

FLEXIBILITY @WORK!



Unique, unprecedented, extreme... The effects of the coronavirus crisis will undoubtedly mark a turning point in the way we all work, giving rise to greater flexibility and fast-tracking us all along the path of change. Why? Because that flexibility will simultaneously address a number of previously identified trends: the ever-growing demand for more independence and mobility amongst employees, the increasingly widespread adoption of teleworking, and the search for new organisational structures to help firms roll out digital tools and tackle the challenges of innovation and agility. In this respect, making changes to our workspaces demonstrates a new ability to explore, share, learn, work together and, indeed, move with the times.

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INTERVIEW

WITH PHILIPPE BROCARD

General Manager
of Maison&Objet



Tapee - Nowy Styl @DR

September will mark the return of the zone you inaugurated last year dedicated to work. Is Work! now an integral part of Maison&Objet?

Last year, we launched an initiative that turned the spotlight on workspace design by setting up a new themed zone. The success of Work! in 2019 underscored our conviction that the issues surrounding office design represent a significant challenge for a growing number of firms. The transformation of work and its “delocalisation” driven by digital developments, new generations’ expectations, the progressive blurring of the lines between people’s home and work lives, the growing need to work together as teams... All these factors are comprehensively redefining the workplace concept.

The aim of the Work! zone is to address all the new challenges companies now face when designing their workspaces, and to make Maison&Objet the trade fair that reinvents these new working environments.

The COVID-19 crisis has triggered the introduction of new working methods or encouraged their more widespread use. What are the likely consequences of these “experiences”?

Experts are unanimous in saying that this crisis is set to accelerate previously identified trends. The fact that it is possible to work efficiently no matter where you are, at home, in a public space or at the office, is rapidly becoming clear to employees and business owners alike.

INTERVIEW WITH PHILIPPE BROCARD



Sedus Cube @DR

The ability to move freely between different living spaces that were previously so highly compartmentalised is undoubtedly set to intensify, with a mixing-and-matching of codes becoming more overtly present in office design and when designing spaces at home to foster effective teleworking.

It sounds as though workspace design is set to become a major topic over the coming months and years...

Our whole community, and notably the designers, architects and interior designers for whom Maison&Objet is such a benchmark event, has the ability to help facilitate these changes and to provide innovative solutions by anticipating new work habits.



Sedus @DR

What's new for Work! 2020?

We're keen to make Work! a longstanding fixture, so we have decided to dedicate a specific show sector to the topic rather than simply a theme. Our aim is to give brands the opportunity to take full advantage of the trade fair's top-quality marketing and reach to showcase their collections and innovations to a broad global audience, which includes architects as well as firms' in-house project managers. We will retain all the core features that made Work! so successful last year and that represent Maison&Objet's signature philosophy: give brands and experts the time and space to communicate. The conference programme will turn the spotlight on technical, creative and business issues to offer inspiration and insights into all the topics related to the workspace environment. There will be a selection of the market's most outstanding new finds ('What's New?' zone), and industry professionals will once again be encouraged to forge connections in our business meeting zone, a convenient space that gives them the opportunity to have a quick chat about their upcoming projects.

SMART WORKING SHOWS SIGNS OF GATHERING PACE

With so many countries in lockdown, the coronavirus crisis has left the majority of employees with no option but to work from home. An event that will doubtlessly serve the Smart Office concept, accelerating its growth.

“Smart offices must be inspiring, in other words extremely simple and tailored to our physical and mental physiology.”

Charlotte Lardinois, Génie des Lieux

To enable thousands of firms to stay up and running all around the world, teleworking has become the solution of choice faced with the coronavirus. Would we be right in saying there's been a rupture in the way we work? Alain

20-30%

The estimated percentage of teleworkers in Europe compared to the USA.

d'Iribarne, economist, labour sociologist and Chairman of ACTINEO's Scientific Board, deems the term inappropriate: “The crisis has simply turned weak, previously identified signals, into strong signals. There won't be any form of rupture, but we will witness the acceleration of a pre-existing shift towards more

remote working. This period of full-time teleworking (and in lockdown, nonetheless) has provided a widespread opportunity for employees, managers and decision-makers to experience the approach first-hand. At all hierarchical levels, people are discovering that working remotely in this way is not only possible,

but can even be a win-win solution.”

The assumption we will witness a significant increase in teleworking once the crisis is finally over would consequently appear well-founded. For the moment, however, suboptimal conditions prevent teleworking from being truly efficient: inadequate equipment, un-user-friendly software and, above all, employees who all too often lack the necessary training. All these issues will need to be resolved if smart working is to truly come into its own. “Co-working tools, such as veritable virtual meeting rooms, and a new breed of working practices will need to be introduced to the teleworking toolbox,” comments Charlotte Lardinois, Project Director at Génie des Lieux, who also highlights the difficulties firms are likely to encounter in getting all generations to embrace a single way of working that is underpinned by technology. It's not necessarily age-related, but more to do with a worker's propensity and ability to use today's digital tools. “Not all firms will have the capacity to power forward at the same pace” Lardinois goes on to add.

