



ACCENT



Third Space

A New Setting to Enable Agile Working

Dec 2015



How 'third space' practices could help your organisation

What is 'third space' and how can it improve your productivity?

Advances in technology, increasing work, financial and time pressures, and the aim for greater effectiveness in a competitive world, together with the desire for work/life balance... These factors have all meant changes to the way we work and where we work. The concept of the 'third space' is gaining currency as a way to accommodate our evolving workspace requirements.

Up until now, this term has referred to the alternative venues, between the office and home, used for work: coffee shops, libraries, drop-in business centres, co-working hubs – a range of venues where you can use the facilities on an hourly or daily basis, for

free or for a fee. It is now also used to describe an area in a workspace that is multifunctional, and inspires and supports staff with a new approach to being 'at work'. In line with the trend for agile working, which enables staff to be more flexible, mobile and effective, the third space is the new setting that facilitates this way of working.



"It is now also used to **describe an area** in a workspace that is **multifunctional**, and **inspires** and **supports staff** with a **new approach** to being 'at work'"





A workforce on the move

With scope to work wherever we are, people are now using space to compartmentalise their lives, with different settings to fulfil different roles.

The Office for National Statistics reported in June 2015 that the number of people working from home in the UK had risen to its highest level since records began – 4.2 million people, amounting to 13.9% of the workforce. This figure includes people who use home as a base, but work in different places. About 1.5 million actually work at home. Nearly double that number – 2.7 million – work from home and travel frequently to meet customers elsewhere. Of these, 63% regard themselves as self-employed, compared to 34% who are employed by a company or organisation.

While home working may remain a distant dream for many commuters, those who work from home can feel isolated and miss the buzz of a shared

workspace and water cooler chats with colleagues. It's also helpful to have a division between work and home, when it's so easy to check in via cloud-based platforms. Separation from the home space, and being near others getting down to work, helps people to be productive.

'With scope to work wherever we are, people are now using space to compartmentalise their lives, with different settings to fulfil different roles, ring-fencing work, and protecting family and down-time,' says Ziona Strelitz, anthropologist and workplace strategist. 'The research is clear: physical place still matters in the digital age.'



"people work from home in the UK...

its highest level since records began"

Source
The Office for National Statistics



The 'coffice'

It's the ideal place for a change of scene
if you work from home...

Futurologist Nicola Mullard – who advises big corporations on how working life will change in the next few years – lists the elements of her ideal workspace: somewhere with a bit of life, no colleagues to distract her, with good coffee, cake and wifi. Otherwise known as the 'coffice', this type of location is most often used for just a couple of hours and is popular with 'knowledge workers' who only need a phone, computer and wifi. It's the ideal place for a change of scene if you work from home and need to escape to avoid cabin fever. And you may get to know other people with the same aims and have the chance to network.

As to be expected, however, there are a few downsides to the coffice. You might have limited parking, and have to leave at an awkward time to avoid getting a parking fine. Do you ask a fellow 'cofficer' to look after your laptop when you want to go to the toilet? Being aware of other people's dramas via loud conversations can be very distracting. Also, you may find that the coffee shop is so popular that you arrive to discover there is no space to work, and it's a wasted trip.

"You may get to know other people with the same aims and have the chance to network"





A pay-as-you-go desk, or club membership?

You never know who is sitting at the next coffee table, when you're discussing a client's dilemma or rebrand...

Eagle-eyed entrepreneurs have identified the need for a workspace-to-hire on flexible terms, with facilities for meetings and presentations. This helps to maintain a professional reputation, with a private space for confidential meetings. You never know who is sitting at the next coffee table, when you're discussing a client's dilemma or rebrand!

Providers such as Regus Business Lounges, UK wide (www.regus.co.uk/products/business-lounges), Club Workspace (<http://club.workspacegroup.co.uk/>), a network of 10 centres in London, Hello Work (www.hellowork.com) in Manchester and Leeds, to expand in London, and NearDesk (www.neardesk.com) are capitalising on the needs of the mobile workforce. The vision of Hello Work states the groundbreaking tack of such providers: 'to curate a culture harnessing the new way of working, to accelerate business growth by building environments around the people that shape them'.

The benefits of a workspace hired on the basis of a drop-in fee, or via a membership scheme include:

- › Convenient location – people want to work away from, but close to, home
- › A professional environment
- › A stimulating atmosphere
- › Full range of facilities
- › A guaranteed space to work
- › A confidential work setting
- › Few distractions
- › A sense of community
- › Scope to network and meet people

Continued





A pay-as-you-go desk, or club membership?

The terms on offer are certainly attractive, with drop-in fees starting at £2.50 per hour for the use of a desk and wifi and printing facilities. Tom Ball, CEO of NearDesk had an epiphany when he needed desk space urgently and was told he needed to pay £1,000 for access over a year. This was too inflexible for his needs. 'I wanted a desk space where I (and others) could use a card system – like on the Tube – where I could travel to these places to work, doing three hours of work in Sheffield, and four in Manchester, for example, and then get billed for whatever I do.' NearDesk offers an app to locate your nearest desk space, and hourly fees, ranging from £2.50 to £10, billed via a card.

No wonder this service is seen as ideal for entrepreneurs, to reduce one of the key costs of a start-up: the renting of premises or desk space. A company could employ a team of sales consultants across the country who use co-working hubs to check in, catch up, and meet clients, without having to travel back to headquarters.

