**ie**
insightful environments

# ATTRACT & RETAIN THROUGH WORKPLACE DESIGN +

How to shape and furnish your working environments
for an engaged, creative and dynamic workforce

# INTRODUCTION +

Workplace design impacts directly your ability to attract the brightest people and retain your most valued team members. It is key to achieving a diverse and dynamic mix of talent within your organisation.

## TIME FOR A CHANGE?

With every passing generation, workplaces have been changed and adapted to reflect the needs and interests of employers.

From the production lines of the early factory system, which optimised for repetitive physical activity and the unvaried focus of its operators; to the open plan offices of the 1990s which prioritised an unremitting watchfulness and enforced accountability.

More recently, design thinking shifted towards understanding the needs of the workers themselves should finally take precedence.

Then Covid happened. After two years of working from home, workers now have a better idea of what they need and want from their working environment. And they are calling the shots.

Workers are asking for more flexibility in their working arrangements, more wellbeing support, and (sometimes) more money.

Employers, worried about filling empty positions and the expense and disruption of a 'great resignation', are responding to these needs.

## ATTRACT, ENGAGE AND RETAIN THROUGH OFFICE DESIGN

Workers today are demanding a better working experience than pre-Covid.

And with hybrid working here to stay, employers need to create workspaces that people want to come to.

Offices are now loaded with expectation. Are there comfortable spaces to work? Can they flex with worker needs? Are there spaces for socialising, connecting and collaborating, as well as heads-down work?

By advocating eco-systems of interconnected spaces where people have choice and control over where and how they work, this new way of thinking prioritises worker's wellbeing and engagement to make businesses more creative and productive.

**Workplace design** can give you the competitive edge by optimising for agility, innovation and employee wellbeing - the key to an organisational culture that naturally attracts and retains the most talented people.

# ATTRACT & RECRUIT +

## In today's job market the competition for talent has never been more fierce.

Despite so many people out of work as global unemployment rates remain higher than pre-pandemic levels, employers are struggling to fill positions.

**87%** of UK employers say they are struggling to fill roles with the right people. This is not surprising given official figures show job vacancies have hit a record high of over one million.

The talent scarcity is particularly acute in STEM disciplines where skills shortages are reportedly costing businesses £1.5bn per year in temporary staffing, recruitment and training costs.

It is a candidate-driven job market. And job seekers' wishlists are becoming more extensive and exacting as a result.

### YOU ARE ALWAYS ON MY MIND

The modern workplace is a constant presence for us, even in the era of hybrid working where it's rare to spend five days a week in the office.

From images shared through social media, employer review sites, sales and marketing collateral, to the different types of work environments we see represented on TV and film.

Real or unreal, we're constantly exposed to - and fascinated by - visions of perfect and imperfect working environments. We use them to measure our own experiences of the workplace and set our expectations about what we want from future employers.

We use them to research and visualise the kind of working lives that we could have if we just made the leap.

Working from home during Covid also gave us a chance to realise what we need from the working environment to feel good and do our best work.
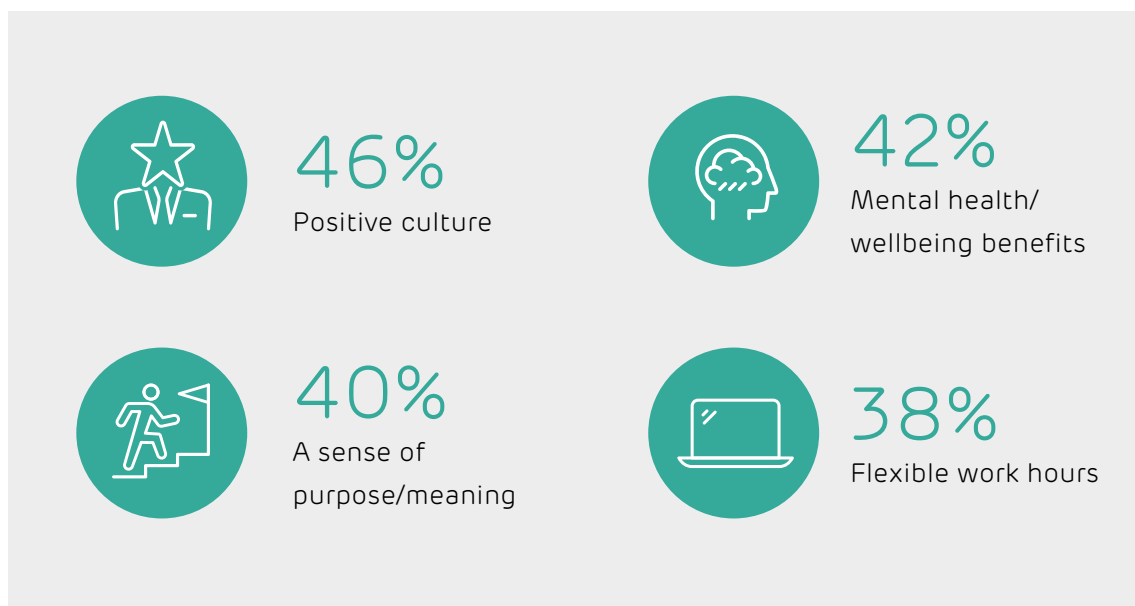
One thing is certain. There is now a sophisticated understanding among the wider population about the choices available to modern workers in terms of office environments and working culture.

And if they are aware of what their options are, or could be, they can definitely see how their existing workplaces are failing them.

## MORE THAN MONEY

The objectives of job search have shifted away from remuneration and towards working practices, employee focus, organisational culture and, of course, working environment.

