

Make Room for Modern Tribes

Steelcase Flex
Collection builds
dynamic spaces
for today's innovators

We all want to be on the team that disrupts our industry, rather than the ones who didn't see it coming. We want to be the people who come up with the most novel ideas and anticipate our customers' needs before they even realize they have them; the ones who bring an idea to market so fast and flawlessly our competitors' jaws drop.



We've given up on the myth of the lone genius who will save the day.

The companies that are thriving have learned teamwork—and a culture that supports it—is the only way to make innovation happen. But teams face an unprecedented level of complexity and intensifying need for speed. They have quickly morphed from the hierarchy-laden culture and practices that shaped work in the past, to become modern tribes: tight-knit units that behave in fundamentally different ways than they did even five years ago. (For more about how teamwork has changed, read: *New Work. New Rules.*, page 22.) These tribes are a work family and their hallmark is hyper-collaboration, working interdependently in rapid cycles— instant messages and sticky notes flying in their wake.

These modern tribes embrace practices like agile and design thinking to try to stay ahead of the competition. Previously the domain of only IT or creative teams, methods like agile and design thinking have gone mainstream, and are being adopted and adapted to help teams learn faster, mitigate risks and get things done. These teams are embracing rituals such as daily stand-ups, sprints, brainstorming and workshops to help them stay more closely connected to their customers, so they can develop solutions with a higher chance of hitting the mark.



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Design Director, Steelcase

It's All About Control

Once teams start working in such fundamentally different ways, they quickly realize typical work environments created for more linear, individual processes simply don't work anymore.

“Teams need flexibility to change their day-to-day activities. Particularly, teams using agile and design thinking practices need to be able to change how they work over time. This shift in how teams are working required us to look at solutions through a new lens,” says Bill Bennie, Steelcase design director.

Bennie was part of a multi-disciplinary team of Steelcase designers, researchers, engineers and project managers that went out to observe these creative and high-tech teams in the U.S., Europe and the Middle East starting in 2017. They talked to people who had grown frustrated and discouraged trying to muddle through with spaces and technology that didn't support their needs. They learned the most from renegades unwilling to put up with the status quo who began hacking their existing spaces.

These hacks, along with a body of primary and secondary research about team-based work, inspired designers to envision some radically-different solutions.

Their idea: Create an interconnected system that supports the activities of the larger team as well as individual

