

**Gensler**

# The Gensler Design + Performance Index

## The U.S. Workplace Survey





The Workplace in an Age of

# New

Contents

## Markets Workforce Responsibility

Foreword
The Evolution of Workplace Design
Research Methodology
What's Going On at the Office?
Key Findings
• Productivity
• Collaboration
• Competitiveness
Client Research Events
Diversity
Distance
Work Mode
Responsibility
Code
Credits/Contact



Foreword **The Workplace Through New Eyes.**

Ninety percent of American workers believe better workplace design and layout result in better employee performance.

From the start, workplace design has been the heart of Gensler’s practice. The firm’s success is grounded in a clear understanding that, when approached as a means to organizational performance, an office can be more than just a nice place—it can be a dynamic workplace environment with the power to enhance a company’s business goals.

Through 40 years of practice, our work has aligned with the cutting edge of management strategy—always finding unique ways to support organizational drivers that address our clients’ needs.

Today, we are witnessing the birth of a new age in business. A thriving knowledge and services sector is now at the heart of the U.S. economy, with strong demand for smart, skilled, and creative professionals. It is an age of new markets, a new workforce, and new responsibility.

**New Markets.** Globalization is connecting nations, companies, and people and creating new market opportunities. Technology has empowered work to happen everywhere, and employees are working remotely—from different cities, from airports and hotels, and from client sites. To adapt to the new demands and realities of global business, companies must develop strategies to maximize culture, collaboration, and workflow.

**New Workforce.** The forces creating new markets have also brought into daily contact a workforce of unprecedented diversity. People from different cultures, countries, races, and religions are working together. Adding to the mix is the fact that the workplace now hosts four generations of people. Organizations must offer a range of workplace options to meet the needs of different groups of workers.

**New Responsibility.** We are seeing the advent of increased social consciousness in the business world. This consciousness is acutely focused on sustainability and extends to our collective use of the Earth’s resources. Sustainable environments are no longer an option, but a mandate, both to realize energy savings and to provide a healthy workplace and a healthy planet.

Recognizing this context of new markets, a new workforce, and new responsibility, we must ask: What is the new definition of success for business, and how does workplace design play a role?

We decided the best way to answer that question was to take the pulse of the U.S. workforce to see what was important to them. In March 2006, we surveyed more than 2,000 Americans who work in offices.

What we found provides a new and deeper understanding of the role the workplace environment can play in support of more competitive companies and more engaged, collaborative, and creative people.

Most significantly, 90% of the survey respondents believe that better workplace design and layout result in better overall employee performance.

The study indicates that companies can gain enormous benefit when they think of the workplace as an integral investment in the real value of a business—its people.

Diane Hoskins, AIA  
Executive Director





# 1980s



Form follows  
process.  
Professional  
and upscale

## Process

In the 1980s, the workplace was seen as a tool to support company process. Spaces were formal in their arrangement and feel. Process flow and efficiency metrics were introduced as workplace success measures.

### Characteristic design elements

- Linear Process—workplace as organizational assembly line
- Standardization—organizations sought control through uniformity
- Hierarchy—status reflected by workspace
- Cubicles—the open vs. closed environment debate

## The Evolution of Workplace Design

The design of the workplace has always paralleled what is happening in business. When we look at past changes in the workplace, we look at what's changed with work itself.

# 1990s



Flexible design.  
Casual,  
less refined,  
impermanent,  
everything on  
wheels

## Process + Technology

The 1990s brought radical changes in workplace approach. Increased emphasis was placed on technology, with workplace environments moving beyond process and actually enhancing the ways work was conducted. Strong focus was placed on technology as a means to achieve business goals.

### Characteristic design elements

- Technology—environments focused on digital tools
- Dynamic Process—less linear and more networked
- No Hierarchy—everyone equal
- Flexibility—design that adapts to change
- Amenities—focus on attracting talent
- Hoteling—introduced to enable mobility

Moving forward, human potential must be maximized. With Gensler's U.S. Workplace Survey, we took a simple yet fundamental move in that direction: **asking workers what they think about their environment.**

# today



Transformative  
design.  
Branded,  
connected,  
diverse

## Process + Technology + People

Today, process and technology have leveled the field of business, and people alone create the strategic competitive advantage. By fully supporting them, design has the potential to enable organizations to leverage their human capital more effectively.

