360°

THE PRIVACY CRISIS

Taking a Toll on Employee Engagement

About this Issue

No organization can succeed if its workforce isn't engaged. And yet the signals are stronger than ever that far too many high-potential employees are chronically disengaged at work—unmotivated, unproductive and overly stressed, with little capacity to think creatively, collaborate successfully and generate the innovative solutions that organizations desire.

Usually, the problem isn't that the wrong people were hired. Instead, the problem is that workers aren't getting enough of an ingredient that's essential to the formula for engagement: occasional privacy. Most workplaces today are designed to provide collaboration for many and privacy for only a select few. As work has become quicker paced and more demanding, workers' unmet needs for privacy have escalated. Lack of privacy is most employees' number-one complaint about their workplaces, and the imbalance has now reached crisis proportions.

By researching the privacy crisis globally, Steelcase researchers have identified the various types of privacy experiences that workers are seeking. We've then applied these insights to create concepts for how privacy can be achieved through workplace design in order to amplify the performance of individuals, teams and entire enterprises.

Content

360°

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Most organizations know that they aren't achieving the full potential of their workforce day-to-day, but fewer have figured out how to achieve the level of engagement they need. New Steelcase research sheds light on the impasse: In addition to needing places that support group work, workers around the world also need private places to focus and recharge. With privacy woefully scarce in most offices today, getting beyond the crisis requires new thinking about workplace design and new ways of optimizing space.
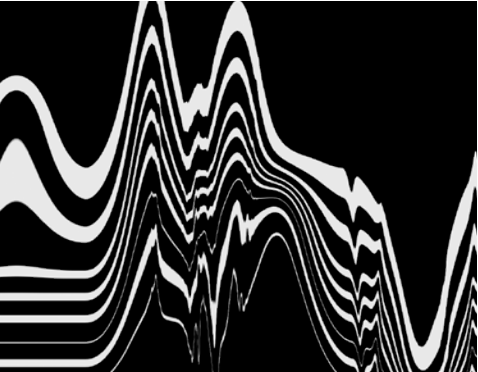
54 Too Much Noise!
Science now warns that too much noise negatively affects our hearts and brains, as well as our ears. For individuals as well as teams, whenever a task is complex or requires creative thinking, less is definitely more.

60 The Quiet Ones
To be at their best, introverts need quiet, private spaces.

thepowerofintroverts.com ▶

Boosting Employee Engagement: Place Matters

At organizations throughout the world, employee disengagement is like a bad virus—difficult to diagnose, contagious and tough to cure. Worldwide, actively disengaged workers continue to outnumber engaged ones at a rate of nearly 2-to-1, according to Gallup's most recent 142-country study, "The State of the Global Workplace." Unhappy and unproductive, disengaged employees are unlikely to make positive contributions and their negativity tends to spread with alarming ramifications. Conversely, engaged employees are more productive, have lower turnover rates, lower absenteeism and drive higher profits—they're what every organization needs to thrive.

Gallup's findings indicate that one important way to help boost employee engagement is to focus on their wellbeing. And Steelcase studies have shown that place matters: The physical work environment can have a strong impact on employee wellbeing and engagement.

Data from a recent Steelcase commissioned study conducted by the global research firm IPSOS of 10,500 workers in 14 countries throughout the world provide a wake-up call for any leaders who think work environments are not a high priority—employees who are highly satisfied with the places they work are also the most highly engaged.

Countries surveyed :

France	Russia
Germany	Turkey
Belgium	US
Netherlands	Canada
Spain	Mexico
UK	India
Poland	China

Highly-disengaged employees are not satisfied with their work environment.

My work environment does not allow me to:

85%
Concentrate easily

84%
Easily and freely express and share my ideas

85%
Feel relaxed, calm

57%
Physically move during the day and change postures

79%
Accommodate mobile workers

84%
Feel a sense of belonging to my company and its culture

87%
Work in teams without being interrupted or disrupted

86%
Choose where to work within the office, based on the task I am doing

59%
Move around easily throughout the day

65%
Socialize and have informal, relaxed conversations with colleagues

For more detailed information on the study findings, get the 360 iPad APP or go to 360.steelcase.com.

Workplace Satisfaction + Engagement

The Steelcase-commissioned survey conducted by the global research firm IPSOS of 10,500 workers shows a strong correlation between employees' satisfaction with their work environment and their level of engagement. Those most engaged were also the most satisfied with their work environment.

Engagement

11%
Highly Satisfied

20%
Satisfied

33%
Somewhat Satisfied

69%
Employees who are not fully engaged at work are also the most unsatisfied with their work environment

27%
Dissatisfied

9%
Highly Dissatisfied

Workplace Satisfaction
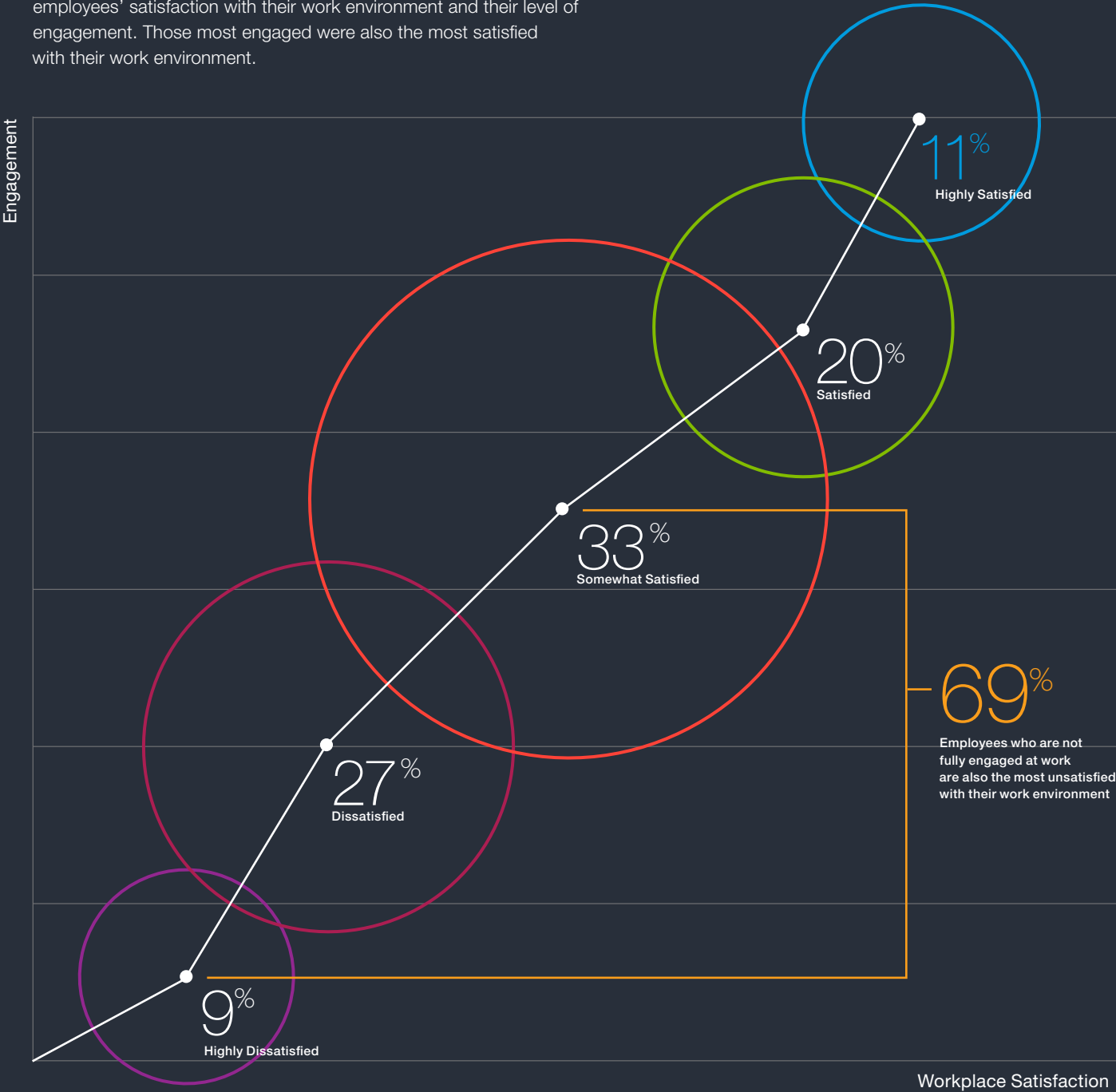
Lagunitas–
by Toan Nguyen and Coalesse

Third place anywhere.

From the conventional to the casual, the Lagunitas collection adapts to changing workstyles and shifting work postures.

YAHOO CEO MAYER NOW REQUIRING REMOTE EMPLOYEES TO NOT BE (REMOTE)

Power of Place: The Office Renaissance

By Gale Moutrey, vice president of global communications for Steelcase Inc.

ALL THINGS DIGITAL

Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer caused a media stir in 2013 when she asked her employees to come "back to the office." Her edict created a great deal of speculation about her intent. Was it because she didn't trust that her employees were working? Or was it a strong signal to her employees about her belief that people need to come together in a physical place to be more collaborative and innovative?

In our work with leading organizations around the world, we find leaders nodding their heads in agreement with Mayer because they are worried about an increasingly recognized issue that has bottom-line impact: employee engagement.

A recent study by Gallup showed that worldwide, 87 percent of employed people are "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" at work, which means that they're emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and thus less likely to be productive. Sometimes these disengaged employees are outright toxic to the organization. The cost is high for countries as well as companies. In the United States alone, Gallup estimates that the cost of disengaged employees could be between $450—$550 billion per year. In Germany, that cost is estimated at 100 billion euros per year.

Gale Moutrey is vice president of global communications for Steelcase Inc, the global leader in the office furniture industry. She has held a variety of sales leadership, product marketing and communications roles since joining Steelcase Canada in 1984. Gale leads a diverse, globally distributed team and she works regularly with leading organizations around the globe. She is passionate in her belief that in an increasingly complex global environment place matters more than ever. Gale feels strongly that place can help workers become more engaged and achieve greater wellbeing, while helping organizations activate their purpose.

Conversely, Gallup found that organizations with a high degree of employee engagement are deeply focused on creating value for their organization. Their contribution allows these organizations to experience greater productivity, great profitability, lower turnover, less absenteeism and even fewer safety incidents. Perhaps that's why CEOs like Mayer are asking employees to come back to the office. They know there is much involved in solving the problem of employee engagement, but they understand instinctively that place matters. They know that bringing their people together in a place that unites them can be the first step.

But this cannot happen in yesterday's office. What's needed today is an office renaissance. This means reimagining the workplace and creating places where employees choose to work—not because they have to but because they want to.

Nikil Saval's new, much-talked-about book "Cubed," which outlines the history of the office, speculates in the near future work will no longer be a place. While this idea has become a popular notion in the media, our research suggests something entirely different.

A 2014 Steelcase-commissioned survey in 14 countries around the world confirms that people who are the most satisfied with their work environment are also the most engaged. These employees are not looking for the paradigms of the past. Instead, they need workplaces designed to nurture their physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

Physical Wellbeing

In offices of the past, the focus was primarily on employees' ergonomic needs because their work caused them to sit for long periods of time, gazing at a computer that was tethered to a desk. Today we understand the importance of movement throughout the day and our new technologies allow mobility, but they also require a different type of support when we are seated.

Static sitting can cause slowed metabolism, neck pain, back pain and reduced concentration, impacting mental and cognitive abilities. Engaging the body in movement is essential for supporting physical and mental vigor at work—it's the body language of ideas. Changing posture stimulates the mind. Our research shows that 96 percent of highly engaged workers are able to move freely and change postures throughout their day.

Employees are working longer hours, so it's critical to offer a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces that offer posture choices and encourage walking to create energy. And as the workforce ages, we need to understand what other changes are necessary in terms of lighting, acoustics and adjustability.

Emotional Wellbeing

Neuroscientists have learned that the quantity and quality of social interactions have significant impact on our wellbeing. When people don't have enough quality interactions, they become more disengaged, which makes it harder to collaborate, innovate, solve problems and be open to change.

As we work more in distributed teams, whether across a campus or across the ocean, people struggle to build connections with coworkers when the places where they work don't support and augment their interactions. Teams need places that allow them to see their teammates comfortably, hear each other clearly and share information easily so they can build social capital and the "shared mind" that is necessary to bring innovation to successful conclusion.

Relationships anchor people's commitment to an organization, its brand and its purpose. Over 98 percent of the most highly engaged employees say their workplace helps them feel a sense of belonging to their company and its culture, and they also feel they can easily and freely express and share their ideas. Therefore, it's critically important to ensure that people have meaningful connections to others, and understand that, wherever they are, they are valued in the organization. Creating places that allow everyone equal opportunity to communicate and contribute is essential to building the trust that is the currency of collaboration.

The workplace needs to help workers reduce "negative" stress so the brain can be free to be creative. Creativity and idea generation diminish when people are stressed—and idea generation is the lifeblood of innovation. Again, our research shows that people who are in work environments that help them feel energized and supported, versus stressed, are the most highly engaged.

Cognitive Wellbeing

Work today requires that people spend their day processing information, solving problems, creating new ideas and innovating. It's both physically and mentally demanding. Our prefrontal cortexes, the region of the brain that does most of this work, is on overload.

We are dealing with more information that ever before, and it's not only more—it's coming at us faster, too. Our thinking is interrupted, on average, every three minutes. Even brief interruptions of just a few seconds causes us to make twice as many mistakes. And after our focused work is interrupted, it can take up to 23 minutes to get back into flow—the state of being deeply absorbed in our work and focused. Multitasking doesn't help us to solve the problem, but rather reduces our cognitive capability to the same degree as losing a night's sleep.

Our research at Steelcase found that 98 percent of highly engaged employees say they are able to concentrate easily at work, and 95 pecent are able to work in teams without being disrupted. This means it's critical for the workplace today to help people manage the cognitive overload of their daily lives and allow them to focus or find respite throughout the day in order to achieve mindfulness, and be fully present in the moment. The workplace needs to be designed to help them control their environment in order to reduce stress and help them think better. And thinking better requires feeling good.

Creating an Ecosystem

The wealth of business clearly depends on the health of people. Leading organizations recognize that their physical workplace can help them more effectively implement their strategy, build their brand and support their culture, but they often struggle with how to do this in way that is both resilient and economically viable.

The key is to design the workplace as an ecosystem of interconnected and interdependent places that support the physical, cognitive and emotional needs of people, and give them choice and control over where and how they work. Control and choice is not only a significant component in building engagement; it has also become the new status symbol for today's workers.

The ecosystem should offer a range, or palette, of places—destinations that augment people's interactions with each other and provide access to the tools and technology that people can only find at work. These destinations need to balance spaces for group work with individual spaces for focus and reflection. Organized in interrelated zones and settings, these destinations support diverse

modes of work and diverse ways of thinking—both of which are essential to fuel the creative process that leads to innovation.

Within the ecosystem there also needs to be a palette of posture—spaces that encourage people to sit, stand and move throughout their day, while supporting the different kinds of work they do and the multiple technologies they use. Equally, people need a palette of presence—spaces that allow them to have quality interactions in both the physical and virtual workplace. These places are designed to minimize what is referred to as "presence disparity"—those moments when people not physically located in the same room are disadvantaged, visually and/or audibly, because they are remote. The more distributed our work is, the more critical it becomes that the places we work in help us "live on video"—in easy and emotionally engaging ways.

We work with organizations around the world that tell us they need places that enhance collaboration, help them attract and engage employees, help them build their brand and culture, and support the wellbeing of their people. An ecosystem of spaces that support the physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing of people can help organizations solve for these issues, while building a more resilient real estate strategy that doesn't increase their footprint, but can instead offer greater flexibility and adaptability in times of change.

CEOs recognize that, among all the many issues they need to solve, employee engagement is one of the most critical challenges they face today. The cost of disengagement is alarming, and the missed opportunities are staggering. But the opportunity for those organizations that face the problem of engagement heads-on is tremendous. While it would be naive to suggest that place alone can solve the issue of engagement, leaders would be remiss to ignore its potential.

At Steelcase we believe in the power of place to help employees engage. We believe in the power of place to help amplify the performance of people, teams and organizations. And, ultimately, we believe in the power of place to help unlock human promise. ○

Go Deeper

The Six Dimensions of Wellbeing
steelcase.com/wellbeingvideo

Video: Steelcase Brand Video
steelcase.com/innovate

THE PRIVACY CRISIS

Taking a Toll on Employee Engagement

In organizations all over the world, people are facing brand-new problems that require sharing information and putting knowledge together in new ways. For all the right reasons, collaboration has become the big engine for progress and innovation. Although workplaces today make it seemingly easy for people to collaborate, most leaders remain dissatisfied with the pace and frequency of breakthroughs. Uncertain of what to do next, they hire new talent, carve out trendy group spaces, add technology or step up team training efforts—but still don't see the gains they desire.

AT A GLANCE

Issue

Organizations need more innovation—which requires employees who are energized and engaged to be able to put together diverse ideas in new ways. Yet employee engagement is alarmingly low around the world.

Insight

Collaboration is critical to the innovation process. Yet a common misperception is that collaboration is always a group activity when, in fact, people also need time to be alone to do their best thinking. But in many of today's workplaces it's tough for employees to find the privacy they need to concentrate, reflect or recharge their batteries. A lack of privacy in the workplace is taking its toll on employee engagement and becoming a crisis for many organizations. Our research found that people need information and stimulation control to achieve the privacy they need.

Action

Going back to the past paradigm of offices dominated by enclosed private offices won't solve the problem. People need a diverse range of places that gives them control and choice over where and how they work. We've discovered five different ways people experience privacy, and the key is to design a workplace that supports all of them.
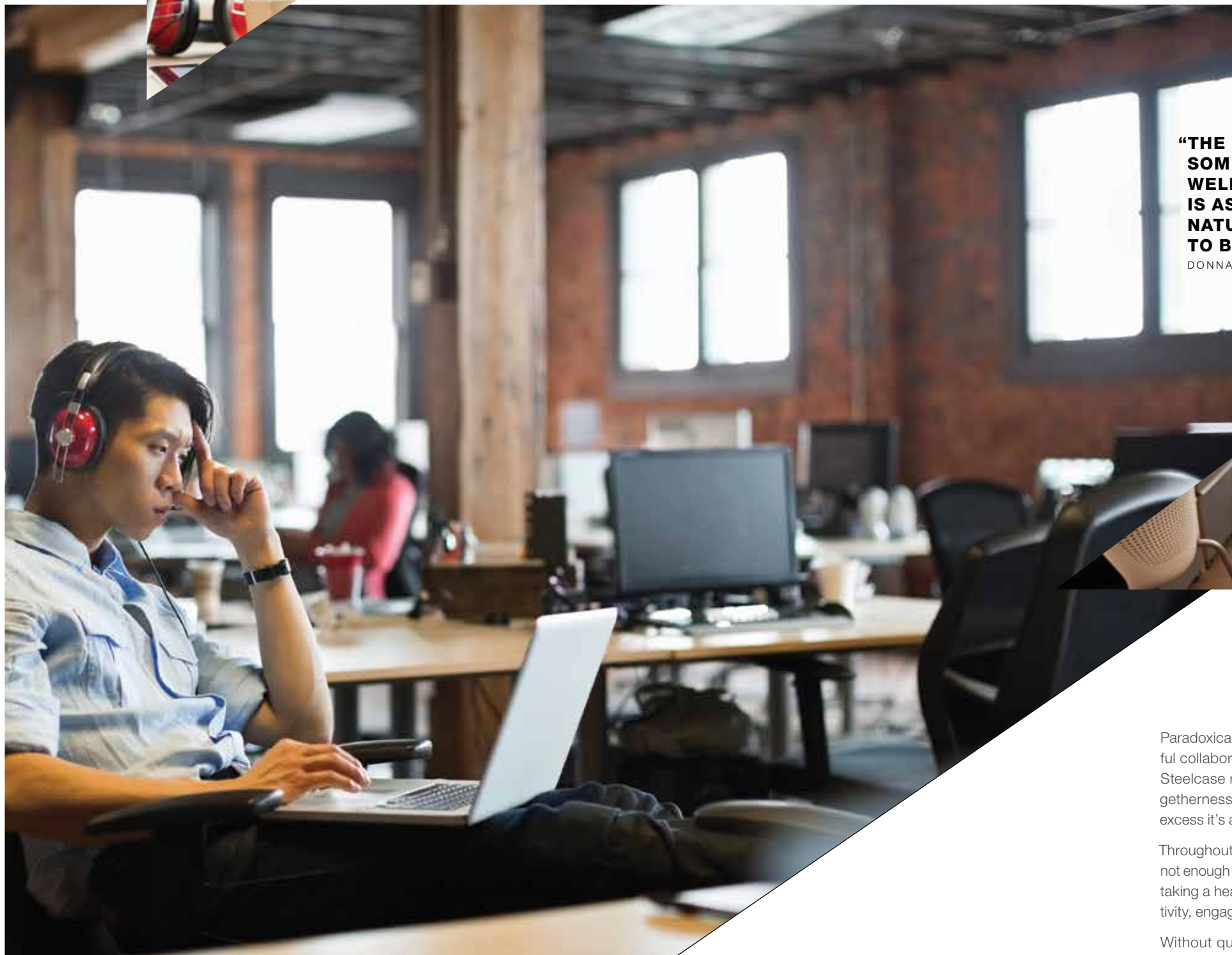
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> **"THE NEED FOR PRIVACY SOMETIMES—AT WORK AS WELL AS IN PUBLIC— IS AS BASIC TO HUMAN NATURE AS IS THE NEED TO BE WITH OTHERS."**
> DONNA FLYNN

Paradoxically, most efforts to fuel more successful collaboration are only making it worse. New Steelcase research has revealed that, while togetherness at work is vital for value creation, in excess it's a killer.

Throughout the world, too much interaction and not enough privacy has reached crisis proportions, taking a heavy toll on workers' creativity, productivity, engagement and wellbeing.

Without question, successful collaboration requires giving coworkers easy access to each other. But it also requires giving each individual the time and places to focus and recharge, and too many workplaces today aren't delivering on privacy as a necessity.

"The need for privacy sometimes—at work as well as in public—is as basic to human nature as is the need to be with others," explains Donna Flynn, director of Steelcase's WorkSpace Futures research group. "The harder people work collaboratively, the more important it is to also have time alone— to be free from distractions, apply expertise and develop a solid point of view about the challenges at hand. People also need privacy to decompress and recharge.

"A key takeaway from our study is that the open plan isn't to blame any more than reverting to all private offices can be a solution. There is no single type of optimal work setting. Instead, it's about balance. Achieving the right balance between working in privacy and working together is critical for any organization that wants to achieve innovation and advance."

Desperately
Seeking Privacy

More than ever before, workers are going public with complaints about their lack of privacy at work. Blogs and online chat rooms are chock-full of soliloquies about what everyday life in an open-plan workplace is like: how easy it is to be distracted, how stressful the environment can be and how hard it is to get any individual work done. Many say they literally can't hear themselves think. Seeing the opportunity, one high-end headset brand has started advertising its products as a way to hear your favorite music or simply to hear the sound of silence instead of your coworkers. But what the ad doesn't say is that wearing headsets cuts people off from hearing and engaging in conversations that could be valuable for their work, thereby eliminating a potential advantage that open-plan workspaces are intended to provide. And audio distractions are only part of the problem.

Meanwhile, beyond the chatter of cyberspace and advertising, other strong signals have been mounting that workers' lack of privacy is a problem that needs C-suite attention ASAP.

Gallup's recent report on the State of the Global Workplace found only 11 percent of workers around the world are engaged and inspired at work, and 63 percent are disengaged—unmotivated and unlikely to invest effort in organizational

goals or outcomes. But slicing the data shows that, at least in the United States, those who spend up to 20 percent of their time working remotely are the most engaged of all workers surveyed. This finding suggests that these engaged workers are able to balance collaboration and interaction with colleagues at the office and are working remotely to achieve the privacy they need for some of their individual work. And yet, many business leaders recognize that sending people home anytime they need privacy isn't efficient and it can threaten versus strengthen innovation by diluting the cultural "glue" that inspires workers and keeps them connected to the organization's goals.

Moreover, a recent Steelcase study of the workplace conducted by the global research firm IPSOS of more than 10,500 workers in Europe, North America and Asia confirms that insufficient privacy in the workplace is an issue throughout the world. The survey results show that being able to concentrate, work in teams without being interrupted or choose where to work based on the task are frequently unmet needs.

Yet the 11 percent of workers who had more privacy and were more satisfied with their workplace overall were also the most engaged. Conversely, employees highly dissatisfied with their work environment were the least engaged. This study confirms observations by Steelcase researchers: The workplace has a very real impact on employee engagement.

