



# How better use of space can unlock cost savings

A guide to flexible office usage strategies that boost collaboration,  
innovation and efficiency



Choosing an office location is an important part of your workplace strategy—but it's only the beginning. How you design and use that office could unlock cost savings, enhance collaboration and support your evolution for years to come. With **the right tools and approach**, you can make the best use of both your space and your money while future-proofing your workplace for the next generations of work and talent.

Why is it so important to get workplace strategy right and how do you get started? Before asking the essential questions needed to guide you on our journey, it's important to understand how work patterns and employee expectations have changed.



# Understanding the work patterns of today

Since the rapid adoption of hybrid work, employees' expectations of the office and how they use it have dramatically changed. Your organisation may offer hybrid work, or you may be encouraging full-time office attendance. Either way, to understand how much and what type of space you need, you must understand how, when and where work is happening.

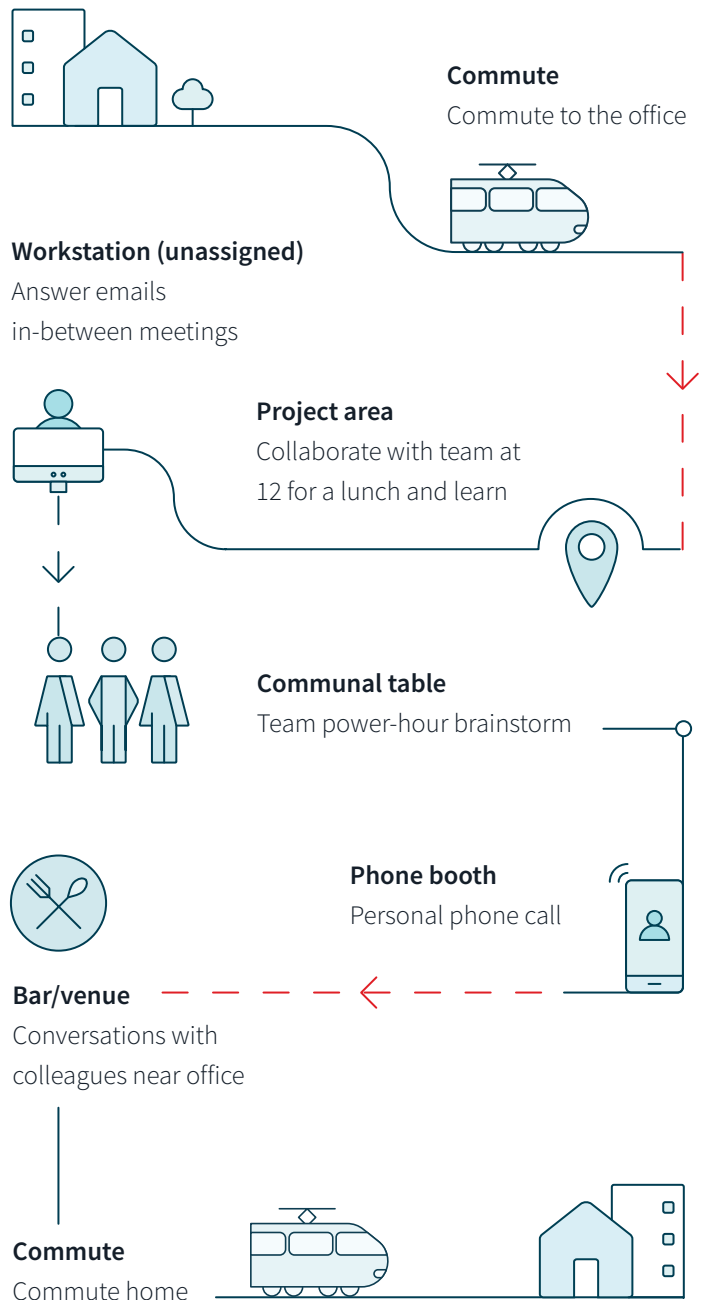
## For example:

One employee may spend very little of the day at a single desk. Their workday might encompass several small-group meetings, a one-on-one with a colleague, a large-group team update, multiple video calls, a coffee or lunch break with a coworker, mixed with periods of quiet time for emails and focused work. On the other hand, a different employee may come to the office for heads-down work, free of interruption from distractions at home.

