

Workplace research: flexibility and personalised experience key as 'most companies' puzzle over office's future

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New research released by [IWFM](#) and MillerKnoll has revealed that most companies remain uncertain about what their post-pandemic workplaces will look like as workers continue to crave the flexibility they experienced as a result of COVID-19 social distancing measures.

For the research, titled '[The future of office design](#)', IWFM and MillerKnoll invited leading workplace and facilities management experts from Credit-Suisse, Cushman and Wakefield, Ford, Gensler, Nationwide, and Red Hat to share insights on where companies currently stand on the future of the office and how the future workplace will be designed.

For most employers, the discovery process for finding new ways of working continues with experimentation being the current preferred approach. However, experts agree that open communication between employers and employees about what's right for each individual and how they function best is critical.

'We have found that people are more willing to try something, even if they're hesitant about it, as long as it's for a short period of time and they can give feedback and feel their views have been heard so that the next idea can be adjusted accordingly,' said Elaine Asal, senior associate at Gensler, at the event. Asal continued: 'This kind of follow through builds trust with the employees and engenders the ability to continue to experiment.'

'People are really voting with their feet...'

The risk to companies that fail to involve their people in workplace decisions and the rewards of embracing a collaborative process were set out by Cushman and Wakefield's IFM Workplace Experience Director, Zoe Humphries: 'Choice is really important to people, and the genie is now out of the bottle on that one. People

are really voting with their feet if they're not getting that choice. What they really like is unfettered flexibility.'

Humphries continued: 'By creating an amazing employee experience, you could improve everyone's efficiency.'

Peter Brogan, Head of Research and Insight at IWFM, commented: 'The workplace and facilities management profession has a crucial role to play in recommending, designing and enabling new ways of working that meet individual and organisational needs. Each organisation has its own circumstances and requirements, but as this research shows, experts agree that a flexible, personalised approach will be the best solution for most.'

'A change in mindset can open up new opportunities...'

Joseph White, Director of Design Strategy at MillerKnoll, shared guidance for implementation: 'One of the things we heard first-hand is that small signals can send big messages - for better or worse - and that a change in mindset can open up new opportunities. Mutual trust and transparency in communication are critical for balancing

individual needs with organisational objectives. By actively maintaining that balance, the outcomes for all will be improved as we design a better tomorrow.'

IWFM and MillerKnoll's '[The future of office design](#)' report, available now, dives into the main considerations for developing a future-facing workplace strategy, including office design, technology, workplace policies, inclusivity and wellbeing, and the legal landscape. The key takeaways offer important insights into how businesses are developing and experimenting with new ways of working, while a helpful guidance checklist outlines the points to consider when redesigning the workplace and rethinking your practices.

Download the full report by clicking [here](#).