Steelcase®

PRIVACY IDEABOOK

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Steelcase

Today's highest-performing, most appealing and relevant workplaces are designed in new ways to provide an effective balance between open areas for collaboration and privacy spaces for focus and rejuvenation. The result is optimally utilised real estate that positively reflects an organisation's values and brand, strengthens employees' engagement and helps build a cohesive culture.

WHY PRIVACY?

The Privacy Paradigm

In organisations around the world, there's an intense drive for better, faster innovation and sustained growth. Success depends on fully engaged and committed employees who are motivated to solve problems and achieve shared goals. And yet, within many organisations, engagement is alarmingly low, and there's growing awareness that workplace design is contributing to the problem instead of helping to solve it. In many of today's workplaces, it's very difficult for individuals to find moments of privacy. This reality negatively affects stress levels, job performance and engagement.

By studying people at work, we know that they transition among five distinct activity modes throughout their day, no matter what type of organisation it is or what kind of work they do. These activity modes include collaborating, focusing, learning, socialising and rejuvenating.

Despite the imperative of all five work modes, most offices today have been designed primarily for collaborating, group learning and socialising. **Spaces that support privacy-related work (i.e., focusing and rejuvenating) are extremely limited or even nonexistent.** Without adequate privacy, people are subjected to constant distractions, noise and stress, which significantly undermine their individual performance. Paradoxically, collaboration suffers too. In order to bring their best thinking to the group, people need time alone to concentrate, apply expertise and develop a point of view about the challenges and opportunities at hand.

Creating Workplaces That Support Privacy

Steelcase research continues to strengthen the insight that what today's workers want most are autonomy and a measure of control over their work experiences. Most people shift repeatedly between seeking the stimulation of others and wanting to block it out, being ready to share information and wanting to keep it private. Creating a diversity of spaces to support these behaviours can make work a richer, more satisfying experience.

Every workplace should have the right balance of areas where people can easily collaborate, and private spaces where they won't be distracted or disturbed.

Rather than assigning private offices or open-plan workspaces based on hierarchy, privacy should be equitably available throughout the entire organisation, with a range of settings to meet both spontaneous and planned needs.

The newest and most innovative designs recognise that people have various work styles and need to accomplish different things throughout their workday. Choice and control is the new hallmark of truly effective workplace design: creating distinctly different spaces that can work for different people at different times. Privacy experiences support common focus and rejuvenation behaviours such as:

FOCUSING	REJUVENATING
Absorbing information	Taking a break
Contemplating	Becoming inspired
Ideating	Praying/meditating
Thinking deeply	Getting away from others
Focusing on a task	Being alone with one's thoughts
Innovating	Handling a personal issue
Creating	
Conversing privately	

The Consequences of Distraction

The volume of information coming at office workers increases every day. Most are trying to deal with an avalanche of information in environments with constant distractions and noise. Meanwhile, the pace of work is quicker than ever, problems are more complex and mobile technologies mean work follows people wherever they go. Together, these trends are taking a heavy toll on productivity, creativity, wellbeing, satisfaction and engagement, which negatively affects an organisation's ability to reach its goals.

11

MINUTES FOR INTERRUPTIONS

When we try to work on a project, we get interrupted every 11 minutes (on average).*

23

MINUTES TO RETURN TO FLOW

When we get interrupted, it takes us up to 23 minutes to get back into FLOW, the state where we're deeply engaged.*

5

IQ POINTS FOR MULTITASKING

When **women** are multitasking, cognitive capability is reduced by the equivalent of five IQ points.**

15

IQ POINTS FOR MULTITASKING

When **men** are multitasking, cognitive capability is reduced by the equivalent of 15 IQ points.**

TRENDS

The desire to be social at times and private at others is a core human need, spanning history and cultures. Today, however, privacy concerns are escalating as a direct response to our ever-increasing exposure. Whether we desire increased privacy at work, on a personal level or even in the virtual world, more people are actively seeking times and ways to "hide away" and disconnect from the distractions of togetherness. As these behaviours gain traction, they drive new priorities and new trends.

BETTERMENT

People are now looking for responsible, conscious ways to "consume," act and work. They know they can play an active part in improving their personal and economic health and wellbeing. They also seek meaningful causes and desire to be part of making the world better without undue self-sacrifice.

This is especially apparent among millennials, an empowered generation that has lived in a wired world since babyhood. The importance of mindfulness (i.e., balancing the intense pace of life with being fully present in the moment) continues to grow in importance as people look for ways to manage the cognitive overload of the times and to live meaningful lives. The need for private introspection is becoming more acute, alongside a strengthening desire to have meaningful, mutually beneficial connections with others.

RESTORING BOUNDARIES

The boundaries between work and home have become increasingly blurred over the past decade. With the rapid rate of technological change that people are experiencing, they are realizing the need to invent new ways of navigating it. This blurring continues to impact the ways people work and their preferences in work settings. Instead of being always "on," connected and exposed to others, there is now a countermovement to restore boundaries between what is private or personal and what is public or shared. We are seeing employees re-establishing boundaries, but in new ways.

