Inside Innovation

Learning to Learn Together

Read 3 minutes

Most important, Steelcase created the LINC to speed its evolution as a globally integrated learning organization. In his book “The Fifth Discipline,” Peter Senge articulated a vision of learning organizations as places “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”

Various informal settings plus several specialized classrooms in the LINC promote collaborative and individual learning. Supported by embedded and mobile technologies as well as simple analog tools such as whiteboards and sticky notes, people can easily gather around content on vertical and horizontal planes—to dissect it, remix it and build on it to make something new. A distance-learning classroom and always-nearby videoconferencing rooms ensure collaboration and learning happen globally as well as locally.

> The WorkCafé, a signature Steelcase concept that transforms traditional corporate cafeterias into dynamic destinations that become a hub of activity throughout the workday, is an eclectic collection of settings spread over two levels, where people can interact, work or simply take time to socialize and rejuvenate.

CREATING COMMUNITY

The LINC merges people from more than two dozen nationalities. To encourage connections, collaboration and learning, the design forces movement. Instead of assigned desks, teams work together in designated neighborhoods and everyone shares the entire facility, moving from setting to setting throughout the day.

“The LINC is a place for sharing ideas and resources, blending boundaries and interacting as a cohesive community,” says Bernard. “The design intentionally gives people all sorts of opportunities to get up, walk around, bump into each other, grab a spot just to talk or work through something together. A very real power gets unleashed in a culture when people have opportunities every day to match their personal sense of purpose to a shared collective purpose.”

Smart paths of circulation give people reasons to navigate to various parts of the building, discouraging silos. Natural attractors optimize high-traffic areas, while out-of-the-way cul-de-sacs steer people to spaces for privacy when needed.

A key design decision—and now a focal point of the LINC— is a wide staircase that opens the space, encouraging movement throughout and giving visibility from floor to floor. Unlike an elevator, it’s an encounter spot for spontaneous conversations.

Another distinguishing feature is the WorkCafé, a signature Steelcase concept that transforms traditional corporate cafeterias into dynamic destinations that become a hub of activity throughout the workday. With a coffee bar and barista plus an eclectic collection of settings spread over two levels, the WorkCafé is a place to interact, work or simply take time to socialize and rejuvenate. Adjoining is an outdoor interior courtyard. People who work in adjacent buildings and passersby also frequent it, expanding opportunities for learning and inspiration that often happen through random conversations.

NEXT CHAPTER – Choice, Control + Transparency
PREVIOUS CHAPTER – Reimagining the Workplace