Membership schemes are built to offer maximum value. At Hello Work, the drop-in day fee, for one hour, is £25, while the membership fee of £99 per month allows full access to

the hub, 9am–6pm, with free filter tea and coffee, access to facilities, including internet and printing, free access to a meeting room for three hours, and the option of a locker, for £20. Alternatively, the 'resident' membership, costing £150 per month, offers access to a 'permanent resident desk and locker', amenities, residents' event space, and six hours' access to a meeting room – charged at a members' rate thereafter. There is also a studio available for filming or photography.

At the Old Granada Studios in Manchester, designed for the new media industry, including film, music, media and technology, Hello Work has zoned in on the upsides of this market's dream office, by including a social club, members' bar, Idea Room, cinema room, and Zumba and yoga classes. Plus, Beer O'Clock every Friday. Who would want to stay home with all of this on offer?

"No wonder this service is seen as ideal for entrepreneurs, to reduce one of the key costs of a start-up: the renting of premises or desk space"





The third space at 'the office'

The third space has arrived in the corporate world, with all the benefits and none of the potential downfalls.

Forward-thinking companies that are fans of agile working find that with desks being freed up, through staff working from home or at co-working hubs, they have the opportunity to get creative in the use of this extra floor space. They appreciate the power of a multifunctional, relaxed workspace to encourage collaboration and light bulb moments. Recognising that their staff are their No. 1 asset, business owners seek to attract and retain staff with a progressive attitude to how staff work together.

In an increasingly competitive era, with businesses requiring maximum engagement and productivity from employees, companies are able to support their wellbeing via the benefits of a third space. This is valued for promoting the feeling of work/life balance. The rationale put forward is the movement to integrate work and life – treating employees more holistically. Practically, it means providing a range of spaces where staff can choose to work, based on their mood and the task.



“The rationale put forward is the movement to **integrate work** and **life** – treating **employees** more **holistically**”

Continued





The third space at 'the office'

Google have made it their business to make the ultimate office, saying: 'Our offices and cafes are designed to encourage interactions between Googlers within and across teams, and to spark conversation about work as well as play.' Across the world, this company blurs the lines between work and play with interiors designed to inspire their staff and encourage positive feelings and associations. Workspaces and meeting areas include a pub-style lounge in Ireland, a mini 'jungle' at a reception in Australia, a park setting complete with deckchairs and rowing boat in London, a bowling alley in California, and a climbing wall in a 'tech talk' area in Boulder,

Colorado. Realising the power of interiors to impact on their staff's wellbeing, Google has invested heavily in interiors that encourage people to do their best work in a fun, even playful setting.

While not every company has the space or budget to make such a big splash, most businesses are able to accommodate a dynamic area through innovative furniture solutions, from soft seating for meetings to a pod for private, focused thought. Freed from their desks, staff are empowered to collaborate and come up with ideas.

"Most businesses are able to accommodate a dynamic area through innovative furniture solutions, from soft seating for meetings to a pod for private, focused thought"





Furniture for a shift in work culture

The third space is where furniture designers get to innovate...

Coalesse, a premium workspace furniture company in the US, aims to bring the comforts of home and community to the workplace, to make the office the best place to work. 'When you do that, it changes the physical character and social experience of the workplace,' says Lew Epstein, Coalesse general manager. 'It fosters a shift in work culture.'

The third space is where furniture designers get to innovate, coming up with ever more fresh ways to maximise space and enable this new approach to the workplace. Their designs facilitate a setting that helps to energise staff and meets a range of needs. Cutting-edge, functional products are available for every budget, to make the third space a reality in any workspace.

Furniture designers have the power to make a difference to how people feel at work. Brilliant design is in demand by brands that want a unique look that expresses their values and makes their company's 'home' a place where their staff love to work.

British craftsmanship means furniture providers in the UK excel at meeting this demand. For example Orange Box (www.orangebox.com), has a collection aimed squarely at the 'millennials' who are key in the agile working trend, with the high value they place on freedom. They are determining the 'design values of the contemporary workplace,' states Orange Box, 'which must yield to the new aesthetic and functional demands.' This company has observed that



Continued





Furniture for a shift in work culture



perhaps due to our 'always on, always visible controlling and homogenous technology, we are seeking a more idiosyncratic, individual, craft-based and handmade quality'. Their Network Landscapes collection specifically caters for more casual and diverse network spaces, 'where the collaborative is as important as the personal, and the casual is valued above formality'.

Another British company, Boss Design (www.boss-design.co.uk), was launched in the 80s to provide premium products in a market dominated by affordable mass-market products. The comprehensive range of upholstery and task seating has brought global success. This includes the tactile, quilt-look Cocoon Media Unit for team meetings, offering the feel of an

enclosed space, the playful Hoot nesting stool, and the tubular Cega 360-degree swivel unit, which is the ideal 'personal touchdown space'. The Vista acoustically engineered pods are an attractive alternative to partitioning, providing the perfect private meeting space.

With all these means to create a third space, it's possible for every company to reap the benefits, whatever the scope of the floorplan and the budget. One dilemma remains however – the sheer range of choice. Seeing and experiencing furniture first-hand, in a showroom, is the answer, to enable you to visualise your own new setting.

“With all these means to create a third space, it's possible for every company to reap the benefits, whatever the scope of the floorplan and the budget”



ACCENT

Whatever your opinion of agile working is, no-one can deny that attitudes towards work have changed and practices are evolving.

It's more essential than ever to be aware of those changes and move wisely with the times.

To view all our whitepapers visit:

www.accentoffice.co.uk/downloads

T 08456 595911

E interiors@accentoffice.co.uk

Creating spaces
where people
love to work