Boundaries are now being defined around short moments of time. They acknowledge the need to escape to one's home life while at work and also to have times of purposeful separation and solitude at work to focus or escape for a few minutes, free from distraction.

WELLBEING
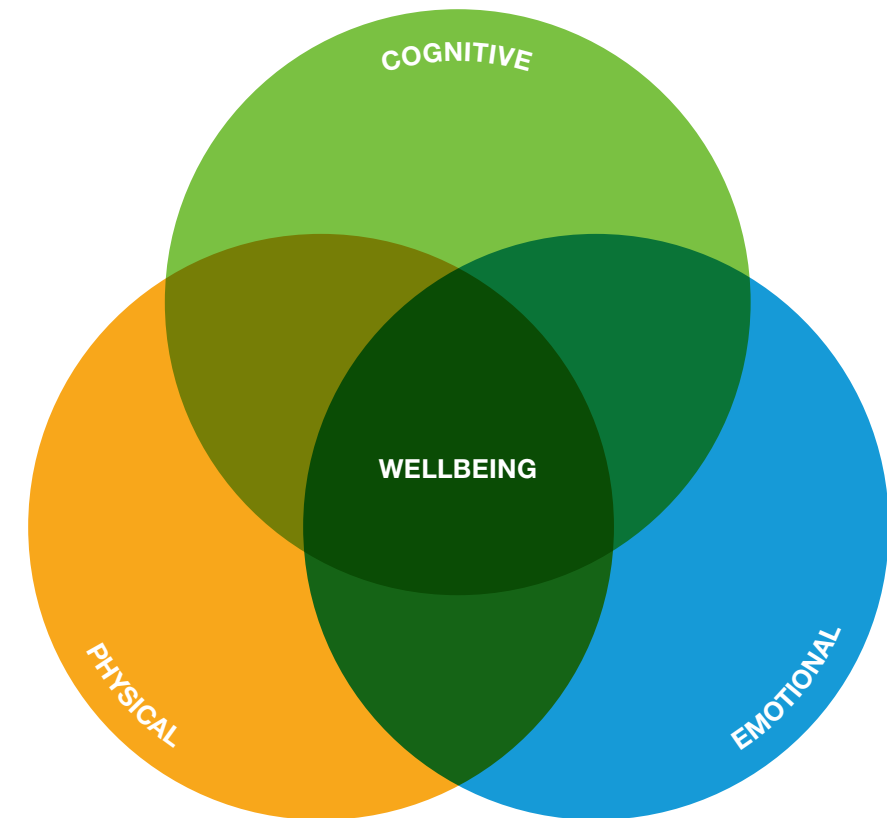
COGNITIVE WELLBEING

Work today requires that people spend their day processing information, solving problems, creating new ideas and innovating. The brain's prefrontal cortex is often taxed beyond capacity. It is critical for the workplace to help people manage the cognitive overload of their daily lives, allowing them to focus or find respite throughout the day in order to achieve mindfulness and be fully present. Spaces for privacy experiences can help people control their environment in order to reduce stress and think better.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Engaging the body in movement is essential for supporting physical and mental vigor at work—it's the body's language of ideas. Changing postures stimulates the mind. Our research shows that 96 percent of highly engaged workers are able to move freely and change postures throughout their day. Employees are working longer hours, and the workforce is becoming more diverse, so it's critical to offer a variety of spaces that support transitions, offer postural choices, and encourage movement and rejuvenation throughout the day.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Idea generation is the lifeblood of innovation, but creativity and idea generation diminish when people are stressed. To help reduce negative stress so the brain can be free to create, the workplace needs to provide spaces to reflect internally, invigorate or be alone with one's thoughts in a physiologically safe place.

INSIGHTS

Personal Privacy Strategies

Privacy encompasses different needs and behaviours, and people activate various personal strategies when seeking moments of privacy. Examining each strategy on its own allows us to understand its nuances. When designing spatial solutions, however, we must always keep in mind that these strategies sometimes combine in ways that are unique to an individual at a particular point in time.

1

PURPOSEFUL SOLITUDE

Physically separating yourself from coworkers in order to concentrate, express emotions, rejuvenate or engage in personal activities

2

ENTRUSTED CONFIDENCE

Being able to share information or express emotions confidentially with someone you trust

3

STRATEGIC ANONYMITY

Being unknown or "invisible" for a while to avoid normal workplace distractions or expectations

4

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

Choosing to share or conceal personal information or actions from others

5

INTENTIONAL SHIELDING

Finding protection from others' sightlines to avoid being observed or distracted, or to develop a personal point of view without the influence of groupthink

Purposeful solitude and entrusted confidence are in particularly high demand, driving dynamic opportunities for new approaches to workplace design.

