

dialogue



22.

Talking about...
The Changing
Nature of Work

Workplace Revolution 2.0
Startups and Post-Startups
Reinventing the Headquarters
Susan Cain and Sherry Turkle

A Gensler publication

We should be designing work settings where there's an ability to pick and choose how much stimulation you want, at any given time. Being able to shape your own space is hugely important.

Susan Cain, author of the *New York Times* best seller *Quiet*

"A revolution in personal empowerment is under way," the *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed. "In the marketplace, the largest and most durable opportunities are those based on freedom." The topic was retailing, but it could just as well have been the office workplace. The first workplace revolution got us to the point where people can choose among a range of work settings to orchestrate their workdays. The second workplace revolution takes this further, responding to a mostly millennial workforce. Open-ended and experiential, the latest work settings encourage people to shape them as they use them. The aim is to engage and empower, channeling all that personal energy into the business at hand.



ON THE COVER:
The Minneapolis office of the Wieden+Kennedy advertising agency (also shown above).

opposite, clockwise from top:
NVIDIA, Austin; The Tower at PNC Plaza, Pittsburgh; 1871 coworking center, Chicago.



Features

2

Workplace Revolution 2.0

Twenty years into a revolution that workforce mobility triggered, the office workplace is being transformed yet again.

10

First Person: Susan Chapman

The American Express SVP on workplace enablement and the importance of personal choice to a workforce in 41 countries.

18

Fringe Benefits

Coworking spaces that help independent workers network and collaborate are getting the attention of bigger companies.

24

Up from Startups

The new media/social media sector grabbing the headlines is also transforming the tech industry workplace.



Join the Conversation

Follow our thought leaders at GenslerOn.com

Departments

14

Case Study: PNC Tower

Could a building breathe? This question led Pittsburgh-based PNC to reinvent the highrise headquarters.

22

Gensler's Workplace Research

Now in its sixth year, the firm's research generates insights that are reshaping workplace design to benefit clients and end-users.

28

Susan Cain and Sherry Turkle

In separate books, these two authors question the wisdom of the fully open-plan workplace and always-on connectivity.

32

News + Views

A Shanghai Tower update and the debut of Gensler LA's stunning new office and the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates.

Workplace Revolution 2.0

BY ALLISON ARIEFF



The workplace is ripe for reinvention.

As the millennial generation comes into its own in the workforce, the expectations for the workplace are changing. Here's a report from the field on where it's headed next.

The modern workplace has its roots in the technological revolution that ushered in mobility circa 1990. For more than 20 years, organizations have exploited innovations in networks, computing, and communication to boost productivity and drive down costs. Parallel gains on the building side have made for healthier, more sustainable work settings. The need to support innovation has produced flatter organizations and open, fluid, flexible work settings. Nirvana?

Not quite. Conversations with the Gensler workplace practice point to deficits, dilemmas, and untapped opportunities. There's

a sense of urgency and excitement among these designers as they talk about their work—urgency because the problems they're solving are crucial to clients, and excitement because the paradigm is shifting as important questions about the workplace are being answered. To capture the flavor of this discourse, let's look at six questions that came up the most.

Why the renewed focus on focus?

A key finding of Gensler's Workplace Performance Index® (WPI®) surveys of US office workers is that while collaboration is hugely important, the ability to focus is even more so.

It's not that people are collaborating less, but rather that they're distracted more. The core WPI finding is that the inability to focus undermines performance in a broader sense. The implication: focus is fundamental.

This flies in the face of the open, densely populated workplace that's considered basic to supporting the informal interaction that spurs innovation. Will cubicles and private offices soon make a comeback, despite their documented lack of utilization? "It's about finding the right mix," says Gensler's Janet Pogue. "Most people's work styles vary, even over the course of a day. You can

opposite: The new Plantronics headquarters in Santa Cruz, CA, encourages informality.

above: The Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, CA, lets people shape the space to meet their immediate needs.

In many organizations today,
**individuals expect
to work in an open-
ended way, with a
workplace to suit.**

Across age groups, there's a desire for choice and flexibility.

design spaces for varied activities without sacrificing openness or density."

Facebook opted to go beyond open plan. With Gensler, it developed a deliberately un-designed headquarters workspace that reflects its flat organization. Not even the CEO has a private office—everyone gets what amounts to a blank canvas and is asked to create an environment that suits. Desks are customizable and height-adjustable, and there's a choice of chairs. That the workspace would be largely open was a given, says Gensler's Randy Howder. "The real issue was how to support different levels of privacy. We used screens, movable and otherwise, to modulate the open collaboration spaces."

The advertising agency 22squared took a different tack, rebalancing the workspace in favor of more "we-space," as Gensler's Richard Macri calls it. "Working anytime and anywhere is the norm now, so we provided a variety of shared spaces that support work-mode choices." By pairing them with a slightly denser workspace overall, 22squared kept its costs in line.

Furniture plays an important role in creating spaces for focus or collaboration, Macri says. "You need furniture that's comfortable and varied. The move to smart devices means that workstations, in particular, can move away from the 'knowledge worker' standard." The new mix provides openness, but also inserts areas in its midst where people can work without distraction.

Can design really help spark innovation?
The answer is yes, but not as conventional wisdom suggests. In abandoning the old office paradigm of rows, columns, cubes, and linear thinking, "there was a tendency to go with edginess for its own sake," says Gensler's Mandy Graham. To understand better how workplace design really supports innovation, she and her team began a dialogue with a cross section of innovators.

Take 3M, a company known for its systematic commitment to invention. "There's a rigorous process to support it," Graham says. "The rhythm of that process is built into the workplace. It's both a platform and a creative tool, making it safe for people to

right: 22squared in Atlanta is designed to let different kinds of work occur without creating distraction.





70%

of the US workforce is either not engaged or actively disengaged at work, according to a 2012 Gallup poll. This is why progressive workplace design emphasizes individual as well as team performance.



take risks." Or consider Whole Foods. Right off the lobby of its new headquarters is a residential-style kitchen—a constant reminder of who benefits from the company's innovations. Sporting goods maker Wilson also re-created a retail setting in its headquarters to help accelerate the product-development cycle by immersing its designers in the real world of their customers and end-users.

A Gensler research team in San Francisco led by Lisa Bottom is asking how pervasive computing and digitally "alive" materials—applied to windows, walls, and tables, for example—could change the way the workplace supports creative work. "The technology isn't there yet," she says, "but we need to anticipate how to incorporate it."

Can change management change?

Workplace change management "uses frequent advice and both practical and inspirational communication to take people from one reality to another," says Gensler's Johnathan Sandler. What is changing can run the gamut from minor to major, but engagement is key, his New York colleague Amanda Ramos stresses. Change management is traditionally imposed on people. Today, though, Gensler is leveraging social media to shift the frame from top-down to something that is more two-way and grass-roots. "We call it change networking. When things are in flux, the fears that arise are best countered through active discussion," Ramos says. "Social media makes that easier because the people who are affected by the changes can drive the conversation."



clockwise, from top left: Autodesk, San Francisco; BASF, Florham Park, NJ; TM Advertising, Dallas; Costa Rican headquarters of a European telecommunications company, Escazu, CR.



left: The Facebook headquarters is organized around an activated interior street that serves as a gathering place.

right: Outsell's Minneapolis headquarters gives people the option of treadmill desks as a wellness measure.



Another approach is to use pilot programs, as American Express did with its BlueWork initiative. A pilot in New York let the company test and refine ideas, and then apply the results. “It can be very challenging to get people to buy into new ideas. With a pilot program, you can address their issues directly, along with the organization’s readiness and capacity to change,” Sandler says.

How do you bridge global and local?

Locational differences are partly about work style and partly about identity. The BlueWork program set out to address both, Sandler explains. Based on four predominant work styles across American Express, it gives the company’s offices and business units the leeway to tailor each work setting to reflect local preferences and reinforce team identity. Yet it supports the American Express brand through overall look-and-feel and performance. It also meets the company’s real estate cost and space utilization targets—in 41 different countries.

Can a workplace make people healthier?

The desire for healthy work settings dates back to concerns about indoor air quality in the 1980s. Most of the focus since then has

been on environmentally benign design and, in some cases, access to fitness centers. Meanwhile, our sedentary ways have been fingered as a contributor to poor health. There’s a real cost to employers in lost productivity and higher insurance premiums: \$80 million per year in the US alone, according to McKinsey. Yet, as the Mayo Clinic reports, just standing more and sitting less can help office workers shed considerable amounts of weight.

“Wellness is becoming a priority in the workplace,” says Gensler’s Janine Intonato. Bayer Healthcare, for example, is taking a holistic approach to wellness in its new Whippany, NJ, campus. Among its features are adjustable, sit-to-stand desks for each of its 2,500 on-site employees, healthy menu choices and nutritional snacks, indoor and outdoor walking trails, a stand-alone fitness center, and bike parking and showers. “Even the stairs are designed to encourage people to skip the elevators,” Intonato says. The campus will include a medical suite with three exam rooms, a lab, a nurse, and a part-time doctor. There will also be two mothers’ suites, each with three nursing rooms. While wellness aligns with Bayer

People Are the Core



American Express SVP Susan Chapman is in charge of “workplace enablement” for a global real estate portfolio that takes in 41 countries. BlueWork, her company’s alternative workplace guidelines program, lets its 65,000 employees align their work settings with their individual work styles. BlueWork has improved user satisfaction, increased space utilization, and held down costs. Launched with pilot programs supported by a constant flow of information, BlueWork has taken hold. “We’re only as strong as our workforce,” Chapman says, and American Express agrees: BlueWork recently prevailed over 300 competing entries to win the company’s prestigious Chairman’s Award for Innovation.

KEY FACTS AND INSIGHTS

- 1 Aligning work styles with flexible work settings and giving people choices are key to supporting them cost-effectively on a global basis.
- 2 Technology is critical to people’s workplace experience. Technology drives revenue growth; it’s not just about enabling productivity.

Why “workplace enablement”?

Susan Chapman: It comes down to people. Alternative workplace environments usually come from a place of saving money. Part of the answer has to be around expense management, but rather than thinking about it as just reducing expenses, we can also focus on having the right amount of the right kind of space—space we can utilize to its maximum potential. Our business units look to us to help them make more money. We’re demonstrating that they will do better when their people are involved and excited about making the workplace work for them.