### Characteristic design elements

- People—talent recruitment and retention
- Performance Focused—maximize human capital
- Brand—communicating mission and values
- Interactive Space—collaboration aimed at innovation
- Mobility—distributed work settings
- Openness—emphasizing access and visibility



# Research Methodology

The survey included more than 2,000 participants at all staff levels, representing eight industries with equal distribution across the continental United States.

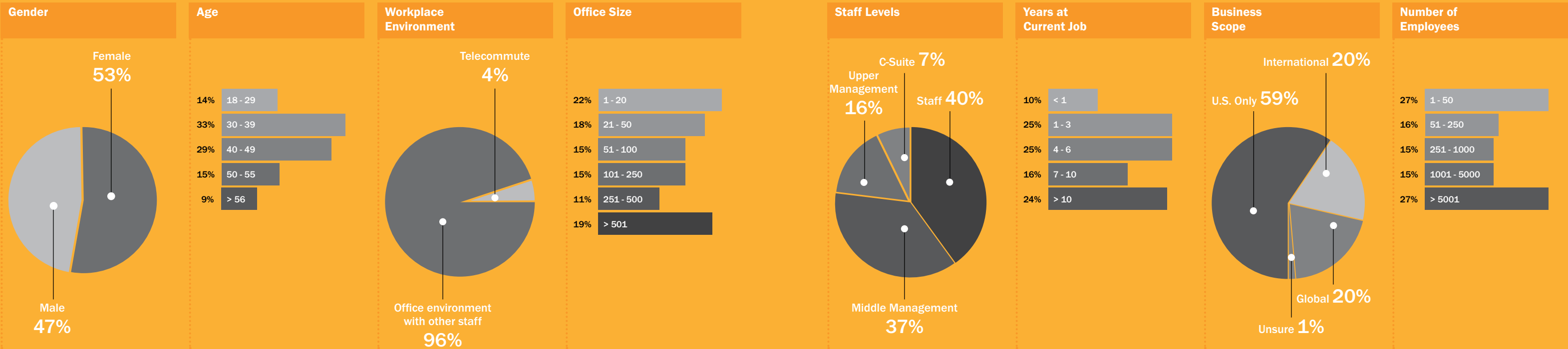
The U.S. Workplace Survey was commissioned by Gensler and performed by D/R Added Value, an independent research firm. D/R Added Value was responsible for all aspects of the survey, including questionnaire design and testing, data processing, and tabulations.

More than 8,000 workers were initially solicited, with a final qualified respondent sampling of 2,013. The margin of error based on the total sample is +/- 2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

The survey took place in March 2006. Research topics included demographics, job satisfaction, productivity, innovation, workplace design issues, and worker state of mind.

At no time was Gensler identified in the survey process, nor were Gensler clients specifically targeted.

The survey is comprehensive, covering eight industries, with equal regional representation across the continental United States.

