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FUTURE WORKPLACE

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Does design really matter?

Office design can be gimmicky, minimal or more conventional, but does it matter when measuring staff wellbeing and productivity?

PETER CRUSH

verv day employees at Google's 8th Avenue HO are being subtly manipulated. Permanent desks don't exist and its lifts are seemingly slower, both of which force staff to move around more. It's all in the name of a workplace environment ethos around so-called "orchestrated chaos", encouraging what it calls "casual collisions" or interactions that provoke unexpected conversations and new ideas. It just can't happen when staff stay put.

For many this is workplace design at its best, engineering desired working behaviours that in theory, at least, create better results. And intellectually, it makes total sense. Few dispute that the environment staff are exposed to matters, not least because countless surveys back this up. In one poll of 1,456 workers by Office Genie in 2017, 45 per cent bemoaned lack of collaborative space while 20 per cent felt their workplace environment actually hindered them doing their job.

With statistics like these it's no surprise the office refit market is booming. Data from Deloitte's 2017 UK London Crane Survey finds office refurbishments outnumber new builds by more than two to one. But here's the rub. Plenty of surveys reveal what staff want, often commissioned by suppliers pushing their solutions, but the extent to which it actually matters is a different kettle of fish.

"Having an inspiring workplace environment absolutely makes a difference," says Charles Bettes, managing director at architecture and design studio gpad London. "What's never really been answered is by how much, especially compared to rival spend - training, management development or benefits - which has reliable return on investment (RoI)."

Watts, chairman Chameleon Business Interiors, adds that workplace design spending is almost uniquely a "leap of faith", especially as offices are depreciating assets. "Common sense tells you different workers need variety in their work space," he says. But, as Richard Morris, UK chief executive of Regus parent company IWG, notes: "It's not easy isolating design vis-à-vis culture or leadership."

And it seems the debate is getting less certain, thanks to the rise of satellite co-working spaces from the likes of WeWork, Many are minimalist and



because they house multiple businesses, they forego accouterments design agencies typically insist are vital to inspire staff. It could be argued their success is proof employees can pretty much work wherever. provided the very basics of technology and temperature are right.

"What's interesting about workplace design is that in isolation it means nothing," says Craig Murray, workplace design consultant at TSK, which has recently fitted out the likes of Kellogg's and AJ Bell. "It only matters when designers listen to organisations' needs. Good workplace design is about responding to pain points and seeking solutions to them." He argues that the trend for creating "destination" offices, with associated frivolity, often means this gets forgotten

Barometers do exist to gauge how effective a workplace is for supporting

the work staff do. Workplace effectiveness assessor Leesman has its Leesman+ recognition where firms must score 70 per cent or more and TSK's AJ Bell building scored 80.6 per cent. Just one area it measures is how office design can better improve wellbeing, an emotion strongly linked to productivity.

Design being design though, trends do change. But what's interesting is that having dashed to make offices open plan, research is now challenging this. A study of 40,000 workers in 300 offices by the Journal of Environmental Psychology concludes that the benefits of "enhanced interaction were smaller than then penalties of increased noise and decreased privacy".

Penny Newman, chief people officer at law firm Lewis Silkin, agrees. "We've reduced the size of our headquarters to make more use

of co-working spaces, but we're preserving quiet areas for privacy," she says. "We're currently testing the exact proportion of traditional cellular to open-plan space to get the environment suited to the work we do."

An antidote to this is what Christopher Allen, head of workplace consulting at Morgan Lovell, calls "universal design" – making a building accessible for all - for instance, not having curved corridors, which disorientates the visually impaired.

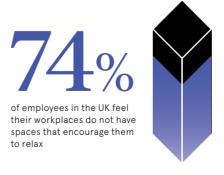
But while lawyers clearly need peace, plenty of others, particularly creatives, may need more stimulating environments. Andy Nairn, co-founder of ad agency Lucky Generals, says: "Creativity is fostered in environments that feel buzzy. As such our office is light and open, with plenty of social spaces. Smart CEOs see workplace design as an investment to get the best from their people, rather than a cost to be driven down to the bare minimum.'

Few argue design has no place at all. At the other end of the spectrum are highly stylised, luxuriant spaces, private members clubs serving as satellite workspaces or co-working spaces. Arguably the most decadent of the latter is The Ministry, a 850-workstation venue with 70ft bar and serviced meeting rooms.

Opened earlier this month, it's night-club brand Ministry of Sound's first foray into workspace provision. Executive chairman Lohan Presencer doesn't mince his words. "The shared workspace boom is becoming a rush to the bottom - all the same, with awful slogans on their walls. Because our DNA is entertainment, we know how to create environments people feel creative in. Some 70 per cent of The Ministry is office space; the rest is for mingling and enjoying being there," he says.

It's worth remembering funky offices attract and retain as well as enthuse. "A building is 10 to 15 per cent of a company's overhead, much less than the 70 to 80 per cent staff are," says TSK's Mr Murray. "Investing in the former is money well spent if it makes your biggest cost - employees - happier."

Perhaps the greatest irony about workplace design is that by its visual nature, it is the easiest investment to actually "see", much more than wellbeing or engagement projects. "That's why CEOs will still put money into workplace environment," concludes Morgan Lovell's Mr Allen. "While the RoI is hard to see, great design isn't."◆



said they fail to promote

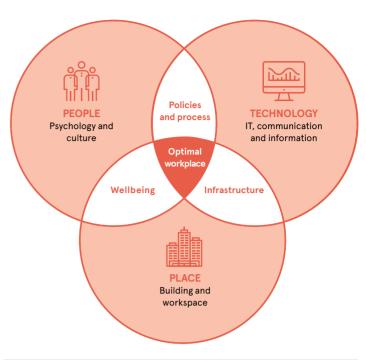
collaborative work

Office Genie 2017

raconteur.net /future-workplace-2018



Morgan Lovell workplace consulting approach



Why a 'destination village' is the future workplace

The very best future workplaces will be those that create and foster a sense of community, purpose and connection with their surroundings. They will become destination villages, places people want to visit and call home, says Christopher Allen, head of workplace consulting at Morgan Lovell

o understand how the workplace of the future might take shape, it is useful to first look at the evolution of office design. While the first examples of clerical work can be traced back to the Middle Ages, the standard narrative is that the modern office began with the Larkin Building in Buffalo, New York, in 1903. The internal design of this building, with its large, openplan spaces and cellular or corner offices for bosses, would go on to influence many of the workplaces that emerged in the early and midpart of the 20th century.



Christopher Allen Head of workplace consulting Morgan Lovell

As new technologies emerged, however, there were attempts to refine the open-plan design. American engineer Frederick Taylor pioneered a system that would eventually be called Taylorism, which put lots of workers in evenly spaced rows under the watchful eye of management. But this model emphasised the hierarchy within the workplace, putting unnecessary pressure on workers.