Critical Influences on Privacy Experiences

The needs of today's organisations and workers won't be addressed with outdated approaches. Designing for privacy requires new thinking about workplace design and how to optimise space. Factoring in these influences is key:

Personal Preferences	Whether they're introverts or extroverts, creatives or analytical types—all workers have privacy needs that are ultimately specific to them. The same environment may be right for someone one day, but too distracting or too isolating the next day. This means a range of diverse spaces is necessary to accommodate a spectrum of personalities, preferences, moods, schedules and tasks.
Spatial Context	Location, adjacencies and other architectural features have significant influence on the experience within a privacy space, setting the stage for effectiveness and frequency of use. Views to the outdoors and natural light, for example, are assets that support both intensely focused work and personal rejuvenation.
Culture + Norms	Everyone everywhere puts a high value on times of privacy. Although human needs for privacy are universal, the influence of expected norms and group values must not be overlooked in workplace design. Whether geography-based or organisational, culture is always about shared values and perceptions. Certain behaviours may be enthusiastically embraced in one culture but have negative connotations in another. Even within global companies, indiscriminately imposing the norms of one geography on another is often ineffective.

TENSIONS

Effective design resolves conflicting demands. Although the choices can be "and" versus "either/or," understanding the tensions that privacy designs must address leads to strategic, high-impact solutions.

Planned
Supporting anticipated privacy needs

Impromptu
Providing for spontaneous, just-in-time privacy

Connected
Ensuring people have privacy and easy access to others

Sheltered
Allowing for purposeful distancing from coworkers

Curated Experience
Providing ready-to-use spaces for specifically anticipated purposes

Customized Experience
Providing user control over elements of the experience

PROTOCOLS

Innovative workplace designs that include privacy spaces can help organisations achieve improved innovation, business growth and employee engagement, and all of this can be accomplished in resilient, viable and cost-effective ways.

Although workplace design has tremendous impact, it isn't a total solution. By establishing clear protocols, leaders demonstrate an ongoing and robust commitment to privacy. This, in turn, cultivates a pervading culture of respect for privacy.

It's always important to customise protocols to each organisation, but some general guidelines apply to all.

Protect Privacy — Plan for acoustic implications (e.g., phones, speakerphones and videoconferencing) and provide clear wayfinding and signage for designated privacy spaces.

Encourage Wellbeing — Recognise the interdependency of people's physical, cognitive and emotional needs by providing amenities and supporting a range of workplace activities that nurture holistic health. Think about how to make privacy a hosted, welcoming and supported experience. A concierge and/or app can help users find available spaces, access tools and resources, and make easy transitions in and out of privacy modes as needed. Hosting amenities also clearly show that the organisation recognises moments of privacy as a valuable part of the workday.

Promote the Value of Privacy — Educate employees about the value of focus and rejuvenation as well as the various work modes and privacy experiences, including information about which spaces in the workplace best support each.

THE PRIVACY SOLUTION

Within any open-plan workplace, shared spaces that support privacy experiences are design solutions that enhance the work experiences of all employees, giving them access to a variety of spaces that allow them to be most effective.

Achieving privacy depends on being able to control information and manage stimulation, in terms of both type and degree. Because all five personal privacy strategies are directly related to these two key factors, they must be thoughtfully considered in the design of all types of privacy spaces.

Designing for information control considers the permeability of spatial boundaries, with enclosed spaces offering the greatest degree of privacy.

Designing for stimulation management considers the design of the privacy space itself as well as the spatial context of the surrounding environment, with areas of higher stimulation offering external inspiration and connectedness, and areas of lower stimulation supporting internal inspiration, focus and reflection.
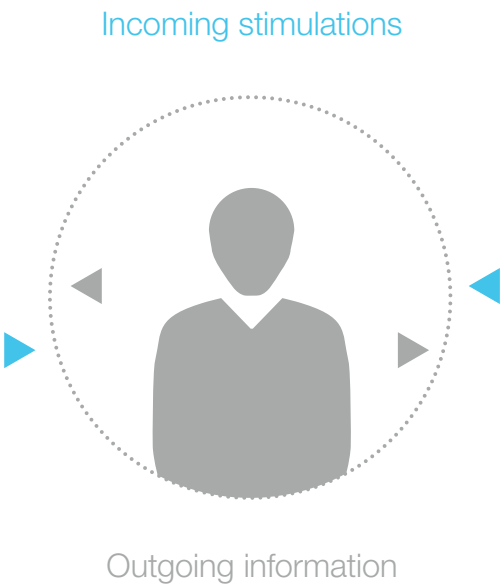
PRIVACY IN PHYSICAL SETTINGS

Various factors regulate privacy in physical space:

Acoustical: managing what you hear or allow others to hear

Visual: not being seen or controlling sight-induced distractions

Territorial: claiming a space and controlling it as your own

Informational: keeping analog, digital and/or verbal content confidential

Incoming stimulations

Outgoing information

In a related way, different types of boundaries meet different degrees of privacy needs.

OPEN

Open spaces are typically environments with open visual lines where many employees work together in close proximity. The increased visibility of working in this type of setting can easily cause employees to feel stressed and exposed. Privacy can be achieved in the open plan through tactics that protect the worker's ability to stay in flow and focused. A protocol around privacy, along with respect and understanding for an individual's desired experience, enables focus to happen even in the open plan. This privacy mode is successful as a choice for individuals who are seeking moderate stimulation from the surrounding environment.

