

Press Releases

Steelcase Shapes the Smart + Connected Workplace with Microsoft Azure

Steelcase introduces Workplace Advisor and Personal Assistant, built on Microsoft Azure IoT platform, helping organizations harness big data to create better workplaces for people.

ORLANDO, Fla. - September 26, 2017 -. At Microsoft Ignite 2017, Steelcase announced it has developed an IoT solution to help organizations create workplaces that respond to the needs of people while also optimizing real estate investment. The new solution, Workplace Advisor, is a sensor-based system that collects anonymous workplace data, with incredible accuracy. Built on the Microsoft Azure IoT platform, it delivers advanced analytics for real-time, 24/7 reporting, with enterprise reliability and security. Steelcase also previewed a companion mobile app, Personal Assistant, which will access this data to give people more choice and control over where and how they work, and will encourage them to offer feedback about what spaces are effective and which ones need improvement.

WORKPLACE MEASUREMENT AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Today's news represents the continued work Steelcase is doing with Microsoft to explore the future of work. Research conducted by Steelcase and Microsoft shows work today has dramatically changed as organizations require increased creative work to drive innovation and growth. Most workers — 72 percent — believe their future success depends on their ability to be creative. However, 42 percent of employees say it's difficult to do creative work in their office, citing issues such as lack of privacy, conference rooms unequipped for collaboration and uninspiring environments. At the same time, up to 46 percent of an office may go unused at any time as people search for better places to do their work.

“Organizations and their employees know they need to work differently, yet most offices are stuck in the past. People say they can't find the right places to work yet valuable real estate sits empty. There's a lack of real-time data about what's working in the office and what's not,” said Jim Keane, President and CEO, Steelcase. “Working with Microsoft we envisioned a digital transformation in which cloud-enabled technology and big data help organizations serve the needs of human beings at work and create workplaces that can respond quickly to the ways people are actually working. The technology also fosters a feedback loop in which employees can tell organizations what places are successful and why – they can vote with their feet and rate spaces on the app.”

STEELCASE WORKPLACE ADVISOR

Workplace Advisor is a cloud-enabled, space sensing network built on Microsoft Azure IoT that collects and analyzes anonymous data to provide organizations meaningful insights about how its people work and how its office is performing. Steelcase then layers its expertise over top of the data, to generate actionable insights into how people are working and how the workplace needs to change

The Workplace Advisor Dashboard enables leaders to:

- Make better decisions about their workplace: 24/7 real-time, online reporting delivers metrics like overused vs. underutilized spaces and scheduled use vs. actual use with the ability to compare this data against historical trends. Workplace Advisor helps leaders gain insight into why spaces are more popular than others by evaluating room amenities and sharing ratings.
 - Optimize use: Workplace Advisor senses and automatically cancels “no-show” reservations, making more spaces available to more people.
- Improve the experience people have at work: The technology presents comprehensive reporting that includes user reviews and advanced algorithms help leaders identify issues and make recommendations for corrections in the workplace.

STEELCASE PERSONAL ASSISTANT

The Personal Assistant mobile app is expected to function as a workplace concierge to help workers quickly find the people and places they need. Powered by Microsoft Azure, the app accesses Workplace Advisor data, searching based on the size and type of meeting, amenities, tools and technologies needed. A map of each available space shows its schedule for the day and allows workers to find and reserve available spaces in real time then share the room location with others.

The Personal Assistant app will help people to:

- **Find colleagues** – Workers can quickly find colleagues by searching the app to see if they are nearby.
- **Find a room** – The Personal Assistant app will help employees quickly find an available **room** with the amenities, tools and technologies they need.
- **Rate and improve their experience at work** – The Personal Assistant “shot clock” alerts workers when the meeting is nearing completion and proactively checks future availability in case additional time is needed. When the meeting is over, attendees can rate their experience in the room evaluating things like technology, privacy, distractions and more.

“Microsoft Azure IoT enables companies across all industries to drive digital transformation by addressing business problems in new ways, gain new insights through connected solutions and create greater efficiencies in business processes,” said Sam George, director, Microsoft Azure IoT at Microsoft Corp. “Today’s announcement with Steelcase is an example of cutting edge work in the smart space industry that brings together people, technology and place to increase productivity and employee satisfaction.”

For more information on Steelcase Workplace Advisor and Personal Assistant built on Microsoft Azure go to [Smart + Connected](#)

About Steelcase Inc.

For over 105 years, Steelcase Inc. has helped create great experiences for the world’s leading organizations, across industries. We demonstrate this through our family of brands – including Steelcase®, Coalesse®, Designtex®, PolyVision® and Turnstone®. Together, they offer a comprehensive portfolio of architecture, furniture and technology products and services designed to unlock human promise and support social, economic and environmental sustainability. We are globally accessible through a network of channels, including over 800 dealer locations. Steelcase is a global, industry-leading and publicly traded company with fiscal 2017 revenue of \$1.5 billion.