to verify. As from the moment the information gets registered, the person doing the back office job needs only to click on enter to record them. The client of this service type immediately gets the respective information sent to their email whether on their mobiles or tablets and wherever they may be. There is no scope for any possible failure that in the business service sector proves fundamental" concluded Raquel Santana. The myOffice platform was developed and publicly launched in 2010. The concept is simple: the user is notified in real time about everything relating to their secretarial services. In effect, "myOffice" provides clients with access to all their information, chronologically listed, archived, stored and centralised. This also takes in changes to each of the client's list of contacts or the records received, for example, if there was anybody phoning, the client gets notified and may decide how to prioritise all of the information received in accordance with their own needs and re-direct issues to other collaborators in order to inform them and may even see in real time all such information registered in an organised fashion.

Behind the origins of myOffice is a Portuguese entrepreneur who imagined and designed the application before bringing about its development. Now this Portuguese

application for Virtual Office, a pioneer at the global level, is already in usage by different business centres on every continent.

The Portuguese IT firm Empty Code developed the application designed by Avila Business Centers for the iOS (iPhone/iPad) operating system before WATERDOG Mobile complemented the already existing app with an Android system version. Rui Lopes, partner at Empty Code, highlights the fact that myOffice does not only serve as a platform enabling business centres to get into contact with their clients. “This is a very useful tool for whoever is developing projects internationally and needs to book meeting rooms or coworking spaces for occasional periods of work”. As the programmer went on to explain: “This may be done through the network of partners, contacting office centres through the app and thereby also being able to ascertain their location on the map”. This virtual office application may have been the first internationally but only represents another clear example of what can be done to create simple solutions leveraging to the maximum everything that technology has to offer.

“Whoever imagined, just a few short years ago, having a coffee with a friend in some part of the planet and getting told by your phone that a package has reached your office or an invitation to start a new project?” asked Rui Lopes before

adding that “myOffice enables, on-the-go, the return of calls to clients, getting notification of the arrival of any mail at the office and never forgetting a message”. And all of this, “through a smartphone in a jacket pocket”, he concluded.

This specialist holds a very clear vision on the technological revolution ongoing: “The evolution of technology has made functions available to people that just a few years ago would not have been foreseeable. Who would have said that in 2007 a company would revolutionise the way of using mobile phones? It was not the pioneer, that’s true. Palm, for example, already had some models on sale in the US that allowed for both making calls and serving as a diary. However, that was basically that, a “smartphone” doing the calls, making some notes and keeping a list of contacts”.

Rui Lopes recalled that “when the iPhone was launched in June 2007, some media outlets had published a phrase saying “All this just for a Phone?”. Six years on, we have thousands of different smartphones and tablets for anything that we might imagine and doing full justice to the cliché “There’s an App for that!”.

GLOBAL OFFICES

Companies working on global scales are increasingly turning to “Virtual Office” services. This is not only due to the low costs this type of service incurs, which help in guaranteeing the success of companies in their early phases or freelance liberal professionals.

Instead, this is particularly happening because we live, work, do business and produce in increasingly globalised and hence correspondingly competitive markets in which the “Virtual Office” service, and in particular those incorporating platforms such as myOffice, proves fundamental and especially for professionals working across different time zones.

Markets are global and operate right around the clock enabling free access through mobility and portability. As a consequence, this drives greater efficiency and profitability in businesses whatever their respective characteristics.

Raquel Santana backed up this perception: “our client companies perceive this mobility as a fundamental factor and prove able to adapt to a diversity of time zones with such services constantly increasing... and I note this day after day.”

Currently, the “Virtual Office” represents a key tool for



companies undertaking internationalisation. Through platforms such as myOffice, a particular company may open up an international subsidiary online in just a few minutes. Through access to a database on office centres worldwide, a “Virtual Office” service may be contracted just as quickly.

The world now really is just a click away and there is an ever rising number of companies that, even without any Virtual Office, have taken up this philosophy of “work anytime, anywhere”.

Rui Brás Fernandes, responsible for Enterprise Networks at Cisco Portugal, highlighted how mobility and work

..... OUT OF THE OFFICE

undertaken in collaborative environments proves a guarantee to efficiency and productivity in modern organisations. “The theme of mobility represents a major objective of Cisco from both the perspective of the internal working model as well as generating complete solutions for the business market leveraging this new paradigm.”

This specialist explained how “these new models



Rui Brás Fernandes,
responsible for Enterprise Networks at
Cisco Portugal

..... OUT OF THE OFFICE

incorporating mobility are based on technological pillars such as the Cloud, the emergence of new devices (smartphones and tablets), security and, certainly, new collaborative applications (...). Today, it is possible to use a tablet in the office of a partner or a client, accessed through a safe tunnel to the business's own network, and engage in a virtual meeting with a colleague back in the office and share the state of a particular project on

the collaborative internal network,” he emphasised. This new form of “working space” advocated by Cisco gives workers greater flexibility and mobility because they may choose the place where they work and also the type of equipment they wish to deploy in order to access information. These two factors, along with recent studies on BYOD (Bring your Own Device) carried out by the American multinational, conclude in favour of how this generates greater employee satisfaction and raises their respective productivity and all in addition to cutting operational costs. Procter & Gamble (P&G) provides an excellent example of how a company

may deploy collaborative platforms in productivity friendly ways, raising the efficiency of teams and even their emotional bonds with team working ongoing across its over 135,000 employees spread across 80 countries.

Solutions such as Cisco Business Video Systems, including Cisco Telepresence, have been adopted by P&G professionals as tools for getting in touch at whatever the time and holding working meetings, sharing documents and generally facilitating communication in real time between various geographically dispersed teams and correspondingly enabling working in whatever the location through the logic of a “high-end communication system”. General Electric (GE) adopted the same strategy in Crotonville, New York, at the institution deemed the first ever Corporate Business School in the world. Jack Welch, former CEO and Chairman of GE once stated: “The desire and the ability of an organization to continuously learn from any source, anywhere, and to rapidly convert this learning into action, is its ultimate competitive advantage.” Under Welch’s leadership, GE grew to become one of the largest and most valuable corporations in the world. Today, his principles of managerial leadership and continued education and training for employees continue to be ingrained in the company culture.

Flying a GE executive to Crotonville for a meeting

represents a costly endeavour. For example, an executive traveling a round-trip from Asia for a two-hour meeting could result in an expense of about \$30,000, two days of time lost in-transit, and approximately 6,294 pounds in carbon dioxide emissions. In addition, arranging for an expert to lecture a training class could be difficult due to scheduling conflicts. GE needed a solution that could replicate face-to-face meetings and reduce the need to travel so it adopted a Cisco Telepresence solution to meet this objective.

Returning to the example of P&G, employees at this American multinational are constantly in transit, working whether from their homes or when travelling on business. Their interconnectedness proves fundamental to ensuring the efficient communication absolutely critical to innovation processes and eliminating barriers such as distance and time. The option for a tele-presence emerged at a time when P&G identified its global collaboration strategies as a limitation and a weak point in terms of the difficulty experienced in establishing real time contact between the different company members of staff involved in innovation and that were located dotted around the world in addition to the complexity of communication systems and the exponential increase in the costs of travelling. “The borderless network is something we’re all pursuing in the infrastructure space,” Laurie Heltsley, P&G

Director of Global Business Services (GBS) made a point of highlighting. For a company setting as an objective the guaranteeing that at least 50% of its innovation projects emerge from external working places, the communications network can never become a barrier!

The paradigm has changed. Just a few years ago, the cooperation and collaboration ongoing between P&G team members essentially consisted of telephone calls, emails and in-person meetings. The flow of executive and management travel was intense. "Although P&G's internal and external teams had access to 300 proprietary videoconferencing systems, the technology was outdated, unreliable, and difficult to use. Poor audio quality and low video resolution resulted in low adoption and utilization of the videoconferencing rooms," recognised Laurie Heltsley. The updating of this technology proved decisive to positioning P&G at a new level from the perspective of team working and cooperation on a truly global scale and with immediate results in terms of productivity and motivation as well as the balance between personal and professional lives. The swiftness of the decision making processes at P&G constituted one of the critical factors of success as identified by the company itself. In a first phase, the firm completed the installation of 43 Video Collaboration Studios in 26 countries. "Now, conversations occur more

rapidly, in more rapid succession, and with people all around the world. Video is also a powerful part of the organization's plan to reduce costs and increase productivity", acknowledged Linda Clement-Homes, P&G vice president of external strategic alliances, GBS division. To this manager, "the Video Collaboration Studios have allowed P&G teams to have face-to-face experiences and maintain relationships without the inconvenience and expense of travel. Connections between employees, partners, customers, and suppliers have improved while giving employees more time at home". The results were self-evident: "P&G has avoided thousands of flights and saved millions of dollars in travel costs. As an extra bonus, the use of Cisco TelePresence has helped to reduce decision-making times from days to minutes".

Bill Metz, GBS section manager for external strategic alliances put forward the following example: "We recently went through a request-for-proposal process to select a strategic partner and used the Video Collaboration Studios. We brought people together from around the world, aligned our goals and processes, and began negotiating an agreement without having to bring a single person to or from Cincinnati. "When questioned about the advantages of the new system, Damon Frost, associate director of GBS for Employee Solutions, does not hesitate in stating that "the Video Collaboration Studio has

dramatically transformed the way we collaborate: it's an immersive experience for our employees to be able to participate and feel like they're in the same room with their partners that are across the ocean." In addition to helping overcome global communication barriers, video collaboration has also opened the door to new possibilities. As a global company, P&G needs to be close to its customers, wherever they are. P&G achieves this through networks and groups, as well as through its online portal for open innovation, where anyone, anywhere, can submit their own innovation ideas! "We wanted to sit down, push a button, and talk and very similarly we want to be able to sit down and push a button if we need help," emphasised Laurie Heltsley. P&G estimates that it has already achieved \$4 in benefits for every dollar spent on the video collaboration system. In addition, the company has avoided the cumulative costs of establishing, training, and equipping its own management staff for the Video Collaboration Studios. However, the value gained goes beyond just financial benefits. Video collaboration increases employee productivity and enables them to spend more time with their families.

From Palo Alto, California comes the example of Stanford Federal Credit Union (Stanford FCU), the first financial institution to provide online banking to its clients. As a

company seeking to be very much in the technological vanguard in its market, Jim Phillips, senior vice president and chief information officer at Stanford FCU, stated bluntly "the expectations and demands of our members are very high across all delivery channels" before exemplifying: "for instance, if they conduct a transaction over the phone, they want to see it online immediately". In this case, Stanford FCU opted for a solution targeting "Midsize Businesses", Cisco Business Edition 6000, which enabled the unification of voice, video, data and mobile applications on fixed and mobile networks. "Overall telecom costs were reduced by 60 percent," says Phillips. Operational improvements were quickly realized as well. "With this new collaborative system, we now have self-service that lets us add new users in a matter of minutes," says Stanley Wong, IT manager at Stanford FCU. The results have also impacted at the professional level: "We have boosted productivity by deploying a more comprehensive collaboration and communications solution that ties together many points of contact. Staff can work anywhere and be reachable via mobile, office or other numbers," described Jim Phillips. The unified communications systems served to foster an increasing level of adhesion in the business world due to the flexible working models. As regards this, the criticism from Richard Branson, the CEO of Virgin, of the decision by Yahoo to

eliminate its tele-working policy in effect at the company in early 2013 drew plenty of attention and clearly identified how this ran counter to a generalised trend with thousands of companies in the process of rolling out remote working practices backed up by the technological platforms that are constantly refining their fit with the needs of organisations and their professionals.

From the internal point of view, Rui Brás Fernandes accepted that “at Cisco, as a global company, ensuring flexibility in working timetables is perceived by our members of staff as one of the most valued factors”. This Cisco Portugal manager then added that “around 85% of employees work various times per week outside of the office supported by the same innovative technology developed by the company enabling them to be in permanent contact with the office, their teams or partners.”

Remote working is here to stay and plays a core role in a new concept of “working spaces.”



..... *TELEWORKING*

OUT OF THE OFFICE

Telecommunications are decisive throughout the organisational process and directly enabling options for various different working formats such as Virtual Offices. Each individual tool interconnects and together serve as a whole.

Remote working is just one of these forms. This model provides for work being done outside of the central office or place of production and enables a physical separation. This implies recourse to technologies able to facilitate communication in accordance with the International Labour Organisation definition of remote working.

Working from home is no longer an obligation and has become an alternative whether to small business owners, consultants, sales reps and many other employees in a practice that has already spread to large scale organisations. Remote working sweeps away borders, approaches work in a global sense and with a lack of prejudice as there are no age, gender, culture or physical differences or any other barrier that might be encountered in the conventional working

model.

Consultancy is one of the many activities that form part of the group of professions with the greatest propensity to remote working. We are referring to liberal professionals and service sector companies but not exclusively so.

Pedro Souto, partner at S-CA Consultores, a Portuguese consultancy firm, represents one example of the type of professionals personifying remote working.

S-CA renders support to senior managers in the fields of strategy and organisation. They collaborate with great proximity and discretion due to the sensitivity of the themes. "Our day-to-day activities contain a major component of jointly



working with the decision makers in their installations as well as another for the analysis of information and the drafting of recommendations”, explained Pedro Souto.

This latter facet means that consultants can easily work out of their homes, out of whatever physical office space they have set up there or in business centre facilities should they encounter the necessity to engage in team working.

“Information and communication technologies have ensured the capacity to follow activities outside of one’s own country of origin. From my own home, I regularly carry out supervision of the activities undertaken by our partners in Maputo, Mozambique,” he added to provide an example.

On one occasion, Pedro Souto ended up discussing a commercial proposal with two consultants who were at their respective homes in Portugal, an associate partner in Maputo and the client in London. Pedro Souto termed it a type of “homeless” consultancy services. Based upon the impact of professionals such as Pedro Souto engaged all over the world, consultancy firms such as Accenture have studied the issues surrounding remote working and in the meanwhile finding that such a working model proves ever more strategic within the framework of reducing costs, boosting productivity and incorporating the new technologies. “Mobile Work – Have you adapted your Real Estate Strategy?” is the title of the report

that both widened and deepened the discussions ongoing around this model of working.

Benchmark entities such as the North American Global Workplace Analytics (formerly known as The Telework Research Network), dedicated to consultancy and researching these fields and whose detailed analysis of “distance working” concluded that 45% of the labour force in the United States exercised a profession compatible with remote working and not only on some part-time basis. [2]

Throughout the world, around fifty million professionals opt to work at home daily because their job content proves compatible with this model of labour even while only around three millions consider the home as their main place of work.

These numbers amount to gains to the planet and its environment. The non-commuting to the “office” generates the saving of many million litres of fuel and the tons of greenhouse gases otherwise issued into the atmosphere. Were all professionals with job content compatible with remote working to undertake this work as from their own homes, the emission of greenhouse gases would be cut by around fifty tons per year and the equivalent of withdrawing the entire workforce of New York and all their vehicles from the roads to provide an indication of the scale resulting.

Countries, in this case the United States, would also gain

financial benefits. There would be savings of around 900 billion dollars annually and a substantial reduction in the oil import bill (especially from the Persian Gulf) and by up to 50%.

Remote working does not only aid those choosing this type of model – there are also the environmental and broader economic benefits and featuring among the reasons that distance working is not exclusive to small organisations and has become current practice at multinationals. One such example comes with Oracle that already saves three hundred million dollars per year on property and other human resource related costs. The US giant now has around 50% of its employees working under some form of remote working regime.

Adopting this pattern of work proves all but unavoidable given the scale of its advance. Within the context of recession, it makes still greater sense to adopt such alternative models.

The prejudice previously associated with remote working, once very often connoted with companies not valuing their staff and sending them off home to work quickly gets reversed when considering examples such as Microsoft and Cisco, award winners on various occasions of the Great Place to Work Institute's "Best Company to Work for" award. [3]

In recent years, this supposed lack of "discipline" has been swept away. The global process of restructuring the

economy, driven by scientific and technological development foretell of the slow death of distance with increasingly virtual world based relationships in which computers continue to remain the cornerstone in facilitating the lives of companies.

This is a new information based model of society which has as its obvious consequence a new form of social and professional organisation.

Redesigning the ways of life and of work now underpins the pace of development of human activities with space and time also requiring redefinition. As a consequence of this change, alterations take place to organisational processes and the development of work.

In this context, remote working, given its intrinsic nature spans flexibility in time and space through recourse to information technologies, takes on an extra territorial reach and proving a way of working that effectively considers the new demands of globalisation.

Turning completely off the office is not yet a particularly common practice in companies in Portugal but in the United States and in Brazil, for example, such has become normal. Even while not particularly socially acceptable, it does represent an ever growing trend in Portugal, explained Pedro Souto, a freelance professional who throughout his career has rejected the physical office space and working trapped

between four walls where every day follows the same pattern. Already by the 1990s, there were companies deploying the Hot-desking system involving the usage of the same desk by various different persons with a locker for storing one's personal items with all meeting rooms subject to pre-booking.

The case of Pedro Souto is the most illustrative example when applied to a particular pattern of work. Understanding that the tasks he engages in and how he schedules and goes about completing them, in parallel with the location where they are being handled, whether in a business centre or at the client, thus becomes obligatory. "People are not working at home; People are working in their office at home, in a space physically isolated from the family environment". According to Pedro Souto, this distinction proves highly important in order to be able to gain good levels of productivity alongside a balance with the personal and family routines.

However, this model of work extends without any restriction whatsoever to practically any profession that does not require travel to a specific physical space. Designers, journalists, commercial sales or marketing professionals, lawyers, doctors, managers, programmers, a potentially unending list of professions that might opt to take up the remote working model.

This is not only a model in itself but also able to

subsequently provide benefits especially as regards establishing a balance between one's professional and one's private life. The model of work cuts down stress, raises wellbeing, enables greater availability to the family, eases on the concerns over parking spaces after traffic has meant a lengthy delay on the morning's commute, driving reductions in costs as well as opening the scope for being one's own "boss" with all the positives that such may imply.

Making it possible to work without interruptions, controlling one's own rhythm and pace of work, we correspondingly end up with more free-time for whatever the end purpose we choose. It also makes sense to look at the other side of the coin. Will every employee be able to adapt to remote working regimes?

There are millions who are unable to work from home quite simply because they cannot manage to erect any barrier and separate off the personal life from the professional. Such discipline is hard to impose with the routines difficult to avoid, concentration gets lost and people begin feeling isolated, feel the need to get out, to see, to contact, in sum, to socialise, to change and break routines. The option, par excellence, for such persons is coworking, a model that as we shall see simultaneously interconnects with and depends on while also empowering the "Virtual Office" model and, in this case along

with remote working. A model that allows, beyond all else, for expanding, deepening and strengthening networking between professionals from diverse sectors. The idea proves easily graspable: whenever convenient, professionals work from home, whenever feeling the need to be in contact with other persons or only to change the environment or seek out a place that fosters self-creativity, working in a coworking environment where there is also contact with the secretarial team, the opportunity to pick up correspondence and, in effect, draw upon one of the models approached in this book, the “Virtual Office”.

However, the list of professional activities susceptible to recourse to this working model proves so extensive that it is beyond our scope here. There are those leading the way and believe that work should be done at home and not in the office.

Is there a single ideal model of work or would such a model only ever result from combining various forms of work?

M & M

“The Managers and the Meetings” is how Jason Fried encapsulates what basically happens when working in an office all day. This simply refers to the amount of time spent in meetings and with managers. Jason enquires as to whether the true problems do not lie in the office itself? [4]

He raises this question in many of the speeches he gives around the world and says that the real problems stem from what he would like to label M & M.

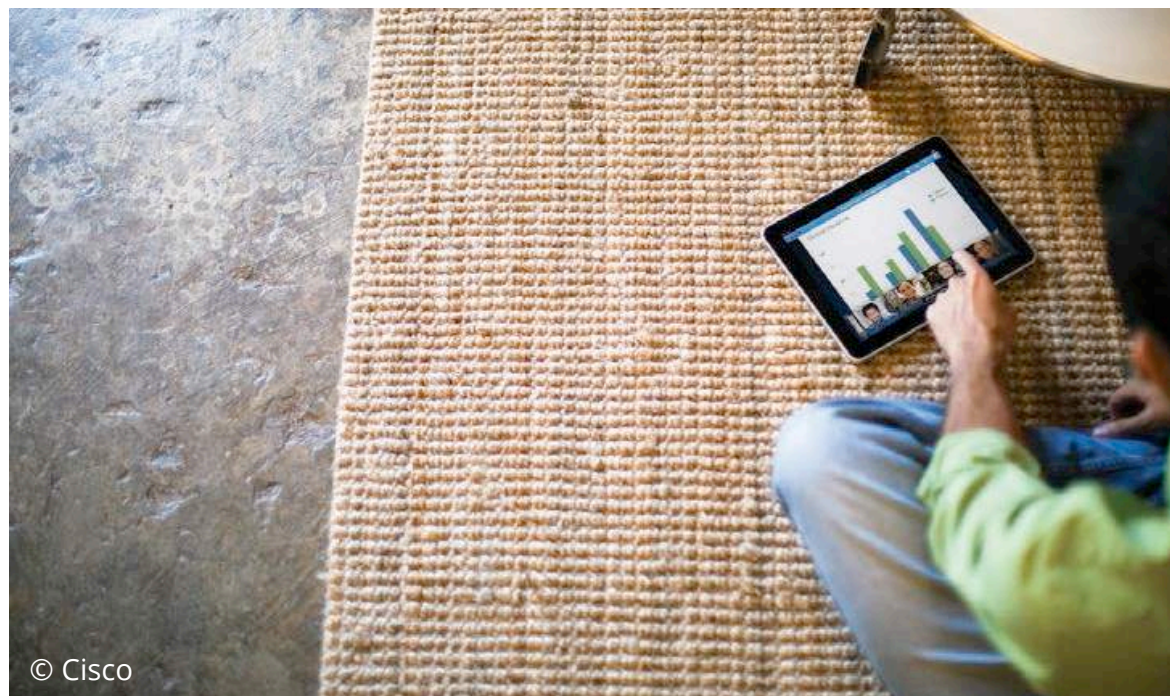
This entrepreneur, with a significant reputation worldwide for his ideas about restructuring working models, conveys a vision that ends up proving a revolutionary all or nothing. He explains that this is because, in his opinion, “work doesn’t happen at work”.

Before going any further, we should point out that Jason Fried, is a co-founder and president of 37 Signals, a company with its headquarters in Chicago, United States of America, which among other things builds productivity based web tools.

Jason is American and lives in a competitive society in an extremely competitive and global sector. His motto is: “intentional competitiveness is the minimum”. He is also the co-author of publications approaching new forms of carrying

out work and creativity.

With a background in Finance from the University of Arizona, he was a creative director with web design firms prior to founding 37 Signals. The author of various books on business, he is also a dedicated blogger on such themes. He does not display any doubts when affirming that there are various errors in the traditional management models of companies. "Everything becomes priority and, therefore, nothing has priority. Thus, what matters is defining priorities. It is difficult to work at work, they don't let us get on with it!" he affirmed. Jason Fried believes that offices are practically overwhelmed by interruptions, in the majority, involuntary.



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People prefer to get on with their work early in the morning or at night or even taking work home at the weekends, he went on to explain.

This does not stem from any conscious option of employees of the company but something emerging out of the error that the structure of their places of work cram them into. A new question then gets posed: are people able to produce? The response is yes, but...

If people were able to work uninterrupted, they would work better. Interruptions are the greatest enemy of productivity and creativity because the work gets adapted to these interruptions whether colleagues telling jokes, phones ringing, the aforementioned "M & M". "Managers calling meetings at any instant. You get into the office, turn on the computer and then immediately after we have a one hour meeting. If you feel the meeting was a waste, then you go out for lunch. When you get back, you check on the social networks and chit-chat with colleagues, suddenly it's five pm and nothing was done of what really should have got done," exemplified Jason Fried.

One question is productivity while another is whether or not people get satisfaction from their place of work because the day-to-day interruptions cannot be eliminated in and of themselves.

This is a transversal line to the thinking of Jason Fried: the fact that the changes necessary are not all in the range of the members of staff. Companies themselves may engage in improvements to their working philosophy in overall terms. This primarily avoids actions outside of due context by managers and leaders and along with those endless and generally non-productive meetings. The work of the group involves interrupting the work of others. Managing is synonymous with interrupting: wanting to know what is the phase of some working situation, whether this or that is ready yet, calling meetings to find out what is being done and how, interrupting and interrupting was how he highlighted this in an interview with the Brazilian Época magazine.

The somewhat fundamentalist idea of Jason involves understanding how companies run, through their senior management, a type of police force inspecting the tasks done by members of staff. "In my company, we do not need directors, the employees manage their own work. If we need help, we look for somebody on the floor above," he added. We might claim that the positions he takes would lead to some form of structural anarchy but Jason Fried contradicts this idea: "it is not the type of control or payback that is going to make these employees play their role or rather determine the interest that they have in it. When interested in getting the job

done, they do so. In order to ascertain whether the work is done as planned (planning is fundamental), simply monitor the level of productivity, the meeting of the deadlines and the remaining assumptions".

For such reasons, entrepreneurs and professionals perceive advantages in working from home in the majority of cases even while clearly depending on the type of person and the house they live in. There are those preferring isolation and solitude to gain concentration but many such people will only ever find a thousand and one sources of distraction at home: children, the dog, television, the postman, the cleaner, the vacuum cleaner. Jason recognises that for the majority of people working from home would not prove productive apart from on an occasional basis perhaps once per week or twice a month.

Less may be more. More may not always necessarily prove better. Less is always an option for improving the life of each person. Working less and better not only means having fewer fellow collaborators but also ensures a greater sense of commitment.

In fact, the business philosophy of the moment only contemplates the option of "more" that Jason Fried so detests: growing faster, selling more, producing more, making more profit.

Of course, there is every due importance to growing, selling and making profits, he duly acknowledges but on many occasions we end up being dishonest with the projects in our personal lives because of this. “Everybody admires successful workaholics as if some contemporary heroes but they all have their own Achilles’ heel. The true heroes are already at home because they found a swift and practical way of resolving their problems and doing their work, completing their tasks and attaining their objectives”, Jason Fried concluded.

The recent decision from Yahoo to end its remote working program raised some important questions regarding the implementation of flexible working policies. Each company is unique and therefore as is its culture as a working environment. The remote working critics take concern with the fact of Yahoo’s members of staff not being as productive when working outside of the office. They correspondingly state that to gain the maximum from employees and the highest possible levels of communication, team members need to be working side by side. Catherine Gall, director of research at Steelcase Workspace Futures, defended that “this may be true in some cases but the benefits of a flexible and well designed working policy greatly outweigh their disadvantages”.

Based upon a century of research on how to set up the most effective working environments that best support the

productivity of employees while fostering collaboration and innovation, Steelcase maintains that it is crucial to give employees choice and control over where and how they work. This boosts their capacities and enables them to choose working ambiances that play to the advantage of their own personal productivity. This in no way means that all people shall suddenly opt for remote working. A recent study by Steelcase found that even in companies with flexible working policies, the majority of professionals continue to go into their place of work. These professionals believe that the office is the best place for getting work done. Over 70% of respondents affirmed that the office was the best place for interacting with colleagues with 40% maintaining that the office provided access to the tools and technology necessary to their jobs. [5]

The Steelcase consultant added that “workers still have a long way to go. Nowadays, many people are working in new businesses and in ‘non-conventional’ businesses. Their needs are different and more complex than ever”. Despite this reality, the Steelcase study concluded that two out of every three workers feel that their working environments do not provide for any great variety of activities.

The key is to provide options and appropriate choices. Many people enjoy working in open and shared spaces that stimulate their collaboration and creativity. Others prefer to

..... OUT OF THE OFFICE

work in the quiet whether found in the office or at home. However, the majority need a blend of both depending on the type of work being undertaken alongside their own personal preferences. Effective working policies endow the right



Catherine Gall,
Director of
Research
Steelcase
Workspace
Futures

..... OUT OF THE OFFICE

combination of spaces and solutions to enable employees to work more productively. An effective working policy should provide both collaborative spaces and quiet environments within the workplace as well as the opportunity to work from home and to go off “camping” in what the sociologist Ray Oldenburg called “third locations” – cafés, book stores, coworking facilities and other locations away from both the home and the office.

In enabling employees to approach different types of tasks in the environments most appropriate to their completion, there is a strong probability of boosting the productivity and the energy of those engaged in them – to provide an example, 90% of professionals surveyed held that a pleasant view out of the window proved very important to their productivity levels. Clearly, monitoring the productivity of staff remains important and should there be any decrease when working from home then the company duly needs to make changes.

However, above all else, giving employees the opportunity to choose and control their working environments will serve to enhance and not hinder productivity.

THE CLOUD

Technologies have done a great deal to facilitate the remote working model and especially cloud computing. Intelligent phones made their debut in the 1980s before going viral at the beginning of the 21st century. Thirty years on, always a long period for technology, the electronic evolution and the development of the processing capacities contained in devices has further shaped this model more than ever. What is good today, will tomorrow be so very much better.

Solutions for connecting up to the Internet have evolved at an ever faster pace.

This technological development has meant the creation of devices with ever more powerful processing capacities and increasingly portable and thereby enhancing individual mobility. With this attribute, all that becomes necessary is access to the network.

Accessing the Internet means reaching whatever the content is placed on that network in any place and at any time. This has long since ceased to be a major obstacle.

Mobile Internet traffic has grown exponentially and especially when compared with the early days of fixed Internet access and revealing the trends towards utilisation in a

constantly changing world. We find that whoever gains access to the means necessary to mobile working makes recourse to such means and representing an increasingly explored approach.

"If we take a look at the trends in recent years, with the democratisation of broadband, whether for fixed or mobile access – as is the case of 3G/4G fibre networks –, we may say that remote working (through video, voice, instant messaging, remote presence and sharing content) is now available beyond offices," stated Miguel Louzeiro, responsible for the field of Collaboration at Cisco Portugal.

This specialist highlighted how "nowadays, remote working is greatly facilitated to the extent there is access to devices such as PCs, laptops, tablets, notebooks or smartphones providing simplified platforms with the best resolutions and unifying the other processes of communication."

Detailing his experience in the company, he stressed the fact that "at Cisco, this already represents an essential working tool. Not making remote working on behalf of the organisation available may, today, negatively influence the attraction of top new employees along with the retention of talent".

His vision is very clear: "Definitively, remote working is not a fashion or a trend but rather a means of making employees

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more productive and satisfied with the flexibility provided.”

The range of solutions is vast.

The appearance of shared servers, for example, boosts working models such as the “Virtual Office” or remote working.



Miguel Louzeiro,
responsible for
Collaboration
at Cisco Portugal

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The Cloud, in effect, is a service and follows the pattern of these working models with its low cost. The shared servers are paid for but running your own server costs so very, very much more. There is the maintenance of the servers, the software licenses, the installation of software. The scope for security breaches becomes vastly greater. Cloud based servers run the most advanced and expensive security systems, that is a fact, but they are also accessible to everybody exactly because they are shared. Each user pays for utilisation and many millions of users ensure this remains a low cost service. The Cloud has come to revolutionise the concept of shared working.