WORKPLACE SATISFACTION
BOLSTERS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

A Steelcase survey conducted by the global research firm IPSOS shows a strong correlation between employees' satisfaction with their work environment and their level of engagement.

Only 11 percent of respondents were highly satisfied with their work environment; they were also the most highly engaged. These respondents agree their workplace allows them to:

98% concentrate easily

97% freely express and share ideas

95% work in teams without being interrupted

88% choose where to work within the office, based on their task

95% feel relaxed, calm

97% feel a sense of belonging to their company and its culture

COST OF
DISENGAGEMENT

USA
$450–550B

GERMANY
€112–138B

AUSTRALIA
$54.8B

UNITED KINGDOM
£52–70B

2013 State of the Global Workplace Report, Gallup

An Epidemic of Overwhelm

One condition that impacts workplace satisfaction and thus engagement is when employees have no choice but to work in environments that are saturated with stimuli. According to Susan Cain, author of the bestseller, "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking," many people perform best without others around them constantly. Despite this, she contends, teamwork is often elevated above all else. The result can be a psychological phenomenon that has been coined as "groupthink"—people's natural inclination to succumb to peer pressure and go along with others rather than to risk being isolated by contributing a differing point of view.

The way forward, according to Cain, is "not to stop collaborating face-to-face, but to refine the way we do it." Instead of providing only open-plan work settings, Cain urges organizations to "create settings in which people are free to circulate in a shifting kaleidoscope of interactions," and then be able to disappear into private spaces when they want to focus or simply be alone.

David Rock, a performance management consultant and author of "Your Brain at Work," points to the latest findings from neuroscience. Most workers, he says, are suffering from "an epidemic of overwhelm" due to huge increases in the amount of information we're expected to deal with every day and a significant increase in the distractions that come our way. Science has shown that the human prefrontal cortex, where most knowledge work processes take place, is small, energy-hungry and very easily distracted, Rock notes. Many researchers' work has proven that any belief that people can successfully multitask is essentially wishful thinking. Humans can give controlled, full attention to just one thing at a time. When we try

THE WAY EACH PERSON CONTROLS DISTRACTIONS IS VERY DIFFERENT.

"IN THE AVERAGE MORNING DOWNLOAD OF EMAILS, MANY PEOPLE HAVE TO PROCESS IN A HALF HOUR WHAT YOUR BRAIN PROBABLY NEEDS A DAY OR TWO TO PROCESS."

DAVID ROCK

to pay attention actively to any two memory-dependent tasks at once, we're easily distracted and end up doing neither one well. Given this reality, achieving peak performance in today's work environments has become much more challenging than it was even just a few years ago.

"As we got better at sharing information and building software and techniques and tools for collaborating, we're leveraging the fact that information travels literally at the speed of light… And so with all this efficiency of information flow and of communication, we're hitting up against the final bottleneck, which is our ability to pay attention and make decisions. In the average morning download of emails, many people have to process in a half hour what your brain probably needs a day or two to process at the right kind of pace… We're definitely stretching our capacities in some challenging ways," says Rock.

Office workers are interrupted as often as every three minutes by digital and human distractions. These breaches in attention carry a destructive ripple effect because, once a distraction occurs, it can take as much as 23 minutes for the mind to return to the task at hand, according to recent research done at the University of California.

The problem, Rock explains, is that the network in the brain that controls impulses—known as the brain's braking system—is easily tired. This means that once we're distracted by something, it's harder to stop ourselves from being distracted by something else. He makes the comparison of using your foot as a brake on a motorcycle. "Your foot is very effective until you start to move. It's a little bit like that with distractions. Before you're distracted, you can stop yourself from being distracted. But once you start being distracted, once you start moving, your brakes don't work very well."

11
MIN FOR INTERRUPTIONS

When we try to work on a project, we get interrupted every 11 minutes (on average).

23
MIN TO RETURN TO FLOW

When we get interrupted, it takes us up to 23 minutes to get back into FLOW—the state where we're deeply engaged.

Source: Gloria Mark, University of California, Irvine, Calif

5
IQ POINTS FOR MULTI-TASKING

When **women** are multitasking cognitive capability is reduced by the equivalent of 5 IQ points

15
IQ POINTS FOR MULTI-TASKING

When **men** are multitasking cognitive capability is reduced by the equivalent of 15 IQ points

Source: Dr. Glenn Wilson, University of London

Researchers' work has proven that any belief that people can successfully multitask is essentially wishful thinking. Humans can give controlled, full attention to just one thing at a time. When we try to pay attention to any two memory-dependent tasks at once, we're easily distracted and end up doing neither one well.

Overexposed?

External distractions—things like sound or what we see—can be controlled in the environment, but it's really up to each individual to figure out how to control internal distractions. A big insight from our research was that the way each person controls distractions is very different.

Donna Flynn

Spatial perceptions have played an important role in the survival of the human race, and significant implications from our evolutionary past remain rooted in our psyches today.

"We prefer landscapes that give us a clear view of what's happening around us—open places that offer a broad vantage as part of a group—as well as ready refuge places where we can hide if needed," explains Meike Toepfer Taylor, a Coalesse design researcher. In other words, while the watering holes and caves of our ancestors have been replaced by gathering places and private enclaves in our offices today, people's needs for both types of settings are basic and instinctive.

For many companies, it now appears that there is too much emphasis on open spaces and not enough on enclosed, private spaces.

"A lot of businesses are now struggling with the balance of private and open spaces," says Flynn. "There's mounting evidence that the lack of privacy is causing people to feel overexposed in today's workplaces and is threatening people's engagement and their cognitive, emotional and even physical wellbeing. Companies are asking questions like, 'Have we gone too far toward open plan… or not done it right? What's the formula? What kind of a workplace should we be creating? '"

As a human issue and a business issue, the need for more privacy demands new thinking about effective workplace design, says Flynn.

FOR MANY COMPANIES, IT NOW APPEARS THAT THERE IS TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON OPEN SPACES AND NOT ENOUGH ON ENCLOSED, PRIVATE SPACES.

Reinventing What Privacy Means

According to Steelcase research, people instinctively evaluate four, often-overlapping mechanisms that determine if a space can provide the type of privacy experience they seek:

Acoustical privacy:
Undisturbed by noise and/or able to create noise of your own without disturbing others

Visual privacy:
Not being seen by others and/or freeing yourself from sight-induced distractions

Territorial privacy:
Claiming a space and controlling it as your own (olfactory privacy is a subset)

Informational privacy:
Keeping content (analog and/or digital) and/or a conversation confidential

Incoming Stimulations

Outgoing Information

Most people think about privacy in terms of other people bothering us, but it's really about control, say Steelcase researchers.

"When Steelcase started looking into privacy in the early 1980s, our researchers were primarily exploring spatial properties, especially the analytics of sound management. By the early '90s, they had synthesized a solid understanding of four mechanisms that regulate privacy in the physical setting: acoustical, visual, territorial and informational. In other words, privacy in any setting is determined by what you hear, what you see, how you define your boundaries and/or what kind of information is revealed and concealed.

"But now we live in an online world as well as a physical one. At the same time that it's brought us closer, technology has invaded people's privacy, exacerbating concerns and sensitivities. We wanted to know more about current human needs for privacy and the types of privacy experiences that are important to workers today. We realized we needed to look deeper and apply a new lens," explains Melanie Redman, a member of the Steelcase WorkSpace Futures team that recently researched privacy by surveying, interviewing and observing workers in North America, Europe and Asia.

As a result of their work, the Steelcase researchers framed the basic psychological context for individual privacy into two spheres: information control—what others can know about us—and stimulation control—managing distractions. They found patterns that were consistent globally: Today's workers repeatedly shift between revealing and concealing themselves, and between seeking stimulation and blocking it out.

"The most surprising thing to us was how universal the need for privacy is in today's world. We expected that in countries like China, which has a very collectivist culture, privacy might be less of a need than in countries like the United States, where individualism is prized. But what we discovered is that people all over the world want privacy at times. In different cultures, they may seek it primarily for different reasons and in ways that are permitted in their culture, but the need for privacy sometimes—at work as well as in public—is as important to people as is the need to be with others," says Wenli Wang, who conducted Steelcase's privacy research in China.

People in Western countries seek privacy at work most often in order to manage distractions, whereas in China the primary motivation is to keep information and one's self outside of others' sight, explains Wang. "In China, people don't think about individual privacy in the same way that Westerners do. In the Western world, it's more often about stimulation control. Being distracted isn't as much of a talking point here in China. It's more about information control, keeping personal information from others and getting away from other people watching you. That's challenging at work because workstation density is fairly extreme and there typically aren't options inside the workplace for taking a personal call or having a personal conversation."

1975
IBM introduces the IBM 5100 Portable Computer

1980s
The first laptops using the flip form

1983
Analog Commercial Cell Phone—Analog Motorola DynaTAC 8000X

1990s
Internet

1996
The first clamshell cellular phone—Motorola StarTAC

2003
Smart phones—Blackberry and Palm

2007
Apple introduces IPhone

2010
Apple introduces iPad

The clamor for privacy at work isn't new. In fact, office design concepts have been oscillating around it for decades. Open-plan systems furniture, developed in the late 1960s to accommodate a burgeoning office workforce, was envisioned as a way to provide more privacy than the rows of desks in large rooms where non-management people had typically worked in the past. Of course, it optimized real estate and reduced costs, too. Over time, the approach continued to evolve. In North America many organizations intentionally migrated to cubicles as a way to flatten hierarchies, break down functional silos, improve collaboration and create a more team-driven organization.

To better understand changing needs and expectations for workplace environments, in 1978 Steelcase commissioned the opinion research firm of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. to conduct a pioneering study of the attitudes of office workers, corporate office planners and professional office designers toward their offices. The results showed that privacy-related considerations were very important to office workers and were, in general, the least satisfactory aspects of their work environments. Though privacy remained an issue, another study in 1991 revealed that changes were underway: Office workers were spending more than half of their time working alone, but organizations were beginning to respond to the growing need for faster, better and more efficient work outputs, and getting to those goals required more collaboration. More workers in 1991 reported there were areas where they could get together to meet and talk informally than two years previous (51 percent vs. 46 percent in 1989), while 57 percent said specific project areas were available.

Throughout the '90s collaboration got stronger and the pendulum began swinging away from privacy. Based on an another survey that Steelcase conducted in 2000, nearly half of workers (48.9 percent) wanted more access to others in their work environment, compared to just 27 percent that said there was too little privacy. What's more, one in every 10 respondents (9.6 percent) said their organization's work environment had too much privacy.

The value of collaboration has become so recognized since the early '90s that, especially in the tech sector, creative industries and countries with egalitarian cultures such as The Netherlands, even executives have chosen to leave their private offices in favor of open plan settings that offer the reward of sharing information more easily for better, speedier decisions.

Today an estimated 70 percent of office spaces in the United States have some form of open plan, according to the International Management Facility Association. Over time, these workstations have become more open and considerably smaller. In North America, the amount of space allotted per worker has decreased from an average of 500 square feet per person in the 1970s to 225 square feet in 2010 to 176 square feet in 2012, says CoreNet Global, and it's predicted to drop as low as 100 square feet by 2017. At the same time, panel heights have gone down from a standard of 5-6 feet to four feet—or less. And in many offices today, panels have disappeared altogether in favor of open "bullpens" or benching work environments, often used on a shared "hot desking" basis versus individually assigned.

Although technology has made work more mobile, the majority of workers worldwide are still doing most, if not all, of their work in workplaces with still-shrinking personal space and few, if any, accommodations for privacy. Meanwhile, the work they do has become more complex and faster-paced to meet the imperatives of creativity and innovation that rule today's economy.

How people use space as an extension of culture has been studied in-depth since the early 1960s. An American cultural anthropologist, Edward T. Hall, coined the term *proxemics* (the study of human spatial requirements and its effect on communication, behavior and interactions) and established it as a subcategory of nonverbal communication. Hall investigated spatial zones based on the amount of distance between others and ourselves: intimate space, personal space, social space and public space. Each is considered appropriate for different situations, and personal space is where people feel comfortable working with others. While the specific distances vary some, each national culture has spatial norms for each of the four zones. In North America, for example, intimate space extends 18 inches from the body, while personal space extends out to 4 feet, social space to 12 feet, and the public zone is beyond that.

Some of the stresses of today's work environments can no doubt be traced to the fact that people's personal space is being compromised. Many are working in environments that routinely bring co-workers close to or even within intimate range, says Taylor. This invasion is not only occurring in physical space. It's also happening digitally when people make video calls on their mobile devices, which puts the other person less than an arm's length away. In contrast, a videoconferencing configuration that situates distributed team members "across a shared table" makes for a much more natural and comfortable exchange among peers.

Though there are culturally based differences regarding privacy and acceptable ways to achieve it, Steelcase's work with global companies has shown that organizational protocols usually trump nation-based norms fairly quickly, says Redman. "If a company places a high value on collaboration and designs an open, collaborative environment in a location where the local culture doesn't support those behaviors, it may wonder why those local employees don't like their new office," she explains.

Within any given culture, the researchers emphasize, privacy is always ultimately contextual to the individual. This means that the privacy that each person seeks depends on personality, state of mind at the moment and the task at hand. "While a particular environment may provide the stimulation necessary for creative work on one day, that same environment may provide only distraction the next day," says Redman. Moreover, says Wang, Steelcase's research underscored that mental privacy and physical privacy, though often related, aren't necessarily synonymous. "People talked about having their own 'space'—i.e., their own headspace, with the freedom and safety to do and think whatever they want without judgment."

"There really is no one-size-fits-everybody-all-the-time solution. Privacy encompasses many different needs and behaviors," notes Redman.

"THERE REALLY IS NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-EVERYBODY-ALL-THE-TIME SOLUTION. PRIVACY ENCOMPASSES MANY DIFFERENT NEEDS AND BEHAVIORS."

MELANIE REDMAN

FIVE PRIVACY INSIGHTS

1
2
3
4
5

1 STRATEGIC ANONYMITY:
BEING UNKNOWN / "INVISIBLE"

2 SELECTIVE EXPOSURE:
CHOOSING WHAT OTHERS SEE

3 ENTRUSTED CONFIDENCE:
CONFIDENTIAL SHARING

4 INTENTIONAL SHIELDING:
SELF PROTECTION

5 PURPOSEFUL SOLITUDE:
SEPARATING YOURSELF

"When people say they need some privacy, it can mean very different things. By diving deeper into the experiences that people seek out for privacy, we were able to identify five key insights," says Redman. "As an output of our research, we coded these five key insights into a set of principles for experiencing individual privacy. Examining each of the five principles on its own is a pathway for gaining a deeper understanding of human privacy needs."

By synthesizing findings from academic studies with their own primary investigations, Steelcase researchers identified and defined these five privacy experiences:

The ability to make yourself anonymous is a key aspect of privacy, in that it frees you from the restraints incurred through normal social surveillance. Being unknown allows people to avoid interruptions, as well as express themselves in new ways and experiment with new behaviors. The key is that it's strategic—individuals choosing when and why to make themselves anonymous. For instance, when people go to a café to get focused work done, they are often seeking to block the social distractions of the workplace. The low-level vibe of strangers can be just right to stimulate thinking without attention becoming diverted.

Examples:

Going to work at a café or other place where you're unknown

Engaging in online discussions using an avatar or handle

Our innermost thoughts and feelings, our most personal information and our own quirky behaviors can only be revealed if we choose to do so. People choose to reveal some information to certain people or organizations, while revealing different information to others. Identity construction is a well-established concept in the social sciences, recognizing that people represent themselves differently to different people. Today, as personal information is being shared across new channels, people are raising new questions about what's "safe" to divulge. While the decision to share information involves the weighing of benefits and risks, the choice is different for each person. Culture, gender and personality influence the choice through implied permissions or inhibitions, as well as personal comfort. Behaviors that are permitted in one culture—such as naps at work in China or relaxing with wine at lunch in France—may be frowned upon in other parts of the world.

Examples:

Opting for a telephone call instead of a video conference

Choosing which personal items to display in a workstation

Privacy isn't just about being alone. We also seek privacy with selected others. When we choose to share personal information or our emotions with someone else, there is a measure of trust involved—an assumption that the other person understands that the shared information isn't for general public consumption. There are many instances in daily work when small groups—two or three people—want to confer. But in today's mostly open-plan workplaces, it's difficult to find places where such conversations can occur without being scheduled. In too many cases, this reality translates to lost opportunities.

Examples:

Discussing a personal situation with a colleague

Being in a performance review with your manager

Personal safety isn't just about protection from physical harm. There is a strong psychological component, as well. The feeling of personal invasion that people report after a home break-in indicates the close connection between personal territory and sense of self. We take active measures to protect ourselves from such intrusions. Though less traumatic than a theft of personal belongings, people experience similar feelings of invasion at work and seek ways to protect themselves from distractions and prying eyes. Self protection may also involve developing a point of view without the distracting influence of groupthink so that, when the group comes together to collaborate, individuals can bring stronger, more compelling insights to the challenges at hand.

Examples:

Wearing headphones to block out audio distractions

Sitting with your back against a wall

Hiding your computer screen

Isolation is a state of mind—it's possible to feel isolated from a group while that group surrounds you. But solitude is physical: intentionally separating from a group to concentrate, recharge, express emotions or engage in personal activities. People in individualistic cultures, such as the United States, may take times of solitude almost for granted, but even within a collectivist culture, such as China, being alone sometimes is a fundamental need.

Examples:

Finding an enclave

Going outside

Sitting in the farthest empty corner of a large room

The Privacy Paradigm

As the researchers synthesized their work, it became clear that supporting people's privacy needs in the workplace requires a diversity of environments.

"There's a tendency to think about privacy primarily in terms of the private office. This paradigm has been embedded in workplace design," says Flynn. "Our research confirmed that people seek privacy for various reasons and they want it for a variety of timeframes. Sometimes it might mean finding a place to sit down and focus for an hour, sometimes it might mean just being quiet for 20 minutes between crazy meetings to calm the mind and still your thoughts. We see opportunities to reinvent private spaces within the entire workplace landscape, to offer spaces that can be very personal and personalized for someone when they need it. Having choices and some control over your experiences at work is really key for people's wellbeing and performance."

"Privacy isn't always about four walls and a door," says Redman. "You can have a measure of privacy with two walls, you can have privacy in open spaces. It depends on what kind of experience you're looking for. "

Even if not enclosed, informal settings that attend to human needs in obvious ways can feel more private than impersonal, institutional environments. Something as simple as high-back lounge seating can envelope a person in a semi-private cocoon.

For most workers, privacy needs ebb and flow throughout the day as they toggle between collaboration and tasks that require shallow individual focus, such as routine emailing, and those that require deep individual focus, such as analyzing data or creating something new. Mihaly Csikszentmihaly is prominent among psychologists who say humans are wired to seek deep absorption in complex challenges, achieving a state of consciousness that he described as flow. Of course, for individuals and teams, privacy alone can't ensure flow, but the lack of privacy can obviously prevent it.

As much as people are wired for individual achievement, they're also wired to crave collaboration. Working in privacy all the time can have as many negative impacts on performance as always working in collaboration, and also carries as many health risks as smoking, says David Rock.

> **"WHAT'S BEEN OVERLOOKED IN THE PUSH FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK IS THE VALUE OF INDIVIDUAL TIME."**
> DONNA FLYNN

"Social interactions are a delicious thing to the brain…," he explains. "Your brain loves interaction with people, it's a very important part of keeping ourselves alive."

Because our brains are deeply social, if someone walks past our desk, we can't help but look up, he notes. "It's a knee-jerk reaction. So whether it's someone walking past your desk or someone sending you an email, these distractions are much too powerful to avoid. So we need to create time and space to switch these things off and do deeper thinking… If we talk about pure collaboration, we see it's actually about being able to come together and make thinking visible, and also being able to go away and do quiet work and then come back together. So the opportunity is to be able to reflect and then regroup, reflect and regroup."

Because human needs for privacy and togetherness are yin and yang—essentially different but also complementarily linked—there is no single type of optimal workspace.

"What's been overlooked in the push for collaborative work is the value of individual time in contributing to the collaborative effort," says Flynn.

"The value of collaborative work isn't going away. Our research has shown that when you have diverse minds coming together to solve a problem, you tend to solve that problem with a higher-quality solution. But we need to recognize that collaboration 8-10 hours a day is going to lead to burnout. The way to support people is to provide the ability to move between individual time and collaborative time, having that rhythm between coming together to think about a problem and then going away to let those ideas gestate. That's a really important, basic human rhythm."

"We need to find the balance between the two ends of the spectrum," she continues. "The future is really in that balance because people are going to continue to be mobile, people are going to continue to be augmented by technology and that's going to drive the need for even more individual choice-making across the spectrum."

The way to support people is to provide the ability to move between individual time and collaborative time, having that rhythm between coming together to think about a problem and then going away to let those ideas gestate.
Donna Flynn

Creating a New Ecosystem

People are social creatures. We don't like to be ostracized. So when we're in a group setting, our brains will easily change our minds to agree with others. That's a danger of constant collaboration. It's very important to also give people the chance for privacy, so they can form their own ideas to bring to the group.
Melanie Redman

A challenge for enterprises today is understanding people's individual needs in the workplace. Especially because we're now saturated with technology connections as well as in-person connections, most of today's workers are operating in a dense informational landscape. Gaining the broad perspective of collaborative work is more important than ever. At the same time, this intensity makes having places for private refuge more important, too.

Achieving the right balance between privacy and collaboration is fundamentally about empowering individuals with choices and some measure of control over their environment.

No single type of work environment can provide the right balance between collaboration and privacy. But when workers can choose from a palette of place—an ecosystem of interrelated zones and settings that support their physical, cognitive and emotional needs—they can draw inspiration and energy from others as well as be restored by the calm of privacy.

Finally, the workplace needs to accommodate for a palette of presence—to allow teams to connect easily both in person and over distance through technology-based communication options to match their collaboration needs and their privacy boundaries.

Insight from research suggests that fulfilling work is defined by opportunities and experiences that enable people to do their best work, acting alone as well as engaging in collaboration with others. Throughout the world, there's growing awareness that privacy at work shouldn't be rationed as merely a symbol of status or a reward for a select few who are given private offices. Instead, by providing places for moments of privacy for all workers throughout the organization—in every country, every position and every demographic—enterprises can realize significant rewards: higher engagement, stronger collaboration, better productivity, improved worker wellbeing and, ultimately, innovation at the pace and scale that defines business success today. ○

Go Deeper

If you want to learn more about the interesting, insightful work being done by thought leaders referenced in our article, here is a menu of resources to choose from:

Book: Your Brain at Work by David Rock ⊘
blog.davidrock.net

Gallup Report: State of the Global Workplace ⊘
gallup.com

Interruptions and multitasking research publication by Gloria Mark, Ph.D. ⊘
steelcase.com/interruptions

Contributors

Donna Flynn

An anthropologist by training, Donna Flynn leads the 19-member global Steelcase Work-Space Futures group, a research team that innovates around insights into how people work, especially the intersection of spaces, people and information. Work is influenced by constantly changing trends, she says, but human nature evolves much more slowly. That's why, especially now when trends such as technology and mobility are dramatically affecting how we work, solving for people's basic needs is crucial.

Melanie Redman

A senior researcher for Steelcase, Melanie has first-hand experience with international cultures, having completed in-depth human-centered studies in China and North America. She was a principal researcher in several recent Steelcase research quests, including investigations into the post-1980s generation in China, the impact of culture on workplaces in 11 countries, and collaboration among distributed teams.

Wenli Wang

As part of Steelcase's research node in Asia Pacific, Wenli works on formulating design principles that lead to new applications, products and strategy for this market. She has participated in projects focused on Asian office environments, as well as healthcare and higher education industries in China.

Meike Töpfer Taylor

Based in the San Francisco Bay area, since October 2012 Meike has been a design researcher for Steelcase's Coalesse brand, investigating the new imperatives of work and life as the division between them blurs.

The Privacy Solution

Optimizing Your Real Estate to Give Employees
Greater Choice and Control

Although privacy is a universal need in workplaces, personal preferences, spatial contexts and cultural norms are key factors for successfully designing environments for privacy, say Steelcase Advanced Applications designers.

Highly differentiated settings ensure that users can choose their best place based on task, mood and personality, making the experience of privacy personal. Context is a key consideration; the same type of privacy setting can provide very different experiences depending on its adjacency, location and level of exposure to what surrounds it. Context determines what type of boundary will be most successful in any given location and, therefore, how much the spaces will be used. Cultural values and perceptions—both geography-based and organizational—must be respected and enabled within the design.