Efforts therefore soon turned to democratising these spaces. In the 1950s, two German brothers developed the Bürolandschaft concept, a far more egalitarian management system that sought to break down both physical and metaphorical walls, and match lines of communication with

The next pivotal development took place in the late 1970s, as the financialisation of the world economy took hold. An ideological shift in capital creation and individualism prompted organisations to design cellular office spaces, often referred to as cubicle farms. Naturally, however, these workplaces, which still exist today in great numbers, lack daylight and isolate their occupiers.

Since that moment, of course, the exponential development of computers and other digital technologies has driven monumental change in office design. Laptops and mobile phones have given people the ability to work flexibly from the locations which suit their needs that has in turn led to a gradual reduction in traditional desk-based work. The first sign of this change was the emergence of breakout spaces such as soft seating and café tables.

Meanwhile, the distinction between office and public space has become blurred, as cafés, hotels and homes are increasingly used to carry out work tasks

This evolution can be seen as a grand exercise in trial and error towards developing the future workplace. Each of the iterations was designed and developed to improve the way we work, but the quirks of each new development have also highlighted a critical lack of understanding in the way people behave within organisational systems and in their relationship to space.

Take care of your employees and they will care more, become more engaged and ultimately perform better

Workplaces which feature open-plan spaces can deny employees the right to privacy. Heavily cellular offices, on the other hand, can produce the opposite effect, isolating and alienating staff. Likewise, working either from home or remotely sometimes denies people the chance to communicate and collaborate with colleagues.

A destination workplace, or village, would be somewhere that ensures all an employee's needs are met and therefore, when employees have a choice of where to work, they choose to work there. After all, villages are by their nature large multi-functional spaces that provide a range of services and amenities to their residents.

Stress at work is at a record high. Figures from the Health and Safety Executive show 526,000 people suffered from work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2016-17. With people spending more time working than ever before, it is imperative that organisations design workplaces that can alleviate any mental health problems, and boost employee wellness and happiness.

There is also a growing consensus that looking after your employees' needs and providing them with the best possible workplace will deliver better business outcomes. The rationale is simple: take care of your employees and they will care more, become more engaged and ultimately perform better.

In a recent project, entertainment company AMC Networks wanted a dynamic office design that supported different creative disciplines, so it opted for a three-floor destination workplace to house its previously disparate workforce, complete with the physical, virtual and social infrastructures necessary to support creative collaboration. In the endeavour to create that all-important, village-esque sense of community, the ground floor has been designed to offer a focal point for the staff to eat lunch, socialise and work. There's even an on-site cinema that can be used for work or play to aid social cohesion in and out of hours.

There's a lot of professional interest surrounding case studies like this and perhaps that is why we are often approached by a range of clients seeking to achieve a destination workplace We know to make a village work there needs to be connection in a virtual and

As office fit-out experts, we add strategy to workplaces and assist with change management. Integral to the success of this process is improving the emotional intelligence of business leaders through training. Upskilling managers in this area will ease the transition for workers, who will better comprehend the organisation's vision thanks to transparent and regular communication. With motivated staff, the financial and other rewards will arrive quicker.

The exponential speed of technological innovations means that further change is inevitable. This is why workplace transformations require wholehearted C-suite backing. By putting people's considerations at the heart of the change, this offers a rare and critical opportunity to engage, or re-engage, employees through the process.

An organisation's culture can be heavily influenced by the appropriate workplace. The secret is trust. Moreover, it is important to stress that allocating significant budget to upgrading the workplace is imperative to the peo ple of a business, whatever that looks

The concept of the destination village not only represents the culmination of more than a century of office design, but also the future workplace. It is the key to happier, more productive people and far better organisational outcomes.

For more information please visit morganlovell.co.uk



MENTAL HEALTH



Debilitating mental illness that wrecks lives and careers is increasingly being addressed as a workplace issue

MARTIN BARROW

o the outside world. Adam Shaw was the highly successful entrepreneur behind a multi-million-pound legal services business employing 1,000 people. But behind the confident façade was a man whose life was dominated by crippling anxiety. His mental illness became so debilitating that he tried to take his own life, but was rescued by police as he prepared to jump from a bridge in Sheffield.

"There was no way out," he says. "I couldn't find safety, so I rationalised with myself that it was like a terminal illness and I would be in a better place."

Mr Shaw's anxiety was rooted in obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), which had a profound impact on his childhood and teenage years in the 1980s and 1990s. Because of the stigma of mental illness, he felt unable to seek help and he was not diagnosed until his late-20s.

Even when his business was doing well and his family life was contented. Mr Shaw struggled with his emotional problems. "I had a lot of anxiety over the business," he says. "I got very down and my OCD just came crashing down on me.'

Increasingly, business leaders are speaking out about how anxiety affects their lives, even when they appear to be successful and at the top of their game, responsible for decisions that affect thousands of people.

The business world was shocked when António Horta-Osório, chief executive of Llovds Bank, took leave of absence as he struggled to come to terms with anxiety and sleep deprivation caused by the enormous effort of trying to turn around the bank's fortunes.

Following his experience, he has now introduced a leadership resilience programme for the senior team at Lloyds, aiming to help executives manage the demands of being in high-pressure roles.

Mr Horta-Osório savs: "The most important change needed is one of mindset. We must move to a way of thinking that recognises that we all have mental health just as we all have physical health. As with our physical health, all of us can experience periods of mental ill health when immediate treatment is needed, or we run the risk of developing long-term conditions that will need continuing support."

Anxiety is typically described as a feeling of unease, worry or fear. When it becomes acute, the effects can be debilitating. Some people are more vulnerable to it than others, at different periods in their lives. Anxiety is not something we can ever wholly eliminate

and it can, at times, be helpful in improving our performance. But

Companies are introducing programmes to help workers cope better with stress and anxiety.

too much and it can be corrosive,

on occasion leading to alcohol and

drug abuse.

As with our physical health, all of us can experience periods of mental ill health when immediate treatment is needed

Even in industries such as finance or technology that are intensely competitive, there is increased understanding that attending to employees' mental wellbeing may be good for profits. Approaches to health and wellbeing explicitly reference mental health, and line managers are given training on recognising and managing mental health problems.

Employee assistance grammes are devoting significant resources to mental health support and are often the first point of contact for employees who feel unable to speak directly with colleagues in their workplace. Mental health first aid training has also become an important resource for organisations looking to do more for employees

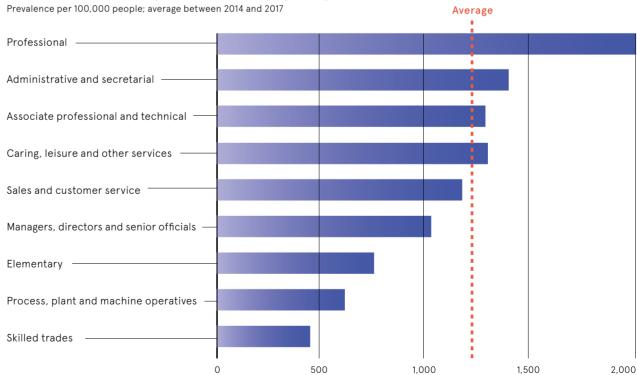
The Bank of England has been at the forefront of the transformation in the City of London's approach to workplace mental health. Adam Spreadbury, a senior manager at the Bank, suffered from depression and needed time off. He commends the support of his line manager at the time, who helped with his phased return

Mr Spreadbury played a key role in setting up a Mental Health Network, which has fostered a culture across the Bank to encourage discussion about mental health. This includes insightful events where staff speak openly about their experiences. "They are very powerful events in helping all employees to understand that having a mental health problem is part of everyday life," he says.