Despite being virtual, it does exist. There are physical disks distributing information. Users do not know where their data is getting stored: as likely to be in Paris as in Johannesburg. The network, distributing the information, functions in accordance with the place the user is accessing from.

We refer to cloud computing as the way of distributing information but it also provides a backup of this information taking into account that it is distributed between a great many of “us”. This revolutionary technological tool ensures that the time taken to access information tends to become identical wherever you might be in the world and at any moment as the data is stored in an intelligent fashion, as stated, storing a copy

in geographically different sites. The dash to the Virtual Cloud began a long time ago. Google and IBM launched the first major offensive to control what the specialists call the new digital frontier or in technical terms, the Information Cloud. This is not science fiction. This is pure technological reality that emerged out of the research laboratories to enter the corporate world while also extending to domestic computers.

The Cloud concept first emerged in the 1970s when scientists perceived how the development of the Internet and communication networks would end up establishing a virtual environment without either rulers or borders and within which software and information would circulate within the reach of any user.

The first major corporate investment in the Cloud concept came from Google that in 2002 began developing text publishing “programs,” e-schedules, email and agendas that would neither be downloaded nor stored in computers as is the case with the Word, Excel and Outlook programs from Microsoft, for example. Jeff Marusak, of the Cisco Collaboration Marketing Team, shared his experience of implementing a Cloud Computing project at Coraid, an American IT company with 170 members of staff: “Coraid is using Cisco WebEx Telepresence to put colleagues at the engineering centre in California in contact with the support and development teams

located in the state of Georgia.”

The professionals participate weekly in meetings where they are “comfortably sat in two halves of the same room and separated only by a screen and the Internet,” Kevin Brown, CEO of Coraid affirmed. With its technology based upon the “telepresence as a service” model, the experience of employee cooperation via video in the Cloud expanded beyond the working environment bringing together complete teams and approximating cultures that, otherwise, would only have proven possible by people meeting in person.

Another means of Cloud based cooperation comes from



WebEx Meetings, “based on which the Coraid engineers share designs, presentations and other content with their colleagues and clients all the while holding telepresence meetings”, exemplified Jeff Marusak. Recourse to these tools results in the swift sharing of content, helping in this case Coraid, to obtain a faster time-to-market. In addition, this type of technology gets easily integrated into CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems and generating more leads to the respective firm. Just like this, there are various cloud based solutions susceptible to implementation with a balanced cost-benefit ratio and without any interruptions to company activities. The Cloud enables fast start ups, without any maintenance teams and eliminating the need for specialist IT staff.

According to Kevin Brown, “if we had to stop, slow down or redesign the way in which our IT systems work, it would have been a disaster because of all of the costs that this would imply. To us, the Cloud was determinant in terms of both scale and speed.” The programs placed on the Cloud are in some cases free and access is available from anywhere. Hence, the emergence of the Information Cloud concept was but a short step. Information available on a network, accessible from any place and potentially free of any property rights.

In Germany, scientists have begun studying the social and

cultural consequences of the Information Cloud. The informative architecture of the Cloud explores the relationships that persons may establish based upon usage of personal systems of communication very similar to mobile phones. A study undertaken by the Technological University of Darmstad, Germany, found that these personal communication devices dispense with the need for centralised control over mobile devices and do not depend on the Internet.

The most revolutionary of all the ideas put forward by this study stems from the information capacity of each individual growing in proportion with the number of persons that enter into the scope of their respective platforms. This may signify a new and radical advance in the decentralisation of the flows exchanging information.

Communication between people is a natural need and will not stop being so. This has always been the case down through time. However, there are emerging ever faster and more efficient and accessible means of doing so. This is the democratisation of communication. The greater capacity for processing the data delivered and the means for storage and accessing this in an easy and cheap fashion have become fundamental. It is now possible to receive flows of data and greater quantities of information. The capacity to distribute

and deliver contents to data and voice communication terminals, such as smartphones for example, enables the experience of those accessing the data to still further improve. Diverse studies point to projections stating that the global marketplace in 2020 will have over 2.5 billion people connected to the network and around 50 billion different devices connected up. According to the Visual Networking Index (VNI) report, due to the explosion in connected devices, global data traffic through mobile networks are forecast to rise 13 times over in the next five years to reach 134 exabytes per year.

To gain an idea of the impact of this growth, this value is equal to 30 trillion pictures or ten photos taken daily throughout an entire year by every single person on earth. And the mobile global data traffic growth is expected to grow three times faster than fixed data. The motives explaining this exponential growth are none other than the greater number of users of interconnected mobile devices in addition to the machine to machine (M2M) applications due to attain 1.7 billion connections by 2017.

Linking daily objects up to the Internet and the scale of the databases requires a combination of an efficient system of identification and sensorial technologies. In this way, registering data about each one of the things and detecting

changes in their behaviours becomes possible. Furthermore, with the advance of nanotechnology, increasingly small objects will have this capacity to interact and connect up. Hence, the intelligence of each particular object rises with the power of the network to return information processed from various different points.

The combination of all these factors renders the Internet of Things (IoT) concept viable and involving the interconnection of objects in a both sensorial and intelligent fashion. The French company Sigfox is one of the companies pioneering the development of technology enabling the transmission of information via radio frequencies based upon low energy consumption sensors in various objects. In turn, these objects are connected up to a communication dedicated network sending out data via the Internet to the mobile devices of each user and enabling real time access to a set of information now able to be monitored at a distance. The main benefits are accessing information integrated into objects in daily usage and at a low cost given that the sensors do not need regular maintenance and wireless technology may be dispensed with in machine-to-machine communication given the scope of turning to radio frequencies that also bring advantages in terms of security.

However, just how are we going to leverage the

opportunities generated by billions of persons and devices all interconnected with this network? For continuous innovation in this scenario in which everything is connected, we shall leverage the transformation of static objects into new and dynamic things and we may thus include intelligence in the communication of such information and interconnecting people, processes, data and things. This is the phenomenon designated as the Internet of Everything (IoE). However, this IoE is a far broader concept than first appears. In other words, this “new” Internet is the natural evolution of the transitions in current technology – combining the very Internet of Things with growing mobility, the demand for Cloud computing and the growing importance of Big Data. The new technologies and their opportunities are uniting in the creation of a “new” Internet for this new era.

The working spaces of this future will be attentive to this new paradigm and the way technology is ever more embedded in these environments. One fantastic example is the Stir Kinetic desk, the first product from the Los Angeles start-up Stir, a desk that includes diverse sensors analysing the behaviours of each user and providing indications of whether they should work standing up or sat down, and automatically adjusting the desk in accordance with the best ergonomic practices. This product, developed by former employees at

Apple, Nasa, Ideo and Disney, incorporates technology based on sensors able to identify situations when professionals have been sat down for too long, suggesting breaks or advising the member of staff to sit down following a long period with the desk in its vertical position.

Fiona Graham, a technology and business journalist for BBC News wrote an article on where this technology is heading in the 21st century. [6] And, while we may have hitherto looked at more conventional professions, through this BBC Business News report, we gain that certainty that all these concepts, forms and ways of working prove just as applicable to a symphony orchestra, in this case the London Symphony Orchestra. To the same extent as any company needs to invest in technology to make its workforce more mobile, flexible and competitive, the same holds true for a world standard orchestra. There are 80 musicians of different nationalities, who travel and perform worldwide, along with a staff of 75 people who work in London, in the office organising events, artistic management or in the education department. A support team to the managers, maestros and musicians making up the orchestra and often working over a gigantic distance. Technology is vital to the London Symphony Orchestra, which spends so much of its time touring from continent to continent. At one specific moment, the orchestra

management and leaders felt the need to upgrade its telephone network, worn down, out of date and as aged as the rest of the organisation's IT structure and this created the opportunity to induce greater and better working flexibility in the work they are all engaged in.

The costs got reduced and all of the team runs in a more pragmatic fashion, simply, directly, connected via laptops and taking decisions in real time whether in Sao Paulo, Delhi or Paris. This made the organisation more agile. This certainly does not represent, as Fiona Graham referred, "to any unusual scenario, deploying technology outside of the four walls and also within them but it does embody a pattern that is growing and taking shape around us as a vision of the workspace of the 'future'. The technology keeps us constantly connected with the central office because the London Symphony Orchestra office is, to be exact, whatever the place the orchestra is actually playing in at that moment".

HAPPY DAYS

It is the advance of technological infrastructures and the accessible price of software, especially via the Cloud, that is endowing small organisations with the capacities and working tools that only large companies had hitherto had access to. For example, just a few years ago, were it necessary to host video-conferences, this option would only be available to the largest organisations.

Pedro Souto exemplified it thus: "at one particular point, I was trying to produce a tool for managing the programs interconnected with strategic implementation. We drafted a tender, asked for one or two proposals and I left the dossier on my desk. And yet, just about a month later, I discovered a tool on the Internet, in the "Cloud", that did exactly what I was wanting to do and for only twenty dollars per user!"

It is today a fact that companies have access to complex project management tools, entire databases of knowledge, shared among all collaborators wherever they might be and all with low costs. After all, organising processes represents the backbone of any company working without a physical office or clocking-in system and simultaneously demanding self-motivation, autonomy and maturity.

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Discipline needs showing by those opting for this model of work because it does not only cut costs but also nurtures expectations about a better quality of life.

Such a process gets demonstrated in person by Pedro Souto: “the scope for working in another environment apart from the office, at home, is extremely pleasant. The expectation of working on a café terrace on some spring afternoon is both motivating and positive. Let me give you the example of the people who leave the big cities and move to the country. These people go more often to the cinema than



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when they lived in the city. The proximity of things gives them very positive expectations for life. The balance with family life assumes, through this model of work, a very important role”. Pedro Souto gave as an example a friend working for a multinational: “he was appointed as product manager for a geography ranging from Russia to Lisbon and they wanted him to move with his family to Brussels. To which he argued that as he only spent one day per week at home in Lisbon, what was the point in moving house? He stayed in Lisbon”.

This increase in the quality of life also depends on the technological tools now available. In the case of this consultant, who has already done time with the major multinationals such as Roland Berger and Price Waterhouse, the key technological tools applied are fairly simple and lists examples: the software, Office, with its stand of contacts, enabling the production of newsletters, interacting with the database and all of this up in the “Cloud”.

Pedro Souto make a point of highlighting this: “Go to my PC is a tool that I have been using for many years that enables me to access (via whatever the place and whatever the computer) my personal computer. There is also the WebEx app for video-conferencing”. We may correspondingly understand how such a remote working model fits perfectly whether to large scale companies or to their small and medium sized

peers.

"In Angola, we had a consultant on the front line and we had others in the rearguard in Lisbon. While in Luanda this consultant was engaged in the fieldwork, the presentation was taking shape in Lisbon. We spent the entire day working using video-conferencing to close the presentation that was delivered one day later in Huambo after having been prepared in Lisbon. This has already become the norm in many companies," he convincingly affirmed. "What is at stake is managing to come up with a proposal incorporating added value at a lower cost. In this case, it was only possible because the consultant in Angola did not need to leave the country."

Furthermore, Pedro Souto really is one for giving examples and especially when the conversation turns exclusively to remote working and accordingly shows us his company logo. "This logo was done by a company called "Logoworks.com" and cost me only fifty dollars. We did a briefing on the Internet at eleven at night one Sunday because the company was based in the United States even if I did not even know where the actual project manager was. Who does this are companies outsourced all around the world and, in the space of nine days, I had the logo done".

The logo of Pedro Souto's company may not even be the finest in the world but in order to be able to get it, the

consultant spent little and worked with somebody who he never even ended up meeting: "I didn't even want to know the address, never mind the city and I don't know who did it but what matters is that here in Lisbon I had my logo done and within the intended deadline".

There is in every case the need to continue to maintain a network of contacts. And every care proves insufficient despite all of this freedom of action. "Work simply cannot be postponed. Whoever does remote working has to have everything very well planned, there have to be periods for controlling the workflow, which requires an effort at organisation far greater than when we are in a physical working environment. The organisation of processes is fundamental and when that organisation falls short the entire structure may implode!"

An organisation may divide into various different states or 'gangs' in which people do not need formal rules and just need to glance at each other and they already know just what needs doing.

"After comes the tribe, a set of gangs needing some kind of organisation before taking on a bureaucratic structure, the case of the state or the major multinationals in which the information in circulation proves so great that it necessarily requires formally governing and everything gets ruled.

Whoever works at a distance still requires rules irrespective of the scale and even when dealing with the gang situation” Pedro Souto described.

This is a solution, and especially in times of crisis, enabling the creation of employment, new posts of work and bringing down unemployment with lower environmental impacts and boosting the professional and personal degree of liberty and autonomy.

Remote working increases the level of satisfaction of employees, cuts absenteeism as well as other costs and contributing towards re-educating on issues such as discrimination as well as redefining labour relations and stress related issues. “Employee productivity always interrelates with the way in which they compare with the group. Imagine having a professional who, in an ineffective company environment with low productivity, works harder than the others. He is well above the average but potentially still below the average of some other company that works far better” added Pedro Souto.

The pertinent issues raised by the consultant incorporate how, where there are no means of measurement or terms of comparison, there are legitimate concerns over how others might be slacking off or alternatively working many long hours and sacrificing some quality of life. In fact, this is how Pedro

Souto approaches this question: “In companies, there is a more watertight competitiveness issue and that necessarily requires the evaluation of performance and career progression”.

Backing up the opinion of this manager, who has always adopted remote working as a pattern in his employment, comes yet another example from the United States.

THE END OF A MYTH

New York, a tall skyscraper, a new office building evaluated at US\$700 million. Glass windows from the floor to the ceiling, views out onto the Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building. The magazine INC. has one of the most attractive offices in New York and to such an extent that they rent it out for photographic sessions. There, nobody complained about working in a cubicle or the coffee not being very good. We might even say that those working there loved their place of work.

However, all of sudden, everything changed!

At one of the regular monthly meetings to discuss the next edition, the director had close to thirty people in front of him, including all the journalists, editors, designers and other members of staff from across the company.

He breathed deeply...

He communicated that from that day onwards, they would be making a temporary experiment. They would produce the magazine virtually and without being entirely subordinate to a physical space. The idea was to produce the next edition as if the office did not exist. "When the meeting finished, we went back to our desks, packed things up and

went home" – as one INC. Magazine staff members described. The experiment began then and would transform INC. Magazine into a virtual company, or at least temporarily virtual. [7]

The experience left out the non-editorial staff such as the IT engineers, administrative staff and the commercial department; hence, the physical space, those marvellous installations continued to operate, the rent still had to be paid but the savings were nevertheless estimated as in the region of half a million dollars annually. Such a number did not leave any room for doubts.

INC. Magazine was founded in 1979.

This monthly publication focuses on the growth in company businesses. Annually, INC. Magazine publishes a list of the five hundred private companies that grew the most in the United States, the INC. 500.

Magazines are particularly resistant to everything involved in the "virtual". This is a traditional business area itself often concerned with the more conservative areas of business. Throughout thirty years, INC. Magazine was printed on paper, a real and physical magazine that reached the hands of readers through the traditional mail system via the postman.

However, the savings arising out of the fact that the magazine editorial team was working out of home came

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reinforced by an increase in productivity. Operating a remote working regime meant the team was already saving around an hour a day commuting to and from the office. At least in theory, there was this monthly rise in productivity but even were that not the case, the magazine directors understood how working from home represented an advantage as it did not increase costs but significantly cut them.

"INC. has written many articles on companies that experimented with new ways of working. Entrepreneurs, consultants, academics, many affirming that working away from the office, remotely, made the company more productive,



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improved its carbon footprint and provided a cheaper means of producing. However, there were also those saying that making an organisation like ours into something virtual was madness," added Max Chafkin, senior editor of the INC. Magazine website.

What was always underlying the idea was to conclude just how it might be possible for entrepreneurs to generate wealth and goodwill with a life free from the office.

Furthermore, this ensured employees felt free of the subtle look over their shoulders at their computer screens or those "spontaneous" meetings and never mind the fortuitous interruptions.

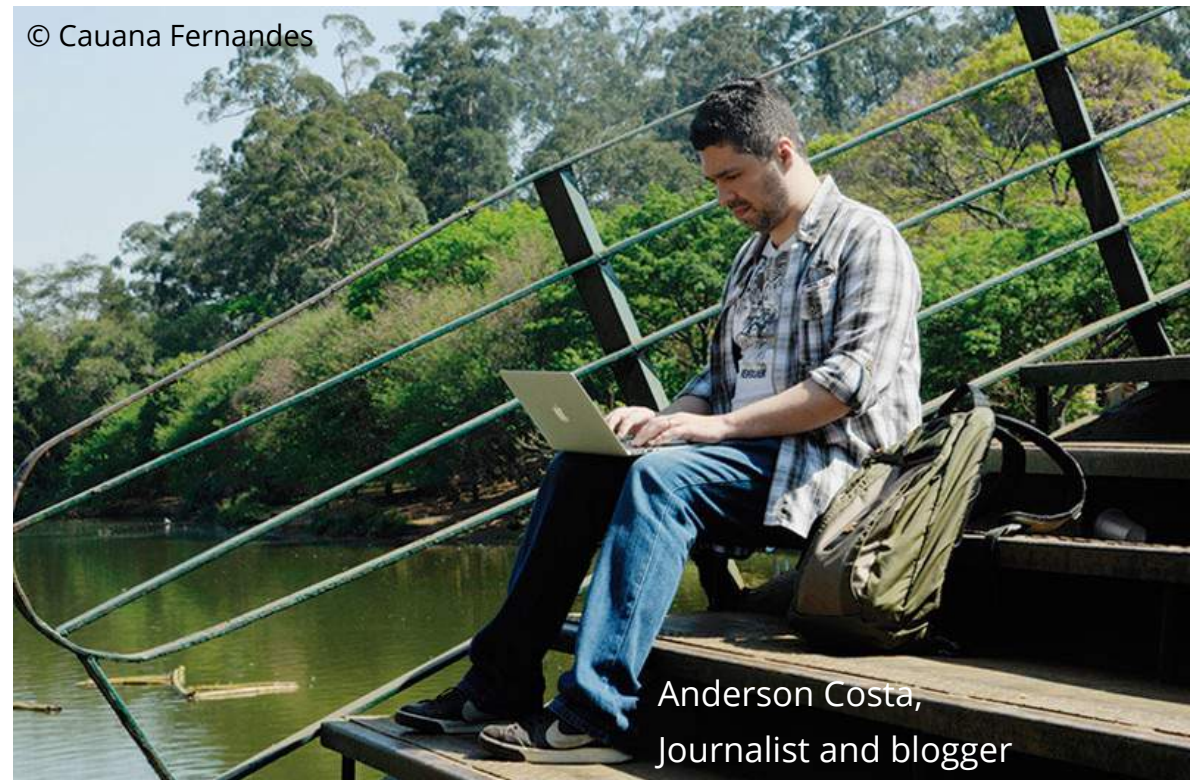
"In March, when we returned to the office, one month on from departing, I wrote an email to my editorial team staff with a question: if you had to choose, would you remain "virtual" or return to the office?" Max Chafkin recalled. "A good handful replied with a strong conviction in favour of remote working. Our copy chief, Peter McLaughlin, who at the beginning of the experiment was one of the most sceptical, had completely changed his mind. It was not difficult. Peter was saving three hundred dollars just in fuel and he could give himself the luxury of waking up at ten in the morning when he felt like sleeping in a bit. Those involved in the experience knew that they themselves were managing their own time, in function of

their objectives and this gave them confidence, autonomy and even raised their own self-esteem.” The conclusion was in sight: responsibility, self-realisation and satisfaction.

One month after beginning this experience, they all returned to their desks and the editorial team was back together. In general, the responses to the email question were consensual on one aspect: the INC. Magazine editorial team said they felt the lack of some things such as good friends, the established routines, however, they also ended up with one certainty: the magazine would be able to survive without needing any office, in an emergency situation and even if having one of the finest offices in New York.

Just as there are magazines able to survive through adopting flexible working models, there are freelance journalists who have never known any other way of working. Anderson Costa is one of them. This young Brazilian journalist confirmed how “the majority of journalists already work according to remote models thanks to regional or international coverage”. A large structure still needs to personally combine and organise delicate details related to the logistics and the running of the newspaper. However, as regards the core material, thus the news, this may already be done remotely and even before the technological advances that we currently experience. One example of this mobility dates back to the

1930s when journalists began conveying their reports and articles down the telephone just as soon as the facts happened. Today, email and the Internet take care of all this. Anderson began working for a Brazilian publisher in 2008. Working remotely has never been a major issue as at that stage there was already the technology that enabled frequent contact and a good workflow. The main advantage was not needing to commute for ninety minutes each way to and from the publisher. “Disadvantages perhaps come from the way of dealing with new teams.” In his vision, remote working is a status that you win over by gaining confidence in terms of



Anderson Costa,
Journalist and blogger

what you do and who you do it with.

Following this experience, he began working from home as a freelancer in 2009 at a time when he held many doubts as to the home office concept. Very few Brazilian outlets took the subject seriously. Hence, there came the idea of setting up a blog “Movebla” to respond to these doubts that he himself was having and sharing these responses. “Meanwhile, I discovered an entire world of feasible and flexible working, including coworking, a model on the rise in Brazil with over 130 active spaces that we chart on the blog”, said the journalist enthusiastically.

Today, Movebla has become a benchmark reference with over 10,000 monthly visits and also a proper business despite not providing financial autonomy. “Movebla earns me far more in terms of contacts, networking and the opportunity to discover fascinating stories,” Anderson recognised. This journalist attempts to fit the blog into his daily routine as well as any other work that he engages in as a freelancer. “Furthermore, it is also a pleasure due to everything that it brings in return,” he concluded.

Remote working simultaneously reflects an alternative that may also be an opportunity at a time when there are studies such as the Intuit 2020 Report that foresees an exponential growth in the numbers of freelancers contracted

over the next six years with a decrease in the number of professionals with medium and long term working contracts estimating that over 80% of large firms will opt for flexible working models for reasons of rationalising working spaces and boosting team productivity levels.

In 1995, the number of freelancers in the United States stood at 39.6 million whilst this had risen to 43.9 million in 2012.

The Intuit study forecasts that by 2020 over 40% of the American labour force will be working freelance and accounting for over 60 million persons.

FREELANCE ECONOMY

Remote working sustains what gets termed the freelance economy. This enables companies and independent professionals to sell their labour to other companies and on a global scale. If we had opted to write this book without having done the research and study that we did do, we would have been able to buy a research study on remote working off the Internet. We would also be able to acquire a few hours work from somebody who might be in India, Pakistan or Belgium. To this end, all that is needed is for the two parties to speak enough English, that now universal language. Afterwards, we would evaluate the research done, pay for it and then set about adapting it to the goal of the book. Clearly, we did not do this here but this option is now open to each one of us.

This constitutes the very essence of remote working and driving an ever rising number of freelancers at work all around the world. Demand has heightened the supply!

This also represents another concept to add to this remote working framework: crowdsourcing, a type of outsourcing to the masses.

Let us return to the example of Pedro Souto's company logo. He purchased it from a company that had a brand but he

might just as well have acquired it via a portal featuring a range of both different offers and prices. Crowdsourcing gets responses from a mass of providers and not from only a single company.

The freelance economy term represents no more than the term appropriate for structured crowdsourcing. The performance evaluation tools already exist. The sale of services proves key and especially because the payment systems for all services hitherto analysed are reliable for both parties.

This string of concepts contains its own self-justification: the market needs to restructure and seek out solutions. Remote working is, after all, only what everybody is doing all around the world and frequently not even understanding just what they are doing. Writing this book at home in the evening or in the office by day and sharing the content with my co-author already counts as remote working. Answering professional emails is the same. How many of us have not already responded to these professional demands in some airport courtesy of its wireless network? Or in a restaurant or some hotel bar? This concept emerges as increasingly modern and of contemporary relevance and, in particular, thoroughly tried and tested. The origins of remote working are not themselves quite so easily definable.

However, the first occurrence of remote working in modern times is deemed to have taken place in Britain in 1962 when Stephane Shirley set up a start up, a then small business named Freelance Programmers that he managed from the comfort of his own home.

Stephane Shirley would write computer programs for companies. In 1964, after two years in business, Freelance Programmers went international with Stephane Shirley then managing a four person strong team. Twenty-four years later, that start up had become a major firm employing over a thousand workers.

It was not just the paradigm that changed: the concepts have also evolved and show no sign of slowing their pace of change. And so much for the better. Whoever opts for the remote working model will still need over the course of their professional activities to hold business meetings and with many making usage of business centres set up for such purposes. However, those same users of this business model, and whatever the nature of their particular project, now ask an increasingly fundamental question: is the meeting in person or via recourse to technology?

In this model, as with any other, there are also disadvantages. You feel the lack of a certain routine, such as a break for coffee, a time for relaxing in the workplace, the

chance to catch up on some business related chat with such interactions capable of restoring energy for the rest of the working day and facilitating communication in the process.

Whoever works out of their own home also encounters a major obstacle: a lack of privacy. Disciplining both others and oneself is a constant challenge and especially in terms of maintaining attention on the work in hand and learning how to ignore non-programmed distractions.

Hence, in countries such as the United States, what have become known as “third spaces” are proving ever more popular, especially coworking and hot-desking facilities for mobile professionals seeking flexible working models. They operate in areas close to where employees live in order to avoid traffic related stress as well as all the time and money spent on commuting. This enables a perfect combination between the work done at home and that done at the client’s own installations.

These centres are fitted out with every facility necessary to making work more productive. Some work stations are pre-booked whilst others are taken up by the first arrivals according to a club logic in which “membership” allows for access to a series of services: coworking spaces, lounge areas for informal meetings, a kitchen-eating area, etcetera. Working away does not now only refer to working from home and also

spans working in an office closer to home within environments serving as multi-company offices. This correspondingly cuts back on the distance of commuting trips given they commonly have suburb based locations.

Whoever works remotely from their home has gained the option of accessing an office, paid for by their company and, while working for the entity, alongside other persons without being isolated and within an ambience charged with energy and networking opportunities.

Turning completely away from office environments remains uncommon in many companies but it still remains a natural trend as both people and companies increasingly question the need to maintain large office complexes with their inherent high costs.

The case of Pedro Souto proves curious. He set out with just one client and has never bothered with any “conventional” office. His office has always been at his home.

His experience stretches back to 1996 and already at that time he was certain: remote working would become a revolutionary factor for organisations. The Internet was then still taking its first steps.

“In 2004, we became news at that time because of remote working (showing us a magazine of that time featuring an article about his company and remote working under the

Portuguese title “Homeless Consultants”). That was how the journalist who wrote the article labelled us. Today, the same type of magazine would not include an article on this theme with such an approach and hence we can perceive the way in which things have evolved.”

However, let us return to the beginnings of SCA Consultores in order to better consolidate our perceptions of distance working.

When the company started out, it had a secretary nearing retirement age. She would answer a mobile phone and take the calls and there was a mail box with an apartment number near her home where she would pick up the correspondence from. Whenever needing to hold a meeting, Pedro Souto and the other members of his team would rent rooms in hotels. When the secretary retired, they turned to a business centre.

The advantage, Pedro Souto maintained, attracting him to this type of service stemmed from the idea of not having to seek out the availability of hotel rooms and the fact of not being dependent on a single person but having an entire organisation for support. “This includes secretarial support for booking lunches or meetings, for example. This is not so much a question of image but rather of functionality because I get the best levels of organisation and service. Signing up to a business centre to make recourse to a “Virtual Office” service

represented a natural development making the decision to keep the remote working model definitive,” he concluded.

In every country recognising remote working as a professional activity, there is a legal framework set out for such workers.

Currently, there is a majority of countries deeming remote working as “the provision of labour carried out juridically subordinate to the company but outside of the company of employment and through recourse to information and communication technologies.” The law furthermore generally establishes that contracts for undertaking remote working should respect certain norms as regards the position or the functions performed and explicitly referencing the remote working regime or the duration of such work as well as identifying the establishment or company department the remote working employee should report to alongside the hierarchical superior or other members of staff that the remote worker may contact within the framework of the respective provision of labour.

Above all, the option or the transfer to a remote working regime should stem from the mutual agreement by both parties and never an imposition by either side.

In the case of the USA, on 9 December 2010, President Obama signed the “Telework Enhancement Act” that serves to

regulate access to remote working by federal government employees and set up a support structure for all persons opting for a flexible model of work. [8]

The law requires government agencies to establish telecommuting policies in which employees are authorized to telework. These policies must ensure that telework does not diminish employee performance or agency operations, and each teleworker's position must be outlined by a written agreement between manager and employee. Employees whose performance does not measure up with the agreement are excluded as are those whose duties require daily direct handling of secure materials or on-site activities (except in emergency situations).

Additionally, the agencies would be required to provide training to teleworkers, and ensure that no distinction is made between those who chose to telecommute and those who do not in terms of performance appraisal and training.

In the United Kingdom, a survey was made of 2,500 civil servants and found that a majority believed the flexible labour policies would be more effective by 2016. [9]

More than half of all respondents to the survey, carried out by Guardian Professional in association with Vodafone, agree that there will be fewer office buildings, more desk sharing and a higher percentage of nomadic workers in three

years time. Less than a quarter of respondents believe that more flexible working would adversely affect team dynamics or that it would lead to an increased amount of time spent monitoring individual performance – concerns often voiced by critics of flexible working arrangements. As one manager put it: "My staff satisfaction has increased with flexible working and productivity is higher."

Returning once again to the private sector, there is one fundamental factor to the accuracy of those who perceived the Virtual Office and remote working as the best solution to their respective business: the interconnectivity, whether due to the provision of services or to the needs existing, between mobility and portability. As we all know, the world itself never sleeps.

Remote working goes hand in hand with the Virtual Office concept. One does not depend on the other but both depend on each other as if hand and glove.

Companies and professionals are not directly bound to these physical spaces but do need their high level of functionality and deploying these two working models drives a sharp reduction in costs leveraged through recourse to information technologies. Teams able to work and produce with greater agility, often smaller in scale and combining to ensure the costs resulting are also lower. Communications, ever more developed and effective, both mobile and portable,

enable the interconnection between decision making levels and the rest of the company, clustering members of staff in remote locations into "virtual teams", with the advantage that their tasks are ever more accessible.

These virtual organisations are based on mobility and this concept both induces and empowers remote working, which, in turn, drives companies to review other interrelated concepts: the management of both space and time and therefore beginning to perceive the set of relationships as a network and as an intellectual environment.

When remote workers need to meet their clients in whatever the place or time, undoubtedly enhancing the concepts of creativity and productivity, they choose to work with the support of the multiple services provided by that Virtual Office. An intelligent decision endowing total liberty and autonomy and without losing any control over the flow of work. Welcome to the era of "your office any where, any time, any place".

KEY WORD - FLEXIBILITY

Experiencing the other is one of the so many different ways of learning.

There are multiple examples of flexible working coming from across the different societies making up the United Kingdom. The activities impacted upon are transversal and do not necessarily have to have any direct interconnection.

In Scotland, many local authorities have felt the need to embrace flexibility and incorporate remote working into their organisational structures in efforts to attempt to minimise the costs incurred with offices and infrastructures, travel and telecommunications whilst strengthening and deepening productivity gains.

Some of these organisations have simultaneously attempted to broaden their capacity to communicate and provide other services.