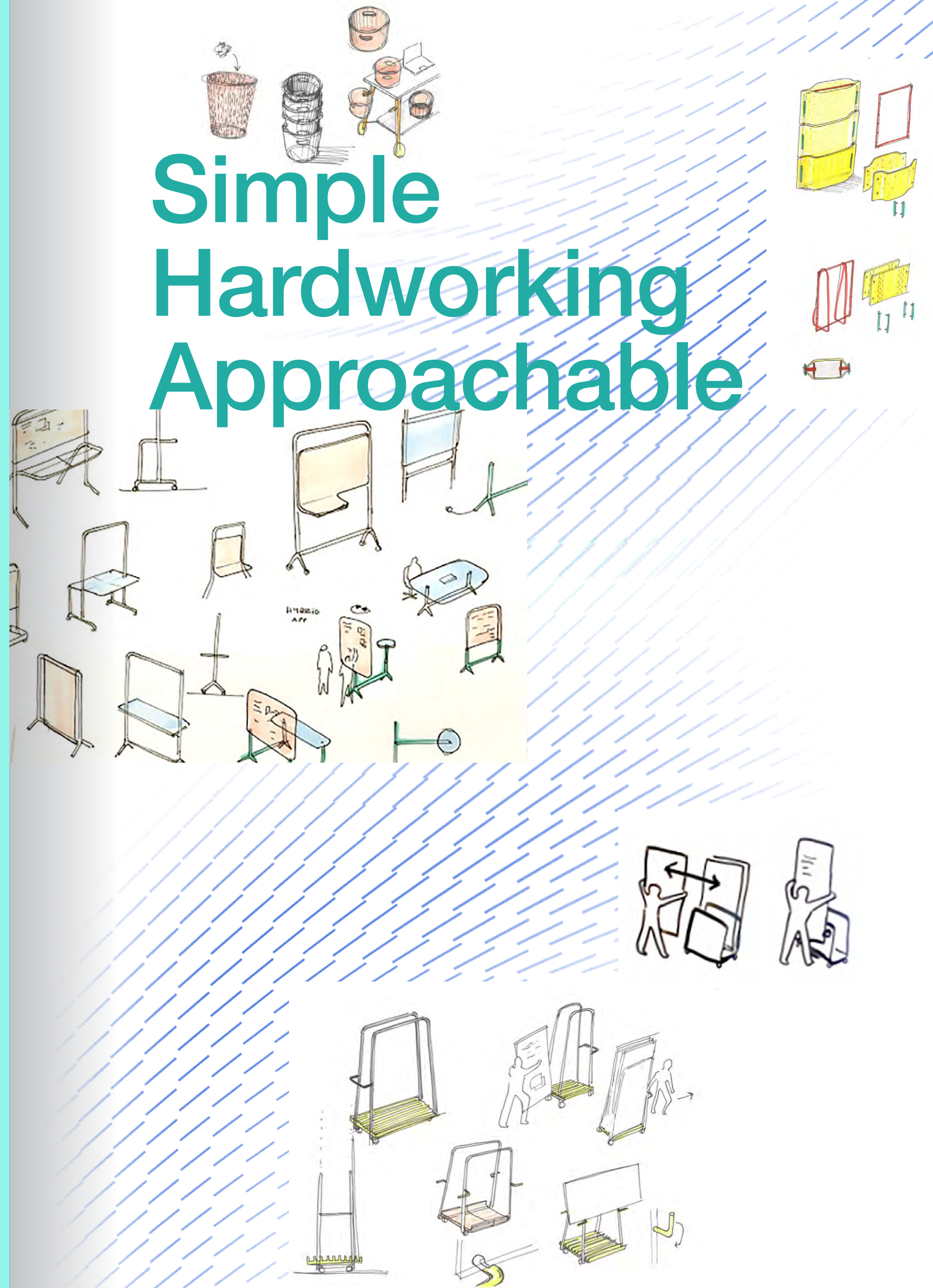
work. “Instead of one new thing, we ended up creating pieces that all move and work together to let people reconfigure their space in a matter of minutes. The pieces work well on their own, but just like a team, they work better together,” says Bennie.

Embracing agile concepts, they enlisted Steelcase IT teams to test new ideas in a prototype space. They collaborated, offering fast, cyclical feedback to allow for continuous improvements on initial models.

The result became the Steelcase Flex Collection—aptly named because the idea is all about flexibility—movable desks, tables, markerboards, carts, screens and accessories that can be rearranged on demand by anyone to create environments that both teams and individuals need to do their best work. The collection is designed to make it easy to shift between different activities from a brain-storm to a workshop, or from a daily stand-up to a sprint review.

Whether on wheels, rollers or glides, Steelcase Flex is designed to move easily and gives teams permission to take control and make a space their own. Details, like the board cart that holds eight whiteboards and pegs on the tables to hang a backpack or other accessories, were designed with the needs of the team—and the individuals who make it up—in mind.

Simple Hardworking Approachable



An Office Rebellion

Steelcase Flex was inspired by teams working in spaces not designed for team-based work who became impatient with their static space and hacked their offices.

Five ways renegade teams hacked their space

DIY Workplace

Teams resorted to moving or re-purposing objects to create the settings they needed for their diverse activities. One team took a door off its hinges to build a communal “table.” This DIY approach forced people to string cords to these makeshift spaces for power, which quickly became a cumbersome spiderweb and made it tough to move around.



Staking Claims

Teams built barricades to claim a territory for themselves and also keep out distractions. They moved display boards, wastebaskets—anything they could find—to create boundaries.



Sticky Note Invasion
Teams covered surfaces with sticky notes—whiteboards, walls and even the ceiling—out of desperation to share ideas and information.

Making It Mine
People went to great lengths to personalize their space and control their individual privacy. They used random items like pizza boxes and plants to limit visual distractions and communicate “leave me alone.”



