

Gensler

UK WORKPLACE SURVEY 2016

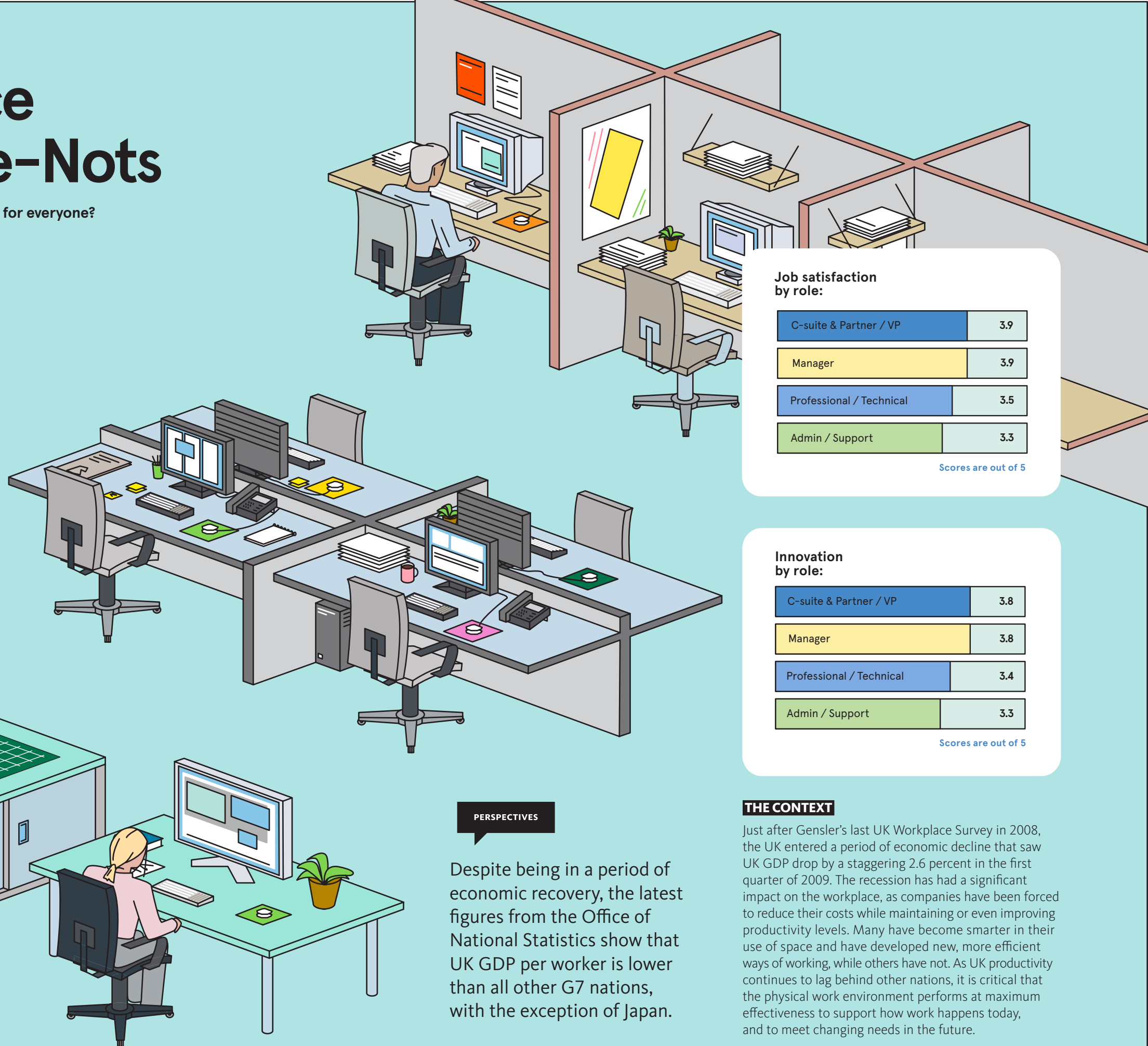


UK Workplace Haves & Have-Nots

Can we make UK office environments work better for everyone?

WHAT WE DID

We surveyed a panel-based sample of over 1,200 UK office workers in 11 industries to gauge current state of the UK workplace and uncover opportunities to improve employee performance and experience. Our goal was to uncover detailed insights into the connection between workplace design and organisational innovation, and identify key strategies to improve UK office environments. Similar to surveys launched in the U.S. and Asia, we gathered responses using Gensler's proprietary Workplace Performance Index™ (WPI) online survey tool. Respondents represented all the generations and seniority levels in the workplace, companies of various sizes, and were geographically spread across the UK.



Job satisfaction by role:

C-suite & Partner / VP	3.9
Manager	3.9
Professional / Technical	3.5
Admin / Support	3.3

Scores are out of 5

Innovation by role:

C-suite & Partner / VP	3.8
Manager	3.8
Professional / Technical	3.4
Admin / Support	3.3

Scores are out of 5

PERSPECTIVES

Despite being in a period of economic recovery, the latest figures from the Office of National Statistics show that UK GDP per worker is lower than all other G7 nations, with the exception of Japan.

THE CONTEXT

Just after Gensler's last UK Workplace Survey in 2008, the UK entered a period of economic decline that saw UK GDP drop by a staggering 2.6 percent in the first quarter of 2009. The recession has had a significant impact on the workplace, as companies have been forced to reduce their costs while maintaining or even improving productivity levels. Many have become smarter in their use of space and have developed new, more efficient ways of working, while others have not. As UK productivity continues to lag behind other nations, it is critical that the physical work environment performs at maximum effectiveness to support how work happens today, and to meet changing needs in the future.