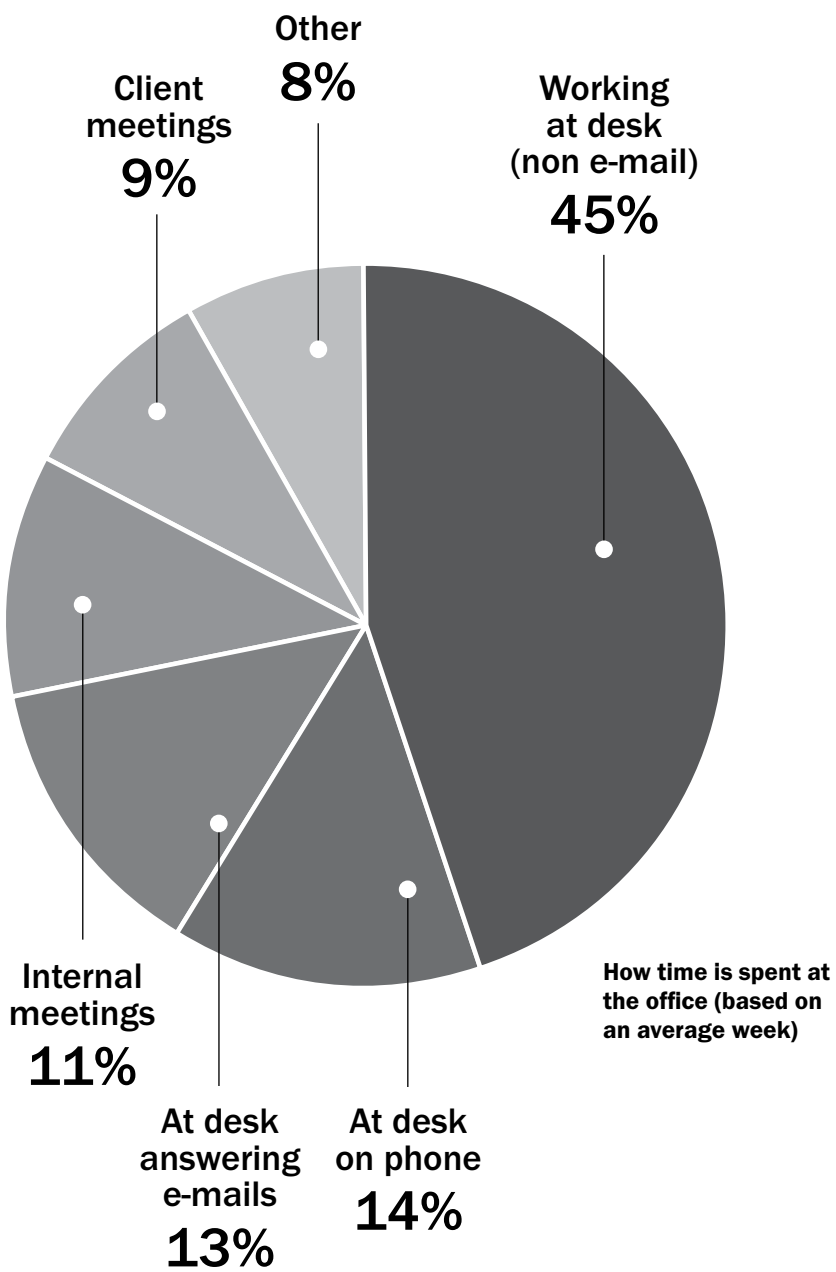






Seventy-four percent of the average work week is spent in the office.

## What's Going On at the Office?



The U.S. Workplace Survey results allow us to paint a picture of the contemporary American office worker.

The average American office worker is 42 years old and has been at her job for 6.3 years. She works in an office with 210 employees for a company with 3,711 total employees. The company's annual revenues are \$354 million.

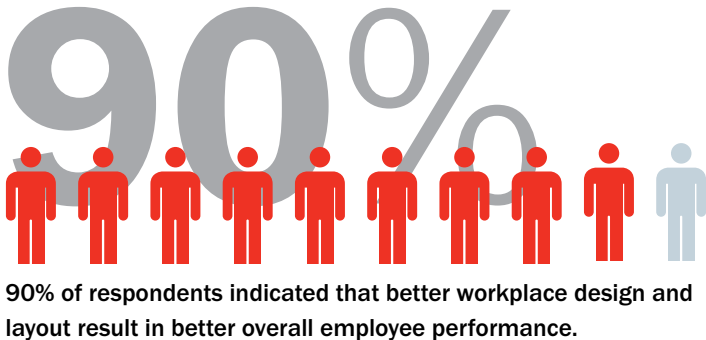
The average office worker feels that he has less time to think than he did five years ago due to increasing pressure and expectations. About 14.5 % of his social time involves work and work colleagues. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being most satisfied, he would rate his current job satisfaction as 3.6.

**More than 80% of workers felt that technology has enhanced their workplace environment. Technologies used include:**

- Desktop Computer 84%
- Mobile Phone 46%
- Laptop Computer 38%
- Wireless Access 28%
- Teleconferencing 26%
- Video Conferencing 17%
- Mobile E-mail Device (PDA) 13%

Key Findings Workplace quality makes a difference.

In overwhelming numbers, U.S. office workers say that well-designed work settings clearly contribute to individual and organizational performance.



When asked if the quality of the working environment is very important to their sense of job satisfaction, 88% of respondents agreed.

Asked where they accomplish their best work, 84% of respondents pointed to the office. Twelve percent cited working at home, 2% cited while traveling, and only 1% cited other venues.

When asked where their best ideas are developed, 49% of respondents said at their desk. Sixty-seven percent of respondents felt they were more efficient when working closely with co-workers.

The survey results indicate that businesses can directly impact worker productivity through workplace design. When asked if they would be willing to work an extra hour per day if they had a better working environment, 49% of respondents said yes.

We asked C-level/upper management to quantify how a better physical working environment could impact the amount of work their company performed. The average estimate was 22.4%. And 88% of upper management/C-level respondents said that the increased productivity would have a positive impact on their company's bottom line.

But the survey also indicates there is a strong disconnect between the value placed on the workplace environment and perceptions of what drove their current workplace design: just 1/3 of respondents believe that creating a productive workplace is a priority at their company.