The research backs this up. The **2022 Work Trend Index** found that, beyond pay, the top five aspects of work that employees view as "very important" for an employer to provide are:

**46%**
Positive culture

**42%**
Mental health/ wellbeing benefits

**40%**
A sense of purpose/meaning

**38%**
Flexible work hours

In another **study by Gallup**, greater work life balance, better personal wellbeing, and the ability to do what they do best were amongst the top factors people consider when deciding whether or not to take a job with an organisation.

In building the talented and diverse teams of tomorrow, focusing on the quality of the work experience you can offer is paramount.

## THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

Sustainability is also becoming a major factor in workers' decisions to join, stay or go.

**Research by Unily** shows workers are deeply concerned about environmental issues such as climate change and want to work for companies that speak to these values.

Regardless of age, it seems there is a new understanding and commitment to environmental goals across the workforce:

- 83% of workers said their company was 'not doing enough' to fight climate change
- 65% said they were more likely to work for a company with a strong environmental policy
- 64% said they would definitely or possibly turn down a job offer from a company with a bad environmental record

Even so, the younger generation were still leading the pack in terms of their commitment to the cause:

- 64% of millennials said they definitely wouldn't take a job at a company that wasn't socially responsible
- 75% said that they'd take a smaller salary to work at a company with environmentally responsible policies

Besides wanting to work for companies that share their values, there is also a belief that a sustainable employer is more likely to care for its employees, a desire for more meaningful work, and a realisation that such work will make them more satisfied and engaged.

Employers must find ways to appeal to today's existing and future workforce. A large part of this includes weaving sustainability into every level of the business, including the workspace, redesigning and retrofitting the office to meet the green expectations of the 21st century worker.

By designing working environments that are tailored to workers' needs but also conscious of your carbon footprint, you can attract the talent you want and need, as well as meet the evolving expectations of existing staff.

## DIVERSITY WORKS

**Research by Glassdoor** found 3 in 4 job seekers say a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers.

This means that whether or not your company is committed to investing in diversity and inclusion, most candidates are nevertheless evaluating it when they research a company and throughout the interview process.

They'll be looking for indications of diversity across the business. And they'll be eyeing up your workplace to decide if it's a place they can see themselves being comfortable and happy.

As employees increasingly demand more from the working environment to suit their preferences, organisations will need to put **inclusive design** at the forefront to keep up.

## WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

The choices you make about your work environments and the choices you offer to the people who work in them can be seen to reflect your whole organisation's shared priorities and objectives in a highly visceral way.

- What impression do your working environments create for those looking from the outside in?
- How are your workplaces being showcased and how are others sharing them online?
- How are the people who work with you talking about their own workplace experiences?
- What experience of your culture and work environments do candidates have when they arrive at your offices for their first interview?
- Does it reflect what they want and need from a future employer?
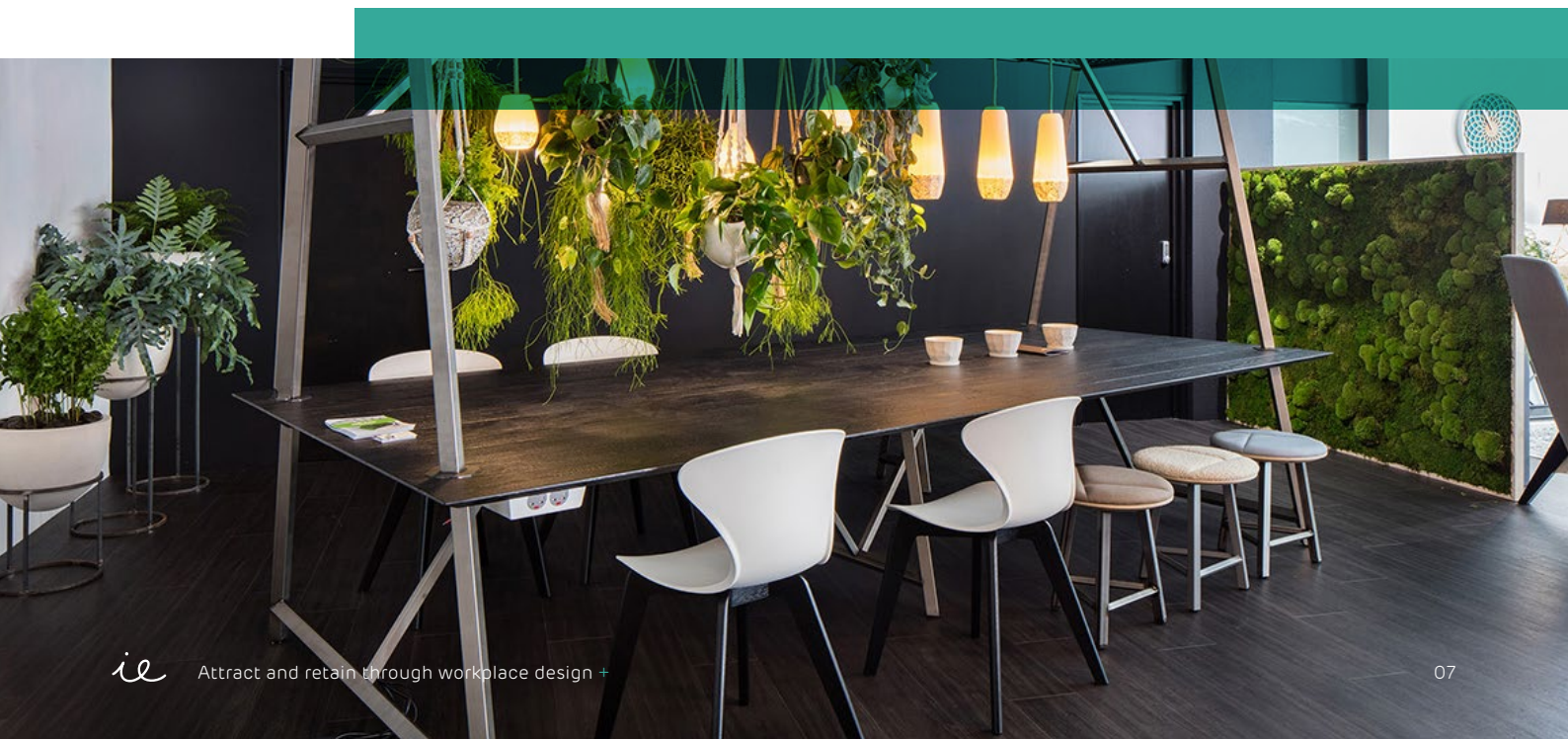
# ENGAGE AND RETAIN +

