

FUTURE WORKSPACE —A PLACE FOR KNOWLEDGE AND CO-CREATION

REPORT BY
EPICENTER HELSINKI
2022



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This report is produced by Epicenter Helsinki and conducted by Reflect based in Stockholm. More than 1000 office workers participated in the web panel questionnaire during August 2022. The target group was office workers aged 30–60 working in the private sector located in the metropolitan area of Helsinki. The respondents have worked in smaller or bigger offices for several years or decades. The respondents in the target group were randomly selected.

The age groups of the respondents were as follows:

- > 30–39 years – 32%
- > 40–49 years – 34%
- > 50–60 years – 34%

By gender:

51% men, 48% women, and 1% other.

The report also includes comments from four CEOs and directors on workspace strategies and how they deal with these issues within their organizations. The qualitative study has been done in the form of in-depth interviews in digital meetings.

The following companies have provided comments on how they work strategically with the workplace:

DNA. A Finnish telecommunications group that provides voice, data and TV services for customers and consumers. DNA employs approximately 1,600 people all over Finland.

Huuuge Games. International gaming developer and publisher focused on the mobile gaming market. Huuuge has close to 600 employees working internationally.

Leadfeeder. A Helsinki-based startup with a B2B data platform that identifies website visitors and tracks onsite activity. Leadfeeder has over 100 employees across 20 countries.

State Security Networks. The state-owned company provides organizations responsible for the security and functionality of the society with mission critical services, situational awareness services and services securing critical infrastructure. State Security Networks employ over 300 people in Finland.

ABOUT EPICENTER

Epicenter is the first innovation house in the Nordics. It is a creative meeting arena for rapidly growing companies and large enterprises wanting to take cooperation, business development and growth to the next level. Epicenter provides its members with everything from smart offices to innovation labs, events and training programs. Epicenter has over 6000 members in Stockholm, Oslo, and Helsinki.

ABOUT REFLECT

Reflect is one of the leading companies offering enterprises professional consulting services, research services and market insights. Reflect’s customers include many innovative and leading enterprises in the Nordic countries. Reflect is based in Stockholm, Sweden.

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THE ROLE OF THE WORKSPACE IS CHANGING

»We are always looking for ways to improve our space and make it more efficient so that our members and we can be more productive and get more done.«

KRISTIAN NIEMINEN

THE ROLE OF THE WORKSPACE IS CHANGING

At Epicenter, we are all about bringing people together to share society-changing thoughts, co-create, and make ideas become reality. Epicenter is a creative and modern meeting arena where companies of all sizes can collaborate, grow, and build cutting-edge solutions together.

It's quite striking how the workspace has evolved since Epicenter was founded back in 2015. Today's modern and flexible offices are more than just rooms and buildings. They are creative spaces where companies and individuals can meet to share knowledge, co-create, and innovate, face-to-face and digitally.

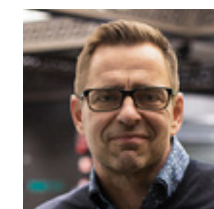
Rapidly growing companies and enterprises need everything from smart and flexible offices to innovation labs, events, and training programs. That is what we offer our 6000 members in Stockholm, Oslo, and Helsinki. We are always looking for ways to improve our space and make it more efficient, so that we and our members can be more productive and get more done.

With this report, we wanted to improve our understanding of what employees and companies think about the physical workspace and what role it plays in their motivation, productivity, and well-being. What strategic challenges are company leaders of today facing when it comes to the workspace's role in business growth? How does the workspace fit into the bigger conversation of social interaction, innovation and talent acquisition? And what should the modern workspace look like? We also wanted to take a closer look at how companies today are working

strategically with the workspace to fit the needs of their teams and fuel their future growth.

This report is produced by Epicenter Helsinki in cooperation with Reflect. The survey includes insights of more than 1000 employees working in offices in and near the City of Helsinki. We also had a longer discussion with a few exceptional decision makers that are constantly facing these questions. Many thanks to SVP Human Resources Marko Rissanen at **DNA**, CEO Timo Lehtimäki at **State Security Networks**, CEO Pekka Koskinen at **Leadfeeder**, and Studio Operations Manager Anne Tulonen-Ruikka at **Huuuge Games**. They shared their views and findings with us on how to empower the workforce with modern workspace solutions to meet the demands of today and tomorrow.

