

ACG Minnesota's Monthly Luncheon was held on December 17, 2019 at Windows on Minnesota in the IDS Center, Minneapolis.

The Future of Work is Flexibility

The future of work is flexibility. Companies strive to be at the forefront of flexible to attract millennial talent. Employees value a flexible work scenario that affords them a variety of work environments. All of this flexibility drives creative workspaces and offers unparalleled opportunities, but also presents significant challenges.

At ACG Minnesota's last monthly luncheon of the decade, Melody Hach, 1600 & IDS Executive Suites, President & Owner; James O'Reilly, Life Time Work, President; Trinette Wacker, Cushman & Wakefield, Director, Brokerage Services and Kip Knippel, Kip Search, panel moderator, shared their views on the future of work.

It probably comes as no surprise that companies thinking about their space today are highly valuing things like density, innovative spaces and natural light. These are the starting points for real estate brokers in conversations with a client team that's traditionally included finance and c-suite management.

Increasingly, human resources professionals are the new key player at the table. This is because there is no best-selling model for workspace. Whether or not the space is a fit is directly correlated to the company's culture. Trinette advises, "Stay true to your company values when creating new spaces, cultures of work, workspaces. Google's workspace is not going to work for everyone."

What works for some people is co-working. Co-working provides flexibility for companies just getting started or looking to grow. Melody is a fan of co-working and offers that to some clients until they're comfortable signing a five or 10 year lease. The workspaces she manages are not co-working spaces. They're staffed and intended to represent the businesses they serve. A professional presentation is critical for them.

To round out the panel, James talked about Life Time Work's model as a workspace that provides a premium experience at work while promoting a healthy lifestyle. With four locations across the country, the latest in Edina, MN, they're catering to experienced professionals. He noted the infamous stat circa 2013 predicting that [40% of the workforce would be freelance by 2020](#). That is not the case today, citing his belief that co-working and these types of spaces are still early in adoption. They're evolving.

Technology and accessibility are evolving too, which present many challenges for workspace, companies and employees. As for technology integration in the workspace, most employees just want a low-barrier, single point experience. The challenge lies in delivering that everywhere to every employee.

With the rise of alternate workspaces – i.e. the third workspace (the first and second being office and home) – we can cite stats like 80% of employees with access to a well-designed third workspace say they're more productive. Third workspace could mean anything to a company from a huddle space in the same building, and amenity-based features (workout spaces); to soft-seating environments, nap pods and wine bars. Essentially this change in workspaces shifts the 1:1 ratio (1 dedicated desk for every person) to a shared-space concept some more readily embrace than others.

The panel touched on talent attraction, a multi-generation workforce, and Gen Z and millennial expectations for workspace and their live/work decision model (1 choose where to live 2 choose where to work). With living location as their priority, companies who seek top talent are pursuing these generations of employees to the suburbs or less urban locations.

To respond to society and workforce changes and stay relevant in the world of work, we might all benefit from empathy training. For a tech professional this equates to kindly prompting a technologically frustrated employee with, "did you turn it on?" Lastly, change is hard. Many believe the shifts caused by behaviors and preferences of the new workforce are for the good of all of us, as challenging as they might be. Be observant and evolve. Send us your comments on the #FutureOfWork at events@acgmn.org

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