

The Workspace of Tomorrow

Future-proof your workspace for the new world of work



R O
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Introduction

A Workspace (R)Evolution

“The objective is not to predict the future (which is a futile quest), but rather to be ready for many different possible futures that could unfold.”

April Rinne

Author, FLUX: 8 Superpowers for Thriving in Constant Change



Our greatest ability as human beings is our capacity to adapt—to the environment around us, to new realities, to ideas big and small. We thrive not when we are unyielding and rigid, but when we open our minds, when we are nimble and flexible.

So why then have our workspaces traditionally been anything but flexible? Rows of identical desks. Stuffy conference rooms. Uninspired design that caters to only one type of work experience. These spaces leave no room for adjustment. They don't respond to our company missions or our employee needs. They are indifferent, uncompromising, single-minded. The unfortunate result? We're left with little room to adapt, grow, and thrive.

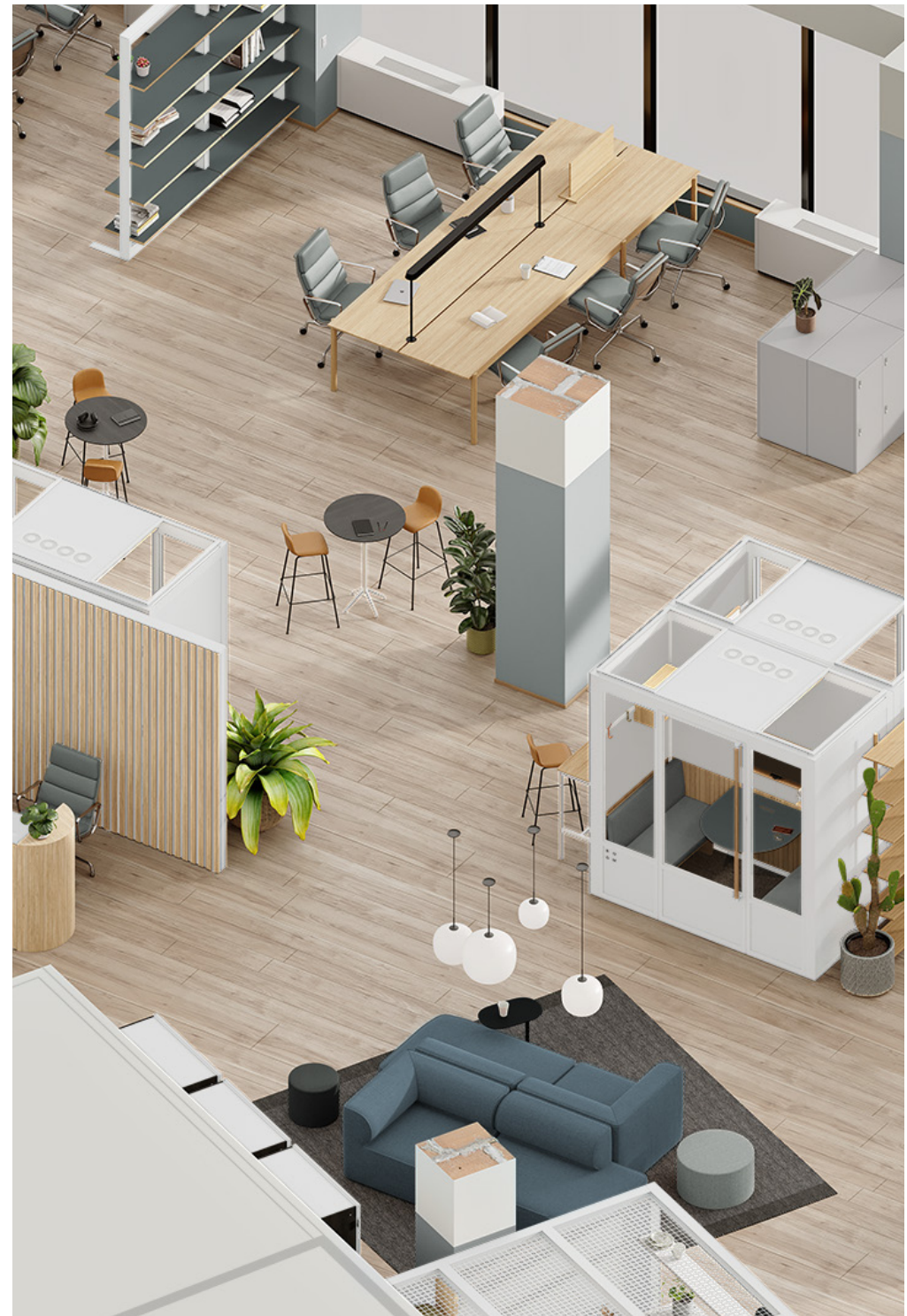
But what if your office could be as flexible as your company and the brilliant minds that make it work? What if it could pivot right along with you, responding to your needs as they inevitably change again and again?

It can.

Adaptive architecture is reshaping the office of tomorrow with workspaces that are prepared for the future, ready to adapt to the unknown and able to accommodate change. Bringing flexibility to a system that has been rigid for far too long, it offers variety and choice through a multitude of environments, allowing us to convene in moments of creativity and collaboration, zero in when it's time to focus, and flourish in those vital moments of relaxation and socialization. Adaptive architecture is leading a workspace revolution, turning the office into a place of possibilities—not inevitabilities.

No business is immune to the challenges we face today—not the Fortune 500 or the scrappy start-up—and as we come back to the office post-pandemic, we are faced with a decision: Return to the old way of doing things and risk falling behind or prepare for the future and see how high we can soar. The time for change is now. People want it. Businesses need it. And the planet demands it.

In [Part I](#) of this whitepaper, we explore how and why the modern workplace failed us, through the rise and subsequent decline of the open-plan office, and the adverse consequences it has had on workers, companies, and the environment. In [Part II](#), we show you the solutions that adaptive architecture and modular office design offer. And in [Part III](#), we help you build it all—a better workplace, a better business, and a better future.



Part I

The Rise and Fall of the Open Plan

“Workspaces have been a horribly underserved area of the environment. The options have been either an office or a desk for too long.”

Clive Wilkinson
Architect and Interior Designer, Clive Wilkinson Architects



In order to return to a better way of working, it is first important to acknowledge that the workspace was broken to begin with. The pandemic cast a light on the ugly truth about the modern office—but our workplace woes started long before the pandemic cleared out company buildings faster than a Thursday evening happy hour.

What are the key reasons we ended up hating our office? How did it go so wrong? There are a number of explanations for the dysfunctional workspace we all know so well: increasing real estate costs, 24/7 connectivity, and rigid long-term commercial leases among them. But perhaps none has been more impactful than the failure of the modern workspace to innovate and evolve with the changing culture of the working world.

