

Q7

With all these changes, are we moving towards a world with no offices?

The purpose of an office should be to support organisations to best deliver their strategic, operational, and cultural objectives. Our teams have been supporting organisations to challenge themselves to answer the question “Why have an office?” for over 30 years. This is a deliberately provocative question (as there are many reasons to have an office), many of which COVID-19 brought into stark focus in recent months. The most common responses we hear from clients and our own APAC employees are:

- Creative brainstorming and co-creating with colleagues;
- Social (re)connection;
- Maintaining culture;
- Maintaining an emotional connection with the brand and organisation;
- Mentoring and learning in groups, etc

This is by no means an exhaustive list and for all employees that are keen to go to the office for collaborative activities, there are as many employees that would rather use the office for deeper focus work in the future. It is all teams, activities, and organisation-specific, and looking at the picture using the Activity based Working ‘lens’ will provide a rich and informative new way to view ‘work’.

COVID-19 presents organisations and individuals with the unique opportunity of disruption to deliberately review their thoughts on their central office location and its purpose. Given the strong appetite of employees to have greater flexibility in the way that they work, including working from home/other locations when it makes sense for the task at hand, it is no longer sensible for organisations to pay a premium for 1:1 allocated desks. Indeed, for some organisations, it may altogether no longer make sense to have a central office.

During these times of increasing uncertainty, for those organisations who will benefit from having a centralised office as part of their future ways of working (we expect that many will), the more flexibility in ways of working, location of work and IT tools an employer can offer, the better. We encourage employers to engage with their people to co-design the functionality of the office space to best support the activities they need to carry out, keeping in mind that the home office is now a bonafide worksetting.

More than ever before, exercising one's agency in planning their day, taking personal responsibility for how they work, and their boundaries are crucial factors in high employee engagement.



Creating a Better World of Work Now, for the Future

Veldhoen + Company's mission to Create a Better World of Work hasn't changed, but the focus, conditions and priorities have shifted as a result of Covid-19. The pandemic has been a catalyst for organisations to become deliberate about why their old ways of working no longer serve them.

Our ambition has always been to co-create new, activity-based ways of working that encourage teams to connect, individuals to flourish and organisations to thrive. Never has an activity-based approach been more valuable. Instead of merely putting out fires and hoping for survival, an activity-based application of three critical lenses: Security, Self-Direction and Universal Compassion helps to pioneer more adaptable organisations. With adaptability, organisations can ensure survival, while building the capability needed to thrive in an increasingly unpredictable world.

How can Veldhoen + Company support your organisation in Asia Pacific

- Post-COVID-19 Workplace Strategy advisory services including functional design briefs for adaptable and safe working environments

- HR policies and programs linked to Blended Working with benefits and incentives linked to mixing workstyles of various teams and employees
- Blended Workstyle Strategy (a blend of working from home, the office, and 'third spaces') to build an adaptable organisation. This includes a thorough analysis of your teams, collaboration patterns, and preferences for remote vs non-remote working to identify what is your adaptable balance as an organisation.
- Assess the team cohesion factor of your teams, develop and deliver tailor-made programs to train managers to coach and lead high-performing blended teams effectively.
- Holistic Wellbeing Strategy and Program for your employees
- Feasibility Studies to assess the teams' readiness to move towards a blended way of working. This study also supports the organisation to identify the various spaces required to best support its activities.
- Training programs for People Managers to create the necessary cultural conditions for adaptable teams.
- Teams training to develop and strengthen Team Connections
- Self-discretion training programs to strengthen individual employee skills to identify, manage, plan, and carry out the work activities in the most productive way from any location they choose to work from.
- Facilitate inspiration and engagement sessions with Senior Stakeholders to explore what the learnings of the COVID-19 disruption mean for the purpose of your workplace.