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What Does It Mean to Be Smart + Connected?

Before you leave work, you can use an app on your phone to check traffic conditions, view a video security feed of your front door, adjust the temperature inside your home and even order groceries to pick up on your way there. Technology helps us save time and money and, in many cases, enables us to live a better life. So why can't it do more to help us reach our full potential at work?

GET SMART

Imagine if your workplace could use data to improve your day at work, the same way GPS improves your drive home. An app on your phone could tell you who is at work and what meeting rooms are available. A workstation with an integrated sensor would activate a light when you were using it, allowing you to focus without interruption. And, your organization could gather precise information to determine which rooms you and your colleagues used the most, so it could identify when spaces were no longer working for employees.

STEELCASE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

Get started now with easy-to-understand, actionable data that empowers organizations to measure the effectiveness of the workplace.

Gathering data has tremendous potential. But, data alone is not enough. In Connected Doesn't Mean Smart, James Norman, UK public sector CIO at EMC, wrote in Internet of Business. "If you add millions of different 'connected' devices and massive amounts of data, you get lots of confusion, unless you first determine what you are trying to do with that wealth of data."

Big data has the potential to overwhelm. At the same time, if a meaningful strategy is in place for how to use data to solve real human problems for people at work, organizations can get smart, creating a more agile workplace and realizing a true competitive advantage.

"Progressive organizations see possibilities," says Scott Sadler, manager of integrated technologies at Steelcase. "We have a real opportunity to bring together technology and physical space to create a better work experience."

GET CONNECTED

There is growing recognition that a well-designed workplace can be a destination — where it's easy for an individual to get work done and where people want to connect with coworkers to engage in a shared purpose. A workplace that helps us be our best selves supports the social nature of work by creating environments to foster team-building and collaboration.

Because of the global nature of work today, people and teams should also be able to work together and innovate whether they are in the same work environment or thousands of miles apart. When we're on a distributed team, we need the right tools to bring us together. When we're always remote, we can lose some of the social capital and trust we need to work as a team. By using technology to boost the human connection, connected workspaces can improve the quality of communication, support diverse workstyles and encourage natural work rhythms.

Connected spaces can also help keep organizations in touch with what people need from their workplace, enabling leaders to make better decisions and be more agile. Real-time data on how employees are working within their environment can inform an organization about how to focus energy and resources with confidence. This allows changes to be made more quickly, providing for a more productive, dynamic work environment.

"The workplace needs to ebb and flow as we are working," Sadler says. "It needs to give us the right space at the right time and if that space no longer works for us, it's absolutely silly to keep it the same. But, we can't change it unless we know how it's being used."

LATEST TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

Find out how data can transform your workplace to help people have a better day at work.

SO WHAT IS A SMART + CONNECTED WORKSPACE?

Smart + Connected Spaces bring people, place and technology together to remove friction and frustration between employees and the workplace. The solutions elevate results for the individual, their team and the entire organization.

Throughout its 105-year history, Steelcase has conducted research and observations to better understand how and where people do their best work. It's with a rich understanding of people and where they work that Steelcase has begun exploring how big data can help organizations measure and improve their spaces.

Steelcase Workplace Advisor uses sensors to detect presence and occupancy in the workplace and send precision data to the Steelcase cloud platform built on Microsoft Azure. The Workplace Advisor Dashboard applies intelligence to make meaning from the data, enabling organizations to understand how the workplace is being used and how it can be made better.

To read more on how Smart + Connected Spaces improve the experiences people have at work, read "Driving the Wellbeing of People" in 360 Magazine.

Rebecca Charbauski
Senior Communications Specialist

Rebecca, an Emmy-winning journalist, reports on global research impacting the places where people work, learn and heal. Over her career, Rebecca spent 17 years covering local and national news events on television and a variety of digital platforms. She directed a digital news group in Kansas City for three years before becoming news director in Grand Rapids, Michigan for more than five years. Prior to Steelcase, Rebecca worked with one of the four largest media groups in the United States to coordinate news coverage among 48 newsrooms from the east to west coast.