Only half of the U.S. workforce feel that their environment empowers them to innovate (see graph at right). American businesses may be missing an important opportunity to increase innovation.

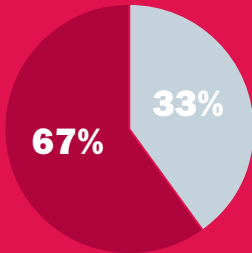
As competition for talent continues to increase and as employers are forced to explore more and more ways to attract and retain employees, the workplace can be a key tool not only to keep employees, but also to keep them productive and engaged.

# productivity



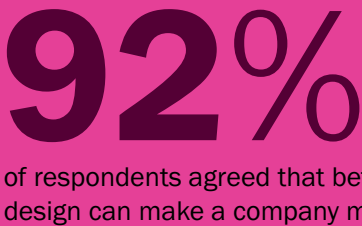
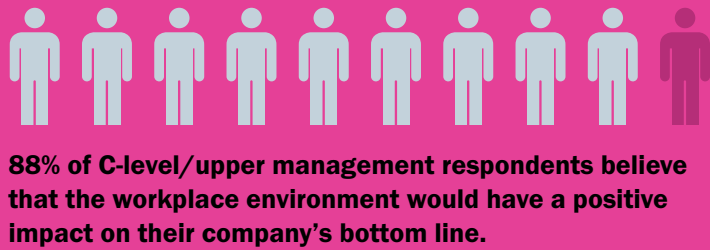
**Potential for increased performance.** Respondents said they could increase the amount of work they perform now by an average of 21% if they had a better-designed working environment.

# collaboration



**Working better together.** 67% of respondents felt they were more efficient when working closely with co-workers.

# competitiveness



of respondents agreed that better workplace design can make a company more competitive.





# Client Research Events

Outside factors have fundamentally changed the ways in which we work.

At more than 15 events across the United States, Gensler gathered a diverse spectrum of clients and guests to present and discuss the U.S. Workplace Survey findings.

Overwhelmingly, participants focused on the potential their workplace environment offered them to impact **productivity**, **collaboration**, and **competitiveness**. There was genuine enthusiasm about the finding that the workplace environment is one of the strongest tools to support their human capital.

Given this consensus, discussions turned to the outside factors that have changed the ways in which we work: globalization has opened up new markets and has brought differing cultures into close contact, while technology and mobility have led to changed work processes and a more distributed workforce. In this new age of business, how can workplace environments support these dynamically changing situations?

## The New Drivers

Gensler’s Workplace Task Force held a summit to merge the discoveries of our survey results and the findings from the client research events.

Seen through the lens of our own project experiences and observations, consistent themes started to emerge regarding how the workplace relates to the challenges and opportunities facing business today. Analyzing these themes, we identified the new drivers of workplace design—**diversity**, **distance**, **work mode**, and **responsibility**—which in turn reflect an organization’s culture, values, and brand... its unique **code**.

This new framework—focused on people and the ways they work together and individually—is the key to creating the right workplace environment to meet the unique needs of each organization.

DIVERSITY  
DISTANCE  
WORK MODE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
CODE

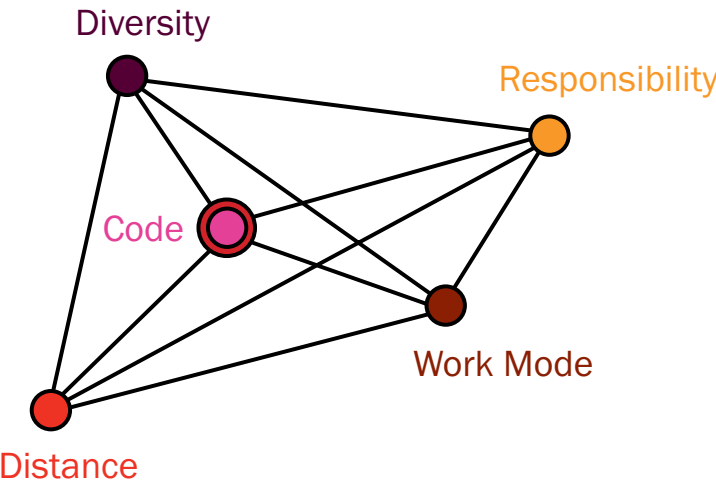
### Event Attendees

AOS  
Acadian Asset Management Inc.  
AIM Investments  
Akzo Nobel  
American Gas Association  
Andrews Kurth LLP  
Apache Corporation  
AT&T  
Atlantic Southeast Airlines  
Atmos Energy Corporation  
Baker Botts LLP  
BellSouth  
Beveridge & Diamond  
The Boston Consulting Group  
BP America  
Bracewell & Giuliani LLP  
Brewster Consulting Group LLC  
CEB—Corporate Executive Board  
Center on Halsted  
CenterPoint Energy  
Chevron  
Clifford Chance LLP  
The Coca-Cola Company  
Colliers International