What led Amex to BlueWork?

SC: American Express is growing and the business is changing as we grow. We’re becoming more of a digital company, so we need the speed that comes with that. Our projects have shorter life cycles and we need to innovate faster. Also, dedicated office space is expensive. If we’re only getting 40 percent utilization, we’re leaving a lot of money on the table. So we asked ourselves if we could achieve higher utilization and meet our business goals more effectively. We constantly rethink workplace flexibility, because people don’t sit in one place anymore. BlueWork gives them the ability to match work settings with their changing activities.

Making that work means thinking about each person from A to Z. We ask them what, where, and with whom they work. What do they need to get their work done and have it be a positive experience? It’s often the small things that keep people from being productive. They can’t access what they need or find a place to meet with someone. BlueWork put American Express on the path of thinking differently about that. It’s helped loosen the formality and controls. It’s the right moment for it—the company is ripe for competition, so the business case is easier to make.

Part of the BlueWork journey is getting into people’s hearts and minds so they embrace it rather than feeling that it’s being imposed on them. Unless you keep them informed

along the way, they will tend to revert back to what’s comfortable. The changes can’t come as a surprise.

What role does technology play?

SC: Technology drives workplace flexibility. We plan every BlueWork project with our tech team at the table, because the end-user experience is so important. If people decide to work from home and the technology doesn’t work, they are going to be frustrated. We also have to deal with hardware and software defects as they come up. Getting people from tragic to magic isn’t easy, but they’re happier when they know that if they have a problem, it will be solved.

Technology has become a strategic competency that drives revenue growth. It’s not just about enabling productivity. Companies like ours spend more on tech now, but we also spend more on the workplace. That’s because we’re competing for tech talent, especially in places like Boston, New York, and Silicon Valley. If you’re not a startup offering stock options, you have to think how you’re going to attract the talent you need. The workplace can be a differentiator.

Are startups a benchmark for Amex?

SC: American Express isn’t a startup. Our work settings may reflect some aspects of the startup culture, but they’re designed in direct response to our brand and our business needs. Startup offices are usually open plan because it’s less expensive. Also, when you’re in startup mode, collaboration is the name of the game. You don’t want anyone behind closed doors. One of our industry peers is in the process of implementing an entirely open-plan workplace. That’s not us. Enabling our people means recognizing their different work styles. BlueWork provides a mix of offices, open plan, drop-down areas, conference rooms, and other settings. It’s designed to support the life cycle of each person’s experience. An all-open-plan workplace can’t do that.

Allison Arieff, who interviewed Susan Chapman, writes for the *New York Times*, *Wired*, and the *Atlantic Cities*.



American Express provides a variety of settings to support the different ways of working across its 65,000-person global workforce. They range from soft seating areas (above, left) to unassigned offices (above, right). Café settings serve as social hubs. Highly flexible, BlueWork is designed to change easily as work styles evolve. It can also be tailored to local preferences and business unit identities within the company’s overall brand and standards.

Healthcare’s brand, others are not as familiar with it, Intonato notes. She points them to the data. “It clearly shows that a healthy workplace is a great investment for our clients. It boosts morale and increases workplace productivity.”

The staircase has emerged as a key part of the wellness strategy, says Gensler’s Cindy Coleman. “We design the staircase to be ‘thickly programmed’ with amenities, so people want to use them, but not just to get from floor to floor.” An activated staircase may have a coffee bar near a mid-point landing, or even serve as a casual meeting place, with the steps designed to double as bleacher-type seating.

Reimagining the stair is an aspect of what the US Green Building Council calls “active design,” now a source of points that count toward LEED certification, says Gensler’s Cristina Crespo. The activated stair is part of the broader strategy of introducing “intentional inefficiency” into the workplace.

The idea is to get people to walk more—by locating printers or recycling bins at a greater distance from their seats, for example. Other measures include convening walking meetings that take place outside and subsidizing bike commuting.

In Washington, DC, Gensler is applying active design to itself. An award-winning Active Design Week created awareness of the issue with activity zones for everything from jumping jacks to disco dancing, fitness classes at the end of every workday, and recommendations for nearby eateries with healthy food options. “We followed up with weekly yoga and sports classes,” says Crespo. “Several clients have picked up the program in their own workplace.”

Does a headquarters still make sense?

Between a mobile workforce and the often-global reach of many organizations, the role of the headquarters is in flux. Some companies have shrunk their head offices dramatically, while others have moved

them—and even multiplied them—to be closer to their markets. For Amgen, one of the world’s leading biotech companies, global expansion made the “back to the future” notion of having a real center appealing. Amgen also saw the value of its headquarters as a platform for transformation.

“This is a wider trend,” says Gensler’s Philip Tidd. “In Europe, for example, there are two megatrends happening simultaneously: a growing number of companies are reclaiming the headquarters as the home base and social nexus of their brand, values, and culture; and a number of them are returning to the city center to have access to talent.” For both, “headquarters are the first-choice place to work for people and teams, despite an abundance of other choices,” Tidd adds.

When Amgen first thought about its headquarters, capacity was the issue. The company believed its headquarters campus could be redeveloped to accommodate more people at less cost, and, more important, support

below: The Amgen headquarters in Thousand Oaks, CA, is designed to give the global company a home base with an openness that encourages people to interact informally.



new work styles in the context of a global company, operating 24/7.

“Synergy is a big issue for Amgen,” says Gensler’s Barbara Bouza. “The need for it drove the design.” She and her team developed a pilot project to move the global headquarters workspace toward a more fluid model with different levels of openness and flexibility. A sophisticated rezoning strategy supports both on-the-fly collaboration as well as focus work. Within Amgen’s culture, people have much more latitude today about how, when, and where they work—on their own and with their campus colleagues and global peers. What the pilot project gives them is a work environment that lets them fully leverage this flexibility.

“The broader trend is that people expect to be treated as individuals,” says Gensler’s Diane Hoskins. “They bring more of what used to be considered ‘outside life’ to the workplace.” The millennial generation is more explicit about this, but it shares with older peers a preference for working in an open-ended way. This is why even companies that are “very metrics-driven,” as Bouza describes Amgen, are equally concerned now with the intangibles, the qualities that they can’t measure as easily, but are recognizably no less important.

The metrics aren’t going away. “This isn’t about reviving the private office,” Hoskins says. “It’s about giving each person the ability to navigate the workday and orchestrate the workplace to suit changing needs. If it’s designed well, the metrics will be just fine.” Providing choice and flexibility serves larger goals like supporting community and hitting sustainability targets. “The work settings that result may look radically different, but they share an underlying logic.”

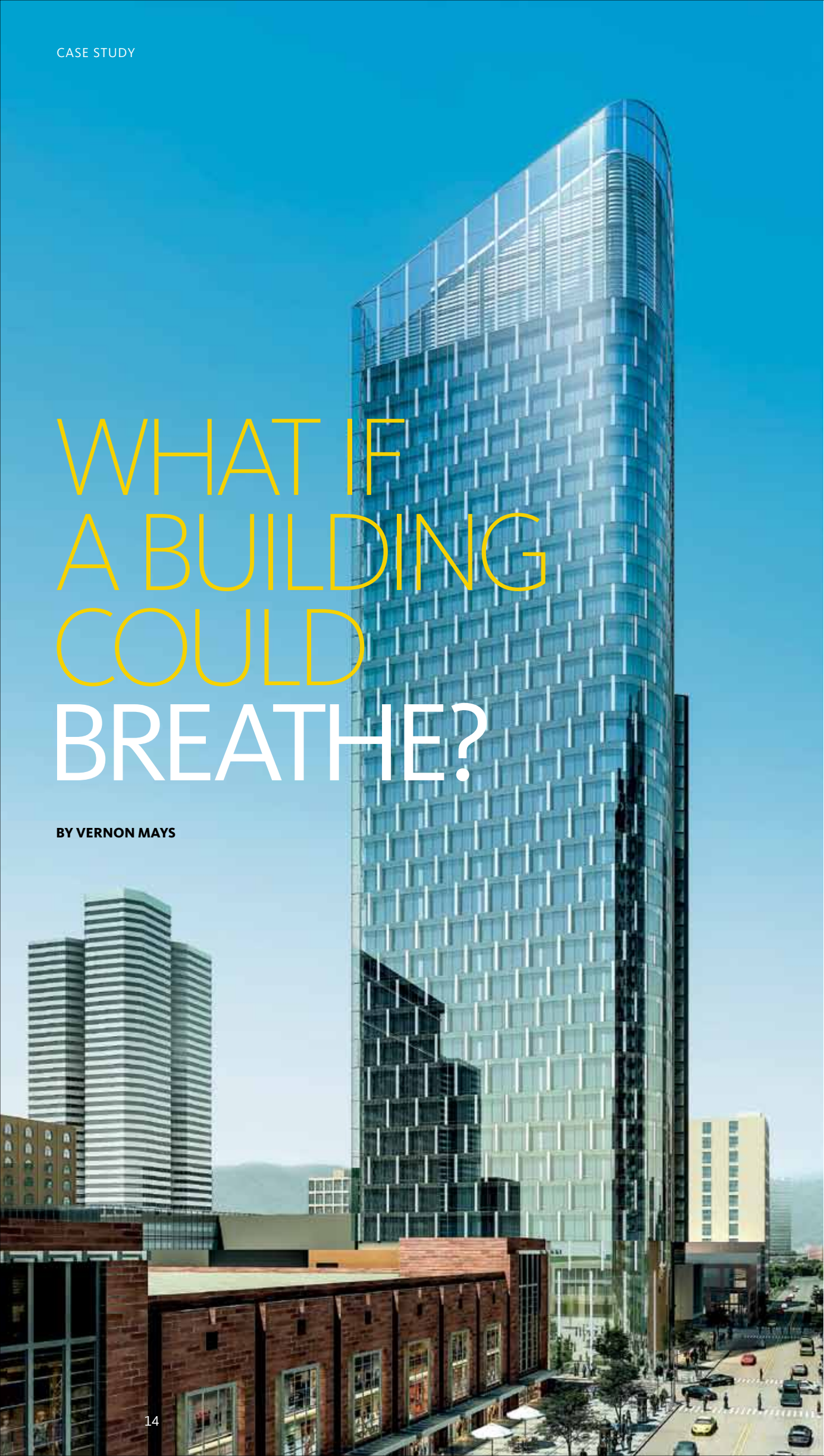
Allison Arieff edits SPUR’s magazine, *The Urbanist*, and writes on design and society for *Wired* and many other publications.

right: Amenity goes hand-in-hand with informal gathering and conversation at Edelman’s London office.



