

The Future of the Workplace in Brazil

Recently, I participated in the [Corenet Corporate Real Estate 2020](#) study, which looked at the future of corporate real estate on a global scale. Afterward, I could not stop thinking about how the study's predictions, and Steelcase's insights, were panning out in [emerging markets](#). Were the global study's findings valid in these growth markets too? Were there new trends in those workplaces not yet identified?

Like anyone else with a question today, I turned to Google. After a quick search, I found that there was still much to be discovered about work in emerging markets. So, at Steelcase, we decided to conduct our own study on the future of the workplace in Brazil.

With the help of the Brazilian chapter of Corenet and Steelcase Brazil, we conducted a survey of over 100 professionals and executives from leading organizations in several industries. We used the study's results to predict what the Brazilian workplace will look like in 2020. Equipped with these findings we will continue to explore other emerging markets, striving to help leading organizations better understand and better prepare for the state of work, workers and the workplace. The workplace can be a powerful tool to help leaders build brand and culture and engage employees.

5 KEY PREDICTIONS OUR STUDY REVEALED ABOUT BRAZIL'S WORKPLACE IN 2020

- **Global expansion and increased responsibilities will lead to an epidemic of overwhelm.** Today, problems in the work environment like [distractions](#) and technology issues can lead to a loss of up to 44 days a year per employee, which corresponds to a loss of 17 percent in productivity. Workers will be asked to do more work, faster and the physical environment will need to support worker's attention to help them think better.
- **Workers will have [more choices over where to work](#).** Currently, the main alternative ways of working used by organizations are flexible hours (65 percent), informal work areas (53 percent) and home office (47 percent). By 2020, 74 percent will have flexible hours and 64 percent a solid home office policy, while 72 percent of them will implement informal areas, followed by 67 percent of new collaboration zones.
- **Global teams will grow.** Today, less than 50 percent of the work done by teams is done with all people present in the same place. That number will only continue to increase. Teamwork will increasingly be done in "mixed-presence" modes, (a few workers connecting to meetings from an outside location), with significant growth in "all-virtual" modes, (every participant joining the meeting from a different location). This will affect mostly medium to large teams.
- **More workers will work away from the office.** In 2014, people still worked mostly out of the office (89 percent), followed by travel (63 percent) and home office (56 percent) and third places (53

percent). The workplace ecosystem of the future will feature a significantly reduced use of the traditional workplace, only 47 percent working in the office, with most workers heading to their home office (72 percent), co-working spaces (68 percent) and third places (64 percent). Interestingly, 21 percent of workers see themselves using more and more public open spaces like parks and gardens.

- **The workplace will be used in a different way.** While workers have this new freedom, the workplace will continue to be a significant strategic asset for organizations to bring their people together for collaboration, innovation and group cohesion. Currently, most workplaces in Brazil are designed for worker optimization (86 percent), fitting the most people in the building as possible. The second goal of workplace design is to increase employee collaboration (79 percent). In the near future, the workplace will be designed to balance worker mobility and connect with those outside of the main location (74 percent). Additionally, workplaces will be designed to give workers more choices over their workspace – including a variety of individual, focused spaces, collaboration areas and spaces for socializing (68 percent).

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Izabel Barros **Applied Research Consultant**

Dr. Izabel Barros is an expert on people-centered strategies for continued innovation and organizational effectiveness. She is a strategy consultant with over 25 years of experience serving global clients to deliver complex content management, work environment and change management strategies and solutions. Currently based in Rio de Janeiro, she leads the Applied Research & Consulting team in Latin America at Steelcase Inc., where she delivers projects related to the strategic uses of the work environment and designing compelling work experiences.

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