This change in working habits and patterns, even in this conservative land of mist shrouded castles, has brought advantages: the new working system added on various services such as instantaneous messages, audio, video or web conferences. The professionals at the local Scottish organisations began deploying technology in their professional

practices furthermore demonstrating how members of staff adapted naturally to hot desking, working from home or in different departments of their own organisation.

Three months into this new adventure, Scotland's South Ayrshire council had a new communications system operational with some three thousand users.

Naturally, operating costs fell sharply and especially phone bills and travel related expenditure, which then drove a positive contribution to the management of the local program for reducing carbon emissions.

One of the country's most famous legal firms, with over forty partners and a three hundred strong staff divided between Edinburgh and Glasgow, decided to restructure and beginning with its telephone system.

The firm opted for a technological system incorporating Voice Over IP (VoIP) and video-conferencing.

With its reputation to protect, the system set up had to appeal to both the partners and the clients of the firm and meeting their respective needs, for example, getting into contact with their legal adviser at whatever the time of day and whether inside or outside the office.

Adding value to the business, this new system eliminated costs with both maintenance and additional receptionists, harmonised communications and made them more efficient

as well as revolutionising the data storage process. Hence, the return on investment came quickly. The activities engaged in within the scope of working flexibility do in fact prove correspondingly transversal.

One of the largest flexible working projects ever implemented in Europe took place at the United Kingdom's British Telecom with its Workstyle Project. [10]

This project consisted of the company adopting, in terms of the management of its employees and their respective ways of working, online means of working implemented whether for working internally or with third party suppliers. The set objective: to find a more comfortable balance between work and leisure.

The project was imbued with the sense of mission common to many innovative projects; finding sustainable alternatives to travelling, reducing not only the environmental impact and improving employee attitudes towards the work done.

These alternatives included working from home, working from places closer to the places where staff lived, job sharing, teleconferencing as well as shrinking the company's car fleet and the members of staff providing transport between its research and development complex and Ipswich railway station.

For a better understanding, let us put some statistics forwards:

The online conferencing system resulted in the elimination of 860 meetings annually, saving £135 million in travel costs and overall productivity gains to the company running to £100 million.

Flexible working timetables cut absenteeism by 3% and practically 100% of women returned to work following maternity leave. The change slowed the daily migratory movements between home and work and saving an annual total of eight tons of CO2 emissions.

The reduction in office costs and expenditure amassed to £620 million per year with the approximate 1,600 employees undertaking remote working resulting in savings of around £87 million annually in accommodation costs while also returning productivity rates in the region of 20% higher than their office bound colleagues.

Overall company travel also fell by 20%. The results of the study clearly demonstrate how costs fell, productivity rose and workers gained greater levels of satisfaction.

There are an increasing number of companies opting to alter their working habits and patterns. The stereotype of the traditional office – filled with its nooks and crannies, closed doors (and minds), clusters of secretaries and poor quality

coffee – is steadily giving ground to the progressive stereotype, the modern place of work characterised by its ergonomically tested furniture, wireless and Internet and espresso coffee machines. Nowadays, many firms and companies are regularly revisiting the layout of their working environments, seeking out new and better means for their members of staff to feel more comfortable and hence more productive.

The way in which we manage our desks and working areas says much about the way we work. However, many companies are letting this pattern fade into the past in exchange for implementing innovative and optimised working spaces nurturing cooperation and mobility.

Such is the case of BHP Billiton that decided to step into the unknown and define new rules for its places of work. BHP Billiton banned any post-its on computers at the end of the working day along with scraps of papers with messages and photographs whether in the divisions of its working spaces or on their doors or walls.

Employees with the habit of savouring a coffee or lunching while they work were forbidden from doing so as eating and drinking at desks became prohibited. Because of the smell said those responsible. Whilst on the one hand these rules might be perceived as extreme, BHP Billiton defended this standard of behaviour, which certainly generated some ill

feeling, stating it was a simple issue: the new company working environment had been designed to foster professional mobility, comfort, courtesy and respect. On this issue, the company would cede to no argument. By effectively forcing employees to get up and eat and drink far from their desks, BHP Billiton believes it will bring about the socialisation of its employees in zones designed for such purposes. The complaints did not last long. Within just a few days, employees were already in alignment with the new measures and began working fully in accordance with the new model. However, despite the idea of seeking to differentiate, this enters into collision with the most appreciated traditional ways of encouraging groups of employees and especially because many now recognise the fact that, as they spend the majority of their days outside of the office, the concept of an “anchoring” desk has become ever more redundant with or without special rules.

The rules are undergoing increasing alteration and adaptation especially within the context of the “Future Office” structured around the much referenced concepts of mobility and flexibility. The organisations positioned around future strategies rapidly bring together the resources necessary to carry out modifications to their respective business models in accordance with their various different needs.

“Core” teams begin managing employees from different locations whether from home, a café or a business centre. Some companies have gone to the extent of launching awards for those members of staff who best demonstrate their ability to shape their technical and interpersonal skills and capacities to adapt to such changes. However, these models always derive from a core concept. The rules themselves nevertheless get adapted and applied with some encouraging while others reveal a conditioning dimension but all are applied within the same matrix established by a shared working space. In contrast to BHP Billiton, organisations with the greatest openness in the management of their rules of operation for their working spaces believe that their professionals become more apt at creating new products and services as well as when searching for more efficient working practices among the many specific market requirements driven by the huge juggernaut of innovation. Simply follow the clues. The next few years will bring even more surprising waves of change. Technology, omnipresent and ever advancing, already enables company staff to easily work away from their offices and organisations. The geographic location now matters less than the transformations actually wielded by persons through accessing their resources located worldwide in response to emerging market opportunities. Furthermore, companies now

depend on that particular “instant”, when they do that ‘plug and play’ and in that “instant” setting up their own office wherever they are and whenever they so wish.

Clearly, businesses and organisations investing in technology drives a reduction in their costs across various fields and especially traditional expenditure and maintenance requirements. The equally omnipresent wireless connectivity opens the way to collaborative attitudes and modern communication devices eliminate the traditional waste of unnecessary time, breaking the barriers of both language and distance to facilitate communication able to foresee any delays in production.

In the future, many executives believe that the flexibility of space and movement will render their members of staff more mobile enabling them to work more hours or at least work better in these same hours. On holiday, for example, practically all of us have already received a work related call or opened up a professional email and swiftly resolved a problem that would only otherwise have been sorted out after the passage of various days. We effectively already work in what gets called the “Future Office” and teleconferencing represents one paradigmatic example of this same trend.

Lance Perry, IT Customer Strategy and Success Leader at Cisco, is one example of a professional who opts and prefers

to work from home for at least one afternoon per week and taking up teleconferencing as his main working tool. These meetings generally begin in the early afternoon and may run on right through to nine or ten o'clock in the evening.

Let us see:

Monday, early afternoon and a call to the east coast to discuss business strategy for the US and Canada. This is then followed by a meeting with a colleague in San José (California). Without any airport related stress, I have a brief meeting with a colleague in Japan before a short break for a cup of tea and a biscuit. I then set about teleconferencing with a colleague in Australia and another in New Zealand.

"After dinner, I have a business meeting in Singapore and, when the night is still young, I take a hop over to India to meet up with our CIO (Chief Information Officer) for Asia", joked Lance Perry.

"Now with a beer in my hand, I shut down my computer and bring my working day to a close. Zero hours lost to traffic and free of jet lag, lost baggage, laundry bills and meal allowance costs." And now comes the best part... when asking Lance Perry what he does on his Monday mornings, he answers: "I stay at home chatting with my grandson, normally about the new ways of living and working!" There are ever more professionals adopting these models of work. In recent

research on Cisco employees, half of those interviewed accepted that they were more productive at home than in the office with 80% of professionals considering remote working to be important to their levels of satisfaction. They similarly estimated that for each hour of remote working carried out, the company gains 40 minutes of productivity. The technology associated with teleconferencing has registered major advances in recent years. Based upon a combination of a graphical vision, a system designed to handle a panoramic image and a purpose designed monitor, a practically real business meeting environment results. Imagine yourself sat in front of a screen on which your meeting partner is sat on the other side of the world. The graphical quality transforms the screen into something real, into a specific place that is real at that same moment when we sit down to begin that meeting. This "tele-involvement" is now possible and does enable people to feel as though they are together within the same "shared" environment. The core idea stems from applying computerised vision techniques in real time; pixels that technologically reflect interfaces such as the furniture, objects and people. This channel of communication also enables the projection of information and images onto specific surfaces. The state of evolution is already at an advanced stage and now focusing on developing graphics able to better depict the

texture on the other side of the screen. This may be summed up (and I deploy the term loosely) as capturing, rebuilding and then projecting modular and dynamic images through a network providing for their display at some remote site. Some universities are already researching this technology with many companies having undertaken its implementation.



THE TRIBE

The interconnections between the Virtual Office and Teleworking are deepening and interweaving with another pattern of work, coworking.

This way of working does not necessarily require recourse to a “Virtual Office” but may opt to do so in order to gain greater working flexibility. Furthermore, coworking enables remote working practices (teleworking) even while this concept stretches far beyond this specific reality.

Professional freelancers may work anywhere: in cafes, on terraces, in cars, in shopping malls. However, there are nevertheless fundamental differences between using shared spaces and a purpose designed working area, built and optimised specifically for such purposes. These shared or coworking facilities have spread worldwide and particularly clustering in major cities. The individual need for a place to work has fed the dissemination of this concept. Coworking is a globally recognised designation for a particular pattern of work but is only recent in

origin.

It was first coined by Bernie DeKoven in 1999 and applied by Brad Neuberg to describe a physical space in 2005 after having initially called the place the 9/5 group. [11]

Neuberg launched the Hat Factory, a coworking environment in San Francisco, California. This was basically an apartment where three information technology professionals were at work and would open its doors during the day to freelancers who needed a place to work and wanted to share their experiences. Today, there are thousands of such coworking spaces on every continent.

Autonomous professionals, who work from home and who travel a significant amount do share one negative aspect: isolation.

A group of persons who work independently of each other but who share ways of being and values that might leverage synergies; this, in sum, characterises coworking, a place of work where persons may exchange flows of ideas and experiences. “Working Alone Together” perhaps provides one of the very best definitions of coworking. In practice, what Neuberg sought out was combining the benefits of self-employment without the loneliness of dressing gowns and slippers at the desk.

He rented space from a non-profit organisation with which he reached an agreement: the placing of tables with wheels so

that they might easily be moved at night so as to enable the free space for the organisation's own activities and waited for people to show up.

Throughout two months, nobody turned up and the place shut down twelve months after opening.

Even though Neuberg thought that coworking had died a death, he did not quit the concept. He involved all of the people he had managed to convince of the idea that he still retained and got on with starting all over again and in a more resilient fashion. At the end of two years, his turnover moved into the black. Five years later, almost every sizeable city had coworking offices and according to the Global Coworking Census 2013 there are 2,498 coworking offices across 80 countries.

There is a melting pot of differentiating factors around coworking which slot into practically every niche ranging from the "green" company to those exclusively catering to working mothers such as Mothership Hacker Moms, located in Berkeley (California, USA), which runs workshops and educational activities involving parents and children and fostering the exchange of experiences between coworkers and avoiding isolation whether for the mothers or their children.

After the United States, the coworking philosophy arrived in Latin America and slowly spread to Asia, Oceania and

Europe. The relevance of this alternative to traditional working patterns was the motivation behind the first "European Coworking Conference" held in Berlin in 2011 and annually ever since.

At the 2012 "European Coworking Conference", held in Paris, one of the most inspirational speeches came from Tony Bacigalupo, founder of New Work City, one of New York's first coworking facilities. He held up coworking offices as the standard bearers in advancing with solutions to situations brought about by economic recession.

Bacigalupo gave as an example the devastating experience caused by Hurricane Sandy during which many coworking spaces along the East coast of the United States responded by providing community support services and opening up their doors to whoever needed shelter.

For example, people who needed to contact their families to inform them that they were well and did not have any means to do so, headed to coworking facilities and where they could also access the Internet.

This had been a test of flexibility and opportunity for coworking spaces that had facilitated the transition between full-time workers, freelancers, entrepreneurs and getting new players involved in a temporarily halted economy.

Due to Hurricane Sandy, many people signed up to this

concept, hitherto unknown to them, and ended up changing their lives.

At one point in his speech, Tony challenges the audience to come and join him and talk about coworking spaces and the power that these might have in nurturing employment globally alongside the cooperation between persons and companies and even helping out communities in the wake of natural disasters.

Just as Neuberg had designed the first coworking facility, the majority of shared working spaces were initially conceived for entrepreneurs seeking out places of work as alternatives to the cafe or their own homes. The business centres began signing up to the concept and the corporate world took ever greater inspiration from the coworking model, with companies such as Coca Cola, Vodafone and the Royal Bank of Scotland importing into their working spaces the ideas and the collaborative format underlying coworking itself. Inspired by this growing movement, multinational companies such as Steelcase carried out studies on this collaborative working trend and globally researching the different social cultures and habits and correspondingly adapting the design and interior architecture of the coworking environments in accordance with the conclusions reached by these research projects.

Swiftly, everybody with an interest in themes related to

working patterns and environments grasped how these shared working spaces, with such characteristics, are genuine incubators for start-ups. Here, the social facet, the collaborative and informal ambiances stipulate the orientation. Coworking thus approximates the “cooperative” model in which profit does not form the exclusive focus and instead emphasising socialisation and creativity.

Hence, we on no account may reduce the concept of coworking merely to the sharing of space. That would be overly simplistic.

Pedro Coutinho, CEO of WATERDOG Mobile, who uses a Virtual Office service under a teleworking regime is also a technological nomad with his company deploying coworking as its model.

“People opt for coworking so as not to be shut up at home, to interact with other people on the one hand and as there is a lot of group dynamics on the other. This is that “tribe”, a great interconnection between people whether at the individual level or between different companies that see each other every day,” he explained. In summary, the coworking space serves as a company with small and different companies inside or, if we so wish, small and different departments.

“Sometimes, I compare coworking with companies where I’ve worked. I once worked for a company with 800 members

of staff. I did not know them all and did not work with all of them. However, I would meet a colleague from another project or another department in the cafe and talk to them about my current project and hear about theirs. This also happens in coworking.”

The comforts existing in a coworking space vary from place to place. Some offer coffee, other unlimited photocopying or other such alternatives. Everything depends on the options of those contracted and the plans offered by the respective coworking facility. The safety of being at work in a place and not being asked to move on, for occupying a table



Pedro Coutinho,
Partner WATERDOG
Mobile

© Patricio Miguel

too long, without consuming enough, in summary, proves priceless. And the users of coworking spaces feel this directly in their experiences.

The advantages to coworking are also greater than those that might appear at first sight. As Pedro Coutinho told us: “From one month to the next, we may alter or adapt. In our company, there were four people coworking in Lisbon and a fifth person in Porto. Now, three of them have quit coworking and went to another place, only I stayed there”.

The engineer who undertakes the development of mobile applications justified his presence in a shared environment as about not missing out on what coworking has to offer. “I have many contacts there. Out of there come many projects for us, many business deals get done, many people from different backgrounds with whom I want to share ideas, share projects and foster communication”. Then, another example: “I launch a product and I speak with two or three people at the coworking office who each have their own networks. Hence, and through them, I am able to reach a much more ample spectrum”.

When, in 2010, Deskmag began monitoring the growth in coworking, through its “Global Coworking Survey”, there was a careful counting of those places that were opening and closing in conjunction with the main motivations for professionals

adhering to the coworking model among other aspects.

The preliminary results from the 2014 Survey, presented by the Deskmag founder, Carsten Foertsch, concluded that the social environment and the positive energy experienced in coworking environments remains the main reason that leads people into signing up to this concept, with 71% respondents identifying this factor. Right behind, on 63%, comes the community spirit whilst quality and the comfort of the working space gains the backing of 62%. In turn, 55% of all respondents identified the interactions with other professionals as the main factor that led them to engage in coworking. Whenever questioned about whether they felt involved in the coworking space community, 64% responded very positively, registering an evolution relative to the 2013 Global Coworking Survey that returned a figure of 60%. [12]

According to Deskmag, coworking remains a fairly attractive model in terms of “value for money”: 73% of those surveyed classify it as cost-effective with only 4% reporting that there was not a good cost-benefit relationship to the coworking model.

We should also refer to how 61% of respondents considered that coworking was a fairly appropriate model in terms of new working opportunities and new professional projects. Coworking facilities take on different formats,

different architectonic styles, ambiances and target publics. Diversity is very much one of the key strengths to this model!

New York often gets termed as the heart of the world. This city that never sleeps proves the ideal host for the most varied examples of coworking facilities that are alike only in the fact that they provide shared working spaces. Each one targets different activities and correspondingly displaying diverse characteristics.

Con Artist is one such community, a collective of artists, a place of work and simultaneously an art gallery. This is a creative place, a dynamo driven by positive energy hosting a range of group projects, events, publications, products and everything that enables artists to embrace creative work.

The members join together in this collective for different reasons, whether for the opportunity to promote their own work in its online store or for its location over two spacious floors containing all the tools necessary for getting on with their work.

Grind, now in New York and Chicago, is guided by its six founding pillars: “a level of separation”, “hi tech, low stress”, “work how you want, when you want”, “high sustainability”, “we’re in this together”, “Grind’s not ours, it’s yours”.

Six ideas and six concepts that differentiate this shared working environment.

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“A level of separation” that means only that normally each respective Grindist (or member) is recommended by another Grindist and hence guaranteeing the community spirit and the broad sharing of a similar world vision.

The second principle of the “magna carta” for this coworker community “high tech, low stress” relates to that same drive...

In Grind, as from the moment somebody enters the environment, they are already “at home”.

The membership card also serves as the key to a cupboard or locker but what really makes a difference here is the Flash Gallery: just upload your individual portfolio and it becomes one of those appearing on screens and monitors dotted throughout the facility. A gallery with its contents lined up for continuous viewing.

As in any working space, flexibility also proves an unconditional factor wherever you are on the premises. Whether sat a desk, in a meeting on the sofa, the choice is down to each individual. This is the third pillar of Grind: “you work where you want, when you want”.

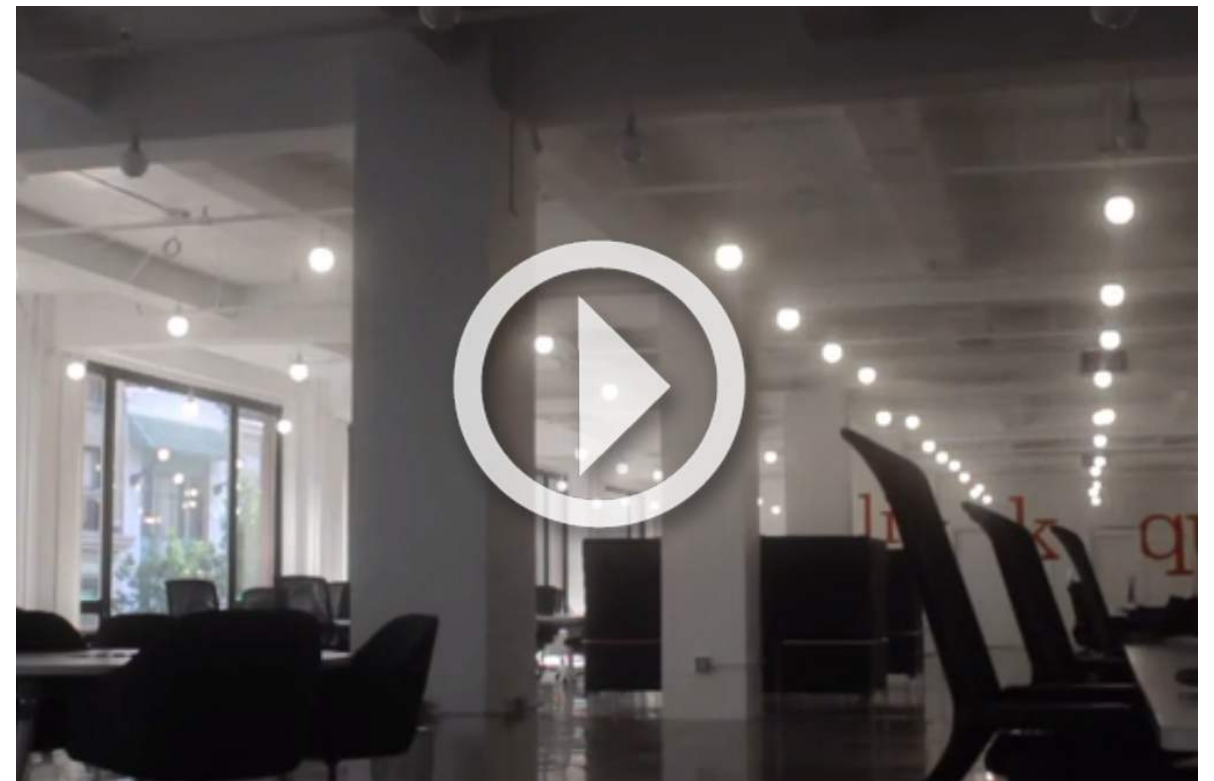
Furthermore, the taps fitted into the washing basins optimise water consumption and save 30% in comparison with others. The doors were made out of recycled materials from traditional industries and both therefore in keeping with the

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fourth commandment of Grind: “higher sustainability”.

The fifth commandment stipulates cooperation: “We’re in this together”. There is a Community Manager constantly on hand and ready to resolve any situation, dealing with any request made or on hand to facilitate networking among members.

Finally, “Grind’s not ours, it’s yours”. This would seem a publicity slogan but it is not. This is very much about strategic positioning. There are no underlying frictions in this work space but there are some major egos, which above all serve to foster a generalised motivation. Grindists are reputed as some of the most talented and interesting persons on the planet.



And they believe that at least.

The concerns and the logics may be very similar just as they may differ greatly but they do all flow into the same ocean of sharing.

Coincidence or otherwise, the area also hosts The Studio Guild (Flower District NYC) that took over a former office block and implemented the environment as one of its core concerns. In 2010, The Studio Guild invested in renewable energies and in that year consumed 22,162 Kw/h generated by wind power. This may seem irrelevant but to put it into numbers, this is a saving equivalent to 152 cubic tons of carbon dioxide that was not pumped into the atmosphere, the equivalent of the greenhouse gas emissions of 22,000 cars or 15,500 litres of fuel or 30,000 hectares of forest saved.

This shared working space in New York now gets all of its energy through renewable supplies, specifically wind power. Environmental sustainability represents one of the major concerns of coworking companies and hence yet another reason that this model is in the vanguard and inspiring ever more companies in the modern economy.

In recent years, Maite Moreno Boch, CEO of the consultancy Monday Happy Monday, has studied the extent to which the measurement of the coworking principles might be applied to companies and the needs of their professionals.

Various companies have already implemented the coworking model in accordance with their own respective objectives and resulting in a range of categories.

The first model category: the Traditional Coworking Centre in which spaces operate on a membership model with independent professionals and some telecommuters at work in the same physical space. AT&T has posted dozens of its best researchers, product developers and technologists in coworking centers across the country and invited new companies and partners such as Ericsson to work with them. Their goals: talent, creativity and getting products to the market faster.

Consulting firms such as Accenture, PwC and Cap Gemini have most of their teams deployed across several coworking spaces.

In 2011, when Plantronics redesigned its headquarters in Santa Cruz, California, executives decided to eliminate the offices for a third of the 500 local company employees. Employees could choose: working every day from home, going to the headquarters or joining one of three company selected coworking spaces.

The second is called the Business to Business Model or Sharing without Relationship in which two or more unrelated companies, and not in competition with each other, share the

same space. For now, the largest business to business coworking experiment is in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

There is an open door policy allowing for residents/employees to share trade secrets, forecast trends and even material science advances. Steelcase, for example, gave advice to Wolverine on controlling odours and, in turn, received data from research by Amway about the emerging Indian middle class.

The third is the Friendly Corporations model in which two or more companies with relationships as partners or customers share the same space as a parent company (the three innovation AT&T centres are excellent examples of this approach).

The fourth is the Startup model category. It is also called the Public-Private. Companies invite non-employees to work at these spaces. Zappos, in downtown Las Vegas, is a great example. Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos has been one of the great enthusiasts of the corporate version of coworking. His goal is Las Vegas becoming the "world capital of coworking and co-learning" with his objectives 3C: collision, community and co-learning. The new campus Zappos represents a great extension of coworking ideals. What does this mean? "Zappos is trying to build a whole community, a mini-city for encouraging people to live, work and play, and everyone in the

office area. The surrounding community is the campus itself. This is an idea that most companies can explore," he explained.

The fifth is the Private model category and only open to the company's own employees, such as Coca-Cola's private space. Employees were, however, initially very slow to embrace this concept due to employees having fixed offices and still working in silos. At first, people found everything very uncomfortable with some forced to change their behaviors because of the open space environment. Thus, a few months into their experiment, the company knew they had to take action in order to attract employees into the space.

It did not take long until employees began to realise that corporate coworking was helping them understand events going on beyond the world of Coca-Cola. Thus, employees became more creative and engaged.

The Coca-Cola case demonstrates how even when companies are ready to experiment with new ways of working, cultural change is necessary and the coworking model proves able to contribute to such changes!

Coca-Cola also loves its hometown and is always seeking new ways to be part of the Atlanta community. With the opening up of their corporate coworking space to the wider community, they are now helping local entrepreneurs learn

from each other.

The sixth category is the Sponsorship Model in which a company sponsors a coworking space. An excellent example of this model is the amazing Google Campus in London as well as its facility in Madrid where Google employees do not actually work but do attend to capture ideas through events that are held there and also serving as volunteer mentors to coworkers.

The Google Campus London spans seven floors. One is reserved for employees and two for coworking facilities. Google is less interested in saving the rent than meeting interesting people. "For companies looking to acquire a lot of talent, something like this is perfect," says Elizabeth Varley, CEO of TechHub, a tenant of the coworking space.

And finally, the Virtual model constitutes the seventh category with Nomatik, a concept designed by Drew Jones – author of 'The Fifth Age of Work' – and David Walker, to connect teleworkers-employees and companies through a virtual platform. Nomatik aims to extend the coworking experience beyond the walls of a single coworking space. The Nomatik founders believe that the working experience on offer in coworking spaces is the future of work and that every workspace around the world will greatly benefit from adopting the flow, the design and culture of the coworking movement.

Thus, there are different types of corporate coworking. Rather than different "types", they often represent "phases" in the same process of opening businesses up, inside outwards and vice versa.

Some entities will adopt Google's approach and design a workspace in order to increase their employees' interactions. Others, especially the most conservative firms, will realize that instead of building a new space, they can achieve a quick and economically significant boost to their learning, ideas generation, research... by placing a relatively small number of employees in a traditional coworking environment.

For these reasons, Monday Happy Monday consultants believe that, despite company resistance to the coworking model, such practices nevertheless offer a long list of benefits stemming from a new way of working that provides a definitive opening up to the outside world.

CROWDFUNDING

ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE

Everything began in late 2009 when the Belgian financial consultant Koen Batsleer was looking for an office where he would be able to house his team of five consultants and a secretary. Along with Christa Jouck – who was in search of a new professional challenge – he took the decision to set up a new business with the acquisition of a former office building covering 5,000 m² and 100 offices. The objective was to set up a business centre providing various different options in terms of the working space configurations in the city of Hasselt and inaugurating the first Officenter in April 2010.

In order to finance this acquisition, he presented the project to some friends, local investors and a banking institution and thus proved able to renovate the property in accordance with the needs of its new clients who simultaneously became the owners of the building. In practice, he created working spaces where all companies shared the services provided such as meeting rooms, offices and secretaries employed under a coworking regime. Christa Jouck successfully handled this first “pilot project” and in 18 months time the Officenter in Hasselt was fully occupied! The model

was then subsequently replicated in four neighbouring cities over the following years: Turnhout, Antwerp, Maastricht and Leuven. According to Koen Batsleer “this created the perfect scale for managing an office business centre based on crowdfunding and in which the clients are also the owners”. The project leader then specified: “in order to attract the financing for these new locations, in each city we attracted the investors and entrepreneurs who believed in our business model, invested in the project and made use of the location for their own offices, strengthening both their networking and their network of local contacts.”

Officenter always believed that its future lay in providing various options within the same space to complement the physical offices. In a first phase, the offices were temporary in nature with the coworking secretary exclusively serving the “fixed” clients but, as the virtual and coworking office market matured, Officenter decided to throw open its infrastructures to “external clients” in 2011. This was a very successful experience: “Henceforth, Officenter has had more clients using its coworking and virtual office services than those using its traditional physical offices,” Koen Batsleer concluded.

Yontec NV is one of the companies installed in the Officenter. Specialising in industrial technical maintenance, the company was founded in 2005 by Davy Jonckers. Yontec NV

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experienced steady but sustained growth and by 2010 was already employing ten members of staff. In 2011, Peter Manet, an experienced entrepreneur and business coach, encouraged Davy Jonckers to move his company headquarters to the Officenter facilities and framing this within the scope of the company's growth strategy.

As Davy Jonckers testifies "the combination of professional office management and the quality of the Officenter infrastructures made a positive and decisive contribution towards boosting the Yontec turnover and to the extent that we were employing 18 professionals in 2012, 28 in 2013 and now 45."

Jonckers holds no doubts about the advantages of a business model such as Officenter: "recourse to flexible offices has enabled us to grow in accordance with the needs that we encountered along the way: based out of one workplace in 2011 through to six workplaces at this moment and always counting upon the support of a community of over 50 other companies within this same building in which the diversity of experiences that may be shared in an informal fashion generates positive results for everybody involved."

Another major advantage of Officenter is the network of business centers provided to resident companies: Yontec NV already draws upon Officenter Lovaina as a "second hub",

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occupying a flexible office with very low costs given the range of services accessed. Given that this model has proven so effective and returns a very balanced cost-benefit ratio to the company's regional expansion plans, Yontec NV advanced into yet another location in 2014, Officenter Turnhout.

The community spirit is one of the critical factors of success of this business centre: each Officenter annually organises a 'New Year's cocktail' and a 'summer barbecue' that bring together around 250 participants for a unique networking event... Furthermore, they also organise a monthly 'Open Coffee', a networking event targeting freelancers and 'Meet and Greet' sessions at which Officenter clients may



Investors of Officenter, with Christa, Koen and the Flemish Minister President, Kris Peeters

schedule short meetings between each other as well as bringing in clients to participate.

Koen Batsleer certainly has no regrets about the option taken: “the positive attitude and the engagement of investors in our project was the touchstone for the crowdfunding dimension to work fully.” According to this entrepreneur, “in our business, we gain the opportunity to attract investors who are clients or who may be able to bring in clients through their local networks. Furthermore, this provides them with an opportunity to partially acquire their own infrastructure, which results in a win-win situation: Officenter gets an investor and a simultaneously loyal client and this guarantees a long term property investment.”

Those in charge at Officenter believe that Crowdfunding represents a model that may be rapidly adopted by other business centres and coworking facilities whenever seeking to acquire the property they are moving into. What is essential is that, on the one hand, there is a team of investors with experience and the financial means to invest and, on the other hand, active managers with the capacity to communicate with the local community. These are the ingredients to the success of this project that enabled the opening of a new centre each year between 2010 and 2014 and always counting on over 500 guests for the respective inauguration celebrations.

