

# white paper<sup>o</sup>

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Hotel Spaces

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## Supporting new patterns in hotel workspaces

Steelcase Research Insights Overview

by Steelcase WorkSpace Futures

# white paper

## The tough economy has hit the lodging industry hard and caused hotels to renew their focus on revenue and profitability.

An important segment is the business professional. In fact, frequent guests like the business traveller make up just 25% of travellers, yet represent nearly 50% of all revenue spent at U.S. hotels. To add value for these customers, hotels are rethinking their support for business professionals. Mobile technology, a global economy, and the need for constant connections make hotels ideal places to meet with clients, collaborate and build relationships. They are also increasingly places for focused, intense work. Thus, hotels have become important “third places,” locations outside the home and office where people choose to get work done. Fully 20% of the U.S. workforce reports working from a third place.

As part of the Steelcase mission to support work wherever it happens, we conducted an in-depth study of the hospitality industry to better understand the business professional and their needs. Our WorkSpace Futures researchers employed our rigorous, six-step process to develop a deep understanding of this market. Based on our findings and insights, we have developed innovative concepts that can help hotels better serve these important customers.

### THE STEELCASE

#### HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS

Our process follows six steps. In the Understand phase, we conduct secondary research

to assimilate essential information, language, and trends about the industry.

Next, Observation involves going on site to see how things work. This may include contextual interviews, focus groups, photography and videography of how users and their work processes function.

From the first two phases we Synthesize our findings to develop insights about the situation, and develop design principles to help solve identified problems.

These design principles are used in the Realize stage to create thought starters or design considerations as potential solutions. Ideas are shared and concepts are visualized, leading to the next step, where we Prototype our hypotheses. Full scale prototypes are built so we can carefully Measure their performance. Solutions are refined, tested, and evaluated to yield workable solutions

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

A major trend in the industry is the increased focus on business results at events and meetings. There is also an increased demand for networking and work spaces at hotels. At the same time, guests are bringing work along on vacation; hotels can no longer view guests as simply business or leisure travellers. Business professionals are constantly connected, never out of reach of the office or their clients. As a result, hotels need new strategies to shift the hotel experience:

- > Shift from simple wireless access to supporting “nomads”  
Providing wireless access is not enough; a more comprehensive approach is needed to improve the spaces where business gets done in the hotel, and those include the lobby, lounge and dining areas, meeting spaces, and guest rooms.
- > Shift from offering primarily large group rooms to a mix that includes spaces for pairs of people and small groups  
Hotels have long been configured for booking large meetings and events. Steelcase research shows that people spend 80% of their time working alone or in pairs, and much of that work happens “off to the side,” working one-on-one.
- > Shift from generic meeting spaces to high performance spaces  
The “empty box” approach that offers traditional conference tables and ala carte technology and speaker support is out-dated. High performance group work requires tools such as integrated visual displays, flexible furniture, videoconferencing and tools to help people generate, compare and capture information.
- > Shift from strictly private and public spaces to a continuum of spaces  
Hotels typically take an either/or approach to spaces: lobbies are open and public, guest rooms and closed spaces are private. Guests today need a range of open, semi-private, and private spaces with varying levels of visual and acoustical privacy. Many professionals, especially Gen X and Y workers, say they prefer to linger in energizing, motivating spaces instead of staying in their hotel room.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR HIGH VALUE HOTEL SPACES

Our design thinking addressed three specific areas within hotels:

- > **public spaces**, such as lobbies and lounges
- > **collaborative spaces**, such as meeting rooms
- > **guest rooms**, where many professionals work long hours

The result is an innovative palette of design strategies developed by Steelcase design researchers expressly for hotel spaces.

Here's a sampling:

### I. Public Spaces

Lobbies are not just for waiting and greeting anymore; guests want to work there, too. They need appropriate lighting, easy access to power, and tables at different working heights. Leveraging lobby real estate by pairing work and food service spaces not only better supports working guests but also makes good business sense.

### I. Collaborative Spaces

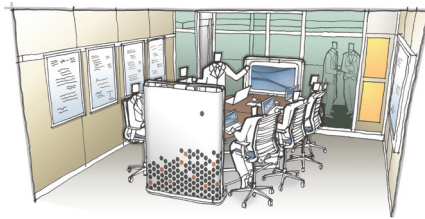
Planning for a range of open, semi-private, and private spaces with levels of visual and acoustical privacy, is a key principle in supporting business travellers. Professionals have a very fluid way of moving between formal and informal meetings and individual work. There are different types of meetings as well, ranging from simple information sharing to evaluating content in order to make decisions, and sessions for generating ideas and information. As a result guests are often seeking out convenient meeting places for just two or three people. They also expect much greater technology integration than many hotels offer.

### III. Guest Rooms

Business travellers appreciate small gestures of comfort, such as robes and chocolates, but they increasingly use guest rooms for serious work. Important considerations include furniture with multiple functions, desk seating that offers ergonomic comfort, and careful attention to creating efficient zones for different activities. Additional design strategies offer many other approaches to hotel public spaces, collaborative spaces, and guest rooms.



Finding a place for a small group to work is a major challenge for travellers. This lobby layout offers a variety of settings for eating, socializing, and work by individuals and small groups.



People increasingly expect to be able to see the content on a visual display. This collaborative space gives professionals equal access to each other and to screen content. Meetings are most effective when everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.



Professionals want guest rooms with more horizontal surfaces for piling and visual access to books and other documents. (Some guests report requesting king beds or two queen beds just for this purpose.) Guests often work in the room after a full day and need good ergonomic support. This room includes a residential style desk, a movable bed bench, and charging station.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

Additional information on Steelcase research and development work for hotel spaces is available for those who plan, design, and manage hospitality environments. This information includes:

- > in-depth findings from Steelcase's hotel research
- > additional designs for various hotel spaces, including lobbies, collaborative spaces, and guest rooms  
[www.steelcase.com/en/resources/design/planning-ideas/pages/main.aspx](http://www.steelcase.com/en/resources/design/planning-ideas/pages/main.aspx)
- > a CEU-LU course for architects and designers, Supporting Emerging Work Patterns in Hotel Spaces

## SEEKING REFUGE

Travel can be a frustrating experience, and guests look to the hotel as a refuge. Yet too often they are disappointed by the tools they need for working in guest room, lobby spaces, and meeting rooms:

- > poor lighting for reading, writing, keyboarding
- > power outlets are too few and too hard to find
- > uncomfortable desk seating (a major complaint)
- > a lack of horizontal surfaces for piling documents, books, laptops, etc.