

Maximize real estate



Not just shrinking – rethinking. The average workstation footprint has been getting smaller over the last few years in response to the new world in which we work. There exists more mobility, more collective work, increasing use of group spaces.

This trend shows no signs of slowing down. According to a new survey about real estate utilization conducted by Steelcase and CoreNet Global, 80% of those surveyed expect to contract their space per employee to some degree. The average reduction was approximately 10%.

What happens to the real estate carved out of individual workstation footprints? Some is subleased or rented out. Other companies move to a smaller office. What is important is to understand how to find the right balance between individual work spaces and shared spaces. Creating the right spaces is about understanding the range of options that help people work most effectively. Simply shrinking your real estate footprint, much like putting yourself on a crash diet, merely makes you thinner, not better. “Compression alone has limited benefits. If you treat your real estate like an asset, you don’t just shrink, you re-think the space to help people work in an interconnected world,” says John Hughes, Consultant, ARC -

Applied Research Consulting of STEELCASE.

More companies seem to be catching the drift. In the CoreNet/Steelcase survey, 57% of companies say they have reconfigured individual space to accommodate team spaces, and 41% say they have created cafés, meeting spaces, and other alternative work-settings. Most companies take a variety of approaches (which accounts for the percentages totaling more than 100%).

When you give people new environments, new tools, and new ways to use them, you get change, and that leads to innovation.

Steelcase’s new workplace, for example, shrinks the average individual workspace, uses benching for on-demand work settings, and creates

more collaborative spaces – neighborhoods, team hubs, free-address work areas – and media-scape settings, a library, as well as the café space that joins the two sides of the floor. The space accommodates more people than before and provides more options for where and how to work. Even employees with smaller dedicated work spaces (just 39 sq. ft./3.6 sq. m.) have more functional space – their work surface, chair, and monitor arm adjust to individual comfort and preference.

Creating workplaces for an interconnected world allows companies to stop reacting to volatile and uncertain markets and instead focus on the connection, collaboration, and inspiration businesses need to innovate today. At Skype’s Palo Alto location, 80% of the workforce is made up of engineers. They are developing the company’s next generation products at open workbenches designed specifically to support serious technology use: extra-long work surfaces with monitor arms that position big

flat screens as needed, and adjustable screens so they can balance individual privacy and productivity. At the end of their desks, there is even more space for collaboration. “People came in on day one, sat down, and started to work. This space makes you take notice. It delights people. It supports our company’s expectations of high productivity. It has a fast feel to it,” says Dena Quinn, Facilities Manager of Skype in Palo Alto, CA. At a company poised to grow, “this place is really attracting talent.” This unique approach to usage of office space has even been featured in an IT trade publication as an “ideal workplace” because of the way it supports collaboration and the culture of the organization. Visitors get it right away. “From day one, employees couldn’t believe this place,” says another, Skype employee. “People are blown away. ‘There’s nothing like this!’ is something I hear all the time. Customers are more confident in doing business with us. Everyone – customers, vendors, partners – says they want to come to work here.”

Ask your own staff and leadership: where do they want to work in the new, interconnected world?



Veronika Kollarovits, Market Manager, STEELCASE

Space savings:

What companies do after shrinking individual spaces

- 57% Reconfigured to accommodate team spaces
- 48% Sold/Moved to a smaller more efficient space
- 44% Subleased/Rented
- 41% Reconfigured to accommodate alternative settings (café, meeting spaces, etc.)

SHARED

I/Share examples:
touchdown spaces
enclaves

We/Shared examples:
training rooms
collaborative spaces
cafe spaces

WE

I/Owned examples:
resident workstations
private offices

We/Owned examples:
project team spaces
shared private offices

OWNED

Top five factors determining job satisfaction

- 55% Salary
- 37% Quality of work environment
- 33% Flexibility to work outside the office or at home
- 29% Relationship with line manager
- 28% Being able to determine how work gets done

Source: Steelcase/CoreNet Global Survey 2011

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