How Did We Get Here?

For as long as people have been working together, there has been a desire to optimize their productivity. Since the very beginning, companies have looked to what has been considered one of the most efficient of human organizations—the military—for guidance in establishing a chain of command, and by the 1920s, that hierarchy had dictated the ecosystem of virtually every type of workspace, from the white-collar office to the blue-collar factory. Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building in Buffalo, New York, was considered the gold standard of hierarchical design in those days, with management occupying closed offices, workers clustered in communal spaces, and natural light considered the height of luxury.^[1] Meanwhile, Henry Ford had just established the 40-hour, five-day work week at his factories, setting expectations for his employees—and virtually every worker around the world since.

1900s

Military-style chain of command provides guidance for early 20th century office design.



1906

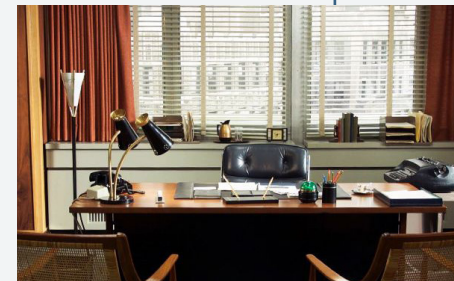
Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building sets the gold standard of hierarchical office design.

1926

Henry Ford of the Ford Motor Company establishes the five-day, 40-hour workweek at his factories, setting employee expectations—and business adoption globally.

1950s

German trend of "Bürolandschaft", or office landscaping, emerges where employees are appointed a desk or office dependant on company role.



By the 1960s, we were in the throes of a great corporate swell, and the hierarchical office was feeling more than a little outmoded. Cue Robert Propst, the mastermind of the Action Office. The Herman Miller designer found he was happier, healthier, and more productive when he had a variety of workspaces to choose from, so he did away with walls, replacing them with a modular system of cubicles, workspaces, and filing cabinets. The open-plan workspace was born! And it was a genius idea that fostered collaboration and socialization—at first.

But as corporations mushroomed, Propst's concept became diluted. Rows of desks began to resemble factories, spanning wall to wall to cram as many employees as possible into the smallest square footage. Propst watched in horror as the very designs he created to liberate workers were now fencing them in. By the booming '90s, the designer's dream had become a dystopian reality of cubicle farms.^[1]

1964

Robert Propst of Herman Miller introduces the Action Office system, replacing walls with a modular system of cubicles, workspaces, and filing cabinets.



1980s

- The notion of the “cubicle farm” begins, which Robert Propst later calls “monolithic insanity”.
- The term “hot-desking” is born, which was borrowed from “hot bunking”, where submariners would share their bunks on ships.
- American architect Robert Luchetti introduces “activity-based working” where workers perform a number of different activities over the course of the day, sparking the need for a variety of work settings.

1990s

- Rise of the “hotel office” or “hoteling” with a wide array of spaces to work from.
- The world sees rapid surge and adoption of tech which introduces more mobility to the workforce.

1968

Launch of Action Office II, consisting of three movable walls that can be arranged to create any workspace desired. Steelcase follows suit with introduction of 9000 series and Knoll launches Zapf System.



1985

The World Design Conference names the Action Office the most successful design of the past 25 years.

1998

Around 40 million Americans are working in what Propst estimated were 42 different versions of Action Office II.



Workers were feeling cozier than a bunch of sardines in a tin can when, suddenly, the 2000 recession hit. Though it might have seemed like the perfect time to rethink their workspace, corporations were trapped in long-term commercial leases that made it nearly impossible (or, at least, wildly expensive) to adjust to their new reality. The office spaces that had been built for them 10 years ago may have no longer been practical but renovating them was even less realistic in a time when revenues were decreasing and construction costs were ballooning. By the time the economy recovered, companies began restacking their offices, fitting another 1,000 employees here, doubling occupancy there—never mind that it all fit together like a square peg in a round hole.

Meanwhile, communication had become constant, thanks to the endless barrage of texts, emails, Slacks, and IMs that suddenly kept us plugged in 24/7/365. That technology also made our desks feel as anachronistic as an Apple Watch on Julius Caesar's wrist: Built for clunky desktop computers, they were bygone vestiges of a pre-tech world that didn't fit our laptops or our needs.

Thus, we entered the 21st century in defeat: Not only were we stuck with workspaces that didn't serve us; we were tethered to devices that controlled us even after we went home. Nine-to-five was no longer. The grind never stopped. And workers, well, we don't have to tell you they were unhappy, but they were also less productive because, as research shows, the proliferation of ways to interact only made it easier for us to tune it all out.

2005

Architect Clive Wilkinson designs Google's HQ office in Silicon Valley and introduces the idea of the office as a playground, which catches on quickly with tech companies.



2019

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognizes workplace "burnout" as an occupational phenomenon.

2022

Workers around the world begin their return to offices after 2+ years of remote and hybrid working brought on by the global Covid-19 pandemic.

2000

The developed world enters into a period of recession. The Labor Department estimates that a net 1.735 million jobs are shed in 2001 and peak unemployment hits 6.3% in June 2003.

2007

The first iPhone is released and so begins the reliance on 24/7 connectivity.



2020s

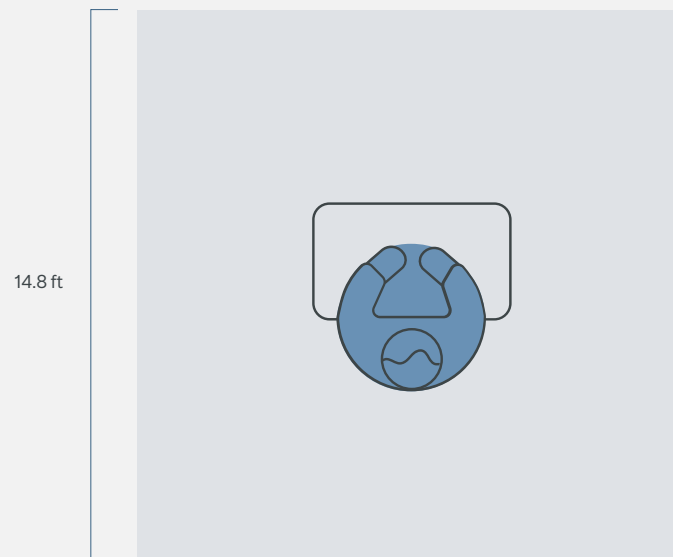
Environmental psychologist Dr. Nigel Oseland dubs today's workplace as "comparable to the early days of zoos."