SHIELDED

Shielded spaces are spaces that provide the next level of seclusion with more extensive visual barriers. These spaces may be situated away from, near or even within an open plan, but provide a higher level of visual barrier for the worker. Shielded spaces provide semi-secluded environments where the worker may be seen while being partially obstructed from others and have a personal space that is free from visual distraction. Adding shielding components reduces the exposure felt by the individual, but also maintains the desired feeling of the open floor plan.

ENCLOSED

There are times when people simply need to get away. Enclosed spaces can provide the worker with full visual privacy. Within these spaces, individuals can escape and retreat to refocus, re-energize or just plain recuperate. In an enclosed space, workers can obtain the highest level of control over stimulation, information and the ability to adjust the space to their personal preferences.

DESIGNING FOR PRIVACY

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

When strategically designed for privacy, a workplace can amplify the performance of individuals, teams and the entire enterprise. Exploring privacy design considerations with a client helps establish priorities and uncover opportunities.

Enable Individuals to Be Their Best

While it's now possible for people to work almost anywhere there's a power outlet, they choose environments where they know their needs will be met. Consider:

• Control of the environment

• Appropriate technology support, including videoconferencing

• Inspiring, evocative ambiance

• Physical comfort

• Emotional comfort

• Security for self, information and belongings

Craft Tailored Experiences

Designing a workplace as an ecosystem of various interde-pendent spaces gives people the ability to choose where to work based on multiple factors. Consider:

• Support for diverse activities and behaviours

• Different spaces for different modes of work

• Integrated technologies

• Natural light and views

Plan With Balance in Mind

Open-plan environments offer distinct advantages, such as easy access to others, ample visibility for work in progress and an energising sense of camaraderie. But workers also need privacy to think creatively, focus and apply expertise, develop a point of view or simply catch a breath. To achieve the right balance:

• Support both spontaneous and planned needs for privacy

• Allow workers to manage their visibility and availability

• Carefully plan adjacencies so it's easy to access privacy spaces

• Design with all the senses in mind; throughout the floor plan, include settings that allow workers to control sensory stimuli

Worker Control Opportunities

Visibility options (movable shields, blinds, transparent-to-opaque glass, etc.)

Power accesses within easy reach

Support for technology use in various postures

Easy amplification

Adjustable lighting (natural as well as artificial)

Sound options (white noise, music or SoundScapes, silence)

Temperature controls

Orientation at workspace

Aromatherapy options

WORKER/SPACE RATIOS

How much private space is enough? The ideal quantity is unique to each organisation depending on the type of business it is and the work being performed as well as its culture, workplace mobility strategy, work processes, protocols and real estate holdings.

Design programming can uncover specific needs, but here are some basics to consider.
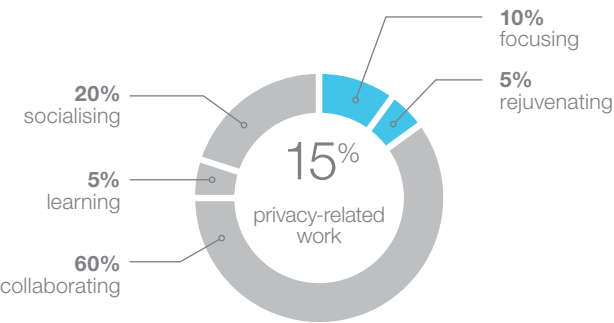
☐ Explicitly explore with the client how the project intent relates to meeting privacy.

☐ Understand how privacy needs are currently being supported.

☐ Gain knowledge about levels of mobility for both resident and mobile workers and how much time is currently lost in transitions.

☐ Estimate the percentage of time that workers in each group or team spend working alone and collaboratively.

☐ Estimate how much time workers in each group or team need for focus and rejuvenation.

☐ Explore with workers to assess the level of tension currently caused by lack of privacy.

☐ Assess desired levels of confidentiality for various work activities.

☐ Explore additional needs and considerations.

100 total employees   50 mobile workers

in the office 50 percent of the time

10% focusing
5% rejuvenating
20% socialising
5% learning
60% collaborating
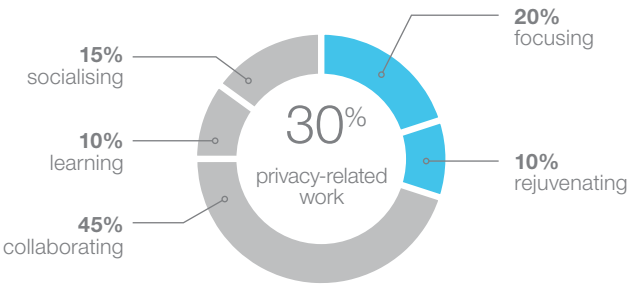**15%** privacy-related work