WHAT IF A BUILDING COULD BREATHE?

BY VERNON MAYS



OPEN POSITION



On moderate days when outside air provides comfort to occupants, the air gates open.

CLOSED POSITION



On days when heating or cooling is required, the façade is shut tight.

PNC’s new headquarters in Pittsburgh reflects the pioneering spirit of a company that makes sustainability integral to its brand, saying, “It’s the right thing to do.”

PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. has an outsized impact, with a real estate portfolio that ranges from bank branches to office and mixed-use towers. As Gary Saulson notes, sustainability has been a PNC priority since 1998. Saulson, an EVP and director of corporate real estate, is leading his company's latest and greatest venture into sustainable design—its new headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh, The Tower at PNC Plaza.

“Our marching orders were to drive performance to a new level,” says project director Doug Gensler, who has worked closely with Saulson on PNC’s sustainable building initiatives, including the new tower. Aiming for a “highly rational, highly analytical approach to the tower’s design,” Gensler teamed with engineers Buro Happold and green-building consultants Paladino & Co.

Rising 33 stories near the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, The Tower at PNC Plaza symbolizes PNC’s commitment to the city. Plans for the tower embrace three broad strategies that guide decision-making and forge an integrated solution: responding to the climate, driving organizational productivity, and contributing to the Pittsburgh community.

Breaking new ground meant going beyond standard solutions. This led the designers to question the conventions of the modern office tower. Could the building’s windows open to bring in fresh air? Could they apply passive cooling and heating strategies at a highrise scale? Most provocatively, what if the tower itself could breathe?

Responding to climate

To lessen the building’s energy dependence, the design team integrated several passive strategies. They configured the tower to maximize southern exposure and trimmed the lease span to 35 feet. These two moves created the optimal geometry to bring daylight deep into the workspace, minimizing the need for electric lights. They also set the stage for a third strategy: a breathable outer skin that gives people the ability to open windows and bring fresh air inside. “Climate analysis showed that occupant comfort in the building could be satisfied by opening a window 42 percent of the working hours in a year,” says Gensler’s Hao Ko,

the tower’s lead designer. Considering the building’s location in Pittsburgh, where winters are harsh and summers are hot and humid, that was a startling revelation.

Making this work takes a unique window—a high-performance system of operable panels that are controlled by an automated system. Under ideal weather conditions—what Ko calls a “net zero day”—large air gates on the exterior open automatically, signaling that the tower is breathing. When the gates open, air will fill a vented cavity and sliding panels can be opened by building occupants to access fresh air.

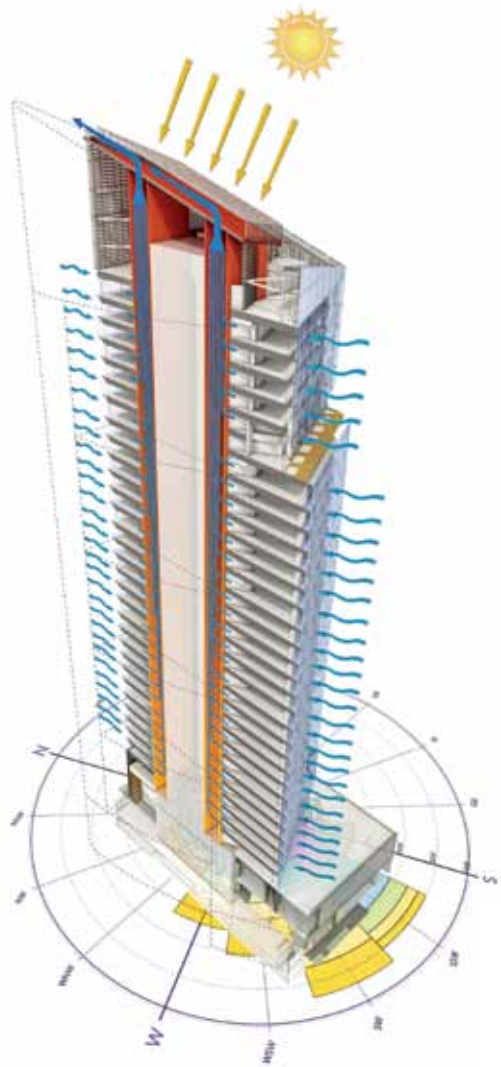
Air will flow into the building with the aid of an additional design feature: a solar chimney. In a conventional highrise, an open window would cause air to be pushed out of the building by the positive air pressure inside. Opening a window in the PNC tower, however, will draw air into the building. People inside will quickly feel a pleasant change in air temperature.

“It’s like a breathing machine,” Ko explains. Here’s how it works: Just inside the tower’s angled glass roof is a massive concrete pad. As sunlight warms the concrete, air inside the space heats up and vents out through a louver high in the mechanical penthouse. Warm air vacating the building creates an updraft in shafts that go down to each floor, pulling cool air through the office space. “In this mode, there are no fans,” he adds. “It’s a fully passive system driven by the sun’s heat.” In the winter, warm air in the chimney will be recirculated to help heat the building.

Incorporating local materials into the tower will raise its sustainability quotient while showcasing the natural abundance of western Pennsylvania. Interior details for the window system, for example, incorporate local white oak. Gensler’s design team also is working with PPG, a Pittsburgh-based glass manufacturer, to develop the first heat-insulating coating for glass to be used in North America.

Two and half years ago, PNC committed to lowering its energy costs by 30 percent over a 10-year period. The company’s already almost halfway there, Saulson notes, and

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR



The solar chimney draws air upward and exhausts it at the top, pulling fresh air through the open windows at each floor.

A VERTICAL COMMUNITY

THE PORCH

NEIGHBORHOODS

LOBBY



Retail and community facilities occupy the base, with 12 “neighborhoods” stacked in the center, and the upper floors sharing the five-story “porch.” The angled mechanical floor is a key functional element of the building’s solar chimney.

PERFORMANCE GAINS

42%

Portion of total working hours that the building can operate in passive natural ventilation mode.

91%

Portion of total floor area that can be naturally day-lit if illuminance levels are expanded to 150 lux.

50%

Reduction in energy use that will be achieved with innovative MEP systems and passive strategies.*

* compared with ASHRAE 90.1 2007 baseline

DOUBLE-SKIN FAÇADE



PASSIVE MODE
Fresh air enters when sliding door is opened



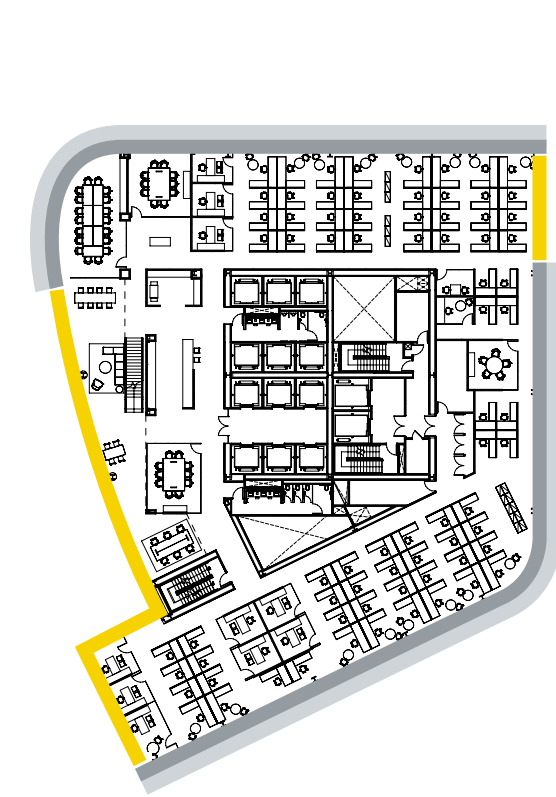
MECHANICAL COOLING MODE
Summer heat stays outside, radiant cooling inside



MECHANICAL HEATING MODE
Double wall insulates, radiant heat and fresh air flow inside

As the seasons pass, the double-skin façade functions in different modes to maximize natural heating and cooling.

EXTERIOR WALL TYPES



DOUBLE-SKIN FAÇADE THIN DOUBLE WALL

The fully operable, double-skin wall is strategically placed next to areas where employees spend most of their focus time.

AN OPEN-AIR “PORCH”



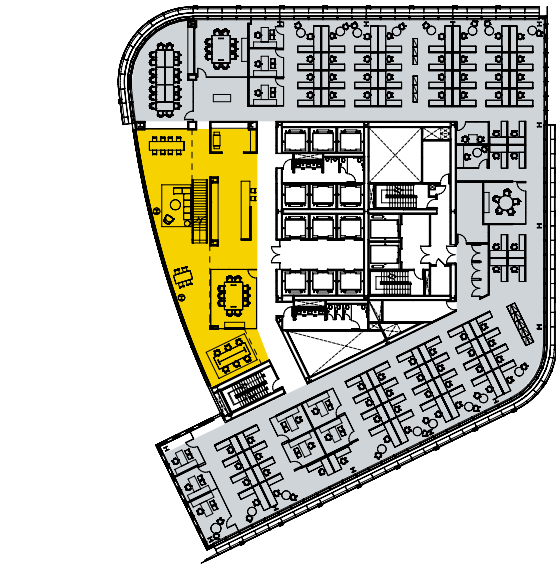
The top of the tower features an open-air atrium that will attract people from throughout the building.

PRIME MEETING SPACE



Large conference rooms (top) and open collaboration spaces (bottom) will give employees opportunities to enjoy the views overlooking the exterior “porch.”

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION



FOCUS COLLABORATION

Locating collaboration spaces to the west orients each floor toward the best views, but more important, these spaces are a low-energy buffer for the remainder of the floor plate.



