WHITEPAPER

FURNITURE DESIGNED FOR YOUR HUDDLE SPACES & PLACES

Trending now: Fit for purpose Huddle Spaces

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WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU TAKE ALL THE TECHNOLOGY IN A STANDARD CONFERENCE ROOM, REDUCE THE SQUARE FOOTAGE BY 75% AND ADD A TRENDY NAME?

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HUDDLE SPACE

The up & coming huddle space has become a popular solution to drive collaboration and innovation amongst employees through spatial design. Known for encouraging communication, impromptu discussions and- of course- the use of technology, Huddle spaces can present big challenges for integrators.

IS THERE A STANDARD SPECIFICATION?

We are constantly being asked for a single SKU for a huddle solution that is inclusive of furniture and technology.

The mobile era is all about meeting anywhere, anytime, over any medium. But the trend isn't just affecting the way we work outside the office - it's also changing the way we meet in the office.

Our 'quick-connect and communicate' lifestyle extends to how we want to collaborate in the office. Gone are the days of postponing a quick team meeting or losing time by taking it outside to a coffee shop because no meeting room is available.

Forget trying to improvise a meeting by cramming a couple of chairs together in an empty cubicle. Instead, say hello to the productivity-boosting, mobile-enabled, quick-hit meetings made possible by smaller meeting spaces equipped with the same advanced communications technology formerly only found in the larger rooms. This is being delivered in a furniture vehicle that readily enables the aforementioned configuration fit-for-purpose!

TRADITIONAL MEETINGS VS TODAY'S MEETINGS

"The world of work has changed profoundly in the last 30 years and it will continue to change over the next 30 years. Technology allows people to work effectively with people anywhere in the world, as if you are virtually in the room with them, presenting endless opportunities for collaboration."

Phil Jones, MD of Brother UK, 'How evolving technology will change the business world'. *The Telegraph*

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THE TECHNOLOGY HUDDLE

David Bennett, Manager at DDC says *"We are seeing customers push video out to more rooms and down to smaller huddle spaces. They are doing this by leveraging desktop video software solutions and lower-cost video endpoints to allow for scale of these rooms. We are seeing a lot of customers focused on mass deployment of these strategies."*

Across work groups and departments, co-workers want to be able to spontaneously gather with their peers in person and online via videoconferencing. To get work done, they expect the convenience of seamlessly connecting via video and sharing links and documents fit-for-purpose.

Today these tasks are easily executed via mobile phone, so at a minimum rooms need to be equipped to perform basic functions in the blink of an eye. The 'Huddle' is born ….

THE USER EXPERIENCE

To make this happen in a huddle room, there are a few differences in setup from your standard larger meeting room, which is typically equipped with a projector and/or screen and AV connectivity may be provided at multiple locations in the room.

"You want AV connectivity close to the flat panel in the room, and power outlets in the table are also helpful, connectivity is also key".

"The spaces are usually small, so you don't have a lot of space to store equipment. Most AV kit has to be put behind a display".

Pedestals are another discrete place for small equipment mounting in secure racks".
David Bennett, DDC

EASE OF INSTALLATION

At least there is some relief in the diminishing amount of hardware that has to be hidden with the era of codecs and Wifi. This makes designing huddle rooms very simple.

"In some cases, customers want only a display and the ability to connect via wireless. There are no cabled connections wanted. However, cable connection is often requestred as backup to WiFi"
David Bennett

In addition to the customers' attitude toward what goes in the room, most clients are still very selective about aesthetics, even in huddle rooms.

"Customers want to use clean simple to use rooms with very little technology showing".

Which means more integrators are looking for furniture designed specifically for huddle room spaces.

"Some manufacturers offer products where displays can be mounted at the end of the table and cables hidden so users only see the display, table and chairs, along with wireless keyboard and mouse."

These smaller rooms may look simple, and clients might want one-touch convenience, but there's still quite a bit of work that AV integrators need to do behind the scenes to make that happen.

We often find that VC services are cabled to a single server room per floor.

AV integrated furniture, without cables showing

THE RISE OF THE HUDDLE ROOM

THE USER POINT OF VIEW

With office space costing a premium, the average workplace seems to be growing smaller. This is leading to us witnessing the rise of the huddle room – small, high occupancy working spaces where users can frequently drop in and out of, and the way that they are conceived is subsequently of great importance.

The need to divide and sub-divide these areas into small, independent, pop-up meeting rooms is fast becoming quite the trend. Due to this increasing trend we see a requirement in huddle rooms for extremely simple user interfacing.

Clients want to plug in their devices, hold their meetings, and leave. The space is too small to spend an entire day in, and it will get shared among multiple users. Convoluted set-up routines, over-engineered lighting requirements, complex climate control schedules and so on, are not what is needed.

