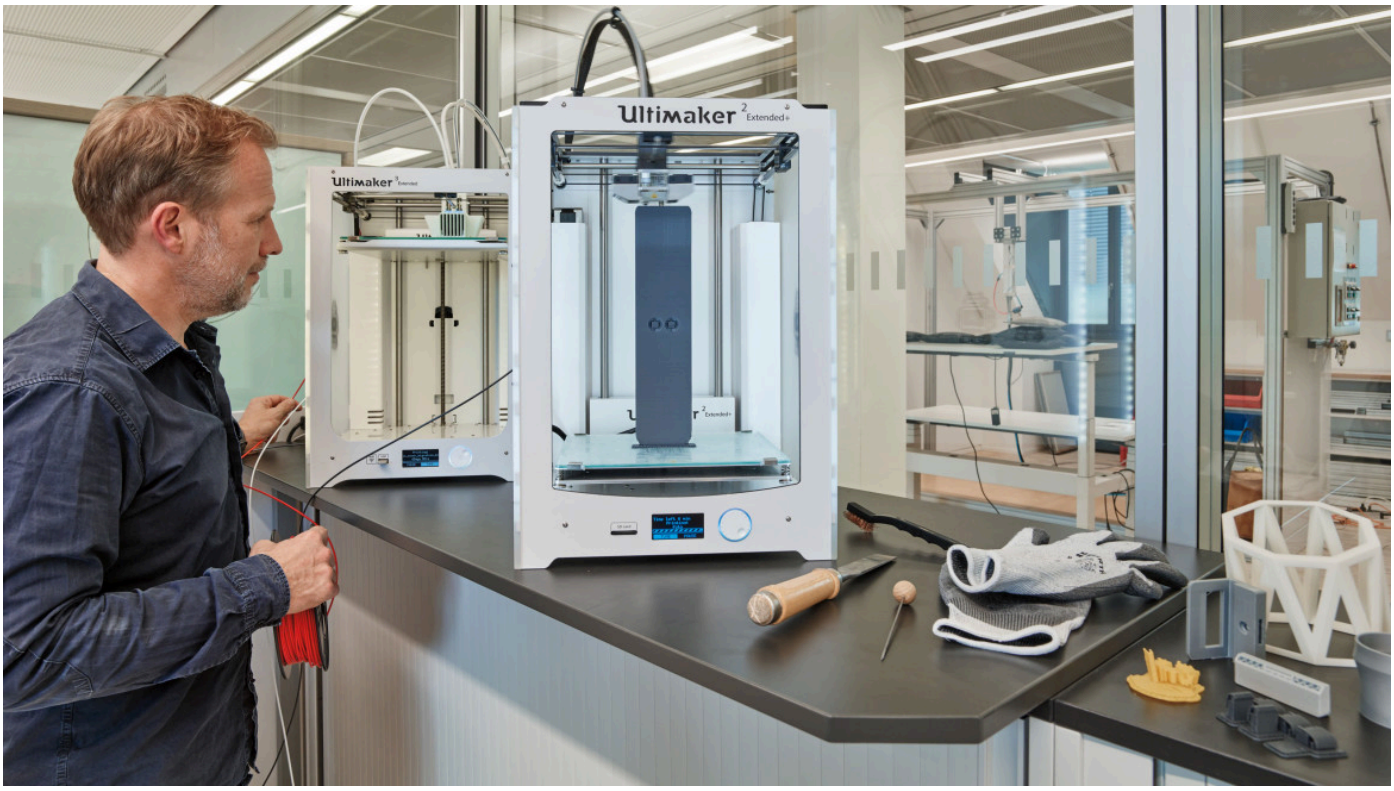
Collaboration

Inside Innovation

Reimagining the Workplace

Read 2 minutes



The LINC is a total reimagination of an existing structure. The design effort leveraged the expertise of a diverse international team—Henn Architects, Munich; Patrick Jouin and Manku Design, Paris; and the Steelcase Design team. The design team's vision was to transform an outdated office space into a magnet destination for employees and visitors—a future-focused, inspiring center for learning and innovation.

"We designed the LINC to support a culture shift from thinking of the workplace as 'the corporate office' to experiencing it as 'the creative studio,'" says James Ludwig, who heads the Steelcase design and engineering teams.

"We wanted the behaviors of design thinking and creative collaboration to be supported at every turn and create ideal conditions where ideas could be realized by both co-located and distributed teams."

JAMES LUDWIG | Steelcase

To embed design thinking—a people-centric approach to creative problem-solving that uses elements from the designer's toolkit like empathy, experimentation and considering multiple solutions—the design team had to consider every aspect of the employee and customer experience at the LINC. It also had to ensure that all stages of the creative process were addressed: focused work, collaboration in small and larger groups, co-creation or making activities, function-based learning and something all too often overlooked: those essential intervals of respite and renewal.

"People often focus on what I'll call the design signatures of a space. But I think those are really secondary to the sociology of the space," says Ludwig. "Does it support building trust networks and nurture creative confidence?Do people have frictionless access to their tools and the people they need to connect with to collaborate and learn? Can they easily share their ideas but also find privacy when they need it? More than how it looks, the value of a workplace is measured by how well it works—what can people accomplish there?"

NEXT CHAPTER – Learning to Learn Together
PREVIOUS CHAPTER – Changing Mindsets