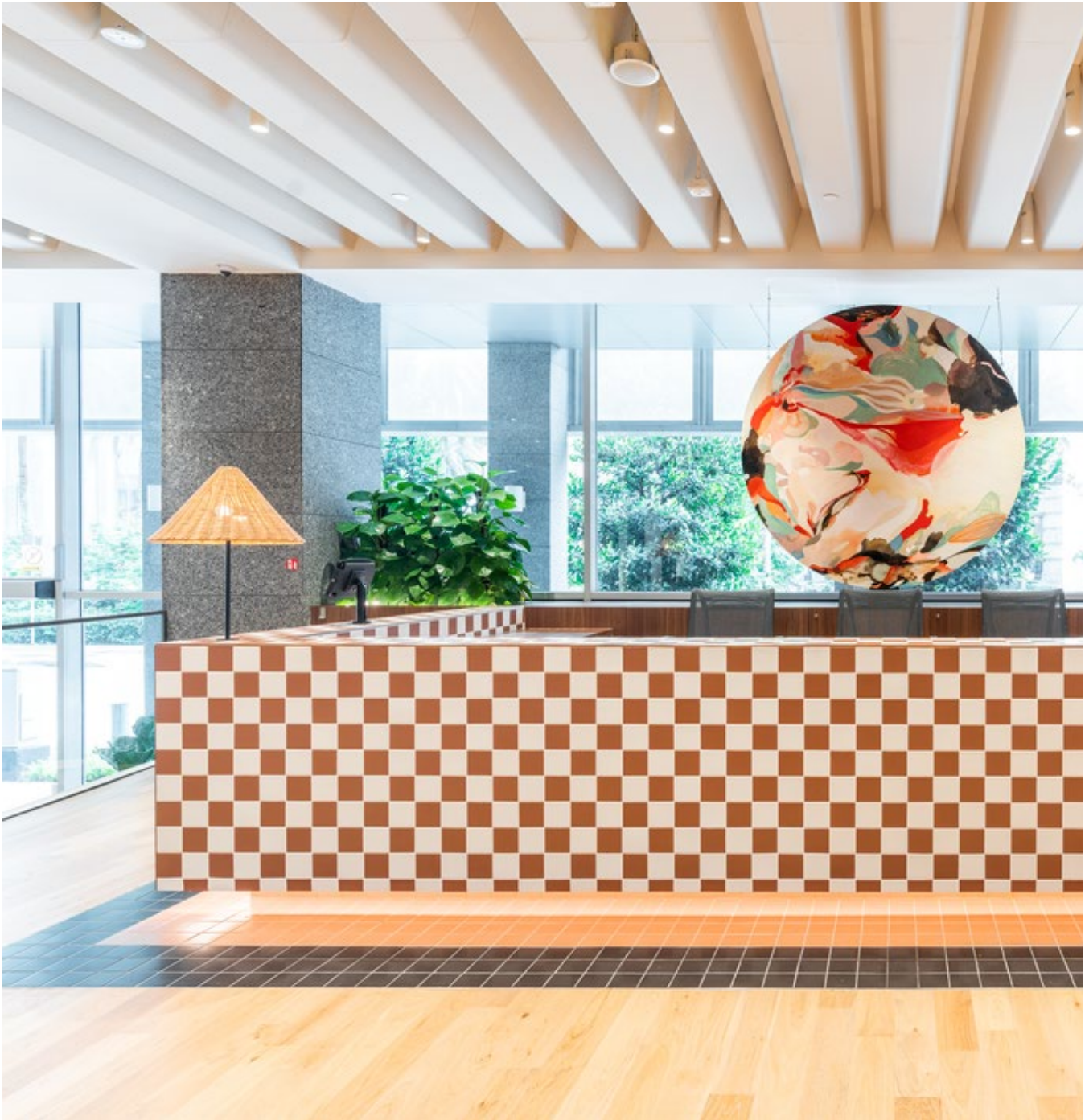


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WEWORK GLOBAL OFFICE TRENDS 2024

The Dynamic Office

Why flexible work models require dynamic office designs.

