



Research Report

How to Catalyze Your Workplace for Growth



Give Ideas Room to Grow

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Be an Efficiency Expert

How to use the space you have to create a seamless workflow. p 24

Create a Center of Attraction

How a connective and fulfilling workplace can help you attract top talent. p 36

Focus on Building Your Brand

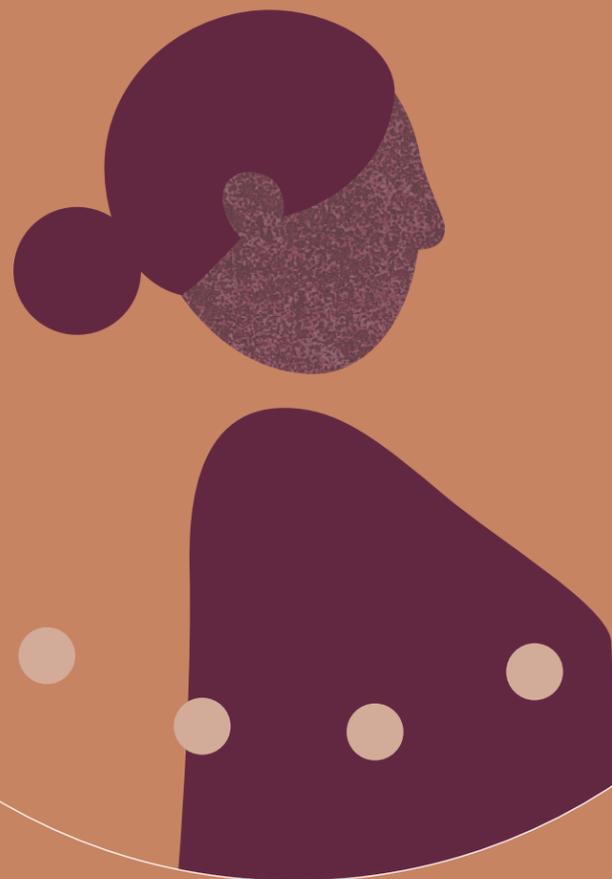
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HOW TO CATALYZE YOUR WORKPLACE FOR GROWTH

When research on your people and their work informs your office design, it becomes a powerful tool for organizational growth.



As workplace researcher Robert Propst observed in *A Facility Based on Change*, “Not only must we accept change, we must adjust to accelerated growth.” If your office doesn’t reflect who you are now and who you hope to become in the future, accelerated growth can feel especially painful. Whoever you are, you can’t escape change. But we think that workplaces can actually be catalysts for growth without all the growing pains. Whether you’re trying to spark innovative thinking or encourage people to work together more efficiently, you can reach your goals with a workplace tailored to your unique needs.

We’ve been capturing workplace data and transforming it into growth-enhancing insight since Propst began studying the connections between people, work, and the workplace nearly 50 years ago. This legacy of workplace research—in combination with the research we do today—informs Living Office®, a research-based placemaking approach that ignites powerful workplace transformations. With Living Office, we help you get to know your people, how they work, and what they need to feel fulfilled. We then map what we learn about your people to your organization’s purpose, character, business strategy, and goals to create a natural, intuitive workplace where people have everything they need to help your organization flourish.

Our Research

As part of our ongoing investigation into the connections between people, work, and the workplace, we conducted an experiment with 13 organizations around the world. To do this, we partnered with Leesman, a leading independent global benchmarking service. Our partnership allowed us to measure and validate our Living Office research by comparing it to Leesman’s data from over 340,000 people working in 2,649 offices in 69 countries—the largest collection of workplace effectiveness data in the world.

The aggregated data presented in this report reflects work we’ve completed with eight of the 13 organizations in our study. We are currently finalizing post-occupancy research for the remaining five organizations. Each of the organizations we studied ranged in size and location—from a small, Boston-based non-profit architectural office to a multi-billion-dollar professional services firm in the United Kingdom. Through Living Office, we helped the organizations’ design teams prioritize key work activities, map them to an intentional mix of settings, and fine-tune those settings to reflect their character and purpose.

Then we studied the office environments before and after the redesigns to understand how workplace changes fulfilled people’s needs, enabled their activities, and influenced everything from their ability to work productively to their perception of the organization. We surveyed employees and leaders, meticulously documented their spaces, and captured both quantitative and qualitative data on the performance of their workplace designs. This vast pool of research shows that when it comes to creating workplaces that are primed for organizational growth, only unique, personalized, research-based environments will do.

Our Methodology

8

Organizations

16

Research Methods

1,535

Survey Respondents

14,400,000

Total Data Points

Our Partners

Employee Tenure

- 0–3 years
- 3–12 years
- >12 years

Revenue

- \$ <\$10 million
- \$\$ >\$10 million
- \$\$\$ >\$1 billion

Age Range

- < 25–34
- 35–54
- 55+



Our Findings: Workplace Design

If you want people to have a natural, intuitive work experience, the design of the workplace needs to feel natural and intuitive as well. To understand the types of design interventions necessary for a better work experience, we assess four essential workplace qualities: Coherence, Identity, Attraction, and Convergence. Is the office easy to navigate? Does it reflect the unique personality of the organization? Does it engage the senses and intellect? Does it bring people together in meaningful ways? Answering yes to all of these questions is important. But if you want to move the dial forward on a particular business priority, you need to focus on specific workplace qualities. Want people to work together more efficiently? Convergence and Coherence are key. But if you are focused on recruiting new talent, Identity and Attraction are the levers you want to pull.

We also worked with organizations to explore how they can more efficiently allocate their square footage. Much of today's work is highly collaborative in nature and happens organically across the workplace. But many offices still give a lot of real estate to private offices and dedicated workstations. By shifting the allocation of space to diverse group settings and purposefully planned connective space, organizations typically see improvements in workflow. When people have more room to connect with one another, share ideas, and solve problems, they'll do it in ways both spontaneous and planned.



By understanding how and where people work together, we can help allocate your space to the right types of settings, right where people need them.

Workplace Qualities

The four qualities that combine to create better work experiences for people

Coherence



Identity



Attraction



Convergence



● Before ● After

Space Allocation

How space is distributed to support people's activities

● Before ● After

Ratio of Group Settings to Individual Workpoints

1:14

Before



1:6

After



Emerging Trend: 1:6

Number of Group Settings

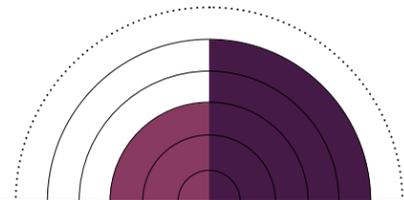
3

Before

5

After

Emerging Trend: 6



Amount of Connective Space

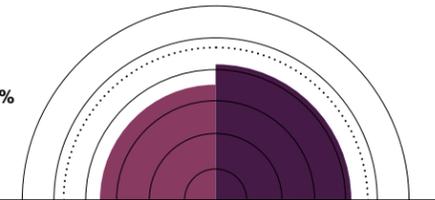
35%

Before

41%

After

Emerging Trend: 47%



Emerging trend numbers are based on Herman Miller's study of 120 floorplans from organizations in a variety of industries around the world.

Our Findings: Workplace Effectiveness

Our research shows that when you make design shifts to improve essential workplace qualities and space allocation, people take notice. Before and after each redesign, we asked people how well the workplace was enabling their daily work activities and if it was fulfilling their expectations for everything from productivity to a sense of community. Their answers tell us that workplaces designed through the Living Office lens lead to measurable improvements in how people perceive the overall effectiveness of their workplaces.

Work Activity Support

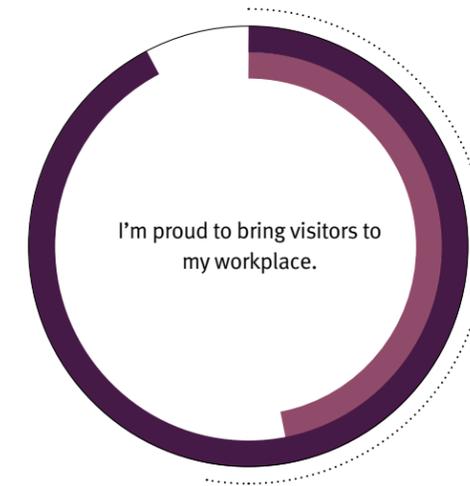
How well the workplace enables people's daily tasks

● Before ● After



Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



Before	After	Leesman Global Avg.
55%	83%	58.5%

Before	After	Leesman Global Avg.
50%	75%	59.1%

Before	After	Leesman Global Avg.
48%	91%	52.1%

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent, global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations

56 **76**
Before After

62.1
Global Benchmark

(out of 100)

Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.

