

ONWARD AND UPWARD

How to optimize your next office space



Shown: Wilton Re Cafe

PLASTARC



YOU'VE ESTABLISHED A VISION FOR YOUR COMPANY.

Y

ou've assembled a team, started working,
and are now starting to grow beyond the limits
of your office space. So how do you go about
choosing the perfect office space for your needs?



*Shown: Informatica
Bangalore conference,
workrooms, circulation*

A multitude of factors go into creating and cultivating a work environment that will suit your organization and bringing together two of your biggest assets—space and people—to make your work stronger.

Even if you're not looking to move right away, it's important to keep tabs on a number of things that will help you find the right space when the time comes—they'll save you time, money, and will make you

more successful in the long run. A full relocation process can last 18 – 24 months, so it's never too early to get started.

YOUR SPACE WORKS. BUT IT COULD BE BETTER.

YOUR FUTURE NEEDS

There are many simple ways you can assess, monitor, and improve your current workplace. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, your current space probably encourages certain types of work, while discouraging others. Is your office too loud? Too quiet? Do people have space to work in groups? As individuals? Types of spaces can be as important as size of space, especially when your day consists of a range of tasks that include varying numbers of people.

The best part of all of this is you don't have to start from scratch—your testing ground is right beneath your feet. Think of your current space as an experiment; once you interpret the results, you'll get closer to understanding your future needs as a business. You may even discover ways to reconfigure and renovate your current space—a process in itself, if you plan to stay put for a while.



SO HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED?

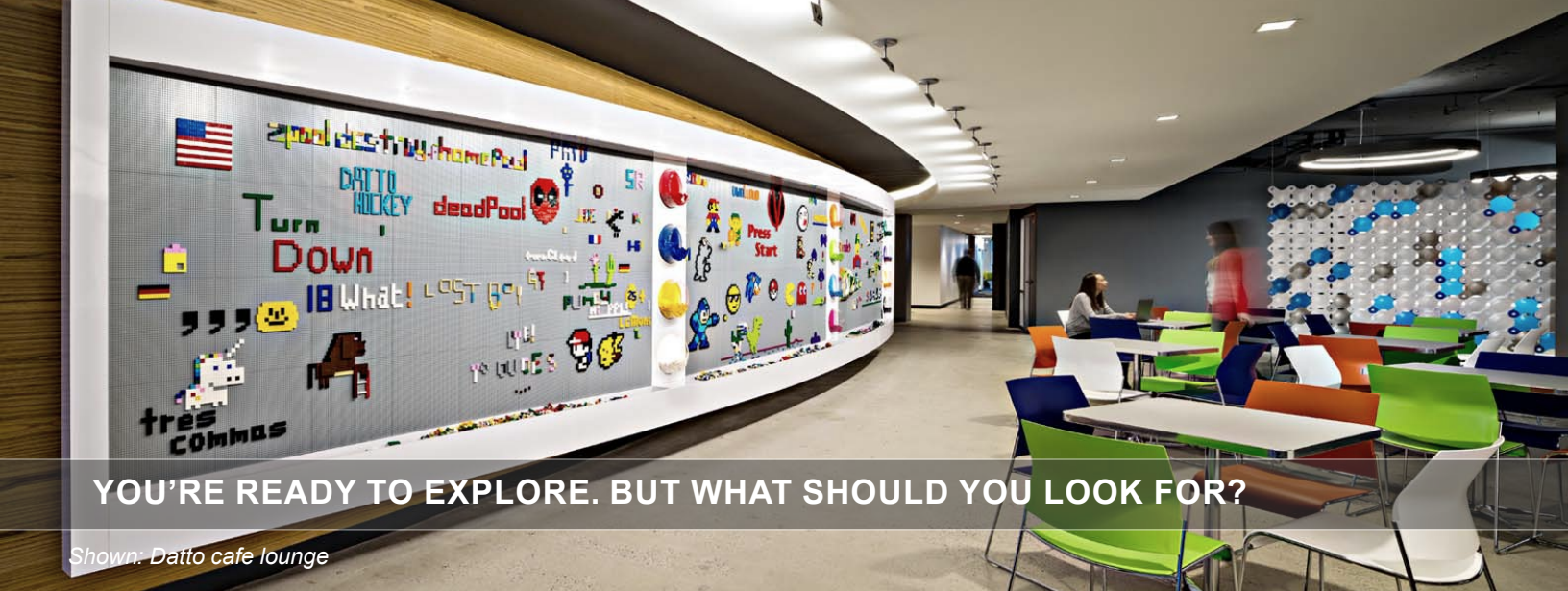
Shown: Datto cafe lounge

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

This list might seem a bit overwhelming at first, but if you follow the steps below, you will learn a lot about how these elements might play in to what your business requires and what might be possible.

