

## Human-Centered: Through the Lens of People, Culture

At this point, it should not be a surprise that physical workplaces play a significant role in shaping company culture. It is more than just a place where employees work; when done well, the workplace clearly communicates the values, beliefs, and identity of an organization and has been executed with a human-centered approach. Somewhere, Homer Simpson is giving a resounding “D’oh!” but stay with me.



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A human-centered approach focuses on understanding the needs, behaviors and preferences of the organization’s employees, customers and stakeholders with a large emphasis on choice.

The importance of choice for employees in the workplace, particularly concerning the physical space, cannot be overstated. Providing employees with the ability to make choices about their work environment can have several significant benefits when viewed through a people and culture lens:

■ **Enhanced productivity.** When employees have the autonomy to choose their workspace, they are more likely to select an environment that aligns with their preferences and work style. This can lead to increased comfort, reduced distractions, and improved focus, all of which contribute to enhanced productivity.

■ **Increased job satisfaction:** Allowing employees to have a say in their physical workspace fosters a sense of ownership and control over their surroundings. This empowerment can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and a more positive attitude toward their work.

**Accessibility of Leadership.** The office layout can also impact the accessibility of leadership to the employees. An office space that allows for easy interaction between executives and staff can create a more approachable and transparent culture, where employees feel valued and heard. This paves the way for the place to foster mentorship.

■ **Onboarding and company integration.** The office environment can affect how new employees perceive the company culture. A well-organized and welcoming office space can help new hires feel more integrated and aligned with the company values from the start.

■ **Tailored work environment.** With the rise of remote



*This area provides a choice of environments that encourage socialization and collaboration, leading to innovation, creativity and a sense of community.*

work and flexible work arrangements, the physical office space’s role has evolved. Some companies adopt hybrid models, where the office is transformed into a hub for collaboration and face-to-face meetings, while remote work is supported for individual tasks. This can impact the sense of belonging and cohesion within the company culture.

■ **Well-being and comfort.** The physical work environment can significantly impact employee well-being. Allowing choices in workspace design, furniture, lighting, and temperature can ensure that employees feel comfortable and supported, reducing stress and potential health issues related to the workplace. Choice of amenities like wellness rooms, recreational spaces, or flexible workspaces can contribute to a culture that prioritizes employee well-being and work-life fulfillment.

■ **Innovation and creativity.** A flexible work environment encourages creativity and innovation. When employees can move to different spaces or work in varied settings, it can spark new ideas and fresh perspectives.

■ **Retention and attraction of talent.** A workplace that values employee choice demonstrates that the company cares about its workforce’s well-being and preferences. This can contribute to higher retention rates and make the company more attractive to potential talent.

■ **Empowerment and trust.** Allowing employees to choose their workspace demonstrates trust in their ability to manage their own work effectively. This empowerment can lead to a more positive and collaborative work culture.

■ **Adaptability and change.** The needs of employees



Workstations that are tailored for the hybrid worker provide all the tools needed to be productive at work while being near team members and leadership.

can change over time or in response to different projects. Providing choices in the physical workspace allows for greater adaptability to these changing needs.

■ **Diversity and inclusion.** Employee choice can accommodate diverse needs and preferences, recognizing

that individuals have different working styles and requirements.

■ **Sense of community.** While individual choices are crucial, the physical space should also be designed to facilitate interaction and collaboration among employees, fostering a sense of community and teamwork.

■ **Company rituals and events.** The office space provides a venue for company rituals, events and celebrations, which are essential for building a strong company culture and fostering a sense of community among employees.

■ **Company identity and branding.** The design and decor of the office space can reinforce the company's values and branding. For example, a modern and innovative office design might align with a company that values creativity and forward-thinking.

The built environment can have a profound influence on company culture. Its design, layout and amenities can shape employee behavior, foster collaboration, promote company values, and impact overall employee satisfaction and engagement. As workplaces continue to evolve, it is essential for companies to put people first and carefully consider how the environment aligns with their desired company culture and adapt to the changing needs of their workforce. \\\



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