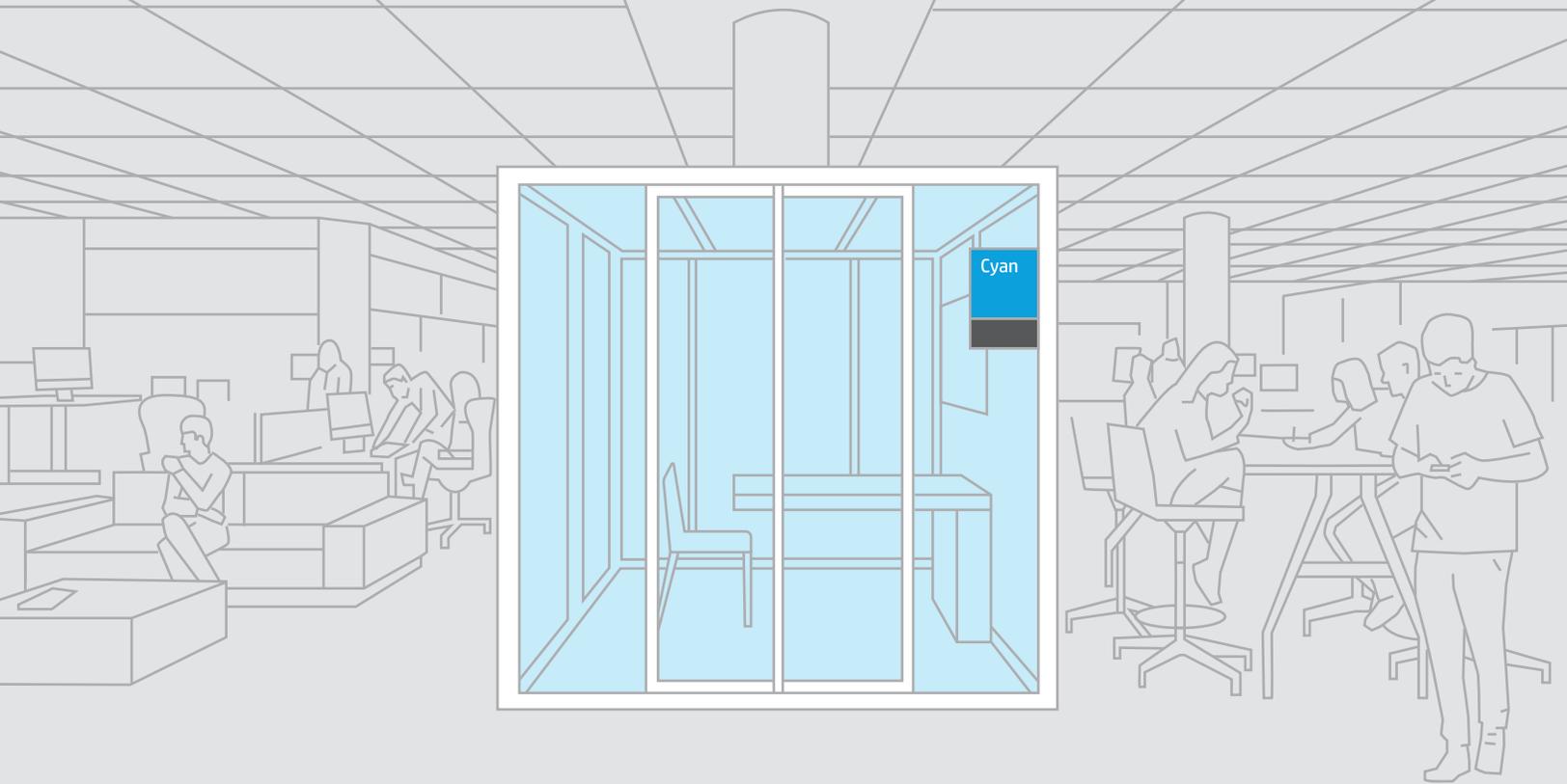


# Tomorrow's Office Today



A look inside “the world’s most connected office”