Consequently, **15%** of the time spent in the office for **25** mobile workers should be supported by privacy settings.
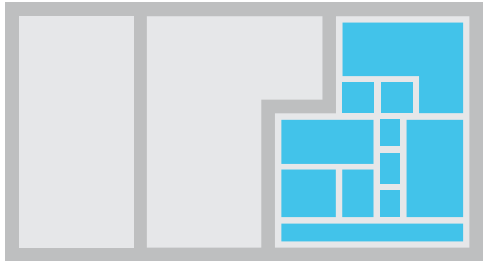
100 total employees   50 resident workers

in the office 100 percent of the time

20% focusing
15% socialising
10% learning
10% rejuvenating
45% collaborating
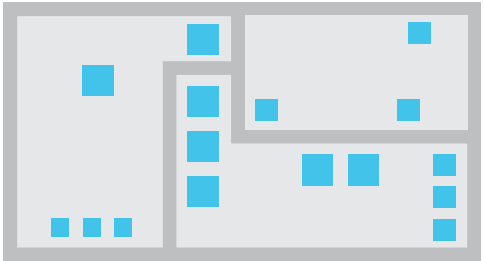**30%** privacy-related work

Consequently, **30%** of the time spent in the office for **50** resident workers should be supported by privacy settings.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Zone model:
Small nomadic camp with privacy protocol

10 – 14
a range of 10 – 14 seats

Distributed model:
Resident neighborhood with dispersed privacy settings

1:8
one privacy setting for every eight people, approximately seven settings

DESIGNING FOR PRIVACY

PLANNING METHODOLOGIES

Inspired by our research, we have identified two different methodologies that solve for privacy. The best option for an organisation depends on its culture, workplace mobility strategy, processes, protocols and available real estate. For some organisations, a combination of both methodologies may create an ideal solution.
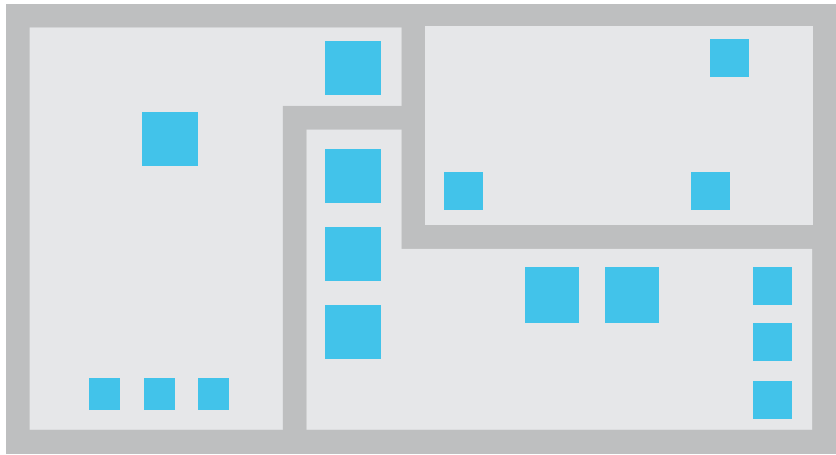
DISTRIBUTED MODEL

This approach supports on-demand privacy experiences with settings that are embedded in an environment for resident or nomadic workers. Adjacency is key. Privacy settings must be nearby and easily accessed to support spontaneous needs for focus or respite throughout the workday. Placement near meeting areas and along walkways offers users privacy support throughout the transitions of their day, allowing them to easily get away without going away.
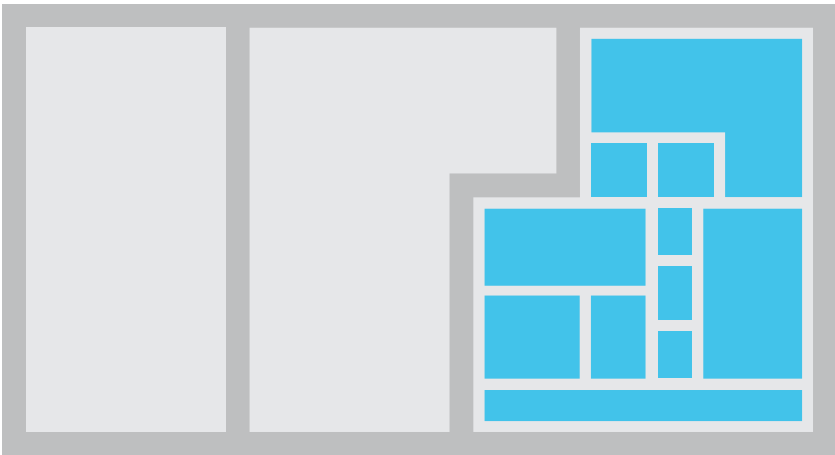
ZONE MODEL

This approach supports purposeful and planned privacy experiences with a collection of settings that create a destination for the exclusive purpose of hosting privacy experiences. With the support of protocols that ensure a heightened awareness and respect for privacy, a privacy zone creates a retreat that people can rely on for times of focus and rejuvenation. Whether they are seeking privacy alone or with another person, workers can be assured of minimal disruptions here as they manage their visibility to others.

Reference Designs

A collection of thought-starter
design concepts for creating
more privacy in workplaces.