ConocoPhillips  
Corporate Design Foundation  
CRESA Partners  
Crescent Real Estate Equities Co.  
D/R Added Value  
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu  
Dickstein Shapiro LLP  
Discovery Communications  
EDS Real Estate  
El Paso Corporation  
Ernst & Young  
Fidelity Investments/FMR Company  
Frito-Lay  
Gallier and Wittenberg  
Genentech  
Halliburton Real Estate Services  
Hewlett-Packard  
Hill | Holliday  
IBM  
Jackson Walker LLP  
Jones Lang LaSalle  
JPMorgan Chase  
Kimberly-Clark  
KPMG LLP

Lehman Brothers  
Lerner Enterprises  
Level 2 Solutions  
Longs Drug Stores Corporation  
Lutron Electronics, Inc.  
Mary Kay  
The McGraw-Hill Companies  
McKesson Corporation  
Mullen Advertising  
Novartis  
Novell, Inc.  
Ogilvy Public Relations  
O’Melveny and Myers  
Ove Arup & Partners  
PG&E  
Plains All American Pipeline, LP  
Plains Exploration & Production  
Preotle, Lane & Associates Ltd.  
PROS Revenue Management  
Raytheon  
Reliant Resources  
Ropes & Gray LLP  
Rosewood Companies  
Rubin Postaer and Associates

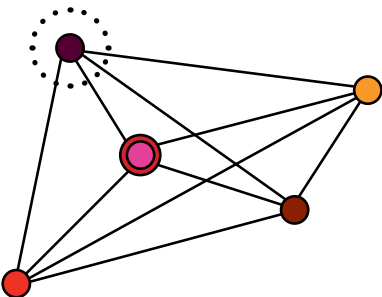
Safeway  
Sage Software  
Schlumberger  
Shell Real Estate Services  
Skadden, Arps  
Southern Union Company  
Sovereign Bank  
Sprint  
SunTrust Banks Inc.  
Tatum Partners, LLC  
Toyota Motor Corporation  
Trammell Crow Company  
TransNational Group  
Transwestern Commercial Services  
United Airlines  
Vinson & Elkins LLP  
Vodafone Americas, Inc.  
Walter P. Moore & Associates, Inc.  
Western Asset Management  
Williams & Connolly  
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP  
WPP  
YWCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles







# Diversity Create community.



At one time, diversity was simply a factor of race or gender; it is a far more complex and nuanced situation today. Within the contemporary U.S. workplace are women and men spanning four generations and representing ethnicities and cultures from around the globe.

Compounding the situation is the speed at which companies leverage technology, physically or virtually bringing into contact previously distributed groups.

The workforce also has a wide spectrum of talents and skills, technological literacy and comfort levels, physical capabilities, languages and communication styles, lifestyles, and learning preferences.

**As technology shrinks distance, differences persist and are even amplified.**

The new character of diversity offers an opportunity with revolutionary potential. Diverse viewpoints and approaches can take creativity to new heights. A workplace that supports the unique skills and perspectives of a multigenerational, multi-cultural workforce can help a business to reach its performance goals more effectively than ever.

Yet there is a paradox facing workplace design moving forward: we are designing for populations, not individuals, but individuals are the ones who do the work. How do companies achieve the economies of workplace standards and systems and still support a diverse workforce and its attendant workstyle preferences?

By managing diversity as an asset and social equality as a tool for commercial growth, the workplace environment can create a sense of belonging and shared culture that appeals to workers of different ages and backgrounds.