I hope you will enjoy this report,



KRISTIAN NIEMINEN
COUNTRY MANAGER
EPICENTER HELSINKI

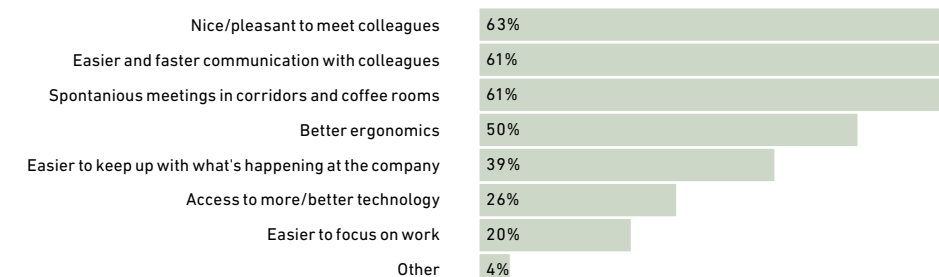
MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THE HYBRID WAY



MARKO RISSANEN
SVP HUMAN RESOURCES
DNA

»For some of us the office is the best place to work, and for some of us working at home suits best. We strongly believe in this model, and we have seen that it motivates and encourages people«

MAIN ADVANTAGES OF BEING AT THE OFFICE?



It is clear that flexibility at work has become indispensable for office workers in Finland. The vast majority of employees are used to working from home and balancing their work-life with flexible ways of working.

Flexible working benefits both employees and companies, and it seems to have settled its role as a hygiene factor rather than an extra benefit. In the case of employees, working from home can be a way to avoid distractions and live a more balanced life. For companies, it's a great way to increase productivity while also increasing efficiency. The hybrid way does not only mean flexibility in choosing the place to work, but also being able to scale and adjust the workspace for the flexible flow of people.

From the survey, 78% of office workers say it's paramount that they have the option to work from home. 17% of the workers always or almost always work from home, and nearly half, 48%, work from home at least three days a week, while only 15% state that they never do.

Those who have worked at an office for many years work more from home than others, and among those who work at large offices with more than 250 people, 68% work mostly from home. Managerial level seems to have an effect, as managers spend more time at the workspace compared to non-managers.

All the company interviewees agree that working remotely can be very efficient, and the freedom to choose where to work is here to stay. When it comes to working in an international environment, it is a must.

»We wanted to build a global business and needed a model for hiring people worldwide. Offering the possibility for remote work today has no competitive advantage anymore. Returning to the old way of working and meeting clients mostly in person seems unlikely. I'm confident that working from home will continue strong« says Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.

DNA started their hybrid journey over a decade ago, and it has resulted to be a beneficial concept.

DNA believes in the freedom of choice, and their employees can choose where and how they want to work.

»For some of us the office is the best place to work, and for some of us working at home suits best. We strongly believe in this model, and we have seen that it motivates and encourages people« describes Marko Rissanen, SVP Human Resources, DNA.

CEO of State Security Networks, Timo Lehtimäki believes that the flexibility will extend, and that in the future there will also be more solutions for working on high security cases remotely. However, those solutions are not quite there just yet.

»In that regard, we are still in a rather traditional world« sums Timo Lehtimäki, CEO, State Security Networks.

→

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MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THE HYBRID WAY

→ From the employer's perspective, increased remote work might reduce the need for a large workspace. This can mean substantial savings in maintenance costs and rent, as it takes less time and effort to maintain a smaller office.