What makes these centres special? All clients enjoy free access to the coworking spaces and facilities and approximately 20% of clients make recourse to physical offices as well as also using the coworking and flexible office facilities, which are rented out by the day and by the hour. Given that the business model is based on the “sharing” and not the “sale” of services, all clients have an “everything included” option, which provides them with unlimited access to the flexible offices, coworking spaces and meeting rooms in every Officenter. In practice, the investors are putting their money into the “building” and not the “business”: the return to investors is concentrated on the value of the building. The revenues generated from running the business centre facility go into paying off a 15-year bank loan financing 70% of the cost of purchasing the property. After this 15-year period, the investors will own 100% of the building and providing a return of approximately 8%-9% annually, less than what V.C.’s want for their money, but more than worthwhile if you compare this with the return of your retirement funds...

WORKBAR VS BAR WORKING

The title would seem repetitive and that is deliberate. Two words stem from the same verb but have two different meanings. One thing however is certain, we are dealing both with “work” and with “bar”.

What is the idea that first comes to mind? Getting some work done in a bar? That constitutes the definition we may apply to the second phrase: BAR WORKING.

The meaning of the first? Well, that first requires some background...

Workbar was launched in the city of Boston in May 2009 by Bill Jacobson, David Ulrich, Ken Epstein and Richard Epstein. At that time, Bill occupied a small office, where he ran his tech-startup within a larger office environment before one day getting an email informing him that the company to which he sublet office space was moving out and he was left with this empty space on his hands. Overnight, his small office became part of a large office with various unused spaces and Bill hence set about thinking of the different purposes for which this sudden deluge of extra space might serve.

At the time, Bill wanted to work around more people with his own firm having a staff of only four and he felt having a few

more people around would create a more dynamic and collaborative environment.

He went to talk to the owner of the building and came up with the idea of transforming the space into a coworking facility. Thus, everything gradually fell into place with the first Workbar fitted out and ready to open a few months later.

Bill presented the concept to Ken and Richard Epstein and they decided to come in on the project.

David Ulrich, who co-worked with Bill began the operation on the site they had been at and turning it into a parallel business to their core technology activities ongoing before the founding of Workbar.

The idea of Workbar would involve a professional but relaxed environment in which the atmosphere fostered “passive networking” among persons and companies from parallel industries and fields going about their daily business. The result was a success, receiving a number of requests in excess of the amount of actually available space. Hence, the founders decided to relocate their Workbar to a larger building equipped with the area and the conditions necessary to growing Workbar.

In this coworking environment, there was a variety of different professions and displaying correspondingly different needs and working methods. This fact lead to the creation of

four different sections in a new Workbar Cambridge facility, a short distance from the centre of Boston: a noisy area called the “Switchboard”, a quiet area called the “Study”, a collaborative area called the “Commons” and a members only coffee-shop type area called the “Cafe”.

The “Switchboard” provides an area for communication to an external audience and to give or take conference calls or hold virtual meetings in enclosed surroundings. The “Study” is just what it promises: a zone of silence and calm and ideal for those seeking to concentrate on their own. In turn, the “Commons” contains some of the most popular working areas and designed to meet the needs of group team working and ideally reaching out to small teams needing to work together while exchanging ideas.

Finally, the “Cafe”. With many people appreciating the opportunity to work in cafe type ambiances, Bill and his partners set up this bar style cafe with a laid back attitude, self-service, places for social interactions, ideal for hosting clients and business partners for informal style meetings.

We would reference how there are no marked places enabling members to switch from one room to another in accordance with their needs. Should they wish to adopt a permanent table, Workbar allows for a selection to be made from spaces whether in the common zone, the “Switchboard” or the

“Study”. According to Bill Jacobson “this office configuration enables members to benefit from all the professionalism of corporate offices with the advantages of flexibility and variety in the working ambiances”. This entrepreneur believes that a broad range of professionals from the most diverse backgrounds would benefit from strengthening their networking with very positive results across the community of companies resident at the Workbar: “We have people working for a great variety of industries and companies. Our members are freelancers, start-ups and even employees from large companies working remotely”.

One of the most interesting examples comes with Facebook. In April 2012, the social network giant then had a few remote employees in the Boston area but did not have any actual office. There was a need to establish an ambience within which the members of staff would be able to work either together or in conjunction with others while also connecting to other members in both professional and social terms. They found the ideal conditions in Workbar, which endowed them with the tools so that they no longer felt they were working all alone. According to Bill Jacobson, “this Boston core inside Workbar established the bases for planning the future official Facebook office in this city”. In October 2013, the Facebook Boston team grew to a total of ten members of staff,

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the point in time when they moved out to their own office. Nevertheless, they still remain active members of Workbar, participating in the diverse events staged by this particular coworking facility.

However, just what proves so unique about Workbar? Beyond the locations hosting Workbar installations, the company also set up “Outerspaces”, a network spanning some 25 companies established throughout Cambridge and the broader Boston region, which provides Workbar members with access to office facilities that would otherwise not be used and enabling a greater range of choices over their places of work. A



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perfect model of cooperation for companies that have needed to downsize and thus become able gain a revenue stream from empty space while also strengthening their networking, reaching and generating partnership opportunities with the respective members.

According to Bill Jacobson, the future of coworking “involves moving towards a trend seeing ever larger coworking spaces”. However, this pioneer also considers that we need more of them: “I don't want to spend 45 minutes getting to the office but I also want to go beyond the confines of my own room”. The Workbar solution involves setting up an extensive network of smaller spaces and facilities that are nevertheless still interconnected with the main office. “The members may thus eliminate long commutes and gain access to a vast network of professionals in the Workbar community. This really is the best of both worlds!”. Ever since 2009, Workbar has steadily gained in both reputation and size, moving on from a single 5,000 square foot/450 square meter site in 2009 to two Workbars (Boston and Cambridge) and setting up an interlinked network of 25 locations dotted around Boston metropolitan area, including two industry focused Centers of Excellence around AdTech and FinTech.

In one short sentence, Workbar provides the professionalism of a corporate office, the flexibility of a

gymnasium and the convenience of a café or bar. Despite the phonetic similarities, Workbar provides a very different working environment and a community spirit entirely different to the bars and cafes that are still sporadically drawn upon by the massed ranks of freelancers and mobile workers around the world.

PURE NETWORKING

Coworking definitively extends beyond some fashion and incorporates both a “movement” and a manifesto framing future working spaces.

Worldwide changes in the economy have triggered attention to the lack of a sense of responsibility in the business world as shareholders begin questioning just where their money has gone. Major multinationals have concluded that they are overspending on offices that never get much use and



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are slowly beginning to replace these traditional offices with those located in business centres which contain (or may contain) coworking spaces and thus providing members of staff with the freedom to live and work whether close to home or their clients.

Speaking of coworking involves references to creativity and inspiration. When considering that practically everything is invented, there always emerge new desires to conquer and coworking represents an excellent example as an industry in which working spaces may be reinvented and adapted to the reality of professionals in the younger generations: in which the market leaders strive to perfect their already tested working models and focus them increasingly on networking and the sharing of knowledge. A coworking space that does not foster networking actions among members and their communities is simply not fit for purpose. Goran Garberg, founder of United Spaces, one of the most prestigious coworking hybrids in Stockholm, Sweden, highlights the importance of “Energizing Breakfasts”, networking events held at 8am in the lounge area, designated the “Arena”, which also hosts weekly inspirational speeches on the most varied different aspects of business life and given either by clients or externally invited guests of United Spaces. The data-show projects onto a white wall that may also be scribbled on with

different colours alongside the dozens of post-its containing the various ideas popping up out of that morning’s brainstorm.

These small business breakfasts made a fundamental contribution to deepening the spirit of community and collaboration between United Spaces members whilst also representing an opportunity to those same members to gain visibility and invite their own business partners.

When only interacting with the outside world through occasional trips to the café or the corner restaurant, it becomes difficult to nurture an effective network of contacts able to drive partnerships and business deals.

Coworking facilities are increasingly proving a solution for filling this void.

This working pattern, as with the others that we have approached, in conjunction with technology, is also undergoing constant evolution and mutation. These changes may be broader or narrower in terms of their extent.

The employees of WATERDOG Mobile left behind their traditional coworking space and the team took over their own working space in which they continued to work together. This demonstrates how while coworking contains every advantage the world remains far from perfect. Pedro Coutinho explained how some people adapt well whilst others do not always prove so able to change. “We are not changing in order to reduce

costs. The development team began experiencing a need to be in an environment where it was easier to achieve concentration. In this particular case, what had stopped working was the typology of the space in which they were working in accordance with the already mentioned need for concentration necessary for project development. Normally, coworking facilities are open spaces, without any physical divisions in which the inputs are many. People also tend to respect more the spaces of whoever is working by their sides but there are also islands of work within the coworking space in which companies work separated by divisions that block off visual contact. In these locations, more noise was unconsciously being generated and we were in this spatial typology," the WATERDOG Mobile CEO concluded. A few years ago, the acoustic conditions were not getting taken into account in the design of these types of spaces while today this is a critical factor of success to coworking facilities that have to provide comfortable working environments. Recent studies on the importance of adapting collaborative spaces to introverted professionals, who represent between a third and a half of any workforce, only serve to reinforce this idea. Now, WATERDOG Mobile employees share their workplace with three other companies; in reality, they share a work space but not in the traditional coworking format. The office belongs to one

company, the transformed room to another and the other room to another with all three spaces converted into working rooms and offices. A differentiating ideal, evolutionary and providing for the generation of innovative ideas.

Generating innovative ideas is a by-product of coworking. That is the claim of Praveen Gupta, author of "Business Innovation in the 21st Century" and editor of the International Journal of Innovation Science. "The people who are collaborating on any project need to be intellectually committed. The creative thinking process provides a mechanism for generating new ideas and also for us to enjoy ourselves." The research undertaken by Gupta led to the conclusion that people do take pleasure in working when they are allowed to think freely and without restrictions. "I usually tell people to think like Einstein and act like Edison. Einstein was renowned for carrying out thought based experiments and Edison for his new innovative solutions and commercialising them. Applying this methodology in diverse different experiments, we found groups of people who generated up to 60 ideas, on average, in a 12 minute exercise. We may see just how rapidly the number of ideas may multiply based on the number of members working in a team." The coworking spaces are excellent examples of locations that may facilitate this process, especially those working within more

communitarian models where collaboration between their members gains greater emphasis.

Praveen Gupta developed a methodology for innovation entitled Brinnovation, based upon the implementation of projects in different areas of business and in which the assumption is based upon, among other aspects, the very foundation for the construction of innovation being a “person interconnected in a network.” In his work “Business Innovation in the 21st Century”, the author refers to how a group of people thinking independently and in conjunction proves more effective than a group of people engaging in brainstorming (thus thinking together) and working independently. Thus, a cluster of persons in itself does not become more innovative; nevertheless, a network of thinkers does prove more innovative. This type of network enables people to learn swiftly, think independently, collaborate virtually and innovate according to need. The consultant Accenture shares this philosophy when, in New York for example, the firm made recourse to various coworking spaces to house its workforce. What are the advantages? Time savings in commuting to and from the headquarters and the respective employee homes, cost savings with the working environment and, no less importantly, this provided consultants with a “third space” to foster innovation, creativity, new routines and healthy contacts

with professionals from other fields.

The Brinnovation methodology surged out of various studies on the human brain and research related to the working processes of personalities that have stood out in the field of innovation such as Einstein, Newton, Galileo, Edison and Ford. From the outset, this stressed the importance of grasping the difference between creativity, invention and innovation. Only afterwards does it prove possible to leverage all of the opportunities that a working space may provide to coworkers within the scope of accelerating creative processes. “People believe that creativity is some gift. If I were to ask a group of person to raise their hands if they consider themselves creative, only around 15-20% will respond positively. Meanwhile, after learning the three rules to the Brinnovation methodology and then putting them into practice, those people shall also prove able to come up with creative ideas and the initial percentage borders on the 100%” Gupta highlighted.

The three rules to creativity set out by this methodology are the following:

Rule 1. Decide to be creative – This step is all based on self-motivation. In other words, professionals need to be aware of creativity and actively seek to become creative. Collaborators appreciate creative activities as they represent a

manifestation of each person's natural instinct. Combining, associating and interlinking prove natural functions of the brain. This is not a question of becoming or not becoming creative because we are all born creative. The issue involves exploring this creativity that we all intuitively possess and coworking spaces nurture this process: open spaces, the colours and their natural lighting, the provision of desks, lounge areas, workshops, the surrounding environment.

Rule 2. Creativity stems from combining two or more things (items or activities) in a unique fashion – creativity is an activity for creating or building that required out of at least two or more things. We may notice how each item that we use or innovate is another new combination. There is no exception to this rule. One of oldest of all modern innovations is the Swiss Army Knife. This combines multiple functions and capacities. Even the simple pencil combines two things, the lead wrapped in its wooden casing. The Hybrid Business Centers, which we return to below, represents another example of the innovation concept that resulted from the combination of various services: coworking, virtual offices and physical offices.

Rule 3. Become a rapid combiner – A person should become an intuitive combiner and continuously experiment. To develop this combining habit, it is necessary to practice in the surrounding environment, creating unique combinations,

acquiring experiences through a variety of activities. Reading books on a range of subjects, doing Internet based research, attending training events and workshops that stimulate both the left and the right side of the brain such as: writing, video, music or design, reading, photography, sport or DIY.

"I discovered that after people learn the process of creativity, some think more rapidly than others and have more ideas than others" Gupta stated as regards his research findings. When interviewing Robert F. Galvin, one of the sons of the founder of Motorola and its former CEO, "He told me that one of his university professors asked his students to think about new ideas." Subsequently, he felt that he did not know how to think up new ideas as nobody had ever taught him to think about them. Normally, the ideas come in contexts when people are more relaxed and less stressed. When asking people when they get new ideas, the most common responses are: in a bar over a drink, in the shower or sleeping (at around 2am). In the context of the Internet and the swift alterations advancing in contemporary society, we need to think when that is requested of us.

Coworking spaces facilitate this process of generating creative ideas and may put into practice methodologies such as these that enable the perspectives to reach beyond simple good ideas.

CLASH OF CULTURES

Hybrid Business Centers are another step forward.

These are business centres that generate new opportunities both for those managing them and naturally for their clients. However, as a still relatively new concept, they deserve a more careful look.

In these hybrid centres, the client gains the key advantage of being able to opt between various models for working in the same environment: physical office space, virtual office space and coworking office space.

In such centres, there is also often access to a business lounge, collaborative in nature and very commonly without any additional cost. Furthermore, even when the work carried out is on a part-time basis, the company always holds the scope for putting monthly contracts into practice or charging for the facilities by the day or by the hour. The keyword is “flexibility” and the person pays only for the time actually consumed...

To the business centre manager, there is the ever present opportunity to test out new forms and patterns of working in his own centre: refreshing and updating the format while continuously learning.

Certainly, the hotels, café esplanades and bars touch upon the coworking environment but they very often do not function in quite the same way given that they were not designed, created and implemented for such activities. This leads to elegant designs in dead spaces, not accessed, converted into improvised meeting spaces or lounge areas and such a strategy does not always encounter success due to the level of privacy and the need for a dedicated reception service, absolutely essential to clients valuing their image and requiring truly corporate levels of client attendance services. One major problem resides in the Wi-Fi networks that in many cases remain primitive and preventing any client interactions and the community spirit that so well characterises some coworking spaces and Business Centers. Very commonly, the hotels, bars and similar environments contain many situations that are simply incompatible with the level of concentration and productivity that is required of a workplace: imagine only the children playing at a table to one side, the constant whirr of the coffee machine and in addition to the obligatory consumption requirements. However “cool” these places may seem.... to many freelancers, secretarial support proves fundamental to being focused upon one’s work (what is the cost of an unanswered phone call from a potential client during a morning of meetings or getting constantly interrupted

by the arrival of mail and parcels?) – the security conditions provided by the technological infrastructures represents another increasingly critical factor: these are some of the great advantages of Hybrid Business Centers over alternative environments. Currently, they have under development innovation spatial management models, involving North American universities to come up with working areas utilised by both former students and teachers in a different format to the traditional library and with very strong corporative and networking components: in turn, these facilities generate revenues that are deployed in growing the university itself, fostering strong synergies with the business world, nurturing the launch of start-ups, placing students in internships, among other initiatives. One fine example comes with the Miami Innovation Center, in Florida, USA. According to its founder, Richard Schuchts, “the first experience was the creation of a hybrid and collaborative working space with coworking, scientific laboratories, facilities for conferences and a Business Center”. “As a result of this work, the Miami Innovation Center transformed into a community and it is satisfying to come in to work everyday and interact with top scientists, entrepreneurs, investors, mentors and university leaders,” highlighted the manager. Schuchts stressed the importance of networking between these professionals from such diverse backgrounds

but which turn out complementary: “the business centres are no longer simply a place of work. They are points of interconnection between members of a community with the education sector ever more involved in this process of change. The new role of hubs of innovation and academic institutions provides us with some clues: there is clearly a trend towards constant learning and collaborative working between professionals that undertake their work in an increasingly independent fashion”.

There are those who see this new paradigm as a “clash of cultures”, especially whoever has reservations over changes and has always worked according to a traditional model, between four walls and with little interaction with surrounding companies. However, we are very much experiencing a unique point in history and the way in which companies and people see their place of work is undergoing radical change. The behaviour of global markets is driving the disappearance of various sectors of the economy, naturally subsumed into other sectors and the rise in the active working age also deepens this need for change: and this is not exclusive to the Millennials generation, passionate adapters of these new working models; there are ever more professionals aged between forty and seventy, highly qualified and with great capital of experience that have already discovered the advantages of these new

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working spaces: lawyers, independent consultants, among others.... In a career transitional phase or in pre-retirement, they may re-launch new professional projects, set up new businesses and establish partnerships in a dynamic environment, with positive energy, learning constantly, with participation in workshops and informal networking practices far distant to the office at home or noisy coffee shop alternatives. The Hybrid Centers bring about a perfect combination between various generations of professionals, transforming that which might have been a “clash of cultures” into a model of success, in which senior professionals co-habit,



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some of them as investors with mentoring profiles alongside entrepreneurs from the new generations with a different “mind setting”, avid to conquer the world with revolutionary ideas and an enormous capacity to make business evolve with their networked team remotely located in various locations around the globe. Pier Paolo Mucelli had no doubts about putting this clash of cultures to the test when he opened in London the first ever corporative coworking facility in Europe: “we opened the first eOffice in London in 2002, which makes us the first operator in Europe to offer open and furnished working spaces. At a time when rented office spaces were normally soulless shells, the eOffice vision was to enable the growth of businesses in efficient, profitable, collaborative and inspirational working environments.”

Loyal to his idea of revolutionising working spaces and breaking with the culture prevailing, the CEO and founder of eOffice deployed a strategy designed to develop the coworking concept within an environment of open spaces, with design, cutting-edge technology, meeting rooms with videoconferencing facilities and weekly networking events at which clients were invited to present their innovative products and ideas. In a later phase, he developed a broader reaching approach, including a conference venue and some independent offices in order to meet the different needs of the

small scale business community. The eOffice concept was launched at a time in which office centres provided only closed off spaces. It was in fact the first operator to launch a shared working environment in which companies and their professionals might not only work alongside each other but also cooperate and collaborate through the exchange of experience and knowledge. Five years later and such shared working spaces were beginning to emerge worldwide and correspondingly reflecting the advance of the coworking movement.

Emi Gal, CEO of Brainient, the leading European company in the interactive video market, who recently announced 400% revenue growth, opted for a working space in which company members of staff could be in contact with start-ups in the media field with which they might establish synergies. “We are planning for global expansion and the working environment and the spirit of networking that we find in hybrid spaces such as eOffice was fundamental to attaining the service level necessary to our being able to handle major accounts such as Disney, Coca-Cola or Lego”. “In addition to being an inspirational space, encouraging the sharing of knowledge and experiences between the various companies in residence represents a fundamental factor to the personal and professional growth of our staff”, Emi Gal emphasised.

In chronological order, the first chapter in the history of eOffice came with the launch of the concept of open working spaces in the centre of London and the founding of the first resident start-up community. Later, in 2003, the hot-desking service with Wi-Fi included was put onto the market in keeping with rising demand for flexible working spaces. The constant presence of eOffice on online marketing platforms, including all of the social media channels, was an essential factor in building up the brand’s identity, strengthening its profile and sharing relevant content on the community of people identifying with the vision encapsulated by eOffice.

“The profile of members using our coworking spaces is different to those only making use of the virtual office services, which only need a professional address to receive correspondence and a personalised telephone answering service”, exemplified Mucelli. The secret stems from offering the best of various worlds: “Despite having a small quantity of members that have their own physical spaces, we also find advantages in the virtual office service and commonly combining the office with coworking at times of peaks in workflows”.

The organisation of events strengthening the sense of community among members is essential to keeping the “spark” alive in such spaces. Different types of networking events are

organised various times per month with the objective of gaining visibility among the community of clients and partners, providing mentoring actions to companies and entrepreneurs that need to acquire competences in specific fields.

Meanwhile, CNN and BBC introduced this visionary concept to the world and, in 2008, the eOffice International Network underwent its launch. This network contains both business centres and coworking spaces throughout the world with the objective of cooperating and facilitating the mobility of companies and professionals wishing to engage in this networked working space.

Attracted by both this model of functioning and by the multicultural ambience, the technological company Olapic also opted to open up in a hybrid space. As its co-founder, Jose de Cabo, stated “it made every sense”. Then he explained: “we are a visual commerce platform considered by Business Insider as one of the leading 35 companies that are changing the way we run the errands that consume our time daily. We founded a company in New York in 2010 and in our European expansion phase, we decided to located in eOffice Soho due to its flexibility, controlled costs and the opportunity to daily access a vast and dynamic community of professionals all attentive to the latest trends with whom we may share ideas, deepen our networking and promote our product in an informal but highly

efficient fashion.” For the team at Olapic, the working space is absolutely strategic to the success of the company currently arduously striving towards making available to e-commerce retailers, brands and publishers, innovation management tools handling the photos and videos that get shared by consumers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Subsequently, this visual content may be applied by the different brands so as to boost their involvement and interactions with clients, forming authentic communities by means of these resources that are obtained authentically and naturally.

Companies such as Olapic may continue to grow while within the eOffice International Network, which now already spans some 200 different locations across four continents. “The eNetwork allows its clients access to inspirational offices, managed independently and chosen according to rigorous quality standards in lead locations all around the world”, affirmed Pier Paolo Mucelli for whom the culture clash was never a concern but rather a constant challenge.

THE NEW GENERATION

Whilst there is only one definition of coworking, this however does span many interrelated concepts with thousands of shared working spaces each in some way different to the other. Exclusive ideas, ever more focused on the professionals of the 21st century: innovative and inspiring coworking environments that share the spirit of “Working alone together”.

Right on Broadway, New York, there is a coworking office exclusively for lawyers. The Law Firm Suites was the first choice of Bernadette Smith, a civil litigator, who began combining working in her own “Home Office” with regular visits to this coworking space in the heart of Manhattan: “I find that working in the coworking mode for a couple of days a week is productive for my practice”.

Concepts such as this represent a new paradigm in the utilisation of working spaces tailored to specific professions and even those reputed to display the more traditional working and somewhat formal models – just what advantages does a lawyer gain from a coworking facility of this nature? Many of these spaces are located in the vicinity of the courts and hence there are clear gains in efficiency resulting from

cutting down on the time taken to get to and from the office. The lawyer operates in a working environment endowed with all the standards of comfort and privacy in those periods when not actually in court. Furthermore, there are meeting rooms available for welcoming their clients and preparing their judicial actions and also benefitting from the secretarial support services common to all the coworking lawyers.

Finally, this legal sector oriented coworking facility holds the additional advantage of the networking that generates partnerships between the diverse professionals occupying the space and leveraged through events and workshops organised by the centres. Bernadette Smith pays due recognition to these advantages: “I get inspired working alongside other successful attorneys. I can meet with clients and more actively build referral relationships with the other members of the Coworking Community”. The low cost of this service, in comparison with conventional office rental costs represents another factor weighing in the decisions taken to sign up to this concept among lawyers given that there were already online office working platforms, such as LiquidSpace, also targeting this market sector.

According to Mark Gilbreath, CEO of LiquidSpace, this “marketplace” emerged as a consequence of the rise in demand for flexible working environments among legal

professionals: “we decided to launch a curated marketplace collection for legal professionals - making it easy to find and book vetted, private meeting spaces suited to the unique needs of court reporters and other legal professionals”.

Within the same logic of sharing and cooperation, a series of coworking facilities have been launched aiming at professionals whether from the IT, design, architecture or the creative industrial sectors. Cohere Coworking, a coworking space for musicians in Fort Collins, Colorado (USA), represents one excellent example. The inspiration to launch Cohere Coworking arose out of the desire to give a happy ending to a sad story. In 2013, on Christmas Eve, friends of Julie and Angel, the founders, were robbed of over \$20,000 of equipment from their shared storage space/rehearsal room. “That one incident was the catalyst to make a change in our city to provide them with a safe, affordable space to create amazing music”, explained Angel. Shared rehearsal space is nothing new for musicians, and they have often led to some of the greatest musical collaborations in history. However, when you add in an element of coworking to a shared space, musicians will then have the chance to create a network of people who may be able to contribute to their work beyond the musical scope.

Another fantastic example is the Hera Hub – an exclusive coworking space for entrepreneurial women, with a spa

inspired design and with four locations around the USA. And just exactly that. On its website, Hera Hub describes itself as “the first national spa-inspired coworking space for female entrepreneurs”, providing working spaces fostering an ambience of productivity for women who do not need a conventional office. As with other spaces with similar characteristics, the conditions provided are ideal for professionals working as consultants, entrepreneurs, authors, journalists and among many other related professions but all in the female. Once again, users gain access to lounge areas and meeting rooms for welcoming clients and building bonds with other business women and generating synergies through this collaborative approach.

As in any coworking environment, the women establish a different pattern of community. In effect, this is a Café Coworking Style for those focused only on work making recourse to a “community” zone for research and developing networks and collaborative projects alongside a conference room and private meeting rooms.

The environment resulting operates as an authentic spa with the working space undoubtedly conveying a special feminine charm. Once again, this does not stray from the coworking rule: users may access the environment on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Mothership Hackermoms is another such coworking service in Berkeley, California and also exclusive to women with an on-site childcare service in the same building. Here, coworkers are able to take up DIY craft and design activities within the hacker/maker culture in addition to participating in entrepreneurship workshops alongside other mothers... and very often also their children! An innovative coworking concept in which mothers and children may acquire new skills and enjoy themselves at the same time.

For those mothers wishing to advance with the launch of their own start-ups, Mothership Hackermoms runs an incubator program designed for such purposes but within the framework of enabling a balance with personal and family life.

This approach by the coworking industry to niche markets makes every sense. There are now coworking spaces worldwide catering for all tastes and needs.

In Santa Monica, USA, those dropping in on theOffice are a mixed bunch. They are confronted by a space of extreme inspiration designed to make people feel at home: a “cosy” surrounding featuring some amazing design. The main room particularly stands out because of the facility’s landmark feature: a tree – imagine a giant bonsai –, surrounded by a working counter. On first sight, it seems to be a bar counter with clients dotted around but the colours, the browns and the

soft lighting induce a sense of enabling serenity. In this coworking space, we find large chairs purpose designed so that users would be at the same height as the counter surrounding the tree along with a library service and reference books, individual headphones and a Hollywood creative directory service. Indeed, a place of true charm able to attract some of the best known faces in the cinema industry.

In Paris, there is the Coworkshop, a charming coworking service located on the ground floor of an old building in the 10th district, conveniently located between two of the major train stations, the Gare du Nord and the Gare de l’Est, and the beautiful Saint Martin Canal. Seen from the street, the Coworkshop conveys the ambience of a modern café – counter at the entrance and simply designed and minimalist tables and chairs – and we only realise that we are dealing with a working space when coming across the private offices, meeting rooms and phone booths, where coworkers may hold private conversations. The office also serves coffee, tea, snacks and provides storage spaces, ideal for mobile workers.

And what about freelancers working in the content production sector?

In New York, there is one such facility purpose designed for writers. Paragraph operates out of a gigantic loft under the slogan “A Quiet Place to Write”. The concept merges a

bookshop with an office containing small working spaces, almost isolated, with the spacious zone featuring nooks and small cubicles for working in with another zone totally dedicated to books.

This is a comfortable spot appealing to every type of writer and accessible around the clock every day of the week. Creativity holds no boundaries and the coworking industry is an excellent example of just this: every day, new and surprising places open their doors. One such facility is United Spaces, a hybrid environment in Stockholm (Sweden) founded by Göran Garberg – “Our mission is not to rent out space, but to make SMEs grow and develop to become successful”, stated Garberg. “Therefore, we develop arenas and concepts according to The New World of Work holding five dimensions: the physical, the social, the intellectual, the cultural and the digital.” United Spaces is a hybrid workspace with mostly established businesses on the go, adding coworking people and methods to bring inspiration and energy to everyday work for our members. This space defines itself as a 100% corporative coworking service: “we are open, energizing, drive change and deliver high-class professional services” said its manager, who makes a point of organising at least one monthly networking event involving clients and partners. There are large commercial properties studying the scope for

adopting the coworking model, rescaling public spaces that have hitherto been poorly taken advantage of and serving only as points of passage to clients and staff. These facilities normally target young persons embarking on their careers and persons who work in informal modes, in the creative industries for example. The objective is that they grow into the space alongside its cafeteria with terrace and free Wi-Fi, laundry and baby-sitting services, restaurants, stores, leisure and smoking areas, car-park, gymnasium, easy access and effective transport network links. In summary, this seeks to implement a concept in which efficiency is the key-word. The same space manages to provide access to every service without wasting time on travel. In practice, a city within a city.

Welcome to “Work City”: the best of various worlds all in the same place!

THE WORK CITY

Recently, Gallup interviewed 150,000 workers and found that only 30% would describe themselves as engaged while at work with 52% describing themselves as disengaged with the remaining 18% calling themselves actively disengaged. [13]



During our lives, we end up spending more time in our places of work than at home with corresponding recognition as to how the working physical environment proves fundamental to the satisfaction and involvement of employees in companies. Attempting to respond to such factors, companies such as ShareAFishingCharter.com and ThirdWave had no doubts about taking up locations at Cendyn Spaces, a hybrid

coworking facility located in Boca Raton, in southern Florida, that many have come to consider an example of the future of collaborative working environments.

When we enter the building, we immediately encounter a sensation that we are entering a different kind of workspace. A unique and calming ambience with a range of facilities: offices, coworking spaces, lounge areas, meeting rooms, restaurants, a laundrette and even a bank. Its core principles - "creativity", "connectivity" and "collaboration" - have all been thoroughly integrated by its clients and today Cendyn Spaces stands out as a genuine "Work City".

Charles Deyo, Owner and Managing Partner, explained that the business strategy is simple: “we have sought to design a vanguardist and truly hybrid working environment, with a strong coworking community backed up by the latest generation of technology and where members get to benefit from the very best ever experience in collaborative working and accessing the various services without having to leave the building”. Shortly after its inauguration, Cendyn Spaces attained a practically 100% occupation rate and sought out by mobile and traditional workers, professionals from across the most diverse sectors of activity who interconnect, through sharing the same working space, and nurture the positive energy that flows throughout the complex. The building has a modern design and natural lighting is a constant throughout the complex and one of the factors making it so truly inspirational and oriented towards the comfort and wellbeing of the hundreds of professionals at work there.