Managerial methods, which vary from one country to the next, will probably also affect the speed at which the process happens. In d'Iribarne's eyes, the best-equipped countries will be those whose management style is based on trust, such as the Netherlands or Scandinavian countries. Other parts of the world will find themselves having to re-think their managerial approach (starting with France and its management built on distrust) if smart working is to drive forward true economic and social progress.

SMART WORKING SHOWS SIGNS OF GATHERING PACE



3 QUESTIONS TO CHARLOTTE LARDINOIS

Charlotte Lardinois is Project Director at Génie des Lieux.

How can we create virtual workspaces that address all the challenges of

teleworking: performance, collaboration and cohesion?

What's absolutely crucial is rolling out different tools that incorporate a strong human element. We also need to rethink the way we currently use existing digital tools. Juggling multiple remote interfaces (email, audio, video, etc.) means we often find ourselves interacting whilst simultaneously completing tasks, resulting in more complexity than clarity.

Are there already any high-performance "web office" solutions on the market?

Yes, but in the sense of subscribe-to-use services that supply an address, register the firm, provide a secretarial service and offer ad-hoc use of a brick-and-mortar

office space. Everyone knows that setting up a virtual working environment is far more complex for big firms. When it comes to designing highly complex virtual spaces, we look to the video game world for inspiration. Virtual reality offers a representation of the space, as well as being able to integrate timelines and journeys alongside informal group events.

How can managers remotely manage their team?

Tools and benchmarks already exist to implement a remote management solution, and we're set to see a rise in these kinds of services. E-learning's also a possibility, and interfaces such as the virtual Obeya Room are already up and running to drive group creativity. Then there are the issues of cross-functionality, informal interaction and non-verbal communication for which the virtual world still has no answer. And lastly, there's serendipity, that fortuitous moment when an unplanned exchange ends up sparking a useful idea, which can currently only happen in the physical world.



Génie des lieux @DR

WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION

A 2020 SPACE ODYSSEY

Flexibility, nomadic working, a quest for well-being... The aspirations of today's employees are upending firms' organisational structures and calling into question the way in which the working environment is designed, even to the point of querying whether the office should remain a workspace!

The classical unities of time, space and action, which have always dictated how firms the world over are run, are in the process of falling out of fashion. Annihilated by digital technology and today's more nomadic lifestyles, they can no longer govern the working day of employees hungry for independence. Work where I want, when I want and how I want: such is the motto by which everyone now strives to live. In these circumstances, the workstation "at the office" is an increasingly worthless benchmark, notably for new generations who are driving firms to reinvent the entire working environment. "The current trend is for a reduction in the amount of space dedicated to workstations and even, with the flex office concept, to provide fewer workstations than employees. The space is reworked to foster togetherness, co-working and service" analyses Camille Kiejman, Head of Innovative Spaces at Fabernovel. The "traditional" open-plan office with its regimented lines of grey desks is now finding itself being broken up into a multitude of spaces, each earmarked for a different use (concentration, meetings, leisure, relaxation...), encouraging the kind of nomadic behaviour employees are so keen to adopt.

Nomadic working is also on the rise outside the office walls thanks to

"The space is reworked to foster togetherness."

Camille Kiejman

increasingly well-grasped and ever-more efficient teleworking solutions, whose development will likely rise dramatically on the heels of the COVID-19 crisis.

"Lockdown-enforced teleworking has led everyone to question the real value of travelling to work. What's the point of wasting time sitting in what can be a highly polluting vehicle only to then just sit in front of a laptop on finally reaching the office?" On hearing Camille Kiejman's words, our traditional working habits do, indeed, seem thoroughly absurd.

If individual work can (and soon will?) be primarily done from home or, indeed, some other location (a public place or co-working space just a stone's throw from the employee's home), firms will be left with no choice but to take a closer look at the nature, purpose and value of their office space. Will brick-and-mortar premises end up becoming nothing more than places where employees gather to socialize and chat informally in recreational spaces? Will they become training centres, places where employees share their knowledge and present their projects? Will they be transformed into design "showrooms" that give employees and clients the opportunity to be immersed in the brand experience? There will clearly be no one-size-fits-all answer. It will be up to each individual firm to take the reins and shape its own story based on its culture, field of activity and strategy.

WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION A 2020 SPACE ODYSSEY



3 QUESTIONS TO CAMILLE KIEJMAN

Camille Kiejman is Head of Innovative Spaces at FaberNovel, a global firm that creates digital products and services.

Flexibility, nomadic working... What is the risk for firms who don't tailor their spaces to the aspirations of today's employees?

The new economy is driving the automation of numerous professions. In order to maintain their competitive edge, firms must tap into the ideas and creativity of high-potential employees. But to attract that kind of talent, they need to give them what they want. And what they want isn't cereal and a football table or an impressive private office on the building's top floor. Today's generations are looking for flexibility and services that will make their lives easier. Workspaces that are aligned with those aspirations help make a firm attractive to top talent and enhance the brand's image as an employer.

Workspaces are now embracing the codes of the home environment in a drive to keep employees happy and boost performance. Should the office environment look just like home?

Firms should not attempt to replicate the home environment, but what they can do is incorporate certain domestic elements in order to give the workspace a soul. Each firm must, however, introduce these elements in alignment with its own codes and values. The right kind of workspace is one that reflects the firm, its product, its business lines and its employees.

"Today's generations are looking for flexibility and services that will make their lives easier."