ZONE MODEL
NOMADIC ZONE WITH PRIVACY PROTOCOL

Privacy is all about choice, and this privacy zone—a destination hub for the exclusive purposes of focused work, reflection and quiet respite—offers open, shielded and enclosed environments to accommodate a range of privacy experiences and preferences. The floor plan is optimised for low or moderate stimulation with spaces that offer workers elements of control to manage their level of connectedness or solitude.

In addition to variety, the success of a privacy zone depends on workers' respect for privacy protocols that reflect the organisation's commitment to its importance.

Design Considerations

• Support both focused work and rejuvenation for individuals as well as groups of two.

• Consider small "phone booth" enclaves for spontaneous privacy needs.

• Design for layers of stimulation and include natural elements, materials or views wherever possible.

• Consider locating the privacy zone adjacent to frequently used gathering places, such as meeting areas, the cafeteria or a coffee bar.

An ideal place for:

Absorbing information

Contemplating

Ideating/thinking creatively

Thinking deeply

Focusing on a task

Solving a problem

Conversing privately

Getting away without going away

Being alone

Handling a personal issue

ZONE MODEL
LEVELS OF PRIVACY

| MODERATE STIMULATION | LOW STIMULATION |

REFERENCE DESIGNS
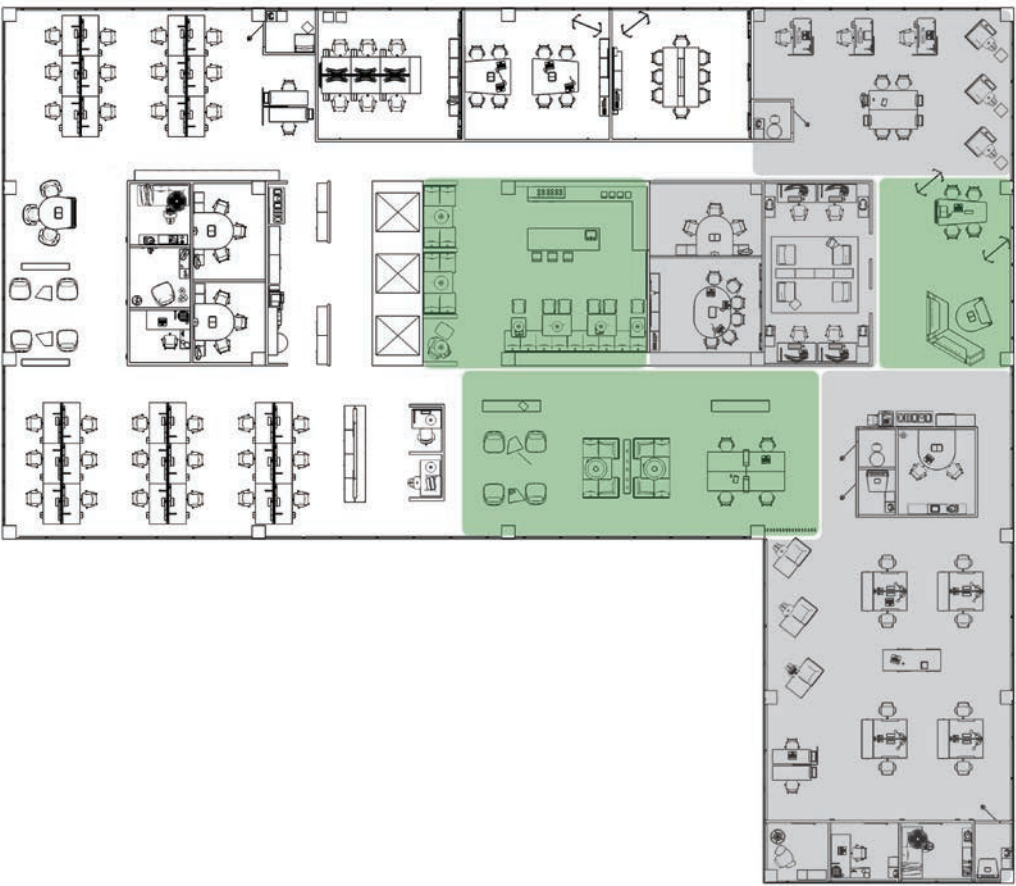
ZONE MODEL

This media:scape kiosk facilitates video conferencing and sharing content with a coworker in another location. The adjoining "phone booth" enclave can be quickly accessed for taking calls. Full-height, acoustically sound walls ensure that those working nearby won't be disturbed and that calls can be private.

The individual settings at the windows minimize visual distraction. Adjacent to the bench, they provide a convenient opportunity for rejuvenation.