## A day in the life of a hybrid worker

### Home

After dropping children off at school, take the first two meetings of the day from home






## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

Today's employees **expect the office to offer a productive, engaging experience**, with the right workspaces for different types of work. In this environment, creating an adaptable, future-ready space that caters to employee work patterns requires thoughtfulness. You'll need to address how much square feet you need, what combination of workspaces are needed, and how much it will cost. You'll need a deep understanding of your people and their work behaviours.

Taking advantage of new design approaches and workplace technologies helps companies engage employees, improve teamwork, attract talent and create a setting where people want to be.







# A guide to future-proofing your office

To get started, this guide dives into the most important questions to ask when creating an adaptive workplace strategy. From practical ways to analyse work behaviours and tips for designing welcoming office spaces to strategies for using data and technology, this guide is your one-stop-shop for future-proofing your office.

How better use of space can unlock cost savings

# 1

How much  
space do you  
really need?



## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

Determining how much square feet is needed is one of the biggest challenges companies have faced since work patterns dramatically shifted several years ago. In the past, a simple formula of “people per square foot” could accurately assess a company’s space needs, depending on the type of business. Now, to determine how much space you really need, it’s important to understand the difference between occupancy and utilisation. This understanding can help you take advantage of potential cost savings and operational efficiencies.

Workplace strategy is most successful when backed by occupancy and utilisation data. You may learn, for instance, that large conference rooms are underutilised, while employees often have smaller meetings huddled in a cubicle or hallway because the smaller meeting rooms are constantly booked. Or you may learn that employees tend to avoid certain spaces.

A successful workplace strategy uses this information to make the office more functional, productive and efficient for today’s work styles. With an understanding of peak occupancy patterns, and the types of spaces most in demand, you may be able to reduce your square foot requirements and occupancy costs. You may also free up capital for investments that will make the office more productive and enjoyable.

To gather essential information, you can use a number of various tools and methods. One low-cost approach is for your own teams to

conduct employee surveys and have conversations with employees and business leaders. Delving into employee behaviours, work styles, needs, preferences and perceptions is an essential step toward understanding how employees use the office. Even walking through the space periodically can provide important insight as to what spaces employees prefer and those that they avoid.

A more intensive option is an **occupancy study**. When performed by an objective third party, an occupancy study uncovers comprehensive data and insights about your space usage patterns. Also important, it will identify and weigh competing stakeholder concerns about the workplace and make it easier to secure senior executive buy-in for reshaping the workplace.





# 2

How can data  
help inform my  
workplace strategy?





## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

In addition to observation, conversations and surveys, you can glean useful information from the data generated by today's building and workplace technologies. For example, JLL research shows that **security badge data is the primary data source used by 97% of organisations**, across industries, for utilisation tracking. Room-booking software also generates valuable data about the days and times that workspaces are being used.

