

AI

Onboarding AI

Bringing technology and workplace experts together to create an AI-ready workplace.

Read 4 minutes

Scary? Smart? Or scary smart? Promises of more productivity and creativity — mixed with anxiety over not wanting to be left behind — are pushing the expansion of artificial intelligence in the workplace. No other business driver is moving faster. Creating an AI-ready workplace requires flexibility since no one knows the future. And it demands bringing technology and workplace experts together to plan for what we know today.

75% of global knowledge workers use AI

MICROSOFT 2024 | Work Trend Index

Learning to work with AI is already leading to new patterns of behavior. People collaborate, analyze, seek out information and organize their day differently. The implications will not just change how we work, but where we work as well. Steelcase partners with leading tech companies, including Microsoft, Logitech, Zoom and VergeSense, to understand and create solutions for how the workplace needs to change to support AI-augmented work.

AI as Co-worker

Tech giants are pushing the boundaries of what voice assistants can do — building in emotional recognition, emphasizing human-like conversations and decreasing delays. The integration of advanced voice assistants in the workplace will drive a need for greater access to privacy, acoustic boundaries and in-office sound masking.

Brainstorming and problem-solving sessions bring people together to build on each other's ideas. Now, generative AI is adding more efficiency and creativity to the mix. Team project spaces can benefit from more and larger digital content displays. Furniture and tech can work together to create easy-to-use spaces where everyone can be seen and heard. Analog and digital tools, such as markerboards and content cameras, should be integrated to ensure everyone's engagement, whether in person or remote.

Less than 15% of global conference rooms are video-enabled (Frost & Sullivan, 2024). While that number has likely increased in recent years, there's still room for improvement. And it's not enough to think about video. You'll also want to consider furniture design and layout in relationship to the camera, lighting, microphones and acoustics. And immersive spaces designed with large-scale screens to create a rich environment maximize connections with remote colleagues or enhance work with vast arrays of content.

AI as Organizer

Microsoft Places is the newest AI-powered app entering the hybrid workplace. The technology helps people and organizations ensure everyone gets the most out of in-office days. It is integrated into Outlook and Teams to be your virtual organizer. For example, you can let co-workers know when you plan to be in the office or work remotely, when you've arrived or if plans change. It supports individual desk booking and provides occupancy and space use data.

At the same time, advancements in agentic AI are poised to make meetings less painful. Agentic AI refers to more proactive artificial intelligence that can act autonomously without constant human direction. AI agents enhance platforms like Microsoft Teams and Zoom to provide real-time transcription and action items. They let people focus on discussions rather than note-taking.

AI as Director

Thanks to AI, rooms are getting smarter. Zoom's aptly named Intelligent Director taps into multiple cameras and advanced AI to ensure people in medium-to-large meetings are visible to remote attendees, even as they move or shift positions.

Logitech's AI-enabled cameras recognize when someone new joins or speaks and reframe the camera to include them. Microphones pick up voices and drown out peripheral noise. And one-touch join makes it easy to start a meeting, even if you don't usually use that room.

AI as Analyst

Data is only valuable when analyzed and turned into actionable insights. Sensor solutions can enhance AI assistants, enabling them to answer questions conversationally in real time and correlate data from multiple sources. VergeSense uses AI to combine entryway data, area sensors, Wi-Fi and space booking data to deliver a single source and analyze how the workplace is being used. Real estate and design professionals are already tapping into this data to optimize and adapt the workplace.

To provide customers with rich insights into how the workplace is changing, Steelcase has built a robust AI-driven data analytics practice working with our authorized dealer community. Insights from over five million Steelcase applications inform how to create high-performing spaces.

- Steelcase AI-driven data analytics shows more companies are recognizing the importance of privacy. In the last three years, visual privacy elements for workstations have increased from 40% to over 50%. Freestanding privacy wraps and acoustic buffering elements have grown from 20% to over 25% in the last year.
- Steelcase AI-driven data analytics shows more organizations are adding performance elements such as markerboards, modular walls, flexible furniture and digital mounts to collaboration spaces. These performance elements have grown from 30% to over 45% in two years.

- Steelcase AI-driven data analytics shows more organizations are designing for a variety of experiences. By adjusting the space to include more experiences, people can now access eight different ways to work instead of just one.