These individual shielded workstations provide a place for heads down focus work without distraction. The adjacency to the window allows workers to stay focused while being provided a visual outlet for contemplation.
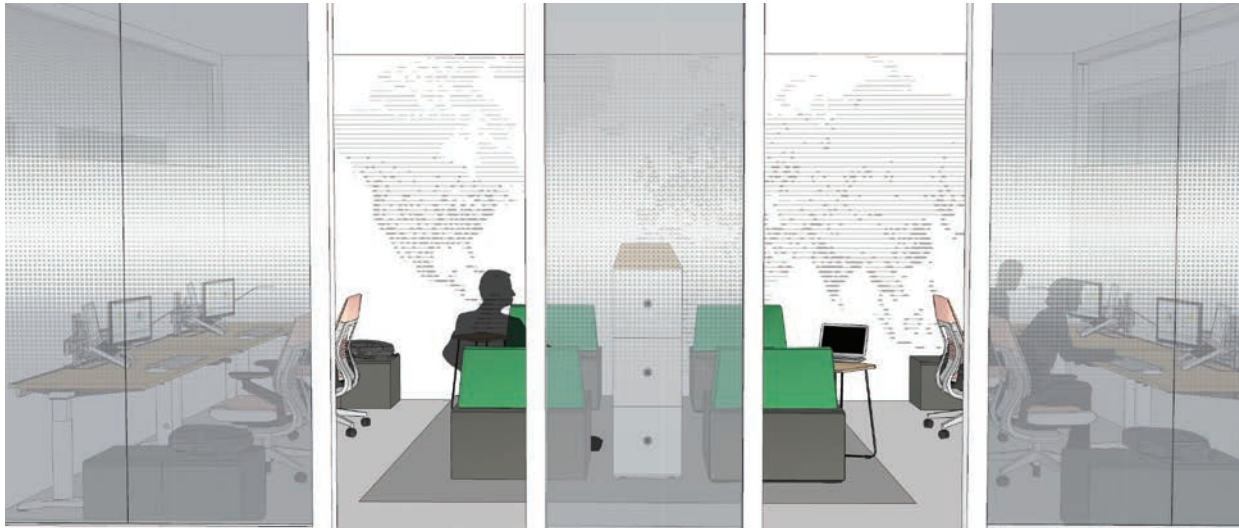

An intimate two person setting offers users a quiet place to get away and work solo or in pairs.. The protocol of these two person workstations offers a heads down focus space with the assurance of minimized disruptions

ZONE MODEL

One-on-one project work is supported in this shielded, free-address getaway spot that is suitable for short- or long-term use, with options for postural switches as work shifts from focused tasks to collaboration in the lounge setting.

Informal spaces that support maximized connectivity or intimate enclosure for a dyadic conversation; these spaces encourage trust and promote healthy relationships

Spaces for one or two with an element of boundary that help people focus while still feeling connected and providing a positive stimulation. Comfortable living room spaces foster relationships and with subtle territorial boundary elements to shield the users.

Collaborative spaces positioned in the open provide a stimulation buzz of activity and provide users convenient spaces to switch between individual and collaborative work..

DISTRIBUTED MODEL
RESIDENT ZONE

Within an open-plan environment, embedded spaces offer privacy beyond the individual workstation and broaden the range of experiences available in the workplace. With close proximity to individual workstations throughout the floor plan, distributed privacy spaces are easy to access, offering new choices for where and how to work best.

Design Considerations

- Support both focused work and rejuvenation, for individuals as well as groups of two, with privacy settings that complement and balance the open plan.

- Consider small "phone booth" enclaves for spontaneous privacy needs.

- Provide a range of boundary options to accommodate varied needs and preferences.

- Plan settings that are immediately adjacent to workstations, along traffic paths and in remote corners of the floor plan to ensure various adjacencies.

An ideal place for:

Absorbing information

Contemplating

Ideating/thinking creatively

Thinking deeply

Focusing on a task

Thinking outside the box

Solving a problem

Conversing privately

Getting away without going away

Being alone

Handling a personal issue

DISTRIBUTED MODEL
LEVELS OF PRIVACY
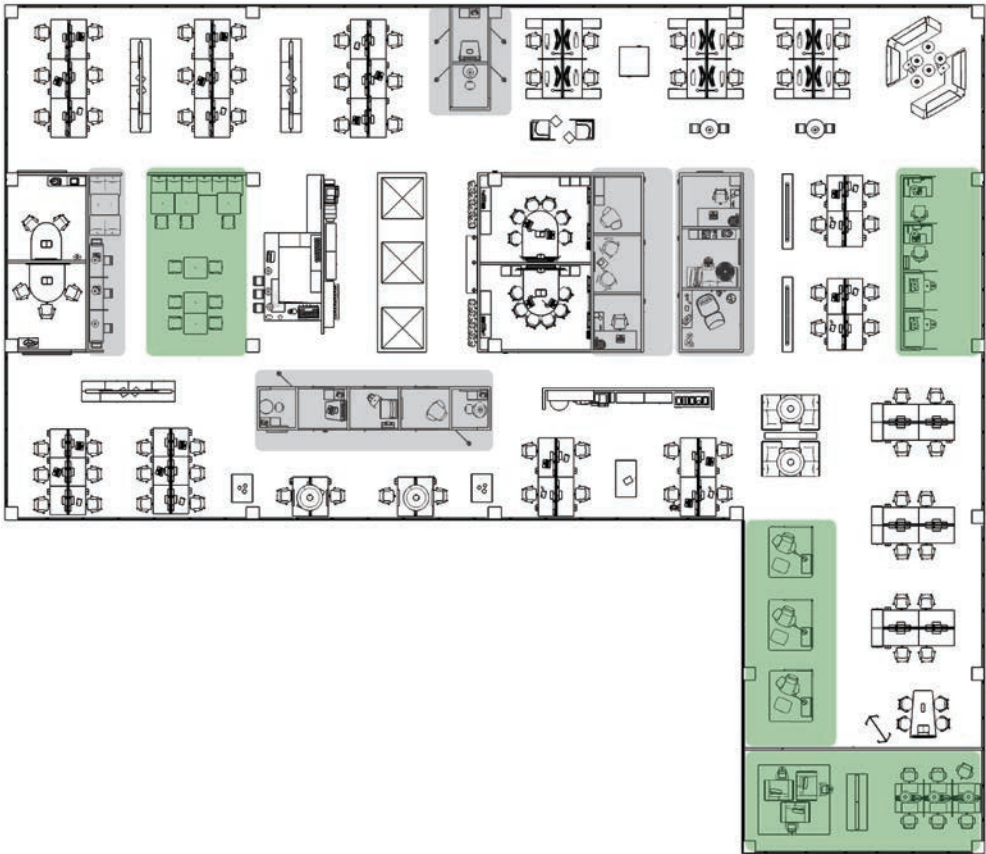
| | MODERATE STIMULATION | | LOW STIMULATION |