**People used to work for companies, but now they expect companies to work for them—to provide dynamic office settings that help them to be more productive and creative.**

DIVERSITY FACTORS

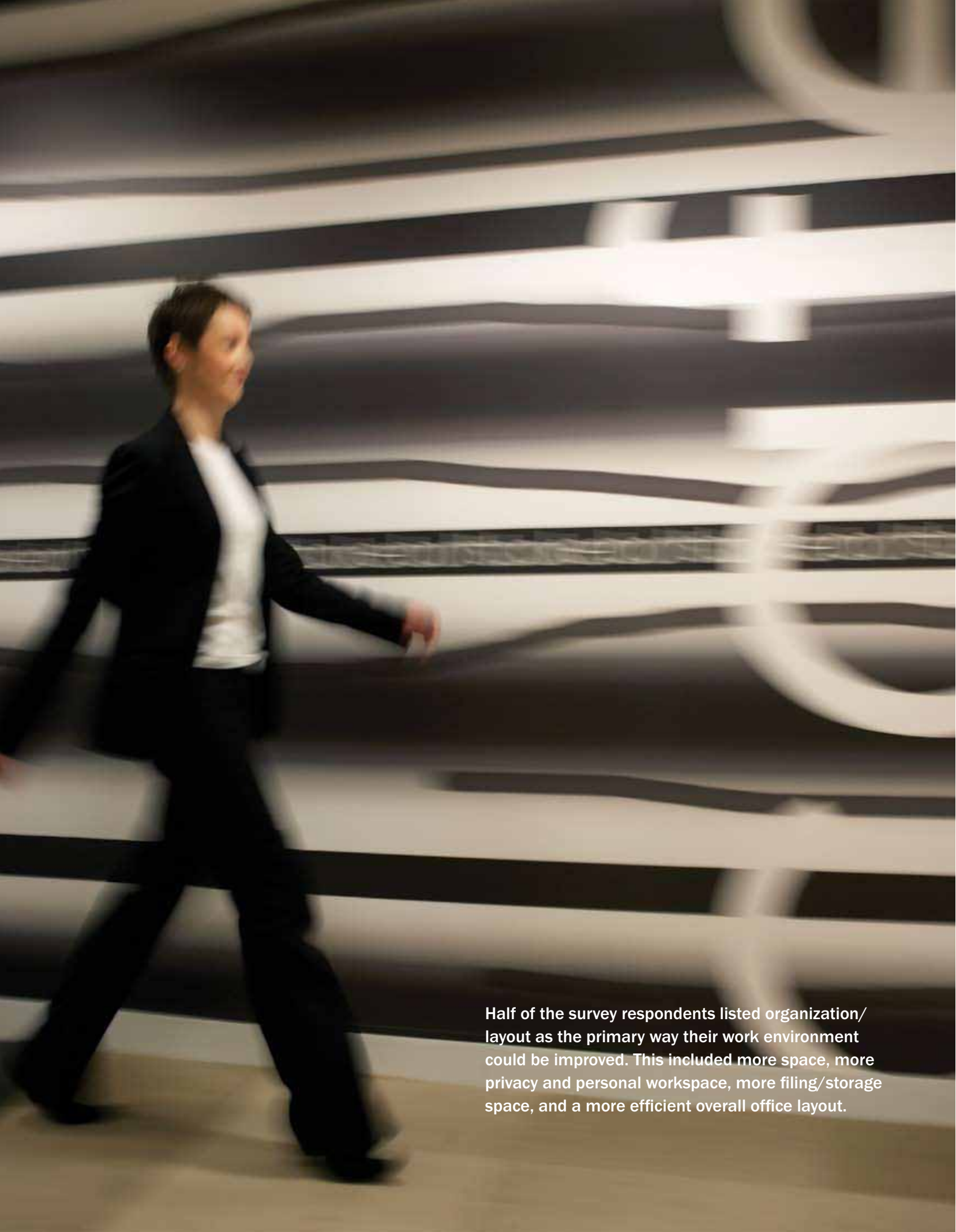
Generational  
Gender  
Regional Culture  
Race  
Lifestyle  
Language  
Work Style/Hours  
Skills  
Learning Mode  
Communication Style

DESIGN RESPONSES

Brand-rich Environment  
Support Collaboration  
Support Culture  
Community Spaces  
Wide Corridors  
Internal Stairs  
Transparency  
Unplanned Interaction

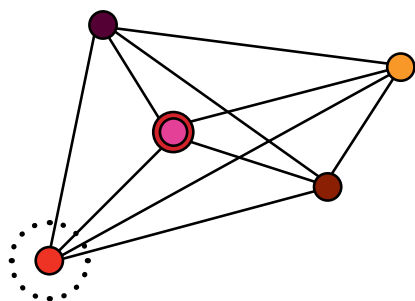






Half of the survey respondents listed organization/layout as the primary way their work environment could be improved. This included more space, more privacy and personal workspace, more filing/storage space, and a more efficient overall office layout.