Our Findings: Employee Engagement

According to Gallup's *State of the American Workplace 2017 Report*, organizations with employees who are engaged in their work have 17 percent higher productivity, 20 percent higher sales, and 21 percent higher profitability than those that don't. But despite the importance of engagement to an organization's success, 67 percent of workers in the United States say they are disengaged. Research with our Living Office partners is helping us understand how changes in workplace design can help people feel more engaged in their work.

Gallup State of the American Workplace Report Findings

1.7 ×

More engagement in workplaces that afford people privacy

1.5 ×

More engagement in workplaces where people can easily connect with others

1.3 ×

More engagement in workplaces where people can move freely between areas while working

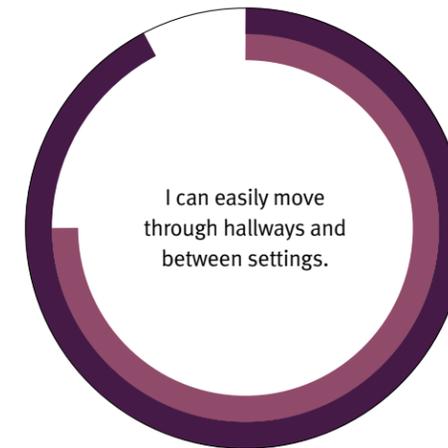
Our Employee Experience Survey Findings



Before	After
45%	63%



Before	After
64%	89%



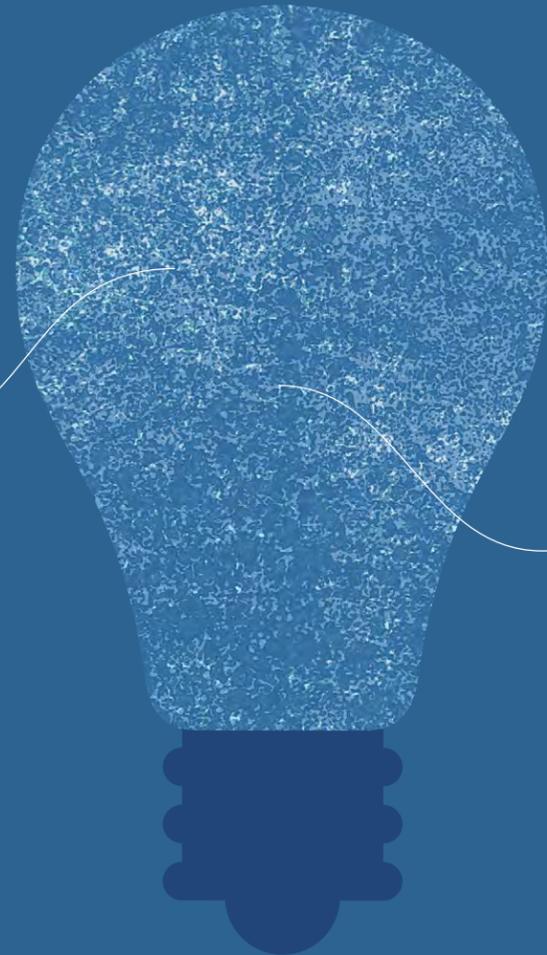
Before	After
75%	91%



If you want to help people feel more engaged in their work, give them a workplace that fosters connection.

GIVE IDEAS ROOM TO GROW

If you're in the market for an innovation boom, start by removing unintentional barriers between people and ideas.



Knowledge is powerful, but only when people can share it with one another. Many of the organizations we work with struggle to untangle information bottlenecks, often caused by the workplace. Limited, ill-equipped conference rooms, workstations with high partitions, and floorplans that inhibit circulation and spontaneous interaction can turn an office into a library where all the good books are kept under lock and key. By creating workplaces with settings and connective space designed for interactions both impromptu and planned, organizations can create environments where talent flourishes, problems get solved, and ideas transform into profitable solutions.

Create a Forum for Ideas

Look at any organization anywhere, and you'll find a unique set of factors that define how and why they share information. For [DPR Construction](#), a national firm based in Reston, Virginia, knowledge sharing is all about inter-generational idea transfer. The team's success is contingent on tenured staff coaching new recruits on DPR's innovative building methods.

"Part of what we need to do is grow the younger generation so they understand the intricacies of a build," says Randy Shumaker, a general superintendent for DPR. "They, in turn, share new ideas they've learned. This makes us a stronger team, which makes us a better company."

Although much of the DPR team's knowledge sharing happens informally—a quick huddle at the desk to solve a scheduling problem, a chance encounter in the café where a bit of advice gets relayed—they still needed a place for more formal education.

When we worked with SmithGroupJJR to create DPR's unique blend of settings, we gave the team plenty of space for knowledge transfer: small Meeting Spaces, Cove Settings nearby workstations for quick huddles, and quiet Haven Settings for private conversations. But to tackle their need to train large groups of people, we dedicated a portion of their floorplan to a Forum Setting. This spacious room is outfitted with digital displays and seating arranged so everyone can clearly see and hear. The furniture configurations are flexible, making it easy for people to have breakout sessions. Large doors open into a Plaza Setting, which includes plenty of connective space for circulation and a wine bar where people can mingle after class.

DPR's customized mix of informal and formal collaborative zones has boosted the team's already highly communicative culture. "We can bring in experts from around the company who interact with our employees," says Chris Gorthy, a project executive with DPR. "People are sharing stories and information and that knowledge transfer is helping us connect the dots and solve problems."



Work Activity Support

How well the workplace enables people's daily tasks

● Before ● After



Space Allocation

How space is distributed to support people's activities

Number of Group Settings Before the Move

3
Cove
Meeting Space
Landing

Number of Group Settings After the Move

6
Plaza
Meeting Space
Forum
Workshop
Landing
Cove

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent, global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations

58.7 **75.6**
Before After

62.1
Global Benchmark

(out of 100)