Cendyn Spaces seeks to provide its clients with whatever they would normally find in any city: whether a restaurant or a bank, the laundrette, delivery services or car washing, organic grocery supplies or seminars spanning everything from the wellbeing of the body and mind to company problem solving. The community spirit is integral to Cendyn Spaces and fostered whether through regular networking events or the protocols reached with companies providing member

discounts at community businesses.

Flexibility in working spaces is another core pillar to the management model in effect at this hybrid centre: membership contracts are personalised in order to accommodate the maximum range of professionals: from companies adopting the virtual office to those needing a private office or a coworking facility whether on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Cendyn Spaces also draws in local companies that occasionally need a meeting room or a venue for events as well as professionals only seeking access to the lounge areas, combining them with work done whether at home or on a Miami Beach café terrace.

A study carried out in 2010 by the American company Intuit forecast that 40% of the United States workforce would be made up of freelancers and that amounts to over 60 million persons. Companies such as Cendyn Spaces have already grasped what the behavioural patterns are of 21st century consumers and set about adapting their services to the needs of their client companies and entirely irrespective of their scale or phase of development.

The Cendyn Spaces mission reaches beyond the renting out of offices and other working spaces. “Our community model is based on building up relations and organic collaboration,” Charles Deyo made a point of stressing. The manager highlighted how this incorporated: “a true nerve

centre of new ideas, creativity and dynamic productivity” before giving an example: “there are many companies that do not even know who their neighbours are within their own building.” Hence, networking is promoted on a daily basis: “We believe that if we have a solid community inside the space, this will expand throughout the business community in the complex as a whole and establish a strong sense of engagement between the various Cendyn Spaces clients with the final result generating wealth for the region we are located in,” he concluded.

In contemporary society, having a workplace in a central zone, with design and levels of comfort, is no longer sufficient in itself. The technological dimension also proves a critical factor of success to Cendyn Spaces: the complex provides ultra high speed wireless Internet access alongside a range of solutions such as an internal cloud, drop-box, online database management, the unified Cisco telecommunications system, including video conferencing for every telephone as well as access to the office telephone, via mobile phone and from wherever the location.

The trend towards shared spaces is clear: “from our experience, at least 95% of our members access the coworking facilities in some way,” stated Dayo. Many companies have members of staff who come to work here a few times per month or professionals who do not need a private office on a

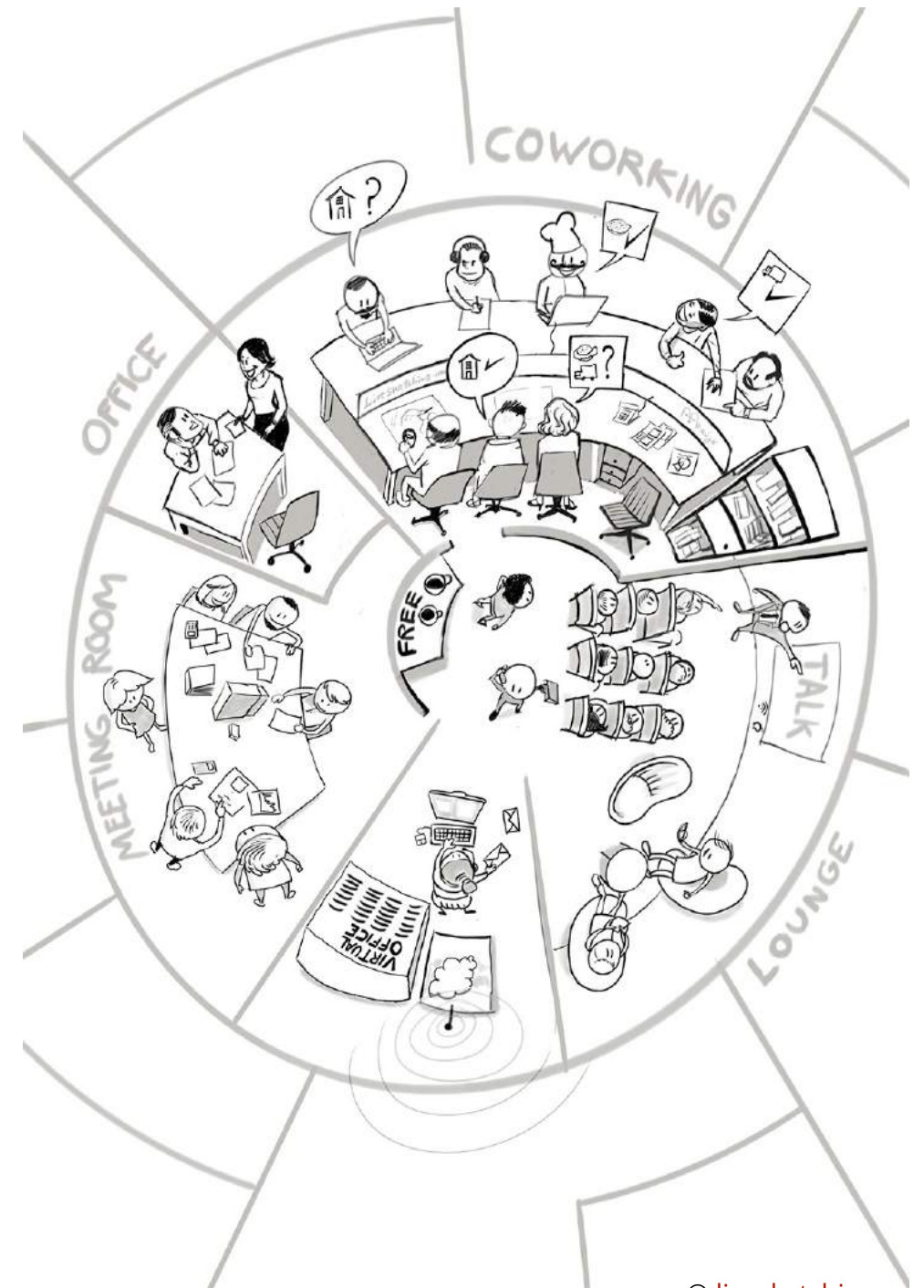
full-time basis and hence they set them to work in the coworking space: some with monthly packages, others with daily passes. On walking through the doors, you are already at the centre of all this. Cendyn Spaces has redefined the typical corporate office by creating a communal hub where nature, work, people and technology come together to innovate and thrive. The result is The Cazbah — a socially-supported coworking community where “Tech meets Zen” and members enjoy the flexibility to create and interact however they work best. The culture of collaboration, creativity and sustainability is reflected in every detail of The Cazbah from eco-friendly bamboo and limestone flooring that eases the eyes as well as the feet, to ergonomically-designed lounge furniture that supports informal interactions and serendipity alike. Fluid furniture configurations and multimedia displays scattered throughout The Cazbah encourage the sharing of ideas, while fresh coffee and gourmet comfort food from the restaurant keep participants focused and energized.

There are also flexible work areas, ideal for one-on-one brainstorming sessions, group meetings and presentations. As the contemporary working environment has to adapt to our ever-evolving needs, The Cazbah may also undergo transformation and become an open venue complete with a stage and LED lighting customizable for various event types. Members tend to spend the day in this “Work City” that also

..... OUT OF THE OFFICE

hosts regular meditation and yoga sessions. Partnerships between resident companies prove a very common result: in practice, these people are not merely working in a place. They are working, interchanging and living in various working locations within the same “city” where new ideas emerge at each and every instant.

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LIQUIDSPACE: JUST A CLICK AWAY

"It's been 15 years since my first experience as a CEO. We had managed to raise around \$15 million in San Francisco and I received a proposal to rent office space to my start-up for a five-year period. To me, at the time, it seemed completely absurd to take on such a long term commitment over space. I didn't have the slightest idea where I would be in six months never mind in five years." Mark Gilbreath explained how this had been the experience – verifying a discrepancy between the real estate model of operation and his needs as an entrepreneur – that left an impact. Hence, six years later, the "click" happened: "right in the middle of the recession, with a large quantity of spaces in disuse throughout the real estate sector - hotels, office centres, private companies – I perceived that there was a great opportunity to bring together all of this inventory and ensure it could be used by companies both big and small." Thus came LiquidSpace explained its founder.

LiquidSpace is an online marketplace that brings

together a vast inventory of working spaces and meeting rooms of all types and needs (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/LiquidSpace/id420584007?mt=8>). In addition to spanning many hundreds of co-working spaces and office centres, the LiquidSpace marketplace also includes working spaces in hotels. Gilbreath added: "Marriot is one of our largest partners. This hotel introduced a program entitled "Workspace on Demand" that makes hundreds of its meeting rooms and workspaces for teams and individuals available to book a reservation in real-time through our mobile app or on a computer". The main clients in large hotels such as Marriott

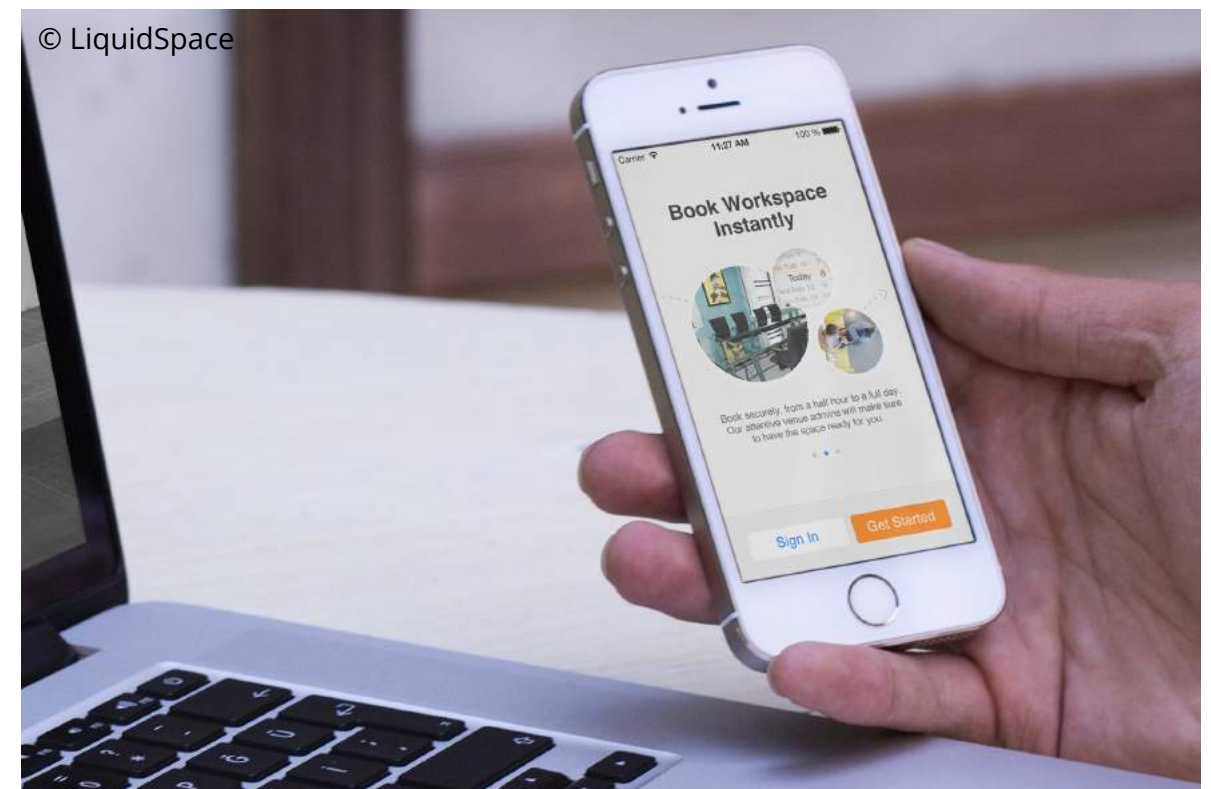




business travellers. “If we look at the specific architecture of lobbies, in contrast to what there was five or ten years ago, the ambience is becoming increasingly like the lounge areas of offices and deliberately so”, explained Mark Gilbreath. We find them becoming specialised environments serving the needs of these professionals, whether only to sit down and work a little through the wireless network or to hold an occasional meeting with work colleagues. Hence, market players such as Marriot and other hotel chains are redesigning their spaces and partnering with LiquidSpace, which enables them to profit from their under-utilized work spaces by offering it in real-time to mobile professionals who are looking for places to meet and

work.

“What I came across some fifteen years ago was having to accept a rental contract for five years and that ended up as the largest single investment my company made”, recognised the LiquidSpace leader. We have witnessed a radical change in this domain. LiquidSpace handles transactions ranging from minutes to months. Professionals now have the power to book a touchdown space for as little as 15 minutes or reserve a space for their team to work on a project together for several months. “We did not limit ourselves to presenting the system to users and complete the transaction in real time resulting in



a win-win situation for all parties” maintained Gilbreath. This new form of company has to look at such working spaces and the enormous advantages generated from the environmental point of view due to the savings made in terms of the energy consumption of buildings as well as the reduction in the amount of business travel and corresponding drop in greenhouse gas emissions.

Increasingly, people are purchasing goods and services through smartphones and tablets, which represents another radical change. Everything that might be needed in one’s professional life is accessible with a few clicks on the mobile phone. “For a business trip, I might tap Uber to get a car to the airport. For a meeting space, I use LiquidSpace. The meeting ended late and I need a place to spend the night nearby. I check Booking Now to find an available hotel room and book it instantly,” explains Mark Gilbreath.

Individuals within companies are exercising choice and using the mobile apps on their smartphones for business transactions, which in the past they would have to run through internal departments at their companies.

All of this is happening in real-time!

WHEN IN ROME, DO AS ROMANS DO

The old codes are gone. The paradigm has changed. The old philosophy of the “office” has been swept away in place of a new relationship between cultural roots and the working environment. Out of this relationship have emerged new ramifications now enabling the outlining of a new sustained and international concept as to the future of work.

With the ongoing growth in international markets, developments in the economy alongside new theories being transformed into practice, the world has been confronted by a



new reality: intercultural relations.

Within the framework of this obligatory relationship, an integral factor of the global economy, companies have improved their communication processes and adapted their management practices to the cultural matrices of each respective location.

This constitutes one of the primary challenges of this era of change: adapting the working environment, whatever its global location, to the image of the culture prevailing in each location. Such a challenge potentially ensures that all actors end up benefitting even while the much celebrated phrase “when in Rome, do as Romans do” proves anything but linear in actual practice.

However, ensuring an ideal, or at least the most feasible adapted working environment, requires far more than a click of the finger in locations that differ so greatly from one another especially when those engaging in such working spaces display patterns of life, relationships and concepts so markedly different from one geographic area to another whether within either the same city or the same continent. What does prove fundamental is discovering, knowing, understanding and sharing the local culture so that this represents an added value both to the company and to its employees and, correspondingly, to the broader community.

The enormity of this challenge becomes especially perceptible when considering how in so many cases we are not even in “Rome” and yet still have to grasp just what is taking place there.

All major challenges encapsulate their own areas of doubt and question and this field certainly does not escape that rule. Indeed, the scope of this challenge proves gigantic. The traditional borders to trade and commerce have now all but disappeared. Clients now draw upon suppliers found in whatever the part of the world and, whether at the employee or management level, people from all over enrich these rising partnerships for tasks that do not always prove easy to conclude.

Despite the empowering dimension to this process – conjugating visions, methodologies, structures and concepts with culture, tradition and localised roots into partnerships and relationships –, this still does not prove either easy or necessarily economically profitable.

Partnerships and relationships depend on the level of involvement and commitment between people and places and the interchange of ongoing contacts. When such assumptions are not duly observed, professional relationships, hence the development of professional activities, may foster states of mind in participants that drive confusion or that best

understood as the non-adaptation of methods and philosophies to the geographic zone of the planet hosting such interactions.

This effectively is the simple act of doing. Imagine a European citizen working at a company subsidiary in the Far East. The working space shall reflect the locally existing cultural, aesthetic, architectural and functional matrices and differing across so many different facets to the employee's point of origin.

However, the employee, in turn, will nurture new habits, developing social and professional networks and to this end represent an example of this new culture, this new pattern of thinking and way of being. At such times, that individual is both exerting and receiving influences.

This establishes the engagement of culturally different persons on a professional scale within the scope of working environments different whether to their own countries of origin or those neighbouring them.

This factor, that of constructing bonds between cultures and working contexts also proves important to the agility and flexibility of working processes and the gains in time resulting. For all of this to add up, there needs the input from those thinking about such matters and handling them with the greatest of care. Such laboratories create and develop

optimised working environments and study the most effective means of adapting them, putting them into practice as if slotting a piece into a jigsaw puzzle in accordance with the culturally conditioning factors prevailing in each place and leveraging the best that is to be found there.

Organisational concerns over this dimension to relationships and involvement broadly fell off the radar for a long period of time. There was only minimal effort to try and grasp the different cultures with which the organisation was interacting whether in terms of different cities, countries or continents.

The North American fast food chain McDonald's operates on a fully global scale – across all five continents. This chain soon picked up on this dialectic and grasped how this represented the way forward: maintaining loyalty to their own origins whilst bridging the gap between their original decor and the locally prevailing cultural reality.

In Europe, the North American brand designed a more sophisticated appearance for its restaurants and thereby adapting them even while without ever abandoning their inherent characteristics. France was the country chosen to role out this rebranding – sales in this market soon put on four and a half per cent.

The success deriving from this understanding of the local

reality, in establishing this interconnection between the original design and a design adapted to the place taking into account its local characteristics, was of such a magnitude that the McDonald's Europe President (the first non-American to hold the post) implemented the same strategy across the entire European continent. Some one thousand and three hundred restaurants were correspondingly adapted to the locally prevailing cultures with the company embarking on an investment program of in excess of six hundred million euros. Just as this environment tailored to enveloping clients spending some free time on enjoying a hamburger, the same also applies to those productive moments in any day. The working space not only influences the well-being but may also boost and strengthen the performance attained by each member of staff.

Companies and organisations commit an error whenever insisting on setting up their offices and other working spaces in different countries without showing due concern either over the preferential needs of their local employees or particularly over the organisation's own culture.

This especially proves an error whenever forgetting that their members of staff spend the entire day within that working environment where, and very much to the contrary of a fast food restaurant, their choices and options are so limited.

The conditioning and variable factors and the solutions found for each place of work entirely differ from country to country. Any high quality manager grasps how the specific "cultural" needs of their members of staff have to be taken into account. The bond between professional behavioural practices and working environments is subject to detailed research and development by companies leading the way in this field and as is the case with Steelcase Workspaces Futures, which carried out and published a study entitled Culture Code spanning eleven countries and dedicated particularly to this dichotomy.

[14]

This study reflected on the results of a three-year project put into practice in six European countries and involving recourse to different sources of information ranging from direct onsite observation in company facilities (means and installations) to workshops and interviews with the final consumers (users) as well as specialists in the different themes converging around the interconnection between professional behaviour and the workplace. This research also extended to incorporating the findings of scientific articles and comparative academic analyses.

This enabled a meaningful comparison between national cultural profiles and the trends in traditional concepts around working environments in these same countries. This effectively

fostered an understanding of the influence of local culture on the design, the usage and the development of a workplace environment.

Aware of this reality, companies increasingly strive to endow their values, their identities and their cultures on their places of work. One of the best examples illustrating this new paradigm is the multinational EDP.

The city of Bilbao, in Spain, belongs to the Basque Country autonomous community. The historical territory of Biscay, in the north, Bilbao is the province's capital and playing a central role across various different domains such as the preservation of cultural identity. This is so deeply rooted that it proves transversal to Basque society.

The EDP group, with its headquarters in Portugal, operates throughout the Spanish territory where it runs several regional offices with one of the most important located in the aforementioned city of Bilbao.

The Portuguese company covers the production, distribution, retail supply and other natural gas related services in the Basque Country, Cantabria and Murcia as well as in the Asturias where it also holds an important electricity distribution operation. There is also the presence in the renewable energy sector through EDP Renováveis, holding a portfolio of over two million clients throughout the country.

The EDP group runs businesses in Europe, Asia, North America and Latin America. The group is vertically integrated with a dominant position on the Iberian Peninsula and joining for the seventh consecutive year the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) on 88 points out of 100 and considered the world leader in the Utilities Industrial Group: Electricity, Gas and Water.

EDP has been in Spain since 2001 but it was in 2013 that it moved its headquarters in Bilbao to another location. The work done in refurbishing and converting this new space took two years to complete and total investment of around €17 million with the project implemented by an architectural firm from Bilbao to ensure the appropriate integration of the locally prevailing cultural, social and economic patterns.

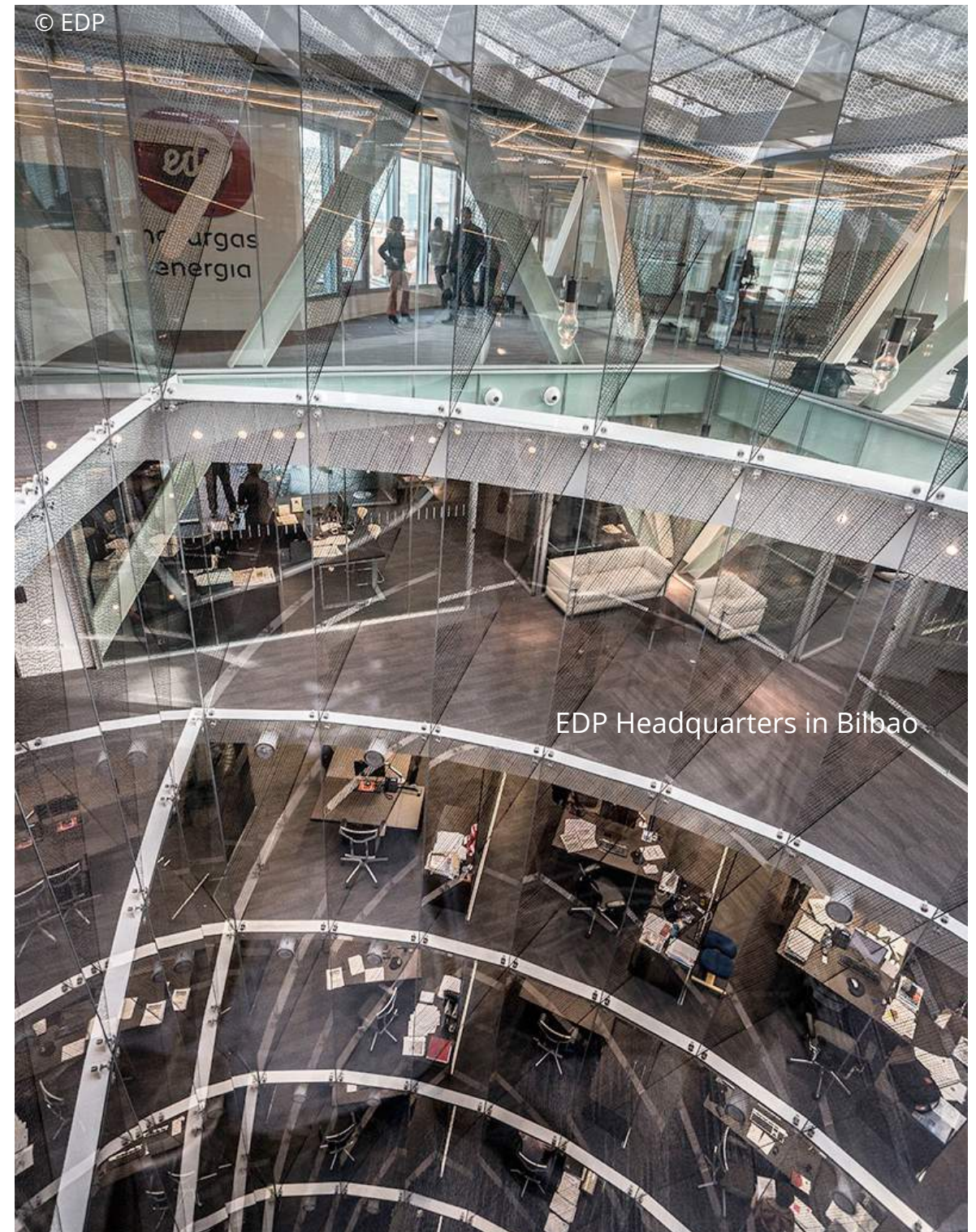
Around 230 members of staff work in the building that houses the operations necessary to directly managing the company's gas business in Spain. The working spaces are perfectly aligned with the management ideas and principles of the EDP group as indeed applied worldwide.

The challenge the company set itself was huge precisely because EDP assumed as obligatory and fundamental this interconnection with the cultural identity of the community surrounding the building-headquarters and the needs and habits of those working within.

As from the decision taken to build a new headquarters, the company management has been fully focused on these questions: on the one hand, this is part of the group's DNA and on the other hand, after twelve years of international operations there were also the mechanisms to identify, integrate and adapt to the business and functional logics and taking into consideration the specific local needs, in this case, those prevailing in the city of Bilbao.

In April 2013, the building-headquarters officially threw open its doors. Seen by passers-by, this seems pretty much like any conventional residential or office block. There is a historical façade and an architectural style in line with that region of Spain from where the majority of employees also come from. "The building was designed, right from outset, for the people who work in it", stated Eduardo Múgica, architect at Estúdio IMB Arquitectos, which led the conversion operation. The building is located in an area that has undergone profound urban rehabilitation and adjoining a diverse range of cultural spaces, sporting and leisure facilities with the neighbourhood becoming one of the new icons of this city.

The preservation of the cultural identity was always a constant in the rehabilitation of this property that dates to 1924. Originally, the building served as the Vizcaíno Pharmaceutical Centre and maintaining the tradition and the



characteristics of this specific site following its acquisition was the objective in conjunction with the municipal planning requirement stipulating the retention of the original façade. Such demands were fully complied with and despite the lack of experience in the field of construction being openly accepted by EDP. "Building and converting on this scale does not make up part of our business model. From the outset, we wanted a building in which people would feel comfortable and that reflected the culture and spirit of our organisation – hence, this was what we conveyed to the architects", explained Rafael Careaga, Director of Resources and Institutional Relations at the EDP subsidiary. That challenge was more than met.

The rationalist style façade lived on while the interior underwent an incredible makeover: the structure was totally transformed giving way to an entirely new building that not only optimised the space but also placed it in the vanguard of environmental sustainability on a global scale. The investment of €17 million was calculated down to the finest detail and the 1,400 cubic metres of waste resulting from the selective demolition of inner sections were recycled by duly accredited firms. This resulted in a gigantic indoor glass covered courtyard, which filters and distributes the rays of light and also functions as a thermal regulator.

As Eduardo Múgica explained, this established "a new box

within a historical box": factors such as savings and efficiencies in the usage of energy and water and the fact that the majority of materials applied in construction were recycled and recyclable combined with the beauty and history of the building. Together, the achievements rendered the new EDP headquarters a landmark in the city of Bilbao and an international case study.

Within the rationalist style walls, there is a working space – 3,500 square metres distributed over seven floors – in which people are the clear priority: "Hence, we conceived and designed a flexible, versatile and transparent working space because that is how we perceive modern working environments", affirmed the architect Eduardo Múgica, who then added: "An eco-design implied the saving of energy but on this point we went still further and were more ambitious".

To more than prove Múgica's words, the EDP headquarters in Bilbao has gained recognition as being ranked among "the most sustainable buildings in Europe". In November 2013, seven months on from its inauguration, the building received its Green Building Council LEED NC (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certificate ranked Platinum category and in this way recognising the excellence of the Vizcaíno Pharmaceutical Centre's rehabilitation project as regards its sheer level of compliance

with sustainability related criteria.

This is the first office building to receive this official recognition in Spain and having generated a positive impact both on the well-being of employees and on the surrounding environment through reductions in both the general building operational costs and expenditure on maintenance.

According to Asuncion Ortiz, EDP Director of the Environment, Sustainability, Innovation and Quality, "working on sustainability in the building represents a permanent feature in a very broad sense and that always interrelates with the environmental dimension but also in social and economic terms as well".

This strategy proved able to set down the EDP business culture in these working locations with advantages in terms of noticeable improvements in employee productivity and motivation: "In our company, every aspect interrelates energy efficiency with obligatory compliance", added Asuncion Ortiz.

Those responsible for this fascinating project, which turned this working environment into a global point of reference, also discovered other facets influencing the well-being, productivity and the overall engagement of members of staff: "Facets such as air quality, saving water, the selection of construction materials and taking advantage of local resources all fall within the scope of our strategic approach". Above all,

this strengthened the cultural identity of the EDP brand among its members of staff and deploying working spaces as a means to this end: "We always worked with this objective, right from the design phase through to what we consider as the end of the project: the release of the building's performance data", concluded Asunción Ortiz.

This ecological, intelligent and sustainable building stands out as a bio-climate reference: obtaining a 60% reduction in its CO2 emissions in comparison with an equivalent conventional building. The environmental impact is minimal during the working life of the building just as it was during the construction and so it remains into the future. "Almost 100% of the structural steel is recycled and recyclable. A total of 422 tons. The eco-design techniques enable its future deconstruction takes place according to these principles", highlighted the architect responsible for the project. In fact, this once again demonstrates the presence of the EDP business culture.

A gas micro-generation system and a geothermal installation that draws upon warmth in the sub-soils through columns that reach down 125 metres into the earth furthermore add to the capacities to appropriately leverage energy savings and water and energy reutilisation throughout the whole of the building. All of these systems combine to

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prevent the emission of 16 tons of CO2 annually whilst driving a 33% reduction in primary energy consumption. As mentioned, right from its outset, this project placed people as its priority objective. Thus, the aim was to design "a place for people", emphasised Rafael Careaga. Working in this environment is undoubtedly a source of inspiration for all employees who find themselves equipped with everything necessary to productivity: "The entire structure is fitted out with important technological means that thus allow for with team members, clients or partners, in any part of the world without having to leave the respective location", the Director of Resources and Institutional Relations observed.



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Any member of the organisation is but a click away or even just a glance: the glass walls and the fields of vision endow this scope. The new generation of collaboration then comes into play: the sharing of documents and applications online, via the intranet, the audio and video conferencing systems, whether for private or group interactions and stepping well beyond the traditional team working model – based on the interaction, mutual cooperation and constant sharing of information and knowledge – become the determinant tools deployed in the daily running of the company.

However, once again, the importance focuses on “culture” and “values”. Innovation, not only at the technological level but also in terms of processes and behaviours, is undoubtedly an increasingly present priority within the strategic positioning of the company and across both the external and the internal dimensions.

The collaboration system enables a more horizontal, agile and flexible organisation and actively stimulating participation in innovation processes in which members of staff perform a crucial role.

To take but one example, the EDP collaborative online platform, entitled “Openspace”, is associated with a new concept of teamwork, based on the constant sharing of

information and knowledge, especially geared to team working across different geographic locations. This platform furthermore stimulates a collaborative working environment and naturally including Web 2.0 tools such as "wikis", blogs, forums and the sharing of documents.

