

Q5

What will be role of the office space and how do these changes impact the decisions to be taken by Real Estate professionals?

As organisations receive more requests than ever to work from home or away from the office, it sharpens the focus on their footprint and the cost of office space. If fewer people want to work in a centralised office location 5 days a week, is the best use of that real estate footprint the provision of dedicated desks? Probably not. Instead, organisations should be thinking about what it is that they want to support their people to do when they come together in this central office location, as well as to work from home or a third space. This decision should be shaped by an organisation's strategic and cultural imperatives. The question then becomes: what is the best way to support these in our workplace? If you are making a significant investment into real estate, it should be returning a significant advantage. Aligning the way your people work to best support the realisation of organisational vision, values, and strategies are where that value is unlocked. Providing dedicated desks to employees just because that is the way it has always been done, is not.

Organisational
Vision
Values
Strategies



Activity Based Working as a workplace strategy delivers a win-win. It absolutely can support cost savings at a time when the bottom line is pivotal. It can also support people to work with more flexibility and provide time and place independence which ultimately creates higher employee engagement. A variety of work settings are required to shape an organisation's workplace strategy around the activities that need to be supported. These work settings can include a co-creation/whiteboarding space, formal meeting spaces, a place for sensitive/confidential in-person conversations, places that enable reflection, quiet or high focus zones allowing people to be free of disruption, and a place to do more day-to-day transactional activities. Not all of these need to be supported in a central office location.

The exact formula for this Blending of Workstyles will need to be tailored with the organisation, business function, and country in which it operates in mind. Equally important will be the cultural and behavioural adaptations needed to make the Blended Work styles a reality. Senior leaders, managers, and employees at all levels will need to become comfortable to run and be part of Blended Teams.

This will be a challenge and opportunity for many teams to transform and evolve into highly-adaptable systems of work.

Collaboration, when everyone is in the office, is one paradigm, collaboration when everyone dials-in remotely is another paradigm but they both assume some level of 'equality' as everyone is interacting using the same medium and environment. Collaboration in Blended Teams, when some might be working from home, some might be from a remote location and some might be in the office requires not only new collaboration skills, and capability to bond and connect over different mediums, but it requires a superior level of awareness, inclusion and encouraging differences.

A study in progress by [Leesman](#)⁴ which has collected to date 10,600+ responses (as of 29 May 2020) indicates that 78% of employees feel that their home facilitates them to work productively compared to 63% agreeing that their workplace supports them to be productive. If we acknowledge that people can do some degree of their functions more successfully at home or from another location, why provide a 1:1 ratio of desks and dedicated space at a central office location? **Veldhoen + Company** believes that the future workstyle of organisations will be to offer Blended working options where employees can elect to work from home, smaller 'satellite' like offices closer to home, and other remote options to enable the agency of employees to choose the best location that supports the tasks that they need to do.

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