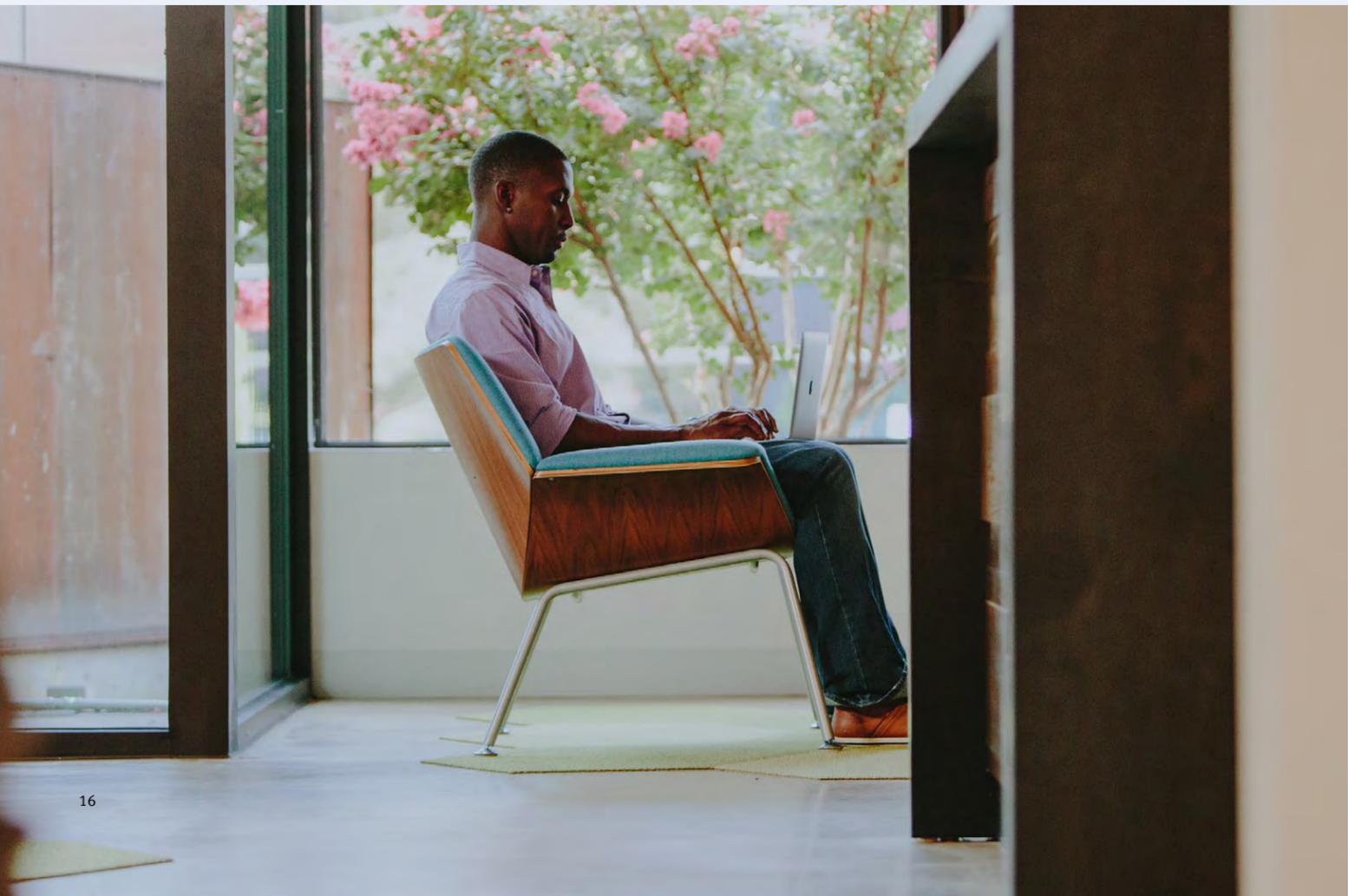
Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.



In this centrally located Plaza Setting, people enjoy the more social side of work. At ease with one another, people share their ideas and have the confidence to help others shape theirs.

“Herman Miller helped us think about the verb versus the noun of each space—thinking about what people do and designing the environment around that.”

Chris Gorthy
Project Executive, DPR



Contractors, site superintendents, and other people who are frequently out in the field now have a variety of settings where they can meet and give each other project updates.

“Part of what we need to do is grow the younger generation so they understand the intricacies of a build. They, in turn, share new ideas they’ve learned. This makes us a stronger team, which makes us a better company.”

Randy Shumaker
General Superintendent, DPR



The open, flexible layout of the new office makes it easy for people to take time out from their individual tasks to chat, ask questions, or share ideas.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people’s expectations



Before	After
18%	84%



Before	After
67%	95%



Before	After
60%	95%

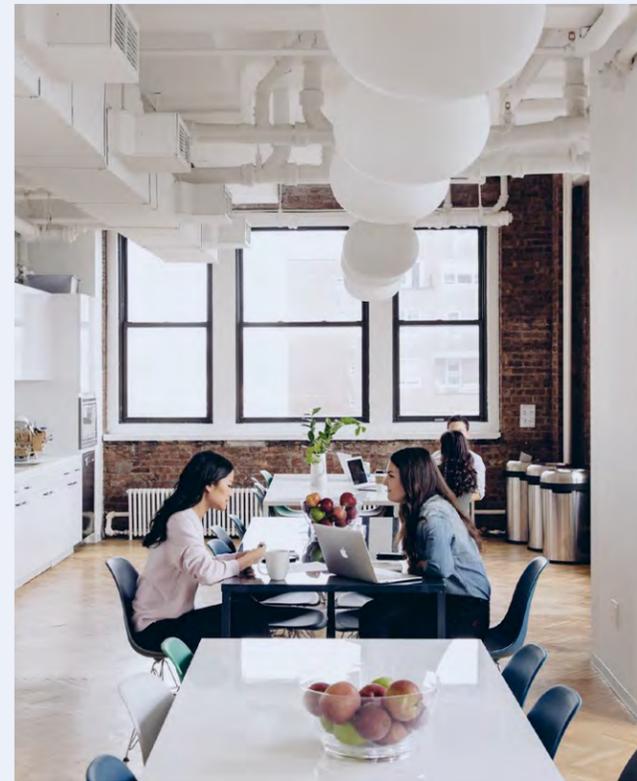


Before	After
55%	86%

Give Improvisation More Space

Settings aren't the only thing that can help people share ideas more readily. Many of the organizations we work with are starting to view necessary circulation spaces as desirable connective zones. To spur spontaneous interaction, organizations are carefully considering sightlines between settings and adjacencies between high-activity areas.

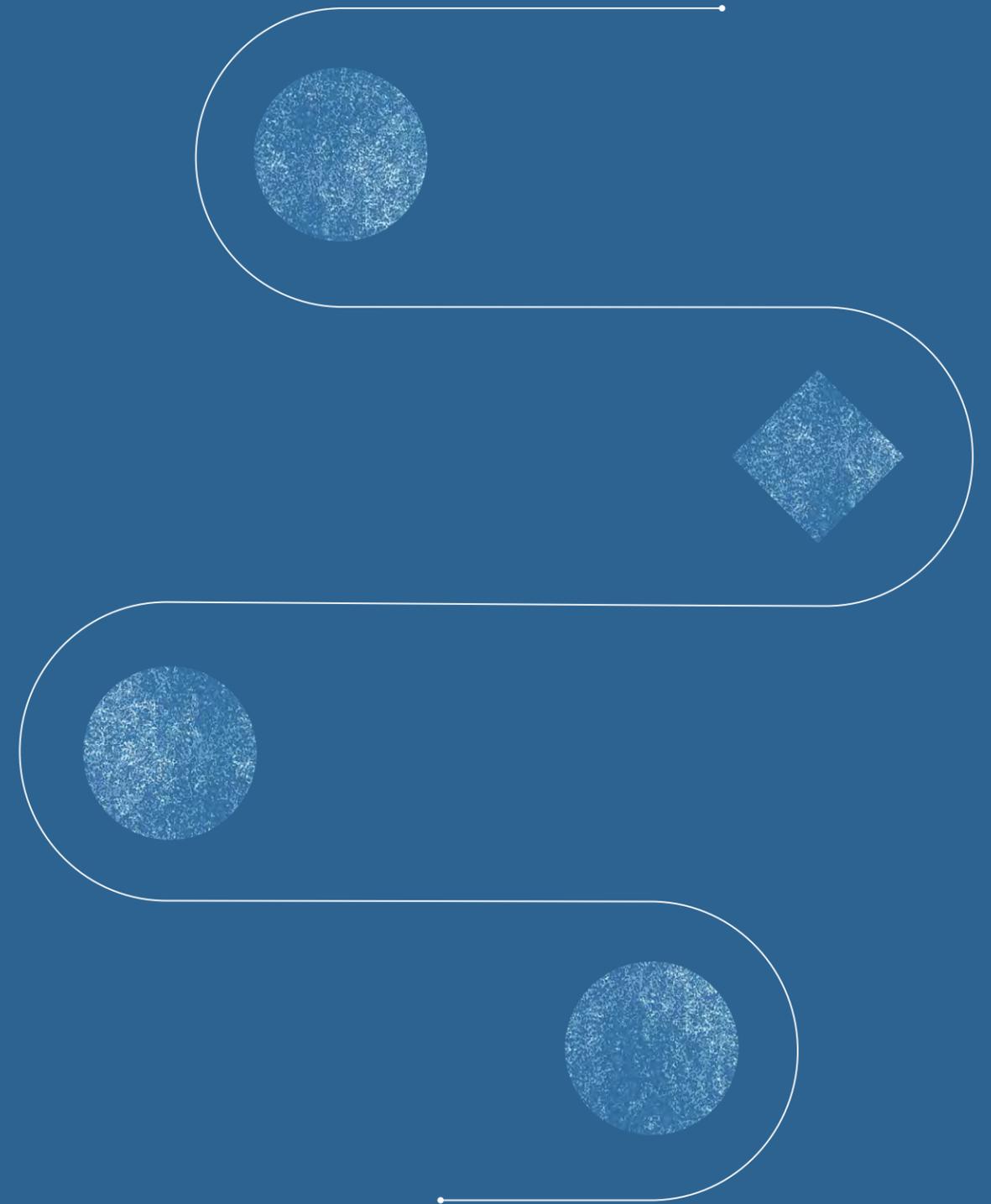
We saw this happen at [Harry's](#), a New York City-based grooming company with a high-energy culture that thrives on the staff's improvisational work style. To capture the power of improvisation, we worked with Harry's and their architecture firm Studio Tractor to create a plan where 58 percent of the space is dedicated to hallways and open



The connective pathways in the office lead people to a centralized Plaza Setting. Here, people can catch up with co-workers and share updates on their lives and work.

areas—up from 37 percent in their old office. We achieved this by right-sizing their group settings for collaborative work and creating a variety of shared individual workpoints—places where anyone can work, bump into colleagues they haven't seen in a while, and share ideas—throughout the office. With over half of the floorplan dedicated to connectivity, people are moving in a more meaningful way.

