

# Top 3 Tips for Enhancing Privacy at Work

## *...and why it's vital for the modern office*

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Why is privacy at work so critical? Because work is changing rapidly, and more than ever, people are looking for retreats that support their needs. One of the most significant shifts is how much we're living on screen, which influences how we behave and feel at work. People are feeling less engaged, lonelier, and more distracted, reporting overall declines in wellbeing. Steelcase research shows that the top things people want in response to increasingly screen-based interactions are privacy, spaces that support wellbeing, spaces that enable virtual collaboration, and access to enough power. And the right solutions can provide the whole package.

Offering optimal privacy options helps people feel their best and do their best work. Here are the top 3 tips when choosing the right privacy solutions for the modern hybrid workplace.

### **1. Include many layers of privacy.**

People have different privacy needs depending on the type of work they're doing and how they're feeling. Steelcase research surveying hundreds of employees has uncovered patterns in the privacy choices people make in the workplace. For a confidential meeting or to take a moment to reset, people are more likely to choose a fully enclosed, soundproof space. On the other hand, people tend to choose less private individual spaces when doing tasks that require less focus or lower cognitive command, such as sending a few emails. Offering variety empowers people to choose the setting that best supports their needs.

Solutions with full privacy are critical in the open modern office, where private rooms are scarce. Phone booths provide both acoustic and visual privacy and are the perfect escape, designed for one person. Be my guest® creates a quiet oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of the workplace, when you need to jump on a confidential call or take a moment to reflect.

*Orangebox Be my guest®*

Campers & Dens is a camper van-inspired solution with pods, cabins, and awnings that create varying degrees of enclosure to suit a range of work modes. For example, cabins offer a cozy, fully enclosed space for focused work, a hybrid meeting, or a quick break. Meanwhile, the awning visually designates boundaries, creating an ideal space for an informal conversation.

*Campers & Dens*

The right level of acoustic privacy can foster productive energy at the office. When in an open area, people want to talk without always being overheard beyond the immediate vicinity. But complete silence can kill the workplace vibe. Sound-absorbing panels like [Truchet Acoustic Tiles](#) help strike that balance. The combination of design and performance means they're aesthetically pleasing while keeping conversations from being heard beyond their intended audience.

*Truchet Acoustic Tiles*

## **2. Prioritize versatility and flexibility.**

People may need a moment alone at any time – whether they're in an open social space and need to quickly retreat to complete a task or heading to lunch and suddenly receive an important call. Providing flexible enclaves throughout the office allows people to access privacy anytime, anywhere.

Plus, research shows that 50% of people decide to join hybrid meetings at their desks, simply because it's more convenient. Though it might be easier, joining meetings at your desk has repercussions for engagement and wellbeing. Strategically placed, flexible, and semi-open solutions can create outlets for spontaneous video calls and quick focus sessions, enhancing engagement and minimizing distractions for everyone.

One example is [Steelcase Flex Kiosk](#), a visually sheltered space designed for one person. It's a practical addition to any area of the office, from team neighborhoods to work cafes and open corridors. Flex Kiosk enables anyone to quickly jump in and feel at ease taking a call or getting a task done, without feeling completely cut off from the flow of energy in the workplace.

*Steelcase Flex Kiosk*

Another versatile, customizable option for privacy is [Steelcase Flex Active Frames](#). Flexible boundary elements can be combined to create spaces with varying degrees of visual and acoustic privacy. The result is a range of possible configurations ideal for stand-up meetings, brainstorming sessions, and project work. Flex Active Frames can also integrate technology with [Flex Media Cart](#), giving teams a project space tailored to hybrid collaboration.

*Steelcase Flex Active Frames & Steelcase Flex Media Cart*

## **3. Integrate technology.**

Technology is an indispensable part of work today. Research shows that 56% of meetings include at least one remote participant, and 75% of workers are using AI. In an era when hybrid meetings are the majority and [AI is becoming our new coworker](#), people require access to the necessary technology and space configurations to have the best experience when joining virtual meetings in a private space.

Co-designed and developed with Microsoft, Ocular is a technology-agnostic solution that provides an optimized hybrid collaboration experience in a fully enclosed space. The unique arc shape of the table paired with state-of-the-art technology allows for an inclusive experience in which both in-person and virtual participants feel seen and heard. Solutions like Ocular are positioned for the future with AI, with optimized screens for sharing AI-generated information and an acoustic set up that could support AI assistants.

*Ocular™ Tables*

## **People Need Privacy in the Modern Office**

The landscape of work is experiencing unprecedented change with the explosion of technology and consequences for human behavior. Privacy solutions have a powerful impact on how people work and feel. When there are options prioritizing varying degrees of enclosure, flexibility, and technology integration, people have choice and control over how they work. This leads to higher satisfaction and productivity – which is ultimately what employees and organizations want.