Table of Contents

3	FOREWORD Defining the “Dynamic” Office
5	Methodology
6	PART I Space Utilization Analysis: Repurposing Space for Collaboration
9	PART II Birds Eye View: What’s Trending in Office Design
11	PART III The New Amenity: Non-Traditional Workspaces
15	CONCLUSION How to Create a Dynamic Office That is Worth the Commute



FOREWORD

Defining the “Dynamic” Office

If the return to office movement has taught us anything, it’s that flexibility is not a “nice to have” but a necessity.

As employees have demanded more flexibility in where, how, and why they work, companies, en masse, have adopted a hybrid model built around flexible working in response. According to a recent WeWork survey¹, a majority (55%) of employers classify their current return to office (RTO) policy as hybrid or flexible.

From a design perspective, the office has taken on a new meaning in this modern, flexible era of work. Employees go to the office to collaborate and connect in person. Employers want the office to be a source of the most productive and efficient work in a week. And many employers have started to deliver better, more commute-worthy offices with the hopes of boosting attendance and rebuilding a company culture that might have faded during the pandemic.

¹Source: WeWork. (2023, September 26). Return to Office Decision Maker Survey: <https://www.wework.com/newsroom/leaders-desire-for-more-in-person-collaboration-is-driving-the-return-to-office-wework-survey-finds>

At WeWork, we often work directly with companies to design their ideal office. Every year, we receive thousands of design requests from enterprise companies, spanning from lighting fixtures to full-floor, customized fit outs. This year, with a goal to understand how the office has changed as a result of the last few unprecedented years and subsequent shifts in work, my team analyzed the data to understand what the modern office looks like and the design fundamentals governing how some of the largest companies globally are shaping their offices of the future.

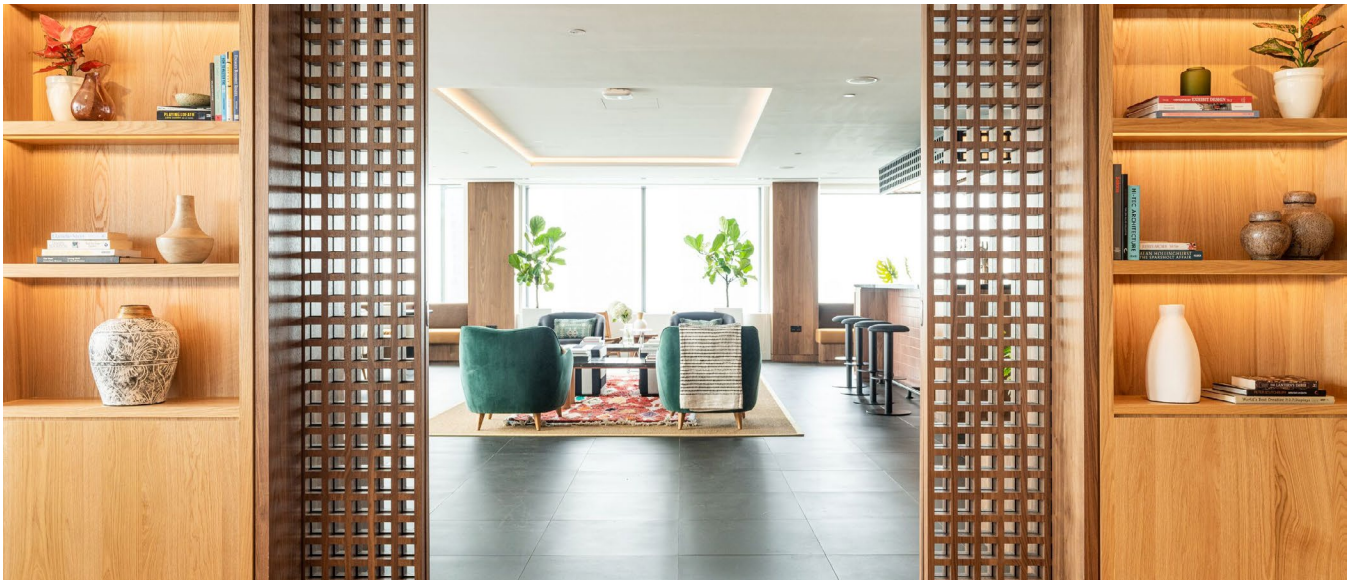
One key theme emerged this year: the dynamic office.