WORKPLACE RELOCATION / REDESIGN CHECKLIST:

- **Assess your current workspace**
- **Determine areas for improvement and future goals**
- **Identify practices to make physical design meet these goals**
- **Investigate the technology needed to support intended functions**
- **Work on designing and constructing the space**
- **Monitor, evaluate, and modify results**



YOU'RE READY TO EXPLORE. BUT WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR?

Shown: Datto cafe lounge

THINGS TO CONSIDER

What kinds of things might you consider when designing and selecting a new space? Being fluent in the design of your space and articulating your goals will go a long way in ensuring a seamless and efficient relocation process. But no process is perfect and you may encounter some obstacles. Here are a few concepts to consider:

► SPACE

- Get feedback from employees on amenities that would help them be more productive and/or enjoy the workplace better (Note: If you're working with a small budget, you may want to phrase this as "what are your favorite and least favorite amenities of our current space?"...it may help avoid the disappointment of telling staff their requests for air hockey tables and pet monkeys will not be fulfilled.)
- Determine which activities and environments are most important to the kinds of work that you do, so that you can find a space that will support them
- Consider whether your staff going to be all in one location or working in a mobile/flexible way. Should you consider relocating to a coworking space?

► NEIGHBORHOOD / LOCATION

- Consider your employees and their locations (possibly using zip code analysis) in selecting a location – try to encourage and support convenient public/shared transit and commutes. Survey results show that for one hour saved in commute (via transport or telecommute) employees spend half an hour back on work.
- Is proximity to certain other companies/industries a factor in your work and collaboration needs?

► BRAND / MISSION

- Does the space support your startup's brand and goals? For example, if ease of use or transparency is important to your product and vision, does your workspace reflect that in its design and culture?



WHO WILL YOU WORK WITH?

Shown: Informatica Milan coffee point

CHOOSE YOUR TEAM

► ARCHITECT

It is important to work with an architect while you are still touring office spaces. An architect can join you on tours and conduct test fits to determine if a space meets your needs. Architects are helpful negotiating lease terms with landlords and creating realistic buildout budgets. Once you lease a space, your architect will work with you to develop a design for the space and produce drawings that can be used by a general contractor.

► GENERAL CONTRACTOR (GC)

A GC will manage all aspects of the construction of your buildout. It is a best practice to solicit multiple bids for any construction project, and a GC will be able to use the construction documents from your architect to prepare a bid. Your GC will manage all of the vendors that are needed to complete the project (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, etc) and the dollar value submitted with their bid will cover the amount they need in order to pay each vendor.

TIMELINE

First, be aware that relocation will require an extended time commitment. Take into account predicted growth before signing a long-term lease, especially if you anticipate a sizeable increase in employee numbers. Some approximate time periods to allocate can be found in our timeline at the start of this paper.



Begin the process, preparing both your business and mind for the transition involved in moving the organization and financial outlay.



Determine what you have and what you need in the future—engaging everybody, staff and business partners!



Self-assessment—identify your site and business needs



Using your newfound information, consult with us!



Select the professional consultants that best suit your needs.



With your chosen professional consultants, design the fit out!



It's time for you to fit out the space and make it your own.



Move from your current space into your new place!



HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE TO DIFFERENT SPACE DESIGNS YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER:

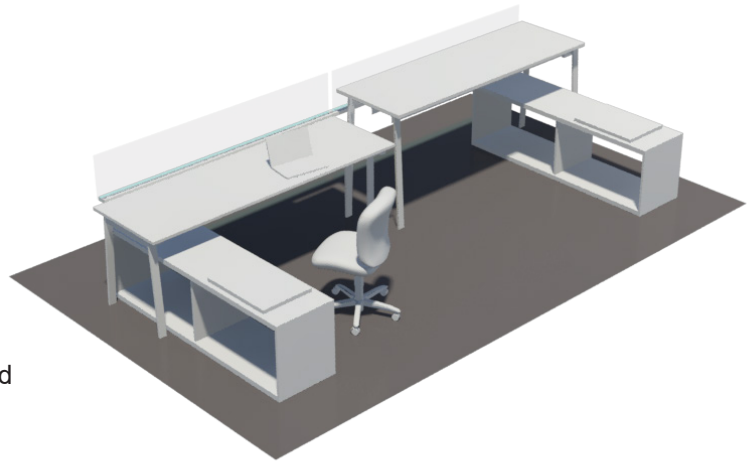
INDIVIDUAL SPACES

A chair. A desk. Sure, these are the basic building blocks of a workspace, but there are many ways you can configure your people to enable individual success. You might consider one or more of these strategies, depending on your style and capacity:

► ASSIGNED WORKSTATIONS:

Your standard old-fashioned permanent desk (may come with a flashy nameplate and/or drawers full of useless takeout menus and old paperclips).

BEST FOR: Long, consistent days of individual work that require stacks of personal documents on hand at all times.



▼ UNASSIGNED WORKSTATIONS:

(a.k.a. “hoteling”) An individual desk workspace that can be used by any employee simply by plugging in.

BEST FOR: Days filled with a variety of tasks where you are willing to trade a fixed location for greater flexibility and increased amounts of space. It may not look that different from assigned, but it all depends on how you use it!

▲ FOCUS BOOTH:

These sometimes take the form of individual phone booths, “library” areas, or enclosed pods – the “Quiet Car” of flexible office space.

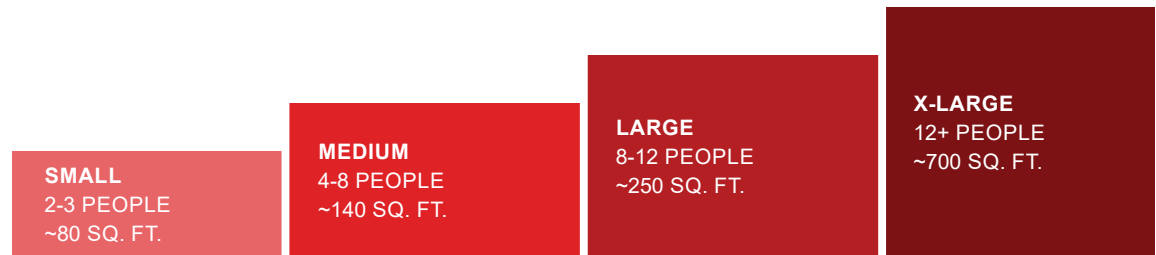
BEST FOR: You guessed it! Heads-down work. Length and frequency may range, but it's likely most of your employees will need this kind of environment from time to time (especially if you have an open plan and a really “FUN!” culture). A smaller-scale space with lots of sound-proofing is better for a higher level of focus.



COLLABORATION SPACES

► CONFERENCE ROOMS:

As you've probably noticed, conference rooms are not "one size fits all" and you will need to take some measurements of your business to get the mix right. Here's an approximate size chart:

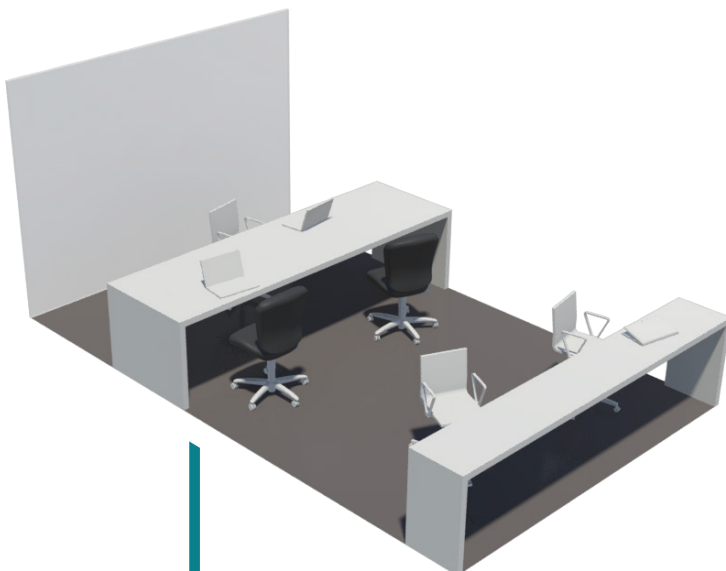


CONFERENCE ROOMS SIZES

BEST FOR: Meetings of all shapes and sizes! Just make sure your booking policies help allocate them effectively. No one wants Joe Boss-From-LA holding up in the X-Large room by himself all day...