“In the previous space, I felt like people weren't moving because there weren't options, or they were moving out of desperation,” says Rachel Peck, the staff manager. “Here there are options and flexibility.”



The Results Are In

Creating Forum Settings and making connective space more meaningful are just two of the ways we're helping organizations create workplaces where information flows fast and freely. DPR and Harry's were shining examples, but we observed similar outcomes for all our Living Office research partners. Check out some of the aggregated results from employee surveys before and after redesign.



Harness the power of people in an office that brings the brightest minds together.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations

"We can bring in experts from around the company who interact with our employees. People are sharing stories and information and that knowledge transfer is helping us connect the dots and solve problems."

Chris Gorthy
Project Executive, DPR



Before	After
78%	94%



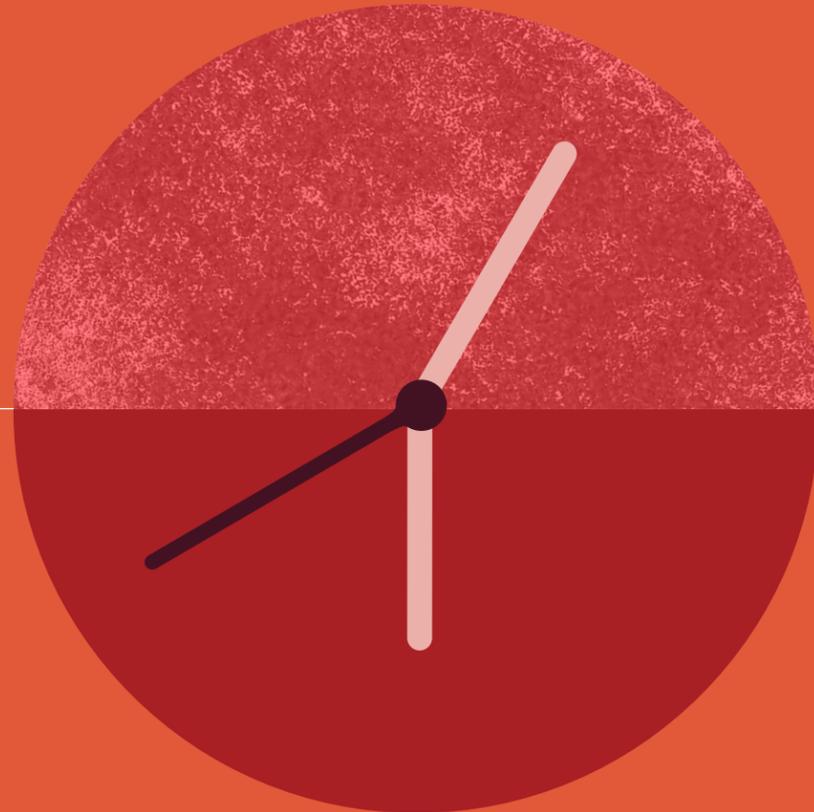
Before	After
64%	89%



Before	After
53%	74%

BE AN EFFICIENCY EXPERT

Whether you have a single floor or an expansive multi-level building, efficiency isn't about more or less space—it's about using the space you have to create a seamless workflow for people.



When you're trying to balance what's right for your people with a lean approach to real estate, creating an efficient workplace can feel like an impossible task. We believe both are possible, especially when you reclaim precious square footage dedicated to underused, assigned workstations and private offices and reappoint that space to shared workpoints across the office. This spatial reassignment gives people access to an entire workplace full of settings. When those settings are easy to navigate and in purposeful proximity to one another, people have everything they need to quickly connect, work together to solve problems, and move the work flow forward.

Do More with Less

One of our Living Office research partners—a global professional services firm—wanted to reduce square footage without compromising people’s well-being. With more meetings and data exchange happening virtually, the firm’s consultants were no longer making weekly treks to client’s offices. More people were coming into the office, but a compartmentalized floorplan was keeping people from connecting.

With the move to a new facility, the firm’s workplace strategist was faced with the challenge of fitting more people into a smaller office while building a sense of community among an employee population that had so far been dispersed. How could she ensure that a smaller office wouldn’t feel small and that people would still have everything they needed to stay connected and be productive?

Answers came from Herman Miller’s Living Office Discovery ProcessSM, which gave the workplace strategist an efficient tool for quickly building consensus among stakeholders on how the workplace should support people’s activities. The design team mapped these activities to settings that would optimize the limited square footage and encourage people to connect with one another. To make room for these new settings, the design team decreased the number of seats at assigned, individual workstations by 36 percent, and increased the number of seats in group and community settings by 65 percent.

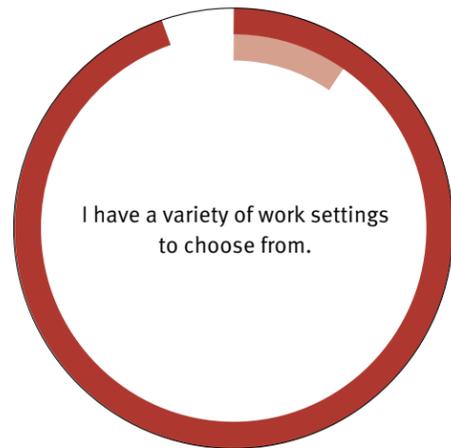
By reducing the number of dedicated workstations, the design team could allot more space to shared workpoints—seats open to anyone—in a mix of settings throughout the office. Now it’s easier for people from different business units to mix and mingle. Working side-by-side, people answer questions faster, quickly make decisions, and propel work forward.

In a post-occupancy survey, several employees noted that the main work area—called a Hive Setting in Living Office parlance—is a place where they can easily focus on individual tasks but quickly transition to more collaborative work. “Sitting close to my team—even those I don’t directly support—is helping me build relationships with them,” says an employee. “It makes it easier to remain updated on the tasks I’m working on.”

Although it will take some time to see just how much the new workplace is influencing employees, early space utilization data and results from an employee survey confirm that people are using and benefiting from the robust mix of settings intentionally placed throughout the office. “We’re tracking utilization closely because we want to make sure we have the right amount of space and the right quantity of different types of spaces,” says the company’s workplace strategist. “So far it’s been really positive. We can see that we’ve increased overall utilization of the office without the building feeling too busy.”

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people’s expectations



Before After

8% 94%



Before After

50% 83%



Before After

43% 89%



Workplace Strategist
Global Professional Services Firm

Do More with More

Unlike the global professional services firm, [Harry's](#), a New York City-based men's grooming company, had the luxury of moving to a larger workplace to suit their rapidly expanding team. To make the most of their new building in SoHo, they needed to avoid some of the design difficulties they faced in their former office. The loft-style space had only one conference room, a meager break area, and rows upon rows of bench seating in a cavernous work room. Business analysts squinted at spreadsheets alongside chatty customer service representatives and product samples and packaging materials spilled over into the reception area.