Although there has been progress, much remains to be done. Last year a workplace mental health survey for Business in the Community (BITC) revealed that 15 per cent of employees had faced demotion, disciplinary action or dismissal after admitting a mental health problem. "This is simply unacceptable," says Louise Aston, BITC's wellbeing director.

Mr Shaw also believes that employers must do more. He set up the Shaw Mind Foundation, a mental health charity. His ambition is to introduce mental health lessons into the schools' curriculum and wants employers to get behind him. "Currently, the cost to business of poor mental health is enormous," he says. "It is in their interest to make sure the next generation is better prepared and more resilient to the pressures of the modern workplace."

Work-related stress, depression or anxiety by occupation



Causes of work-related stress, depression or anxiety



Managing the office should not be a joke

They are often lambasted as figures of fun, but middle managers can hold the key to success

OLIVER PICKUP

've created an atmosphere where I'm a friend first, a boss second and probably an entertainer third," says David Brent, the deluded general manager of Wernham Hogg's Slough branch, in the first episode of cultish mockumentary *The Office*.

Ricky Gervais' moustachioed middle-management misfit at the fictitious paper company – where "life is stationery" – is a narcissistic, yet insecure, character who portrays himself as a maverick business leader and polymath. His ill-judged jocularity and inability to connect with colleagues fuels the wince-inducing comedy.

Ridiculing middle management has long been popular, and not just in the UK; *The Office* has spawned copycat series in America, France, Israel, Brazil and Canada. However, ineffective middle management is a serious business.

Notwithstanding the widely held belief that middle management is perennially bloated, with many promoted to that level and unlikely to go any higher – "employees join companies, but leave managers" goes the adage – it is clear inadequate engagement with staff and a lack of emotional intelligence (EI) is costly.

Even for highly developed economies, active disengagement in the workplace causes an immense drain in terms of productivity and profitability, and Gallup estimates a staggering £5.3 trillion is lost every year globally due to poor productivity.

Gallup's most recent State of the Global Workforce report, published last and failure

year, estimates disengaged employees are costing the UK up to £87.2 billion in lost productivity. Worse, only 11 per cent of UK workers are "actively involved and enthusiastic" about their jobs, 4 per cent lower than the global average. Little wonder the UK is currently languishing in seventh place in the G7 productivity rankings and is a lowly 17th in the G20.

"According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the UK is falling further behind its G7 counterparts, with productivity now 16 per cent below the average of the other economies," says Matt Weston, managing director at specialist recruitment company Robert Half UK. "Middle managers are the operational heartbeat of any organisation, and vital to ensuring that the goals of the senior team are met by the working practices of operational staff. Ultimately, they are the difference between success and failure.

"Poor communication causes staff to feel disenfranchised. It can mean they are working towards the wrong goals, causing them to feel under-appreciated and making their work seem meaningless. The issue is widespread, with four in ten UK employees feeling they are not well managed, deeming their manager a 'bad boss'.

"This negativity impacts employee retention, too. With employee turnover increasing by over a third during the last three years, the issue of poor management is not one employers can afford to ignore."

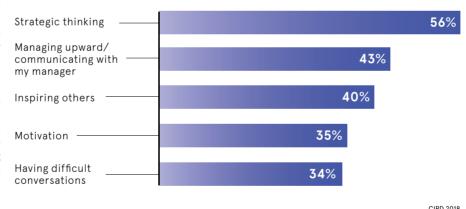
Paul Russell, managing director of soft-skills training company Luxury Academy, goes further. "EI is more important at this level of management than at any other because of the interaction middle managers have with staff," he says.

Middle managers are the difference between success and failure



Top five training needs for middle management

UK survey of managers at all levels



"The UK is one of the worst countries in the world for EI at middle-management level. We still have this mentality in the UK of 'I'm not here to win a popularity contest' as though this somehow excuses poor management and negates the need to engage with staff on an emotional level. The idea that you can perform well as a middle manager without EI is outdated and also very dangerous in the modern workplace."

Petra Wilton, director of strategy at the Chartered Management Institute, jokes that middle management is referred to as "permafrost – the place where all good ideas go to die".

She says: "Good middle managers are essential for building hightrust, high-performing businesses. Too often individuals are promoted into middle management because they are good at their function, such

as marketing, sales or engineering, but with very little training on management.

"Indeed, our research shows 71 per cent of companies fail to train first-line managers, creating far too many 'accidental managers' who struggle to do a good job. There are currently 2.4 million accidental managers in the UK and it's costing businesses tens of billions of pounds a year in lost productivity

"The quality of management is the biggest factor in determining productivity – the Bank of England, ONS and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development all pick it out as the one thing that influences business performance above all. As such, far more middle managers need to be better empowered to deliver against their company strategy, and work closely with senior management

to connect with the workforce and

"Employers need to do far more to invest in training their managers or they'll continue to pay a premium through poor business performance. We clearly need to move on from this view that they're unproductive and easy-to-trim fat."

But how do businesses improve the EI of middle managers? Dr Andy Cope, an author with a PhD in positive psychology, says: "EI is the cornerstone of trust; it is about tuning into people, getting on their wavelength and creating strong relationships. The ability to build rapport with a network of key individuals stands out as a major factor in getting people to go above their job description.

"One of the simplest ways to improve EI is to refocus away from your 'to-do' list towards your 'to-be' list. This is a bold change of emphasis because it requires you to be honest when answering the question, 'Who am I being while I'm doing the things on my to-do list?'

"Are you being empathetic, positive, nurturing, optimistic, upbeat and open minded? Or are you being ground down by multiple projects and burgeoning emails? By focusing on your to-be list, you and your team become more productive and end up getting more done."

It's clear that upgrading EI at middle-management level is imperative for success. Those who take it seriously will boost the bottom line, while the others face being the butt of derision, much like David Brent.



The workspace revolution

Selected data for the UK

of people say their office environment makes them feel tired and stressed and that they would be more

believe flexible working helps

say enabling their company's employees to work from anywhere helped them recruit and retain top talent

Flexible working: an entrepreneur's growth engine

Disruptive forces have transformed how we think about entire industries. Spotify with music. Uber and Lyft with transport. Netflix with television programmes and films. Tinder with dating. Technology has transformed the way that we think about things we used to take for granted

e're now more connected than ever before, not just in terms of communicating, but also in relation to the distribution of resources. Consider that two years from now, 80 per cent of the world's population will own a smartphone. And then there's the cloud and the rise of 5G: put simply, it's now easier than ever to plug in and work from anywhere we like.