Another revealing example of this strategy: the "Click Ideia" platform. The entire extent of the EDP group makes recourse to this ideas management system: accessible to employees in every geography and, beyond actually gathering the ideas, the system enables the effective accompanying of the entire life cycle of the idea thus strengthening employee involvement and engagement in the company's life and its future.

In this fashion, EDP takes its place among the inspirational companies out in the vanguard of institutional culture, fully integrating offline and online tools; the Bilbao headquarters visibly reflect this "webization" of the EDP business in keeping with its culture. Valuing the role of members of staff and from both the professional and the personal points of view, renders them more competitive and dedicated to putting that business culture into practice, very often through spreading its contents internally after viewing them on its corporate TV network, also a model to follow in terms of best practices.

"When in Rome, do as Romans do": a saying that makes every sense when we analyse the ways in which EDP structured and implemented its Bilbao headquarters, conciliating best practices in terms of team and dynamic collaborative working environments with the capacity to achieve the commercial and financial objectives of the group, which has already invested in excess of €4 billion in Spain. That investment has already brought returns and new challenges are always just around the corner...

THE VOYAGE OF GOOGLE

Google, already referred to over the course of Out Of The Office as a company capable of inspiring alongside so many hundreds of others, represents a textbook example of the position set out above.

This company may have its headquarters in the United States but has nevertheless become a truly global organisation with offices in every corner of the world.

In keeping with the inspiration that defines the company, Google nurtures the bond between local cultures and design in its respective working spaces. In partnership with its centre of research and development, in Zurich, Google set up a unique “office” (working space) taking into consideration the European concept of such places. This incorporates a type of “little world” that incorporates not only performance but also conveys visual stimuli fostering pleasure and relaxation.

Google’s Swiss “office” hosts members of staff from over fifty different nations and not only demonstrating but also proving just how modern and international environments also simultaneously remain “traditional” in their daily functioning.

Nevertheless, the EMEA Engineering Hub, in the centre of Zurich, was not the first foray of the North American

multinational into European territory even while representing a significant advance and especially for the Google standard.

The building, covering some twelve thousand square metres, was transformed to align with the Google matrix in which recreation and performance progress hand in hand.

The building got divided up into various areas, all of them different, ensuring employees are immersed in a thematically divided world that means they constantly get recalled how they are in anywhere but a traditional “office” environment.

Seen from outside, the Google “office” in the Zurich neighbourhood of Hurlimann does not in any way differ from



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its surroundings. However, within, there is a unique world awaiting any visitor.

A library, replicating a typically British “gentlemen’s club”, with its shelves in dark polished wood crowded with books along with Victorian style chairs harmoniously laid out in front of a digital fireplace. Within this welcoming and inspiring room, the Google Director of Communications and Public Relations receives visitors in a most appropriate fashion. The art of fine reception here combines a point of meeting within an environment that successfully combines classical styles with a very hi-tech input.

Of course, employees also take out the board games and other social games that may be found among the books on the shelves and stands.

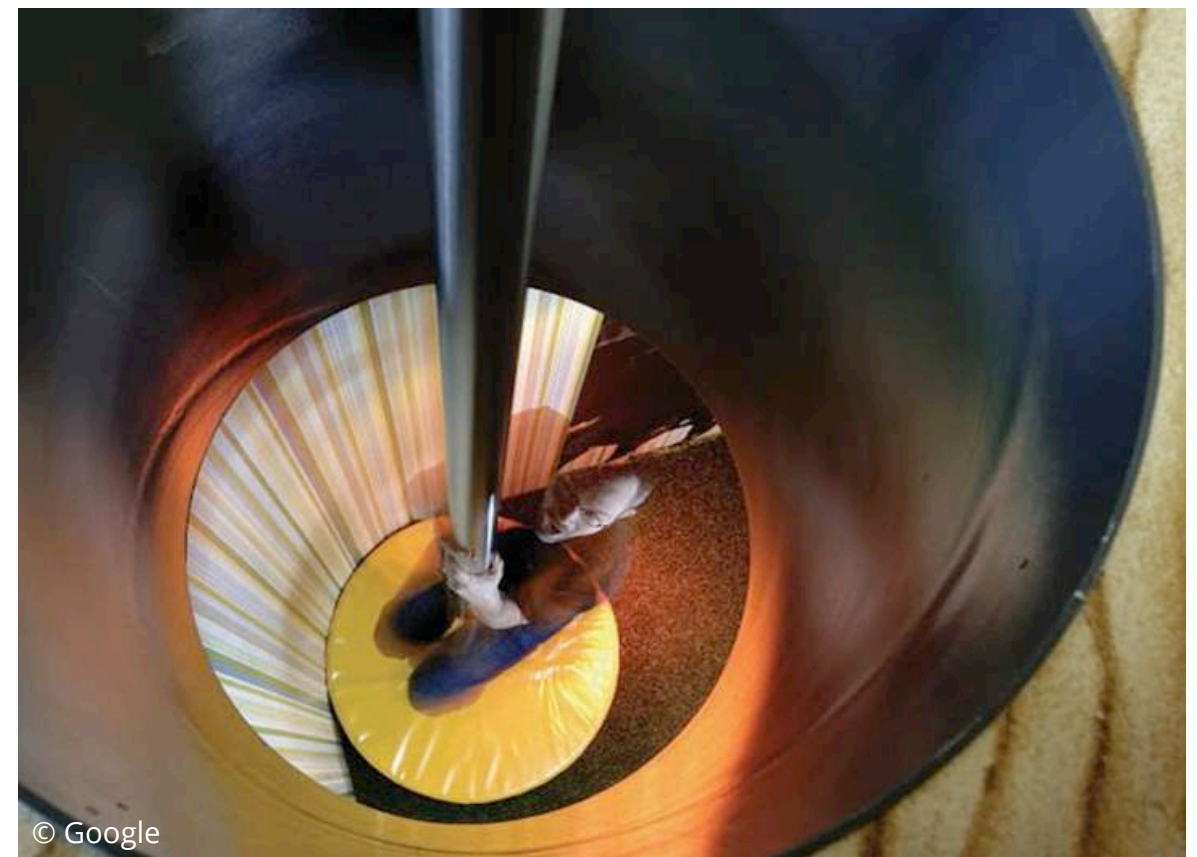
There is, furthermore, a social zone, a lounge, that serves as a canteen for employees and their guests. This however proves to be an entirely different concept of space from the preceding environment. Broader, more open and modern, this area encourages informal exchanges of impressions and conversations. This also hosts Miliways, the in-house restaurant that serves up a vast range of dishes to Google employees whether at morning, noon or night and all for free. Free lunches...

As one creative option, there is a means of access via a

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polished steel tube by which members of staff may slide down from the upper floor exactly as if taking a slide in a water theme park.

Throughout many years, the building hosted a beer-house until the moment when it was converted to receive the four hundred plus Google members of staff. The company has benefitted from the photos of the interior that began circulating on the Internet. However, critical voices soon followed and claimed that the photographs showed how employees at the new Google research and development



centre did everything but work. Those in charge simply accepted that point of view: some kind of enormous fun-park. And they pride themselves on it.

Matthias Graf, Director of Communications and Public Relations set out how everything operates and to perfection:

“You just need to take a look around. You see tables and chairs arranged within the space as if in any other place of work. The rest all involves the psychology of work; we shunned the classical that has so often proved a factor of stagnation in communication within organisations and instead incorporated factors of success within a pleasurable context. And they all have their own justifications...”

In the corridors running between the different open working environments each occupied between six and ten employees, the walls have enormous white boards awaiting ideas.

Software engineers, for example, are free to advance with their projects within this informal atmosphere. Thus, we therefore encounter complex mathematical formulas written across these white boards lining the corridors and alongside the result from some game of football. Ideas!

With reference to football, there is a guide underpinning all of this harmony and taking as its slogan “it is possible to work and program while the football’s on”.

Here, people work just as in any other place even while actually working less than in some typical day with its eight hours of labour.

In Google’s Zurich “office”, the classical concept of work is broken down by the constant zones of communication such as those white boards spread out along the corridors.

Basically, the building proves the junction between two traditional buildings (from the outside) accessed by an aerial walkway. The journey begins at the entrance with the seven floors each endowed with its own particular theme, for example, the floor containing the British “gentlemen’s club” style library is called the History floor.

The floor below, the Green Floor, in turn evokes forests and nature. Access between the floors above and those below may be made via a firemen’s pole – at least for the more daring. However, this gets less frequent usage than the spiral tube providing access to the canteen.

Telephone points of access, in the shape of giant egg-shaped spheres, are not mere modifications of the scenario but rather spaces in which staff may make their own professional and personal calls. It does not cross the mind of anybody at Google to ban private calls.

The Blue floor takes as its theme water and ice. Our attention immediately gets drawn to the water-skis that

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provide a decorative touch and fostering an ideal atmosphere whether for more relaxed meetings or for somebody wishing to pick up their laptop and get to work in “peace” and on their own. In fact, work and working environments is what this is all about. Whoever works at the EMEA Engineering Hub may, should they so wish, get down to it within an authentic polar igloo, literally.

These “objects” (varied and colourful), identical to those used by polar explorers were transported and placed within the building with the help of a crane and having since been modified due to humidity related issues. Everything around is



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ice. There is even a penguin (automated) that wanders around the igloos. Full colour hyper-realism. The Water Lounge is dimly lit with the exception of the brightly coloured fish swimming all around in a huge aquarium that forms the very walls to the room. Relaxing ambient music comes out of the in-built speakers. Laptops are forbidden from this location as it after all constitutes an underwater “sanctuary” and a fantastic place to recover from a stressful day’s work.

The recreational concept adopted in its working patterns makes sense for Google and especially given the nine hour time difference with its headquarters over in California. Indeed, this recreational concept ends up stipulating the pace of work.

When some are just beginning their day on the other side of the world, those over on the other side are halfway through their own respective days. What this means is that the company becomes apt at communicating first and foremost in order to ensure that the work ongoing at Google’s Mountain View headquarters does not encounter any type of obstacle. This stems from the spirit of employees, whatever their particular nationality, in turn fostered by this fantastic recreational concept of labour.

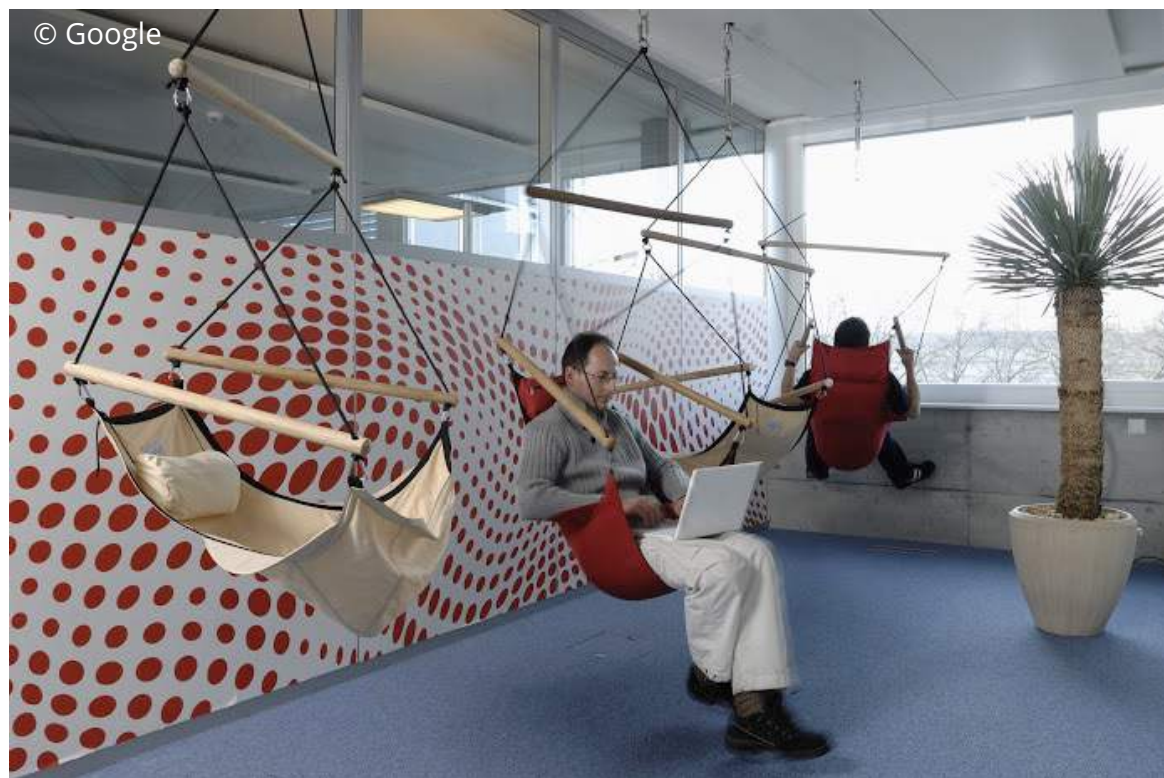
The Zurich structure is not only directly aligned with the United States based headquarters but, in its role as a

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laboratory, the EMEA Engineering Hub is also in daily contact with the company's many offices whether in Tel Aviv or Krakow, London or Dublin.

Furthermore, daily meetings do not pose any problems with solutions always emerging through recourse to tele and video-conferencing.

And, if at the end of the day, employees are not about relaxing in the Water Lounge, they may always relieve themselves of the daily grind (should such exist here) in the gymnasium or through the seemingly always welcome massage.



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That which at first seems “colourful anarchy” in the end turns out to be a workplace where meetings begin exactly on the time set and coming to a close a minute before the next room reservation falls due. Switzerland may have its own reputation as the country of clocks but that is also very much how Google functions. With pace and accuracy, like any good Swiss watch, employees act with meticulous precision.

Google thus adapted its working patterns to the local culture while never divorcing its American cultural origin, which, in sum, explains the glue able to unite these two facets.

Beyond the idea of working with pleasure, visitors



certainly do find an atmosphere of high performance within the building and nurtured by the mobility enabled communication. This is the core capital of this multinational with its United States based origins: the personal development of not only its members of staff but also their various creative ideas. Google deals with an average of one thousand and three hundred job applications daily and is already considered the best company to work for by the Great Place To Work Institute. The working culture of Google does not end with its places of work, with the employees that drive its dynamic nor even with the creativity inherent to its processes. Once per year, its youngest members of staff meet up with its most experienced members and coming in from all around the world. Do you remember having read that sometimes the “Romans” are not even located in “Rome? This makes every sense. The business of the North American Google in Europe is overseen by a head office located in Dubai.

There does only exist a single problem for this organisation: its younger members of staff, after having drawn upon all of these experiences, very commonly decide to free themselves still further and head off to develop their own respective projects and set up their own companies. However, at Google, no sense of rancour lingers. After all, entrepreneurialism forms part of its own DNA.

THE STEELCASE LABORATORY

Optimisation, innovation and the search for perfection in future workplace environments best takes place in laboratory based environments.

Such laboratories engage in research, creativity and develop new concepts that the most inspiring major brands deploy to generate additional value and to build on past progress. These laboratories provide the backdrop enabling the emergence of other assumptions and equally important in

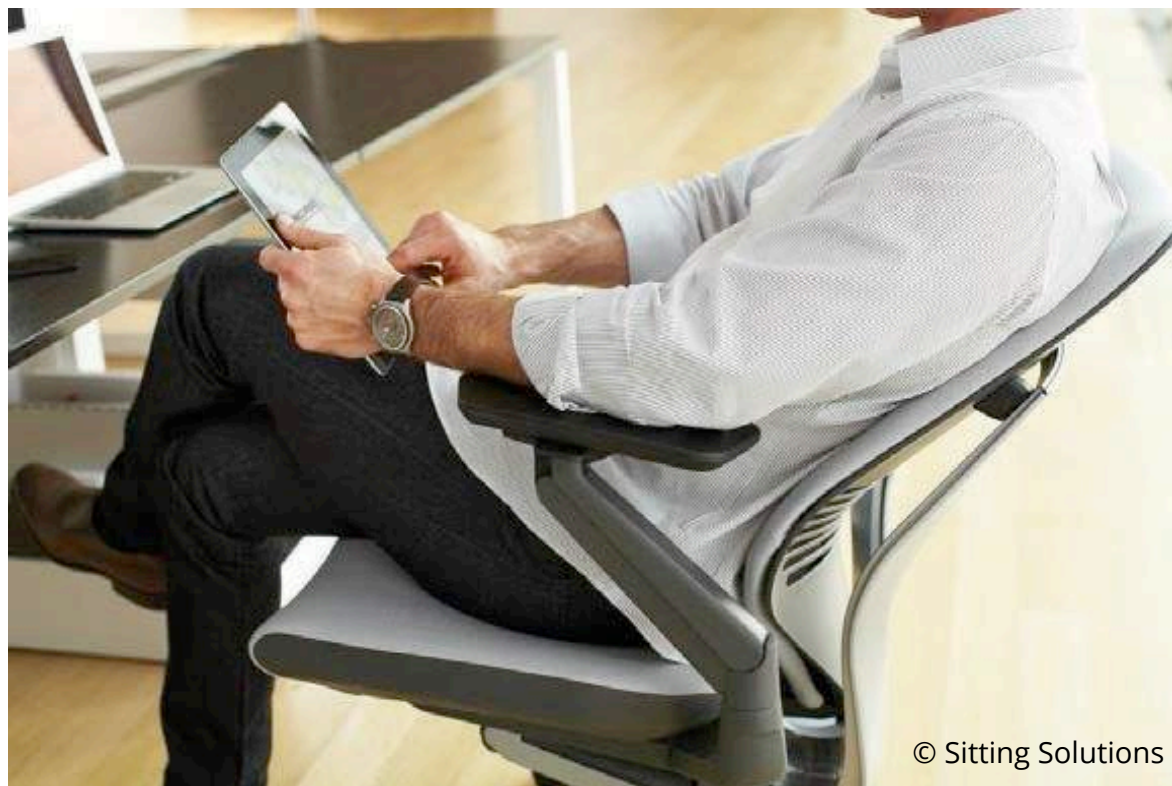


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the increasingly critical positioning of future models of organisations and workplaces.

After over one hundred years in business, Steelcase is an inspiring example to any professional. Not especially out of the experience that such a track record brings but rather out of the image immediately associated to words such as future, innovation, creativity, globalisation, ideas, concepts and productivity.

Similar to the case of Google in Zurich, the international division of the fellow North American Steelcase set up its general headquarters in Europe, in Strasburg, in accordance



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with its philosophy and running its offices throughout the Middle East and Africa. The working environment of this professional office furniture multinational is also known as WorkLab. A living laboratory of innovation able to serve both as a showcase and as the context within which members of staff develop concepts for work spaces before testing them out first hand. The core objective of this Strasburg located seven thousand and three hundred square metre building involves “designing” collaborative and mobile solutions for multicultural and multigenerational workforces.

WorkLab reflects a mixture of a simultaneously static and mobile concept in which the desk, the chair and technology accurately and loyally portray the functional, emotional and social needs of those engaged in optimised work spaces that ever more represent the future. In practice, some of the designs emerging certainly may be deemed futurist.

Over the course of more than a century, Steelcase built up its portfolio of products, furniture and services. This constitutes the firm’s genetic code. A global company accessible through a network of immense channels and that designs its concepts in accordance with the social, economic and environmental concerns prevailing. Once again, the theme of sustainability, even while always visible, has now taken on a particularly visible profile.

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Organisations on this scale not only generate billions of dollars but also employ thousands of staff all around the world. They drive the global economy and, in times of recession and austerity, particularly stand out as the motor that does not slow and strives to get the world moving forward again.

The multinational's top management is based at its headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

At Steelcase, establishing and building up bonds between cultures and working environments also proves a fundamental factor. Only thus is the company able to fulfil its mission and successfully contribute towards the world and better dealing



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with this dichotomy between space and work.

These centres represent far more than laboratories or other innovative working spaces. They are all of that but also a means of reflecting and celebrating the international culture of each company employing multiple nationalities with different educational levels and academic backgrounds, groups of people who then feel both inspired and at home in these creative environments.

Laboratories such as Steelcase's WorkLab are, in practice, environments for multicultural working. In Strasbourg, some fifteen different nationalities are at work and before even beginning to count all the visitors arriving from across the world.

These spaces attain a level of diversity able to endow those working or only visiting with a welcome and intriguing experience. One of the greatest challenges facing those managing multicultural workforces involves conveying the company's culture and all of its different sensibilities.

In any organisation, there is a strong need to pass on the correct messages and effectively identify both the objectives needing to be attained and the model and ways in which the organisational and working processes actually operate.

The philosophy of companies and organisations also reaches its members of staff through their working

environments, the sharing of spaces, the managing of functionality as well as the ways in which these spaces get optimised. Such dynamics deepen the knowledge held about the company itself, its means of organisation and its respective objectives. Understanding the history of the company proves determinant to enabling work to get done while creating, adding value and taking satisfaction and pleasure and... as well as getting paid for all of this.

Steelcase was founded in 1912 by a group of people sharing a commitment towards dignity and integrity in order to ensure they did that which was right whether to their clients, employees, business partners, associates or their neighbours. A differentiating and inspiring company right from its outset, decade after decade these values have been handed down ever since.

Its employees represent the cornerstone to this company and the internalisation of these values constitutes the driving force of both the modern company and its past incarnations. The company started out as The Metal Office Furniture Company.

It registered its first patent in 1914, two years on from its own foundation, for a steel waste paper basket – the greatest innovation after woven straw paper baskets.

This project led onto metal desks. Ever since, the

company has focused on innovating and developing its range of products and services.

And, correspondingly, it went about writing its own history until the point of reaching “office environments”, interior architecture, furniture and technology. In 1954, the company changed its name to Steelcase and in 1988 became a public listed company.

Transforming working spaces so that the “mini-cultures” become interconnected and within this scope holding workshops in which everybody, leaders, managers and workers, discuss the potential and positive factors surrounding processes of constant change. Tools that do not only serve to recharge the batteries of projects but out of which there also emerge ideas worthy of leveraging by the company’s international structure.

There is a constant concern over maintaining the conditions able to determine certain working habits and always with downstream success.

Interesting and applicable conclusions are reached. For example, this process identified the need for working environments to contain ever fewer objects and only that necessary for the professional to feel comfortable during the performance of their tasks and duties.

Here, as in every case, the driving need for ingenuity, and

to provide a single example, meant that rather than designing some simple hotel lobby what emerged was the creation of an accumulative experience that emotionally bonds the person to the space. People work faster and more intelligently whenever they are easily able to interact and share information and thereby exchanging ideas and generating content.

A close follower of the work done at WorkLab in her role as part of the global team that puts the ideas into practice in the field, Teresa Vendeirinho – manager of A&D Marketing & Relations at Steelcase Portugal – says that this all begins by “observing how the working space is undoubtedly a strategic tool that raises the productivity of companies and a competitive advantage whenever designed to leverage the opportunities presented to us by an interconnected world.

Workers are increasingly mobile and ever more connected and hence the space should adapt to this reality. Above all, they need technology, other persons and spaces able to combine people and technology. They want, without a shadow of a doubt, to be empowered to take control over how and where they go about their work”.

For organisations and their organisers, this raises some important challenges.

The first challenge: “optimising each square metre”.

“The real estate cost is the second highest to companies



and right behind the wage bill. Whenever the space is understood as a strategic tool, this does not lead to its reduction but rather to its redesign in order to also be able to provide support, through optimisation, to the new trends and thereby improving wellbeing and correspondingly reflecting culture and fostering cooperation.

Following the reconversion of conventional individual working environments into collaborative spaces, and exactly analysing this same physical area, we are easily able to get from 86% of individual work and 14% of collaborative work to 45% of individual work and 55% of collaborative work whilst raising the number of persons from 148 to 215 in a frankly far more innovative and pleasant environment.”

The second challenge highlighted by Teresa Vendeirinho is that of nurturing collaboration.

“In the interconnected world of today, collaboration is both fundamental and essential to generating innovation. In addition, the working environment needs to support collaboration at a distance with the appropriate technology that takes into account people, space and information. In the future, 85% of work will be done in collaboration with others. Decision making will stem from the reflection of teams, working groups and sets of decision makers. This shall gradually move away from being individual and isolated acts.

Committing all the results of a company represents half of the journey down this path to success”, she explained. Attracting and retaining talent proves the third challenge.

“In the war for talent, it is necessary to secure and retain the best. With increasingly high levels of unemployment in many countries, business leaders might begin to think that attracting, developing and retaining talent is no longer an essential priority. However, now that rapid innovation and creativity are the keys to success, this makes maintaining highly motivated workers with the talents and capacities in keeping with the company’s objectives a fundamental factor”, Teresa Vendeirinho concluded.

In the Steelcase WorkLab, around sixty per cent of the working space was formatted for “face-to-face” cooperation over the activities of each member of staff. There then comes the labour force and hundreds of teams and their thousands of participants geographically dispersed but interconnected with their laboratory colleagues through virtual collaborative platforms including tele-video links, online conferences and interactive presentations.

All of the concepts, forms and patterns of work detailed in this book currently converge in the WorkLab. Three distinct teams engage in the fundamental inputs to the projects and experiences of this North American multinational just as any

multicultural project should necessarily draw upon multicultural “intelligence”.

The Design Team is made up of Dutch, German, French, American and Brazilian specialists. They go about their creativity in accordance with a standard governed by team work, mobile work and experimentation. These are the pillars underpinning all of the activities of this US giant in its Strasburg laboratory.

This pattern of working gets expressed through the common language of inspiring design. Such inspiration gets conveyed to employees and motivates them as they go about their tasks.

Team work is fulcral to Steelcase activities whenever the management of complex problems is on the table. Setting off from an environment in which the main barrier to teamwork and communication is physical in nature, the design based decisions attribute sixty per cent of the planned working space to working in groups. Members of staff have access to a vast range of spaces and technologies that enables them to work on the different phases to collaboration: whether in relaxed but structured interactions or in formal group sessions.

One key idea arising out of the workshops held daily encapsulates the challenge posed by mobile working – mobility within the working environment. The general change in



processes and knowledge about the different forms of working means it becomes necessary to spend ever less time within a specific working space. The model, or the pattern of mobility and its respective format is designed in accordance with the differing needs for employee mobility.

Employees spending over eighty per cent of their time at their work posts are classified as desk-based users. They may work at a workplace individually assigned to them and fitted out with fixed technological solutions. In turn, employees spending less than eighty per cent of their working time at their desks are considered mobile users. They are provided

with access to every space designed for collaboration and sharing and correspondingly equipped with mobile technological solutions.

Furthermore, at the Strasburg WorkLab, sixty per cent of employees are mobile with the remainder working at fixed work stations. Common to all of them is the need to communicate in an array of fashions and in the different working environments throughout the building. The way in which this was designed enables employees to work in teams in whatever the place and whenever the time, whether previously planned or casually occurring, and therefore motivating spontaneity and creativity whilst breaking down any eventual isolation within the organisation itself. The motto of this research and design team: “err swiftly so that success arrives quickly”.

Hence, fostering the brand image proves a decisive factor and exactly what Steelcase has undertaken over the course of the years. Teresa Vendeirinho explained why, in her opinion, this represents the fourth challenge faced by organisations.

“The brand is an essential factor in order to achieve company success. And the space can help in fostering the type of culture that best conveys the brand. The behaviour of workers gets influenced by the space that surrounds them and this, in turn, serves to communicate the values of the brand

and whether to internal clients or to external clients.

46% of persons are fully in agreement with the fact that the brand does prove key to organisational success. Thus, what matters is making it visible and ensuring that it not only reflects the values of the organisation but may be found throughout the entire space”.

Correspondingly, the company’s Portugal marketing manager then moved onto the fifth and final organisational challenge: “improving the wellbeing of employees”.

“In order to raise the level of innovation in a company, the wellbeing of employees is unavoidable. The working environment profoundly impacts on the physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing of the persons working within it. This thus has to take into consideration factors as important as ergonomics, illumination, acoustics, ambient temperatures, sustainability, privacy, multiple options over workplaces as well as areas for relaxation and socialisation.

To prove just how important wellbeing is to the quality of work, to reducing absenteeism and to personal satisfaction, simply consider that half of all people with low levels of wellbeing increase their medical and health expenditure by around fifty per cent!”

WorkLab serves as a laboratory for innovating workplace environments. Researchers and designers test out innovative

ideas and prototypes. Their eventual conclusions and solutions are all duly documented.

Some models end up standing out as turning points. The Gesture chair is one example of an object that reflects a new paradigm in the field of ergonomics and the relationships that professionals build up with technology. Steelcase carried out a study in eleven different countries and observed some two thousand professionals in their place of work and having concluded that persons are adopting new postures as a result of their constant interactions whether with computers, tablets or smartphones. New postures were correspondingly identified and this new chair enables an automatic and flexible adaptation to the context of the moment. [15]

Inspiration arrives at the most disparate of times. In this work space, there is a variety of individual and group zones where members of staff may keep in shape and whether in physical, cultural or social terms. Some staff come up with their best ideas while contemplating a tranquil view, others prefer to work while either sat with their legs crossed or lying down whilst still others might prefer an atmosphere with more bustle and activity, such as the restaurant zone.

In the international WorkLab laboratory, each employee holds the autonomy to seek out a particular space and then adapt it to their own working preferences. Each may thus

benefit from their own respective place for concentration, contemplation and, of course, to work as best suits their personal style.

Similar to Google's European headquarters, WorkLab also provides its employees with a company restaurant, Le Kitchen, that serves up such a wide range of dishes that twenty different gastronomic traditions may be sampled and enjoyed at any one time.

From this environment, workers may also access another point that allows for an escape from the stress and pressures of work. Open every day, from breakfast through to supper time, the terrace proves a particular hit during the summers.

The inspiration extends to the aesthetic language set out in a mural replete with motivational phrases.

In sum, this entire process of experimentation enables members of staff to legitimate their ideas and accelerate the development and perfection of new concepts. Stimulating individual curiosity and implementing practical experiences are key facets throughout the entire innovation process.

In the context of modern business culture, the extrovert has become the stereotype of the successful professional: a motivator and an assertive leader with the capacity to influence fellow working team members. However, a recent Steelcase study in partnership with the specialist Susan Cain

concluded that introverts make up between 30% and 50% of any workforce. Susan Cain is the author of the international best seller “Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking” and stridently stated that “despite the advantages associated with extroverted personalities, the introverts, nevertheless, have strong points that are very often overlooked: creativity, focus, courage and right through to leadership capacities.” [16] The prejudice very often associated with the introverted (shyness, passivity and a lack of working capacities) means that such professionals, depending on the environment they find themselves in, “attempt to behave as extroverts, which represents a major strain and limits the capacity to apply their natural strong points,” Cain concluded. In reality, the introverts may be highly creative professionals when placed in an appropriate working environment with clear evidence that this personality type proves more sensitive to external stimuli than their extroverted peers. This means that a bustling workplace, with various persons regularly interacting, does not favour the working productivity of more introverted professionals that frequently need to be far from their colleagues and at least temporarily occupying private and tranquil spaces. In current times, the lack of such spaces in companies represents a serious concern for many leaders, some of whom are themselves introverts, who are beginning

to grasp how the introverts make up an important slice of their workforce and have presently to engage in a campaign to achieve their full potential because they work in a physical and cultural environment that values extroverts. This very commonly involves surviving in a corporate culture that is simply not in touch with the needs of employees in modern economies.