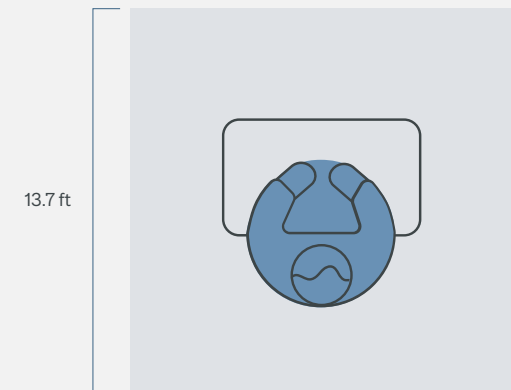
The Human Consequences

In many ways, the first century of the office space can be compared to the early days of the zoo. Plucked from our natural habitat, dropped into artificial environments, we have often behaved erratically—like a monkey in a treeless terrarium. And in these foreign, rigid ecosystems, we have failed to do our best work.

Over the last decade, the average space per employee dropped by more than 30 percent, to a much-too-snug 190 square feet per person.^[2] The close quarters wreaked havoc on our concentration and caused noise complaints aplenty, but that was only the beginning. Employee stress skyrocketed—contributing significantly to the more than one million Americans who call in sick every single day—and productivity plummeted.



2010, 220 ft² per employee



2019, 190 ft² per employee

Adrian Ponsen, CoStart Group; Ethan Bernstein and Ben Waber (December 2019). "The Truth About Open Offices". Harvard Business Review.



Studies show that all those mass free-range workspaces also stopped encouraging interdepartmental interactions—and actually started to hinder them. Sequestering employees into homogenous clusters hampered engagement, decreased cross-pollination, and obliterated innovation. Productivity was lost, collaboration was down, and, even before the pandemic, employees were uninspired.

In a recent survey conducted by the Harvard Business Review, 63% of workers said they lacked space for focus work. When companies switched to open offices, face-to-face interactions fell by 70%.^[3]

39% of Americans say they are
reluctant to return to the **office.**^[3]



The Broader Consequence

Amid all this, landlords had begun squeezing the life out of the office with long-term leases that hamstrung companies' needs. Workspaces had become largely reliant on fixed construction, locking us into the same offices for extended leases that could span an entire decade. That's a lifetime for any business. Scale up. Scale down. Adapt to rapidly changing missions. Shift with new goals. You can't do any of that if you're working in an office that was made seven years ago. For many of us, even seven months ago can feel like ancient history given the rate at which business is changing.

Thus, even the idea of renovating and rebuilding became a costly burden that few could—or should, considering the environmental impacts—shoulder. After all, who could imagine sinking the time and cost (not to mention the employee interruptions) required to move a conference room from one side of your workspace to the other? Sounds like the making of *Mission: Impossible: Office Fallout*. As a result, the majority of companies occupying a long-term lease are, to this day, sitting in workspaces that no longer fit them, something that negatively impacts employee wellness and productivity, and your ability to attract and retain new talent.



Part II

Building Back Better

“Creating an office is very much an evolutionary process. As the office evolves, your role is constantly changing.”

Bjarke Ingels
Architect and Co-Founder, Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG)

In the pre-pandemic world, there was little economic incentive for companies to change. But the Great Resignation was a drop-the-mic moment for millions—and a resounding wake-up call heard ‘round the world by employers everywhere. The message: Employees will vote with their feet, choosing to work for the companies whose values and culture resonate with their own. Some companies took longer to get the message than others, pushing for a total return-to-work agenda only to pull an about-face after losing droves of talent in response to the stringent demands.

At ROOM, we have had countless conversations with thousands of our business customers, and the resounding fundamental truth for each and every one of them has been clear: **It is not enough to have a return-to-office-policy. We must reimagine the office altogether**, into a place that people don’t just tolerate, but actually want to spend time in.



Companies that want to bring people back to work and attract and retain the best talent must make the office engaging and inspiring—not just functional. It must compete with a multitude of other work environments—from the local coffee shop to the living room couch—because we know that more than 75 percent of Americans prefer to work from home than their current office environment. And because we also know our teams cannot—and will not—return to the workplaces of the past.

The question we should be asking ourselves then is not “How do we bring people back to work” but, “How do we return to a better way of working altogether?”

The 2020s will be an era of work revolution, where nearly everything is up for debate: the 10-plus-year lease, the fixed workspaces, the clock-in/clock-out mentality, even the five-day workweek, which we’ve already seen abandoned in countries like Spain, Iceland, and England. Working post-pandemic will be a personal choice that, for most, is a combination of the office, the home, and third spaces. And the businesses that pivot along with all of this are the companies that will have their pick of the best talent.

As we embark on the second century of the workplace, we must consider the facts today: ^{[4][5]}

+50% of employees would quit their job if not provided flexibility.

63% of them prefer a hybrid model of work.

73% say they want to work from places that offer a genuine human connection.

Nearly all of them list work-life balance as the #1 priority—even higher than salary.



Adaptive Architecture: A Brave New World

Imagine your office ecosystem is like any other ecosystem: a community of interacting organisms (in this case, the brilliant, super-talented humans you call your team) and their physical environment (your office). Like in any ecosystem, shifting needs create small adjustments that ultimately lead to massive changes. And today, the office ecosystem has an even broader range than ever before, with home offices and third spaces integrating into our long-term plans for success. If your ecosystem doesn't adjust with those little shifts, disaster awaits (think: rising sea levels). But if you acclimate in real time, it's calm waters as far as the eye can see.

With adaptive architecture, the workspace becomes a shapeshifter—an ever-evolving ecosystem that fits all the building blocks of a successful office together into infinite iterations. Based on a wide array of factors, from business goals and property limitations to company culture and local context, adaptive architecture allows for myriad interchangeable spaces that take the office from a rigid environment of limited choice to a liberated ecosystem of variety—without an expensive buildout.

Adaptive architecture is affordable to buy, fast to deploy, and easy to change over and over again. It's a more sustainable alternative to fixed construction that allows companies, landlords, office providers, architects, and designers the ability to build spaces that adjust to a company and its people's always-changing needs. Think of traditional architecture:

- **Slow and expensive**
Traditional construction comes with long turnover time and high buildout cost.
- **Inflexible to change**
Once you have created a workplace, you are left to your own devices to measure, manage and optimize your space.
- **Complex to build and scale**
Disjointed web of vendors, from brokers, attorneys and landlords, to general contractors, furniture dealers, workplace strategists and more.
- **Detrimental to environment**
Demolition waste is one of the largest contributors to landfill in the world. Carbon emissions from office interior retrofits can be larger than the initial CO2 emission by a factor of 3 to 5x.

Answering the resounding call for more hybrid workspace opportunities, adaptive architecture's flexible solutions also bridge the gap between in-person and remote employees, paving the way for better communication, and opening the door to increased flexibility and quality connections. Purpose-built ready-to-use video-conference rooms bypass distracting office buildouts and instantly create more connected—and more productive—workspaces, no matter the distance between team members.





