Creating Space(s) for All

A GUIDE TO CREATING INCLUSIVE AND INSPIRING WORK ENVIROMENTS

NELSON INSIGHT SERIES





Creating Space(s) For All

Studies have proven that a huge part of making employees feel comfortable, safe, and productive has to do with their environment. Knowing this, how can employers and designers use the return to the office as an opportunity to bring a more empathetic perspective to the workplace?

In this insight report we've established five key principles in making more inclusive and inspiring work spaces for all.

TRENDS TO WATCH





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EMPOWER YOUR EMPLOYEES

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EQUITY OF EXPERIENCE





HONEST TRANSPARENCY



EMPOWER YOUR EMPLOYEES

comfortable with.

change.

Once the space it ready, training employees on how to use their new space (how to use furniture, moveable walls, etc.) is crucial. We suggest allowing them to bring friends and family in to show it off and increase pride.

Lastly, upper management should always use the space in the way it was designed to be used. This shows employees not only how to use it, but that it's okay to use it. People need to feel like they have permission to use the space without judgement.

We've all heard the "Field of Dreams" quote, "If you build it, they will come." Well, that isn't so true in architecture and design. They may come, but they may be confused and then turn around and go back to what they are more

A successful workplace will empower your employees and in order to get the space right, it's imporant to start change management efforts early. Easing them into the process by allowing them to see the space either in-person or virtually will allow them to get excited for



INNOVATION IN ACTION NELSON SOCIAL CLUBS

NELSON Worldwide recently unveiled a "Social Clubs" concept that envisions the workplace taking on the role of the social glue for company employees giving them access to distinct amenities; coffee or juice bars, app-based fitness equipment from Peloton, Mirror and Tonal and partnerships with socialization-spurring, community-based book clubs, knitting circles, cooking courses, town halls, and more. "Just building a cool new space will generate some buzz but without the encouragement of the decision-makers and upper management along with clear guidance on how to utilize the new space, people will inevitably resort back to how they were working before, even if it means being less productive."

-Kristin Cerutti, NELSON Worldwide





2

Hint: Your "customers" are your employees. We've always been taught that one of the key rules in business (after staying in business) is understanding your customer base.

successful.

So how can companies better understand and support their employees? An office renovation/relocation is the perfect opportunity to reengage and reinvigorate your teammates. Get as many people as possible involved, as early as possible, to share their experiences and thoughts on what is and isn't working. Keep them updated throughout with regularly scheduled project updates. This will not only help them feel heard but will make managing the change easier on you as well.

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KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

In what's now being called "The Great Resignation" employees leaving their current place of employment are stating that it's largely because they don't feel heard or supported. For example, acoustic performance and variety of space types are the two things that employees complain about the most within workspaces. If we don't address these things, a project isn't going to be



"About 7% to 11% of employees want to come back full time. That tells me that employers don't really know what kind of surroundings their employees want and need to be most productive. Listening to needs is a huge part of this equation."

-Anne Gibson, NELSON Worldwide



FLUID

3

teammates.

The most resilient organizations are those that are agile and willing to flex and change direction when needed. Your space needs to be just as flexible as your organization in order to adequately support it rather than hindering you in those key moments.

FROM FIXED TO

As the workplace continues to evolve one thing is clear: flexibility is key. The office will need to become a shape-shifting environment that can be easily adapted to facilitate creative connection and renewed purpose. In addition, allowing employees a choice in where and how to work can offer a renewed purpose and sense of culture as employees return to the office.

When creating a flexible environment, consider utilizing the "kit of parts" we've all come to know and love in a new and different way. Instead of providing cookie-cutter spaces that are all the same, think of spaces more like the individuals that occupy them – unique settings that are individually adaptable to support the needs of your





Moving white boards



Freestanding mobile screens

Private/shared productivity pods







Modular furniture systems





R



EQUITY OF

4

We now need to consider more than just giving everyone a height adjustable desk. How good are the sound systems in your conference rooms – can they pick up each person no matter where they are seated? Are the cameras placed where those who are contributing virtually can see everyone participating in-person? White boards are great for those in the room, consider virtual solutions where those in the room as well as those who are remote can add notes, ideas and contribute equally to the discussion.

Give people access to the tools to do their job effectively and then let them choose when, how and where to use those tools to support themselves throughout the day.

EXPERIENCE

We have to understand that some people were able to work more effectively from home, where they had complete control of their environment. Therefore, if you are requiring your teammates come back to the office in any capacity, some of that control will be taken away. How can we ease the minds of those coming back and allow those who will now be working in a hybrid environment and those with varying personal experiences and backgrounds to have equitable experiences?

63% of current job seekers are looking for remote roles, while 89% see a lack of work-from-home options as a serious downside to a job.

(Zippia)



INNOVATION IN ACTION GOOGLE HYBRID OFFICE CONCEPT

Google has created a post-pandemic workplace that accommodates employees after over a year of working from home and prefer a hybrid work model. Instead of rows of desks next to cookie-cutter meeting rooms, Google is designing "Team Pods." Each pod is a blank canvas: Chairs, desks, whiteboards and storage units on casters can be wheeled into various arrangements, and in some cases rearranged in a matter of hours. The company is also creating a new meeting room called Campfire, where in-person attendees sit in a circle surrounded by large vertical displays thatshow the faces of people dialing in by video conference.





HONEST

5

The most important step in providing for honestly and transparency is to start the conversation. This let's employees know that you're trying and willing to have open and honest discussions around their needs.

to accommodate them.

TRANSPARENCY

When developing a new workspace, don't be afraid to get it wrong. If we've learned anything from the past 18 months, it's that we can't predict what is going to happen tomorrow. Needs will change and the more transparent you can be with your employees the better.

Overall, no two people are the same or work in the same way. You cannot be expected to know every individuals needs, but if you open the line of communication, you will be more likely to have those who really need your help and support, reach out so you have the opportunity



"The best things we can do as designers and employers is open up and ask employees what they need. We often assume that if we have done it once or twice it applies to the next group, but we need to be supporting individuals at this point."

-Kristin Cerutti, NELSON Worldwide

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