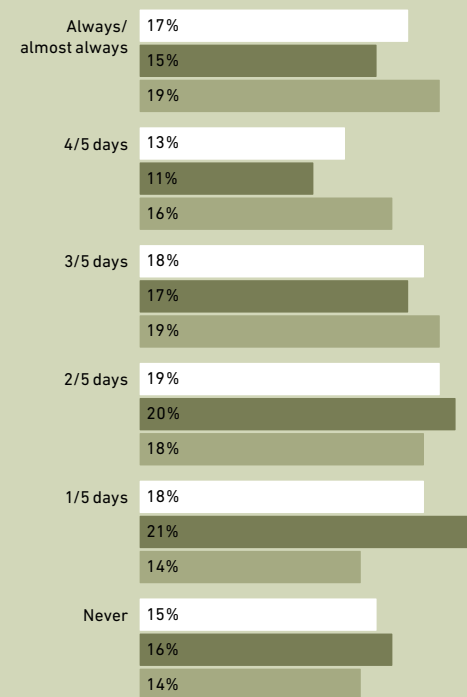
»We used to have a 400 square meter office. We were used to working in an online setting, as we have an international team and we have never been tied to one place. We monitored the utilization rate of our offices globally, and decided that we needed to scale down because office usage had decreased. We don't want to pay for empty square meters, and moving to a full-service office has been really easy for us« says Anne Tulonen-Ruikka, Studio operations Manager, Huuuge Games describes.

Flexibility means that the workspace needs to be adaptable for a floating stream of people. Companies should also consider what new opportunities the flexibility brings to the table. Pekka Koskinen from Leadfeeder predicts that international workspace solutions will grow in popularity.

»Now that we are used to working remotely, and the world is freeing up and travel is increasing, there will be more need to host individual people in, for example, another city. So there will probably be more demand for such office solutions, where good working and meeting conditions are guaranteed« says Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder. ●

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU WORK FROM HOME?

ALL
MEN
WOMEN



MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THE HYBRID WAY



WORKSPACE IS THE HOME OF COMPANY CULTURE AND BRAND



MARKO RISSANEN
SVP HUMAN RESOURCES
DNA

»The work life is more virtual than ever, but we still need offices and places to meet in person because we are social creatures. If there are too many meetings and no time for thinking and being together, it also tends to lead people to the virtual world«



ANNE TOLONEN-RUIKKA
STUDIO OPERATIONS MANAGER
HUUUGE GAMES

»At the office there is much more ad-hoc discussion, ideation, more experiences and feedback are shared«

There is no need to hide the advantages of the hybrid way of working. However, the story only begins here. As a company you want to create a workspace that engages employees and gets them excited about being there. But why is having a great workspace so important? Our research shows clearly that the physical workspace is an influential factor for employees and companies. The value manifests in increased ideation, stronger company culture and solidified brand.

A CATALYST FOR INTERACTION AND INNOVATION

Both employees and employers agree that the prime advantage of being present at the office is meeting colleagues in person—spontaneously or planned, work-related or not. The spontaneous social and cultural impact that comes with live meetings is yet unbeatable by virtual tools. Open workspaces also encourage collaboration between employees who might otherwise never interact with each other. This helps promote collaboration among colleagues, as well as open communication channels between leadership and staff members at all levels within an organization.

The majority, 76%, agree that the office helps to build and strengthen the corporate culture. Same amount, 76% of the respondents feel that seeing colleagues and team members in person is important for unity. 30% also think that it is easier to live the company's values at the office.

The workspace offers effortless and faster communication between colleagues, spontaneous meetings in the corridors and coffee rooms, and an easier chance to keep up with what is happening in the company at a larger scale. Instead of working in the cubicle, people go to the office for workshops, events, training, and bigger gatherings.

At the State Security Networks working at home is more common than working at the office, but live interactions are highly valued. State Security Networks Group's CEO Timo Lehtimäki underlines the importance of reaction speed and idea-sharing at the workplace.

»Reacting is faster and asking opinions is much easier at the office, where we can see reactions and micro-appearances without virtual barriers. Sharing ideas is, in my opinion, much more efficient at the office. Digital solutions are still too primitive for teams trying to solve demanding problems. It is also a totally different feeling to talk with people at the coffee machine compared to virtual tools« underlines Timo Lehtimäki, CEO, State Security Networks.

