

orangebox



OFFICE WARS THE BIRTH OF THE CORRIDOR WARRIOR

The Digital Pen, a cigar shaped pen with a mini camera on its tip that reads your handwriting and converts it to whatever format you choose, to use and communicate to whomever you choose. As with all new technology what seems at the outset to be maybe a little quirky, before long becomes an essential daily work tool. Remember the first mobile phone.



Office Wars is a report commissioned by Orangebox from Unwired to investigate both the reality and fiction of today's workplace and to anticipate how wireless technology will impact the emerging trend for the adaptable and flexible office. This document should be read in conjunction with the Orangebox 'Expanding The Landscape' publication of May 2003.



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Office Wars and the Corridor Warrior

The objective of this white paper is not to predict the future. There is much written about the future of work and the workplace. And most predictions never materialise. Yet much of this forecasting is done in a vacuum.

This piece of research has approached things differently. We have set out to provide a balanced agenda by working with professionals and practitioners in the market. The research has not been carried out in a dark room, but rather through dialogue and discussion with people responsible for the design, planning and running of workplaces in the UK.

We have identified three key trends:

1. The emergence of new workplace technology that no longer requires a traditional 'desk'
2. A predicted increase in noise or acoustic pollution, that will affect the acceptance and performance of the open plan office
3. A growth in in building mobility (in part led by 1 above) will necessitate the provision of new social or non desk spaces

We believe that these three key issues will provide the impetus for change. They represent three key forces at work:

	Technology pull	enablers of change
	Technology push	exogenous drivers of change
And	User demand	new workstyle requirements

To evaluate these predictions, OrangeBox hosted a series of ThinkTanks where leading thinkers and practitioners from the world of facilities, architecture and furniture came together to discuss and debate these issues. The results are open and honest and do not all support the hypothesis we present.

However, there was clear agreement that something different was needed in the workspace. A new kind or topology of work setting, neither open plan nor cellular, that would cater for a new breed of worker, the 'corridor warrior'.

It is the emergence of this new individual, no 3 above, that has been the driver of this initiative and the inspiration behind the title of this white paper: Office Wars – the emergence of the corridor warrior.

We hope you enjoy our call to arms!

Orangebox Office Wars White Paper

2. Executive summary

- Open plan has become the main approach to the provision of the workplace and the majority of people believe that the open plan workplace works. The advantages of open plan include: cost efficiency, flexibility, encouraging teamwork, communication and collaboration and giving people a sense of belonging and identity. It also reduces churn or change costs and is efficient for networked technology and structured cabling distribution.
- The alternative to open plan – the cellular or private office – is still with us but has diminished in the corporate office. This is primarily due to cost, inflexibility and culture
- Open plan however, has its clear disadvantages: lack of privacy, noise pollution, lack of choice (the open plan only offers one environment in which to work in), rigidity (it may not suit the organisation's business need, culture and diversity of employees – especially the generation gap).
- Technology also has moved on. Open plan working grew alongside networked personal computers cabled down to desks. The emergence of portable computers and personal productivity devices such as the PDA and mobile phone are changing the rules.
- Away from open plan, many people have provided 'break out' space. But the experience with today's breakout space is that it is poorly defined, 'off line' and not functional. There is no protocol: breakout spaces are one of two extremes – a vending machine and soft seating in the 'dead' corner or a 'wacky' space, often with beanbags and soft seating. Break out spaces today are more often than not for 'taking a break'; they are places without connectivity or access to corporate data and messaging (e.g. email)
- Noise is a critical issue in the open plan workplace today and noise levels are set to increase significantly in the near future with the next generation of technology.
- There are a number of solutions to noise but the most effective ones are instilling new etiquette or protocol and providing different environments e.g. quiet areas and sound booths to work in.
- Today, open plan does not provide an appropriate environment for some work tasks e.g. making/receiving phone calls and conference calls, listening to voicemail, thinking and brainstorm/creative thinking. Importantly, a 'third space' could potentially offer the environments for the work tasks that are not provided by the open plan office today.

- We believe that there is now a need for a 'third space' inside the workplace. The current choices or definitions of open plan or cellular are too narrow and are diametrically opposed. The alternative spaces, break out, team, social and so on do not describe mainstream work areas but rather specialist niche places that have often been regarded as a place to escape, rather than a setting for connected work.
- There are a number of ways of making a third space effective. These include: defining the function and purpose, making it multi functional (providing many different environments), making the space agile, designing the space to suit the business need, culture and diversity of employees, introducing protocol and life style management and providing the appropriate technology.
- The workplace today does not cater for the corridor warrior. We believe that a new topology called the 'third space' will evolve to provide an alternative to the polarity of the open plan – cellular debate.

3. State of the workplace in 2003

What is right with open plan?

Open plan has become the main approach to the provision of workplace. Most offices in the United Kingdom now have the majority of desks space planned in open space, often with low partitions to provide a degree of segregation or privacy.