ARE YOUR CONFERENCE ROOMS CONSTANTLY BOOKED FOR THINGS THAT DON'T LOOK LIKE CONFERENCES?

IF SO, YOU MAY NEED MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:



◀ OPEN COLLABORATION AREAS:

Sometimes your people may be working together on something and need space that's more than just a desk, but not quite an enclosed room. These can be placed in clustered areas on the floor or distributed throughout, depending on the nature of your work.

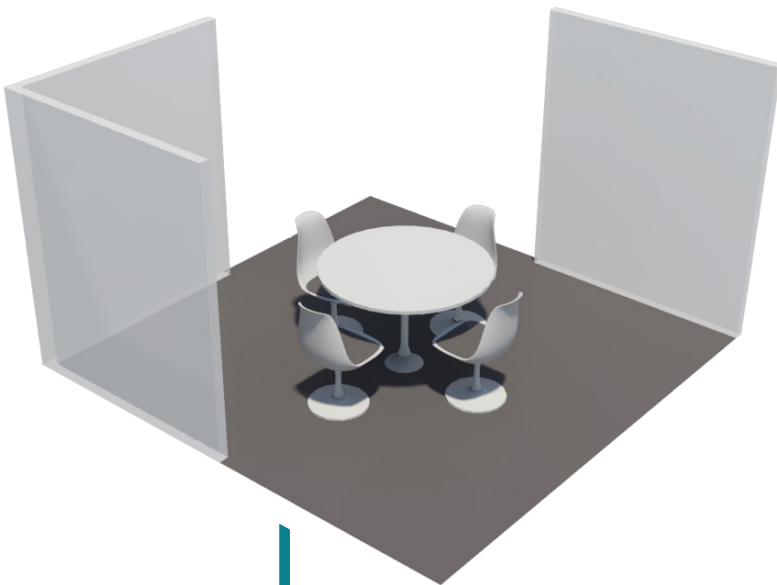
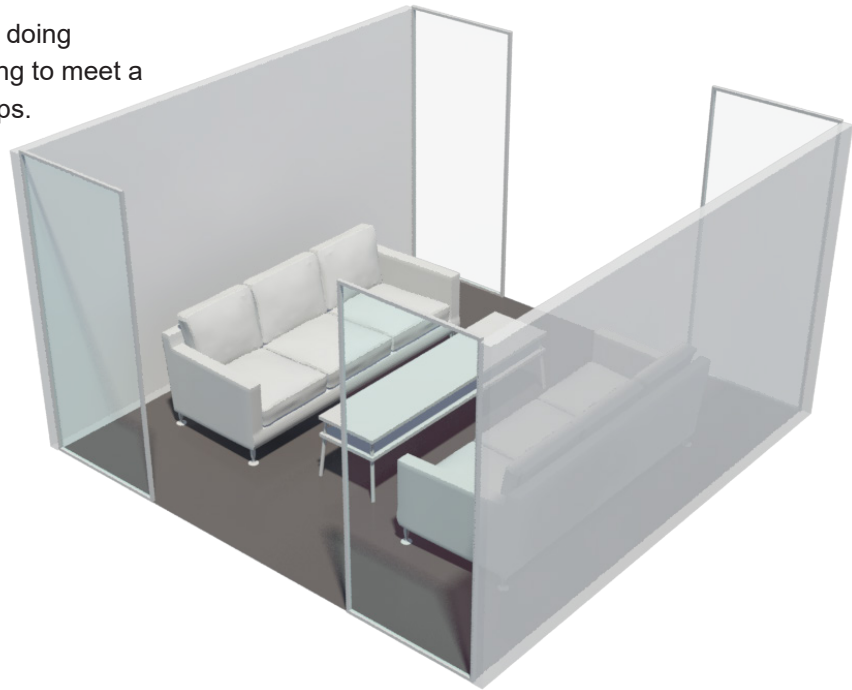
BEST FOR: Quick team meetings, working together in small groups, one-on-one meetings with lots of papers / drawings / post-its

GUIDE

► **SOFT SEATING:**

These elements—which can take the form of diner-style booths, couches, ottomans, and other comfy furniture—are designed for informal collaboration and individual work.