## If recruitment is proving a challenge in the current market, then so is retention.

Businesses lose their best people all the time. But in 2021, workers left their jobs at historic rates in a movement that has been dubbed 'The Great Resignation'. And it's far from over.

**41%** of workers are considering quitting or changing professions this year

**Microsoft**

Another **study** of workers in the UK and Ireland showed that 38% of those surveyed planned to quit in the next six months to a year.

The 2022 Work Trend Index shows how the collective experience of the past two years has left a lasting impact:

> *"The experience of the past two years has shaped our priorities, identities, and worldview, drawing a bright line between what's important - health, family, time, purpose - and what's not. As a result, employees' "worth it" equation - what people want from work and what they're willing to give in return - has changed. The power dynamic is shifting, and perks like free food and a corner office are no longer what people value most."*

It seems, employees' whose "worth it" equation tips the wrong way, are voting with their feet.

Ultimately, employees' decisions to stay or leave a business are largely based around the level of engagement they feel with their job and the organisation they work for.

## WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Engagement is the level of enthusiasm and dedication an employee feels toward his or her job; the passion and commitment they have for the role and the company they work for. It includes the extent to which they engage and identify with the company's culture, mission and values, as well as their desire to contribute to its current and future direction, productivity and success.

Engagement is a powerful influence - it sustains a positive work culture, promoting a self-sustaining atmosphere of wellbeing, creativity, productivity and growth.

Disengagement - is an equally powerful force, it sustains a negative work culture, kills creativity, destroys productivity, and tends to inertia.

## ENGAGEMENT DRIVES PRODUCTIVITY

While disengagement inhibits productivity, innovation, creativity and happiness, engagement can actively support these powerful qualities.

Deloitte has found successful employee engagement links directly with a whole slew of benefits which encompass profitability, levels of customer service, as well as recruitment and retention. And that's why it's becoming an area of intense focus for businesses:

> *"Culture and engagement is no longer an arcane topic owned by HR. It is now an imperative for every leader and every executive in the organization. Many studies now show that highly engaged companies can hire more easily, deliver stronger customer service, have the lowest turnover rates, and be more profitable over the long run."*
> *Deloitte*

## WHY THE ANSWER LIES IN THE WORKPLACE

**Steelcase research** showed employee engagement to be directly correlated with workplace satisfaction.

**37%** of the global workforce who are disengaged one of the main things they have in common is dissatisfaction with their working environment.

Maybe this shouldn't surprise us.

Physical work settings can obviously have a material effect on our ability to carry out certain tasks, and they can have an equally profound effect on mood and morale.

The research shows how every element of our work environment impacts the way we feel about the work we do, and the way we do that work.

In their study, nearly every measure of employee engagement can be correlated with a measure of satisfaction with their physical working environment.

**Further research** post-Covid shows the office still plays a crucial role in how people feel about their organisation.

When people like working from the office, they are more engaged, productive, connected to the culture, and likely to stay.

## FLEXIBILITY AND CONTROL IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT

Attitudes towards labour are completely transformed when more choice and control over the working environment is handed to people. Coming out of the pandemic after two years of working from home, the need for choice and control is all the more pertinent.

These elements of choice and control include:

- Individual freedom to select working locations within a building
- Choice of working postures (enabled by height adjustable desks and other features)
- Ability to choose the kind of office furniture that suits our ergonomic needs

The more employees feel a sense of independence in these areas, the more engaged and satisfied they feel, and the more they are able to fulfil certain tasks.

- 88% of highly engaged and satisfied employees report they can choose where they work in the office depending on the task at hand
- 88% of highly engaged workers said they could concentrate more easily
- 94% said they could work in teams without being disrupted

This, in turn, drives our optimism and enthusiasm about the organisations we work in. And is key to our level of commitment and, crucially, our intent to remain:

- 96% of highly engaged workers felt their job gave them a sense of personal achievement
- 97% felt happy to go to work
- 93% were optimistic about their future within the company

## MEANING AND PURPOSE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

The need to belong is hardwired into our DNA.

Coming back to a workplace designed with community in mind can help galvanise worker engagement and improve retention.

Steelcase research revealed the top two reasons people want to be in the office are to connect with colleagues and feel a shared sense of purpose with the organisation.

Employers are realising the more they provide spaces that help build that sense of meaning and purpose, the more likely they are to retain the most engaged and motivated people.

## WHY YOUR WORKPLACE REALLY NEEDS TO CHANGE

Perfecting the right workplace design is more than window dressing, it enables the right conditions for innovation, creativity and wellbeing to flourish.

It enables a culture that attracts and retains talent. Employers who have created environments where engagement thrives have done so by simply recognising the needs of everyone who works within it.