Today, traditional and dense layouts are no longer going to cut it. Dynamic mixed-use floor plans that not only offer a variety of space options, from break out areas and quiet corners to meeting rooms, but are functional and efficient, and encourage workers into the office.

What's more, **companies are recognizing the value of having flexibility to adapt their footprint and office layout based on changing employee demands and expectations.** Companies want their spaces to be dynamic, and elastic; workspace that can shapeshift to accommodate a variety of work-related needs. Mirroring the desire for more flexibility, this concept underscores the value of adaptable and flexible office design; not limited to providing what workers want from the office today but having the ability to adapt to meet what is needed from the workplace in years to come.

This report delves into the key design trends of today's workplace: examining how enterprise companies are rethinking the office, exploring how employee expectations have shifted to prompt more intentional and adaptable design for a "commute-worthy" and dynamic space, as well as analyzing data points across WeWork's global portfolio that demonstrate the impact of hybrid work models on the future of office design.

- **Ebbie Wisecarver**
Chief Design Officer, WeWork



Methodology

This report is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data from global WeWork member accounts and customization requests from May 2019 to June 2023.

Specifically, our analysis looked at:

- 25 major enterprise deals since June 2021
- Over 3000 enterprise member requests for design-related requirements
- A scan of existing asset locations, new turnkey deals, and new customization deals
- Conversations with enterprise member account managers
- WeWork's Basis Of Design (BOD) documentation: a design standard document established with key member accounts



SPACE UTILIZATION ANALYSIS

Repurposing Space for Collaboration

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Offices today are less densely populated.

With the implementation of social distancing requirements during the pandemic, the average density of offices experienced a significant drop and has continued to remain below pre-pandemic levels. The rise of flexible policies means that most companies no longer plan for 100% of their workforces to be in the office at the same time.

Graph 1: Average Density*

(SF = Square Footage)



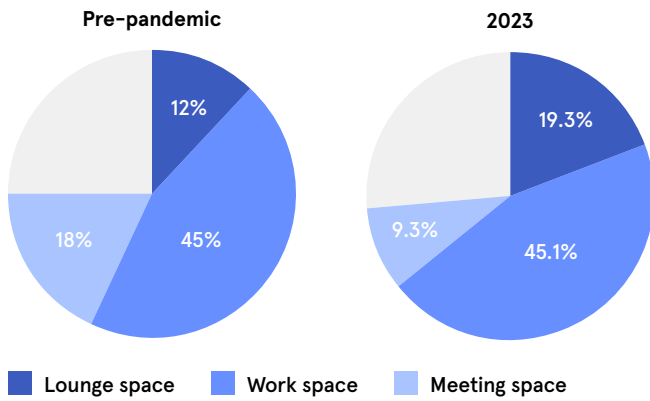
With fewer people filling up space, companies are rethinking their layouts to optimize for lounge space, thus making their spaces more dynamic and usable across a variety of working needs.

We define “lounge” areas as the parts of an office built for relaxation, collaboration, and connection, such as clusters of couches and soft seating, day beds, or booths. These are the spaces that are designed to encourage interactions and foster spontaneous “water-cooler” moments.

*During the pandemic, office density has decreased sharply to comply with social distancing guidelines. WeWork offices at this time had a density at around 1/180sf

In the below graph, you'll see that as hybrid models became the norm, meeting space was deprioritized while lounge space was prioritized.

Graph 2: Space Utilization



*Measured by % of sq footage used. Other percentages would include 'back of house' and circulation spaces.

Why? Remote working and virtual collaboration technology have underscored the importance of the physical office as a hub for meaningful, face-to-face interactions and collaboration. While technology enables remote collaboration, the office remains a space for building trust, fostering a sense of belonging, and bringing a company's culture to life.