As the building’s energy performance is being pushed to new limits, the design team also is enhancing the tower’s ability to drive workplace performance.

the tower is a big part of the strategy. “It raises the bar. Like everything we do, it’s designed for functionality, purpose, and pay-back. We’re not doing it just to be different.”

Performance with people in mind

As it pushes energy performance to new limits, the design team is also focusing on driving workplace performance. “We want to make it a place where people want to go to work,” says Saulson. Office floors will be organized in a horseshoe arrangement, with workstations and enclosed offices for focus work along the north, east, and south walls. The collaborative spaces will face west, capturing the best views. Locating them there also creates a low-energy buffer for the office floors.

The architectural potential of these west-facing spaces benefits from double-height

“neighborhoods,” each one shared by two single-story office floors. Twelve of these neighborhoods comprise the majority of the tower. “From a workplace standpoint, the neighborhood is a great addition,” says Doug Gensler. “By creating an open, two-story space, we bring people together and allow them to connect vertically between departments.” Amenities of the neighborhoods, such as conference rooms and communal tables, provide a variety of workplaces while facilitating creativity, innovation, and a sense of community.

The idea of the community space is carried a step further in the top five floors, which overlook an open-air atrium. Ko envisioned the space as an exterior “porch” that will provide an experience much like sitting in a park—albeit a park that overlooks the city. The space will function as a destination in

the tower and a symbol of the building’s ambitious energy goals.

Strengthening the community

Beyond satisfying its internal programmatic needs, PNC is committed to the role it plays in making Pittsburgh a better place, driving growth and business development downtown. From an aesthetic point of view, the tower—with its distinctive architecture and landscaping—will complement the city’s skyline and add a creative element to the blocks defining the site. The building will also support downtown’s evolution into a 24/7 center of activity.

Good urban design is valued highly. “PNC doesn’t want the tower to be a fortress,” says Ko. To engage the street, it has retail on the ground floor and the base of the tower makes a transition in scale that ties

it visually to the surrounding cityscape. Planned to open in 2015, PNC’s bold new tower will bring economic benefits and a renewed spirit of innovation to Pittsburgh’s downtown core. For PNC, it’s all part of being a good neighbor.

Vernon Mays is a contributing editor at *Architect* magazine and a senior editor at Gensler based in Richmond, VA.

above, from left: Two-story neighborhoods with shared amenities connect pairs of office floors, clearly expressing the stacked neighborhoods on the tower’s west façade.



FRINGE BENEFITS

BY YUKI BOWMAN



A third of US workers are independent, and their numbers are growing. As more of them opt for work settings that support collaboration and networking, mainstream companies are paying attention.

The ranks of independent workers—freelancers, the self-employed, consultants, and contractors—swell in recessions, but lately, their growth reflects an entrepreneurial surge of startups and sole proprietorships. In search of supportive places to work beyond home offices and Internet cafés, they're driving the emergence of a new category of workspace: coworking.

Unlike accelerators, incubators, and mobility centers, coworking space “focuses on community to attract the diversity that interdisciplinary collaboration requires,” says Gensler’s Sonya Dufner. The concept dates back to 2005, when San Francisco’s Brad Neuberg moved his on-demand workplace for freelancers to the Hat Factory to found the first coworking operation. Today, there are more than 500 coworking locations in the US and some 1,300 worldwide.

The economics of coworking are not unlike the mobility-friendly workplace: most people don’t need a desk at all times. The leverage of desk-and-equipment sharing means that 72 percent of coworking spaces are profitable after two years. A few, like the lobby of New York City’s Ace Hotel, are free of charge,

drawing a scene of independent workers who perk out on the hotel’s artistic atmosphere and free wireless. On the other end of the spectrum, dedicated coworking spaces are emerging for midsize startups that want to hang on to the communal benefits and low overhead of the informally shared settings they’ve outgrown. Even large companies are getting into the act. In Grand Rapids, MI, four large but non-competing companies developed Grid70 as a shared “design hub” that gives each a creative boost. Nesting development teams in coworking space is seen as a way to hasten innovation.

Building community

Although coworking space is often used on a first-come, first-served basis, Dufner says that those with a curated membership work better, since a balanced set of skills and interests accelerates their synergy. Grind, a successful collaborative workspace in Manhattan, has grown through referral, invitation, and application. Now Gensler is helping Grind expand, with new branches planned in New York and Los Angeles. Says cofounder Benjamin Dyett, “It’s important in an open-space environment that everyone

has a compelling desire and reason to be here. There’s no place to run or hide.”

The right space can encourage interaction and support productivity. Between 10,000 and 20,000 square feet is ideal, Dufner says—big enough to feel spacious without discouraging sociability. Openness and privacy have to be balanced, though. Grind’s new spaces will incorporate privacy without exclusivity, Dyett says. “We want ideas to flow and innovation to be nurtured; barriers can literally stop that flow.” To minimize vocal distraction, Grind counters it with “pink noise”—low-level sound generated at the same frequency as the human voice to keep real conversations contained and unobtrusive.

Technology can also connect. Grind’s online marketplace, Agora, helps members find each other. A gallery of 12 LCD screens displays member content and a flat-screen monitor in the café highlights their skills. Events are another community-builder. Grind’s monthly—and public—speaker series, #Rethink, is recorded and uploaded to a Vimeo channel. A full-time “experience director” keeps it all moving.

opposite: Venables, Bell & Partners, the San Francisco advertising agency, has integrated a coworking space into its offices to nurture talent.

above: Blackstone Group’s coworking demo floor helps it market 229 West 43rd Street in Manhattan to tenants.

Jumpstarting a new industry

Government is investing in coworking as it looks to spur economic growth. Chicago's newly opened 1871, designed by Gensler, is a nonprofit collaborative tech hub that's partly supported by a \$2.3 million grant from the State of Illinois—seed money to spawn new industry. Named for the year of rebirth after the Great Chicago Fire, 1871 caters to the city's unique breed of socially active tech startups. This drives its hybrid character: part incubator and part coworking space, 1871 reflects many of the values and design elements that make other communal workplaces tick.

Says Carlos Martinez, who led the design, "1871 suggests things in the making." Its Merchandise Mart setting is the ideal backdrop. The 50,000-square-foot space "has an industrial feel that encourages people to make it their own," he adds. "They can do what they really want and need to do." Flexibility, mobility, and transparency are achieved with reconfigurable furniture, robust technology, and glass partitions that allow light to penetrate the space.

The design is playful—Martinez calls it a "hackable" aesthetic—but it's also carefully planned for its different users. There are suites for universities and investment groups. Parts of the incubator area have startup suites and reserved workstations, while other parts support on-demand coworking in various configurations. "Not everyone has the same work habits, so you have to let people find their comfort zone," he says. The lobby and café bring the entire community together for socializing and events—UK Prime Minister David Cameron dropped in during a break in the NATO Conference in Chicago in May, drawing a crowd.

Catalyzing the city

The ability to encourage economic growth and serendipity makes collaborative workplaces a powerful placemaking tool, a key role of the Hub, a coworking community in San Francisco's 5M. As envisioned by Forest City, 5M is a mixed-use development that will join entrepreneurs, social visionaries, nonprofits, arts organizations, food vendors, and artisan "makers" in a 4-acre

community at Fifth and Mission streets, along the city's downtown transit corridor. "The Hub promotes values that connect its coworking community in a different way," says Forest City Senior Vice President Alexa Arena. "It's not just about sharing space and hard resources, but about the cross-pollination that builds capacity for improving the world." For example, the Hub sponsors a lively series of do-it-yourself events and roundtables, inviting its members to get involved in programming the space—a model that can work for 5M as well.

The synergy in the Hub's two-story, 20,000-square-foot space is palpable. Surrounding each floor's shared work area are small offices that house the startups, venture capitalists, trainers, consultants, and nonprofits that feed into the entire community. Gensler worked with Forest City to explore how a similar dynamism could be cultivated at the urban scale.

Arena believes that the Hub's growth and energy will also benefit 5M: "We definitely see companies that could expand within and emerge from the Hub, so we're thinking about how this ecosystem can play out at the scale of the development."

As Arena notes, "Ultimately, the Hub and 5M are asking the same question: how can place be a tool for people to build community?" The answer is to provide a mix of spaces that maximize interactions and shared experiences among the different tenants and the surrounding city: the coworking strategy at an urban scale.

As this suggests, coworking space is the "physical manifestation of social media," Dufner believes. "It allows the breadth of our digital networks to deepen through shared experience." If technology lets people work independently, outside traditional organizational structures, then coworking space gives them the possibility of coming back together to create something radically new.

Yuki Bowman is a San Francisco-based writer and 2012 architecture resident at Marin's Headlands Center for the Arts.



right: Chicago's 1871 calls itself a coworking community. Illinois invested \$2.3 million in the project to jumpstart new industry in the region.

THE POWER OF DESIGN RESEARCH

BY TIM PITTMAN

This year, Gensler is funding 19 research projects, the most in its history. Work and the workplace are both important emphases of the program. The deliberately broad scope of qualitative and quantitative research efforts encompassed by the program makes its findings robust and nuanced. It also benefits from our proprietary survey and observational research tools, as well as from the breadth and depth of our market exposure.

Our research gives us an in-depth understanding of how people's interactions with the workplace enhance or diminish their satisfaction, sense of engagement, and performance. What we learn validates, informs, and challenges the knowledge and assumptions we bring to workplace design, helping to ensure it supports client goals.

USER-BASED RESEARCH

With over 80,000 survey responses from more than 140 organizations, Gensler's Workplace Performance Index (WPI) gives our clients unique insights on the workplace. It provides before-and-after data on specific projects and comparative data about sector peers. The WPI shows that workspace effectiveness drives job satisfaction. How well the individual workspace supports heads-down, focused tasks is the strongest predictor of a workplace's overall effectiveness as reported by employees. Support of focus work also affects their ability to collaborate, learn, and socialize.

Consistent with what we're learning from office workers, a Gensler survey of 250+ university and college students tells us that while collaboration is important, focused work is how they spend the majority of their time. The survey considered how college students—soon to be workers themselves—use and experience on-campus settings. Initial findings suggest that the popular image of an ultra-social cohort is a myth. Students reported that working alone takes up the largest proportion of their time.