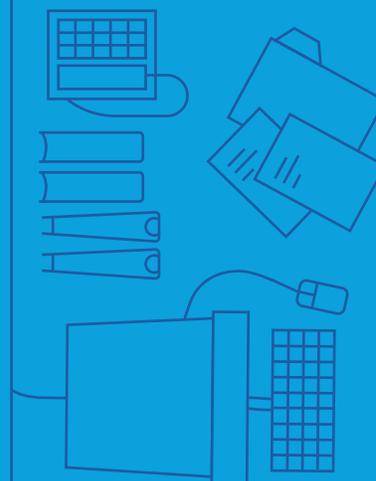
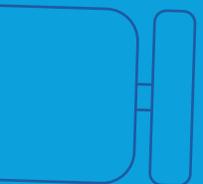
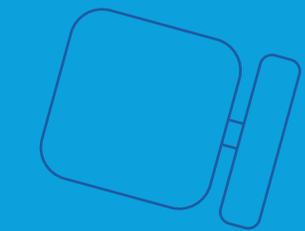
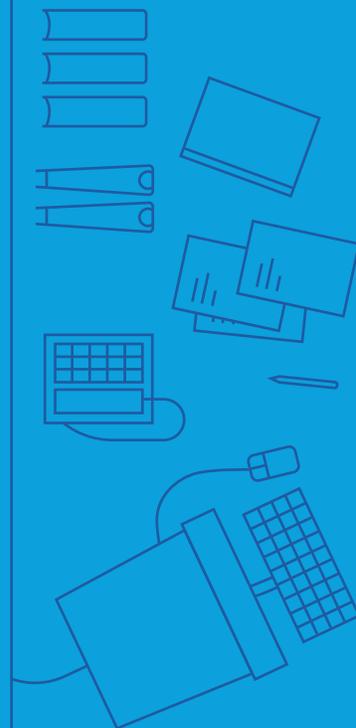
Presented by

TEKTONIKA



**Some day in the not-so-distant future, we'll look back on the era of cubicles, 9-to-5s, and desktop computers and shake our heads in disbelief.**

Digital technology has transformed not only how we do our work, but also how we think about it. Work—something you do sitting at the same enclosed desk all day, every day—is being subsumed by a more fluid approach that promotes collaboration and mobility. In doing so, it creates a paradigm for work that is more human, social, inspiring, and uplifting.



# Offices designed with collaboration at their core have swept the world during the past few years.

Why? Because in addition to technological advances that push the possibilities for communication forward, research proves that collaboration has a dramatic impact on productivity, creativity, and innovation. A report from Accenture on the Digital Collaboration Index states that, “In an increasingly digital and connected world, it’s vital that large enterprises and startups/entrepreneurs explore the value that can be created by closer and deeper collaboration with each other.”

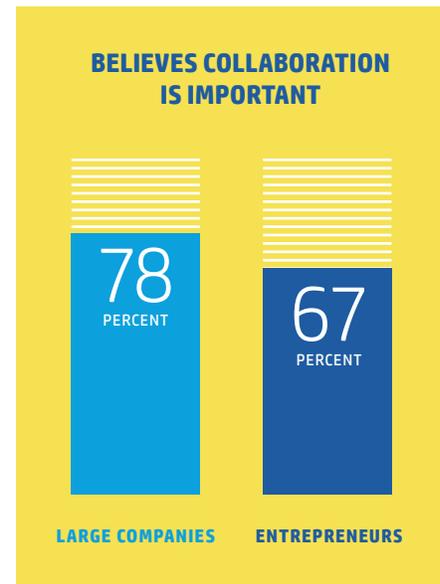
This Index measures both the effectiveness of an enterprise’s present collaboration mindset and how it successfully translates it into revenue growth and innovation company-wide. The study revealed that 78 percent of large companies and 67 percent of entrepreneurs believe collaboration was of prime importance. Of those surveyed, high performers in collaboration (those performing in the top twentieth percentile of the Digital Collaboration Index) reported higher levels of revenue growth in 2014—true for both startups and enterprises.

Research from Nielsen found that larger, more diverse teams generate better concepts. Teams of six or more people generated concepts that performed 58 percent better with consumers in pre-market testing, and teams with representatives from four or more functions generated concepts that performed 46 percent better than baseline results with consumers.