What clients want to achieve are simple systems where, when a source is connected, all automation is immediate and no user interfacing is necessary.

Users want the ability to plug in their devices, have the monitor screen power on and select the correct input: and that's it. Job done! Disconnect the source and the room shuts down. Simple!

THE CORPORATE CULTURE

Corporate culture has undergone drastic changes over the past decade.

Not only are traditional nine-to-five workers increasingly being replaced by a more mobile and flexible workforce, but the move towards open-plan offices is gaining traction.

Recent innovations in unified communications, alongside the most recent global economic downturn, helped speed up this transformation, which has led enterprises to support more manageable, multi-use open-office spaces.
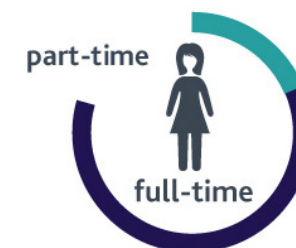
Open-office floor plans may help meet the changing demands of employees, but the noise and disruption caused by these offices has brought about the need for new collaborative spaces, where staff can have impromptu meetings without being disputed.

There is a growing shift in focus taking us away from the conventional large conference rooms in favour of smaller, ultra-connected 'Huddle areas', which some businesses refer to as 'breakout areas' and are typically used by smaller groups of two to four people.

"The transformation to huddle rooms enables everyone to be able to make use of them. Now meeting organisers don't have to schedule a meeting or ask IT to help; they can just walk into the room or space and the meeting can start. We are seeing a transition to companies creating small and flexible spaces, mainly driven by the prohibitive cost of maintaining a huge AV/IT infrastructure."

Although the definition of huddle rooms can be quite broad, in essence these spaces are small meeting spaces intended for informal conversations, presentations, brainstorming sessions, conferences with remote workers or any number of other collaborations.

THE WAY WE WORK NOW:

part-time
full-time

Flexi-time

Job share

Remote teleworking

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LOOKING AHEAD

Huddle rooms are far from a new concept, but it has only been in recent years that companies have begun to grasp the possibilities presented by these under-utilised areas.

Standard large meeting spaces have often been the default setting for all types of meetings, partly due to their expensive audio visual equipment and technology, but this isn't expected to be the case for much longer.

"Over the next few years, we will see a transformation which will be led by three key things: flexibility, ease of use and improved user experience, at a much more competitive price point.

Until recently, it wasn't uncommon for an enterprise to pay tens of thousands of pounds for a full conferencing system which required days to be fully installed.

Now the technology is easier to install, we are seeing more requests for fitting huddle room-style spaces with a space-efficient plug-and-play device.

As Huddle rooms continue to proliferate it will also be a requirement that the monitoring of these spaces on a single, over-arching basis will become the norm.

Each huddle space will be like a component part of a bigger system, and as such, the ability to identify potential issues immediately before they occur will be enormously beneficial.

We can foresee this type of monitoring becoming especially useful in terms of both room booking availability and also device and output statuses that enable the overseer of those rooms to address any IT or AV issues that may arise.

The 'Huddle area' will be defined by the furniture delivering the AV experience.

All enterprises can capitalise on the potential of these spaces

THE HUDDLE EXPERIENCE

Equipment that makes any space a meeting space, no matter how small, is challenging the old way of doing business.

"The old way of working solely over a phone is disappearing. Collaboration in the future is going to be interaction through video, instant messaging, web-streaming and content-sharing in addition to audio, which are all tools that enable people to talk to each other better and to work in a much more open manner".

The recent innovations in technology are driving video proliferation further by allowing smaller huddle spaces to be created even in the larger rooms or open plan offices. With multimedia screens and a wide angle camera, video-conferencing allows viewers to collaborate more naturally and literally huddle around the table, as opposed to looking at a single distant screen.

This also opens a discussion for the "create a huddle space versus a huddle room" as it can be fitted anywhere.

The prospects of huddle rooms may be considerable, but technophobes will need to be convinced, if these spaces can be truly collaborative environments.

The element that always puts off people is ease of use. If users do not find these rooms or technology simple to use, they will just use an old-style meeting space.

It is extremely important that the technology is really intuitive and "idiot-proof", with no training needed. The other element is the need to make this technology affordable.

If it costs the same amount of money or more to fit out a huddle room than is being paid for a conference room, no one is going to do it!

We think collaboration is going to bring everyone together and that's the way people will want to work. Once you've tried it, you will not want to go back.

Clearly the delivery vehicle for such spaces is the furniture that is fit-for-purpose and this is a primary focus for Dalen.

For more information on Huddle spaces, please contact Dalen Design Concepts on +44 121 508 4350

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