Future-Proof Your *Workplace*

You can't predict the future, but you *can* prepare for it.

It's called future-proofing, and in uncertain times it is a smart strategy for organizations. Future-proofing can give you an edge in a competitive market, keep you viable and set you up for success down the road. So what exactly does future-proofing mean? And more importantly, how do you do it?

Here are some first steps you might want to consider when future-proofing your workplace.

1 **Identify and prioritize the most likely drivers for workplace change in your immediate future.**

People and finances remain at the top of the list of drivers for workplace change. Our industry has been dealing with these core issues for the past several years: the demand for cost reduction, the need to engage employees, competing for top talent, and balancing the virtual with the physical workspace. However, experts agree the real changes are the *solutions* to these core workplace issues. For example, many organizations have come full circle in their approach to having employees work from home vs. coming into the office. While employers are fully committed to supporting work-life balance, they are placing increased value on an employee's presence in the office, especially if it is a team-based business. This trend has been termed "presentee-ism" by various media sources. For many, innovation flourishes when face-to-face collaboration and co-location support the creative exchange of ideas. This renewed focus on being present leads to different workplace solutions.

2 **Consider how the workplace can set companies up for success during changing times.**

Much of this comes down to agility—strategically setting up your organization so that you can move quickly and keep options open. People, followed by real estate, are most commonly an organization's largest expenses. When you align the portfolio with company goals, you realize a more fluid match between a relatively fixed supply (real estate) and an often volatile demand (people). This match helps to even out the peaks and valleys of business cycles. In terms of real estate, it means minimizing both increased costs for carrying too much space as well as incurred premiums when more is needed with short notice. When you create flexible space, you can better adapt to shifting workforce size and demands in less time and with lower costs.

3 **Consider the consequences of not being prepared to meet these challenges creatively.**

We've all seen what happens when companies, or even entire industries, cannot sustain a business model rooted in the past. They fail. Look at the two recent bookstore giants, Borders and Barnes & Noble. Why did one go under and the other stay solvent, despite the same pressures of online booksellers and changing consumer purchasing habits? One anticipated change and proactively implemented workplace strategies that got out in front of it. They were able to align their allocation of people, space and technology with their business goals. This is what future-proofing can do.

Future-proofing defined
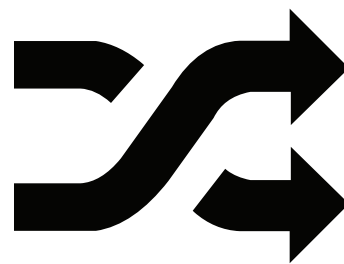
The process of anticipating future developments and activating solutions in order to seize opportunities and minimize possible negative consequences

JONES LANG LASALLE®

Real value in a changing world

4 **Leverage industry best practices to get ahead in the game.**

Companies that successfully future-proof themselves often follow similar best practices. Some key lessons from the industry include:

- *Employee engagement:* Focus on employee engagement. Engaged employees want to come to work. They are productive. They 'activate' facilities with energy and positive buzz. They keep you competitive and your bottom line going in the right direction.

- *Enterprise alignment:* Strategically align space with enterprise values and goals. Facilities should reflect a CEO's vision and shared mission. They then foster a sense of identity and belonging, sending a clear, consistent message externally to the market, and internally to employees.

- *Top talent:* Create an environment that is attractive to top talent. Some of the best examples of this are the Silicon Valley companies. Located outside of urban centers, they understand the need to attract talent (who usually want to live in the city). They provide transport to and from work and have created suburban campuses that provide services that support employees and keep them on campus—everything from meals and dry cleaning services to gyms, daycare, and recreation facilities.

- *Function driven:* Focus on how people need to work. Offer employees choices of work settings—mobility based **and** office based—to promote work-life balance. Many workplaces have shifted from an ownership to a membership model. The focus is off of desks and onto non-territorial neighborhoods that allow people to work in the environment that best supports the task at hand.

- *Flexibility:* Align the real estate portfolio for flexibility and cost savings, understanding that it is easier to move people than walls and desks. Both space and technology should support the work over time. With appropriate planning, a well-designed workspace can grow over time, upgrade as new technology emerges and adapt to changing ways of working.

- *Data analytics:* Leverage data to create value. Organizations need to benchmark internally across regions and cultures, as well as externally with key competitors for talent. You need to be able to track trends, measure progress, understand industry metrics, model your options, follow best practices, aggregate information globall—and integrate all of this with your own data.

The physical work environment affects just about every part of an organization: finances, culture, work process, productivity, human capital, the ability to meet the expectations of the workforce and the ability to adapt to change.

JONES LANG LASALLE®

Real value in a changing world

5 **Start today.**

Everyday, the future arrives. And if you haven't planned for it, it will have passed you by. Start with a clear vision of who you are, what your goals are and where you need to go. Get at the root, not the symptoms, of any problems you are experiencing. Work with experts who understand best practices. Establish benchmarks, set up a data collection process, and use metrics—hard, measurable, up-to-the-minute data and trends—to guide your decisions and shift your business accordingly. And most importantly, start building flexibility into your real estate portfolio so that you can respond quickly, appropriately and cost-effectively to changes down the road. We all know change is a constant in this world, why not be prepared for it (and even profit from it)?

What does future-proofing look like?

Imagine a large internet company that led the market in innovation 20 years ago. However, as is often the case with early adopters of new technologies and business models, this company was surpassed by newer, more agile competition. They needed to reinvent themselves in order to remain in business. Creativity and innovation, once again, had to be front and center.

To accomplish this, the company focused on employee engagement. They asked themselves what kind of environment would support the needs of the "future" business? What kind of environment would allow them to focus on collaboration, innovation and team building? What would attract top talent and make those new employees want to come to work?

As a result, the physical work environment is changing dramatically to refocus on attracting employees back to the office. This allows employees to be present and to work together in tight teams with joint deliverables. The outcome: engaged employees whose purpose, work style and goals are supported by their environment.

For more information, please contact:

Bernice Boucher
Head of Workplace Strategy, Americas
Bernice.Boucher@am.jll.com
+1 212 418 2619

Claudia Hamm
Head of Workplace Strategy, EMEA
Claudia.Hamm@eu.jll.com
+49 (0) 89 29008817

Su Lim
Head of Workplace Strategy,
Asia Pacific
Su.Lim@ap.jll.com
+65 6494 7017

JONES LANG
LASALLE®

Real value in a changing world