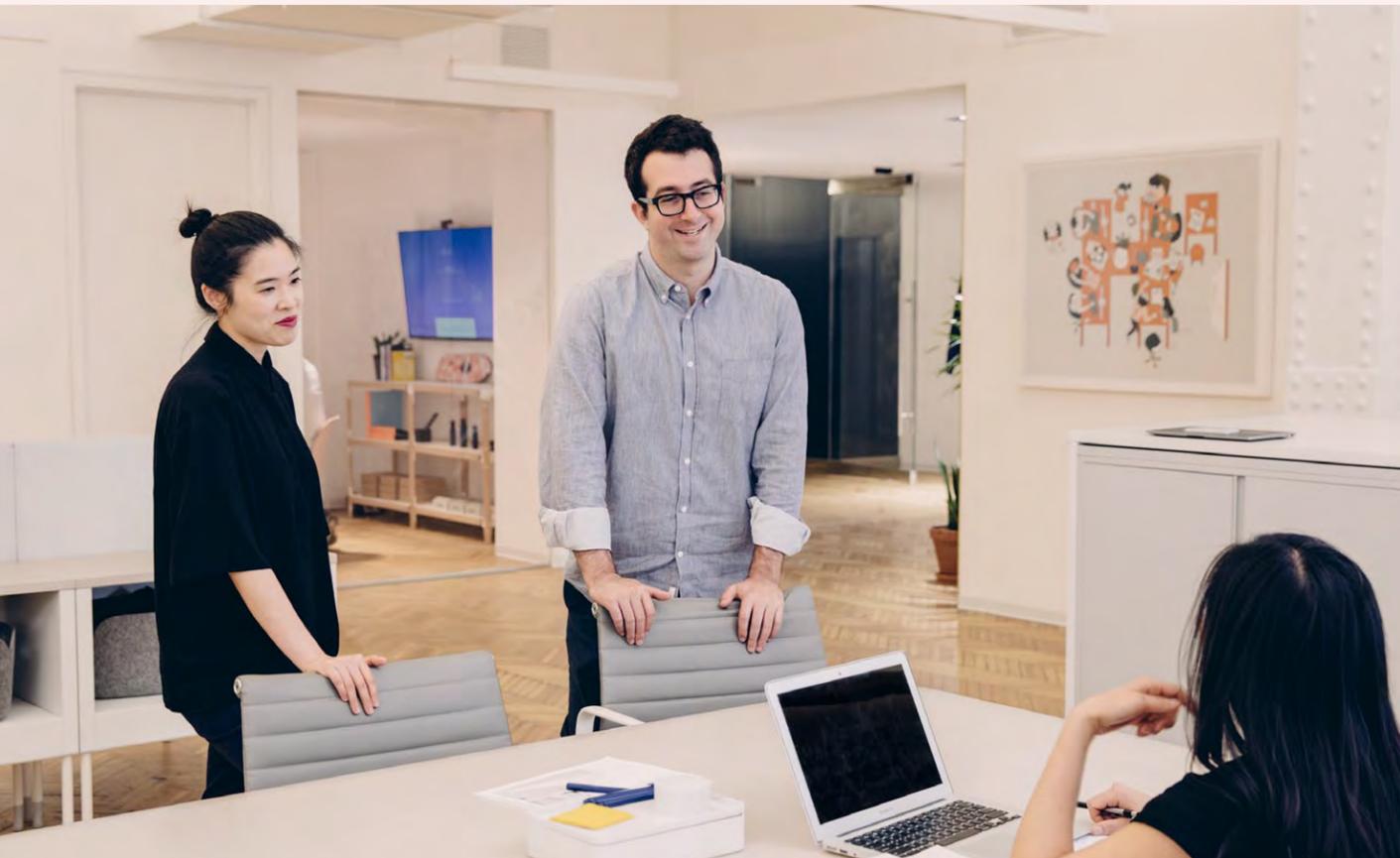
The chaotic environment forced people into hallways and stairwells for phone calls and meetings. "It was hectic," recalls Scott Newlin, Design Director for Harry's. "It hurts your day-to-day workflow when you're just trying to have a phone conversation and you can't."

The office lacked two essential workplace qualities: Coherence and Convergence. The workplace wasn't easy to navigate, and because of that, it wasn't bringing people together in efficient and meaningful ways. To address these

challenges, Harry's enlisted Herman Miller and architecture firm Studio Tractor. Together, we transformed the new office into a diverse landscape with settings they could be confident would enable a full range of work activities—no easy feat in Harry's sprawling new facility.

"With a larger office, the trick was to make sure the space didn't look like a ghost town," says Mark Kolodziejczak, an architect at Studio Tractor. "With Living Office, you have different settings that support different activities. The settings are dispersed, but they allow activities to happen in meaningful proximity to one another."

Today, Harry's employees are thriving in a workplace where it's easy to find and connect with the people and resources they need to complete their work. "We have our marketing team sitting next to our customer acquisition team, who on a day-to-day basis have dozens of conversations," says Newlin. "I think this really allowed a more streamlined approach to the way they work. It also has allowed us to take less time in between certain tasks."



Work Activity Support

How well the workplace enables people's daily tasks

● Before ● After



Space Allocation

How the space is distributed to support people's activities

Number of Group Settings Before the Move

2 Plaza
Meeting Space

Number of Group Settings After the Move

5 Plaza Landing
Meeting Space Cove
Workshop

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent, global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations

48.4 **71.9**
Before After

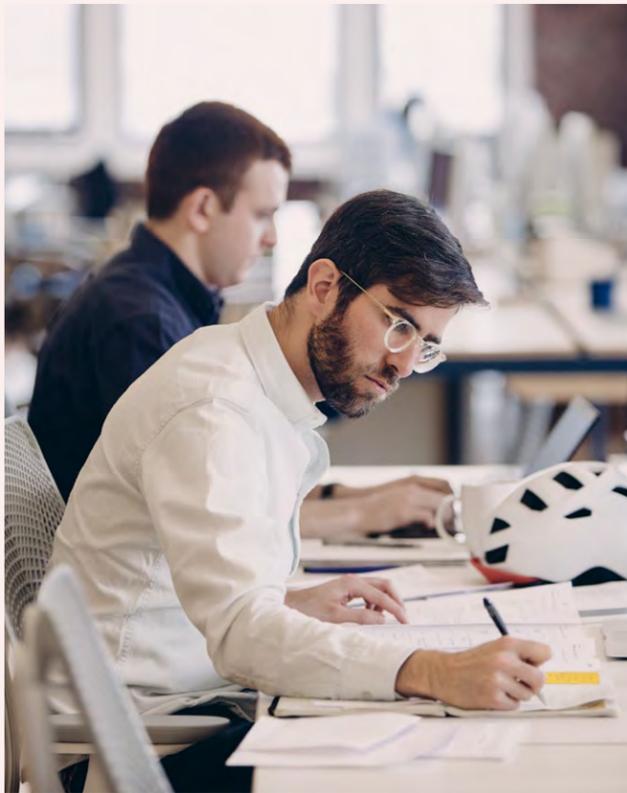
62.1
Global Benchmark

(out of 100)

Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.

“We have our marketing team sitting next to our customer acquisition team, who on a day-to-day basis have dozens of conversations. I think this really allowed a more streamlined approach to the way they work. It also has allowed us to take less time in between certain tasks.”

Scott Newlin
Design Director, Harry's



The most efficient offices give people room to fluidly move between interactive and focused work.





The Results Are In

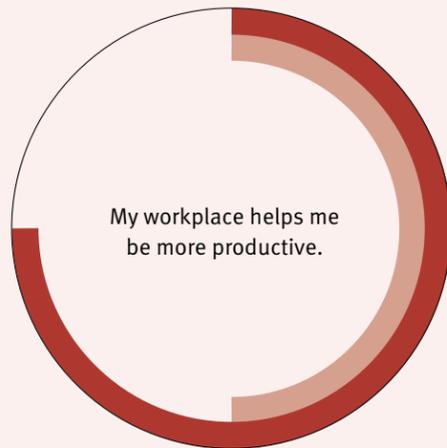
Making more space for shared workpoints and designing for Coherence and Convergence are just two of the ways we're helping organizations achieve their efficiency goals. The global professional services firm and Harry's were shining examples, but we observed similar outcomes for all our Living Office research partners. Check out some of the aggregated results from employee surveys before and after redesign.



Efficiency isn't about more or less space. It's about how you plan that space to make it easier for people to accomplish their work.