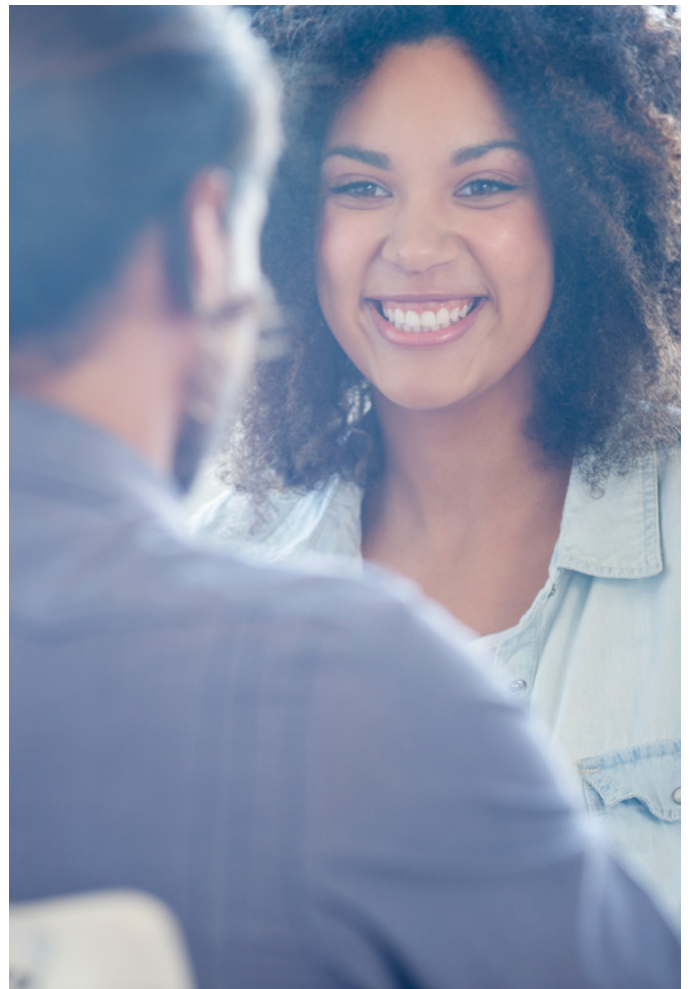
While useful, however, badge data doesn't reveal why employees came to the office that day, or which parts of the office they are occupying, other than areas that require badge access. WiFi login data can provide additional information about where employees are working. Another option is to install short-term or permanent wireless sensors, including motion sensors, to gather ongoing anonymised data about space usage.

Combining data-driven findings with employee and leadership input is a useful exercise—because perceptions and reality may not match. For instance, employees may perceive a space as being more crowded—or emptier—than it actually is simply because it feels that way, suggesting that space layout warrants improvement. That's why it is helpful to have both quantitative and qualitative inputs when assessing occupancy.

Analysing space utilisation can provide surprising insights. Whether the approach is hybrid or office only, the workplace can be poorly utilised and lack the right spaces and features that would improve

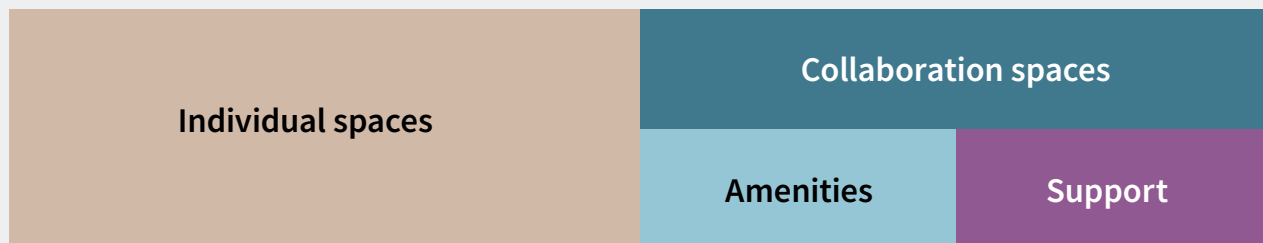
employee happiness and productivity. Most significantly, you may be able to shift from providing dedicated workspaces for every employee to relying on mostly shared workspaces available for all by reservation, freeing space for other purposes.

To support team collaboration and group activities, many organisations are revisiting which types of spaces they offer. Forward-looking companies are allocating less space to dedicated individual workspaces and more to collaboration spaces and amenities.