In our series of user group lunches the majority of people¹ (90%) thought that open plan works. Indeed, the open plan format has many advantages over the cellular office format.

Firstly, the open plan office has proved to be significantly more cost effective as the footprint needed for each individual and real estate overhead are considerably reduced. Open plan removes costs involved with fitting out the office (walls, air conditioning and so on). Not only is open plan economical but it is flexible. Open offices are designed for change.

Another fundamental strength of the open plan workplace is that the openness between workstations increases communication, collaboration and teamwork within an organisation. This encourages the sharing of knowledge and expertise and helps to build strong work relationships. Importantly, this gives people a sense of belonging and identity.

As Helen Berresford at Sheppard Robson pointed out, "It is important to see people working together. People's energy levels in an office environment are very apparent. It is something you pick up instantaneously, particularly when managing and working with a group of people."

The open plan office also extends the sphere of influence and fluidity in an organisation. With no barriers between workstations, people are more likely to walk around the office floor and talk to more colleagues than if they were hidden behind office walls. Hot desking in conjunction with open plan dramatically increases the sphere of influence further as people change desks and therefore mix with different people everyday.

Martin Stocks of FF Business, explains how everyone including himself works in the open plan workplace and how this has been very positive for his organisation. "I have a laptop, a

"It is important to see people working together. People's energy levels in an office environment are very apparent. It is something you pick up instantaneously, particularly when managing and working with a group of people."

**Helen Berresford
Sheppard Robson**

¹ Based on the Orangebox ThinkTanks

cordless phone and a pedestal. We're trying to do as we say, we don't file things we put the file on the system. Ours is not just a demonstration, ours is so we work in the most effective way. It has saved costs, it does improve efficiency and it definitely breaks down a lot of departmental barriers. Because we are sitting in different places everyday you do get a lot more fluidity through the organization and it works well."

The BBC's offices are now also largely open plan and the result has been an improvement in efficiency particularly in terms of space. "At the BBC we try not to have accommodation based on status, rather it depends on activity," explains Jane Macfarlane. "For example, if you are 60% of the time in meetings, talking about contracts, dealing with talent, you can have a desk in the corner and a meeting table. When you are not there, you tidy your desk and allow other people to use it. We are trying to get away from offices by status most of the directors at the BBC are now in open plan but they have access to private space."

We are trying to get away from offices by status most of the directors at the BBC are now in open plan but they have access to private space."

**Jane Macfarlane
BBC**

What is wrong with the open plan?

Despite the dramatic move to the open plan model and consensus that on balance the open plan workplace is effective, the format has its clear weaknesses. One of the main complaints is that with the high density of workstations positioned closely together in a confined space, there is no privacy. People may be unable to have uninterrupted conversations with other colleagues or on the telephone. The high density of workstations also results in a high level of noise pollution. Sources of noise include: conversations between colleagues, telephone and mobile ring tones, loud telephone conversations, conference calls and speaker phones, dictation, computer audio, the footsteps of people walking past, printers, scanners, copiers or fax machines. This means that whilst the open plan is the ideal setting for some tasks such as collaborative work, it is completely inappropriate for other work tasks such as those that require a high level of concentration or creativity.



"Clients do use breakout areas if they are in the right location. I don't think they should be too far away from the desk."

Gavin Harris, Harper MacKay

Therefore while the open plan model is flexible, and allows FM changes in the number of desks and seating, it is totally inflexible for the individual using the space. Essentially, it only offers the individual one environment or setting in which to work – not ideal for the diverse set of work tasks performed today.

The Demands of the Organisation

We can categorise two types of worker: ones that are process workers and primarily desk bound and those that are knowledge or service workers that are more mobile.

As Julia Kitchen of Workplace points out: "I think there will always be a two tier workforce. Those who roam and those who don't."

For example, at PricewaterhouseCoopers there exist a number of businesses in the organisation; those working in banking or tax will tend to be desk bound whilst consultants who are knowledge and service workers will tend to be more mobile.

PricewaterhouseCoopers' John Conner explains, "The one thing that is missing in this debate is the word business. Everything has to be driven by business need and if it makes sense, it's affordable and there is a return then the quicker it will be established. Also every major corporation ... is not just one business, it is a variety of businesses and a variety of workers and processes, therefore absorption will depend on what people do. In the professional services industry there is a heavy emphasis on processing work whilst consultants providing knowledge/service will be more mobile."

Mr Conner continues, "Flexible working has always been part of the professional services industry. These have been drivers of change. We have been able to embrace flexible working in all sorts of ways because an auditor has been doing it forever. We did call it hot desking, we now call it hotelling."

Business or organisational culture is also important.

As Jacqueline Carrington Fallow from HSBC says, "We are a global corporation. People have different expectations and different cultural values throughout the world, we can not assume that people doing the same job in a different part of the world will have the same expectations/values. Even something as simple as introducing a flat screen cannot be taken for granted."