Employee Experience Survey

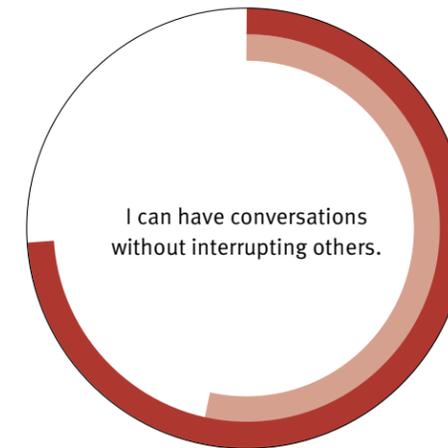
How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



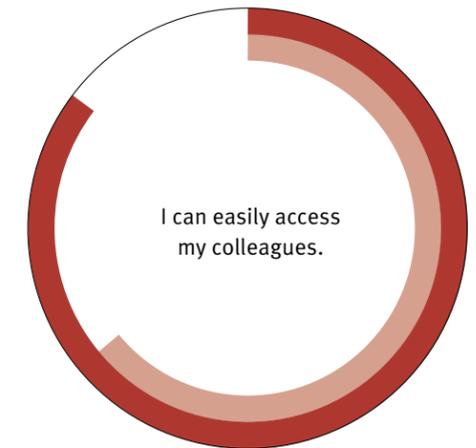
Before	After
50%	75%



Before	After
66%	85%



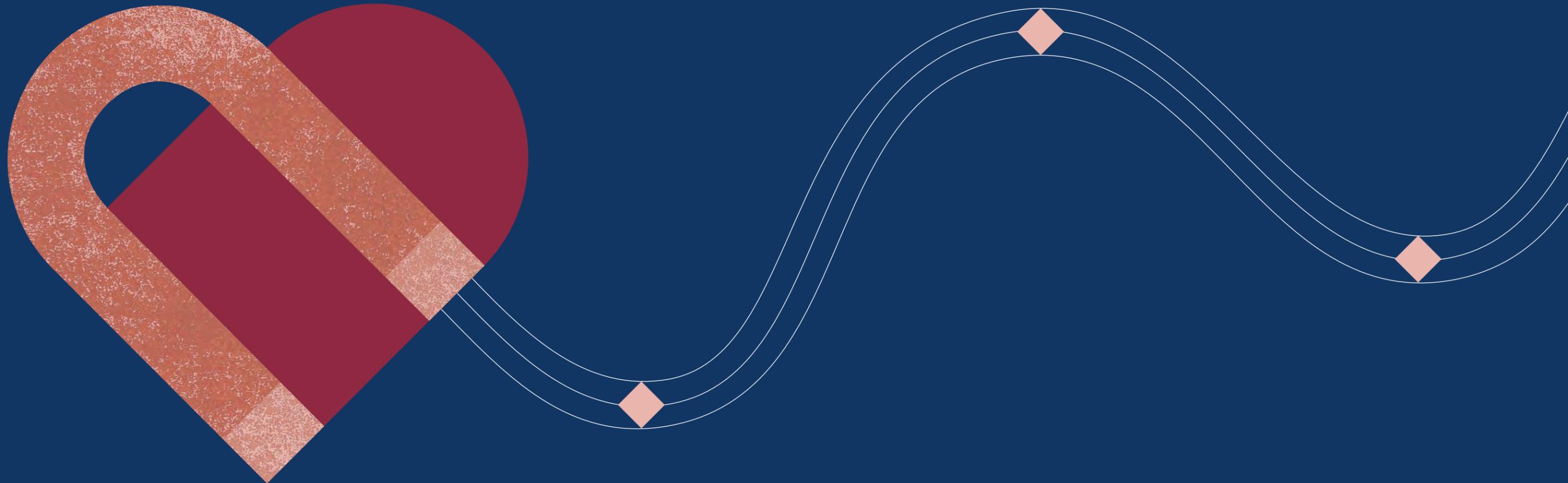
Before	After
53%	74%



Before	After
69%	85%

CREATE A CENTER OF ATTRACTION

When it comes to hiring talented people and enticing them to stay and grow, one of the **biggest benefits you can offer—and a major differentiator that you may be overlooking—is a connective and fulfilling workplace.**



How do you create a workplace that draws people in and encourages them to stay? Some companies put in a ping-pong table or rock-climbing wall and call it a day. But what people are really looking for is connection—to each other and to a broader sense of purpose.

The workplace can help you fulfill both these needs. Think of the way a kitchen often serves as both a gathering place and a bulletin board for schedules, lists, and artwork—daily reminders of what gives our lives meaning. An office that's a people-magnet has the same kitchen-like qualities, with settings and design elements that bring people together and remind them that their work has meaning.

Have a Heart

One of our Living Office research partners, [Tavistock Development Company](#), took the kitchen concept quite literally when they worked with us to plan their new office in Lake Nona, Florida. Tavistock is a real estate development firm that prides itself on developing inspiring communities for clients. Its leadership team realized that to maintain that reputation, it was going to have to do the same for its employees. This meant working with Herman Miller and Little Diversified Architectural Consulting to consolidate people from three dispersed locations into one vibrant and connective hub.

As part of this work, Herman Miller guided employees and leaders through the Living Office Discovery Process to help identify disparities between their daily work activities and their workplace. A group of Tavistock employees studied

10 categories of common work activities, determining that the new workplace would need to enable lengthy conversations, longer periods of project development work, and quick, impromptu discussions—activities known as Converse, Co-Create, Divide & Conquer, and Chat in Living Office parlance.

“We already knew that we were in three different buildings, so we weren’t colliding and collaborating like we should be,” says Human Resources Director Karen Duerr. “The research reinforced how important these types of interactions are to our work.”

To prime the workplace for interaction, the design team mapped people’s activities to a variety of collaborative settings. At the heart of it all is a bright, window-lined

café, called a Plaza. Here, socializing converges with getting work done—activities that happen at happy hour gatherings, pop-up parties to celebrate new deals, and once-a-month celebrations with Tavistock-themed trivia or costume contests. Accountants mingle with project managers and marketing specialists catch up with urban planners. People who wouldn’t normally spend a lot of time together during the workday are getting a glimpse of what others are working on, and it’s helping them feel more connected to the broader purpose of the organization.

“After the move ... the thing that people said made the most difference [more than paid time off and flexible work hours] was the café and the gatherings we have there,” says Debbie DeMars, Vice President, Human Resources and Internal Operations. “It’s fun, and people are proud of it. And it’s a way for us to tell people what’s going on in the company.”

Tavistock’s leadership team sees a direct correlation between the workplace changes they made and improvements in employee retention. “Over the past couple of years, prior to the move, our turnover rate was 26 percent,” says DeMars. “We are now at a 10 percent turnover rate for the year.” She attributes this dramatic improvement to “the intangibles.” “It’s not just about the pay. It’s not just about the time off,” says DeMars. “It’s about feeling good when you come to work. It’s feeling pride and a sense of community.”



Space Allocation

How the space is distributed to support people’s activities

Number of Group Settings Before the Move

1 Meeting Space

Number of Group Settings After the Move

6 Plaza Meeting Space Workshop Landing Cove Forum

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations

48.7 Before **85.5** After

62.1 Global Benchmark

(out of 100)

Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.

To understand how effective Tavistock's new workplace design is as a tool for attraction and retention, you just have to look at the numbers.

Employee Turnover Before Move

26%

Employee Turnover After Move

10%



From dining to celebrating to meeting, Tavistock employees are able to do a variety of social activities in their café. Post-move surveys indicate that this multi-functional setting is one of the leading reasons why people enjoy the new workplace.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



"It's not just about the pay. It's not just about the time off ... It's about feeling good when you come to work. It's feeling pride and a sense of community."

Debbie DeMars
Vice President, Human Resources and Internal Operations



“This office makes a statement that we practice what we preach in our community development projects. It’s designed around people, and you can feel that when you come here.”

Jim Zboril
President, Tavistock



This Workshop Setting brings people together to work simultaneously on various parts of a project—sketching ideas on a whiteboard, reviewing development plans, and breaking away from the group to have private conversations.