Camille Kiejman



Office FaberNovel @Julie Anslau

Faced with the rise in teleworking, what questions should firms currently be asking themselves in terms of space management?

Questions definitely need to be asked. If the office is no longer the place where everyone works, then what is it going to be used for? Before inviting some or all of their employees to make the switch to teleworking, firms must first of all ascertain which jobs can be done online and which jobs can only be done "physically", as maintaining coherence and cohesion within the firm is absolutely crucial.

WORKSPACES

7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020

Today's health crisis and the resulting global lockdown will undoubtedly end up accelerating changes to the way in which we work. Workspace design, which holds a mirror up to the new ways in which firms are managed and organised, is going to have to adapt. We shine a light on 7 avenues well worth exploring.

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



1 – OMNIPRESENT YET INVISIBLE TECHNOLOGY

Nothing must be allowed to impede employee hyperconnectivity. Access to the digital environment must be constant and fluid, irrespective of whether the individual is sitting at their workstation or in a communal space, outside or inside, at the office or at home. Fluid and invisible, of course, as the age of shy technology has dawned!

“Connected technology, yes, but that delivers a totally seamless experience: sensors, artificial intelligence and intuitive solutions. And connected technology that fosters well-being, with desks and chairs that remember users and adapt to their specific body shape and size.”

Vincent Grégoire (NellyRodi)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



Tapee Nowy Styl @DR

2—ERGONOMICS IS KING

Workstation well-being and comfort are key, but that's not all. Ergonomics is also about having access to a variety of personal and shared spaces. It's about working in an environment that is conducive to both individual and communal work and having the ability to connect and disconnect at will!

“The biggest challenge is successfully creating environments that feel “just like home”, but that incorporate the notion of workplace ergonomics.”
Frédérique Miriel (Colliers)

“Furnishings are flexible and suited to a variety of activities. A desk must be as simple as possible in terms of its materials, contours and style. But it must also be perfectly ergonomic, equipped with wireways, hooks and cable feeds, and be the kind of format that is tailored to new work habits.”
Elise Lefeuvre (Morning Coworking)

“Technological components may be impressive, but it's comfort that truly prevails!”
Morgan Kanicki (Nowy Styl)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



3 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OR BUST!

Increasingly demanding, increasingly vigilant: today's employees expect their firm to be visibly and actively engaged in every aspect of CSR, and are increasingly sanctioning employers who fail to hit the mark. It goes without saying that the workspace is expected to be sustainable, too.

“Sustainable development, and notably championing the circular economy, must become a priority in the office design sphere: furnishings made from recycled, sustainable and eco-sourced materials must become the new norm.”
Clement Alteresco (Morning Coworking)

“New generations are highly engaged and driven by clear convictions regarding environmental and social issues. They want employers to show more respect and want to see them adopt a more virtuous approach to the working environment, underpinned by a more ethical and moral outlook.”

Vincent Grégoire (NellyRodi)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



4 – WORKSPACE HYGIENE: TIME TO COME CLEAN

The coronavirus crisis has added a brand new challenge to the shared workspace mix: what can be done to improve workplace hygiene without impacting workers' freedom of movement and the way in which the space is used? Avenues to explore include using materials with anti-microbial properties (such as copper, brass or treated fabric), introducing personal protective measures such as doing away with the traditional handshake, installing transparent screens between workstations, and introducing more contactless solutions (such as voice-operated lifts, automatic doors, etc.). Looks like it's time to innovate!

“Cleaning no longer entails just giving the space a quick Hoover, but rather giving workstations a much deeper clean. That calls for the use of easy-to-clean materials and for cleaning contracts to be reviewed...”
Alain d'Iribarne (Actineo)

“The basic rules of hygiene are ingrained in the workspace sharing principle. It would seem only logical to give your flex office desk a quick clean before leaving!”
Morgan Kanicki (Nowy Styl)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



5 – FLEXIBLE TIME, MODULAR SPACES

The demand for flexibility is an underlying trend that may have been around for a while but is currently gathering pace. The notion of the working environment is gradually replacing that of the workspace, now deemed too restrictive. Employees want to be able to move around and have the option to sit, stand or even lie down to work... Who needs a workstation? People *are* the workstation!

“All offices used to be functional. Today, we’re starting to question the function of offices.”

Gabriel Abdelhakmi-Gaisne (Sedus)

“Whenever people want to connect, they must be able to do so in a dedicated, suitably furnished space: a phone box for making calls, inspiring and spacious meeting rooms, cosy spaces for informal briefings...”
Clement Alteresco (Morning Coworking)

“It’s about seeing the workspace as an environment, a place where people can connect, a place that’s full of resources, a place through which to journey rather than being simply a static space.”

Charlotte Lardinois (Génie des Lieux)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



6 — THE WORKSPACE AS A REFLECTION OF THE EMPLOYER BRAND

How can firms entice employees into the office? What can be done to attract and retain up-and-coming talent? If these oh-so strategic objectives are to be achieved, the creation of an alluring working environment must be fully aligned with the firm's values and mission. Coherence is key!

