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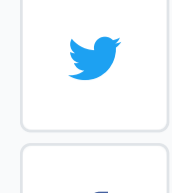
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Aug 7, 2018 **Issue #13 - Workplace Design: Looking busy vs. doing best work?**

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"The physical environment is constantly giving messages that influence behaviour, and you can either use that as an organization or ignore it. Sadly, the majority of organizations ignore it" - **Despina Katsikakis**

Despina [goes](#) on to say "We know now that open-plan offices tend to be the antithesis of collaboration, sometimes actually promoting isolation. But if you begin to layer the work environment with places that support connection, places that allow people to be open and spontaneous and accessible to one another, you can actually create the opportunity for innovation through collaboration."

Most of us have worked in spaces where it was "design-first, people second" (whereby sometimes for aesthetic reasons, but often times out of efficiency, e.g. cost per m2 per employee), often to the detriment of productivity, employee engagement and well-being.

For fun, tick-off if any of the following applies to your work experience:

- loud open-office spaces where employees would IM rather than get up to talk,
- earphones are considered a survival tool,
- high-heels cause ear- (not only toe-) cringing reactions,
- meeting rooms are blocked by folks trying to concentrate,
- "do not disturb" signs or "in another meeting" aren't deterrents,
- not getting a mobile desk or trolley in time results in Desk for the Day being a corner near a power outlet,
- virtual teams have more insight than the people in the same building,
- work fundamentals and updates are "somewhere on the intranet"
- the office Fußball table is used for spare-parts or as storage space,
- web meetings are 3 people talking through a power-point presentation and the other attendees are listening (aka. multi-tasking)
- installed glass walls get retrofitted with milk-glass stickers for privacy

Dilbert there is hope - it can be different! This week's issue focuses on workplace design for collaboration, care and control are expressed in the social and individual spaces people work in - both physically and virtually. There is some great work being done in this space to transform from spaces originally designed for efficient paper flow to designing for information and collaboration flow. It is the designing difference between "looking busy" and doing your best work.

Your Work Environment and You



Open office plans have a surprising effect on communication at work – Quartz at Work

"Humans are not like insects" - this is actually revolutionary thinking as for many years, the idea of collective intelligence when humans are forced to share space dictated a lot of work in office design.

(Albeit the question is valid as to why the examples of dorms or US-congress for collective intelligence did not set academic alarms off but alas I digress). Great article highlighting research insights and recommendations for moving forward.

[qz.com](#)



Open offices can lead to closed minds - Bartleby

Many workplace designs are more about cost-cutting than collaboration. This article delves deeper into the research on open-space layouts, hot-desking, and cubicles and ends with the call-out of "workers of the world, unite. So you can

separate again."

[www.economist.com](#)

Psychology Of The Office Space

A detailed infographic that explains how your office space plan influences motivation, productivity, and overall employee satisfaction. For those interested, there is a second infographic on productivity [factors](#) (like lighting, clutter, temperature)



[www.15five.com](#)



Cubicles don't work. How architectural design affects your brain | Scott Wyatt | TEDxSeattle -

Scott explains how architectural design can solve—or make—problems. It is an argument for driving towards smarter workspaces, responsive cities.

Scott argues for design to take into account the primal human need for prospect or refuge. He highlights some great examples where this has worked.

[www.youtube.com](#)

Designing for the Future@work

A future landscape of flexibility and choice | Despina Katsikakis

The article is speaking from the heart to talk to what is important when designing spaces in which people collaborate, have a sense of purpose and community (article starts on page 8 of the magazine *Work&Space*, (if you are into infographics, see *Frederick Taylor and a Dodo on page 9*). Despina goes into the shift from how value can be extracted from employees to how value can be instilled. Which is a very different design practice.

[workplaceinsight.net](#)



How we can create unique workspaces | Nigel Oseland | TEDxSurreyUniversity

In a world where personalities are so different, why do we design as if one work space fits all? The best zoo's know this - how can this knowledge be used to redesign existing spaces? Nigel uses the Big 5 personality traits to research different work

preferences.

[www.youtube.com](#)

How To Design An Office That Actually Makes You Better At Work

You don't need a climbing wall or popcorn machine but rather an environment that supports learning and collaboration. Huh. A quick overview of a few simple things for everyone to get the most out of their workplace.



[www.fastcompany.com](#)

Question of the Week

What changes in workplace design have really helped you be better able to do your best work?

A special shout out to my friend, [Patrycja-Jadwiga Sankowska](#), who is taking office design quite a bit further to urban layouts (smart cities, [responsive cities](#)) being the change we wish to see in the world.

Thanks everyone - and have a great week!

Best regards,

Liz

Did you enjoy this issue? [Yes](#) [No](#)



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