It's important to keep in mind that boundaries to private spaces can be open, shielded or enclosed, to support individuals working alone or together in teams. In addition to having spaces for personal retreat, being able to have private conversations or do focused work together are important dimensions of workplace privacy; meeting the full range of privacy needs requires providing for pairs or small groups as well as individuals. Planning should also recognize that, when supported by strong organizational protocols, personal privacy can be achieved in designated "together" spaces.

Privacy Distribution Framework

Inspired by our research, we have identified several different planning approaches that solve for privacy within a workplace floor plan. The best option for any organization depends on its culture, workforce mobility strategy, processes, protocols and real estate holdings:

Distributed Model. Distributed private spaces embedded throughout a workplace provide on-demand privacy experiences, in which workers can switch between collaborative and focused modes of work rapidly with the convenience of readily available "escape places." Adjacency to traffic paths is a key attribute of this approach, and quantity and variety are other important considerations.

Zone Model. A separate zone space serves as an exclusive privacy hub, much like the quiet zone of a library. This approach supports planned, longer-duration privacy experiences with a portfolio of settings. In addition to variety, the success of a destination space depends on users' respect for privacy protocols that reflect the organization's commitment to its importance.
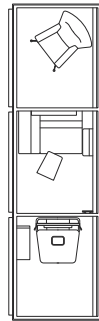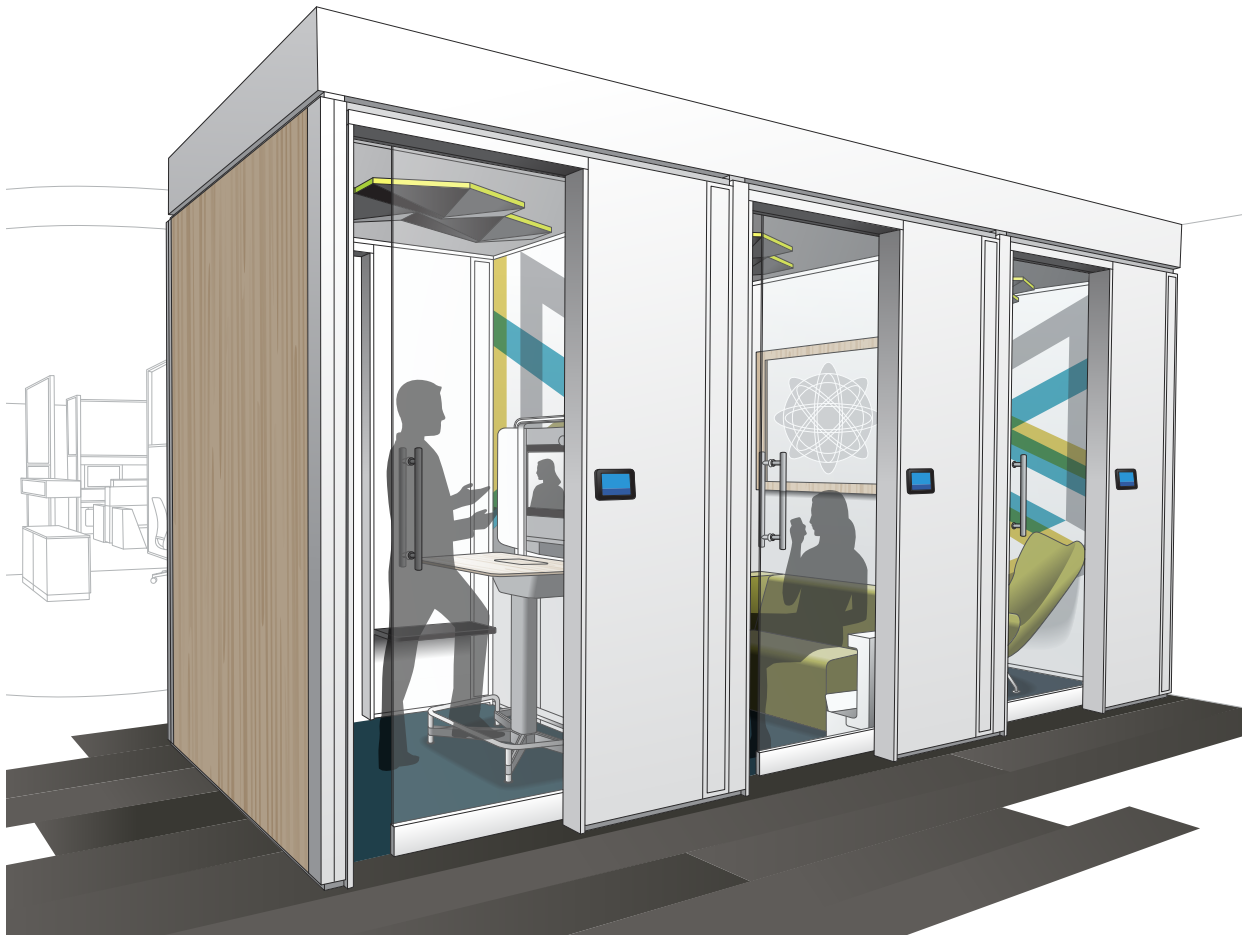
A combination of the distributed and zone models provides the best of both approaches: convenient access to on-demand privacy and the ability to plan ahead for guaranteed privacy as needed.
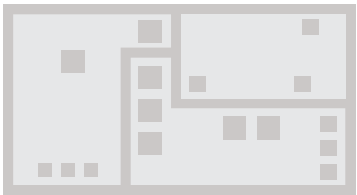

Distributed Model

Zone Model

Private Enclaves

These three small individual private spaces provide a range of solutions that support the varied modal transitions in a worker's day. Intended for short-term use, they offer a place to get away for rejuvenation or to connect virtually with others. The adjacency to the work zone offers easy access to support spontaneous needs. The range of products provide a relaxed posture in the lounge settings with support for your personal device or belongings. And the media:scape Kiosk provides a high-tech connection and sharing capability.

Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle	PRODUCTS SHOWN:
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity	V.I.A.™
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure	Coalesse Wing Chair
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence	Regard™
			Intentional Shielding	Details Soto™
			Purposeful Solitude	media:scape® Kiosk™
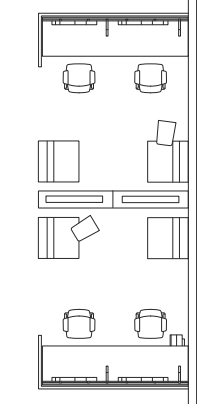
1:1 Project Space

For two people intensely working side-by-side on a project, this shared setting supports quick switches between focused work and informal collaboration.

Wall-mounted monitors make it easy to amplify and share information from personal devices, and panels and freestanding casegoods provide boundaries while also maintaining visual connection to coworkers in the open plan.

Markerboard surface on the V.I.A. wall allows for analog ideation. This setting can be used in both corporate environments and higher education spaces.

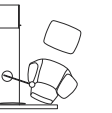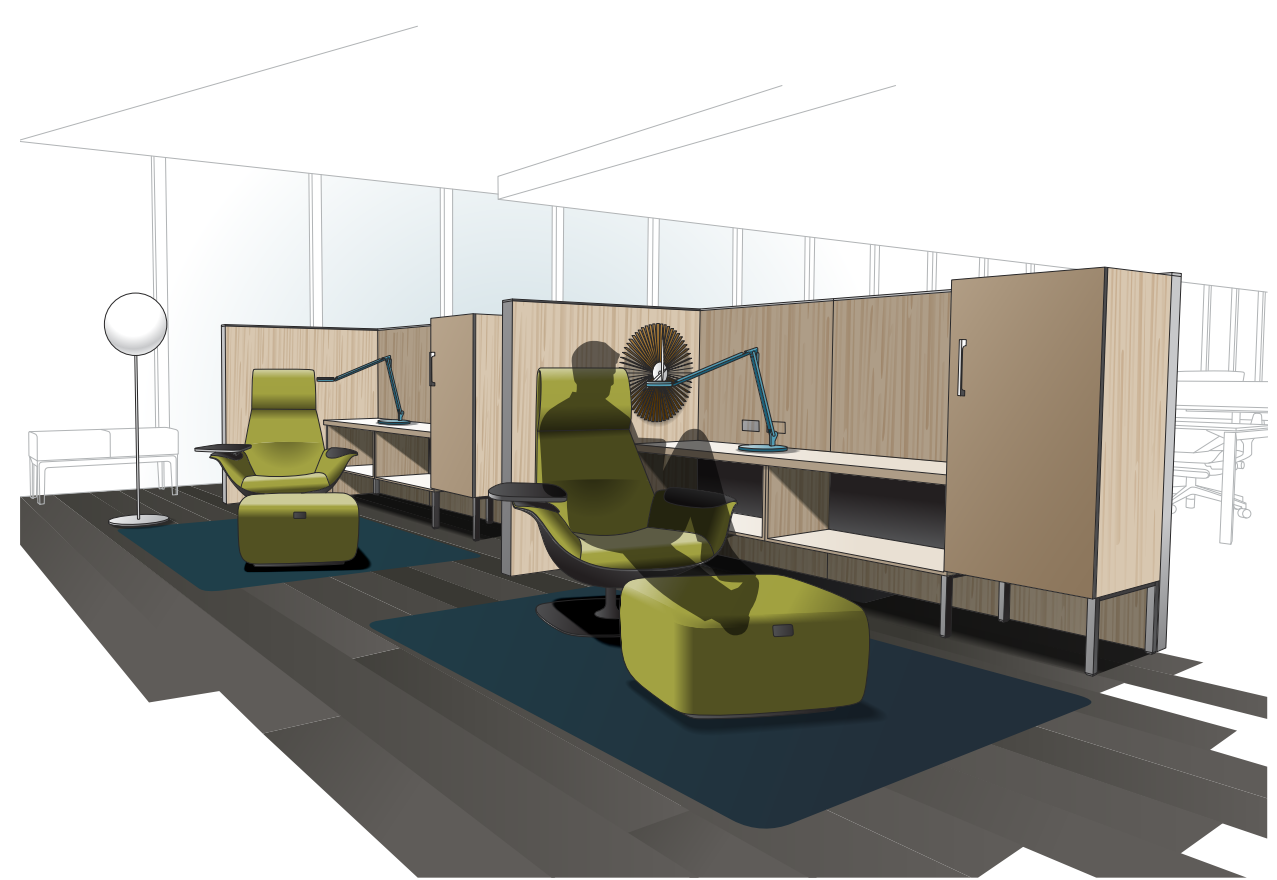| Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle	PRODUCTS SHOWN:
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity	V.I.A.™
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure	FrameOne™
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence	Gesture™
			Intentional Shielding	Details® Worktools
			Purposeful Solitude	Soto™
				turnstone® Campfire™
				turnstone® Depot/
				Big Depot
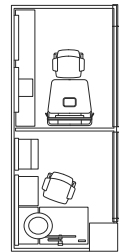
Conference Enclave

Sized for 1-2 people, workers can be fully immersed in a videoconference shielded from external distractions and share digital information privately in this technology-rich "step-in, standup" space. There's a worksurface for necessary items plus a stool for those who want to perch. A room-scheuling system signals when the space is occupied or available to minimize disruptions.

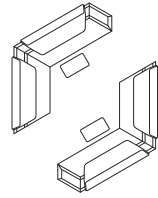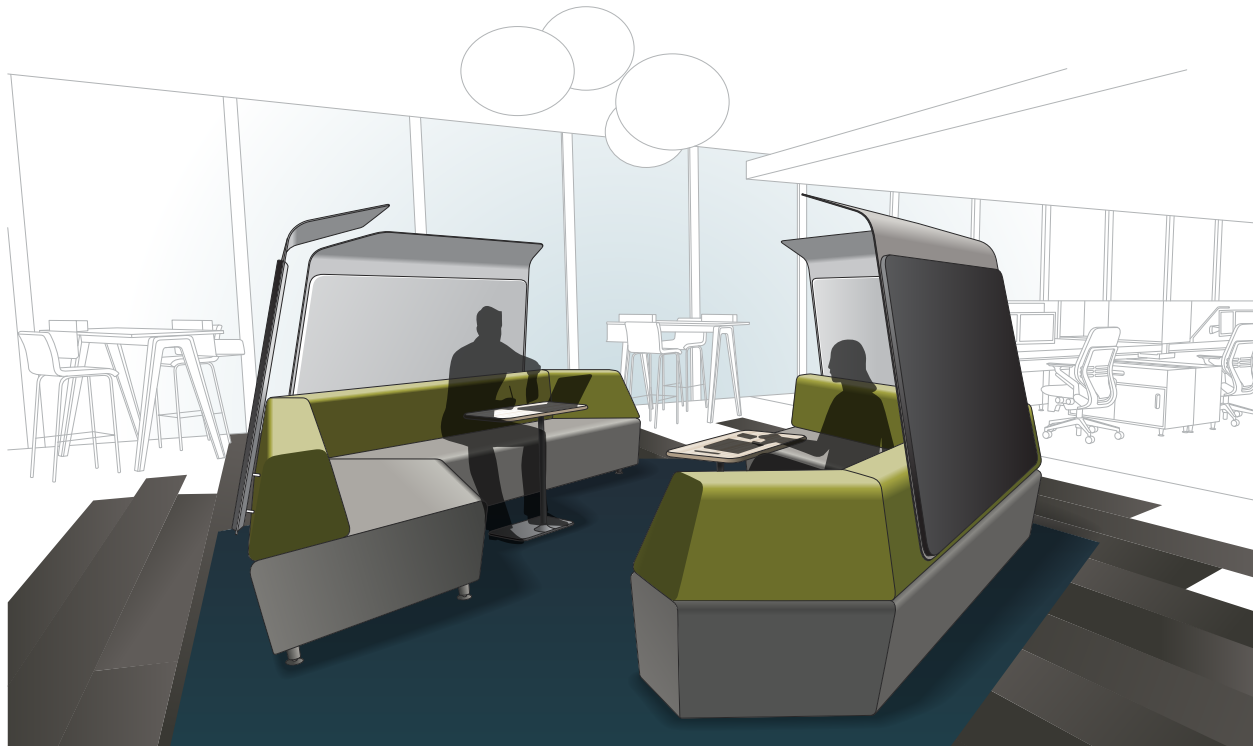| Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle	PRODUCTS SHOWN:
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity	V.I.A.™
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure	Gesture™
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence	media:scape® Kiosk™
			Intentional Shielding	RoomWizard™
			Purposeful Solitude	Elective Elements®
				Airtouch®
				FlexFrame®

Personal Retreat

Being able to get away without going away is an advantage for people who want to complete a task, read or simply catch their breath and renew.

Panels create a boundary between the adjacent work area, controlling visibility. A swivel lounge chair lets workers choose their orientation, and there's at-hand storage in the ottoman. Casegoods provide a place to hang a coat and stow personal items.

Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle	PRODUCTS SHOWN:
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity	Answer®
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure	Elective Elements®
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence	Dash™
			Intentional Shielding	Coalesse® Massaud™
			Purposeful Solitude	

Shielded Conversation Lounge

Easily accessible, this is a place for 2-6 people to have a quick conversation without disrupting others. The canopies help contain sound, plus create visual and territorial separation from the rest of the work group. Lounge seating is comfortable and informal, and tables support personal devices and other necessary items.

| Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence
			Intentional Shielding
			Purposeful Solitude

PRODUCTS SHOWN:
media:scape® Lounge
Coalesse® Lagunitas™

Connect Hub

Face-to-face conversation and confidential content-sharing are optimized in this enclosed enclave adjacent to a gathering space. Workers control the lighting and sound levels within the space. Integrated power in the lounge seating accommodates personal technology devices, and their digital content can be shared on a wall-mounted monitor.

Boundary	Modes	Posture	Privacy Principle
Enclosed	Deep Focus	Lounge / Prone	Strategic Anonymity
Shielded	Shallow Focus	Task	Selective Exposure
Open	Rejuvenation	Stool / Stand	Entrusted Confidence
			Intentional Shielding
			Purposeful Solitude

PRODUCTS SHOWN:
V.I.A.™
c:scape®
Regard™
RoomWizard™
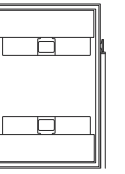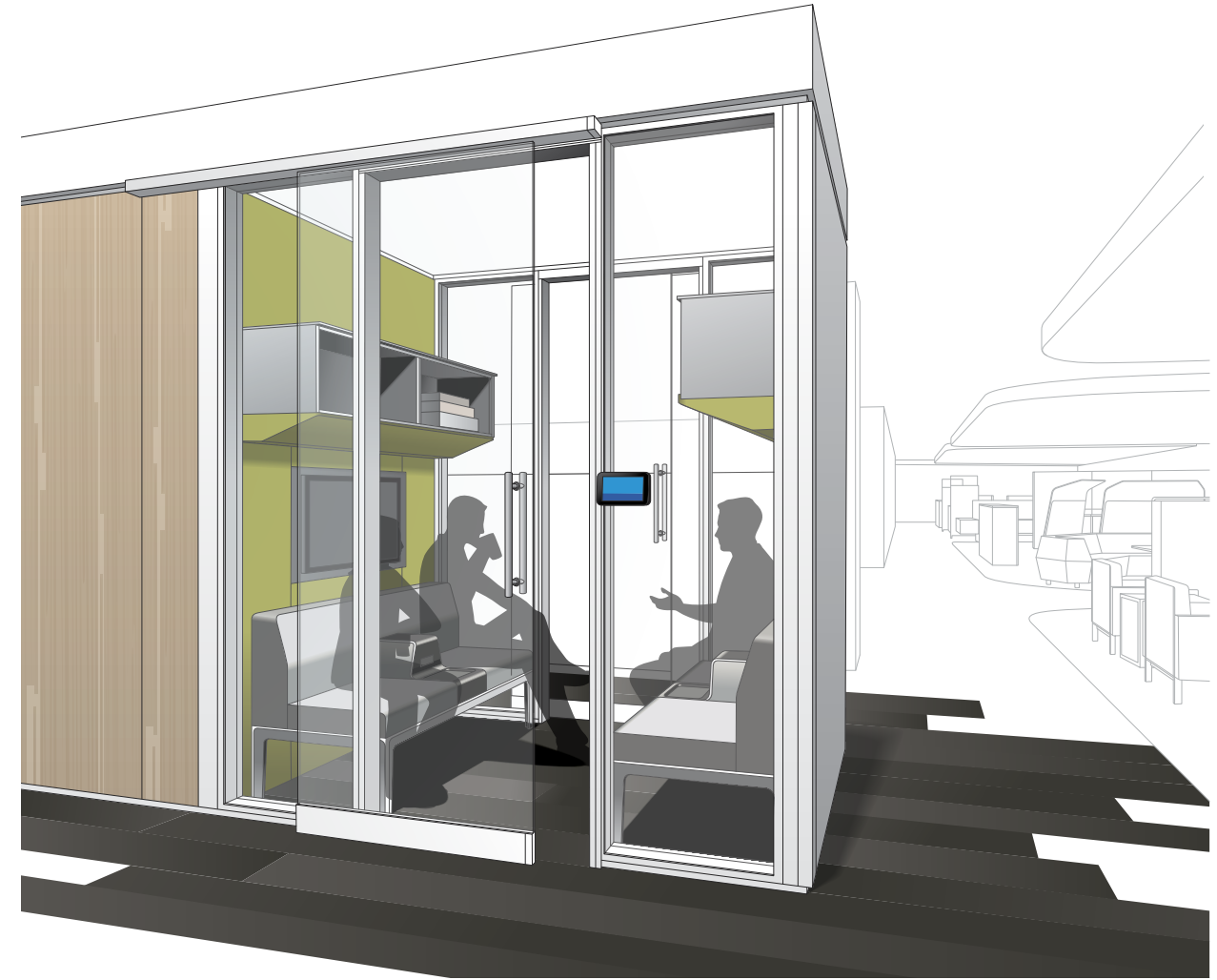
Privacy
Zone 1

With a library vibe, this area provides spaces where workers can go to read, reflect, rejuvenate or do focused work. Informal spaces with lounge seating and wood storage create quiet retreats. Enclosed spaces offer even greater separation and privacy.

Privacy Zone 2

Spaces for focus and concentration retain a sense of energy through proximity and transparency to colleagues. Individual workstations with screens to minimize distractions are available for focused work. For greater privacy there are enclosed and semi-enclosed spaces for one or two people. A nearby lounge space supports more relaxed postures and contemplation.

PRODUCTS SHOWN:	OPEN	SHIELDED	ENCLOSED
	cobi®	Coalesse® Lagunitas™	V.I.A.™
	Elective Elements®	Universal™ Tables	RoomWizard™
	turnstone® Bivi®	V.I.A.™	
	turnstone® Depot/	RoomWizard™	
	Big Depot		
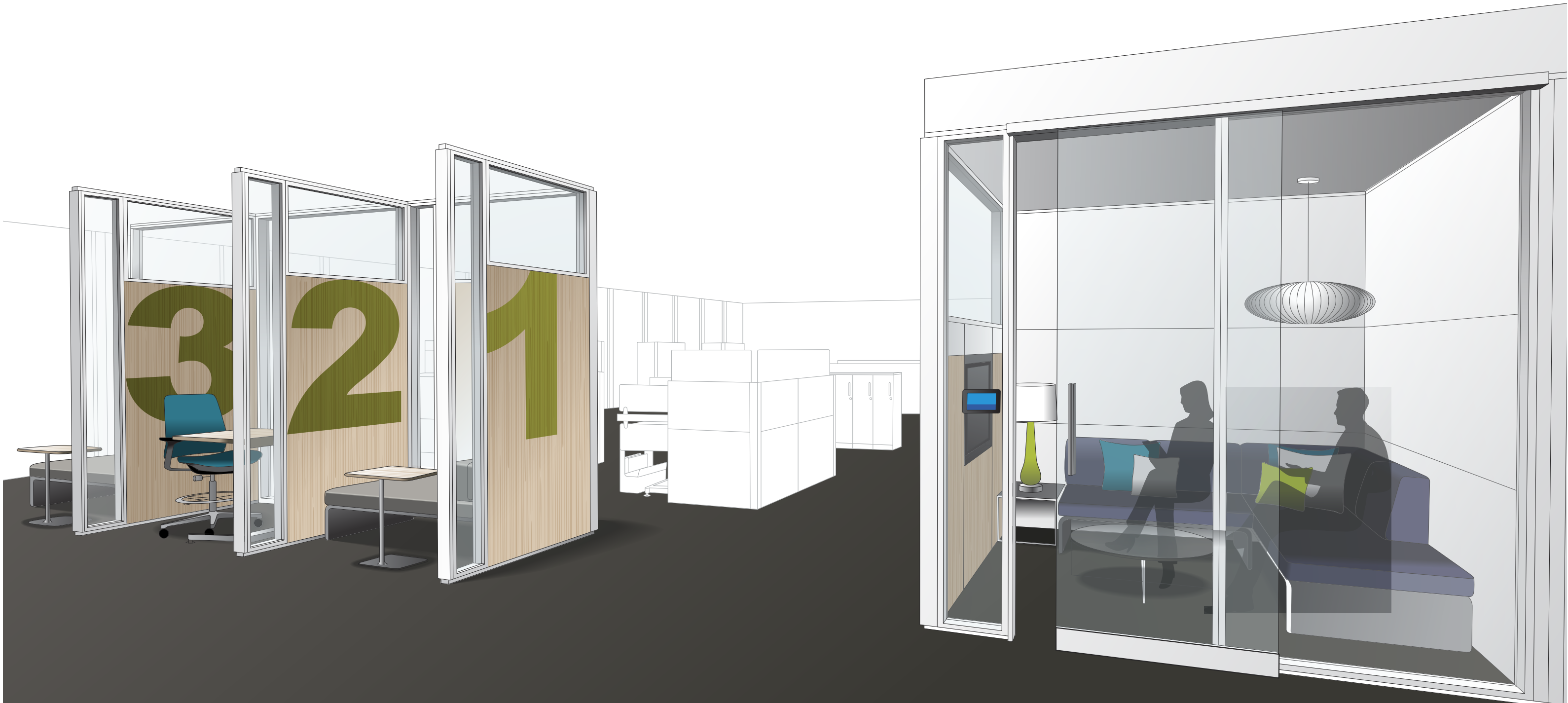
Privacy Zone 3

Privacy is all about choice, and this zone offers a broad range of visual, acoustical and territorial privacy options. People can select from a variety of different spaces, including a fully enclosed Susan Cain Quiet Space (Green Room) and shielded nooks and individual workstations for deep focus.

Q&A WITH
David Rock

Founder of NeuroLeadership Group

Chances are you'll be interrupted before you can finish reading this article.

How to think deeply at work, how leaders think, and how the unconscious mind tackles problems that are too big for the conscious mind to solve—these are the kinds of things that David Rock thinks and writes about.