“What the younger generation wants is spontaneous, sincere, vibrant workspaces that have a real identity.”
Vincent Grégoire (NellyRodi)

“Workspaces help make a firm attractive and are powerful tools in enhancing the brand's image as an employer. A workplace's layout, design and services reflect the organisation of work within the firm.”
Camille Kiejman (FaberNovel)

“From the reception space to the scent, experience has become as crucial in office design as it is in the retail sphere.”
Claire Riondel (Morning Coworking)

WORKSPACES 7 AVENUES TO EXPLORE IN 2020



7 – THE ADVENT OF THE “HOSPITALITY SPACE”?

The osmosis that now exists between the home and work environments is gathering pace, leading to the hybridisation of spaces within firms and co-working venues. Do we go to the office to work? Of course. But we also want to be able to have a chat in cosy surroundings, grab a bite to eat in the cafeteria, expand our minds in the reading corner, or snatch forty winks in the nap pod.

“Informal spaces, such as the cafeteria or the gaming room, allow employees to take a real break, which helps boost creativity.”

Morgan Kanicki (Nowy Styl)

“It is vital firms provide access to extremely flexible spaces that employees can use as they see fit depending on their feelings, their mood, their inclinations and the current climate.”

Vincent Grégoire (NellyRodi)

“As is the case in hotels, zones where people can connect have become the beating heart of today’s working environment: reception areas, cafeterias, communal kitchens, vast meeting rooms and events spaces are all hubs that are keeping the modern-day office alive and powering forward.”

Clement Alteresco (Morning Coworking)

WORKPLACE HEALTH

WHAT'S THE LATEST WORKSPACE "PRESCRIPTION"?

Changes in the way we work are giving rise to new concerns about health and well-being. On top of the psychosocial and musculoskeletal risks that have long since been identified, the age of workers and the mental implications of telework are also now cause for concern...

Noise triggering stress, a lack of personal space giving rise to anxiety, chairs provoking back problems: the seemingly endless list of employee complaints is inspiring office designers and manufacturers to up the innovation ante. We're consequently seeing an ever-increasing number of sound-proofed moveable partitions, isolation pods and

work pods that break up the otherwise open-plan space, and lounge-style seating areas in which to relax.

A tsunami of creativity to help eclipse the most unpleasant aspects of working in an open-plan office.

But a new range of challenges have also begun to emerge, highlighted in a 2019 report by the International Labour Organisation.* These

include people having longer careers, driving the need for a multi-generational approach to workspaces that enables people with varying physiological needs to work together. "The Dutch designers at Studio Lonk have done some extremely inspiring research into Senior Spaces, focusing on design solutions and specific furnishings for older employees, and sparking debate on a key topic," comments



Play&Work - Nowy Styl @Nowy Styl

Vincent Grégoire from design consultancy NellyRodi.

Another key topic – the importance of which will only become fully apparent once we all come out of lockdown – is teleworking, whose adoption is likely to gather speed given the current context. Alain d'Iribarne, economist, labour sociologist and Chairman of ACTINEO's Scientific Board, has a word of warning: "Workplace health is closely linked to the quality of social relations within the team or department. Poor relations can have serious pathological consequences. Teleworking, if done in a confined environment, can have adverse and harmful effects. It is consequently vital to work in lots of different places and seek out opportunities to connect." It would seem that working from home full time

"New generations are far more demanding when it comes to Worklife Harmony." Alain d'Iribarne

76%
of French people
working from
home during
lockdown missed
their usual
workspace.

Coronavirus & Telework survey,
Deskeo, April 2020

WORKPLACE HEALTH WHAT'S THE LATEST WORKSPACE "PRESCRIPTION"?

isn't where we are all headed. The challenge: manage to find a workplace harmony that strikes the right balance between the office, secondary spaces and the home to foster efficient working, collaboration and socialisation. "The ability to harmoniously create unstructured systems and be multi-venue and multi-time is by no means easy. It's going to take a great deal of thought," d'Iribarne adds.

Lastly, a risk already identified by occupational physicians has found itself thrust firmly under the spotlight as a result of the coronavirus pandemic: the contact-based transmission of pathogens.

The increasingly widespread sharing of workstations only serves to amplify that phenomenon. Could introducing more antibacterial-coated equipment be the solution? "What's most important is following basic rules of hygiene. That responsibility falls to each individual. The coronavirus pandemic has made protective measures part of our everyday lives. We can only hope that continues!" adds Morgan Kanicki from Nowy Styl. Common sense, team spirit, a courteous attitude... And we'll all start feeling a lot better!

*Safety and Health at the Heart of the Future of Work, ILO, April 2019.



3 QUESTIONS TO MORGAN KANICKI

Morgan Kanicki is in charge of marketing communications and brand identity for Nowy Styl in France, a group that is European number three in office design solutions.

Is an attractive office all that's needed for employees

to feel happy at work?

Comfort and well-being are notably linked to the quality of the working environment: each individual should feel at home, with spaces that are tailored to their specific work habits and body shape. Nomadic working and the rise in co-working spaces have given rise to the need for a vast range of customisation options. That notably applies to workstations, with height-adjustable tables, adjustable office chairs, ergonomically shaped seating tailored to activity and use (concentration, relaxation, meetings), etc.

A healthy workspace is...

A well-designed workspace! That's why our approach has changed enormously over the past twenty years. We now have a much closer relationship with our clients. We get to know them so that

"You can design the most stunning space, but it will be useless if it hasn't been designed with its users' well-being in mind."

