

Press Releases

All businesses want for Christmas is...

London, 21st of December 2017 – This time of year is for mulling not just wine but also over how you're going to conquer the next 12 months. So while your personal wish-list might include an Amazon Echo Plus or the latest Fit Bit, perhaps it's time to think about what you want on your business' wish list to prepare you for 2018.

Here are the seven things Serena Borghero, Director of EMEA Research Communications at Steelcase, thinks should be on every business' wish-list this year to help you grow, learn and become more creative in the New Year.

Agility: In 2018, businesses will need to be even more agile to cope with technological developments and increased disruption in their industry. Steelcase predicts the need for spaces that facilitate speedy interaction between teams and departments.

This year, give the gift of making a corporate office feel more like a creative studio and support an environment that can adapt to suit focused work, collaboration between groups of different sizes and function based learning.

Trust is even more important. Building a culture that engages employees, particularly millennials, will need to focus even more on trust – to empower employees and give them a sense of belonging. At Steelcase’s recently opened Learning + Innovation Centre (LINC) in Munich, we designed a workspace that makes it possible to build trust networks through collaboration among your peers, but also an environment where employees can trust their organisation.

A thirst to learn: Businesses that are not learning are not innovating; workspaces that create areas to concentrate and learn are going to be vital to progress. Creating informal learning environments, with mobile seating and breakaway areas, allows teams to interact and collaborate, encouraging equal participation so people can learn from each other.

Creativity and Innovation: You don’t need a workshop full of elves to tell you that business growth depends upon quick turn-round of new products; cross-disciplinary teams will need to come together for projects and then return to focus on their specialist area. We will need more varied workplaces to facilitate creative thinking and delivery. We have seen first-hand the value allowing employees to choose their workspace based on the technologies they need to use, their state of mind or the task at hand can be to a business.

Privacy: Steelcase’s Global Report found 43% of UK employees say they can’t concentrate at work. While open workplaces foster collaboration, they can sometimes hinder concentration. Privacy and acoustics are going to be essential for productivity. Workers should be able to manage their own privacy, and leaders can provide a range of spaces like shielded or enclosed settings for individual work.

To be global, but local: International businesses are under more pressure than Santa to be efficient in global markets. This can lead to a focus on process rather than local relevance. At the LINC, we have 25 different nationalities working under one roof – understanding different cultures has been a key part of building the new centre.

A focus on wellbeing: Mental and physical wellbeing is key; it's not about 'poo tables' but paying serious attention to spaces, equipment and furniture that encourage appropriate postures and recognise that different people work better in different spaces. This mode of thinking should be intertwined in the design of the workplace. Allowing choice and control over working environments gives a great sense of belonging and improves their state of wellbeing.