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TAP
into

the workplace

BARCO

Redefining where we work

The workplace as we once knew it — the place where you go to work — has undergone a major upheaval in the last decade. What used to be floor upon floor of desk-bound workers complete with simple amenities, has been superseded with colourful creative spaces and bespoke furniture, designed around specific employee tasks — the physical building now set-out to foster collaboration or concentration at any time of the day.

Going places

Ten years ago, if you asked an employee to describe their workplace, they would recall a purpose-built structure at the end of their morning commute – a place where they would complete an honest day's work, leave, and go home. This is not the workplace of today. The structure may still remain, but the workplace is rapidly being redefined by an evolving workforce, digital technology and a seismic shift in the jobs that people are now tasked to do.

Computers changed the world

The personal computer – that means one for every employee – has arguably had the most profound effect on the workplace in the last 20 years. Internal mail envelopes have been replaced by email and our filing cabinets now live in the cloud. In fact, because much of the work we do can be done on computers – they have essentially become our workplace. And now, with most employees working on laptops and other mobile devices, our workplace is wherever we can find an internet signal.

Your desk has moved

Having collaboration devices that can follow us wherever we go has literally knocked down the walls of the workplace. Our desk can now sit in places that we wouldn't have thought possible – on trains, in airport lounges, sat in cabs, and yes, at home. This has added a new way to do business and also created a new type of employee – the mobile worker.

If employees have the flexibility to work remotely, they save money and time on commuting. At least some of that lost commuting time is likely to be invested back into work.

Joyce Maroney,
Director of the Workforce Institute at Kronos

Meeting places

Office meeting spaces, or conventional gathering places will still be important for business however. After all, humans are social animals. This means that seamless connectivity to physical meeting and huddle spaces within the workplace is imperative, to help facilitate real-time collaboration between remote and 'in situ' workers.

For that to happen, however, there will need to be a trade-off between agile working and company security protocols. Security solutions from major network providers are constantly being introduced, but work still has to be done to achieve the full potential of a distributed workforce while limiting the risks to company data.

The connected office

Unified communications technology will be key to developing the workplace of the future. If employees are to be comfortable working remotely, or from home, they must feel they can connect to the office without difficulty.

In the past few years, the evolution of cloud technology has opened the market for innovation. More companies are offering remote collaboration tools such as video conferencing, which are cheaper, flexible and easier to install.

The rise in productivity promised by new technology will come once we virtualize the workplace.

Demian Entrekin, Forbes Technology Council – The Rise Of The Truly Virtual Workplace.
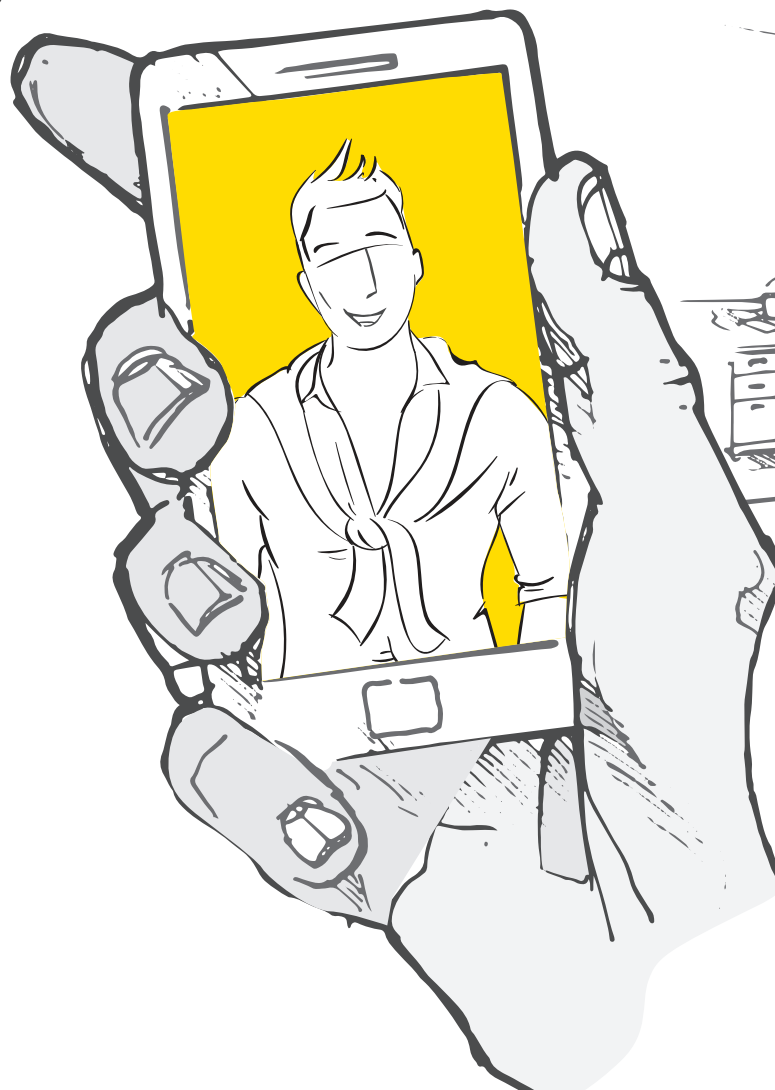
This is the next frontier,moving the brainstorming, ideation and design phases of work into a virtual space makes real, significant changes in the way we work."