Identify Yourself

For organizations focused on competing for top talent, we often recommend dialing up two essential workplace qualities: Identity and Attraction. That’s exactly what we did when working with CHS, a farmer-owned food and energy cooperative. They’re the type of company that aims to make a difference in the world and to do that they need to attract bright people who want to make a difference, too.

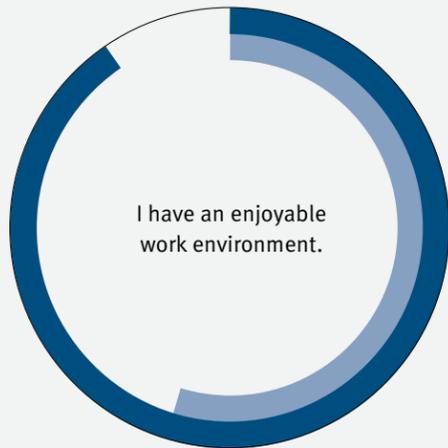
What better way to do that than by creating an office that broadcasts the qualities that makes CHS unique—a workplace quality we call Identity. In the new office, large murals tell stories about who CHS is, what they do, and why they do it. On a wall behind the reception desk, you’ll find laser-cut sheets of steel engraved with the company’s tag line, “Farmer owned with global connections.” On another wall, brightly colored diagrammatic panels illustrate

the process the company follows to bring their crops to global customers. Larger-than-life black and white photos of children at play give people a sense of why CHS is so committed to helping partnering farmers succeed.

These meaningful, colorful design elements boosted another workplace quality we call Attraction. To attract people, you need a work environment that engages both your senses and intellect. At CHS, this meant a shift from isolating workstations surrounded by high-panels to a variety of light-filled, low-walled settings where people can easily engage with one another. These settings attract people with beautiful furnishings and views of the outdoors and stimulate people by facilitating conversations with colleagues. One resident of the new office calls the energy in the space “more positive and motivating.”

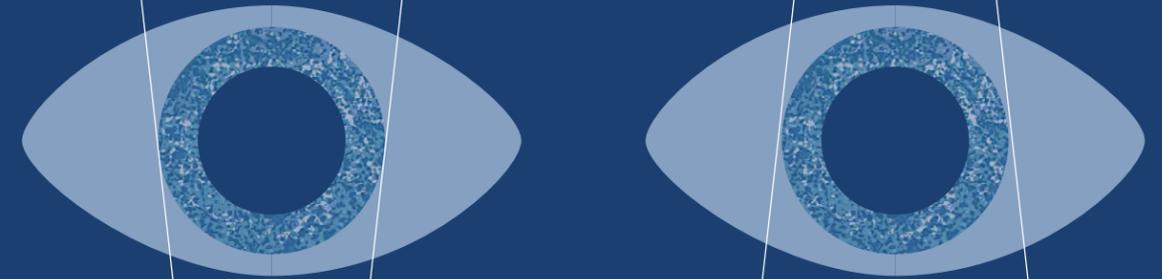
Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people’s expectations



Before	After
56%	88%

Before	After
64%	91%



The Results Are In

Anchoring your office with a Plaza Setting and boosting Identity and Attraction are just a few of the ways we're helping organizations create workplaces where people want to be and where they have a strong connection to each other and their work. Tavistock and CHS were shining examples, but we observed similar outcomes for all our Living Office research partners. Check out some of the aggregated results from employee surveys before and after redesign.



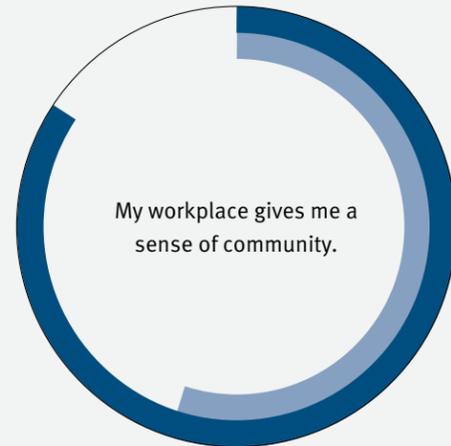
If you want to attract—and keep—the talented people your organization needs to be successful, give them a workplace where they are excited to be and where they can do their best work.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



Employee Survey Respondent
CHS



Before	After
55%	83%



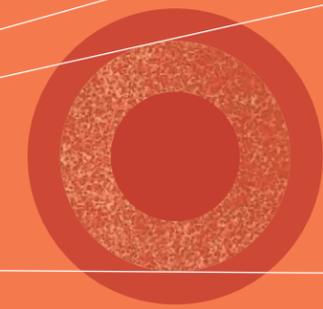
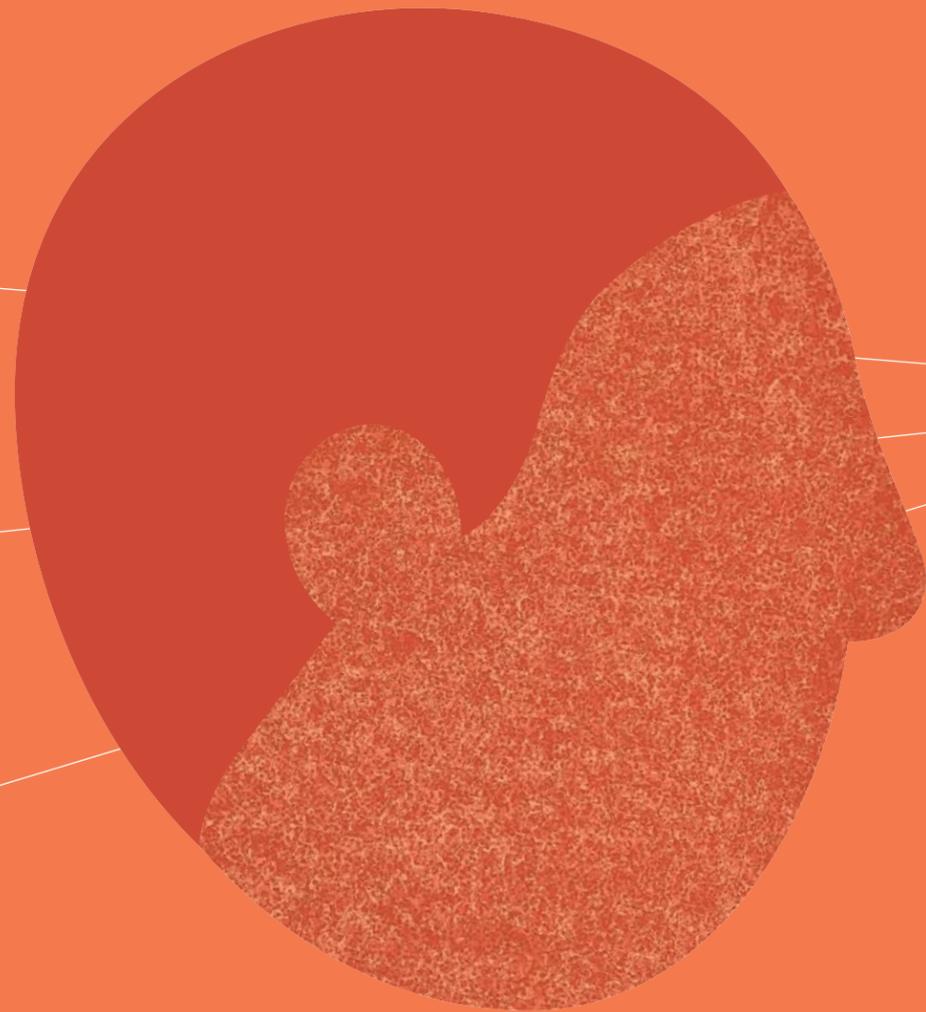
Before	After
48%	91%



Before	After
52%	85%

FOCUS ON BUILDING YOUR BRAND

A workplace that's laser-focused on expressing who you are and what you do is a powerful tool for building strong relationships with customers and employees.



To be a successful business leader, you need to dedicate most of your time and resources to growing the business. That probably means the last thing on your lengthy list of to-dos is updating the aesthetic of your office. But the way your workplace looks and feels can send a message as powerful as a Times Square billboard. An office that broadcasts who you are through meaningful design elements in settings fine-tuned to your organization's character gives people an immediate sense of your priorities and purpose. With an environment unique to your organization, you're telling potential employees and customers that you take your relationships seriously—so seriously that you've created an inspiring, welcoming workplace that people are proud to inhabit.