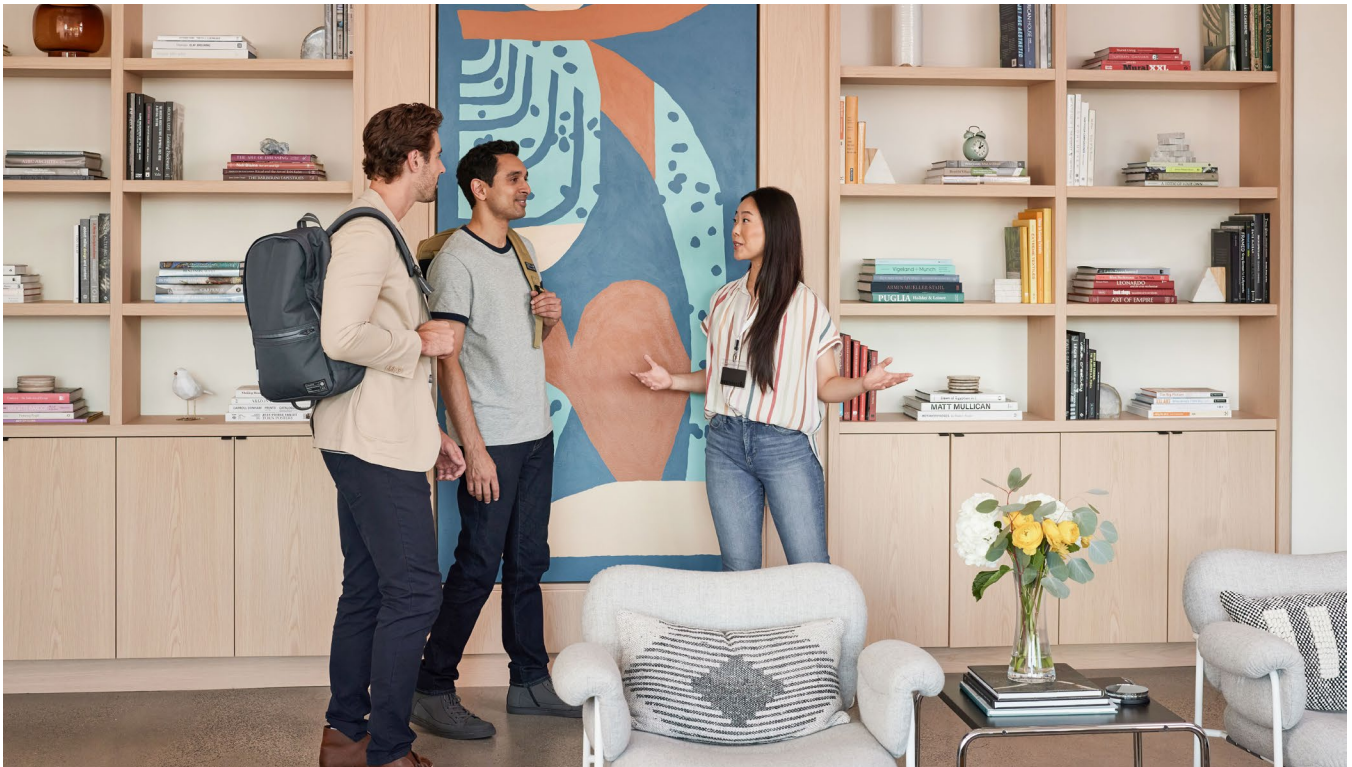
Open floor plans, communal areas or "lounge" space, and intentionally designed collaboration "hubs" are a handful of space options that facilitate impromptu discussions amongst colleagues to share ideas, insights, and expertise in real-time.



A major venture capital's office turned an executive office into a "Collaboration Hub" (highlighted), an intentionally designed space to enhance teamwork and individual



This is an enterprise floor plan from May 2023. The highlighted yellow indicates lounge space – a key demonstration of how lounge space can be integrated into existing office footprints.