Morgan Kanicki

we can work together to design spaces that are not just attractive but tailored to each entity and to how sedentary employees are.

Home workspaces are rarely ergonomic. Will the rise of teleworking have an impact on the products manufacturers offer?

Providing B2C solutions is, indeed, an option. For the moment, we're helping employees get to grips with this new way of working by offering advice on our website and via our social media platforms. We've created the hashtag #MakeYourSpaceAtHome, which links to articles about organising your home workspace and best practices to adopt. Home workspaces are set to become a major topic for absolutely everyone - manufacturers, clients and employees.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

LE MONDE GROUP

It's a building that bridges the tracks of Austerlitz train station in Paris. And above all, it's the new head office of French press group Le Monde which, for the first time ever, has brought all its publications together under a single roof: Le Monde, L'Obs, Télérama, La Vie, Courrier International and the HuffPost.

“There’s no Group logo on the facade. The building’s architectural identity does all the talking.”

Gilles van Kote

Take a plot of land made up of three concrete slabs “suspended” above the tracks running into Austerlitz train station in Paris, decide that the central slab is unsuitable for construction, and ask architects to erect a single building there that’s over 20,000m² in size. That was the exact challenge the Le Monde Group set the day it decided to bring all its publications together under a single roof (with the exception of Le Monde diplomatique). It was Norwegian design agency Snohetta (Alexandria Library, Oslo Opera House, National September 11th Memorial Museum in New York) that decided to pick up the gauntlet, coming up with a breathtaking bridge-style building that celebrated curvaceous lines and transparency.

But the architectural challenge wasn’t the only challenge faced: bringing six publications with strong identities and each fiercely proud of their independence together under a single roof was clearly not going to be easy. “This head office building is all about showing that our press group is cemented by geographical unity

even if the publications we produce each retain their own personality and freedom. Bringing everyone together will make it easier to connect and will foster greater efficiency amongst the cross-functional teams that work on all our publications,” explains Gilles van Kote, deputy chief editor of Le Monde Group.

When it came to designing the interior, it was decided that the whole workspace should be open-plan, including the spaces used by top management (since “it’s important to lead by example!”), with identical furnishings and the same basic structure adopted for each floor. “We were keen to be able to switch-up the organisation of the space really quickly, as our teams are constantly changing. It’s also becoming increasingly common for us to work in project mode, so we needed the space to be modular.”

The various publications may well now be housed under a single roof, but their identity and independence have nonetheless been maintained, with partitions clearly marking out each editorial team’s space. All the other spaces (meeting rooms, pods for interviews, relaxation areas and so on) are communal and can be reserved for use via a digital booking system. “This building encourages and fosters mobility. We want it to be a vibrant space. In actual fact, in the southern lobby, which is an employee-only space, we’re planning to introduce “Agora”-style furniture so that people can put it to good use. A vast staircase sweeping up from lobby will also lead to the *Café de la presse* up on the first floor.”

Some of the Group’s 1,650 employees moved into their new offices in early March this year. The others will have to wait until they’re given the green light to emerge from lockdown...

MOVING WITH THE TIMES **LE MONDE GROUP**

3 QUESTIONS TO **VINCENT DUBOIS**

Vincent Dubois is CEO of architectural design agency Archimage: Workplace, Design & Build.

How did you go about designing the space to create a sense of unity whilst respecting each editorial team's identity?

We began by spending six months getting to grips with the firm, identifying what all the publications had in common and everything that made them unique, in other words the aspects that drew on their brand culture and had to be retained at all costs. That insight fuelled our decision to create standardised, uniform spaces to ensure everyone was treated alike, with “communal spaces” in the corridors, alongside the lifts and in the meeting rooms giving each editorial team the opportunity to flaunt their identity (by displaying iconic front covers, for example).

Why is it so important to actively involve employees in an office move?

Any move comes as a shock to the system. It is consequently vital to start offering employees support very early on in the process. Furthermore, an office space is a work tool. It is therefore absolutely crucial it is designed and structured to suit employees' current and future needs.

“Back in 2015, we set up employee task forces to determine what the different workspaces should be like and how we could best share the space...”

Vincent Dubois



Le Monde @Jared Chukski

“Each editorial team has its own clearly defined workspace, but the relaxation zones and meeting rooms are communal spaces. That encourages people to connect.”

Vincent Dubois

What are the new head office's key strengths?

First and foremost, I would say the building's shape: powerful, iconic and innovative against the otherwise traditional Paris skyline. Secondly, it's a building that's perfectly connected to its environment: it is designed to throw open its doors to the outside world and host events in the auditorium or the lobby, such as reader meet 'n' greets. Lastly, it's a curvaceous building with beautiful soft lines whose interior helps foster a different kind of interaction that's more harmonious, more human.

WORKPLACE QUALITY OF LIFE

TACKLING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGE

Having already been tried and tested by marketeers in the customer relations sphere, experience design is now gathering pace in the human resource world with a view to improving employee satisfaction, engagement and performance. Workspace design is one of the crucial cogs at the heart of that machine.