Diversity of employees (especially the generation gap) that exists in the workplace today is set to get worse. There are generally 3 4 generations at work now. The older generation tend to still use paper. For example, they often

"We have always encouraged a diversity of space and some degree of flexibility so people can move."

**Craig Linnell, Buschow
Henley**

print off emails or other word documents to read rather than reading from screen. The younger generation however, who have grown up with new technologies enabling new ways of working tend to be more mobile and used to on screen work. Furthermore, the younger generation tend to be more flexible and open minded to changes in the workplace format.

“Different cultures and generations is another issue. Kids coming out of college will have no issue with paper work.” explains Michael Clarke from W2W.

Ross Wilkinson at Workplace Creations emphasises the point: “We are in a society today with a broad mix of people, from not having technology at all to the young kids coming through who are fantastic with technology. It is much harder when you have a huge disparity of people being 60 65 still working and a 21 year old.”

Human barriers and people’s unwillingness to change should not be underestimated:

“We work in an office where two thirds of our office are flexible workers. We have our different space and we bring clients in to see our ways of working and however much the clients are stimulated by that, there are many hurdles that have to be overcome. The technology is there, but there are barriers:

- a) People’s willingness to change
- b) Culture is a slow thing to be able to change.”

Martin Stocks, FF Business

People are naturally territorial and creatures of habit. People like to ‘own a space’ and sit at the same desk everyday. Even though it appears that we have moved a long way from the factory origins of the office environment, many workspaces still bear a striking resemblance to those of the past: regimented rows with little choice of alternative work environments.

“You would not believe it come 7 or 8 am people rush into the office early to grab their space. Sounds great, but is it good that people want to get in early to get their space?”

**Ross Wilkinson,
Workplace Creations**

“One of the downsides to the open plan is the feeling that you are still in a factory environment, unless you provide creative furniture layouts.”

**John Conner
PricewaterhouseCoopers**

4. Experience with breakout space

Many organisations have implemented 'break out' spaces, with mixed results.

a. What is breakout space in today's workplace

At present, breakout space in today's workplace seems undefined. Organisations often believe they ought to have breakout space but the purpose of the space is not clear.

"Often Breakout spaces are provided because designers and organisations believe they are the thing to have without understanding the real purpose and value of them – hence they can be underutilised."

John Conner, PricewaterhouseCoopers

b. No clear protocol

There is often no clear protocol provided by senior management as to how breakout space should be used. The name, lack of definition and absence of protocol as well as the 'frowns' from senior management, create the perception that when you are in a breakout space, you are not working but taking a break from work.

c. Breakout spaces are one of two extremes

Breakout spaces are often badly located or poorly designed. The unusable, undesirable space on the floorplate e.g. a windowless corner where the vending machine is located, is often the setting for 'soft seating' masquerading as breakout.






Alternatively, designers license creates exaggerated space where wacky, off the wall interiors and furnishings are the only ingredients provided and meant to stimulate creative thought.

Helen Berresford from Sheppard Robson sums up the issue: "If breakout spaces are too extreme they do not encourage use. People don't worry about sitting in a meeting room, if the environment isn't right people won't use the space. The right design is crucial."



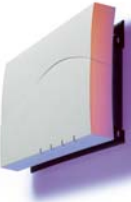
We believe that break out spaces in today's workplace are ineffective and not representative of the environments that are needed by a new breed of worker seeking 'non desk' settings for certain tasks.

5. Technology drivers of change and new ways of working

The technologies of change

	<p>The smart display a wireless flat screen with touch display. It charges on a base and can be separated from its computer, allowing use near the desk</p>
	<p>Changing ergonomics of laptops, may encourage use of these devices away from desks or tables</p>
	<p>Tablet PCs will bring true 'laptop' computing, changing ergonomics, providing pen and screen interface</p>
	<p>Bluetooth headsets will allow people access to voice/telephony services as well as provide a means of control. They will also be used to listen to audio casts and for digital dictation</p>
	<p>Mimio Bluetooth devices create an intelligent whiteboard for capturing thoughts in third space</p>

In the series of user group lunches 80% of attendees said that they believed that technology would dramatically change the ways of working.

	<p>Mobile phones will be used inside buildings for making and receiving calls, as well as accessing voice mail.</p> <p>Digital pens will bring handwriting back to work and allow the capture of notes or annotations away from a PC.</p>
	<p>Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) will be the main tool of the corridor warrior, a wireless connected device carried in the pocket with 'on line' schedule, email, database and access to office documents</p>
	<p>Laptops will have Centrino, Intel's new wireless processor, built in as standard during 2003 allowing work anywhere for an increasingly mobile workforce</p>
	<p>Wireless local area networks (WLANS) will allow connection to the network from anywhere, initially for laptops and PDAs, and for phones in the future</p>

There is no doubt that a host of new workplace technologies will lead to massive change in work and the workplace. The above summarises the main drivers of change.