Adaptive office systems are also more affordable than traditional construction, requiring no demolition and only minimal assembly. They are faster and easier to erect, and, most importantly, they are better for the planet. Think about typical construction: The drywall, the 2x4s. The loud hammering, the dust, and the waste. Now forget about all of it because prefabricated offices bypass the wasteful practices of conventional construction, and in the process, drastically reduce carbon emissions. Adaptive architecture has a longer lifespan too, thanks to modularity that allows each component to be reconfigured again and again without any further impact on the environment. There's no need to undergo massive renovations when moderate replacement and easy reorientation will yield the same results.

The benefits of ROOM adaptive architecture:

- **Cost Effective**
ROOM sells direct from factory to business, making extra room in the budget without compromising quality.
- **Easy to Install**
Products are shipped flat for seamless delivery and assembly, so businesses can build a better way of working right away.
- **Flexible**
All products are portable so they can easily be moved around the office, or to the next.
- **Sustainable**
ROOM products are sustainably designed to minimize environmental footprint, from manufacturing to delivery and beyond.

Making Room for the Future

When you take advantage of adaptive architecture, you get plenty of tangible rewards—not the least of which are shiny new offices and a whole lot of saved money. But the benefits of flexibility go way beyond the material. Dynamic workspaces drive long-term benefits to your people, who will feel more autonomous and more inspired; to your organization, which will retain the best talent as it grows and pivots more easily; and to the overall health of the industry and even the planet.

Here's how:

Better People

More than any sum of its parts, an organization is only as great as the individuals behind it. That's especially evident post-pandemic, as we prioritize worker wellbeing more than ever before (and it's about time). At the root of every human's inalienable right to wellbeing is freedom of choice—and that's the cornerstone of adaptive architecture. Designing purpose-built spaces fosters a human-first culture, empowering people to choose the environment that serves them best at any given time and allowing them the autonomy to fulfill their needs as they arise.

Every individual deserves a welcoming place of unity and connectivity that motivates, inspires, and builds strong human connections—whether the task at hand is a board presentation, a team meeting, or collaborative connection. And we are all entitled to privacy, a place where we know we can focus uninterrupted and feel comfortable and at peace.

When spaces are designed around these specific uses, distractions are reduced and everyone works better, smarter, and happier.

In fact, employees reported being: ^[6]

75% more productive

57% more motivated

49% happier





Adaptive architecture also helps to build dynamic workspaces that don't force employees to adjust to their environment, but rather adjust to workers' needs. At ROOM we take that concept to the next level by outfitting our modular products with technology that monitors exactly how—and how much—they are being used. Built-in motion sensors calculate usage and provide real-time feedback, giving companies the intel they need to constantly improve the work experience, reconfiguring layouts at will—without invasive construction that displaces or interrupts employees. Large conference rooms aren't being

used? Divide them into smaller meeting rooms. Hot desks at capacity? Reconfigure to make room for more focused work.

It's all part of a greater mission to better support your teams, because when the workspace conforms to its people, it becomes a successful ecosystem—a place where employees feel seen and heard, respected, and connected. And that leads to happier, more productive, get-out-there-and-go-get-'em employees who don't just make an appearance. They make a difference.



Better Organizations

In the post-pandemic workforce, flexibility is key to retention. It's also the answer to organizational uncertainty. And whether you're a tech giant or a small-but-mighty start-up, uncertainty is a reality. Today, more than ever, it's impossible to know what the future will look like. The flexibility that adaptive architecture creates is crucial to every company's ability to shape and reshape its workspaces, making it easier to react to changes within our organizations—and to the changing world around us.

Adaptive architecture is a workaround to the complicated, exclusionary system that building an office has become, empowering companies to skip the red tape and long construction phase in favor of prefabricated, pre-certified systems that are ready to go on any floor plan, whether you're giving your office an upgrade or starting from scratch.

Faster to deploy and easier to customize than traditional construction, modular systems pay for themselves over time. With each reconfiguration, there is no drywall to pull down and put up. Smart spaces also have the ability to learn from the way they are being used, providing feedback to companies so they can reconfigure again and again, ensuring their spaces work from day one, and well into the future. That's not just good for your bottom line; it's good for your talent pool too, allowing you to easily expand—without compromising employee wellbeing.

Better Industry

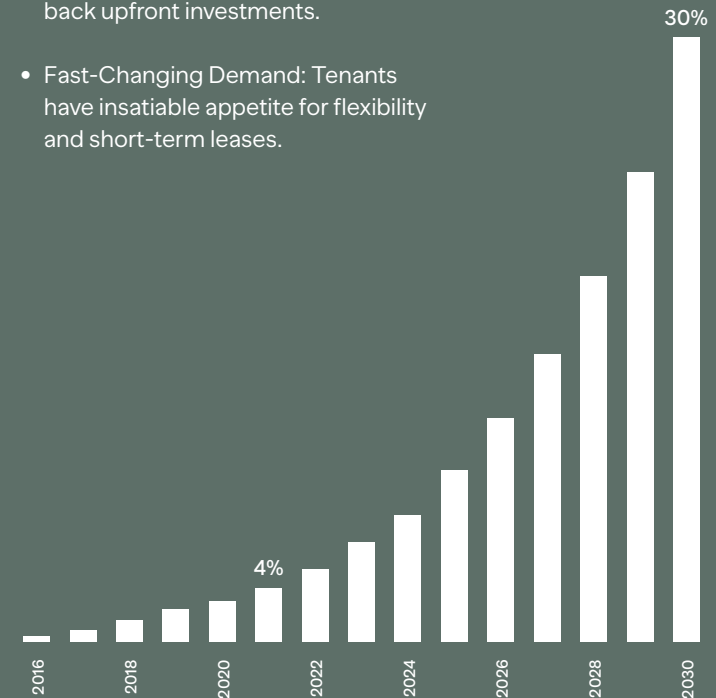
On the heels of the workspace revolution comes a systemic change—the upending of the long-term lease. As employees and employers shift to a more flexible model, landlords are faced with their own moment of reckoning: Will they change with the times or get left behind?

A pre-pandemic study performed by global commercial real estate services company JLL showed that demand for flexible and short-term leases had already skyrocketed. As a result, the total inventory of these types of leases was expected to grow from a meager 4-to-5 percent today to a whopping 30 percent over the next decade.^[7] It's already happening in full swing: Some cities, such as London, have already reached 10 percent flexible and managed workspaces. This evolution towards flexibility represents one of the largest shifts in commercial real estate in recent memory.

Demand for flexible real estate is exploding and increasing as a share of total office inventory.

There is an inherent mismatch between today's supply and demand:

- Inflexible Supply: Capex necessitates 7-10 year leases to pay back upfront investments.
- Fast-Changing Demand: Tenants have insatiable appetite for flexibility and short-term leases.