The concept of improving workplace quality of life first emerged in the early noughties on measuring the cost of work-related distress (stress, absenteeism, employee churn, etc.). The idea that happy employees (also) make for a happy firm has since become firmly established. It marks a significant paradigm shift after centuries of enduring arduous working conditions, and has upended employer/employee relations resulting in a more trusting, considerate working relationship and increased employee autonomy.

Reflecting this new managerial style, today's workspace is a more caring place that fosters personal and collective fulfilment. But faced with a heterogeneous workforce, keeping each individual happy is a pretty sizeable challenge. Frédérique Miriel, who heads up Colliers' Workplace, Change Management and R&D team, isn't quite so categorical: "A high-quality working environment is above all one that is perfectly tailored to employees' professions and activities. The most important thing isn't designing an amazing-looking space that's attractive, pleasant and even fun. What's key is giving employees the tools and environment they need to be as efficient as possible." Ergonomics should top the priority list! As Miriel points out:

"One of the shortfalls so often seen in flex office spaces is that they offer a single type of workstation yet numerous service zones. True diversity means offering a multitude of working positions, from sitting at an isolated desk to standing at a communal work bench."

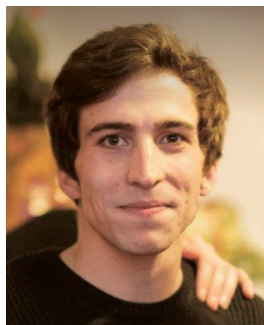
Ergonomics is also about providing tools to stay connected and work with others without being physically together, which means "efforts must be made to improve meeting room design." Lastly, ergonomics is about being able to enjoy some privacy whenever needed, such as by shutting yourself away in a concentration pod. Each individual must be given the means to create their own workplace experience.

"The workplace must incorporate sociable open-plan spaces and more private enclosed areas earmarked for a specific use but available to all." Frédérique Miriel

It goes without saying that the decor, services and relaxation areas all contribute to this experience. It is vital they are not neglected, as they are key in attracting younger workers who have a tendency to blur the lines between work and leisure. The quality of the workspace is, indeed, one of the criteria that sways their decision to join a firm (or not). Think a football table in reception is enough to seal the deal? Think again. A fulfilling working environment is one that is both meaningful and useful.

WORKPLACE QUALITY OF LIFE

TACKLING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGE



3 QUESTIONS TO RAFAËL DE LAVERGNE

Rafaël De Lavergne is the co-founder and CEO of Totem, a firm that supplies mini modular cafeterias that are connected, sociable and healthy.

You say that cafeterias are one of the firm's strategic hubs, notably fostering creativity. Why is that?

Food is always synonymous with sociability! In any office, the cafeteria is an informal space where everyone can be themselves and chat and engage with others. As such, it stimulates creativity. One of the big Silicon Valley firms has clearly figured that out, as every single one of their office spaces is less than 15 metres from a cafeteria. Plus some of them are cleverly sandwiched between two departments to facilitate communication, encouraging developers to connect with the marketing team, for example. That's exactly what Totem's modular cafeterias can do, by offering numerous different refreshment zones.



Totem @DR

What are the latest office refreshment trends?

Free food is on the rise, with employees able to help themselves to complimentary snacks or meals. 28% of firms in the USA have now adopted this system, compared to some 6% 5 years ago. We're also seeing a rise in the number of micro-markets, which allow employees to collect (and pay for) food using their office badge.

How can cafeterias and free food help improve workplace quality of life?

When someone offers you something to eat, you can't help but feel at home! Food strengthens an employee's sense of allegiance to the firm. Providing an extensive range of top-quality food also makes employees' lives easier: a father can, for example, skip breakfast to spend time getting his child up in the morning, safe in the knowledge that he'll be able to grab something to eat once he gets to work.



Totem @DR

DID SOMEONE SAY SUSTAINABLE?

Socially Conscious Consumers don't leave their conscience at the office door, and are making ever-growing demands for responsible furnishings and environmentally-friendly fittings within the workspace. Firms are also becoming increasingly aware of precisely what's at stake. Time to turn the spotlight on all things sustainable!

"What pledges has your firm made regarding social and environmental responsibility?" Vincent Grégoire from design consultancy NellyRodi hears that question nine times out of ten

when interviewing candidates for a job at the agency. In the workplace, sustainable development is no longer an option: it's a must for any firm keen to attract and retain talent and drive forward growth. And it's no longer simply a generational thing. According to an Ipsos* survey conducted in 28 countries, 74% of those surveyed are aware of the UN's sustainable development goals.

An increasingly critical eye is being cast over every aspect of our day-to-day lives, including our workspace fixtures and fittings, which are now scrutinised through the unforgiving filter of social and environmental impact.

Driven by the self-same ecological considerations, furnishing manufacturers are looking for new solutions, such as using natural wood and recycled materials, in order to develop responsible collections aligned with their clients' expectations. Framery, which specialises in sound-proofed spaces, uses FSC- or PEFC-certified plywood along with

15%
That's
the increase in
perceived
well-being that
is recorded after
incorporating
natural
elements into
the workspace.