The office needs to be designed with enough flexibility to support every employee and every task. Collaboration areas, quiet spaces and touch-down locations will ensure everyone can be productive, connected and engaged.

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORKPLACE +

In the industrial past, work was about perfecting repetitive tasks, making human beings the servants of machinery, honing precise actions and behaviours to achieve standardised outcomes.

But the experiences and outcomes we expect from a modern working environment are the exact opposite of those of the factory production line.

Our working lives now require multitasking, original thought, adaptive strategies and activity-based working to be successful.

## AN ECOSYSTEM OF SPACES

The modern office is not a production line. It doesn't need to support the execution of just one unvarying task at a single workstation. Instead, it must support an ever-changing array of cognitive, creative and collaborative tasks.

To achieve this, office design must prioritise physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. Companies should provide an **ecosystem of spaces** within which employees can control:

- Where and how they work.
- The physical arrangement of their working environment.
- Acoustics, posture and physical presence in the workspace.
- Transitions from individual to team working scenarios.
- Levels of connectedness with colleagues and technology.

If we achieve all this it can help us all work collectively and independently, for longer and with better results.

And businesses can create a thriving culture which actively engages and **retains the best talent**.

# ENGAGE & RETAIN THROUGH GREATER WELLBEING +

**The demands made on individuals can be great. Leaders need to be mindful of the support they give to their staff and the way their physical environment can impact on their levels of engagement and their overall health.**

## HOW THE OFFICE MADE US SICK

The **open plan office** revolution changed nothing. The same desks and chairs were transplanted from smaller offices into larger offices.

Our bodies and minds remained restricted and siloed, tied to work stations and, often, a single posture for hours on end.

Open plan made us less in control of heating, lighting and ambient noise, it took away our privacy and, often, made us feel terrible.

No wonder **Danish scientists** found that those working in open plan offices took 62% more sick days than those working in fully enclosed offices, while **Swedish researchers** found those moving to an open plan working environment thought 'their health deteriorated' as a result.

## WELLBEING IS A HOLISTIC CHALLENGE

But while poor quality working environments can contribute to physical sickness, wellbeing is a holistic challenge, too.

It entails supporting the cognitive and emotional needs of workers as a whole to get the best out of them as individuals and teams.

Successful organisations support their employees with a holistic approach to mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

When employees have the best place to do their work, it helps them to be more efficient, less stressed, and more satisfied with their job.

Leaders need to be mindful of the support they give to their staff and the way their physical environment can impact on their levels of engagement and their overall health.

## THE HIERARCHY OF OFFICE NEEDS

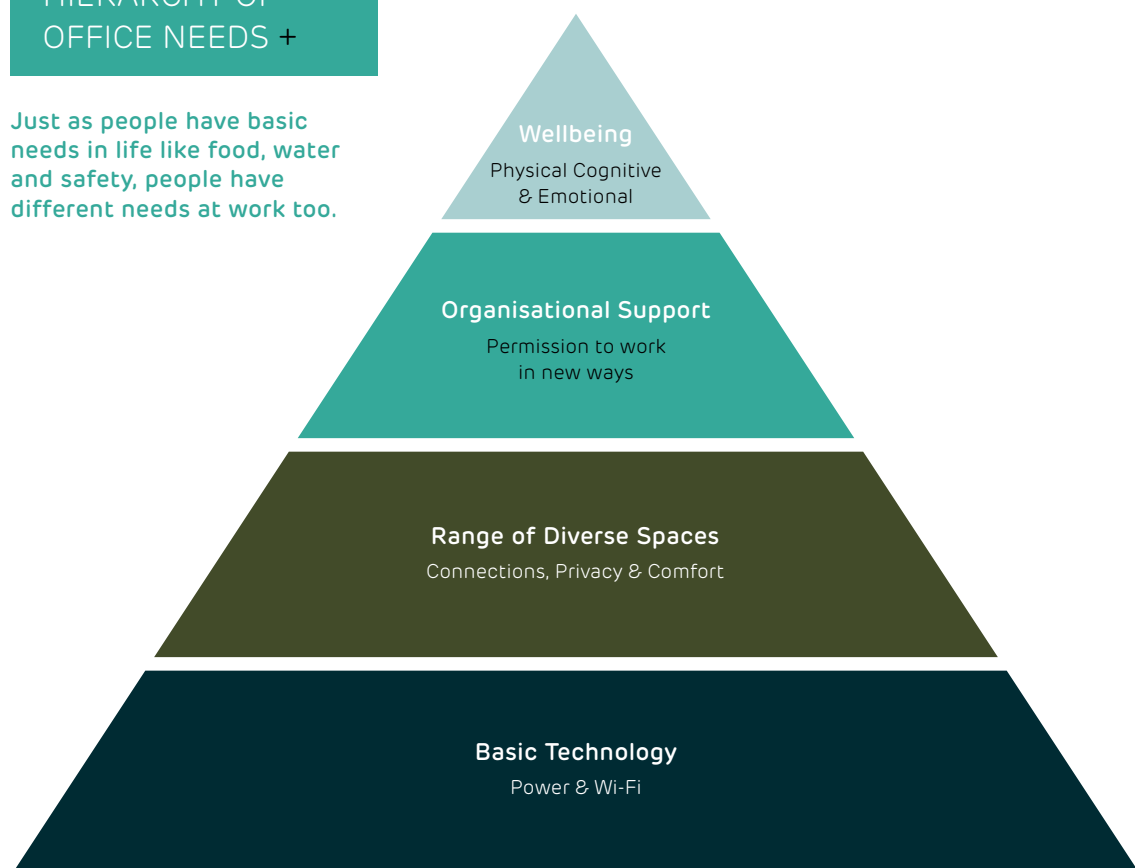Employers need to find a workplace design that synthesises support for cultural and material wellbeing.

