

WHAT WILL WORK LOOK LIKE IN 2030?

FROM PHYSICAL SPACE TO WORKPLACE CULTURE, A NEW STUDY REVEALS THE POTENTIAL IN OUR NEXT 15 YEARS OF WORK.

BY VIVIAN GIANG

The idea of work in the past 15 years has changed so much that it's difficult to imagine what the next 15 years will look like.

According to a new study published by commercial real estate services CBRE and Genesis, a real estate developer from China, many of the ideas, trends, and behaviors that will shape work in 2030 is already evident today. However, some of these changes are quietly emerging and business leaders might not truly understand the significance of their impact on performance, productivity, and retaining talent.

Based on the ideas of 220 global experts, office workers, and young people from Asia Pacific, Europe and North America, below is a glimpse of what our workplaces will look like in 15 years:

THERE WILL BE "PLACES TO WORK," NOT "WORKPLACES"

The best workplaces will have offices, rooms, and different quiet areas so that workers have choices to where they want to work. Some young workers in the study suggested "mood-based working" areas, which eliminates assigned seating altogether and, instead, allows employees to pick a place to work depending on how they feel that day (i.e. happy, excited, creative, or calm).

"The idea of what collaboration means is very different in every culture," says Peter Andrew, CBRE's Director of Workplace Strategy in Asia. "The majority of collaborations actually happen in and around the workplace, like standing around other people's desk. People will not go to the other side of the room to have coffee every time they want to have a conversation about collaboration."

In Asian countries, or collectivist cultures, young people see themselves working in circular layouts or round tables when it's time for collaboration. They will then have the ability to leave these areas to quieter and reflective spaces for head-down concentration. In Western focus groups, or individualistic cultures, young people see themselves "owning" a primary place of

work or having an assigned seat at the table, but still having options to other places for concentration.

SMALLER INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS

According to Andrew, we will have smaller corporations and businesses in the near future. With so much opportunity for collaborations, there is no need to build a costly big business. Instead, future business leaders will be focused on specializing their services and products to stand apart from the crowd.

"[Corporations] will rely on allied organizations that they work in partner with, whether they're individuals or small groups," says Andrew.

LESS HIERARCHY

In the future workplace, everyone is a leader. Work will thrive in teams, not dictators because young employees don't think too highly of hierarchy or ranking rules. They believe that anyone can be an "intrapreneur" and can have influence and control through their work.

In fact, the research found that young people are losing their verbal skills, but "have the ability to maintain large networks, absorb more information and filter out non-essential material to avoid overload."

When it comes to what young people want from their bosses, those in Shanghai, Beijing and Tokyo are most optimistic about pushing for change, whereas opinions about management are more conservative than expected for those in New York and London.

The research says: "The rapid speed of change and the colossal scale of new office development in Asia combined with rapidly changing attitudes across all generations means the Asia region could well see the adoption of new ideas about work, workplace and commercial buildings as fast or faster than many other parts of the world."

BIG EMPHASIS ON WELLNESS

Offices will be much healthier environments whether that's good lighting, relaxation areas, sleeping rooms, art, music, pets at work, and even areas with grass so that employees can rest their feet.

Paul Scialla, founder and CEO of Delos Living, says: "Ninety-two percent of our time is spent indoors. Buildings are built with environmental sustainability in mind but what about the people inside? Outside real estate almost every consumer product in the marketplace is somehow geared or marketed with health or wellness benefits now. Of the \$150 trillion investments in real estate it is unquestionable to invest a small fraction even for wellness."

After all, healthy, happy workers lead to more productive results and companies that truly understand this will be able to move ahead faster.

NEED FOR A "CHIEF OF WORK" ROLE AT THE C-SUITE LEVEL

The culture and values of the organization must be consistent and by 2030, organizations will need to take an active role in proactively managing or curating the experience of work. The Chief of Work is someone who sets the culture in the organization, which includes what environment and even what technologies are used. Their sole focus should be driving the work experience agenda.

When you think about game changers such as the sharing economy and artificial intelligence, it's easy to see why business structure is changing so rapidly. The above trends may seem simple, but truly understanding the metrics behind these ideas is needed for business success. Only forward-thinking organizations who take the time to understand and explore these metrics now will know what's needed for a productive, collaborative, successful workplace of the future.