Provence Moss - Greenmood @DR

recycled foam, baize and glass when manufacturing its acoustic pods, and has replaced PVC with cardboard. At Bene, meanwhile, 99% of the waste produced when making its untreated pine PIXEL cubes is re-used or converted into energy. Guaranteeing traceability and minimising environmental impact is now happening right across the board, from the start of the design process all the way through to the product's end of life. This, in turn, is having a knock-on effect on production costs (and consequently retail prices) and helping clients better recoup their investments. "If the client wants to use our products over the long-term and has the ability to do so, he helps reduce their environmental impact; designs, colours, quality and flexibility are consequently interlinked. What's key is creating products

DID SOMEONE SAY SUSTAINABLE?



Greenmood @DR



Greenmood Showroom @DR

that are designed to last,” comments a representative from office furnishings supplier Kinnarps.

Good for the planet... and good for me! By using fewer solvents and opting for relatively unprocessed natural materials, manufacturers are providing office workers with non-toxic furnishings, which makes for healthier air. At the end of the day, sustainable development is a “win-win-win” scenario that benefits not just the environment but the workforce and firms, too.

* Sustainable Development Impact Summit survey conducted by the Ipsos Group for the World Economic Forum, 2019.



3 QUESTIONS TO AJAY MENDA

Ajay Menda and co-founder Sadig Alekperov head up Greenmood, an eco-design firm that creates plant-based structures and objects.

What is biophilic design?

Biophilic design is all about reconnecting humans to nature by bringing natural light or water into a space via water features or by using plants. Studies have shown that biophilic design is a source of well-being for employees and boosts their productivity. It involves introducing fixtures, fittings and decorative elements such as hanging structures to improve the workspace. The idea isn't to bring nature into the space in a simplistic way, but rather to introduce one-of-a-kind creations that are truly awe-inspiring.

Greenmood uses stabilised plants. What are the merits of that particular solution?

Unlike living green walls, this type of installation is totally maintenance-free: it doesn't need to be watered and there's no need for any special lighting. The plants are mosses, lichens and other plants that have received a 100% natural treatment to stabilise them. The process allows the plants to maintain their appearance as well as their fragrance, if required.

What type of spaces are your creations designed for?

When used as a decorative element, our creations can help define a space, giving it its own identity. When used to cover the ceiling or to embellish moveable workspace partitions, stabilised mosses help reduce the propagation and reverberation of noise and minimise echoes. They make a space more visually appealing and enhance its sound quality whilst simultaneously fostering user well-being.

TALKING SENSE(S)

Colours, materials, sounds, smells... A finely tuned symphony for the senses is giving our workspaces an injection of life. At times animated and at others serene, it fosters creativity, concentration, collaboration and relaxation...

Is your workspace totally white? Then you'd better get the decorators in, quick, because a lack of colour increases the risk of burn-out. Do you like the smell of jasmine? Then fragrance your meeting rooms with this heady scent that improves concentration and is even said to give reaction times a 10% boost. Playing around with colours, materials, smells and sounds stimulates the brain, enhances creativity, fosters concentration and encourages employees to connect. As we seek to create harmonious and efficient surroundings, workspace design must consequently take account of the positive and negative effects different sensorial stimuli can have. But to ensure your space is pitch perfect, it is absolutely crucial the workspace is treated as a combination of different ecosystems (work zone, area for relaxation or informal gatherings, etc.) in order to implement the codes that are specific to each space.

Furniture manufacturer and office layout specialist Sedus has compiled a "recipe" book full of ready-made looks whose colourways and materials are perfectly suited to each space's intended use: gentle hues for individual workspaces that tap into the "soft being" vibe; warm, dynamic hues for multi-purpose creative zones; cosy, chic, urban living-style elegance for relaxation areas... "The trickiest thing is tuning in to people's perceptions which are, by their very nature, highly personal. There are certain places, like around the workstation, where a reassuring and therefore more consensual vibe is required. Elsewhere,



Milieu 2 Office - Sedus @DR

such as in informal work spaces, there's the opportunity to be more disruptive," explains Gabriel Abdelhakmi-Gaisne, CEO of Sedus. But disruptive doesn't mean disturbing. Far from it. In the corridors of a Parisian co-working space, a "birdsong" soundtrack accompanies workers as they go about their business, improving well-being based on the premise that nature is never silent.

Gently massaging the senses also plays a part in reinforcing corporate culture and strengthening brand image. "The colour palette and materials must exude the firm's identity. It's a key way of creating a sense of employee belonging at a time when work is becoming increasingly nomadic." Achieving office design, brand vibe and employee perception consistency has become a powerful lever for fostering cohesion.

TALKING SENSE(S)



3 QUESTIONS TO GABRIEL ABDELHAKMI- GAISNE

Gabriel Abdelhakmi-Gaisne is CEO of Sedus, a firm that supplies complete office solutions and workspace furnishing concepts.

To what extent has catering to the senses become a major part of workspace design?

It's a core topic that we've been working on for a number of years. The senses are becoming more and more important, notably under the impetus of the younger generation who need ambient stimuli in order to get things done, push themselves, be creative. Today's firms are looking for office design solutions that act as structural levers: incorporating nature and plants, tackling acoustics, using specific materials and hues...

How can we gently massage each individual's senses through shared language and stimuli?

We must first and foremost ensure that any office design solutions have a positive effect on all users. The issues can be strategic, ergonomic, cultural or related to the need for a multi-generational approach. Above all, the design must fulfil a given function. It is therefore important to work hand-in-hand with employees to determine how each workspace will be used. Based on that, we can then design a global solution that incorporates sensorial stimulation through colours and materials.