JLL (December 2021). "2021 Global Flex Space Report: The Future of Flex". JLL.

Post-pandemic, businesses around the world are prioritizing flexibility more than ever, with 41 percent of tenants expecting to increase their use of flexible space as part of a return-to-office strategy.^[7] And with office spaces around the world sitting empty, landlords are reacting—fast. In New York City alone, 40 million square feet of short-term subleases is currently available—a record high jumping 47 percent from the previous

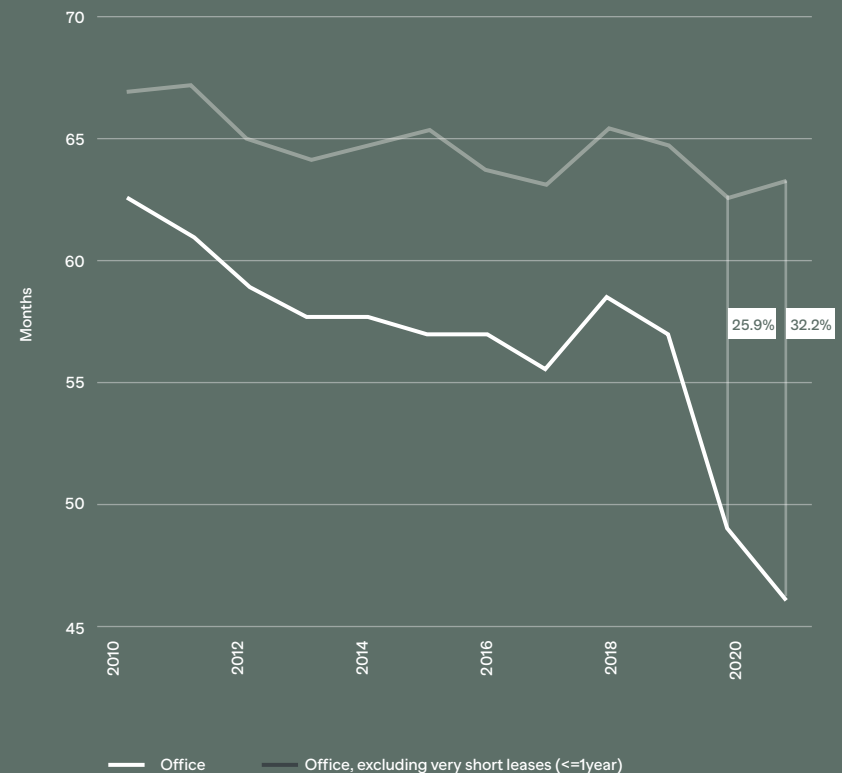
year. The result? Flexible-alternative operators are leaving their rigid competitors in the dust, reporting sharp increases in sales, with overall inquiries surpassing even pre-pandemic levels. Innovative new deal structures are requiring shorter commitments and offering greater control of space. The writing is on the wall: **Convert to flex or stay vacant.**



41% of companies expect to increase use of flex space as part of post-pandemic workplace strategy.

With the increase of short-term leases in their portfolios, many landlords are facing a new challenge: How do you build a workspace that works not only for your next tenant, but also your next five tenants? Adaptive architecture is the industry's future-proof solution, enabling landlords to plan, build, and change between tenants, replacing months of construction with days of reconfiguration. Deployed correctly, modular systems are a powerful tool that allows real estate owners to adapt to a world in constant flux, while increasing the value of their square footage and gaining a competitive edge over the rest of the market.

The percentage of very short leases in the U.S. (≤ 1 year) increased from 14.8% in 2019 to **25.9%** in 2020 and **32.2%** in 2021.^[8]



Fagan, Kevin (January 2022). "The 'Big Short' of Office Leases: What Do Shorter Terms Really Mean, and Will They Last?". Moody's Analytics.

Case Study: TF Cornerstone Washington, D.C.



ROOM's construction-free buildout workspace for TF Cornerstone in Washington, D.C., is living proof of the lasting power of adaptive architecture. Designed in collaboration with the project's architect of record, the floor plan comprised of seven floor plans, all using our simple suite of modular products, and each designed for multiple tenants at various densities, from law firms necessitating ample private workspace to accommodate client confidentiality, to tech startups that thrive on

open collaborative environments. Low-density workspaces, staggered workforce schemes, and high-density layouts were all meticulously designed with purpose—and all submitted for approval at the same time. TF Cornerstone is now ready to deploy any of the approved floor plans for every new and existing tenant, modifying quickly, easily, and at minimal cost, serving companies more efficiently, and eliminating the environmental impacts of invasive construction.



A Better Planet

The old workspace wasn't just inefficient—it was a disaster for the planet. Purpose-built office architecture claims a significant portion of the 39 percent of global carbon emissions for which building and construction are responsible.

But the answer is not to stop building; it's to start building better. 67 percent of a typical office's carbon emissions fall into the "embodied carbon" category—that is, the carbon released when materials are manufactured, processed, transported, assembled, and eventually demolished. Each phase releases more carbon, expanding our footprint again and again.

Adaptive architecture is the ultimate workaround, allowing companies to bypass conventional construction with prefabricated designs that drastically reduce embodied carbon. No more erecting walls only to break them down and put them back up again. No more building, demolishing, and rebuilding ever again.

75% of manufacturing and construction materials end up as waste, with wood, drywall, bricks, and other materials piling into our ever-growing landfills.

10% of carbon emissions are from manufacturing and construction.

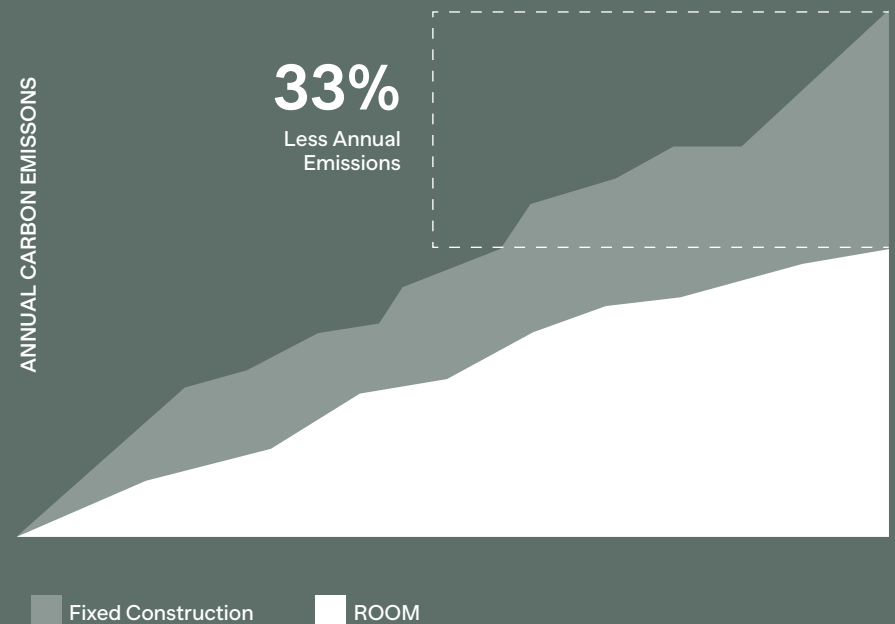
600M tons of construction debris goes to landfills every year.

