

Rethinking An Old Project Room to Support Creativity

Steelcase designers have put together three steps for turning an existing project space into a place where creativity can thrive.



Will a robot take my job? It's a question on a lot of minds, according to a new [Pew Research Center](#) study (Oct. 2017). Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of adults worry about a future where robots and computers can do many human jobs. However, many experts, including Microsoft's [Satya Nadella](#), see AI as helpful. While AI may take over more rote tasks, it will add new jobs as well. Plus, as computers do more of the cumbersome, busy work that bogs us down, we'll get to spend more time creatively solving problems to innovate and drive businesses forward.

A [Steelcase and Microsoft](#) survey found 77 percent of people believe creativity will be a critical job skill in the future. Yet, 69 percent of employees say they aren't living up to their creative potential and lack a culture and environment that encourages creativity.

Unlike the linear work process driven by models of efficiency, [creative thinking](#) requires people to flow through different stages of work as they come together, break apart and iterate on ideas. The thoughtful integration of space, tools and technology enables the cycle between conversations, experimentation and concentration demanded by creativity.

When creativity is supported, it becomes a habit. The physical environment can help reinforce the shift toward a more creative culture. Together, Steelcase and Microsoft designed Creative Spaces, an ecosystem of spaces embedded with technology, to enhance the creative process.

CREATIVITY IDEABOOK

The Creativity Ideabook provides key insights and information around planning for creativity in the workplace.

RETHINK A PROJECT SPACE

Designing for creativity can start small, however. Many organizations have underused real estate, like an old project room, just waiting to be given new life. There are some easy ways to begin rethinking existing space to boost creativity.

A dedicated project team space can provide fluidity between focus, collaboration and respite as teams flow between group sessions and individual heads-down work (see photo below). To help organizations get started, Steelcase designers created several ecosystem planning ideas in a Creativity Ideabook. They include three ways to “nurture creative confidence,” one of the design principles for Creative Spaces. Here’s how to begin turning an old project space into a place for creative work.



THREE WAYS TO NURTURE CREATIVE CONFIDENCE

To nurture creative confidence, all employees should be empowered to tackle complex problems regardless of hierarchy or geography.

1. Encourage Equal Contributions

Accessible technology encourages people to participate and co-create. Adding a large-scale Microsoft Surface Hub makes it easy to share content or work with co-located and distributed team members.

2. Guide the Creative Process

Provide postable, writable surfaces adjacent to technology to make ideas visible and to guide the creative process. Vertical surfaces for writing, drawing or posting support creative thinking and expression.

3. Engage + Connect with Leaders, Guests

Separate spaces for additional team members or outside experts encourage leader and guest participation in the project work. Embedded within the project space, the director's studio (top right of the photo) connects leadership to the workflow of the team.

To see more of the design principles behind Creative Spaces and additional ideas for creating the conditions for creativity at work, download the [Creativity Ideabook](#).

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