It seems that given a full opportunity to decide where to work, most people tend to be drawn to work in a social setting. Before the covid-pandemic DNA's employees worked outside the office on average 1.8 days a week, with the full flexibility to choose where to work. The value of working together under the same roof has always been clear to the company.

→

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→ *»Most of us want to be at the office and work together. The work life is more virtual than ever, but we still need offices and places to meet in person because we are social creatures. Everybody at DNA is responsible for building a good team spirit«* comments Marko Rissanen, SVP Human Resources, DNA.

He believes that overly busy schedules drive people to go online, and it is the leader's job to make, and allow, time for ad-hoc and unplanned interactions.

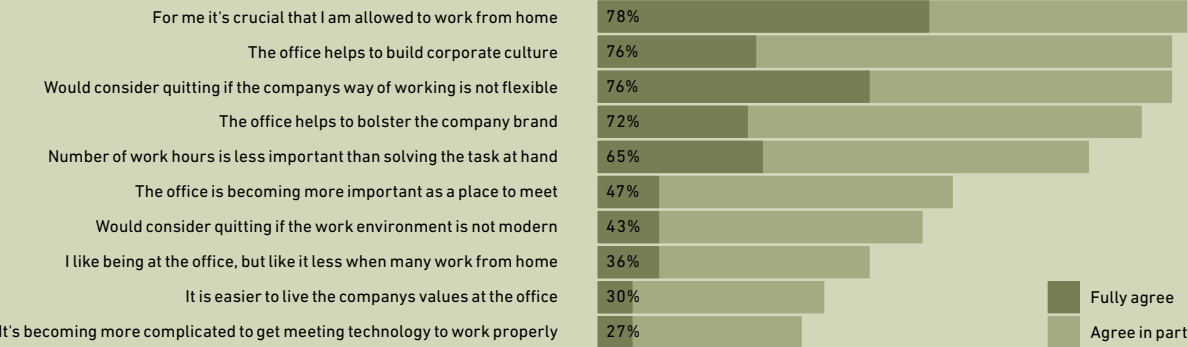
»If there are too many meetings and no time for thinking and being together, it also tends to lead

people to the virtual world. That's why we tried half a day of meeting-free Thursdays, and noticed that there were more people in the office immediately when they were given the time for it« says Marko Rissanen, SVP Human Resources, DNA.

Huuuge games also recognize the value of in-person meetings in terms of work progress.

»At the office there is much more ad-hoc discussion, ideation, more experiences and feedback are shared. Especially when prototyping is done, it would be important for people to be present« says Anne Tulonen-Ruikka, Studio Operations Manager, Huuuge Games.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS OFFICE WORK



ATTITUDES TOWARDS MY OWN OFFICE



THE BACKBONE FOR RECRUITING
AND RETAINING TALENT

People who feel like they're part of their company's physical workspace are more likely to feel like they're part of the overall company—and that means increased loyalty and retention rates. Companies and employees recognize and acknowledge a workspace's value to an organization's culture and brand, and consider that an attractive workspace will attract talent and enhance the employee experience.

81% of employees would consider turning down a job offer if the workspace did not meet their expectations. The majority of respondents, a total of 62%, say that a modern office is significant when choosing who to work for.

A company's workspace plays a vital role in defining its culture and brand. It thus plays a significant role in the total evaluation of a company—even before an employment contract is signed. 74% also state that a good office helps when recruiting.

Pekka Koskinen from Leadfeeder describes how the competitive situation in recruitment has changed enormously in recent years.

»The need for developers is constantly high. Offering remote work is no longer an advantage, but an assumption. Before it felt like you had to go to the office. Nowadays, it's all about the office offering you something more: meeting colleagues, having delicious coffee, and so on. Working conditions must be at least as good as they are at home« says Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.

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ANNE TOLONEN-RUIKKA
STUDIO OPERATIONS
MANAGER
HUUUGE GAMES

»Working more at the office increases the visibility of the employee and that often means better career paths. In the hybrid era, some people might, in a way, become invisible. On the other hand, those who are there and make their own work visible can more easily move within the organization«

PEKKA KOSKINEN
CEO
LEADFEEDER

»No matter how remote the culture is, sometimes you have to get the whole team together. I think that that is the function of the office –to bring people together«





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→ DNA's strategic goal is to be a great place to work, and the company was named the best place to work in Finland in 2019. In Marko Rissanen's view, recognition is composed of many elements, one of which is the workspace.

