



Notes Template for Facilitators – Fall 2020 Business Round Tables

Topic: Workplace of the Future

Facilitator: Kurt Fraese

Number of participants: 8

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	The nature of offices will move to a hybrid of both office building and home office space, thus offering more flexibility for the integration of work and life schedules. Homes will be better equipped for officing and office building space is likely to become smaller as technological efficiencies and shared “reserved” space models are adopted.
2	People will be trusted to work from anywhere, be it home or far from home. Location will not matter as much.
3	When seeking to acquire and/or retain talent, the geographic footprint for talent will be significantly expanded. Firms will embrace a “work from anywhere” model when seeking to find and keep their top talent. It is already beginning to happen. Two participants shared specific examples.
4	There are some inherent downsides and risk associated with remote officing and shared space. There is a profound sense of potential loss of togetherness and the cultural fabric of our organizations. Mentoring and efficient personal connection will be difficult to attain. Senior engineers will not be “just down the hall” or “down the street” with a dispersed and virtual team. The same is true relative to making client connections.
5	Cultural development and adaptation will become an imperative. Firms will need to be much more purposeful to nurture and maintain the aspects of their culture that are unique.
6	Technology will become even more central to our surroundings and what we do. Field work will be supplemented through a wider use of drones and data acquisition sensors and better access to excising “big data.” Quality assurance and controls will shift more to AI applications.

7	Training and professional development will be done more through on-line offerings. Virtual reality will play a part. Greater efforts in creating togetherness will be needed.
8	Nimbleness and adaptation will become core competencies in the workplace.
9	Big changes are coming in automation, vehicles and transportation that will impact where and how we work.
10	Open office space may not be perceived as “safe” considering the scars from the pandemic experience. Paradoxically, there will be a pent-up demand for ways that we create a sense of togetherness in the same office space.

Topic: Future of Office Space

Facilitator: Charles Head

Number of participants: 8

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	Current status - Most not back to office more than 25%; internal communication a challenge
2	5 – 10 years – “Half-way” change 2/3 days per week home/office; ability to accommodate individual needs more and save on overhead expense. There is a pretty wide range of opinion about this – emphasizes that individuals will want (demand) the flexibility – the genie is out of the bottle
3	Challenges to how we configure office space: Shared space – big common areas – few cubes; no walled offices; no dedicated space – plug in computer and go. Big change for some and challenges with distraction; not feeling a connection to space; company culture; etc.
4	Productivity will drop for a period of time once we can all go back to work – people craving interaction and needing to adjust back to making decisions about travel/meeting and conference attendance. (Opposite of what we experienced when we all went home last March.)
5	Will a more work-from-home status quo challenge professionalism and the way we mentor more junior staff? Will we need to be attentive to times when face-to-face interactions may be expensive or time consuming but very worthwhile to generate idea flow and network development.
6	This has been a “grand experiment” – gives us more tools that have become

7	The world is now gotten very flat – opportunity now to hire the best people even if they are thousands of miles away. Of course, this is a threat too.
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1	Flexibility will be key to the future of office space; individuals will want/demand different things
2	New approaches to mentoring, creating idea flow, and building and reinforcing company culture will be needed
3	The world has suddenly become “flatter” than it was before; we can now consider hiring the best people no matter where they live

Topic: Workplace of the Future

Facilitator: Rick Heckel

Number of participants: 10

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	Several participants said office space will be rethought at the time of lease renewal. Footprint will probably become smaller, fewer people will have permanent offices, there will be more options for temporary use or shared space and more conference rooms as some work primarily from home. There may be a 20 to 25 percent reduction in the footprint of office spaces.
2	Hard to say whether field work will change in the future depending on technology. It is conceivable we will have machines to run field density tests that require no one be present in the field.
3	Rate of change for technology will continue to accelerate. There were mixed feelings about whether COVID has taught us to be more flexible and adaptive toward technology or if we will revert to being slow to accept change.
4	A major concern is loss of human connection. We don't want our employees to become independent contractors who can do whatever needs to be done wherever they are located and for any competitor. From a CEO standpoint, how do you connect people living across the entire U.S. or world.

5	In the current situation, employees tend to be working more, possibly because there is nowhere to go and nothing else to do. PTO is often being used to tend to children. These are not good trends. People need to take care of their mental health.
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Summarize the three most important items from the discussion that should be shared with GBA members:

1	Our workspaces will look different in the future.
2	Loss of human connection is a concern.
3	COVID 19 has taught us how to be flexible and adaptive. As technology continues to evolve, we need to take those lessons learned to embrace new technology.