8.5M tons of office furniture ends up in landfills every year in the U.S. alone.

At a time when supply chains are in disarray, prefabricated architecture is also more reliable than traditional construction. Modular systems can be designed, sourced, and assembled in one place, making it easier to use sustainable materials from a single supplier. The streamlined connection from supplier to factory to client also significantly reduces emissions during transport—one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

The future of architecture demands that we view our offices as continually evolving entities rather than replaceable purpose-built products. The way we do that is to create circularity in our environments—a process that allows us to reuse the same materials over and over, emitting little to no carbon with each iteration. Modular design does just that, giving new life to recycled materials, and making it possible to reshape an office again and again without the need for demolition or construction. Need more convincing? [A recent Columbia University study](#) found workspaces that use modular architecture are up to 33 percent more sustainable than traditional offices.^[1] And as materials get greener with innovation, that number is only going to get bigger.

Carbon Savings Year Over Year



Part III

Designing Today for Tomorrow

“With adaptive architecture you can design a workspace today, and reconfigure it for years to come as business needs change. Now you can create a space that evolves with your vision, your company and your workforce.”

Alejandra Albarrán
VP, Workspace Design & Strategy, ROOM

The Foundation of a Great Place

In the race toward the office's new era, adaptive architecture is the clear frontrunner. The last century has taught us that there is no one true perfect workspace—no single unicorn to satisfy every need, mood, and task—and that's precisely why the flexibility of modular design is the cure-all for our ailing offices.

At ROOM, we have created flexible floor plan schematics for clients including Industrious, JLL, Menlo Park's Canopy and Starbucks' innovative Tryer Center in Seattle to showcase the extent to which a construction-free, adaptable workspace can achieve a multitude of collaborative and creative spaces to successfully facilitate the ever-changing goals of an organization and its people—from day one and well into the future. Following is a closer look at how we do it.

1

Workspace Strategy

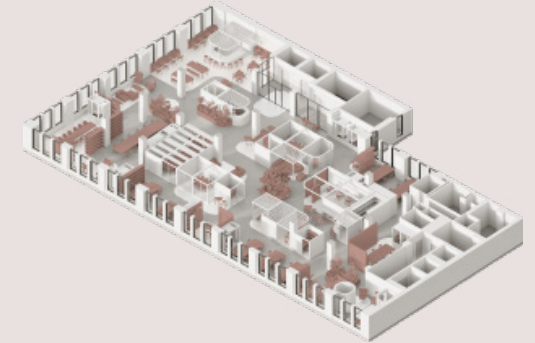
We kick off with a thorough research phase to understand company needs and workspace objectives to create a curated, holistic workspace strategy.



2

Adaptive Architecture

Leveraging modular architecture and purpose-built design, we create a balanced landscape of work environments.

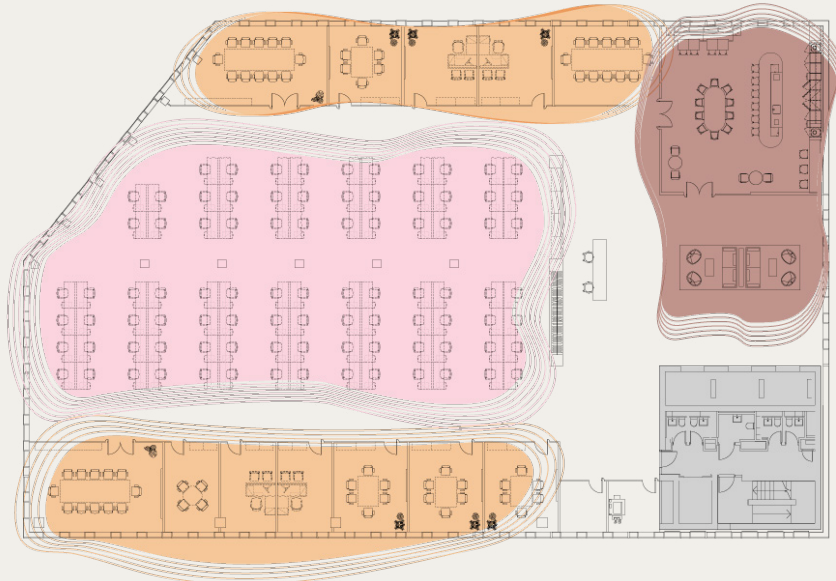


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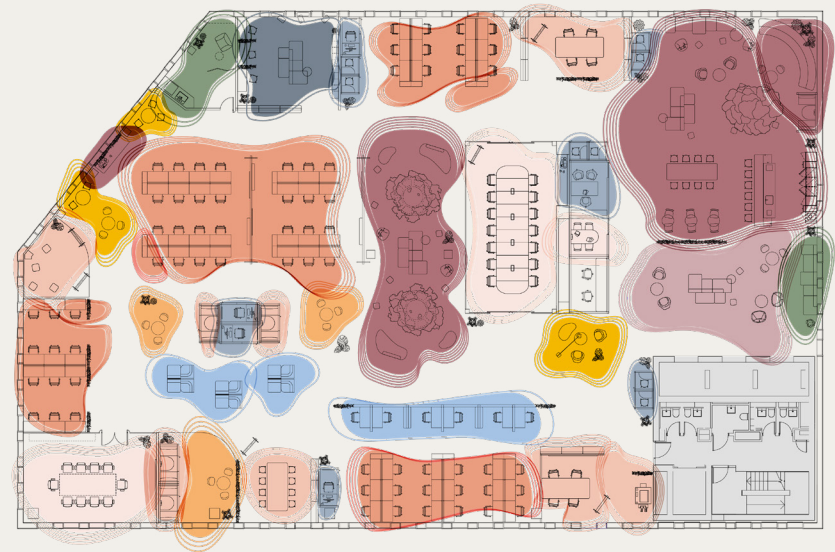
The Iterative Workspace

By gathering data and constantly learning how a space is being utilized, we can continuously ensure a better, more adaptable, work environment and experience.





Traditional / Fixed



Dynamic / Flexible

The Building Blocks of a Dynamic Workspace

Adaptive architecture provides the building blocks for dynamic office design—one that encourages workers to move spontaneously and to make use of a variety of purposeful spaces to suit their objectives at any given time. They reject the one-size-fits-all layouts of traditional offices, continuously adjusting for employee wellbeing, empowerment, and comfort.