The rapid advancement of new technology has paved the way for a gradual shift in how we are choosing to work. Research from JLL shows that up to 30 per cent of corporate real estate



Richard Morris Chief executive, Regus

portfolios could be flexible workspaces by 2030 while, according to CBRE, the flexible office market is growing at 13 per cent a year. Flexijobs.com predicts that by 2020, 50 per cent of all workers will be remote. With statistics like these, it's clear we are approaching a tipping point which will transform the working experience of millions.

Our appetite for a more agile way of working can also be traced to the desire for personal productivity gains achieved from escaping the nine to five. Today's workforce expect more; having grown up with rapidly changing technology, their expectations are higher and more open to new ways of working. They know they can set up anywhere and work smarter, in a way that suits their lifestyles.

Indeed, a report from the Centre for Economics and Business Research found that flexible working could save 533 million hours a year in commuting time, saving UK employees an annual £3.8 billion, rising to £7.1 billion when the commuter value of time is taken into account. As well as the steep financial costs, why should people spend several hours a day commuting when they could work from a fully serviced office close to home?

For entrepreneurs, the flexible working revolution will create competitive advantage, save money, and help attract and retain customers and talent. Entrepreneurs are driven, and they are not likely to follow a traditional working model as they establish and grow their business. For them, the ability to work anywhere, at any time, can be a huge advantage, enabling them to remain productive while on the move.

A properly networked flexible workspace partner can ensure that entrepreneurs have access to high-quality office space, resources and expertise no matter where they are in the country or the world. The same partner can help entrepreneurs to grow their business as the availability of service support enables them to focus on value-generating activities rather than spending time and money on real estate leases.

successful business owners keep a very close eye on expenditure. But for many it is also hugely important to project an image about your brand and business that is going to excite and impress potential partners or customers.

It's clear we are approaching a tipping point which will transform the working experience of millions

Flexible workspace providers such as Regus can ensure that not only can you travel to where your potential client is, you can be assured when you get there, you can bring them to an office which is modern, friendly and impressive. Even as a fledgling business, you want to have a base to bring potential customers, partners and employees for meetings without letting down your brand.

Cost-effective, fully equipped spaces can help you punch above your weight for heightened credibility. With top-ofthe-range IT and reliable wifi, friendly and professional support staff, as well as high-quality catering facilities, you'll have all you need to seal a deal and impress clients.

The benefits of flexible working run even deeper than this, though.

One of the most important advantages of a flexible workspace is the collaborative culture that we foster. For entrepreneurs, establishing a business network can be a hugely important factor in development. Co-working spaces mean you have access to a community of like-minded professionals from day one. Company throughout the day also helps to prevent feelings of isolation and frustration that individuals can sometimes experience when working alone.

We have seen many of our partners begin to work together, sometimes

following a simple conversation over coffee as they enjoy the chance to get down to business in an affordable and professional environment, with none of the productivity drawbacks of working from home or a local café. Collaborative culture, like-minded people and potential partners; it's all there with a smart, flexible workspace strategy.

Moreover, these benefits typically cost less than renting or buying traditional corporate real estate, as well as reducing administration time for your business. As an entrepreneur, you want to focus on your core business and reduce the time you spend distracted by other activities. A flexible workspace strategy can help you achieve this.

Regus understands entrepreneurs and we obsess about meeting our customers' needs. We have been established in the UK for almost 30 years and have worked with thousands of entrepreneurs as they establish and grow their business. We provide workspaces, communities and services in almost 3,300 locations in over 1,000 towns and cities across more than 110 countries.

Our clients benefit from simple contracts and reporting dashboards, digital apps, dedicated account teams, world-class infrastructure and back-office support from a proven global leader. These all help empower you and your colleagues to harness the full benefits of flexible working.

The workspace revolution is coming and smart entrepreneurs are getting involved and reaping the benefits. Short commutes, balanced lifestyles and sky-high productivity beckon. Through flexible working, you're set up for success, wherever you want to be.

For more information please visit

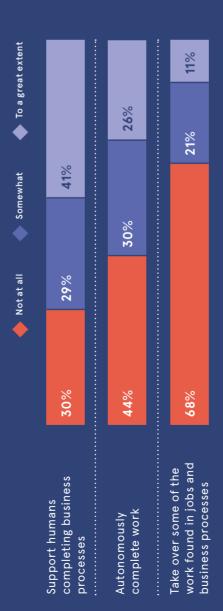


ABOUT AI IN THE WORKPLACE

there. Yet some common misconceptions still exist about AI's definition, its impact on jobs and the intentions of work, communicate and live, artificial intelligence (AI) is understandably one of the most divisive topics out corporations using the technology. This infographic Given its potential to completely transform how we quashes some of these often recited myths



How employers believe automation will impact workforces



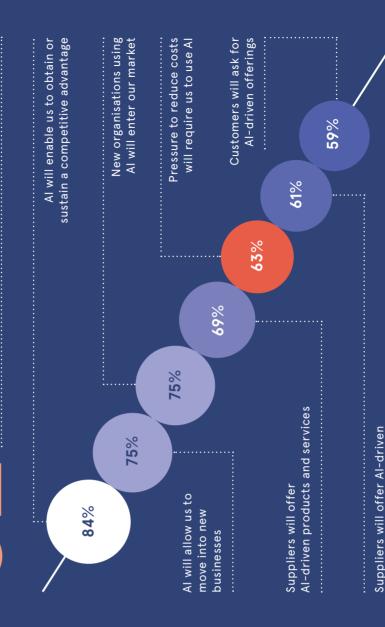
AI, machine-learning and deep-learning are the same thing

products and services

interconnecting, layered neurons of the brain, based on learning algorithms through data so the algorithm can `learn' and adapt. from unstructured data as opposed to task-specific algorithms perform tasks characteristic of human intelligence. Machine-They're all buzzwords, but are often used interchangeably. Al is a broad, general term used to describe machines that

Percentage of organisations that agree with the following statements

interested in cutting costs Companies are primarily



Automation will eradicate more jobs than it creates

are the same thing Robots and Al

In conventional terms, robotics and Al are completely separate fields, and serve very different purposes. Robotics refers to the technology behind the physical devices

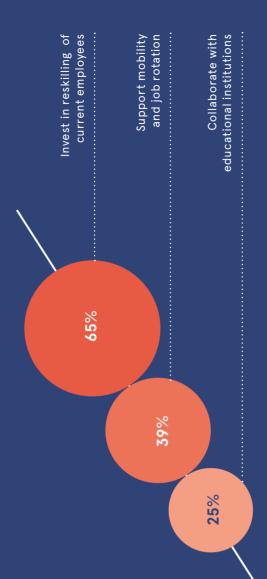
though the AI algorithms only form part of the larger robotic system complete tasks which would have otherwise needed human intelligence. There is some overlap with Al-powered robots, actuators; whereas AI is software built with algorithms to autonomously or semi-autonomously, using sensors and (robots) programmed to perform a fixed set of tasks

ROBOTICS ₹ ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT ROBOTS

jobs are expected to be lost to Al by 2020, but...

are ready to learn new skills/ completely retrain to remain employable in the future

Companies implementing Al don't care about me Share of employers pursuing the following for their future workforce



Percentage of organisations that think Al adoption will have a

big effect on processes

Technology, media, telecom

Professional services

Healthcare ...

