Creating Dynamic Team Neighborhoods for Agile Teams

How the Steelcase Flex Collection keeps up with a truly agile digital team.

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Hyper-collaboration is here and it's changing the game, putting teams under pressure to move faster than ever. Today's highest-performing teams are constantly collaborating, exchanging information and ideas in rapid cycles of iteration.

To keep up with the increased pace, many teams are adopting an agile practice to structure their work. Agile is process-driven work derived from software development and now used by lots of industries to improve speed, flexibility and customer focus. Agile teams structure their work into a sequence of activities that guide them to execute quickly, monitor progress and re-adjust workflow, including daily stand-up meetings, sprint reviews and sprint retrospectives. Team members juggle team work with moments for individual focus and partner work.

"Teams need flexibility to change their day-to-day activities. Particularly, teams using an agile practice need to be able to change how they work over time. So, we thought about this through a new lens," says Bill Bennie, design director. By studying the diverse behaviors of different teams, Steelcase designers created the Steelcase Flex Collection, an interconnected system of moveable desks, tables, whiteboards and other pieces that can create dynamic team neighborhoods that allow teams and individuals to adapt spaces on demand.

STEELCASE FLEX COLLECTION

Discover this new workspace solution that gives fast-paced teams the control they need to adapt their space fast.

"This is such a different way of planning a space. Normally, you plan it, install it and it stays that way. But with Steelcase Flex, you're planning for movement. So, we give people the pieces and show them how we'd set them up, but there's no wrong way to configure it," says Jamie Pell, applications designer, Steelcase.

With that in mind, here's an example of a week in the life of an agile team with Steelcase Flex.
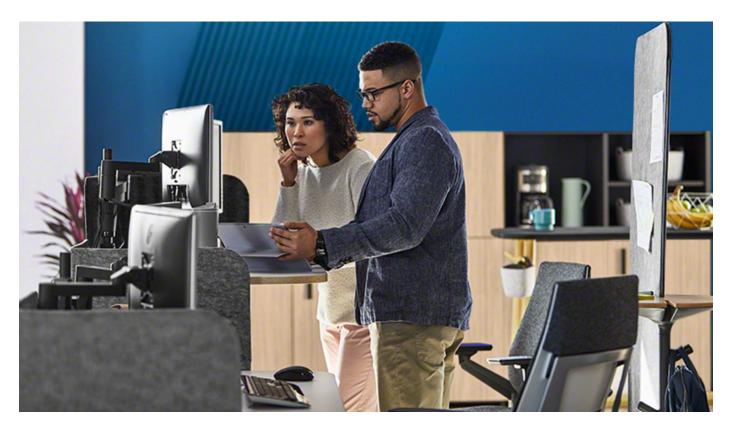
DAILY STAND-UP

The Steelcase Flex Acoustic Boundary and markerboards make it easy for teams to reference their scrum board during daily stand-ups. The markerboards are lightweight, making them easy to put on a board cart and take it wherever you're going next. Integrated clips on the acoustic boundary allow markerboards to be displayed vertically or horizontally.

"Every agile client we've talked to cannot find enough horizontal markerboard surface. A lot of that is because of the way they arrange their scrum boards – their work flows in a landscape fashion," says Anne Sprague, applications designer, Steelcase.

PAIR PROGRAMMING

With directional rollers, the height-adjustable desks are stable yet mobile, allowing teams to work closer together for pair programming. Plus, one-cord-out integrated power hosts up to seven plugs while still being able to move your desk easily.

"Since agile is very tech-focused, and there's a lot of pair programming, power is really important. The height-adjustable desk provides an integrated source of power, with only one power cord going down to the floor to plug in. So when you need to move that desk somewhere else, you only have to undo one power plug," says Pell.
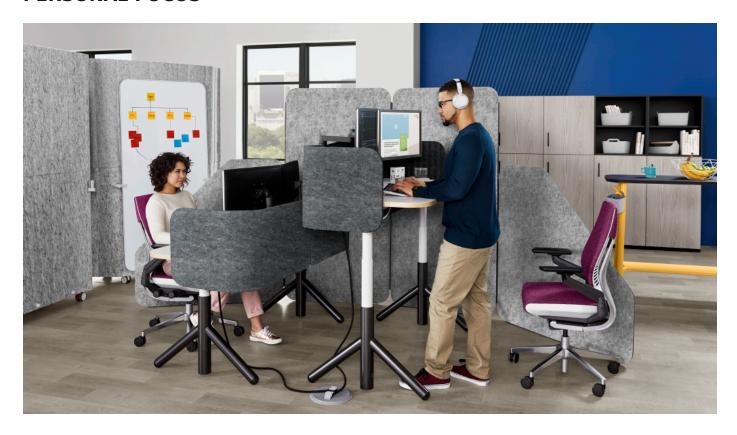
SPRINT REVIEW

Gathering for sprint review is simple, when your work tables can move – wheels and glides make it easy to reconfigure the space.

"We chose highly-mobile pieces to support these pivotal moments in the agile process. The standing-height tables with wheels can easily go anywhere to support the various agile activities throughout a project," says Sprague.

Additionally, Steelcase Flex Carts and the acoustic boundary do the heavy lifting, making it easy to display important information. Accessories stored in baskets or cups allow for quick note-taking during any conversation.

PERSONAL FOCUS

When it's time for solo work, user-adjustable screens provide the right amount of privacy to help you focus. The height-adjustable desks also feature clever, integrated features, such as seamless access to power.

"One of the first things people ask is, 'How am I going to power this?' In a highly agile studio, there needs to be easy and consistent access to power," says Sprague.

The Steelcase Flex Power Hanger makes it easy to stay plugged in while moving around the office. It's weighted and can hang on a table or stand, neatly storing cords so you're not constantly kicking them or having to dive underneath your desk to unplug something.

TEAM CELEBRATION

At the end of the project, a slim work table can be used to hold food and refreshments, allowing the team to regroup and celebrate their achievements.

"Every agile team is different. Some want to be highly mobile, some want a blend of fixed and static elements, and some don't want to move anything because they prefer consistency. So, we wanted to find the right balance between fixed and mobile components to accommodate groups of any size," says Sprague.

Want to see more ways to work with the Steelcase Flex Collection? Take a look at how a creative team uses Flex to innovate faster.

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