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BIRDS EYE VIEW

What's Trending in Office Design

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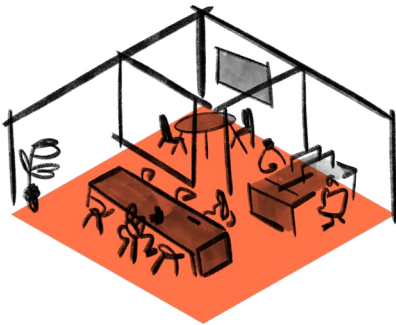
Top Office Requests in 2023

1 Acoustic Improvements	2 Phone Booths	3 Desks + Task Chairs	4 Lounge + Breakout Areas	5 Privacy Vinyl
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Trending

Less Executive Office Space

As companies push for a RTO and rebuild spaces to be more flexible and dynamic, many have opted to repurpose space formerly used for executives into lounge, meeting, or working space. This also can be related to pushes for more transparency and connection in the era of return to office.



We have seen an **80% decrease** in requests for executive offices from 2018 to 2022.

Ergonomic Furniture

During the pandemic, workers elevated their work from home set up; buying office furniture that meant they could work comfortably when working remotely. This has prompted an increase in demand for ergonomic furniture in offices to meet this new expectation.

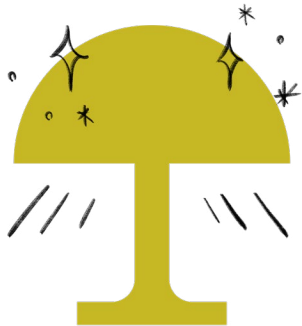


76% of companies request some portion of height adjustable desking.

80% upgrade to a larger desk size than the standard desk size.

Low-Lux Lighting

Low lux lighting emits a dimmer glow. Companies have been requesting low lux lighting to reduce eye strain and increase productivity levels amongst workers.

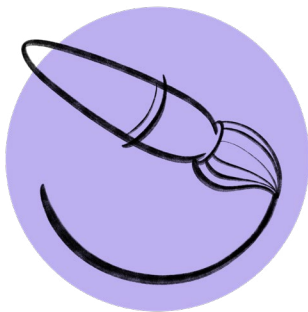


More than 50% of enterprises

request linear light fixtures (which have a higher performance) than legacy dome lights. These lights give a softer, warmer effect.

Customization

More and more businesses are looking to add design elements that amplify their brand and help bolster company culture.



90% of members

chose to implement branding in their space

70%

opted to include plants

Over 80%

chose to have artwork installed in their office space

Over 70%

requested to add accessories to their space



THE NEW AMENITY

Non-Traditional Workspaces

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Over the last three years, businesses are increasingly investing in new, unique spaces within their offices.

These spaces, spanning built-out food and beverage offerings, customized board rooms, libraries, focus rooms and 'All Hands' spaces, depart from typical floor plans to expand the elasticity, functionality, and optionality of the office.

From our data, two categories of space requests have emerged over the last three years: spaces that improve company culture and employee well being, and spaces that foster productivity.



32%

of requests were for spaces that improve company culture and employee wellbeing

68%

of requests were for spaces to improve and foster productivity

On the one hand, as companies make cases for employees to return to the office, well-designed spaces like wellness rooms have become increasingly valuable for employee retention and recruitment while also fostering connection with colleagues. Open communal areas, high-quality finishes, wellness spaces, shower rooms, and barista bars are all sought-after, non-traditional spaces from companies looking to boost the in-office experience.

On the other hand, as companies invest in measures to boost productivity, we are seeing a rise in buildouts of more performance related spaces, such as training rooms or elevated board rooms.

These space type requests are likely to fluctuate as a business changes its priorities and employees re-evaluate what they need from the office.