The Hierarchy of Office Needs suggests the apex of success for a business is creating a healthy, sustaining and enriching work life while supporting the right work/life balance for their people.

> *"The most important thing executives can do is send a very clear message to their employees that they care about each person's overall wellbeing and they want to be a part of helping it improve over time."*
>
> Tom Rath

### HIERARCHY OF OFFICE NEEDS +

Just as people have basic needs in life like food, water and safety, people have different needs at work too.

**Wellbeing**
Physical Cognitive & Emotional

**Organisational Support**
Permission to work in new ways

**Range of Diverse Spaces**
Connections, Privacy & Comfort

**Basic Technology**
Power & Wi-Fi

*Source: Steelcase, What Workers Want*

## THREE WAYS THE WORKPLACE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO WELLBEING

In an ecosystem of spaces, workers can be free to find the working environment that suits them best for each task they are required to perform.

Teams and individuals are encouraged to function in a way which they find most comfortable and rewarding.

### 1    Posture: better ergonomics

The workplace should **encourage regular movement** throughout the day and offer options for people to work in sitting, standing or lounging postures.

Collaborative seating should support postures such as reclining and perching. People should have options – sometimes they will want to huddle around a table and other times sit in a more casual setting.

In large meeting rooms, space should support both standing and sitting to encourage movement during lengthy discussions.

Today's workforce is diverse in age, gender, size, neurodiversity and physical capabilities. Whether they are using a dedicated workstation or hot desking, workers need the furniture and tools available to fit their requirements quickly and easily.

People are more likely to be active, change posture and use different work locations when they know they can easily adapt the space to fit their needs.

No one has time to learn complicated chair adjustments, so their mechanisms should work simply and intuitively. Seating should fit the widest possible range of users and adjust to their needs easily.

Adjustable height desks, moveable monitor arms, and easy access to power and work tools all help fit workspaces to users.

## 2.  Presence: facilitating a culture of flexible working

With more people prioritising flexibility in their job hunt and employment decisions, our offices must be designed to facilitate hybrid work.

Spaces should enable quality interactions for mixed presence teams. Workers not physically present in the workspace, should not feel alienated or at a disadvantage because of it.

Video conferencing facilities should be set up to properly include those not physically present, all participants should be visible and audible at all times. Digital tools like virtual whiteboards will make co-creation more effective. While acoustic screens and barriers create privacy within the open plan.

Technology needs to play a key part in supporting workers at home too - making remote working effortless, easing anxiety about detachment from the wider team and supporting full engagement.

## 3.  Privacy: focus and rejuvenation

The work environment should provide places that offer varying ways to achieve privacy. In both open and enclosed spaces.

Privacy is important to all workers and a vital component of both focus and rejuvenation which are essential to employee engagement.

These might include relaxation rooms with soft chairs, day beds and access to daylight or terraces.

No-tech zones can also be areas where employees can escape from the relentless buzz of phones and laptops to regain their focus.

Improved employee wellbeing reduces sickness and absenteeism. It helps people feel more equipped to work, more productive, creative and innovative and less likely to burn out or depart for a competitor.

# FOUR WAYS TO ENGAGE & RETAIN THROUGH WORKPLACE DESIGN +

## 1. Design for more effective teamwork - hyper collaboration and agile working

In the past, teams typically worked in linear ways. Projects were planned, teams met, tasks were allocated, completed, approved and handed off. When problems arose they were reported and escalated for resolution.

But with the rise of 'Agile' in the workplace all this changed.

Led by the demands of a growth-driven global economy and a slew of disruptive technologies, companies are searching for a competitive edge through more iterative teamwork, innovation and greater customer focus.

This is an era of hyper-collaboration, where breakthroughs are made through cross-functional cooperation, intense collective thought and more interactive development processes.