Demian Entrekin of Forbes Technology Council.

What's on offer

Never before in business has there been such a broad cross-generational workforce – all with their own preferred ways of communicating and collaborating. Therefore, your workplace strategy and types of collaboration tools will be key for company-wide adoption. Workers will inevitably gravitate to what feels natural. More experienced workers may choose calling and conferencing, while millennials are known to prefer chat and messaging.

By 2020, younger employees are set to make up 50% of the workforce and they are the ones who will be eager to embrace new workplace communications technology, particularly as it supports the flexible 'always-on' remote working schedule they favor.

Always open

As the workforce adapts to become more agile and 'always on', so too must the workplace. Modern, purpose-built smart buildings that are open 24 hours a day, provide easy access to full-time staff and non-pay roll workers alike. For example, 'Gig' workers, who lead a 'digital nomadic' life, can drop-in and collaborate with project leads, face-to-face the night before a pressing deadline.

As Jim Link from the Forbes Human Resource Council says: *"Office concepts that easily incorporate agile workers — a more hotel-like setup where people come and go — are critical to creating short-term collaboration and inclusion needed for a successful engagement.*

Workers do more remotely, but require the office as a stable center for organization.

Study conducted by office design firm Knoll. 'The Workplace net.work'

Collaborate without constraints

Encouraging agile working practices while capturing collective knowledge is still a barrier to productivity for many organizations. This was summed up succinctly by the late Lew Platt, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard: "If only HP knew what HP knows, we'd be three times more productive."

Today's digital tools are addressing Platt's frustrations, helping workers to share knowledge without constraints and collaborate in new ways. Forward-thinking companies are enabling meetings to form easily and spontaneously with the introduction of 'huddle spaces'. These feature the latest collaboration tools to bring remote workers to the physical table. Huddle spaces deliver exactly what today's agile workforces seek; to co-create, ideate, problem-solve and quickly move on.

Digital meeting spaces should be about getting people to engage quicker and achieve business outcomes.

Lieven Bertier, Director GTM Strategy & Services, Barco, ISE Conference 2018

Set the scene *for* *productivity*

A smart workplace can also improve the impact an organization has on the environment and its people. Workspaces shouldn't feel like a compromise for employees who also work from the comfort of their home.

To that end, modern workplace strategies need to consider the 'mental space' – an environment that promotes wellbeing through careful consideration of features such as lighting, temperature and CO2 levels. Do not underestimate the positive effect a well-placed shrub or green 'living wall' can have on employee productivity.

The wider environment will also play a key part in attracting the best talent. According to the British architect Sir Norman Foster, "Young people will choose office buildings not just based on facilities and lifestyle, but also on their sustainability credentials." This responsible approach to workspace design can only be good for the environment and good for business.

Staff are 15% more productive when they've got control over their environment.

CFO Survey Europe Report

Make it *easy*

Workplaces that simply work, will be those where employers think of people first, then introduce the collaboration technology that empowers them.

While the implementation of that technology may not be easy, its experience for employees must be simple and intuitive to enable them to connect, share their thinking and speed up business outcomes.

The workplace, as we know it now, may change irrevocably, but it will remain a focal-point for the transient workforce, retaining its function as the cognitive headquarters of the business.

If you want knowledge workers to report to the office, balance sociability and quiet.

Virginia Postrel, Bloomberg Opinion Columnist – 'Remote Work Is Not About Avoiding the Commute.'

No need for headphones

Changes to the workplace and the way we work are happening at a dizzying pace as organizations try to keep pace with today's agile workforce. For many, open-plan offices haven't gone to plan as the sight of desks of workers wearing high-end headphones will contest. This may be the reason why many employees choose to work remotely, as they actually get more work done.

Finding a workplace strategy that meets your business needs may involve a little trial and error. A reduction of desks, as 'pods of people' give way to huddle spaces perhaps? Whatever you decide, consider a balance of collaboration and quiet.

Setting the scene for your workplace:

Involve all parties

It may not be that apparent, but to create a workplace for collaboration, you must first collaborate. Engage your C-suite so they understand your goals and get your workplace and innovation teams together to discuss your future vision.

tailor tech

Discuss the collaborative technology needed to facilitate a more fluid way of working. This may include apps for remote working to presentation technology that connects multiple devices in huddle spaces. Doing so helps avoid missed opportunities or inefficient use of space.

TAP into the Workplace

remote workers shouldn't feel remote

Adopt a knowledge-worker workplace that delivers a seamless user experience - one that encourages interaction and co-creation with other, more liquid locations outside your main office hub. While your employees may be widely distributed, they should be able to access your workplace, any time, from anywhere.

get a good signal

This may be obvious, but internet connectivity can be a major source of workplace inefficiency. If everyone decides to work from the office, will your connection cope?

welcome all-securely

Create lean, agile and secure spaces that allow autonomous or freelance workers to think and collaborate with full-time employees. Or even spaces where visiting clients can work, knowing that their corporate data is protected.

Work your workplace

Get feedback from your workforce. Find out if your existing workplace environment and collaboration technology works for your remote and local employees. Encourage suggestions from frequent users and adapt accordingly – a small change can make a big difference.

Tap into our reports on the other areas of business that are transforming the way we work – the Workforce, Workspace and Workstyle.

Download our full comprehensive report 'The Four Ws'

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Sources

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ENABLING BRIGHT OUTCOMES

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