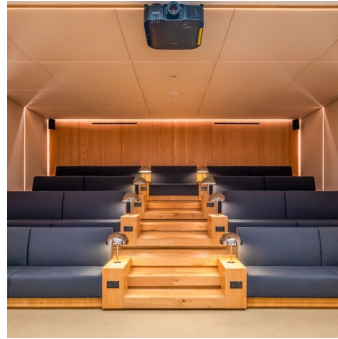
Space to improve culture (32%)



Food & Beverage offering

Specialized or a full scale F&B service beyond the typical pantry

e.g. Coffee Bar, Catering Kitchen, Canteen



Team Gathering

Open & semi-open areas where teams and/or the entire office can gather in a curated fashion

e.g. All Hands Space, Bleachers



Wellness

Spaces dedicated to providing physical and mental wellness at the Workplace

e.g. Zen Rooms, Showers, Wellness Studio

Space to improve performance (68%)



Specialized Workspaces

Work or meet spaces that provide a specific and integral function to meet business needs

e.g. 1 on 1 Room



Focus rooms

Quiet workplace setups away from one's desk/office

e.g. Focus Room, Library



Education

Large, enclosed spaces used primarily for trainings/seminars

e.g. Training Rooms, Auditorium

Here's a bit more detail on these non-traditional spaces

Food & Beverage

An elevated F&B offering is becoming increasingly popular amongst enterprise companies with large workforces, as decision makers look to improve workplace culture.



Member requests for pantry space and communal areas has [doubled since 2021](#)

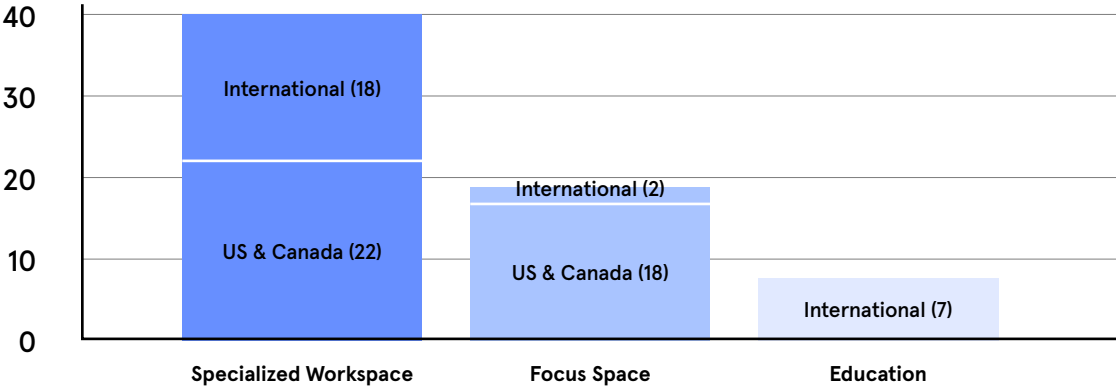


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Specialized workspaces

Specialized workspaces are by far the most requested non-standard space types. These are rooms that provide a functional purpose to a business; mostly bringing large teams or entire workforces together for a specific task or event but can be flexible in their use. Two key examples of “specialized workspaces” are command centers and all company meeting rooms. The majority of enterprise accounts analyzed for this report have an assortment of “specialized” workspaces that are integral to how they build culture, work productively, and provide opportunity for their employees to collaborate.

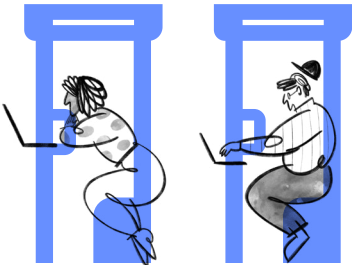
Graph 3: Demand for space types varies by market



Member companies in the United States and Canada, and member companies based in the International market are showing different appetites for what we call “focus” and “education” spaces.

The vast majority of the requests for “focus” space are made by members based in the United States and Canada. These spaces are individualized work settings, away from one’s desk, and have a close resemblance to home office conditions that most employees have grown accustomed to since the start of the pandemic. This could be an indication that US & Canada workers, who are visiting the office less often than their international counterparts, are seeking the comfort of home when working from the office.

On the flip side, in the International market where the “return to office” momentum is outpacing the US market, we noticed that enterprise members are requesting and investing in dedicated “Education spaces”, which are purposefully designed for training sessions and offsites.