### WHAT IS AGILE WORKING?

Agile is a method of working pioneered in software development as a way of managing complex projects in a highly responsive way. Agile is defined by the shape and rhythms of its various 'rituals' and working practices that foreground collaboration and accountability. Agile is intended to make teams more productive, innovative and customer-centric.
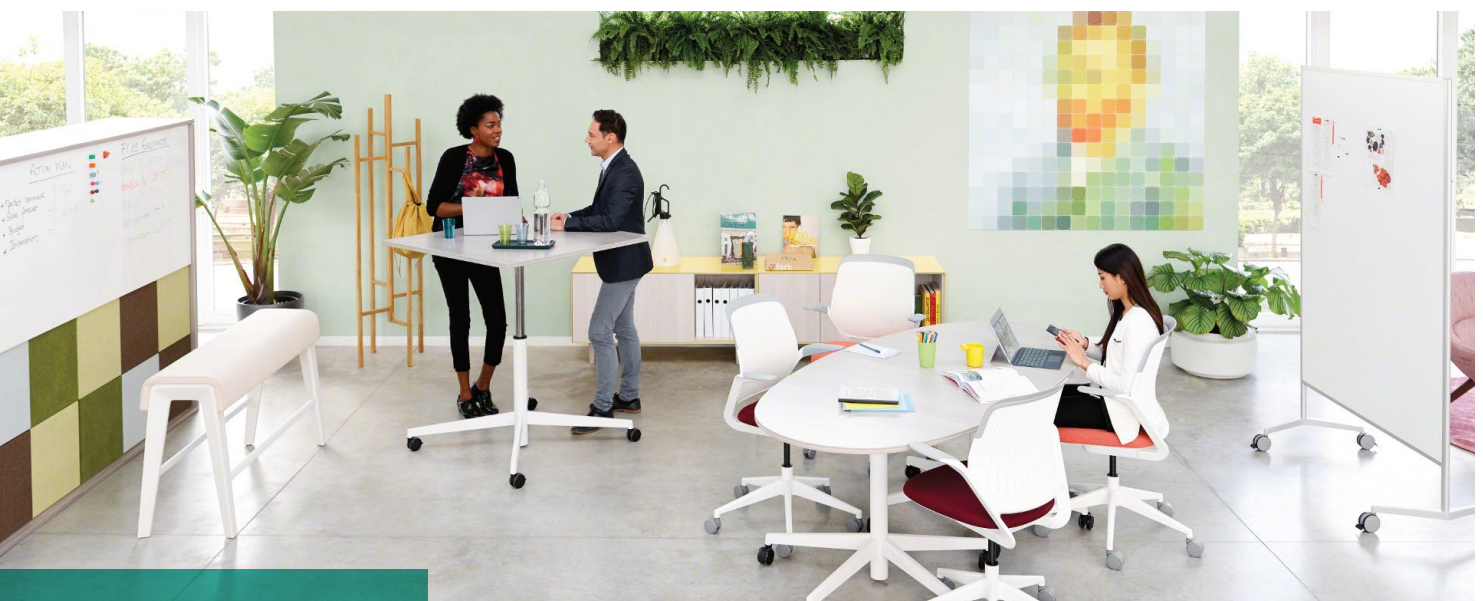
## WHAT IS 'AGILE INSPIRED' WORKING?

Thanks to its success in delivering greater innovation in software, 'Agile inspired' working has been adopted by other business functions beyond development.

And we see its influence operating in many different teams, companies and sectors - in the daily standups, group planning and cross-functional collaboration that happen every day in countless organisations around the world.

**80%** of companies surveyed by the **Harvard Business Review** stated that they had adopted agile working practices in at least some parts of their organisation.

'Agile inspired' working presents unique opportunities for businesses. It encourages teams to:

- Work in an iterative fashion through interactive planning, daily stand up and constant review - making teams more creative, responsive and accountable
- Develop better solutions by closer and constant collaboration between individuals and clients
- Help teams spot problems and quickly change direction if customer or market needs change

But for workers to thoroughly engage with this kind of Agile thinking they need a radically different setting from the traditional 'fixed' office space.

## ADAPTING TO THE AGILE CHALLENGE

These kinds of working methods demand truly flexible workspaces if they are not to undermine their objectives of increasing efficiency and maintaining collaborative momentum. Agile demands:

- The right balance of spaces for team and individual work
- The opportunity to meet, collaborate, 'break out' and reform fluidly and easily
- Stand up locations need to be close enough to individual workstations, so that flow and concentration is not lost or broken
- Workstations need to be capable of shutting out noise or distraction when required
- Teams need quiet spaces where individuals can retreat for inspiration and deep thought
- The team need spaces where groups can relax together
- Building better and more engaged teams through user-centred office design

When Steelcase observed modern design teams at work they described ways of working that were highly 'agile'.

They described a never-ending exchange of ideas and information, peer-to-peer learning and greater connection with customers.

Teams were working in rapid cycles of iteration, tasks were interdependent and their projects fluid.

At times, there was clearly a great need for teams to work together on benches or desks, so they could build cohesion and work faster on particular parts of a project.

But individuals also needed time to retreat from the group to absorb information and process their own ideas.

At other times there was a need to create spaces where people could meet, 'sit, stand, draw on boards, gesture, move materials and objects.'

There are many **flexible office furniture solutions** on the market that are directly addressing these kinds of agile requirements, and helping create seamless ebb and flow between individual work and teamwork.

## DESIGNING FOR AGILE TEAMS

Teams can roll together standing height tables to create one large work surface for a design thinking workshop. Screens can be used to hold images in place for consideration and discussion. And 'always on' video conferencing allows remote workers to join in.

Freestanding screens can also create separation from the team, allowing individuals to focus when they need to and attend to their personal needs.

## 2. Design for creativity

Creativity is a deeply valuable currency in the modern economy. It is the powerhouse for companies who need to differentiate themselves and their offerings in a crowded and hypercompetitive market place. **72% of people** at work today believe their future success depends on their ability to be creative.

The lesson from Agile is that every idea can evolve and be improved on, iterated and expanded when the right team works together to develop it and bring it to fruition.

In the modern workplace, creativity is productivity - it is a collective pursuit, but it is also strongly linked with a sense of personal and professional fulfilment.

So, how can you design your workspace to support creativity - and keep the people in your business engaged and contributing to its success and innovation in every way?

In the modern workplace, creativity is productivity - it is a collective pursuit, but it is also strongly linked with a sense of personal and professional fulfilment.

## THREE WAYS TO DESIGN FOR CREATIVITY

**Create environments that stimulate an emotional connection.**

- Use ambient and thoughtful design elements to inspire thinking and foster team culture.
- Build a welcoming environment and personal connection to space with authentic design elements, artefacts and materiality.
- Design for physical and emotional wellbeing through posture options that allow for comfortable proximity to other people and content sources. Keep sightlines to screens open and make eye to eye contact possible for colleagues.
- Consider the space's size, boundaries, materials and the direction of microphones and speakers for the best audio for both in-person and remote participants when collaborating in mixed presence teams.