Design on Purpose

To create an office that serves as a brand billboard, you need to include design elements that people find appealing and engaging—an essential workplace quality called Attraction. And you want those design elements to tell a story about your organization’s unique character and purpose—an essential workplace quality called Identity. That’s just what we focused on when we worked with Boston-based non-profit architecture firm [MASS Design Group](#) to create a work environment that would help them advocate for the value of good design with their clients.

For the team at MASS, concepts like Attraction and Identity are no-brainers. The architects at the firm spend their days designing beautiful, functional healthcare facilities for the sick, disadvantaged, and those who care for them. Part of this work includes convincing non-profit groups that an investment in good architecture is an investment in improving the lives of the people they serve.

But just like the organizations they work with, the MASS team was so busy serving their clients that they hadn’t taken the time to thoughtfully consider their own workplace. The loft-style building where they had recently moved was divided into three distinct areas that isolated people from one another—not good for a bunch of architects and designers who thrive on creativity, lively debate, and deep discussion.

Knowing that a dysfunctional office environment wasn’t helping them make the case for the role of design in bettering people’s lives, co-founders Alan Ricks and Michael Murphy enlisted help from Herman Miller. We teamed up with the firm’s designers and researchers to transform every element of their office into a testament to the organization’s purpose.

The redesigned office has a unique mix of settings where people can bounce ideas off one another, chat about projects and weekend plans, and share computer screens

and opinions. A spacious, light-filled Plaza Setting draws people together from all parts of the office. In this setting, people have plenty of room to mingle, share updates on their work, and stay connected to the firm’s mission.

“Sometimes, there can be a disconnect when you are based in Boston but working on a project that might be abroad,” says Patricia Gruits, Director of Research at MASS. “One of the ways we can really understand the impact of our work is through sharing the results of those projects with each other. Giving a moment to celebrate success and share challenges is so important.”

Now the entire workplace serves as a celebration of the important work the team is doing around the world. You can see the breadth of the firm’s impact in photographs that line the walls—a cholera treatment center in Haiti; a hospital in Rwanda; a facility where expectant mothers can prepare

to give birth in Malawi. Lush plants enliven dark corners—verdant representatives from the regions where MASS has built hospitals and schools. Given these appealing, purpose-filled elements, it’s no surprise that MASS saw a significant increase in their post-occupancy measures of Attraction and Identity.

The success of their new office has inspired the MASS team to apply what they learned from Herman Miller to the work they are doing with non-profits like Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program (BHCHP). Architect Chris Scovel took the BHCHP team on a tour of the architecture firm’s new workplace to help them understand the type of impact design can make. “It was really the moment when they realized how easy it is for work and interaction to happen when the environment is designed around people,” says Scovel. “And it made it not about the jargon and the intimidating ideas of high-end designer types. It made it real for them.”

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people’s expectations



“We’re trying to cultivate an organization of the most talented designers to work on some of the most difficult challenges. And having office spaces that support our group’s mission is critical.”

Alan Ricks
Co-founder, MASS Design Group

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations



(out of 100)

Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.



The MASS headquarters has settings tailored to the highly interactive way the team likes to work. In these Cove Settings, colleagues put their heads together and talk through the challenges of complex problems.



“One of the first things I do when I meet a potential supporter or client is say, ‘Why don’t you come to our office and meet our team?’ One reason is our ethos here and to see how we organize ourselves. You can meet the incredible team that’s doing amazing work.”

Michael Murphy
Co-founder, MASS Design Group



Getting into Character

For some organizations, the workplace can be a significant roadblock between who they are now and who they need to become to better serve their customers and employees. Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW) experienced this when it was shifting its focus from disseminating funds to bringing people together to solve some of the community's most complex problems. The office simply wasn't set up to accommodate a more interactive approach to engaging with the community, so they came to Herman Miller and design firm SmithGroupJJR for help.

We kicked off the project by taking VSUW leaders through the Living Office Discovery Process for helping stakeholders build consensus on the organization's purpose, character, and activities. During the workshop, we identified two significant misalignments between the organization's goals and the way the workplace

was designed. The team felt a strong need to shift from a more formal, closed-off approach to working with each other and the community—to a more informal and open way of engaging. But their current office, outfitted with workstations segregated by each team's function, was keeping people in different departments from intermingling. And with only a few, highly formal conference rooms to choose from, brainstorming sessions and community gatherings felt more like board meetings.

To make more room for casual conversations, high-energy huddles, and interactive share-outs, the design team decreased the amount of space allocated to individual workstations and increased the amount of square feet for community, group, and connective space. Two large Forum Settings serve as flexibly furnished, technology-equipped settings for presentations and break-out sessions.

A bright, airy communal Plaza Setting connects the space, bringing together people from all parts of the office and serving double time as a place to host casual gatherings with community members or potential donors. Smaller Cove Settings are intentionally placed throughout the work areas, giving team members a chance to break away from their desks for conversations that happen on the fly.

"When we brought donors into our old space to make a seven-figure ask, we would have been meeting in a conference room," says one VSUW leader. "In our new space, we can have an interactive session with a potential donor. It changes how we work and communicate. It's a more dynamic environment."

Leesman Index for Workplace Effectiveness

An independent global benchmarking service that gathers and analyzes data on workplace effectiveness from thousands of organizations

59.7 **79.2**

Before

After

62.1

Global Benchmark

(out of 100)

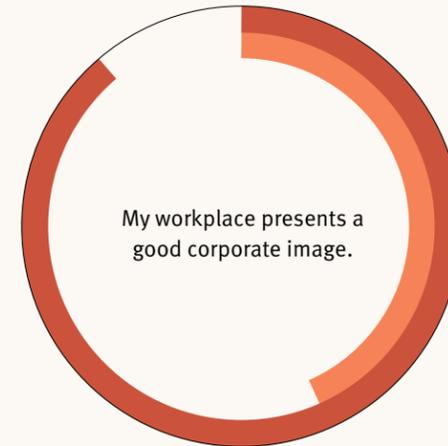
Organizations with scores above 70 provide excellent support for people and consistently outperform those organizations that only achieve the global benchmark.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



Before	After
36%	90%



Before	After
43%	88%

"We had to shift how we worked, both inside and outside the organization. And it became really important to start breaking down the silos. There had to be a greater degree of cross-organizational interaction and collaboration."

Leader Interview
VSUW

The Results Are In

Designing to reflect purpose and character are just two of the ways we're helping organizations create workplaces that strengthen the bonds between their brands, customers, and employees. MASS Design Group and Valley of the Sun United Way were shining examples, but we observed similar outcomes for all our Living Office research partners. Check out some of the aggregated results from employee surveys before and after redesign.



By creating a workplace that reflects who you are and what you do, you can build a stronger connection between your people and the purpose of their work.

Employee Experience Survey

How well the workplace fulfills people's expectations



"Dignity is the place where the language of design overlaps with an organization's mission."

Chris Scovel
Architect, MASS Design Group



Before	After
47%	91%



Before	After
48%	91%



Before	After
52%	87%

Three Takeaways for Workplace Transformation

We know that growing your business isn't easy. But when you approach change with purpose and a plan for realizing that purpose, great things can happen. The findings in this report, validated by the largest set of workplace data in the world, shows that when research on people and work informs your office design, it becomes a powerful tool for organizational growth. Here's how.

1

People who inhabit research-based workplaces tell us they are more creative and collaborative, and they are able to approach their work with a higher degree of productivity and efficiency.

2

Organizations that invest in workplace research and use it to inform their office designs make more efficient use of their real estate and report measurable improvements in everything from employee retention to innovation.

3

As smart workplace capabilities evolve, real-time data on space utilization and employee well-being will increasingly allow your workplace to immediately respond to people's needs and efficiently adapt to the changing demands of your business.

If your organization is ready to design a workplace that's a catalyst for growth, visit hermanmiller.com/livingoffice or connect with your local Herman Miller representative. They'll put you in touch with a Living Office Specialist.

For more information, please visit hermanmiller.com or call 888 443 4357.

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