BEST FOR: When you're doing individual work, but are planning to meet a teammate soon. Quick sync-ups. Informal discussions with visitors. Pretending you're working from home on your couch...which is sometimes incredibly productive!

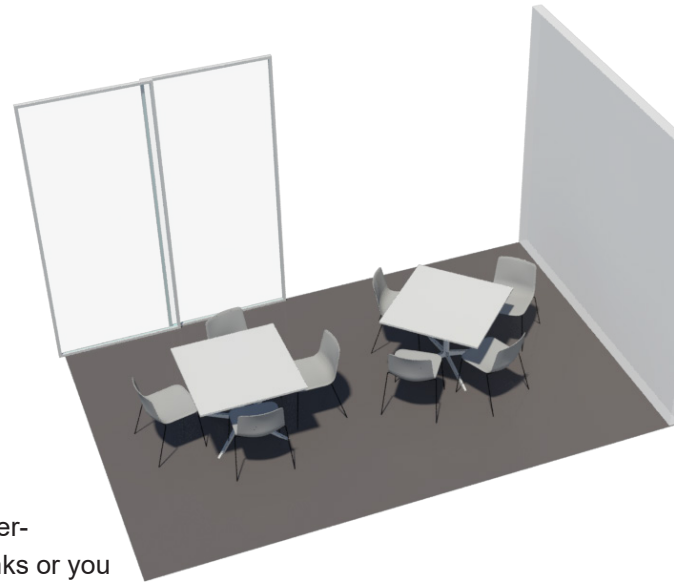


◀ **SMALL MEETING ROOMS:**

Enclosed, but small, these spaces can free up some of those precious conference rooms while reducing the decibel level on the floor.

BEST FOR: Taking conference calls as a group. Louder one-on-ones and small group meetings. Sensitive discussions i.e. client meetings, HR-related matters, performance reviews.

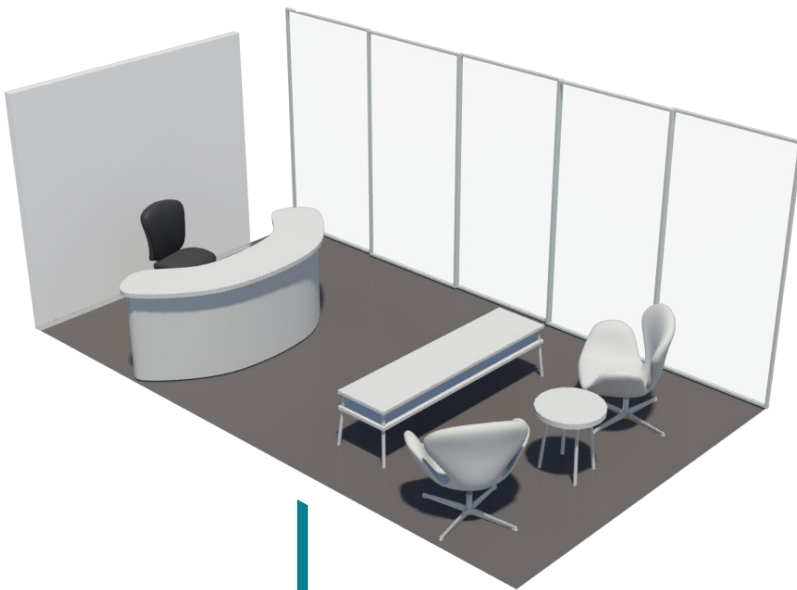
GUIDE



► CAFE / SNACK AREA:

The fun stuff! Whether your pantry is overflowing with tons of free snacks and drinks or you operate on more of a B.Y.O.-model, you should consider the size and placement of this space to be both as social as possible and, equally, as far away from quiet areas as necessary. Ample daylight and an open atmosphere will help people recharge. For example, a bar that opens into a lounge area is a great way to create an upbeat dynamic.