And as Martin Stocks reaffirms, "In what we do, products are designed around technology. That's been the main drive in product design e.g. desking and flat screens."

6 Noise in the workplace

Noise is a critical issue in the open plan workplace today

Noise is a hazard at work. Not just in terms of health and safety or quality of the workplace, but noise pollution can impact productivity and effectiveness.

Examples of the sources of noise in the workplace at present include:

- Desk phones
- Computers
- Speaker phones (off hook calling, conference calling and voice mail)
- Mobile phones (ringing tones, receiving text messages or conversations)
- Voice and web casts
- Broadcast/TV
- Equipment such as copier/printer/fax/shredder.
- Some office furniture
- Air conditioning
- Machinery such as lift gear
- General human voices

And we believe that noise levels in the workplace are set to increase significantly in the near future.

While people may accept the level of noise in today's workplace, or provide solutions such as white or pink noise to block out background disturbances, we believe that the next generation of technology will exacerbate the issues of acoustic pollution and work in the open.

A range of technology led trends are set to increase the amount of noise at work:

- **Voice controls and commands** voice access to computers will become a common interface. The availability of high quality automated speech recognition and speech synthesis technologies, combined with lower cost and higher performance hardware, make automated voice access feasible for most applications including word, excel, powerpoint and email. The next time you open this White Paper, you may simply be saying to your

"Noise is only getting worse as more technologies are introduced into the workplace, and the seating arrangements become more cramped as the firm tries to cut costs and fit more employees into the same area."

**Analyst
JP Morgan**



"The office is incredibly noisy to the point where I often can't think when trying to write a presentation or concentrate on something"

**Media Planner
J Walter Thompson**

computer "start word" and "Open OrangeBox Office Wars White Paper file"...

- **Digital dictation** as a substitute to dictating onto a tape, digital dictation allows a user to dictate directly on to a computer, PDA or other device using a handheld microphone or a headset. This is recorded as a sound file (eg WAV file). The file is then saved on to the company network and then sent to a selected secretary to be transcribed. The digital dictation can be replayed and transcribed from a WAV file directly into a relevant application and then saved again on the network as a finished document.
- **Delivery of real time training** formalised training is eroding and instead we are seeing training being delivered by audio/multimedia to a computer at the desk. We believe that companies will soon replace the majority of formalised training days or courses for employees with training courses managed by individuals and undertaken in spare periods during the working day.
- **Internal communications (webcasts/voice casts)** internal communications through web casts and voice casts has been a phenomenon in the US that we believe will spread quickly. People are beginning to send web/voice casts live or pre recorded within the office as a means of internal communication around the globe.
- **Multimedia** most software (e.g. Microsoft's Powerpoint, Excel and Word) that we use today comes with sound/voice control. We believe that increasing network speed and more powerful processors will increase our use of multi media in the workplace e.g. music and video, and sound will be common in applications used for work and leisure.
- **Unified messaging** unified messaging gives users access to email, voicemail, and fax messages through a single 'inbox'. Users can listen to their email using text to speech technology as well as forward voice messages as attachments to an email. For example, with unified messaging, a CEO is able to easily forward a voicemail that is more relevant to several members of management as email attachments. The members of management will then receive the email attachment in the form of a voice file and listen to it. They can then forward it again to employees below them, for them to deal with.
- **Instant messaging and collaborative software** – there is a new breed of software emerging that allows people to be aware of on line communities of interest (such as project teams or departments) and these will allow more instant messaging, rather than email. The move towards IP telephony will drive the use of mixed media through a PC, where for example an instant messaging conversation may migrate to an immediate conference call at the desk.

- **Desk top video conferencing** – we predict a medium term rise in video conferencing from the desk top, which will include the requirement for audio.

Effects of noise

With these predicted rises in the level of noise pollution in open plan, it is important to be aware of the effects of noise. For noise levels in the office, the most common effects are interference with speech communication, annoyance, stress and distraction from mental activities. The annoying effect of noise can decrease performance or increase errors. If the tasks require a great deal of mental concentration, noise can be detrimental to performance. There are also issues of privacy and confidentiality.

Studies reveal that people who are exposed to unwanted noise in open office environments can suffer decreased productivity of up to 20%
Source: Evans, 2000

The solutions to noise

There are a number of solutions, but the most effective are:

1. Management values and protocol

“It is about keeping personal values, general protocol and just thinking about other people. Good old fashioned consideration for the person sitting next to us.”

Jacqueline Carrington Fallow, HSBC

2. Providing different environments e.g. quiet areas and soundproof booths as well as enabling mobility through the use of wireless technology. Employees can then move away from the desk and spend time working in more appropriate areas.

“The solution to noise is to define areas. You need to have quiet zones where people don’t talk or do so very quietly.”

**Jane Macfarlane
BBC**

7 Work tasks and settings

During the ThinkTanks we asked participants to rate open plan and cellular environments based on a variety of tasks at work. We also tried to identify how good a 'third space' might be in providing an environment for certain tasks.

