

The offices enticing employees back to the workplace

The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically shifted employee practices towards working from home. After two years of repeated lockdowns, many of them regretted having to go back to being physically present on site. However, the offices of the future have many convincing reasons to get employees back to the workplace...

How can employees be attracted back to the office? Many company heads are now pondering this question, wary of their employees asking to spend more and more days working from home. Yet the solution often lies in a simple idea: offices must give employees the very thing they do not get from working at home, and that is social contact. The solution is to transform the office into a space for living and interacting rather than being just a work space.

Whistle while you work

In an effort to keep their employees in the office, some companies are increasing the number of social and recreational areas. Cafeterias, outdoor areas, games rooms, and even [siesta rooms](#): everything is geared towards making employees understand that they can feel at home in the office and are not deprived of any comfort compared to working from home.

[The headquarters of Microsoft France](#) has replaced the large reception desk in its entrance hall with a Starbucks Coffee bar, where colleagues can drink coffee to the sound of background music.

[Airbnb's Paris headquarters](#) looks more like a huge shared apartment than a workplace, with its open kitchen, library, solarium and Zen space. Employees choose where they want to work each morning when they arrive, and can move around as they wish.

A proliferation of informal spaces has been achieved through the introduction of hybrid working. This is because companies that include teleworking in their employees' schedules can reduce the proportion of closed offices and conventional workspaces and create spaces that are more inviting and communal.

Treating employees as customers

In the same approach, companies are now increasing the number of third-party service areas on their premises, which are usually classified in the "leisure" category. Although still relatively uncommon a few years ago, it is becoming increasingly widespread to see sports halls in head office buildings. Yoga classes, massage or hairdressing salons: anything goes to make the workplace a pleasurable place to be.

Companies are also providing services for their employees, by offering concierge services or even a butler, [as is the case at Bluelinea](#). Just like a headwaiter, he pampers the workers: providing snacks, ordering a taxi, calling a nanny, etc. Are employees just spoiled children? Above all, this transformation is a response to what is happening in the labour market: the best employees now have all the options, and will choose to work in companies that pamper them.

Connecting employees with nature

In the same approach, increasing the number of outdoor spaces at the workplace works wonders. According to a survey conducted by the French polling and market research firm IFOP, 55% of employees under the age of 35 now use outdoor spaces to work, and 56% use them to hold meetings. Courtyards, roof terraces, gardens: on sunny days, any space is a good place to work while recharging your batteries with vitamin D!

Providing green spaces, both indoors and outdoors, plays a fundamental role in well-being at work. [A survey conducted by the Human Space agency](#) covering 16 countries around the world shows that an office layout inspired by nature, with natural light and abundant green space, increases employee productivity by an average of 6%.

Increasing the number of green spaces, using glass walls inside the building to let in natural light... More than simply placing a few potted plants at the feet of desks, the entire architecture of the premises must be geared towards the well-being of employees and saving energy. According to [a survey carried out last year](#) by the Actineo observatory on the quality of life at work, working in an eco-responsible and sustainable space is even ranked second among employees' concerns. Welcome to a new world, where the "commute, work, sleep" paradigm is a long-forgotten memory...