Industrial ...

Public sector

OVERALL

Financial services

Consumer ··

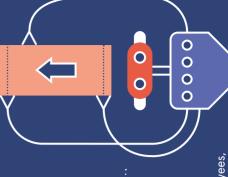
Al won't affect my industry

Big effect in five years



and less employment equals higher profits Higher productivity

Al and automation will undoubtedly raise productivity growth, but that



stimulating higher demand across the economy and, inevitably, employment growth companies to slash prices for consumers and pay higher wages to employees, doesn't necessary mean profits will only be distributed to executives and shareholders at the expense of workers. Higher productivity will enable

80%

%09

20%

40%

30%

20%

10%

Boston Consulting Group/MIT Sloan Management Review 2017





NICK EASEN

t's nigh on impossible to get hold of David Graeber. The anthropologist from the London School of Economics is very busy. He's landed a bombshell of a book on the desks of business leaders, saying that many in employment do "bullshit" jobs. roles so utterly pointless that even employees cannot justify them, and now with a potential epidemic of meaningless work, something needs to be done.

"From the Daily Mail to the Bank of England, they've all taken notice," says Professor Graeber, an American now between book talks in Amsterdam. It resonates widely because many people secretly believe it's true, even if they don't admit it. "The big question I have is why isn't anyone doing anything about it?" he asks.

Certainly, all of us know what unproductive work looks like, dealing with an email inbox after a week's holiday is a good benchmark, only to realise 90 per cent was superfluous rubbish anyway.

Watch W1A, the British satire of the BBC, to see it in its extreme or listen to frontline doctors, nurses or teachers recount the endless bureaucracy they deal with, generated in their minds by people doing pointless jobs; the endless middle managers riddled with self-importance and made-up titles.

Professor Graeber emphasises this with a tantalising quote from administration: "That represents one million, two million, three million jobs filled by people who are working at Blue Cross, Blue Shield or Kaiser, or other places. What are we doing with them? Where are we employing them?"

There are few statistics on unfulfilling jobs. But in a YouGov poll. UK workers were asked "if their job made a meaningful contribution to the world"; 37 per cent said no and in a similar survey 40 per cent of Dutch employees said their job had no reason to exist.

In Professor Graeber's new book Bullshit Jobs: A Theory, he postulates that more than half the jobs

casual workers and unemployed

that exist are pointless and are in fact toxic to society.

In the United States, 21 million people are estimated to be creating little or no economic value, according to a study by Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini. Reassigning them in more productive roles could give the economy a \$3-trillion boost, they claim.

"Most of the jobs people do are not productive and many people are miserable at work. There is a perverse morality going on. Many believe we should suffer nine to five

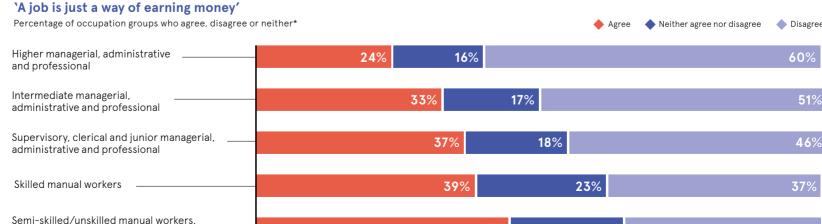
and not enjoy working. There's also an inverse relationship between work and money. The more people get paid, the more they should suffer." explains Professor Graeber.

When Rolls-Royce recently axed an eye-watering 4,000-plus jobs, slashing its middle managers and support roles for a leaner, simpler business, some argued that they were cutting back on meaningless jobs. The company, known for its bureaucratic processes, is still in good health we're told. In fact, the

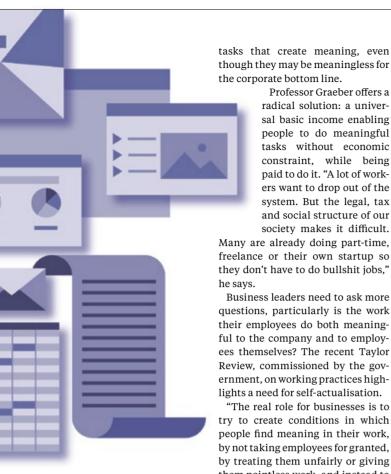
stock market rewarded the cull with a six-month spike in share prices.

The chief executive of the company is probably cursing economist John Maynard Keynes. He said in the 1930s that over time. machines and technology would allow people to be more productive, not less. This was his argument for a 15-hour working week, which just hasn't materialised.

Tapping on our keyboards, filling out endless schedules, spreadsheets and PowerPoint slides may



*Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding



Professor Graeber offers a radical solution: a universal basic income enabling

people to do meaningful tasks without economic constraint, while being paid to do it. "A lot of workers want to drop out of the system. But the legal, tax and social structure of our society makes it difficult.

Many are already doing part-time, freelance or their own startup so they don't have to do bullshit jobs,"

Business leaders need to ask more questions, particularly is the work their employees do both meaningful to the company and to employees themselves? The recent Taylor Review, commissioned by the government, on working practices highlights a need for self-actualisation.

"The real role for businesses is to try to create conditions in which people find meaning in their work, by not taking employees for granted, by treating them unfairly or giving them pointless work, and instead to help employees understand the purpose of the organisation in which they work and how it contributes to society," explains Professor Adrian Madden from the University of Greenwich's Business School, who along with Professor Katie Bailey from Kings College London has researched meaningful work.

Employee ownership structures could be one answer. The so-called John Lewis model offers a way of stimulating employees' sense of control and dignity, and in the process flush out meaningless work. People question unproductive tasks when they are in control. It's been adopted by more than 300 British companies.

have sucked the productive life out of us, enabling an ever-greater division of labour, managerial control and complex structures. With many of the world's largest economies in a prolonged productivity slump, there are lessons to be learnt.

"Many people only do 15 hours of productive work a week anyway; work reduction may be a good thing, it would make people focus," says Professor Graeber. "Digitalisation and the latest technology have actually had the opposite effect in some sectors; productivity has gone down, especially in the teaching and caring professions."

There's also still an obsession in corporations that many jobs should be full time, with bums on seats and employees at least looking like they're busy and creating value, even if they aren't. Yet aided by our tech-driven PC systems, work can feed off itself, creating more work. Professor Graeber calls this vicious cycle of work for work's sake the "Sovietisation of capitalism".