Topic: Workplace of the future

Facilitator: Guy Marcozzi

Number of participants: 10

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	Hybrid work model with increased flexibility as the tasks require. Flexibility will depend on roles with back office having most flexibility and field having less. Flexibility allows for right sizing job to family and location constraints.
2	Experienced consultants may have more field and training opportunities through technology
3	Agreement that younger consultants need training. Concerns for the effectiveness of virtual environment in doing so
4	Questions about the office of the future, but most thought there would be less and many thought shared space and huddle rooms likely.

5	Technology will challenge our current understanding of what is necessary in the physical environment. Drones, VR and big data will re-shape what we currently think is possible
6	How we work will have a big influence on preserving the human element of consultant and engineering judgement. Leaders will need to figure this out.
7	May see centralized labs.

Summarize the three most important items from the discussion that should be shared with GBA members:

1	Changes are coming and most involve flexibility in work environment to accommodate staff and clients and the accelerated openness to technology which will significantly change what and how we work (drones, big data, LIDAR, VR to name a few). Be open to embracing the change and look to manage the risks.
2	Our own established paradigms limit our ability to see a different future. Emerging staff have fewer rigid paradigms and will likely see new opportunities. Finding new and evolving means to attain, retain and develop new staff is first necessary and then ride them into the mystic.
3	We will need to find ways to differentiate our firms and our services in this new flexibly and more virtual world with potential staff and clients. Erata – gig economy, training staff, getting more out of aging and almost retired staff.

Topic: Workplace of the Future

Facilitator: Cameron Beul

Number of participants: 10

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	The future will be hybrid – partly in the office and partly at home with less time in the office than in the past.
2	People will be able to work from more diverse geographic locations, which may benefit their organizations.

3	We are overestimating the degree to which things will change. There will be a new normal, but people crave interaction with colleagues. We need to figure out how to spur changes to get people back together. People thought New Orleans would never get back to normal after Katrina, but things have gotten “back to normal.”
4	More remote work may improve retention because of performance based trust. May also better help retain women better.
5	The office used to be the place for accountability. In the future it will be a place for community.
6	It will become harder for field techs to interact with office staff who primarily work at home. Additionally, field tools need to improve so that field technicians don’t need to work as much before and after field work.
7	We need to train our managers to be more adept at managing staff both in the office and remotely.
8	Less office space will be needed – will likely impact the bottom line
9	Record these types of sessions

Summarize the three most important items from the discussion that should be shared with GBA members:

1	We have to plan for a hybrid work environment. This includes reducing the footprint of the physical workplace with improved IT systems for connectivity. The biggest challenges will be building relationships with staff and clients. We need to train our leaders and managers to manage employees both in person and remotely.
2	Improve processes for communicating with field techs. Also improve field data collection processes so that field technicians don’t need to work as much before and after field work.
3	Things may not change as much as everyone thinks.

Topic: Workplace of the Future

Facilitator: Matt Moler

Number of participants: 10

Briefly summarize up to ten things from the discussion that were of most interest. This might include points discussed, concerns expressed, lessons learned, advice given, solutions offered, case histories presented, or anything else related to the topic. Expand the boxes as needed.

1	Working from home on a bad weather day is a huge benefit.
2	Folks finding a hybrid of working from home and the office a real benefit. Working from home as a mainstay or component of a typical company is here to stay.
3	Downsides - Office life is less formal now and getting even more so. Unfortunately some folks feeling like they are working all the time now (need to establish boundaries). Mentoring of younger staff a real difficulty now with remote environment.
4	Upsides - Connectiveness of folks has improved in many ways (via Teams, Zoom, etc. interactions). This opens up a whole new opportunity for hiring beyond our footprints. Folks can work remotely easily now. Option to stay home for any person (to focus on deadline as an example) is a good thing. Flexibility of schedule has improved productivity.
5	Surprises - Travel and meeting in person is not as essential as we used to think. Office is still a place to work, but more of a collaborative space now.
6	Field based folks: things have not changed much for our field-based people. Biggest challenge is likely with bringing samples to the office. Training for field folks is a big challenge – done remotely through Teams, but not the same. Face to face contact with them is not happening. Very challenging when traveling to another state (hotels and restaurants sometimes closed). Scheduling with field-based folks now is a real challenge. Field folks are pretty resilient though.
7	Things to not revert back to: Folks coming into the office that are sick. Keeping people engaged and morale up. So important to keep this level of connection up (company-wide and at the office).
8	Deeper engagement into our member firms with this GBA virtual conference – this is a huge plus!
9	Leaders of change: our firms need to embrace these changes, show how we can adapt quickly, don't revert to what we've always done. If we go back to our old ways, we will be setting ourselves up for failure.

	From a client perspective, we've found many more ways to keep our clients engaged.
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