They overwhelmingly prefer working alone to working in groups. When they were asked about effective study space, "quiet" rose to the top.

Corroborating our research findings for office workers and students, the importance of focus work and the power of the introvert have captured recent media attention. Our data confirms many of these arguments, but more important, helps point us toward future strategies and design solutions. Space to focus is essential, but that doesn't mean we should all be working alone. Visual contact with others from one's workspace drives levels of organizational commitment.

To explore this dynamic further, Gensler is planning a new US-wide office workplace survey, the results of which should provide a better understanding of the ways that workplace design enhances individual and organizational performance.

48%

of the average US office workday is spent doing focused work

71%

of college-aged students prefer studying alone to studying with others



Greenfield Community College, Greenfield, MA.

PLACE-BASED RESEARCH

Gensler's Activity Analysis—an ethnographic research tool that delivers data on the occupancy and use of space—brings a different perspective. We know that in the average workplace, individual workspaces are occupied only 55 percent of the time on average. For clients looking to make their spaces more efficient, knowing how and how often the spaces are being used means their decisions are more informed and have a greater chance of success. Looking at our Activity Analysis data over time, we're also seeing a distinct rise in the levels of virtual collaboration. From 2010 to 2011, for example, the percentage of meetings with at least one virtual participant rose from 40 percent to almost 70 percent among professional service firms that we observed. To support that level of virtual interaction, offices need to integrate more and more seamless virtual collaboration technology, and not just in meeting rooms but at desks where many of these interactions take place.

Our Commercial Office Buildings and Consulting practices used research to create tools to help document sustainability

considerations earlier in the design process. Gensler's Environmental Mapping tool and online database of LEED-certified projects is helping our teams deliver location-specific climate, material, and certification data to inform sustainable design decisions and discussions.

In the coming year, Gensler researchers are combining observational, literature, and demographic research with conceptual design solutions to speculate on the future interaction between work and the city. Another team is considering the workplace from the perspective of health and wellness, asking how we can design work settings to promote healthier lifestyles.

Still other researchers are looking at technological innovation from a human perspective, asking how workplace design can more effectively integrate the increasing number of tools that support and define our work lives.

45%

is the average office space utilization rate among US organizations

75%

is the increase in virtual collaboration in US law firms from 2010 to 2011



Boston Consulting Group, New York.

CLIENT-BASED RESEARCH

To understand the issues that clients face, the business drivers and trends that impact them, and the ways that they measure the value and performance of their work settings, our research engages client executives and senior-level decision-makers. The consulting practice, for example, researched the impact of the workplace on innovation by interviewing executives charged with fostering innovation at their companies. This research revealed that the creative process mixes concentrated work with interaction. Ideas arise unpredictably, and the settings that balance focus with collaboration are the most effective.

The professional services firm practice held a roundtable with senior executives from top-ranking international law firms to understand how the changes they see in the global business environment will impact the way they work and the space they need. One unexpected finding is that despite cost pressure and a new emphasis on teamwork, enclosed offices persist. What's new is the expectation that the office will serve multiple purposes, from small team meetings

to virtual conferencing. WPI surveys of law firms support this: lawyers are collaborating more, but use their offices, not their conference rooms, to do so.

A recent survey of corporate real estate executives at financial services firms found that cost per square foot, square feet per employee, and percentage vacancy are the top metrics by which they measure real estate and workplace performance. When asked the greatest challenge faced in managing their workplace portfolio, the ability to obtain reliable data came first. A follow-up survey found that these cost-centric metrics persist because workforce engagement and productivity are still hard to measure. Gensler-developed tools like WPI, Activity Analysis, and 4-1-Where aim to bridge that gap.

Tim Pittman is Gensler's research communications manager, based in New York.

70%

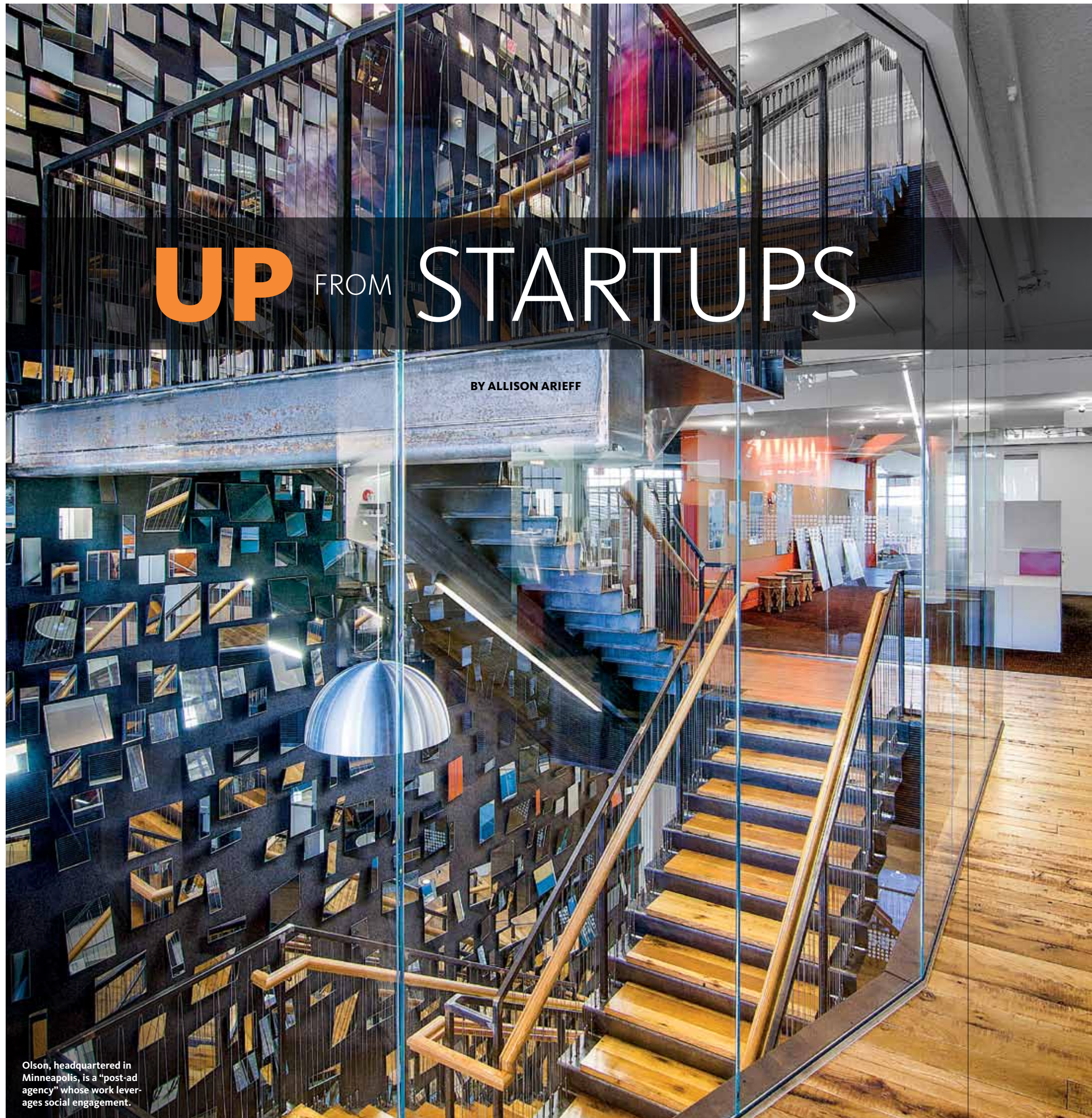
of the collaboration in law firms occurs in attorneys' offices, not in meeting rooms



TM Advertising, Dallas.

87%

of US CRE executives use cost/square foot as a key measure of portfolio performance



UP FROM STARTUPS

BY ALLISON ARIEFF

Olson, headquartered in Minneapolis, is a "post-ad agency" whose work leverages social engagement.

The rise of social networking companies and their offshoots is newsworthy all by itself.

Behind the headlines is another story: how they're transforming the tech industry workplace.

The story line is better known now than David Packard's garage: Young entrepreneurs start a company in their dorm—or at a café or a coworking space. Soon, they need space to grow. By necessity, it's casual and inexpensive, thrown together from IKEA. Fast-forward and some of these companies are on a growth tear, with hundreds if not thousands of people. Those startup days are in the past, but the impulse that got them going—the fast-moving culture that first set them on fire—remains very much in mind. They don't want to lose it.

In this era of social media and Web 2.0, the challenge of maintaining excitement and dynamism in the workplace is an imperative. But how do these companies reconcile the pace of bricks-and-mortar with the pace of innovation? "Tech is fast, and real estate is slow," says Gensler's Joan Price. "Trying to resolve that conundrum is what's driving the social-media workplace."

Social-media companies, including those structured around social media and others that depend on its existence, dismiss the trappings of more traditional businesses. But that's not to say they haven't defined new trappings of their own that reflect the

distinct preferences of a young workforce: raw and nonhierarchical spaces, for example, and generous amenities. There's nothing buttoned-down about these settings. On the contrary, they're geared toward preserving every last bit of the freewheeling ambition that got them where they are.

Given that the social-media sector continues to expand its scope, scale, and reach, the work settings these companies are now putting in place are unlikely to be the last word in where the trend is going. Yet it's possible to discern some common themes.

Urban, even if suburban

Many of these companies still opt for campus settings, but the way they inhabit them is much transformed: the feel is definitely urban, even if the location isn't. Unlike traditional suburban campuses, these new ones have a Jane Jacobs-like streetscape ambience, with lots of activities along the ground plane. Movement is encouraged, as Gensler's Randy Howder notes. "The amount of places people check into every day is astonishing." There is parking, but shuttles are provided—often with generous incentives not to drive. Getting new housing built within walking distance of their

campuses is on some companies' radar screens. Once people are at work, there are lots of inducements for them to stay—from varied dining options to on-site day care and health care.

On the flip side, the real urban core is attractive to some social-media companies. Millennial workers, the majority of the social-media workforce, have expressed a preference for living in town in opinion surveys. San Francisco's Mid-Market and South of Market districts are hotly competed for by social-media companies, an experience replicated in other cities. To identify suitable office space for them in urban tech hubs, Gensler has developed a geographic information system (GIS)-based query tool. Another new Gensler tool helps social-media companies track their employees' preferences for amenities and proximity to transit and other urban must-haves.