# Distance Connect people.



The typical office worker used to live within a few miles of the office. Cities grew, suburbs were born, and commutes lengthened. Now companies are spread out across the country and around the world. They tap into a workforce that is mobile and remote. Along with physical distance, a diverse workforce brings with it cultural, behavioral, and emotional distances.

**As the workplace grows in complexity, it has never been more important to bridge the distance, to empower people to work together and to support each other.**

The competition for employees’ hearts and minds is intense. Companies are looking for a virtuous cycle: people’s sense of belonging helps retention, retention aids mentoring, mentoring builds expertise across the company, and that expertise fuels innovation. With a dispersed workforce, the office can become the place where this happens.

As work spreads out, organizations that are fluid and flexible—functioning more as networks than hierarchies—have a competitive advantage. People on teams need “face time” at certain points, but virtual interaction is the rule today. Given that, the office is increasingly a meeting point that supports collaboration of all types. (New-generation video conferencing rooms, such as HP’s Halo concept, reinforce collaboration.)

When real and virtual blend like this, it often falls on the workplace to make work progress visible. **In a world of distributed work settings, people crave an effective workplace to come together to get their work done and achieve a sense of community.**

## DISTANCE FACTORS

- Physical
- Virtual
- Generational
- Cultural
- Behavioral
- Emotional
- Time

## DESIGN RESPONSES

- Distributed Work Settings
- Flexible Workplaces
- Enhanced Amenity Spaces
- Team Rooms
- Hoteling
- Video Conferencing
- Open Vistas

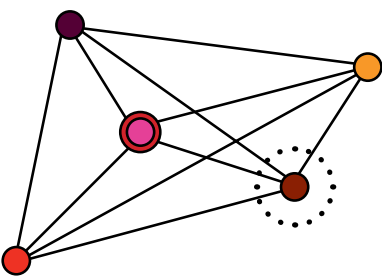






There is a striking discrepancy between the high valuation of workplace design and workers' perceptions of how it is valued by their own companies. Close to half of office workers—46 percent—feel that their employers do not see providing a high-performance workplace as a priority, and two-thirds see minimizing costs or maintaining the status quo as the main goal behind the design of their own office.

# Work Mode Foster collaboration.



Today, work is delivered through a multitude of approaches. By work mode, we refer to the ways and means that people engage and perform their work. Work mode includes ownership, interaction, concentration, and creation. It involves process, technology, environment, and infrastructure. Some work modes are individual and some are collaborative, but most are a combination of the two.

**The new workplace must accommodate a wider variety of work modes than ever.**

As with diversity and distance, work mode is an element of the workplace that can be understood and leveraged. Through a careful analysis of the various work modes utilized—by individuals, by teams, by units, by companies, and by regions—a company's business goals can be facilitated and enhanced.

Workers need a variety of different settings to suit different needs at different times, depending on their personal style as well as the nature of their tasks. Work environments should provide places for individuals to think and work quietly, places for groups to gather and exchange ideas, places for people to meet—which may be formal, informal, scheduled, impromptu, or face-to-face—and places for teams to set up long-term projects. People also need places for just dropping in.

Supporting work modes requires a balanced allocation of owned and shared settings, all designed to respond quickly to people's changing needs.

Community and collaboration spaces are needed, but so are retreats where people can unplug, do focused work, and have private conversations. Smaller meeting spaces are also desirable, as most face-to-face collaboration involves only two or three people.

**When the right work mode balance is reached, workers thrive, interacting with each other and their environment in ways that enhance the quantity and quality of the work they deliver.**

## WORK MODE FACTORS

- Individual
- Collaborative
- In-office
- Remote
- Technological/Virtual

## DESIGN RESPONSES

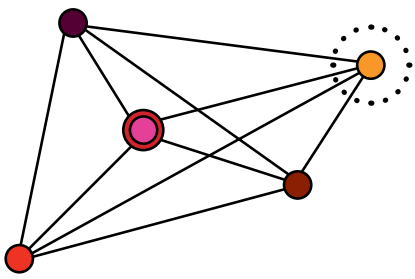
- Variety of Settings
- Team Spaces
- Agile Workstations
- Retreats
- Flexible Meeting Rooms
- Community Space
- Amenities
- Efficient Adjacencies
- Appropriate Size Allocations







# Responsibility Do the right thing.



Beyond just making a profit, a business must act ethically, support its employees, and respect the environment to be viable in this new era. Often referred to as the “triple bottom line,” these expectations are the result of increased scrutiny of business and heightened levels of awareness about the depleting of natural resources and the enormous impact we have on the environment.