Focus pods account for **50%** of new enterprise build out requests



CONCLUSION

How to create a dynamic office that is worth the commute

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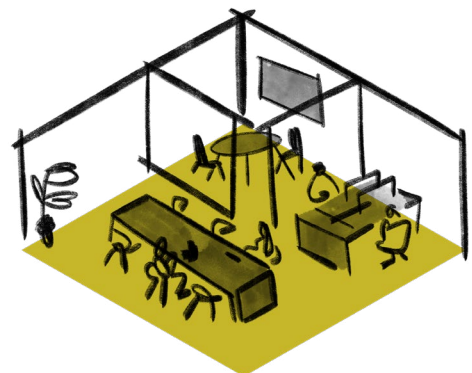


The future of the office continues to be one of the most hotly debated topics since the pandemic, prompting new work patterns and emerging work models that put employee experience at the core.

What defines a “commute-worthy” office space largely depends on what your workforce actually demands from the space. As a result, businesses are intentionally designing spaces for collaboration, and investing in non-traditional spaces more than ever.

As office needs and expectations continue to evolve at a rapid pace, it’s impossible to predict what workers will want from their office in 5, 10 or even 20 years time. An elastic office interior, or a “dynamic” office, is the only design concept we can be certain will continue to add value in this uncertain landscape.

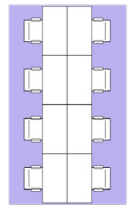
The “dynamic” office can be achieved in a number of ways.



1. Create reconfigurable layouts

Reconfigurable layouts revolve around adaptability and flexibility in the use of space. Traditional office setups are giving way to more dynamic environments that can be easily transformed to meet the changing needs of individuals or teams. It requires having space that can be repurposed from one space type to another program, and is particularly beneficial in accommodating various activities, from focused individual work to collaborative meetings and events.

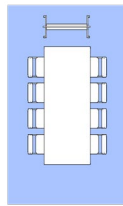
Typical Desk Swap Options



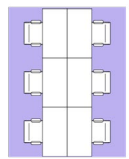
8 Work Stations



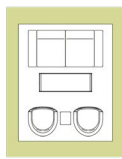
Small Lounge 1



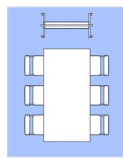
Breakout Medium 1



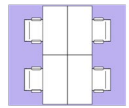
6 Work Stations



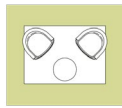
Small Lounge 2



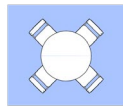
Breakout Medium 2



4 Work Stations



X-Small Lounge



Breakout Small

Top Tip: The ability to reconfigure layouts not only optimizes space utilization, but also allows the space to be customized for business needs and tailored to suit specific tasks and employee preferences.

This image demonstrates how space can be reconfigured to meet changing needs



2. Reimagine space with furniture bundles

A diverse mix of furniture not only blurs the lines between office and hospitality, but provides an innate flexibility to a space that can be adapted seamlessly to densify and/or transform it with ease based on changing demand. These furniture bundles include reconfigurable soft seating, rugs, tables, space dividers, mobile AV kits, and accessories that help bring a space to life.

Top Tip: These furniture bundles help with fluctuating in-office populations. During days or weeks that are seeing less employee visits to the office, the diverse furniture setting can be used for relaxation or collaboration. Likewise, for days and weeks that companies are seeing more employees visit the office, employees can leverage these more informal work points for heads down tasks.

3. Invest in flexible lighting layouts

Clever lighting design goes beyond mere illumination: it plays a crucial role in setting the mood, enhancing productivity, and defining the overall aesthetic of a space. Smartly designed lighting systems take into account the diverse needs of a workspace, offering adjustable and customizable solutions based on changing needs. Dynamic lighting must be evenly distributed to create a space that is suitable for both informal catch-ups and productive work. Adhering to equal spacing of lights provides even light distribution throughout the space for maximum flexibility of desk placement and sizes, allowing easy desk swaps for enterprise requirements.

Top Tip: Linear lighting arranged in a uniform grid is the key to the flexibility for a dynamic floor plan.



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For decision makers, operators, and landlords looking to create “commute worthy” office space for the long term, the dynamic office is a solid bet to create a space that not only employees feel excited to work from, but that provides flexibility for businesses with evolving priorities.



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Aggregate Data Source: Numbers are estimated based on facilities & internal data.

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