What is evident is that people felt the cellular or enclosed space was suitable for almost all tasks, while open plan failed on a few counts. What is interesting is the potential role that could be filled by a third type of space...

Tasks	How good is the open plan?	How good is cellular?	How good could third space be?
Reading/Reviewing on screen	Adequate	Good	Good if there were private areas and if technology allowed for it
Reading/Reviewing on paper	Adequate	Good	Good if there were private areas
Writing	Adequate	Good	Good if there were quiet areas and if technology allowed for it
Entering data	Adequate /Good	Good	Poor
Surfing Internet/Intranet	Adequate	Good	Good if there was connectivity
Sending/Receiving emails	Adequate	Good	Good if there was connectivity
Making/Receiving phone calls and conference calls	Not good	Good	Good if there were sound proof booths
Listening to voicemail	Not good	Good	Good if there were sound proof booths

Thinking	Not good	Good	Good if there are quiet areas
Briefing colleagues	Good	Not good	Good
Discussions/Collaboration	Good	Not good	Good
Brainstorm/Creative Thinking	Not Good	Good	Good
Paperwork/Filing	Good	Good	Not adequate
Food and drink	Good	Good	Good

As seen from the table, the cellular office is suitable for almost all work tasks aside from briefing colleagues and discussions/collaboration. In contrast, the open plan succeeds where the cellular office fails. However, it does not provide an appropriate environment for making/receiving phone calls and conference calls, listening to voicemail, thinking and brainstorm/creative thinking.

Importantly, the third space could potentially offer the environments for the work tasks that are not effectively provided by open plan today. For example, the third space could be the setting to make/receive phone calls and listen to voice mails (if there were sound booths). Moreover, the third space could encourage creative thinking and brainstorming (if there were quiet areas). It appears therefore that the open plan and a well thought out third space could combine to provide the perfect mix of settings for any work task.

8 The third space environments for the corridor warrior

We believe that there is now the need for a third space in the workplace. Perhaps it will be an adjunct to open plan, where there are desk and non desk open plan settings. But third space could also become a topology in its own right, complementing open plan and cellular with a new format of work environment.

What is clear is that there are three ingredients necessary for third space to emerge and be effective:

1. A defined need – a degree of mobility
2. An accommodating culture – acceptance
3. The enabling technologies – wireless, portable devices

How can we make the third space effective?

a. Change the name

The name 'breakout' has given people the misconception that when you are in a breakout space you are taking a break and not working.

"Is the word break out not already outdated? It suggests that someone is having a break from work," says Martin Stocks from FF Business

Hence the term 'third space'. We need a new definition.

b. Define the function and purpose of the third space.

The first step in introducing the third space is to clearly identify the purpose and function of the space.

'If you clearly identify the function of the space then you can probably succeed in achieving its function. If however, the space is undefined and you are undisciplined about what you actually want to achieve from the space (let's throw a 100 chairs in, because we need it and it looks pretty in the atrium), then it generally fails.'

c. The third space should be multi functional, providing many different environments

With the trend of working longer hours, people are looking for the workplace to be more like home, a different space for different work tasks.

“People will expect everything they get at home within their office,” says Martin Stocks at FF Business

For many the third space represents up to 8 different environments.

“Breakout space for me, if it is going to be effective we have got to have 7 or 8 different ways of working in one breakout space to give people a choice.”

Martin Stocks, FF Business

Examples of different environments

- a. A touchdown area
- b. A place for privacy, quiet space and concentration
- c. A place for inspiration, stimulation, creative thinking and brainstorming
- d. A place for team work and collaboration
- e. A place for a break, to relax, socialise and to eat and drink

What is clear is that Third Space needs to fulfil a range of user requirements. To achieve this it will need to provide a series of settings, led by furniture and enabled by technology.

We present here the ‘third space matrix’ a menu of options for this new type of environment and identify the key enablers.

“I think offices are becoming more homelike. People are working longer hours so they want better facilities to support them.”

Kathy Tilney, Tilney Shane

The third space matrix

Environment	Setting	Typical Tasks	Enabler
A touchdown area	Stand up table	Checking emails, voicemail Surfing the Intranet	Laptop Wireless data Mobile Telephony
A place for privacy, quiet space and concentration	A small compact space	Reading/Reviewing on screen or paper Writing Thinking Private one on one meetings	Laptop External display Wireless data Mobile Telephony
A place for inspiration, stimulation and creative thinking	A spacious, area with comfortable seating and work surface with screening	Thinking Brainstorm/Creative Thinking Writing	Laptop Wireless data 'Smart boards' External display Network projector Corporate presence
A place for team work and collaboration	A area suitable for groups with seating and work surfaces	Briefing colleagues Discussions Collaboration Meetings	Laptop Wireless data Network connection Mobile Telephony Network Projector 'Smart board'
A place for a break, to relax, socialise and to eat and drink	A casual informal area with seating and surfaces for food and drink	For rest and relaxing Food and drink	Mobile Telephony PDA Music/Television

"Breakout areas particularly need screening."