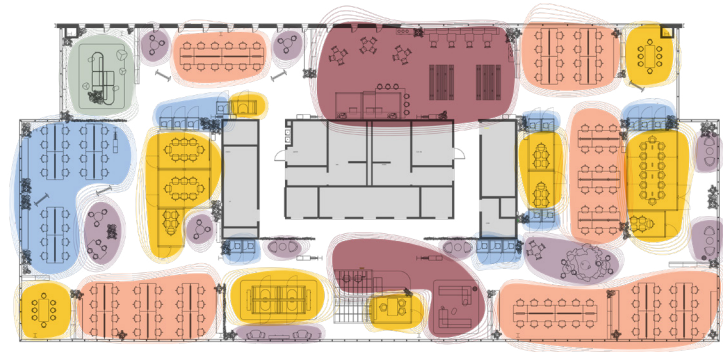
When designing dynamic floor plans, we look to the programming of a space, leveraging six main Zones which range from “hot” to “cold” in terms of acoustic levels and social interaction. The hottest Zones are high-energy atmospheres, while the coldest areas are silent spaces for concentration and relaxation. This next section showcases Zones in action, and details the specific spaces that make up each unique Zone.

Case Study: Flexible Office Provider, NYC

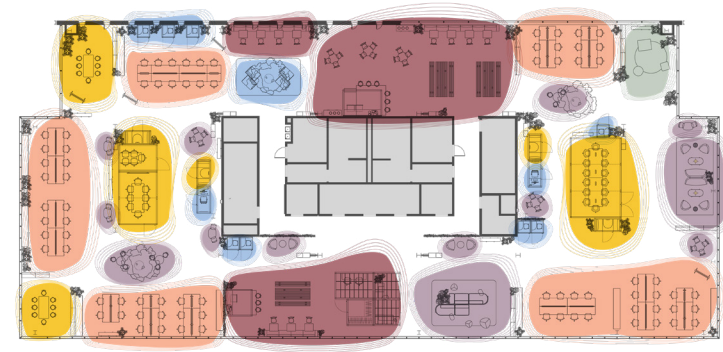
ROOM designed a series of floor plans with adaptive architecture specific to the density of the space. Whether its low or high occupancy, adaptive architecture lets you continuously evolve a space over time without the need for traditional construction.



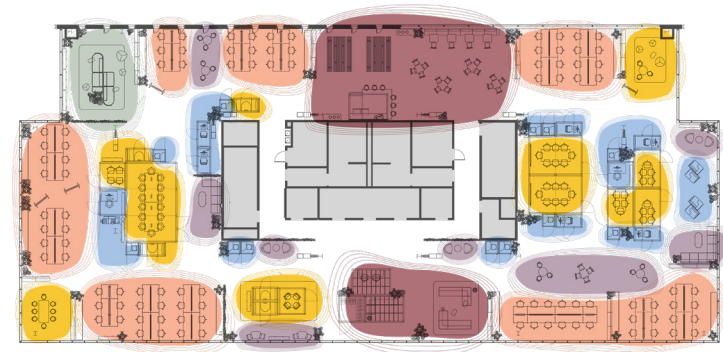
Original floor plan - Density 122p



Proposal no.1 - High Density 122p



Proposal no.2 - Mid Density 98p



Proposal no.3 - Low Density 78p

Community

While the traditional office was built around desks, the flexible office makes ample room for spaces that promote genuine human connection. These Community Zones act as “serendipity machines,” with engaging common spaces that increase the likelihood of people crossing paths. An evolution of the old watercooler, they are the high-energy social hub where great ideas (and predictions about *The Bachelor*) are often born.

- **The Café**

Meet for breakfast or lunch. Share ideas over coffee. Chat about the weekend. The café is a casual meeting area where we have the freedom to caffeinate, brainstorm, gossip, and get together.

- **The Lobby**

Featuring plenty of seating options and amenities, this vibrant welcome space provides opportunities for serendipitous encounters. We all come and go through the lobby, making it a place of fortuitous connections, but this space also doubles as a casual gathering space or laid-back setting for solo work.

- **Community Hub**

Located in a central space, creating a “go-to” vibe that all employees can access, the Community Hub includes lounge seating and coffee tables. Come as you are: All work styles are welcome here.

- **Coffee Corner/ Snack Bar**

There may or may not be a watercooler in this modernized space, but the function is similar. Allow for community engagement—and plenty of happy sipping and snacking—in the Coffee Corner.



Collaboration

There's no denying that face-to-face interactions are critical for the exchange of ideas and information. Collaboration Zones go a step further by accommodating specific kinds of interactions, from brainstorming sessions and stand-ups to impromptu touch-bases and quick collabs. They are the connective tissue of the office, bringing everyone together and seamlessly linking all the Zones of the workplace.

- **Warm Up/Cool Down Area**

Sometimes we need a pre-meeting prep. Other times a debrief is vital. These open spaces with tall tables and seating are located close to meeting rooms and offer a designated area to touch base before or after a group session.

- **Open Nooks**

These semi-enclosed spaces are for small meetings, collaboration, and individual work. They are typically furnished with high-backed seating—for example, classic diner-style booths—to provide a sense of visual privacy while still being part of the surrounding open space.

- **Creative Corners**

Quick meetings and stand-ups can skip the conference room and instead assemble in the Creative Corner, an informal space with writable surfaces, a video screen, and no seating—to keep it quick.



Meet

In most organizations, interactive work takes up between three and six hours of every workday. There are status meetings, information-sharing meetings, decision-making meetings, problem-solving meetings—the list goes on and each has its own requirements including the necessity of video conference technology. The following Meet Zones address them all.

- **Hybrid Meeting Rooms**

70 percent of all meetings comprise no more than four people, making large conference rooms superfluous on most workdays. Hybrid meeting rooms pose an opportunity to create more diverse uses when they are built with modular components that can be broken down to make smaller rooms for more intimate meetings or used for social activities when furniture is folded up or removed.

- **Medium and Large Meeting Rooms**

Serving the traditional function of a meeting room, these spaces are reserved for medium and larger groups (up to 14) and provide both formality and privacy. They feature wall space for writing, brainstorming, and presentations.

- **Small Meeting Rooms**

Suitable for small meetings and confidential discussions, the small meeting room is an enclosed space for two to four people, typically available on a first-come-first-served basis. They double as focus rooms.

- **Huddle Rooms**

These open meeting spaces have a laid back, comfortable feel and can function as a congregating point for teams or departments during informal discussions, relaxation, or work.