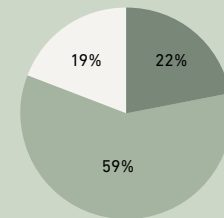
»We couldn't be a great place to work without modern offices, and without places to meet and collaborate with other people. We are social animals and we need physical encounters, even though we have a strong virtual world. Without these, we cannot be an excellent workplace« says Marko Rissanen, SVP Human Resources, DNA.

Anne Tulonen-Ruikka from Huuuge Games ponders that working physically in an office can also have a positive effect on personal career development.

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WOULD CONSIDER TURNING DOWN A POSITION IF THE OFFICE WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Yes, definitely
Yes, maybe
No



I would say no if it was too noisy, bad chairs/screens or bad air quality (F56Em)

Bad location, shabbiness and bad parking or lunch (M51CE0)

Bad location, too crowded or bad ventilation (M38Em)

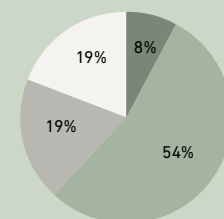
Never again a huge, echoing open plan office (F44TM)

I would say no to bad ergonomics, dark rooms without natural light, bad location, no lunch restaurants nearby, too hot/cold or if the premises was in general bad shape (F49TM)

Bad atmosphere (F30Mg)

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE OFFICE WHEN CHOOSING WHO TO WORK FOR?

Very important
Fairly important
Neutral
Less important



A company's workspace plays a vital role in defining its culture and brand. It thus plays a significant role in the total evaluation of a company—even before an employment contract is signed. 74% also state that a good office helps when recruiting.

A BOLSTER FOR COMMUNITY—MAKE THE MOST OUT OF PHYSICAL MEETINGS

A BOLSTER FOR COMMUNITY—MAKE THE MOST OUT OF PHYSICAL MEETINGS

Empty workspace equals sunk cost for businesses and lonesome work days for employees. The big challenge for companies and management teams is to find what motivates their employees to come in to work physically from the office. Depending on the goals, this might mean weekly, monthly, or yearly gatherings, and include both teamlevel and company wide meetings. People who feel like they're part of their company's physical workspace are more likely to feel like they are part of the company — and that means increased loyalty and engagement.

Anne Tulonen-Ruikka from Huuuge Games says that it's quite typical in the gaming industry that people want to participate in common activities but don't necessarily want to work at the office. She thinks it is important to discuss inside the company what type of activities their employees would like to participate in.

»We have noticed that it is important that these activities are organized also during the working day, and not only in the evenings. Regular meetings once a month are important for all of us, and additionally in team summits the team members have the chance to meet each other in person for a couple of days« says Anne Tulonen-Ruikka, Huuuge Games

Even though employees understand the importance of participating, it might be a challenge to find common activities that motivate people to join simultaneously. Pekka Koskinen from Leadfeeder describes that they are constantly thinking of ideas on how to activate employees to the office.

»No matter how remote the culture is, sometimes you have to get the whole team together. We hold a team week twice a year. On one occasion we flew to Southern Europe for a week and the whole gang was there. I think that that is the function of the office—to bring people together« underlines Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.

In bigger companies, one way is to hand the autonomy to the teams to meet on a regular basis in their own way. On a larger scale, companywide informative sessions and workshops are also valued by the employees. Marko Rissanen from DNA believes that if the company has a good working culture, people will also want to do things together.

»We encourage our teams to independently agree on their own ways of working and meeting each other. I don't really believe in magic tricks in this case. Of course we also arrange events and nice things, but if you organize a breakfast every Thursday, I bet that after a month or two the interest will start to fade out. From what I've heard from the employees, is that they would like company level meetings, with relevant speakers and information. I'm surprised that they even wanted a physical strategy meeting—even an unsexy strategy can be exciting!« says Marko Rissanen, SVP Human Resources, DNA.