**Helen Berresford
Sheppard Robson**

“If all they need is to have a touchdown space, you have those. If you need a quiet booth, you have that. You have got to have it like a house a bathroom to wash, a kitchen to eat and a bedroom to sleep. Its not about having 30 desks for 40 people because they are out 25% of the time. That does not work. Those that have gone to save space, a lot of them in our experience have said that has not worked. It is about more efficient space than necessarily saving space.”

Martin Stocks, FF Business

Achieving Effective Third Space: the debate

As with any new concept there are strong views and opinions that need to be taken into account.

Providing a high quality workplace is not only important in increasing productivity but in retaining and recruiting staff. As noted by Kathy Tilney from Tilney Shane, companies value people, and to recognise that, they need to offer staff tangible benefits.

“We want to attract and retain the best skills – one of the components to do that is the working environment. It is about working smarter,” states John Conner at PricewaterhouseCoopers

People, especially the younger generation, will come to expect a choice of environments at their workplace and it will become a factor in determining which organisation they work for.

And justifying the third space is not about an additional requirement but about a changing allocation of productive floor space inside the building.

Ross Wilkinson from Workplace Creations referred to a case where a dynamic organisation took over a more traditional organisation and tried to modernise its thinking and culture. One of such initiatives was to introduce create breakout spaces.

“They wanted to go the whole hog but they were not ready for it, because the people were not ready for it, because the culture was not ready for it,” he explains.

The result was that the breakout spaces were not being used six months after they had been created.

Trevor Morgan from Calvert Morgan also cites a case where the breakout space created was not used and eventually ‘petered away’ because the company culture did not condone the use of them.

“People expect more from the spaces around them.”

**Craig Linnell Buschow
Henley**

“Generally providing personal territory is important. However breakout spaces are becoming essential more informal meeting spaces.”

**Helen Berresford,
Sheppard Robson**

“When we went back and asked people why the breakout areas were not being used, they said that it was because the company culture was not right. ‘I was working in the area and a partner/director walked past and frowned at me.’”

Trevor Morgan, Calvert Morgan

Trevor Morgan pointed out that when people were in breakout areas the feeling was that “I am in this area and I am seen as not working.”

For third space to become effective, it is important to learn from these experiences.

With the diversity of cultures and ages that exist in the workforce today, the third space needs to take into consideration this diversity by offering the freedom of choice.

“Its about not assuming that any of us are going to apply a common solution across the board. Choice management is really the thing going forward. There are different ages, mentalities and skills. It is the challenge as to what you provide in physical terms and what you provide in technology terms and in soft terms.”

John Conner, PricewaterhouseCoopers

The third space should not be a substitute for a desk but an addition to the desk. It is believed that having taken space away from people with the open plan workspace, some space should be returned in the form of non desk space. The modern workplace is not just about saving space but effective space.

Furthermore, the third space should be located close to the desk making it more accessible.

“Clients do use breakout areas if they are in the right location. I don’t think they should be too far away from the desk.”

Gavin Harris, Harper MacKay

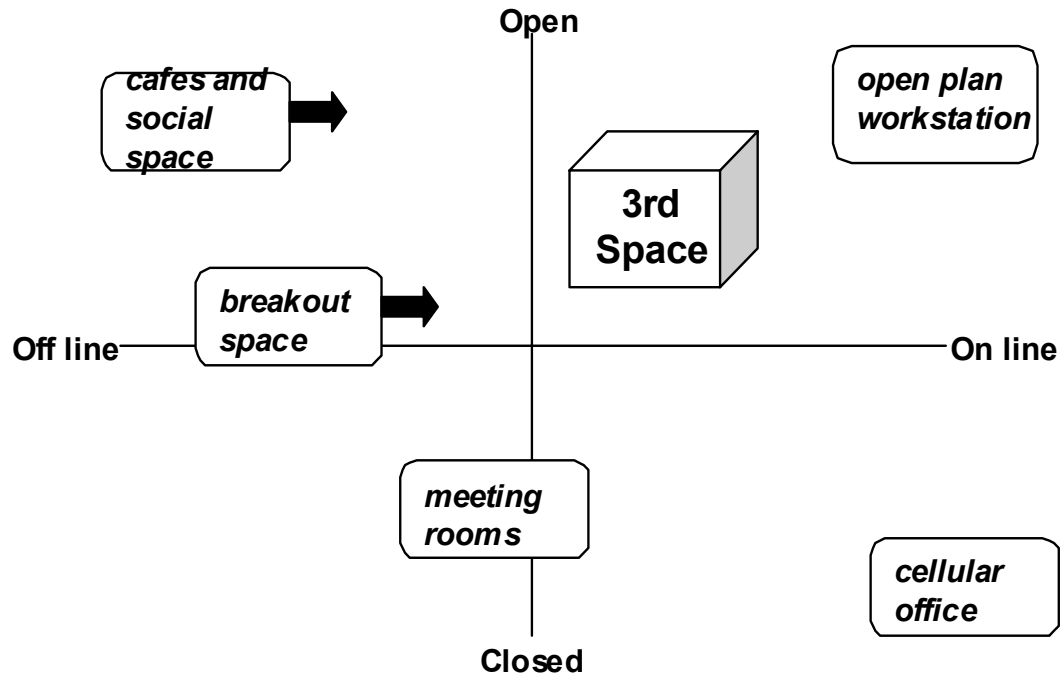
Julia Kitchen of Workplace believes that “the future of breakout space will be what managers have always had, your own space, adjacent to your desk. Smaller desks and a breakout space. Then you don’t have to move.”