Dense, but open-ended

From an organizational standpoint, social-media companies are built on transparency and trust. Top-down is out and dialogue and coaching are in. They see employees as fellow entrepreneurs, not as workers to be controlled. This ethos, which is absolutely



reflected in the social-media workspace, results in settings that are denser than the typical tech workspace. Openness is the norm. Howder notes, "One challenge is to find the right balance between open-plan, collaborative settings, which predominate, and places where people can hide away." Social-media space is highly flexible to the point of being open-ended. "The expectation is that people will constantly reshape it," he explains. "It can't be overdesigned."

Expressive by design

At every scale—individual to communal—a loose, varied, often playful, and always eye-catching visual expression is the norm. Again, the effect is urban street, not art museum. The artists are young and local. There's nothing precious about the work, either—nothing that says it's forever. "It

can't be static," says Price. "If it's too familiar, that's a signal that innovation is flagging." Yet—hoodies, food trucks, and fixed-gear bikes aside—this is not zaniness for its own sake. These companies mean business.

From a real estate perspective, social-media companies are still better known for taking over existing workspace, buildings, and campuses than for developing their own. That may change, of course, as these companies continue to grow and mature. The millennial workforce that's so associated with them is also maturing—there's a postmillennial generation right behind them. The relatively youthful profile of these companies may impact the office building/campus template in the future, but that remains to be seen. Right now, the ability to get up to speed quickly makes repurpos-

ing existing urban and suburban properties the more frequent option.

If there's an overarching commonality to the social-media workplace, it's about supporting broader goals than innovation and speed-to-market. While these remain absolutely critical, there's an ethos in social-media companies—perhaps reflecting the boundary blurring of their young workforce—that goes beyond them to emphasize self-expression and self-fulfillment.

Allison Arieff writes for the *New York Times*, *Wired*, and the *Atlantic Cities* and edits SPUR's *Urbanist*.



Social engagement is about creative self-expression, which these companies actively encourage as a force for innovation.

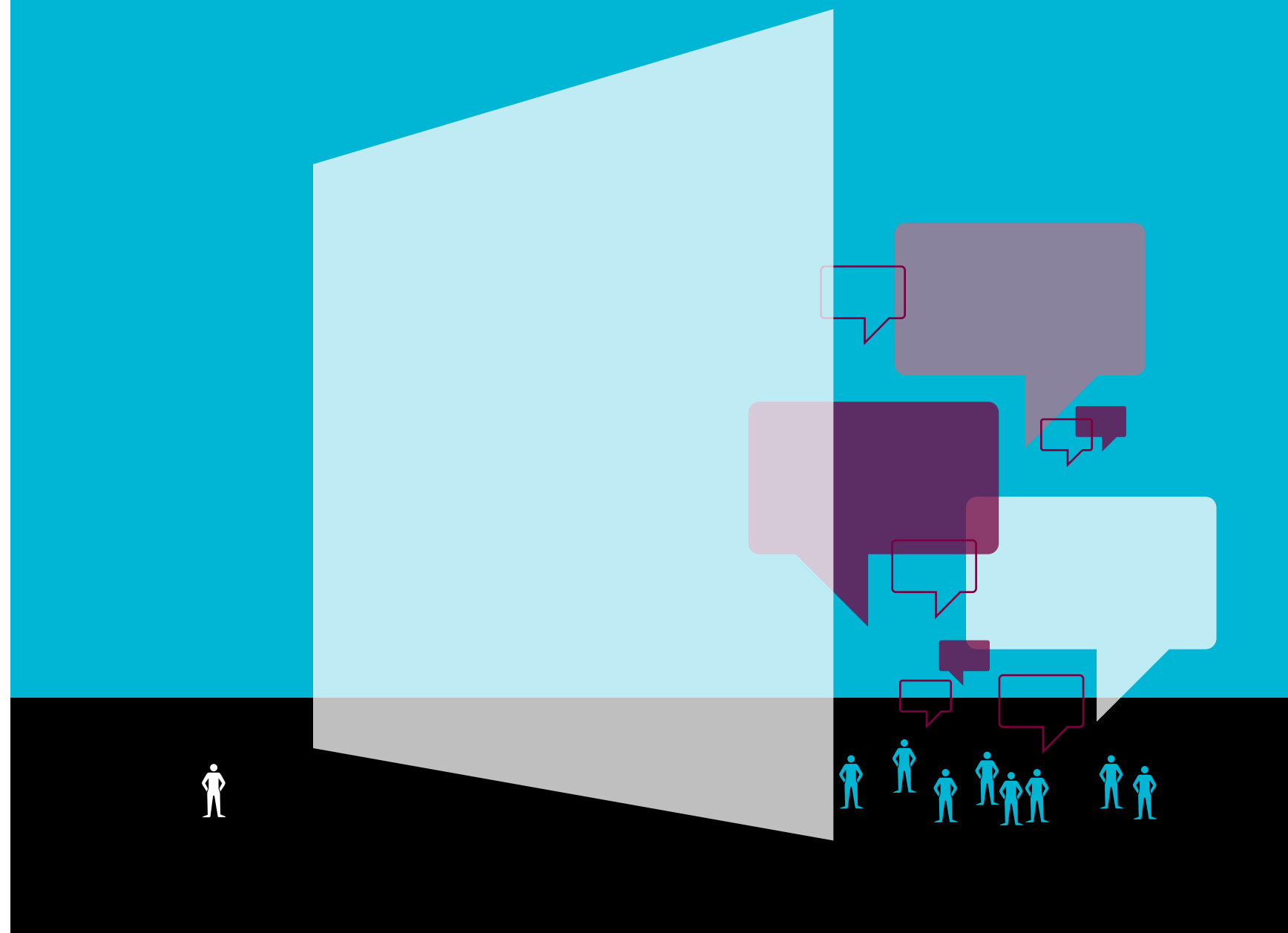


opposite: Local artists helped set the tone at Facebook's Menlo Park, CA, campus.

clockwise, from top: The AT&T Foundry, Palo Alto, CA; PeerMusic, Burbank, CA; NVIDIA, Austin.

“We should be designing spaces where there’s an ability to pick and choose how much stimulation you want.”

SUSAN CAIN



Stressed Out by Openness



Susan Cain struck a chord with *Quiet*, her best seller, which criticizes the modern workplace. Not everyone is served by its openness, she argues. In fact, a sizable percentage of the workforce finds it thwarting.

A self-described introvert, Cain is a former lawyer and negotiations consultant. Her February 2012 TED Conference talk, repackaged as a TED video, garnered its first million hits faster than any other.

KEY FACTS AND INSIGHTS

- 1 Both extroverts and introverts find the openness of the modern workplace a source of distraction, but introverts suffer more from it.
- 2 Innovation is best served by letting people choose openness or quiet and allowing them feel at ease and able to be themselves.

Openness is the “new normal” today. Why?

Susan Cain: It starts with the widely shared belief that creativity and productivity emerge from a gregarious place. There’s a sense that more and more work should be done through group work and through collaboration. While those things are great and valuable, I think we have gone a little haywire with it. The US workplace reflects that—more than 70 percent of offices are open plans. Most people I encounter, including extroverts, are really not happy with the open-plan workspace. They feel that it’s too noisy and distracting, that there’s no chance for personalization, and no privacy. It’s worse for introverts than extroverts. And that’s something to pay attention to, because introverts are a third to a half of the population.

Introverts experience openness differently?

SC: Introverts are more sensitive to stimulation than extroverts. In one study, the psychologist Russell Geen gave math problems to introverts and extroverts to solve, with varying levels of background noise. He found that the introverts did better when the noise was lower, and the extroverts did better when the noise was higher. Other studies show that it’s actually harder to develop personal connections, especially trusting relationships, in open-plan offices, because you can’t have a conversation without being overheard. You can’t confide in people.

What does this imply for workplace design?

SC: We should be designing spaces where there’s an ability to pick and choose how much stimulation you want, at any given time. Serious flexibility is crucial. We need more of a choice to either work in a big, open clattery area, or in quieter places, in nooks and crannies. A lot of companies nowadays have quiet rooms, but usually they’re few and far between, and so they’re in huge demand. You have to book them hours or days in advance, which is actually counterproductive to what those rooms are supposed to

achieve. It should be that the minute you need to work alone or in a quieter place, you can. You shouldn’t have to jump through a bunch of hoops to be able to do so.

I realize this makes me seem antiquated, but I don’t understand why the private, personal office has fallen so greatly out of favor. I think there’s been a massive overcorrection. Steve Jobs famously designed Pixar so that, just to go to the restroom, you had to pass through a big open atrium where you would run into people. That’s a great idea, but why can’t you couple it with some sense of privacy? There should be ways to design the workplace so you have more of a choice to work in an open area or in quieter places—in the nooks and crannies.

So did you write your best seller at home?

SC: This is the funny thing: I wrote my entire book in a café. I felt isolated just sitting at home and working. But—and this is the challenge for companies—there’s a huge difference between the environment of the café and an open space within a company. The essence of café life is freedom. You’re free to come and go as you please; you’re free to sit on the margins, seeing but not being seen. Nobody can tap you on the shoulder and pull you into a meeting, a team-building session, or an office social event.

If openness isn’t the key to innovation, what is?

SC: I believe the key to innovation is spaces where people feel accepted for who they are, and are comfortable and emotionally safe, so they’re not using up any excess energy on anything besides thinking and exchanging ideas. For example, look at offices where you can bring your dog to work. In that setting, a dog is more than a pet, it’s a symbol that says that this is a place where anything goes, where you can be yourself and think up outlandish ideas. Symbols like that are important, and that extends into physical settings where you can make choices. Being able to shape and personalize your own space is hugely important.

Is online collaboration a work-around for introverts?

SC: A few years ago I would have said the online world is clearly more comfortable for introverts. It gives them a way to connect and express your ideas. But social media increasingly are becoming more about self-presentation and less about the exploration of ideas. Having said that, I’m actually optimistic about the role of online collaborations. Research shows that electronic brainstorming actually works better than in-person brainstorming, because it frees people from the distortions of group dynamics that often set in when they connect face to face. When you’re talking about groups coming together to solve a problem or innovate, so many problems with group dynamics are solved by working online that I feel like we should be paying more attention to that particular usage.