THE RESULTS

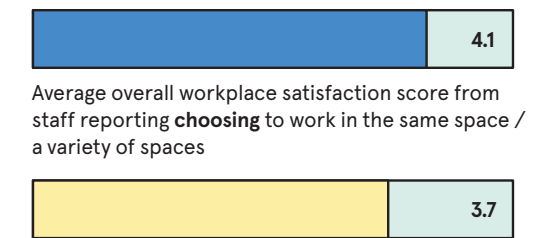
The UK workplace significantly favours those in management positions. It may come as no surprise that employees in leadership positions have higher-performing workspaces, but the gulf between the haves and the have-nots in the UK workplace is dramatic and it poses a significant challenge for organisations looking to innovate. The starkest representation of the difference is in the allocation of private offices—89 percent of those in senior leadership have private offices, compared to 23 percent at lower levels of the organisation—and the impact shows across all performance and experience metrics.

WPI scores by role:

C-suite & Partner / VP	76
Manager	72
Professional / Technical	63
Admin / Support	62

Scores are out of 100

Overall workplace satisfaction:



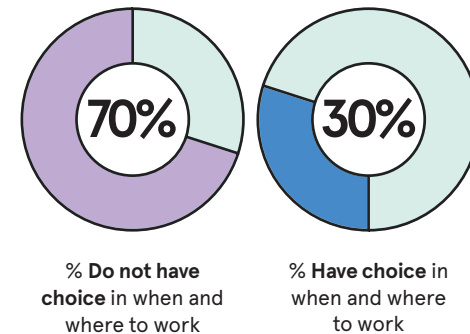
Scores are out of 5

Effectiveness ratings by work setting:

Private Office	4.2
Shared Office	4.0
Room with 3 or More	3.5
Workstation with High Panels	3.7
Workstation with Medium Panels	3.8
Workstation with Low Panels	3.5
Desk or Bench without Panels	3.6

Scores are out of 5

Choice versus no choice:



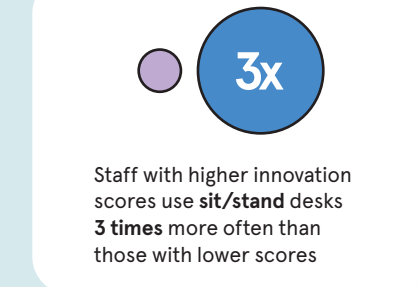
Over 8 million UK employees work in open plan environments and many of these environments are not optimally designed. The UK has an established open plan culture, and the majority of workers are in open plan environments particularly at lower levels of the organisation. However, the basic open plan environment often fails to support work activities as well as those providing a variety of enclosed environments, with job satisfaction, performance, and at-work relationships suffering as a result. Key to this problem is a lack of alternative spaces for work. Our data shows that open plan environments can be just as effective, if not more effective, as more enclosed ones, but on the condition that employees have a range of spaces in which to work more effectively and use them optimally.

Legacy workplace behaviour and lack of choice are a drag on performance. Having not only variety, but also the freedom to work wherever and whenever it's most effective, are key performance drivers for UK workers and workers across the world. Employees who rate their organisations highly on innovation measures also report having greater choice, and use a wider range of workspaces to get their work done. Working this way requires not only the right spaces, but also the right behaviours—change management can help the transition to open environments and activity-based work settings achieve greater success.

WHAT THIS MEANS

We need to take a more considered approach to the open plan. Effective workplaces must support both individual and group work, and open plan environments without access to a range of alternative settings and enclosed spaces are challenged to do both. If adopting an open strategy, the right—and separate—spaces for individual and collaborative work are key. And for some organisations, becoming more open may not be the best option. The enclosed office is not necessarily the enemy, but one size very much does not fit all.

Expand workplace variety and choice. British workers are still using their desks for most work activities and this appears to be to the detriment of performance. Give employees a greater variety of spaces, and the choice to work when and where suits their current tasks and work styles best, and their satisfaction and performance will improve.



Match space to job needs, not role. Employees who report that the spaces in their offices are assigned by job requirements, rather than hierarchy, are much more likely to also report an optimal workplace experience. Given the current challenges of workplace performance across all levels in the UK workplace, strategies that match space to need rather than seniority are an opportunity to engage and improve at all levels of the company.

WHAT'S NEXT

We continue to analyse data gathered via this survey and other, individual WPI surveys to uncover industry and client-specific insights into how best to leverage workplace design to maximise organisational performance and innovation.

Team

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As architects, designers, planners, and consultants, we partner with our clients on some 3,000 projects every year. These projects can be as small as a wine label or as large as a new urban district. With more than 5,000 professionals networked across 46 locations, we serve our clients as trusted advisors, combining localised expertise with global perspective wherever new opportunities arise. Our work reflects an enduring commitment to sustainability and the belief that design is one of the most powerful strategic tools for securing lasting competitive advantage.

Gensler's Research Program supports research investigations important to our firm, our clients, and to the ongoing learning and development of Gensler professionals. Research projects are practitioner-led with involvement across the globe. Our teams bring thought leadership to the table as we seek to solve our clients' and the world's most pressing challenges by creating high-performance solutions that embrace the business and world context in which we work, enhance the human experience, and deliver game-changing innovation.

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