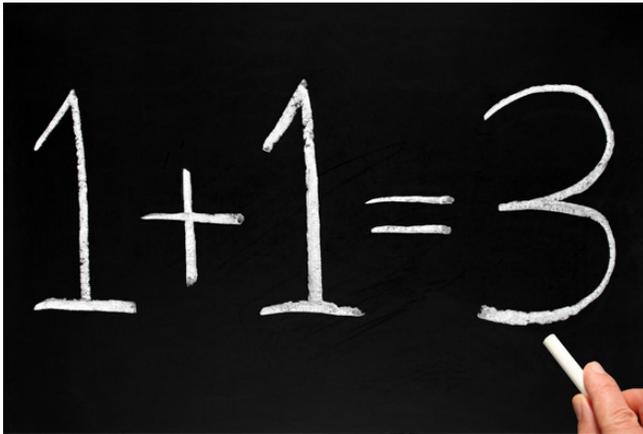


A Whole Greater Than Its Parts: Combining New Approaches in Workplace Design



Writers love lists because they're attention getting; readers like them because they're a good way to process a lot of information. I'm not an inveterate list maker, but when asked to speak about new approaches to workplace design, I tend to think holistically. Hence, a list seems a great way to juxtapose the trends we're seeing in workplace planning, design and execution. The power of the list is that while each of these is worthy of singular consideration, together they can transform both the design process as well as the results achieved.

Never hire an architect...hire a team.

Integrating subject experts early on clarifies roles, deliverables, and commitments and provides the greatest opportunity for engagement, efficiency, and creativity. The people you might not think to call to the kickoff meeting because they're not needed until later in the project (furniture and logistics managers, for instance) have experience that might help build a project better, faster, cheaper. The process should not be linear, but circular. (Think Camelot's Knights of the Round Table).

BIM is not a fad, but a facilitator.

Building Information Modeling (BIM) has been around since the 1970s but its recent momentum is driven by its value as a life cycle management tool. It is a shared knowledge resource to support decision-making about a facility from early conceptual stages through design, construction, its operational life and eventual demolition. BIM models are an up-front investment that can pay big back-end dividends.

Densification is on the rise...but it's not free.

Reducing square feet per person might save money but "packin' 'em in" can also tax building infrastructure and compromise employees' ability to do their jobs. So much so that the cost of lost productivity outweighs real estate savings. Offering employees a variety of spaces helps make up for the smaller individual footprint. And if these alternate spaces can do double duty, it's a win/win for employees and real estate.

Health and wellness is the new sustainability.

Coming on stronger and taking hold faster than sustainability initiatives did at first, employee wellness and wellbeing - and the work/life balance that supports it - has become a business strategy. Overall, it's among employees top 5 consideration in taking and staying in a job; for younger generations it's an imperative. And the metrics support it: according to insurance giant, AON, an investment in Health & Wellness programs returns \$3-\$6.00 for every dollar spent.

Food, glorious food.

More and more, individual companies and developers alike are building amenity spaces into their buildings that either provide food or support it. Just as people gravitate to the kitchen at a party, office cafes and cafeterias - whether they are fully catered facilities, a place to heat up a homemade lunch or merely a place to eat that's not your desk - have become the heart of the office. As a bonus, café's and lounges that double as work space help leverage your real estate, and rented for for special events, they generate additional income.

Mobility is not going anywhere.

Mobility is not right for every organization or for every department within an organization. But in some form or another it's here to stay and offers some benefits worthy of consideration, including reduction of the real estate portfolio, reduced carbon footprint, a larger talent pool to draw from and a perquisite that supports employee work/life balance. Instituting an effective mobility program, however, requires some critical thinking around entitlements, adjacencies, management styles and how performance is measured.

There should be KPIs for everything.

Albert Einstein said "not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted. " But for everything that does count, there should be Key Performance Indicators (KPI's.) With all the big data out there it's hard to know what to measure. Benchmarking and consultants can help, but what works for others might not be right for your company. What's important to measure is what's most relevant to your business as determined by your own team of cross-functional experts who see things from different perspectives but can come to consensus on what's important.

Performance-based compensation is increasingly on the table.

Yes, but only for those who embrace team-based idea generation and problem solving, and collectively define excellence in mutually agreed and quantifiable terms. Performance-based compensation only works when you have a true partnership based on transparency and a commitment that develops trust. Without that, it's a gamble. The house will always have the advantage and the players may eventually get tired of playing.

The need for speed.

Time is of the essence in today's competitive and volatile market, but speed can also shortchange the process. Practically speaking, there will always be times when truly emergent situations require fast, reactive thinking and action. But chronic, reactive planning can result in doing the same thing over again without breaking any new ground. While building time into the project schedule for thorough information gathering, piloting and testing, and review can produce magic.



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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR WORKPLACE INNOVATION

People are a company's most valuable asset and in today's business environment it is people who make the difference. Our mission is to combine real estate, technology and business processes to create exceptional spaces that empower people to do their best work. We align design solutions with actual business drivers and create performance metrics to establish a feedback loop that continues to inform. This builds agility into the workplace to support the way people work today while enabling its evolution to support the way they will work in the future.



