

Microsoft Envision Highlights Steelcase Creative Spaces

Microsoft Envision 2017 showcased cutting-edge technology and its impact on the cars we drive and the places we work.

🕒 Read 4 minutes

“There isn’t a single industry that isn’t being transformed. We collectively have the opportunity to lead in this transformation.” With that powerful statement, Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella, opened Microsoft Envision 2017 in Orlando. The conference brings leaders together to inspire and learn from one another as they embark on a digital transformation. Steelcase, and its recent work with Microsoft to boost creativity was among those featured on the Envision stages.

Nadella made a point to note this year’s gathering included a more diverse group than ever — tech, education, healthcare, finance and more. The range of attendees, he said, is a testament to the unprecedented levels of digital transformation organizations are going through.

“Together, we are building a modern workplace, which starts with empowering everyone in an organization to be more creative and collaborative, and ultimately apply technology to help shape the culture of work,” Nadella said.

Microsoft showcased innovative ways to use cutting-edge technology to reimagine different parts of our lives including the cars we drive and the places we work. Here’s a glimpse at two of the groundbreaking projects highlighted at Microsoft Envision.

DESIGNING CARS WITH MIXED REALITY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKLXVePZb78>

One of the most talked about demonstrations at Envision came from Ford, an organization now led by former Steelcase CEO Jim Hackett. The iconic auto company is using mixed reality, the merging of real and virtual environments, to change the way it engineers and designs cars.

In the past, to test a new design Ford had to build a 5,000 pound clay model and move people from place-to-place in order to review the prototype. Using a Hololens on the Envision stage, technology upended this old model.

The audience watched two participants as they worked on a car surrounded by blacked-out digital storyboards. Then, as they put on a Hololens virtual reality device, logged in and verified their identities, the storyboards came to life. The mixed reality environment securely allowed engineers and designers to collaborate from anywhere, make 3D comments in the live environment on the new car design, and watch as the technology adds those same notes to their documents for review later.

CREATIVE SPACES INTEGRATE PLACE AND TECH

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2ajQd1jvtA>

As Ford works to improve the design process for cars, Steelcase is collaborating with Microsoft to create new ways to support creative work. With machines taking on more process-oriented tasks, and leaders desiring more creative, innovative solutions from their people, there's a need for the workplace and technology to better support the creative process.

Jim Keane, former Steelcase CEO, and Ryan Gavin, General Manager of Microsoft Surface, demonstrated the power of integrating space and technology. Often, organizations think about real estate and technology strategies separately. By working together, Steelcase and Microsoft have created a holistic solution to empower people and organizations to be more creative.

Keane and Gavin showcased Creative Spaces — an ecosystem of technology-enabled spaces designed to support all the stages of the creative process including focus, co-creation, ideation, experimentation and respite. The two leaders talked about their shared mission — to help people unlock their potential. They also demonstrated how by working together their teams designed spaces that help people get the most from their technology, allowing them to easily move from one setting to another without interrupting the flow of creative work.

To see a tour of Creative Spaces exhibited at Microsoft Envision, watch the video below.