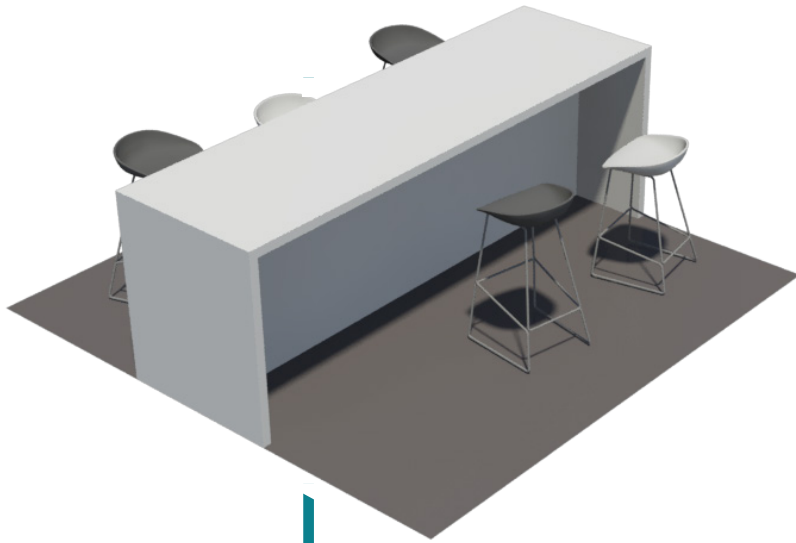
BEST FOR: Breakfast, lunch, dinner, midnight snacks, and those Fridays everyone actually takes a break to catch up and socialize!



◀ RECEPTION:

Depending on your size, the number of external visitors you receive, and the patience level of the person sitting nearest the door, you may want to think about having a reception area. Plus, it's a great place to put your logo and makes your space look pretty important!

BEST FOR: Organizations with a good flow of visitors and a desire to brand their space more visually.



◀ **STANDING HEIGHT MEETING:**

A variety of work surfaces, including multiple and/or adjustable height tables, allows for maximum personalization of the workplace and practices like standing meetings, which have been shown to be shorter and more productive.

BEST FOR: Informal meetings. Spontaneous and friendly conversations when navigating between spaces.

▶ **CO-CREATION TABLE:**

Appropriate technology enables multiple types of meetings, collaboration and presentations. By integrating devices throughout several space options, there is no pressure on one type of space to fulfill all presentation and meeting needs.

BEST FOR: Meeting done with people outside the office. Integrating different types of media into the conversation.





ESTABLISH A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT SUITS YOUR SPACE

Shown: Informatica Tel Aviv kitchen

YOUR NEW WORKPLACE

Establishing a workplace and culture that suits your space and your organization is just as important as the physical design.

Ways to do this may include:

- **Creating a new office “Welcome Guide”.**
- **Taking your employees to view the new space during construction.**
- **Hosting an office-warming party—for staff, rather than clients.**
- **Practicing what you preach. Demonstrate the use of various spaces to show why they exist and how they can be configured.**
- **Making adjustments. The task of creating a successful office space is never finished—solicit feedback, keep improving, and use the space as a tool for communication with your employees.**



**YOU'RE FINALLY READY TO MOVE AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE YOU CAN FIND WHO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?**

Shown: Informatica Tel Aviv conference zone

HOW WE CAN HELP

It is important to work with building professionals you can trust, and the process of vetting a group of contractors to obtain multiple bids is highly involved. You should speak to references, examine past project experience, and obtain background information for any candidate that is invited to bid on your project. With thousands of companies that provide design and construction services, this process can be a daunting task.

PLASTARC is a social research, workplace innovation, and real estate strategy firm serving tenants and owner-occupiers, and collaborating with architecture and design firms.

MELISSA MARSH, founder of PLASTARC, and Assoc. AIA is part researcher and part innovator. Melissa defined an early career in workplace innovation with projects in design, architecture and master planning around the world. She has worked with international clients on the forefront of leveraging workplace to inform corporate culture, employee experience, and business strategy.

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