“Every organization has introverts and a lot of them,” affirmed Jim Keane, CEO of Steelcase. “There’s a large segment of the workforce going through their day, just trying to get by. But organizations that value diverse thinking need to fully leverage all of their employees’ creativity. What if the problem



is that work has changed, but the places that have been provided for people to work are all the same? What would happen if we designed places that recognize the differences in people, not just by their job type, but by their personality? How and where can we help introverts do their best thinking?"

In efforts to respond to this challenge, Steelcase entered into partnership with Susan Cain with the objective of designing new working spaces specifically adapted to the needs of introverted employees and able to leverage their needs and wellbeing. To this end, the Susan Cain Quiet Spaces by Steelcase concept was launched featuring a set of private working spaces with an interesting architectural design carefully catering for the specific needs of introverted members of staff, integrating furniture, decoration, lighting, technology and other working tools. Research carried out recently by Steelcase confirms the need for greater privacy options in company workplaces. In the U.S., 31% of professionals recognise that they have to be away from their main place of work to get their tasks done. The Steelcase Workplace Survey asked over 39,000 professionals and found that 95% of respondents recognise the need for private locations for confidential conversations with 41% affirming that their companies lack such facilities. Another Steelcase study of over 10,000 individuals in 14 countries confirmed that

having options enabling greater privacy does contribute to people feeling more involved with their work.

The design principles developed by Cain and Steelcase are the following:

- Permission to be alone: the freedom to focus and innovate without interruption from an otherwise highly stimulating workplace.
- User control over the environment: the ability to control elements of the workspace.
- Sensory balance: the ability to control sensory stimulation, often in the form of calming, more intimate influences.
- Psychological safety: having the choice of places to be unseen and unable to see others.

Cain thus concluded that "these spaces don't exist in corporate America, for the most part". According to her experience, "some companies might have something approaching these spaces, but what I've seen since I started researching my book in 2006, is a ton of offices that are basically one gigantic room, with very little, if any, real privacy".

Privacy, quiet and solitude are essential to creativity and innovation and to leadership as well. Quiet Spaces are a way to bring those dimensions back into the workplace... In other words, everyone shines, given the right lighting!

The Steelcase offices worldwide are themselves living laboratories cohabited by designers, engineers, creatives and any number of other professionals united by this drive for experimentalism, research and development and the creation of innovative and inspirational concepts.

They constitute authentic and dynamic showrooms, visited by dozens of people daily whilst the hundreds of employees onsite go about their daily tasks and routines. These represent what is really meant by the expression living laboratories.

Were life boundless, there would nevertheless still not be time enough to describe, detail and show all the working places existing on the planet and the ways in which they work as factors of differentiation in productivity, in the professional and local culture and in the global economy. Simply conceive of a specific working environment, your ideal space tailored to your requirements; it certainly does already exist somewhere out there.

CULTURE CONVENIENCE CLUB

The world is more interconnected than ever before. The “Village” has now truly become the “Global Village”.

However, it is not just the patterns of labour, driven by technological change, that are undergoing constant mutation. We also need to take that one step further to accompany this dynamic and understand the way in which these working spaces help people to create, to produce, to work and, in parallel, enabling companies and organisations alike. Only thus can the necessary equilibrium be attained in a world moving at an ever faster pace and now permanently interconnected.

Practically two hundred and fifty billion emails are sent out daily around the world. A third of the planet’s inhabitants are interconnected through the Internet. We shall now consider some of the consequences of all of this.

Optimised working spaces, inspirational and thoroughly designed in order to maximise the potential capacities and creativity levels of those working within, are becoming the norm. There is an endless world of relationships surrounding the development of working spaces but there are also other ways of looking at the question and seemingly demonstrating the boundless nature of this world.

The prestigious magazine Monocle (published just ten times per year worldwide) featured a report from Tokyo, Japan, on a rather special book store or should it rather be termed a charming working environment facility? Probably, both factors prove applicable and hence let us attempt to understand why.

Located in a building with a glass and concrete façade, modern and that immediately draws the attention of whoever passes by outside, Daikanyama Tsutaya Books can only have resulted from an inspirational idea able to achieve the greatest of success among its Japanese clientele.

Books, music and magazines are indeed present as in any book store along with articles for consultation or purchasing.



And taking the concept one step further, Daikanyama Tsutaya Books literally opens itself up to anybody, any person seeking a place packed with appealing places whether for reading, researching, thinking, discussing, working or simply taking a break over a cup of Ginseng or coffee. All of this is to be found in this highly inspirational refuge that simultaneously serves as an original and surprising place of work.

It is not only the presence of valuable archive resources that makes this such a differentiated and uplifting environment. Daikanyama Tsutaya Books stands out for its originality even in a city renowned for its innovative concepts. Tokyo has very much found another with these characteristics.

The store represents a type of “third space” as it is certainly neither a home nor a conventional place of work and clearly something different. Daikanyama Tsutaya represents a very refined reincarnation of the major chain stores and outlets selling music and books while proving to be more of a convenience club. A convenience store like others but selling only culture. This profoundly re-shapes the book store concept and redefines the “experience” and that is what the creator behind Daikanyama Tsutaya Books is dedicated to: redefining the “experience”.

The space indeed represents some kind of resort for books and culture where one can work and create with

pleasure.

Within, there are in excess of one hundred and forty thousand books and magazines, over eighty thousand films and DVDs in addition to hundreds of thousands of CDs and vinyl records. However, it is not this cultural mass alone that brings life to the space. Outside, at eye level, the glass façade is set off by cocoons framed in concrete that reach up to the top of the building. Whoever passes by in the street quickly realises that they serve for book reading: that just takes a glance through to the displays on show. However, the greatest surprise comes when having gone in through the doors.

On entering, we all but immediately grasp what we are to



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encounter. To the right of the entranceway, there is a signpost: ground floor, books on art, architecture, design and automobiles. On the first floor, the multimedia and lounge zone.

There are but these charming two floors making up the interior of the organism that is Daikanyama Tsutaya Books. The hall, as with the rest of the book store's interior, is finished in a dark brown and matching the enormous leather chairs that line the round tables made out of smooth wood. Further on, the tables are in glass and square-shaped. The entire ambience pulls you in and invites you to take a seat and remain. Indeed, the wood is a factor common to the entire environment and stands out as such.

Large wall surfaces are decorated with paintings, original and Oriental motifs and the lighting and the ambience, everything fits together as if the pieces of a Lego castle. The shelves have their own spaces and breathe and let breathe the vinyl records on display that also serve to convey a retro touch that softens the modernity of the overall concept. An escalator with movie themed steps takes us up to the next floor, the lounge and multimedia zone. On reaching there, we gain the sensation that we have been dropped into our own welcoming living room, surrounded by books, records, DVDs, in a space packed with environmental and ambient nuances. Visitors

really do want to take a seat and stay a while.

“The differentiating and unique Tsutaya position in the market is based on its provision of its archives, books, CDs and films. In summary, we have been gathering and organising our cultural package and a database of knowledge and experience as well as setting up an archive of excellence made available by a simple search”, confirmed Motoharu Ueda, the general director of Daikanyama Tsutaya Books.

“However, at Daikanyama, we sought to add something extra and provide a little more; we added onto the archive the atmosphere and the creation of unique experiences within a comfortable non-virtual space that contains all the value of culture. That is our challenge!” he added.

In fact, a true challenge but extremely pleasant for whoever gets to enter. What Motoharu Ueda has just said reflects across the shelves packed with books and the tables in the centre of the rooms and also overflowing with books. Furthermore, a lamp, recalling the Bauhaus school with its high metal stand and rounded almost transparent shade, issues a light that seems to reach out to embrace the books in its immediate surroundings. When we release our gaze, we are able to understand that, somewhere in the midst of this retro film, a state of the art computer sits on a desk designed in the most sober of fashions and then we begin grasping just where

we are.

The entire ceiling is studded with inset LEDs, the source of this soft, pleasing and comfortable illumination. There are also other mentally interconnected spaces within its open space. Broad, low tables are flanked by leather chairs and sofas, some in beige and others in deep red tones. Then comes another lamp stand. Further on, there is an identical scenario but framed by a large and long wall decorated with pastel and red motifs. In this space, the layout of the table and the sofas, running parallel to the wall, seems ideal for working, for meeting, for some brainstorming and managing to be completely different to the previous space in which a sense of relaxation prevails. There are long tables as in any meeting room... and always in wood. In this space, the walls are covered with shelves brimming with books, records and films.

The employees are dressed in white shirts and black waistcoats with neat hair and generally giving off a healthy air. They bring about an additional dynamic and foster that sense of being somewhere you really do not want to be leaving, that there is a world inside still to be discovered.

There are even members of staff serving at the tables.

“This is a book store where the atmosphere is established by the walls lined with books and that is very pleasant, isn’t it?” asks Motoharu Ueda. He provides his own answer: setting out

the challenge involved in opening a book store, a shop for books, while thinking about nurturing an atmosphere just as important as the content of any of the books. Thus, people become able to adopt this space for working in, within its specific context, and there are still the books able to provoke and stimulate the ideas then applied to the working outputs and that is not to mention the films and music that may provide material references or the art dotted around this environment capable of stimulating and triggering the senses. A true pleasure.

Motoharu speaks with pride but especially with knowledge and understanding. This reflects in those so very finely coloured, long and imposing walls. The green that emerges almost invisibly and that pervades our subconscious stems from the giant trees outside of the building with the natural lighting settling the ambience against the aroma of coffee. "All of this may inspire new ideas and enable us to become more creative", Motoharu highlighted. "Daikanyama is a place where ideas may get interwoven and converge somewhat like that which takes place in coworking facilities. That is the type of atmosphere we like to have here" the general director concluded.

We said that we were in a culture convenience club with some resemblances to the usual convenience stores. Hence,

Daikanyama Tsutaya Books is open twenty-four hours per day because the world does not sleep and the technology keeps on whirring.

As we have gradually understood, this is not a place restricted to loaning or selling books, music (electric guitars feature among the decorative objects) or magazines. This is an unprecedented and unique environment. In the background, we make out a grand concert piano.

There is a concierge service run by a group of specialists highly trained in helping clients and guiding them through the collection entrusted to them.

As Takeshi Motimoto explained, concierge of the "Travel" literature section at Tsutaya Books, there was an entire page in some of the most important business newspapers covered in adverts for concierge vacancies. He then clarifies: "I am a travel writer and the author of guidebooks and therefore, when I came across these adverts, I thought that this would be ideal for me".

Takeshi is retired and, as a specialist in travel and everything related to the theme, he helps out clients in their researches, providing suggestions and advice and, at the end, clients may even accompany him to a special table. There, they are able to define, for example, the trip that they want to go on, book the hotel and plane tickets, define the itinerary and

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so forth. This is called the T-Travel Desk.

The “Gastronomy” section also has its own concierge, a former editor of the inspirational and famous female lifestyle magazine Croissant.

In the “Film” section, the concierge is one of Japan’s most famous film critics, a true human encyclopaedia of knowledge on the medium. Takeshi has greyish streaks through his hair, short with round, brown and brandless glasses. He likes what he does and says it inspires him daily. He takes the initiative to introduce his colleagues: the concierge in the “Music” section is a jazz producer with experience in the studios of New York... in other words, all professionals from various different areas that join together to create the team of cultural concierges.

“In my case, I am able to provide clients with information about travelling and, at the “T-Travel desk”, help them plan their trip on the spot. This is collaboration, cooperative work in which I share my experience and knowledge with my clients.

And, clearly, clients appreciate that. They leave Daikanyama with their reservations made and their itinerary defined and may set off on their trip without any delays when what they may have intended to do was merely do a bit of research in a nice and welcoming place. They come out of here happy!

Many clients want to spend the entire day inside and then

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they say one day is not enough and, in this sense, this is a fantastic human experience, that which I am living” he told us beaming a bright smile from ear to ear.

“Here, we are apt at developing interpersonal relationships with our clients and that is why Daikanyama Tsutaya Books is such a unique and personalised location and an amazing experience”.

A creative and inspirational idea and also a space for working or perhaps just a space that proves so entirely from all others.

After all, working may also be a little romantic.



IN THE AIR, ON THE TRAIN, ON THE ROAD AND IN THE HOTEL

The importance of the working environment proves determinant wherever and whatever it might be. For precisely this reason, researchers at the American State University of Ohio teamed up with the national Institute of Health to carry out a study analysing the behaviour of workers inside government installations.

The conclusions of this study are well known: architecture and design influence moods, thinking and health ranging from the height of the ceiling, the visual quality, the entrance of natural light through to the colours of the walls and the furniture. This fundamentally influences and defines who we are and what we do in the working environment.

Some workers observed in this study coped in offices with loud air conditioning units, extremely low ceilings and in buildings both old and shut off to natural light. Others worked in renovated environments, with high standards of lighting and open space working areas. Seventeen months on, the researchers concluded that those professionals working in older buildings suffered considerably more from stress both in

the workplace and outside of it and to such an extent that they run the risk of accelerating cardiac pathologies. The other workers feel not only more motivated and inspired but also, as a consequence, happier.

This is but one example that proves how the place of work and its ongoing dynamics constitute a decisive factor to the wellbeing of employees and to raising productivity along with all of the resulting benefits to companies.

The new working spaces are increasingly focused on the different forms and processes of occupying such spaces. They provide the foundation for a collaborative philosophy and boosting both knowledge and creativity. Thus, working spaces need to foster both this individual wellbeing and the bond with the company's respective culture and, therefore, convey the organisation's own brand.

Basically, the working space needs to leverage each existing square metre because this represents the key to the entire question whenever able to turn into a strategic, interconnected, collaborative and above all inspiring tool. For the first time in history, a half of the world's population lives in cities and travels with a high degree of intensity from one point on the planet to another.

The world has become increasingly interconnected with airports evolving into "special" cities. Business now takes place

in the lounges of airports while awaiting a flight. Around these airports, these “special” cities have prospered with business centres mushrooming and with some just five minutes walk from the airport check-in and fitted out with every function and tool. One example of these new cities came alongside the airport in Fort Worth, Dallas, in the United States.

The city is home to around six million people. Business has leaped from inside the airport to outside with people accompanying it on this journey.

However, not all of them.

Users of this airport, whether on a regular or a sporadic basis, engage in their businesses and establish their communications both inside and outside of its scope: from the airport to the surrounding city or to the “Global Village” beyond.

The airports of Hawaii, Boston, Lisbon, Frankfurt or Eindhoven are other examples joining the hundreds of others worldwide.

The industry, always aware and ready to capitalise on such trends, grasped that working inside an airport while awaiting a flight should not have to be done at a table in the bar or in a waiting hall with only a minimum of conditions. Airports began offering their “inhabitants”, even if only there for a few brief hours, appropriate working spaces with all of

the facilities laid on.

While waiting in the queue to check in, there is time for a quick call on the cell-phone and, after hanging up, a glance at the email inbox. With check in done, a deep breath and time for a coffee and a quick catch-up on the working situation. This personality is today universal and might be any one of us.

There is here a “non-territorial facet” within which the physical, social, technical and cultural aspects of any organisation also functions beyond the walls of the office and now wherever one might be on the planet.

The concept of the Integrated Working Space was moulded to take into account the working processes of any organisation and any of its members. And, in airports, there are thousands where not millions of persons at work daily while still in “transit”. Such is the case with head-hunters employed by the major firms, for example, constantly trawling the world for the very best talent and taking advantage of their time in airports to conduct interviews and hold business meetings.

This proves to be an intelligent solution as they are not forced into leaving the airport and expend the time and effort in making it to the city centre to render continuity to their respective tasks.

Within this line of thinking, spaces and facilities were set

up to provide the flexibility enabling those who live and work between different countries to hold meetings in airports and thereby unquestionably raising the returns on their own working schedules – and whether within the airport’s own installations or in its immediate vicinity.

These spaces are equipped with lounge zones, individual offices, meeting rooms with “video conferencing”; some have their own shower and personal hygiene facilities and not to mention massage services. The idea is to foster the comfort of clients and provide them with a pleasant experience within a working environment.

What matters, and both to the service provider and the client, is forgetting about being in an airport. Such changes have taken on such a profile that not only CNN but also much of the rest of the world’s media have thrown a spotlight on them.

Client comforts extend to surround sound, gourmet food, spa and other such wellbeing treatments along with other services transforming the waiting time into a pleasurable experience able to enhance productivity whenever venturing beyond the office environment. According to CNN, airline companies are now casting their glance more towards their first class or executive class passengers and beyond their actual experience of flying out of the consideration that

optimising and providing them with the means of enjoying their time while waiting for embarkation proves an effective and attractive means of securing their custom. Passengers have to arrive ever earlier at airports and especially because of the tight and lengthy security checks in effect. Executives have begun redefining their choices when cashing in their air-miles and increasingly opting for airport based lounge services. [17]

We should not forget that the service range extends to refreshing showers... Imagine arriving at a meeting when you will not even be landed for long enough to stay in a hotel – what better way is there to ensure a total refresh before the event?

In Bangkok, such passengers begin their flight in an exclusive check-in zone and hence are almost entirely spared the time spent waiting to pass through security or passport control. Just as soon as the initial formalities are done, passengers receive a card enabling them to go into the lounge where they may relax in semi-private rooms or get to work in shared facilities. After several hours of flight, thirty minutes of massage in the spa does help in recovering in time for the next takeoff.

The Wing, in Hong Kong, for example, contains a book store inside its lounge facility.

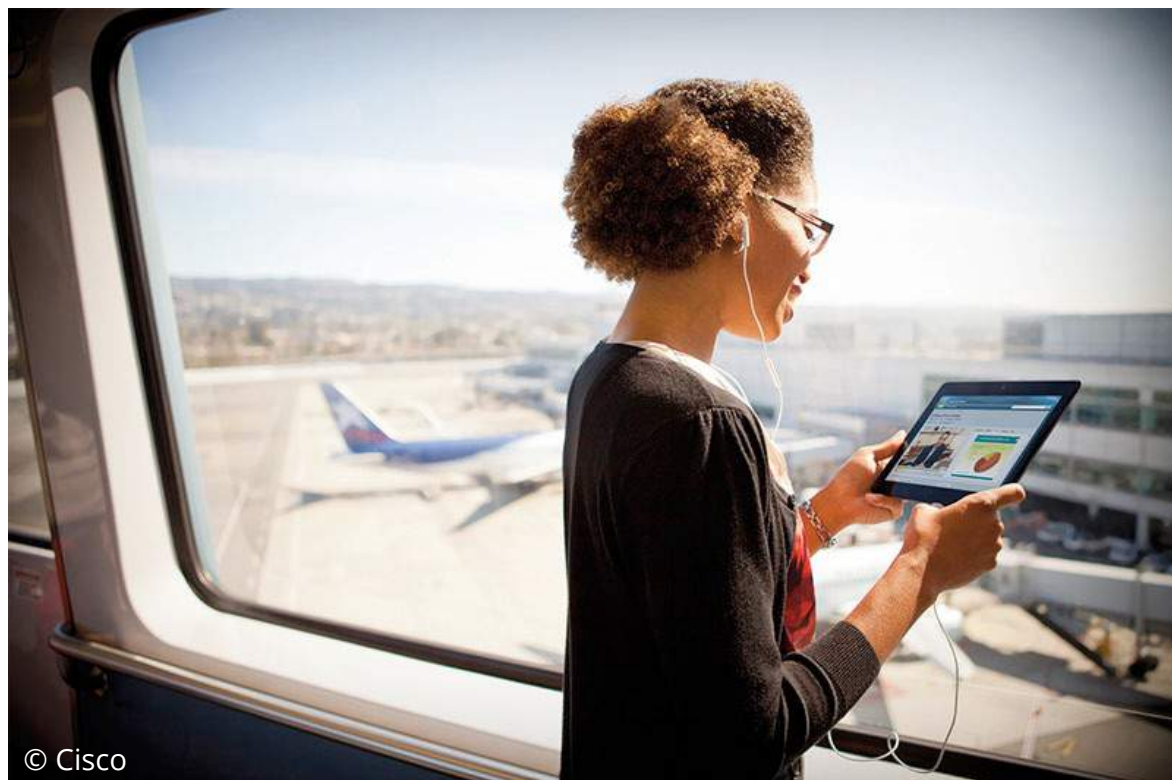
The development of communications and the way in

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which man now travels clearly represent decisive factors to questions related to work, productivity and optimising the resources of organisations.

Through the development of airport located working spaces, another factor of differentiation began to emerge. Working spaces and business centres installed in railway stations in yet another sign of the great change ongoing in the way we do business and work.

The French railway company SNCF was a pioneer in this experience and fitted out six of its stations with business centres in yet another clear indicator of the period of growth in



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the flexibility and mobility that we are currently experiencing. Millions of persons, whether businessmen or self-employed workers, are thus able to take the lead roles in their own self-scripted films.

SNCF forecast, when deciding to embrace this experience, that its 1.2 million passengers who work while travelling would swiftly take up these working spaces. Intelligently maximising their times, such facilities ensure they can work with flexibility and whilst remaining in contact with their labour force. Mobile working has now entered a new and never before reached level of productivity.

According to Mark Dixon, CEO of Regus, the company contracted by SNCF to provide these services, the development of the Drop In workplaces was driven by the increasingly demanding requirements of the market place. Rendering the time spent waiting while travelling into productive time was the key objective.

As in the case of airports, users gain access to a working space for a minimum period of ten minutes. They may draw on the facilities to work, hold meetings, check emails, respond to unforeseen issues arising in the meanwhile or just simply to have some time to think.

These hybrid centres, or, alternatively expressed, the development of this concept and similar to others provide the

user with professional support and including means of communication via video platforms, printing, copying and digitalisation services. The French railway stations hosting such centres have themselves since become platforms for doing business.

Throughout this book, we have insisted not only on the interconnection of these different forms, concepts and patterns of work that empower those making recourse to them but also particularly how they are developing. We now reach yet another concrete example. The development of these hybrid centres has itself undergone transformation. In their working spaces, there are both lounges and other zones denominated campuses that are authentic coworking style environments. Meeting rooms with video-conferencing feature thirty-minute time slots whilst receptionists speaking various different languages are on hand to field phone calls, book meetings along with other interrelated types of services.

The zones are complete with vending machines serving up free coffee and tea.

Furthermore, such working spaces make their own contribution to sustainability. They generate a better utilisation of building spaces with companies saving money on other under-utilised spaces and profiting from them with the associated energy costs offset by this optimisation and level of

functionality.

Modern technological means of communication aid in reducing the long distances covered to reach a meeting that may only last an hour. Railway stations have, in turn, become more effective alongside roads and airports. Today, travel has become a matter of fact.

Airports and, as described above, railway stations have both invested in “Virtual Office” services structured for coworking and in the main utilised for remote working while in transit. The interconnection between concepts, forms and patterns of working proves permanent. Motorways and highways have also been converted within this new world of working spaces and becoming new office environments in the process.

Service stations exist all around the world. Many, and once again France here took the first steps, have followed in the wake of the first “mobile office” opened at one of the service stations on the A10, the route connecting Limours and Janvry.

In the United Kingdom, five Drop In working spaces have now opened in service stations following the first venture at London Paddington. In every feature, they reflect those working spaces that have popped up at airports and other railway stations.

Above all, they are working spaces set up and located at points traversed by many thousands of people daily and where they make a stop within the kind of comfortable environment propitious to sharing and working. In summary, travelling and feeling that, without ever getting out of the car, the day seems both longer and more productive forms the cornerstone to these businesses!

There are ever more of these working spaces capable of meeting the demanding needs of their clients. Thus, they stand out as alternatives for individuals who enjoy thinking and doing, for the more outgoing individuals who like socialising while working as well as for the executive type who prefers some isolation in a lounge purpose created for such purposes. There are also places for relaxation and kitchen facilities and naturally in addition to the reception. In all of the examples covered over the course of “Out Of The Office”, another factor of differentiation of equal importance has always been present: the low level of the costs associated.

Technology has been driving this gigantic working tanker forwards and especially since the advent of the tablet. Working flexibility has swiftly empowered people to decide on when and where they want to work, create and produce and, in the extreme, fostering the change in paradigm that we have been referring to since the beginning of this book.

It no longer makes any sense to book a hotel room to hold a meeting halfway along a journey. However, it does still continue to make sense to utilise the hotel but now from another perspective and, above all, in a sustained and optimised fashion. While freelancers have long since swapped cafes and their terraces for hotel lobbies, those hotels are now repositioning themselves and taking on the role of hosting such people through simultaneously fostering the ideal conditions for utilising their facilities for working.

Definitively, we are not talking about a bar, café or anything else along this line, noisy, crowded with people and doing nothing to aid concentration, creativity or productivity. However, they do represent another enormous alternative.

We are talking about working spaces to which executives, for example, may make use of for the time necessary to engage in their professional tasks.

We may turn to Brazil for another example. The São Paulo Marriott Hotel is one of the hotels on the extensive list of establishments worldwide that have dealt with this trend as priority. Located just five minutes from Guarulhos International Airport, to meet the needs of workers on the move, the hotel developed the Great Room concept. The entire hotel lobby was restructured in order to adapt the response provided by the hotel and setting up a functional environment

that provides the business class with the facilities both to hold their meetings and to take breaks for rest and relaxation.

Such hotels are no longer simple meeting points, places of passage suitable for catching some sleep. Their lobbies now enable a fusion between business and commercial activities with more social pursuits whether engaged in individually or in group. Thus guaranteed João Paulo Berger, general manager of the São Paulo Marriott Hotel in an interview with the *Brasilturis* newspaper. The lobby covers an area of one thousand square metres and contains a reception, bar and restaurant and, of course, a business centre. In sum, this new typology of space was transformed into an enormous public living and working room characterised by good taste and its charming environment. If we add this to the traditional hotel facilities such as fitness centres, stores and similar services, clients (whether staying at the hotel or merely using its space for working purposes) find in the hotel lobby a new and authentic paradise. In the special spaces, there are communal tables for working and socialising as well as individual zones providing greater privacy whether for resting or for working. The wireless Internet connection may be free or paid for but nevertheless certainly exists. The creation of hotel environments able to enhance productivity and working outputs to the detriment of empty meeting rooms or a lobby

in the traditional sense is driving both the major hotel chains and their boutique counterparts to refurbish and refashion their physical structures. The changes begin right in the reception. Guests are able to approach various different points of service rather than but a single reception desk and thereby providing a different experience to clients whether on arrival or on departure. The gates to the office have been thrown down and now work takes place wherever one might be and in adapted environments able to encourage and motivate work and especially when travelling. A trip no longer represents but a means of spending both time and money but rather stands as another productive form of work.

As an example (and no more than this), users of these new spaces tend to state with a certain definitive emphasis that they are not just another Starbucks!. In one aspect, in fact, they are not as there is space for all, tranquillity and another level of infrastructures and conditions alongside the vast range of services under provision and all of which turn lobbies into genuine business centres for whoever is in transit.

There are simply millions of bloggers, consultants and a whole host of other creatives that do not bother with physical offices and instead increasingly opt for free wi-fi, the comfort of high quality chairs and working tables, the attention and dedication of the support staff and the quality of the services

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they enable. Clients throw open their laptops, check up on their smartphones, hold meetings and do so in calm ambiances with many now spending their entire days in the (lobby) lounge zone before getting on with their lives. This is the type of living room that I would never otherwise have in life was how one client of these facilities put it.

Ian Schrager has long since been a user of these spaces. "The most irritating thing in the world is to go to a hotel restaurant or bar where only guests may enter and use the full facilities. There are hotel chains worldwide that are putting this concept seriously into practice and even charge monthly access rates for clients wishing to use the working space. In this model, everybody ends up benefitting!" This inevitably raises a question: does a lobby packed with persons at work jeopardise the hotel's own image?

Laurent Vernhes, co-founder of the boutique hotel booking service Tablet Hotels, believes that it can and without special care and attention the hotel's image can get damaged in expanding this type of service to non-guests but does also consider that those making recourse to such spaces and facilities, with these specific characteristics, is standardised and in harmony with the concept. However, he emphasises that every care still needs taking (over the image) and such requirements explain why some hotels put on menus

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prepared by chefs with Michelin stars. On a normal day of work in New York, Edward Ryan, an independent consultant, spends in the region of sixty dollars.

In the morning, on arriving for work, he orders a coffee and a bottle of water. At lunch, there is steak before, a few hours later, he again calls over a member of staff and to tell him that "I'm ready for a Dogfish Head Indian Brown Ale and at five o'clock, I drink that cool beer. I could not get a better transition to the end of the day", said Edward Ryan who visits the same place at least once per week. "The facilities compensate for the service and, after all, those who do not



wish to spend so much just have to get through the day without consuming anything. What matters here are the working conditions”, the consultant concluded.

There are spaces for every taste. New York’s Public café, evocative of the coffee shops of the 1950s through its aesthetic layout and chosen works of art, provides yet another differentiating model. Those dropping in here do not want to be alone at home working and take advantage of this space not for coworking but out of the need to have people other around them; for only five dollars per day, they may square this circle, overcome all such barriers and get on with work in a welcoming and comfortable environment.

Worldwide, there is a culture driving an increasingly broad range of diversified working environments and spaces. This is leading to the emergence of specific niches, small spaces able to co-exist alongside the more immediately recognisable “mainstream spaces”.

Such innovative models focus on specific realities and professions. In Berlin, we may now encounter working spaces shared by seamstresses, architects, designers or, as already covered in this book, working spaces inside or alongside courthouses so that lawyers may effectively continue working between cases and hearings. Such working spaces are ever more a presence in all of our daily lives.

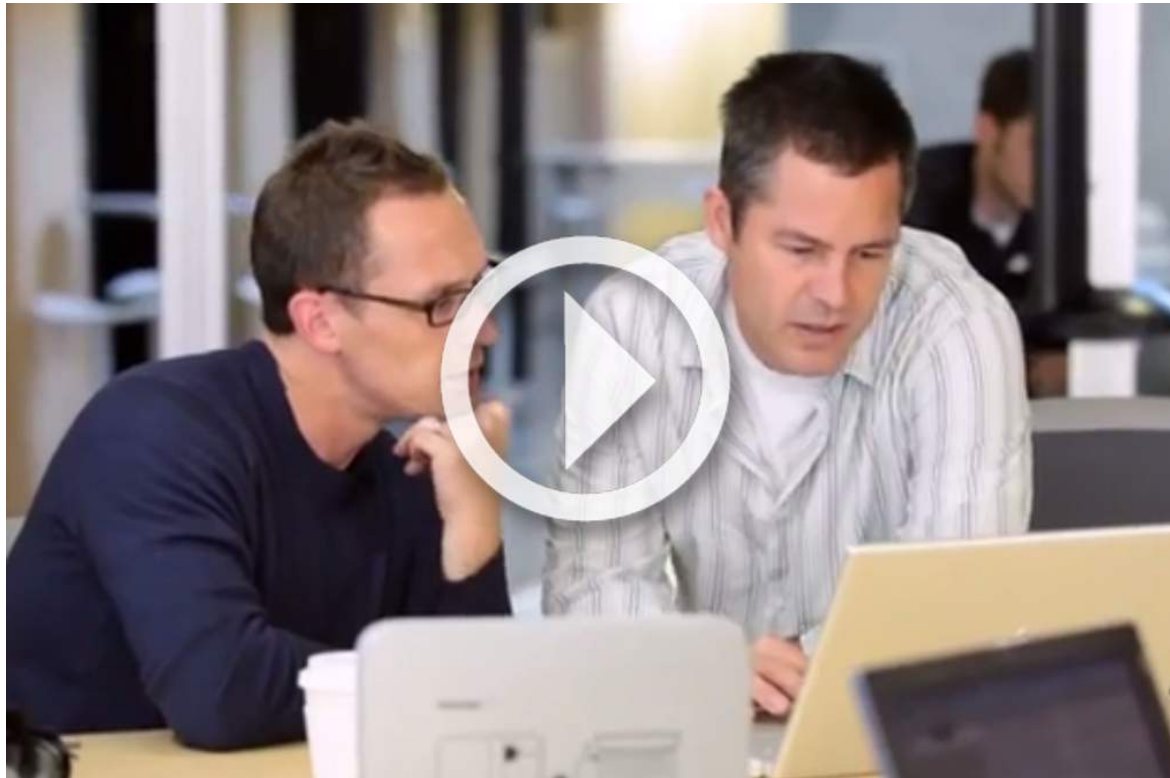
THE OFFICE GOES TO SCHOOL

Working spaces do not only encourage collaboration between professionals but may also foster such practices among students with experiences that also facilitate, nurture and enable their communicational capacities.