Team

Teams are the essential building blocks of a successful organization, and each needs a “home” that offers a sense of belonging, predictability, and community. It is not mandatory for team members to work in their team homes, but it is a comfortable base built for the specific work of the department, where employees can find their colleagues and feel a sense of camaraderie. The ideal Team Zone features well-equipped desks with lockers nearby, in low-noise or silent areas and away from high-traffic Zones.

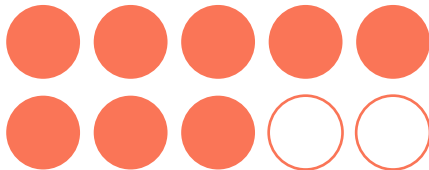
The Team Zone requires the most calculations, as employees necessitate personal space, yet remain free to utilize other Zones at their discretion. We recommend a daily maximum capacity of 80 percent, or eight workstations for every 10 employees. Team homes should also include brainstorm areas, whiteboard surfaces, and, ideally, a small lounge area for casual collaboration.

Key Ratios

Employee to Alternate Seat 1:4



Work Desk to Employee 8:10





Wellbeing

The pandemic finally made employee wellness a top priority. This relates as much to basic creature comforts—acoustics, daylight access, air quality, and thermal conditions—as it does to mental health and personal betterment, all of which are the focus of various Wellbeing Zones. Light, color, texture, and smell can all be incorporated into these Zones to create spaces that are meaningful and impactful.

- **Relax-and-Recharge Station**

Everybody needs a break sometimes. The Relax-and-Recharge Station provides a momentary reprieve, with comfortable lounge seating, warm lighting, area rugs, and visual space dividers filled with plants or books. Access to power is necessary.

- **Wellness Room**

Able to be positioned anywhere across a floor plan, Wellness Rooms function as spaces for quiet time. It is not a place for tech, but rather an island where one can find a momentary retreat from the pressures of the day. It can feature a small library, shelves with plants, and even serve as a space for after-work yoga or breathwork sessions.

- **Meditation Room**

A vital space for mental wellbeing, the Meditation Room is a physical and mental sanctuary with minimal stimulus and low lighting. Incense, white noise, soothing colors, and comforting textures can all be utilized to engage the senses for a calming impact.

- **Mother's Room**

This small room should be purpose-built for privacy and dedicated to providing a comfortable experience for new mothers. It should offer simple comforts, such as water, natural light, and plants, as well as easy access for quick use as needed.

- **Game Room**

An important yet oft-overlooked part of wellbeing is play! This area can be positioned in an open space anywhere across the floor plan to incite moments of leisure and enjoyment, with spontaneous sports like ping-pong or shuffleboard and games that exercise the brain in different ways.





Solo Work

Studies show that between two and four hours of every day should be committed to focus work, yet Solo Work Zones are the most challenging to get just right. They must facilitate deep, rich, and productive thought, with no distractions, interruptions, or unwanted noise or visual disturbances.

These Zones should be significantly removed from the shared environment and/or soundproof. Our research suggests there should be one private space for every eight employees, of which 80 percent is phone booths and 20 percent is focus rooms.

Solo Work

- **Focus Room**

This fully enclosed, soundproof room allows employees to escape the buzz of the open workspace. Suitable for activities that require deep concentration or privacy, the room should be designed to accommodate phone and video calls, as well as small meetings.

- **Phone Booth**

This fully enclosed, soundproof space provides personal privacy for employees to make phone or video calls that require a degree of focus or confidentiality. It can also be used as a means of escape from noisy activities in open-work areas.

- **Hot Desks**

These workstations can be placed anywhere throughout the floor plan, functioning as islands where employees can work on their own. Seats here have high backs to create a sense of visual privacy.

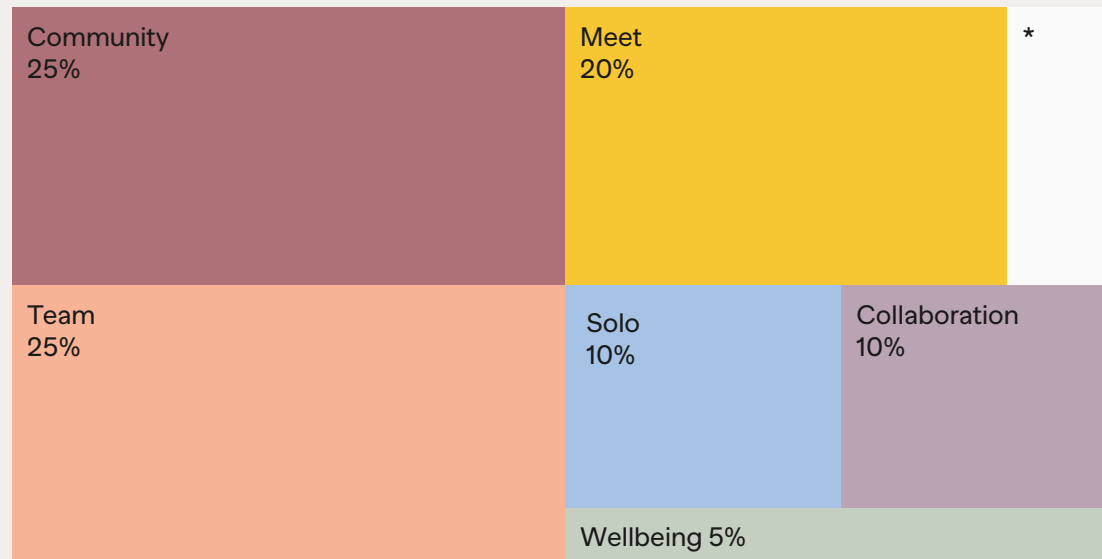
- **Private Offices**

This fully enclosed dedicated room is the sole workspace of one person, facilitating the work that individual performs daily.



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Zoning: Spatial Distribution



*The last 5% remaining is for supporting spaces.

**These values are an estimated average of spatial distribution for an open dynamic workspace and need to be evaluated based on every company and their specific needs.

Conclusion

The Future Is Now

“Our mission is to create a true alternative to fixed construction. One that is affordable to buy, fast to deploy, flexible to change and more sustainable for our planet. In essence, our purpose is to inspire a better way to work, for all.”

Morten Meisner-Jensen
Co-Founder, ROOM



When we approach our offices as malleable, evolving environments, we better support our companies and our workers. We create more livable environments to not only foster creativity and inspiration, but to embrace the humanity that makes our companies extraordinary. And we commit ourselves to something bigger and more important than all of us: a more sustainable future for our planet.

This is why we started ROOM. We are constantly evolving. Just like you. Just like the planet.

And every day we're hard at work in our own offices to create the next-generation modular workspaces for your office of tomorrow.

Like you, we know it's time to rebuild—not just a new workspace but a new mindset. One that supports creativity and passion, nurtures individuality and originality, and paves the way for the best version of your team—and your company—now and always. The future is coming.

We'll see you there.

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