

Restoring Focus and Privacy in the Workplace

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A New Workplace Reality

Hybrid work has changed the expectations of managers. The manager crunch signals rising demands for privacy and focus reveal areas for improvement, but also new possibilities for workplace transformation.

Managers are expected to stay visible, accessible and supportive to their teams, yet at the same time they need space for confidential conversations, deep strategic planning, and coaching. But today's open plan often works against them. Instead of empowering them, leaders are left exposed to interruptions, background noise with limited access to private settings.

Many organizations are uncertain about how best to adapt their workplaces to new ways of working. As a result, some continue with the status quo or delay making significant changes. This hesitancy means that many offices remain much as they were five or ten years ago – and managers remain caught in a persistent 'privacy crunch'.

Insights from Steelcase research confirm this growing tension:

- Privacy scarcity: 69% of middle managers lack access to privacy where confidential or focused work can happen without interruption.
- Disruption of change: Renovations are often time-consuming and disruptive, making them an unrealistic option for many organizations.

The Solution: Bringing Privacy to the Open Plan

To address the crunch in open-plan offices, organizations are increasingly seeking solutions that can deliver focused, private spaces without the disruption or cost of major renovations. Modular panels, acoustic pods and reconfigurable layouts are emerging as effective strategies to quickly enhance privacy and adaptability in hybrid workplaces.

For example, privacy systems like Steelcase's GroundLab offer:

By integrating these types of solutions, organizations help their leaders regain focus and discretion, while supporting broader space utilization and employee wellbeing.

Built for Enterprise, Designed for People

As hybrid work continues to evolve, organizations will need to rethink how they support managers and teams, especially when it comes to privacy and focus. Solutions that bring adaptable, modular privacy into the open plan can help bridge the gap between human needs and enterprise strategy, without the disruption of traditional renovations.

By prioritizing human-centered design, companies can create workplaces that are ready for whatever comes next – supporting individual wellbeing and organizational performance.

Frequent Asked Questions

Question 1: Is privacy important in hybrid offices?

Yes. Privacy is essential for managers and teams to focus, hold confidential conversations, and reduce distractions in hybrid and open-plan offices.

Question 2: How can organisations add privacy to open-plan offices?

Organisations can use modular panels, acoustic pods, and reconfigurable layouts to quickly create private zones. Solutions like GroundLab are designed for fast, low-disruption installation.

Question 3: Are there sustainable privacy solutions?

Yes. GroundLab, for example, is platinum-level Green Tick certified, meets SCS Indoor Advantage Gold for indoor air quality, and is 80% recyclable by weight.

Featured Product

GroundLab