Slow is the New Fast



Alone Together, Sherry Turkle's latest book, argues that always-on communication is making us overconnected, hindering our ability to focus *and* to collaborate. Her advice: slow it down!

Sherry Turkle is the Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, where she also directs the Initiative on Technology and Self.

KEY FACTS AND INSIGHTS

- 1 Being overconnected turns multitasking into a habit, but research shows that when people multitask their performance degrades.
- 2 Overconnectivity erodes the solitary reflection that fuels creativity and relationship. Don't just connect, Turkle says. Converse.

Are we really overconnected?

Sherry Turkle: Yes. People text at meetings now, even at corporate board meetings. Being able to text while making eye contact with the person you're with is an important new skill. It's hard, but it can be done. A businessman I know, who sits on many important boards, unapologetically does his email during their meetings. He's a member of a "tribe of one," he says, and only he knows what's best for his tribe. But "tribes of one" cost us our sense of being in a community.

Overconnectivity means that we've become habituated to multitasking. We do it in our office environments. We are almost punished if we don't do it in our office environments. But research shows clearly that our performance degrades for every task we multitask. We have to take this lesson to heart. There are some things that simply cannot be multitasked. These tend to be the most important ones, the ones that require thinking things through to the end.

We ramp up the volume and velocity of our exchanges to a point where we can only respond to each other by email or text. We measure success by emails or texts answered—metrics that don't mean anything at all. Always-on connectivity encourages instant answers, dumbing down our exchanges. This is not good. We live in an ever more complex world, as we say, but our communication culture leads us to go for the simple and the glib, just to have things along move faster. Instead, we should all be slowing things down, intentionally and mindfully.

How do you slow things down?

ST: Start with food. Make it against company policy to take lunch at your desk. Then work up to more serious dimensions of company culture. Why do people feel they are more productive when they're walled off into tribes of one?

If the company rewards them for this behavior, it's not going to change. Slowing things down often means taking a major look at company values.

At a personal level, overconnectedness erodes the capacity for solitude—to gather oneself and concentrate without anxiety. It's what enables creativity and relationship. Without it, we turn to other people to make us feel less alone, less anxious. In that situation, we can't really learn who they are. We may try to collaborate, but we're really looking for validation. That state of mind does not make us ideal collaborators. So encouraging solitude rather than frenzied isolation is part of slowing down.

We also have to learn to substitute conversation for mere connection. We need to retrain ourselves to recognize the difference. The most important thing about conversation, if we take a long view of it, is that we're having a conversation with ourselves, too. It teaches us self-reflection in a way that all those online tweets and texts do not.

Is online connectivity ever a good thing?

ST: Online tools are good for sharing documents among collaborators who are editing or commenting on each other's work. This works best when the collaborators know each other, because there's less chance of being misunderstood. There's also more trust and with it more leeway to go back and forth. So, for a new team without that familiarity, it's better initially to opt for face-to-face interaction, because every tweak may come with a long explanation.

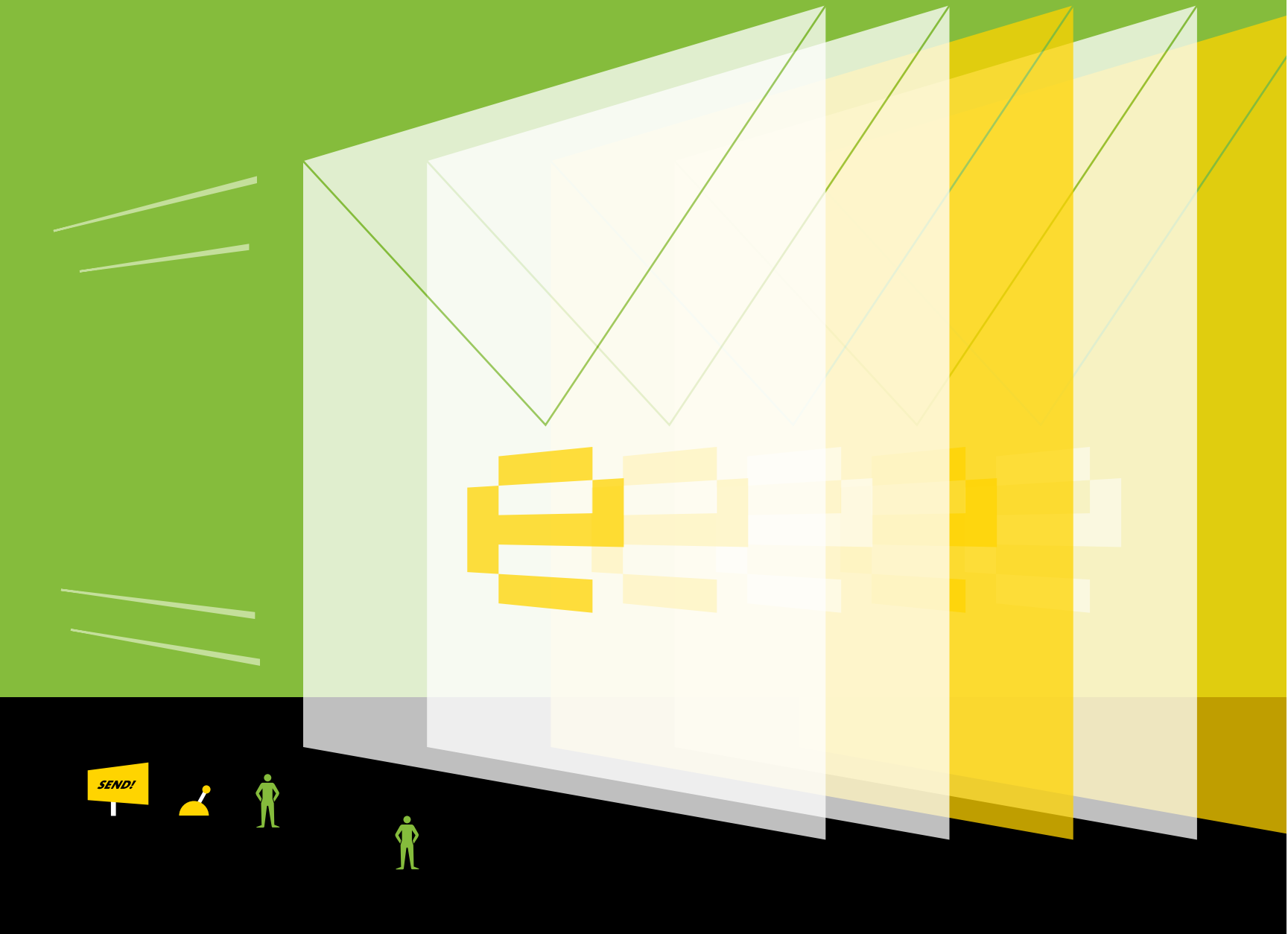
Another good use of electronic connectedness is what might be called broadcasting—when you have a complicated piece of messaging that needs to go out to a large group and has to be carefully worded, but does not call for conversation with the recipients. Related to that are the "handshake" email that affirms consensus on a question that the parties have fully discussed, and emailed notes that are for review only, face-to-face discussion to follow. Every use of email that prepares people for getting together in a more constructive way later is helpful.

What isn't helpful is a constant barrage of comments. We need to ramp down the volume and velocity of electronic communication, which is why my very favorite email response is one that says, "I'm thinking." This sends a very powerful message. I like to watch it go viral.

Andrew Blum, who interviewed Susan Cain and Sherry Turkle, is the author of *Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet* and a contributing editor at *Wired* magazine.

“We measure success by emails or texts answered—metrics that don't mean anything at all.”

SHERRY TURKLE



NEWS+VIEWS

Targeted completion 2015

When it is built and open, the Shanghai Tower will be the tallest in China and the second tallest in Asia.

UPWARD SPIRAL

THE SHANGHAI TOWER
PUDONG, SHANGHAI

In June 2012, construction of the Shanghai Tower, the world's second-tallest building, reached its halfway point of 300 meters (985 feet). Scheduled for completion in early 2015, the 632-meter (2,073-foot), mixed-use super-highrise wraps a tapered and spiraling exterior around an efficient structure divided into nine vertical neighborhoods of 12 to 15 stories, each anchored by its own mechanical floor and atrium. The amenity-filled atria provide an armature for highrise community-building and act as climate buffers. Distributing the mechanical floors to serve the individual neighborhoods also saves energy. The spiral form of the tower cuts wind loads, reducing structural materials by 32 percent. Over 90 percent of tower is made from regionally sourced materials, further minimizing energy and transport costs.

Both the interior and exterior curtain walls of the innovative double skin have undergone multiple full-scale tests to speed on-site assembly. The unitized exterior curtain wall was similarly tested and refined to meet stringent code requirements for light pollution. Its stepped configuration and high performance glazing also reduce interior glare and heat gain. Contributing to industry-wide advances, the Shanghai Tower will house the world's fastest and longest elevator. At 18 meters/second (59 feet/second) it will bring guests from the lobby to the tower's open-air observation deck—the world's highest—in a single run. This is an unprecedented achievement.

BRINGING THE FUTURE DOWNTOWN

THE NEW GENSLER LA OFFICE
LOS ANGELES



To spark an urban renaissance, the City of Los Angeles has spurred 24/7 developments downtown, like AEG's L.A. LIVE. Attracting the creative sector is equally high on its agenda, which is why Gensler LA's 400 designers are now at 500 South Figueroa. The new office transforms a long-vacant City National Plaza banking pavilion into a true workplace of the future that is designed with the firm's mobile teams and highly interactive studios clearly in mind.

Gensler LA is an eye-catcher, its transparent main façade revealing the kinetic activity inside. Conceived from the outset as a flexible, technology-rich innovation lab, the office keeps pace with its fast-moving teams. Floating conference rooms line the centerpiece—a skylit atrium and stair that define

a vibrant social and visual hub. More than half the space is collaborative, with project, team, and conference rooms, impromptu work areas, and the Red Zone, the main communal space for the office.

