WHAT IS A WORKPLACE STRATEGY?

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE WORKPLACE AND WHY IT SHOULD BE ON YOUR AGENDA

A workplace strategy is used to improve efficiency in the workplace, more specifically in the way an office space is used.

As business environments are constantly changing and evolving, it is important that the work environment progresses in the same way.

Organisations should establish a workplace strategy to remain competitive in an ever-changing business environment.

Key insights

Developing a proper workplace strategy results in an increase in employee productivity and efficiency.

Younger generations are replacing the Baby Boomers as they near retirement; this new group of workers have different priorities.

To attract more skilled workers, improve employee performance and efficiency, organisations must make occasional adjustments to the business environment.

With increased access to technology; working patterns and workplaces are changing - flexibility is something most employees are seeking now.

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WHAT IS A WORKPLACE STRATEGY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A workplace strategy is defined by the Journal of Corporate Real Estate as "The dynamic alignment of an organisation's work patterns with the work environment to enable peak performance and reduce costs."

The objective of having a workplace strategy is to increase productivity and efficiency.

"Having a well-developed workplace strategy can have a positive impact on employees' productivity which can support employee health and well-being as well as efficiency in the office."

A workplace strategy is created by considering all facets of the organisation's goals, both immediate and long-term. Fundamental departments in determining and shaping a workplace strategy are Human Resources, Facility Management, Real Estate and members of top management. A good synergy and understanding between these departments is crucial in making the workplace strategy successful. Formulating a workplace strategy can be especially beneficial for key departments such as Facility Management and Human Resources. For example, trends such as hot desking and remote working can work to improve efficiency in the office in favour of Facility Management. A well-developed strategy will also allow for easier talent acquisition and retention as a result of happier employees, which will support Human Resources. However, all departments must assess their goals for the organisation as a whole and coordinate a strategy to improve employee productivity in addition to office efficiency.

Real estate management

Workplace Strategy

Facility management

Human resources

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WHAT TRENDS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN CREATING A WORKPLACE STRATEGY?

The typical work environment has not seen a significant change in four decades, yet the way of work and nature of work has changed significantly as technology has become more prevalent in the office in the past 20 years. In a continuously changing business environment, it is vitally important to embrace change, especially in the way work is done. Components such as the workforce, working patterns and the workplace are experiencing a rapid shift in preferences and value. Therefore, organisations should adjust their business environment and workplace strategy to attract more workers and to improve employee performance. According to the McKinsley Quarterly, creating value for the employee is the key to winning the "War for Talent".

Changes in demographics

Changes in working patterns

Changes in values

Changing demographics

Because of changing demographics, large shifts in the workforce are going to take place; as the Baby Boomer generation begins to go into retirement, younger workers are replacing them who value different things in an employer than previous generations. Younger generations value balance between work and personal time over the traditional values such as company loyalty and lifetime employment. In addition to that, there is a shortage of highly qualified employees, and big companies are finding it more difficult to attract and retain talented people. There is a "War for Talent" and it is mainly due to the changing demographics, as the demand for talented employees is increasing, but the supply is decreasing (less young workers available to replace retirement-aged people, according to the Journal of Corporate Real Estate).

Changing working patterns

Working patterns are also changing to become more flexible. With the ability to communicate via mobile devices and use powerful applications on the go, people can work anywhere. According to a recent report in The Telegraph, it is suggested that 73% of full-time employees aged 18-34 were working flexibly. Of those who did not work flexibly, 64% would have preferred to. The study also found that employees prefer to work flexibly for several reasons such as reducing a long commute, having more control over their work/life balance and having more time for family and leisure activities.

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Changing values

As younger generations are seeking different things from the workplace than older generations, the workplace must change along with the workforce. For example, a survey conducted in 2013 by Deloitte concluded that the main thing Millennials seek in a workplace is flexible working hours and location of work. The report noted that workplaces with shared spaces and increased opportunity for collaboration are more attractive to millennials than the typical, old-fashioned cubicle setting.

Over time, workplace strategies have evolved, in the 1970's, 80's and 90's, office spaces were made up for cubicles and c-suites, where employees were encouraged to work alone. The workplace was less oriented on technology and most communication was done in person. Nowadays, in 2018, the modern workplace often has an open floor plan mainly to encourage collaboration. Additionally, technology also plays a bigger role in the way we work and communicate with each other.

Generational workplace preferences

Baby Boomers prefer working together, face-to-face	Millennials prefer completing work through phone or email
Prefer to have a variety of meeting areas to work in	Prefer to work outside of the office
Prefer to work remotely only if necessary	Remote working is the way of life
Prefer the workplace to be designed and equipped with cubicles and conference rooms	Prefer to have the freedom to roam within the workplace when present

What effect do these trends have on the workplace?

As a result of these trends, more employees are seeking flexibility in the workplace. Organisations can do several things to adapt to the changing workplace; however, offering increased flexibility simply gives organisations a tremendous strategic advantage in the "War for Talent." According to Werk, a flex working specialist, 96% of American employees need flexibility at work, but only 42% have access to it. Additionally, it is not only Millennials who are seeking flexibility, people from different generations are seeking more freedom in their work life. Employees are seeking more flexibility for several reasons; the main ones being increased productivity, less time spent commuting, and better work/life balance. A study by Stanford University found that just by allowing employees to work from home there was a 13% increase in productivity compared to in-office counterparts.

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HOW CAN I CREATE A SOLID WORKPLACE STRATEGY?

More and more, successful workplace strategies are not being built based on an organisation's vision and an architect's gut-feeling and best practices. Organisations are creating their workplace strategies with data evidence from their own offices as a foundation. Data is becoming more important in building a workplace and a strategy for the workplace. The insight from this data allows for organisations to build more efficient and even more practical workplaces for their employees.

In conclusion, the work required to implement a workplace strategy is little when considering the possibility of more positive results and increased employee performance within your organisation. Considering the trends mentioned in this article along with real data from your own organisation is the best way to ensure successful implementation and use of a workplace strategy.

Who is Measuremen?

Founded in 2003 in the Netherlands, we are now operating in 29 countries worldwide. Our goal is to improve the work environment worldwide by measuring the use and performance of workplaces to offer insight to help managers build or improve their workplace strategy.

If you want to implement a workplace strategy or need to revamp your current workplace strategy, visit our website or get in touch with us:

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Sources are available upon request.