Rock coined the term "neuroleadership," and cofounded the NeuroLeadership Institute to help people and companies better understand how the brain functions. For example, he wrote recently about a study conducted by the NeuroLeadership Group that asked 6,000 people where they believed they did their best thinking. Only 10 percent said it occurred at work—a sobering thought for business leaders.

Rock is quick to point out that he's not a neuroscientist; he works to bring neuroscientists and leadership experts together to build the science for leadership development. A consultant and author, Rock received his professional doctorate in the Neuroscience of Leadership from Middlesex University in London, England.

The typical manager is interrupted every 8 minutes, and employees spend, on average, 28% of their time dealing with unnecessary interruptions and getting back on track. Fortunately, David Rock can explain why and what to do about it. He's written a best selling book on the topic, "Your Brain At Work." The founder of the global consulting firm NeuroLeadership Group, Rock works on the faculty of the international business school, Cimba, and blogs for major publications about leadership, organizational effectiveness and the brain.

Interruptions and distractions reduce productivity and affect every company's bottom line. Understanding how to focus and think better has important implications for business, and offers the potential to help everyone's wellbeing.

You say we face "an epidemic of overwhelm" today. How so?

Since "Your Brain At Work" came out a few years ago, the amount of distractions that we all deal with each day and the actual amount we need to achieve per hour have gone up considerably. Information travels literally at the speed of light, many times faster than it traveled just 200 years ago. With this efficiency of information flow and communication, we're decreasing our ability to pay attention and make decisions. People's attention spans are significantly decreased because there are limitations in our capacity to process, limits to what we can do. For example, we know we can't have five conversations at once, but many of us try to have two conversations at once and don't recognize that that's quite damaging.

"Social interactions are delicious things to the brain."

Is distraction the reason it's so hard to work at our peak every day?

Distraction is one reason. Another is that the amount we try to achieve in a day is unrealistic. Track your effectiveness over a day and you'll find you have a few hours at best of really productive time, and many hours of semi-productive time. We expect to be able to go full tilt all day, and this puts a lot of strain on our attention and decision-making capacities. We tire them out without giving them much rest, and then, to make things worse, we put ourselves in the way of technology that creates incredible distraction.

How much of a distraction is technology?

I think technology has primed us to be distracted. There's good research showing that people who use a lot of media, who use two screens at once and who multitask, actually become more distracted and worse at multitasking. In fact, the more you multitask the worse you get at it. You become actually more and more distracted and it becomes harder and harder to focus. Research shows that high media users are on the ADD continuum. They find it very, very hard to focus.

How does distraction affect our work?

When you lose your place in a thought because of a distraction, it takes quite some time to go back and re-find your place in your mind, not just in a book or a document. Every time you're distracted, it takes quite a lot of energy to regroup and get back on track. That effort is very tiring. But it's also tiring for our brains to consciously work to avoid distractions, so we often respond to distractions.

Are some distractions worse than others?

Most distractions are social, and social interactions are delicious things to the brain. The brain loves to know what's going on in the social environment, and it's incredibly important to our survival to know what's happening socially. Whether it's someone walking past your desk or someone sending an email, we can't help but check out who that person is, are they okay? It's a kneejerk reaction. These distractions are almost impossible to avoid, and we need to learn to create time and space, perhaps to switch things off, to do deeper thinking.

What's the optimal environment for people to work in?

There's no one optimal environment. Even for an individual in a particular role, the optimum environment changes across the day, across the week. There are times when we need to be able to completely shut out the world and not be distracted at all. There are also times when we want to work around other people and sense that buzz, such as in a café.

There's also the environment for collaborating with people, where you want to be able to write on everything and make your thinking visible in lots of different ways, and be able to move things around. We need those options to come together and make thinking visible, or to go away and do quiet work and then come back together. Ideally the environment enables people to move between those different spaces as they need them. It gives people some needed autonomy.

**Providing autonomy, or control, seems like an advantage in preventing distractions.**

Research shows that giving people autonomy over their space resulted in about a one-third increase in productivity. So it's not necessarily the case of what is the ideal workspace, but understanding that people have changing needs throughout the day and the week and should be able to control their work environment and choose how they work.

Why do some distractions, such as taking a walk or a change of scenery, help us focus?

Our ability to solve problems logically is very limited. Most problems of any basic complexity require the unconscious brain to actually solve the problem. So once you get to a certain level of complexity, the best way to solve a problem is to pose the question and then do something that's slightly distracting, to forget about the problem and do something else pleasant for a while. The unconscious brain keeps going, and then when you come back to the problem you get a much better answer than actually trying to continue to solve the problem logically.

How can we take advantage of these helpful distractions?

We need to quiet down the brain overall to be able to notice quiet insights. Taking a walk, doing some exercise, or doing anything slightly pleasant can quiet your brain overall so you can start to hear the subtle signals. In the new "Men in Black" movie, one guy says to the other, "Let's go eat some pie to solve this complex problem." The second guy looks to the first one, thinking he's crazy. But they eat some pie and a solution pops up. This is actually very rooted in science! If you can quiet your brain by doing something pleasant and easy on the brain, a solution is more likely to occur to you.
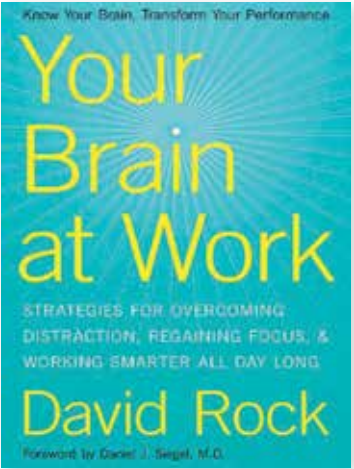
How can we control annoying distractions at work?

First, it's important to remember that attention is a limited resource. It doesn't matter how something gets our attention, but once it actually gets our attention, we've got to put a lot of effort now to get back to where we were, and that's intrinsically very tiring. That's why it's important to have places where people are able to shut out the world and focus when they need to, and also places where they're able to collaborate when they need to collaborate. It's about choice and autonomy. Being able to move between these different spaces as you need to is critically important.

Another important need is space where you can have unexpected social encounters. Random social connections are important because, as I said, social connections matter a lot to the brain.

If we give people the opportunity to focus when they need to, the opportunity to collaborate when they need to, and the opportunity to have great social interactions, I think we're giving people what they really need at work. ○

Know Your Brain. Transform Your Performance

Your Brain at Work

STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING DISTRACTION, REGAINING FOCUS, & WORKING SMARTER ALL DAY LONG

David Rock

Foreword by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D.

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7 Activities for A Healthier Brain

A brain needs attention to be healthy. In fact, it needs seven kinds of attention, according to David Rock. Here are the different neuro-cognitive activities that nurture the mind:

Sleep time
refreshing the mind and body, and consolidating memory

Connecting time
the healing power of relationships

Play time
the joy of experimenting with life

Physical time
improving the brain's plasticity through exercise

Downtime
disconnecting for integration and insight

Focus time
attention management for performance

Time-in
reflection, attunement and mindfulness

"To be ultimately healthy, we really need all seven of these types of activity," says Rock. "The ones we tend to disregard are sleep time, social time and play time. These tend to be much more important, in particular social time, than we realized for healthy brain functioning."

TOO MUCH Noise
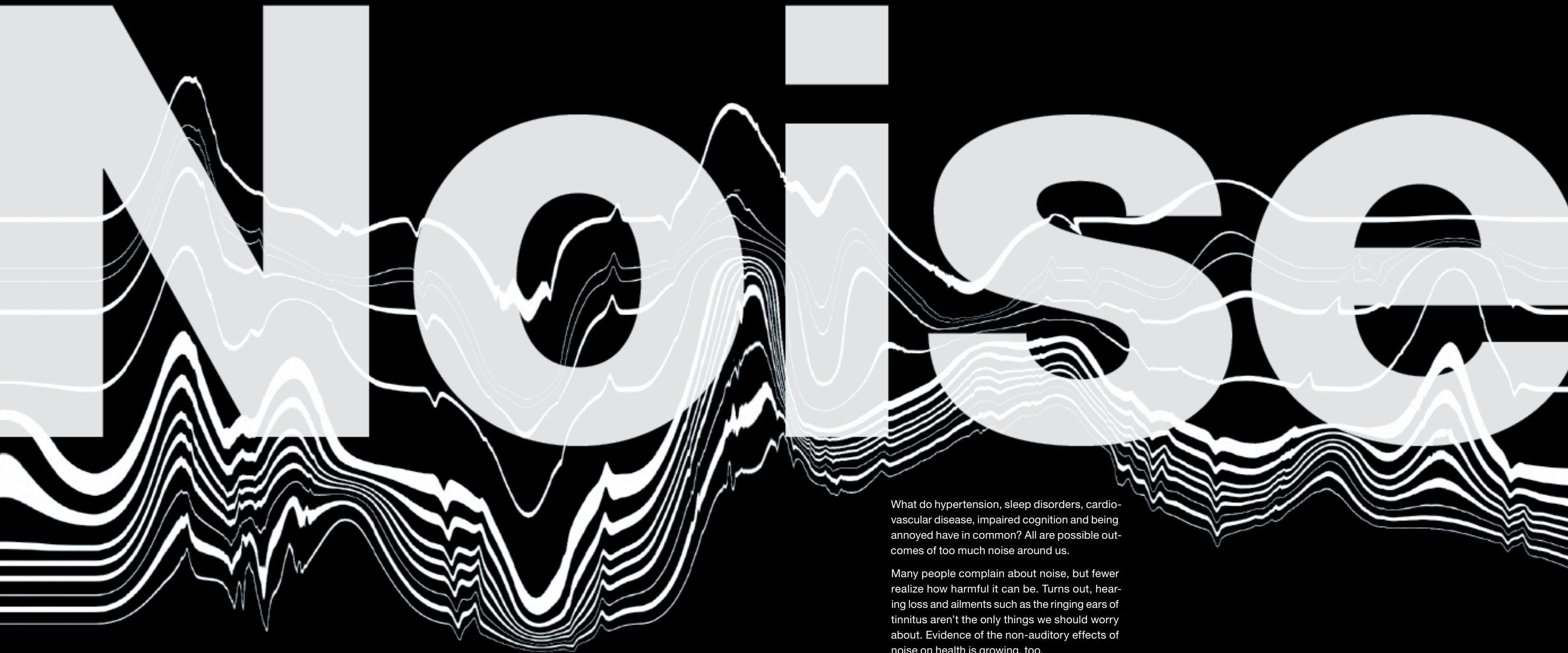
What do hypertension, sleep disorders, cardio-vascular disease, impaired cognition and being annoyed have in common? All are possible outcomes of too much noise around us.

Many people complain about noise, but fewer realize how harmful it can be. Turns out, hearing loss and ailments such as the ringing ears of tinnitus aren't the only things we should worry about. Evidence of the non-auditory effects of noise on health is growing, too.

Defined by scientists as "unwanted sound"—noise puts a burden on our hearts and brains, as well as our ears, according to Dr. Wolfgang Babisch, a lead researcher in the field of environmental noise and a senior research officer at the German Federal Environmental Agency.

In offices, irritating noise can come from all kinds of sources: air conditioning, obnoxious ringtones, traffic, nearby construction, unsophisticated sound-masking systems and—especially—from other people's voices, says Julian Treasure, chairman of a United Kingdom-based consultancy, The Sound Agency. Noisy environments tend to only get worse over time, because people start speaking louder as it gets noisier around them (known as the Lombard effect).

Annoyance is the most common response to noise, says Babisch, and that's not as trivial as it may sound. We are easily set off by noise because we have been programmed as humans to be aware of sounds as possible dangers, going back to when our evolutionary predecessors had many enemies in the wild. This sensitivity to sounds has stayed in our neurobiology—we're constantly alert to our environment, and noise easily makes us uneasy. Lab studies on humans as well as animals have shown that exposure to noise arouses the nervous system, causing rising blood pressure and the release of stress hormones. Over time, these instinctive responses can stress the cardiovascular system and give rise to negative outcomes such as anger and exhaustion.

As if those effects aren't bad enough, cognitive impairment is another non-auditory result of noise that researchers have been studying. More than 20 studies in multiple countries have shown that environmental noise negatively affects school children's learning.

Without effective acoustical solutions, experts say, the negative impacts of day-to-day noise in many office environments can also be significant.

First, there's the nature of the noise itself. It's fluctuating, which is more annoying than constant noise levels, according to Babisch, and it contains talking, which is "more distracting than broadband noise with no informational content."

"Cognitively, there is plenty of research now that shows that the most destructive sound of all is other people's conversations," agrees Treasure. "We have bandwidth for roughly 1.6 human conversations. So if you're hearing somebody's conversation, then that's taking up 1 of your 1.6. Even if you don't want to listen to it, you can't stop it: You have no earlids. And that means you've just .6 left to listen to your own inner voice."

The level of noise for the type of work that is supposed to happen in offices today is also an issue. In some open-plan offices, noise ranges from 60 to 65 decibels. That may seem minor compared to a busy highway that generates 85 decibels or a refrigerator that hums along at 40, but it can make cognitively demanding work difficult. Recognizing this, the German Association of Engineers has set noise standards in their country for various types of work. While 70 decibels is acceptable for simple or mainly transactional office work, 55 decibels is the requirement for what the association terms "mainly intellectual work." They identify this as work characterized by high complexity and demanding creative thinking, decision-making, solving problems and effectively communicating—precisely the kind of knowledge work that, when performed well, puts leading enterprises ahead.

The recommended noise level for intellectual work pertains to participating in discussions and meetings as well as working solo. In fact, the association recommends the same limit on noise for a doctor performing surgery as for office workers doing intellectual work, alone or together.

a busy highway:
85db

open-plan office:
60–65db

refrigerator hum:
40db

> "There is plenty of research that shows that the most destructive sound of all is other people's conversations."
>
> Julian Treasure

The noise level of 60-65 decibels that's common in some open-plan offices is not only too loud for concentration, it can also impede effective collaboration by causing speech interference. As Babisch explains it, the sound level of speech is about 60 decibels if people talk to one another, in normal tones without raising their voices, at a distance of about one meter (3 ¼ feet). This means any other noise within that same range—someone else talking nearby, for instance—can cause speech interference, so not all the words may be fully heard. "Nevertheless," he says, "a sentence may be understood because of cortical processing. This, however, is an active process that may cause reaction leading to adverse effects in the longer run of chronic noise exposure."

In other words, in noisy environments with poor acoustics, workers can as easily get stressed by trying to hear others as by trying *not* to hear others—a lose/lose proposition.

The solution, says Treasure, is a variety of workplace environments, each designed with consciousness of sound for the task and the people using the spaces. Work environments need to be designed not just for appearance, but also for experience in all the senses, especially hearing. "Consciousness of sound is a new tool to design with," says Treasure. "Good acoustics can make environments more productive."

Solving for noise in workplaces isn't easy. Four walls and a door don't necessarily make for good acoustics, because sound, like water, can spread through the smallest gap. Within any environment, sound can be either sealed, absorbed or masked. Each method has advantages and disadvantages that should be carefully weighed, because controlling sound within acceptable levels of tolerance has become a design imperative and an important metric for the overall effectiveness of a space.

See page 132 to learn how Steelcase's V.I.A.® (Vertical Intelligent Architecture) can eliminate unwanted sound in workplaces. ○

Go Deeper

If you want to learn more about the interesting, insightful work being done by thought leaders referenced in our article, here is a menu of resources to choose from:

Wolfgang Babisch

Research paper (coauthor): "Auditory and non-auditory effects of noise on health," Oct. 30, 2013
steelcase.com/auditory effects

Research profile:
steelcase.com/Wolfgang_Babisch

Go Deeper

Julian Treasure

Website: juliantreasure.com

Presentation: "The 4 ways sound affects us," TEDGlobal 2009
steelcase.com/the_4_ways_sound_affects_us

Presentation: "Why architects need to use their ears," TEDGlobal 2012
steelcase.com/why_architects_need_to_use_their_ears

Sustainability Spotlight

Balancing Privacy and Transparency in the World of Big Data: A Path to a Sustainable Future.

Big data. The words are small, but the implications are huge. As vast new streams of information become available, data has taken on new importance. Big data makes patterns visible, revealing connections we've never been able to see and understand before. The new insights are delivering new generations of value, enabling smarter decisions and promising to help us solve some of our biggest economic, environmental and social challenges. It's also offering innovation potential at an unimaginable scale.

At the same time big data is offering tremendous up-side benefits, it is also demanding we give something up in return: information that previously may have been hidden or considered private. There are strong signals that people are conflicted.

Consumers are willing to give up some personal information privacy if their gain is strong enough, but resist the transparency if the sharing goes too far. Demand is growing for services where personal information and privacy are exchanged for the cost savings and sustainability gains. Yet the same consumers are driving demand for new generations of privacy-based products—like "black" smartphones that cloak, or encrypt, what is considered open in other mobile operating systems.

In business solving for the inherent tension between the desire for information privacy and the need for transparency is key to taking advantage of big data and leveraging other emerging technical advances in analytics. Finding the sweet spot in the tension is also at the very heart of sustainability.

At Steelcase we experience the tension between information transparency and privacy in our disclosure of the chemical makeup of materials in our products. Because our simplest product can easily involve at least 50 different suppliers, and a cascading numbers of sub-suppliers, full disclosure requires close cooperation across our entire supply chain.

This means our supply chains must be willing to give up closely held information about the chemical inventory of products. Most often, we must negotiate nondisclosure (privacy) agreements with suppliers in order to gain the proprietary information (transparency) we need. This means we can have access to the chemical make-up of materials, we just can't reveal the information to others.

In the end, the materials assurance comes in a less transparent form than customers might expect. As we work to detect and eliminate materials of concern, everybody gains by giving up a little information. This exchange benefits human and environmental health and delivers material and design innovation.

You might say that sharing information has become the new currency of sustainability. Capturing data, analyzing it and making what's happening transparent allows us to fully define social, economic and environmental problems and opportunities. Transparency identifies shared ground and opens doors to new modes of co-creation, collaboration and design partnership.

At the same time, solution developers like us have an obligation to manage the information we acquire in ways that protect individual interests. People must be comfortable with the tradeoffs of sharing more about their workstyles in order to help us transform their work environment. By working together, we can innovate the work experience while conserving what is precious to each of us and what makes each of us unique.

In the era of big data, the question is not whether to create transparency or preserve information privacy. The real question is: How can we create an abundant and sustainable future by finding a place where information transparency and privacy meet—a place where they co-exist and everyone benefits?

Angela Nahikian
director, global environmental sustainability, Steelcase Inc.

I know that our job will never be "finished." As citizens of a world that keeps getting smaller, we face tremendous environmental, economic and social challenges, and the scope of our efforts must always be expanding. The future will be about designing for a holistic system in which business embraces its role as a positive change agent, and realizes the full benefit of sustainable business design. The challenge will be in the scope of the opportunity; it's all-encompassing. The good news? It's scalable.

I'd love to learn your perspective and ideas. Email me at anahikia@steelcase.com.

THE QUIET ONES

Introverts make up 30–50 percent of the workforce. What can you do to help them thrive?

Extroverts are celebrated in our culture as movers and shakers. They are perceived as strong leaders who are actively engaged, gregarious and assertive. Introverts, on the other hand, have strengths—creativity, focus, grit, and even leadership—that are usually overlooked. Instead they are often viewed in less flattering terms: quiet, shy, or even poor collaborators. Because of this perception, many introverts go through their day trying to overcome their natural tendencies and to exhibit more extroverted types of behaviors that seem to be critical to success. It's an exhausting way to live, and limits their ability to use their natural strenghts.

Business leaders, many of whom are introverts themselves, are starting to recognize that introverts are a huge and valuable portion of the workforce, and they struggle to reach their full potential because they work in a physical and cultural environment that has a bias toward extroverts.

"One-third to half the population are introverts," says Susan Cain, author of the international best seller, "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking." Since businesses have placed more value on extroverts, introverts have had to adopt extroverted behaviors in order to survive in corporate culture, Cain notes.

"When introverts act like extroverts, it's very stressful. It's not their natural behavior," she adds. "It takes a lot of effort and results in them having less mental and physical stamina available to do their work."

Introverts can be highly creative and are more sensitive to external stimuli than extroverts, which means that an over-abundance of boisterous group work can be more exhausting. While they often need time away from colleagues in order to work effectively, quiet, private spaces are often lacking in work environments.

"Every organization has introverts and a lot of them," says Jim Keane, Steelcase CEO. "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?"

AT A GLANCE

Issue	Insight	Action
Introverts represent up to half of all workers, yet companies often fail to provide work environments that bring out their best.	Knowledge work requires a palette of place: a range of workspaces that supports different types of work, workstyles and workers, including the quiet, private spaces that introverts prefer.	Steelcase designers and Susan Cain developed design principles for quiet spaces. Suitable for offices of any size, these principles include giving users permission to be alone and to control their environment by offering sensory balance and psychological safety.

A Quiet Collaboration

Steelcase and Cain have teamed up to offer a range of spaces based on a deep understanding of introverts and how they work best. The new Susan Cain Quiet Spaces by Steelcase is a series of private workspaces with carefully integrated architecture, furniture, technology, surface materials, lighting and work tools designed for the unique needs of introverts.

The collaboration between Steelcase and Cain's "Quiet Revolution"™ initiative began serendipitously. "I was in my car one weekend listening to an interview with Susan about her book *'Quiet,'*" explained Keane. "She was being very human centered and empathic in the way she thought about introverts. We've been researching the topic of privacy for some time, and it felt like there was a great intersection in our thinking."

"We share values in common, including a dedication to research," adds Cain. "I admire how Steelcase thinks things through about how people feel and thrive at work. It was a natural partnership."

The collection is based on a combination of Steelcase research about the universal human need for privacy and Cain's in-depth research on the needs of introverts. "Introverts recharge their batteries by being more on their own or in low-key environments, and extroverts recharge their batteries by being in spaces where there's a lot going on," explains Cain. "The nervous system of introverts reacts more to that kind of stimulation. So if introverts go into a space that's too noisy or cacophonous, you're placing extra cognitive load on their thought process that doesn't need to be there, and shouldn't be there if you want to get the best of everyone's brain."

Steelcase research confirms the need for more privacy options for all workers. In the United States, 31 percent of full-time employees say they have to work away from their primary location to accomplish their tasks. The Steelcase Workplace Survey of more than 39,000 workers shows that 95 percent say they need quiet, private places in the workplace for confidential conversations, yet 41 percent don't have them. Another Steelcase study of more than 10,000 workers in 14 countries around the world confirms that having options for greater privacy contributes to people feeling more engaged at work (see The Privacy Crisis, pg. 12).

Giving Introverts Control

In their drive for greater collaboration and innovation, many businesses build energizing open environments but sometimes neglect to include spaces that allow workers to control the amount of stimulation they receive, in terms of sound, light, and communication. At times, people want more stimulation, at other times less.

Introverts need to have a range of places where they have choice and control over where and how they work. Susan Cain Quiet Spaces by Steelcase offers organizations a range of spaces that can be incorporated into their new or existing workplace and can help introverts thrive.

Cain collaborated with the Steelcase design team to develop a set of design principles for the Quiet Spaces. They met weekly over a period of months and fine-tuned the five final spaces. "I'm not a designer," says Cain, "but, as a researcher, I know introverts and I can tell you what works and what doesn't, and the Steelcase designers got it right away.

"For example, sometimes people need a sense of complete privacy and anonymity. Even offices that have quiet places often have glass walls and people can see everything that's going on. We shouldn't be transparent all the time. So the idea of complete privacy was one of the first principles."

The design principles developed by Cain and Steelcase are:

Permission to be alone
the freedom to focus and innovate without interruption from an otherwise highly stimulating workplace

User control over 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

Susan Cain and the Steelcase design team created design principles for Quiet Spaces. "I'm not a designer, but I know introverts and what works and what doesn't. The designers got it right away," says Cain.

The "I" List

The list of famous introverts includes great public speakers, innovators, and leaders such as Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, Vincent Van Gogh, Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Frederic Chopin, and Audrey Hepburn.

Introverts recharge in quiet and solitude while extroverts feed off of social interaction, but they can readily work together. Steve Jobs was an extrovert who relied on introverts to build Apple, including cofounder Steve Wozniak. And who did Jobs line up as his successor? As Susan Cain describes him, "the quiet CEO, Tim Cook."