Tom Goodwin, head of innovation at Zenith Media and author of Digital Darwinism, adds: "I've seen it. In many big corporations, big opportunities will require big budgets. Anything with big budgets will need a large workforce, large tender bids, large advertising campaigns, large legal challenges, all attracting vast numbers of staff because it's important. Yet most people just get in each other's way; it can be meaningless and unproductive."

It doesn't help that most people who turn up to the office on a Monday morning want to do meaningful work. They want to be useful and contribute to society. It means employees are good at sniffing out to achieve." •

People question unproductive tasks when they are in control

Guy Singh-Watson, founder of Riverford Organic Farmers, which distributes organic vegetable boxes UK-wide, thinks it's a good idea, recently handing the business over to its 650 employees.

"Most people are better, more generous, less greedy and more willing to work collectively for shared goals," he says. "As I learnt in my early days, if you paid people by the sack to fill up carrots, don't be surprised if you find that the sack is full of stones and mud at the bottom because actually you're just rewarding them for filling up sacks.

"If you involve them in the business and share profits, people aren't going to put stones and mud in the bottom, so I guess in very simplistic terms that's what we're trying

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This is how to design a good, working office

Three senior executives tell how they designed workspaces to improve processes, and foster creativity and happiness

SARAH DAWOOD



Jody Ford, chief executive, PhotoBox Group

We recently moved into a new East London office called Herbal House, which holds 400 employees across our four online brands PhotoBox, Moonpig, Hofmann and PosterXXL. The building is an old print works, with four floors and a huge atrium in the middle, and each business is on a different floor. It has a post-industrial feel to it and light floods in.

One of the most important things has been creating flexible spaces where people can collaborate across teams. We now employ the "squad model" by putting together cross-department teams of five to ten people who work towards a specific goal.

We have a dedicated space for squads with clear desks, whiteboards and screens where people can plug in their laptops. The set-up also means everyone on each squad is looking at each other.

We've been using this model for over a year now, and we've seen more engaged employees, an acceleration in Moonpig's marketing efforts and customer conversion, and faster feature deployment.

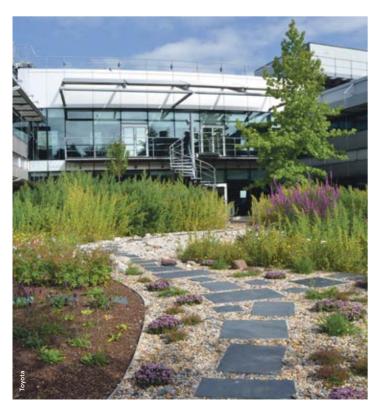
Beyond this, we have many more flexible spaces, particularly in the basement, which has strings of unassigned desks where people can work or corners to have a quick catch-up with a manager.

There's a long, core staircase that sweeps between three floors and means people run into each

other throughout the day. This has encouraged people to chat and it's made me much more visible as the chief executive, which I think is so important. There's a screen that drops down and cushions available, so two thirds of the staircase turns into a space that holds 80 people for an all-hands meeting.

Creating more collaborative, agile spaces has empowered our employees to bring their best ideas forward and given them autonomy. The old command-and-control model doesn't work anymore. This has unleashed the talent of employees who are closest to the coal face, helped drive accountability and has meant tasks get done quickly.

Creating more collaborative, agile spaces has empowered our employees to bring their best ideas forward



Tovota GB's headquarters has been in Epsom, Surrey since 2001 and is a flexible environment centred on an area we call "the street", which is a big, open-plan space where we display our products. The layout is like a spider's web, with the central area where people come together, then lots of wings with meeting areas.

Rachel Shepherd,

organisation development and human resources senior manager, Toyota

Because the office is open plan, people sometimes need to take themselves away to a quiet or private space and do some thinking.

We've been doing a lot of research around innovation and something that's come out of it is the value of giving people spaces to work that look different from their regular working environment.

We try to encourage people to utilise the whole building and outside spaces, and find alternative venues for meetings to help them think differently and creatively.

There are a series of open, garden spaces on the ground floor with seating. This is part of how we can create the right physical spaces for people to be innovative. They are also sustainable habitats for wildlife, which supports our global principle of working in harmony with the environment.

We're soon going to be installing signage panels in the gardens to give people insight into the different areas. These will contribute to a walking route, which links to employee wellbeing and looks to get people physically active and engaging with the ecology. There are also picnic benches and shaded areas where people can work, have a meeting or relax.

To add to the number of alternative working spaces, we're developing four innovation pods, three in the office and one outside. These will be used by individuals or groups as a source of stimulation; one will be modular, so it can be changed to suit different people's needs or moved around the office. The idea is to take people into other environments to help them think differently.

People sometimes need to take themselves away to a quiet or private space



Marili 't Hooft-Bolle, chief operating officer, WeTransfer

Workspace design is very relevant for us as we've grown out of our current space and are moving into a former chewing gum factory in Amsterdam at the end of the year. The key thing will be flexibility, and striking the balance between majority open space, meeting rooms of different sizes and spaces that turn into other things.

WeTransfer is a very creative company. A meeting room with stackable chairs will turn into a meditation space and our openplan cafeteria can be transformed into a presentation hall or an exhibition space to showcase the work of new artists we are collaborating with.

Another important thing is light and air quality, which have an impact on employee energy and health. This factory building has a big, glass, shed-regulating style roof, which is beautiful in terms of letting in light, but also means the heat to make sun is very bright. We've had to think about technicalities, such as how to gain as much light as possible, but not too much heat in summer.

As there's a lot of light coming from the top, we've opened up the first floor so there's a big atrium where the light will fall straight down into the ground level too. Then on both floors, we've drawn light lines on the ceilings that will allow desks to be placed horizontally or vertically in blocks of four, six or eight, basically any configuration.

We'll install LED lights, which look most like natural light, and these overhead light lines will aim to cover all the working areas that could be configured in the space, to give a daylight feel. This allows areas with lower ceilings to have the feeling of natural sunlight.

We've also put a lot of time into climate and regulating heat to make the space comfortable. We have a sophisticated mechanical system on the roof that takes air out of an area and blows it into another, which can regulate both air quality and temperature.

We've put a lot of time into climate and the space comfortable





Putting technology to work in the service of people

There has never been a more exciting and important time in the world of work, says Jason Sutton, vice president UK and Ireland, ServiceNow

n this digital age, the exponential rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation brings with it questions over the role of the workforce, but any challenges are far outweighed by the opportunities on offer.

When you consider that most of us will spend around a third of our lives working, being able to jettison the boring, repetitive and mundane elements of our roles has the power to generate happier, more productive and more valuable employees.

The C-suite is realising that getting this employee experience right hands them a huge competitive advantage and embracing technology is crucial for success.

In our annual research study, The State of Work, now in its fourth year, we explore the demands of workers and it's clear the way we currently work is falling short of employee expectations.

