

MAGNET:

The Post-Covid Future of Work Study



**TECHNOLOGY DRIVES CULTURE.
CULTURE SHAPES TECHNOLOGY.**

The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted our culture, technology, and workplace. [A lot rides on how we react to this shift.](#)

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What has changed?

The pandemic is over.

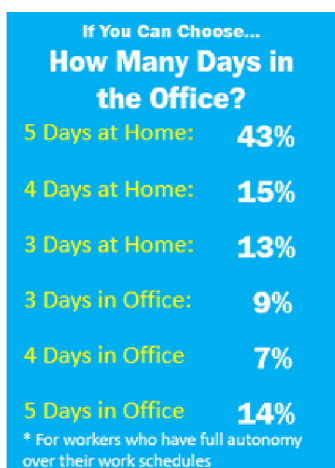
And everything is different.



“To be (there)... or not to be (there)... that is the question.” The explosion of video collaboration and unified communications technologies gives knowledge workers the ability to communicate and collaborate with anyone, no matter where they are. A Zoom call or a Teams call is as normal and mainstream as a phone call.

So, if not being there is just as good as being there, why do we have offices at all?

Is remote just as effective as being there, face to face? Ask anyone in the sea of cubicles or across the stretches of benches, and you'll get one answer. Ask the C-suite and you'll likely get a radically different answer.



Culture is the last thing to change. For any C-Suite leader who's grown up in a command-and-control environment, having workers in their line of sight and available is preferable, particularly when you're never sure if they're working or not.

On the other hand, workers prefer to work from home, all things being equal. Why is that?

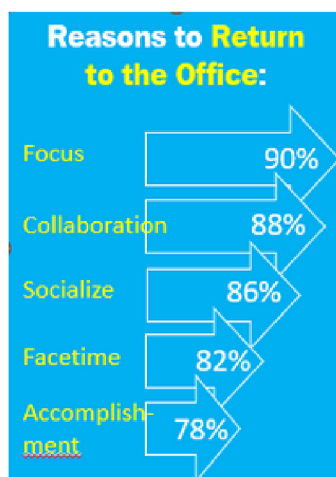
What makes workers prefer the privacy of a home office over the bustle of a traditional office? Does that suggest that companies with flexible work policies have stronger cultures? Or has the definition of culture changed?

How has this newly mainstreamed decentralized working style impacted teamwork? What passes today for informal collaboration? Is it Teams chat? Is it a quick Zoom call and screen share?

Back to the Office?

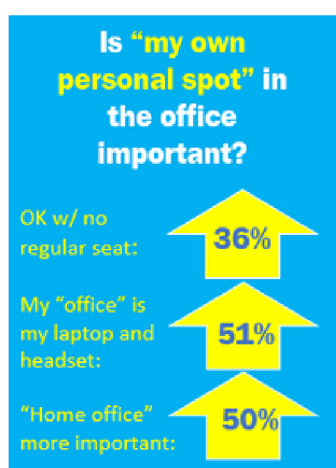
Where's my desk?

And why is it so distracting here?



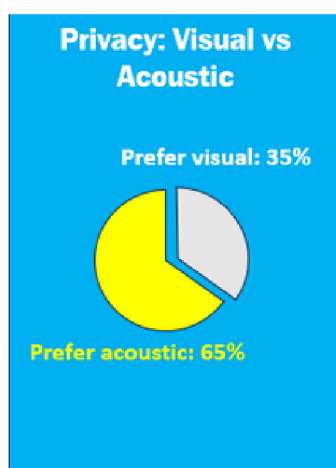
Cafes, libraries, and huddle spaces. If this new hybrid work regime is the new normal, what does this mean for the physical, brick and mortar office? What needs to change in workplace design if companies are to retain their best and brightest workers?

For one thing, we need to acknowledge that in a decentralized work environment, there's a need for dedicated spaces for informal collaboration as well as space for intense focus. Call it "The Café" and "The Library," if you wish. And more than either, we need more collaboration spaces than we have rooms to put them in. Do we call these "huddle spaces"?