Mahatma Gandhi, renowned spiritual and political leader—and introvert—perhaps said it best: "In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

A few modern day introverts:

Author J. K. Rowling
Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates
Former First Lady Laura Bush
TV journalist George Stephanopoulos
Actress Emma Watson
Investor Warren Buffett
Pop star Christina Aguilera
TV host David Letterman
Actor Harrison Ford
NBA great Michael Jordan
Former Vice President Al Gore
Google cofounder Larry Page
Director Steven Spielberg

Five Quiet Spaces

Susan Cain Quiet Spaces by Steelcase offer five diverse ways to support introverts at work. Footprints range from 48 to 100 square feet with specific postures, work modes, and expectations for quiet and privacy supported by a carefully chosen range of Steelcase and Coalesse furniture, materials and technology to create not just spaces that are physically quiet, but that offer an atmosphere where introverts can work their best. Every space is designed with V.I.A. walls which provide superior acoustic performance and combined with sound masking to ensure these spaces are free from audible interruptions.

Are you an introvert or extrovert? Susan Cain has developed a 20 question quiz to assess yourself and learn where you fall on the introvert/extrovert spectrum.

thepowerofintroverts.com ▶

Introducing Susan Cain Quiet Spaces
by Steelcase

Be Me

This Quiet Space provides a warm and receptive destination that gives workers **permission to be alone and be themselves.** This space is free from the gaze and interruption of others, encouraging vitality throughout a day by lounging, working or even closing your eyes for a few moments.

Lagunitas by Coalesse, provides comfortable and familiar seating, much like a couch in a living room, except it offers power to support mobile devices.

Modes	Posture	Users
Focus	Lounge / Prone	One
Rejuvenation	Task	Two

The use of warm, natural materials create a calming connection to the outdoors.

Designed for comfortable informal postures, the use of pillows create a cozy, familiar, living room-like environment. By sitting in the corner, individuals feel a sense of safety for themselves and their information.

Flow

This Quiet Space provides a place free from visual distraction or interruption for deep focus, strategic thinking and getting into flow. Natural materials like wood and wool **create a calming state of mind, providing a place for focus, free from physical and cognitive distraction.**

The integrated monitor in V.I.A. allows amplification of digital content. The Elective Elements desk is large enough to spread out content while bookshelves are full of tools to support strategic thinking. Users can control lighting in the space, and V.I.A. keeps noise distractions at bay.

Modes	Posture	Users
Focus	Lounge / Prone	One
Rejuvenation	Task	Two

Bookshelves are full of tools to support strategic thinking. As well, inspiring materials are within reach.

Purposeful artifacts make the space feel familiar and more residential.

The integrated monitor in V.I.A. allows amplification of digital content.

Shown with clear glass for demo purposes only. In reality, variable opacity films are used to create these spaces.

Yoga mats are offered to support stretching or meditation.

Elective Elements storage keeps belongings off the floor—keeping real estate open for lounging or stretching.

Plants create a connection to nature.

Studio

This Quiet Space provides **a more active environment where individuals can escape and rejuvenate through activity and/or stretching.** Stretching provides greater blood flow to the brain, keeping the mind fresh and ideas creative. Control of the space is in the hands of the user, allowing them to customize lighting, music, volume and digital content based on their mood, task or personality.

V.I.A. offers dimmable lighting, and integrated speakers allow users to control the mood of the space. Hosu seating supports relaxed and informal prostures. The integrated monitor can be used to share news from home or calming content to support the need to rejuvenate. The open floor space allows users the opportunity to stretch, meditate and reset.

Modes	Posture	Users
Focus	Lounge / Prone	One
Rejuvenation	Task	Two

L-Shaped seating accommodates two while creating appropriate personal space. Designed intentionally low-tech to escape from the hum of devices.

Living room-like environment creates a comfortable and cozy space.

Green Room

This Quiet Space provides an informal destination to **connect, share and build trust before, during or after a meeting.** The lounge posture creates a relaxed, comfortable environment, while tools throughout the space support working and sharing of digital content.

Lagunitas provides a comfortable and informal seating option. The divided sofa at 90 degrees offers specific places for people to sit perpendicular to one another, creating an individual sense of space and psychological safety. Power in Lagunitas supports mobile devices with the ability to share content on the integrated monitor. Lighting is dimmable.

Modes	Posture	Users
Focus	Lounge / Prone	One
Rejuvenation	Task	Two

"These are spaces that don't exist in corporate America, for the most part," says Cain. "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 elements back into the workplace… In other words, everyone shines, given the right lighting." ⊙

The Quiet Revolution

The Quiet Revolution, Susan Cain's new mission-based company, was established in 2014 as a way to convert the unique awareness generated by her best-selling book "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" into action. With its mission to "Empower Introverts For The Benefit of Us All," the Quiet Revolution launched its first initiatives in 2014 in the world of work. Through their landmark Quiet Spaces partnership, Susan and her Quiet Revolution are working alongside industry-leader Steelcase to help corporations reimagine how workspace can be used to harness the power of the introverted half of their workforce. And Quiet Revolution's worker training organization, the Quiet Leadership Institute, is delivering outcomes-based training solutions to leading organizations that unlocks the value of introverted workers by making them aware of their unique strengths and empowering them to act.

Through 2014 and 2015, the Quiet Revolution will continue to add offerings that further its mission, including for parents and teachers of introverted children, lifestyle offerings dedicated to helping people live a quietly beautiful life—in travel, home design, acoustics and wellness, for example—and more.

Learn more about the Quiet Revolution at
quietrev.com ⊙

Go Deeper

If you want to learn more about the interesting, insightful work being done by thought leaders referenced in our article, here is a menu of resources to choose from:

Quiet Spaces collection ⊙
steelcase.com/quietspaces

Susan Cain homepage ⊙
thepowerofintroverts.com

Susan's 2012 TED talk ▶
steelcase.com/talk

Mind Share

This Quiet Space offers introverts a trusted space where they can engage in deep conversation with a colleague, display and discuss content in confidence. Depending on the **treatment on the V.I.A. glass, people would be able to see that someone is in the room, but content would be** **shielded from anyone who may be a passerby.** Integrated media:scape allows workers to actively edit and build digital content while the whiteboard supports brainstorming.

Modes	Posture	Users
Focus	Lounge / Prone	One
Rejuvenation	Task	Two

Table is intentionally shaped and sized for two. Integrated media:scape allows workers to actively edit and build digital content. Storage provides a place for personal items and an alternate seating option for collaborators.

Digital Agency Finds its Groove

For many, noisy copy machines, ringing phones and chatty coworkers are hallmarks of vibrant workplaces. But even in industries like advertising and marketing where creative thinkers thrive on group brainstorming and ideation, it's easy to overdose on constant noise and togetherness. Creative thinking also requires breakaway time to focus and recharge.

When Groove, a digital advertising and marketing agency in Baltimore, Md., outgrew its space, founder and CEO Ethan Giffin recognized it was an opportunity to rethink the company's work environment and that the solution involved more than just adding square footage. Partnering with turnstone and Steelcase Baltimore dealer Hyperspace, he took time to examine needs for growing the business in light of the types of spaces necessary for maximizing employees' success. A top priority was creating an engaging work environment where his team could thrive and do their best work.

10,000 Square Feet of Possibilities

When Giffin first toured an empty industrial building near Baltimore's Little Italy, he was greeted with crooked walls and dirt floors strewn with debris. But what he saw beyond that was 10,000 square feet of possibilities.

It was 2012 and Groove was not yet seven years old. Having already moved three times, the Groove team was well-acquainted with the pitfalls of underperforming spaces: loud mechanical sounds drowned out conversations and made phone calls difficult: poorly designed spaces left his team in discomfort and unable to concentrate.

The new space had to be different. "I knew we had to evolve from our old way of doing things," Giffin says. "When I was evaluating everything in our culture, the one thing we were missing was the building—the physical space. We always took someone else's second-hand space and just repainted it. I came to realize that space was the thing that was missing to push us to the next level creatively."

Groove's new workspace was once an empty industrial building near Baltimore's Little Italy.

As part of his exploration, Giffin visited Steelcase Global Headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich. The visit radically transformed his thinking about the workplace. After witnessing people working effectively while walking on a treadmill or in informal lounge spaces, he realized work no longer had to be confined to a desk or a boardroom.

Making Space Matter

Inspired by what he saw, Giffin discarded initial plans for a cubicle layout and replaced it with a floor plan that addressed the diverse needs of his team with various types of spaces.

Because most of Groove's work is collaborative in nature, the majority of the new space is designed for cocreation and brainstorming. Nicknamed "the pit," this main area is open and collaborative, uniting the team. Employees have assigned desks, but they also have access to a variety of other spaces for collaboration as well as focused work.

For example, they can sneak away to one of Groove's "dens" on the second-floor loft. Open to the pit below, these dens resemble residential living rooms without walls. Their location provides physical separation from the group without being completely closed off. Enclosed conference rooms offer additional getaway options for team members needing uninterrupted time or a quiet place to work. Whether they need to make phone calls, review a performance evaluation or simply hit a deadline, Groove provides employees with ample enclaves for reservation or impromptu use.

Groove's in-house bar not only provides additional areas for collaboration but hits a homerun when it comes to fostering vibrant office culture. With beer on tap, a stage complete with disco ball and enough reclaimed wood for an old-fashioned barn raising, the bar sends a clear message that this team likes to have fun. Groove also offers free lunch each Friday, happy hour after work on Friday afternoons, and movie nights regularly.

Groove reinforces their philosophy of options and control by using a music management system that allows for choosing the genre and volume in seven different areas of the building. For example, the pit may feature rap music, while Beethoven plays in the den, but, ultimately, it's up to the team. Releasing control of environmental factors like this underscores the importance of each individual seeking out the right experience for their tasks.

"The space we have now has elevated our culture. If you look at the excitement of my team and the things we can do, it's not a stretch to say that this space is responsible for solidifying our culture," Giffin says.

Private Offices Based on Work

For Giffin, creating a range of places meant preserving a traditional office for himself and Mack McGee, executive vice president and principal of Groove. Their personal workstyles, the confidential nature of some of their projects and the strategies that they are considering for the future are things that they wanted to keep out of the public eye. Client expectations were another factor in that decision.

"My clients expect me to have a formal office," Giffin notes. "I need space to spread out and my creative work is sometimes more private in nature. I like to think through things alone sometimes and so does Mack."

He also placed the sales team in a separate room with a door so that ringing phones and chatter don't disturb the creative team in the pit below. Although Groove employees actively use headphones to achieve privacy, experience has taught Giffin that headphones alone are not always enough. He realized he could maximize team contributions if individuals could go to a different type of space when they need more privacy.

I finally "got it"— work didn't have to include a desk and a computer tower

Employees at Groove have assigned desks, but they also have access to a variety of other spaces for collaboration as well as focused work.

Space as a Perk and Catalyst

Groove's journey has so impacted the way they work that their space is listed as a job perk on their website. And having "the coolest space in Baltimore" is not only good for employees; it's good for business, too.

When it comes to attracting the best in the field, job candidates regularly choose to sign with Groove because they've fallen in love with the space, says Giffin. In fact, he's predicting that, in a matter of years, he won't need to rely on recruiters to hire mid- or high-level employees.

Equally as exciting is the change he's seen in the company's bottom line. Because their old space didn't represent the brand well, Groove did everything they could to deflect business meetings to alternative venues, email or phone calls. That's all changed.

"We have clients and prospects in every week. Bringing people here is a different kind of sell—we create an experience for staff, clients and prospects. Now there's so much traffic, we need a receptionist! And the best part is we're closing 75-80 percent of business when we can get them into our space. They recognize that if we pay this much attention to our work environment, we're going to pay even more attention to their project. They're right." ○

"When it comes to attracting the best in the field, job candidates regularly choose to sign with Groove because they've fallen in love with the space."
— Ethan Giffin

Research shows that even small movements throughout the day can add up to big benefits. That's why turnstone created Buoy.

Designed with your wellbeing in mind, Buoy's rounded base helps engage your core while you balance, rock, wobble and spin. And weighing in at just twenty pounds, Buoy is designed to go wherever you go, putting a whole new spin on "mobile" work.
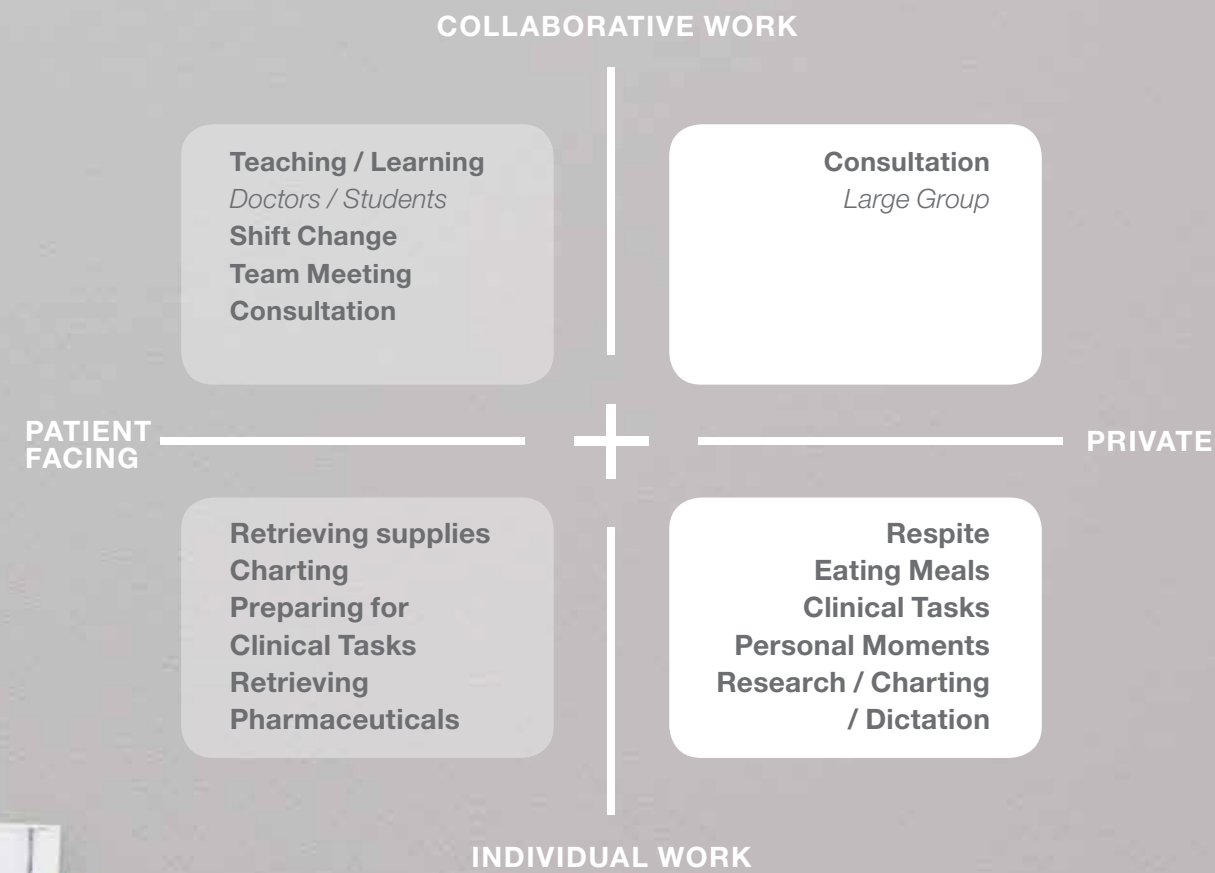
Buoy.
Active sitting for active people.

TAKING CARE OF THE CARETAKERS: CLINICIAN PRIVACY

In the era of big data and healthcare, there's one buzzword at the center of every conversation: privacy. From HIPAA to telemedicine to electronic health records, concerns about privacy are at fever pitch. But too often, these conversations are centered exclusively around patients and health information technology, ignoring the importance of providing clinicians with the privacy and space they need to safeguard information and maintain their own wellbeing.

Clinicians of all levels find themselves stretched thin, working in spaces that don't suit the dynamic and changing roles they must switch between during their shifts. Room to share patient information. Room to focus on tough problems. Room to relax and recover. Most clinician spaces today don't offer this diverse ecosystem of spaces—instead relying on the traditional nurses' station. But nurses' stations are frequently noisy, busy spaces that don't offer a place for individual focus or private conversations, increasing the risk for costly errors.

Historically, hospitals have been environments that hold little regard for clinician privacy. Yet this is a problem not only for those clinicians and the patients they serve; it is also a problem for the hospital's bottom line. There is extensive evidence that noisy, hectic environments with no place for focus and escape result in poor performance and absenteeism. And as the use of telemedicine and other remote video collaboration tools increases, clinicians will require more private environments to share patient information. It's time for us to better support those who deliver care.

Hospitals must take action to protect the privacy needs of not only their patients—but also their staff. As the primary care shortage continues to result in an influx of nurses, physician assistants, and other team members delivering care on the front lines, creating spaces for hospital employees to step aside and find privacy will require a more thoughtful and concerted approach.

By studying clinicians' needs and behaviors and understanding their everyday workflows, Steelcase Health offers an innovative new approach for improved clinician efficiency, accuracy, satisfaction and overall wellbeing. It's designed to empower clinicians, connect them to technology and to each other and, ultimately, to create more connected patient care. And privacy is a very important part of the story.

COLLABORATIVE WORK

Teaching / Learning
Doctors / Students
Shift Change
Team Meeting
Consultation

Consultation
Large Group

PATIENT FACING

PRIVATE

Retrieving supplies
Charting
Preparing for
Clinical Tasks
Retrieving
Pharmaceuticals

Respite
Eating Meals
Clinical Tasks
Personal Moments
Research / Charting
/ Dictation

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Prescribing Privacy for Clinicians

The inherent tension for clinicians lies in alternating demands to communicate with patients, families and colleagues and their own need to concentrate on individual, detailed, heads-down work. "Clinicians have shared with us that it can be very stressful to try to chart at the patient's bedside while the family is present," said Caroline Kelly, a Steelcase researcher. "For some tasks, they want to be able to go somewhere private where they can be shielded from other demands."

Whether it's updating electronic medical records, conducting patient research, trading information during a shift change or simply taking an important personal phone call, private getaways humanize the healthcare work environment and improve clinicians' sense of wellbeing and ability to focus as needed.

But finding places to have periods of intense concentration or even small moments of respite in most healthcare environments can be difficult. Because there are no spaces designed for privacy, often clinicians ignore their own wellbeing in favor of their patients, feeling unable to take full breaks and allowing themselves to be interrupted during rare quiet moments. In a study on staff respite conducted with Spectrum Health, one of the U.S.'s highest-rated large healthcare systems located in Grand Rapids, Mich., Steelcase researchers discovered that the staff were taking what they termed "micro-breaks." Instead of 15 minutes in the break room, they'd take less than a minute, pausing just long enough for a quick sip of water and a deep breath. "Not every break is deeply immersive," says Kelly. "Some are just a few moments, so we need to make sure the spaces are convenient and support the activity the staff wants to do."

Designing for Wellbeing

Steelcase Health has developed applications for clinical and administrative workspaces with three core design principles in mind: to humanize the work experience, and to empower and connect clinicians. Privacy needs are inherent throughout, from individual solitude to quiet, small-group discussions to retreat spaces for staff—a range of settings to meet individual, group and organizational needs.

"When the organization provides spaces that support the wellbeing of their employees, it empowers the staff to take care of themselves," Kelly says. "This gives nurses the chance to say that taking care of themselves is important. Since they're feeling recharged and rejuvenated, it's easier for them to encourage their co-workers to take a break and offer to cover their patients." When the organization provides a human-centered workspace that recognizes people's privacy needs, cultural changes naturally follow and individuals find themselves adopting new behaviors. By design, it all adds up to enhanced provider wellbeing, satisfaction, accuracy and patient care.

The clinician hub creates a more dynamic, functional space that allows for a greater range of work modes. This hub is an ecosystem of different spaces for different activities: collaboration, focused tasks, teaching and learning, and quick social exchanges.

Clinicians' Hub: Central Nursing

A reimagined nurses' station creates a more dynamic, functional space that allows for a greater range of work modes. Unlike a traditional nurses' station, this hub is an ecosystem of different spaces for different activities: collaboration, focused tasks, teaching and learning, and quick social exchanges.

The hub also provides easy sightlines to patient rooms so clinicians can maintain awareness of what's going on around them. Multiple points of entry and exit make movement fluid. Technology is thoughtfully integrated throughout all workspaces in recognition of its increasing importance in healthcare. As more and more clinicians rely on mobile devices such as tablets, the hub features a multi-port charging station that provides secure support, so expensive equipment gets dropped less frequently, recharged often and used to share more patient information. Adjustable monitors and foot railings encourage personalized work styles and postures, providing physical comfort and relief for aching feet.

Charge Nurse Enclave

For clinicians, privacy can't mean physical distance from patients. Charge nurses and nurse managers often express a need to be able to move quickly between private and patient-facing spaces. Maintaining situational awareness and being able to seamlessly transition can make all the difference when it comes to responsive patient care.

A nurse enclave accommodates clinicians' need to do focused work while maintaining a close watch on what's happening on the floor. With visual and acoustical semi-privacy, it's an ideal space for charting and other heads-down work, as well as phone calls or videoconferencing. Staffers can see through glass walls, encouraging impromptu conversations and questions, but an enclosed configuration assures periods of privacy as well.

Technology-supported collaboration

In addition to individual spaces, clinicians need quiet collaboration spaces where they can share digital information and consult with others, including via videoconferencing from different locations. Given recent data that telemedicine will grow at a rate of almost 20 percent every year, creating space for it to be successful is paramount. The new footprint includes space for an enclosed telepresence room, complete with high-definition videoconferencing, creating an optimized setting for physician consultation and collaboration. Teams and specialists in multiple locations can now share vital information in casual, quick, informative sessions. Seated-height chairs allow for longer meetings to generate and evaluate ideas. Enhanced communication leads to more connected care, and better outcomes.

A clinician retreat near the clinicians' hub provides a combination of social and private spaces that can include a small kitchen, eating area, media bar, personal lockers and a separate enclosed respite area for one person.

Clinician Retreat

Not surprisingly, clinicians tend to place their own care at the bottom of the priority list. "We need to support them by understanding the context of their work and giving them choices that fit instead of telling them to walk five minutes down three different corridors to the break room," Kelly says. "Most will tell you they can't leave their unit that long." A better alternative is a strategically and conveniently placed retreat near the clinicians' hub. A combination of social and private spaces fills the respite area, including a small kitchen, eating area, media bar, personal lockers and a separate enclosed respite area for one person. These touchdown spaces encourage balance and rest, so patients receive better care, staffers are less prone to burnout and breaks become all that they're meant to be.

Enclosed Respite

Healthcare practitioners see some of the most joyous and devastating moments in people's lives, creating an emotional roller coaster. Sometimes, it's necessary to move into a quiet space after a stressful experience, or just to take an urgent personal phone call away from the hubbub of the open work environment. An individual enclosed enclave adjacent to the clinicians' hub allows workers to take a few moments to recenter themselves or handle personal matters, reducing their stress load and the risk for medical errors.

Time For Change

The old ways of working in a healthcare setting are giving way to smarter, more human-centric ways that emphasize clinician wellbeing. The signature spaces of the healthcare landscape are changing as well, providing more efficient, versatile and private spaces than the old nurses' stations. As healthcare continues its evolution towards consumer-driven models of care and value-based reimbursements, forward-looking hospital leaders will transform their spaces to accomplish these new market requirements. These leaders will remember that privacy is about more than just patients' health records; it's about the basic human need for choice and control. The benefits of providing privacy for healthcare workers are already clear, from fewer medical errors to increased staff retention and better patient care. ⊙

The signature spaces of the healthcare landscape are changing, providing more efficient, versatile and human-centric spaces that focus on clinician wellbeing.

We work with leading healthcare organizations to create places that deliver greater connection, empathy and wellbeing for everyone involved in the experience of health.

HEALTH. CARE.
TIME FOR CHANGE.

Improving the experience of health can feel overwhelming. Perhaps the best change we can make is to look for the changes that are possible to make.

Changes that are **meaningful**. Changes that are **personal**. Changes that can be pivotal for the **people** involved.

At Steelcase Health we believe that change can come from truly enriching the moments that matter most. We study the places that support health and then deliver insights, applications and solutions designed to create moments that can lead to change.

Moments that enhance the **wellbeing**, **empathy** and **connection** of clinicians, patients and families.

We believe Steelcase Health can make a difference.
We believe in the power of place.

For more insights, applications and solutions, visit us online.

SteelcaseHealth.com

flipping the classroom

A high school "flips" learning processes and spaces— and turns around student performance

There is no hope for your students.

High school principals are used to criticism, but for Greg Green, principal at Clintondale High School in suburban Detroit, Mich., that assessment by an educational consultant hit hard.

The school's problems were clear. Debt: $5 million. A majority of its 525 students considered at-risk. An outside evaluation that ranked Clintondale's technology infrastructure 542nd out of 560. Student skill levels were all over the map. Failure rates, Green says, were "through the roof."