**There is a growing awareness of the role businesses should play in sustaining the planet we share. Businesses must act responsibly.**

When fully embraced, responsibility can reap enormous rewards. A company that makes its values evident in the workplace gains increased commitment and enthusiasm from its employees. This common ground can unite a company. In an age of distributed work settings, this increased trust factor is critical for performance success.

Responsibility is a mandate—from clients, customers, and employees. But it’s an investment with enormous returns.

The case for sustainability becomes progressively more important. Buildings significantly impact land, air, and water pollution and deterioration. More than half of all energy use is attributable to buildings. Sustainable design provides the opportunity to make significant savings in energy consumption and its attendant costs.

Beyond stewardship, Gensler’s experience and research indicates that healthy working environments can aid in recruitment and retention, reduce absenteeism, lower churn costs, increase productivity, and improve employee morale.

**Through simple, cost-effective measures, sustainable design can support human performance and workplace flexibility. Responsibility has never been more important or more appealing.**

RESPONSIBILITY FACTORS

Environment

Health

Values

Ethics

Mission

DESIGN RESPONSES

Brand-centric

Flexible Scheduling/Telework

Recycled Materials

Flexible Systems

Daylighting

Task-Specific Lighting

Ergonomic Furniture

Fresh Air

Personal Thermal Comfort

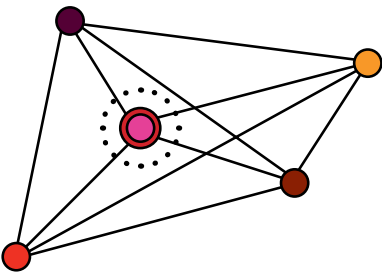






Asked to prioritize the factors that add up to workplace quality, U.S. office workers put working conditions that are healthy, safe, and secure at the top—the choice of nearly half of survey respondents.

## Code Leverage uniqueness.



A company is more than just a list of employees, titles, processes, and outputs. A company has a unique nature and personality...a cultural code.

That code is as unique and specific as the DNA of a human being. No two businesses have the same employees, perform in the same way, or face the exact same challenges.

A thorough analysis of a company's cultural code can reveal its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and dead-ends, patterns, and possibilities—what's needed, what's just fine, and what has to be improved.

When looked at through the lens of a company's unique code, deeper understanding can be reached on the unique challenges it faces in terms of the four drivers of diversity, distance, work mode, and responsibility.

### Innovative Design is Unique Design

Innovative design is not a checklist of design elements. It's not an open workplan, bright colors, bean bag chairs, hoteling stations, or high-tech conference rooms. Innovative design is more than a one-liner, more than a sleek space or a new layout. In fact, what is innovative for one company may be disruptive for another.

The key to unlocking innovation is analyzing a company's cultural code, capturing that knowledge, and translating it into authentic, user-centered, and client-focused design solutions.

Innovative environments function well. They endure. They empower. They inspire. They leverage people to be creative and innovative in their work. They release the full measure of the potential of human beings.

By understanding a company's unique code, we can arrive at design solutions that fully leverage the workplace as a transformative tool to support client goals.

When designed well, the workplace environment can be a powerful vehicle to maximize human capital.





**Credits**

Diane Hoskins  
Erik Lucken  
Evelyn Fujimoto  
Gervais Tompkin  
James Williamson  
Jane Brown  
John Parman  
Kate Kirkpatrick  
Thomas Vecchione

**Photography**

Christopher Barrett: page 5, top left  
Elizabeth Felicella: cover  
Richard Greenhouse: page 2; page 5, bottom left  
Hufton & Crow: page 5, bottom right; page 18  
Michelle Litvin: page 10; page 19; page 21  
Chas McGrath: page 6, middle  
Nick Merrick/Hedrich Blessing: page 6, top  
Atsushi Nakamichi/Nacasa & Partners: page 5, top right;  
page 24  
Brian Pobuda/Gensler: page 14  
Timothy Soar: page 17  
Sherman Takata/Gensler: page 20; pages 22-23; page 26  
Peter Vanderwarker: page 16  
Paul Warchol: page 9  
Toshi Yoshimi: page 6, bottom

**About Gensler**

Gensler is a leading international architecture, interior design, planning, and strategic consulting firm. For over 40 years, Gensler has been a pioneer in creating great places that enhance the quality of work and life. Gensler employs over 2,400 people (564 LEED®- accredited) with offices in 30 cities.

[www.gensler.com](http://www.gensler.com)

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