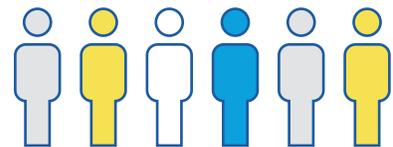
In industries where creativity and innovation are valued, organizations that don’t prioritize collaboration will struggle to maintain a competitive edge, but businesses across sectors are finding it a challenge to weave collaboration into the fiber of their company. It’s not enough to encourage people to collaborate—the physical layout of a space must make collaboration inevitable and ubiquitous. It’s no surprise that some of the world’s most innovative companies—Facebook, Google, Pixar—have built offices that make collaboration and connectivity a paramount priority.

In the digital age, this requires more than building an atrium for “unplanned collaborations” or cafeterias where “casual collisions” can occur. It means crafting office space that enables dynamic groups of people to work anywhere, anytime, with anyone; physical and digital space must be interwoven and inextricable.

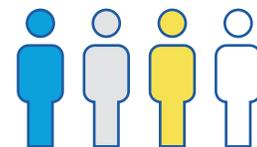
While it sounds great in theory, businesses have been slow to make the transition. Completely changing the landscape of an office is expensive, not to mention time-consuming and potentially disruptive. It requires forward-thinking companies to make the first foray into the unknown, not only to demonstrate the potential of connected workplaces, but also the “how.”



## GENERATING BETTER CONCEPTS



TEAMS WITH DIVERSE GROUPS OF 6+ CONCEPTS PERFORMED 58% BETTER



TEAMS WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM 4+ FUNCTIONS CONCEPTS PERFORMED 46% BETTER

## A building, a case study

R/GA is one of the most well-known and well-respected advertising agencies in the world. When founder Bob Greenberg decided it was time to move office buildings, he approached the endeavor the same way he has approached work throughout his career: with innovative and tech-forward thinking. R/GA built its global headquarters in New York City during the 1980s, but the company eventually outgrew the space and expanded across four different buildings.



R/GA acquired 200,000 square feet of a building at 450 West 33rd Street, and embarked on a complete and total renovation. They didn't just want an upgrade—they wanted the most connected office possible. R/GA brought elite architecture and integrated design firm Foster + Partners on board to rethink what an office could be in a radical new way.

R/GA's new global headquarters follows an open floor plan, with each of the two floors being larger than a football field. While aesthetics—and communicating R/GA's identity as a brand—were important, facilitating collaboration was the top concern. Greenberg wanted a space that would enable R/GA to locate as many of the 900 New York employees as possible on each floor, in order to drive interaction, creativity, and efficiency through close proximity.

Colocating hundreds of people who are online and on their computers all day long requires a tremendous amount of cabling. Foster + Partners designed a raised floor, enabling the distribution of over 100 miles of electricity and digital infrastructure in a way that doesn't compromise performance or design. There's also a canopy of Unistrut, a metal framing system, hanging overhead. It allows R/GA to easily reconfigure the floor plan and create private conference rooms of any and all sizes, as necessary.

R/GA's new office has 1,000 custom sit-stand desks on wheels that provide every employee not only with their own workspace, but also with high mobility. When employees don't want to be at their desks, they can go to a communal area to work, collaborate, socialize, and relax as they wish. All communal areas are equipped with IT infrastructure, so employees can quickly get up-and-running wherever they choose to work.

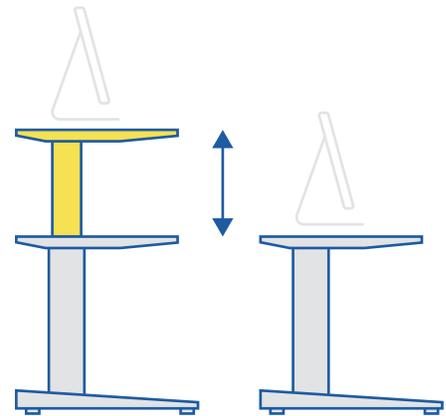
"Everything we look at [in the design], we want to be sure it's helping with collaboration, integration, and networking—things that will really move us forward," Greenberg told *Fast Company*. "And we're not investing in anything that would be part of the past...we wouldn't invest in finishes over everyone having a sit-stand desk."