The consultants had no clear solution, and Clintondale could have easily become another tough-luck story of not enough money, a challenging student population and extenuating circumstances. Instead, the consultant's criticism marked a turning point for Green and Clintondale. "When they said that about our school, we drew the line right then."

Less than three years later, with minimal expenditure and creative approaches to learning and the places where it occurs, there's renewed hope at Clintondale. Student failure rates have plummeted. Grades and statewide test scores are up.

Upending the School

The turnaround started when Clintondale reversed the teaching and learning process, or "flipped" the school. In this model, teachers use laptops to record lectures on video and post them to the school's website, YouTube and other outlets. Students can watch the videos after school at home, in the school computer lab, on a smart phone—how and where it's most convenient for them. The next day in the classroom, building on the material they studied, students work on math problems, write essays, build science projects, etc. Teachers are at their side, coaching, answering questions.

If the approach seems counter to what schools and students have practiced for decades, Green says it's about time. "Look at the usual process in schools. Kids listen to lectures, then they go home. Where's the assistance at home? Sitting at their kitchen table, who's going to help them with advanced algebra, physics, chemistry? The parent hasn't been in the classroom in 30 years. They could be a physicist but they still don't know what the teacher wants the student to get out of the material."

The flipped model allows students to seek one-on-one help from their teacher when they have a question and learn in an environment conducive to education. "We have experts in the classroom, social workers, assistant principals, technology, all kinds of resources. So why keep sending the homework home where those resources are absent? Why not just reverse the process?"

Rethinking the Classroom

Flipping a school causes teachers to rethink classroom procedures and pedagogies. Since lectures are on video, more class time involves collaborative work between students and teachers, students and peers. Clintondale worked with Steelcase Education professionals to explore how space can support a more active learning approach.

"Active learning is where students construct meaning by making their own discoveries. They don't just sit back and listen to a teacher lecture all the time," says Aileen Strickland, Steelcase design researcher. "They're more engaged in learning, frequently working in groups and interacting with peers. When students can move around, relationships are more dynamic, so furniture and space that supports a more active approach can help teachers and students adapt to these new methods."

Working with Steelcase, Clintondale transformed a classroom into a model for active learning. Out went old-style heavy metal student desks; in came lightweight Verb® tables with lockable casters and mobile Node® student chairs with flexible, swivel seats. Now students can easily shift between discussion, group work, working with another student or the teacher, test mode, or any other set-up. The room also includes a three-person lounge, ottomans, and individual and small group tables for brainstorming and sharing. There's also a stool-height table and chairs for team collaboration or individual work.

In moments the classroom can shift to the layout that works best for students, teachers, and the material at hand. "We've identified nine different ways to set up the furniture in the classroom so far, and there's probably more setups we'll create. Students simply rolls things around, reconfigure, and in two to three minutes they're back on task," says social studies teacher Michael Ward.

He believes the flipped model, a classroom built for active learning and the flexibility he has to adopt new pedagogies provide major advantages. "You can put 185 lectures on video, enough for the entire year, but that doesn't replace the teacher. What it does is let students watch the video when they want, rewind it as many times as they need and review particular points at their own pace. Once the students get that content, they come in here and we can teach to a higher level.

"We're embedding new skills in students, teaching them how to solve problems, to be more creative, to collaborate with others. This room has allowed us to teach to best practices and to explore new frontiers."

It takes time for a school to adopt active learning. "It's a gradual process, and it requires some training for both teachers and students," says Strickland. "It involves not only learning new pedagogies but also how space impacts learning, and how different pedagogies are best supported with different spaces and furniture."
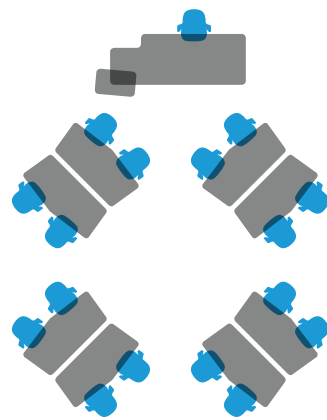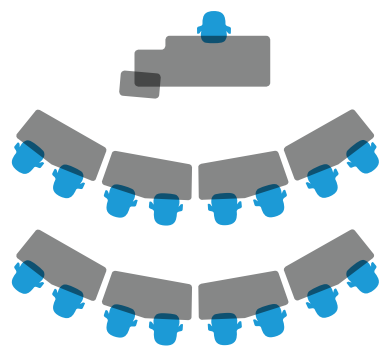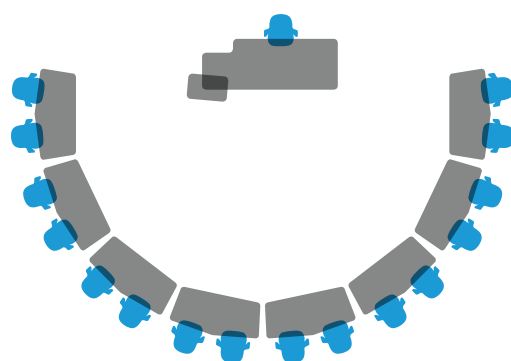
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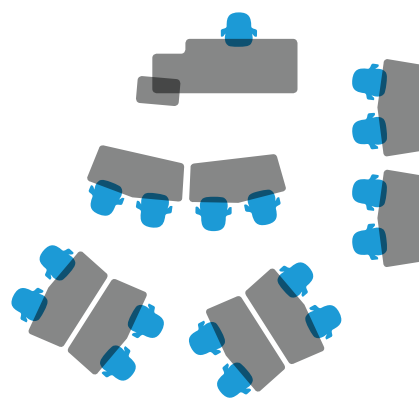
personalized
learning

in-class lecture +
review

discussion +
presentation

**I'm improving my grades
a lot. I can work better in
this classroom.**

—Brianna

Modest Investments, Major Returns

Even teachers at Clintondale without active learning furniture are using spaces differently. One instructor removed the teacher's desk from his classroom, saying he doesn't need it since he spends his time coaching and helping students one-on-one and in small groups. Another teacher uses a half-round table instead of a traditional hulking steel desk. He prefers the table because everyone can share material easier and he can work closer with students than from behind a desk.

Clintondale also rethought their 1950s vintage library, outfitting it with small tables, easy-to-move chairs and lounge seating. It's now a hub for class break-out sessions and group projects. Students also use the library for individual work, including watching videos on course material.

"Just introducing the new furniture made a difference. One student said, 'We've never gotten anything new before.' They got the message that the school is investing in them, so they should invest themselves in their education, too. It's a kind of a reciprocal agreement," says Ward.

Since the consultant's stinging assessment three years ago, Clintondale has experienced remarkable success. The ninth grade, the first to be flipped, saw the student failure rate drop by 33 percent in one year. Since September 2011, when the entire school began using the flipped model, the overall failure rate at the school has fallen to 11 percent. Student grades are up, as are statewide test scores.

Other schools have taken notice. Educators from around the world—over 300 at last count—have visited Clintondale to see what's going on. Reporters from national, regional and industry media outlets are constantly calling.

For Principal Green, the greatest satisfaction is restoring hope for his students. "There was a national survey of nearly 500,000 students that showed that only one out of two students was hopeful. That's alarming!

"But educators can change this. We don't need to eliminate lectures, just offer them where students can review the material at their own pace. Classrooms can support active learning, with the experts and the resources and tools right there.

"Look at the results for our kids, who come from tough situations. We're creating more hope for them. Ninety percent are graduating. Eighty percent are going to college. Most of these kids are the first to graduate from high school in their family. This is how we can create hope, right here in our schools." **o**

**Failure rates
dropped
from 30–40%
to 8–11%**

Mastering the Mix: Technology, Space, and Learning.

Clintondale High School's flipped model shows how blended learning (part online, part in-classroom) can reshape the learning process. From online courses to videoconferencing and interactive whiteboards in classrooms, the possibilities are changing every level of education.

Steelcase Education researchers recently completed an in-depth design research study to better understand this trend and how educators might rethink how they can best leverage space and technology to improve the learning process. Their six research insights:

→ **Person-to-person connections remain essential for successful learning.**

→ **Technology is supporting richer face-to-face interactions and higher-level cognitive learning.**

→ **Integrating technology into classrooms mandates flexibility and activity-based space planning.**

→ **Spatial boundaries are loosening.**

→ **Spaces must be designed to capture and stream information.**

→ **High-tech and low-tech will coexist.**

The researchers conclude that classrooms and informal learning spaces must be highly flexible to support the new learning behaviors that are the direct result of new technologies.

Learning Curve

Helping Students Focus

As a university professor, I was often asked by students, "What advice can you give me for doing well in this course?"

Educators hear this question frequently and our response is fairly universal: manage your time, take good notes in class, stay focused. Yet focus requires a place for heads-down work, and these places are not always easy to locate.

They're scarce for several reasons. Active learning pedagogies require more collaboration and more spaces for interaction. Libraries are evolving from whisper-quiet book centers into team project workplaces. There's only so much real estate, and budgets are tight everywhere. Plus, there's been a steady increase in the cacophony of life today, due largely to ubiquitous technology.

A key point here: Active learning does not preclude individual, quiet study. In fact, as learning becomes more collaborative, it's even more important to provide places for individual concentration and focus.

In classrooms across the country you'll find teachers and students struggling with noise. Increasingly noisy educational environments are more than just distracting. As researcher Arline L. Bronzaft, Ph.D., points out, "Noises are not only hazardous to our children's mental abilities but to their overall wellbeing as well." Other research confirms the importance of acoustic control for learning spaces.

Buildings, classrooms and furniture that support focus and concentration should be an important design consideration for education places. Based on our research, here are some design strategies to support individual focus in learning environments:

Provide a range of learning places to support varied pedagogies and learning styles. Teachers with reconfigurable classrooms can be more creative in their teaching and provide more ways to keep students engaged.

For example, a classroom layout that supports collaboration can easily be reconfigured into a test-taking setup. Mobile tables with removable privacy screens help students shift between their own work, lecture mode, group work, etc. Libraries can include social, collaborative, and focus learning spaces.

Recognize the need for open, shielded and enclosed spaces. Open spaces (studios, study halls, etc.) give students little control over the space. Their ability to focus and concentrate depends on density, sound levels, protocols, and other factors.

Shielded spaces allow students to work alone but remain connected to other students. They may have their ear buds in, but they're still aware of others. Shielded space examples include a classroom corner workspace enclosed with low screens, or an alcove or niche inside or just outside the classroom.

Enclosed spaces are areas for quiet reflection, respite and study: private rooms, individual workspaces with privacy screens, and small enclaves. These spaces offer visual and acoustic privacy and help students focus and concentrate.

Support a range of postures. We've all endured working in traditional study carrels. A fixed desk and hard chair quickly become uncomfortable. Instead, consider settings where students can change postures: sit, stand, lean, etc. Movement and changing postures help students stay energized, focused and more engaged in the learning process.

Instructors can promote quiet, focused study, too. Incorporate heads-down activities into learning plans, and help students understand the pitfalls of multitasking and the benefits of turning off smartphones during focused work.

Set the stage for student success with a range of spaces that support the rhythm of learning, including quiet, focused work. ○

Lennie Scott-Webber, Ph.D., Director of Education Environments for Steelcase Education Solutions

I've spent years researching educational environments and have seen the insides of more classrooms than I can count. My passion, and my job, is helping people understand the behaviors that come from different environments, and creating classrooms that truly support new ways of teaching and learning.

Email your ideas, questions or comments to lscottwe@ steelcase.com or on twitter to Lennie_SW@twitter.com.

NEXT

VISIONS OF WHAT'S NEXT

600
ENTRIES

5
FINALISTS

30
ORGANIZATIONS

It was a tough design competition.

A strategic think tank with 35 highly mobile employees required a new workplace in an existing 8,000-square-foot floor plate where employees could do their best work and innovation would thrive. Thirty different schools in the U.S. and Canada accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation took on the challenge as part of the Steelcase-sponsored NEXT Design Competition for interior design students.

"Our goal is to help the next generation of designers. We want to encourage design that looks at problems in new ways, is based on insights from solid research and results in real world solutions that can adapt over time as needs change," says Jerry Holmes, one of the Steelcase design alliance principals who managed the NEXT competition.

Over 600 students submitted design solutions. After initial judging by the students' faculty members, each school's top two entries moved on to an evaluation by an independent panel of professional judges. All identifying information (student name, year, program, college or university) was removed from the entries to ensure unbiased judging.

Ultimately, five interior design students were selected as finalists. They were flown to Grand Rapids for a three-day immersion in Steelcase workplace research and design, and a chance to present their design solutions to a panel of five judges who would select the best overall solution.
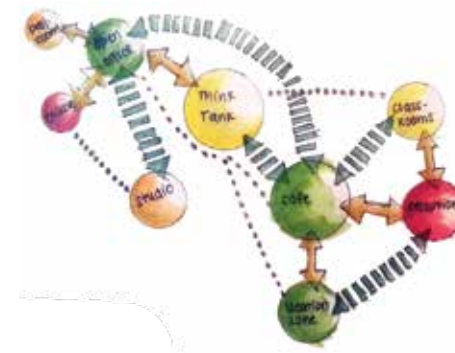
2014 NEXT Design Competition Finalists:

Sara Gasser
Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

Channing Glover
Maryville University, St. Louis, MO

Anna Ivleva
Humber College, Toronto, ON

Sabryna Lyn
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Cindy Tiek
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

2014 Honorable Mentions:

Taylor Behl
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL

Samantha Blancato
George Washington University, Washington, DC

Carly Lisnow
George Washington University, Washington, DC

Adam Thilges
Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Courtney Wierzbicki
Kendall College of Art & Design, Grand Rapids, MI

"Our goal is to help the next generation of designers. We want to encourage design that looks at problems in new ways, is based on insights from solid research, and results in real world solutions that can adapt over time as needs change."

—Jerry Holmes

Design Goals for an Interconnected Workplace

The central design challenge was to create an interconnected workplace for the client that would:

→ foster collaboration and drive innovation

→ provide employees with workspace options that supported different work processes and workstyles, thus giving them choice and control in their workplace

→ nurture the physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing of employees

→ support the organization's culture

→ reflect the company's brand

These factors would in turn support the firm's desire to attract and retain top talent.

The real estate itself was a challenge: a long, rectangular space that looked like a boomerang missing part of one wing. Every square inch of this real estate was precious, as it is for every company, and the client wanted to use it more effectively. They also needed to accommodate additional staff and resident clients over the coming year.

Bob Blaha, director of interior design for HOK in St. Louis and one of the judges, was pleased with the solutions developed by the finalists. "The thinking was there. What I was looking for was a very big idea that they manifested in the space physically and emotionally. It was a hard choice, selecting just one of these designs."

Winning design anticipates workplace change

The winning design solution, by Channing Glover, a student at Maryville University, St. Louis, Mo., took shape over four weeks in one of her studio classes. She used a paper airplane and its often random flight path as a metaphor for the work at NEXT. The company helps clients with design thinking, product design and prototyping, work that often takes random twists and turns.

"I saw a paper airplane's moves as similar to the way people work. The layout can be folded up and unfolded and rearranged into something different," says Glover.

Her space planning uses flexible workspaces and furniture. Users can rethink their workspaces, move furniture around and create the spaces they need at any given time. She also used the paper airplane concept to develop a company logo and suggested artwork for the walls and ceiling based on different airplane designs.

Glover's space plan encourages the impromptu interactions that often fuel innovation. "An interconnected workplace is the way people work now. I grew up working on a lot of group projects, so things have always been interconnected people-wise. But I also think connecting to the outside is important; being able to connect to people in different countries, different clients."

Director of education environments at Steelcase Lennie Scott-Webber, Ph.D., says "an interconnected workplace isn't an easy thing to understand. But the finalists worked to appreciate the strategy and used the concept throughout the spaces they designed. It wasn't just a furniture solution; it was about how it would actually feel to work in the space."'
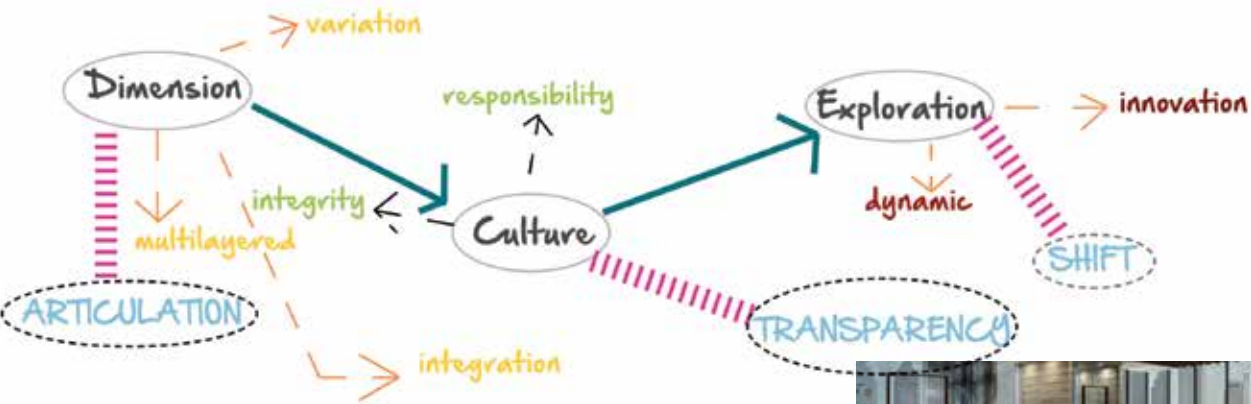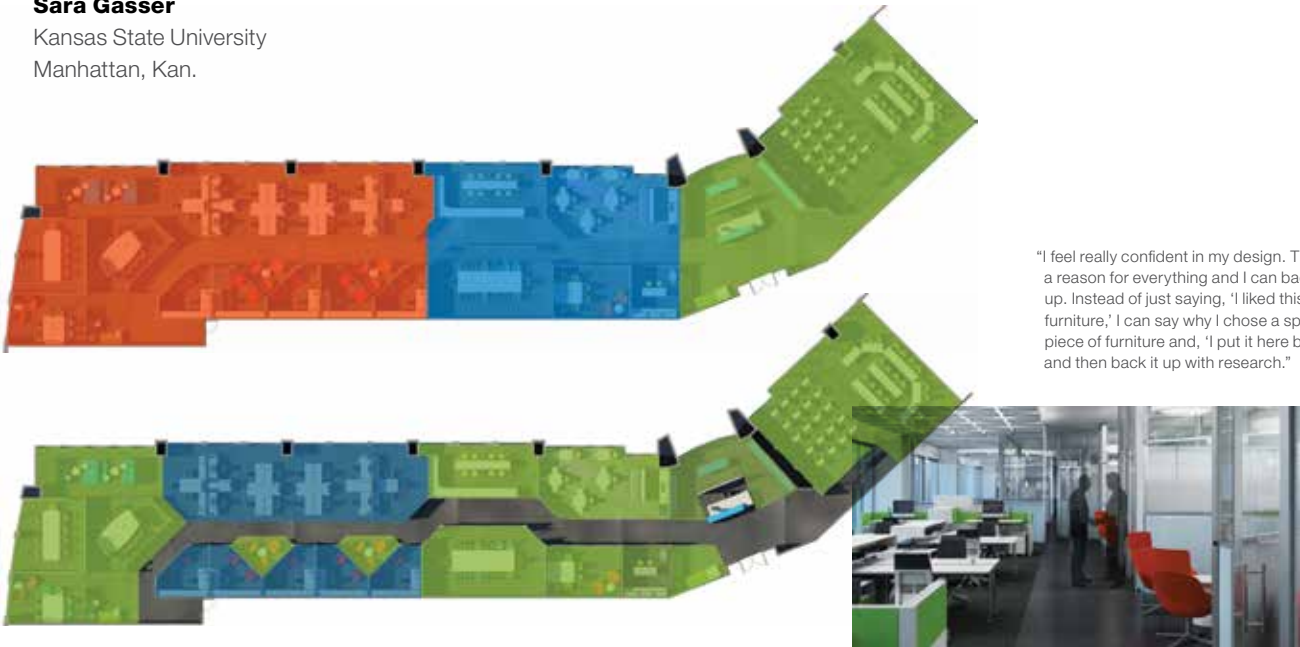

Channing Glover
Maryville University, St. Louis, MO
2013 NEXT Design Competition
Winner
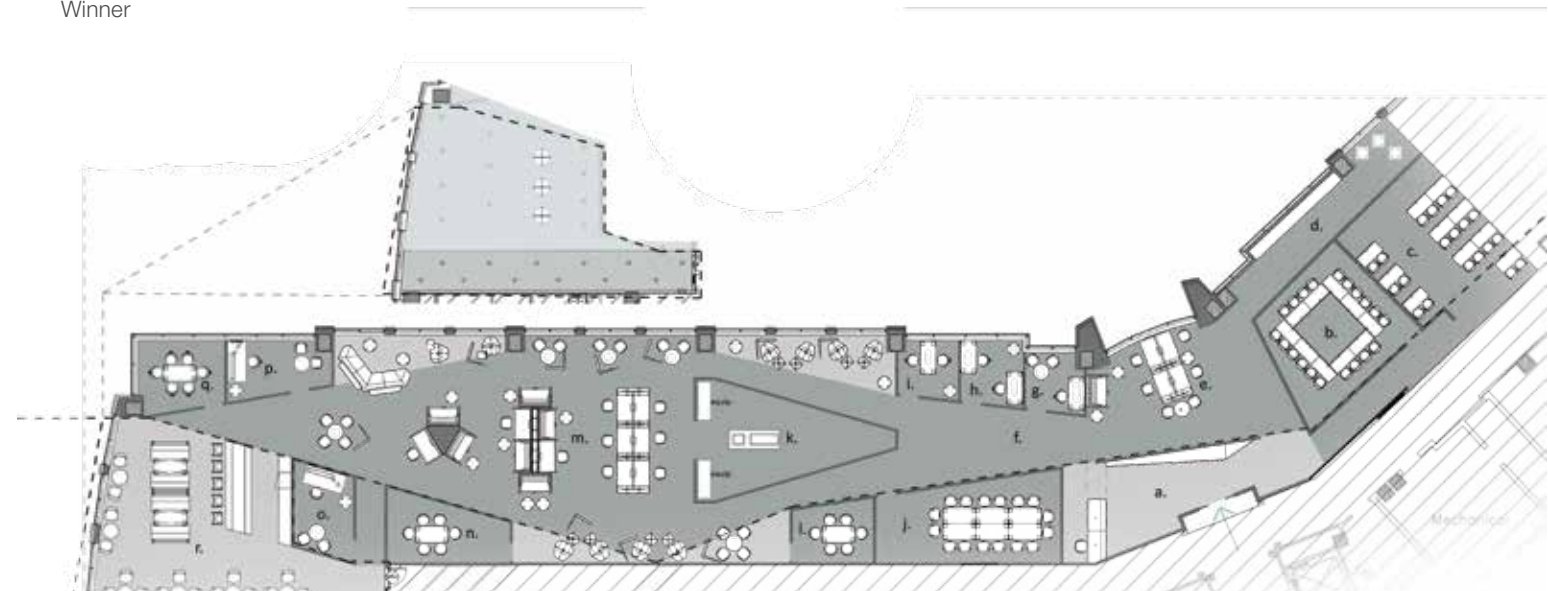
"When you're working with somebody you should be able to have the flexibility to change and transform within your space in the way you're working. Not every task is going to require the same type of workspace."

Sara Gasser
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kan.

"I feel really confident in my design. There was a reason for everything and I can back it up. Instead of just saying, 'I liked this piece of furniture,' I can say why I chose a specific piece of furniture and, 'I put it here because,' and then back it up with research."
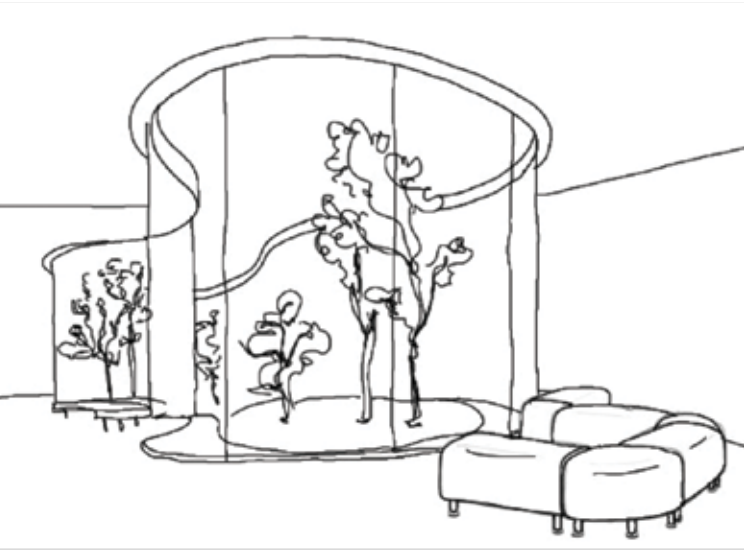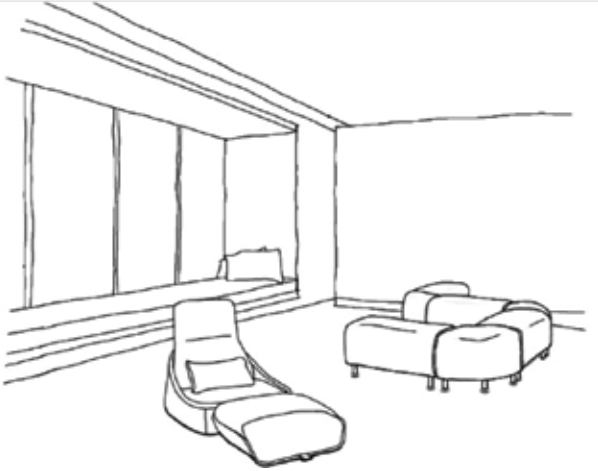

Sabryna Lyn,
University of Florida,
Gainesville, Fla.