**Nurture creative confidence**

- Provide co-creation tools, such as virtual whiteboards, that allow everyone including remote participants to contribute to and interact with content.
- Support the visibility and tangibility of ideas by using partitions and walls as postable, writing surfaces to guide the creative process.
- Enable both remote and co-located participants to move around the room - mobile furniture and displays will help.
- Enable privacy and control over the environment to provide a "safe haven" where new ideas can incubate.

**Build a fluid creative ecosystem**

- A variety of spaces should support individuals and teams as they cycle through the creative process, hosting moments of individual exploration, cognitive resting, social connection, co-creation and evaluation.
- Build an ecosystem with options so people can choose where and how to work. A range of spaces and devices is necessary to support the diverse stages of creative work.
- Scale the ecosystem with separate spaces or zones for specific individual, team and organisational needs.

# 3. Design for technology

Technology needs to facilitate, not interrupt or frustrate. It needs to be built sensitively into our working environment in order to help us work more seamlessly together.

Tech is a constant source of frustration and disengagement in the modern office.

According to Steelcase, team meetings frequently start with malfunctioning technology or some difficulty related to sound or sightlines for the people present.

Remote teammates often struggle to fully participate because of poor office design - including acoustics or even the position or field of vision of the webcam.

In the crucial collaborative processes of design and development, the limitations of older, existing technology are also glaringly apparent.

Workers huddling around desks with small screens cannot always stand back and review creative options on a screen, or easily 'take over' a device to make edits or add detail.

Rooms where technology is used also need considerable thought in their design and furnishing to support the best results for teams.

Researchers found that particularly soft and low slung chairs discouraged team members from standing and interacting with digital whiteboards or screens.

Badly designed or poorly placed desks could present physical barriers to interaction with shared technology.

## DESIGN FOR A BETTER
## EXPERIENCE OF TECHNOLOGY

Provide seamless connectivity between spaces to support the flow of information and experience from tools-to-tool and space-to-space.

This means using cloud-based platforms for individual and team tools - helping content move with people as they transition between zones.

Where mobile technology facilitates flexible working both inside and outside the workplace - employees find themselves able to concentrate and collaborate better and more seamlessly. Individuals and teams thrive as they work together in a variety of settings, some joining from the office and others remotely.

**To create the best possible hybrid work experience, offer a range of spaces and technology solutions to easily support diverse types of collaboration**

## BRAIDING THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL

As more companies transition to hybrid work, people will be collaborating with a blend of in-person and remote teams more than ever before.

To create the best possible hybrid work experience, offer a range of spaces and technology solutions to easily support diverse types of collaboration - from a planned creative session to an impromptu one-on-one and everything in between.

<u>Steelcase research</u> reveals three insights for supporting better hybrid collaboration using diverse technology and high-performing spaces:

- Strive for equity and inclusion despite location - e.g. develop more intentional shared etiquette and protocols
- Design experiences across a range of settings that are human and engaging - e.g. arrange remote and local participants and digital and analog content to ensure equal participation.
- Design a variety of intuitive virtual and physical experiences that are easy to navigate - e.g. make sure all participants have clean sight lines to people and content.

It's these sorts of details that have to be a priority for organisations who are concerned about their ability to recruit and retain the right talent.

They need to meet employees expectations about the ease with which they can lever tech to help them work.

# 4. Design to support a diversity of talent and experience

Research shows organisations with diverse workforces are happier, more creative and more productive than those with a narrower demographic make up.

McKinsey says firms with inclusive cultures are 29% more profitable than their competitors - and have an enhanced ability to recruit and retain talent.

Inclusively designed workplaces allow for employers to attract and retain the right candidates for a position without having to consider barriers that exist within that environment.

Creating flexible working settings, where all workers can find a way and a place to work that suits them - is a way of respecting their differences and contribution, as well as reducing the potential for conflict and stress.

Different generations also have different needs when it comes to the workplace. Gen Xers say they favour working on their own and independently, while millenials are more team-oriented and can multitask more effectively in busy environments than their older colleagues.

For Gen Zers, the latest entrants into the workplace, their general engagement and understanding of previously specialist technical areas like coding, will likely require further integration of teams and physical forums for even deeper creative collaboration regardless of their job title.

Employers would also do well to consider how their sustainable credentials, their commitment to the circular economy and green office design will inform the decisions about where the next generation chooses to work.

## CHANGES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The creative, team-based and cognitive tasks demanded by modern business require highly flexible working conditions. Without them, it makes it much harder for people to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Businesses who fail to address inadequacies in their work environment, risk the growth of frustration and disillusionment.

They risk sapping the energy and ambition of their teams and could lose them altogether to competitors.

On the other hand, when you start removing mental and physical silos across the business, extraordinary things can start to happen.

# CONCLUSION +

## Businesses need to create flexible working environments that engage and inspire existing and future employees.

Companies need to allow creativity and innovation to flourish while meeting expectations of hybrid working and wellbeing.

A great physical workspace attracts the best by its promise of engagement through progressive ways of working, but it then delivers on those promises through thoughtful, 'human-centred design'.

Paying attention to the quality of the corporate environment will help create a workforce more able to achieve their personal and professional goals and more loyal as a result.

At the same time, they will share their positive experiences of work because they are healthier and happier.

