

Research reveals hybrid workers want privacy and home away from home

Open plan offices have never offered much by way of privacy; phones ringing from every end of the floor and the constant din of conversation was disruptive and distracting. Quiet spaces allowing workers to concentrate were in high demand and short supply.



Image source: dotshock – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

"Fast forward to 2022, and the problem has only worsened," said Linda Trim, director at Giant Leap, one of South Africa's largest workplace design consultancies.

"The way people work has significantly changed as video meetings have become a norm and people working in the office have flooded to enclosed spaces so they can avoid disturbing others and have the acoustic and visual privacy to stay focused."

According to the most recent survey by Steelcase, who are represented in South Africa by Giant Leap, when asked what's become more important in the office now - compared to pre-pandemic - four of the top five were related to privacy and places to do individual work:

- 64% – Spaces for hybrid collaboration
- 62% – Single-person enclaves for hybrid meetings
- 61% – Privacy
- 58% – Workstations with full or partial enclosure
- 57% – Reservable workspaces

The research was conducted in 11 countries with 4,986 office workers.

“With so much conversation about the office of the future becoming a destination for collaboration and social interactions, organisations may find this new research surprising,” said Trim.



Top 5 requirements of a hybrid work culture

18 Feb 2022



“Yet it reveals what employees really want – an office that helps them easily do both collaborative and individual work, where they feel a greater sense of belonging and control over their work experience.”

Dedicated desk space

In fact, most people want their own, dedicated desk so much they are willing to trade remote work days to get it.

“When asked which they would prefer, 55% would work from home two or less days per week if they had an assigned desk in the office, while only 45% prefer to work from home three or more days a week and not have an assigned desk.

“The desire for a dedicated workspace reflects people’s need to feel like they have a home in the office, where they feel like they belong and have the privacy they need to do their work,” Trim noted.

Unable to find the privacy they’re seeking at work, it should not be surprising that 45% of people prefer working from home.

Their work-from-home experience during the pandemic has shown them the value of having a place to call their own – 70% of people globally have either an office or a dedicated zone within their home where they have more control over their environment.



Hybrid workplaces: there is no one-size-fits-all approach

7 Jun 2022



While spaces in the office for hybrid collaboration ranked first on the list of things people feel are more important than before the pandemic, it’s clear that spaces where people can effectively work alone, without distractions, are critically important for people to feel their office is a great place to work.

“Yet, many organisations are considering designing their offices primarily for collaboration and social connection and not realising people’s increased need for privacy.

“In addition, organisations are shifting to more unassigned spaces as they adjust to hybrid work and new office occupancy patterns. At large organisations (10,000+ employees), 15% of employees have lost assigned desks, compared to pre-pandemic; overall, regardless of the size of the organisation, there has been a 10% decrease in employees with assigned desks.

The unintended result is people feel a sense of homelessness if they come to the office and can't find a place to work alone.

“But the data is clear: People want and need a place to call home where they can control and adapt their environment, “
Trim concluded.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>