"At the University of Florida, they're very evidence-based, so before even looking at floor plans or creating a concept our first step is always research. I was just researching for two weeks, and then from there I came up with the overall concept to drive my design."

Anna Ivleva
Humber College,
Toronto, Ont.

"Interconnected office, for me, is the place where people can collaborate and innovate and be engaged with others to create something big, something new together."

Cindy Tiek
Louisiana State University,
Baton Rouge, La.

"We all participate in so much technology nowadays, everything is digital, we are interconnected that way. But it's also having a workplace where it's much easier to collaborate one-on-one or in groups. You're not isolated anymore in a private office, there's a lot more group work, so it's providing the places for people to work in those groups."

The Massaud Lounge with Ottoman–
by Jean-Marie Massaud and Coalesse

Call for Entries:
2014 NEXT Design Competition

"Rethink Active Learning Spaces," the NEXT competition for 2014, challenges students to reimagine what a successful learning environment could be.

Juniors and seniors at schools accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation are eligible to enter. The winner receives $1,000 and a matching cash prize for their school's design program.

Details on the competition have been sent via email to instructors at all CIDA schools. Student registrations are due by October 3, with final entries due by November 21. There is no cost to students or schools to enter the competition.

For more information,
email design4next@steelcase.com

The Future of a Profession

"All of the judges were thoroughly impressed with the students' work. It makes you feel excited about the future of the interior design profession when you see students produce work of this caliber," says Holmes.

"We're hoping that even more schools will get involved in the new competition for 2014. This time students will explore how space can better support the changes going on in education today. It will be a great project to incorporate into a design curriculum, or to turn students loose on as an independent study," says Madelyn Hankins, co-leader of the NEXT competition and a Steelcase design alliance principal.

For students who enter, Channing Glover has some advice. "One of our teachers always says, 'Don't be afraid to break the rules because you never know when they are going to change them.'

"Just be as creative as you possibly can, have fun, and do what you want to do. Don't really worry about winning. It's your work and you want it to be everything that you want it to be. And if it wins, that's great." ○

Part work. Part refuge.
Designed for comfort and connecting with technology, the Massaud Lounge with ottoman is an alternative destination to work, contemplate or relax.

coalesse®

coalesse.com

Finding Balance: Improving Collaboration by Rethinking Privacy

If one word can sum up the strategic intent behind the creation of flagship headquarters for TAQA, the global energy company, it is *Majlis*—which in Arabic signifies a place where people gather and are welcomed by their hosts.

When TAQA decided to establish a new corporate headquarters facility in Abu Dhabi, company leaders knew that it needed to be a place for meeting, greeting and interacting—where people could come together, work together and share in the benefits of an inspiring environment. At the same time, especially because many employees were initially wary of losing the convention of individual workspaces, they knew that individual needs for privacy could not be overlooked in the design of the new space.

Established in 2005, TAQA has grown into one of the most dynamic energy companies in the world. With operations spanning the energy industry and interests in 11 countries, its speed of growth has been laudatory.
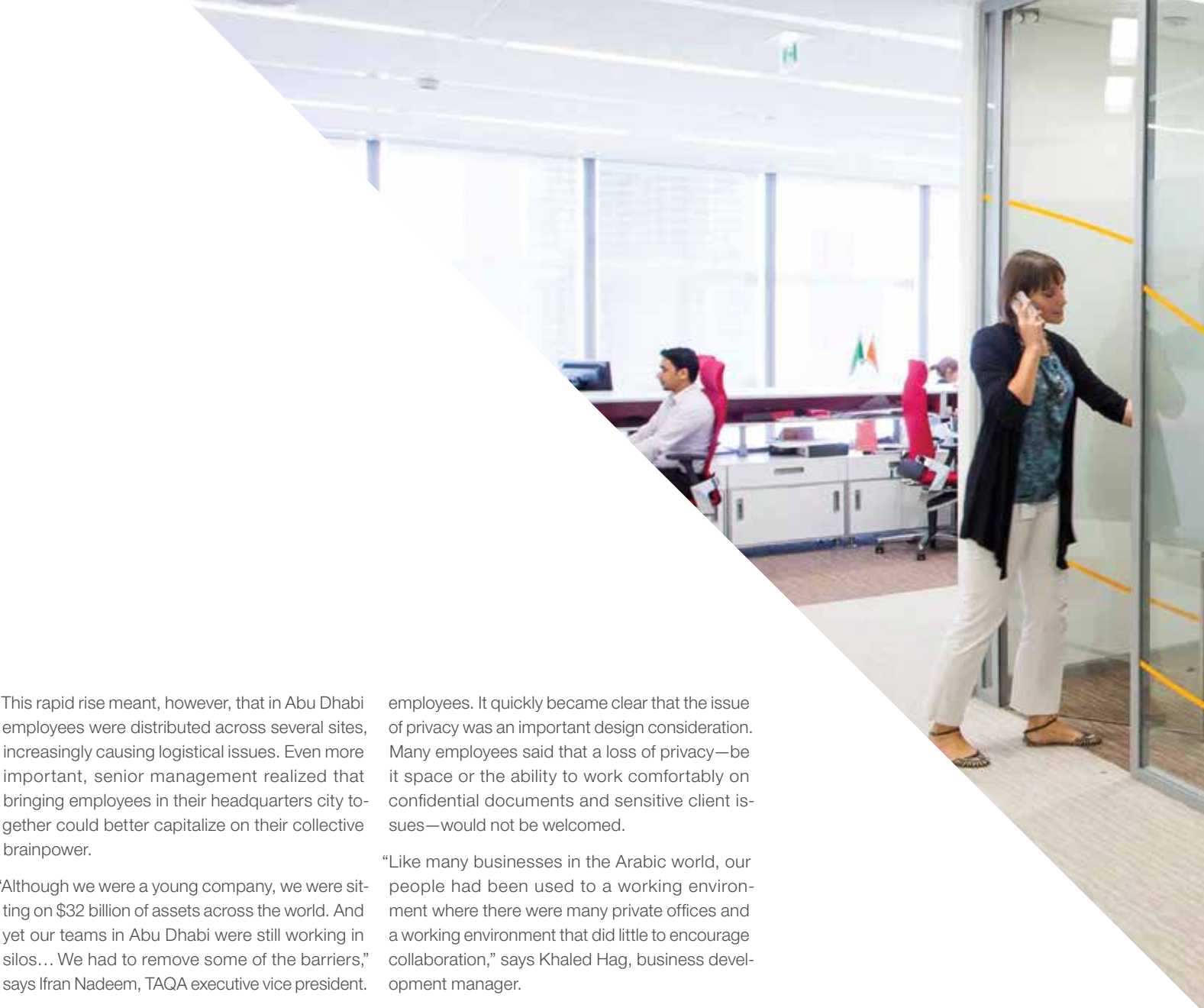
This rapid rise meant, however, that in Abu Dhabi employees were distributed across several sites, increasingly causing logistical issues. Even more important, senior management realized that bringing employees in their headquarters city together could better capitalize on their collective brainpower.

"Although we were a young company, we were sitting on $32 billion of assets across the world. And yet our teams in Abu Dhabi were still working in silos… We had to remove some of the barriers," says Ifran Nadeem, TAQA executive vice president.

"We wanted to create a space that would reflect the diversity of our business and enable people to connect more easily. Innovation and new technologies are, of course, extremely important. But what matters most of all for a business is the quality of its people and the strength of the relationships between those people."

In 2012 TAQA secured the 23rd, 24th and 25th floors of a high-rise on Abu Dhabi's Al Maryah Island. To make sure they understood mindsets and readiness for change, TAQA's leadership team started the project by consulting extensively with employees. It quickly became clear that the issue of privacy was an important design consideration. Many employees said that a loss of privacy—be it space or the ability to work comfortably on confidential documents and sensitive client issues—would not be welcomed.

"Like many businesses in the Arabic world, our people had been used to a working environment where there were many private offices and a working environment that did little to encourage collaboration," says Khaled Hag, business development manager.

At first, it looked as though the project could become mired in compromises that would diminish the scope of what TAQA hoped to achieve.

"There was a lot of resistance," explains Ali Khouri, TAQA director of strategic co-ordination, who led the project team implementing the move to the new headquarters. "People in more senior positions had expected their own private office to reflect their position, but also they felt they could only work on confidential matters in such an environment."
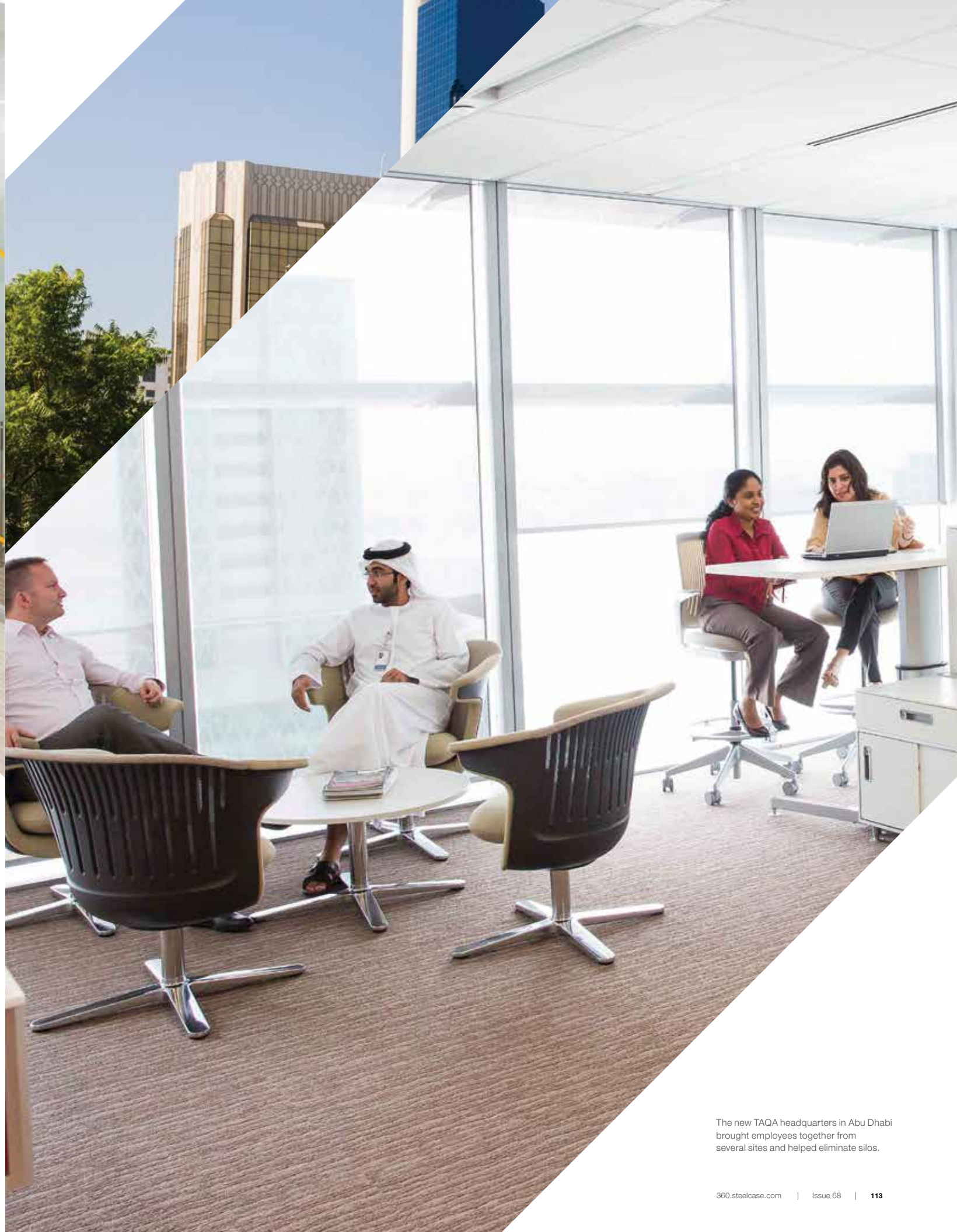
The new TAQA headquarters in Abu Dhabi brought employees together from several sites and helped eliminate silos.

The new space provides a blend of open workstations and shared environments for privacy. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer expansive views of the Gulf and old Abu Dhabi.

" We wanted to create a space that would reflect the diversity of our business and enable people to connect more easily."

Ifran Nadeem

Moreover, privacy concerns weren't limited to leaders. As the project team listened to employees, they realized there needed to be a balance for all employees—spaces that satisfied individual privacy needs and also spaces that supported collaboration.

TAQA began working with architects Pringle Brandon Perkins & Will and contractor EC Harris on the design of their new 5,543 square-meters headquarters. To gain insights into options, planners visited Steelcase facilities in Rosenheim, Germany, and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"We were presented with solutions, rather than items of furniture, and that made a huge difference to us," says Khouri. "It led us to being much more bold than we originally envisaged."

For example, he says, TAQA employees were concerned about the confidentiality of documents they printed in a shared environment. Showing them how a smart printing function works reassured that, although printers would be for communal use, they could still protect private documents.

It was also important for employees to know there would be spaces where they could make private calls and numerous meeting rooms in the client area for interaction with external visitors without disrupting activities in the office.

As TAQA's 250+ Abu Dhabi-based employees began moving into their new headquarters, trepidations began to evaporate.

"Some people took longer than others, but in general it was a very fast transformation. And some of the people who were most concerned about the lack of privacy were the most enthusiastic about our new home," says Khouri. "People grasped what it was all about."

The collaborative applications within the space proved an immediate success, and media:scape® settings were an obvious favorite. According to Khouri, media:scape "showed, probably more than anything, collaborative and effective working at its best." Since the move, a number of senior executives have asked to give up their private individual offices to work in the collaborative spaces.

The floor plan presents a seamless blend of open workstations and shared environments for privacy. Brightly colored furniture communicates informality and creativity, and glass partitions are decorated with graphics representing flowing waves of energy. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer expansive views of the Gulf and old Abu Dhabi, enhancing what is a dynamic yet serene office environment.

Client meetings take place on the 25th floor, which includes a boardroom, numerous meeting rooms, an auditorium and, of course, a *Majlis*, the company's place of welcome.

TAQA prides itself on the values that have propelled it on the global stage: pursuing excellence, safe and sustainable, stronger together, courageous and creative, and trusting and trusted. Their new headquarters reflect these values, and also empower employees to take them to the next level.

"People work in different ways, and we needed to give them different options," says Hag. "Those who had concerns about privacy found those fears were allayed as they became used to the new environment… I do not think there is anyone who would turn the clock back now to the way things were."

As with any culture change, it was extremely important that TAQA leadership was behind the project. With the support of leadership at the top, the project team successfully "grabbed the project by the horns," says Hag.

"Probably, the most gratifying aspect has been the response of our employees," he emphasizes. "An inspiring working environment has brought out the best in them, and they were re-nvigorated by the change." ○

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Business leaders work differently today. So should their workplaces.

Leaders are reinventing themselves. Global markets, long distance responsibilities and distributed teams are demanding new leadership workstyles, as well as new kinds of workplaces—places where performance and flexibility support leaders' needs for hardworking interactions and meaningful exchanges.

"Today's leaders spend less time alone in their office and more time interacting with team members," explains Patricia Kammer, a Steelcase WorkSpace Futures researcher who has explored the changing workstyles of business leaders.

"A private office is not only a refuge and a place for focused individual work. It's also a place where leaders need to make their thinking visible as they interact with colleagues in scheduled and spontaneous encounters.

"Many leaders are now highly mobile, leading widely distributed teams, so these interactions often take place outside the private office, and they're just as important as work that happens inside the office."

While high-performing leaders have learned to make almost any setting a temporary workplace, from airports to taxis, cafés and hotels, these compromised work sites vividly demonstrate the value of an office that actively supports new leader workstyles.

With greater design flexibility and technology integration, Steelcase's Elective Elements® has expanded to meet these diverse and demanding workstyles. Whether used in a private office or to support the growing trend of executives who choose to work in open plan, Elective Elements offers user-centered support for today's professionals, maximizing their ability to think creatively, interact productively and lead effectively.

For a close-up look at newly refined leadership workspaces, turn the page...

Through refined design and rich, warm materials, Elective Elements supports a mobile, global workstyle with areas for focused work and collaboration with colleagues.

Elective Elements seamlessly integrates
with the Steelcase product portfolio
to create spaces that actively support and
amplify the work of today's professionals.

Elective Elements offers user-centered
support for today's professionals,
maximizing their ability to think creatively,
interact productively and lead effectively.

Open, light-scale storage in a refined aesthetic exemplifies a product portfolio designed for high-performance spaces.
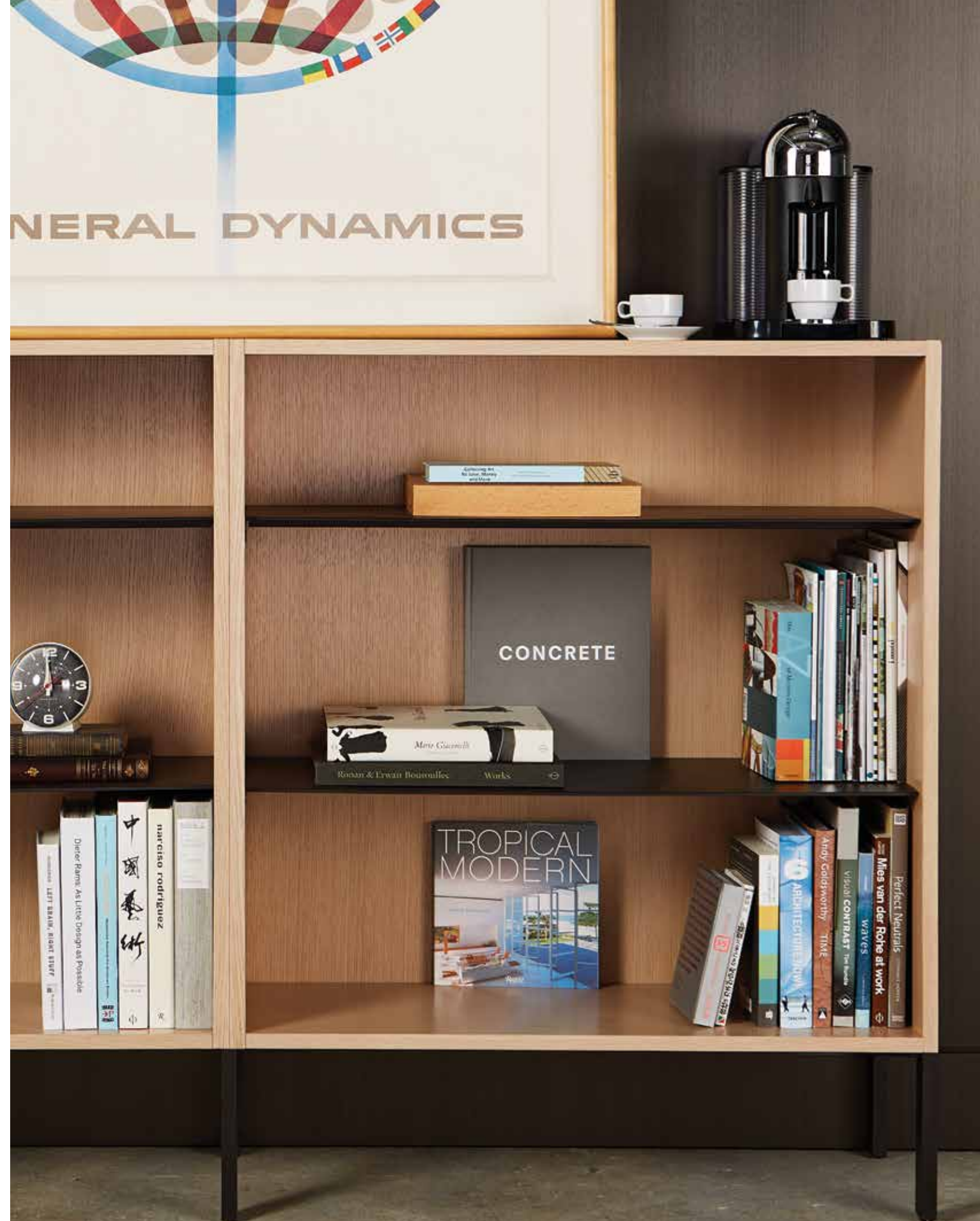
Management responsibilities transcend
the real estate of the private office. Elective
Elements creates high-performance
workspaces that optimize real estate across
the floorplan, from dedicated offices
to collaboration areas and the open plan.

Wide-ranging options in material choices,
including veneers, glass, metal finishes
and elegant fabrics, reflect the culture and
brand of the organization.

RAL DYNAMICS

CONCRETE

TROPICAL MODERN

ELECTIVE ELEMENTS®

Elective Elements is a freestanding office system designed to address the changing workspace requirements in today's private and open-plan environments. Through a blend of rich materials and refined design, Elective Elements expresses the image of an organization while creating spaces that invite and inspire.

Light-scale aesthetics enhance small spaces and thoughtful details graciously host workers, allowing them to be productive, collaborate and create. Elective Elements is designed to seamlessly integrate with the Steelcase portfolio of solutions, enhancing collaboration when paired with media:scape and privacy when used with V.I.A. architectural walls.
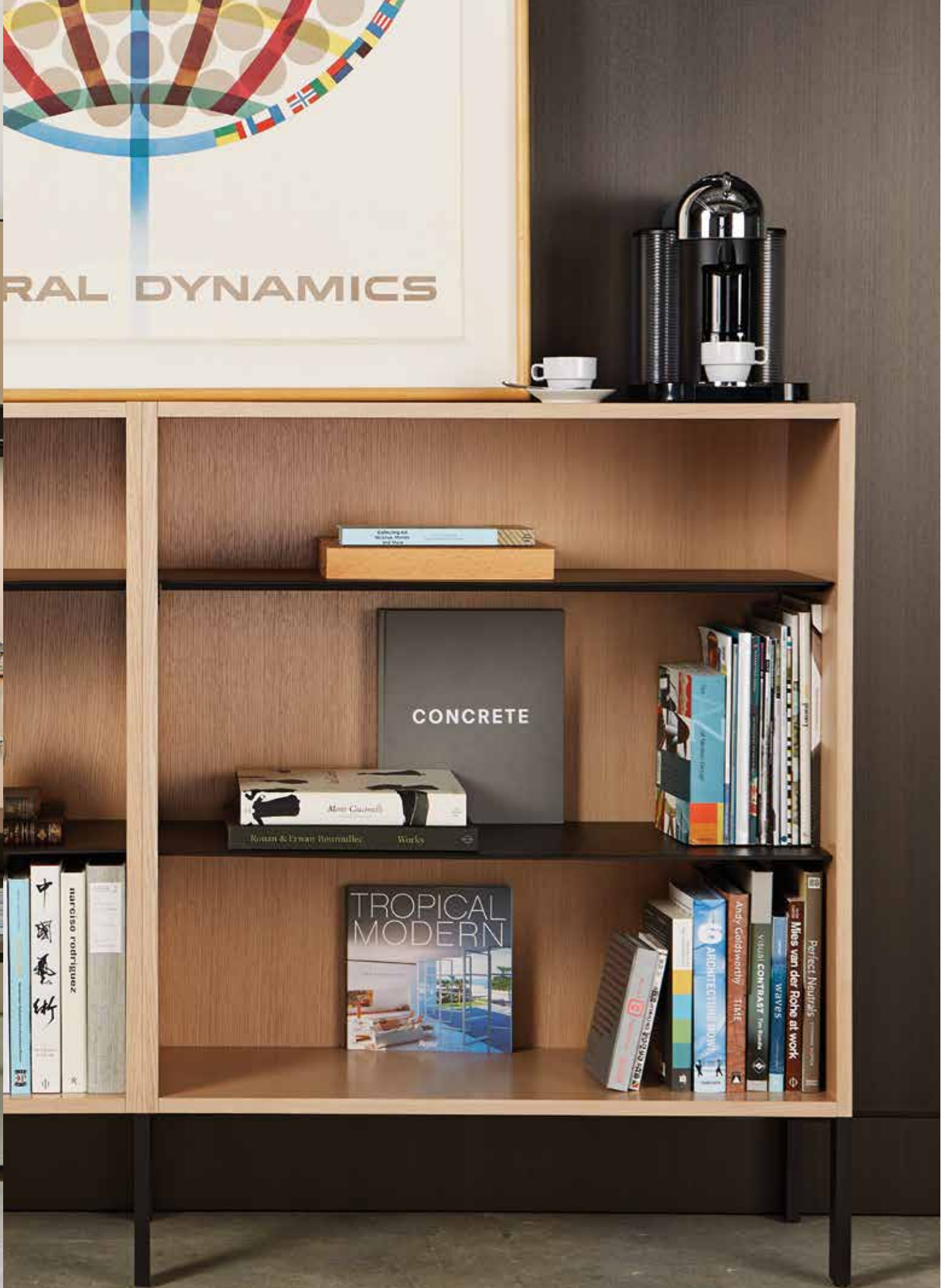
V.I.A.™
VERTICAL. INTELLIGENT.
ARCHITECTURE.