One of the main challenges that open-concept offices raise is noise. Hundreds of people gathering in the same large room could be a recipe for constant noise, unless tempered. R/GA and Foster + Partners overcame this challenge by fitting acoustic panels to the coffered concrete ceiling to absorb sound. Spongy floor tiles also serve to dampen the noise, creating "the perfect amount of buzz," according to *Advertising Age*.

Light was also a key design concern. Bad lighting can cause painful and uncomfortable eye strain, as well as headaches, which can limit concentration levels and curb performance. It also leads to drowsiness and boredom, which translates to lower productivity, as well as dissatisfaction. To stave off light fatigue, R/GA installed 8,000 smart bulbs from Ketra that are programmed to change their color temperature and brightness based on the season and time of day.

With its new headquarters, R/GA prioritized not only intra-office collaboration, but also inter-office collaboration. The agency has 14 offices (and counting) around the world. Employees at every location needed the ability to seamlessly work together because as many as five different R/GA offices may be working on a project for an international client. R/GA set up state-of-the-art video conferencing technology that connects every office, so employees across the world can feel like they're in the same room.

"The ability to connect our entire global workforce, regardless of which continent, country, or office they sit in, has inspired some fantastic combinations of capabilities and talent," Daniel Diez, R/GA's EVP, global chief marketing officer, told *Forbes*. "And the impact on our work, culture, and client relationships has been immediate."



"Everything we look at [in the design], we want to be sure it's helping with collaboration, integration, and networking—things that will really move us forward," Greenberg told *Fast Company*. "And we're not investing in anything that would be part of the past...we wouldn't invest in finishes over everyone having a sit-stand desk."

## Connecting physical and digital landscapes

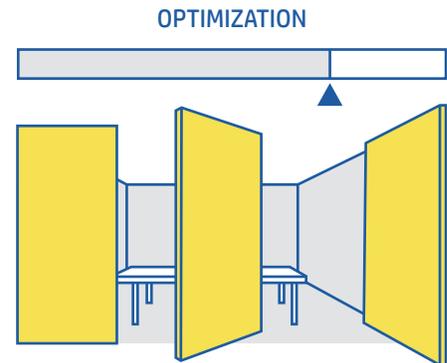
Beyond the design of the space itself, R/GA enhanced the connectivity of the office with an internal app, which provides a description of the art that is displayed throughout the office through geo-proximity beacons. The agency also conducted a contest that called on employees to design functionalities for the app, in order to make the office even more connected and productive. The best ideas will become part of R/GA's new Connected Design practice, which will work with other businesses to help them revamp their own office spaces. In this way, R/GA's office also serves as a forum for testing new digital ideas and applications that its clients can use to their advantage.

R/GA's new headquarters is still evolving, and it's flexible enough that it can evolve over time. While some of these changes will be organic, others will be the result of implementing technology and analyzing data. For example, R/GA is working with the Enlighted Space app to create an IoT motion trail and implement heat mapping software, which provides insight into how the space is used at every minute of the day.

"This data-driven analysis reveals enormous insight into how the actual use of the space is aligning with the design," wrote Jessica Appelgren, director of marketing communications and public relations at Enlighted Inc. "Based on this data, plus input and feedback from the occupants themselves, the space can then be optimized to meet the evolving spatial needs of the workers."

While a space this connected may seem like a luxury only multinational, award-winning advertising agencies can afford, navigating costs are all about setting priorities—and deciding what's important and what isn't. This means investing more in cutting-edge technology and less in things like wood paneling or fancy molding. "One of the most surprising things we learned is that building a connected space doesn't have to cost any more than a traditional space, you just have to be willing to make unconventional choices," Greenberg told *Forbes*.

With its new connected office, one of R/GA's main goals was to recruit and retain the best talent by creating the most creative, collaborative, and innovative workspace that would enable people to perform their best. The impact of the space quickly became clear—R/GA's retention rate went up by five percent within five months of moving, *Advertising Age* reported. Companies like Facebook and Google have demonstrated just how strong an impact an inspiring office can have on retention, and offering boundary-pushing workspaces is one of the best ways for an advertising company to compete.



