

5 main reasons why the office really still matters

After working from home and collaborating at a distance, the importance of the workplace and all that it offers has become clear: An office is more than just a place to work and while some people have adapted to WFH, many people miss the office, perhaps even surprising themselves.



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“The workplace drives innovation and growth and fosters culture and sense of community, while providing the tools and resources people need to be truly productive,” said Linda Trim, director at Giant Leap, one of South Africa’s largest workplace design specialists.

There are countless benefits to having a physical place that brings an organisation’s people together. Here are just 5 reasons why the workplace matters - and will continue to matter.

Personal and corporate growth: The post-Covid economy has ushered in a season of survival mode for companies. “But the pivot back to growth mode for people and businesses will be here soon. Growth depends on innovation, and that’s driven by people coming together to collaborate and think,” Trim said. “And dare we say it: Make sure we are better prepared for another event that disrupts business continuity.”

Further digital transformation: If companies weren't thinking about digital transformation before Covid-19, they certainly are now. Organisations have been forced to compete and manage a range of disruptions — internal and external, domestic and global.

Said Trim: "They're launching new business models and equipping teams to be ready for anything; digital transpiration will evolve for years to come."

Attract and retain talent: The workplace is a key tool to help organisations attract, retain and engage talent. Not only is space an expression of the company, it sends important cultural signals about what new talent can expect in your organisation. Is there choice and control? Are there social spaces to meet with teammates?

"While technology can help with some elements, like onboarding, it's hard to build community and nurture the kinds of relationships needed to engage talent and strengthen teams over Zoom," Trim noted.

Innovation: Research shows that successful innovation is typically 'place-based'. Workplaces foster these connections and promote innovative activities like building models, sharing content, testing prototypes, iterating in real time, collecting annotations and ideas and building on the collective efforts of the team. Two-dimensional technology simply cannot move the needle like three-dimensional interactions can.

Collaboration and connection: Collaboration is a key, place-based business behaviour with demonstrable links to growth and innovation. Sharing ideas, brainstorming and bringing others along through discussion creates new concepts. Body language and other unspoken behaviours provide social cues that can be easily missed when not in person. When every meeting starts and ends on time, there is no room for the magic of serendipity. At the same time, people who don't interact with others or participate in the workplace risk becoming irrelevant, undervalued or overlooked. "These factors don't just impact individuals' career paths, they impact a company's ability to fill the talent pipeline. Having a place to create meaningful connections is more important than ever," Trim concluded.

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