DISTRIBUTED MODEL

Shielded privacy areas providing sit, stand or lounge posture options for workers who want protection from distractions while staying close to their workstations and coworkers.. The adjacency to the windows allows these open nooks to still provide ample privacy without complete enclosure.
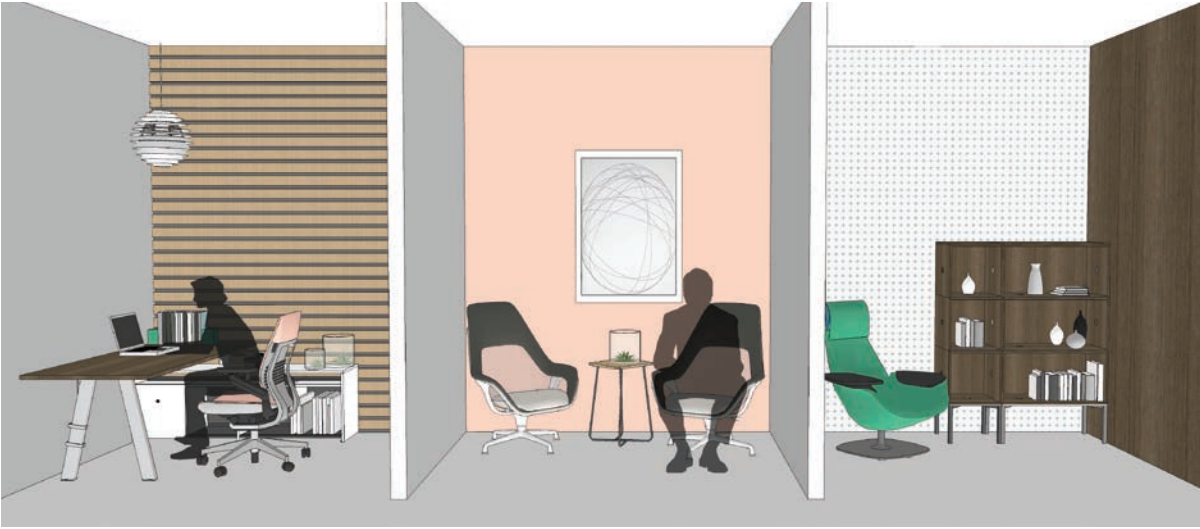
Easy to access enclaves support various work modes. Intended for short-term use, they offer a free-address getaway spot for rejuvenation, connecting with another person or focusing on important tasks.

DISTRIBUTED MODEL

Being able to choose among settings designed for focused work and settings designed for rejuvenation ensures that workers' specific privacy needs can be met. This shielded lounge setting encourages relaxation and contemplation.

These intimate settings along the transition path provide short term duration landing spots. Adjacent to meeting rooms, they can be used for pre or post meeting work with minimal distraction.

Enclosures adjacent to workstations allow workers to take and make calls with the assurance of acoustical privacy, or duck in to rejuvenate briefly while not distracting coworkers.

DISTRIBUTED MODEL
Library Room

An enclosed library room is a perfect place to gain the quietness and separation needed for reading, research or focused ideation.
With compact work and lounge settings, this is a high-density, high-performance way to add privacy options to the open plan.

SETTINGS ATTRIBUTES

Exploration of the setting attributes addresses all of the experience principles and accommodates personal preference while allowing for design and curation unique to each organization.

Attributes

Modes of focus: shallow and deep

Modes of rejuvenation: active and passive

Duration: short term and long term

Postures: prone, lounge, task, sit/stand

Boundary: open, shielded and enclosed

SETTINGS FOR ONE

SETTINGS FOR TWO