Firstly, people want to be able to run their working life in the same way they run their personal life. They think: "I can book a taxi, order a takeaway or buy a product online that will be delivered the same day, all through an app on my phone, so why on earth can't I reset my work password, order a new laptop, request holiday or book a meeting in

Secondly, people actually want to be more productive. They don't want to continue to spend two days of their week on manual, administrative work that stifles their creativity and strengths.

Keeping staff engaged and motived, and providing greater purpose in their roles is essential to both attract and retain the very best talent.

Further, by focusing on individuals, the culture of an organisation evolves and adds value for both employees and customers.

The role of the employee is central to the success of any business and their workplace experience is of critical importance, now more than ever.

At ServiceNow, we strive to "make the world of work, work better for people", creating simpler and faster ways for people to get work done to ensure meaningful customer and employee experiences.

We believe those great experiences should happen from day one of a job. Onboarding is a classic use-case, as this is where many organisations have an unstructured workflow. Too often, a new employee walks into the office and finds that he or she cannot work straightaway because the desk, laptop, system login credentials, identification badge and so on are not ready.

For these reasons, the first three weeks of a new employee's life cycle can be the most unproductive. This is also the window when the organisation has the ability to make a real impact on their new employee's perception of the company.

At ServiceNow, we empower teams to make this an incredibly positive and straightforward experience from

Having that attitude truly makes a difference in this ever-competitive landscape. We are helping organisations, including Virgin Trains, Experian, RBS, Siemens AG and WorldPay, lay down a bedrock of systems of engagement and service that allow them to improve the way they do business and enrich the experience of the work itself.

ServiceNow was originally a platform that assisted with workflow in information technology service management. Business leaders quickly saw the real impact of our work and the value of expanding this approach into other areas, including human resources. customer service management and security operations.



Jason Sutton Vice president UK and Ireland ServiceNow

We reduce complexity and make processes seamless, fast and effective using automation and Al, which can afford workers up to 20 per cent more time to focus on the "human" elements of their job. These aspects - innovation, creativity and people management – require emotional intelligence and are intrinsically hard for machines to replicate.

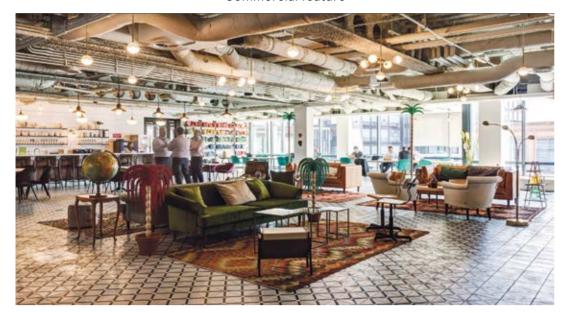
At ServiceNow, we believe technology should be harnessed to enhance the service of people, not the other way round. Applied correctly, it can serve and augment employees, making their workplace experiences richer and more productive.

Those business leaders who adopt this approach early will not only future-proof their organisations, but steal a game-changing march on their competitors.

For more information please visit servicenow.com



Commercial feature



How enterprises are shaking up co-working

Rising rents and a desire to appeal to millennial talent are driving the rise of innovative co-working spaces, such as London's newest arrival Mindspace

ne growing costs required to work in sought-after central locations have long driven startups and small and medium-sized businesses to choose co-working as a less risky, more flexible month-to-month option. Currently, more than one million people worldwide work in co-working spaces.

That number is now set to grow rapidly as larger businesses and corporates capitalise on the lower overhead costs, while seeking inspiring locations to drive innovation and offer employees a great experience, which helps them to attract and retain top talent.

With millennials soon making up half the workforce, the expectation for an uplifting, stimulating workspace with original and vibrant culture is afoot. As a result, enterprises seeking satellite offices, research labs and innovation centres are increasingly adopting this revolutionary style of working.

With local member benefits, events and workshops on offer, much of the headache for operations and human resources teams is removed. Many large companies often now house entire departments within co-working spaces. Heads were turned when Microsoft took

of people in the UK say their office environment makes them feel tired

collaboration or limited collaboration between teams in their companies

an entire Mindspace building in the second-largest deal in co-working history.

"Millennials demand a more dynamic and flexible way of working than traditional workspaces allow," says Dan Zakai, Mindspace's chief executive. "Tech advancements have meant professionals can choose to live, work and travel where they want, while being connected at all times. Co-working enables businesses to think more globally."

Mindspace encourages members to work according to the needs of their business, not their location. Members are granted open-ended access to all Mindspace locations, globally - currently 27 prime locations in 13 cities and growing - at no extra charge.

Members of Mindspace in London, for example, can not only choose between two locations in the heart of Tech City - one in Aldgate and a newly opened space in Shoreditch but they can also access Mindspaces in Berlin, Warsaw, San Francisco and Amsterdam, enabling them to have a professional office set-up wherever their business takes them.

Beyond the lure of cost-savings and a culture befitting the millennial generation, co-working provides instant access to a network of other companies, enterprises, entrepreneurs and potential investors. The Mindspace app, meanwhile, provides access to a digital network of more than 14,000 members globally

Working so closely with potentially valuable contacts is a unique opportunity for businesses to bring high-level networking to their doorstep. More than 93 per cent of Mindspace's members said the networking effect benefits their business directly.

"Proximity is power and having such great direct neighbours can really benefit a business and help propel it to the next level." says Mr Zakai, "The ecosystem has changed; sitting among influential industry leaders is innately inspiring and encourages organic networking and collaborations in your field."

Mindspace has gained admirers by positioning itself as the boutique hotel of the co-working industry. Despite its growing global footprint, no two Mindspaces are made the same. Its vice president of creative and design acts very much like an art curator by delving into local cultures and communities to create a completely unique working environment.

"Every location is bespoke, premium and beautiful in its own way," says Mr Zakai. "We adhere to exceedingly high quality standards that, as we grow, will not be compromised and our passionate design team scours local flea markets, while building tight-knit relationships with artists around the world.

"From the light fittings to the book collections, the wood selection for the desks and the record collections, the designers focus their attention on every single detail. We also offer generously sized offices compared with many of our competitors. It comes down to the people; our commitment to service is backed by the numbers and our ratio of on-site community managers to total members is twice that of other co-working spaces."

focus on service means Mindspace is able to offer a high degree of responsiveness to needs and queries through its on-site IT, operations, finance, event planning and community managers. Co-working has evolved into a global movement and is set to change the whole concept of work for a new generation of talent.

Mindspace Aldgate: 114 Whitechapel High Street, E1 7PT Mindspace Shoreditch: 9 Appold Street, EC2A 2A mindspace.me 0748 048 8397

'Business rates unfairly penalise the flexible space sector and particularly co-working'

t the BCA we continually question the way in which workplaces operate, those which lead and those which follow. This is a people-watching process as it is people, not companies, who drive change

In the workplace, this is remapping everything we thought we knew. In this fluid landscape, some will thrive and others will fail. This is the way markets operate, but it is essential that both as an industry and as a government, there is an environment which supports and promotes workplaces and the customers they serve.