For internationally working companies, one way to combine flexible working and community in the company culture is to arrange regular live gatherings on themes that are important for business goals.

»It's nice to meet other people and have ad-hoc discussions on different topics, but it makes no sense to force everyone to always be in the office at the same time. It is better to find common sweet spots for doing things together. We bring everyone together twice a year by organizing team weeks« says Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.



MARKO RISSANEN
SVP HUMAN RESOURCES
DNA

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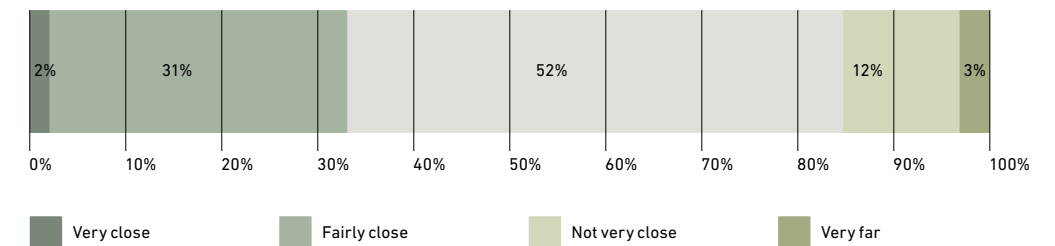
DESIGNING THE FUTURE WORKSPACE



TIMO LEHTIMÄKI
CEO
STATE SECURITY
NETWORKS

»Sometimes you have to be alone and concentrate, but most of my work is done with others, because we cannot do everything alone. There is a need for different forms of work.«

HOW FAR FROM PERFECT IS YOUR OFFICE?



The way people work has a profound impact on the culture of the business. We have stated that the workspace is a concrete tool for company culture, innovation, and talent attraction. But only 2% of the workers state that they are currently working in a perfect workspace. What can companies do to create the best possible work environment, and what do people actually want from a workspace? A well-designed workspace can set us up for success by leading us to increased productivity, happier employees, and higher profits.

To start with, it is always a good idea to include the employees in the design process. By engaging with employees in the design of their workspace, you will help them feel more invested in the company, which means they will remain loyal employees who feel appreciated and valued by their employer.

While the workspace's main function is to allow employees to work, the workspace needs to cater to different kinds of needs at different times, and keep on track with the changes in the company. According to our survey, an office must be designed to accommodate functional hybrid work as well as collaboration to be future-proof. Additionally, a central location motivates the employees to skip the home office.

A DYNAMIC SPACE WITH HIGH TECHNOLOGY FUNCTIONALITIES

Varying tasks call for dynamic workspaces. As a normal workday might include tasks that require focus, workshoping, client meetings, innovation, high-confidential information, and teamwork, the workspace should be adaptable as well as functional. Things to consider in a workspace design are both concrete, such as ergonomics, as well as abstract, such as creative stimuli.

89% say that office functionality is important in defining the perfect office. The most important

aspects of functionality are a healthy sound environment, good technical solutions, a variety of spaces for different types of tasks, good kitchen or eating facilities, and private spaces. 50% underline that they have better ergonomics at the office than at home.

After functionality, 46% agree that office design is important. The respondents appreciate good ventilation and lightning, including natural light, and modern office facilities.

As the tasks at hand might change fast, the workspace should be adaptable. The State Security Networks corporation moved recently into a modern and scalable office with diverse spaces for different kinds of work, tasks and projects. Timo Lehtimäki, CEO, State Security Networks states that good colleagues, challenging work tasks and nice modern workspaces attract people to the office.

»Our present office represents the future. There is more and more mosaic-like knowledge work, at least for many of us. Sometimes you have to be alone and concentrate, but most of my work is done with others, because we cannot do everything alone. There is a need for different forms of work. For example, focusing on the law versus participating in innovation work« says Timo Lehtimäki, CEO, State Security Networks.

Nowadays, employees tend to need more possibilities for concentration, and the continuous need for video meetings is significant in today's work environment.