In education as well, technologies and working spaces play a determining role in the success of the teacher/student dichotomy. At the end of this process line, students enter the labour market and hopefully do so in a professionalised approach, within the respective context and with the tools needed to work in collaborative spaces and processes.

The construction of flexible spaces, with the appropriate furniture and design, complemented by incorporating collaborative technology, stimulates the creativity and productivity of students and betters the relationship that they have with their teachers. The introduction of collaborative concepts to students also results in added value in terms of their preparation to join the world of work. They get used to cooperating, making recourse to technology and sharing their learning, knowledge and knowhow.

The University of Stanford needs no presentations. This university was a pioneer in researching the impact of working



spaces in accordance with the academic profiles of its students and attaining unprecedented results in terms of the productivity/returns binomial. This was the birthplace of the Social Entrepreneurship Laboratory.

This structure exists to bring about new ways of learning. The idea involves conveying to students the kind of preparation necessary to joining the 21st century workforce. In this laboratory, students correspondingly develop their cultural capacities, such as languages, in addition to their analytical abilities. Student motivation gets enhanced by a range of factors but especially by the way in which the work is undertaken. When the Social Entrepreneurship Laboratory

plans and designs the working spaces for student usage, this duly takes into consideration the preferences of the members making up that community along with their various experiences. Basically, this project demonstrates what effectively proves a prototype of the flexibility of space and its respective importance. The same importance is attributed to the involvement of (inspirational) brands that focus their specific standards on particular fields as with the example of Steelcase, a partner with Stanford on this project. The laboratory director, Scott Doorlgy, backs this as the central idea to the project: "At the end, we want the students to have created something. Placing the students in this context also involves redefining, to a greater or lesser extent, the styles of teaching and preparing. We participate in the construction of the working spaces while students come into contact with new concepts and expand their knowledge rather than restricting themselves just to memorising facts. The integration of students into projects provides them with a touch of reality that reaches beyond the concepts themselves. It becomes normal for students to interact with the teams involved in developing the working space. The obligation or responsibility of the instructors or team leaders is to provoke this mindset in students and they are and function as a type of guide", the director of the Stanford Social Entrepreneurship Laboratory

added.

“Keeping things mobile and flexible is highly important to us and in the same way that the students are important and exactly on their behalf. Thus, they feel motivated as do their professors. We design spaces in which students may make their ideas public at the moment they have them, for example, writing them out on a white board”, said Scott Doorlgy.

The working spaces are set up by the university for its students and with their collaboration. After all, that is what collaboration is really all about. The introduction of this concept to students provides them with a protective shield for when they head off into the real world. In those cases when there is a profit resulting from the productivity of students, these amounts revert entirely back to the university in order to be applied in other spaces and other experiences.

Different experiences but underpinned by one common factor: the working space as adapted to teaching.

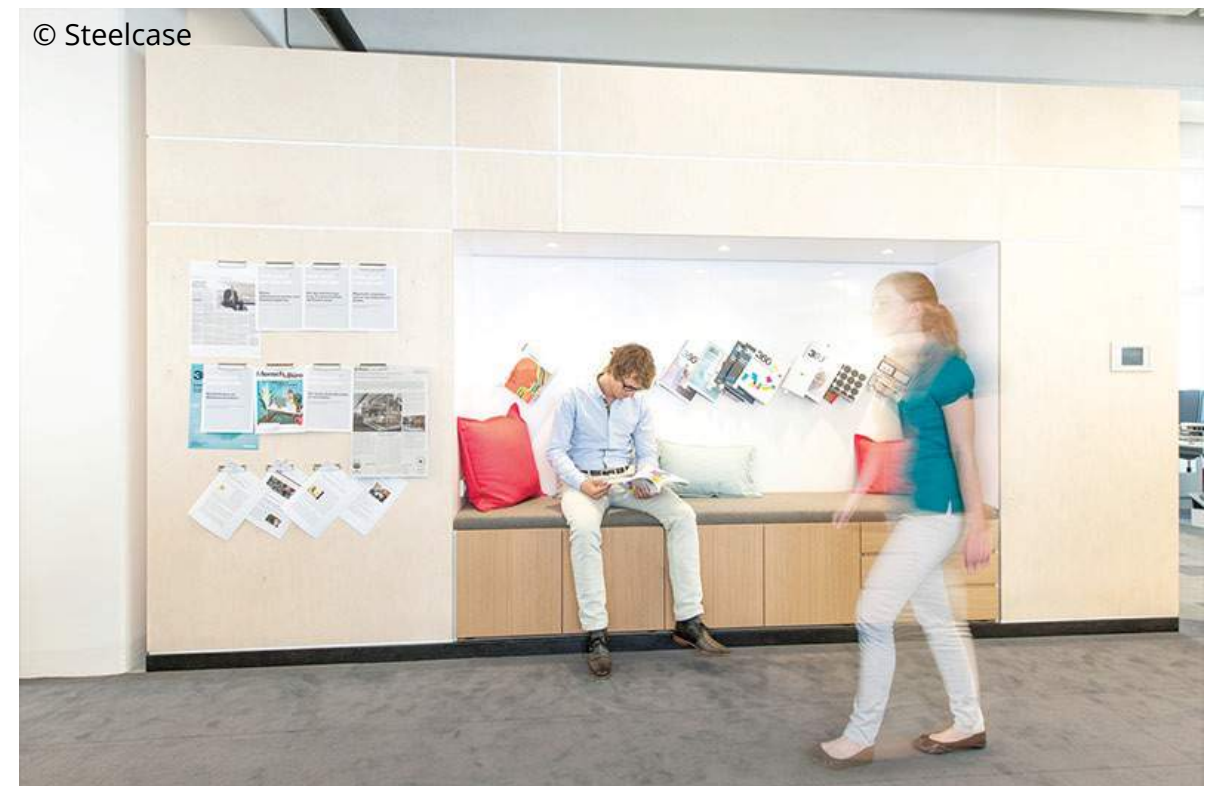
“Taking over an old warehouse, empty and dirty and giving it a cosmetic facelift, transforming it into an inspiring space, is no easy task especially when there are no specialists within our scope and range of influence”.

What the Center of Innovation, of Georgia’s Department of Education, did was, instead of going after any eventual specialists and getting into adventures, we contacted

companies specialising in planning, designing and developing spaces for schools. We wanted to learn about what the classrooms of the future would look like and we wanted that future here immediately”, explained Bob Sniggum, chief information officer of the department.

The specialists, the designers, producers and the technological equipment soon arrived.

“Then, we agreed that we would not be buying any equipment nor asking them to donate it. What we wanted was for them to install the technology into the space and adapt it and assume it as their own”, recalled Bob Sniggum.



© Steelcase

“After having adapted all of the classroom space into small doorless rooms with divisions guaranteeing privacy to student working groups and thereby gaining flexibility over the space, we invited in specialists and monitors from various zones who then worked with these technological platforms and these concepts adapted to schools and we allowed them to manage the space. Their presence did help in clarifying the best means of leveraging everything that the technology was able to provide and not only making the space more functional but also ensuring both students and their teachers gained greater pleasure from being there”, explained Georgia’s Department of Education CIO.

“The children make use of the technology, come into contact with it and all of this gives them ideas about how to design the new classrooms or redesign those already existing. Flexible furniture and technology gave us ideas about what we liked in and for our school”, said Ellen Sabatini, the director of Barrow School, one of the American schools participating in the project.

The students, still children, highlighted the facility with which they were able to implement the tasks and get work done along with the privacy enjoyed by groups when engaged in work along with everything they were able to do in accordance with whatever the objective had been set them.

The flexibility of space!

In this way, students thus gained greater control over their own learning and collaborated with each other and interrelating in different ways and forms throughout the various phases of the work in hand.

Ellen Sabatini does not have any doubts, a traditional room, with its fixed furniture in the regular positions and layouts does not enable the flexibility that these classrooms provide for multiple group activities. The classrooms form part of future working spaces given how the technology merges with the intervening parties through constant and permanent interaction.

Technology does not represent the main piece to the puzzle. All the pieces together add up to the main piece and that is according to Andy Plemmons, a media specialist. “All of these pieces together form a single solution that endows the flexibility of the space with access to this technology creating situations such as a tele-conferencing session with a monitor, instructor or specialist without this causing any distraction to other students who, for example, are designing on a white board or at a white, round table.

The technology arrived, got installed and is already up and running in a portfolio of classrooms. Cisco developed another unique project at Portuguese universities with the

objective of fostering synergies between the academic and business worlds through collaborative platforms. This project, integrated into a European Union Program involved a number of different universities along with companies from the cinematographic sector and enabled the construction of bonds interlinking the academic and the business sectors in addition to boosting the cooperation existing between professors at Portuguese, Brazilian and African universities, which all began holding meetings via tele-conference to discuss their action plans and the content for each degree program.

Technology is increasingly raising its weighting within the scope of the education sector. It leapt out of offices, homes and streets and into universities, colleges, institutions, organisations and boosted by specially adapted and tailored technological solutions. And, furthermore, everybody seems content with the end results.

Various studies, researchers, observers and experiences are undertaken each and every day worldwide to try and better align spaces to the way work gets done and increasingly beyond the four walls of the office.

The ideas are seeds that grow quickly and blossom before producing their fruits. And all such ideas prove valid just so long as organisations are able to duly apply and leverage them. Indeed, they may be as simple as that which

follows.

The G2 Technology Group is an IT consultancy specialising in small and medium sized companies. Its own creativity led the company to affirm that Idea Paint is all over the place and it is... on boards, walls, free spaces; in fact, this idea first emerged when somebody was writing something on the table that was being used. They thus set up boards on which anything might be wrote and placed wherever deemed most appropriate. These can be moved around, redecorated and rescaled according to the space. Such panels are for writing down whatever, whether ideas, events coming up, a drawing of a big smile, messages for the rest of the team and any number of other situations.

This involved nothing more than a board or some white panel which may be written on and cleaned and read by everybody with its particular chameleon characteristic of swiftly altering the aesthetic and visual layout of the working space. They thereby created a comfortable, appealing and inspiring ambience for their members of staff. They called it “functional art”. The engineers and the designers develop these environments according to photographs that they then enlarge up until the largest scale possible before placing the boards in their respective places.

In summary, the infrastructure ends up more as a

multifunctional wall and less of a panel. The material is applied to the wall following close measurement and design in accordance with the photographs worked on by the engineers and the designers and after having pre-visualised the final art. The application of the material that is later transformed into the white panels spread across the wall and in diverse different shapes gets done by a roller just as if the wall was getting painted.

This creative idea does not, and quite deliberately, result in anarchic outputs. Employees may write or draw whatever they so wish but whoever uses these working spaces also does so in an ordered and pragmatic fashion.

One panel for team meetings, with the objectives defined and laid out, alongside another panel on the same wall containing quotes and thoughts for the day, curiosities, ironies and inspirational sentences. Further above, on the same wall, another space in white for communicating between the various members involved in a particular project.

This is certainly an innovative, simple and effective way of fostering collaboration within a working environment with its usage having spread through the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and France.

However, it is not only technology that is changing the way we go about learning and the means of teaching. On its

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own, without being duly integrated, technology cannot achieve its maximum potential and be appropriately and effectively deployed. Whoever one day visits the classroom as described above will come away with the impression of a futuristic space ship in which teaching and learning takes place with recourse

to multiple platforms and spaces.

Bob Sniggum knows very well that the more specialists are available to this type of environment and technology, the more intense the symbiosis with the teachers proves and demonstrating to them that, with the same cost of effort, they are able to carry out diverse operations. However, they still remain the same classrooms even if with a completely different set up, he concluded.

While a classroom is a shared working space then such an environment necessarily incorporates the basic coworking

philosophy. One of the greatest challenges facing contemporary society is just how to overcome the discrepancies between the traditional education system and the real needs of the new generation entering the labour market. As one means of resolving this problem, universities are investing in the coworking model and have already latched onto its benefits with these spaces and facilities proving ever more attractive to students and, in all probability, becoming one of the main locations for the training and education of future entrepreneurs.

Interested in the success of their students and boosting their involvement with their post-study careers, universities have moved to set up their own coworking spaces or, alternatively, establishing partnerships with those coworking service providers already established in the market.

The academic world has already grasped how coworking represents a new source of knowledge and innovation and constituting an added value to students to the extent that they then easily slot into real working contexts and getting them into contact with different professionals from various different sectors of activity.

This very much amounts to a new paradigm: a “third space” between school and home: coworking spaces for students.

The phenomenon is also very much part of our daily life as witnessed by taking a look around and observing the number of students working in cafés, bookstores and other “third spaces” whenever such provide an Internet connection.

Our example here comes from Dresden, Germany. SLUB, the library of the Technical University of Dresden, saw its occupation levels rise significantly over the course of recent years.

Confronted by a lack of desk space given the level of demand, SLUB went into partnership with Neonworx, a coworking specialist company located in the proximity of the campus and which thereby provides the opportunity for fifteen different students to work out of their facility for three months and gaining free access to its set of resources, in particular the digital library.

The benefits of an organised coworking space to students prove unquestionable. Here, the advantages stand out as an alternative to the busier and more crowded sites such as cafés or bookstores and appropriate for long periods of time spent working, exchanging experiences, expanding one’s network of contacts as well as obtaining training in various areas related to management and entrepreneurship. The experiences gained from working within the context of a community of specialists provides another dimension to the advantages and

alongside putting into practice the theoretical concepts already acquired in the classroom.

Students experience a relative facility to getting on with their projects in motivating working environments. And it is similarly not difficult to understand how accessing professional opportunities proves something that naturally benefits them in the final stages of a degree and prior to their actual entrance into the labour market proper.

These benefits suggest that the innovation and creativity generated in these communities have their own places within universities and there is thus little surprise at noting how library occupation rates are on the rise year after year.

Some universities have already set up their own coworking facilities for students as is the case of H4, at the University of Nova Carolina (USA) and Kosilab at the University of Siegen (Germany) with its slogan “Coworking for Students”. These are spaces utilised to develop entrepreneurial projects, fostering interactions between students while also putting into practice recruitment programs for companies external to the universities themselves. More than company incubators, they are working spaces in which students begin coming into contact with the world of work and developing their projects and ideas.

Professors are also increasingly seeking out working

spaces with such characteristics. Many sign up to coworking facilities to stage workshops within the scope of the courses that these spaces offer to the students studying there. Such is the case with the Reno Collective Space (USA) that went into partnership with the Reynolds School of Journalism. In interview with the Deskmag magazine, the dean of this Nevada located university stated that he “had hoped that the collaborative dynamic with the Reno Collective Space would strengthen the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurialism of the school of journalism”.

Another interesting example is the cooperation ongoing between the coworking facility NTI Leeds Space (United Kingdom) and Leeds Metropolitan University, which develops three-month intensive training programs in digital technology at the end of which students are able to join the coworking community with special terms and conditions should they intend to advance with some kind of professional project. The involvement of professors appears in this phase with the students getting accompanied by a mentor who advises them and guides the practical implementation of their projects. Students are encouraged to participate in events held within the coworking environment, sharing their ideas and building up their own contact networks. Cooperation between universities and coworking spaces makes particular sense

because in reality both share the same objectives: sharing knowledge, collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship.

There are inclusively more radical opinions believing that to the extent knowledge becomes available through the online world, coworking spaces may act as the future agents for spreading this knowledge with some universities tending to disappear to the detriment of “mentoring”.

Geekdom, a coworking space located in San Antonio, Texas (USA), set up an educational program, SparkEd, that had hardly opened its doors before rapidly exceeding its own expectations. Its leaders saw around one thousand and five hundred youths sign up for thirty Weekend Campus events, which were run by the community of coworkers. The following year saw enrolments break the five thousand mark.

Geekdom works with schools to teach subjects such as web design, programming, robotics and entrepreneurialism.

In truth, universities have now gained a new type of campus in their immediate surroundings populated by “knowledge companies” focused on technology, management and design.

Betamore, in Baltimore (USA), provides yet another example of a technologically entrepreneurial campus. Its purpose is clear: reinvigorating the ecosystem of Baltimore through training in fields such as IT programming, finance, law

and design and involving members of coworking communities, employers, members of staff, companies and students. Betamore thus provides an open mentoring program to the community and has already considered certifying its course.

Might these coworking spaces at some stage replace universities? One facet is for sure: once again, these coworking spaces have changed the way that we all work. But they have changed much else – and, above all, they have brought about a new way of learning.



AND THE FUTURE?

Catherine Gall, a researcher at Steelcase International, states that “the profound social changes that we currently experience are going to have significant consequences for future working environments. Today, employees are motivated by independence, creativity, continuous training and control over integrating work and life”.

21st century professionals tend to dominate the social and professional networks as a means of promoting and sharing their experiences. They have control over the platforms enabling a combined and simultaneous presence of both virtual and physical interactions. The place where the work actually takes place is of ever less interest given how technology has evolved to provide platforms empowering remote and interactive forms of cooperation and collaboration.

In turn, Miguel Louzeiro, the manager of Collaboration at Cisco Portugal, defended that “the working space should be both attractive to employees as well as functional from the point of view of flexibility”. This specialist maintains that open spaces need complementing with more reserved areas in which employees may benefit from privacy and relaxation.

There is no doubt that this future is now: technology fits into this reality in a natural fashion to enable members of staff to work without any technological limitations and irrespective of whatever part of the office they might find themselves in. Indeed, ultimately, their “office” is the world.

“In the new global market, physical working spaces are undergoing constant change. As a result, cultures are colliding and business leaders, real estate professionals, architects and designers need to think in a different way about designing culturally adjusted working environments” Catherine Gall maintained. While there is no universal standard on best practices in this field, Steelcase, a world leading company in the working space organisation sector, considers that companies should adopt the following:

- Know the local culture well before opening up a place of work in another country. Nowadays, working for a multinational does not substantially differ from working for the United Nations – requiring diplomacy, tact and sensitivity as well as new models of organisational dependence and interaction. Attitudes towards the company are strongly influenced by cultural values and norms. An equilibrium between the local and global culture needs establishing and able to leverage locally based differences and align them with the organisation’s own identity;

- Always invest in the workplace in order to attain the cultural context targets. Working spaces need to highlight the best in each employee, reconciling the cultural differences present and highlighting the value of each person as a source of energy contributing to the success of all without ever losing vision of the organisation's strategic facets in targeting the ongoing and emerging trends;

- Advance with working spaces that value collaboration wherever this takes place. Building a community and fostering the energy arising out of mutual trust between professionals are core ideas to a climate of collaboration with the way in which the place of work is designed taking on an ever more critical role. The growing need and desire for persons to remain interconnected – physically and virtually – require places of work that enable and encourage such interactions and collaboration.

- Apply design thinking to finding solutions whether to global or local needs. Whenever a complex problem emerges, the design thinking process proves a highly effective tool for fostering creative thinking. This perceives the problem in overall terms both through the lens of a microscope that scrutinises the pieces individually and through the lens of a telescope that takes in the patterns and the general panorama. In deconstructing and rebuilding the key components to any

challenge, there may emerge new perceptions on the issues under study and enabling practical solutions for a particular local reality stemming from discussing it from an overall perspective.

- Allow for demonstrations of culture and local inputs into the working environment. While the design of the workplace is an important tool to establishing a corporate brand in any place, a certain level of adaptation and customisation also proves essential. Showing respect for the space of each individual and allowing them to show their emotions and preferences represents an unquestionable advantage to 21st century organisations.

This new approach to work, to life and innovation needs new types of spaces and this change is becoming increasingly visible. The working environment, hitherto largely encased within corporate building structures, is beginning to spread outwards. Work has entered into the public domain, into what are termed “third locations”, into the homes of people and raising new questions about the borders between the public and the private, working time and free time and revealing a confrontation between cultures, practices, aspirations... and still furthermore: we remain interested in grasping these emerging forces and creating a new paradigm for the place of work: individual office, campus, home, city, “cloud”...

Currently, the view from the “office” of any worker may change five or six times per day as workers move from their home to their place of work, to the café, bookstore, airport or coworking place. Workers are highly motivated but the transition between spaces and information necessarily involved to access these same spaces does not always prove easy.

The post-it notes on the fridge about your child’s football game, the calendar on your mobile phone and the presentation on your portable needing to be passed onto your colleagues in India: each change of space contains a conundrum of information requirements.

In the office of the future, the idea of “going to work/the office” becomes obsolete and the need to transfer information swiftly between spaces and devices multiplies many times over. These same professionals “carry little but live a lot”. All of the information necessary to living and working may be transported in the palm of your hand and in whatever the location you find yourself in: waiting room, airport or café. The post-its on the fridge are beginning to appear on the walls of hotel rooms. The presentation may be shared with the India branch as we travel to the airport and the information available in the hotel’s office is the same as that in the office.

Pier Paolo Mucelli, CEO of eOffice is pragmatic as regards

this theme: “in order to visualise the office of the future we do not need to go off into some space based utopia or extra-terrestrial architecture. When asking architects about offices of the future, the conversation turns on basic points such as collaboration, communication and integration. Effectively and efficiently designed spaces and the appropriate utilisation of resources shall play an integral role in meeting the needs of collaborators within the specific cultural framework of the company.” According to this manager, leveraging mobile technologies alongside the flexibility that proves an essential characteristic in accordance with the way in which persons work and utilise their working spaces. Rather than having their own desks, people need only a place of work to connect into. “And why shouldn’t these working places not have their lighting and temperature definitions controlled individually in favour of sustainability?,” Mucelli questioned.

As stated earlier, Koen Blaster owner of Officenter, believes that – also due to mobility related issues – the greatest change taking place comes with working from home that continues to register increases. It is not therefore surprising that people divide up equally their working from home and from “their own” office, which drives a substantial downturn in the amount of time spent in the office (perhaps 45-50%).

According to this Belgian manager, companies shall therefore ever more adopt flexible working models and becoming focused on meeting spaces and co-working facilities in the process.

According to Workbar Partner Bill Jacobson, “there is a major shift afoot in the office and its core is the movement from office space being a business to a business type of offering to become a business to consumer type offering”. The paradigm has changed: “Individuals as much as companies are choosing where, when and how they want to work, instead of being mandated by an employer. As individuals are empowered to choose their work environment they are choosing to congregate with others instead of in their private places. The office of the future will embrace this trend in a professional, enjoyable environment that accentuates a people-centric workplace”, Jacobson concluded.

The Brazilian blogger and journalist Anderson Costa considers that the ideal model shall be found when we stop thinking about productivity in a linear sense as happened in the Industrial Revolution. We live in a moment when intellectual activities are at a peak and working with our brains proves something more cyclical than linear as our bodies tire more rapidly and need more frequent breaks. Hence, the desire for flexible working: days of intellectual analysis

spanning eight to ten hours per day are extremely exhausting and the place where you go to work is more a choice based upon your profile than on the structure, which is basically the same in the case of the majority of offices. According to Anderson, “the ideal model is the model you need at that precise moment.”

According to Annette Reizburg, former president of the Global Workspace Association and one of the most respected consultants in this industry, “the concept of an office in a single size is something that belongs to the past”. The “office of the future” will better interrelate with the needs of each individual: these needs stem as much from “work” as from “life”. We spend most of our lives working and the future office should allow us to choose how, when and where we work.

João Paulo Pereira, an international consultant on occupational health, shared his vision in defining the office of the future as “not a space in the perspective of no longer being confined. There will have to be a certain congruence between our own vital space and the immense need to frame oneself within the scope of that which forms our expectations about the organisation of our lives”.

According to this specialist, his studies on the theme suggest that “the office of the future will incorporate a perspective of rendering our time profitable and almost in a

counter cycle to what we do today, adapting our work to the organisation of our lives. This will function from the perspective of the global village and existing within the space that defines it and operating mostly as the place where we gather our memories. The tasks themselves shall be executed freely within whatever the context that we find ourselves”.

This line of thinking reaches conclusions that the future may include solutions such as virtual offices and always taking into account the ever rising need to adopt a multi-disciplinary perspective within the framework of working interdependently with others.

“And in this aspect, coworking may prove a solution”, João Paulo Pereira proposed.

This research maintains that there will be a profound difference, and to an increasing extent, between the office and the working environment. The former will fundamentally contain the vehicle facilitating institutional contact, accumulating information and a safe haven of organisational certainty. The second will function in accordance with our space, our time, our desire to be in a particular place taking as our reference the compliance with objectives and no-longer considering our physical presence as a characteristic obligation.

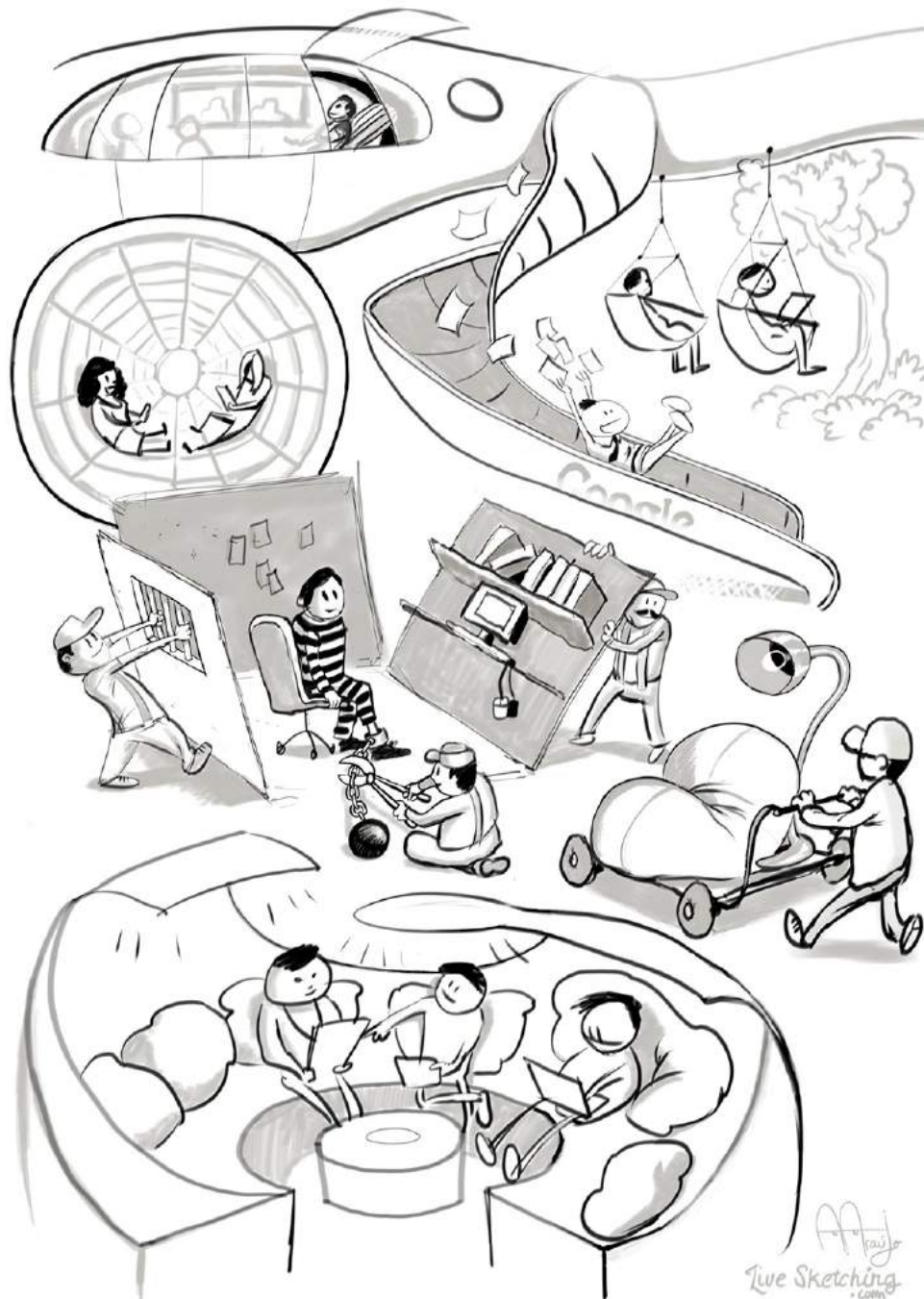
Four walls and physical isolation would thus seem to be

conditions that are immersed in a profound need for rethinking before finally placing the technology now existing at our service and in the full knowledge that the imaginary model that we have created from the educational and social point of view shall necessarily have to undergo restructuring. Quite simply, the rules for personal discipline, for organising time and managing space shall be different.

The office of the future shall fundamentally be, and taking into consideration that which we today understand by “office”, an immense gamut of roles that we are constantly assuming and even while undergoing a constant and unceasing re-adaptation.

After all, this represents only a beginning on the long and fantastic journey to this admirable new world.

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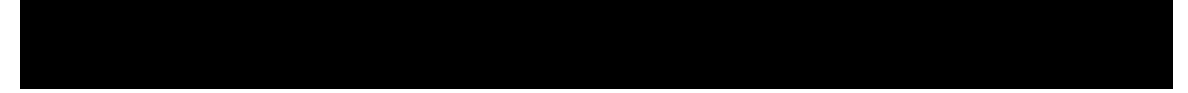
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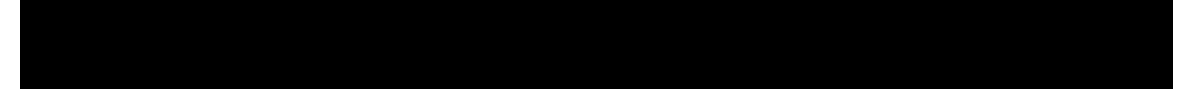
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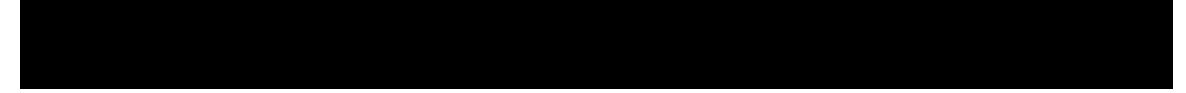
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