Sounds, smells... Simply gadgets or true well-being tools?

If there is no real purpose behind their presence, they are pure gadgets. However, if the objective has been clearly defined, and if the project is perfectly aligned with the corporate culture, then their presence can be nothing but beneficial.



“The colour palette and materials must exude the firm’s identity.”

Gabriel Abdelhakmi-Gaisne, Sedus

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR, SEPT. 2020

FRANKLIN AZZI, ARCHITECT OF HYBRIDISATION AND CROSS-FUNCTIONALITY

He's one of the driving forces behind a new generation of architects for whom the use of space forms the backbone of each and every project. 44-year-old Franklin Azzi has been at the head of his own agency since 2006 and imbues every project with his own unique style straddling different design disciplines, from the Bali Barret stores in Tokyo to the refurbishment of Paris's Montparnasse Tower.



FAA DESKOPOLITAN realization @WE ARE CONTENT(S)

As Maison&Objet's Designer of The Year 2020, you've designed a "hybrid and unconventional" space to present your work at the trade fair. Could you tell us a little more about it?

We've put together a rather museum-like exhibit featuring a sensorial progression that will whisk visitors back in time on a journey covering over ten centuries' worth of workspace history. It will be an invitation to take a step back and explore how the relationship between the vessel (architecture) and the content (working methods) have changed. What makes the approach more interesting still is the fact

that it resonates with the crisis we are currently going through, a crisis that has left us with no choice but to embrace new ways of working and fast-track change.

How do you see your role as an architect?

The profession has changed immensely over the past 50 years. It's become fragmented. Today, our role is not dissimilar to that of an executive producer in the film industry. For the Montparnasse Tower project in Paris, for example, meetings can involve over 30 engineers with wide-ranging expertise. The architect is the only one with a precise vision of where the project's heading, and it's up to him to ensure everything stays on track. For several years, now, I've been battling to regain a foothold in the various different disciplines, as having a global vision of a project is absolutely crucial. Architecture is inextricably linked to interior design, design and the use of space.

Has the profession become too technical?

Our generation is faced with so many challenges linked to the environment, new usage habits and energy use that the profession has, indeed, become highly technical, but that's not to the detriment of creativity: a creative thread continues to run through absolutely everything we do. What's more, the highly technical nature of our work fosters better builds with a more long-term vision.

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR, SEPT. 2020 **FRANKLIN AZZI,** ARCHITECT OF HYBRIDISATION AND CROSS-FUNCTIONALITY



Which have been the defining moments in your career that have helped “cement” your role as an architect?

It's actually been more about defining encounters than defining moments. Notably with teachers like Paul Virilio (urban planner and essayist - ed.) who taught me to really look and

see. He always asked us to picture our projects by shutting our eyes and walking through them, opening doors. He'd say “the mind is more agile than the hand”. I still use his technique today when I'm finding a space challenging. Other extremely enlightening encounters include those I made at the Glasgow School of Arts, where I was able to explore lots of different disciplines by meeting people such as car designers and potters. The whole Bauhaus mindset taught me a lot.

Does this multi-disciplinary approach guide all your work? Even when you're designing office spaces?

Our approach is never systematic. I do a lot of listening before putting pen to paper. I need to feed off the client and their goals. When designing any space, the architectural structure is just one small step along the road: what's important is knowing how the space will ultimately be used. A co-working space could thus be designed as a quasi-cultural hub with conferences, book-signings and so on. It's up to us to ensure the space is designed to reflect its intended use.

How do you think workspaces are set to change going forward?

I'm convinced that buildings will become more diverse spaces and that we will move away from the idea that a particular building must have a specific function, housing offices, a museum or accommodation. It will give us true flexibility and

the ability for programmes to be reversed in order to adapt to current needs (such as the need for more office space or more accommodation). The COVID-19 crisis has made us all realise that we are not immune to major social incidents. We must consequently design flexible spaces that can be swiftly transformed. It's something we're still exploring. Perhaps going forward, firms will invest less money in brick-and-mortar offices and will instead fund the creation of home office spaces for their employees. The post-lockdown period is set to be rich in new ideas and change.

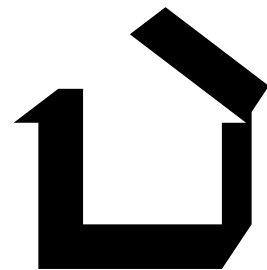
MONTPARNASSE TOWER, THE MAGNIFICENT METAMORPHOSIS



Jardin Suspendu @Nouvelle AOM / Luxigon

Franklin Azzi has completed numerous refurbishment projects that rely on the use of upcycled materials. “When a building has good basic bones, the focus should be on refurbishment. From an environmental perspective, the worst possible solution is demolition followed by reconstruction: the carbon footprint is huge.” At the Montparnasse Tower, whose obsolescence triggered the need for extensive refurbishment, the 44,000m² of black-tinted glass on the facade will consequently be upcycled and given a new lease of life as part of the building's interior design scheme. The project is being managed by Nouvelle AOM, a consortium associating Franklin Azzi Architecture, ChartierDalix Architects and Hardel Le Bihan Architects.

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