The Territorial Imperative. If our physical real estate is only 50% to 60% occupied at any given time, because everybody else is working from home, does everyone still need a dedicated cubicle or office? Can we lighten our real estate load and embark on a more aggressive hoteling or hot desking workspace policy?

This always sounds like a great idea on paper until you actually ask employees what they think. Yes, the territorial imperative is still alive and well in corporate America. If we take away a person's dedicated spot - their territory - do they still feel the same cultural attachment to their employer? Has personal attachment to a place of work changed from the traditional office to the home office?



What about privacy? And what about privacy in this brave, new office environment? What is our expectation of workplace environments in this post pandemic age? Are there any remnants of pandemic and social distancing norms left? Do we require acoustic privacy more than visual privacy? Or do we simply now wear our offices on our heads in the form of binaural, noise canceling headsets?

About the Study



The 2024 Magnet: Post-COVID Future of Work study explores the complexities of the modern workplace in a single, holistic survey.

The 2024 study follows the proprietary inaugural publication launched in 2022, studying four main areas of interest: person-to-person (culture), person-to-technology (collaboration), person-to-workspace (design), and person-to-society (pandemic).

This approach avoids the bias found in vertical sponsor studies – like technology companies, real estate or architectural firms – who see these critical trends only through their own domain-specific lenses.

Why sponsor the study?

If we are to take advantage of this seismic shift in the workplace, we need to master several disciplines quickly.

We need to make this new decentralized culture work for us, from launching a hybrid strategy to retooling your C-suite's thinking tools to manage a workforce that is no longer all in one place.

We must master the new basics of technological adoption, ensuring all workers have the same experience regardless of location.

We must understand the new expectations of workplace design so that it is attractive and useful enough to draw workers back in.

Who benefits from the Magnet: Post-Covid Future of Work Study?

The key stakeholders for the study include the C-suite in its entirety as well as departmental leaders from HR, IT, real estate, facilities, and others.

We also see a tremendous opportunity to use insights derived from the Magnet for thought leadership and customer guidance. This adds both sales and marketing – including PR, IR, and others – to the mix.

For any company seeking to understand how best to take advantage of this seismic shift in work style, The Magnet can provide a playbook on succeeding and winning in this new post pandemic age.

About Denny Marketing

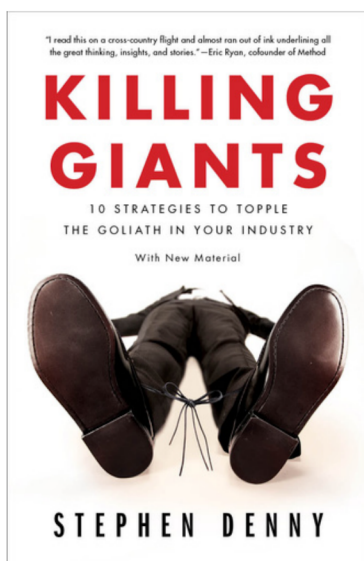


Stephen Denny is a trend researcher, consultant, and author, helping both emerging and well-established brands define (or re-define) their competitive positioning.

The roster of clients Stephen has consulted for includes Logitech, The North Face, Jabra, GN Resound, Barco, Nuance Imaging, Altria, Cogeco Peer One, and others. He also ran marketing efforts at Plantronics (now HP/Poly), Sony Recording Media, GM's OnStar division, as well as former Microsoft *Partner of the Year* UnifiedCommunications.com.



He has authored multiple global trend research projects beyond the Magnet: Post-Covid Future of Work study, including the Culture & Technology Intersection study (2016-2022) which served as the basis for his most recent book, *Unfiltered Marketing: 5 Rules to Win Back Trust, Credibility, and Customers in a Digitally Distracted World* (Red Wheel/Career Press, 2020).



In short, Stephen has a rare perspective on what matters when studying the future of work, both as a line manager and practitioner as well as an experienced trend researcher.

His prior book, *Killing Giants: 10 Strategies to Topple the Goliath in Your Industry* (Portfolio, 2011), was hailed by Advertising Age as “One of the 10 books you need to read” after its publication and is an exploration of how smart, nimble companies out-manuever the giants they face in the marketplace.

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