So will third space become a new part of the office landscape? As ever there are conflicting views. Some believe that ‘breakout’ space is here to stay, others see no need for a new topology of space and a few see it as just variation on today’s managerial workstation.

However, our view is that whatever the approach to the softer issues of task led environments there are some solid facts that cannot be ignored:

1. Open plan will become increasingly ineffective as new technology drives up acoustic pollution to unacceptable levels.
2. New technology such as smart displays, tablet PCs, mobile phones and PDAs will change the rules by providing portable equipment that connects away from the desk
3. New software will accelerate the demise of the desk as the location or gateway for information, messaging and data.

Third space will complement existing formats by providing an on line, connected setting that sits somewhere between open plan and cellular in its degree of 'openness' or provision of privacy. It is designed to be a work setting, in contrast to social spaces and will, we believe, become the environment of choice for a variety of tasks identified above.



9 Conclusions

The workplace today does not cater for the corridor warrior. It provides formal workspaces and informal settings, but nothing in between.

This white paper has set out to discuss and debate the need for a third type of formal work space in the office. One that caters for the need of the corridor warrior.

What is clear is that the participants considered the emergence of third space to be a step on the road to a different type of workspace altogether.

As knowledge workers increasingly dominate the white collar office and as mobility gathers momentum, new solutions for the workplace will continue to evolve.

In the future, the main purpose for going into the workplace will be for teamwork and collaboration, training and mentoring as well as social and cultural needs.

“I believe that the future office will become more relaxed. I think we will be working in more like a lounge. The advertising industry is already there. The future office will get more lounge oriented and more casual.”

Gavin Harris, Harper MacKay

Perhaps in the future, the office will borrow more from an executive lounge at an airport or a collegiate environment than the factory, Taylorist influences of today.

The third space, like the ‘third way’, may define the manifesto for the workplace in the 21st Century.

“The one fundamental drive for the population to come into the office is to network and collaborate.”

**John Conner
PricewaterhouseCoopers**

Third space caters for the needs of the corridor warrior by providing both settings and technology enablers for certain work tasks to be performed effectively

10. Breakout Became The Third Space

It's always easy to exaggerate or overcook research and claim to be the first to define an important trend. At Orangebox it's not our style; in summary perhaps the outcome of this report is quite simply 'Breakout' can now be seen as the beginning of the move to create the new ways of working outlined in this report. However as a description it must be jettisoned; it simply does not express what we're on about. We've used descriptions like 'The Corridor Warrior' and 'The Third Space' – we offer these as suggestions but we know our industry will eventually adopt a consensus to describe the new agenda for responsive, agile, flexible furniture that allows the office to be productive and relaxed. **Which is exactly where Orangebox is focused.**

11. Conclusions that inform Orangebox

Resulting from this white paper Orangebox has set out key concerns that we believe should inform the Orangebox product landscape. Orangebox products are never over cooked, elaborate or indulgent in their design and manufacturing. They are designed for our time of new values in which appropriate quality is more important than ever before. Our needs change constantly and even three years is now a long time into the future. Orangebox recognises this reality and is focused on products that have a lightness of touch and honesty of spirit, where smart design is directed to answer today's issues, while ensuring each product is able to be absolutely relevant for tomorrow's, whatever it may be.

The myth of the breakout space

The successes and failures of the current workplace

One solution never fits all

Addressing the new technologies workday

Individual working and team working

Good environments retain good workers

The growing importance of lifestyle values

New generations with new attitudes enter the workplace

The desk becomes a table

The need for third space environments

Avoid cu de sacs

The myth of breakout space

The furniture industry has continuously offered up new ways of working and new ways to organise and influence the workplace. None has been so hot and ubiquitous as the breakout space. A space that's open to multiple interpretations from the 'don't know what it is but we should have one' to the downright wacky. The conclusion to have come from this however, is the widespread acceptance that within the workplace there is a real need for multiple working scenarios and it can no longer simply be a desk, task and tub chair.

