

Solving the human connection disconnect with the office of the future

"The basic human need for love, health and connection cannot be met with technology."



In our workplaces and homes, we are increasingly using technology as if it does in fact meet these needs. Our basic human needs for love and acceptance and to be 'heard' can only be met by meaningful interaction with other people, being present in our everyday experience and conversations. Yet, it's easier to 'check out' behind our screens. And companies (to some detriment) are encouraging it.

Don't worry; we're not grabbing the pitchforks and hailing Slack or Whatsapp as the new enemy. These and other tools are brilliant for productivity and creativity. But if online or instant messaging is our exclusive tool for human connection and social media is making us... well, anti-social... we become disconnected and even depressed.

That being said, technology is here to stay, so we may as well find ways of working in unison with our technological life partners. The main objection being that with mobile devices on us and around us all the time, we avoid the other spaces we can go to for help and connection. What if we could combine the two, to, in a way, create a balance, especially in the workplace.

Face-to-face interactions are by far the most important activity in an office. Employers need to understand the importance of creating office designs that get employees to 'collide', because data suggests that creating collisions — chance encounters and unplanned interactions between knowledge workers, both inside and outside the organisation — improves performance.

Let's face it - the most creative ideas aren't going to come while sitting in front of your monitor. It has been proven time and time again that collaborative environments initiate innovation, thus employers are moving towards good office design in terms of density, proximity of people, and that of a productive social nature.

As an example, Facebook will soon put several thousand of its employees into a single mile-long room. Yahoo notoriously revoked mobile work privileges because, as the Chief of Human Resources explained, "Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions." And Samsung recently unveiled plans for a new US headquarters, designed in stark contrast to its traditionally hierarchical culture. Vast outdoor areas sandwiched between floors will lure workers into public spaces, where Samsung's executives hope that engineers and salespeople will actually mingle.

Co-working is becoming a welcomed solution to fulfil the need for connection, hence its global popularity. With the arrival of enterprise mobility and mobile apps, organisations are moving away from the traditional office model. Businesses are now very aware of the advantages of technology; however, it cannot exist without a combination of cultural, social, technical and economic factors. This is making businesses rethink their internal strategies and move away from their traditional routes, to align themselves with the development of new technology, and stay ahead of the game.

Businesses are recognising office space as not just an amortised asset but a strategic tool for growth. With this in mind, the new global SPACES brand, recently entering South Africa, originating in Amsterdam, has been carefully designed to favour exploration, engagement and energy to achieve these outcomes.

Companies are now discovering a third option between conventional offices for rent and virtual address packages. Co-working spaces are not only the perfect compromise with regard to cost and a physical location, but they are essentially the only option for ensuring flexibility. Not to mention they are all-inclusive.

For companies, allowing and paying for employees to work out of co-working spaces offers many benefits. In addition to reducing remote work loneliness, co-working spaces provide excellent business and technological infrastructure, strong networking opportunities, and exposure to innovative companies, products, and services. Companies will also benefit from having happier, more engaged, and more productive workers.

These trendy, up-and-coming office spaces specialise in adaptability. Offices are fully furnished, 24/7 accessible, and rentable by the day, week or month. From private single person offices and large spaces for up to six people, and even bigger conference rooms. Alongside your office, all membership options give businesses full access to work in open lounges, meeting rooms, cafés, entertainment rooms. All utilities, like printers, amenities, and state-of-the-art technologies are included in a simple monthly rate, which can always be altered or expanded parallel with your unique business needs.

The most upgraded high-tech equipment and connections can ultimately disconnect you from the real world if you are not in an environment that encourages collaboration. Human beings, at different levels, need social interaction to survive. Forward-thinking businesses will be the ones who take this into account in the way they work, design spaces for creative 'collision' and help their employees bridge the disconnect gap.

About SPACES:

The new SPACES brand, which recently opened in South Africa in September 2017, offers an inspiring work environment for professionals and growing businesses. Next to office space, there are memberships and meeting rooms to help you think, create and interact with like-minded people. SPACES' goal is to offer inspirational surroundings with an entrepreneurial spirit where ideas are born, a company evolves, and valuable relationships are built.

As more businesses seek out ways to bring the personal touch and authentic local connections back into their brands, co-working enables just that, coupled with an environment suited to energy and creativity, the SPACES brand will soon be a signature brand throughout South Africa.

For more information or to contact a specific centre visit: www.spacesworks.com.



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