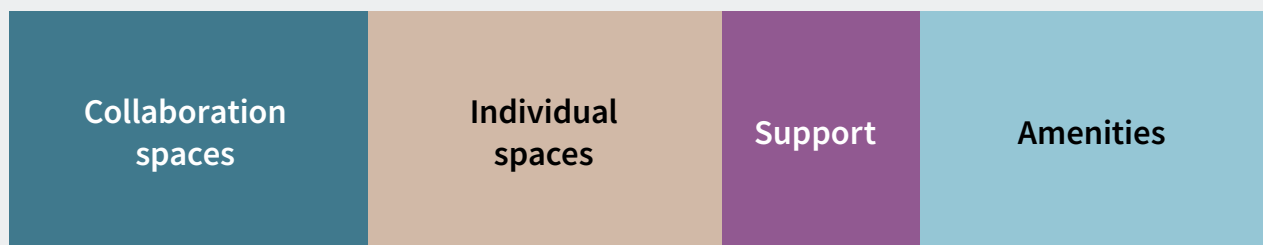


## The new space mix for changing demand

### Existing office space type mix\*



### Virtual-flexible space type mix\*



\*Illustrative diagrams based on overall space categories

Using **technology** to understand factors like headcount, anticipated growth, and lease terms can help determine the space, layout, and square footage that makes the most sense for your business. At the portfolio level, the data will likely reveal opportunities to consolidate spaces and exit leases, reducing long-term occupancy

costs and freeing capital to invest in workplace redesigns and improvements. You could also pursue opportunities to co-locate departments that interact frequently, need similar types of workspaces, and could potentially share office equipment—further improving efficiency.

# 3

How do we design flexible workplaces that save money and use space wisely?





## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

JLL research shows that investment in office design can improve the environment for focused individual work, boost collaboration and improve air quality—all critical to employee performance. Redesigned offices can offer a choice of workspaces for different types of work, as well as views and green spaces, all of which are strongly linked to increased employee wellbeing and productivity, according to JLL research. Our research also finds that acoustics, thermal comfort and space for individual working are the worst-rated factors in workplaces, so it pays to focus on improvements in these areas.

Also important, you can redesign your offices with built-in flexibility to address current and future needs and reduce the need for costly renovations as needs change. Through the principles of flexible office design, you can create adaptable, employee-focused environments that support different work styles, promote collaboration, and can easily be reconfigured. Combined, adaptable design features can improve employee retention, satisfaction and productivity, and create a strong return on investment.



## Principles of the flexible office

### Activity-based design

Empowers employees to choose different zones and workspaces for different tasks:

- Quiet zones for focus
- Collaboration zones for teams
- Phone booths for privacy
- Social areas for informal interactions

### Flexible layout

- Easily transformed for individual work, group meetings, events or creative sessions
- Modular furniture and reconfigurable layouts

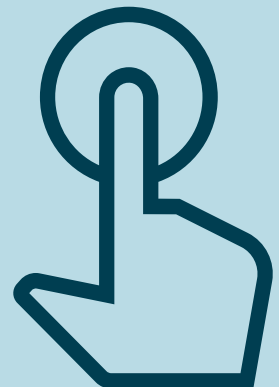
### Flexible infrastructure

- Power, data and HVAC configuration that allow for easy changes and upgrades



# 4

How do we integrate  
technology and digital  
infrastructure?



## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

An important element of flexible design is to incorporate **workplace technologies** that help optimise use of your office space. Investing in videoconferencing tools, robust WiFi, and interactive whiteboards can boost employee satisfaction and productivity allowing for seamless teamwork between remote and in-office employees.

Meanwhile, workspace reservation systems streamline employees' use of different spaces throughout the workday, while generating

real-time data about workspace availabilities and space utilisation.

Choosing office space in buildings with advanced tech features can also create a more flexible and efficient work environment. Connected building systems integrate various technologies to optimise building performance, energy efficiency and sustainability, and self-adjust in response to occupancy levels—improving the employee experience.





# 5

How can understanding space utilisation reduce operating costs?



## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

You can use today's facilities management technology systems to correlate building energy consumption with the actual use of space. By using space efficiently, you can avoid the cost of heating, cooling and maintaining under-utilised space. You can also see which facilities are the most or least costly to operate, so you can either focus on improving space performance or transition to more efficient buildings for long-term operational savings.

Ideally, you'll put sustainable facility features in place alongside space utilisation improvements to increase efficiency and provide long-term cost savings. Sustainably designed and operated workplaces that use eco-friendly materials, LED lighting, and reusable components will reduce energy costs and contribute to emissions reduction goals and address employees' sustainability-related expectations.



# 6

How do we  
enhance collaboration  
and innovation?





## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

Creative thinking thrives outside the confines of a traditional cubicle or private office. To foster collaboration and innovation, it's best to create informal unassigned seating areas, with nearby whiteboards for spontaneous discussions.