The successes and failures of the current workplace

The current open plan environment does work at many levels and the new generation of desking products are encouraging more organic planning configurations rather than the rigid grid footprint. However the major downside of open plan continues to be the feeling that you are in a factory space. The major upside, is the importance of seeing people working together where energy levels are very apparent and in which people can share.

One solution never fits all

Every client building, whether a bank, airline whatever, is not just one business but a variety of businesses and a variety of workers and processes. Whatever furniture solution you work with it must, above all else, allow each organisation to choose their solution and configure for their own needs. In today's complex and diverse workplace the notion that a single solution fits all has become obsolete.

Addressing the new technologies workday

While you can never foretell the future with any accuracy what we do know is that the new generation of wireless IT now coming through will bring more into focus the different generations within the workplace and each will embrace and participate with this technology in their own way. During the course of the Orangebox research we found universal belief that this new technology will dramatically change our ways of working in the coming years and the furniture industry must offer new solutions to facilitate it's integration.

Individual working and team working.

Research shows that the changing demographics of the workplace; highly I.T. literate younger people, the increasing importance of women, bring with them a new work culture and value system. High in importance within this is the value placed on the satisfaction and results from being a team player. It's also becoming increasingly common for key decisions to be made by teams not individuals. This evolution from individual work to collaborative work, enabled by the new I.T. tools, brings with it the real need for adaptable and flexible furniture.

Good work environments retain good workers.

Better and more effective work environments are becoming more critical in an economy where key skills are in short supply and the cost of employee turnaround is expensive. Attracting, motivating and retaining high performance employees is getting more important and companies increasingly talk of the needs of 'happy workers'. People believe a company's environment reflects its goals, values and image; what it thinks of its employees.

The growing importance of lifestyle values

Remember the forecasts of a few years ago that suggested in the near future a large percentage of office workers would be working from home. Today's reality is that working from home has become one of a number of options of flexible working – something you do when convenient but not continuously.

New generations with new attitudes enter the workplace.

Clients believe there are three generations within their organisations, each with different values, I.T. skills and ways of working. New generations of workers coming into the workplace carry a different value system, the design, look and functionality is more important to younger people and as women become increasingly critical so their value systems will also come more into focus.

The desk becomes a table

As the need and use of the third space increases so the hegemony of the desking system lessens. A recurring sentiment during our research was agreement that we are seeing a gradual move away from the rigid desk towards a lighter, more flexible work surface and as wireless I.T. increases in use, this move will accelerate in the coming years. The question also arises – what work surface do we need if you are writing on a tablet screen and projecting your screen information onto a surface adjacent to you.

The need for third space environments

We know breakout was the beginning of a new trend in office design and function. We also know that to call it breakout space was restrictive and limited. So we asked the same question repeatedly to people from different backgrounds and experiences. Define the function of the third space; unanimously this was described as all of the following and universally it was accepted that unless these spaces are well defined and designed they would fail. A clear consensus also emerged that a diversity of spaces is critical to achieving the effective office. It's clear that the new breakout or third space is going to be effective if you offer many different ways of working within one space.

Avoid cul de sacs.

In our competitive business environment, when clients invest in their offices they demand a new ability to change easily and inexpensively. Allowing workers to work well, both individually and collectively is becoming increasingly critical within the workplace that we know will change but we cannot predict how much or how quickly. Client organisations are increasingly demanding a proven business case for new work environments and if it's affordable and has a proven return, they will more quickly embrace these developments.

12 Appendices

Top ten issues highlighted by user group lunches for open plan workplace

Team work/Collaboration
Communication/Relationships
Organisational culture
Noise
Density
Lack of privacy
Identity/Ability to personalise and have your own personal space
Inability to focus and concentrate
Lack of alternative choice
Heating/Lighting/Air Conditioning

Top ten issues highlighted by user group lunches for effective breakout space

Location
Technology and connectivity
Power
Comfort
Flexibility
Diversity/Change of atmosphere
Privacy
Teamwork
Organisational culture/Being allowed to use it/Definition for staff of its function
Policing and control

13 Sources

Thanks to all the participants that attended the Orangebox ThinkTank Lunches that were held during February 2003.

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Joanne York, Claremont
Martin Stocks, FF Business
Michael Clarke, W2W
Ross Wilkinson, Workplace Creations
Tony Eaves, Systems by Design
Trevor Morgan, Calvert Morgan
Amanda Baldwin, Gensler
Craig Linnell, Buschow Henley
Gavin Harris, Harper McKay
Helen Berresford, Sheppard Robson
Julia Kitchen, Workplace
Kathy Tilney, Tilney Shane
Jacqueline Carrington Fallow HSBC
Jane Macfarlane BBC
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University of Surrey

14 About UNWIRED

UNWIRED is the knowledge division of Cordless Group. It offers research, market analysis and forecasting services and publishes a range of reports, newsletters and guides. It specialises in analysing new technologies and their impact on work, the work process and the workplace. UNWIRED has in depth knowledge on the application of wireless innovation and predicts the technology trends of the future.

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