When the BCA was launched it was into a world which was all about the corporates with a tiny space carved out for non-conventional operators. Fax machines were still used everywhere, and phone calls and letters rather than email was the way to communicate.

Twenty years on and advances in technology have transformed the way in which we can, and do, work. The revolution in flexible workspace gives rise to innovations such as Hubud in Bali, a co-working space in paradise, fully connected and working with the rest of the world.

Where technology is often criticised for breaking down personal relationships, working environments are coming full circle with new generations of employees and companies pushing back against the traditional office in favour of community-focused offerings which also have wellbeing at the heart.

Alongside this is the emergence of disruptors promoting lifestyles not simply offices; brand is now as important for operators as it is for their business customers.



Jennifer Brooke BCA executive director **Business Centre Association**

As recent CBRE research shows there is a widespread acceptance that the flexible revolution is here to stay. Even the FTSEs are getting on board with communal staircases and breakout spaces across HQs, focusing on wellness and encouraging a more familial and collaborative approach to work.

But, when it comes to operating their own flexible spaces, do they know how to manage and maximise the opportunities? Not until traditional companies finally start calling tenants customers, will we know that they fully understand the new world in which they are working.

These changes are undoubtedly significant contributors to the rise in the number of fast-growing small businesses in the UK and the collaborative, international approach of many new businesses. However, the pace of change has left many far behind, not least legislators, and this risks undermining what is a fantastically strong part of the UK economy.

For one thing it is not all about the next new thing in office space. In the North East and North West there has been significant growth in the demand for "easy in, easy out" light industrial space, driving supply chain economics and supporting regional economies and industries. The value of this in terms of the UK economy, particularly in the context of Brexit, cannot be overstated. This is something which must be nurtured and encouraged to continue to grow. Empty rates and complex tax treatments on leases does not support this position.

Outside the global challenges which need to be navigated as best we can, the biggest challenge comes from the lack of understanding of our own policymakers; the current system of business rates unfairly penalises the flexible space sector and particularly co-working.

In some cases, rates have increased by 500 per cent; overall, in London the business rates bill for the 340 open workspaces in the Greater London Authority database has almost doubled from £5.58 million

These are costs which act as a brake on the economy, risking bringing growth to a shuddering halt as space providers and small businesses alike are pushed out. Government has so far been woeful in its recognition and motivation to address this issue. The workplace is dead, long live the workplace.



Long hours, no extra pay or family life

Workers in Japan are struggling to overcome a culture of unpaid overtime and long hours which threaten their health and sacrifice family

SHARON THIRUCHELVAM

e have Japan to thank for the practice of conspicuous time. From the 1950s onwards, post-war Japan set a benchmark for hard work the world over. In its golden age of growth, Japan's corporations offered lifelong job security and high wages in return for long hours, loyalty and service. A job for life as a regular worker at a respected firm demanded personal sacrifice - unpaid overtime and relocations - but it was a price that was accepted freely.

Since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, however, Japan's productivity has languished at the bottom of the G7 league table, well beneath the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average. Productivity in the services sector, which employs almost 70 per cent of workers, fell by more than 10 per cent between 2003 and 2016, according to Bloomberg Economics.

Workplace conventions which were once a boon to productivity have begun to have a perverse effect. Working overtime has become a proxy for working efficiently and a whole culture has evolved around enabling absurdly long hours. It



of entitled annual leave taker on average by Japanese workers. equal to 8.8 days

office before your boss and workers are hesitant to do so before their peers. Convenience stores sell clean shirts for those who haven't had a chance to go home and a genre of literature, kodoku, romanticises the loneliness of workers who have little time or inclination to see friends or find a partner. Death by overwork, karoshi,

is considered impolite to leave the

claimed 191 people in 2016 and, according to a government report over a fifth of Japanese employees are at risk through working more than 80 hours of overtime a month, usually unpaid. More serious still, one in ten Japanese workers clock over 100 hours of overtime each month.

And on average, Japanese workers use just 50 per cent of their entitled annual leave, amounting to just 8.8 days a year, according to the health ministry, a percentage far less than that of Japan's highly productive neighbours Hong Kong (100 per cent) and Singapore (78 per cent).

The government is well aware of the depth of the crisis. Japan's parliament is debating a bill which would cap monthly overtime at 100 hours, and has begun to name, shame and fine workplaces that violate existing rules. But campaigners argue that without addressing the amount of work employees shoulder, any cap would force workers to complete their workload through clandestine means earlier in the morning, through lunch and at home.

As Japan grapples with its productivity shortcomings, it also faces a well-documented and connected demographic crisis. Deaths in Japan now outnumber births at a rate of 1,000 a day. Yoshie Komuro, founder and chief executive of consultancy Work-Life Balance, says Japan's punishing work culture is directly related to the falling national birth rate.

Meaningful provisions to encourage and support young people to start families are severely lacking. as workplaces seem indifferent to helping employees balance work with their personal life.

As part of prime minister Shinzo Abe's so-called "Abenomics" programme to boost the economy, women have been encouraged to stay in or rejoin the workforce; some 70 per cent leave after their first child. Yet unofficial and illegal workplace policies such as pregnancy order systems, which employers use to make couples wait in turn to have children, persist and are lowering Japan's birth rate, says Kanako Amano, a researcher at the NLI Research Institute.

A rise in precarious employment may also be creating a class of men who don't marry. Men are still widely expected to be breadwinners in Japan and yet a rise in irregular work, which has grown by 7.6 million jobs between 1995 and 2008. just as jobs for life have fallen by 3.8 million, is limiting their chances. Irregular work is paid approximately 30 per cent less than other jobs and while 56 per cent of full-time corporate employees in their early-30s are married, just 30 per cent of irregular workers are, according to Professor Jeff Kingston of Temple University.

Japan's high expectations of its economy may be frustrating workplace reform. The country has an exacting service culture to uphold, yet a national fear of inflation, price rises and job cuts. Coupled with its falling birth rate and closeddoor immigration policy, the pressures heaped upon those in work are great. As real wages have stagnated, employees have been even less inclined to complain about long hours or hop between jobs, prioritising work well ahead of their personal lives and health.

The country could make efficiency gains through relatively modest changes. Corporate culture in Japan is needlessly hierarchical, decision-making is slow and consensual, flexible working is rare and suffocating rules penalise staff for the most trivial of infractions. Rooting out obtuse work practices, such as micro-management, presenteeism, superfluous meetings and paperwork. and the practice of awarding pay rises for seniority rather than performance could enable great gains.

On a macro-economic level, Japan is beginning to admit more foreign workers and automation may also boost productivity. On a company level, those able to make modest workplace reforms, even if they cannot offer a job for life, may find it easier to poach talent, says Yumiko Murakami of the OECD.

Convenience stores sell clean shirts for those who haven't had a chance to go home



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