"Data-driven analysis reveals enormous insight into how the actual use of the space is aligning with the design," wrote Jessica Appelgren, director of marketing communications and public relations at Enlighted Inc. "Based on this data, plus input and feedback from the occupants themselves, the space can then be optimized to meet the evolving spatial needs of the workers."

The new headquarters is also intended as a “living lab” for testing innovations, like the GPS-sensing beacons, apps, and networked office communications. This enables R/GA to deliver better service to clients of its new Connected Design practice. They’re serving as their own guinea pigs, so they know what works and what doesn’t before making any recommendations.

For instance, a common issue with open office plans is navigation. R/GA tackled this hurdle by developing a cohesive signage system based on airport systems. The graphic language is consistent across their physical space, website, and app. But R/GA didn’t stop there: they’re also experimenting with using beacons to direct employees to the nearest available conference room (essential in a decentralized office setup).

R/GA’s app also aims to enhance relationships with clients. The first thing people see when entering the office is a cafe area with thirty screens placed around it, displaying photos of teams, client names, and work highlights. This not only reinforces employees’ sense of purpose, but also emphasizes to potential and current clients the value of partnering with R/GA. This is further reinforced by the app, which provides more in-depth case studies of the work showcased on those screens.



# A workspace that works

By moving into a completely new space—and building it out from scratch—R/GA had a rare opportunity to reconceptualize every aspect of the office from the foundation up. They were able to throw out notions of what an office “is” or “should be” in order to create a space built for the digital age and the reality of working in it. But even businesses that aren’t starting from square one can take valuable lessons away from R/GA and take steps to make their office as connected and collaborative as possible.

Mobility and flexibility are driving principles in today’s world, and IT infrastructure needs to reflect that. Offices are no longer static places where an employee sits at a desk and works independently. They’re hives of activity and cross-pollination.

Employees want and need the ability to work from anywhere at any time with any number of people; it should be as easy to collaborate with two people as it is with two hundred. They need communication tools that enable seamless sharing and make it possible for people across oceans to feel like they are in the same room. They need devices, like smart bulbs and thermostats, that understand and optimize for their needs. They need apps that enable them to maximize their use of the space and services available.

Just as life in today’s world represents fluid boundaries between the physical and the digital, so should the environments in which people work. No one wants to work in an environment that feels cold, generic, and stifling. The office should be inspiring and uplifting, designed to maximize human achievement, well-being, and creativity.

“We have only just scratched the surface of what is possible when you connect the physical and digital landscapes,” Greenberg said. “I can’t wait to see what comes next as we further reimagine the relationship between architecture, design, and technology.”

## RECREATING R/GA ANYWHERE: A CHECKLIST

### 1. OPEN FLOOR PLAN

Open floor plans promote communication, camaraderie, and the free flow of ideas.



### 2. BREAKOUT ROOMS

Meeting rooms and nooks of all sizes distributed throughout the office make it easy for employees to collaborate whenever they need.

Every room should have whiteboards, plugs, and jacks so employees don’t need to leave when they are in the zone.

### 3. MOBILE DESKS

Mobile desks enable employees to work from wherever feels right at that moment.

Mobility facilitates the creation of dynamic teams, since employees can easily rearrange where they sit or stand as necessary.

### 4. SMART LIGHTBULBS

Adjusting color and brightness based on the time of day can reduce worker fatigue and boost productivity.



### 5. SOUND ABSORPTION

Open, collaborative office spaces can be loud, but this should never get in the way of the quiet needed to get work done.

### 6. VIDEO-CONFERENCING TECHNOLOGY

Whether you have offices around the world, clients in other regions, or employees who work remotely, seamless video conference technology is a must.

### 7. IT INFRASTRUCTURE

A connected, collaborative workplace is only as good as the IT infrastructure underlying it.



Invest more in technology, and less on the things that don’t really matter.



For more insights, visit [tektionikamag.com](http://tektionikamag.com)

