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things you need to know about: Continual Workplace Evolution

A spaciv report outlining our biggest learnings about the value and challenges of an evolutionary approach to workplace strategy.



When we founded spaciv, we started out with the idea of a tool that digitalises conventional workplace consulting services. The combination of our close collaboration with early customers and a fresh, data-oriented perspective on the services delivered in the industry, allowed us to realise that there is a much more fundamental problem in the field of workplace strategy. The real problem is not the tools or a lack of creative concepts. Instead, the real problem is the project-based approach itself. Organisations are evolving faster than ever before, and the workplace must be continually aligned to ensure that it best supports the users' needs. We have named this approach **Continual Workplace Evolution** and have created this report to share some of our most important learnings. We hope it is helpful and look forward to your feedback!

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Contents

- 01 _ Good things ~~take time~~ require action
- 02 _ Trust is granted, value it
- 03 _ Keep an eye on your knowledge base
- 04 _ Rhythm is key
- 05 _ Don't freeze, embrace flexibility
- 06 _ Change is easy, in the right measure
- 07 _ Listen to everyone
- 08 _ Spread knowledge, shape understanding
- 09 _ Automate data, focus on people

1 Good things ~~take time~~ require action

Somehow, even in times of extensive digitalisation, we've come to accept that the quality of results correlates to the time it took to develop them. Sometimes, we even question fast results - especially when established processes take longer to deliver.

Workplace strategy, especially when you are just starting, can be a daunting task. The complexity can quickly become overwhelming. However, you must hit the ground running with fast insights to move forward confidently.

Establishing this thorough understanding of an organisation has been, until now, a process of intensive analysis, sometimes taking up months of work, creating a static overview of data. Essential insights for sure, but quickly outdated and may even be disruptive to an organisation due to heavily relying on time-consuming workshops.

We champion an **integrative process with the ability for every user to participate** but consider gaining insights you need, like activity profiles and understanding your internal work pattern fast and with low-level interaction forms like quick surveys or interviews. And once you have built the first vital insights, fill in the blanks and constantly update your knowledge base. So securing that you'll always decide based on actual data during a process that will most likely last more than a year



Trust is granted, value it

To maximise acceptance, you must enable active participation and ensure stakeholders clearly understand the actions and purpose. This is especially true in projects that have a widespread effect on everyone in your organisation.

But beware, you may leave many valuable opinions unheard if you rely solely on traditional formats, such as group workshops or interviews. Meanwhile, surveys are commonly disconnected from the following workflow meaning that the data is not actually used for decision-making. Although these methods are well-intentioned, the positive sign can quickly be perceived as a show – fake participation – causing more damage than good.

Instead, **try low-involvement formats that are fully integrated with the data flow of your strategy** and opt for high-involvement, individual formats to refine and thoroughly understand unique points of view and qualitative insights.

3 Keep a close eye on your knowledge base

We love data. Whenever you want to prove a point, there is nothing better than supporting your judgment with historic and forecast data points communicated in compelling visualisations. In a complex field like Workplace Strategy, handling this knowledge base is critical and ensures easy access to essential supporting data.

We strongly recommend a systematic approach to managing your data.

Even in smaller organisations, workplace projects quickly become complex, and it's easy to lose control of several thousand data points. It is crucial to avoid a situation where multiple versions of data (e.g. excel files) are circulating – at best; the result is costly and at worst disastrous.



4 Rhythm is key

A constantly updated knowledge base, providing customers with the latest activity profiles and foresight analysis, is a core feature of the spaciv approach to workplace strategy. So how often should you update your workplace insights?

Your data can and should be updated continually. However, we are supporting customers adopt an iterative process for implementing changes to the workplace. Most customers opt to make such micro improvements one to three times per year, giving users enough time to experience changes before reviewing them.



Don't freeze, embrace flexibility

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Change always has been a constant, especially in workplace design. However, the last years have shown how fast external factors can transform and in what unforgiving role organisations quickly linger if they do not adapt.

It is common to freeze at specific points during transformation projects, making it easier for external services to work on a set and agreed-upon basis. While this makes sense for new building projects, **we strongly recommend shifting the point of view in workplace strategy from the "finished project step" to the "current project basis" and enforcing the idea of constantly adapting external factors, user needs and space mix, for example.**

Flexibility in your approach increases support for change because users will appreciate your openness to adapt. Secondly, the initial project will reflect the latest and most current needs-driven and user-centric results, setting up the organisation for easier adoption of further change routines.





Change is easy, in good measure

Workplace strategy and change projects often are holistic approaches to motivate new behaviour through variations of work environments that reflect multiple work patterns. Commonly they are planned as typical projects with a defined start, goals and end - resulting in something that can be static for several years to come.