Can't Take It With You
Team members awkwardly balanced laptops in an effort to share ideas with co-located teammates or used selfie sticks to try and help remote teammates feel a part of the group. Unable to lug displayboards everywhere or access large-scale technology, people struggled to interact with the content and eventually disengaged.

“A lot of environments today throw everyone into the same general space and say ‘collaborate.’ And, we’re surprised when it doesn’t work and people feel frustrated. Teams do not have the control they need to move easily from activity to activity. They don’t have the ability to reconfigure their space at will if their team make-up, needs or priorities change.”

Vanja Mistic
User Experience Lead,
Steelcase WorkSpace Futures

Introducing Steelcase Flex Collection

The Steelcase Flex Collection helps teams adapt their space as their work changes. See how teams practicing design thinking and agile can quickly and easily reconfigure their space.



Creative Studio

Teams practicing design thinking deeply immerse themselves with a problem to develop empathy and an understanding of the customer. They must surround themselves with their information and look for patterns that will point to new needs. They work together to build on each other's ideas and break apart to analyze, synthesize and generate a fresh point of view to bring back to the team. Steelcase Flex Collection supports their ebb and flow between individual work and teamwork.



Visual displays help this magazine design team pitch and share an upcoming layout to their leader. The Steelcase Flex Board Cart lets the team bring the collection's markerboards anywhere and the wall rail and stand support visual displays.



Fuel ideas with a space created to encourage participation for a productive brainstorming session. Slim tables (center) support a standing posture and the team cart (right) includes clips to hold a markerboard or screen, as well as group necessities, such as sticky notes, dry erase markers, paper clips, in the baskets made to fit underneath the display.



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Creative Studio

Freestanding screens create separation from the team, allowing individuals to focus and attend to their personal needs.



The team rolls together four standing-height tables to create one large workspace for a design thinking workshop. Surrounded by their information and ideas, they are able to quickly jump into flow.



Make Room for Modern Tribes



Agile Studio

Agile teams are guided by a set of ceremonies that celebrate their process and keep them connected to their customer's needs. The agile approach to problem solving involves a lot of individual work that connects back to the team as a whole—crucial to advancing a project. Steelcase Flex Collection lets the team transition from collective to pair to solo work without disrupting their workflow.



The team brings two standing-height tables together for a sprint review to review progress with their customer. The acoustic boundary integrates a markerboard to help display information and bring people up to speed quickly.



Agile Studio

Steelcase Flex makes it easy to shift between different activities.

This agile team gathers around the Steelcase Flex Slim Table for its daily stand-up, a quick directional meeting that lasts 15 minutes. The acoustic boundary includes integrated clips to attach the collection's markerboards either horizontally or vertically.



Make Room for Modern Tribes

Height-adjustable desks with directional rollers let team members slide side-by-side for pair programming and pull apart when it's time to focus. Integrated power hosts up to seven plugs with just one cord out, simplifying any move. Screens can be adjusted to privacy or modesty mode, depending on preference.



“All the pieces of Steelcase Flex Collection work well on their own, but just like a team, they work better together.”

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Design Director, Steelcase

Acoustic Boundary
The movable acoustic boundary provides flexible space division, acoustic privacy and allows for the integration of markerboards and screens to display information.

Height-Adjustable Desk
Designed for mobility and function, the height-adjustable desk comes with directional rollers that allow for movement, one-cord-out integrated power that hosts up to seven plugs, and user-adjustable curved screens that can be configured by anyone for both privacy and modesty.



Power Hanger
The ultra-mobile power hanger lets you connect to power nearby at all times.



Screens
The lightweight freestanding screens come in three sizes, are tackable and provide infinite possibilities for personal privacy, space division and keeping information visible.



Screens
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Carts
The cart family provides team personalization and storage, a place to display information while also creating boundaries for space division. Designed for mobility, the team cart and board cart keeps all the team's essentials accessible and visible.



Accessories
Details like the pegs on tables provide a place to hang your backpack. Other accessories like baskets and cups give the team a place to keep their things.