These spaces can include everything from a lounge area or high-top table to a coffee bar, kitchenette or huddle booths. Another option is to create dedicated, reservable spaces with moveable dividers for deep brainstorming sessions free of distractions. These spaces should include such features as writable walls, flexible seating and presentation tools to capture the idea flow.

Throughout, you can combine colour, lighting and artwork to energise spaces and provide visual and mental stimulation. Creative elements like inspiring quotes, murals or interactive installations can reinforce a culture of curiosity and experimentation.



How better use of space can unlock cost savings

# 7

How do we create  
a compelling office  
experience that tells  
our brand story?



## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

Visual elements also contribute strongly to the office environment. Varied textures and use of colour influence mood, while plants and natural materials appeal to the human desire for nature. Open sightlines and quiet spaces support mental health, creativity and satisfaction, while natural light promotes wellbeing and reduces stress.

Ensure the office is welcoming for everyone by focusing on comfort and accessibility. Provide adjustable chairs, sit-stand desks, comfortable casual seating, and accessible fixtures and furnishings that work for people of different physical abilities.

In addition, articulating your company's culture and values through design elements and storytelling can spark pride and unity for employees. These elements don't have to be costly to create a positive workplace experience.



Creating a positive work experience:

### **JLL Walnut Creek office →**

#### **Informed workplace decisions through data and collaboration**

- Used workplace utilisation data to optimise space design
- Conducted employee surveys to understand needs and preferences
- Designed for cross-team collaboration based on employee input

#### **Celebrate culture and employee wellbeing**

- Incorporated local landmarks in design
- Emphasised employee flexibility and wellness
- 100% of occupants have access to natural light
- Sit-to-stand desks at every workstation
- Quiet spaces and movable walls for versatility

#### **Sustainable and healthy environment**

- Prioritised environmental sustainability
- Diverted 70%+ of construction waste from landfills
- Reduced indoor water use by 25%
- Used materials with environmental certifications
- Implemented indoor air quality management plan
- Achieved LEED Gold certification

#### **Results**

- 33% increase in headcount
- Doubled average daily occupancy
- Inspired clients with cultural epicentre concept
- Ongoing data collection to measure success and inform future improvements

JLL's Walnut Creek office demonstrates how an inspiring, functional, and healthy workspace—informed by data and employee feedback—can drive productivity, connection, and business growth.



# 8

Do we have the  
right team?



## How better use of space can unlock cost savings

Workplace strategy needs input from multiple departments, not just the real estate team. A more effective approach is to collaborate with IT, HR, legal, other support services, and business

stakeholders to capture valuable insights and ideas, inform budgets, help manage change and ensure that any workplace decisions align with overall business goals.



## Future-proof your workplace

In an uncertain global economy, creating a compelling workplace has become a business imperative. Many C-suite leaders now recognise that the workplace is not just a cost item to control, but a strategic asset that can provide a competitive advantage for talent, growth and business performance. Now, the challenge lies in optimising space and resources while ensuring that the office design and functionality will foster productivity, collaboration and innovation—and keep employees engaged.

More than ever before, employees are looking to the office for collaboration and socialising with colleagues, and they expect the office to offer an enjoyable and productive environment. As work styles, habits and technologies will continue to evolve, the future of the office is flexible, cost-effective and ready to **adapt to meet the needs of employees**.

**Are you seeking flexible office solutions  
that position your company for the future?**

**Contact us →**

## **About JLL**

For over 200 years, JLL (NYSE: JLL), a leading global commercial real estate and investment management company, has helped clients buy, build, occupy, manage and invest in a variety of commercial, industrial, hotel, residential and retail properties. A Fortune 500® company with annual revenue of \$23.4 billion and operations in over 80 countries around the world, our more than 112,000 employees bring the power of a global platform combined with local expertise. Driven by our purpose to shape the future of real estate for a better world, we help our clients, people and communities SEE A BRIGHTER WAY<sup>SM</sup>. JLL is the brand name, and a registered trademark, of Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated. For further information, visit [jll.com](https://jll.com).