Especially considering the financial and organisational input needed for this widespread change, you would think that organisation work hard on keeping the results as long-lasting as possible. But unfortunately, that is not the case. This is even harder to understand if you consider that constant small changes and micro improvements have multiple benefits. For example, shortened updated cycles save costs in the long term while providing a consistently optimised work environment supporting the attractiveness of your workplace, staff retention, health and motivation. All while averting the next costly, organisation-wide and intrusive workplace change project. **Think in improvement loops and update cycles rather than once-in-a-while modernisation projects.**

7 Listen to everyone

As with any costly change project, you want to base decisions on reliable data and insights. While focus groups and user workshops are standard formats, we prefer to recommend crowd-modelling - like a user survey, but fully integrated with the data flow - for four specific reasons:

Speed

Collecting information in the more conventional format takes a lot of time. Scheduling can be a nightmare. With an automated, data-based approach, you can get quantifiable insights in a fraction of the time.

Reliability

Focus groups are typically made up of an - at least for the whole organisation - unrepresentative group of participants. You need a balanced cross-section of everyone to gain a reliable understanding of your organisation's actual needs.

Sensitivity

The workplace is an emotional topic. In short; fast, low-effort and widespread data contribution methods provide you with an objective dataset. A significantly more reliable foundation to work with.

Inclusion

More often than not, selected workshop participants represent only a fraction of existing diverse work and interaction styles. Think about who you would choose to participate in a workshop. The introvert? The stressed colleague? Are you selecting the one that complained a lot to you last week? Avoid this with low-effort but widespread interaction formats.



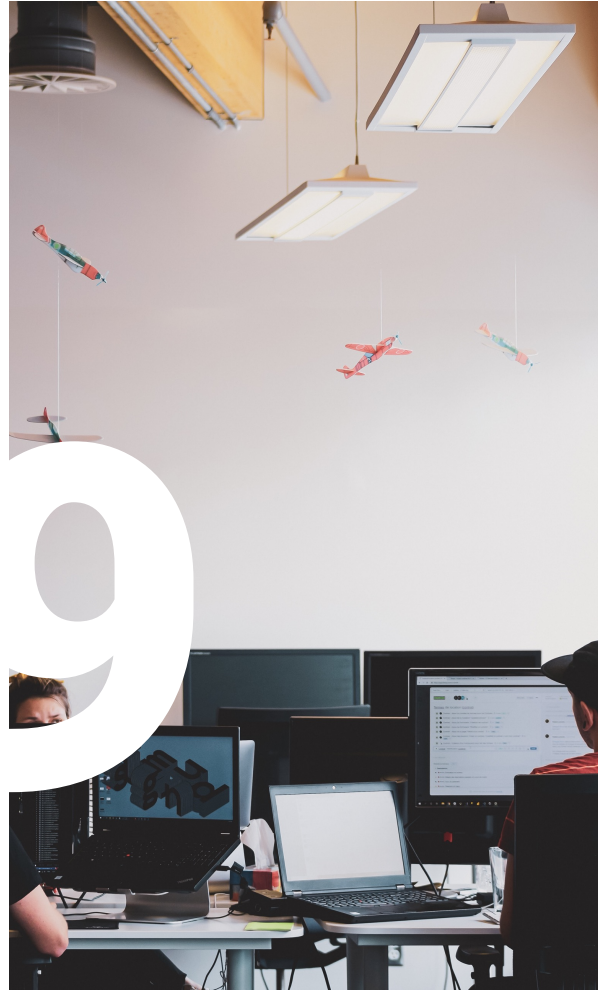


Spread knowledge, shape understanding

Your aim for any changes to the work environment should be the **best possible transparency to inform understanding and support**. Not an easily achievable goal while working with ever-changing insights and datasets.

A goal, nevertheless. We know how important it is to have this layer of transparency connect everyone involved to the project itself. Therefore, we integrated contributor dashboards to see how their individual responses influenced overall statistics. But not only contributors demand transparency. With spaciv, you can instantly generate and download reports with an overview of all crowd-modelled data insights. An always up-to-date presentation you can share with anyone interested.

Automate data, focus on people



spaciv was created based on the belief that no one knows an organisation better than the employees themselves. Therefore, a successful change process is driven by people and insights from the organisation itself.

We recommend splitting your project into two points of view - one driven by cold, unemotional datasets and one empathetic, directly interacting with your users. Doing so provides an optimised overall foundation as a decision basis and leaves many possibilities for individualisation inside a defined spectrum while moving forward.

Because of that, we strive to make the foundational data work for any workplace strategy as comprehensive, easy to use and quick as possible without sacrificing the quality of the output. That frees up valuable time to work directly with people on pressing topics at the right time.

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