Achieving this meant removing parts of the roof and top floor of the 1971 pavilion and inserting a 12,000-square-foot mezzanine and two disconnected floors became a dynamic three-story volume with a larger floor area—45,000 square feet. Colorful, soundproof breakout rooms act as visual landmarks for the open studio floors.

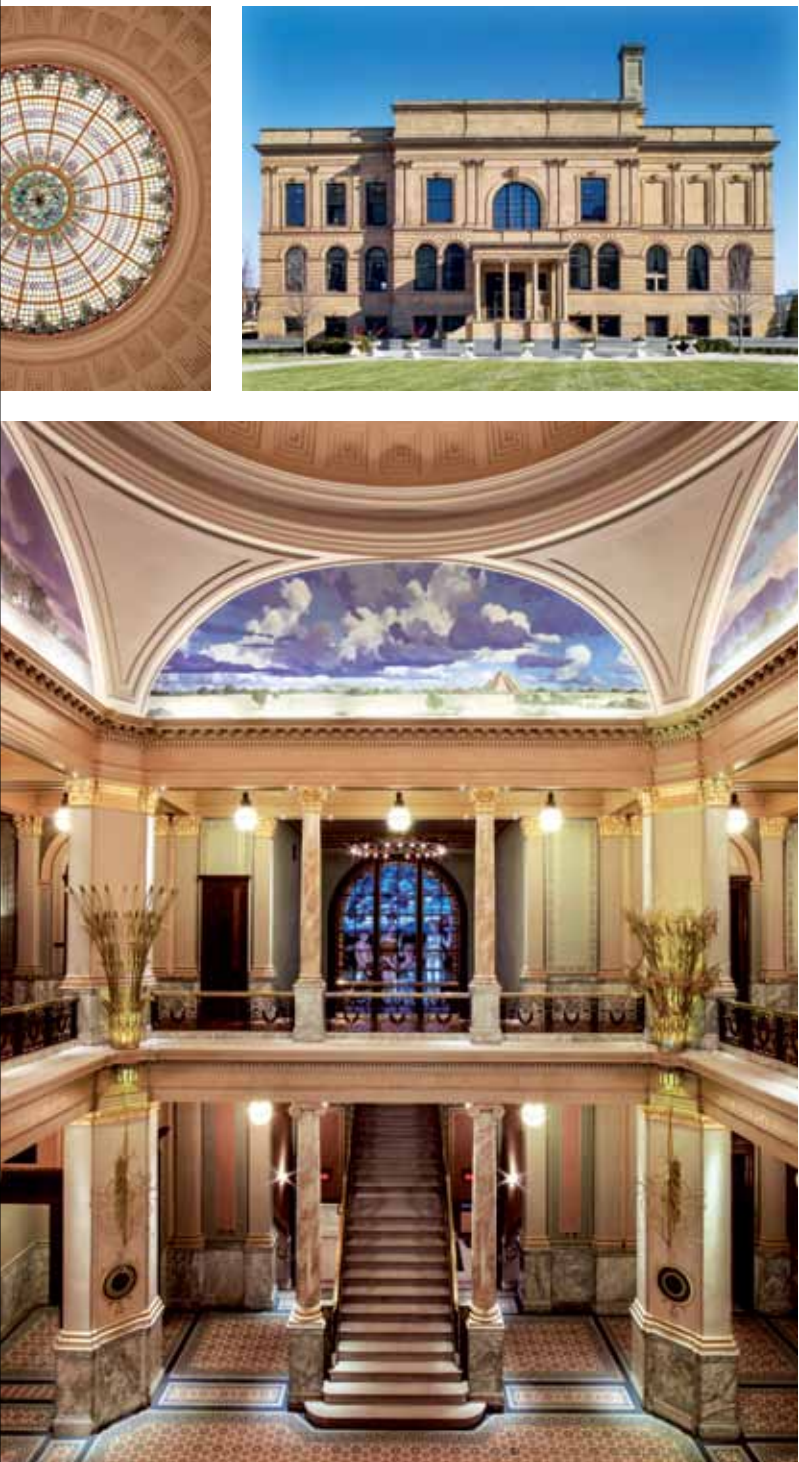
Designed and built in just nine months, the LEED Platinum-certified building incorporates such sustainable features as radiant chilled sails and motion-sensor lighting.

Before the design started, Gensler LA did a WPI survey of itself to understand how work styles varied across its teams and what kinds of settings they needed to work effectively. The new office supports the present and future needs of a globally connected, tech-savvy design collective. And it dramatically displays Gensler's commitment to downtown LA as the showcase of the city's renowned creative sector, one of the engines of the California economy.



STORY BUILDING

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE HALL OF LAUREATES
DES MOINES



The World Food Prize was established in 1986 by Norman E. Borlaug to recognize significant contributions to eradicating global food scarcity and hunger. Borlaug, an Iowa native, is known for his Green Revolution—a series of mid-20th-century agricultural advances that helped save millions from starvation. Celebrating his achievements and providing a home befitting agriculture's highest international honor were important goals for the prize's sponsors. When the Des Moines Public Library outgrew its original 1903 building, they saw the opportunity and asked Gensler to transform it into the new World Food Prize Hall of Laureates. The design celebrates the significance of the prize and its recipients, provides an important educational venue for the public, and strengthens Des Moines' role as a hub for agricultural science and innovation.

Located along the Des Moines River near the state capitol, the regal building and its extensive gardens help revive the civic waterfront. The grounds discreetly house

new geothermal wells and cisterns, all contributing to the building's application for LEED Platinum certification. The design team integrated the restoration with such new uses as a museum, a convocation center, and a community hall. New allegorical artwork in the rotunda links the original library to the prize. A mezzanine above the stacks was recast as a balcony, while the stacks themselves were transformed into a formal ballroom whose inlaid floor marks their original location. Uniting past and future, this thoughtful renovation honors Borlaug's legacy and the accomplishments of the World Food Prize laureates to come.

dialogue

editorial	contributors	editorial board
Editor John Parman	Allison Arieff Andrew Blum Yuki Bowman Vernon Mays Tim Pittman	Robin Klehr Avia Andy Cohen Art Gensler David Gensler Diane Hoskins
Creative Director Mark Coleman		
Issue Editor Vernon Mays		
Lead Designer Ngoc Ngo		
Managing Editor Erin Luckiesh		
Photography Editor and Team Manager Tiffany Strike		
Digital Designer Jonathan Skolnick		

credits

All images are credited to Gensler unless otherwise noted.
American Express provided: page 10 top
Farshid Assasi: page 34–35
Robert Benson Photography: page 22
Susan Cain provided: page 29
Kevin Chu + Jessica Paul: page 19
Paul Crosby: cover, ifc
Bruce Damonte: page 7 bottom; page 23 right
Gensler: page 33
Ryan Gobuty/Gensler: page 11; page 27 bottom right
David Joseph: page 7 top
Eric Laignel: page 36
Chris Leonard/Gensler: page 10 bottom; page 23 left
Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal: page 9
Michael Moran/OTTO: page 4–5
Owen Raggett/Gensler: page 12–13
Jasper Sanidad: page 2; page 3; page 6; page 8; page 18; page 26
Peter J. Sieger: page 24
Antuany Smith/Gensler: page 1 bottom left; page 20–21 center left, bottom; page 21 top
Julia Stotz: page 20 top; page 21 center right
Sherman Takata: page 27 top
Sherry Turkle provided: page 30
Craig Washburn: page 1 top; page 27 bottom left

thanks

Christine Barber, New York
Yulia Bortkevich, Boston
Lisa Bottom, San Francisco
Barbara Bouza, Los Angeles
Amanda Carroll, New York
Cindy Coleman, Chicago
Cristina Crespo, Washington, DC
Sonya Dufner, New York
Doug Gensler, Boston
Mandy Graham, Chicago
Diane Hoskins, Washington, DC
Randy Howder, San Francisco
Janine Intonato, Morristown
Robert Jernigan, Los Angeles
Hao Ko, San Francisco
Erik Lucken, Minneapolis
Richard Macri, Atlanta
Carlos Martinez, Chicago
Tom Mulhern, Chicago
Brenda Nyce-Taylor, Morristown
Tim Pittman, New York
Janet Pogue, Washington, DC
Joan Price, San Francisco
Leah Ray, Chicago
Amanda Ramos, New York
Johnathan Sandler, New York
Monica Schaffer, New York
Jay Shen, Shanghai
Philip Tidd, London
Lauren Torgerson, New York
Sasha Zeljic, Chicago

Gensler is a leading architecture, design, planning, and consulting firm, with offices in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. *Dialogue* magazine, published twice a year, focuses on design's ability to transform organizations and improve people's lives.

Dialogue articles also appear as features on www.gensler.com (now iPad compatible). An archive of past issues in PDF form can be found in the Viewpoint section of the site.

Dialogue is produced by Gensler Publications. © 2012 Gensler. To comment or request copies of the print edition, please write us at dialogue@gensler.com.

Dialogue is printed on FSC®-certified, 10 percent postconsumer-waste paper with ultralow-VOC (<3 percent) vegetable oil-based ink. Savings to our natural resources include:

8	million BTUs of net energy
17	fully grown trees
528	pounds of solid waste
1,455	pounds of greenhouse gases
7,892	gallons of waste water





Practice Areas

- Aviation & Transportation
Brand Design
Commercial Office Buildings
Consulting
Corporate Campus Headquarters
Creative Media
Education & Culture
Financial Services Firms
Health & Wellness
Hospitality
- Mission Critical
Mixed Use & Entertainment
Planning & Urban Design
Product Design
Professional Services Firms
Retail
Retail Centers
Science & Technology
Sports & Recreation
Workplace

Locations

- Abu Dhabi
Atlanta
Austin
Baltimore
Bangalore
Bangkok
Beijing
Boston
Charlotte
Chicago
Dallas
- Denver
Detroit
Doha
Dubai
Hong Kong
Houston
La Crosse
Las Vegas
London
Los Angeles
Miami
- Minneapolis
Morristown
New York
Newport Beach
Phoenix
Pittsburgh
Raleigh-Durham
San Diego
San Francisco
San Jose
San José
- San Ramon
São Paulo
Seattle
Seoul
Shanghai
Singapore
Tampa
Tokyo
Toronto
Washington DC