They will stay longer and help your business prosper. They will be your best recruiters, as your organisation shares its success and cultural values with the outside world and the next generation of workers.
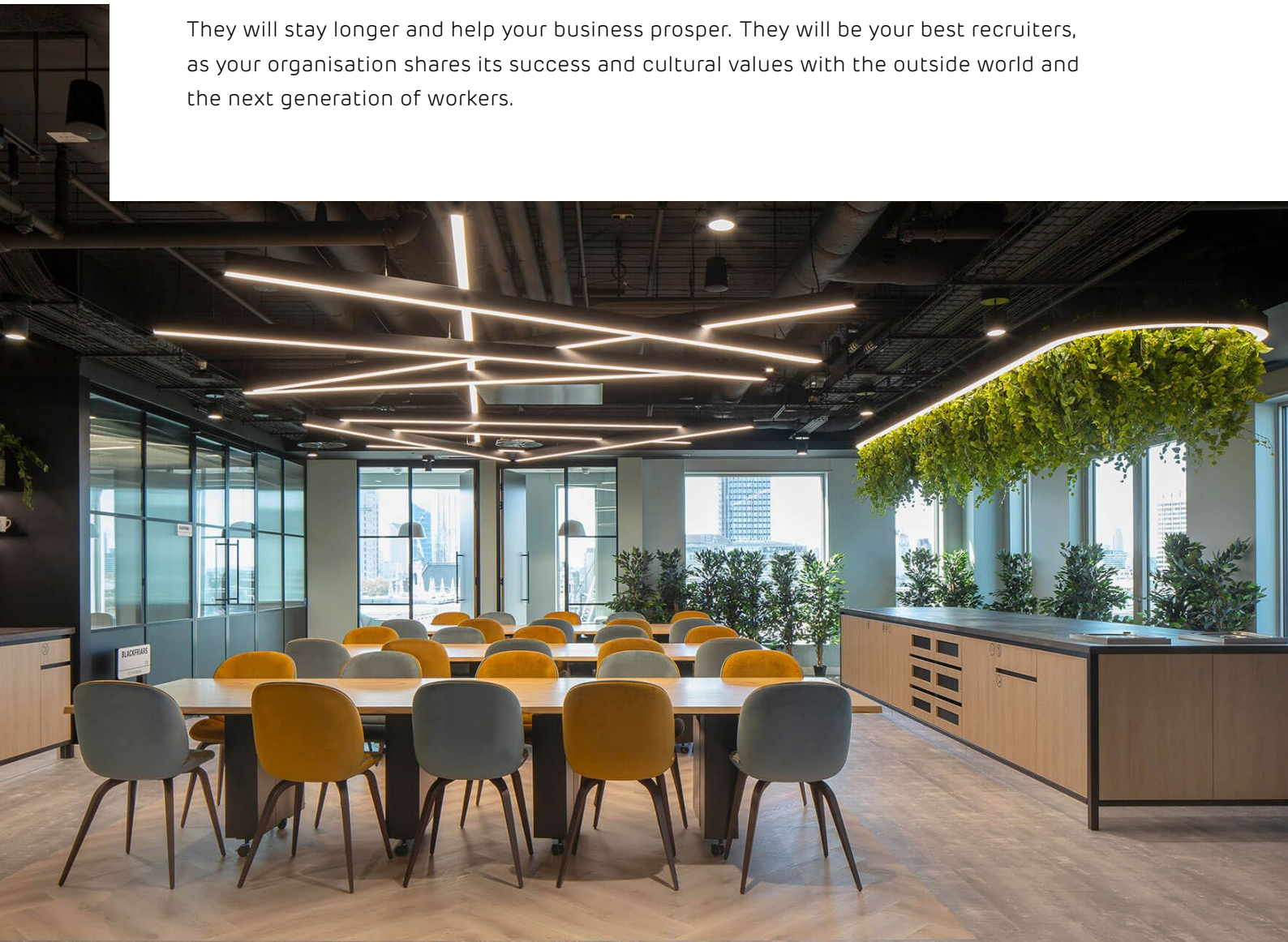
# HOW INSIGHTFUL ENVIRONMENTS CAN HELP +

**Choosing furniture solutions can be challenging, especially when the corporate world is going through a huge transformation and there are multiple agendas to take into account.**

This is where Insightful Environments can really help. Our multi-disciplined, creative team have been de-risking transformation projects for the last 20 years, helping a lot of great, forward-thinking organisations along the way.

We stay at the forefront of workspace design and insights, bringing together our deep knowledge of the UK market with Steelcase's global R&D prowess to deliver smarter, healthier and sustainable work experiences for our clients.

We can guide you through the procurement process, from strategy and design through to delivery, install and beyond. And you will have peace of mind that your project is on track to meet your requirements.

**Some of the services we can help with include:**

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

We listen carefully to understand your goals, challenges and priorities, and what your people need and how they like to work. We help you identify and address your current workplace challenges and prepare for the future.

## FURNITURE AUDITS

We will measure, track and assess your current furniture to see what assets still hold value and can be reused, refurbished, resold or donated, and what assets need to be recycled.

## ADAPT AND REUSE

Tired assets can be cleaned and refurbished or reinvented to look like new and serve different purposes. It's great for the environment and will save you money.

## DESIGN & SPECIFICATION

We apply our insights and ideas and shape your physical space through furniture and design to optimise the working experience for your people. We'll think of the details and consider all your options, from refurbish and reuse to sourcing the market for the best, sustainable furniture products.

## PILOTING & PROTOTYPING

We can work with you to explore different furniture solutions over time and value engineer the design to ensure you get the right solution.

## FURNITURE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION

Our extensive knowledge of the furniture market allows us to scour the market for the best products to meet your business goals while making sure they fit the needs of your users and the design aesthetics too. We have access to more than 300 suppliers, as well as a growing database of products graded by certification and carbon footprint.

## ONGOING SUPPORT

Our work doesn't stop after the project's delivered. We help you with physical moves, asset management and ongoing furniture maintenance. And when you have furniture you no longer need, we can buy it back, reuse it, or build something new out of it.

**Please contact us if we can help you achieve your goals on your next project.**

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insightful environments