→



PEKKA KOSKINEN
CEO
LEADFEEDER

»The workspaces should be optimized for making video calls. A video meeting experience should have the right background, lights and acoustics«

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Many respondents criticize an open plan office layout for being too crowded and noisy. The paradigm of the office worker is to pursue community and, at the same time, have the possibility to really focus on the tasks at hand. Pekka Koskinen, CEO of Leadfeeder, thinks that with the right tools and arrangements these two don't have to contradict.

»A noisy open plan office won't motivate colleagues to the office. In our renewed office we have more spaces for hanging out and smaller areas and

rooms with intelligent glass walls. The glass blocks the noise, but still allows you to see your coworkers and feel the community« says Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.

One way to encourage and build a community is to assign certain areas for free interactions. The feeling of openness encourages spontaneous discussions between colleagues. Marko Rissanen from DNA believes that basic things like a good work community lives in everyday interactions.

»Our employees want coworking-premises and places for hanging out. Good quality and flexible workspaces as well as nice restaurants are important« says Marko Rissanen, SVP, Human Resources, DNA.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

In addition to a functional design, an attractive office is one that is easy to find and visit. We found out that easy accessibility with public transportation and proximity to other services seem to motivate employees to skip the home office. The more centrally located the company is, the more accessible it is also to potential clients and customers. When it comes to an attractive workspace, location is everything.

If employees have easy access to work, they are more likely to show up and bring their best efforts with them into the workspace each day. 69% of the respondents stress the importance that the office is located in the city center, and 81% say that office location has a direct effect on their inclination to work from the office versus at home. Employees appreciate access to public transportation as well as parking options.

Leadfeeder's CEO Pekka Koskinen has noticed that a central location lowers the threshold when it comes to gathering people at the office. As companies try to differentiate themselves from other employees, the location of workspace seems to be an attractive advantage.

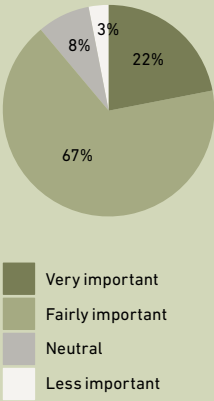
»One good reason for coming to the office is a central location in the city center with restaurants and services close by« underlines Pekka Koskinen, CEO, Leadfeeder.

Anne Tulonen-Ruikka from Huuuge Games agrees that the attraction factor seems to be the extended services that come with the central location.

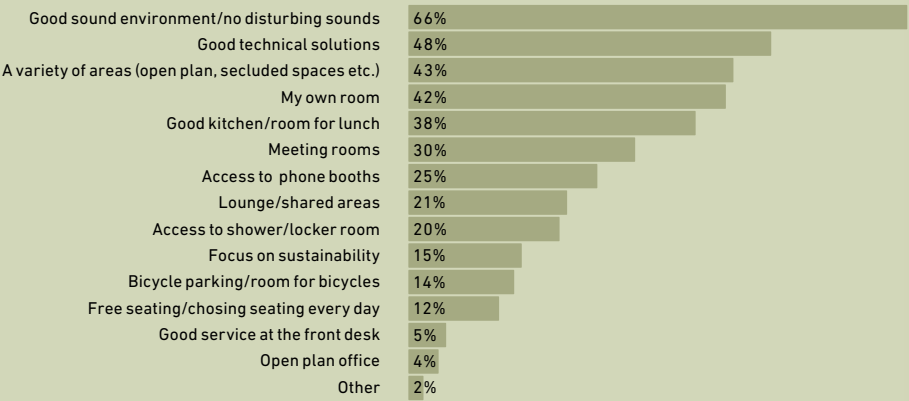
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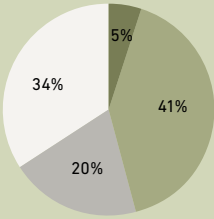
IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE FUNCTIONALITY
FOR YOU TO BE AT THE OFFICE