A collaboration between Claudio Bellini and the Steelcase Design Studio, V.I.A. not only defines space, but redefines the role vertical real estate plays in today's workplace. V.I.A. augments human interaction by providing true acoustical privacy and hosting technology. It provides a sense of permanence with the speed and design flexibility of a relocatable wall, allowing the creation of a range of applications.

ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE

V.I.A. creates a new benchmark around true acoustical privacy. Focused workspaces can be adjacent to dynamic collaborative team spaces without noise disturbance issues.

PLATFORM FOR THE FUTURE

V.I.A. not only allows you to realize your design vision today, but its embedded intelligence provides a platform for the future. With V.I.A. it's easy to make small changes or large changes, providing a sense of permanence with flexibility for evolving business needs and emerging technologies.

DESIGN FREEDOM

V.I.A. provides consistent and predictable visual detailing giving architects the freedom to express their vision using a broad range of materials and surface flexibility to create different spaces without having to compromise on vision or worry about the details. This includes dimensional consistency whether in the horizontal or vertical orientation and mitered edge detailing. V.I.A. is developed with EnvisionIT, the design software from Steelcase that enables parametric products to easily be planned and ordered.

PRECISION ENGINEERED

Precision engineering drives the consistent visual detailing of V.I.A. The intelligent precision frame and mechanical skin attachment brackets are designed to properly align skins—to minimize installation time and reduces dependency on the installer's skill level.

GESTURE™

Technology is the single greatest force driving the changes in the way we work, live and behave. The new, multiple devices we deploy throughout our work day allow us to flow between tasks fluidly and frequently. Gesture is the first chair designed to support our interactions with today's technologies. Inspired by the movement of the human body. Created for the way we work today.

THE CORE INTERFACE

Our body is a system of synchronized movement. Like the human body, Gesture's back and seat are connected and move as a synchronized system to create a tailored fit, moving with each user to provide continuous and persistent core support.

THE LIMB INTERFACE

Gesture's arm moves like the human arm, which helps people to get closer to their work and supports their arms and shoulders, no matter the device they are using and no matter the size of the individual. Gesture's arms are mounted behind the hip to support a wider range of postures and people, and also takes up a smaller footprint overall than traditional chairs.

THE SEAT INTERFACE

Gesture's seat uses Adaptive Bolstering (air channels in the foam) that responds differently to large and small users to provide consistent comfort for everyone.

The contoured seat distributes weight to make it comfortable longer. It is flexible at the perimeter to allow a range of postures without pinching or cutting off circulation. The seat depth control is responsive, and makes it easy to "fine-tune" so people are less likely to perch on the edge of their chairs.

THINK®

When Think was launched in 2004, it was embraced around the world as a breakthrough innovation. Now this multi-function chair has been completely redesigned from the casters up with new materials, new technologies and new performance capabilities, including a new intelligent Integrated Liveback System that conforms to users like never before. With even fewer parts for even simpler disassembly and recycling, it still has the familiar Think look completely repackaged as a higher-performing, sleeker and smarter chair.

NODE® MID-BACK

The Node mid-back chair is mobile and flexible. It's designed for active environments, preventing contact between the seat back and the wall.

With Node mid-back, a classroom can flex from a lecture-based mode to a team-based mode and back again, without interruption. It supports active and team-based learning, even in crowded spaces.

REGARD™

Regard was created to solve the challenges of today's waiting places. A modular system that can be reconfigured in many ways for many applications, it provides the right blend of solutions for a broad array of needs. Regard can help improve people's healthcare journey and make every moment more meaningful.

While waiting, most people seek separation from strangers and closeness to family. Some like the stimulation of TV, while others prefer a quieter setting to focus on a task or read. To ensure meaningful uses of time, healthcare waiting spaces must be designed for many people and many preferences—a range of settings for a range of needs.

QIVI®

People don't just sit in meetings. They interact, brainstorm and create. QiVi, an intelligently designed collaborative chair, encourages movement, supports multiple postures and provides comfort for extended periods of time—fostering collaboration in a variety of settings.

QiVi is designed with a pivoting backrest and gliding seat that allow automatic adjustments in posture or position, keeping workers focused and maximizing performance during collaboration.
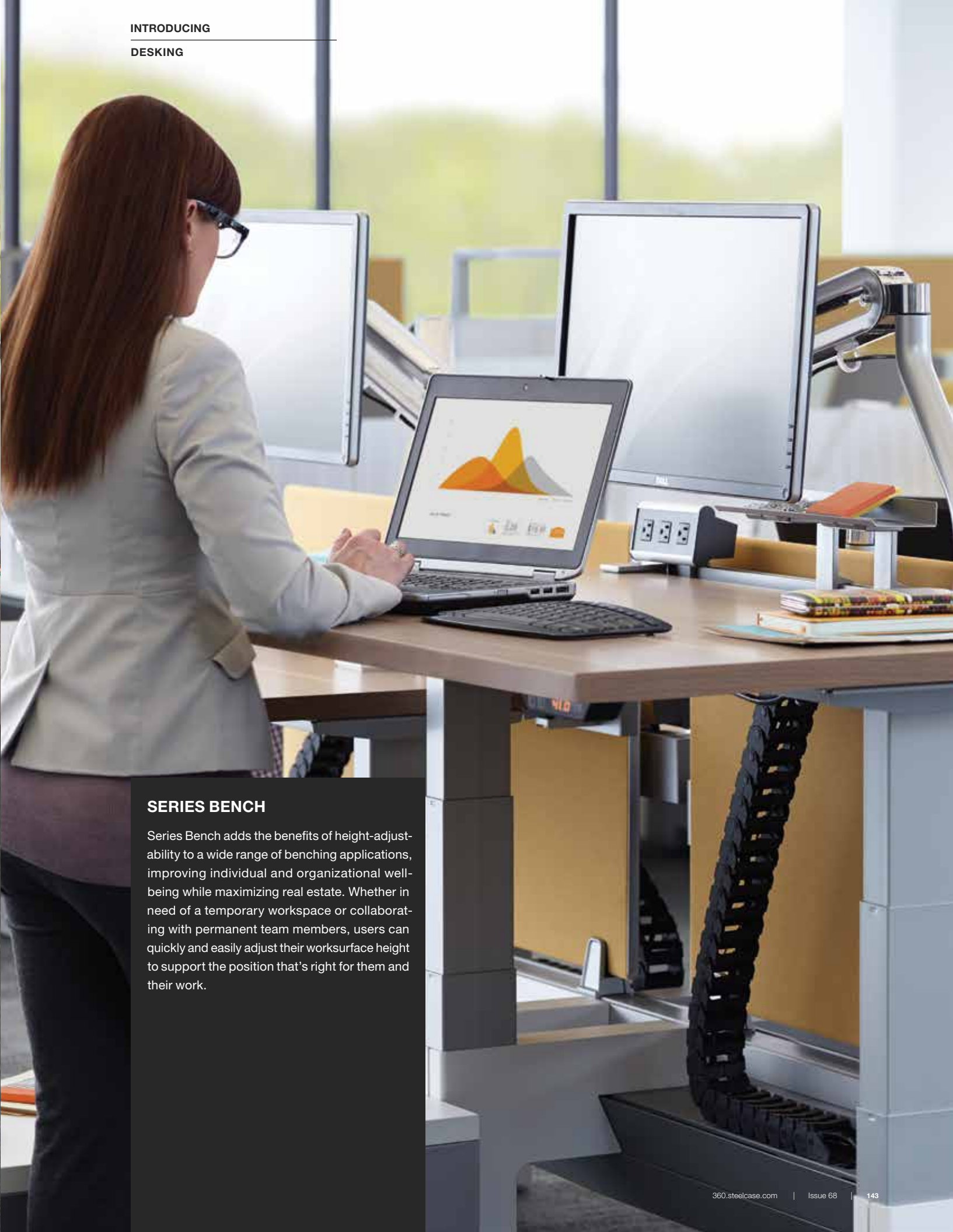
SERIES BENCH

Series Bench adds the benefits of height-adjustability to a wide range of benching applications, improving individual and organizational well-being while maximizing real estate. Whether in need of a temporary workspace or collaborating with permanent team members, users can quickly and easily adjust their worksurface height to support the position that's right for them and their work.

MEDIA:SCAPE®
TEAMSTUDIO

media:scape TeamStudio amplifies the conditions for innovation by augmenting the quality and quantity of interactions in the places where teams come together to work. Local and distributed teams can engage using analog and digital tools in a seamless, easy and equal way. The result is a destination that fosters trust, facilitates collaboration and speeds innovation.

TeamStudio is a comprehensive application for active project teams that considers social dynamics for both the near side and far side video participants, working equally as well when the camera is on or off. It's perfect for hosting a large team brainstorming session and can just as easily support small breakout sessions.

MEDIA:SCAPE®
KIOSK™

media:scape kiosk is optimized for the ways collaboration happens today. Embedded media:scape technology lets participants easily share their information with others. Integrated lighting and audio controls help participants "see-and-be-seen" while also "hearing-and-being-heard." Camera angles capture the participants while minimizing the surrounding area. The result is an improved user experience that increases focus and the level of engagement, in a highly efficient footprint that optimizes real estate.

MEDIA:SCAPE®
VIRTUAL PUCK™

Virtual PUCK allows any meeting participant to share content from their personal laptop or tablet, maintaining media:scape's simple "open, connect, share" experience. Virtual PUCK elevates content seamlessly, without the use of a physical PUCK. Meeting participants can easily share information anywhere in the room, with the simple click of an icon on the desktop.

ROOMWIZARD® II

RoomWizard II is a room scheduling system that solves the dilemma of connecting workers to meeting spaces. It provides a solution that manages open and closed collaborative spaces far more effectively than first-come-first-served. RoomWizard II now offers Corning's Antimicrobial Gorilla Glass, which inhibits the growth of algae, mold, mildew, fungi and bacteria because of its built-in antimicrobial property, which is intrinsic to the glass and effective for the lifetime of the device.

TAGWIZARD™

TagWizard is a free-address scheduling system that makes space easy to find, reserve and measure. Mobile workers can "tag" a space on demand, from their computer or mobile device.

Unlike other scheduling systems, TagWizard allows instant check-in with the swipe of a badge or the touch of a finger; it collects information about utilization and wellbeing factors using an analytics package; and it provides IT managers the tools they need to efficiently deploy, manage, support and update the system.

USB RECEPTACLE

The USB receptacle provides users with an enhanced option for accessing power at convenient connection points, supporting the evolving technology needs of workers and workplaces. The new receptacle seamlessly integrates with Answer, Montage, FrameOne, c:scape, Privacy Wall and V.I.A.

Texel & Impera

Texel and Imperma, new additions to the Steelcase High Performance Collection join the current Steelcase standards—Chainmail and Stand In. Texel and Imperma are solution dyed nylons created for their high performing capabilities as well as their timeless pattern and color ways. Attributes to aide in the high performance story are bleach cleanability, effortless maintenance and a high volume of abrasion resistance. These fabrics are ideal for areas such as healthcare environments and spaces for mobile workers where cleanability is vital for everyday use.

Tensile

Tensile also joins our other high-performance textiles within the Steelcase Upholstery Collection. Tensile is the epitomy of beauty and function. This new material is composed of a PVC-free polyurethane with a unique embossing detail. This fabric is also bleach cleanable, easily maintained and constructed for a high abrasion resistance. The Tensile color offering provides a diverse range of creative choice—all while caring for the environment.

Gabriel

New to the Select Surfaces offering, Gabriel textiles allow designers to employ beautifully crafted, high-end materials without sacrificing environmental responsibility. A perfect pairing with Steelcase, Gabriel's commitment to quality, social responsibility and global design allows us to extend our design choice to customers around the world.

REDEEM & RETRIEVE

Redeem and Retrieve are the newest members of the Steelcase seating upholstery offering. We've taken the process of recycling textiles even farther. The collaboration of efforts in the manufacturing process, implemented by Designtex last year, is the first of its kind in the office furniture industry. The process utilizes a system that begins with scrap fabric originating from a Steelcase manufacturing facility. This fabric is recycled into yarn that is then woven into new textiles—Redeem and Retrieve. Beautiful and sustainable, Redeem and Retrieve are not only created from recycled content, but designed and manufactured for future recycling.

Kvadrat

Joining the Select Surfaces offering is a collection of fabrics from Kvadrat. The colorful yet simplistic designs of Kvadrat push the aesthetic, technological and artistic boundaries of the growing textile industry. As a result of their innovations, Kvadrat has become Europe's leading manufacturer of high-quality, contemporary textiles and textile-related products. Exciting collaborations are behind all Kvadrat textiles—where the world's leading designers, architects and artists work together to turn idea into reality for many of the most highly acclaimed architectural developments. By partnering with best-in-class suppliers, Steelcase makes it simple to use beautifully curated offerings from around the globe. The company's distinguished design heritage allows customers to choose from a wide selection of skillfully made finishes that appeal to an international audience.

Composite Veneer

We're expanding your material choices by offering select composite veneer finishes. The composites are engineered wood that creates the consistent grain patterns and characteristics of wood. Intuitive to order, these industry-leading composite finishes are available with no CUSTOMIZ up charge.

Back Painted Glass

We've enhanced our back painted glass offering by expanding the color choices and product availability. A unique variety of color options allow you to create a beautiful, seamless aesthetic for V.I.A. and Elective Elements.

DESIGNTEX + CHARLEY HARPER

Designtex + Charley Harper explores how vivid color and vibrant imagery can contribute to better healing outcomes in a healthcare environment, and enhanced wellbeing in any environment. A number of the styles have been specifically developed to meet the performance standards of the healthcare industry, although they are also suitable for use anywhere a co-ordinated collection of distinctive surfaces is required.

Charley Harper Collection: Birch Bark Plaid

In Charley's painting of Birch Bark and Birds from 2005, the patterning of birch bark is abstracted into a geometric design of white, black, gray and orange-brown blocks of color. In Birch Bark Plaid, Charley's abstracted birch bark pattern is manipulated to recall the traditional plaid motif. The twelve colorways for this woven upholstery range from the naturalistic tones of Charley's original painting of the birch, to complex palettes that are familiar from Charley's other works. Available in 12 colorways.

Charley Harper Collection: The Last Aphid

Charley not only loved the ladybug, he made her the center of much of his work in prints, paintings and sculptures through the years. The Last Aphid woven upholstery returns to this motif, depicting four ladybugs poised to devour a coveted aphid. In Charley's work, nature is revered but never blandly romanticized: Even the beautiful, graceful ladybug must become an effective predator to survive.

Charley Harper Collection: Leaves

The perfectly shaped foliage of Leaves originally appeared in the background of one of Charley's paintings of the cardinal, Redbirds and Redbuds, published in his 1980 book To the Skies. In this printed coated upholstery, the leaves are drawn in an overall pattern of circles and diagonal lines on a vibrant, single-color background, showcasing Charley's fascination with the natural world. Available in fourteen colorways with Cleangene+Silicone™ top coat system providing high-level stain resistance and bleach-cleanability suitable for healthcare settings.

Origami Collection

The Origami Collection is inspired by the art of traditional Japanese paper folding. This innovative textile, which won the prestigious Red Dot Design Award for Best of the Best 2013, can be used either as a panel fabric or a drapery. When installed as a drapery, the fabric's regular angled surfaces are engineered to provide acoustic absorption. The unique production and finishing process used to create these fabrics results in a three-dimensional textile with striking structural qualities, accentuated by the play of light and shadow.

Designtex + Wallace Sewell

The Designtex + Wallace Sewell collection is a collaboration with the Wallace Sewell partnership, formed in 1990 by UK-based textile designers and expert weavers Emma Sewell and Harriet Wallace-Jones. Featuring Wallace Sewell's characteristic bold geometric patterns and sophisticated color work, these four luxurious upholsteries in lambswool are perfect for corporate and residential settings. The large-scale designs of stripes, grids, and oversized weaves find inspiration in the highly disciplined color explorations of Anni Albers as well as the urban landscape of Wallace Sewell's working environment in London.

Henrik and Inga

The latest release in our Premiere Collection introduces two digitally printed upholsteries: Henrik and Inga. These striking, Scandinavian-inspired patterns are both available at two different scales and in two distinctive colorways—one a kaleidoscope of bright, bold hues and one a blend of muted cool and warm grays. These styles utilize a PVC-alternative non-woven substrate, underscoring Designtex's commitment to promoting sustainability in its digital printing processes. In the coming months, these same patterns will also be available as standard-line products on two of our most popular woven upholstery fabrics, Gamut and Rocket. In addition, the large-scale version of Henrik will be available as a wallcovering on DNA substrate.

◀ Charley Harper Collection: Beguiled by the Wild

In Charley's 1994 artwork Beguiled by the Wild, a bevy of beasts, bugs, fish, fowl and foliage is artfully arranged like the interlocking pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, all sketched in clean black lines against a single-color background. Maintaining a similar spirit, the Beguiled by the Wild printed coated upholstery employs traditional printing techniques to depict Charley's menagerie in crisp linework against a range of vivid background colors. Available in 14 colorways, with Cleangene+Silicone™ top coat system providing high-level stain resistance and bleach-cleanability suitable for healthcare settings.
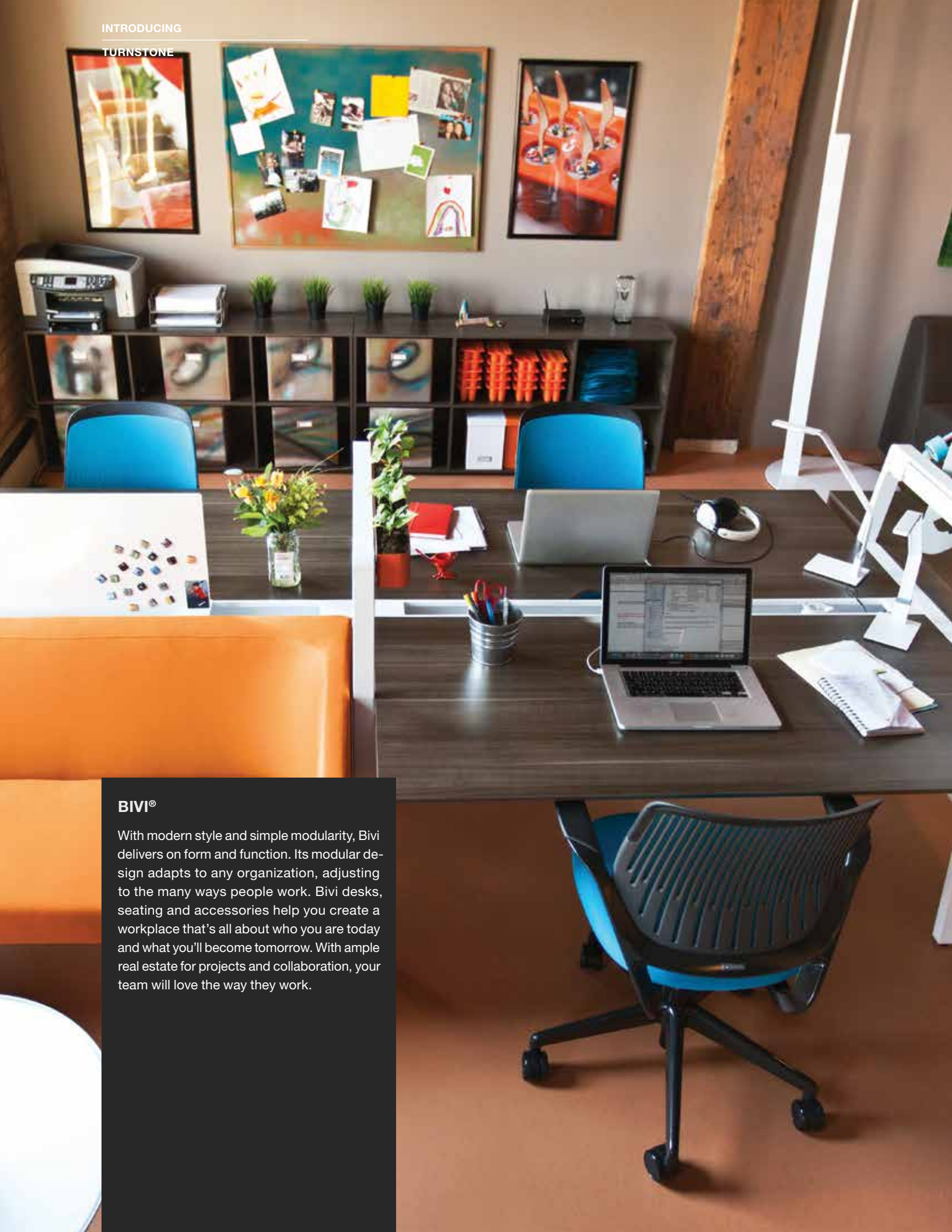
BIVI®

With modern style and simple modularity, Bivi delivers on form and function. Its modular design adapts to any organization, adjusting to the many ways people work. Bivi desks, seating and accessories help you create a workplace that's all about who you are today and what you'll become tomorrow. With ample real estate for projects and collaboration, your team will love the way they work.

BUOY™

Research shows that even small movements throughout the day can add up to big benefits. That's why turnstone® created Buoy. Designed with wellbeing in mind, Buoy lets you spin, rock, wobble and tilt—keeping bodies active and minds sharp. So feel free to pull up a seat. Or lean in. Buoy is a seat that's as active as you are.

<5_MY
SEATING
MICHAEL YOUNG—GREAT BRITAIN

The <5_MY chair is an ultra premium, light-weight (under 5 lbs.), highly customizable stacking side chair, constructed entirely of carbon fiber. It exhibits extraordinary crafts-manship tailored for an experience that is anything but ordinary. For use indoors or out, the carbon fiber construction evokes a heightened design awareness. Combining a fine-tuned artistry and technical sensibility, the <5_MY chair is challenging the conventions of materiality and channeling the future of modern craft.

SIXFIVEZERO_CO
COLLECTION

The Sixfivezero_CO is a comprehensive wood side chair and café table collection that brings beauty and flexibility to any space. The collection is offered in a range of heights to accommodate a variety of postures. The chairs are lightweight and stackable and are available in a unique range of upholstery and finish options. Tables feature customizable finishes and are offered in a variety of shapes, allowing for personalization and the creation of inspiring environments in which to socialize, collaborate or relax.

MASSAUD™ CONFERENCE
COLLECTION
JEAN-MARIE MASSAUD—FRANCE

Work environments seek to support conferencing, collaborating and personal work and express company culture and brand through comfort and aesthetic. The Massaud Conference collection is a remedy to the corporate office. The conference collection is an offer in luxury. High design, attention to detail and excellent craft, in addition to lasting comfort and several adjustment features, compliment home and office environments.

LAGUNITAS™
COLLECTION
TOAN NGUYEN—FRANCE

From the conventional to the casual, Lagunitas adapts to changing workstyles and shifting work postures. A comprehensive seating and table collection, Lagunitas creates a "third place" anywhere while offering multi-modal support and varying degrees of privacy through high and low panels. The unique articulating back cushion allows for toggling between lean forward and lean back postures. The 44 pieces within the collection allow for endless configurations and the seating and tables both offer power.