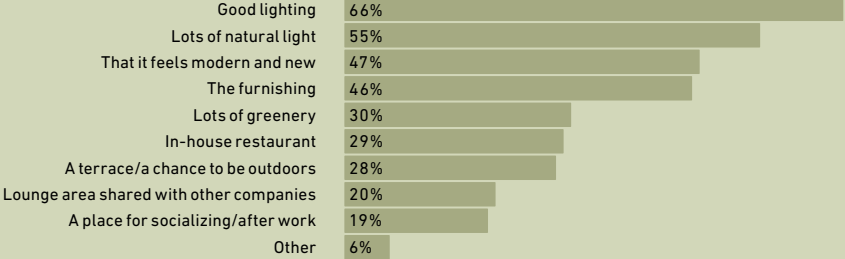
WHAT ASPECT OF FUNCTIONALITY IS MOST IMPORTANT?



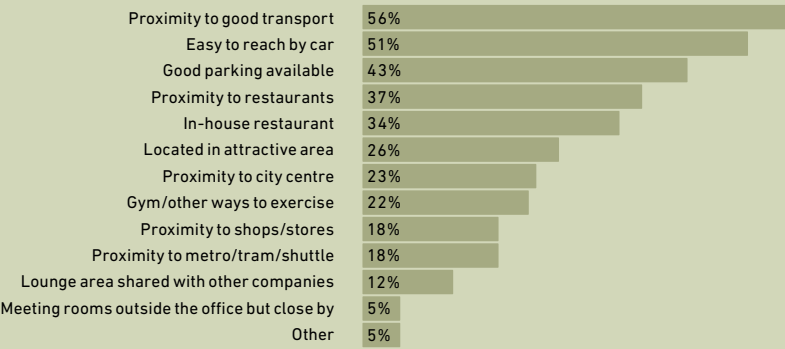
IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE DESIGN
FOR YOU TO BE AT THE OFFICE



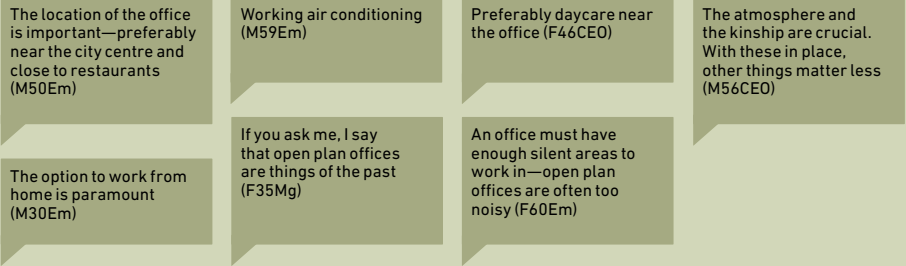
WHAT ASPECT OF DESIGN IS MOST IMPORTANT?



WHAT ASPECT OF LOCATION IS MOST IMPORTANT?



MANY CRITICIZE OPEN PLAN OFFICES WITH SHORTCOMINGS





ANNE TOLONEN-RUIKKA
STUDIO OPERATIONS
MANAGER
HUUUGE GAMES

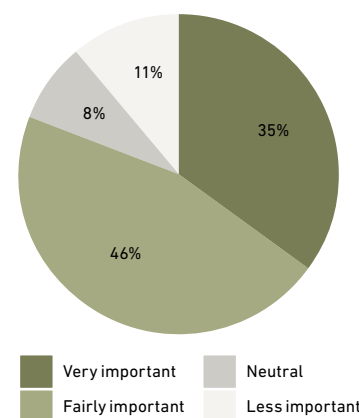
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Working from a fully serviced workspace solution allows companies to concentrate on the tasks at the core of the business, rather than everyday errands related to running an office of your own.

»In our new and modern fully serviced office in the center of Helsinki it's very easy to work. It has been a luxury here not to have to take care of so many things. We don't have to worry about deliveries, there is always coffee and tea ready, and everything here works really smoothly« says Anne Tulonen-Ruikka, Studio Operations Manager, Huuuge Games. ●

IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE LOCATION
FOR YOU TO BE AT THE OFFICE



FUTURE WORKSPACE —A PLACE FOR KNOWLEDGE AND CO-CREATION

REPORT BY
EPICENTER HELSINKI
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